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A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Kidapawan Massacre News Coverage

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Abstract

This study explored the representations of People-Centered Development (PCD) in the Kidapawan Massacre coverage from the selected Philippine print and broadcast media. Specifically, this examined how media presented these farmers and indigenous peoples (i.e., Lumad)-related massacres within the context of social development. This researcher employed van Dijk's (1998) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of selected twenty-seven (27) tabloid news articles, two (2) television documentaries, and one (1) radio and television news coverage of the stories of conflict between the oppressed and marginalized sector of the society and the government. This research led to the way of thinking that because of the latter's inaction and the media's neoliberal-capitalistic ideology, the former's plight was overlooked and silenced. In this elite-dominated Philippine society as well as in the Asia-Pacific, representations of profit-centered development are more hegemonic compared to its counterpart that was relatively muted. Hence, the conceptualization of Communication and Social Development (CSD) as an alternative model can further be explored in the context of modern times amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Media representations, social development, People-Centered Development (PCD), profit-centered development, Communication and Social Development (CSD)

People-oriented media representations can lead to advocacy which is a communicative act and a set of actions that involve communication designed to promote social action with a mindset/notion that community, collectivism, and communication are closely interwoven in imagining equality, equity, and justice for sustainable development (Escobar, 1995; Maslog, 2014; Samuel, 2002).

The plight of the poor farmers in Kidapawan City, North Cotabato, Mindanao, the Philippines caught this country's awareness of the growing food insecurity, deprivation, and militarization of these farmers on April 1, 2016. Thousands of people, victims of El Niño (e.g., drought), set up a human barricade to protest the inaction of the local and national governments to their plight. This caused the deaths of a few farmer-protesters, bloody dispersal of thousands, cases of missing persons, and filing of legal cases against the rallying farmers including women and the elderly.

According to the Asia-Pacific Network for Food Sovereignty [APNFS] (2016), Filipino farmers can be considered as the nation's unsung heroes for bringing food to every Filipino table, but have time and again experienced state-perpetrated violent suppression and reaction to their plight for survival. APNFS (2016) opined that "Philippine agriculture has been made backward by a landed elite-dominated government, which systematically neglects and abandons it, resulting in the peasantry's further desolation." Meanwhile, articulating the voice of the marginalized has been a major challenge among communicators because of the apparent government's control on the mass media. Despite the restoration of democracy in 1986, there is still control of the Philippine mass media by the powerful government (Maslog, 2014).

Meanwhile, APNFS (2016) maintains that the continuing neglect of farmers by the Philippine government is a big reason for the rising discontent of the masses. In the same vein, Araullo (2016a) and Raymundo (2016) articulate that what has transpired in the latter part of the first quarter of 2016, tagged as the Kidapawan Massacre, is a symptom of the raging class struggle between the poor and a government that functions in favor of the local and global ruling elite.

The story of the Kidapawan Massacre started on March 30, 2016, as recalled by Cable News Network (CNN), Philippines (2016), when farmers in North Cotabato demanded immediate release of calamity aid from the local government. The farmers have been suffering from severe hunger because of the drought affecting their crops, yet the provincial government had failed to deliver its promise of food relief to the farmers despite the area under a state of calamity. The farmers started blocking several roads in Kidapawan City as a sign of protest.

On that tragic day, the farmers who blocked the major highway were violently dispersed resulting in the wounding of three farmers and dozens of others. Reports claimed that members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) opened fire on the protesters. Meanwhile, officials said the violence started after a number of the protesters attacked policemen escorting a group of social workers who were out to rescue minors in the barricade (CNN, 2016).

Despite the crucial importance of this issue, it is necessary to keep in mind that "peasant resistance reflects more than the struggle for land and better living conditions; it is above all a struggle over symbols and meanings, a cultural struggle" (Escobar, 1995). Social development is assumed to be fueled by communication and the central principle of which is to care for the base - the poor.

The aforementioned agrarian situation concerning the elite-dominated Philippine government and the poor farmer-victims prodded the researcher to explore the present

communication and social development phenomena. Since its approach is social development communication, this study attempts to convince Philippine media to initiate a movement that would empower the proletariat rather than oppress them further through repeated deprivation, militarization, and class conflict as exemplified in the Kidapawan Massacre. The current research aims to add to the body of literature about the media representations of the oppressed, poor, and marginalized sectors of society. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people should have been given the media platforms to air their grievances and needs for survival in the hope of encouraging the policymakers and the State, in general, to launch a people-oriented campaign in these trying times.

Literature Review

A. Kidapawan Massacre Timeline: Historicizing the Peasant Past

In presenting the historical and socio-cultural contexts of the Kidapawan Massacre, this study endeavored to revisit past conflicts between the government and its people. This “Bigas, Hindi Bala” (Rice, Not Bullets) drama has been a repeated history of socio-cultural problems and the same media representations that go along with it.

The APNFS (2016) documents that the Filipino farmers' fight for land, food, and justice started with the *Maliwalu Massacre* (1950) in Maliwalu, Pampanga resulting in 21 fatalities involving temporary policemen. The massacre underpinned the failure of the government to resolve the socioeconomic causes of mass discontent. The second was the *Culatingan Massacre* (1966) in Culatingan, Tarlac with seven farmers shot dead. The third was the *Escalante Massacre* (1985) in Escalante City, Negros Occidental with 30 fatalities and many injured. The fourth was the *Mendiola Massacre* (1987) in Manila City with 13 fatalities and

74 injuries. Thousands of farmers and peasants marched toward the Presidential Palace, Malacañang, hoping for a dialogue. Instead, government forces met them at the historic Mendiola Bridge. During a scuffle, the President's troops opened fire on 10,000 to 15,000 farm workers and peasants who were demanding equal land distribution and decent wages. Fifth was the *Lupao Massacre* (1987) in Lupao, Nueva Ecija where 17 civilians were reported killed by army soldiers. Sixth was the *Hacienda Luisita Massacre* (2004) in Hacienda Luisita, Tarlac with seven fatalities of striking farmworkers, 121 injured, including 11 children and four elderly men demanding the turnover of the land to them. Finally, the *Kidapawan Massacre* (2016), left at least three farmers dead, 89 missings, and 116 hurt. Another form of control through deprivation and militarization manifested when the government and the media flexed their muscles on the poor farmers by containing their voices. In all these massacres, the sector of the farmers proved to be the poorest in Philippine society because of the government's inaction.

Parallel to these cases of farmer oppression, little is known, reported, or studied about the Kidapawan farmers. Notably missing is any update or coverage about this issue since it happened in 2016. North Cotabato is considered Mindanao's food basket however, the prolonged dry spell that dried its ricefields and fishponds posed a severe challenge to the province's productivity. Having provided food consistently to the nation, the government should have offered additional assistance to address the needs of the farmers in mitigating the damage caused by El Niño in the area.

The Kidapawan Massacre can be considered as a popular protest that by definition is public. Protesters put on performances in public places to influence both the targets of their claims and the public at large (Steinhardt, 2015). This public discourse uses the public sphere as "the set of all forums" (Steinhardt, 2015), including those that facilitate discourse among social elites as well as those targeting much broader audiences, such as the mass media and the Internet.

B. Sowing the Seeds for Social Development

The media can serve as an independent monitor of power and offer a voice to the voiceless in articulating the People-Centered Development (PCD) framework of the media themselves regarding the situation of the grassroots. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014) explain that the purpose of media is to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing. To fulfill this task and make society a better place, journalists can consider the true values of media such as truthfulness, loyalty to the citizens, the discipline of verification, independence, monitoring of power, a forum for public criticism and compromise, responsibility, comprehensive and proportional, personal conscience, and a reminder to the citizens of their rights and responsibilities.

As watchdogs of society, mass media should have for its purpose and "responsibility to secure that the truth is not distorted by the powers that be and the public is well-informed so that they will be able to make the right judgments and decisions" (Malabonga & Pangilinan, 2013). Media representations are how the media portrays particular groups, communities, experiences, ideas, or topics from a particular ideological or value perspective. On the one hand, Malabonga and Pangilinan (2013) affirmed that the mass media "has the power to affect the minds of the people with their ability to frame the news. In such a way, public opinion is shaped based on how the news is presented by the media." Malabonga and Pangilinan (2013) posit that "media's news representation may differ from one another. They have the power to twist and turn the course of events and divert reality to the ends of their vested interests."

C. Media as Platform of Voice to the Voiceless

Discourses on PCD by the Philippine media covering this conflict are crucial for the exploration of the communication

phenomena at hand. Studies by KhosraviNik (2010) and Malabonga and Pangilinan (2013) confirm that mass media are a major source of prejudiced knowledge among people who may not have had personal experience concerning certain groups. Vahini (2016) argues that messages play a vital role in the decision-making process of people by setting priorities and criteria. The socially-shared insights of the farming community by the mass media have a lasting impact on the members of the society. If unfavorable messages are imminent, Vahini (2016) opined that media might bring into the community new life concepts and world views that project farming as inferior to other professions. The antagonistic image of agriculture that the media brought with the coverage cultivated apathy among the young media audience.

Hence, media brings changes to society. Reporters provide coverages that determine people's thinking, change their opinion, shape social interaction, and bring new values to the system. To be succinct, agriculture and rural development programs inspite of their life-and-death implications, are less important in the news section as compared with the entertainment section. Therefore, the glorified, sensational, and less researched media reports create a relatively lasting impression on media consumers as media often pampers the interests of the rich and the middle-class.

The audiences rely on the media's coverage of a conflict for public opinion. Media is considered the "most important information path" during a crisis event (Iannarino, Veil, & Cotton, 2014) yet despite the popularity of social media as a forum for crisis communication, media consumers are more likely to share crisis information from traditional media sources because of their higher perceived credibility, hence, Philippine media can be relied upon in communicating PCD.

In addition to communication and social development as major constructs of this study, the employment of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as both method and theory is demonstrated in KhosraviNik's (2010) article in which he affirmed

that "CDA studies on the representation of out-groups involved theoretical and conceptual notions of prejudice, ideology, power and various sources of legitimation." Further, Rivera (2016) recognized the importance of considering the social context into which discourse is being constructed and practiced." Her study raised arguments among researchers as to whether the analytical procedures of CDA should be standardized. Hence, communication as a game-changer has been investigated in research which focused on CDA which being socio-political in nature, (KhosraviNik, 2010), presented problematic media representations brought about by politics (Gong & Le Billon, 2014), news media, and framing attitudes for political communication (Mulligan & Habel, 2011), power relation in communicating social and development (Pamment, 2015), and the need to understand communication practices of the government and its people in running certain programs (Rivera, 2016).

The media can be the voice of the voiceless and provide a platform for discourses of social development which can enable the farmers to address their concerns to the government for policy making and implementation. Some people appear to have lost their trust in media because they seem to favor the State rather than the common people which leads to the assumption that media upholds a neoliberal-capitalist ideology. A critical evaluation of mass media discourses and social development can address this problem. Correspondingly, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility [CMFR] (2016) believes that the media could have delved into exploring the issue further without negating the hardship caused by the drought illustrated by the clash.

Lastly, media can be a platform for the representations of identities in which certain pieces of literature focused on the objective space or reportage in the media (Malabonga & Pangilinan, 2013), media framing as an information path (Iannarino *et al.*, 2015), media products as sites for meaning

elaboration and construction for the society's consumption (Morris & Evans, 2001), the role of mass media in public discourse for the social construction of reality (Rotaru, 2016), media activism and protest (Steinhardt, 2015), and media's protest paradigm (McLeod, 2007). Thus, this study explores the characteristics of selected Philippine media representations of farmers in the context of the Kidapawan Massacre. The general focus is to show how mass media represented the Kidapawan farmers who were reportedly massacred in an armed confrontation with the government represented by the military in April 2016 to the present.

Purpose of the Present Study

This study examines the representations found in both print (i.e., tabloid news articles) and broadcast media (i.e., television documentaries and radio and television news coverage) media of the Filipino farmers to analyze how communication served as the 'voice' of social development in the context of the Kidapawan Massacre. Thus, under the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the study posits the following questions:

1. How are the messages of the Kidapawan farmers represented and communicated in media concerning social development?
2. What are the implications of these media representations in articulating the identities of Filipino farmers to describe the Philippine society in terms of People-Centered Development (PCD)?

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design. The array of research methods in the data generation included CDA/textual analysis of media namely tabloid news articles, and

transcripts of television documentaries and radio and television news coverage.

Units of Analysis

Following the purposive, convenience, and nonprobability (i.e., does not involve random selection) sampling procedures, the Philippine media coverage should have focused on the Kidapawan Massacre vis-à-vis social development communication. The first genre was tabloid news articles which consisted of six (6) news articles from *Bulgar*; five (5) from *Tempo*; four (4) from *Bandera*; three (3) each from *Remate*, *Abante Tonight*, and *Abante*; two (2) from *Pilipino Star Ngayon*; and one (1) from *People's Journal* were considered; thus, a total of 27 potential units of analysis/corpora of this study.

The second source of media was television documentaries (i.e., *Kaya*. and *I-Witness*). The television documentaries in this study were "Binhi," a 32:22 special report on the Kidapawan Massacre hosted by Jay Orense of *Kaya*. which was aired on April 11, 2016, at News 5 Channel 5 and "Buwis Butil," a 26:41 special report on the Kidapawan Massacre hosted by Jay Taruc of *I-Witness* and aired on April 16, 2016, on GMA Channel 7.

Finally, the third source of media was the radio and television news coverage, the Senate hearing on the violent dispersal of Kidapawan farmers in a 5:22:21 GMA 7 coverage which was aired live on *GMA News TV* simultaneously with its radio counterpart, *Super Radyo DZBB*, on April 7, 2016.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study followed a process in this CDA exploration. First, instrument formulation to guide the researcher on reading and examining the media texts and talks at hand. Second, data construction or generation instead of the research problems and

objectives. Third, data processing is the coding of unique and reoccurring themes. Lastly, the analysis part is framed by the researcher based on the CDA model. Further, the following three (3) parts and steps in doing CDA are hereby considered. Part 1 involved *working with a text*, which entailed four steps. The first was selecting a specific text to be analyzed. The next step was to look for words and phrases that revealed the text's attitude toward its subject. Then, how the text includes or excludes readers from a community was analyzed. The last step was to look for pre-existing interpretations of the text. Part 2 involved *analyzing the text's form and production*, which entailed three steps. The first was deciphering the way the text has been produced. The next step was to examine the form of the text and considering who has access to it. The last step was to analyze the text's form and production. Part 3 involved *tracing power in social practices*, which entailed four steps. The first was examining ways in which texts reveal traditions within a culture. The next step was to look for contrasting similar texts to find differences between the social cultures. Then, to determine whether norms are held by a culture or a sub-culture. The last step was to consider ways in which cultural norms may exist.

Mindful of CDA's framework of focusing on key terms, cultural labels, and linguistic codes, the researcher took note of the statements, contents, and narratives presented in the Philippine media to better see the complex but often taken for granted messages of the proletariat. Hence, this study could possibly unveil the ideological underpinnings of the discourses of communication and social development themes.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, the research questions are addressed in light of the findings that set out to explore the Philippine media's coverage of the Kidapawan Massacre using CDA toward PCD. Referencing Fairclough (1995), there are ways of analyzing a communicative event. Its first analytical focus is on text whose "analysis involves linguistic analysis and cohesion-organization above the sentence level." Further, any media statement in the

text is analyzable in terms of the articulation of these functions such as relabeled representations, relations, and identities. Borrowing from Kress (2011), the discourses are located somewhere between two markers providing accounts of connected stretches of language in use and uncovering salient social and political features in text and talk-like entities. For this current study, the micro level, "text and talk" addressed the identifications and descriptions from the Philippine media in an endeavor to answer the first research question (i.e., How are the messages of the Kidapawan farmers represented and communicated in media concerning social development?)

A. The “Magsasaka ng Inang Bayan” [Farmers of the Motherland] Representations

The media’s languages (i.e., dialogues, patterns, and conversations) were hereby investigated as, but not limited to, discourses of Philippine society and social development communication. Through a collective synthesis of abstraction, theorization, and ideological analysis, this study ascertained the messages for the farmers and Lumad in the media’s coverage of the Kidapawan Massacre instead of social development as per the aforesaid CDA parts and steps. The presentation was hereby sub-thematized and presented in bulk to capture the commonalities of these media texts and talks accordingly.

B. Putting Premium on People- than Profit-Centered Development

Messaging variations in terms of capturing how the media implicitly voiced concurring dialogues, patterns, and conversations for the grassroots alongside social development implications rooted in it were hereby suggested. The following are common social development constructs that were directly articulated in the media forms or genres involved in ideological analysis made in this study: (1) subordination of the needs of the

production system to those of people, (2) human growth as the dominant goal, (3) new potentials to enhance human growth and well-being, equity, and sustainability, (4) pluralism practice, (5) balanced human ecology as the dominant logic, (6) self-organization that highlights the role of the individual in the decision process, and (7) balance for human growth as the dominant goal. The pertinent highlights of the said themes were presented.

This section addresses the second research question (i.e., What are the implications of these media representations in articulating the identities of Filipino farmers to describe the Philippine society in terms of People-Centered Development (PCD)?). Anchored on the critical framework of van Dijk's (1998) CDA, descriptions and analyses of the media texts in the meso level (i.e., discursive practices) of the CDA framework were thoroughly discussed. Lastly, the focus of this meso level, "text consumption" is mainly on the discursive practice in terms of media consumption or reception in which the researcher acted as the reader of the texts in examining the media representations of the Kidapawan farmers.

The first PCD theme is the subordination of the needs of the production system to those of people. This development construct enables society to prioritize people over the machine for production; thus, people-centered, human approach in nature (Korten, 1984). The media should play its societal role to uncover oppressive social conditions and power arrangements to promote emancipation, or a freer and more fulfilling society. For these to suffice, media ought to be acquainted with socialism or neo-socialist models which are assumed to be a more humane form of development (Peet & Hartwick, 2009).

Borrowing the media and discourse of development notion, the succeeding media imply the subordination of the needs of the production system to those of people. Beltran (2016) addresses this theme as securing the dominance of power on May 9, entails gains on the part of the party: "the officials of the PNoy Misadministration were busy trying to maintain their grip on

power.” To elaborate this social development construct which implies protagonistic notions for the Kidapawan farmers, the columnist voices out this as well as he continues: “officials who did not do anything about the food problem and who ordered the police to violently disperse the farmers”, which probably is an instance that this government is not keen on considering the welfare of the abused Lumad and farmers because the approach is less people-centered.

Pamintuan (2016) likewise argues for the assumed deprived sector by reiterating the aforesaid pro-development construct as she inquired, “... why didn’t the government just release the (promised) 15,000 sacks of rice, with the condition being that the road blockade be lifted?” and concludes that indeed, the state is impatient with its human-approach program and is only after some economic boosts by placing the farmers at the backseat in the discourses of development: “the protesters wanted food, and instead they got bullets.” In an attempt to articulate this pro-people theme, Locsin (2016) underscores: “all that the people wanted was rice; so give it to them.” Consequently, Araullo (2016a) demands for addressing the needs of the people over production as he opines that the government has been orchestrated by bureaucrat neoliberal capitalists with vested interests which is against the interests, rights, and welfare of the majority of the Filipino people especially the landless and destitute farmers.

PCD, in consonance with Oliveros (2016), should be anchored on the farmers over the welfare of a few from the state. Meanwhile, Araullo (2016b) stresses that this notion should be the authorities’ frame considering the farmers’ highly challenging way of life as poor farmers including indigenous peoples eke out a living subject to the vagaries of nature and under the threat of displacement by mining operations, plantations, and other ‘development projects.’

Cruz (2016) zeroes in on the subordination of the needs of the government's production system to those of the society's people-centered approach which he concurs to be the more appropriate action compared with what happened: "killing poor and helpless farmers is but a matter of course for certain callous individuals with immense land holdings."

The second PCD theme is the human growth as the dominant goal. This development construct relies heavily on the notion that any individual is a work in progress as it is assumed that society should not look at development by isolating human potential, thus, local advancement is imperative to achieve what is being imagined as globalization (Korten, 1984).

Beltran (2016) insists on a reminder for the government to prioritize human growth as the dominant goal over his political activities. Despite its life and death implication, as the government's preoccupations with the elections come as a priority, human growth is subordinated. This is also delivered by Locsin (2016): "a state of calamity sets aside all laws, regulations, and procedure; e.g., for the release of rice stocks and other foodstuffs to the hungry." If this development concept is to be collapsed, then "the only rational response to hunger is food" (Cruz, 2016). Lastly, human growth as the dominant goal should be part of any governing body's agenda to prepare itself in dealing with such a crisis as Araullo (2016a) laments: "... administration for failing to provide timely and adequate relief to the distressed farmers considering that the severe drought and its effects on agriculture have been predicted for more than two years by the government weather agency."

The third PCD theme is the new potential to enhance human growth and well-being, equity, and sustainability. It is assumed that inequality cannot be eradicated, it is recirculated and reproduced. The perceived inherent inequality and other culturally specified inequalities such as class, status, and power can be contained through a clamor for change in imagining sustainable equality and equity (Korten, 1984). Society must understand that change is important and that ignorance to it is

politically taboo. In an ideal world, its attainment should not be complicated at all, although this is easier said than done.

Pamintuan (2016) infers what seems to be a government's perspective. Certain themes for the government to consider include new potentials to enhance human growth and well-being, equity, and sustainability as crucial concerns: "farmers have a long list of legitimate grievances, and now they have a rallying point" (Pamintuan, 2016, para. 11). Meanwhile, Locsin's (2016) opinion echoes the discourse on the same media and development construct as the central concern in his parting words: "Kidapawan was a case of those who were dying to eat, dying just the same because they did not want to starve to death" (para. 10). Further, Adaza's (2016) media text argues that the Kidapawan protesters are on the right side of the issue and that these "starving farmers" (para. 5) have valid reasons to protest in this democratic nation: "demonstrators who are only exercising their constitutional rights and demanding help from government because they need food due to the drought in that part of the country" (para. 2). In the same vein, Adaza (2016) suggests that a necessary change vis-à-vis the idea of enhancing human growth and establishing sustainability development as central concerns are attainable given the political will of authorities along with their willing people: "the procedural revolution can be finished in twenty-four hours peacefully. It is the aftermath when the new government installs a new system that could have the potential for violence. But this is the only way out of the current system" (para. 18).

Lastly, Araullo (2016b) observes the inclusion of these new potentials through these statements:

... people could not understand why hungry farmers could not be treated with compassion by concerned government officials. Why were their appeals and demands met with indifference, their protest action met with harshness and eventually

armed suppression? Where did government calamity funds go? What had the Department of Agriculture done to mitigate the effects of El Niño? (para. 9)

The fourth PCD theme is the pluralism practice. Recognitions of diversities, perspectives, and differences are notions that are believed to bring forth meaningful and sensible convergence. The objectivity of media is hereby put under the critical lens of CDA which is about bringing out diversity and multiple identities (van Dijk, 1998). Convergence is said to be a pro-development machine for it enables participation among potential associates.

The development theme of pluralism practice is a significant factor if the change will be seriously propelled as Adaza (2016) imagines sustainable development for the Kidapawan farmers given the opportunities they can get ironically in the story of the massacre that depleted them badly: “the procedural revolution can be very peaceful. To do that, only you need to have are three elements – the leader with brains and balls, the needed logistics, and the appropriate apparatus.” Oliveros (2016) points out that the society should seek diversity and multiple identities for certain steps in changing the landscape, which has been problematic at times affecting the proletariat because of their antagonistic relationship with the bourgeoisie-dominated state (Peet & Hartwick, 2009) in what I assume to be a capitalist society: “farms have dried up and the response of the Aquino government has been limited.”

The fifth PCD theme is the balanced human ecology as the dominant logic. Although it is believed that there is no formula to achieve development and freedom, humanity can never go wrong with balanced human ecology as the dominant logic (Korten, 1984) in imagining social development. Sen (1999) opines that substantive freedom is central to the process of development, economic development is not social development, and affiliations as connections shall lead to opportunities for development.

Instead of that framework, Cruz's (2016) opinion column articulates balanced human ecology as the dominant logic:

... the finally outgoing government headed by someone from a well-known clan of a huge hacienda holding appears to be used to looking down and despising poor and starving farmers... the Kidapawan tragedy is now a shameful episode in Philippine History.

Parallel with Cruz's (2016) arguments, the researcher opines that this theme is a promising model for a people-driven response: "to respond thereto with unbridled anger and mortal force makes the respondent not simply callous and merciless but also downright inhuman if not emotionally impaired and/or mentally burdened." Meanwhile, Araullo's (2016a) calls for the said people-centered approach as the clamor is for the authorities to govern all their constituents from the urban and rural sides with equal treatment: "there was hardly any relief in sight despite the provincial government's declaration of a state of calamity."

The sixth PCD theme is the self-organization that highlights the role of the individual in the decision process. This social and sustainable development construct prefers fair equality of opportunity; hence, participatory in nature that observes justice as fairness and injustice as inequality (Korten, 1984). Cardoso (1972) affirms that participatory development allows for some degree of local participation which deals with the agony of reform that is the dilemma of how to narrow the gap between the rich state and the poor farmers.

Locsin (2016) highlights several statements directly or indirectly favoring the people with their rights intact over the capitalists' production system. Self-organization that highlights the role of the individual in the decision process is observed in the opinion column because: "the right of assembly was invented...

precisely to defy ordinary laws to be listened to." Adaza (2016), meanwhile, suggests that self-sufficiency has to be taken outside of the periphery bringing the fight in a core that could have made the voices from below more significant in an endeavor to redefine development.

The last PCD theme which is the balance for human growth is the dominant goal. This development construct calls for a fair and just system of a society for humanity to prosper so societal issues can be avoided, if not resolved. In consonance with Korten's (1984) people-centered approach to discourses of social development, Oliveros' (2016) media text likewise communicates a certain balance for human growth as the dominant goal: "the peasantry, who still comprises the majority of Filipinos, is the most neglected sector in Philippine society. Its basic demand for land reform has been ignored for centuries."

Conclusion

Social development constructs traced from the Philippine print and broadcast media include: (1) grassroots-, people-oriented, (2) people as the dominant logic, (3) balanced human ecology, (4) human growth defined in terms of greater realization of human potentials, (5) new potentials to enhance human growth and well-being, equity, and sustainability as the central concerns, (6) pluralism or collectivism, (7) subordinate the needs of the production system to those of people, and (8) local participation and empowerment. These social development arguments are traced specifically in television documentaries and radio and television news coverage genres. Given the conventional reporting of other media forms like news articles, social development arguments were scant or merely implied.

The Philippine media criticizes the tolerance of the production-biased system hindering the promotion of the people's needs which is a more social development mindset but lacks the ingredients to deliver a better resolution between the erring parties. Further, this investigation of media messages proves that media discourse focuses on the ideological underpinnings and the

rhetorical stances of the personalities involved that shape economic and social practices.

The glorified, sensational, and less researched media reports create a relatively lasting impression on media consumers as media often pampers the interests of the rich and the middle-class, thus, ignoring the voices of the deprived farmers; hence, this concurs the lack of social development communicated in the Philippine media.

Desirable people and development media representations are all critical to becoming catalysts of empowerment. Media as development workers are influential in local capacity-building and support the creation of enabling settings for the oppressed, marginalized, and poor sectors of society. The aforesaid media's forms of dialogues, patterns, and conversations seem to suggest that with perceived openness between the government and small associations, the needs of people can be highlighted. Hence, the challenge for communication experts, media practitioners, and development workers is to make the government decipher what basic styles and methodologies of decision-making should change as a response to human needs than dominated, non-consultative response to local poverty.

From the Maliwalu Massacre (1950) up to this modern neoliberal-capitalist society, the sector of farmers remains under-represented. The inaudible voice of the grassroots is expected to be amplified by the media and be attended to by the state, however, both anti-people ideology that hinders social development as profit-driven is hegemonic rather than people-centered. The scarcity of follow-up reports and its ensuing silence in this story was a shade of the history of the dark peasant past; hence, a case of history and culture go hand in hand.

The Philippine media started strong in its reports on the Kidapawan Massacre only to lose its momentum in the

subsequent weeks because of its scant social development content which has always been known for its sustainable, long-term approach. The researcher proposes a new model/framework or a better broadcast journalistic way of thinking, that is Communication and (in) Social Development (CSD)-- a convergence, pluralistic, and pro-poor approach to communicating the developing stories involving the grassroots at the expense of media's pervasive power. Thereby, the harmony of knowledge between the aforementioned allied fields can enable the imagined substantial on-the-grounds, people-based reportage.

At this time, neither mass communication nor social development has fully recognized the enormous implications of each in a promising partnership. Hence, the current study recommends the convergence of communication and social development which can benefit not only the society in their plight but also the government in the attainment of their sustainable development programs for the country mediated by the media.

Interestingly, CSD by itself is pluralism which can likewise promote deep discourses of capitalism and neoliberalism and the articulation of its implications with the pressing issues and concerns at hand involving the base populace of the nation. The researcher imagines pluralism in CSD which combines not only the political, economical, and social functions of media but also integrates discourses of social and sustainable development such as the human development approach (Nussbaum, 2011), socialism (Peet & Hartwick, 2009), and solidarity economy (Quinones, 2012).

Recommendations

This study discussed the practical implications and applications of the findings which include recommendations for improving the practice of communication, media, and social development. Future studies may opt to focus solely on one media genre, if necessary. This will establish the focus of the content and context being studied. Likewise, future proponents may prefer either the leaders or members of the grassroots community to

build pro-people action themes which may be generalized to explain their sociological, political, and cultural insights about the pressing agricultural concerns alongside food security issues in the country. Probable unique and overlapping themes may be used to uncover the dilemma and address the many concerns of the subject being studied. The researcher also recommends taking a critical look at the concepts and constructs identified in the data generation specifically in the text production part of the CDA framework by either van Dijk (1998) or Fairclough (1995) which may enable future researchers to conduct interviews or discussions with journalists and broadcasters.

In the same vein, alternatives must be explored and these alternatives should be seen to exist. Broadcast journalists can stay away from the conventional writing style of being at the mercy of the prescribed format by the editorial board. The journalists' discernment can be utilized whenever they cover the aforesaid pressing issues to substantiate social development communication that should zero in on reporting on the grounds. The Philippine media are thereby prompted to talk directly to the people from the grassroots because there is no substitute for real and actual coverage of the people's voices and noises.

In an ideal world, Philippine media, as well as in the Asia-Pacific, should actively echo the voice of the grassroots through the articulation of action themes that can allow the people to engage in communication production and enliven the call for a more PCD in the pursuit of empowering the local community, enhancing its standard of living, and solving its material deprivation and economic inferiority. Concurring representations toward the greater populace of more than a few capitalists are critical to jump-start media as a catalyst for empowerment and emancipation. Communicators as development workers are the perfect recipe for a society driven by local capacity-building and support for the creation of enabling settings. Hence, the challenge is to deconstruct the state's

conventional styles and methodologies of decision-making that customarily stem from its higher hierarchy. This is now passé and should be subjected to change as a response to human needs than the government's dominated and non-consultative response.

The Philippine society, shaped by substantial mass media, must be guided by a new paradigm that is CSD, based on alternative ideas, values, social techniques, and technology that would highlight the people-centered nature. CSD can narrate the story from a fair and balanced perspective arguing on action themes directly that would uplift the life of not only the assumed victims but also all human beings involved. Meaningful and sensible follow-up, on the grounds, and people-based reports are potential media messages to observe in realizing CSD. In the presence of affiliations and/or tensions between the government and media, the latter can be keen on articulating people-centered development. CSD can underscore the social development bearings within a pressing issue making it more direct and less complicated for the general audience to confront epiphany in constructing their way of thinking. Society can never go wrong with the field of communication playing the role of an activist in the representation of social development; thus, serving the people through communication through a rallying heart coupled with a critical head for the poor populace. For the longest time now, what society missed are media activism being feisty and combative against inequality, social injustice, poverty, and the proletariat as emerging media. CSD can be a game-changer to achieve the needed revolution that is the connection of heart and head toward life for a higher purpose. Hence, the current study recommends CSD, the harmony of knowledge between communication and social development in the pursuit of life for a higher purpose.

Whereas, the present study recommends to future communication and social development scholars/researchers particular theorists and their constructs of discourses of development namely "Invention of Development" by Arturo Escobar, "People-Centered Approach" by David Korten, and "Welfare Economics, Social Choice Theory" by Amartya Sen. The current study may be a precursor to further investigations on

peoples and government-related socio-political conflict at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic where fake news, misinformation, and disinformation have been rampant in social networking sites. As the study's results hold notable information about the implications of media representations and/in social development, they can be utilized by policymakers, communicators, and social development workers in work and real-life settings.

For all the challenges facing the Philippine society amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, media should consider revolution by embracing convergence and pluralism approach to allied fields such as social development to reinforce communication and vice versa. Likewise, the findings can be incorporated in interventions and campaigns on conscious use of print, broadcast, and interactive and emerging media, as well as social media, to reduce the negative effects of agrarian-related conflicts wherein the muted groups have less platform to articulate their noises and voices, especially at the time of the pandemic and lockdown. Although there are still plenty of questions waiting to be explored, the study can be defined as a step to a clearer understanding of the background of peoples' presence.

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