

Towards a Modified Burkean Approach to the Rhetoric of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD)

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This study was conducted in view of the significance of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) not only among the Mindanaoans, but to the Filipino people as well. The study aimed at describing the rhetorical process using the Burkean approach and to determine the major issues reflected in the rhetoric. To reach this goal, a description of the rhetoric using the Dramatistic pentad with its five elements— act, scene, agent, agency and purpos—was deemed necessary. It was found out that Kenneth Burke's dramatism or pentad was useful in analyzing the whos, whats, whys and hows in the rhetorical process.

Although Kenneth Burke's dramatism or pentad was useful in analyzing the rhetorical process, there was a need to complement the approach with discourse analysis to be able to show the interpersonal relationship that was observed.

Since the study focussed on the Senate deliberation on the establishment of SPCPD, the rhetoric was analyzed during the height of the issue, the year 1996: focusing from the release of the draft of the Executive Order in August to the signing of the final Executive Order 371 in September, establishing the SPCPD, ZOPAD and the Consultative Assembly up to the immediate aftermath of the EO 371 in October to December. The analysis concentrated on this particular timeframe. Hence, the recent developments in the Mindanao situation was not included in this study.

The Senators who had given their speeches to explain their votes on the establishment of the SPCPD were foremost considered as the main agents in the rhetoric. Hence, the written explanation of votes was not included. Sample speeches were chosen to represent the "pro" and the "anti" side of the issue. Senators Heherson Alvarez, Neptali Gonzales and Orlando Mercado represented the "pro" side; while Senators Blas Ople,

Marcelo Fernan and Francisco Tatad represent the “anti” side. The selection was based on the criteria that the speeches revolve around the “major issues” commonly identified in this study. These issues were: (1) SPCPD as a formula for peace in Mindanao; (2) the composition and constitutionality of SPCPD; and, (3) the Muslim/MNLF domination. The statements uttered, open letters, position papers published in the newspapers and in other forms of documentation were the main materials used for this study.

Since limited studies in the Philippine setting have been done in this area, results of this study would provide additional information on rhetorical criticism using the “dramatistic pentad” of Kenneth Burke.

The study of rhetoric has been undertaken since the time of Plato and Aristotle. Rhetoric was studied by the ancient Greeks and Romans, medieval courtiers, Renaissance theologians, and by practical thinkers in the emerging democracies of the eighteenth century. In each age there was a sense that something powerful happened when a firebrand mounted a public platform, entered a pulpit or delivered a scathing editorial. Since then, Aristotle’s classical definition of rhetoric as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” has been useful for rhetorical studies.

Man’s fascination with persuasive communication is longstanding and pervasive. However, contemporary rhetoric has significantly deviated from the classical definition of Aristotle. For the layperson, today’s “rhetoric,” connotes mostly “talk” and no action, and usually construed as derogatory, pretentious, and deceiving. This usage has actually posed a definitional problem among scholars of the field even before the turn of the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, even with their reservation on the definition of “rhetoric,” scholars still pursue rhetorical studies. Nowadays, an analysis of a “rhetoric” stems from an understanding of the traditional and contemporary concepts of the term, and scholars do not only consider the persuasive elements of a rhetoric but also the effects it has on its audience. Thus, in its broadest yet simplest sense, “rhetoric” is any written or oral message delivered purposively

to influence or create an effect on its readers and listeners. This definition is based on the following principles founded on the nature and scope of rhetoric: first, “rhetoric is a humane discipline grounded in choice and designed primarily to persuade”; and second, “rhetoric is a dynamic, developing process which is culture bound and multidisciplinary in nature” (Golden, et al., 1976 as cited in Fernandez, 1990: 2).

Rhetorical criticism helps strengthen the interdisciplinary view of knowledge because it utilizes works of other disciplines in its practice. According to Stephen Lucas, a scholar of American public address, “Knowledge is not subject to the artificial boundaries of academic disciplines. It is, rather, like a tapestry upon which scholars of disparate backgrounds, methods and interests weave their intricate and special designs” (Navera, 1998: 2).

There are many fields or areas of study from which the student can engage in rhetorical criticism. For instance, theories in the academe can be advanced with the use of rhetoric to defend the view of academicians and scholars. In the field of religion, bishops, ministers or missionaries with the use of persuasion strengthen “faith.” Whether in education, religion, politics or the arts, rhetoric plays a vital role in shaping public opinion. For this paper, the researcher chose politics where public servants and citizens alike discuss and express their views on the issues in government and law.

Public speaking is one form of communication that has been significant in articulating people’s views and ideas. It is an interactive process of transmitting messages, and there is a need to understand these messages through language or common symbols that can be the best means to motivate, inspire or persuade the listeners. Andrews (1973) remarked that “the public utterances of social and political leaders can form the highest expression of the aspirations of the groups for whom and to whom they speak.” Similarly, he considered speeches as “the artifacts of man’s thoughts and vision... their careful study will tell us something of where man has been and where he hopes to go” (Navera, 1998: 2).

Indeed, the political arena is rich with public addresses or speeches of leaders, of government officials, of men and women wanting to be heard, fighting for a cause. Through these speeches, hearts and minds have been stirred, great leaders have been born (Fernandez, 1990:3). Rhetoric creates impact or consequences which should not be left to the annals of history. The role of the rhetorical critic, therefore, should be to relay these to the public not merely as information but also with the purpose of sharing a world of meaning with other human beings. The extent of this sharing may lead to the perfection of society, if possible, which the rhetorical critic must look forward to.

According to Kenneth Burke, the basis of rhetoric lies in “generic divisiveness which, being common to all men, is a universal fact about them, prior to any divisiveness caused by social classes” (Golden, et al., 1984:320). The promotion of social cohesion and the perfection of society are the function or ultimate end of the rhetoric (Holland, 1955 as cited in Fernandez 1990:3). The rhetorician, therefore, should begin with an understanding of the elements involved in the rhetorical situation that can bring about the needed change to achieve “order” or even “perfection” of society. And ultimately, it would help the rhetorical critic understand the rhetorical act.

Historical background

Mindanao. The land of promise. The land of plenty. Also, the stage that witnessed the conflicts that caused the shedding of blood and tears on the same soil that gave life to many. A chronicle of events of the past decades will be replete with accounts of the confrontation between Filipinos in this island. The 1970s, in particular, saw the height of armed confrontation between the Muslims who desired to apply their own solution to the problems in Mindanao, imagined or real, and the government troops. The decade closed with the recognition that bullets are not the only means to end the problem. A peaceful solution was sought for the 10 million

Filipinos to whom Mindanao is home. In 1979, President Marcos declared autonomy in Southern Philippines, a move envisioned to upgrade the economic, social, and political backwardness, which gave way to discontent and restlessness culminating in rise in arms against the government.

The Muslim Filipinos

A better understanding of the Mindanao problem starts with a knowledge about the natives of the place who are at the center stage of the conflict that has been going on for years now in Southern Philippines. Briefly, just who are the Muslim Filipinos?

Earlier studies on the distinct Muslim groups vary significantly. Melvin Mednick in 1984 cited the Jesuit ethnographic map of 1887, which names only six Moro groups. Another scholar, Bayer, listed seven, and Kuder counted 10 groups. A recent list in 1980 showed a total of 12 groups, namely : Maranaos, Maguindanaos, Tao-sugs, Samals, Yakans, Badjaos, Sangkils, Jama Mapuns, Kalibugans, Malebugans & Palawanis, Iraruna and Kalagans (Tongco, 1984:37).

Of the different Muslim groups, the Tao-sug has distinguished itself as having a long history of direct contact with Borneo, Malaya, and Indonesia and more remotely with India and China. The geographical base of this particular group makes this reality quite easy to understand. While the Maguindanaoan had the same kind of contact, it was not of the same degree with the Tao-sugs (Tongco, 1984:38).

Owing to the difference in their geographical setting, differences in subsistence base among these groups are marked. While it is true that the Maranaos and the Maguindanaoans are engaged in agriculture, even here a difference can be pointed out. The Maranaos cultivate upland rice and corn while the Maguindanaoans practice wet-rice farming. The Yakans also cultivate upland rice. The Tao-sug and coastal Maguindanaoan are also engaged in agriculture while the Samal and the Badjao rely a great deal on the resources of the sea for subsistence.

Another significant difference among the different Muslim groups is language. The Muslim of Lanao speak Maranao; those

in Cotabato, Maguindanao; those in Sulu, Tao-sug and Samal. The Muslims of Zamboanga and Basilan generally speak Yakan. These languages are partially, mutually nonintelligible so that oral communication among Muslim groups is difficult.

The different Muslim groups in the Philippines had their respective distinct cultures, traditions and beliefs before their conversion to Islam sometime during the 14th century. So it is quite understandable that they differ in their system of governing themselves. It should be pointed out that there was no centrally organized body embracing all the different Muslim groups into one political unit. Each group had its own system which subsequently was broken into principalities.

Basically then, the Muslim in the Philippines differ in a lot of ways—language, subsistence patterns, social and political development, contacts with non-Muslim elements. A quick generalization could be said of each group—the Maranaos as the largest group, the Badjaos as the group which finds its home in the sea. Differences go beyond these, however.

The Muslim Filipinos are divided in other ways. Rivalry among different Muslim groups exist. And so do feuds within a group involving families, clans, and datuships. In his book, *The Filipino Muslim Armed Struggle*, Samuel Tan illustrates conflicts within Muslim groups which were mostly fueled by desire for political supremacy. Tan mentioned the “Cuevas-Kalun” rivalry in Sulu in 1900 which was a conflict between the Sultanate and the datu who wanted to minimize or remove the Sultan’s influence in Basilan. In Cotabato, a significant local conflict occurred during the turn of the century and its main characters were Datu Piang and Datu Utu. With the latter’s death in 1902, Datu Piang ruled Cotabato undisputedly, which did not last long, for in 1927, Datu Mampurok, leading the Alangkot Movement shattered peace in Cotabato.

In Lanao, a typical local conflict was the Lumamba-Tawakir dispute which took place in 1916 in the town of Bayan, and which involved two authorities: one secular and the other religious. Imam Tawakir, as his title shows, was a religious authority over secular matters. The conflict started when Imam Tawakir attempted to

introduce changes in mosque worship following new ideas from Mecca. Datu Lumamba wanted to maintain the old way. Tawakir consequently established a separate mosque for his followers and appointed a new *rajah muda*. The latter act of Tawakir was resented by Lumamba because the appointment of a *rajah muda* was a political right which Lumamba thought exclusively belonged to him.

The above-described disputes are examples of clashes between tradition and change. All the three cases of inter-Muslim conflicts show that even among themselves the Muslims cannot be one in mind.

This can be used to describe the present-day Muslims, too. Leadership in its rise-in-arms against the government is also an object of intense rivalry. For instance, the three-way split among Nur Misuari, Hashim Salamat, and Abul Khayer Alonto over the leadership of the Moro National Liberation Front and the secession issue was no secret. Salamat in 1978 attempted but failed to take over the Chairmanship of the Front. Alonto who was Vice Chairman did not share the views of Misuari, the Chairman, on the objective of the struggle, whether it was for independence or autonomy.

On the other hand, as Gowing and McAmis put it:

Muslim Filipinos may seem to be hopelessly divided among themselves, but outside observers will never understand the reality of the situation unless they understand that despite the differences, the Muslims regard one another as brothers in the faith of "Islam." Already, the Muslim communities have identified themselves as Bangsa Moro (Moro nation) which serves to mean the Maranao, Maguindanaoan, Tao-sug, Badjao, Samal and which serves to play down the differences among them. (Tongco, 1984:42)

The Mindanao problem

What is the Mindanao problem? The Mindanao problem can take any form. In any case, it is an encounter between two communities with different traditions and rival economic interests and suffering from different historical hangovers. The Mindanao

problem has been a persistent wound in Philippine society. It has caused so much suffering to the Filipino Muslims, not to mention the other sectors affected by it. It has developed rebels among the people and alienated many of them from the government and mainstream society. The intricate web of violence and counter-violence, neglect and apathy, lawlessness and political insensitivity has only pushed the people into the abyss of uncertainty.

The quest for Muslim autonomy has been affected by two major factors: geography and religion. The geographical diversity resulted in cultural and linguistic division. Most Filipino Muslims live in the southern islands of Mindanao, the western island of Palawan, and the Sulu archipelago. It is noticeable that these points have “physical detachment” from the main geographical body of the Philippines, resulting in “territorial isolation” (Bauzon, 1991:67). The centralized control from Manila would never be effective in governing other isolated islands in the archipelagic configuration. So Muslims have considered the concept of separation. For them, it will meet their legitimate desire for an opportunity to manage their own affairs (George, 1980:119).

The introduction of the Muslim faith to the Philippines has brought many consequences. In Islam, politics and religion cannot be separated: *All actions taken are according to Allah*. Islamic concept of god leads to the emergence of a unified community under sultanate (like in the past). As Sen. Mamintal Tamano states:

To the Muslims, the political head of the state is also the head of religion because they believe in oneness of creation and oneness of God. Our constitution dictum on the separation of church and state does not relate well with the Muslims, who after all, feel that everything said and done in this world is but a preparation for the hereafter. (1990: 15)

Islam is regarded as a socio-political order which encourages Muslims to engage in political struggle, movements, and wars. It urges Muslims to strive for its foremost aim: the improvement of Muslim life. Thus, their quest for autonomy is to preserve the

glory of Islam, and Muslims consider it a duty to work toward the establishment of an Islamic government. As conflict becomes complex and frustration becomes deeper, Muslims begin to express themselves through resistance.

The campaign for political independence was staged in the south through armed confrontation with government troops, and in the Middle East where the movement leaders attempted to get the support of the wealthy Arab nations. It was this strategy which brought the Philippine government to the negotiating table to discuss the peaceful settlement with the Moro National Liberation Front. The Tripoli Agreement entered into by the Philippine government and the MNLF with the participation of the Quadripartite Ministerial Commission called for the declaration of autonomy in 13 provinces in Mindanao.

Different minds view the Mindanao problem in different ways. In terms of causes, structure, objectives, the social unrest in Muslim Mindanao is perhaps not identical to, nor a continuation of the old "Moro Problem." It appears more as a new phenomenon arising from current and external social forces which affect the Philippines, the Muslim area and the population therein included. It draws inspiration, however, from the resistant spirit of the old Muslim nativists who refused government control under non-Muslim leadership.

Needless to say, as a result of centuries of repelling foreign aggression, the Muslims had mastered the art of resistance. They devoted so much time in fighting foreign aggressors that they neglected their economic development. This, plus the low priority given by the previous administrations to the Southern Philippines, resulted in a complex of political, economic, and socio-cultural problems in the region (Tongco, 1984 : 55-67).

For its part, the Philippine government has tried injecting its own doses of medicine. But it has only succeeded in containing some of its ugly symptoms even while some apparently continue to mistake the symptoms for the disease.

Autonomy in 13 provinces in Mindanao was declared by Marcos on March 25, 1977 by virtue of Proclamation No. 1618, but this

was neither effective nor responsive to the demands of the Moros. Instead of creating one autonomous government for the whole 13 provinces and nine cities called for by the Tripoli Agreement, two autonomous governments were created in Region IX and XII, covering a total of 10 provinces (Tongco, 1984 : 56-60).

The Aquino government attempted a policy process that ended with the adoption and implementation of a law on regional autonomy for Muslim Mindanao under RA 6734. On November 6, 1990, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was inaugurated in Cotabato City with the attendance of no less than President Aquino. The inauguration, which symbolized another episode in the continuing effort of the government to address the seemingly perennial problem obtaining in Southern Philippines, was momentarily met with dissenting placards and shouts by a youthful group which was able to get near the stage despite hundreds of military personnel around the area.

The Aquino government thought it had found the key towards the final resolution of the Mindanao problem with the passage in Congress of Republic Act 6734 on June 8, 1989 and its subsequent approval by the President on August 1, 1989. When a plebiscite was held last November 19, 1989 in 13 provinces and nine cities, as called by the Act, the COMELEC count showed only four provinces voting for inclusion in the "autonomous region," namely: Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi. No city voted for inclusion (Tanggol, 1992 : 4-8).

The Ramos solution called the *Southern Philippines Council for Peace & Development* (SPCPD) was the latest formula developed and applied to the Muslim problem. It was a peace settlement mechanism between government of the Philippines and Moro National Liberation Front. It was the result of the 8th Mixed Committee meeting of GRP-MNLF Peace Talks and the first phase implementation of Tripoli Agreement. SPCPD was composed of one chairman and three deputies, one each representing the Muslim, the Christians, and the Lumads. They were appointed by the president upon recommendation of the MNLF and after due

consultations with leaders and sectors in the Philippines. It had the coverage of a special zone of peace and development in Southern Philippines and 14 provinces.

SPCPD had the following functions and powers: (1) to take charge of maintaining, improving, coordinating peace and order in the area; (2) to focus on peace and development particularly in depressed areas; (3) to provide support to local units of government; (4) to exercise powers and functions for effective implementation; (5) to assist the COMELEC for holding election, referenda or plebiscite; and (6) to cause the creation of offices for effective and efficient administration of the areas (EO Draft 1996).

Most of the 24 senators said that they would support SPCPD. However, the Christian majority residing in Mindanao was resistant to the idea of being under Muslim autonomy and some Islamic extremists preferred holy war to get an independent Islamic state. The people's initiative plan headed by Zamboanga City Rep. Clara Lobregat, Senators Ople, Tatad and Fernan, among others, opposed the SPCPD. They believed it was a tactic of the Ramos administration to provoke war in order to extend the presidential term. They criticized Malacañang for letting the Muslim rule over predominantly Christian areas. In the south, they claimed that if SPCPD would fail, it would give the administration an excuse to cancel the presidential election in 1998 and to amend the constitution in the name of peace.

It is with this background that the researcher chose to study "the rhetoric of SPCPD." The paper's main concern will be the major issues brought up during the deliberation: *What were the issues reflected by the rhetoric of SPCPD?* The answer to this question entailed not only a description of the rhetoric used but also an evaluation of the rhetorical situation, the actors, the motives, and the strategies involved. Hence, Kenneth Burke's dramatisic approach or the pentad was foremost considered in the study of the "rhetoric of SPCPD."

The elements of Burke's pentad—scene, agent, agency, purpose, and act are useful in analyzing the whos, whats, whys and hows in the rhetorical situation. Moreover, the study would attempt

to modify the Burkean approach by using discourse analysis in the rhetorical criticism of the Senate deliberation on SPCPD.

Findings from this study would provide additional information on the rhetorical analysis using the Burkean approach. Moreover, it would show future rhetors or rhetoricians that they should be conscious of the kind of statements and/or messages uttered, and that they should shape their rhetoric to help attain an orderly society. It is hoped that the study would introduce discourse analysis as part of the rhetorical analysis of political situations using Kenneth Burke's "dramatism."

The study focused on the rhetoric during a particular time frame, the year 1996: from the issuance of the Executive Order in June of 1996, to the Senate deliberation on the establishment of the SPCPD in August of 1996, to the major reactions to Executive Order 371 in September of 1996.

Since the study dealt with the transcripts of the Senate deliberation, it was not able to examine the actual delivery of the speeches, hence, the voice, body language, and paralinguistic devices at the time of the public address could not be considered. The video records of the speeches were not available during the time this study was conducted. The author relied mainly on the verbal artifacts—the speeches, their contents, and dynamics or form.

Related studies

On the issue of the Muslim autonomy problem of the Southern Mindanao region, a couple of studies have been done.

Tanggol (1992) conducted a content analysis of the policies by the Aquino government to address the Muslim autonomy problem. The study revealed that with the numerous policies and Republic Acts, there is still no permanent solution to the festering Mindanao problem. Hence, the study proposed a more effective, responsive, and implementable policy for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

On the other hand, in 1984 Tongco made a study on the Muslim higher officials' perspectives on the autonomous regions.

Results have shown that position has the strongest association with opinions on the Autonomous Regions. Local officials tend to withhold their opinions on the way the Autonomous Region is run. In contrast, national officials tend to be more vocal of their views on the operation of the Autonomous regions.

With regard to the rhetorical studies using the Burkean approach, very limited studies in the Philippine context have been found.

Fernandez, in 1990, conducted a rhetorical analysis of the 1986 Snap Elections focusing on the electoral process using Kenneth Burke's "dramatistic pentad." The study showed that the pentad was useful in analyzing the rhetoric of the snap elections. It was found that the rhetoric arose out of the scene that encompassed the deteriorating socio-political and economic situation of Philippine society. Moreover, the study revealed that the agents preferred to indulge in a "rhetoric of personalities and *ad hominem*" rather than focus on a "rhetoric of issues."

In 1998, Navera made a rhetorical analysis of Corazon C. Aquino's major speeches to establish historical judgment on the former president's place in Philippine history. Based on the utterances that she had delivered, the study revealed that the rhetorical criticism manifests the transformation of the speaker's ethical position and that the speaker's leadership was found to be multifaceted.

A review on the related studies has shown that very limited literature is available on the Burkean studies, hence, results of this study could provide additional information on the rhetorical analysis using the "dramatistic pentad" of Kenneth Burke.

The dramatistic approach to speech criticism

Dramatism, as Burke entitled his method, primarily investigates motives of an act, i.e., "basic forms of thought which, in accordance with the nature of the world as all men necessarily experience it, are exemplified in the attributing of motives." It is in the consideration of the "matter of motives" by the investigator "in

a perspective that, being developed from the analysis of the drama, treats language and thought primarily as modes of action,” that the term “dramatism” was given to the method. When one would ask the question regarding “what people are doing and why they are doing it,” the answer to these questions would involve an investigation of motives. In the study of motives, one has to determine the act that occurred in thought or in action, the scene or situation where the act took place, the person or kind of person who performed the act, the means or instruments he used to perform the act, and his purpose for performing the act (Burke, 1945:76-81).

According to Burke, it is through the dramatic metaphor of human beings as actors that their substance could best be described. When humans as actors act, they do so with a purpose which arises out of the conditions in a situation they find themselves in. The actors respond to the social situation that directly elicits a verbal act. Their response, for instance a speech, is a strategy to meet or overcome a situation, or an answer to a question or problem that arose. Hence, the verbal act which is the symbolic act can be analyzed from the context of the pentad formulated by Burke.

Golden et al. (1984:341) define “dramatism” as a method of analysis and a corresponding critique of terminology designed to show that the most direct route to the study of human relations and human motives is via a methodical inquiry into cycles or cluster of terms and their functions. This method centers on observations of this sort: for there to be an act, there must be an agent. Similarly, there must be a scene in which the agent acts. To act in a scene, the agent must employ some means or agency. And it can only be called an act in full sense of the term only if it involves purpose. These five terms have been labeled the dramatic pentad.

Human action is viewed from five interrelated motivational or causal points of view, namely :

The ACT - what took place in thought and in deed

The SCENE - the situation where the act occurred

The AGENT - the actor or person performing the act

The AGENCY - the means or instrument used by the actor to carry out his role

The PURPOSE - the cause or motive which lay behind the act

This pentad to the speech, the dramatic approach, considers the significance of symbols not only to the individual but to society at large. The symbolic act makes up much of the content of drama in society. Individuals communicate by symbols with the belief that these will create and sustain social order (Fernandez, 1990). A speech is thus analyzed not because of its merits alone but because of its role in society. Again, this puts into perspective Burke's classical view of the ultimate end or function of the rhetorical critic which is to promote social cohesion and to the perfection of the society.

Given the five elements of Burke, a conceptual framework, the pentad, which makes a thorough dissection of the speech act from a holistic point of view, is used in the study as concretized in Figure 1:

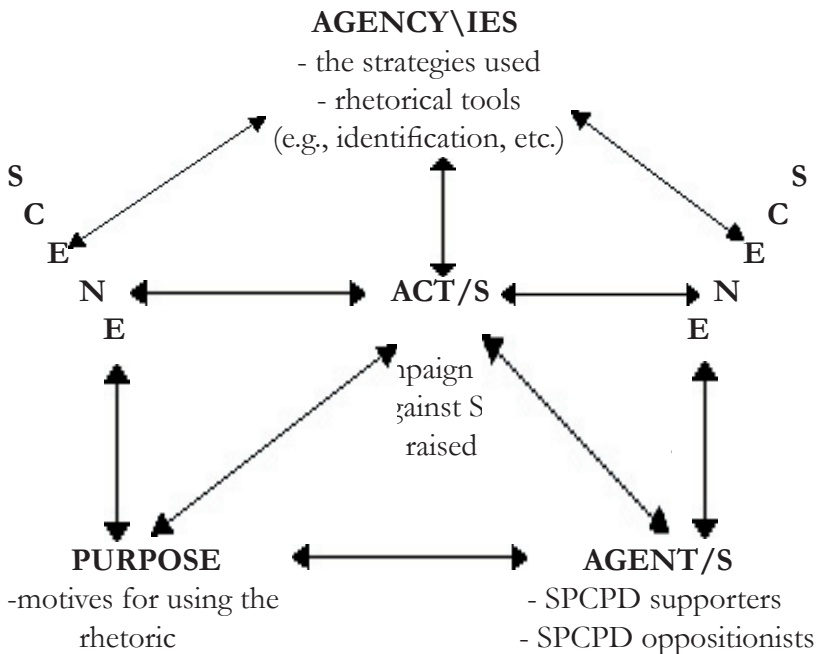


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Burkean Pentad

To concretize the framework for analysis of the “rhetoric of SPCPD,” the pentad, with the ACT/S on the center connects all the other elements. The pentad would show the “rhetoric” of both the sources and receivers of communication.

The ACT/S would account for the speeches presented for and against the establishment of the SPCPD. The social, political and economic condition in Muslim Mindanao would account for the SCENE that evoked the call for the establishment of SPCPD. In this scene, the lead AGENTS (sources of communication) in the pentad are the Senators who supported and opposed the establishment of SPCPD during the deliberation in the Senate. However, it could not be helped to include other political observers who contributed in creating an impact on the audiences or in stirring up public opinion. These agents, particularly the main actors, had certain motives or PURPOSES for coming up with their ACTS, the debate on the establishment of the council through certain AGENCIES or rhetorical strategies and tools. These acts, the various messages are received by the different audiences—the government officials who are against or for the SPCPD, the Filipino people—all parts of the autonomous region.

The relevance of discourse analysis cannot be disregarded in an issue that connotes examination of interpersonal conflicts. Actual language used in its social context already provides room for an analysis of the discourse existing within a particular event or situation.

Interpersonal conflict can be studied through the discourse between persons. Indeed the contribution of the discourse analysis in this social issue is to equate interpersonal conflict with discourse between people. Most interpersonal conflict is verbal, not physical (Bavelas, Millar & Rogers, 1985:9).

Thus to analyze such dialogue, in particular, the discourse that took place in the Senate deliberation of SPCPD, is to approach and study the phenomenon most directly. In linguistic terms, interpersonal conflict is the speech event; it is performative in that saying equals doing (Bavelas, Millar & Rogers : 9).

Utilizing the Burkean model alone would only account for the

detailed description of the rhetoric. Employing discourse analysis, therefore, would give emphasis on the deeper relationship that the rhetoric reflects. In a case like the SPCPD deliberation, it greatly shows the “power relations” at work. However, if the study would concentrate only on the Burkean approach, it may fail to show this particular analysis. Hence, the Burkean approach combined with discourse analysis would clearly give another way to look at rhetorical analyses. This is an attempt to discover how the Burkean approach could be modified for a better presentation of the holistic point of view on the issue.

The rhetoric of the SPCPD

On September 2, 1996, a peace agreement in the form of a two-phased autonomy formula was finally forged between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The settlement marked a turnaround in the terms of engagement between the two parties—from enemy and oppressor of the other to partners in building peace and development in Mindanao.

The GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement and Executive Order 371 issued one month later, established the Special Zone of Peace and Development in Southern Philippines (SZOPAD) and a transitional mechanism called the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD) was to be chaired by the MNLF chair, Nur Misuari, and shall cover 14 provinces and nine cities in Mindanao.

When the features of the draft Agreement were made available to the public in August, it spurred protests led by influential political leaders in the affected provinces, notably in the 10 out of the 14 provinces where majority of the population are Christians. The different reactions the proposal generated endangered the process. President Ramos and his followers had to muster all the the strength of their political clout to whip back the oppositors in line.

The division and confusion over the SPCPD proposal that marked the weeks leading to the signing date of the Agreement

and the Executive Order 371 clearly had to be understood and sorted out.

The ACT/S would account for the privilege speeches delivered by the Senators during the Senate SPCPD deliberation on August 26, 1996 for Resolution 547. Although majority of the Senators supported the SPCPD, it would be interesting to note how the rhetoric of SPCPD was manifested in the Senate deliberation, taking into account the AGENCIES that were used by both the supporters and oppositors of the issue.

Three major issues emerged in the Senate deliberation on the establishment of SPCPD. These were the following:

- a. SPCPD as a formula for Peace in Mindanao
- b. Council Composition/Constitutionality of SPCPD
- c. Fear of Muslim/MNLF Domination

Although different views have been expressed by the different Senators on the issue, this study would focus on the abovementioned concerns. The major AGENTS that this study focused on are the Senators who publicly delivered their speeches, since some of the Senators just submitted their manuscripts, that dealt with the major issues, specifically, Senators Marcelo Fernan, Blas Ople and Francisco Tatad as representatives for the anti-SPCPD stance; and Senators Neptali Gonzales, Heherson Alvarez, and Orlando Mercado as representatives for the pro-SPCPD stance.

For a clearer presentation of the analysis, under each section, the first part would focus on the anti stance, and the second on the pro stance. It cannot be denied that the statements from the religious sector could be another factor to consider; however, this side was only presented to give another view on the issue. Since the agents did not deal with “religious concerns” on their acts, it would be inappropriate to relate the issues to the analysis of the discourse.

In the course of analyzing the discourse, some elements were found to be dominant in some of the utterances, hence, the presence of the RATIOS. The ratios would account for the dominant element combinations in a particular utterance.

On the issue that SPCPD is a formula for peace

Senators Fernan, Ople, and Tatad were the major AGENTS of the opposition panel. The statements that follow are the utterances delivered during the Senate deliberation on the establishment of the SPCPD.

One of the major issues in the debate is the issue of SPCPD being a formula for peace in Southern Mindanao. For Senator Tatad, this issue was clearly presented as part of his opening statement:

The question before us is not whether or not we want peace. That is assumed—we all want peace. Rather the question is this: Is the creation of a Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development in 14 provinces and 10 cities in Mindanao, to be run by the Moro National Liberation Front, the way to peace?

In addition, he supported this statement by saying:

Give peace a chance, so the slogan goes. It is the mother of all motherhood statements. No one will dare quarrel with it. But the question is: Has SPCPD become synonymous to, or interchangeable with, peace?

Through the abovementioned statements, it is very clear that, for Senator Tatad, the establishment of SPCPD does not necessarily provide peace for the people of Mindanao.

Similarly, the same sentiment was expressed by Senator Ople with regard to the issue of SPCPD as a formula for peace when he stated:

I vote No to this Resolution, and I vote No to the SPCPD not because I am opposed to peace in Mindanao, but precisely because I put the highest value on peace. By superimposing a rule of the minority over the majority in Mindanao, we are creating an unjust structure which millions of people in Mindanao, especially the non-Muslim majority, regard as a betrayal and a provocation to another armed conflict between Filipinos.

By stating the phrase “*regard as a betrayal and a provocation to another armed conflict between Filipinos*,” the speaker already gives a foreshadowing of the perceived outcome of the establishment of the council: instead of promoting peace, it would heighten another war between Christians and Muslims.

Senator Fernan shared a similar perception on SPCPD as a formula for peace. Burke’s tautological tool, meaning narrating “what has been” combined with the use of the tool of identification can be observed when Fernan stated the issue on the pursuit of peace by saying:

Mr. President, I have chartered my lifework as a legal practitioner, judicial officer and lawmaker on the course of a committed pursuit of peace and development for our people.

In this pursuit, I fought for peace beyond the confines of mere advocacy, and even beyond the boundaries of the Republic, to embrace the cause of peace in Asia and the Pacific in my work as Chairman of Lawasia’s Human Rights Committee.

I also built my family bonds to Mindanao and its people. I married a member of the Neri-Chavez family which is a pillar Of the House of Baloi directly descended from the Sultanate of Sampura.

This statement can be observed having the ACT-SCENE ratio, where the act clearly gives a vivid imagery of what is the reality outside the confines of the issue. He further added:

I want peace in Mindanao. Whatever pains Mindanao suffers will pain the whole country. Whatever blood and sacrifice is unnecessarily spilled in Mindanao will enfeeble our nation’s will to stand strong and prevail over the challenges of the future.

The statement also gives an ACT-PURPOSE ratio, wherein the agent is trying to impart to his audience that his objection to the council does not necessarily mean an unconcerned attitude towards the Mindanao situation.

Moreover, by stating an analogy of the statement with the Filipino saying: “*sakit ng kalingkingan, ramdam ng buong katawan*” in the phrase *whatever pains Mindanao suffers will pain the whole country*, the agent has employed the AGENCY-ACT ratio.

In the same manner, according to Senator Tatad, Zamboangeños concluded that SPCPD will not bring peace because of an incident. Hence, the use of ACT-AGENCY ratio is used by the agent by giving vivid exemplification to support his statement when he said:

Because of the absence of any clear agreement on disarmament, civilian populations who had never seen any large bands of heavily armed MNLF forces during the active years of the secessionist war are now seeing the movement of such forces in or near their own communities during this ironically imminent outbreak of peace. The best example of this is the Limaong incident.

The government and the MNLF have explained this incident. But the explanation has not allayed all fears. It has not prevented the Zamboanga City Council from appropriating P15 million to arm Civilian volunteers and it has not prevented the Zamboangeños and others like them from concluding that the SPCPD will not bring peace.

The use of vivid imagery and exemplification is an effective AGENCY of the agent to support and give justice to his statement and allegation. And to further emphasize his belief that SPCPD can not be equated with peace.

Moreover, this issue elicited a similar reaction from different sectors within the area. They welcomed the idea of peace, but they were not convinced that SPCPD was the answer. For instance, Palaweños clearly stated “Yes to Peace, but No to SPCPD” through their placards in a rally staged by students from the city (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 18, 1996). Moreover, it was also the same sentiments voiced out by the people from Zamboanga and General Santos City, when they “welcomed” the arrival of then President Ramos by their staged rallies. It was also reported that more than

50,000 residents signed a manifesto opposing Zamboanga City's inclusion in the expanded Muslim region (*Philippine Free Press*, July 20, 1996).

In a Resolution by residents of Iligan City, it clearly stated that the major premise of the points of consensus which is to “*Give Peace a Chance*” is unreal and imaginary. Further, it was based upon an *artificial war*. This clearly emphasized the issue that before the GRP-MNLF could have injected peace, they should have considered if there is really an ongoing war in the region.

On the other hand, Senators Neptali Gonzales, Heherson Alvarez, and Francisco Tatad had the following utterances to give their support to the establishment of the council.

For Senator Alvarez, peace had been anybody's dream and that it has been an enduring process hence:

For truly, I ache to find the road to peace, and many do. Once more, when the issue was brought to the Senate, we poured our energies in order to be able to make that path to peace a clearer opportunity to assure us of peace.

The new Peace Form of our time, which will help pave the way for their acceptance as the first viable initiative in 400 years, I hope, has been moved a few inches closer to fulfillment. With the resolution that came out of these debates in the Senate, that will end the bloody and injurious conflict in Mindanao and usher in the enduring peace and prosperity for all Filipinos.

This statement clearly shows the defensive mechanism being employed by the speaker to justify the support to the council. Referring to the council as the *new Peace Form of our time* clearly shows the perception of Senator Alvarez with regards to the issue of SPCPD as a tool for peace. With the succeeding statements, he was hopeful that the best road to peace would be through the establishment of the council. This rebuts to the issues presented by the oppositors of the council.

The process to peace is a long and arduous process, so stated by Senator Gonzales in his opening statement supported by the words from Isaiah, 2:4:

He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many people.

They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

By giving this statement, he has already envisioned that attaining peace is a very noble action. In addition, for Senator Gonzales, his perception of the council as a way to peace was stressed through the use of an analogy on the different “peace processes” that took place in various forms:

The guns of Bosnia-Herzegovina are silent now because of the Dayton Accord; Shir Shalom, the song of peace led Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Yasser Arafat of Palestine to sit in the table of Brotherhood if only to “reason together”; and today a military ceasefire holds between the armies of Russia and of Chechnya. And so it was that because of the utmost need for peace in our Country, the government and the Moro National Liberation Front met to pave the way towards the signing of the Davao Accord/Consensus.

It establishes the idea that the need for peace can be achieved through different forms and ways. And one such way is to reach an agreement between the opposing panels to settle their differences without the use of arms or weapons. Whereas Bosnia-Herzegovina made the Dayton Accord to settle their conflicts; Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat decide to sit down and settle their differences; military ceasefire was the way to start the negotiation towards peace between Russia and Chechnya, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front (GRP-MNLF) has decided to create the Davao Accord as a pact to pave the way for peace in the Mindanao conflicts that have been affecting millions of people for a long time.

This statement clearly shows the ACT-AGENCY ration wherein the speaker had used the tool of analogy to present his

point of view in a clearer manner and can best be exemplified by the other incidents that may be considered parallel to the Mindanao conflict.

Moreover, for Senator Mercado:

The Mindanao problem has been with us for too long a time. Too long, in fact, that it has engendered deep biases and prejudices amongst some people. To expect them to be immediately swept away and for them to have an immediate change of heart so soon would simply be unrealistic. But then again, I am sure that every peace-loving Filipino agrees that it is high time to consider alternatives to the heretofore confrontational and violent approach to the Muslim conflict. And I am likewise sure that like all of us in this Chamber, most Filipinos are convinced as they are concerned and have taken into consideration the lives lost, the properties that have been destroyed and the opportunities that have been foregone because of this conflict.

This statement not only redefines the value of peace to all the Filipinos, but also suggests that it is just but natural to have opposite views regarding the issue. However, he is hopeful that upon careful review, everybody will agree with the government panel that SPCPD is one sure way to peace that will solve the Mindanao conflict problem.

The same sentiment was expressed by then President Ramos regarding the issue of peace. He was very hopeful that “with peace prevailing in the area under SPCPD, we can focus over time, energies, and resources in the pursuit of economic growth instead of exhausting them in maintaining law and order” (*Manila Bulletin*, July 4, 1996). Hence, this statement clearly gives the impression that for the SPCPD supporters, there is no other way to peace but the creation of the council. Moreover, the council would facilitate faster economic growth.

In addition, Senator Alvarez employed the use of exemplification by mentioning the ideology of former Ninoy Aquino on nonviolent ways to achieve peace by stating:

It is best to recharge our memories with this one word of wisdom and concern that can guide our choice today. Ninoy said : I have decided to pursue my freedom struggle through the path of nonviolence, fully cognizant that this may be the longer and more arduous road. One can fight hatred with the greater hatred, but it is more effective to fight hatred with greater Christian love.

We are already the worse economic performer in SouthEast Asia. Revolution, violence and counterviolence exact the highest price in terms of human values and human lives. In the end, there are really no victors, only victims. Must we destroy in order to build?

I refuse to believe that it is necessary for a nation to build its foundation on the bones of its young. I am indulging in an impossible dream; I hope not for the sake of our people.

This clearly manifests the ACT-AGENCY-PURPOSE ratio since the agent used exemplification to be able to address the audience that whatever he believes to be the real concept of peace can be understood better through the agency.

On the issue of composition/constitutionality

It was stated that the SPCPD would have a three-year implementation as a transitory mechanism of the Government under the direct supervision of the President. Moreover, it would cover the 14 provinces and nine cities in Southern Mindanao. However, objections were raised because the majority of the proposed localities covered by the council do not accept their inclusion in the coverage of the council. As stated by Senator Fernan:

I vote No because an overwhelming majority of the constituents of the 14 provinces and nine cities sought to be corraled in the Muslim Autonomous Region envisioned by this agreement vehemently opposed their inclusion into this new autonomous region. Citizens of Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Norte, Iligan City and many others continue to rage against their forcible hamletting into a new autonomous region, openly

expressing their willingness to engage in armed struggle should government turn deaf to their sentiments. (Fernan, 1986)

The emphasis given on this particular issue, clearly shows the sentiments of the people in Mindanao who would be greatly affected by the establishment of the council. And further, it was supported by Senator Tatad when he said:

But large sections of Mindanao are doubtful of it, Mr. President. They fear the SPCPD; they reject their inclusion in it; they would have nothing to do with it. In many places in Mindanao today, the easiest way to pick a quarrel with a stranger is to mention the name SPCPD. To many, it has become a cuss word.

This simply reiterates the objections of the Mindanaoans on the issue. The lack of proper interpretation on the results of the previous plebiscites conducted in the area was the major idea behind the objections for inclusion of the people that should have been covered by the ARMM. Further, he added:

Only four of the 13 provinces and nine cities mentioned in the Tripoli Agreement voted for inclusion in the ARMM. These are Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao. These are predominantly Muslim provinces, while the rest are predominantly Christian. Basilan, the only other predominantly Muslim province, did not opt for inclusion, just as the city of Marawi in Lanao del Sur and the city of Cotabato in Maguindanao did not opt for inclusion.

This statement also exemplifies the idea that inclusion in the council can be attributed to the religious and ethnic affiliations of the different sectors within the area of coverage.

However, a plebiscite result should also be considered in choosing the areas of coverage of the SPCPD. This is the main rationale behind Senator Ople's statement:

Now Nur Misuari knew that these same 14 provinces and 10 cities to be placed under the SPCPD had voted three times

in 1977, 1978 and 1989 to be excluded from the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao. They have tellingly rejected the Tripoli Agreement. So now Malacañang's political operators and legal craftsmen saw their opportunity in a provision of the Constitution that empowers the President to create ordinary regional development councils. This formula obviates the necessity to call a plebiscite; but as a sop to the constitutional conscience, it provides that the plebiscite can be held three years later, at the end of the transition period. This gives rise to an assumption that both Mr. Ramos and Mr. Misuari believe that given three years, they can turn around the political situation and inveigle the Christian majority in these provinces and cities to vote for inclusion in a new regular regional autonomous region, so-called, whether by cajolery, bribery or by coercion.

This clearly signifies that the SPCPD has been feared to be the diversion mechanism of the Ramos administration to postpone the ARMM plebiscite to a latter date and that vehement violent objections may lead to a declaration of Martial Law.

Moreover, it was mentioned that some people who opposed the idea of their inclusion to the council can be very vocal, which was exemplified by Senator Tatad, when he stated:

Some, however, have decided to oppose the SPCPD, no matter how toothless. In Zamboanga City, a retired old judge told our Senate hearing: "Whether the SPCPD is good or not is a debatable point. But our right to say no to SPCPD—our right to say we do not wish to be part of it—is not a debatable point. It is our inherent right. We have our reasons, all of them valid and legitimate. But we do not even have to explain those reasons to the government or the MNLF.

This already gives a clear and credible proof of the statements given on the issue of the inclusion in the SPCPD. The agents effectively employed the tool of "evidence presentation" to show the ACT-AGENCY ratio of the statements.

Moreover, a recurring view is that the whole process is a conspiracy of President Fidel V. Ramos, who anticipated the protests and would use the unrest as a justification to declare Martial

Law. Another was the belief that the process was merely a ploy to eventually implement the Tripoli Agreement (UP-CIDS, 1997).

This shows the ACT-AGENCY ratio of the rhetoric which calls for the proofs provided in the act that would serve as a justification of the AGENTS in the PURPOSE of giving a credible statement to voice out their stand about the issue.

Moreover, the different AGENTS had been effective in giving a credible account of their vision of the issue. By providing facts, statistics and previous documentation as their proof for their assertions, the agents had used certain AGENCIES. They employed the expository technique of presentation of evidences to support the validity of their claims.

The statements uttered by the three Senators opposing the council could also be observed from other forms of documentation. In a related study done by the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies, it was found that certain reasons accounted for the anti-SPCPD stance of the different provinces in Mindanao, specifically, Zamboanga, Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, Marawi, Jolo, Sulu, and Davao City.

The most obvious objections of the Zamboangeños were due to the undemocratic process of SPCPD, the bias towards the Muslims ("Muslims cannot be trusted"), the ARMM as the logical area for the demonstration of Muslim capacity, and that the city is already doing well and happy outside the autonomous region. In Iligan City, opposition for the inclusion in the SPCPD was manifested in Resolution No. 699 s. 1996 entitled: "Interposing Vehement Objections to the Points of Consensus of the 8th GRP-MNLF Mixed Committee Meeting with the Participation of the OIC Ministerial Committee of Six Held in Davao City on June 21-23, 1996." Similarly, for the people of Davao, the unfair representation in the council, creation of Darul Iftah, and the teaching of Islam in schools were the major issues cited in their opposition to the inclusion in the SPCPD coverage (UP-CIDS, 1997).

Furthermore, Palaweños have also shown their objection to their inclusion to SPCPD through rallies and statements. Unlike

the reactions from Mindanao provinces where politicians led the opposition, in Palawan, objections were mainly from the students and nongovernment groups. Through a forum, the City Alliance Church stated: "We are the most peaceful province in the country, and we are already developing at our own pace, so there is no reason why we should be included in the council." In the same spirit, students from the Palawan State University declared: "Palawan is already governed by the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development created by Congress in 1992 and inclusion in SPCPD will be a *needless redundancy*" (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 18, 1996).

The preceding statements clearly show the SCENE-ACT ratio of the rhetoric. The acts of the agents can also be observed in the prevailing scene. Hence, these give proof to the AGENCIES (examples in the speech) used by the agents.

Another critical but differently slanted view expressed by the people from Iligan City was the lack of people's participation in the process. Moreover, the GRP Panel that should have represented the Mindanaoans were basically residents of Luzon, hence, they *cannot morally, legally and spiritually represent the VOICE of the 8 million Filipinos inhabiting the 14 provinces and nine cities of Mindanao*. However, for Senator Tatad, there was really a constitutional basis for the rejection of SPCPD when he stated:

The first constitutional objection refers to the Tripoli Agreement. Entered into between the Philippine Government and the MNLF on December 23, 1976, this was implemented by the Marcos government in 1977, then elevated to a constitutional provision by the Aquino administration in 1987. Congress readily enacted the Organic Law creating the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and the ARMM came into being in 1989.

Although the MNLF had consistently refused to recognize this political and constitutional reality, in a welcome change of heart, Chairman Misuari agreed to run and is today running unopposed for the ARMM governorship in the September 9, 1996 elections. This is a positive and welcome development.

Despite this, our government negotiators, having agreed that the Peace negotiations with the MNLF “implement fully the letter and spirit of that agreement,” insist on having the text of the agreement carry express references to the Tripoli Agreement, as though it had never been implemented or that the ARMM did not exist, and that Chairman Misuari would not be soon running it.

This particular statement made use of the ACT-AGENCY ratio wherein the rhetorical strategy employed by the agent in his act was the use of comparison and contrast.

Through this statement, the agent was able to give a clear exemplification of how the issue of the constitutional objection was given response by the people in the government.

In the same manner, Senator Ople reinforced the issue on the constitutionality of the SPCPD by referring to the testimony given by one of the constituents, when he stated the following utterances:

I think the government should ponder the telling point made by Fr. Joaquin Bernas in his testimony before the Committee of the Whole, why the government should be so disdainful of the Constitution by so much as intimating that the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) which was created in by the Constitution and an enabling law duly enacted by Congress, should be held legally inferior to a so-called regular provisional government to be imposed under the SPCPD. Is the presidential fiat higher than the Constitution?

Moreover, Sen. Ople mentioned the following:

Mr. President, I yield to no one in my concern for the rights of the Muslim minority in Mindanao. As a member of the Constitutional Commission of 1986, I principally authored the Resolution that became the provision for the autonomous regions for Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras, respectively. Indeed the Constitutional provision of 1986 settled the Mindanao Question in a just and comprehensive fashion.

The follow-up statement to the testimony clearly shows the ACT-AGENCY-PURPOSE ratio wherein the agent made use of testimonials to give credibility to his statement and at the same time made use of follow-up statement with the use of Burke's "tautological tool" by giving a scenario of "what has been." Therefore, the agent was able to supplement the credibility of the utterance. However, it also informed the audience that there was no personal factor involved since he himself was a part of the previous proponent on the ARMM issue. Meaning, his objection to SPCPD was different from his support of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao issue which was, in principle, related to one another.

On the other hand, Senator Fernan criticized the constitutional basis of the Agreement by giving a clear account of the legality of its formulation: "But beyond these patent malignancies in the draft agreement, I vote No because this agreement grossly violates the Constitution and the rule of law."

This particular statement was supported by another statement:

The Tripoli Agreement is neither a treaty nor an executive agreement nor a statute. It is but an agreement signed by then Undersecretary Barbers and Chairman Misuari. A treaty is entered into by two sovereign states. Mr. Misuari did not represent any sovereign state. Even if, for the sake of argument, he did, the document would at best be a draft treaty requiring action by appropriate authority—at that time under constitutional processes by President Marcos—before it assumes any binding force.

With this statement, the agent was trying to convey the constitutional issue based on the real idea behind a treaty. Hence, this exemplifies the ACT-AGENCY ratio which makes use of the lexical tool of rhetoric which expounds on defining a particular aspect to support the statement. And further, he used the expository strategy of presentation of evidence when he cited:

The draft agreement also embodies cavalier disregard of Philippine sovereignty. A foreign entity, the OIC, is tasked to monitor and oversee the implementation of the agreement during the transition period.

This is direct violation of the constitutional policy in Article 11 of the Constitution, which declares: The state shall pursue an independent foreign policy. In its relations with other states the paramount consideration shall be national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest, and the right to self-determination.

It abets more than intrusion into our internal affairs; it allows significant control over matters of domestic policy decision and implementation.

Similarly, the tool of entelechy was employed by Senator Fernan when he mentioned the following statements defining the functions of the SPCPD:

Moreover, SPCPD is a council—a council akin to regional development councils supposedly—but is intended to cover both the autonomous region and areas outside such autonomous regions. It is patent, therefore, that the SPCPD is bereft of constitutional or legal parentage.

Aside from the utterances of the Senators during the deliberation on SPCPD, people from the different areas of the region expressed their objections through the different rallies, demonstrations, position papers, and statements presented in various forms and media like newspapers, television, and even radio interviews.

Another strategy that was used for the rhetoric of anti-SPCPD was the use of threat. For instance, in some of their statements, the Zamboangeños threatened to invert the position of the flag, if the council would be imposed on them. According to Azurin (1996), the emotional reaction of some politicians in Mindanao was to incite their followers to resist the proposed peace package through a series of rallies and symbolic gestures such as flying the Philippine flag with the red field up (indicative of war footing) or flying it at

half-staff (*Philippine Free Press*, July 20, 1996). In the same manner, some people from other areas of the region had threatened to arm themselves, in case the council would be implemented despite their objection.

Nonverbal communication was another strategy that the oppositors used to air their objections. When a dialogue with the people of Zamboanga City was initiated by the government panel, headed by the President himself, the residents made a perverse version of people power. When he arrived in Zamboanga City on July 1, 1996, a prayer rally was staged by the Zamboangeños, lighting candles on the streets to dramatize their protests. A more violent reaction from the protesters was the tearing down of the makeshift barrier at Edwin Andrews Air Base where the President's plane landed. Some of the protesters even threatened to hit him. Thereafter, demonstrators hurled stones at a building where Pres. Ramos was meeting with Lobregat and other Zamboanga officials. Similarly, in General Santos City, where the President had a dialogue with the people on the issue after the Zamboanga incident, he was "welcomed" by people who threw tomatoes at him to show their objection and protests to the council (*Philippine Free Press*, July 13, 1996).

Another sensitive issue that needed to be addressed by the rhetoric was that of the legality or constitutionality of the establishment of the council.

In response to the issues raised by the anti-SPCPD rhetoric, the pro-SPCPD senators responded through their own speeches.

For instance, Senator Alvarez had been defending the establishment of the council by stating that SPCPD adhered to the constitutional mandate: "But we have moved towards peace and economic sustainable development, precisely by adhering to the constitutional mandates."

Indirectly, it already addressed the issue raised by the anti-SPCPD rhetoric with regard to the legality of the council. By appealing to the emotions and sentiments of the people, he also stressed that:

... let our hopes overcome our hesitation. Let our innate goodwill prevail over our suspicions, perhaps, mistrust, and our stunted sense of security. Let us underscore the nobler virtues of sacrifice, compassion, love and caring for the enduring, long-term peace and development aspirations for our country.

This statement clearly shows that the speaker was trying to address the emotional reactions of the oppositors of SPCPD. The ACT-PURPOSE ratio emphasizes the need for rationality over emotionality in dealing with issues that concern the entire Filipino nation. In using words like *suspicion, mistrust and stunted sense of security*, the speaker focussed on the argumentum ad hominem strategy wherein he considers that the oppositors were merely reacting emotionally to the issue.

Another related issue was the democratic process of consultation. This was basically the line of reasoning of Senator Gonzales, thereby, responding to the issue that the government and the pro-SPCPD panel did not consider the view and perceptions of the oppositors. He started with an indirect explanation of the role of the Senate regarding the issue:

But the search for peace, Mr. President, is not solely an executive function. It is too important an endeavor to be left in the hands of diplomats and negotiators, even as war is too important to be left in the hands of the generals. The Senate, as an institution of our people must be, and is, an integral part of the process. This great deliberative body must have its collective voice heard.

Furthermore, the follow-up statement clearly negates the issue of undemocratic process with regards to the consultation with the people involved on the issue:

And the Senate, by creating a Committee on the Whole, to study the peace process which led to the Davao Accord Consensus between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front, has done a truly magnificent

role to educate, to enlighten and to listen to the concerns of the people of Mindanao. We have not relinquished from our constitutional mandate of congressional oversight.

This particular statement gives a clear response to the issue of undemocratic consultation. As an ACT-SCENE ratio, this is supported by the different manifestos and transcripts of the Senate on the Hearings in the affected areas like Davao, Iligan and Zamboanga conducted simultaneously on August 8, 1996.

Sen. Gonzales even made use of the narrative strategy by stating how the Senate went through the hearings:

We invited resource persons to advance their views, whether for or against the SPCPD; we went down into the heart of Southern Mindanao to feel the pulse of the populace; and, we debated in this Hall deep into the night over the finer points of the Davao Consensus if only to prove again and again that this institution, like that of its Roman counterpart, is truly the “Council of Wise Men.” Finally, dictated only by what we think is right and by our God, we have come to make our individual and collective decision.

In this statement, the ACT-AGENCY ratio made use of an analogy between “Council of Wisemen” and the Senate to further prove that the Senate’s decision is the voice of the people, even mentioning the Supreme Authority as the major binding factor of the decision of the body.

Hence, this clearly responds to the issue of undemocratic and nonconsultation which had been raised by the anti-SPCPD rhetoric (ACT-PURPOSE ratio).

Senator Mercado, on the other hand, in relation to the issue stated that:

The proposed Resolution before us is one such instance. The decision we will make in this Chamber will no doubt come from deep reflection and consideration of the various, and even conflicting, interests involved. We will decide one way or the other but only after trying to do a delicate balancing of interests. In

the end, all of us shall act and have acted in accordance with our individual consciences and with the firm belief that our decision is for the best interest of the Filipino people.

This exemplifies the ACT-PURPOSE ratio that justifies the stand of the supporters of the establishment of SPCPD. This also gives a clear indication that the Senate's decision had been arrived at through careful deliberation and assessment.

To support the various assertions of the pro-SPCPD stance, according to Dr. Samuel Tan (1996), those who supported the SPCPD found the historical perspective a just basis. From the MNLF side, including Chairman Misuari, the council was viewed as a very limited and modest concession to Muslim demands after centuries of struggle. In fact, the Muslim opposition to the council was precisely anchored on the argument that the establishment of the council gave less to the Muslims than expected. This position which was shared by the MILF, the Abu Sayyaf, and the Islamic Command Council, was opposite to that of the Christian sector which viewed the council as giving too many concessions to the Muslims.

Moreover, the government was considered right in regarding the SPCPD as a breakthrough and as a gesture of true sincerity on the part of the MNLF and the OIC supporters. No Christian interest had been sacrificed except its pride of power. No constitutional or legal mandate had been eroded since Philippine sovereignty had been recognized and citizenship assumed by the MNLF.

What was clearly given to the MNLF and the Muslim sector through the SPCPD was a great psychological satisfaction that they were really an important and trustworthy part of the Filipino people. This psychological fulfillment of a long cherished dream was all that the Christian majority was asked to give to a sector that had finally come to take its place as Filipinos, not as separatist Mujahideens and Mujahidats. This was not too much a cost to pay for peace in Mindanao by the Christian majority whose interests had always been protected by the state system.

Moreover, viewing this from the purely Christian principle, it was a moral obligation of the Christian majority to allow the Muslims

to enjoy their freedom and prerogatives through the SPCPD for just three years before their final destiny would be settled by the one last phase of the peace agreement. Otherwise, the failure to accept the SPCPD as an implementing mechanism ushered in a picture much more uncertain, perilous, and unrewarding to those who were not willing even to share crumbs of power and wealth or just the thought of being important as a Filipino (UP-CIDS, 1997).

To further enhance the campaign for SPCPD, a Position Paper was released by the Coalition for Peace and the National Peace Conference which stated their support and some recommendations so that those who opposed the council would be able to compromise on the issue. Although they had their fears and apprehensions about the council, their hopes and support still prevailed.

Even as we decry the lack of transparency and citizen's participation in the ongoing peace process, as Filipinos and peace advocates, we welcome this breakthrough in the GRP-MNLF Peace Talks. Despite our fears and questions, we see the SPCPD as probably the most feasible transitional implementing structure and mechanism for the establishment of a new autonomous region within national sovereignty. Thus this political solution to the Moro Liberation struggle deserves at least our critical support as well as positive inputs.

It further recommended certain modifications to allow for certain issues to be settled with the oppositors of the council. To name a few, (1) citizen participation and constituency building; (2) information and education; (3) transformation through a culture of peace; (4) Muslim-Christian dialogue; (5) Lumad rights and ancestral domain; (6) research and studies on autonomy; and (6) demilitarization of Mindanao.

On the issue of Muslim/MNLF domination

Another major issue of debate was the MNLF or Muslim Domination within the area of coverage of the SPCPD. One reason for the vehement objections was the council's leadership.

I vote No because this agreement seeks to build the edifice of peace in Mindanao on the fragile commitment of a single group, the MNLF, under the leadership of Nur Misuari, without regard to other equally potent Muslim groups such as the MILF, the Abu Sayyaf and others which instead of supporting the agreement, have voiced open and determined opposition to its drafting.

This statement from Senator Fernan clearly uses the tautological tool of Burke—that is the exploration of “what has been.” It tried to depict the divisiveness even among the Muslims. Further, he added:

How can peace be attained with but a mere fragment of the vast Muslim constituency? How can peace be possible with the marginalization of the majority of the Muslims while government willingly renders itself captive to the dictates of the few represented by Misuari?

This sentiment was also echoed by other statements that show divisiveness among and between the Muslims and may result in the minority ruling over the majority.

In the same manner, in one of his columns, Mr. Ed Fernandez declared that “majority of those who oppose SPCPD are not really against SPCPD but against Prof. Nur Misuari” (*Mindanao Daily Mirror*, July 10, 1996). This clearly gives a clear proof of the ACT-SCENE-PURPOSE ratio, where the agent has been able to represent the reality of the scene through the use of exemplification to inform the public that one of the reasons for objection was the personality involved in the leadership of the council.

For instance, Senator Herrera said in the Congress Hearing on SPCPD that “If there should be a person heading this council, if this will be organized, then it should be a Christian. I don’t think it is correct on the part of the government to succumb to the pressure of the rebel group” (*The Manila Chronicle*, June 29, 1996). It was even feared that “the SPCPD will be a guise for giving full

control of the Mindanao region over one man, Misuari” (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 6, 1996).

The name-calling strategy was observed in the utterances of the different persons to show their objection to SPCPD. Senator Santiago, for one, accused the then President Ramos this way: “It is a clear sign that Mr. Ramos is incompetent, for failing to grasp the people’s sentiment to a rebel-dominated council now being forced on them” (*Manila Standard*, July 5, 1996). This name-calling strategy was also exemplified by Congressman Angel Carloto of Zamboanga, when he stated: “Why must our national government honor a dishonorable rebel like Misuari?” (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 7, 1996).

For Iligan residents, their vehement objection was explicitly stipulated in Resolution 699. One section discussed the leadership and the composition of the Council which made it unacceptable for them. MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari being the Chairman of the Council, would have absolute power to recommend representatives. Therefore, the voice of the Council, they surmised, would be the voice of Misuari himself. Likewise, the Consultative body would be composed mostly of MNLF representatives, hence, non-MNLF members would be automatically outvoted in all the decisions of the Council. Moreover, they felt that Nur Misuari and the MNLF organization were not qualified under the Constitution, specifically, Sec. 14, Art. 10, to head the SPCPD because they were neither government officials nor NGO representatives (UP-CIDS, 1997).

However, for Senator Fernan, the President’s announcement that the SPCPD’s powers would be mere extensions of presidential powers. Hence, there would be an issue of the Council’s voice as the President’s voice. Making matters worse was the fact that local officials would become mere members of the Consultative Assembly, which was dominated by the MNLF. This reiterated the issue of dominance of the MNLF in the Council.

This ACT-AGENCY ratio can also be observed and can be attributed to the results of the study conducted by the UP-Center for Integrative and Development Studies on the different positions

of selected Mindanao provinces and cities. Results showed that people who opposed SPCPD were afraid of Muslim domination in the area and the ruling of a well-known Muslim rebel.

According to Dr. Samuel K. Tan (1996), from the survey results in Zamboanga as well as the literature produced on SPCPD by all concerned, certain realities were clear. First, two perspectives were used in responding to the issue. There was the *perspective of contemporary realities* from which the opposition derived their basis of argument and for which they expected greater support from modern society. These contemporary realities were the following: the Christian majority in Southern Philippines, the disunity in the Muslim sector, the failure of ARMM as a Muslim autonomous region to raise the level of progress and prosperity in the region, and the violence and conflict induced by the Muslim sector in Mindanao. While this perspective of contemporary history may not be readily ignored, yet it could not deal with the non-Christian demand for social justice which was expressed clearly in Misuari's ideological reference to *kaadilan* and *gausbangbog*.

The twin concepts of *kaadilan* and *gausbangbog* constitute the components of the second perspective. The foundation of the Muslim armed struggle and the logic of its demands upon the Philippine government were rooted in centuries of Muslim-Christian relations. Social justice, which is subsumed in the concept of *kaadilan*, is rectifying the historical injustices committed since colonial times. The concept of *gausbangbog* establishes the geopolitical context of social justice in what is meant by "ancestral land." Those, therefore, who supported the SPCPD took this historical perspective as a legitimate point of reference in evaluating all options and proposals for the resolution of 20 years of armed struggle by the MNLF and the other rebel groups (UP-CIDS, 1997).

Divisiveness among Muslims could only be observed in the SCENE. For instance, in the cities of Marawi and Iligan, the negative view on SPCPD was accounted for by the people's general distrust of Nur Misuari. Another issue was that the Tausug, Maranao, and Maguindanao could not be grouped together and were not capable of working together because of their respective biases. Furthermore,

the conflict surrounding the SPCPD could not be attributed to political differences alone, but also to historical sociocultural cleavages based on religion and ethnicity (Ferrer, 1996 as cited in UP-CIDS, 1997).

This was clearly emphasized in Senator Tatad's statement:

What purports to be a historical background loosely portrays the MNLF struggle as a religious war between Muslims and Christians, which it is not. This sorry piece of historical writing, which partakes more of sloganeering than of scholarship, depicts the MNLF rebellion as part of the Muslim's continuing struggle against colonization, first by Spain, then by the United States, and then by Christian Filipinos.

This statement clearly reinforces the results of the surveys that were mentioned and shows the ACT-SCENE ratio of the rhetoric whereby the dominant aspect in the act is the scene from which the rhetoric sprang.

Moreover, Senator Tatad made use of the rhetorical strategy of tautology, exemplifying "what has been" in the ACT-AGENCY ratio for his statement: "It is an undisguised attempt to make the present quarrel with the past. And in the words of Winston Churchill, the future always loses whenever we make the present quarrel with the past."

On the issue of minority-over-majority rule with regard to Christian and Muslim relationship, Senator Ople discussed this issue by his statement:

The truth is that we are all committed, without exception, to the idea of Muslim autonomy, but I draw the line where this autonomy is perverted into a Muslim hegemony over the Christian majority. This is substituting minority rule for majority rule, which is the very essence of democracy. Of course, some say that we should not make a fine point of the Constitution when the object is to achieve peace and legalism must not be an impediment to that. But precisely, it is on occasions of great moment when a society gropes for the right path to the future that we need the Constitution as a lodestar.

In line with this statement, another issue of debate on the SPCPD was its constitutionality.

According to Ferrer (1996), the strongly worded City Council resolution of Iligan City described in the Points of Consensus were dubious, questionable, unfair, and unjust. It claimed that the SPCPD was not an administrative machinery but an “interim government... leading to the establishment of a provisional government.” Misuari was given absolute power to recommend. The Christians and the non-MNLF Muslims would always be outvoted in the Council. In addition, the agreement institutionalized the MNLF, a group backed by a foreign power which would then impose its will on inhabitants. The Resolution also criticized the Aquino government for resurrecting the Tripoli Agreement in 1986-1987 (UP-CIDS, 1997).

On the other hand, to respond to the allegation that SPCPD would be a way for MNLF/Muslim Domination, the pro-SPCPD rhetoric focused on the advantages that the government achieved through the MNLF cooperation.

For Senator Alvarez, the use of the tool of analogy best showed his perception on the matter:

We have successfully reached out to our brothers in the Cordilleras, in the RAM, and in the NPA-NDF. I see no cogent reason now why we cannot do so and be able to reach to our brothers in Muslim Mindanao, with the MNLF. Must we continue to treat them as potential antagonists with our distrust for their capacity for peace?

The statement clearly shows a compare and contrast tool, hence, ACT-AGENCY ratio: if the government has succeeded in having a settlement with the other groups like the NPA and the RAM, it will not pose difficulty in finding ways to settle the conflict with the Muslim Mindanao region, in particular with the MNLF.

On the other hand, he was also defending the issue of the MNLF or Muslim domination in the region in his statement:

We cannot help but recognize the reality that our Muslim brothers have earned the rightful place in the history of

our nation—to their proud past and steadfast opposition to domination, whether homebred or foreign. That, they, too, like us, the dominant majority, have shaped their legitimate hopes and dreams for a life in equality, justice and freedom. These commonalities are the cornerstones for unity and reconciliation—the cornerstones and building blocks for peace.

The statement clearly illustrates the idea that Muslim domination cannot be avoided in the Mindanao region because our historical past has given them the privilege to be the dominant figure within the area. And it is not only the Christians that dream and hope for peace, but the Muslims as well. This ACT-PURPOSE ratio of the rhetoric clearly manifests the motive behind the utterance—to give justice to the Muslim domination in the area. Hence, it responds to the anti-SPCPD issue that SPCPD would foster Muslim/MNLF domination because, in the first place, they had already earned that privilege.

The Leadership question on the SPCPD had also been answered by Senator Alvarez by using the positive character traits of Nur Misuari that made him acceptable as a person to Chair the council:

Let us allow Nur Misuari, who has shown his mettle and leadership in war, to show us his qualities as a leader in peace. The coming back of Misuari into the fold of law is an indication that he has mellowed, that he has seasoned.

Who knows what lies ahead of him as he endeavors to find a rightful place in the sun for himself in our community? I would like to think that men like Misuari—warrior, teacher, peacemaker—has a significant role in this diversity of our community. In the modernization process of our Republic, the peace accord is a vital ingredient towards modernization.

By providing the positive aspects of the character of Misuari, Senator Alvarez has already provided an indirect rebuttal to the SPCPD oppositors' rejection of the proposed leader. The ACT-PURPOSE ratio exemplifies how Misuari can be considered the best

person for the position to head the council, notwithstanding the fact that in the past, Misuari has been the leader of those who fought for Muslim autonomy and had used violent strategies to try to achieve it. This also indirectly responds to the issue of “name-calling” strategy that the anti-SPCPD rhetoric has used by considering Misuari as a *rebel*. The statement already justifies the choice of leader by pointing out the changing role of Misuari from an opponent to an ally of the government in the peace process for the Mindanao region.

Senator Mercado had defended the SPCPD with regard on the issue of the composition of the council, highlighting the cooperative attitudes of both the government and the MNLF panels.

The SPCPD and Consultative Assembly shall have only delegated powers. Whatever powers Chairman Misuari and his companions will have will be viewed as the President’s prerogative to delegate his powers in this area. The SPCPD does not have a separate personality. It is not considered as a political subdivision of the government. It is an administrative entity under the control and supervision of the President.

This clearly illustrated the perceived rationale behind the establishment of the council and the perceived role that the council may have. In the same manner, this negated the idea that because of the majority of MNLF representatives in the council, this would mean that the council’s voice would be Misuari’s voice. It also reiterated the function of the council with regard to the President’s authority over the council. Hence, the council could not be considered as Misuari’s council.

Likewise, a clear exemplification was used to further emphasize the agreement between the government and Chairman Misuari when Senator Mercado stated:

Mr. President, the fact that Chairman Misuari and President Ramos have similar visions of Mindanao is a big, big plus and it will auger well for for the success of this effort. The SPCPD will not have control over local government officials, but will perform

coordinative functions. More than all the legal, constitutional and other arguments, the SPCPD is one of the boldest and most imaginative ways ever thought of to manage the conflict in the South. It is absurd to expect an immediate change of heart amongst the protagonists because the biases, prejudices and stereotypes were nurtured for many, many years. The Mindanao problem is a development problem. The religious factor with its egrerious backlash has been used as a smoke screen to hide the centuries of corruption and neglect of its leaders there.

With the use of a metaphor, Senator Mercado has clearly compared the peace process with a “smokescreen” that will certainly cover the past events of corruption and neglect in the Mindanao region (ACT-AGENCY ratio).

Through the statement, Senator Mercado also tried to send a message regarding the role of local government officials. This ACT-PURPOSE ratio clearly emphasized that the council would not have an overlapping of function with the local government units.

President Ramos, as the leader of the country and one of the proponents of the council, in the different venues and interviews that he had, always defended the establishment of the Council. In an interview with *Manila Bulletin*, he said: “Peace means seeking consensus within the constitutional framework...finding unity in diversity...and exorcising the ghosts of history and starting anew” (July 2, 1996). The government and the supporters of SPCPD had used different strategies to justify their stand on the establishment of SPCPD. The government panel, to defend their position on the issue and to respond to the various rallies, position papers and newspaper statements that the oppositors raised, sponsored different public forums.

The scene-purpose ratio of the rhetoric showed that with the prevailing situation, the supporters of SPCPD undertook measures to rebut to the accusations by the oppositors.

In the different forums that the SPCPD supporters sponsored, it showed the defensive side of the government. In Pagadian City,

for instance, the President opted to respond to the issues raised by the different sectors against the Council. On the issue of function of the council, he clearly stated that: “Local government leaders should not fear the council because it will not, in any manner diminish the powers and functions exercised by them under the local government code” (*Manila Bulletin*, July 3, 1996).

This statement clearly responds to the issue raised by the different local government units that they would have an overlap of functions with the council. In the Zamboanga forum, the President asked the Zamboangeños to listen to their side before they voiced out their own objections. He reassured the people that in whatever issues they would raise, the government would listen to them. “We will listen to you. I hope you will listen to us. This is not a one-way thing.” (*Manila Bulletin*, July 3, 1996).

In this statement, the President asked for cooperation from the oppositors of the council. By appealing to their rationality, this shows the ACT-AGENCY ratio.

Considering all the issues taken up so far, it was clear, that the rhetoric of the oppositors of SPCPD centered on the issues of (1) peace; (2) the composition of the council and the qualifications of the “proposed leader” and the issue of the legality with regard to the Constitutional aspect; and, (3) the fear for Muslim/MNLF domination within the areas covered by SPCPD.

On the other hand, the oppositors have uttered their statements to (1) establish SPCPD as a tool for peace in the Mindanao region; (2) bring out into the open the Constitutional and legal basis of the proposed council; and, (3) explain the rationale behind the leadership of the council, thereby shedding light on the issue of Muslim/MNLF domination.

Conclusion

Burke’s “dramatism” with its five elements—act, agency, agent, scene and purpose—was found to be a useful approach to the study of the SPCPD rhetoric—in analyzing the whys and the hows

of the prevailing situation. The “dramatistic pentad” was relevant in the analysis of the SPCPD scenario. The dramatism primarily investigates motives of an act, and the political arena which is never void of an act (i.e., rhetoric), has plenty to unravel.

In the course of analyzing the motives of the rhetoric of SPCPD, various “motives” were brought to light; these were based solely on the motives of the different acts. The prevailing motive was that each of the opposing panel would like to respond to each other’s issues raised in the conduct of the deliberation of the SPCPD establishment. Moreover, focusing on the “motives” of the rhetoric of SPCPD, it was found that most of them arose from the prevailing social, cultural, economic, and political conditions of the Southern Mindanao region. The inner motives of the agents were difficult to evaluate in the absence of a thorough understanding of the agents, as in a total psychological analysis of each agent. This was a limitation of the study since Burke’s dramatism had called for an understanding of the “substance of man.”

Nonetheless, in the prevailing conditions before and after the establishment of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), motives that were responsible for the rhetoric that took place were viable for analysis. Using Burke’s pentad, it was shown how societal conditions and requirements created a rhetorical situation where act was formed as a response to the prevailing scene. The rhetoric used in the SPCPD issue came out of the demands to clarify certain issues. Moreover, the rhetoric was in response to the widening gap and division between the oppositors and supporters of the SPCPD.

The chaotic scenario in Southern Philippines was the focus of the rhetoric. From a historical perspective, the proposal for the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development was perceived to be the answer to the conflicts in the region. And this situation was the major focus of the rhetoric that took place between the supporters and oppositors of the council. The presentation of the proposal had stirred a lot of mixed reactions from the different sectors of the society. In particular, people who were affected by the proposal were the ones who reacted with mixed emotions. Hence,

the encompassing conditions greatly affected the rhetoric. The scene, therefore, was considered to have provided motives for “rhetoric of issues,” since most of the acts encompassed the act-scene ratio. Similarly, another motive was the “rhetoric of personalities and ad hominem” with regards to the acts committed by the other agents that were found to be crucial in shaping public opinion on the issue. This, however, shifted to an action-oriented, goal-oriented rhetoric with the anti-SPCPD movement creating a “rhetoric of confrontation” to further enhance their objection to the finalization of the Executive Order 371, thereby creating the SPCPD, ZOPAD, and the Consultative Assembly.

It was found out that the rhetoric focused mainly on the issues that were concentrated on the SPCPD itself. The major issues of deliberation prevalent in the different acts of the agents were the following: (1) SPCPD as a tool of peace and an answer to the conflict in the Muslim Mindanao region; (2) the composition of the proposed council and the perceived leadership and the rationality, legality and Constitutional basis for the establishment of the council; and, (3) the Muslim or MNLF domination

However, it cannot be avoided that in relation to these major issues, some other issues were brought up.

With regard to the other issues having had lesser weight than the major issues, this could be seen in the amount of time spent in discussing the issues and in how these were discussed. Prevalent in the discussion of the major issues, the following were discussed in relation to the major issues mentioned above, in particular: (1) the issue of disarmament of the MNLF; (2) the issue of land ownership in the region; (3) the minority-majority issue among Christians and Muslims; and, (4) the Christian-Muslim division that might be resurrected by the creation of the Council

Although a lot of agents could be considered for the study, the role of the Senate as a deliberative body of the country has been the focus of this particular study. Most of the statements have already incorporated the view and perceptions and even issues raised by the other agents that may have affected the rhetoric. Similarly, coagents like the religious sector have been taken into consideration

in the study of the agents. Moreover, statements from prominent personalities uttered and published in different media were also considered to have affected the rhetoric itself.

The most obvious motive of the agents in the rhetoric was to solve the widening gap between the protesters and the supporters of the council through different strategies. On the part of SPCPD supporters, their most obvious motive was to create awareness and to rectify certain misinformation. On the other hand, the anti-SPCPD rhetoric focused on the rejection for the inclusion of many areas in Mindanao to the proposed area of coverage of the council.

Among the strategies found to be very effective in the conduct of the rhetoric was the use of the different media like newspapers, magazines, and position papers. Open letters, PR brochures, and even rallies and demonstrations emphasized the position of the agents.

The immediate aftermath of the SPCPD creation showed that the opposition was not contented with the revision of the draft of the Executive Order in its final version that created the ZOPAD, SPCPD, and the Consultative Assembly. Moreover, the “rhetoric of confrontation” in its nonverbal stage that followed after the establishment of the council in 1996, clearly showed the grave discontentment and objection of the oppositors of SPCPD. The rhetoric that followed drifted from being issue-oriented to being goal-oriented.

It was also found that traditional rhetoric places much less emphasis on interpersonal relationships. And in the case of the SPCPD issue, the interpersonal relationship of “power” was evident and needed to be taken into consideration. Hence, although the Burkean approach was useful in analyzing the rhetoric of SPCPD, it could not be avoided that power relations needed to be analyzed through discourse analysis.

This study was an attempt to modify the traditional rhetorical approach such as Burke’s. Though the Burkean approach was considered significant in analyzing the rhetorical situation, it was found necessary to come up with a deeper analysis of a rhetorical situation in a political issue such as SPCPD. Therefore,

complementing the approach with discourse analysis that focused on the prevalent interpersonal relationship, a more holistic approach could be applied to the rhetorical situation.

Burke's dramatic pentad provided the analysis on the five elements of the rhetoric while discourse analysis and power dynamics focussed on the interpersonal relationship prevalent in the rhetorical situation.

A more dynamic approach to a rhetorical situation could therefore be achieved by using a traditional rhetorical analysis like the Burkean approach combined with the use of discourse analysis and power dynamics.

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