

“Anak ng bayang dukha”: A computational and comparative keyword analysis of sakdalista and communist discourses from 1925 to 1941

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Abstrak

In Philippine historiography, there has been a tendency to either classify political movements using rigid, positivist, and “elite” categories or to challenge such definitions by arguing for a certain almost universally “indigenous” Filipino character. In contrast, the current study proposes to use computer tools and corpus linguistic techniques to balance the recognition of both continuity and dynamism, as well as sameness and difference, between movements. More specifically, the study uses a Keyword in Context (KWIC) analysis to compare the writings of the Sakdalistas and the Communists, two of the largest mass movements in early 20th-century Philippines. The keyword analysis reveals, on the one hand, distinct discursive features in the writings of the two groups, with the Sakdalistas deploying a language that is more concerned with morality and the Communists deploying a more economic tongue. On the other hand, a closer examination of these keywords in context also reveals a shared critique of imperialism and its connections to capital, as well as the common presence of two discourses in tension: a discourse of inclusive nationalism and a discourse of division among the people. In other words, the comparative keyword analysis shows that the Sakdalistas and the Communists had distinct political characteristics while also oscillating between similar languages and arguments on the nature of colonial Philippines. The identification of these patterns may contribute to a more nuanced and empirical understanding of the complexity of social movements in both the Philippines and Southeast Asia in general.