

The Hegemony of the Culture of Traditional Politics in Philippine Elections

**Paper # 1
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Panel Title:

MODERNIZING DEMOCRACY: The Philippine Experience

CenPEG Panel

9th ICOPHIL

Michigan State University

October 28, 2012



CenPEG Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG)

Philippine elections

greatly influenced
by a deeply entrenched
**CULTURE OF
TRADITIONAL
POLITICS** or *TRAPO*
politics as a way of
political life in the country



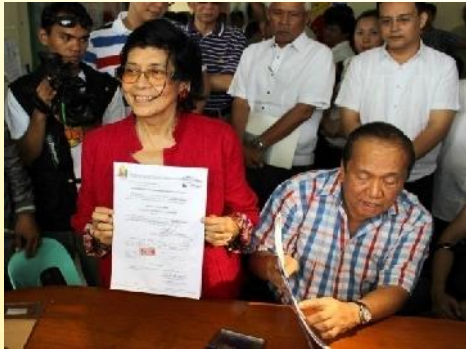
Personality-oriented campaign & popularity contest



She almost made it in the filing of the COC for Mayor!

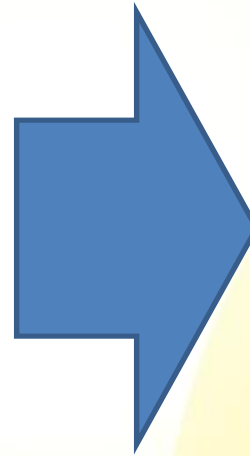


Dominated by political dynasties



Comprising the Political Elite

- Big landed class
- Big business



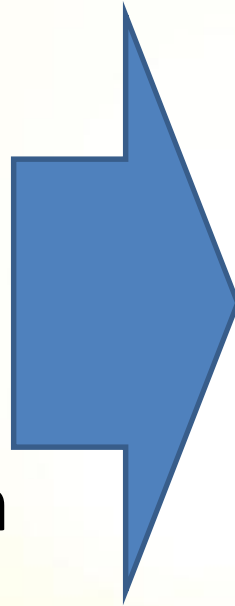
Less than
2 % of the
Philippine
population

Philippine Congress:
powerful turf of political dynasties



Voters as subordinate stakeholders

- More than 70% of the 50 M registered voters who are expected to vote come from the poor sectors



Marginalized poor

Peasants, fisher folk, urban poor, workers, semi-workers, other minority groups – indigenous people, Muslim groups

Other sectors of the middle class and underrepresented sectors



Trapo politics constantly marred by issues of

- > private armies, civilian security forces and/or personal body guards
- > coercion and violence
- > overspending
- > vote buying
- > horse-trading
- > fraud



The power
of the **3 Gs**
(gold, guns
and goons)



- Weak political party system where POLITICAL PARTIES exist for convenience (“balimbingan”)



1987 Constitution:

Elections every **3** years

Every **6** years – **SYNCHRONIZED**

National and Local Elections



Presidency



Municipalities and Cities



Total: **16,500** positions **120,000** candidates



Election modernization

- **RA 9369** or use of Automated Election System to modernize elections

to ***speed up results and prevent fraud***

"SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy

*It is policy of the State to ensure free, orderly, honest, peaceful, credible and informed elections, plebiscites, referenda, recall and other similar electoral exercises by improving on the election process and adopting systems, which shall involved (sic) the use of an automated election system that will ensure the secrecy and sanctity of the ballot and all election, consolidation and transmission documents on (sic) order that the process shall be **transparent and credible** and that **the results shall be fast, accurate and reflective of the genuine will of the people.**"*



Automated Elections

* **August 2008**

PILOT TEST in
ARMM in Mindanao

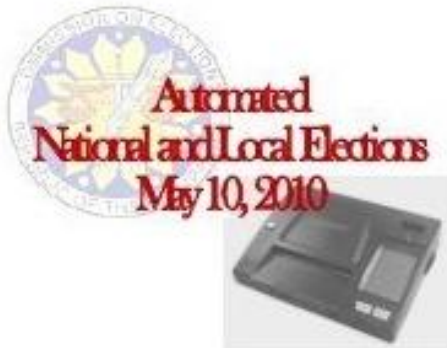
• **May 2010**

First NATIONWIDE
Automated Polls

SWS Post ARMM -Election Survey December 2008 involving 90 respondents (20 from each province): *“Majority of the people liked automated elections – new form and fast results ..”* (March 2009)



Automated Elections



- Traditional forms of cheating persisted
- Technical glitches occurred nationwide
- Comelec dependent on foreign technology provider

A manifestation of **ELECTORAL DYSFUNCTION: INCONGRUENCE*** between political culture and automated elections

* Congruence: compatibility of information and matter; if there is contradiction, there must be resolution to be congruent or similar -- Osgood/Tannenbaum, 1955



ARMM and Barangay

- Elections for Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
- Barangay Elections for 42,000 villages



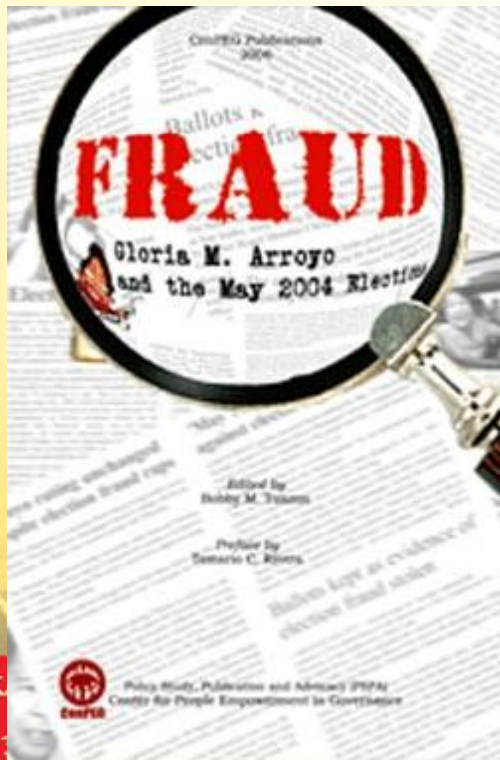
Basilan, Tawi-Tawi Shariff
Kabunsuan, Sulu, Maguindanao
and Lanao del Sur

51M registered voters
(2010 elections)



Pilot Testing of Election Technology

Why ARMM for pilot testing when it has been the subject of investigations for 2004 and 2007 electoral fraud?



Hello, hello Garci...



ARMM



One of the country's poorest regions where a culture of **RIDO*** and **IMPUNITY** is the **NORM** & fraud, violence and dynastic politics are well entrenched

POLITICAL CULTURE:
political dynasties, clan politics, warlordism, violence and cheating during elections
> traditionally blatant & widespread

**Rido" in Maranao is to seek "righteous" revenge*



ARMM Election stakeholders

- While ICT use is in vogue, there is LOW literacy level in formal education and understanding of political/ electoral issues

Atty Marohomsar Salik, Governor of IBP: “ Majority of Moro people believe that their obligation especially during elections, is to show unity under Islam and remaining loyal to their clans”

Strong patronage system:

*Culture of beholden-ness to clan leaders
(utang na loob, pakikisama, ka-pamilya)*



ARMM ELECTIONS 2008: INCONGRUENCE

Use of Election
Technology highly
INCONGRUENT
with prevalent
political culture



Clan voting



Traditional Cheating

“The use of automated machines seemed to project the illusion that elections would be “clean and honest. It was not in the ARMM..”

Namfrel, LENTE and
CenPEG studies, 2008



- **Tita de Villa, PPCRV chair on the 2008 automated elections:** *“You can’t get rid of vote buying, still many incidents of cheating, flying voters, disenfranchisement during the ARMM elections ... the integrity of the elections actually depends on the Board of Election Inspectors, the voters, and the politicians... **With the automated machines, they can’t easily change the results on the election returns, CAN THEY? I would say that the space for cheating has narrowed..”** August 10, 2008 interview with the PDI*



Observation Report, ARMM 2008 *

Traditional Cheating

- Rampant vote buying: P50-P150 down payment; P150 upon voting
 - Multiple Voting or “flying voters”
- Culture of Maratabat: word of honor among relatives during election day
 - Under age voters
 - “Cooperative” ballot/box snatching
- “Herding” of voters before election

*CenPEG, 2008



Observation Report, 2008

“Fraud” due to Technical Glitches

- In many precincts in Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, voting and counting were delayed for more than 10 hours because of technical troubles
 1. At provincial gym of Marawi city, as of 11am, August 12, at least 12 of 75 machines were defective, *i.e.* inoperative, slow or erratic
 2. In 14 of 120 cubicles, machines could not canvass
 3. Poll watchers, media monitors and board of canvassers were idle and had to wait for hours and, many instances, even 3-5 days for results transmission
 4. After 5 days, provincial canvassing remained incomplete

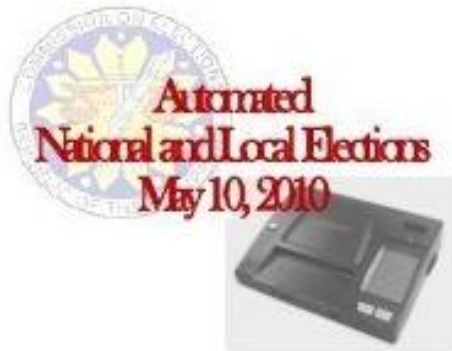


ARMM: after 2008 and before the May 2010 automated elections

November 23, 2009

MAGUINDANAO Massacre
**58 people -including 35 journalists-
KILLED**





- **Traditional forms of cheating persisted**
- Technical glitches occurred nationwide
- **Key ICT standards not complied**
- Comelec dependent on foreign technology provider

ELECTORAL DYSFUNCTION?
INCONGRUENCE between political culture and automated elections



ICT-based study **30-30**

30 vulnerabilities and 30 safeguards

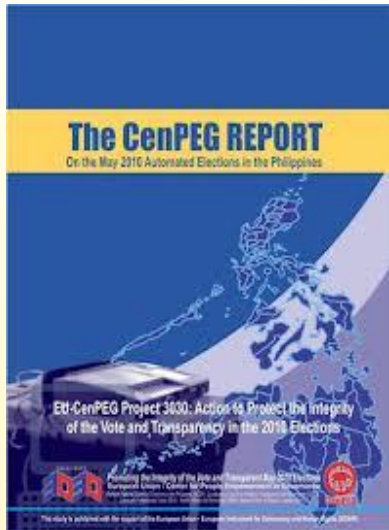
Partnership with UP College of Law- 2009 & supported by
the European Union Instrument for Human Rights -2010



Largely dismissed as **DOOMSAYING**



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637-page REPORT on the May 2010 Automated Elections in the Philippines



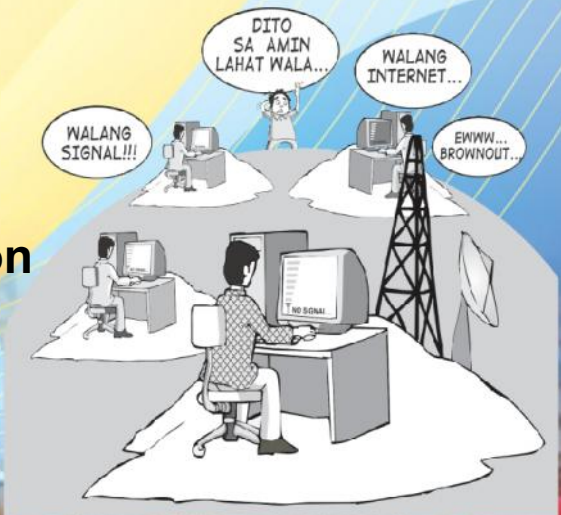
PCOS voting machine carried onboard the carabao



Non-compliance on ICT standard Digital signature



Non-compliance on ICT standard certification



Erratic Transmission Infrastructure



- Modernized elections incongruent with state of communication infrastructure development in the country



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Three major results of the modernization project for Philippine elections, after the May 2010 automated elections

1. **System-generated voter disenfranchisement**
2. **Continuing non-compliance of technological standards**
3. **TRAPO politics more pronounced and more ALIVE than ever**



After two automated elections,
TRAPO politics are now more vibrant

No level playing field despite modern technology

Political culture remains predominantly elitist and dynastic

**Resurgence of the old and
emergence of new dynasties**



Set in the framework of a weak state

- Presidency as a powerful institution of dynastic and patronage politics; and representative of the political/economic elite
- Weakens accountability and strengthens culture of impunity
- Elections as vehicle for clan competition
- Determined largely by TRAPO politics
- Any election development project therefore benefits the power holders – the political elite



Until this weak state is changed
or undergoes transformation –
to include a shift of power to
the real actors in democracy,
the people- incongruence and
the hegemony of TRAPO culture
-will persist



Election Technology must be a Tool to Serve

- Technology as a TOOL to provide **more information** to voters and other election stakeholders
- Technology to promote more inclusive **participation** of the people and ICT to help Improve elections
- Technology for greater **transparency**
- Technology to **count accurately**

