



The Evolutionary Response for Bangsamoro Self-Rule

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ABSTRACT

This study reveals the reason of Bangsamoro revolution which started as a response to the discriminatory treatment and historical injustice committed against the Moro people. There were many movements appeared in the past. Two important revolutionary groups, namely the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, have negotiated with Philippine government for the attainment of Peace and development. The present paper discusses the details of how Bangsamoro revolution brought into existence and how they became instrument in the realization of peaceful Mindanao. This revolution has paved the way to political settlement. The achievement of autonomy arrangement in Mindanao is seen as a process of Bangsamoro political evolution. Part of the political evolution is the realization of Moral Governance that sheds light to the government led by Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The Bangsamoro Transition Authority which would last for three years is headed by Moro Islamic Liberation Front founded on Moral Governance championed by AhodEbrahim, the Chief Minister. This government is democratic which ensures people's participation. People have authority to look for and elect their leaders. There is people's place in the Bangsamoro Government. Bringing into reality this notion of economy of autonomy which means maximization of the autonomous power is a great challenge of this new government.

Keywords: *Bangsamoro Revolution, Bangsamoro Evolution, Moral Governance, Bangsamoro Government, Economy of Autonomy.*

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INTRODUCTION

The legacy of colonialism in Mindanao is indisputably piercing, painful and excruciating. Colonial masters drew the global borderlines. The former Prime Minister of Great Britain, Churchill, once proudly said that he had drawn the map of Jordan in an afternoon. They drew the present boundaries of all the nations to divide, control and distribute the natural resources among themselves. Global natural resources were deemed spoils of war. In African continent, the result of this remaking of nations was endless conflict between and among tribes and clans – even in the present. When the colonial warlords created the nations in Africa, they blended and melded the people. The former neighbors with close connection culturally were separated while those who were distant from one another suddenly became neighbors. This has a gargantuan impact on nation-building. Then they were given independence. The notion is that it was a raw and fake independence because the indirect motive is that they had to be necessarily in need of masters who would groom them forever.

The doctrine of “Manifest Destiny” which expedited the banning of Europe to trespass the western hemisphere brought out the idea that United States (US) expansion in American continents was inevitable. The rising US was at the helm of Americas, Guam and the Philippines.

Philippines during the arrival of US had two distinct people; Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Aguinaldo discerned very well that Muslims in the South were distinct and separate people. Among other reasons, US established the Moro Province because she treated Moro as different from the people of North. Unfortunately, as a colonial pattern, US had to blend and mix the two discrete groups of people for obvious reason mentioned above. In the language of President Duterte, this is called historical injustice committed against the Bangsamoro. It is in the crossroad of world history that Bangsamoro nationalism is emerging. In the age of the reemergence of Great Powers rivalry, the Bangsamoro is reasserting its right to self-determination.

This study sheds light to the initial response of the Moro people. The first spark of revolution was staged in the last quarter of 1960s. This revolution shook the entire Island of Mindanao. War and conflict occurred in every nook and cranny. But later, peaceful solution was found and a political settlement dominated the next chapter of Moro history. This then is the subsequent evolution in Moro political history.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study utilized the qualitative technique in investigating the opinions and perspectives of the respondents. The research employed the methodology of Key Informant Interview (KII). There were 15 key informants. The qualitative approach sought to gather and collect information to provide narratives and descriptions on the opinions and views of the Bangsamoro Professionals.

Locale of the study

The locale of the study is the sixty-three (63) barangays of the Special Geographic Area (SGA) which opted to join the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) during the Bangsamoro Plebiscite in 2019.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study are Bangsamoro Professionals in the 63 barangays of the SGA. The research had 15 Key Informant Interviews. The KII participants were composed of Bangsamoro Professionals living in SGA.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure was undertaken into phases. The first phase was the preparation of all the necessary documents for the conduct of the study. The second phase was the actual interview. The researcher asked the Bangsamoro professionals to share their opinions on Bangsamoro revolution and the ensuing political evolution as response. After the interview, the researcher took note all their responses for thematic analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Bangsamoro Revolution

Revolution was staged to correct all wrongs that if possible an overnight endeavor and to change the unacceptable status quo. History shows that the basis of revolutions around the world and between various nations was built on justice. Many times this word stirred the souls of those whose lives were filled with rulers' negligence and injustice whose rights and honors were encroached upon. The oppressed revolted against evils and attempted to achieve the precious freedom, liberty and justice by eradicating the unjust authority.

Bangsamoro have been fighting a protracted and time-consuming war just to enjoy and savor sweet-smelling justice – they believe that they have suffered injustice since the onset of colonialism. The Bangsamoro revolution was launched to reclaim and restore pre-colonial independence. The revolution was further precipitated by the Jabidah massacre. The agonizing situation brought about by the colonization Act of 1935 was really heart-breaking. What government administrators conceived as the solution to the HUK problem – peasants' hunger for land in central Luzon – started the war of attrition that engulfed Mindanao [1]. The government's solution to the problem in Luzon became a bigger problem in Mindanao. That problem lasted for decades.

As a result, several revolutionary movements and organizations brought to the fore in response to the unjust national policies. Among many revolts were staged by Black Shirt and barracuda fighters. These two famous groups according to respondents emerged as a response to Ilagas' depredations. Most importantly, Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) was organized seeking for independent Islamic republic in Mindanao. Gloria [1] opined that the creation of the MIM, no matter how uneventful, was not entirely devoid of significance. It was an idea that germinated well, fed by the inability of the government to contain the conflict with justice and impartiality.

As time went on, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) stepped in to pursue liberation approach and that it became the vanguard of Moro resistance against the neo-colonial Philippine republic. The mission of restoring independence was proved to be difficult, tough and challenging. The MNLF had once dreamed of an independent Bangsamoro country on a par with the rest of the Muslim world. That objective of pulling out from the handhold of Philippine government appeared hard-hitting and costly. But MNLF held the line. Furthermore, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) separated from the MNLF because the former felt dissatisfaction over the results of the peace negotiation headed by the latter. The MILF wanted to continue liberation from the clutches of Philippine government. It consolidated the masses right away. It launched many military attacks both defensive and offensive to show its military power.

When the MILF embraced peace negotiation, another group arose and willfully pursued a separate Moro government. This group is called Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) though it lost the revolutionary direction according to one respondent.

The Bangsamoro Evolution

Evolution means the phenomenon in consequent Bangsamoropolitical environment. Part of evolution is subsequent attainment of political maturity of Bangsamoro. Based on the respondents, The Bangsamoro evolutionary response is the adoption of political arrangement and settlement such as the realization of autonomous governments: Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and then the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). In consonance with this acceptance of autonomy arrangement is the implementation of democracy, rule of law and justice.

Table 1 shows the evolutionary responses of Bangsamoro people in attaining their self-determination.

Responses of Bangsamoro people to attain their self-rule	Armed (Violent) Revolution Autonomous Government from ARMM TO BARMM; SELF-RULE AS ENSHRINED IN The Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL); Democracy in Parliamentary system; Moral Governance
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In connecting the historical process in the Bangsamoro, one respondent quoted Zafar Bangash who pronounced that there are two opposing worldviews of history. The first one is that “history makes ideas” and the second one is that “ideas make history”. Muslims believe that ideas make history. In contrary, the western world believes that history creates ideas. Muslims trace their history to the advent of Islam and the prophet’s *Sunnah*—everything started from these two. The ideas of Islam and the prophet have changed the course of history. In other words, the history created by the ideas of Islam is significantly amazing. True, Muslims consider the history of Al-Andalus, for instance, which is especially shaped by Islamic ideas as empire belonged to the Muslim Ummah.

Fidel V. Ramos, former president, with his neo-liberal approach to Mindanao peace process, knew clearly during his presidency, after problem was diagnosed, that the root-cause of it is socio-economic. In Washington consensus, it views that all the problems surround separatism and secessionism around the globe are stemming from, thus the driver, economic reasons. The Philippine government is unbending and it has cast-iron will to stay on its constitutionalism without compromise. The government views the situation at the deeps that it is poverty of the people which drives them to rebellion. That means, if only the government had supported the education of the Moro since day one—decent jobs would not have been elusive—and they would not have been at odds with the government and then plunged in deep water.

On Moro leaders’ lenses, the problem in the Bangsamoro region is not economic, it’s political. However, politics and economics are two inseparable things—one is peel and the other is seed. In short, political system is born out of the bosom of economic system. The problem in the world started from the notion of production and consumption. It is all started from distribution of production—hence, the bringing into existence of justice and injustice. Capitalism and Socialism emerged because of the contesting views of how wealth is produced and distributed. Capitalism sees that wealth should not be state-owned, thus there is a private ownership. In fact, healthy competition would boost economy. On the other hand, Socialism is its reverse. Wealth should be state-owned—and private ownership is taboo.

In addition, the Moro people expressed their desire objecting the incorporation of Mindanao in the larger Philippine body-politic to the extent that they preferred to become 51st state of the United States of America. Despite the protests of Moro datus contained in historic Moro documents like the Sulu Petition, Zamboanga Petition, Dansalan Declaration, the Maguindanao Memorandum that basically begged the non-inclusion of Mindanao and Sulu in the Philippine Republic before 1946, however, United States deliberately ignored them.

While after decades as part of evolutionary awareness, the MNLF accepted peace offer for a political settlement. The Government of the Philippines and MNLF signed a peace agreement to end war in this part of the world. Bangsamoro political autonomy was the end result of the peace agreement. Unfortunately, there were many problems and conflicting claims arose especially on the implementation of the agreement. Some of the evident ones are the following, to wit: (1) The Special Zone of Peace and Development in Southern Philippines (SZOPAD); (2) The Southern Philippines Council

for Peace and Development (SPCPD); (3) The Consultative Assembly; (4) Integration on MNLF Combatants and (5) Mainstreaming of the MNLF Members and Communities.

Based on the research of Institute for Autonomy and Governance [2], there are still many areas and subjects where the two camps are left at odds in the interpretation. One apparent point of contention is the case of the SZOPAD, SPCPD and Consultative Assembly. On MNLF assumptions, in the implementation the parties must be guided by the 1976 Tripoli Agreement which provides for the establishment of a provisional government prior to the inauguration of the Autonomous region. In contrary, the GPH believes that the 1976 Tripoli Agreement is considered completely implemented upon the signing of the Final Peace Agreement (FPA). On Integration of MNLF combatants, the FPA makes reference to a Special Regional Security Force (SRSF) which is going to be a separate unit from Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and calls for the appointment of Deputy Commander of Southern Command. This is a distinct unit that would be organized out of the MNLF forces.

On MILF revolutionaries, the Ramos administration invited them for another set of negotiation to address their grievances and demands. Starting from 1997 numerous negotiations were conducted until president Duterte finally bestowed the empowered regional autonomy called the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) through the enactment of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL).

There is a perceived evolution in Moro political awareness. Revolutionary movements in the past had heartily accepted peace and development offer of the government in exchange of a peaceful Mindanao.

Moral Governance

On February 26, 2019, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) of the newly created Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) assumed the ARMM offices. The Chief Minister Ahod “Al Haj Murad” B. Ebrahim, introduced Moral Governance as his framework in governance. Basing on this governance, immoral practices like corruption, manipulation, nepotism and other perennial problems are removed and should be stopped. This policy statement of the Chief Minister aroused the curiosity of pantheon of common people and even scholars. Two offices had ventured in trying to define and frame Moral Governance.

Moral Governance is surrounded by number of issues. The Association of Bangsamoro Doctors in the Philippines, Inc. (ABDP) and the Development Academy of the Bangsamoro (DAB) have different views on Moral Governance. The outputs of the two offices were submitted to the Chief Minister for possible consolidation. The Hay-atul Ulama in the Philippines had also drafted its version. The difficulty comes with the copious definitions that emanate from worldviews of those who define it. Professors and scholars from different backgrounds have no consensus of opinion about it.

Before discussing the meaning of Moral Governance, there is a question arises on what are moral action and natural action. Mutahhari[3] disclosed that most of the actions of people are natural actions not moral. For instance, a person would go home after office hours; he feels hungry so he eats; he feels thirsty and he takes drink; he feels tired and he lies down and goes asleep. These actions are common actions and thus natural actions. These actions are not worthy of appreciation to such that we say, Bravo to so-and-so for eating food after getting hungry!

Moreover, Moral Action demands appreciation and praises. For instance, Albert Malet narrated that Peter the Great while standing near a river, a boat with some people riding on it was passing by. He sensed that the boat was sinking and there was nobody else there to rescue, he immediately threw himself into the river to rescue them. As a result of this action, he was afflicted by pneumonia and died. As a footnote, Peter was not a common individual; he was the ruler of the Russian Empire. For a leader – let alone a ruler of an empire to do it is worthy of praise. Thus, what he did is a “Moral Action”. In the parlance of governance, we can also ask the same question such as ‘what are natural governance and moral governance?’ Natural governance is a common performance of functions and responsibilities and then be paid from the taxes of the people. Working eight hours a day and following the code of conduct provided by civil service commission are natural actions. Government workers should follow the rules and therefore acting in accordance with the laws and policies is natural action. President who governs according to the constitution is exercising natural governance. On the other hand, moral governance is situated in an exemplary station. It is worthy of praise and appreciation. It is a state of notion of taking responsibility in going outside the confine of natural governance for the better.

Moral Governance is a performance of duty and responsibility for the collective interests of nation or community. Leaders are not executing their obligation because they are being paid but because they want to make a positive difference. In moral governance, the leaders do not have interests in governance while the receivers enjoy the government service. The Chief Minister stressed that "moral governance" should not just be BARMM's tagline. Government workers and residents should regard it as the guiding discipline and principles to live by, he said. “Many of us speak of moral governance but the real challenge is how to live it. Our success lies in how we can change the system

from the previous one to a better system. If we cannot deliver, then we are nothing,” he added. He further stated that Moral Governance emanates from Islam.

One respondent described Moral governance as an exemplary characteristic of administering society like that of King Negus, a Christian King of Abyssinia, who adopted the Muslims who had migrated to his kingdom for safety in the early mission of the prophet. During this time, Negus had no interest in his action. In fact, his country’s diplomatic relations with the Makkkan city-state was deteriorated. He went out from the four corners of his religion for the wide territory of humanity. Umar bin Khattab, the second caliph, when he was requested by bishop of Jerusalem to personally surrender to him after the conquest, he responded. He went to Jerusalem with his slave. They had one horse. They could ride one at a time. They agreed that one would ride while other is holding the horsewhip until they reached Jerusalem. Imagine a caliph doing this action. Ali Bin AbiTalib, the fourth Caliph, while he was speaking before the people, he offered his sword. He sold his sword to the public because he had no enough clothes. In other instance, every time people visit him, he asks his transactional purpose, if it is personal or related to government. If the purpose is personal, he had to put out the candle that is bought from the people’s taxes.

ABDP differentiated Moral Governance and Good Governance. Among their differences is that in Good Governance, one is working at the pleasure of the people while in Moral Governance one is working at the pleasure of the people and Allah (swt) (God). Framers from the ABDP summarized that in Moral Governance one is accountable to Allah (God), people and government in the delivery of service through excellence in deed and character to achieve reward in the hereafter while in Good Governance, one is accountable to the government and the people in the delivery of service to attain earthly fortune, pleasure and personal valor.

The Crafters of this Moral Governance Framework came up with a definition as follows: Moral Governance is a management system founded on faith that adheres to a harmonized religious precepts and morally accepted statutes, laws and treaties responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people in running the affairs of the government.

Bangsamoro Government as an Expression of Democracy

Surfeit of great political theories and theorists have defined government. Curtis [4] quoted James Mill in his “an essay of government” who opined that “government is the union of a certain number of men to protect one another” (p.121). This certain number of men – say, people – put their persons and powers in common under the supreme direction of the general will and in their corporate capacity, they receive each other or member as an indivisible part of the whole. This “indivisible part of the whole” formerly took the name “city” and now takes that of “Republic”.

In the present and modern state, there are two seeming contradictory notions – say, two persisting divide. One group puts that modern state is only the organization that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachment as well of the workers as of individual capitalist. Moreover, it is a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists; hence its necessity ceases and withers away [4]. According to this notion, the government is invented by minority to rule and lead the disorganized majority. Another group is more practical by supporting thus believe in representative system. This is why universal suffrage came to the fore. That means majority rules – as plainly demonstrated by the majority votes. Therefore, the bottom-line lies on welfare-seeking mission of government. The government is established to ensure public well-being and happiness.

The case of the Moros in Mindanao, they are for a government which will give them better life and that will guarantee socio-economic development. The Philippine Government is duty-bound to fulfill its mandate for the Bangsamoro. Unluckily, in post-Philippine independence, the Moro people were treated as “others”. It seems cliché to speak that there was long well-organized and powerfully-built sultanate government in not too distant past until the falcon of colonialism started to swoop down this civilization. Wesphalian state or territorial nation-state was introduced in what is now Philippine archipelago including what is now Bangsamoro region. The system of government around the world has been changing from time to time – from nation-state to transnational system and from continental entity to global state – but the Bangsamoro remains backwater. Bangsamoro incorporated in the Philippines. Then, autonomous government was given to Moro, only to find out that after three decades of its existence, it was declared a “failed experiment” i.e. ARMM. The common Bangsamoro people have been significant parts of the government under democratic system. By definition, Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people.

In other words, Man is located at the center of democracy. Similarly, according to the theory of “Social Contract or Social Compact”, Rousseau said, “Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will and in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.” Thus, this public person so formed by union of all persons formerly took the name “city” and now takes that of “Republic”. It is called by its member “state” when passive and “sovereign” when active [4]. In the modern day setting, democracy is

expressed through the votes of the people. The voting power of the people suggests that they have “a say” in the government. Through the votes of the people, they can put leaders and form a government.

There are more than a few contradictory notions on democracy: some intellectuals insist that it is a political philosophy and others advance that it belongs to the domain of management. The reason behind this according to Yazdi[5] in his “Islamic Political Theory “ is that many thinkers come forward and decide to “remove democracy from the realm of political philosophy and insert it in the domain of social sciences.” For instance, if there is a difference of opinion among managers of company or corporation, they must arrive at a consensus. To advance the interest of the company or corporation, they have to consult one another to finally arrive at an agreement. This is called democratic method. In Political Party vernacular, this is called internal democracy. Every member is an important part of the group and he has to be consulted. The point is that originally democracy is a political construct until it penetrates several domains.

Two years ago, the Bangsamoro reached an important milestone in its political life as distinct group of people. BARMM replaced the defunct ARMM. Moro have pinned their hopes to this newly-established political entity. MILF is ready to put its arms beyond use for the sake of the establishment of BARMM. BARMM envisions a democratic government. It has a parliamentary-ministerial democracy. Like many people in the world, Moro have been experiencing occasional elections. Election is an expression of democracy. It implies that power emanates from people. People have the power to install leaders who would administer the government. Democracy ensures and guarantees that people have the ultimate decision in politics. They have also the power to remove leaders who are corrupt and incompetent through impeachment and revolution. Congress, who represents districts, can impeach a sitting president.

Since BARMM is naturally-born autonomous, it does not mean that it is dictated by a trifling number of national leaders. Based on Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), National Government cannot directly dip its hands in the Bangsamoro. Bangsamoro Government is a democratically-created entity as the whole Bangsamoro has ratified its organic law. That means every single Moro becomes part of this significant whole. Political Party System is deeply-entrenched in the organic law. Fifty percent (50%) of the members of the parliament are coming from political parties. In political party system, people will vote for parties. They do not vote for the personalities but for the platforms and programs of the party. Voters will learn to look for ideas and not on persons. The system is party-based; not personality-based. Democracy in political party system transcends party internal democracy and government external democracy.

Besides, the BOL has introduced a democratic political system called ministerial or parliamentary democracy. It envisions a prescription of a parliamentary form of government premised on having well-established and well-functioning political parties. The edge of parliamentary over unitary system is that the former seeks proportional representation. For instance in parliamentary form, political party will have a seat in the parliament even it does not top the polls. The number of votes of the party will determine the number of seats in the parliament. Unlike in unitary in which those candidates who acquired bigger number of votes are the only people who could sit in congress or say assembly. The Bangsamoro region which suffers from the morass of personality-based politics where the game is fame and money will somehow slacken off given that the game turns out to be party-based. In party system, people will have been very busy scrutinizing the platforms of government of each party before heading to the polling stations.

Political Party in Parliamentary System gives an opportunity to small time party to participate the election because the game is more peaceful than any other system. In this way, voters will vote for the party that will best represent their interests and aspirations. Moreover, the system is more democratic in the sense that votes for non-winning party are not wasted. If a certain Political Party garners 100,000 votes region-wide depending on the content of the yet to be coded Bangsamoro Electoral Code, there is an extensive possibility that this party will have one or two seats in the parliament. This is called proportional representation.

Though political party system sheds light to the importance of proportional representation, the next level of this political system is district representation. BARMM will also elect members of the parliament under the same plurality system that employs the *First-Past-The-Post* plurality method of determining victorious candidates. It is akin to a personality-based in which it is going to be a contest of individual candidate. Forty percent (40%) of the members of parliament are coming from Bangsamoro Districts. What's more, like any transition politics in other parts of the world, Bangsamoro is not going to be different. One important thing to consider in democracy is that it is an endless transition. One leader introduces programs and platforms and another will come next with new government platforms. The next leader may do or undo and make or unmake the previous leader's government programs.

The most significant advantage of ministerial form is that weak and deemed insignificant marginalized sectors of the Bangsamoro can have a “say” in the system. They are not just spectators but also participants of this great game. The power contest is not wrapped by personal ambition but driven by party services to the Bangsamoro. Of course, it will not

totally cut the powerful hands of patronage politics but at least the system would be able to give life to genuine democracy in this part of the world and ultimately the system is not the result of partisan whims of certain group but a bipartisan consensus. Under the existing law, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) is an entity that governs the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region within three years. The term “transition” is defined in Concise Oxford English Dictionary as “the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another”. Clearly, BTA is an interim government. It is parliamentary or ministerial in form and nature. The executive and legislative branches of government are fused—it is headed by Chief Minister. Chief Minister is the head of government. It is now very clear that Chief Minister is functioning with dynamism in legislation and law execution.

Parliament is a consultative body composed of elected members from the different sectors and political parties. That means the parliament is a mecca of concerned body of disciplined representatives of the whole Bangsamoro. The members of the parliament would debate and discuss things that concern the elevation of socio-economic and political development of the people. Among the significant advantages of parliamentary over other forms is that it can fast-track legislation. The laws are enacted and signed into law in a single chamber unlike in unitary system which takes time because the executive and legislative offices are separate from each other. In parliamentary, the executive head is leading the majority bloc in the discussions and debates.

Wali is the ceremonial head of the regional government. He is not involved in the day-to-day affairs of the government. The striking role of the wali is that he has the power to dissolve the parliament upon the advice of the chief minister. Failure to dissolve the parliament after the vote of no confidence of the government of the day is a ground for his removal in office. This makes Bangsamoro Government unique. Thus, it portrays a dynamic checks and balances in the government. There is no independent power vested upon the Wali. It is different from the ceremonial head in different parliamentary democracies in the world, for instance, the Queen of England is independent from the UK parliament. The Wali of the Bangsamoro Government is selected by the parliament unlike the foregoing country in which the Queen is not selected but a permanent seat bestowed upon the Royal Family.

In the Bangsamoro Parliament there is a clear line of government’s check and balance. The power really emanates from the Bangsamoro people. The People would vote for the members of the parliament and MPs have to select their Chief Minister. The Chief Minister appoints his/her cabinet members. Cabinet members return the service to the people. In addition, MPs select Wali; Wali in return can dissolve the parliament and call for new parliamentary election. Wali can dissolve the parliament upon the advice of the Chief Minister who heads the present government to be dissolved. Failure to dissolve the parliament is a ground for Wali’s removal. When the parliament is dissolved, the people will again elect the members of the new parliament.

The structure of the parliamentary democracy is a mile different from the unitary regional structure of the abolished ARMM. The above-explained power distribution suggests that government is nearer to the people. If we analyze the power structure, the people are the de facto leaders for themselves. Two of the four vital pillars of good governance according to Clarke namely transparency and people participation are guaranteed. The people will finally see the well-oiled Bangsamoro Government.

Economy of Autonomy as a Challenge

At first, Concise Oxford English Dictionary defined “economy” as “careful management of available resources.” It then recorded in more general sense, including thrift, carefulness, caution and administration. Rees put forth that “economy is a set of activities by which human agents identify, develop or exploit, process, and trade in scarce resources.” It generally embraces everything associated with the production, allocation, exchange, and consumption of valuable goods and services. Second, autonomy refers to self-governance. An example of an autonomous jurisdiction was the former United States governance of the Philippine Islands. The Philippine Autonomy Act of 1916 provided the “framework for the creation of an autonomous government under which the Filipino people had broader domestic autonomy than previously, although it reserved certain privileges to the United States to protect its sovereign rights and interests.”

BARMM is a political autonomy arrangement of the MILF and the Philippine Government. Currently, it is in transitional phase. The defunct ARMM had joined the museum of history after the birthing of the BARMM. That means ARMM is a predecessor of BARMM. They are both autonomous entities. ARMM was abolished because of its systemic and inherent defect that was evidenced by the continuing miserable conditions of the people. It existed for quite a long time – or three decades to be exact – its assurance of reforms, transformations, peace and development in Bangsamoro, however, is seen as a broken promise.

At the turn of history BARMM came as empowered one politically and economically. It is an oasis for the Moro. As people who have been slogging vast desert of struggle coupled with unexplainable sufferings and discomforts brought

about by fighting for and assertion of self-governance would surely expect so much. What needs to be done is to facilitate then bring to the fore the notion of “economy of autonomy”.

What does it mean to say economy of autonomy? Autonomy is not an absolute freedom; there are limited powers vested with autonomous government. Some central government powers are not devolved to the autonomous regional government. It is therefore necessary to the regional government to make use of the given limited powers and budgets to ensure the welfare of its constituents. These limited and meager resources can help uplift the living conditions of the less than ten million Moro people by enforcing equal and fair distributions and justice. Leaders should look at the Bangsamoro as a whole, a complete whole without discrimination. Farmers and Professionals are seen as equal. What needs to be given to fisher folks must be distributed to them in the same way rights of the teachers are attended to.

Careful management and administration of powers including implementation of justice and the rule of law within the micro-world of the region should be at the top of priorities. Whoever violates the law should be punished. There must be intolerance and hard fight against corruption and injustice. Corruption destroys the balance of economic and social order. For instance, a handful of leaders would take out the king’s ransom while the majority of people are just enjoying a little. In this state, economic balance is destroyed. Socially, a finger count politicians would become millionaires or billionaires while the large number of constituents are drowned in poverty. This is called social imbalance.

To simplify it, these meager resources of BARMM should be divided, allocated and distributed down to the lowest strata of society. Let everyone feel the existence of government. Right at this beginning, knowingly the Moros are trained in fasting; leaders have to show their constituents the real sense of fasting. They should infuse in their minds the meanings of fasting, struggle and self-reliance on the first level, and on the second, the real meanings of justice, equality and Islam. This is the meaning of “economy of autonomy”.

CONCLUSION

The Bangsamoro People fought for decades to reclaim their lost freedom. Moro revolutionary movements such as MIM, MNLF, MILF and BIFF were organized to stage revolt to realize Moro self-rule. The revolution turned out to be an evolution. The political settlement agreed upon by the Philippine Government and Moro movements is the final evolution of the revolutionary approach. Democracy, rule of law, self-determination, participation and justice were enjoyed by the Moro people after the acquisition of self-governance delineated in the present Bangsamoro Organic Law. The place of people in the Bangsamoro Government is well-secured. The political system in the Bangsamoro region ensures people’s participation. It is democratic system that safeguards the will of the people. Finally, the most challenging part of this Moro evolutionary consciousness is the maximization of this political autonomy. The other important question is, “Can this political autonomy arrangement put the longstanding Mindanao conflict to its final closure?” Only time could tell the ultimate story.

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