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The Dynamics of Meranao Political Participation in Southern Philippines: An Analysis Using Milbrath's Hierarchy of Political Involvement

Jamel R. Cayamodin

Department of Islamic Studies, King Faisal Center for Islamic, Arabic and Asian Studies
Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Philippines

Email: jamelrcayamodin@msumain.edu.ph

Abstract

The study analyzed the dynamics of political participation of the largest Muslim ethnolinguistic group in the Philippines – the Meranao. Using Milbrath's Hierarchy of Political Involvement, the researcher examined the nature of Meranaos' political processes and the role played by demographic and socioeconomic factors including gender, place of origin, age, income, education, and occupation on the nature of their political participation. The study adopted quantitative approach whereby survey method is the primary technique during the collection of data. There were 315 respondents who took part in the five-month survey period in the two districts of the province of Lanao del Sur in Southern Philippines. The research question is summed up on how do Meranaos participate in Philippine politics vis-à-vis Milbrath's Hierarchy of Political Involvement, and how do social stratification in the Meranao society influence their political participation? The study found that the nature of Meranaos' political participation is not up to democratic setup as they are confined only to spectatorial level, while rarely participating in transitional and gladiatorial levels. In the same manner, there were no significant impacts of demographic and socioeconomic factors on political participation. The effects were only found in individual formative items at a lesser extent. The study recommends a massive information drive on the status and significant roles of political institutions in the Meranao society to entice higher political participation. Extension of this study to other Muslim ethnolinguistic groups and communities in the Philippines is essential.

Keywords: Meranao, Political Participation, Muslim Ethnolinguistic Group, Democracy, Milbrath's Hierarchy of Political Involvement.

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Introduction

The Muslim society in the Philippines including that of the Meranao ethnolinguistic group, a dominant Muslim group dubbed as “dwellers of the lake”, mainly inhabiting the two provinces of Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte in Southern Philippines, face various phenomena brought about by their dysfunctional political institutions (Cayamodin, 2019; Panda, 1993).



The impacts of these dysfunctional political institutions to the Muslims have been fortified in recent years that further aggravated inequities in the society. This is partly because of the negligence of the political leaders and common people as manifested in the nature of their political participation, being, as maintained by Verba and Nie (1994a), a powerful social force for increasing and decreasing inequality that determines the performance of the bureaucracy and the output from political institutions. The active participation of the citizens in the political processes yields a strong force to compel the increase of the output of political institutions.

Political participation indicates the action by private citizens seeking to influence government personnel and the decisions they make which may differ in kind, intensity, and effect (Kalaycioglu and Turan, 1981; Kenski and Stroud, 2006; Kourvetaris, 1987). It can take the form of individual, small group, or mass action. It may be narrowly self-interested or breathtakingly self-sacrificing, sporadic or sustained, spontaneous or highly organized, cooperative or confrontational, legal or illegal, peaceful or violent. Participants may seek to influence policies or their implementation, to retain or change the decision makers, or (more rarely) to defend or alter the institution of the political game (Krieger, 1993). People participate in the political processes when there is a political opportunity or space available to them in the hope of gaining control of the state or shaping state policy (Yavuz, 2005). Political participation can also be viewed as a “right that entails a nonbinding obligation. It is a system of representation, and open access to public office where citizen’s right to participate is said to be secured” (Brint, 1991, p. 125).

Political participation concerns, as Magill (1996) explained, the manner in which citizens interact with government. Through active participation in government, citizens attempt to convey their needs to public officials in the hope of having these needs met. Farooqui (1977) opines that political participation is crucial for any political system in general and for democratic system in particular. It is according to him the criterion on the basis of which societies are characterized as traditional, transitional, and modern. It is crucial in any political system because it entails stability, people participate in political activities because they think that, by doing so, the government can solve their individual or group problem. People feel that it is a rational problem-solving behavior so that their diverging participations from peaceful to violent are expected to produce a beneficial outcome. Political participation necessitates costs that people may utilize resources at different intensities according to their capability. At a minimum, people may spend time, money, and other resources. At a maximum, they may risk losing their jobs, their liberty, or even their lives (Krieger, 1993). Participating in any of these activities, as believed by Verba and Nie (1994a) is considered as potent force which leaders respond to it. Consequently, leaders would respond more to the participants than to those who do not participate.

In view of the above, one must find concomitant features that motivate people to participate. Bratton (1999) argued that mass politics are shaped, more powerfully than by

other factors, by the availability of political institutions that link citizens to state. The extent to which citizens become involved in the political process depends on their affiliations, through mass mobilization campaigns, to agencies of voter registration, to political parties, and to voluntary associations. Bratton further viewed that political participation is much also depending on the way these institutions operate, especially whether they reinforce or break with practices inherited from the past. Although political institutions can create opportunities for popular access to decision making, weaknesses in institutional capacity can also constitute obstacles to participation, because factors associated with political institutions, as Christy (1985) opines distinctively affect the trends of political participation.

The citizens' eagerness to participate in any of the political activities and their tendency to favor a certain political entity is often attributed to various factors such as socio-economic status and demographic affiliations (Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh, 2001; Dietz, 1989; Franklin, 1984; Orum, 1989; Verba and Nie, 1994b). This may also include exposure to mass media and involvement (Christy, 1985; Farooqui, 1986; Krishna, 2002; Searing, 1986; Shupe, 1979). Conversely, Fowler and Kam (2007) have distinguished two different factors that motivate peoples' political participation which are not integrated to many previous studies. According to them, some people are motivated by social identification, which creates a desire to improve the welfare of certain groups in society, possibly at the expense of other groups. These individuals will likely participate when they believe that their actions will give them an opportunity to help their preferred group(s). Other people are motivated by altruism, a willingness to pay a personal cost to provide benefits to others in general, regardless of the identity of the beneficiaries. These individuals will likely participate when they believe that their actions will give them an opportunity to make everyone better off.

Kourvetaris (1987) viewed that in reality every citizen can, theoretically, participate and influence the political processes. However, there is an unequal degree of political participation and influence. This has clearly shown in the elaboration of Milbrath (1965) when he put a hierarchy of political involvements or activities, as shown below, where people are normally involved.

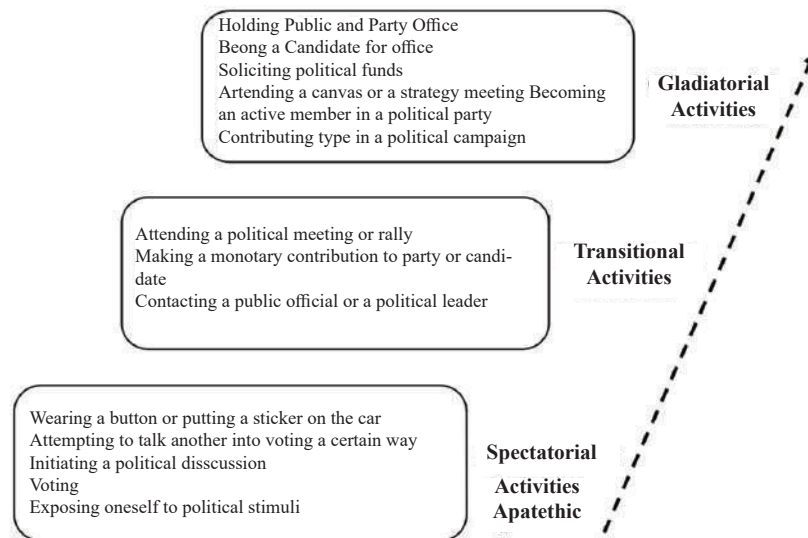


Figure 1: *Hierarchy of Political Involvement/Activities, adapted from (Milbrath, 1965). Political Participation. Chicago: Ran McNally.*

Figure 1 shows the three different levels of political involvements or activities (spectatorial, transitional, and gladiatorial), where people are variably involved. These types of activities, in measuring political participation, will determine the degree of the people's political participation so as their influence. People who join in activities such as those in the gladiatorial level will be considered as having higher political participation. While those involved in the transitional activities are regarded as moderate or average level. And those who join spectatorial activities are categorized as having low level of political participation. These three levels of political participation, as mentioned earlier, are determined by several factors of different intensities. Apparently, motivating factors, as explained by Fowler and Kam (2007), to participate such as altruism and social identification may not be solely attached to any specific level of political participation because of the certain material and immaterial requirements that further determine people's political participation.

This study argued that the political dilemma occurring in the Meranao society would not have been in place without fundamental factors that are currently ensuing or had happened in the past. One perceptible *raison d'être* that can be assumed here is the nature of how they participate in politics, which is believed to have been shaped by their history with the intrusion of the waves of alien colonizers as well as the treatment they inherited from their government. This argument is in conjunction to the view of Dowse and Hughes (1986) that political culture is a product of the history of the political system and the individual members of the system, and, thus, is rooted in public events and private experience, which is further shaped, as Bratton (1999) opines, by institutional legacies. Another factors accruing to the nature of people's political participation can be attributed to demographic and socioeconomic factors. Thus, in order to gauge the other side of the equation, this study tries to examine at least six demographic and socioeconomic variables and their interaction

with the hierarchy of political participation in a democratic political system. This study addresses research question how do Meranaos participate in Philippine politics according to Milbrath's Spectatorial, Transitional, and Gladiatorial Hierarchy of Political Involvement, and how do social stratification in Meranao society influence their political participation? It also formulated a hypothesis that Meranaos emit a higher participation in the Philippine politics across Milbrath's Hierarchy of Political Involvement - Spectatorial, Transitional, and Gladiatorial.

Method

This study adopted quantitative approach using survey as primary method in the collection of data. The study investigated the nature of political participation found among the Meranaos residing in the two districts of the province of Lanao del Sur, Philippines, the construction of instruments was designed for the three levels of the hierarchy of political involvement – spectatorial, transitional and gladiatorial. Our method allowed us to examine the degree of Meranao political participation during the past Philippine local and national elections and other political activities that typically exist in the province. A structured questionnaire was formulated and administered among the respondents regarding their participation in different types and levels of political activities. This method has produced data about the respondents' behavior, assessments, opinions, and characteristics toward politics that are inherently statistically in nature which allowed us to test our hypothesis.

The universe of this study constituted the Meranaos who occupy diverse socioeconomic statuses and demographic profiles. These respondents reside officially in the province of Lanao del Sur, Philippines at the time of data collection. There were 315 randomly selected respondents who met the requirements of this study. The primary tool in our analysis of data was the version 21 of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, and accordingly we assess respondents' characteristics, nature of variables, reliability and internal consistency, and their various interactions. In the beginning, we construct frequency distribution of respondents' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics to know at a glance the social features of the respondents. After examining the nature of our variables, we resolved that there are two inferential statistical tests, which are all parametric, suitable for the analysis of our data vis-à-vis research hypothesis. Thus, those variables that are measured at nominal level and at the same time dichotomous were analyzed using Independent Sample t-test, while those variables measured at both nominal and ordinal but polychotomous were analyzed using One-Way ANOVA F-Test. In addition, the scales constructed to measure the nature and impacts of variables under study were also assessed for reliability and internal consistency by using Cronbach's Alpha test.

Results and Discussion

This part presented the findings of the study on the nature of overall political participation of the Meranaos. The analyses on the interactions of our variables are twofold – on one

hand, we try to interpret the combined items to reflect the overall political participation of the respondents. On the other hand, we attempted to discretely look at all items as observed variables which, in sum, form our latent constructs. Our twofold interpretations are based on respondents' mean scores on summated and individual observed variables of political participation. This was undertaken in order to draw a well-defined finding of the subjects under discussion. Further, the study used parametric inferential statistical tests as tools for analyses after we have ascertained approximate normality of the data in our variables as well as meeting the other assumptions of the statistical tests being used.

The Nature of Meranao Political Participation

The political participation as dependent variable in this study was measured using established twelve formative items which were, after having been modified in order to suit the characteristics of the Meranaos, adopted from Conradt (1980); Milbrath (1965); and Verba and Nie (1994a). The Cronbach's Alpha test was employed in order to ascertain the measurements' internal consistency and reliability. In the beginning, the Cronbach's Alpha test has incurred a very good weight of .872, and would have been increased to .890 had we removed the item "voting during election" that has negative inter-correlation coefficients with some other items, as well as having low correlation coefficient with the composite score of all other items. In acquiescence, however, to the views of many scholars and studies on political participation including Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh, (2001); Ampa, (2017); and Wielhouwer and Lockerbie, (1994), who used voting as a significant indicator of political participation, we will still include the item on voting during election as an observed variable in our analysis. We found that the aforementioned Cronbach's Alpha coefficients have established a very good reliability and internal consistency of our measurements. In addition, the study assumes that the negative inter-correlation of item voting during election to other items measuring political participation or its low correlation coefficients to the composite score of all other items is not because it measures other construct but due to the level of chances the respondents can exercise these various political activities. We presumed that voting is the most typical political activity existing in the province of Lanao del Sur which Meranaos regardless of classes and statuses can emit their political expression.

The data showed the general description of the Meranao political participation, which can be regarded as more on spectatorial if we can draw from Milbrath's hierarchy of political involvements (Milbrath, 1965). Our findings indicated that there are at least two political activities where Meranaos are found to be highly participating such as voting during election and initiating political discussion. Other political activities such as convincing friends or other people to support a particular political candidate or party; participation in the procession of political parties; contacting public officials or political leaders due to a need or problem by the people or community; and joining political campaign, are found to have sometimes participated by the Meranaos. Further, the data also indicates that the Meranaos

have low participation on political activities such as working for political candidate or party; contributing resources such as money or other properties to a political candidate or party; becoming an active member of a political organization; running for political post or office; attending an approved political rally or demonstration; and collecting signatures or signing on a petition for political purpose. In sum, what our findings clearly postulate is that the Meranaos have high political participation but only in the level of spectatorial activities. It is revealed in this study that they have low participation in both transitional and gladiatorial political activities.

We, then, argued that this nature of Meranaos' participation to democratic political processes is one of the major factors that aggravated various political dilemmas occurring in the province of Lanao del Sur. Thus, the above findings which show a general low political participation of the Meranaos can be rendered as initially disproving the research hypothesis. However, this study insisted that since we adopted twelve observed variables of political participation which are further divided into three hierarchical levels, this hypothesis can, then, be possibly concluded in various standpoints. The study would like to argue, on one hand, that if the bases of our assessment of Meranaos' political participation and their conformity to democracy only comprise spectatorial activities, then this study, to some extent, conforms to maintain the hypothesis after our data has truthfully provided us supporting opinions. On the other hand, elevating the criteria of democratic conformity into transitional and gladiatorial political activities, this study strongly rejects the hypothesis. These two opposing views can also be examined from different angles once we include the role of several demographic and socioeconomic factors that are affecting the nature of people's political participation in the subsequent sections.

The Role of Social Stratification on the Hierarchy of Political Involvements among the Meranaos in Southern Philippines

A major force leading to political participation, as opined by Verba and Nie (1994a), is associated with social status and civic attitudes that accompany it. This skews the participant population in the direction of more affluent, the better educated, and those with higher-status occupations. This study attempted to portray how this contention is reflected among Meranaos in the province of Lanao del Sur. In order to widely see this in the Meranao polity, we further include gender, age, and place of origin as subjects of discourse. In this section, we tried to analyze in details of how our previous findings above exactly manifest among the respondents using our individual observed variables. We used parametric inferential statistical tests such as Independent Sample t-test and One Way ANOVA *F*-test as our tools for analysis. Post Hoc tests such as Scheffe, Tukey HSD, and Tamhane's T2 were also employed in our analyses in order to figure out the exact locations of differences among groups in our variables. Our attempt to figure out how political participations are exactly reflected by our respondents led us come up with more concrete findings where we drew our conclusions.

The Role of Gender in Political Participation

In response to the question on the factors affecting Meranao political participation and how this manifests to male and female respondents, the study found that the pattern of overall political participation shown above was consistent on gender [$t(313) = 1.775, p > .05$]. However, our further examination in our individual formative items revealed that there are two observed variables, parallel to the work of Bratton (1999), and Christy (1985), which have shown statistical significant differences for males and females. It was found that there were differences on the way respondents initiate political discussion with friends or other people, and the mode of their participation in the procession of political parties. As shown in our data, male respondents are notably engaged on these types of activities more than the female respondents.

Our analysis further indicated that Meranao males are more open to the public in discussing political issues than their female counterparts. The results of running an independent sample t-test showed that there is a statistically significant mean difference in the initiation of political discussion [$t(313) = 2.023, p < .05$] between male ($M = 4.49, SD = 1.50$) and female ($M = 4.14, SD = 1.56$) inhabitants of Lanao del Sur. Similarly, the t-test also revealed that there was a statistically significant mean difference in the way Meranaos join the procession of political parties as an indicator of political participation [$t(313) = 2.013, p < .05$] between male ($M = 3.60, SD = 1.87$) and female ($M = 3.19, SD = 1.67$) respondents. Another finding that can be drawn here, although they did not generate a significant alpha level, is that Meranao males generally have higher mean scores in all types of political activities except for working for a political candidate or party where Meranao females were found to have higher participation.

By and large, the above discussions merely suggested the evident gender differences in political participation among the Meranaos. Meranao males, as in the case of gender differences in political participation among Indian villagers (Krishna, 2002) and the case of Americans and Germans (Christy, 1985), manifest their consistent higher political participation when compared to women. Nevertheless, these contentions have no impact on our initial findings shown earlier that the political participation of the Meranaos is mainly high on “spectatorial,” but low in “transitional,” and “gladiatorial” levels, as well as our general acceptance of the hypothesis.

The Role of Place of Origin in Political Participation

The place of origin is regarded in some studies, including the study of Krishna (2002), as a factor to determine the nature of people’s political participation. We try to examine this variable in the two districts of Lanao del Sur, but the respondents did not manifest any point of significant differences. Our findings suggested that the two districts of Lanao del Sur did not show any significant differences in political participation [$t(313) = .287, p > .05$] which indicated the homogeneous nature of political participation among the dwellers of

the lake regardless of their district. This means that Meranaos at all places in Lanao del Sur evince invariable political participation. This is clearly indicated when t-test did not result to significant coefficient in any of the 12 political activities examined in this study. Another finding that can be drawn here is that the mean scores did not favor one group to the other. The pattern of mean scores between the two groups fluctuates whereby respondents from 1st district sometimes have higher mean scores than the respondents from 2nd district and vice-versa. This thin numerical fluctuation indicates that the people in the whole province have symmetry of political participation across levels.

The Role of Age in Political Participation

Our examination of age groups, in a broad sense, were found to have no differences in political participation [$F(4, 310) = .604, p > .05$]. This is clearly seen in the characteristics of people who participate in politics particularly in running for political post where the emergence of both young and old politicians is evident. However, as we looked at our individual formative items, we uncovered that in some instances there are significant differences in political participation between age groups as shown in the data. Our findings show that among the twelve indicators of political participation employed in this study, contacting public officials or political leaders due to a need or problem by the people or community, and joining a political campaign, have indicated significant differences among varying age groups. In the case of contacting public officials, elderly respondents portrayed higher participation than the young ones. Conversely, joining a political campaign shows the otherwise, whereby young respondents manifested a higher participation than the elderly. This means that, at any rate, the variable age moderates the nature of Meranao political participation in those specific indicators. Nevertheless, although our data indicated two diverging views on the tendency of young and adult Meranaos to be politically active, this study has found resemblance to the analysis of Shupe (1979) on the Japanese political participation, and the study of Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh (2001) on the African American political participation, whereby age plays an important role in determining people's political participation.

Further, the results of running a One-Way ANOVA F -test for these two political activities showed that there are statistically significant mean differences in political participation such as first, contacting public officials or political leaders due to a need or problem by the people or community [$F(4, 310) = 6.028, p < .01$]; and second joining a political campaign [$F(4, 310) = 3.542, p < .01$] between respondents in different age groups. The study tried to identify the exact pairs of age groups where the significant differences of involvement in contacting public officials or political leaders due to a need or problem by the people or community by running a Post Hoc test. The results of running a Post Hoc test called Tukey HSD showed that statistically significant mean differences lie between, 21-30 years old and 31-40 years old ($p = .006$); 21-30 years and 41-50 years ($p = .000$); and between 21-30 years and 51-60 years ($p = .020$).

The above findings indicated that more than 95 percent of the time those respondents who belonged to the age group 21-30 years will likely to differ their participation to the said political activity from those respondents belonging to the age groups 31-40 years, 41-50 years, and 51-60 years. The test, however, did not show statistical differences between 21-30 years and 61-70 years. Overall, we can assume here that the younger the Meranaos, the less are their desire to contact public officials or political leaders due to a need or problem by their people or community, which may imply that they are not belonged to altruist participants, as found by (Ampa, 2017; Fowler and Kam, 2007), who are willing to participate in such kind of political activity in order to uplift the welfare of the people who may not belong to their preferred groups. Further, the significant mean differences are more visible when it is between 21-30 years and 41-50 years as shown in our analysis where young respondents indicated lower participation than the old ones.

Another finding that can be conversed here is the difference in joining a political campaign among age groups. After running the Tukey HSD Post Hoc test, we found that the difference among age groups only lies in a single pair of groups between 21-30 years old and 51-60 years old ($p = .009$). Our analysis indicates that in this particular political activity, young Meranaos join a political campaign more than their aged counterpart. However, although the mean scores across age groups show a complete fluctuation where there is no uniform pattern, it illustrates an overall decrease of mean scores as age increases. This means that more than 99 percent of the time people who are at the age of 21 to 30 years old participate differently from those respondents at the age 51 until 60 years. This highlights the fact that young people, such as in the case of Meranaos, participate more in politics during campaign in order to attain the objectives of their preferred groups which are motivated, according to Fowler and Kam (2007), by social identification.

The Role of Income in Political Participation

The level of income or economic context is often dubbed as one of the many variables that affect the political behavior of the people. This assertion is apparent to many studies on political participation across cultures. In their study of African-American political participation, Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh (2001) argued that neighborhood economic context undermines voting. Residence in neighborhoods with higher levels of concentrated poverty reduces the odds of voting in national elections. In this study, we tried to examine the rationality of this assertion in the case of local politics. Our analysis revealed that respondents belonging to different ranges of income did not vary in their overall political participation [$F(6, 308) = .399, p > .05$].

Conversely, when we scrutinize our twelve formative items of political participation, we found that respondents who vary in income have different attitudes on voting during election. The data shows that there are differences in political participation between groups of respondents who have varying incomes. It revealed that among the twelve political activities

assessed in this study to determine the degree of the Meranao political participation, only voting during elections was found to be varying among respondents with different incomes. The results of running One-Way ANOVA *F*-test showed that a statistically significant mean differences lie in respondents' participation on voting during election [$F(6, 308) = 5.340, p < .01$] between those who are earning 5,000 Php or below ($M=4.54, SD=2.02$); 6,000 Php to 10,000 Php ($M=5.91, SD=1.67$); 11,000 Php to 15,000 Php ($M=5.65, SD=2.02$); 16,000 Php to 20,000 Php ($M=6.24, SD=1.40$); 21,000 Php to 25,000 Php ($M=6.21, SD=1.45$); 26,000 Php to 30,000 Php ($M=5.94, SD=1.41$); and 31,000 Php and above ($M=6.37, SD=1.14$).

In order to determine where these substantial significant differences in voting during election exactly occurred, we run a more conservative Post Hoc test called Sheffe. The results showed that the statistically significant mean differences have only occurred between the following pairs: below – 5,000 Php and 16,000 – 20,000 Php ($p = .000$); below – 5,000 Php and 21,000 – 25,000 Php ($p = .008$); below – 5,000 Php and 26,000 – 30,000 Php ($p = .048$); and below – 5,000 Php and 31,000 – Above ($p = .002$). By and large, these indicate that respondents who have high income are likely to have statistically significant higher mean scores in voting during election, as their form of political participation, when compared to respondents who have low income. We can also argue here that only those respondents who are earning 5,000 Php and below are differing from other groups, while high earning groups did not significantly differ from each other. Our analysis further indicated that although there is a fluctuation in the mean scores between groups, it showed general increase parallel to the increase in respondents' income. In consonance to the assertion of Wielhouwer and Lockerbie (1994), we can then argue that income is a strong determinant of political participation for at least, in our data, voting during elections.

The Role of Education in Political Participation

According to Krishna (2002, p. 456) “education influences how much particular individuals engage in political activities”. Similarly, we try to examine how education level determines political participation. In our general analysis, it was revealed that differences in education levels do not go parallel with political participation of the Meranaos [$F(4, 310) = .721, p > .05$]. However, looking at the twelve indicators of political participation individually, we disclosed that respondents who only obtained Elementary and Secondary levels of education contributed resources such as money or other resources to a political candidate or party more than those who have Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees regarded as highly educated.

The data also showed the differences in political participation between groups of respondents who have different educational attainments. The respondents were grouped into five categories of educational attainments (i.e. Elementary, Secondary, Tertiary, Masters, and Ph.D.). It was found that among the political activities asked to the respondents, there was only one activity that has shown statistically significant mean difference across respondents of

different educational attainments. The results of running a One-Way ANOVA *F*-test showed that there is a statistically significant mean difference in political participation particularly on contributing resources such as money or other resources to a political candidate or party coded as PP8 [$F(4, 310) = 2.644, p < .05$] between Elementary ($M=2.47, SD=1.59$), Secondary ($M=3.07, SD=2.15$), Tertiary ($M=2.13, SD=1.60$), Masters ($M=2.18, SD=1.67$), and Ph.D. ($M=1.29, SD=.75$). We run a Post Hoc test called Tamhane's T2 in order to ascertain where these differences between educational groups precisely occurred. Tamhane's T2 test revealed that the difference lies in a single pair of educational groups between Secondary and Ph.D. ($p = .011$). The difference between this single pair of educational groups appears to be unusual but interesting, because it does not follow the common assumption found in many studies such as the works of (Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh, 2001; Krishna, 2002; Wielhouwer and Lockerbie, 1994), that the highly educated are the people, the more likely they participate in political activities.

This study showed the reverse of this contention by postulating that more than 98 percent of the time respondents who have lower educational attainment are more active in contributing resources such as money or other properties to a political candidate or party as their form of political participation when compared to those highly educated. This argument is substantiated by the general pattern of mean scores across education groups. Our data showed that the mean scores of the respondents who only attained elementary and secondary levels of education are higher than the mean scores of those who obtained their Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. degrees. The study would like to put forward that there are some essential factors that might be leading to the findings exhibited above. In recent years a significant number of Meranao constituents in the province of Lanao del Sur have migrated to other provinces and cities in the country. They usually do various business activities that eventually made them more affluent (Gunting, 2015). These Meranaos who have established themselves in various business sectors are mostly those who do not have opportunities in the bureaucracy caused by their low educational attainments. This has then given them a chance to participate in various political activities more than those who are highly educated believed to be occupied by their works in the bureaucracy and have limited financial and other resources obtained from their lowly paid professions. The data also revealed, though not statistically significant, that respondents who have low education displayed higher mean scores in political activities that require more financial resources and efforts such as becoming an active member of a political organization, running for political post or office, and attending an approved political rally or demonstration.

In sum, we can presume that the lower the level of education of the people; the higher the possibility for them to join political activities that are regarded as "gladiatorial". In contrast, the higher the people's educational attainment; also the higher the chance for them to participate in political activities but only for "spectatorial" that requires small amount of time and resources. This contention may not be working to the whole Filipino communities

in the Philippines, but at least seen among the Meranaos. Further, this argument needs to be treated with caution as it is uniquely found among the Meranaos and rarely found to other groups of people in highly democratic countries.

The Role of Occupation in Political Participation

Respondents in various occupational groups have displayed a matching overall political participation [$F(3, 311) = 1.556, p > .05$]. However, our deeper analysis, analogous to Franklin's (1984) observations on class-based voting behavior in British politics, showed that there are differences in participation in at least four political activities such as voting during election, joining a political campaign, attending an approved political rally or demonstration, and collecting signatures or signing on a petition for political purposes. In this regard, our findings suggest that people who are not working and apparent to be economically unstable showed a general apolitical behavior more than those who are connected with the government, private institutions, and those who owned businesses who are known as self-employed.

Our data showed the differences in political participation between respondents of various occupational groups. The respondents were grouped into four different types of occupations such as government employee, private employee, and owned business; we also included those nonworking respondents who represent an occupational group in our analysis. The data revealed that there were at least four political activities where people who have various occupations differ. These are voting during election, joining a political campaign, attending an approved political rally or demonstration, and collecting signatures or signing on a petition for political purpose. The results of running a One-Way ANOVA F -test showed a statistical significant mean differences in political activities such as, first, voting during election [$F(3, 311) = 4.205, p < .05$]; second, joining a political campaign [$F(3, 311) = 3.011, p < .05$]; third, attending an approved political rally or demonstration [$F(3, 311) = 5.455, p < .05$]; and fourth, collecting signatures or signing on a petition for political purpose [$F(3, 311) = 3.312, p < .05$] across various occupations.

In looking at respondents' participation for voting during election we can see in our data that government employees and those who owned businesses have displayed higher mean scores compared to private employees and those who are not working. This contention of the differences of mean scores of these four groups of respondents can be validated when we use Post Hoc test. In order to find out the actual locations of these perceived differences, we run Tukey's HSD which subsequently shows us that the significant difference lies between government employee and not working ($p = .014$). This means that more than 98 percent of the time a significant difference in voting during election occurs between those respondents who are employed in any government agency and those who are not working. It was revealed that government employees are likely to vote more often than those who are not working.

Another observed variable that has displayed statistical significant mean differences across groups of different occupation, after we run F -test, is joining a political campaign.

In this particular observed variable it was found that respondents who owned business and those who are not working have higher mean scores when compared to government and private employees. We run a Post Hoc test called Tamhane's T2 but it did not provide us clear picture where these significant differences exactly found among occupational groups. This is, according to general assumptions, partly because of the nature of the data where the variances between groups are not really big enough as seen in our analysis, or there might be significant differences as shown by F-test but omitted in Post Hoc pairwise comparisons because of the unequal sample size for each group as spelled out in the analysis. However, we can notice that those who owned business or self-employed respondents incurred higher mean scores as compared to others, which may suggest that in this particular political activity self-employed respondents get involved themselves more than the respondents in other occupational groups.

Further, our analysis showed that there are statistically significant mean differences in attending an approved political rally or demonstration among occupational groups. It was found that respondents who owned businesses generated higher mean score when compared to other groups. The Tukey HSD Post Hoc test revealed that differences are found between government employee and those who owned businesses ($p = .002$); and between those jobless and those who owned businesses ($p = .004$). This indicates that more than 99.8 percent of the time respondents who owned business differ from government employees, while at least 99.6 percent of the time respondents who are in the business sector have higher tendency to attend an approved political rally or demonstration than those who are not working. In sum, respondents who are self-employed or owning businesses obtained a higher mean score which indicate that they have higher participation whenever there is a political rally and demonstration than those employed in the government and jobless individuals. Lastly, the study revealed that in collecting signatures or signing on a petition for political purpose, there is a visible statistical significant difference among respondents belonging to various occupational groups. The Tukey HSD Post Hoc test shows that the difference in this particular political activity lies in a single pair of occupational groups between those who are not working and those who owned businesses ($p = .041$). This means that more than 95 percent of the time respondents who owned business or self-employed participate in collecting signatures or signing on a petition for political purpose more than those respondents who are jobless.

Analogous to the assertion of Humphries (2001), the above findings claimed that there is a semi-homogeneous pattern of Meranaos' political participation given their diverse occupations, whereby respondents who are self-employed or categorized as owned business group has consistent significant high participation on several political activities when compared to other groups. In sum, our general examination on the roles played by demographic and socioeconomic factors suggest that social stratification in the society, similar to the contentions of Brady et al (1999); Ghapar (2008); Krishna (2002); and

Mohamad Razali (2009), played a less significant role in determining the degree of people's political participation. There might be some roles played by socioeconomic status, as Orum (1989) viewed, but it was merely negligible and barely occurred in our individual items. Other factors that may have determined Meranaos' political participation can be discerned from some of the dimensions of political attitudes such as subjective political competence, political alienation, political discontent and political cynicism, which unfortunately are not included in this study.

Conclusion

In any group of people who aims for a well-balanced and progressive political system that functions according to a given expectation should emit a rational higher participation in various levels of political involvements or activities. People should elevate their levels of participation to transitional and gladiatorial that have evident significant impacts on political processes and outputs. Higher degree of political participation narrows the way for fraudulent groups or individuals to manipulate political processes only to maximize their gains, which continuously alienate the average citizenry. The researcher argues, as shown in many studies, that the cognitive political orientation of people can help in attaining not only higher participation in various levels of the hierarchy of political involvements but forms an effective political initiative that often challenges lackadaisical or corrupt elite politicians. In conclusion, the study would like to reiterate the categorization of political involvements used by Milbrath – spectatorial, transitional, and gladiatorial. This study, therefore, argued that the Meranaos' political participation is not up to the requirement of a democratic political system as seen in more developed countries. This renders our research hypothesis generally rejected when the Meranaos' political participation is largely observed only in spectatorial level whereby people are only seen to be active in voting during election and discussion on political matters. The study further argues that these two types of political participation categorized in spectatorial level will hardly ignite an influence on the polity and a change in the society because these are easily subjugated by vicious political practices existing in the province of Lanao del Sur such as party identification based on kinship, bribery, and coercion. The study proposes that there is a need to increase the Meranao political participation in order to neutralize the unending monopoly of power by the elite traditional politicians who managed to establish well-rooted political dynasties in the Meranao society. This endeavor will not only awaken the lackadaisical or corrupt politicians but it will likely make the political institutions legally function according to the given mandates. Further research on this subject is highly encouraged given the recent political development among the Muslim ethnolinguistic groups in the country, especially the establishment of a new political entity for Muslims in Southern Philippines - the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

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