

ELECTORAL POLITICS AND CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGE OF BASQUE AND MORO NATIONALISM

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Abstract

This article explores the similarities and differences concerning the extent to which electoral politics addresses the concerns of Basque and Moro nationalism. These demands mainly focus on the factors that have brought about their political, cultural and, for the Moros, also economic marginalization. In terms of similarities, electoral politics in the form of plebiscites and referendums are used to gauge the sentiments of the Basques and the Moros with regards to approving a national constitution with provisions affecting them as well as the establishment of an autonomous region for the Moros and the strengthening of a federal form of government in the case of the Basques. Elections are also used to choose their leaders at the local, provincial, regional and national levels. As for the differences, among the major ones are the following: One is that electoral politics in the Basque region mirrors the class divide in society and reflects the interests of the constituencies. This is not the case in Muslim Mindanao whereby patronage politics rules and electoral results are generally dictated by the Muslim elites who have close ties with the national elites. And secondly, the ideological bias of the elected leader and his political power in Spain has a direct impact on Basque nationalism. In the case of the Philippines, it is the personality of the elected leader that determines whether peace negotiations will be pursued or not. But this does not impact on national or local electoral politics as in the case of Spain.

Keywords: *Electoral politics, nationalism, Basque, Moro, separatism, marginalization*

Introduction

For both the Spanish and Philippine governments, electoral politics has been viewed as one of the major solutions in resolving the Basque and Moro separatist movements. Through elections, the Basques and the Moros would

be able to elect their respective representatives to voice their concerns as well as enact laws that will address their grievances. Electoral politics is also viewed as the venue by which political structures for representation, e.g., autonomy or federalism, could be decided upon, particularly through a plebiscite or referendum. This article, therefore, would like to assess to what extent did electoral politics address the concerns of Basque and Moro nationalism and particularly, the demands of their respective separatist movements, i.e., the *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (Euskadi and Freedom) or ETA in Spain and the Moro National Liberation Front or MNLF and later on, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front or MILF in the Philippines. The answers to these questions would help provide an interesting comparative analysis of the role of electoral politics in confronting the demands for separatism in developed and developing societies. It will also help highlight the limitations of electoral politics in achieving the aspirations of the separatist movements particularly in a developed country and a functioning liberal democracy such as Spain, and in a developing country such as the Philippines which exemplifies an “illiberal” democracy, i.e., a democracy which is more procedural, rather than substantive. This is because despite the presence of political parties and electoral politics, the interest and concerns of the vast majority in Muslim Mindanao are not addressed. This is attributed to an electoral process which is dominated by elite rule and patronage politics.

The first part of my paper will, therefore, look into the causes of the rise of Basque and Moro nationalism and the failure of electoral politics during its incipience to confront the challenges it posed to Spanish and Philippine societies in general. It will also examine the foundation of electoral politics in these two countries which impacted on enhancing as well as weakening Basque and Moro nationalism. The second part of my paper, on the other hand, will highlight the marginalization of electoral politics during the Franco and Marcos dictatorships and its impact on Basque and Moro nationalism. The third part will analyze electoral politics during the transition from authoritarianism to a democracy in Spain and in the Philippines. And lastly, the fourth part will discuss electoral politics as an arena for confronting the challenges of Basque and Moro nationalism in the 1990s and beyond. In general, my paper argues that in the Basque experience, electoral politics has helped to a certain extent address the concerns raised by the Basque nationalists unlike in the case of the Moros. But, nevertheless, the continuing existence of the ETA and the MNLF/MILF continues to be a reminder that electoral politics as an arena for contention and change still falls short in addressing the demands of Basque and Moro nationalism.

Factors Which Led to the Rise of Basque and Moro Nationalism'

The Basque region claims the provinces of Navarra (which is not part of Spain's autonomous Basque region), Alava, Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa in Spain, and in France, Labourd, Lower Navarre, and Soule, which is roughly the territory covered by the French department of Pyrenees-Atlantiques (see Figure 1). It has around 2 million inhabitants (Shepard, 2002). As for Muslim Mindanao, in 1981 it was made up of four regions with 22 provinces with a total population of approximately 9 million (Lomongo, 1981, p.77). Currently, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARRM) consists of the following: Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, and the cities of Marawi and Isabela. For the Basques and the Moros, what is common is that their allegiance to a place and community takes priority over other national allegiance and political obligation, and that their quest for self-determination is within the boundaries of the nation-state (Carter and Stokes, 2002, p.6). Social movement is based on ethnic regional identity in the case of the Basques, and religious community (i.e., Islam) in the case of the Moros, who comprise diverse ethnic groups—e.g., Tausug, Maranao, Maguindanao (although an MNLF leader (Nur Misuari) had once commented that all those living in Mindanao and Palawan, even the Christians, should be called 'Moro').

The major concerns which fueled the rise of Basque and Moro nationalism which later on became electoral as well as separatist issues are the political and cultural marginalization of the Basques (Encarnacion, 2004, p.66) which was also experienced by the Moros. But in the case of the Moros, they also suffered from economic marginalization. Their political marginalization was mainly marked by the imposition of their respective governments of a political system which was alien to them. The Basques had their own political system known as the *fueros* (Edles, 1999, p.340) while the Moros had their own political sultanate (Rodil, 2000, p.138). Both the Basques and the Moros also felt culturally marginalized because of the imposition of the Castilian and Filipino cultures, respectively, on their societies. This was heightened with the entry of immigrants into their regions, mainly in search of jobs. In the case of the Basques, this was because the Basque region developed into one of the richest regions in Spain (Hooper, 1995, p.396). As for Muslim Mindanao, it was regarded as a frontier area of the American colonizers who saw Mindanao as very rich in resources (Ferrer, 2006, p.463). The entry of the immigrants into Mindanao led to the economic marginalization of the Moros as whatever development ensued did not go to them but either to the country's capital, Manila, or the immigrants, or both. Unlike the Basques, the Moros were also not homogenous as they belonged to specific groups such as the Tausugs, Maranao and Maguindanao.

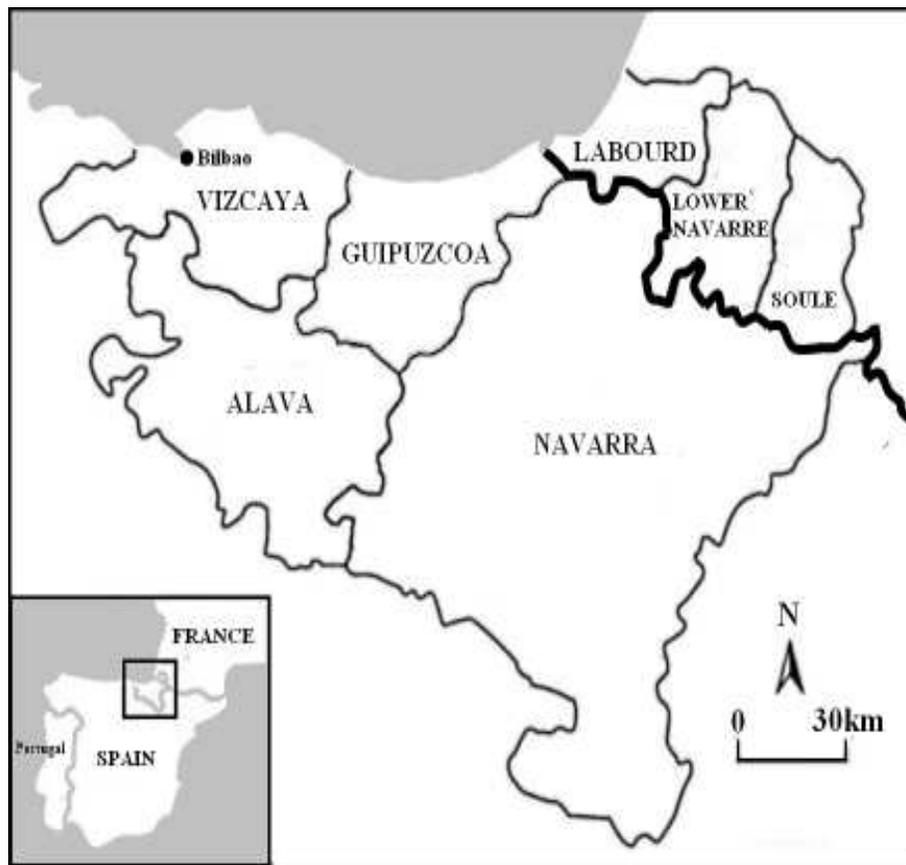


Figure 1. The Basque Region

Both the Basques and the Moros therefore wanted to secede and the Basques were guided by the reactionary ideology of Sabino de Arana y Goiri who wanted to bring back the Basques to their “pre-industrial society“ (Hooper, 1995, p.396), while the Moros were guided by the radical ideology of Nur Misuari, a Tausug and the founder of the MNLF who wanted not only to address the problem of asserting the Moro identity and ethnicity but also the class issue in Mindanao. Thus, the struggle of the MNLF was to also include the non-Muslims who were disadvantaged by the policies of the central state—the *lumads* or the indigenous peoples of Mindanao, and Christians, who mainly belonged to the lower classes. Misuari was open to Marxist-Leninist thought (Lomongo, 1981, p.81). For the Basques, what persisted were Catholic and separatist thoughts (Puzzo, 1962, pp.20-21).



Figure 2. The Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
(Lanao del Sur, Maguidanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi)

Both the Spanish and the Philippine governments attempted to pursue non-electoral strategies in addressing Basque and Moro separatism. For the Basque, the policy was federalism which, however, failed (Encarnacion, 2004, pp. 63-64). Basque privileges for autonomy were also affected by the Carlist Wars², an outcome of which revoked the Basque privileges for autonomy (Hooper, 1995, p. 395). For the Moros, the issue of autonomy or federalism prior to the Martial Law years (1972-1986) was ignored. Instead, the Marcos government from 1964 to the early 1970s attempted to annihilate the Muslims as seen in what is referred to as the Jabidah massacre of 1968 which involved Tausug trainees who were recruited by the army and who were summarily killed. “This heightened Muslim resentment against the central government leading to violent land disputes and other social tensions. What emerged were the formation of vigilante groups in the 1970s serving as private armies of powerful or rich Christian/Muslim landowners” (Ferrer, 2006, p. 467).

Despite these failures, the Basques were able to assert their political leverage on Spanish society which would later on factor in on electoral politics. This was because the Basques were able to develop their region into one of the richest regions in Spain. They were the country’s major producer of steel and coal. They were the country’s major producers of steel and coal. Together with

Catalonia, the Basque region is the seat of the country's industrial and financial capital (Encarnacion, 2004, p.66). The Basques felt that they did this on their own without the help of Spain.

This was not the case of the Moros in Mindanao. Although Mindanao is very rich in resources, the Moros did not have the chance to develop these. Although the Muslims made up 76 percent of the Mindanao population by 1960, they now only constitute 23 percent (Ferrer 2006, 463). They also "lost control and ownership over land and tribute collection as state laws overrode customary laws. The 1902 Organic Act passed by the US Congress granted the American colonial government authority to formulate laws in the administration of public lands" (Ferrer, 2006, p.464). The American colonizers also encouraged immigrants to go to Mindanao³, particularly in the areas where Moros had settled. This was one way by which they sought to weaken the Moros in their own territory.

Like the Basques, therefore, the Moros also resented the coming in of the immigrants as it pushed them (the Moros) away from their land and underlined their economic underdevelopment. The Moros could also not fight back against the Americans as they were militarily weaker (Macario Tiu⁴, interview, October 27, 2004). The American colonizers also co-opted "friendly" Moro elite leaders or *datus*. They, together with non-Muslims, were appointed to the local executive and legislative governing bodies. The 1935 Philippine Constitution further ignored the concerns of the Moro population and forcibly integrated the Moros into the independent Philippine Republic (cited in Ferrer, 2006, p. 464). For the Moros, therefore, the present-day Republic of the Philippines (which includes Muslim Mindanao) was a creation of colonialism and conquest, as a result of which the Moros became dominated by Manila and subjected to a Christian-based majority culture. The struggle of the MNLF, to put it simply, is to liberate themselves and their lands from Manila's domination (Tiu, interview, October 27, 2004).

With Philippine independence in 1946, the national elites continued to follow the American policy of co-opting Moro elites into their fold. The practice of patronage politics was followed whereby the Moro elites sought the support of the national leaders to perpetuate their political as well as economic power. These Moro elites were not concerned with the welfare of their society in general. They were, however, also not elected to the national government; if ever, there were only a few of them (like the Tamananos). For the other Moro elites who refused to be co-opted, and for the ordinary Moros, the way out was through the MNLF, a Moro movement for secession whose strategy was not through elections but through insurgency.

The Emergence of Basque and Moro Electoral Politics

A reason why patronage politics prevails in Philippine electoral politics in general and in Muslim Mindanao in particular is the big gap between the rich and the poor. As for the Basque region, it has a substantive middle class which assured the functioning of liberal democracy and electoral politics. The class divide in the Moro society (which mirrors that of Philippine society), was also the reason why Misuari consciously called his movement the Moro National Liberation Front, with the stress on the “national” rather than Islamic religion. It was an attempt to attract non-Moros who were also politically and economically marginalized in Mindanao.

For the Basques, their strength was further boosted with the support from other regions, like Catalonia and Andalucia, which were also demanding independence. This was not the case of the Moros where there was no demand for autonomy from the other areas of the Philippines (aside from the Cordillera region in Northern Philippines). The leverage of the MNLF would have been stronger if they had allied with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), with its armed group the New People’s Army (NPA), and the National Democratic Front (NDF), or the CPP-NPA-NDF. But the latter prioritized the armed struggle to bring about change and the CPP also did not give the same importance to ethnicity as compared to the class issue, unlike the MNLF which saw the importance of asserting the Moro identity together with the class issue as more or less equally significant (Ed Quitoriano⁵, interview, July 17, 2004).

The (non)establishment of political parties. Given the liberal democratic dispensation in Spain, the Basques, together with the other regions, were thus able to set up their own regional parties. For the Basques, this was the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV) which was founded in 1898 by Arana. This was unlike the Moros who did not look at political parties as instruments for bringing about their goal of secession. This was understandable as what existed in the Philippines was an “illiberal” democracy—that is, although there are elections and political parties, people generally do not vote on the basis of issues but of personalities, or they simply sell their votes to the highest bidder. The Moros who joined political parties were mainly the Moro elites who were co-opted by national politicians, usually from the government leadership.

Both the Spanish and the Philippine governments, however, refused to entertain any demand of independence from the Basques and the Moros respectively. The PNV as a political party initially demanded independence.

But once the Spanish government clamped down on them, they changed their demand to autonomy. Nevertheless, the PNV was used as a party to distance the Basque nationalists from Spain. But there were also Basques, like those from Navarre, who did not identify themselves with Basque nationalism (Hooper, 1995, p. 397). In the case of Mindanao, one had the *lumads*, i.e., the indigenous peoples or IPs, who did not have the capacity to fight and who kept on moving from one place to another. The Moros, on the other hand, had the capability to resist or prevent the Christian settlers from going into territories that they considered their own (Tiu, interview, October 27, 2004). As for the Moro elites who forged alliances with the national elites, they were not concerned at all with independence but with empowering themselves. There were, however, also Moro elites who were part of the leadership of the MNLF who fought for independence, not through electoral politics but through the Moro insurgency.

The Class Divide and Electoral Politics

There were also class factors which influenced the electoral politics in the Basque region. One was the divide between the agrarian vs. the industrialist sectors of Spanish society. Initially, the agrarian oligarchy in Spain ruled and they were accused of cheating in elections. As pointed out, their power was based on the social power of landlords and the repressive power of the forces of order, e.g., the Civil Guards (Preston, 1990, p.17). A similar situation was also found in Muslim Mindanao where the “agrarian oligarchy” ruled and was supported by the national government, i.e., the American colonizers and later on by the local elites. But there was no industrial elite to challenge the “agrarian oligarchy”. The conflict was mainly between the landed elites and the landless. This was not depicted in electoral politics as the Moro landed elites were co-opted by the colonial state.

Spain’s electoral system would, however, later on reflect the class composition of the political parties of European liberal democratic countries. Because these regions, including the Basques, were relatively economically well-off because of their industrialization as compared to the rest of agrarian Spain, they could assert themselves vis-à-vis the central government. This was not the case in Muslim Mindanao because of colonialism and the maintenance of a Sultanate system whereby land was owned by the Muslim Sultans. Their land, however, was taken away by the American colonizers and local elites. Thus, the economic power to form political parties as seen in the experience of European liberal democracies like in Spain was not there. Secondly, Muslim Mindanao could not also assert itself against the national government because it did not

have the political, economic and military power to do so. In the case of the Basques and the other Spanish regions, the assertion was expressed economically and supported by political clout at the national and local levels. Thus, in the Basque region, electoral politics could be used to assert the Basques interests, but this was not the case of the Moros in Mindanao.

National class affiliations among the Basques would later on affect their national and regional electoral politics. The upper-middle-class owners of the factories, together with the owners of the big banking and insurance concerns which grew up alongside them, for example, tended to align themselves with the Spanish oligarchy, often acquiring titles of nobility in the process (Hooper, 1995, p. 395). This seems to be similar to the Moro elites who sought favors from the leadership in the national government through patronage politics. This alignment among the Basques did not apply to the lower-middle-class bosses of the workshops who came to regard industrialization as a process from which they had gained less than they had lost (Hooper, 1995, p. 395).

In the case of the Basques, the presence of the immigrants did not also seem to undermine the electoral process. But this was not the case in Muslim Mindanao where Moro issues during election time were undermined by the interest of the immigrants, i.e., the non-Moros, who were not only interested but also threatened by assertion of Moro identity and even autonomy and at worst secession. A reason for this is the colonial policy of encouraging immigrants to settle in Moro areas leading to the marginalization of the Moros in their own regions as the immigrants soon outnumbered them. This was not the case with the Basques who were always in political control of their territory.

Ideological movements—the left-wing and right-wing movements in the country—which expressed themselves in electoral politics, also impacted on the Basque political parties. Between these two groups stood the center parties, consisting of the two nationalist movements of the Basques and Catalans, the Radicals and the Progressives. The rise, however, of the Falangists (the fascist party under the leadership of General Francisco Franco) would severely undermine Basque interests with the exception of the Requettes of Navarre who allied with Franco. In the case of the Moros, they were not subjected to these kinds of national politics. What existed was the national politics of the colonizers particularly the Americans who allied with the Filipino as well as Moro elites to subjugate them. Although there was a socialist/communist movement in the Philippines which began in the 1930s, this was limited to Central Luzon and did not seep down to Mindanao. These socialist/communist parties were also banned from participating in electoral politics. The emergence

of the new Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in 1969 seemed to have an influence on the MNLF, but this would come during the Martial Law period (1972-1981).

Electoral Politics in a Period of Dictatorship

The efforts of the Basques to push for more autonomy under the scheme of federalism were beginning to bear fruit under the Second Republic 1931-1939. The Republican leaders granted home rule to the Basque region as well as Catalonia under the efforts of a heterogeneous coalition of left-wing parties. By October 1, 1936, the Basque Statute of Autonomy was finally approved by the Spanish government, which secured the loyalty of the Basque nationalists to the Republican side. But Civil War broke out leading to the rise of the Franco dictatorship from 1939 to 1977. With the exception of Alava and Navarre, the rest of the Basque region suffered during this period. What would explain Alava and Navarre going for the Franco rebellion was the deeply reactionary outlook of the Basque peasantry and the quasi-fascist ideology of the middle-class nationalists. Such alignments were reflected in electoral politics (Hooper, 1995, p. 395).

In comparison with the Moro experience, the left-wing parties were more supportive of the causes of the Basques and other regions to go for federalism. This contrasts with the Moro experience as attempts of the MNLF to define a separate territory for them, i.e., the Muslim areas in Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan, were met with lukewarm support from the CPP (Ricardo Reyes⁶, interview, June 30, 2004). But with regards to national political parties in general (i.e., the Nacionalista Party and the Liberal Party), Moro concerns were not addressed at all as also with class concerns. These two parties existed mainly for elite interests. In both Basque and Moro experiences, though, electoral politics were put aside as the quest for autonomy and even separatism led to a series of civil wars in Spain and, in the case of the Philippines, the Moro insurgency against the State.

During the respective dictatorships in the two countries therefore, for both the Basques and the Moros, electoral politics understandably was not a venue for change. What happened in the Philippines was that, the MNLF formed a tactical alliance with the CPP in fighting the Marcos dictatorship. But the CPP did not fully agree with the MNLF's position of secession for the areas of Muslim Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan as there were also Christian settlers there. There was also the issue of the primacy of the class issue over ethnic considerations which was the policy of the CPP, while the

MNLF saw both concerns in more or less equal footing (Tiu, interview, October 27, 2004). As for the Moro elites, Marcos either sustained some of them who were supportive of his dictatorship or created new Moro elites. He would later on make use of these Moro elite allies in machinated elections during the Martial Law period. Nevertheless, the Martial Law period, and its continuing suppression of the Moros further strengthened the MNLF.

As for the Basques, with the exception of Alava and Navarre, they were solid with regards to their opposition against the Franco dictatorship. The inability to use electoral politics to pursue change led to the rise of the ETA.

The letters ETA – standing for *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (Euskadi and Freedom) first appeared during 1960, daubed on the walls of towns in the two coastal provinces. The movement which lay behind them had coalesced during the late fifties around a clandestine publication called *Ekin* (Action) set up by university students. In 1961 ETA carried out its first terrorist operations when some of its members tried to derail a train taking Francoist veterans to a rally in San Sebastian. The police response was savage. A hundred or so people were arrested. Many were tortured and some were charged, tried and sentenced to up to twenty years in gaol. But the leaders of ETA escaped to France. Thus began a cycle of terrorism and repression which has continued to this day (Hooper, 1995, p. 398).

It was also during the Martial Law period that the Moros found an ally in fighting the dictatorship which was the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), particularly the countries of Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Egypt. These countries extended economic and military assistance to the MNLF as Muslim brothers. The Philippine government was, therefore, forced to seek a political solution to the Moro conflict. This paved the way for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and these countries with the objective of finding a “peaceful” solution to the Moro insurgency. What emerged was the Tripoli Agreement in 1975 which was, however, generally unacceptable to the MNLF. Making matters worse for the Moro insurgency movement was that the establishment of diplomatic ties weakened it as the member countries of the OIC lessened and eventually ceased to extend military and economic assistance to them. The efforts of the MNLF were also further stymied with divisions among their leaders.⁷ One of the major reasons was the dissatisfaction with the leadership of Misuari (Lomongo, 1981, p.81).

This situation reinforced the reality that electoral politics was not the venue for bringing about change for the Moros in their quest for independence. What remained to be vital was to keep the armed insurgency alive and to get external allies to fight the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). For the Basques, there was generally no room to maneuver against the Franco dictatorship except through the ETA and the PNV, their political party, but not through electoral politics. There were, however, divisions within the PNV on whether to pursue the armed struggle or not (Hooper, 1995, pp. 398-399).

Unlike the Moros, the Basques' assertion of nationalism was also supported by the other regions in Spain, such as Catalonia and Andalusia, which were fighting for their own regional identities. This gave the Basques a stronger leverage vis-à-vis the central government. This was not the same with the Moros who were generally alone in their quest for more autonomy and even secession. Furthermore, while Marcos was dealing with the OIC with regards to the implementation of the Tripoli Agreement, he continued the policy of co-opting Muslim leaders/warlords who would support his Martial Law regime. These were also the warlords he supported when elections were held during his term in office.

Like the Marcos dictatorship, the Franco regime also appointed to the Cabinet men from the Basque region who had no ties with Basque nationalism. In fact the percentage of ministers from the Basque Country was almost two and a half times as great as the percentage of Basques among the population. And all throughout his long dictatorship, Franco found valuable allies from the Basque industrial and banking oligarchy (Loyer, 1998). This situation seems to parallel that of the Moros in the Philippines whereby Marcos continued the practice of his predecessors to cultivate ties with the Moro elites as well as to create new ones through patronage politics.

Electoral Politics in a Transition from Authoritarianism to Democracy

Electoral politics as a venue for change would resume with the end of the Franco and Marcos dictatorships in 1975 and 1986 respectively. In both the Philippines and Spain, however, there continued to be three types of movements challenging this. The first was the nationalist or separatist violence, which aimed to achieve the separation of certain regions, e.g., ETA in Spain, and for the Philippines, the Moro insurgency. The second was the extreme left-wing or revolutionary violence which, its perpetrators hoped, would provoke a popular revolt against the capitalist system. In the case of the Philippines, this

was embodied by the communist insurgency as led by the Communist Party of the Philippines, its military arm, the New People's Army and its illegal united front, the National Democratic Front. The third kind in Spain was "the fascist and vigilante violence, which was partly a reaction against the new democratic regime and partly an attack against Basque separatists" (Sanchez-Cuence & Aguilar, 2009, p. 435). This "fascist streak" could be seen as well in the Philippines, particularly during the period of the Aquino Administration (1986-1992) which was threatened by eight military *coup d'etats* staged by members of the Philippine military.

These non-electoral types of movements for change in Spain and the Philippines, however, would take a backseat with the re-establishment of parliamentary and presidential elections respectively. In Spain, political parties were legalized and the first free elections were held in 1977 after 40 years. The 1978 Spanish Constitution offered Spain's diverse regions limited autonomy. The Basque Statute of Autonomy was approved in 1979. Elections were used to approve this, garnering a 90 percent support (Edles, 1999, p. 340). There were divisions among the Basques, however, on whether to accept this or not. For those who accepted this, electoral politics became the venue for asserting Basque rights, particularly the expansion of their autonomy. For those who did not accept this, i.e., the PNV and the ETA, their only recourse was through armed violence (Basta Ya! Citizens Initiative, 2005, p. 1). In a way this further marginalized the electoral process as a venue for change. Support for the ETA position was also brought about by the weakness of the middle class (Puzzo, 1962, p. 16), its ability to continually gain supporters (Hooper, 1995, p. 403) and the feeling among some Basques that the democratic dispensation was no different from the period of dictatorship because of insipid autonomy for the regions among others (Fajardo, 2007). The first democratic election, however, isolated the ETA-m, i.e., its military faction, and the political forces that gravitated toward ETA-m refused to participate in the electoral process. "This may have created a sense of failure exacerbated by the fact that some Basque separatist forces, increasingly critical of ETA's violent strategy, decided to participate in the process, one of them obtaining parliamentary representation (Sanchez-Cuenca & Aguilar, 2009, p. 445).

In the case of the Moros' experience, the end of the Martial Law period continued to witness the marginalization of electoral politics as a means to resolve Moro concerns because the practice of Moro elites being co-opted by national leaders continued. The venue for change instead became the process of peace negotiations which actually revived the very much weakened MNLF under the Aquino Administration and the implementation of the Tripoli

Agreement. In 1989, therefore, Republic Act (RA) 6734 creating the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was passed and signed into law by President Aquino (Philippine Constitution, 1987, art. 10, sec. 15). This was followed in November 1989 by a plebiscite which was held in Mindanao to comply with the constitutional requirement. The MNLF, however, disagreed with the nature of and the process by which the establishment of the autonomous region was pursued. In particular, it disagreed with the requirement to hold a plebiscite to determine the area of autonomy. There was also a low voter turnout and the usual charges of manipulation and fraud which characterizes Philippine elections in general (Tanggol, 1993, as cited in Ferrer, 2006, pp.159-164). In February 1990, elections were held again but this time to determine the ARMM officials, i.e., the region's Governor, Vice-governor and 21 members of the Regional Assembly. This was held under the Ramos Administration (1992-1998) and the administration candidate Zacaria Candao, a Maguindanaon, and Benjamin Loong, a Tausug, were proclaimed regional Governor and Vice-governor, respectively. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), however, took on a policy of non-participation (Ferrer, 2006, p. 474). It is ironic that Candao, (who was ARMM governor from 1990-1993) did not come from either the MNLF or the MILF signaling that the national leadership gave no importance to these two Moro insurgency movements. The leadership of the ARMM went to the MNLF when Misuari, who was backed by the ruling party, became ARMM governor from 1996-2002. What all of these highlighted, however, was that the choice of who would be the Moro leader was determined by the national government; Candao, Misuari and Luninding Pangandan, who served as ARMM governor from 1993-1996 were all affiliated with the ruling party LAKAS-NUCD-UMD (Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino-National Union of Christian Democrats-Christians and Muslim Democrats of the Philippines). Such a situation was, however, generally not only true for the Moros but for the whole Philippines where electoral politics is a game of patronage politics. This contrasts with the Basques who did not have to rely on patronage politics for representation at the national level—although this was not the case initially; the Basques were also able to establish close links with the Castilian society which gave them some political clout (Hooper, 1995, p. 391).

For both the Moros' and the Basques' experience, therefore, electoral politics was used to decide the establishment and the nature of their respective autonomous regions. Unlike in the Basque experience though, the non-Muslims had an influential say on how the autonomous region was to be. This was the case of the non-Basques who, like the non-Muslims, were generally immigrants in the Basque region. The Philippine government also made use of electoral politics to determine the scope of the autonomous region, which brought

about further dissension among the Moros. (The only areas which favored inclusion in the autonomous region were the Muslim-dominated provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Marawi City [Ferrer, 2006, p. 474]). In contrast, for the Basque region, there was no question with regards to the scope of the autonomous region. The issue of the Basque region is that some sectors, like the ETA, wanted to secede. This is also the case for some sectors of the Moro community. Such an objective was certainly not in the ambit of electoral politics.

National politics also impinged on the nature of the electoral politics with regards to the Basque and Moro nationalist agendas. The Suarez government in Spain, for example, because of “mounting pressure, and with the aim of ensuring Basque nationalist participation in the first democratic election (June 15, 1977), agreed to widen the scope of the amnesty legislation by approving two decrees in March 1977, which permitted the release of most of the political prisoners, although some activists, the majority of them members of ETA, remained in prison” (Sanchez-Cuence & Aguilar, 2009, p. 437). Moreover, once “the Spanish state has passed through the *transición* and a functioning democratic system had been successfully establishing – including an autonomous parliament and government in the Basque Country – this also affected ETA’s capacity to achieve its ends”. (Sanchez-Cuence & Aguilar, 2009, p. 437).

A consequence of this has been that “all main Spanish political parties have a serious presence in the Basque Country and elected representatives from the region have often played a key role in the making and breaking of governments in Madrid” (Bew, Frampton, & Guruuchaga, 2009, p. 246). In a way, this is also the case with Philippine national parties who look at vote-rich Mindanao as important to their electoral victory. The difference, however, is that Spanish political parties campaign on the basis of their vision for the Basque region and they are linked or allied with the regional parties on the basis of this. In the case of Muslim Mindanao, there are no Muslim parties to ally with in general; political alliance is forged in terms of individuals/families/clans.

What has also emerged in relation to electoral politics is the nature of leadership. Whereas in the Basque region, the leadership was generally representative of electoral parties, this was not the case in Muslim Mindanao wherein the leadership, which emerges also during election time, is representative of a political dynasty/family. Furthermore, what continues to prevail in Muslim Mindanao is that patronage politics—i.e., the national leadership’s support for a Moro candidate, who generally is the administration’s candidate—determines

the outcome of elections. This is not the case, however, of the political leadership in the Basque region.

For the ETA and the MNLF, and later on the MILF as the Moro insurgency became a force to contend with, violence continues to be viewed as the more feasible option for change than electoral politics. One other option is through peace talks or negotiations. This has become relevant with the weakening of the ETA and the MNLF. Although an alternative has risen to the MNLF, i.e., the MILF, it is not strong enough to wage an effective Moro insurgency. The Basques in 1977 chose to go for electoral politics as the source of change although violence was continued by the ETA; thus, the division between the “radical” (ETA) and “moderate” (PNV) sectors. Nationalist activists are deeply divided on the issue of armed struggle, and several members of the PNV have been assassinated by the ETA terrorists (Loyer, 1998). This has not been the case among the Moro elites who have chosen to participate in elections. But unlike the Basques, the Moro identity is lost in elections as the Moro elites who run in elections do not carry Moro issues at all. They simply carry the national government platform. Thus, elections in Muslim Mindanao are merely the consolidation of the political and economic power of Moro elites who in turn facilitate the consolidation of the power of national elites in their respective Muslim territories.

For the Basques, national politics also affects them, but in a way different from the Moros. The national party in power basically determines whether negotiations will be pursued with the ETA or not. If it is the right-wing Popular Party, chances are negotiations will not be pursued and if it is the left-wing Socialist Party, chances are negotiations will be pursued (Anonymous, 2006). Thus, the chances of electoral politics being the arena for change also depends on whether peace negotiations are to be pursued or not. ETA, however, also views participation in elections as a way of garnering votes for its party but it has never obtained more than 18 percent of the party votes (Basta Ya! Citizens’ Initiative, 2005, pp. 1-2). In the case of the Moros, whether there are peace negotiations or not does not impact on elections bringing about change. Peace negotiations are also generally determined by the personality of the leadership rather than the ideology of the political party to which the leader belongs. This is because political parties in the Philippines are not ideologically-based but are personality-based.

The weakening of the ETA has also led to electoral politics as the only game in town with regards to the quest for more autonomy. Like with what happened with the social movements in Spain in general, they became heavily

dependent on political parties. “As many leaders of the social movements were co-opted and included in the electoral lists of these parties, the parliamentary representation obtained after the first democratic election left some social movements leaderless. Secondly, the advances made during the transition managed to satisfy many of the demands that had mobilized the largest numbers of people” (Sanchez-Cuenca & Aguilar, 2009, pp. 441-442).

With regard to the Moros, the current weakness of the MNLF and the MILF seems to have left little option for change in Muslim Mindanao as electoral politics does not offer the way out. It also does not help that the region occupied by the Moros remains the poorest in the country. This, therefore, deprives them of the political and economic clout to assert themselves in the electoral process. This is unlike the Basques whose economic power is translated into political power. This is also greatly enhanced by other regions which are as rich as them like Catalonia which are asserting themselves vis-à-vis the central government.

External forces have also pushed ETA to consider the electoral option. Foremost of these is the withdrawal of French support for Basque exiles in France and the European Union’s declaration of the ETA as “terrorists” (Hooper, 1995, p. 403). In the case of Mindanao, the United States, the European Union and Japan among others have poured in massive amounts of official development assistance to develop the Moro region, hoping to give the Moros the option for change through peaceful rather than violent means. As pointed out, “Misuari’s MNLF was transformed from a government enemy to a partner in development but within the context of the patronage of the ruling party” (Ferrer, 2006, pp. 142-143). This is different from the Basque experience where there is no need for the central government and external players to pour in money to the Basque region as it is already very wealthy. Thus, the Basques do not owe the central government or anyone anything. The problem, as pointed out earlier on, is not economic but political and cultural marginalization. Either way, the electoral process is viewed as not the arena for change.

Continuing peace talks have also ensued between the Basques and the Moros and their respective governments. The success of these peace talks also determines whether electoral politics would be looked upon as an option or not. Plebiscites, as an electoral process, continue to be used to attain peace. Such was the August 2001 plebiscite as stipulated by the Tripoli Agreement in determining the coverage of the ARMM.

Electoral Politics and the Basque and Moro Separatist Movements in the 1990s, and Beyond

Together with the left-wing Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the right-wing Popular Party (PP), the Basques were able to field their own nationalist party, the center-right Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) which is the largest party in the powerful regional Basque parliament. The PNV during the first post-Franco government formed a coalition with Felipe Gonzalez's Socialist Party in October 1982 and shared a common platform against ETA's terrorism with Madrid-based democratic parties (Woodworth, 2001, p. 1). It, however, has recently sought closer links with the Herri Batasuna (HB), an outlawed separatist Basque coalition with links to the paramilitary *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA) (Anonymous, 2007, May 11). What angered Madrid with this relationship was that the PNV was now openly calling for self-determination too. "The Basques country as understood by the nationalists would include the three French provinces, and the Spanish province of Navarre, though nationalists form a small minority – less than 10 percent and 20 percent, respectively – in both regions (Woodworth, 2001, p. 9). Challenging the PNV in the Basque region, Partido Popular rejects any renegotiation of the Basques' constitutional relationship with Spain. "It insists that ETA can be defeated by policy and judicial methods alone, and now seems to believe that nonviolent Basque nationalism must also be discredited if ETA is to lose momentum" (Woodworth, 2001, p. 9). The Partido Popular is the first non-nationalist coalition government in the region's post Franco history (Woodworth, 2001, p. 9). ETA, however, in general did not consider these political parties as bringing about radical change. The Moros on the other hand still do not have a Moro nationalist electoral party and moreover, unlike in Spain, there were also no other nationalist parties found in the Philippines. The Moro elites continued to lean towards patronage politics to get what they wanted and to win in elections. Other Moro leaders, on the other hand, saw the MNLF and the MILF as the venue for change. There is, however, one Moro electoral party, *Anak Mindanao*, a party-list party headed by Mujiv Hataman. This is unlike the Basques who find themselves in the company of other nationalist parties.

The weakening of the ETA, however, led Basque nationalists to reconsider electoral politics as a venue for change. The reasons for ETA's weakening were the following: 1) the winding-up of the ETA-pm (political-military) faction in the party (Hooper, 1995, p. 403); 2) growing cooperation between the Spanish and French governments in clamping down on ETA exiles in France ever since Spain joined France in the European Union (Hooper, 1995, p. 403); 3) increasingly effective police work which resulted in the capture

of key ETA terrorists (Hooper, 1995, p.403); and 4) in the last few years, polls have consistently found that a majority of the Basques found political violence “completely useless” and that as many as 90 percent of Basques in 1999 simply wanted violence to end (Edles, 1999, p. 341). This contributed to the split within the PNV or the Basque electoral party and gave further impetus to electoral politics as the venue for change. There has also been a sharp drop in support for independence as a solution to the problems of the Basque country. As for the Moros, the division between the MNLF and the MILF which began during the Martial Law period did not help at all with regard to their leverage vis-à-vis the government. What did not improve the situation too were the Moro elites/warlords who continued to benefit from the patronage politics given by the national leadership. The relationship of the Moro society was also marked by *rido* or clan wars. All of these did not make the Moro a force in electoral politics unlike the Basques when it comes to demanding more autonomy and even independence.

The politics and ideological bias of Spain’s two major national parties, the Popular Party and the Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE), also impact on electoral politics as a venue for change for the Basque separatist movement. An example was when the right-wing Popular Party refused to negotiate with the ETA and decided just to clamp down on it, which weakened ETA leading to its announcement of a “permanent” ceasefire in March 2006 (Anonymous, The Economist, 2007). This increased the PP’s popularity among the voting electorate. But when the ETA was effectively able to sow violence again with a deadly bombing in December 2007, the PSOE had to resort to negotiating with the ETA (Anonymous, 2007, May 11). Such negotiations, however, can also turn off voters if not handled well, specifically by the political party which is negotiating with the ETA. This was seen when the PSOE called for the unconditional surrender of the ETA which led to the hampering of peace negotiations and the consequent decline of the Socialist Party (Anonymous, 2007, May 11). Thus, the violence which the ETA is capable of has a direct effect on electoral politics in Spain unlike the violence instigated by the MNLF and the MILF. Because of this, the national parties like the PP and PSOE have to examine carefully what strategy to take, i.e., whether to negotiate or not with the ETA, and what the character of this negotiation should be.

In relation to this, the ideological stance of the national political parties in Spain also affect the manner in which these are going to deal with the ETA and how this will impact on electoral politics. In general, the PSOE is more open in doing this as compared with the PP. Their success or failure in dealing or not dealing with ETA will have an effect on how the voters will choose their leaders.

How the voters will choose will initially reflect in the municipal elections. Much depends on how the PSOE is successful in forging peace negotiations with the ETA (Anonymous, 2006). If successful, then the party can expect to boost their chances of winning in the national elections. If the peace negotiations are a failure, it can expect a lessening of their chances in winning in the elections.

Such national politics are also reflected in the Basque regional parliament. In the late 1990s, for example, the Basque Socialists served in a coalition government in the regional Basque parliament with the PNV but they resigned from such an alliance in protest of the PNV alliance of electoral representatives of the ETA whereby the latter offered support to the former to secure the passage of certain bills (Bew et al., 2009, p. 222). Regional elections also form a way by which the ETA is able to gauge whether their acts of violence have popular support or not. In October 1998, for example, ETA took part in the regional Basque parliament elections under the name *Euskal Herritarok* ('Basque Citizens', or EH) so as to avoid prosecution on the acts of violence committed such as the murder of Miguel Angel Blanco, a 29-year old PP councilor in the Basque town of Ermuna. EH received more votes than ever. Elsewhere, EH performed much better than the PNV. This was followed by local elections where the share of the vote recorded for ETA (operating again under the guise of EH) reached its highest ever level, as the party secured almost 20 percent of the overall vote. The PP and the Socialists also performed well while the PNV performed poorly (Bew et al., 2009, p. 222). What the election results demonstrated was the extent to which a peace process based on the Estella Agreement of 1998 (which put forward a programme for a negotiated settlement to the Basque conflict, involving representatives of the Basque people together with the French, and Spanish governments)¹ was serving to polarize the political environment in the Basque Country (between the Spanish and Basque nationalist parties) and damaging the power base of the PNV. "The results fuelled a growing reassessment within the PNV as to what the nascent peace process was about" (Bew et al., 2009, p. 227). Furthermore, at Estella, ETA had demanded that the PNV sever all links with the Spanish parties. Now it seemed that with the ETA victory and the poor showing of the PNV, the Spanish parties decided to break all links with the PNV, at last until it renounced its *de facto* alliance with the ETA. In addition, under the terms of the new pact, the PP and the socialists promised to try to reach an agreement on new policies dealing with prisons and counter-terrorism strategy (Bew et al. 2009, p. 227).

In June 2002, however, the Spanish parliament approved a new Political Parties Act which was designed to give the courts the power to ban the electoral wing of ETA – known successively as *Herri Batasuna*, *Euskal Herritarrok* and

now reincarnated as *Batasuna*. In March 2003, the Supreme Court *banned* Batasuna. Such measures appeared to confirm the complete breakdown in relations with between the PNV and the PP – the two parties having been once allies in the Spanish parliament. The PP’s hardline position on the ETA was supported by the PSOE highlighting how the Basque nationalists and the main Spanish parties had never been further apart (Bew et al., 2009, pp. 229-230). Nevertheless, the PNV through its president, proposed the “Ibarretxe Plan” which claimed self-determination on behalf of the Basque territories in both France and Spain (Bew et al, 2009, pp. 229-231; Woodworth, 2004, p.177).

This is not the case for the impact the violence of the MNLF and the MILF has on electoral politics in the Philippines. Who matters for the national government in the elections continue to be the Moro warlords and the anomalies they can do particularly in relation to election matter; this also links them to the national leadership. In general the Moro warlords are known to deliver “100%” votes for the national leadership making them suspect of electoral cheating. One of the foremost examples of this is the 2005 “Hello Garci” scandal and the 2009 “Maguindanao massacre”. The former involved President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo caught talking on the phone with then former Mindanao-based Commission on Elections (COMELEC) Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano instructing him that one million votes should be delivered to her from the Muslim areas of Mindanao.

As for the latter, this concerns the Ampatuans of Maguindanao, who are staunch supporters of Arroyo and who never fail to deliver “100%” votes for her and her candidates during elections amidst accusations of cheating and violence. The Ampatuans were recently accused of masterminding the November 23, 2009 Maguindanao massacre which saw the murder of 57 people including the wife and relatives of Maguindanao Vice-mayor Esmael Mangudadatu. Thirty-four of those murdered were journalists. The killings were the first reported violence related to the May 2010 national elections because Mangudadatu wanted to run for governor versus the incumbent Ampatuan. Mangudadatu’s wife and her entourage were on their way to the city capital to file his electoral candidacy for Governor. The journalists, who were murdered, were there to cover this controversial event. Both the Ampatuans and the Mangudadatus are known to be supporters of Arroyo. It is, therefore, these Moro warlords who affect electoral politics and not the MNLF or the MILF. The Maguindanao massacre was actually the first case of violence as instigated by the Moro warlords which threatened to have an impact on electoral politics. The Arroyo Administration presidential candidate Gilberto Teodoro Jr. sought to distance himself from the Ampatuans by calling for their expulsion from the ruling coalition party, the LAKAS-NUCD.

As for peace negotiations, although in general these do not have any impact on the electorate, there are also certain issues which may translate into electoral votes. Such an experience was seen in the Philippine government's proposal to create the Bangsa Moro Juridical Entity (BMJE) as part of the peace negotiations with the MILF. The BMJE was to concede to the MILF what they declared were their ancestral lands in Mindanao. This turned off the majority of the voting electorate in a country which is 80 percent Catholic, prompting senators and congressmen who were running in the 2010 national elections to denounce this for fear that they might lose votes. At the local level, non-Muslim politicians in the Moro areas as well as in the neighboring provinces, like Zamboanga City, also vowed to go against the BMJE. The national government was, therefore, pressured to withdraw this proposal despite the support given to it by the United States and Malaysia, among other countries.

The issue of autonomy also continues to be a contentious electoral issue among the Spanish. Political demands from regional parties in both the Basque Country and Catalonia for increased autonomy, sometimes bordering on de facto independence, are viewed as a probable cause of constitutional crisis in Spain. Furthermore, the differences between the Spanish political parties concerning this matter create more concern for a possible crisis (Anonymous, 2007, May 11). In all this, the reality is that a prolonged outbreak of ETA violence will create disaster for whichever government is in power during election time.

Memories of the Franco dictatorship also impact on how the Spanish national parties, i.e., the PP and PSOE, deal with the ETA. There are those in the PP who believe that their party should not deal with ETA, it being a "terrorist" group, but there are those who also argue that ETA was a victim of Franco's repression and it had to resort to violence to retaliate (Fajardo, 2007). These are the arguments that play into the electoral votes when the issue of peace negotiations with the ETA are pursued. This does not seem to be the case with the MNLF or the MILF where the issue of the Marcos dictatorship shapes the relationship of the national government in dealing with the Moro insurgency, particularly with regard to electoral politics. But Christians in Mindanao generally are not sympathetic to the MNLF and the MILF causes. This is seen in the regions of Mindanao which are both inhabited by Christians and Muslims or Mindanao regions which are surrounded by Moro communities. An example is Zamboanga City wherein any politician who shows sympathy to the MNLF or the MILF is sure to lose the votes of the Zamboangueñas. It is also for this reason that the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) with the United States which allows U.S. military exercises in Mindanao — particularly in Basilan where there are Moro insurgents, specifically those from the infamous kidnap-for-ransom

Abu Sayyaf, an MNLF renegade group — are popular among the Christians in the neighboring areas. These VFA troops are also linked with the U.S. War-on-Terror (WoT) where the support for this translates into local votes, particularly in the predominantly Christian areas which are threatened by the Moro insurgency. In the case of Spain, the global WoT is very unpopular among the Spanish people; but despite this, the Spanish government under Aznar's PP supported this U.S. policy. This, however, was only translated into national votes when the PP blamed the 2004 bombing of Madrid's Atocha train station on the ETA although it turned out that it was the doing of *El-Qaida*. This led to the national electoral victory of the PSOE in 2004 (Anonymous, *The Economist*, 2007).

Conclusion

The issues which therefore factored into the electoral politics for the Basques and the Moros revolved mainly on the concern that they were both politically and culturally and, for the latter, also economically marginalized. The difference was that for the Basques, their concerns could factor into electoral politics; however, this was not the case with the Moros. Among the reasons for this was that the Basques also had economic power which they could translate into political power. Electoral politics in the Basque region also mirrored the class divide between the agrarian and industrialist sectors as well as the national class affiliations of Spanish society. An implication of this was that electoral politics reflected the interests of the constituencies. This was not the case of electoral politics in Muslim Mindanao whereby the American colonizers, because of their military strength, succeeded in marginalizing the Moros not only economically but also politically. This led to Moro elites relying on patronage politics to win in electoral politics. What aggravated this situation for the Moros was that the non-immigrants now residing in the Muslim areas of Mindanao would vote for issues that are not of concern to the Moros. In certain areas also inhabited by the Moros, the migrants could easily outnumber the latter. This was not the case with the Basques who could not be outvoted by immigrants.

The failure of the electoral process to address the needs of the Moros led to the emergence of the MNLF, signaling that Moro concerns are not to be addressed through electoral politics but through a separatist movement. As for the Basques, the ETA arose in the early 1960s because of the repression of the Franco dictatorship. This further fuelled Basque separatism as Franco also repressed all forms of political parties and electoral politics. In the case of the Moros, the period of dictatorship also eliminated any form of genuine electoral

politics to address Moro concerns. What emerged, however, was the intervention of the OIC which threatened to impose an oil embargo on the Philippines if it did not solve the Moro problem. Thus, the solution was outside the arena of electoral politics. This trend continued during the post-Martial Law period where peace negotiations and peace talks took the forefront over electoral politics in resolving the Moro problem. But what also co-existed here was the continuing co-optation of Moro leaders and elites by the national leadership during elections. Such a co-optation only perpetuated the political and economic power of these Moro elites and did nothing for Moro concerns.

Electoral politics as a venue for change would resume with the end of the Franco and Marcos dictatorships in 1977 and 1986 respectively. Elections, in particular, were held to approve the 1978 Spanish constitution and the Basque Statute of Autonomy in 1979 which received 90 percent support from the voting population.

The PNV and ETA, however, refused to recognize this and continued their acts of violence. In the case of the Moros, RA 6734 of 1989, created the ARMM and was passed and signed into law by President Aquino in 1989. A plebiscite was held to approve this. Like their PNV and ETA counterparts, the MNLF did not approve of this as they disagreed with the process in which the autonomous region was pursued. But unlike in the Basque experience, there was a low voter turnout. Nevertheless, in February 1990, elections were again used to determine the ARMM officials. What continued to characterize Moro electoral politics was patronage politics where the national leadership basically determines who would be the elected Moro officials. The Philippine government also made use of elections to determine the scope of the autonomous region which brought about further dissension among the Moros.

Like in the case of the Basque experience, national politics also impinged on the nature of the electoral politics with regard to the Basque and Moro nationalist agendas. What has also emerged in all these is the importance of the leadership. In Spain, this is dictated by the ideological bias of the leadership and his political party in power. If it is the PSOE, the chances of negotiating with the ETA are more positive rather than if it is the PP in power. Nevertheless, in both cases, both the leaderships of the PSOE and the PP are conscious of the impact of their decision to negotiate or not and the content of the negotiations on the electorate. This differs in the Moro experience whereby electoral politics mainly concerns the Moro elites who play the game of patronage politics with the national leaders. Thus, Moro concerns are not carried during elections. The political leadership's decision to negotiate or not negotiate with the MNLF or

the MILF does not have any impact on the elections. There are, however, negotiating issues which have threatened to affect the national politics as in the case of the government's proposal to establish a BMJE. For the ETA and the MNLF and later on the MILF, violence rather than electoral politics continues to be viewed as an option for change. Within the Basque radicals, however, there has been division between the "radical" (ETA) and "moderate" (PNV) sectors with the latter favoring electoral politics as a venue for pushing for Basque interests. The weakening, however, of the ETA has also led to electoral politics as the only game in town with regard to the quest for more autonomy. For the MNLF and the MILF, the inability of electoral politics to address their demands and the weakening of their military power have led to another arena for resolving the Moro conflict which is the pouring in of official development assistance.

Electoral politics, to differing extent for the Basques and the Moros, has played a crucial role in determining the outcome of their demand for more regional autonomy. Plebiscites and referendums to ascertain their geographic scope of autonomy and the rights to be accrued to them as well as the elections of their respective representatives have been held. These electoral procedures seemed to have worked better for the Basques than for the Moros. A reason for this is that electoral politics in the Philippines continues to be a game of the elites. Thus, an "illiberal democracy" in the Philippines as characterized by patronage politics undermines the electoral process as a venue for resolving the demand for separatism. For Spain, on the other hand, the fact that the quest for separatism continues to wreak havoc on national electoral politics highlights the limitation of this arena to resolve such a problem even under a functioning liberal democratic dispensation.

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Endnotes

¹Please see Tadem (2009).

²“The Carlist Wars arose from a dynastic dispute after the death of Fernando VII. The wars pitted liberal supporters of Ferdinand VII’s infant niece Isabel, who controlled the government in Madrid, against peasant supporters of Ferdinand’s brother Carlos (hence, they became known as ‘Carlists’)” (Payne, 1875, p. 41).

“Inside the Basque Country, the Carlist wars were civil wars that pitted urban, anti-*fuero* liberals against nobles of the countryside, peasantry, and clergy – the latter of whom were united under the slogan ‘God and the *fuero*’” (Heiberg, 1982, p. 364).

The two Carlist wars in 1833-39 and 1874-76 resulted in the abolition of the *fueros*, and a political movement gradually emerged to demand their reinstatement. Initially, this demand was not incompatible with inclusion in the Basque country in Spain, but after a few years it took on a separatist connotation (Loyer, 1998).

³The Americans had even at first dreamed of creating a separate colony out of Mindanao, which was then known as the ‘Moro Province’.

⁴Macario Tiu, Professor of at the Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City.

⁵Ed Quitoriano, Executive Director, GUAVA Consulting Team.

⁶Ricardo Reyes is Executive Director of Philippine Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services (PARRDS).

⁷Initially, the MNLF presented itself as a coalition of forces. Differing opinions compounded by fundamental tribal and ethnic differences, however, led to the breakup in the leadership. Today, the MNLF leadership has been divided along the following three major tribal lines and these are: the *Maranaos* under Abdul Khayer Alonto; the *Maguindanaos* under Hashim Salamat who, after officially presenting a Manifesto declaring his takeover of the MNLF Central Command Chairmanship in December 1977, established his base in Cairo/Jeddah and Kuwait; and the *Tausogs/Samal/Yakan* group under Nur Misuari (Lomongo, 1981, p.81). Salamat accused Misuari of “failing to unite the Muslims in attaining their objectives, mismanaging the funds of the MNLF and of one-man rule. He also believed that Misuari leaned more towards Communist ideologies rather than Muslim interests” (Lomongo, 1981, p.81). A fourth group was the Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO) which was jointly headed by Salipada Pendatun, a Maguindanaon, and Rashid Lucman, a Maranao. On September 19, 1980, (former Congressman) Pendatun returned to the Philippines “not... as a Moslem rebel” but to share the responsibility with the legitimate government in attaining peace and progress in Mindanao (Lomongo, 1981, p.81). Some also believed that the cause of the split was the doing of Marcos himself who spread rumors that Misuari was receiving huge amounts of money, creating dissent among the other MNLF leaders (Guiam, 2004, interview [Rufa Guiam, Director,

Center for Peace and Development Studies. Mindanao State University, General Santos City].

⁸The Estella Agreement “led to a ceasefire that began in September 1998 and lasted for just over a year” (Bew et al., 2009, pp. 223, 250).

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