

Philippine election system essay



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I. Abstract Philippines as a democratic country hold election as a political process in which the citizens choose their candidates to govern the country. Through conducting election, people's voice is being heard. Election is said to be the basic in a democratic country, it is the most needed component in order to let the people feel that the country they are living with is a country being governed by them. It should be held free and fair but in contrary to reality, election now is being affected by its so-called "ills". Electoral sabotage, electoral violence and vote buying have been its part and parcel in every conduct of Philippine election.

Philippine election was considered most of the people as a "dirty election" because of the issues it had undergone. This paper focuses on the "ills" of election in Philippines, specifically on fraud/ electoral sabotage, electoral violence and vote buying. It also includes the manipulation of the result the election by the political elites, the "boboters" (voters) in Philippine election and the awareness of the public on the "ills" of election. This paper aims to give further information on "ills" of election and be able to add awareness to the public's information on "ills" of election.

II. Introduction Democracy is a world that purrs with respectability. Even states that are not democratic wish to appear democratic, and holding elections is one of the easiest ways to follow some of the forms of democracy even if the state is not democratic. Elections can serve many purposes for the state than merely the democratic one of allowing the mass of the people to help in the selection of leaders and policies. Election was invented to make democracy possible; but once invented it turned out to have further uses.

Election in Philippines has always been become an intense, and most interesting event in our country. The voters of the country always tried to cast their votes in order to participate in election. But, the voters' interest to participate in election was being infected with the “ ills” of election. Instead of being motivated to vote wisely, the “ ills” of election just give the voters the concept of voting just for the sake of earning money and not for the sake of choosing the right candidates for the right position in the office of the government.

For many Filipinos, their image of election is that of “ guns, goons, and gold” or as “ riotous fiesta.” In areas where violence is not an issue, voters choose among the best performers. Where violence proliferates, voters either cast their vote in view of ensuring their survival, or stay away altogether. With violence and fraud, election loses credibility as a democratic exercise. Elections merely become a venue for exchange between politicians and the voters, and citizenship and the right to suffrage are fundamentally undermined.

Electoral malpractice can be so rampant that it was said in one isolated community so many votes exceeded the number the number of registered voters, perhaps the “ birds, bees, flowers, and trees voted”.

As being quoted by Shiela Coronel “ Election, therefore is a mirror”. It gives reflection to what our country is. If Philippine election is said to be a “ dirty” election, therefore our country as well is dirty, so is that it really means? Or it just implies that people who are involved in election are the one that must be labelled as “ dirty” and not the election itself? Because of the power of

the vote, the electoral process has been corrupted by unscrupulous politicians, in connivance with irresponsible people. III. Philippine Electoral System

The Philippines elects on national level a head of state (the President) and a legislature. The president is elected for a six-year term by the people. The vice-president is elected at the same time on a separate ballot. The Philippines elects on a local level governors, vice governors, board members, mayors up to the barangay officials and the Sangguniang Kabataan or youth council members which is mandated in the current Constitution of the Philippines and the Local Government Code of 1991.

The Congress or Kongreso has two chambers. The House of Representatives or Kapulungan ng mga Kinatawan has currently 240 seats elected for three-year terms, of which 212 seats are contested in single seat constituencies and, 23 are allotted to party-lists according to a formula, which are only accessible to marginalized and under-represented groups and parties. The Philippine constitution prohibits the House of Representatives to have more than 250 members. The Senate or Senado has 24 members who are elected for six-year terms at-large and do not represent any geographical district. Half of the Senate is renewed every three years.

The Philippines has a multi-party system, with numerous parties in which no one party often has a chance of gaining power alone, and parties must work with each other to form a coalition government. The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) is responsible for running the elections.

Under the Constitution, general elections for the President, Vice President, Congress and local officials occur after the President and Vice President finish their terms. While the Congressional elections occur on mid-term of the incumbent President. Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections are now done at the same time after the Congressional elections.

IV. ILLS of Philippine Elections The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) is the agency constitutionally mandated to administer the conduct of elections. The commission records the violence during the start of the campaign season until Election Day. Election- related harassment and violence can range from intimidating and threatening persons with bodily harm, to kidnapping and murder, as well as arson and bombings of strategic locations. Victims and perpetrators are not limited to the candidates and their campaign staff. Hired goons, private armies, the police and military, as well as armed rebel groups, also figure prominently.

A. Fraud/ Electoral Sabotage Electoral sabotage is an illegal interference with the process of an election. Electoral sabotage could be the reason why manipulation of the results of election happens. It could whether be done through increasing the vote share of the favoured candidate, depressing the vote share of the rival candidates, or both. Most electoral sabotage happens on the day of election- during the day of election. Electoral sabotage in Philippines became a law on January 23, 2007, RA 9369 and was approved by the former president Gloria Macapagal- Arroyo. Any member of the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI) or Board of Canvassers (BOC), and those who conspire or connive with them shall be made held liable of the case electoral

sabotage. As being included in RA 9369, the following are the specific acts that constitute to electoral sabotage:

1. Tampering, increasing or decreasing the votes received by a candidate in any election, and such acts are perpetrated on a large scale or in substantial numbers;
2. Refusal by any member of the BEI or BOC, after proper verification and hearing, to credit the correct votes or deduct such tampered votes, and such acts are perpetrated on a large scale or in substantial numbers;
3. Tampering, increasing and/or decreasing of votes is committed in the election of a national elective office which is voted upon nationwide, and the tampering, increase and/or decrease shall adversely affect the results of the election to the said national office to the extent that losing candidate/s is/are made to appear the winner/s;
4. Refusal to credit the correct votes or to deduct tampered votes is committed in the election of a national elective office which is voted upon nationwide, and the refusal shall adversely affect the results of the election to the said national office to the extent that the losing candidate/s is/are made to appear the winner/s;
5. Tampering, increase and/or decrease of votes committed, regardless of the elective office involved, is accomplished in a single election document, and the number of votes involved exceed five thousand (5, 000) votes, and the same adversely affects the true results of the election;

6. Refusal to credit the correct votes or to deduct tampered votes perpetrated, is accomplished in a single election document, and the number of votes involved exceed five thousand (5, 000) votes, and the same adversely affects the true results of the election;

7. Refusal to credit the correct votes or to deduct tampered votes perpetrated, is accomplished in the transposition of the figures/results from one election document to another and the number of votes involved exceed five thousand (5, 000) votes, and the same adversely affects the true results of the election;

8. Tampering, increase/s and / or decrease/s of votes perpetrated, where the total votes involved exceed ten thousand (10, 000) votes; and 9. Refusal to credit the correct votes or to deduct the tampered votes where the total votes involved exceed ten thousand (10, 000) votes. Often, political elites are the one who have charges in electoral sabotage since political elites have their “ guns, goons and gold”- the 3Gs. This made them possible to do bias on the result of the election. They could use all their 3Gs in order for them win in the election. Life imprisonment was the penalty being charged to those who are found guilty in doing so.

Even our former President Gloria Arroyo who approved the bill of electoral sabotage as a crime into a law was also being charged of the same violation on November 18, 2011. Andal Ampatuan Sr. was also charged of the same case, he was the one being pointed to be the mastermind in the Maguindanao massacre. The “ rich-versus-poor” theme is kept intentionally vague by populist leaders (as they are from the elite themselves) who

attempt to mobilize the masses without the need of an extensive “leftist” organization. the decline of the Philippine left meant that a political space opened up (Abinales, 1996). The unorganized masses still provide a tremendous opportunity for would-be populist politicians.