

#### DISCUSSION 4

DR. WILFRIDO VILLACORTA: I must congratulate Miss Carbonell for her incisive presentation.

Now I have some questions. First: Your group is interested in coming up with a responsible formula of political and citizen participation. However, what assurance will you have that in your local government election, there will be honest-to-goodness popular participation?

My second question is: What study has been made previously about KB participation? I am titillated by your comment that KB members in the *Sangguniang Bayan* are shy. The feedback I previously got is that KB members are, generally, speaking, more outspoken, to the embarrassment of even the New Society and its old politicians!

DR. RAUL DE GUZMAN: Before Miss Carbonell answers, I want to point out for your first question that there would be no assurance. So probably we could just argue on different grounds.

It is really difficult to guarantee. But we mentioned that for the election result to really reflect the wish of the people, there are several things that we could do. First, we could perhaps improve on the electoral processes and procedures. Secondly, we could also perhaps help the people organize.

MS. MA. AURORA CARBONELL: On the second question: The finding that KB representatives are generally shy is true of the *barangays*. If there were findings that KB representatives are outspoken—even aggressive—then that's a very good sign. But, on the other hand, they have their training programs being conducted by the government, specifically at Mt. Makiling.

MR. TONY PANGAN: Under Martial Law, citizen's participation cannot be meant as expression by all. Although we have this so-called referendum plebiscite value of effective participation, we cannot deny that there still exists fear on the part of the people. There is that fear that they might be arrested or invited if they speak openly of their feelings. So, that's why in October 1976, the referendum comments ended up mostly with the so-called "it's-up-to-you" votes.

Now how would you accept this kind of participation?

DEAN DE GUZMAN: Well, I have studied various referenda—the January 1973, the July 1973, the February 1975, and the October 1976 referenda. And there are a number of things we noted in our previous studies of those referenda. For one, the safeguard in the registration system was not good—one could easily vote in many precincts at the same time. Second, we noted that the atmosphere was that of fear. Even now, this is still prevalent and the point is that the votes do not really reflect what the people want. Then, as mentioned by Ms. Carbonell, there is this concerted program and campaign to get a particular type of vote or response. This was true in the 1975 February referendum.

So, all in all, our assessment would point out the fact of leak-ups in the conduct of the referenda.

DR. REMIGIO AGPALO: On development, I think your concept of it is diametrically opposed to that of the Martial Law administration.

The concept of development by the administration, as made clear by the statement of President Marcos, is to reform society.

Now, the reformation of the Philippine society will be effected through a highly centralized, hierarchical organization which is the Martial Law administration. This can therefore be legitimized only after it has provided the services to the people.

In your proposal, the idea of legitimizing the government is through election, through liberty, and through other attributes of liberal democracy. And I think it will simply be not accepted.

DR. DE GUZMAN: Well, you talk of Martial Law administration and I think you have only in mind Pres. Marcos and his staff. But Martial Law is more than that!

Around Pres. Marcos, you have the military, you have the bureaucracy, and you have the local government officials. So Pres. Marcos is not alone and whether he likes it or not, there are forces he has to contend with before arriving at certain decisions. And we are battling for our proposal because it includes the other forces outside the administration.

MR. TENDERO: I want to raise a point here. I believe that there is a need for technology and technocracy as well. My question is, how are you going to work it out if you also want meaningful participation through representation?

DR. DE GUZMAN: Well, the proposed developmental legislature is in the form of a bicameral legislative body. It will have an

appointed group of technocrats in addition to popularly-elected members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

MR. TUASON: Does it mean a recapping of the constitution? So, after five years of Martial Law, we need to restudy the 1973 Constitution and perhaps even formulate a new one?

Your panel advanced that there must be citizen participation in order to have a responsible use of power. But you stated that citizen participation should be in terms of election. Now, it is very obvious there is no citizen participation today.

DR. DE GUZMAN: Let me remind the group that we are studying citizen participation (1) in legal means—that is, election, or electoral process; (2) in decision-making and preparation of policies and programs; and (3) in the implementation of several development programs.

Now in the Martial Law administration, as Ms. Carbonell has mentioned, there is no election. But election is not the only way of participation!

We can have participation in the election of the *Sangguniang Bayan* members; in the referenda; in public hearings. So we cannot just say that because there is no election, we have a totally irresponsible government!

MR. TUASON: I would like to question the proposition that we need to set up a government where it will be authoritarian at the top and democratic at the lower level. If we do this, will it still be a democratic government?

DR. DE GUZMAN: Well, obviously that is impossible. I want to qualify it in terms of a temporary Martial Law which goes through a phasing out period. At the phasing out period, there will be elections at the *barangay* level. Then there will be elections of local officials, regional ones, up to the establishment of a full-blown legislative body.

MR. ROMEO OCAMPO: I think, on the issue of irresponsible use of power, we really cannot have that kind of set-up.

MR. TRIUMFANTE: It has been pointed out in this forum that the administration claims to have allowed direct participation through referenda, *barangays*, and *Sangguniang Bayans*. And they are even claiming that the previous types of consultation of representatives were not as good.

However, the constitution has been amended; the present President will become the Prime Minister; and at the same time, some of the Cabinet members will sit in the *Batasang Pambansa*.

My question is: Why do they want to continue holding power? And how independent and articulate will the proposed interim *Batasang Pambansa* be in carrying out its legislative function if these people are there?

My other question is: If election will only be at the regional level, how independent and representative will the interim assembly be?

DR. DE GUZMAN: Well, I think it will not be really as reflective as the people would want.

MR. ORDEN: The proposal of the panel, I think, is similar to the fairy tale I've read from a novel. The tale goes like this:

There was a prisoner in a big house—or castle—with many rooms. The prisoner was made to go from one room to the other. Each time he encounters the same accessories, displays, and other items, he goes to the next room and so on until he never really found out that he was a prisoner of that big castle.

DR. DE GUZMAN: Well, I don't know what you expect from us. You are asking how sure we are that we are not in this big castle—as prisoners.

What we want to discuss are these issues which we believe should be kept alive by being discussed. And our point is we want to find a way out because we are also getting bored with these.

MR. ANABEJO: I understand you gather your data from observation. Did you use other methods like questionnaires?

DR. DE GUZMAN: There were surveys conducted and interviews and questionnaires. And I myself was a participant in the analysis of the comments given by the people in the February 1975 and October 1976 referenda.

Also, we have studies on a more purposive sampling so, we are actually using data from combined sources

MR. ANABEJO: Is there any means you employ to insulate your collection of data—and your analysis of them—from personal biases?

MS. CARBONELL: Well, our panel has the commitment. The data are there. The specific research methodologies and techniques are employed. And we are giving some reliability check measures.

We have a group of UP consultants—mostly deans, and a group from the Comelec. These two work together and I suppose their biases must have been neutralized already by each other.

Thus I think the data we presented were valid and reliable. And the interpretation of the given data proceeds logically from those actual data.

DR. FRANCISCO NEMENZO, JR.: Listening to you, I get the impression that participatory democracy exists only in the UP College of Arts and Sciences. To say that there is no citizen participation under Martial Law is, I think, essentially saying that there has been no change in the nature of the Philippine political system—because we had no democracy before. Our participation, before, was limited to choosing only once every two years between the NP and the LP!

Now, is the proclamation of Martial Law, there was really no participation in the making and shaping of policies; so that there has really been no change at all!

However, I realize the possibility that under this dictatorship, the condition for citizen participation can be created. In fact, all the democracies that I know were created by one man—even in the US. George Washington imposed a dictatorship for twelve years—when he was elected with no opposition! And through that period of one-man rule, the conditions for participatory democracy were laid down.

In the Philippines, however, it is different. The problem with the present regime is that it has not really destroyed the oligarchy! Well, it has destroyed the previous one but another oligarchy has emerged! And until this also is destroyed, no participatory democracy will ever be made real!

DR. DE GUZMAN: Well, we are aware of this problem.

DR. GABRIEL IGLESIAS: I would like to go back to the story related earlier.

Now I think the problem is not only the prisoner's being in the castle, but the problem is the prisoner himself! He does not react.

DR. VILLACORTA: Well, on my part, I think the problem is that of high sounding concepts of structures, indicators, etc. mixed with the basic concept of citizen participation.

I think that we in political science talk of institutions, parliaments, vigilant citizenry, public opinion, etc. without even taking into consideration the basic components of citizen participation—like the economics of it. Or do you think there can be a genuine participation without the citizen's actually having a say in production?