

A HISTORICO-COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
OF THE BARANGAY AS A
POLITICAL UNIT

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ABSTRACT

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Summary

The study involved the historico-comparative analysis of the barangay as a political unit. It featured the political structure of the barangay in three periods, namely: pre-colonial, colonial, and at present.

Pre-colonial barangay was known to be the oldest and smallest political unit in the Philippines. It was headed by a datu, a rajah, or a lakan whose territory inhabited by 30-100 families. He was surrounded with the so-called council of elders. The multiplicity of the barangays proved that there was no central government during that time.

Under the colonial period, the Spanish colonization in particular, the barangay was used and became a part of

the governmental structure. From the pre-colonial head called rajah, lakan, or datu, his title was changed to "cabeza de barangay", meaning head of the barangay. In this period, the cabeza has more responsibilities, that is, to his superiors. In his territory, one can find about 20 to 30 dwellings organized primarily based on kinship and economic ties and with a complete political consciousness.

At present, barangay is considered as one of the important elements in the entire political system. With the creation of Presidential Decree No. 86, known as the Citizens' Assembly, up to the promulgation of Presidential Decree No. 557, the barangay was officially acknowledged. Several bills and laws were then passed and implemented to further strengthen the barangay as a basic political unit.

Methodology

The methodology used is the historical research and it may be defined as the systematic and objective location, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events. It is an act of reconstruction undertaken in the spirit of critical inquiring designed to achieve a fruitful representation of

a previous age. In seeking data from the personal experiences and observation of others, from books and records, the researchers have often to contend with inadequate information so that their reconstruction has tended to be a sketch rather than a portrait.

The researchers tried to spot the differences between the periods of study on how did barangays grew, evolved, and developed as a political unit. A comparative analysis between these three periods was made to establish significant findings.

Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Barangays during the pre-colonial era were politically independent from each other. The datu possessed the necessary powers and functions that would enable proper administration of the barangay.

During the colonial period, the Spaniards introduced a centralized form of government. The datu, now known as cabeza de barangay, lost a lot of his powers as the colonizers consolidated the barangay to become a part of a central government.

The importance of the barangay as part of the governmental structure cannot be taken for granted. The government during the post-colonial era tried to give the

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