

Understanding The Effects of Local Patronage Politics on the Voting Behavior of Selected Residents of Barangay 149, Caloocan City

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ABSTRACT

Political scholars have emphasized that Patronage Politics remains an integral concept in fleshing out the status of national politics as a whole. This study employs an explanatory grounded theory design, subjecting semi-structured interviews with purposively sampled residents of Barangay 149, Caloocan City to closely examine how the informants understood local patronage politics and its effect on voting behavior. The findings indicate that understanding of patronage politics in the local setting is closely related to how a voter behaves during elections through the frameworks of *reciprocity*, *dyadic ties*, and *prevailing norms*.

Keywords: Patronage Politics, Grassroots, Voting Behavior, Caloocan City, Prevailing Norms, Reciprocity, Dyadic Ties,

INTRODUCTION

The Barangay serves a vital role within each community, promoting general welfare, provision of basic services, and in preserving and upholding the peace within the community.¹ Barangay 149 belonging to the 1st District of Caloocan City holds prominence within the *Bagong Barrio West* area having the incumbency of local leaders Mayor *Along* Malapitan and Congressman Oscar *Oca* Malapitan residing within the Bagong Barrio West Area. Aside from population, Barangay 149 is a prime location of sorties, activities, and gatherings making the barangay hold prominence in garnering votes within the 1st District.

Philippine Politics remains defined overwhelmingly by the various social phenomena and the dynamics that provide a picture of what the political atmosphere looks like in the country. With this, comes the concepts of *patronage politics* that may encapsulate several concepts such as *reciprocity*, or *clientelistic exchange*. This chapter shall focus on the *grassroots level*, specifically, the community setting, in understanding the effects of local patronage politics on the voting behavior of community members.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This research will only focus on exploring, presenting, the grasp of the community residents on the effects of Local Patronage Politics on their voting behavior. By employing the specified approach, the study caters to the concept of Patronage Politics, specifically how the concept may be perceived from the grassroots and thereby how this perception manifests into the actual voting behavior of selected community members of Barangay 149 of Caloocan City. Given the incumbent leaders such as Mayor Dale *Along* Malapitan, the father Congressman Oscar *Oca* Malapitan, and District 1 Councilor Alexander Caralde residing within the Bagong Barrio West Area. The scope of this thesis holds Barangay 149 in prominence by being a prime location of sorties, activities, and gatherings aside from the population holding dominance within District 1.

The study shall not extend to similar fields stemming from the topic of patronage politics, by highlighting local contexts of other municipalities and cities. Furthermore, studies giving emphasis on the overall ‘national’ effect shall not be part of the primary pursuit of analysis. Whereas, this aspect shall only be tackled within the context of the literature review providing a clear picture of what Philippine Politics look like.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employs the Grounded Theory (GT) approach which was formulated by authors Glaser & Strauss (1965).² By pursuing an *exploratory* approach, the Grounded

¹ *Barangays – PhilAtlas*. (n.d.).

² Lambert, Mike. "Grounded theory." In *Practical research methods in education*, pp. 132-141. Routledge, 2019.

Theory allows the use of inductive methods to develop theory. This framework emphasizes having a ‘multi-faceted’ means of investigation granting much more freedom in exploring through the discipline of knowledge suitable in attaining the research aims.³

In the context of Barangay 149, belonging to the 1st District of Caloocan City encapsulates the community level *culture* and *trends* within the political atmosphere of Caloocan City,⁴ As such, the Grounded Theory systematizes the social realities, the processes, and dynamics in a social context, employing the approach is much more appropriate in rendering a theory or a framework that shall render in explanation human behavior.⁵

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis follows a qualitative methodology as the study leans towards non-numerical data, reflecting in the manner of exchange from desired participants by means of text, audio, or through video format.⁶ In exploring the areas of politics and governance, the complexity of the broad nature of social phenomena is without a doubt part and parcel of such pursuit. Giving more emphasis on why the research methodology is frequently utilized in the fields of the humanities and the social sciences. The approach presents the greater potential of identifying the natural context of social phenomena by being free in analysis, interpretation, and stimulation of presented data.

Therefore, the approach provides a better understanding of patronage politics in the local setting of Barangay 149 of Caloocan City, and its effects on the voting behavior of the selected residents of the community. To effectively acquire the necessary information needed in fulfillment of the study, the study employed a qualitative approach and pursued a sit-down one-on-one interview with the selected residents.

In pursuit of exploring the perception of selected residents of Barangay 149 of Caloocan City on the local setting or *atmosphere* of patronage politics and the effects on their voting behavior, the study ultimately sets its course to the ‘what’ in understanding the aspect of the individual perception of community members.

As the aims of the study then gives the purpose of giving meaning through extension of knowledge regarding the scope of research, therefore, **this thesis applied an explanatory research design and a grounded theory approach following a highlight**

³ Lambert, Mike. "Grounded theory." In *Practical research methods in education*, pp. 132-141. Routledge, 2019.

⁴ Barangay 149 (Caloocan City, Philippines) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location.” n.d.

⁵ Lambert, Mike. "Grounded theory." In *Practical research methods in education*, pp. 132-141. Routledge, 2019.

⁶ Nayak, J. K., & Singh, P. (2021). *Fundamentals of research methodology problems and prospects*. SSDN Publishers & Distributors

of the phenomenological approach. Giving emphasis on exploring the context of understanding local patronage politics and its effects on the voting behavior of selected community members of Barangay 149 in Caloocan City, the design provides the highlight in the analysis of a social phenomenon that has not yet or not been vigorously studied.⁷

Leaning on answering the ‘why’, the explanatory research design was employed in regards to the pursuit of understanding what leads the perception of locals on the grass roots level, what entails their perception of local patronage politics, what motivates such perception, and ultimately leads to understanding the effects of their individual perception of local patronage politics to their voting behavior. The explanatory design gives emphasis to depicting what areas of the grassroots level of politics may be given more extensive focus in consideration of how the grassroots level affects the local, and in cumulative, may posit of the ‘local patterns’ leading to the national.

The phenomenological approach emphasizes the significance of individual perspectives and interpretation based on the concern of the lived experience of an individual. This research applies the approach to attain the *raw* or uncultivated perception of individuals from notions and conventional beliefs that may arise from the pursuit of the study, while the approach enables the study to extensively render layers of analysis that subjects to the merit of the possible toll on the voting behavior of the cumulative. The approach will ensure that the study shall be based on the full context of the lived experiences of the community members.⁸

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study are selected residents of Barangay 149 of the City of Caloocan in the National Capital Region. Having a range between the legal age of 18 being a registered voter and above; the study ensures the consent, willingness, and the availability of the participants. Having the nature of the study to focus on the individual perspectives of the community, understanding the individual perception of local patronage politics to determine its effects on their voting behavior provides gravity for an engagement with the community members.

RESEARCH LOCALE

Barangay 149 is a Barangay Located within the City of Caloocan, has a land area of 0.04029 km² or 0.015 square miles. Having a population of 5,255 according to the 2020 census, the Barangay serves as one of twenty-four barangays within the Bagong Barrio West area situated within the 1st District of the City.

⁷ George, T. (2023, November 20). *Explanatory Research*

⁸ Politz, D. (2023, June 9). *What is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)? — Delve*. Delve.

The study pursued the focus on the area of Barangay 149 in consideration of the prominence of grassroots level governments breeding potential local leaders and in a mass of dominant local support by trend of partisanship with local leaders. Considering the nature of the Politics within the city, the running history of having multiple dynasties, the local setting of Barangay 149 presents the high potential of yield in how the perception of community members affect their voting behavior during elections.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Pursuing the technique of purposive sampling, this research shall identify the following key criteria for selection of respondents such as: (1) Age, (2) occupation, (3) income, and; (4) years of residency. The purposeful or purposive sampling technique was utilized in order to meet with the set of attributes that an individual must meet being suitable to the study's scope. Alongside information that would be provided by the participant, the standard of eligibility must stand in order to meet with the standards set by means of analysis of data.

From this, this thesis employs the following qualifications for a participant: (1) must be at least 18 years of age and a registered voter in Caloocan City, and; (2) the respondent must be a resident of Barangay 149, Caloocan City for at least a minimum of two (2) years. In order to avoid bias, occupations such as public officials, government employees, and community officers of Barangay 149 shall not be included. Individuals who wish to partake within the process of data collection but fail to meet the criteria shall be deemed ineligible, thus, won't be allowed to partake in the study.

DATA COLLECTION & INSTRUMENT

This study shall collect data by means of an *interview* following a semi-structured format through a set of questions that may possibly render follow-up questions that will be based on the response of the participant.⁹

By allowing the questions to be freely answered by the respondents, this shall enable depth in terms of individual perspectives. Thus, if demanded further explanation from the answers, follow up questions would be appropriate to satisfy any point of information that is expressed, point of speculation in terms of why the answer stands to the personal take, and if given the chance of analysis of personal stance of the participant. The study finds the interview being a vital means of data collection considering the expanse of perspectives demanded by the nature of study.

This study shall follow an interview utilizing a set of questions that are crafted to contain and highlight specific points that tackle individual perceptions on local patronage politics, voting behavior, the effects, and the overall context of where the study may

⁹ Nayak, J. K., & Singh, P. (2021). *Fundamentals of research methodology problems and prospects*. SSDN Publishers & Distributors.

speculate. Being open-ended questions, the respondents shall not be limited to answer only within the question but may be allowed to express their thoughts even extending from questions, thus, follow-up questions are given in order to tap into the *raw* or the lived experiences of the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS

The gathered data shall undergo a thematic analysis composed of (1) Familiarizing Data, the gathered data is reviewed by means of audio recorded during the interview proper, and having transcripts to be constantly analyzed and read for notes of observations being presented. (2) generating codes, where key features such as key points of responses are labelled in order to reflect relevant data. From where the respondents have a common ground to the emphasis on effect or narrative of commonality. (3) the themes are then constructed from the actual rendered patterns from the data compiled based on what is relevant from each theme or code.

(4) The compiled and classified themes are then reviewed in order to highlight if the given codes add up and are applicable. (5) These themes are then analyzed in detail to come up with a label or a name for each and (6) to render a report that shall bear the analysis by narrative with the data that was contextualized with existing works of the scholars.¹⁰

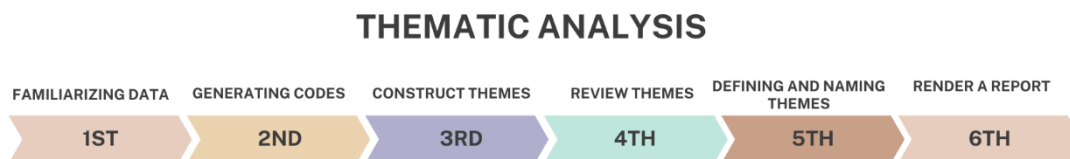


FIGURE 1. THEMATIC ANALYSIS STEPS

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In pursuit of attaining the objective of understanding local patronage politics and its effects on the voting behavior of selected residents of Barangay 149 in the City of Caloocan, a total of ten (10) individuals participated in the data gathering process. Participating through a one-on-one interview utilizing a set of semi-structured questions, the participants were provided the freedom to answer the set of questions, allowing the conduct of follow-up questions in expounding integral points.

¹⁰ Anastacio, Adrian and Morandarte, Nhesty, Political Patronage in Philippine Local Politics (February 17, 2023).

Respondent (R)	Age	Gender	Occupation
1	34	M	Seaman
2	35	F	Housewife
3	66	F	Retired
4	22	M	Student
5	69	F	Retired
6	52	M	Messenger
7	83	M	Retired
8	75	M	Retired
9	50	F	Housewife
10	28	M	IT Audit Officer

Figure 2. Respondent Profile

The participants are mostly composed of individuals that are based in their respective homes such as senior citizens with ages ranging from sixty-six (66) to eighty-three (83) housewives, employees, and a student. There are a total of six (6) male participants, and four (4) of which were female. It was observed that Barangay 149 as a community is classified as an average income earning community belonging to the first city income class and a poverty rate of 4.20%.¹¹

Current Status: Structure, Programs, Performance

Being the 3rd largest city in Metro Manila in population, Caloocan City being governed by a dynasty still remains to be seen as a city governed by *political motives*.¹² and this is reflected in the following statement:

“Medyo ok ngayon dahil ka-lugar natin ang Mayor, kumakalat ang tulong pero meron pa rin sa likod nun na hindi buhos lahat, kumbaga sa ano eh 30% nabibigay niya pero the rest wala, yun ang nakikita ko dito sa caloocan.”

¹¹ “Barangay 149, Caloocan Profile – PhilAtlas

¹² Statista. 2024. “Population in Metro Manila Philippines 2020, by City and Municipality.”

A recurring theme that may be highlighted among the informants' responses is the collective perception of programs that may be appropriated *unequally* amongst residents. In the community setting alone, where *Patronage Politics* is being exercised through exchange of favors and political support. Politics being *relational* in the local and community setting subjects to *political motives* being in question by residents. From territorial narratives wherein areas closest to the Mayoral residence are being given the premium, to *vote-rich* areas such as Barangay 149 are regularly being subjected to be *selective* when it comes to rendering public service suggests the current status of the political atmosphere.

In highlighting the Barangay's status as being headed by incumbent leaders in support of the Malapitan family, Barangay 149 is the bailiwick of the Malapitan family, notable district leaders, and community population garnering the title of a 'vote-rich' barangay serves the community's prominence in local politics of Caloocan City.

Established Knowledge

A recurring theme from the respondents' answers presents an established understanding of *Patronage Politics* regardless of knowing the concept in its official and *academic* concept. As Berenschot and Aspinall presented the definition of *Political Clientelism*, in the practice of exercising personal favors and material benefits that are said to be for reciprocation of support to such *politicos*, having a grasp on the concept gives highlight to the established knowledge and awareness to the community members being resoundingly treated as a *norm* for the political culture of the city and community.¹³

“Ang pagkakaintindi ko diyan yung exchange gift na sinasabi, kasama na yan sa sistema eh.”

“Ano yan eh, parang bubusugin ka sa mga magagandang bagay, kahit na magkamali siya sa mga maliliit o sa mga bagay bagay, okay lang kasi natulungan ka niya eh. Parang blinded ka sa mga nagawa niya kahit malaki impact nito. Dahil naka tulong siya sayo, okay lang kahit nagkamali siya. Yan ang tingin ko sa local patronage politics.”

This reflects the general perspective of having such practices bearing a consensus between residents. Regardless of being registered voters, *corrupt practices* continue to prevail in terms of the quality of governance in the city and in the community for such qualities of governance and leadership within communities are also contingent on being seated as local chief executive of the city, being the Mayor, Congressman, Vice-Mayor, and District Councilors. Dominated by the Malapitan slate in the 2022 National and Local Elections, it may be seen from barangay to barangay orange colored facilities, tents bearing faces of officials, main streets and roads covered in such display *political colors* blatantly presenting the *Traditionalist* or *Traditional Politics* being practiced by political personalities. This calls back to the work of Dela Cruz which suggests branding as vital

¹³ Berenschot, W., & Aspinall, E. (2022). How clientelism varies: Comparing patronage democracies

for political survival; tapping into such recall identified as on-the-ground practices of *Political Patronage*.¹⁴

Programs, Infrastructures, Favors, and Ties

Giving out aid or *ayuda* may be considered the *new lifeblood* of aspiring and standing politicians eyeing branding and carving a legacy of efforts to be seamlessly seen by the eyes of a citizen. While it may also be said focusing on *cosmetics* such as infrastructures may be the way to present the local government unit towards the people on the ground, quality in all the aspects of programs and infrastructure projects were classified as a resounding theme of quality of service being surfaced as crucial. This may be seen in the following statements:

“Di ko alam kung sa Caloocan aware ang mga namumuno dahil sa TUPAD, sa AICS; wala sila ginagawa, yung mga nakaka sali. Mga nagwawalis pero di ko alam kung may alam ba ang namumuno diyan.”

“Most recent memory ko syempre yung COVID19, ayuda at bakuna, di ko malalaman na may ayuda o may bakuna kung hindi dahil sa sasabihin ng mga kamag anak ko na may katungkulan doon.”

Reflected by the statements of dismay over delivery of programs even mandated by the national government through programs supporting citizens in need, what sets the theme to prevail being consensus of the respondents is the *nature* of delivery in programs such as extension of aid, projects delivered being left to be delivered on a *selective* regard. *Local Politics* being relational may be regarded as closely tied to the emotion of an average citizen provided that the conditions of the society with all factors being considered are the closest to the people on the ground.

To projects being subject to ties established between *patron and client*, being *emotional* about the norm must be understood as not only to be regarded as a given but also freely expressed by citizens in feedback.

Prevailing Norm

To be perceived from the actual impact of Local Patronage Politics as perceived by the informants, several perspectives are viewed being treated as to have (1) a positive impact, (2) negative impact, or lastly, (3) having a neutral impact. This may be seen in the following statements:

“Merong good, merong bad. Good kung ang pinapatronage mo ay okay talaga na politiko, okay ang pinapatupad, sumusunod sa batas, decent. Pero kung gago yun at

¹⁴ Dela Cruz, L. "Beyond the classics: Identifying gaps and setting trajectory in understanding political dynamics in Philippine local politics." 2021

binubusog ka lang sa kung ano ano, edi mali. Meron talagang good and bad na effect ang local patronage politics, dahil lahat nama ntalaga ng too much ay masama eh diba? Kaya kung pinapatronage mo ang isang tao, dapat may limit ka. Kung ginawa niya to oh masama na, hindi na. Wag na diba. Neutral para sakín, dahil may good and bad.”

“Negatibo. Napaka pangit ng nangyari dito sa atin, harap harapan na mismo korapsyon, masasabi mo talaga na only in the Philippines. Para sa akin palpak talaga itong Mayor natin gawa ng wala talagang binatang hindi katulad ng ama niya na. Parang sa history ng Caloocan ganun na rin talaga eh mula kay Asistio, si Echiverri walang kwenta, puro kahihyan dahil babaero at magnanakaw.”

“All of the above, positibo, negatibo, at neutral. Dahil positibo, pag kinailangan ko ng tulong for example, kailangan ko ng ambulansya, papahiramín ako ng barangay pero kailangan ko ng supporta mo sa susunod na eleksyon, neutral, nakak inggit naman tong mga to nauna sila, pero point of view mo yan na imbes na ikaw ang makinabang may ibang nakikinabang o may inuunang iba, ganito pala gumamit ng benefits. Sa negative naman, sa mga inggit, di mo magawa, di ko naman kilala yung mga to; inuna nila mga pamilya nila.”

Voting Behavior: Preference

How an individual chooses a candidate may be seen simply as the *preference* of a voter. However, enriching the perspective of why certain brands of *politicos* and *local politicians* continue to prevail may be reflected through how voters may choose to behave.¹⁵

“Merón talagang botante na kahit bayaran mo ko, kung ano gusto ko yun ang iboboto ko.”

“Kasi nga para di ka bumoto kung di naman para sayo yung desisyon na yun, sinayang mo lang boto mo if sa huli you’ll regret it.”

Based on the data, it is evident how the machineries of *political strategists* get close to the people on the ground, especially during elections; individual preference such as perception of what would better the perception of *status quo* for the individual would still stand regardless. This points to the theme of preference strongly manifesting the given nature of voters where one may choose to accept such ‘*generosity*’ and still opt to choose a candidate that must hold public office for such candidate ticks all the preferential boxes of the individual.

¹⁵ Dela Cruz, L. "Beyond the classics: Identifying gaps and setting trajectory in understanding political dynamics in Philippine local politics." 2021

Track Record: The ‘Attainment’ of Promises & The Narrative of Change

In the greater aspiration of systemic change, a recurring theme among informants’ responses is the perception that track record must be given a premium in selecting who to vote for. As far as *populist tactics* shall prosper through local and national level machineries that may be tapped into by local-running candidates. It must be stated that the people on the ground give weight to what an individual can ‘bring to the table’ as pundits may state.¹⁶ This may be reflected in the following statements of the respondents:

“Syempre titignan ng botante ngayon kung dapat ba talagang iboto itong kandidato. Pag aralan ng mabuti kung dapat ba na siya ang ilagay sa pwesto na yun.”

“Sa akin kasi, based ako sa mga nagawa, kung may nagawa ba talaga, ano yung plataporma niya, pero ngayon kasi ang voting behavior ng mga botante is tumitingin sa popularity, sinasabi nila na ang galing nila dahil nabigyan lang sila ng pera, nag iinvest sila sa emotion ng tao.”

One may suggest that change would look like firmer enforcement of laws through peace and order, similar to a *Dutertismo perspective*.¹⁷ Another may be by the idea that all government programs are being implemented with certainty that taxpayers money are being spent for the entirety of projected programs in the annual budget. While it is imperative that delivery of services are to be laid out at the end of the day, it can be highlighted how voters are still hopeful that their political aspirations can still be carried out, that they would benefit from such a *narrative of change* being projected by certain candidates.

Pointing out how track record is crucial to selecting any candidate to hold public office; this stands as a recurring theme from the data gathered for the very reason that track record, at the end of the day, is a crucial factor in shaping the future of local politics, the standing of the city, in securing a better future for not only the voters themselves but also for loved ones, even the unborn.

Alternatives & Choices

Evaluating the current political culture of local politics within the city of Caloocan would be similar to analyzing the national level of political culture. This is to point out that there is an alarming lack of choice in elections. Whereas, it may be stated in the obvious that there are personalities to be voted for by running into slates, what may be placed into subject is whether such personalities differ from the norm.

¹⁶ Arguelles, C. V. (2019). “We are Rodrigo Duterte”: Dimensions of the Philippine Populist Publics’ Vote

¹⁷ Arguelles, C. V. (2019). “We are Rodrigo Duterte”: Dimensions of the Philippine Populist Publics’ Vote

“Lack of choices. Kasi parang sila sila na lang ang tumatakbo eh, tsaka parang ano, ayaw sumubok ng mga bago. Siguro dahil kung sino na lang nakasanayan nila, kakulangan ng alternatives.”

If there would be a solution to combat the norm today, the recurring theme is surfaced by the statement of the informant highlighting ‘*lack of choices.*’ In depicting a political arena wherein each personality may bring to the table their *take* and *style* to combat societal issues, concerns, and needs; one may consider the authenticity of each personality by *political branding*. Some resort to populist tactics, what resonates clearly is the type of political culture that may be perceived by such *political personalities* as ‘the easy way’ or the ‘sure’ means to attain political win.¹⁸

By such reality, the question of why there is a lack of alternatives and choices is for the very reason that the overall political culture of the society today ‘may have’ imbued within its very core, through its systems, that such political culture shall guarantee victory. Whereas, the following statement may highlight:

”Parang nawawalan ng kakayahan ang tao na pumili sino talaga gusto niya dahil sa ganung klaseng pangyayari, di na nag isip, pinaubaya na lang sa kapitan na ganun talaga. Kulang talaga sa educational awareness pero i think dahil nabubudol rin talaga, yung basics ang importante eh what are the three branches of government, ano ba talaga ang trabaho ng mga opisyal, naitanim talaga na magaling ang politiko sa pamumudmod ng pera, di sa pagbalangkas ng batas, ang daming batas, di naman naiimplement.”

Whereas *embedding* within the roots of society may be the answer to better political motives, it may be admitted that such political culture persists for systematic reasons such as the very laws that permit political motives to translate into political pursuit. Taking into example the prevalence of Political Dynasties, case in point; to highlight the City of Caloocan of having a history to be rich in ‘Family Businesses.’ Dulay & Go argued that certain families holding public offices affect the actual intended institutional mandate of policy making by replacing political rivals who may oppose the incumbency from the policies that may be proposed and imposed and to smite influence on the constituency, an aspiring candidate representing genuine set of platforms being misaligned with an incumbent family would have a hard time in pursuit of their political will provided that an incumbent family would have in reach all instruments, machineries, instruments, and influence that may be resorted to.¹⁹ Furthermore, the following statement may also be taken into account:

“Sa laki ng ginagastos nila sa pakimkim, babawiin nila yan syempre kapag nanalo sila, mas malaki pa. Buti nga ngayon naiisip ko na yan, kasi dati syempre nag

¹⁸ Ravanilla, Nico, and Allen Hicken. "Poverty, social networks, and clientelism."

¹⁹ Dulay, Dean, and Laurence Go. "When running for office runs in the family: Horizontal dynasties, policy, and development in the Philippines."

aalaga ako ng mga bata, di ko siya naiisip. Ngayon na wala akong iniisip namulat mulat.”

Having said of certain machineries, the narrative of ‘*babawiin*’ in blatant reflection of the Political Culture represents a clear notion of *warning* that is a recurring thought provided by informants. From whether to question why such machineries would be contingent to *win in order to claim in return “ten-fold”* is inferred, the collective idea of the needs of the people on the ground may also be taken into account, provided of the privilege one set of people would have that another set of people in cluster would not have.

The 2022 National and Local elections may be a prime example wherein ‘blaming culture’ is guilty of the fact that the voters themselves blame another end of the turnout. This may also be said that certain political stunts, and motives prevail for such culture of turning a blind eye to the larger context why such social phenomena prevails.²⁰

Candidate Awareness

On another end, availing a campaign may not be possible without a good campaign strategy that would assure a political camp of a fighting chance by studied, planned, and coordinated tactics in the goal of winning. The prevalence of having mass media such as social media reshape the political landscape from a global perspective poses the imperative claim that – to win in the elections, a candidate must be present in platforms available.²¹

“Tingin ko aware na sila, sa ngayon. Kasi medyo takot rin, makikita mo yan sa panahon ng kampanya, may kaba narin kasi baka mamaya tong tao na to, tinulungan ko babaligtad na rin kasi sa totoo naman nagbago na ngayon mga tao eh, di mo na mauuto.

“Ito nga eh, kahit sabihin natin na di nila kaya gumawa ng mga programa, pero aware sila kung paano kontrolin ang tao.”

Asking whether they think candidates are aware of such factors that may affect how a voter would decide emphasizes the notion that candidates are now being cautious of the fact that what social media provided in terms of mechanizing their campaigns may also be used against them by weaponizing social media.

Another aspect that may be considered is how such candidate awareness generally points to the *birth* of a political culture that provided all *stakeholders* the means to know more about their candidates. While Patronage Politics may take varied forms and instances, social media provided the playing field for the vulnerable sectors to take part. This is part and parcel of what such platforms provide in consideration of the informants’

²⁰ Carreon, R. E. M., Loyola, Q. F., & Abelgas, F. J. DEBUNKING THE TERM “BOBOTANTE”

²¹ Basit, L. (2019, March). “Social Media and Political Participation of Beginners.”

notion that the people on the ground are now also capable of being equipped with the general knowledge that may be about: (1) the candidates themselves, (2) platforms, and (3) promises.²²

On another end, the recurring theme also sends the fact of *political personalities* taking advantage of social media in order to better their strategies to better certain plans that shall take advantage of the people on the ground. Manifesting into propaganda, coupled by the utilization of *trolls* that are prevalent and widespread throughout social media platforms, the other end suggests the possibilities in point of highlighting such themes. Case in point, this may be seen from the statements of informants:

“Kahit sino naman eh basta may kapangyarihan ka, alam mo kung paano gamitin yun at paano pa to mapagpapabuti para sa sarili mo eh.”

“Kaya nag iinvest yang mga yan talaga na direkto na maffeel ng mga tao na uy tinulungan kita sa mga bigay bigay ng pera, tsaka. Pag yung mga issue sa kanila na fake news, sa tagal ng kalakaran na ganyan, pag may issue sa kanila tatapalan ng bagong issue, tatakpan lang.”

Giving further emphasis on political motives, the findings manifest that *Political Personalities* may be extended to take advantage of voter preference, suggesting endless instances wherein such *personalities* may mechanize strategies to counter and avert obstacles that may very well affect their political pursuit.

The collective perception of the participants may therefore be said to manifest the general awareness that is provided by present tools such as social media, aiding in scrutiny and being in reach of defining *Patronage Politics*, *Local Patronage Politics*, and its forms. This outcome may represent comparable findings to other communities, municipalities and cities provided the possible overlap in shared political culture.²³

The analysis of the findings perceived from various perspectives such as from the lens of the people on the ground, from the candidates themselves, and to the political observer renders an *arena* which levels out why such social phenomena prosper, what may be considered as *‘learning blocks’* from what may be controlled, what may be mobilized to counter such realities; and even, what such personalities may consider in order to better their cause by subscribing to Patronage Politics.

Contributing to the Field

The findings manifest the recurring themes that a portion of the grassroots level within the city’s local government may be regarded as the *present landscape*. Being

²² Basit, L. (2019, March). Social Media and Political Participation of Beginners

²³ Alcazar, M. D. P., & Fabella, E. (2024). FACTORS AND STRATEGIES AFFECTING VOTING BEHAVIOR OF REGISTERED VOTERS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SILANG, CAVITE

tantamount to reflect the overall perspective of the community, the study has manifested such themes that the informants collectively underpinned. An established knowledge on Patronage Politics is apparently present in the systems of governance in the structures, themes, and practices of the City Government of Caloocan. This theme establishes the contribution of outlining the standing political atmosphere and culture from the 3rd largest city by population in the whole of Metro Manila.²⁴

The findings presents in contribution to surrounding scopes within Patronage Politics the prevalence and the effectiveness of exercising *Political Power* if met by the right formulas such as (1) establishing a political base, (2) establishing numerous positions to hold public office, and (3) establishing a local government unit stronger by how *kinship networks* provide footing for *politicos*, providing the notion that it may be the nature of clans coordinating.²⁵

In further analysis of these findings, the effects of local patronage politics to the voting behavior of community voters may be perceived from levels of analysis that caters with *personal preferences* that differ in nature of background through lived experience, and attributes of personal outlook. Therefore, the findings are presented to contribute to Carreon et al., Debunking the term *Bobotante* wherein the findings present in overview how the voters perceive *politicos* through expression of *political promises* in upholding the aspirations of their respective constituencies.²⁶

The factors that affect the voting behavior of voters then may be understood as to (1) how voters would react, (2) accept, and (3) evaluate what such *personalities* would provide at the end of the day. Emphasizing on how *relational* the local political atmosphere is by its nature presents footing to how such factors such as *preferences*, *recognition of track record*, and *alternatives* are recurring themes manifested from the informants. Furthermore, this contributes to understanding the effects of the local setting of Patronage Politics. The voting behavior of local constituencies provided in this thesis presents an outline of themes bearing a ‘slice’ of what the political culture, political atmosphere, and political playing field looks like in the City of Caloocan through the community or grassroots level.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the Effects of Local Patronage Politics on the Voting Behavior of Selected Residents of Barangay 149, Caloocan City

Being reflective of the local governance of *politicos as Dela Cruz* (2021) highlighted, the practice of Patronage Politics in the local setting sets the stand to classify how such kinship ties continue to prosper despite recognition that such practices by

²⁴ Statista, 2024.” Population in Metro Manila, Philippines 2020, by City and Municipality”

²⁵ Serrano, Isaac Jeffrey. "Do clans coordinate? Kinship-based reciprocity and the allocation of infrastructure programs and projects at the local level."

²⁶ Carreon, R. E. M., Loyola, Q. F., & Abelgas, F. J. DEBUNKING THE TERM “BOBOTANTE”

political leaders are proven to be *opportunistic* for their political motives. To underline this point, the themes outline how citizens would behave before elections, where months leading up to the election is critical in understanding the phenomena. It is therefore established that *populist leaders* employing populist tactics continue to be victorious, meeting their goals provided of the depth or reach of political influence within governance structures such as Barangays and City Hall.²⁷

Following the Ground Theory Framework, patronage politics in the local setting is closely related to analyzing its effect on how a voter behaves and chooses who to vote for during the elections. It can be concluded that the effects of local patronage politics to the voting behavior of the selected residents of Barangay 149 in Caloocan City reflects what the political culture looks like, to have a community that has accepted local patronage politics and its similar forms in praxis, customs, and associated outlooks. While at the same time being critical by having personal preferences.

This conclusion can firstly be expressed in overview of the recurring themes such as highlighting manifested themes being found on the *Current Standing* of the City Government through its structure headed by the Malapitan Dynasty, in conjunction with establishing what governance looks like in the Barangay level in delivery of services, quality of programs.

Secondly, on the individual perception of Patronage Politics, the findings manifest how Patronage Politics conceptualizes *reciprocity* through the study's informants. Thirdly, on *Dyadic Ties*, and *prevailing norms*. The themes represent the general overview in understanding the political culture present within the context of the grassroots level and the city.

Lastly, regarding individual voting preference the recurring theme that was manifested by informants suggested that, despite strategies conducted and spent by *politicos*, how a citizen perceives a candidate best fitting to represent the constituency is contingent on personal preferences.

RECOMMENDATION

The results rendered from this thesis presents a stepping stone for further research surrounding the scope of Patronage Politics in the local setting, examining Voting Behavior, the effects of standing political cultures on the actual extent of governance, and an overview of the actual political atmosphere in the City of Caloocan through the grassroots level. As such, the study recommends the following angles for study:

Firstly, a study utilizing the patron-client framework and a phenomenological approach in terms of capturing the lived experiences of the target population. This is to

²⁷ Dela Cruz, L. "Beyond the classics: Identifying gaps and setting trajectory in understanding political dynamics in Philippine local politics."

give a specific highlight on Patronage Politics, why it prospers in the local and national level of politics and to be provided of a better grasp of the lived human experience of intended informants possible to apply in the same target of grassroots or community level, and city level. It is highly recommended to focus on building frameworks that would add up to existing scholarly articles provided that this thesis serves as a foundation depicting what the political culture of a City in Metro Manila, Philippines looks like from the reflection of its grassroots level being the Barangay.

Secondly, it is recommended that a focus on *political alternatives* be of focus provided of the lack of political participation within the local level. This is to give way in highlighting what the narrative looks like for opposing forces challenging the *traditional politics* and to contribute in emulating a framework that may evaluate what areas may be highlighted in contrast to standing political norms in terms of governance within local governments.

Lastly, serving as a pioneering study to focus on Caloocan City Politics through Barangay 149 of District 1, this thesis being an anchorage for further studies on the scope of patronage politics in the local setting shall be recommended to be integrated into a framework in which further studies may examine local politics not only in the City of Caloocan but most importantly, for the field of Political Science and Local Government Studies.

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