

A Syncretic Analysis of Ifugao Parliamentary Procedure Practices: Basis for an Indigenized Philippine Model

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Abstract: It is the general objective of this study to create a framework for an indigenized parliamentary procedure model through the syncretisation of actual practices of Sanguniang Bayan (SB) and the Ifugao parliamentary, Knowledge, Systems and Practices (IKSP). The research was participated by the Ayangan, Kalanguya and Tuwali SB Officials and IKSP holders respectively by the municipalities of Mayoyao, Kiangan and Tinoc of the province of Ifugao. The study is a qualitative research using descriptive case study of multiple case studies in kind and syncretic analysis. The actual SB officials are able to conduct their sessions as well as make relevant practices in operation. Some aspects in the tenets of parliamentary procedure are found to be adherent to Robert's Rule of Order. Deviations include mainly the ways of disposing motions and motions. The practice of consensus decision-making is found to be effective. Problems uncovered include the use of complex parliamentary practices and external and internal demands. The parliamentary IKSP is found to be effective containing deep community values such as simplicity and responsiveness via leadership and participatory approach. The indigenized framework developed contained good practices, character of culture sensitiveness and cardinal democratic principles. It is an eye opener for non-collaborative practices promoting polarization in a world of ever-changing multicultural challenges. It revisits priceless IKSP principles for rootedness and meaning in development. The indigenized model is answer to occurring creativity deficit, abating efficiency and effectiveness performance and moral and cultural degeneration in local legislatures. The model is recommended for better actualizing legislative and administrative functions of local legislative players and in making a local guidebook for local legislators via facilitative and participative approaches among players.

Key words: Syncreticism, parliamentary procedure, indigenized model, Ifugao, efficiency

INTRODUCTION

Governments around the world are mostly democracies and are turning to be democracies in their very essence. With the goal of realizing democratic ideals through public administration, these countries, though unitary or federal in form, parliamentary or presidential in system or national or local at levels are trying to improve their systems and strategies in the actual operations of the government's three branches: executive, legislative and the judiciary, without undermining the rights of the non-dominant groups or the very least of the society (De Leon and De Leon, 2011).

Modern democracy requires that political systems and actions should always be in consonance with international agreements/laws such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the United Nations Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples to ensure that equality and inclusiveness are advanced in all people. An indispensable activity of the government's branches is

decision making via the conduct of meetings. It is through meetings that social, political and economic problems are tackled and resolved and the principle of democracy which is the rule of the majority and the protection of minority rights extending to the indigenous groups, women and other marginalized sectors is manifested. However, residing in the legislature is the function to make laws where the conduct of meetings becomes a routine (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

Erickson (2012) states, "How well legislature executes power depends upon the processes and procedure it follows." Without parliamentary procedure, it would be impossible for legislative bodies to deliver their functions of legislation, representation and oversight. Regrettably, in these broad aspects, according to Tsekpo and Hudson (2009), "in many developing countries as well as in many developed countries, parliaments are weak, ineffective and marginalized." Parliamentary strengthening now becomes a need at least in the gamut of parliamentary procedure (Yin, 2009). Parliamentary procedure, an ever changing democratic practice is the systematic conduct of

meetings. It is a system which has its own principles, order of business, motions that facilitate order and ways of disposing a motion, designed to lessen the use of time and to establish decorum.

Time, policy resource and costs are saved while ensuring the quality of the meeting. Furthermore, Bach (2008) pointed three key issues that parliamentary procedure addresses.

First, its rules lend order, stability and predictability to the way in which the assembly does its work; second, the rules define how much protection the opposition and the political minorities in the assembly have against a majority that might be tempted to abuse its power. Third the rules allocate responsibilities among the members of the assembly and the organizational units they form within it such as party groups and committees.

In the advent of the deepening international relations, political dynamics and the turn of democratic countries towards the waves of decentralization and democratization, the local governments, civil societies and marginalized sectors such as the indigenous peoples play more active part in societal forces and decision making which presupposes the conduct of more meetings among these groups (Zamora, 1986). Essentially, models that guide meetings among these groups should deal with their demands of change, encourage sharing and greater participation, strengthens self-governance and self-determination and are culture sensitive.

The world accounts the successes of parliamentary procedure to the authors and compilers, e.g., Henry Roberts who according to Fitzpatrick (2010), authored the most popular parliamentary procedure book titled Robert's Rule of Order that has come now in its 11th edition but maintaining its principles. Such revisions exemplify the need to continuously enhance and improve parliamentary models to cope with the dynamic organizational changes including the age of behavioral sciences in both public and private realm.

There are two popular types of parliamentary procedure namely, the non-legislative and the legislative parliamentary procedure. Across the world, these have been adopted by both types of organization in their rules of procedure. Patnode and Robert (1993) states "those rules (parliamentary procedure), however were never intended to have any application beyond the legislative assemblies for which they were devised; thus, non-legislative assemblies imitated them at their own risks."

In the Philippines, Orendain, Juan, Fajardo and Dihan are known for their pioneering efforts on both legislative and non-legislative parliamentary procedure. As a result,

parliamentary procedure has been integrated in the academic curriculum in Public Administration, Political Science and other related courses of various higher education institutions including secondary education in their extracurricular activities. In the Philippine government, parliamentary procedure has been adopted in the rules of procedure in both national and local legislatures (Tsekpo and Hudson, 2009). The constitution enshrines legislative parliamentary procedure through the provisions on rules of procedure found in Article VI Section 16 (3) which states, "each house may determine the rules of its proceedings."

The Local Government Code of 1991 pursuant to Section 50, Book 1, states, "the sanggunian concerned shall adopt or update its internal rules for the proper discharge of legislative functions." Both national and local provisions on delegating rules of procedure to said bodies show the logic and acceptance of policy makers that legislators should have the model that suits them best. Researchers for that reason are direly needed by legislators for their recommendations in this legislative parlance as sessions entail much cost.

Inquisitively driven and since public administration desires the best statecraft for actual government affairs and the perpetuation of real democracy to include partly local legislation, this research endeavors to provide sound inputs on the rules of procedure of the various Sangguniang Bayan (SB) and to create a framework on parliamentary procedure for local legislators and their students as bases for future updates in their rules of procedure.

The locale of the study is an indigenous cultural community which can be a strong and necessary point for harmonization of procedures. Given the numerous international mandates on cultural promotion and recognition that national and local mandates should resemble such as those in the Indigenous Peoples Republic Act it is an opportune time for the interfacing of Ifugao indigenous parliamentary procedure extending to some aspects of Ifugao culture with the mainstream of the government's systems and procedures on local legislation taking in mind that both areas of concern stand on equal grounds (Sangguniang Panlalawigan of the Provincial Government of Ifugao, 2010).

The issuance of the joint circular numbered 001 series of 2011 with the subject, "Guidelines for the Determination of the Minimum Thresh hold of Indigenous Peoples/ Indigenous Cultural Communities Population in a Local government Unit to Allow Mandatory Representation in the Local Sanggunians" by Department of Interior and Local Government (2012) and the (NCIP, 2012) obliges

indigenization of parliamentary procedure through the interfacing of indigenous parliamentary practices and current parliamentary practices in various local legislative councils found in indigenous cultural communities (NCIP, 2013).

For example in response to the said Memorandum on Indigenous Mandatory Representation, the Manobo, Mamanwa, Higa-onon and Banwaon Tribes in Caraga Administrative Region developed their indigenized guidelines/model.

The Manobo Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Local Guidelines/Model (NCIP, 2012) for instance, contains the legal matters on Philippine local legislation and the National Commission On Indigenous People's Act, indigenous political terms such as legislative and procedural terms and cultural terms, indigenous selection process, rules on indigenous meetings and indigenous checks and balances.

Finally, this is for the development of parliamentary procedure itself both as a science and tool in public administration mainly due to the universal need of introducing new developments such as dealing pressing issues on simplification, localization, modernization (e.g., use of electronic meetings) of parliamentary procedure as effectiveness and efficiency are essential in this era of overarching challenge for quality legislation specially in the rural areas where divides in human technology pervade. The best critic of the best model however is vested on the legislative players themselves and their immediate environment. An encompassing consideration that includes their active participation, an objective evaluation of their current practices and a keen and sensitive observation of their views, behaviors and practices or culture as a whole would strongly yield to the making of an ideal framework for an indigenized Philippine parliamentary procedure.

Statement of objectives: The general objective of this study was to create a framework for an indigenized parliamentary procedure model through the syncretisation of actual practices of Sangguniang Bayan (SB) officials and the Ifugao indigenous knowledge, practices and systems on parliamentary procedure. Particularly, it aimed to achieve the following.

To document the parliamentary procedure of Ayangan, Tuwali and Kalanguya SB officials in terms of the following:

- Actual practices
- Effectiveness
- Problems encountered with the practices

To determine and describe the parliamentary knowledge, systems and practices of the Ifugaos of the aforementioned groups. To develop a framework as a basis of an indigenized parliamentary procedure model using syncretic analysis.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher made use of a case study using mainly qualitative method. With curiosity, the researcher documented and analyzed the actual parliamentary procedure of SB officials with the end goal of producing a framework for an indigenized parliamentary procedure model.

With the tenets of the Robert's rule of order as a benchmark, it uncovered how practices on parliamentary procedure are being carried out in the selected SB from a first-hand understanding. It is a case study but of multiple-case studies in nature since the respondents were taken from three municipalities as representative municipalities corresponding to the three ethno-linguistic groups of Ifugao yet of same kind of organization/institution. These replications answered the possible uncertainty of creating the best parliamentary framework that is based on a single case study and on the quality of current officials.

Direct observations and interviews were used in establishing converging lines of evidence and in exposing issues needed in developing a framework to establish an indigenized parliamentary procedure model. The interview part relied not only on the semi-structured interview guide but also on some analytic data collection technique in a case study approach. Issues or facts that were not clear or established from other respondents were clarified and verified from other respondents in the course of data gathering.

Aiming to improve the current systems and practices, the case study was an extensive qualitative study having three real-life cases classified in kind as multiple-case studies. Its multiple methods such as the use of documentation via direct observation and interview to facilitate the description and data analyses for explanation via logical approach, both needed for syncretisation are complementary. Moreover, data transcription, inductive reasoning and creative interpretation were used to facilitate reconstruction and generation of objective conclusions. The syncretic model comprised of the comparison of the actual parliamentary procedure practice of the sanggunian and the indigenous parliamentary procedure practice to establish an essential analogy, a raw material for syncretisation (Fig. 1).

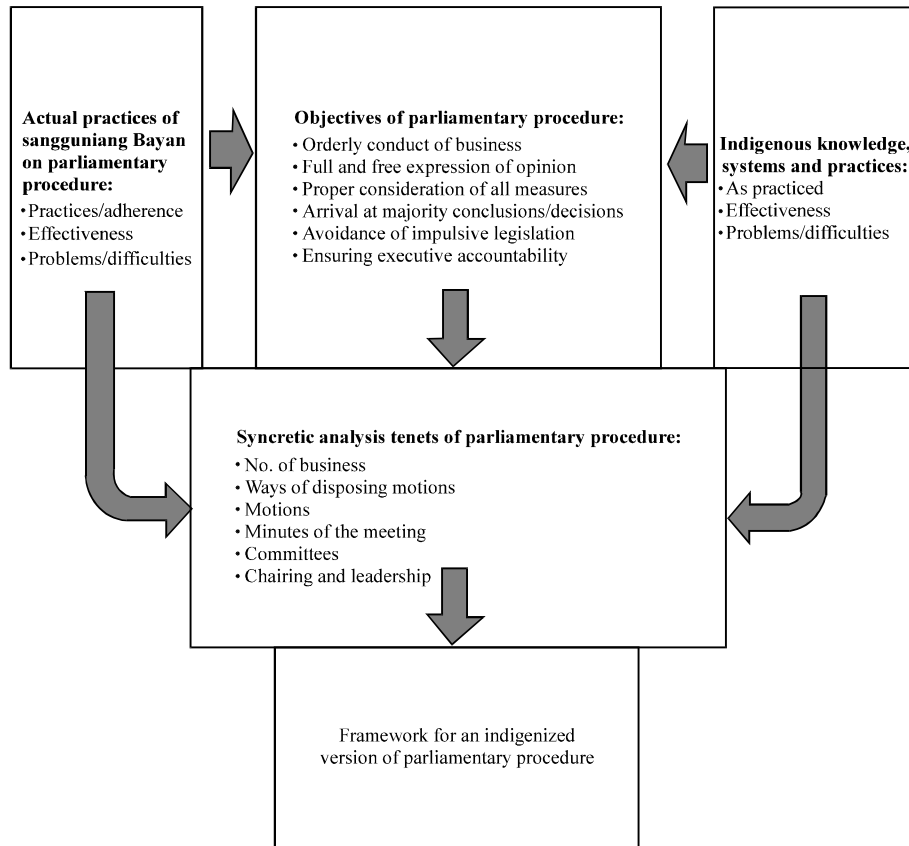


Fig. 1: Research paradigm of the study

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the features of the Ifugao parliamentary practices. Table 2 displays the actual and indigenous practices of the Ayangan, Kalanguya and Tuwali in relation to the objectives of parliamentary procedure.

Problem posed by the Ifugao indigenous parliamentary procedure practices:

- Ayangan, Kalanguya Tuwali Indigenous Parliamentary Procedure
- The problem of diminishing culture due to mainstreaming in governance

The factor besetting the Ayangan, Kalanguya and Tuwali indigenous parliamentary procedure.

Actual parliamentary practices among the sanggunians:

In documenting the actual SB parliamentary practices, it impresses that considerably their existing practices make their session as well as relevant practices in routine

operation. Aspects in the tenets of parliamentary procedure such as order of business, committees, minutes of the meeting, decorum and chairing and leadership are found to be adherent to Robert's Rule of Order. Deviations from the said standard as well as from any other Western standards include mainly the ways of disposing motions which are considered to be the heart of Western parliamentary procedure. Instead, the Sanggunians practice consensus-decision making and from time to time the initial application of simplified motions.

On effectiveness, the actual practices on the tenets of parliamentary procedure are effective in maintaining order on legislative routine, serving as a guide, providing usual avenues for scrutiny, allowing favorable climate for freedom speech and the use of the vernacular. The government policies embedded in the procedures are effective in maintaining usual checks and balances. Group's culture such as good discernment is also contributory to the status quo. Overwhelmingly, the application of consensus decision-making is found to be effective.

Table 1: A synthesis on the characteristics of actual SB parliamentary practices of Mayoyao, Tinoc and Kiangan and the Ifugao indigenous parliamentary practices

Tenets of parliamentary	Actual parliamentary practices of SB Mayoyao, Tinoc and Kiangan	Ifugao indigenous parliamentary practices
Procedure		There are no preliminaries during the meeting proper
Orders of business	A list of document-based items which can be categorized as ceremonies, reports, agenda and closing exercises is being followed	Preliminary activities are done before the meeting
	Session is adjourned but mechanisms of the procedure such as laying on the table and postponement leaves unresolved issues	Diplomacy is highly exercised prior to the meeting proper through the go-between/diplomat
		The agenda are the only matter to be deliberated upon
		The presider directs the agenda guided by unwritten rules
		The value of finality of decisions is experienced if something is resolved during the meeting
Ways of disposing motions	Sanggunians deviate from strict parliamentary practice by having consensus decision-making and follow the Western parliamentary steps of disposing a motion: recognition, moving, seconding, reinstating and voting	It is done via consensus decision-making
Motions	There are kinds of motions such as main motions, subsidiary motions, incidental motions and privilege motions. The concept of precedence or rank of motions, a very technical and complex system is practiced by some	The agenda is the only type of motion which brought the participants to a meeting
	Initial steps of simplifying motions using the simplest terms for motions are being done by members	This agenda if classified under the Western parliamentary procedure is called main motion
Minutes of the meeting	The proceedings of the meeting are documented and kept for filing	The motion is very easy and can be participated by any kind of people
		There are no written proceedings but procedures and decisions are restored precisely in the minds of participants as basis for future decision-making and form part of the local culture
Tenets of parliamentary procedure	Actual parliamentary practices of SB Mayoyao, Tinoc and Kiangan	Ifugao indigenous parliamentary practices
Committees	There are assigned committee to do committee work	
	These are classified into standing or Adhoc committees	The go-between/diplomat performs functions similar to a committee likerefining things before the meeting. He does on-site
	In practice, they work under the referrals of the chair and conduct committee meetings and hearings	ocular inspection, goes to the place of conflict and does on-site negotiations, digging roots of problems and uses diplomatic means and human appeal
Decorum	There are listed disciplinary measures, ways of obtaining the floor that are prescribed by the local government code. decorum is enforced currently by the presiding chair	Decorum practices are found and practiced in the complex Tinoc culture. Spirituality is a strong factor. Its decorum in the procedural aspect of the meeting lies under the indigenous presider's management
Chairing and leadership	The Vice Mayor serves as the presiding officer. He is chosen through plurality vote	The indigenous presider is chosen based on natural intelligence, oral profficiency and people's acceptance
	The current presiding officers have perceived qualities	

There are problems and difficulties encountered in the aspects of existing parliamentary procedure among the Sanggunians. The practice of complex parliamentary procedure is experienced that resulted in various issues rooting from web of concerns. Problems and difficulties on internal demands include one's level of education, knowledge in parliamentary procedure, personal traits perceived negative chairing and leadership qualities that need to be patched and legislative staff related work while external demands include e-Governance capacitation, balance between branches of municipal government, public involvement and socio-ecologically derived problems.

Ifugao parliamentary indigenous knowledge, systems and practices: The Ayangan, Tawali and Kalanguya indigenous parliamentary procedures possess counterparts of the actual practice. As reflected in the crucial role of the indigenous presider, the Ifugao indigenous parliamentary procedure is leadership driven. Its procedures are anchored to complex community

principles and deep values but the characteristics of simplicity, responsiveness and the use of the vernacular are realized to be contributory to its effectiveness. Its application of consensus decision-making, a participatory approach tested by time is found still to be effective as it is already being practiced at the Sanggunians. All of these are found needed to be interfaced with the actual parliamentary practice. Moreover, national and international policy instruments alone mandate the preservation of these practices.

The developed framework for an indigenized parliamentary procedure model: The indigenized model contains the good as well as effective SB's actual practices. Based on a holistic evaluation that includes the objectives of parliamentary procedure under a democratic framework, the actual practices were innovatively enriched with good parliamentary indigenous knowledge, systems and practices. Important features infused from the indigenous practices include its being value-laden, leadership and participatory-driven and culturally and

Table 2: A synthesis of the effectiveness and problems and difficulties encountered in the actual SB parliamentary practices and Ifugao indigenous parliamentary practices

Objectives of parliamentary procedure	Effectiveness of the actual practice of SB Mayoyao, Tinoc and Kiangan	Ayangan, Kalanguya and Tuwali indigenous parliamentary procedure	Problems/difficulties encountered in the actual practice of the SB of Mayoyao, Tinoc and Kiangan
Orderly conduct of business	The actual parliamentary practice is effective because of the tenets of the parliamentary procedure	The indigenous parliamentary procedure is effective because of its simplicity and responsiveness	Problems arising from the tenets of the parliamentary procedure: order of business ways of disposing motions, motions, minutes, committees, decorum and chairing and leadership
Full and free expression of opinion	It is effective because all opportunities to freely express one's opinion are given and respect is accorded such as one's right for privilege speech	It is effective because of the wisdom of the presider in ascertaining the right speakers at a time and the use of the vernacular	There are language barriers: the difficulties encountered in speaking English, lack of confidence and lack of knowledge on complex parliamentary procedure
Proper consideration of all measures	It is effective because of compliance and implementation to established processes and procedures such as committee processes	The indigenous parliamentary practice is effective because of the presider's knowledge on IKSP processes	The problems and difficulties concerning staff work, members taking advantage of parliamentary
Arrival at majority conclusion	It is effective because consensus applied leaves no unanswered question	The indigenous parliamentary practice is effective because of the presider's knowledge on IKSP	There are no problems encountered when using the consensus decision-making
Avoidance of impulsive legislation		It is effective because of the effective chairing skill and management of the presider	Problems concerning external pressures such as certificate of urgency and being blamed for unapproved measures
Ensuring executive accountability	The actual parliamentary practice is effective because of the doctrine of legislative authorization to which the question hour is anchored	It is effective because the community/communities involved serve as the checkers of accountability	Lack of oversight functions on the implementation of measures

behaviorally sensitive as opposed to the rule-driven and practices promoting polarization. Finally, it contains steps and directions to perfecting the model.

CONCLUSION

The actual practices of SB contain good and best practices worthy of maintaining. The documentation of these practices is a step for sustaining best institutional practices among government's policy making bodies. The revealed effective practice of the Sanggunians on consensus decision-making deviating from the usual non-collaborative practices are considered eye-opener of challenging century's old Western parliamentary practices and practices of big governmental and non-governmental institutions. They call for further scientific study and innovation. Having underlined the results of applying complex parliamentary procedure and the effects of various legislative internal and external demands, indigenized model provides blueprint for other legislative institutions in indigenous cultural communities in coping with ever-changing multicultural challenges.

Despite the intensified globalization and state modernization, the world is going back to what is organic in order to survive and enjoy. The parliamentary indigenous knowledge, systems and practices possess

sound behavioral, managerial, democratic and life-value principles currently needed by local legislatures specially to genuinely impact indigenous peoples. The characters of the indigenous parliamentary procedure on simplicity and responsiveness can always be revisited for ease of government's conduct and effectiveness on the delivery of legislative services.

The framework as a final output of the process of syncretisation is an answer to occurring creativity deficit and abating quality performance in various legislatures. The leadership-driven makeup of the framework reinvigorates the routinely run sessions and relevant practices of legislative bodies. Its value laden quality revitalizes each legislator of heeding to the present call for genuine good governance. Its encompassing character on dealing with diverse personalities while evading the caging of one's uniqueness into rules is a gargantuan move of bolstering effectiveness, ownership and participation in such a bureaucratic branch, a trend in modern management. The progressive paper itself is a way of making the old new and a unique but powerful way of preserving culture by making use of the most powerful institution in the society and mobilizing the people, the most important resource. It is indeed a noble contribution to public administration, modern democracy and humanity.

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