

AWARENESS AND SUPPORT OF BENGUET CONSTITUENTS ON CORDILLERA REGIONAL AUTONOMY



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ABSTRACT

With the aim of getting a ‘pulse’ on the awareness and preparedness for the renewed move for Cordillera regional autonomy, two pulse surveys were conducted by Benguet State University in the province of Benguet in 2012 and 2013. The two pulse surveys was part of a region-wide survey initiated by RDC-NEDA with the objective of gathering inputs where information, education and campaign are needed. Using modified multi-stage random sampling for municipalities and barangays involving four and five municipalities in 2012 and 2013 respectively and a systematic random sampling of households for respondents, results showed that 20% (2012) and 22% (2013) of the residents in Benguet are aware of the renewed move for regional autonomy. Similar results were shown in a more recent survey in 2014, this time conducted by a commissioned service provider, the MNADUNOP Development Studies. Majority are still unaware of the contents and passage of House Bill 5595 passed in Congress for the third attempt for move for regional autonomy and so cannot give opinion about the matter and there is reliance on the decisions of officials, their organization or church membership. Radio and television broadcasting as well as print media (newspapers) appears to be the primary tool for communicating regional autonomy; however these may not be enough to reach other sectors of the voting population. Once again, the people of Benguet remain doubtful of the renewed move for Cordillera regional autonomy despite the three times revision of the House Bill for the establishment of a Cordillera Autonomous Region.

Keywords: *autonomy, cordillera region, pulse survey, house bill 5595, indigenous peoples*

INTRODUCTION

The framework of struggle for fundamental change in the Cordillera spawned during the 1970s when many church organizations concerned themselves in the plight of the Indigenous Peoples. While nationwide protests against Martial Law dictatorship were going on during that time, there was also popular rejection by the Cordillera people over the lopsided development projects such as the Chico dam in Kalinga-Apayao and Mountain Province and the logging operations of the Cellophil Resource Corporation (CRC) in Abra and

western Mountain Province. The *Ibontoks* and the *Ikalingas*, aware of the grave consequences of these projects and of the previous similar experiences of Binga and Ambuklao dams in Benguet, showed an overwhelming response. Such experience served as stimulus for the analysis and the conceptualization of an alternative political and development entity among the affected sectors (CDPC Dev Series #2 1989).

These activities provided the impetus of developing the drawing up of the regionalization scheme while the concept of Cordillera regional

autonomy stirred the imagination and aroused the interest of various groups in the region (Florendo, 2009). By 1984, the “contours of the Cordillera underdevelopment” was formulated from various sectoral papers (CDPC Papers 1990: MRDC 1989). This later led to the forging of the Executive Order 220 in July 1987. Meanwhile, the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) launched a strong and sustained lobby of the Constitutional Convention in 1986 and this resulted to the provision of regional autonomy for the Cordillera and Mindanao in the Philippine Constitution (CPA, 1987).

Claver (2011) in one of his messages, envisioned that the creation of a Cordillera Autonomous Region is a demand rooted in the peculiar history of the region that has suffered from minoritization, marginalization and underdevelopment. Regional autonomy is a political arrangement within the state, under which a specific territory of indigenous peoples can exercise self-rule to a much higher degree compared to other regular regions or territories of the state (Carling, 2004). The most basic principle informing the character of this historical demand is the principle of self-determination, a collective right of peoples and communities recognized by international covenants (Claver, 2011). As defined by United Nations, “it is a right vested in peoples and include, but is not limited to, the right to determine their own socio-economic, political and cultural development in accordance with their needs and capabilities”. This would be the most appropriate form through which the Cordillera Indigenous Peoples can exercise collectively their right to self-determination while abiding as part of the Philippine nation (Carling, 2004).

The strong desire for autonomy was a clear indication of the Cordillera peoples’ desire to gain political power and control over their own destiny. However, although it is clear that the region wants to establish a distinct Cordillera region, there are disagreements as to what the structure of Cordillera autonomy should be (Penalba, 2009).

Constitutional Basis

The creation of an autonomous government within any state is a difficult act for any central government to achieve (Calde, 2009). Nevertheless,

the 1987 Philippine constitution strongly provides for the creation of autonomous regions in the Cordillera and Mindanao. Specifically, Section 15, Article X, states that: “There shall be created autonomous regions in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras consisting of provinces, cities, municipalities and geographical areas sharing common and distinctive historical and cultural heritage, economic and social structures, and other relevant characteristics within the framework of this Constitution and national sovereignty as well as territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines.”

This means that our constitution mandates the state, through its congress to pass a law for the establishment of autonomous region in Mindanao and the Cordillera as regions populated by indigenous peoples and or ethnic minorities.

Failed Efforts for Autonomy

While there was no law made and approved yet to provide for Cordillera autonomy, Executive Order 220 was issued by then President Corazon Aquino to formalize the creation of the Cordillera Administrative Region (LAWPHIL, n.d.). This is to prepare and make ready the region for the envisioned autonomous government (Calde, 2009).

In a span of eight years from 1989, several attempts at legitimizing autonomy in the Cordillera region have been passed. First is Republic Act 6766 known as the first Organic Act for the creation of the Cordillera Autonomous Region and second is Republic Act 8438 (Calde, 2009). Concurrently, both attempts failed to provide Cordillera autonomy: the 1990 and the 1998 plebiscites (Umaming, 2013). An affirmative vote for the law on regional autonomy is a precondition by the 1987 Philippine Constitution to give the region autonomy in self-governance much like the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao in southern Philippines. The first law Republic Act No. 6766, took effect on October 23, 1989 but failed to muster a majority vote in the plebiscite on January 30, 1990. The second law, Republic Act No. 8438 passed by Congress of the Philippines on December 22, 1997, also failed to pass the approval of the Cordillera peoples in a region-wide referendum on March 7, 1998 (Lacdao, 2010).

The rejection of the organic act, however was noted as not necessarily a rejection of regional autonomy. Carling (2004) claims that some voted against because of misinformation, mistrust in the national government which formulated the law, fear of discrimination particularly by non-indigenous residents and the view that it is another imposition on the people that does not truly recognize their indigenous rights. Casambre (2010) concluded that Cordillera autonomy has not been achieved because a tenable basis for it has not yet surfaced. To quote Casambre, "There is as yet no community for an autonomous region, as evidenced precisely by the absence of a discourse that has survived and overcome divisive contestation, attempts at bureaucratic capture, and general failure of imagination of the form or substance of a Cordillera region." (Casambre, 2010)

She asserted that an autonomous region, in the sense of social practices would come into being when a fruitful, productive discourse would be able to emerge and be nurtured.

Renewed Efforts for Cordillera Autonomy The failed efforts for Cordillera autonomy did not stop leaders in the region to renew a move to achieve such. In 2005, a regional consultation on charter change came up with a recommendation that the provision on regional autonomy should be retained. On December 6, 2011, Congressman Mauricio Domogan filed HB 5595 in the House of Representatives. This would be the region's third attempt at autonomy after HB 5595's precursors failed ratification in 1990 and 1998 in plebiscites held for the purpose of realizing the elusive "autonomy dream" laid down by Article X of the 1987 Constitution (Rillorta 2011).

To determine whether the people in the Cordilleras are ready to decide on the third move for regional autonomy, the Regional Development Council conducted the Pulse Surveys on Regional Autonomy from October 2007 to year 2008 (Regional Development Council, 2012).

With the recent move for Cordillera Autonomy, motivated by House Bill 5595: "An Act Establishing the Cordillera Autonomous Region", the Regional Development Council engaged in planning and

information dissemination regarding the said new proposal for regional autonomy in the year 2011 (Regional Development Council, 2012).

From July 2012 to October 2012, the Regional Development Council through state universities and colleges conducted another Pulse Survey to test the awareness of people in the Cordillera about the renewed move for Cordillera Autonomy and the existence of House Bill 5595 (RDC, 2012). This was followed by another pulse survey in March to May 2013 while another pulse survey is being prepared for 2014.

Continuing Issues on Autonomy

According to Cosalan, 1991 (as cited by Penalba, 2009), the political argument for the Cordillera autonomy is anchored on the issue of the "outright disregard of the national government of the rights of the natives (Cordillera communities)" especially with regard to the rights of ancestral lands and their right to self-determination. This issue has been brought about by the long and well-entrenched tradition of centralism in the country that facilitated the dominance of "Imperial Manila," the seat of government power, in political decision making (Penalba, 2009).

The case of decentralization had been expressed by Abueva (p1; 2001) when he said, "To deal with the demands for substantial autonomy or secession of the indigenous communities in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras, the new constitution allowed the creation of autonomous regions in those areas. Under the Local Autonomy Code of 1991, the national government functions concerning health, welfare, agriculture, environment and local public works have been partially devolved on the local governments. Various departments of the national government have also decentralized their operations to their regional and local offices".

Calde (2009) supports this by expressing that, "On the premise that development begins at the local level and that local officials are better attuned than national officials to the ways and means to pursue local development, together with the realization that local governments are not competitors but rather partners of the national government in pursuing a common agenda in

attaining national development goals, the Local Government Code of the Philippines was signed into law.”

Abueva (2001), adds that evolution and decentralization of national functions, powers and resources through the Local Autonomy Code of 1991 should be accelerated by progressive amendments and effective implementation.

The Philippines may remain unitary, however, the State is duty-bound to guarantee and promote autonomy of local governments to ensure their fullest development as self-reliant communities and make them more effective partners in the pursuit of national development (de Leon, 2011). People will be more empowered as they can participate more meaningfully in the State and local politics and governance instead of being continuously alienated from weak local governments or being mere spectators in the affairs of the national government (Abueva, 2001 cited in Brillantes and Moscare 2002, and in Penalba, 2009).

Carling (2004) emphasized that the lessons learned from the past attempt of the government for a plebiscite is that, genuine regional autonomy as an expression of the exercise of self governance and collective empowerment can only be achieved if genuine national democracy and independence prevail in the country. Furthermore, it should be built from the grassroots to the regional level. The capacity of IPs must be strengthened and further developed to ensure the dynamic exercise of self governance and democratic participation at all levels and spheres of governance. Capacity building for collective political and economic empowerment which necessarily requires a long and complex process should we want it to succeed. The need remains to continue to conduct widespread information and education campaigns on Cordillera regional autonomy and self-determination to enlighten the wider public on what truly regional autonomy entails (Carling, 2004).

The current campaign on Cordillera regional autonomy and development through House Bill 5595 is being led by the Regional Development Council (RDC), which is the highest policy making body of the region. While the move for

Cordillera regional autonomy started in the 1970s and formalized in 1987, there seems to be a long and bumpy road to such (Umaming, 2013) mainly because there is a strong clamor to ‘study the proposal’ in the light of new developments as well as experiences in the region and elsewhere.

The Pulse Survey on regional autonomy aimed to assess the current level of awareness and support of the general public in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) provinces and cities. This was spearheaded by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA)-CAR, National Statistics Office (NSO) and the academe. The involvement of the latter was in recognition of the research expertise of the academe as well as its resources in terms of organizing a team of students and lead faculty researchers.

There were two surveys conducted: one in July to September 2012 and another from February to May 2013. During the discussions and planning with RDC and NEDA for the pulse survey, there was an assumption that information, education and campaign on regional autonomy particularly on the House Bill 5595 would be launched in the different areas of the Cordillera especially after the first pulse survey. The second survey aimed to find out if there was an increase in the awareness level and position of the communities after the IEC activities. Results of both surveys will be used as take-off point for academic discussions.

This paper then intends to present the 2012 and 2013 Pulse Survey in selected municipalities of Benguet. Specifically, it aims to assess the current level of awareness and support of the general public on the substance of regional autonomy; gather inputs and determine areas where more IEC efforts can be focused.

METHODOLOGY

The survey made use of modified multi-stage random sampling for the municipalities and barangays and systematic random sampling of household for respondents. There were 1,170 respondents in the 2012 pulse survey from the four municipalities in Benguet namely; Itogon, Buguias, Bokod, and La Trinidad. In 2013, 1,293 respondents joined the survey from the same municipalities with Kapangan as an additional site.

The said municipalities were recommended by the National Statistics office because they topped the list of highest voting populations. Particular barangays with the same characteristics were also prioritized as areas but with consideration of its accessibility given the short duration of the survey.

Samples in both surveys included representatives of randomly selected household who are 18 years old and above. For the 2013 survey, some revisions were done in the questionnaire, which was based from the initial assessment of the first pulse survey. The changes included the addition of the agricultural sector, students and the unemployed for the item on 'Occupation'. A question aimed at capturing how the people define or understand autonomy was also added.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 1,170 respondents from four municipalities of Benguet during the pulse survey conducted in 2012 while there were 1,293 respondents in 2013. The samples in both surveys included representatives of randomly (systematic random sampling) selected household who are 18 years old and above.

Demographic Profile

The median age of all survey participants in the 2012 survey was 35 and 37 in 2013, which would suggest that a good number of them might have participated in the earlier plebiscites concerning the previous Organic Acts.

Women comprised 62% of the total number of

respondents and about 38% were men in the first survey. In the 2013 phase, the number was almost equal with 54.5% females and 44.5% males. The higher number of female respondents could be because the homemakers who were available in the home when the survey was conducted were mostly women.

A high literacy rate could be seen among the survey participants in the province as more than 80% of them have attained at least a high school level of education. Most of them are either college graduate or have been to college or vocational school. A few have gone to graduate studies. Nevertheless, one percent has claimed not to have attended school at all.

The demographic profile of the respondents in Benguet for the 2012 and 2013 survey is presented in the Table1.

Table 1 reveals that more than half (51.9%) of the survey participants in 2012 worked in the private sector, which included farmer, businessmen and the self-employed, while the next largest group (39.5%) included housewives, students and the unemployed.

For the second phase, the largest group of respondents was from the service sector which included the wage earners, employees in public and private institutions and those involved in small scale business. The next largest group came from the agriculture sector followed by the homemakers. A significant number came from the senior citizens who were farmers, home makers or retired employees at the time they were interviewed.

Awareness on the Renewed Move for Regional Autonomy

Majority of the residents of Benguet province are not aware of the renewed move for Cordillera autonomy. As shown by the pulse survey results, only 602 (51.5%) of the total number of respondents in 2012 were aware while only 568 (48.5%) were not aware about the proposal. The second pulse survey revealed a higher percentage of respondents who are unaware (57.91%) of such proposal.

Table 1. Respondent Profile According to Sex, Educational Attainment and Employment

	2012 N=1,170	2013 N= 1,293	
Gender	Percent	Percent	
Male	37.38	45.50	
Female	62.62	54.50	
Education			
Elementary	17.6	18.61	
High School	31.7	33.23	
College/Vocational	39.1	45.74	
Graduate/Post-graduate	10.6	1.49	
No grade completed	1.0	1.02	
Occupation/ Employment Sector			
Government	3.2	Agriculture	26.00
NGO	0.8	Homemaker	18.32
Private Sector	51.9	Industry	4.54
Academe	4.6	Services	34.06
(Others) Housewives, students & unemployed	39.5	Senior Citizen	4.39
		Student	8.14
		Unemployed	4.54

Among the 602 respondents in 2012 who were aware of the renewed move for Cordillera autonomy, the sources of information on this issue are varied (see Figure 1). Radio and television were cited as the most common source of information (70%). Another cited source was the informal discussions in the community or “word-of-mouth” (22%). The least cited sources are the school and public forums (8%). This could suggest that radio and television broadcasting were very effective in giving out information on Cordillera autonomy and this could be maximized for information education activities before the next plebiscite. However, information education campaign efforts must also be increased in schools and community assemblies to enable student voters and the least informed members of the community comprehend the issue.

For the 2013 respondents who were aware of the renewed move for Cordillera Regional Autonomy, radio and television were also cited as the most common source of information. Newspapers and brochures trailed as also a common source which could imply that discussions on this issue became

more frequent through these media forms. Schools and the internet were the least common sources.

Out of 602 respondents in 2012 who were aware of the proposal for autonomy, about 54% learned about it very recently, either in 2012 or in 2011. The other 46% have known about it earlier in the previous years. It is interesting to note that the call for Cordillera autonomy have already started two decades ago and two plebiscites have already taken place, the latest of which happened in 1997. Nevertheless, only a few were aware that such efforts have been going for several years already.

In 2013, out of the 42.09% respondents who were aware of the move for autonomy, about 48.36% of them learned about it sometime in 2010 or even earlier. Only 34.87% and 16.76% percent learned about it in 2012 or in 2011, respectively. This result shows that the expectation for a supposed increased or heightened conduct of IEC after the first pulse survey did not materialize because of the low percentage of respondents who have just learned about it.

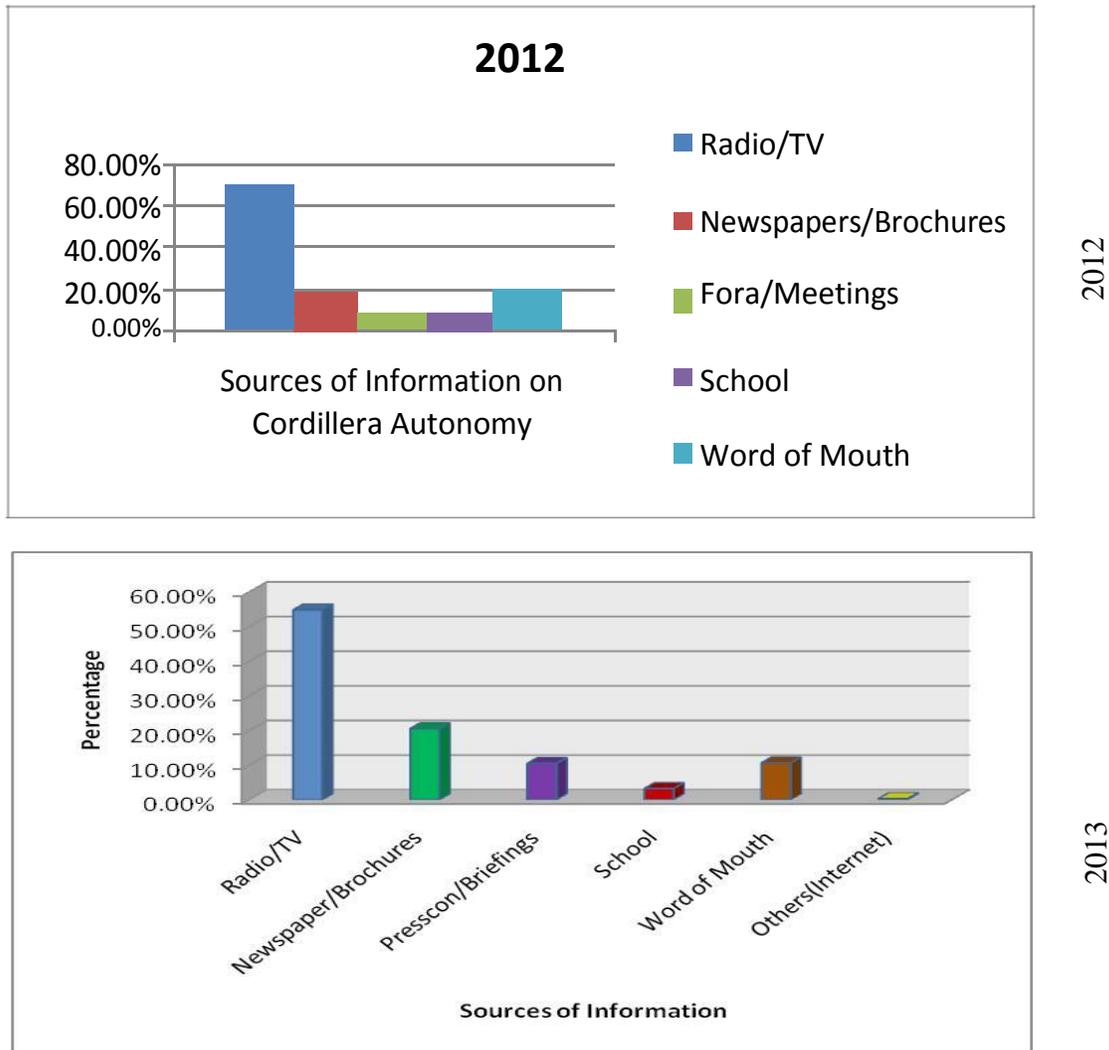


Fig. 1. Percentage Distribution for Sources of Information on Cordillera regional autonomy in 2012 (top) and 2013 (bottom)

While a good number of the 2012 survey participants were aware of the efforts to make the Cordillera an autonomous region, only 233 or about 20% heard about the House Bill 5595 or the third proposed Organic Act. Of these, only about 24% were aware of its contents. The majority heard about the bill but was not informed about the sections it contained.

For the 2013 phase, only 22% of the total number of respondents have heard about the House Bill 5595. Of these, only 22.38% were aware of its contents.

The level of awareness for each section of the bill is presented in Figure 2. As seen in the

chart, most of those surveyed in 2012 who heard about HB 5595 were only somewhat aware of the different sections it contains. For the 2013 respondents, most were not aware of the different sections contained in the proposal. Such results reveals that the constituents lack information and understanding not only on the proposed organic act but also on the various areas provided for by the bill. Awareness and complete knowledge on the details of the organic act would enable the electorates to arrive at an informed decision about regional autonomy for the Cordillera.

Support to the Proposed Regional Autonomy

Regarding the need for autonomy, approximately 40% of the 2012 survey participants agree that the Cordillera ought to become an autonomous region.

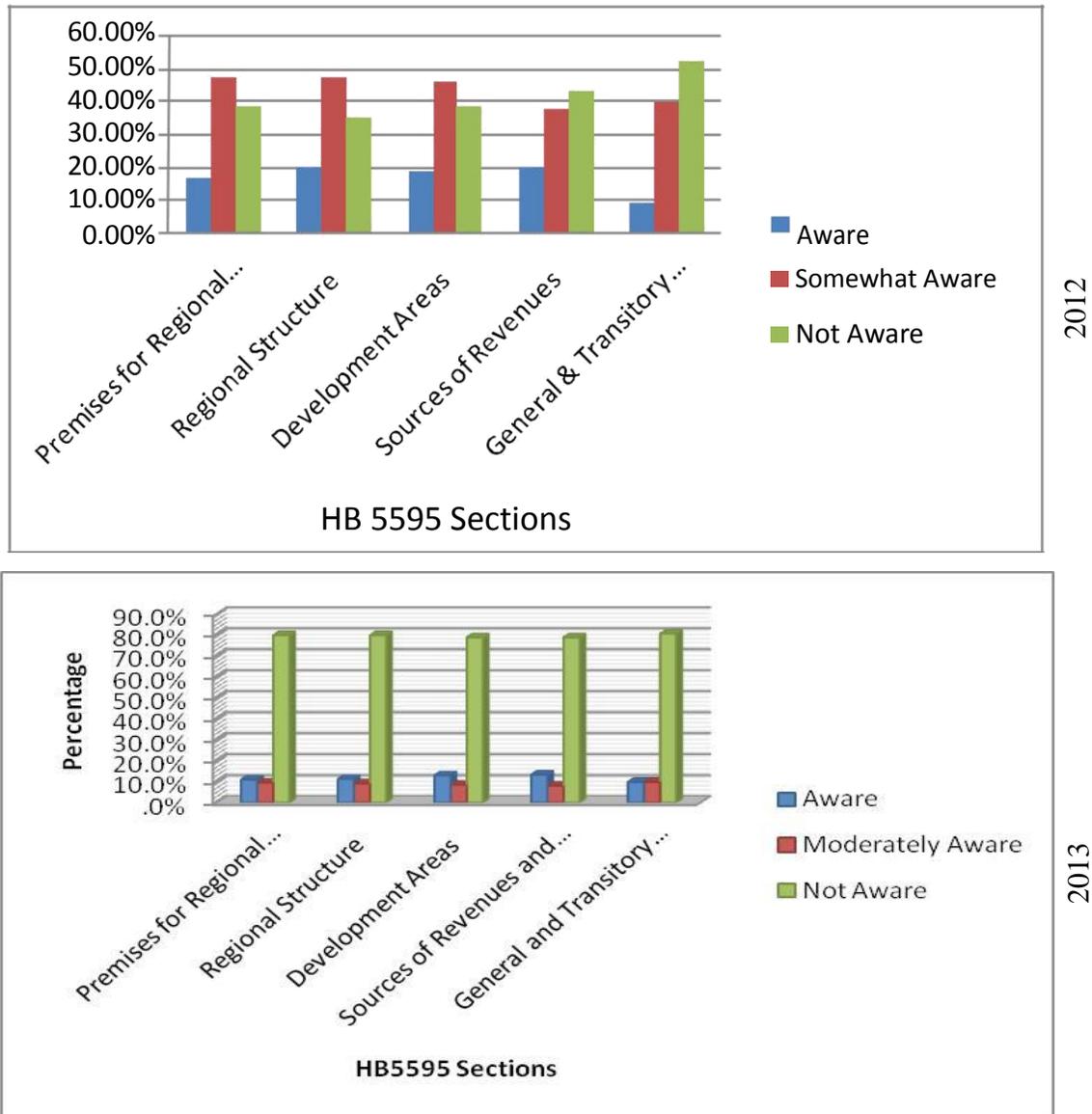


Figure 2. Percentage Distribution for Level of Awareness According to the HB 5595 Sections

Most of these come from the government, private, academe and unemployed sectors. Nevertheless, 26% disagree, another 20.3% are undecided and 13.3% responded they do not know whether there is indeed a need for this. Of the 472 respondents who agreed to the need for regional autonomy, a large percentage (83.8%) said they support the renewed move for this. Three percent stated refusal to support and the rest (13.1%) gave either of the conditional responses of “It depends” and “I don’t know.”

For the 2013 survey, the numbers of those agreeing to autonomy was much lower with 28.78%, also from the government, private, academe and the unemployed. In the 2014 survey conducted

by MNADUNOP Development Studies, only 24 percent agree that there is a need for autonomy (MNADUNOP Final Report, 2014). Nevertheless, 27.62% disagree, 22.73% are undecided and a higher 20.87% responded “I don’t know.” For those who agreed to the need for regional autonomy, a small percentage (32.37%) declared support for the proposed Organic Act. Around 22.83% signified absence of support and the bigger part (44.80%) said “It depends” and “I don’t know.” However, considering the total number of respondents, only about one third will support the autonomy proposal. Moreover, less than twenty percent (19.4 %) expressed full support to this move.

When asked about CAR’s readiness for

autonomy, around 30% of the 2012 respondents and 20.10% of those surveyed in 2013 stated that the region is now ready to become autonomous. However, in both phases, more than 70% comprised of those who disagree as well as those who are undecided.

Those who answered “No”, “It depends” and “Don’t know” to the question “Is CAR ready for autonomy?” identified aspects of the region which they regarded as not yet ready. The percentage distribution for the responses is summarized in Figure 3.

As shown in the chart, the respondents perceived social preparedness of the citizen/public, politics and the economic aspect of the region as areas which most required preparation in the move towards autonomy. Although the ‘citizens/ public’ was not a choice in the 2012 survey, many of the respondents mentioned about their preparedness so it was considered in the revised 2013 questionnaire. The basic reason here is the people’s lack of understanding on the content, reasons and need for an autonomous region resulting to their indecisiveness about the matter. Further, Planning and groundwork would also be needed in the aspects of culture.

As to how they will vote if there will be a plebiscite to ratify House Bill 5595, 34.5% of the 2012 survey respondents gave an affirmative response. About 20.85 % would vote “No” and the other 44.7% are undecided, giving the answers of “It depends” and “I don’t know.” Among the 2013 survey participants, a lower 25.51% pronounced to vote “Yes”. About 22.78% would vote “No” and a higher 51.72% than the first survey were undecided.

Tables 2 and 3 summarized the reasons for the respondents’ voting behavior across economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions.

Overall, in terms of the question of ‘How to vote’ with the renewed move for autonomy, the ‘Yes votes’ surveyed in 2012 garnered 34% while it only garnered 25.5% in 2013, which decreased of about 10% showing a decline of enthusiasm for the renewed move of regional autonomy. This

is consistent with the ‘perceived readiness’ for autonomy where in 2012, 29% say the region is ready but declined in 2013 with almost 10% at 20.10% surveyed results.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the study are still relevant as it is consistent with the results of a more recent survey, the MNADUNOP Development Studies 2014 pulse survey on the same issue. The data is not necessarily overridden but rather are validated by the new survey. More specifically, based on the results of the two surveys, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. A few number of Benguet voters perceive that there is a need for Cordillera to become autonomous and the majority of them perceives the region as not yet ready for this because of economic, political and personal concerns.

2. The response “no, don’t know, and undecided” to Cordillera autonomy is particularly related to the lack of awareness of the renewed move for autonomy, the contents of the HB 5595, the understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of regional autonomy, and the lack of a successful model of an autonomous government in the country. Furthermore, the mistrust of the people to the politicians/leaders is also a big factor in their decision making.

3. The indecisiveness of many respondents and their reliance to the decisions of the leaders, their organizations or of whatever the majority decides is critical in coming up with a more active discourse on autonomy. The constituents need to be well informed of the matter and be empowered to be involved so that they can decide for themselves.

4. Radio and television broadcasting were consistently utilized in informing potential plebiscite voters about the proposed organic act. But IEC efforts are vital for the unemployed and uneducated sectors of the province.

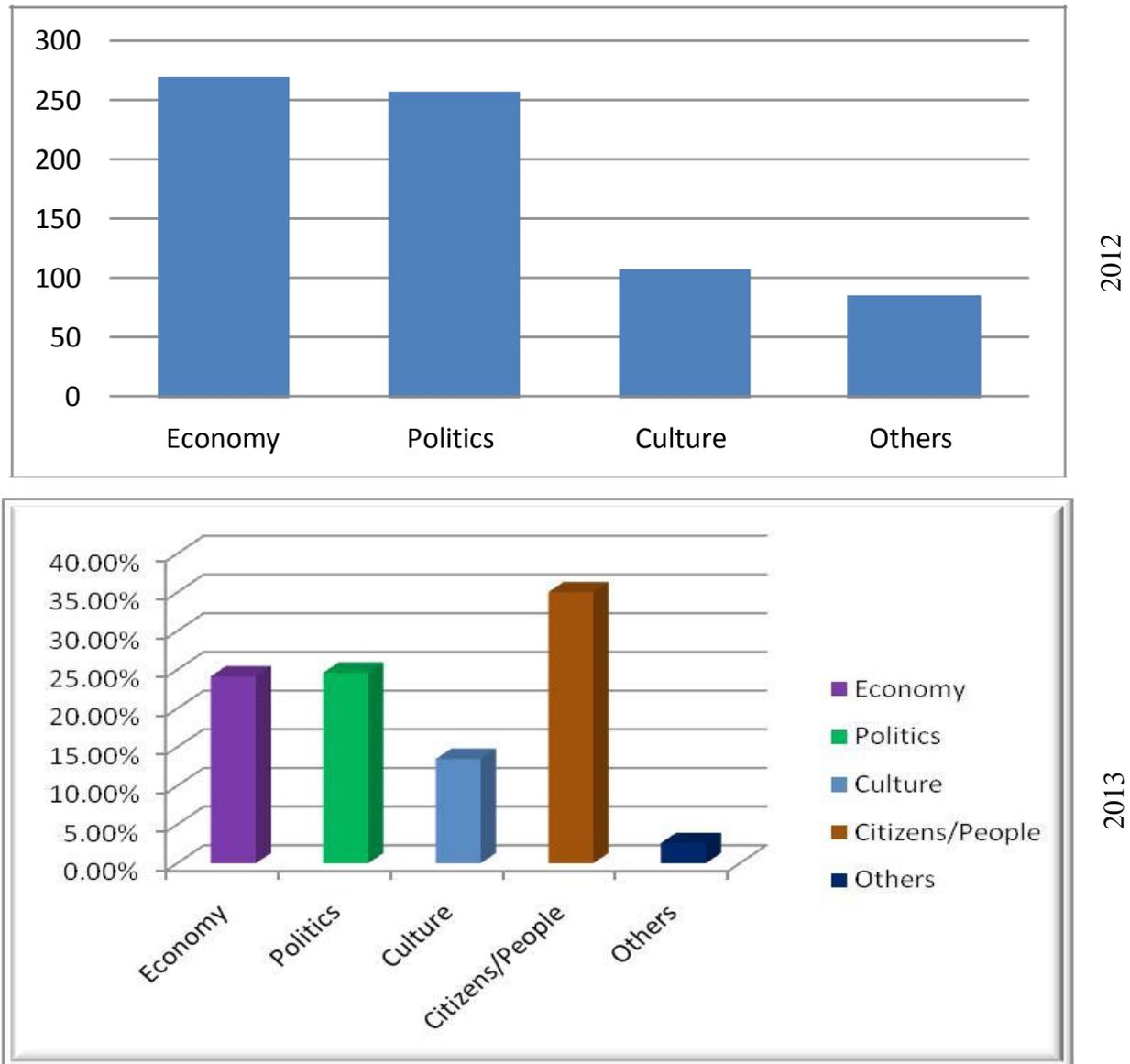


Figure 3. Frequency Distribution for Aspects of CAR perceived as Not Ready for Autonomy

5. The substance and form of regional autonomy needs also be widely discussed in all avenues to solicit different opinions until the majority become part of a productive discourse for Cordillera regional autonomy. While radio and television broadcasting, newspaper is effective as tool for communicating about regional autonomy, these may not be enough to reach other sectors of the voting population. Hence, IEC activities should also be carried out in other venues, such as schools and general assemblies in the rural areas.

6. A wide-range of information education campaign (IEC) is needed in Benguet as indicated by low to moderate level of awareness on both the renewed move for autonomy and the HB 5595

apparent in the province. The concept of autonomy may also be discussed and expounded to ensure the citizens understanding of its economic and political implication.

7. The Regional Development Council is encouraged to implement and allocate sufficient funds for extensive IEC activities in Benguet, covering information on the nature of regional autonomy, the contents of the proposed new organic act, and the specific advantages it may bring to the people of the Cordillera. This is to address the clamor of many survey participants to be given knowledge on what regional autonomy is and what it means for them and their province.

Table 2. Reasons for the 2012 Respondents' Votes

How

will you Reasons of respondents vote?

	ECONOMIC	POLITICAL	SOCIO-CULTURAL
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Income and resources will be concentrated in the region; benefits gained will be for the community * It's a venue to care for our fellow Cordillerans * it will promote development, improvement and progress (infrastructure, education) * We benefit from our own tax payments and will not be brought far from the region * Economy not yet progressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * So we can manage our own region * There will be a change in leadership * Being an "administrative" region has no direct benefit * For peace and order * Prompter resolution of political issues such as land disputes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * For regional unity in the midst of cultural diversity * Prevents discrimination against the local people * We can exercise and utilize our own talents and skills
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mindanao is experiencing problems with budget allocation. It can happen to us. * During calamities, we still depend on support of the national government * Economy is not yet ready 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Those in the city will not benefit as only provinces are the focus of this move. * Conflicts similar to those in ARMM may be experienced * The present leadership in the region is not capable to sustain autonomy * Benguet people will be at a disadvantage as abuses of leaders in other areas may spread out to Benguet. * The present form of governance is fine. * Peace and order will be compromised * Attention should be given first to our security and defense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The culture of Benguet is different from that of other provinces * It is not really what will happen when the region becomes autonomous * It can lead to us being discriminated by other regions * I don't understand what autonomy is * I don't know that contents of HB 5595
It depends		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Depends on who the political officials will be * Abuse of power by politicians and government employees * Peace and order is not yet evident * The government might disintegrate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of advocacy, publication and campaign for HB 5595 * Lack of information on autonomy and present situation * Need for public consultation and information dissemination * There is a need for a clearly written information and explanation about what it is * The Bill is vague. Do not know yet advantages and disadvantages of autonomy

Continuation of Table 2...

* It might again lead to corruption

* Leaders should have a common stand on the issue
 * It depends on what the majority wants
 * Lack of knowledge and understanding cause fear/anxiety about its results

Table 3. Common Reasons for Respondents' Votes from the 2013 Survey

How will you vote?	Reasons of respondents		
	ECONOMIC	POLITICAL	CULTURAL/ PERSONAL
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To show how Cordillerans are determined to improve our region * Many Cordillerans are poor; for better life; higher income; prioritized in terms of employment * Tax are paid here; maximized and localized use of resources * To provide housing especially for the poor * To fight importation of vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * We can decide on our own; others will not interfere * Change in the political system of the place * Let's try to lead our community/ region * Good as long as it will be peaceful and united 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Only the Igorots will stay here in the region * Recognition of IPs; preservation of culture * "Tapnu kinaadayon iskwelaan ket umasideg" * Regional separation can prevent discrimination
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * We still need the national government support * Corruption is rampant, it will get worse * Not economically stable, we are just relying on farming and not on the industry * Only the few and the powerful will get rich * Can't foresee any benefits from it * Even if we are autonomous, life is still the same * We are not yet ready 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Politicians who will govern us would stay the same; "madi nu maysa mang imaton" * It might become similar to Mindanao case * Provisions of the bill not clear; don't know anything about it * Peace and order of Benguet will be affected * People and the officials are not yet ready; unfair leadership of officials * Benguet will be dominated by others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * We have diverse cultures * People are not yet ready * Many will be affected, "magulo gamin"; we are not united in the region * "I won't vote for something I am not sure about" * People are having misunderstandings because of the issue

Undecided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Only if our economy becomes better * Fear of corruption; unity is still needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of IEC; autonomy not clearly understood; The people must be well informed before conducting the plebiscite * Mindanao autonomy is not proving to be successful * Each one wants to be the leader * Only the officials will benefit if we become autonomous * Whether yes or no, it depends on who will lead the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Unsure of what happens if yes or no will win * We should not rush * Can't decide, whichever is the minority
Don't Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * No idea about what autonomy is; never been tackled; needs deeper understanding * The big budget is not an assurance for its success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * It depends on the leaders, they are becoming worst * CAR still need the support of the Nat'l government not only in money matters but for other matters like education and health * Not sure if our region can stand alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Depends on the dictates of one's religious group (mandatory vote) * "Walang paki alam"; did not go to school; "know nothing about those"; don't understand what autonomy means * "They should show/discuss the whole part of the bill for us to see both the advantages and disadvantages"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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