

# Leadership and Democracy in Asia: The Cases of the Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan and Thailand

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**Crislene J. Torres:** Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We are gathered here today for the last installment of the political discussion series on comparative government and politics. This discussion series is made possible by the collective efforts of the UP Department of Political Science and its students, in cooperation with the Office of the President, University of the Philippines. For this afternoon, we will have this as topic of discussion: "Leadership and Democracy in Asia: the Cases of the Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan and Thailand."

I hope you can all stay with us for the next three hours to listen to the presentation of our distinguished panel of speakers and to actively participate in the open forum. Before starting the discussion proper, may I first invite Professor Jorge Tigno of the UP Department of Political Science to give the opening remarks.

**Jorge Tigno:** *Magandang hapon po sa ating lahat.* I would like to acknowledge the students here under Prof. Santiago of Social Science II. I hope you'll get something out of the discussions this afternoon that is relevant to the subject matter you are discussing in Soc. Sci. II. *Nasabi na ni Kris kanina kung bakit tayo nandito.* This is the last installment of the discussion series sponsored by the Department of Political Science and its students as well as the Office of the President of the University. I have been asked by Dr. Tadem, our chairperson and one of our panelists this afternoon, to sort of give you a background as to why we are having this as a series or why this is part of a series, and also to assess the relevance of the topic under discussion, as well as to welcome you, of course. *Ito ang papel na dapat gampanan ni Dr. Teresa Tadem.* But since she is a panelist, I have been asked by Dr. Tadem to make this presentation on her behalf. So, on behalf of the department, I would like to welcome all of you to this series.

Since this is the third of a series, this actually follows the areas in the discipline of political science. There are five major areas: Philippine government and politics, Area I; Political dynamics, Area II; Comparative government and politics, Area III, which is covered by this discussion; International law, organization and relations, Area IV; and Area V is Political theory and

methodology. The series started late last year. The first panel discussion that we had was on the issue of federalism in the Philippines, which supposedly falls under Area I on Philippine government and politics. I understand that at least one of the panelists in that discussion is also here. Then we had a discussion on civil society movements in the Philippines, which falls under Area II on Political dynamics. This has been followed early this year by a discussion on the Macapagal-Arroyo presidency and its responses to the prevailing international economic order and to globalization, under Area V, on international law, organization and relations. In that same period, a discussion on postmodernism and liberal democracy was held in relation to the EDSA II phenomenon. This could be under Area V. So, what is left is Area III on Comparative government and politics. The topic for this afternoon is leadership and democracy in Asia in the context of poor countries—the Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand. The panel hopes to provide a fresh perspective and understanding of the issues of leadership and democratic governance and styles in the countries concerned from a comparative standpoint.

I'm sure that all the speakers will be providing us with some kind of a glimpse into the leadership styles and the governance problems of the countries they will be covering. I also hope that the discussions after the presentations will be lively and diverse and, as much as possible, involve the students who are here this afternoon.

So, again, on behalf of the chairperson of the department, and the department and students of Political Science, I would like to extend my hand to all of you and I would also like to extend the gratitude of the department for the participation of the distinguished panel members, the students, as well as the faculty this afternoon. I also look forward to future discussions. Hopefully this will not be the last, although this is the last in the series. Eventually, the department will be conducting other programs, other discussion fora for the students to participate in and to benefit from as a complement to their studies. *Maraming salamát po.*

**Crislene J. Torres:** Thank you very much, Prof. Tigno. For our first speaker, we will have Dr. Jose Abueva, a former UP president and now president of the new Kalayaan College. He is also UP Professor Emeritus in Political Science and Public Administration. Dr. Abueva will speak on the subject of leadership and democracy in the Philippines.

**Jose Abueva:** Good afternoon. *Bago ko talakayin ang aking assignment, which is leadership in the Philippines, gusto ko sanang magbigay ng ilang introductory remarks tungkol sa teorya ng liderato o pamumuno, which we should always be conscious of now, dahil mga estudyante tayo sa UP at ang education daw sa UP ay training for leadership. Kaya mahalagang-mahalaga itong subject*

*natin*. Let me start with the theory or concept of leadership, *liderato o pamumuno sa wika natin. Ano ba ito?* Stripped of its other meanings, whether, say, a bad leader or a good leader, new leader, *trapo* or the ideological description of leaders, such as radical, left, center and right, I would like to discuss the functional theory of leadership. In other words, I would like to answer the question, “What do leaders do?” or “What are leaders expected to do regardless of their background, their traits?” and so on. But of course, you have to relate this to a democratic country. It is not leadership in an authoritarian regime. We are talking of leadership in a democracy. But my concept of leadership is true, even in the context of authoritarianism. It is a functional concept of leadership.

What do leaders do? Leaders are supposed to define the problem or the situation that they are facing. And they are expected to solve the problem. But before they can solve the problem, they have to define the problem and to define the situation of the community, or the country if they are national leaders, or the municipality if they are leaders at that level. Secondly, leaders are expected to define a course of action to deal with the problem or the situation. They are expected to solve the problem so they have to present or author a course of action, a policy or a program for dealing with the problem. Third, leaders are expected to mobilize the human and material resources needed to deal with the problem. Even if you are a leader with a good policy or program, if you do not have the people and the resources, or the funds to deal with the problem, you cannot do much. And of course, as the solution is being applied and the policy or the program is being implemented, you’re supposed to be concerned about the outcome or the consequences of your policy and program. You’re supposed to assess the results of your policies. Briefly, *ito ang* functions of a leader: define the problem or situation, come up with a course of action to deal with it, mobilize the resources that are needed and, from time to time, assess the impact of the policies so that you can improve or remedy the problems of implementation. More than that, a leader, especially at the national or even at the provincial level, in a democracy, should be concerned with values all the time. These values have to do with the purpose of government, whether it is development or justice or peace or the welfare of the poor or poverty reduction. Leaders are concerned with values. And also, leaders have to work with and through institutions and organizations. A leader cannot function alone or with just a small band of people. Normally, leaders inherit an institution or an organization. You are elected to an office. There is already an office, there is already a government. So you have to deal with institutions. You have to work with and through institutions and therefore, you should take care that institutions are strong because it is through institutions and organizations that your course of action or your policies will be carried out. Your effectiveness will be tested by the ability of the institutions to carry out policy, to implement policy. *Kaya pag*

*masyadong* corrupt *'yung* institutions, *konti lang ang mangyayari* because so much resources will be dissipated or wasted. *Kurakot*. So a leader is concerned with his functions. He is concerned with values. He is concerned with institutions. Now, since we are in a democracy, we are concerned with democratic values and democratic institutions. This is just a thumbnail theory of leadership in a democracy.

*Ngayon, ang aking assignment ay ang pagtalakay sa liderato ng ating bayan*. I wish I had the time to talk about Marcos and Aquino, Ramos and Estrada. But there is very little time. But let me just say, in relation to the functional concept of leadership that I began with, that Ferdinand Marcos was an eloquent leader, bright in the sense that he topped the bar examinations and he had a good record as a student. He was charismatic, but he also began his career with murder. He was convicted with the murder of the political rival of his father in the Court of First Instance. But this went up to the Supreme Court (SC). And to make a long story short, he was acquitted in the SC, partly because the Justices said, "*Sayang ito, marunong na marunong ito. Magaling ito*. He has a future." *Ang naging future natin*—39 hard years of dictatorship. So you see, if you have a violent background, you are likely to be violent throughout your political career. It was during his career when we had massive violation of human rights; when democratic institutions were destroyed; when he plundered our country, our economy and really did so much havoc and damage to our country. So the nation had to react to him, to get rid of him. But how? He was a dictator. You know about EDSA I or People Power I. It did not just happen in February 1986. Actually, throughout at least the second half of the 13½ years of his dictatorship, resistance was building up, and with the assassination of Ninoy Aquino on August 21, 1983, this resistance really gathered considerable strength until the snap election of February 1986. There was this contest between Cory Aquino and Marcos. And even with all the apparatus of the dictator, of authoritarian rule, Cory Aquino won that election, but it was stolen from her when the Batasang Pambansa declared Marcos the winner.

Anyway, EDSA I deposed the dictator, sent him in exile to Hawaii and began the restoration of our democracy. It was a very difficult time for Mrs. Aquino. She had six years to start the redemocratization process. So that was a period of having a new Constitution, of rebuilding the shattered institutions of democracy of building and strengthening civil society. What did Aquino accomplish? The accomplishments of Cory Aquino seemed to be overshadowed by her apparent weaknesses and inexperience. But the fact is that no leader, not Tañada, not any other, not even Pepe Diokno and others could have defeated Marcos. That's why everybody gave way to Cory Aquino. So, she accomplished, first of all, the overthrow of dictatorship. She restored democratic institutions,

fought a rightist military that staged several coup attempts and began to jumpstart the economy. One of her achievements was to bring about a peaceful election to choose her successor. And that was Ramos by a slight margin of Miriam Santiago. So we have Ramos, an engineer and a soldier, an officer by background and training. He brought with him the technocratic approach to the presidency and leadership. He was a micromanager, they say. He went into the details of administration, but he continued with the democratization effort and also brought us further advancement in our economic recovery. Then came Estrada at the end of the Ramos regime. He had worked his way up from mayor, senator, vice president. He was extremely popular. All the surveys showed he was the leader from the very beginning. So he attracted so much support, was very popular with the people, and attracted so much money because he was the man to beat. He won. Many of us here in UP, including myself, voted for him. Pres. Nemenzo voted for him. Randy David voted for him. By elimination, we thought he was better than Joe de Venecia, Ramon Revilla, Alfredo Lim and so on. Why? Because we thought he was sincere, genuine in being pro-poor and that he was really going to do something for the poor. So, millions of his countrymen ignored his character: *babaero, sugarol, lasenggo, di bale na 'yan*. That's not so relevant. We thought what is more important was that he will do something, more than any other president, for the poor. We were wrong. Character is basic. You cannot really say private character is irrelevant to public character. It is one and the same thing. If you are evil, if you are corrupt as a private person, you are very likely, or maybe irresistibly going to be, a corrupt leader. This is a recent experience and memory. I don't have to dwell on that anymore.

What I have just done is really a very superficial treatment of the four leaders. Actually, in our Center for Leadership, Citizenship and Democracy at the College of Public Administration and Governance, we have published many books on Cory Aquino and one on Pres. Ramos. We have also published a book on presidential plunder, the very elaborate and scheming stealing by Pres. Marcos.

For the theoretical part, let me divert into the kinds of leaders that we recognize. Lately, or even a few years back, *palagi nating naririnig yung trapo* versus the new politics *daw*, the *guapo*. The trouble with this is it's a very alluring contrast, the *trapos* and the *guapos* or the old politics and the new politics, respectively. But when you examine the elements supposed to be associated with the *trapos* and the new politics, they are very general. For example, when you say you're a *trapo*, you're associated with your wealth, your personality, your popularity. And also associated with the cliché of Philippine politics: guns, gold and goons, all of which are supposed to be the package of the *trapos*. And on the side of the new politics, these are supposed

to be: a concern for policies, programs, ideology and for character, integrity, and so on. So when you examine these elements, *para bang ang isa ay* good, *ang isa ay* bad. If you differentiate between good and bad, it is really misleading. The elements are elusive. It is hard to say who are really the *trapos* and the *guapos*. But it is with us. It is in the present campaign. The *trapos* are those who blocked the opening of the second envelope in the aborted impeachment trial of Pres. Estrada. The new *guapos* are those who wanted to open the second envelope, those who wanted the truth, those who wanted justice.

Then there is a more useful distinction in political theory. This is the James McGregor Burns' concept of transactional leaders and transformational leaders. As Political Science students, you must have tackled these. Transactional, of course, means that you are a leader, you bargain and you transact business with your followers. You exchange goods, money and privileges, and favors with each other. For the support that you want, you are ready to give thanks in return—favors, resources, prestige or whatever. It is a matter of *quid pro quo*. It is an exchange, a bargaining relationship. On the other hand, the transformational leader, according to James McGregor Burns, is a moral leader who engages his followers to consider certain values, to raise the level of the followers to a higher plane of vision and purpose and moral qualities. That's why this leader is a transforming leader. It is a moral leader who transforms his followers so that they can move up to a higher level. This leader pursues the values that I talked about, in order to realize the purposes that he has set for the people. And then there is the distinction which you already know of, especially in UP, between the left or radical or progressive left, the center or *status quo*, more or less, and the right or the reactionary, the very conservative kind of leadership.

So let me just end by saying, aside from performing the functions of leadership as I defined them, a leader eminently should be concerned with values because values really represent the end purposes of government, the ideals of society and the solution of problems. But values cannot be really enhanced or realized except through institutions and organizations. Thus, it is important to build strong, effective and efficient institutions.

**Crislene J. Torres:** Thank you very much, Dr. Abueva. Now, to speak on leadership and democracy in Taiwan is Prof. Aileen Baviera. Prof. Baviera is the former Director of the Center for International Research and Strategic Studies of the Foreign Service Institute at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Currently, she is the Executive Director of the Philippines-China Development Research Center and an Associate Professor at the UP Asian Center.

**Aileen S.P. Baviera:** Compared with other countries in the region, such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Korea and the Philippines, the 1997 financial crisis did

not have that serious an effect on Taiwan politics. The main reason is that Taiwan has a stronger economy. It has the third largest amount of foreign exchange reserves and the lowest foreign debt. Its banks have very low bad loan ratios, while companies have low debt-to-equity ratios. However, like other Asian countries, corruption and financial scandals also abound in Taiwan.

The effect of the crisis on politics was very indirect, as were its effects on the economy. Because the general environment in the Asian region suffered from the crisis, Taiwan lost some of its export markets, which eventually led to a worsening performance of the economy, which in turn became the basis of public criticism of the new leadership in Taiwan. Another reason why the crisis did not have such a grave impact on Taiwan is the structure of its economy. Taiwan's economy is highly dependent on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Ninety-eight percent of Taiwan economy is accounted for by SMEs, so they have no strong commercial or industrial groups that would try to influence the political system disproportionately, in the same scale as you would have in Indonesia, the Philippines or Thailand. This economic structure has been described as one of the underlying factors in the successful pluralism and democracy of Taiwan.

Let me go through some of the important features of the democratization process in Taiwan, independent of the financial crisis. Democratization in Taiwan offers lessons for other Asian societies, including the Philippines. The first notable feature is that the process of democratic change in Taiwan was marked by a peaceful step-by-step transition, which was led by the ruling party. This is where the importance of good leadership comes in. Unlike in other countries in East Asia, where democratic transition often follows a cathartic social or political movement, or the displacement of large sections of the elite, in Taiwan this was not the case. The party in power, which was the Kuomintang, even presided over the transition to democracy.

In terms of origin, the Kuomintang (KMT) is a Leninist party which considered itself a vanguard party. But unlike other Leninist parties that have seen power in contemporary history, it was willing to relinquish its own power through a systematic process. Taiwan has a legacy of forty years of martial law, with all its trappings—strong military influence in the government, dictatorship, emergency powers of arrest and detention, and a ban on fundamental freedoms. A lot of people suffered and many lives were lost during this period. And yet in the little over a decade since martial law was lifted in 1987, Taiwan has transformed into one of the region's most successful examples of democracy. This is attributed to the Kuomintang leadership, the dynamic interactions it had with opposition political parties and other active sectors, such as civil society in Taiwan.

In the 1970s, when Taiwan was still under a military government, increased economic affluence and education gradually heightened public demand for a more open society. By the mid-1980s, the Kuomintang had lifted the ban on political parties. In 1986, the main opposition group, the Democratic Progressive Party or DPP, was established. Martial law was formally lifted in 1987. From the late 1980s onward, the opposition began to gain ground in electoral politics.

Elections in Taiwan had been allowed even during martial law, but only at the local levels. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there were local elections, provincial elections and direct elections for representative in the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly. In 1988, Lee Teng Hui took over as the first democratically-elected president of Taiwan. Those of you who understand Taiwan's history know that the government of the People's Republic of China was set up only in 1949, after the Kuomintang fled to Taiwan following its defeat in the Chinese civil war. So, in the Chinese mainland's version of history, Taiwan is but a province of China. But as far as the people of Taiwan are concerned, they are increasingly inclined to eventually seek independence from mainland China.

This history has very much affected the politics and democratization in Taiwan. When Lee Teng Hui took over, he was also the first native-born leader in modern times, as most of the Kuomintang had been mainlanders who were only forced to flee to Taiwan in 1949. This has been the main focus of the democratization process—how to transform the quality of representation in order to reduce the influence of the mainlanders and increase the influence of native Taiwanese. In 1993, the Kuomintang was beleaguered with accusations of corruption and of exercising a paternal and dictatorial leadership. In response, demands for constitutional amendments eventually led to the first-ever popular election of a president and vice-president in 1996. The following year, constitutional reforms introduced a semi-presidential system, where there is also a figurehead prime minister.

The most significant event took place in March 2000, when oppositionist DPP candidate Chen Shui Bian was elected president in a plurality of votes. He was running on a platform of reform and clean government. This marked the end of the continuous rule of the Kuomintang since 1949 and its reign as the world's longest-ruling political party. Up to this point, however, the KMT still holds a legislative majority in Taiwan. In many ways, this is the stability of the semi-presidential system, where a former oppositionist is president but the legislature is dominated by the Kuomintang.

Another feature of the gradual introduction of democratic institutions is the role of strong local politics in Taiwan democracy. The process of transition was



not just a top-down approach. There was also a bottom-up counterpart, where local and provincial elections, as I mentioned, were introduced. The local elections could be looked at from two perspectives. From the Kuomintang's perspective at the time, it was a way of co-opting local elites. Considering that mainlanders dominated the party, they had to find some way of co-opting the ethnic Taiwanese elite. On the other hand, through elections, the process of democratization was speeded up because it allowed for opposition groups to be politically active. Irregularities in the local elections also became the main rallying point for the emergence of opposition political parties in Taiwan.

Let us illustrate some of the democratic gains in Taiwan, particularly since the lifting of military rule in 1987. In terms of press freedom, there were 31 newspapers in 1988 but 360 in 1998. From 33 radio stations in 1993, this grew to more than 80 in 1998. The accessibility of cable TV is more than 80%, the highest in the Asia Pacific region. There are three million internet accounts on the island.

In 1999, the publications law was abolished. This law gave the government the right to supervise all the publications of Taiwan, a legacy of martial law, when the state maintained very strict control of the press and other institutions. A transparency law was also passed three years ago. This law allows citizens to obtain data and statistics from government offices, in the interest of enhancing accountability. A debate on a plebiscite bill is ongoing, and it would allow citizens to directly influence national policy issues, including Taiwan's desire to become a member of the United Nations, the possibility of changing the name of Republic of China, or seeking independence from Beijing. These are very sensitive issues that the Kuomintang had all along been trying to keep a lid on, because of their potential for provoking conflict with mainland China. That such a discussion could take place in an atmosphere where Beijing continues to dangle the threat of using force in order to reunify with Taiwan is, some would say, adventurist on the part of Taiwan. Not only could it heighten tensions with Beijing, but it could also lead to a loosening of its tenuous social cohesion.

The role of the military has been limited and is now subject to legislative oversight, especially on such matters as the procurement of weapons. There is also greater representation of native Taiwanese in the officer corps; but some people still question the allegiance of the military elite. They were, after all, a dominant force through martial law and enjoyed a big role in politics. Now that the Kuomintang is no longer in power and the president is from the opposition DPP, which is likely to favor independence from China, then the military is indeed a major stakeholder in the direction of this new government in Taiwan.

NGOs have also been an active force in Taiwan politics and society since

the 1980s. Among the first to emerge were groups working for women's rights, environmental protection as well as charitable institutions. Following the end of military rule, there were more militant groups, such as labor unions and anti-nuclear activists. NGOs are now given a bigger role, not only in politics but in Taiwan's diplomacy.

Because Taiwan does not enjoy the official diplomatic recognition of most countries, its government wants to mobilize NGOs to help increase interactions with the international community. This is consistent with the trend of increasing NGO activity in international affairs—with parallel people's summits serving as counterparts to official meetings. Taiwan sees this as opening up opportunities for it to join the mainstream in world discourses through its NGOs.

Overall, the main feature of democratization has been a strong adherence to constitutional processes, which is one lesson worth exploring in this forum, albeit too late for the Philippines in the context of EDSA 2, or for Indonesia's post-Suharto transitions. But for countries such as Malaysia, where you have democratic forces that are still negotiating the possible courses of action, or even the People's Republic of China, the step-by-step systematic model of democratic transition may be of value.

The uniqueness of the democratization process in Taiwan stems from the fact that democracy is the main pillar of legitimacy of the Taipei government at this point. Because of the cross-Strait problem, the question that looms large in the consciousness of the Chinese people on both sides and the international community is whether or not Taiwan should become a separate state or a separate polity from mainland China. Independence can only be justified if Taipei can demonstrate that its government is truly different from Beijing, and Taipei has in fact been arguing that its democracy makes it different.

The success of democracy in Taiwan is vital to regime survival as well as the key to international recognition. At the same time, it is closely linked to ethnic cleavage and national identity issues, with the pro-democracy forces drawing their largest support from nationalist and pro-independence groups since the 1950s. In the future, the more democratic Taiwan becomes, the more likely it will be for native Taiwanese to dominate politics and the more likely it will be for Taiwan's people to aspire for independence from China.

**Crislene J. Torres:** Thank you very much, Prof. Baviera. Our third speaker, Dr. Joel Rocamora, has played a very active and visible role in the recent EDSA-People Power II struggle, as he was constantly interviewed on TV for his incisive political analysis on the rapidly turning anti-Estrada campaign. Dr. Rocamora is the Executive Director of one of the country's leading research institutions on

political empowerment, the Institute for Popular Democracy. He is also the president of the party list with the biggest banner on EDSA flyover, the AKBAYAN. Dr. Rocamora will speak on the topic, "Leadership and Democracy in Indonesia," centering on the increasingly fragile leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid.

**Joel Rocamora:** In a speech about a month ago, President Wahid or, as people would affectionately call him, *Gus Dor*, which means older brother, said roughly, "Have patience, we are undertaking repairs in the Indonesian economy and in the Indonesian state. Apologies for the inconvenience." I want to start by telling you that I am an avid fan of *Gus Dor*. Mainly because from about 30 years of analyzing political leaders, the most serious failing of political leaders all over the world is that they take themselves too seriously. They lose their sense of humor and if *Gus Dor* has anything in abundance, it is his sense of humor. Another story that is attributed to him, and I fully believe this, is that he said you have to understand, because Indonesia has had crazy presidents. He says, "Our first president, Pres. Sukarno, was crazy about women. The next president, Pres. Suharto, was crazy about money. Pres. Habibie is just plain crazy. And me, I drive everybody crazy." Which comes as close as to a sophisticated reading of the situation. *Gus Dor* in Indonesia is driving everybody crazy because they don't know what he is going to do next. Partly, I think it is a very clever strategy: not giving anybody a sense of what he is going to do next or who he is going to insult next with his next joke. But, I would insist, it is also a functional way of leading Indonesia at this point in time. If somebody said to me, "Look, I'll give you a hundred million dollars and arrange it with God so that you'll live about a hundred and fifty and still look like 35, but to get this you have to become president of Indonesia, I would flatly and immediately say no. Not at this time in particular because Indonesia is an impossible country to run." Let me explain why.

At this particular point in time, both the political economy and the Indonesian state are in the process of massive restructuring. Indonesia has been, or rather was, for all intents and purposes, under a dictatorship from the time that Pres. Sukarno declared martial law in 1957 until Pres. Suharto was kicked out in May 1998. That's a very long period of time. Up to this time, that is like 80 percent of Indonesia's life as an independent country. And during all that time, the military, Suharto and his family, and his cronies succeeded in gaining control over major chunks of the Indonesian modern corporate sector. What's happening now is that this modern corporate sector, including 90 percent of the banking system, is in the process of being redistributed. Basically, this is what happened: the political crisis that drove Pres. Suharto out of power was preceded by a massive economic crisis worse than that of any other country in the region in

the aftermath of the 1997 financial crisis. Quite specifically, Indonesia's currency depreciated from around 700 rupiah to the dollar in July 1997 to, at one point, as much as 15,000 rupiah to the dollar. So, what happened was that large corporations with dollar denominated debts suddenly found themselves literally bankrupt. In addition, because of the economic crisis, demand plummeted, so that even if you still have the money to buy raw materials, you would not produce because demand was way, way down. Then, the IMF came to the rescue. And what a rescue it was! The IMF squeezed Pres. Suharto in November into closing down 16 large government and privately-owned banks. The idea was that these banks were into corrupt banking practices, that they owed too much money, and that they should be closed down in order to reform and strengthen the Indonesian banking system. Instead, the banking system almost collapsed. And to rescue the banking system, the Indonesia Central Bank loaned close to US\$14 billion to the seven largest banks in the country. On the average, the Suharto family directly controlled about 30 percent of these seven banks; the cronies controlled the rest. What they did with the money, as soon as they got it from the Central Bank, was to take it out from Indonesia. One of the countries where they took the money to was the Philippines. Using one of the cronies of Suharto, they used US\$750 million out of about US\$4 billion that they managed to make from the so-called rescue to buy the PLDT. So, when these banks collapsed for their inability to pay their debts and for the inability of their top corporate clients to pay their debts, all of these banks became automatically government-controlled and government-owned. Again, the IMF, not even saying "I'm sorry," called for the setting up of the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (IBRA). IBRA now controls 57 percent of the banking and corporate assets of the country. With the 30 percent of public enterprises also controlled by the Ministry of Public Enterprises, the government now controls 80 to 85 percent of the modern sector of the Indonesian economy. All of these are now up for grabs. You can imagine the ferocity of the struggle for control over these assets because these are being sold at bargain basement prices. To be sure, it is not just factions in Indonesia which are battling over these assets, but also foreign companies, especially American companies with the open support of the IMF. That's the first background thing to the problems of Pres. Wahid.

The other problem is this: Indonesia was a military dictatorship under Suharto and, to a certain degree, also a military dictatorship under Sukarno. Suddenly, the country becomes a "democracy." So what you have to do is completely restructure the Indonesian state. But the way that the transition occurred in Indonesia is what would have occurred in the Philippines if Gen. Angelo Reyes was allowed to have his way, which was a carefully controlled exit of Pres. Estrada, with Pres. Estrada still retaining some degree of authority.

When the Indonesian military played a role analogous to the role played by Gen. Angelo Reyes, then Gen. Wiranto said, "Pres. Suharto, we're sorry but we are withdrawing our support from you." The next thing that Gen. Wiranto said was, "But the military is committed to defend you and your family." Although unspecified, it included defending the considerable economic assets of the Suharto family. None of these assets have been touched to any significant degree. So, the Suhartos still have billions and billions of dollars. The only problem is the military itself. The military has a territorial structure that just makes it, for all intents and purposes, and in fact, the real government all down to the village. There is military structure at the national level, at the regional level, at the provincial level, all the way down to the village. In most places, it is the military officer who makes the political decision. This territorial structure of the military has not yet been dismantled. Secondly, the military, going back to its beginnings in 1948, has this attitude that if push comes to shove it can just kill a few thousand people. In 1965, the Indonesian military organized the killing of anywhere from three quarter of a million people to one million people. The human rights violations of the Philippine military would look like children's games compared to the human rights violations of the Indonesian military. Eighteen military officers have been jailed for human rights violations. They are all from Aceh, and the highest ranking officer is a captain. This captain, when he was about to board the military plane at a military airport, to be transferred to Jakarta as a prisoner, was caught with five kilos of marijuana. That gives you some idea of the extent of continuing control by corrupt military elements within the military. No senior officer has been arrested, much less jailed for human rights violations.

The other problem is an economic problem. For most of the last 20 years, only an average of about 20 percent of the budget of the military has been paid for out of government-appropriated money. The rest of the Indonesian military's expenses are paid for by military-owned enterprises, *kotong*, protection money and various other sundry ways of earning money when you have a monopoly on the means of violence.

This last one is a very, very serious problem because if you want to discipline the military, if you want the military to shape up and become a civilian-controlled organization, you first have to punish Suharto. You have to put Suharto in jail, not just for corruption but also for human rights violations. In the same way, you have to put Estrada in jail. Next, you have to try, convict and imprison top military officials for human rights violations. These two, I think, are doable. At this point in time, the Wahid government should find Tommy Suharto, the youngest son of former president Suharto, who has been convicted of a minor corruption case and who has avoided the police for about four or five months.

These two are doable: jailing one Suharto and jailing some top generals. What is extremely difficult to do, and I don't know what solution can be found for this, is how you can feed and clothe the military and find money for bullets, or maybe you can forget about finding money for bullets as a way of solving human rights violations. But how do you feed and clothe over 250,000 military personnel in a situation where the government just does not have the money and the military is not used to getting money from the government anyway? A fourth major problem is this: Indonesia has no business being one country. The diversity of Indonesia is so great that it makes us in the Philippines look like a Couples for Christ chapter. I mean, Indonesia, for one thing, has four time zones. To go from one part of Indonesia in the north, then all the way down to Papua New Guinea, to West Papua, it will take you six to seven hours on a modern jet plane. And while 90 percent of the export income of Indonesia is outside of Java, 2/5 of the population of Indonesia lives in Java, and the majority of the political leadership of Indonesia is Javanese. It is understandable why people in Riau, especially in Aceh or in Maluku or West Papua, are unwilling to put up with the old way of doing things, when all their resources were sucked into Jakarta. So, there is a local autonomy problem. They passed a local autonomy law as early as 1999. It took them forever to put together the implementing rules and regulations. When these implementing rules and regulations were finally put together, they were so bad that the Minister for Regional Autonomy resigned on the day that the implementing rules and regulations were promulgated.

These are the problems that Pres. Wahid has to deal with. Why did he become President? His biggest problem is this: Abdurrahman Wahid of the party PKB, revered leader of the Nadatul Ulama, a Muslim organization with some 30 million members, became president because of his political weakness. In the election of June 1999, Wahid's party, PKB, came in only number four. It's only like 11 percent of the votes, way behind the PDI-P, the party of Megawati Sukarnoputri, which came out number one with about 34 percent of the votes. This was followed by the former ruling party, Golkar, which had 24 percent of the votes. The third, I think, was PAN. The point is, Wahid's party is a very small party in the MPR, which is the Philippine Senate's counterpart in Indonesia, and which is the body that elects the Indonesian President. The only reason why Wahid became president is because neither of the two largest parties was willing to concede to the other on whose candidate would become president. So this gave way for several smaller Muslim parties to put together a coalition that enabled them to elect Wahid as president. Our friends in the feminist movement will not appreciate this, but one of the main recruiting actions of this Muslim coalition was that Muslims should not allow a woman to become president of Indonesia. This is one of the strongest arguments used by the people organizing

this coalition called Turos Tanga, or Federal Force coalition. It does not exist anymore. So, that's how Wahid became president. In addition, his personality is too big for the role of a politically weak president. When he first came into power, talking about feeling confident in his government, he said, "My vice-president, Megawati, is dumb. She hardly ever talks. The chair of the MPR is deaf. And me, I am blind. So, you should be very confident." And indeed, Wahid has managed to get some things done. Unfortunately, it is not enough to push the restructuring of the political economy and the state and the government to a point where enough restructures are in place, and to a point where his own position would be strengthened. That is his problem right now, that he is still in office because the two largest parties cannot decide which of them should take power. But if Wahid cannot do anything about the kinds of problems that I told you about, it does not matter if he remains president or not. The place will just collapse at one point in time. What will happen? I don't know. As Yogi Berra once said, prediction is a hazardous enterprise, especially if it has something to do with the future. On that note, thank you.

**Crislene J. Torres:** Thank you, Dr. Rocamora. For our last speaker, we will have the energetic chairperson of the UP Department of Political Science, Dr. Teresa Encarnacion-Tadem, to talk about leadership and democracy in Thailand. She will be discussing the downfall of Thailand's Prime Minister Chuan Leek Pai.

*Editor's Note: For Teresa E. Tadem's paper, please turn to page 35. Prof. Tadem submitted a well-documented paper which she preferred to be featured separately from the forum proceedings.*

**Crislene J. Torres:** Much as I would want to accommodate your questions, we have no more time left. I would like to thank the audience for the comments and questions and our speakers for their responses. May I now call on Bonn Brian Juego, the Department of Political Science representative to the CSSP Student Council, to give the closing remarks.

**Bonn Brian Juego:** To close, we would like to give Certificates of Appreciation to our speakers. First, to Prof. Jorge C. Tigno, for delivering the opening remarks. Secondly, for Ms. Crislene G. Torres, for being our moderator for the second time. May I request Prof. Teresa Tadem to assist me in distributing the certificates? Please allow me to read the citations.

To our speakers: The Political Science students and the Department of Political Science, in cooperation with the Office of the President, University of the Philippines, present this Certificate of Appreciation to Prof. Aileen SP Baviera for being one of our discussants in the political discussion series Area III, Comparative Governments and Politics, with the theme, *Political Science*

*Responding to the Challenges of the Times*, and for sharing her insights on the topic, "Leadership and Democracy in Asia," particularly the case of Taiwan. We are very privileged to listen to her discussion on leadership and democracy in Taiwan, the country which is strange among Political Science majors. Her exposure and expertise in the field of Chinese politics have greatly contributed to the success of this discussion. Given this 6th day of March 2001 at Bulwagang Claro M. Recto, Faculty Center, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. Signed by Bonn Brian T. Juego and Rio J. Casis, the respective Representatives of the Department of Political Science and the CSSP Student Council and Dr. Teresa Encarnacion-Tadem, Chair of the Department of Political Science. Thank you very much.

A Certificate of Appreciation is also presented to Dr. Joel M. Rocamora. We are very pleased to have him grace this event in spite of his numerous appointments and consultations with the media and civil society. His studies on Indonesian politics and his advocacy in the advancement of popular democracy have made this discussion extremely remarkable. Thank you very much, sir.

We likewise present a Certificate of Appreciation to Dr. Jose B. Abueva for being one of our discussants in the political discussion series and for sharing his insights on the topic, "Leadership and Democracy in Asia, the Case of the Philippines." We are very honored to have him in this discussion series for the second time. Despite the very short notice of our invitation, he delightfully accepted it, and for this we feel that we are so special to this brilliant yet very humble guy. His expertise on leadership and democracy and his outstanding scholarship on Philippine government and politics have successfully filled the discussion with wisdom. Thank you very much, sir.

And lastly, we are presenting a Certificate of Appreciation to Dr. Teresa Encarnacion-Tadem for being one of our discussants in the political discussion series, and for sharing her insights on the topic, "Leadership and Democracy in Asia: the Case of Thailand." We are honored to have her participate in this discussion, despite her various commitments as chair of our beloved Department of Political Science.

To everyone, thank you very much for your attendance in this forum.



## Selected Questions and Answers in the Open Forum

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**Ms. Torres:** I would like to open the floor for discussion. May I invite the students, teachers and guests to ask questions or give their comments? *Para sa mga nahihiyang gumamit ng mikropono, pwedeng isulat ang inyong katanungan sa papel at babasahin ko ito.* The question with me right now is not directed to anyone of the discussants, so, anyone of them can answer. Here goes the first question: Is there such a thing as Asian leaders' value? If so, how is it different from the values of Western leaders?

**Dr. Abueva:** As students of political science, you must have heard of or discussed the idea of Asian values in politics. What I remember about this is a chapter that Chan Heng Chee wrote. This lady was, for a few years, the director of the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, then she became the Singaporean permanent representative to the United Nations and Singapore's Ambassador to the United States. In her thesis about Asian values, she says that we should not accept that democracy is only of one kind, the so-called liberal democracy of the West typified by the United Kingdom and the United States. There are different kinds of democracies. We might even talk about Asian democracies. And she clearly had in mind Singapore, Malaysia and, I think, even China. She says that, basically, in a rather sweeping generalization, with Asian (what she had in mind was East Asian and even Southeast Asian) countries, the emphasis is not on individual and his/her rights but on the community. So, she talks about communitarian values. She also says, with respect to the several countries in Asia that are supposed to be influenced by the Confucian ideology, that the individual is not as important as the group or the community. Then, she argues that what every society has is really a basket of goods, among which the idea of individual liberty is only one of many goods, the desirable things. So, a society that is being democratic or being well-governed is to be judged on the results, that is, on the well-being and welfare of the people. It is like arguing that in Singapore, they have a very high standard of living, the people are mostly employed, there is order in society, the laws are applied, and disobedience to law is punished. I remember the taxi driver when I was praising the greenness and beauty of Singapore while riding a taxi going to the hotel. I told the taxi driver that every time I come to Singapore, I see more greeneries, more flowers. He said, "Yes. This is a very fine country. There is a fine for everything, including chewing gum and not flushing the toilet." I said, "Ha? How do they know you are not flushing your toilet at home?" He answered,

“No, sir, only in the public toilet. They know whether we flush it or not.”

For one thing, the generalization about the emphasis of communitarian values over individual rights and so on, and the acceptance of authoritarian methods of governance is probably exaggerated in this idea of Asian values and Asian democracies because, if we look at Asia, at least East Asia that includes Southeast Asia, where you have Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, I think they do not subscribe much to such Asian values, although we vary in our degree of emphasis on the community solidarity and the privacy of the community as against the individual. So, there have been recent criticisms also on the idea of Asian values. But let me just stop here and allow my colleagues to respond.

**Prof. Baviera:** Just very briefly, in my view, there are good Asian leaders and bad Asian leaders. Usually, it has very little to do with the values or culture, but sometimes it is affected by the nature of the political system itself. I think Asia has had a good share of its good and bad leaders.

**Dr. Rocamora:** This question reminds me of my response when I was asked about the sodomy charge against former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia. He was charged of committing sodomy, which the government of Prime Minister Mahathir insisted was a national security issue. My response is that it is only in a government of assholes that sodomy becomes a national security issue.

**Dr. Tadem:** They always said that the success of the new Asian tigers—Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia—is because of Asian values. But after the 1997 economic crisis, they pointed out that it is because of Asian values that these economies collapsed. I think it is really difficult to lump Asian countries as having the same values. My experience in Thailand, when I did my fieldwork there, is this: I saw that there are a lot of values which are also different from as well as similar with other countries. So, it is really difficult to generalize.

**Guest:** I have something to add to the rejoinder of Dr. Tadem. Among the criticisms by the West that were hurled against the promotion of Asian values articulated by Lee Kwan Yew and Mahathir, is that this is used to legitimize their rule for whatever purpose. I also agree with Dr. Tadem that pronouncements of Asian values... cannot be made as a sweeping statement for all the so-called Asian democracies. Democracy itself is a very subjective term. Some dictatorial countries would even claim that theirs is also a democracy.

**Q:** Some analysts of Indonesia, like for example, Michael Vatikiotis, have argued that the present leadership crisis in Indonesia has been exacerbated by the skewed institutional incentives fostered by the constitution itself. They argued that while

their constitution is clear about electing their leaders, it is not clear on how to remove their leaders. That is why, for example, the legal advisers of Wahid had been trying to argue that Wahid is, in fact, not accountable to the Indonesian parliament. My question is, to what extent do distorted institutional rules exacerbate or worsen the political tug-of-war between Wahid and the Indonesian Parliament?

**Dr. Rocamora:** The Indonesian Constitution of 1945 is one of the shortest and vaguest constitutions in the world. And the institutional structure of the Indonesian state is the result of rather inspired misinterpretations of the spirit of the 1945 Constitution. Most of it is through presidential decrees. Yes, the institutional structure of the Indonesian state is in a very severe state of decay. I did not mention this as a problem, but it is a problem. When a country has been under a dictatorship, such as Indonesia from 1957 to 1998, that's 41 years, it is very difficult to put together a democracy and the institutionalization of every thing from a new electoral system to local autonomy, to things as basic as the rule of law or the political party system. All of these have to be reinvented under conditions where the sociology of Indonesia imposes some rather severe constraints. For example, two of the largest institutions in the country are Nadatul Ulama and Muama Dia. These are both Muslim organizations which virtually act as separate states. They run an educational system from kindergarten all the way to the university level. Nadatul Ulama, I think, has about a dozen universities, while Muama Dia has a lot more. They provide social services, they impose a certain kind of justice within their ranks, they have armed groups. And if you are going to have a political party system, of necessity, these two organizations are going to form parties. Muama Dia is slightly smaller than Nadatul Ulama but they do roughly the same things. In terms of Islamic theology, one is more "modernist" than the other. But that's it. There is nothing you can do about it. If you are going to form a political party system, you have to take account of that fact.

**Q:** Could you please assess how education influences or affects leadership? For example, Erap for the Philippines, Wahid for Indonesia, Chen for Taiwan and Chuan Lik Pai for Thailand.

**Dr. Abueva:** You are actually singling out one factor among the influences on a leader's behavior or performance. And that is education. But I think it is important to be reminded that leadership is a relational concept. A leader exists because there are other leaders and followers, citizens. Leadership is not just a leader acting as he wants to; he is often reacting and responding to other leaders in his own camp and the opposition leaders, and he is responding to various groups, various interests, and so on. So, there are many influences on him than

just his education. Just the other day in Davao, somebody asked me whether we should amend our constitution to set higher educational qualifications for presidents. You don't deal with the equality of leadership that way, and it would be undemocratic to say that only those with a master's degree or a law degree should be qualified to be president. It is really about this idea of a leader in the context of relationships with various parties, such as civil society, the military, the media, the religious groups, the youth, various segments or sectors of society—assuming, of course, that the political parties are very organized groups and institutions. I would think this is more important, because when you talk of education, what are you talking about? Discipline? Level of education? There are other things. In the case of Erap, I don't think it was education that was the key thing.

But character itself is really the more efficient. I was telling Joel (Rocamora) before you came that a number of us here in UP voted for Erap, believing that he would really be sincere and determined in addressing the problems of poverty, in helping the poor, and so on. So it was not because of education at all. We thought it was his primary value systems, commitment and so on and so forth. It did not work out that way because of his basic character defect. Plus, I think, in the area of education, not the formal education but the ability to learn, the willingness to learn—because many leaders, whether a congressman, senator, mayor or president—really require a tremendous capacity to learn, and the willingness, the eagerness to learn and to read reports, proposals, rather than formal educational requirements.

But let me raise two problems in our democracy. One is the rising cost of elections. Money politics as they sometimes call it. The 1999 elections showed that it cost billions of pesos to run for the presidency. Others have much less than that. *But Erap, in addition to his popularity, turned out to have the most money. And being a personalistic kind of a leader, he was very willing to pay back those who have helped him get elected as president. But it also turned out that it was not just a matter of being faithful to his friends. He was also eager to make money out of the relationship.*

But how do you deal with the legitimate need for resources in order to run a campaign and win elections? How does a party raise the funding? In other jurisdictions, the state helps the parties by giving funds to those who qualify or get so much proportion of the votes.

The other problem I see is this: how do you build political parties that are not just electoral vehicles but also have enough membership or mass parties who believe in a set of ideals, policies, programs, and are brought together by and stay together because of this solidarity? People power has twice demonstrated

to the world this tremendous capacity to come together and change a president. But how do you institutionalize this power of the people, except through NGOs, peoples' organizations and political parties, so that the pressure is constant and continues to be organized?

**Dr. Tadem:** I think the education question came from Lee Kwan Yew, who said that we, Filipinos, don't know what democracy is because we are uneducated. But I agree with Dr. Abueva about character. People can be educated but not have the character. This I saw from the criticisms of the Thai leader, Chuan Leek Pai, who used dogs to bite demonstrators and to beat up protesters in front of the government palace, which is like Malacañan Palace. I just find it so inhuman, and he did not even bother to come out. I'm quite amazed that they used the word authoritarian a lot. He acted in an authoritarian manner, he is a civilian dictator. It's something we don't do. I think we never used that in any deposed martial law president. But the Thais are very conscious about not being consulted or actually being treated in that manner. Character is not everything, but it is something that must be considered.

**Prof. Baviera:** As Dr. Abueva mentioned, there are a lot of important questions that we need to address, such as the role of political parties, and how to determine the kinds of candidates you want to elect into office. Perhaps one lesson that we can draw from the Taiwan experience is about the role that the government itself can play, the role that the ruling party itself can play, not just to make its candidates win. We already hear a lot of criticisms when they bring in people that you suspect would be incompetent political leaders into their slate. Then, they are not helping by doing that. The government has a responsibility to look beyond the next election and to lay down the groundwork for institutions that will work in a long term.