



Martial Law and EDSA

A discussion series by the
Ateneo de Manila University
Department of Political Science
in collaboration with BusinessWorld

Series 06 – September 2020

This booklet contains a series of articles written by the faculty members of the Ateneo de Manila University Department of Political Science in relation to EDSA and the Martial Law era in the Philippines. These articles are accessible online through BusinessWorld Online.

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Martial Law in the Philippines

SERIES 06-2020

In response to the 34th year of commemoration of the Martial Rule in the Philippines in the Ateneo, the Department of Political Science launches *Martial Law and EDSA discussion series SERIES 06-2020*.

The Ebook is a relevant collection of perspectives on Martial Law in the Philippines in the context of 34 years of our democratization experience. As authors pitched in their take on the EDSA democratization project, these issues were unveiled.

Firstly the narrative that EDSA as “a call and challenge for social solidarity and political engagement” (Tolosa 2015) is also staging ground for parallel and intergenerational stories of democratic struggles (Tolosa 2015). EDSA’s “cultural and religious” underpinnings make it a unifying event that “... matched the culture of a people whose religion was part of it.” (Tolosa 2016)

At the same time these narratives confront chokepoints in:

- the challenge to move beyond juridical democracy (Charentenay 2014)
- to address the tensions between “hybrities” and the “contradictory logics of personalism and particularism” and rationalism and public good on the one hand (Tolosa 2016)
- the close or narrow the gap between executive residual unstated power and constitutionalism (Lim 2017)

Writers who think that oligarchy (Rivera 2020) has underpinned post-EDSA society, 34 years after People Power, believe that sustained dynastic politics has altered the political structure, that ripened up to new patronage (Salvador 2016) and Duterteism (Abao 2018).

Did not the inability of the state and society to “interiorize the criterias of democracy when making their choice” (Charentenay 2014) led many Filipinos to support Martial Law 30 years thereafter (Barretto 2017)?

In the end, authors provoke their readers: complacency amid EDSA’s “democratic gamble” (Rivera 2020) creates a damage that is “deep, multi-dimensional and far-reaching” (Abao 2018). Let not this thwart our “capacity” to revive our ideals of democratic change.

PEOPLE'S POWER

EDSA and after

By Pierre de Charentenay

25 February 2014 - <https://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Opinion&title=edsa-and-after&id=83869>

Twenty-eight years after the event, EDSA and People Power remain the main symbolic cornerstones of Philippine democracy, the references to a new beginning. The event was unique in the history of the country. After four days of great tension and numerous demonstrations, President Marcos left the country. The risk was high that violence would erupt between the two camps on both sides of EDSA, the Marcos loyalists on one side and the secessionists behind Fidel Ramos and Juan Ponce Enrile on the other.

The involvement of the Church, led by Cardinal Sin, the prayers and the non-violent commitment of millions of believers during those days permitted a peaceful ending. It was a spiritual event, with a lot of religious presence, where the participants risked their lives. It has been defined as a "miracle," which is understandable since the religious dimension was as obvious as the surprise of the outcome.

After such an event, everything was becoming possible. It would depend on the

capacity of the government to lead the country toward real change. But seven coup d'état attempts in six years threatened the rule of law and the stability of the institutions. As Cory Aquino said herself later, her main achievement was to have allowed democracy to be transmitted to President Fidel V. Ramos despite great political instability during her term. The peaceful transition between the two presidents in 1992 became a model which had to be followed. Military coups were something of the past. The stability of democracy was the greatest legacy of EDSA and the main achievement of Mrs. Aquino.

The democratic spirit was reborn in the land. It allowed for EDSA II when it was obvious that President Joseph Estrada had been exceeding the limits of the law. His corruption was unacceptable, and since the political institutions were not willing to take the decision to put him aside, the people again took to the streets in a new people power, expressing their indignation and their desire to see Estrada go. He had no other recourse but to leave Malacañang.

This event clearly showed that the spirit of EDSA was still alive. But several signs questioned the capacity of the people to follow the road of real and not just juridical democracy which had been reinstalled by the first EDSA revolution. The first area concerned the electoral process: the election of Gregorio Honasan, one of the military officers who threatened the Aquino presidency, and of Imelda Marcos to the House of Representative showed that the electorate did not really interiorize the criterias of democracy when making their choice. This would be confirmed later by the senate election of Juan Ponce Enrile, former ally of the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos, of his son Bong-Bong Marcos, of

the two sons of Estrada, and of the former President Erap himself as Mayor of Manila. Does EDSA deserve to see her legacy mangled by those against whom it worked?

The second concern of democratization revolves around the presence of some families which, locally or nationally, hold economic and political power. Various attempts to do away with the dynasty system failed. In 2014, the Philippine senate is a chamber of the same old families, with some new dynasties like the Estrada and Binay families. So, the effort of democratizing political life has not been the key element of the policy organized during all these years. Some great personalities, from Dr. Alran Bengzon, former Secretary of Health in the government of Mrs. Aquino, to Leila de Lima, Secretary of Justice in the government of her son President Benigno S. Aquino III, have shown that politics of justice and the rule of law are still possible despite the dynasties although the old family system has maintained its power in the country.

The third area of concern is the economy. The very slow pace of reform has not allowed for real social change. Agrarian reform has never been a priority. The level of poverty has not changed in the country while the economy has been booming for many years. The level of unemployment remains the same. The Philippines has invented development without an increase in jobs, and the creation of wealth without repartition. New preoccupations are coming in the horizon: the level of violence is rising, not that by various guerrilla forces, but ordinary criminality, the kidnapping industry or the killing of journalists and political opponents. The environmental question is another very serious one: rivers are in a terrible situation, the quality of air in Manila

is below all international standards, the forests have been disappearing at the same rate as before.

With the distance of time, we understand that EDSA was not proposing a political or economic program. It was just (but it was considerable) a return to the democratic life with all its hesitation and possible choices. But it had no program, no agenda, not even a political project. EDSA was not conservative or liberal, centrist or leftist, although leftist groups did not really support this revolution. That is why many social and political groups could support the change: it had no political program. Consequently, it gave a blank check to those elected to power. It also meant that economic or social forces which were set aside during the dictatorship came back on the political scene to claim their share. They did it very successfully. And the old demons of Philippines democracy came back with them.

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EDSA, World War II, and generational storytelling

By Benjamin T. Tolosa, Jr.

24 February 2015 - <https://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Opinion&title=edsa,-world-war-ii,-and-generational-storytelling&id=103214>

How does one share the significance of Martial Law and the EDSA Revolution with young people who have no memory of this period in our history? This question took on a particular urgency last year when we saw disturbing images of Imelda Marcos and young Atenean scholars/alumni posing happily together in social media. It was seen as a moment of collective forgetfulness about the Marcoses and dictatorship. What are we teaching our students or have taught our young alumni? What have we learned, and how are our responses today shaped by our understanding of the past?

Every year as we commemorate EDSA People Power, we confront these hard questions. On the eve of the anniversary last

year, Pia Hontiveros of Solar News Channel (now CNN Philippines) conducted “ambush” interviews of Ateneo Grade School students about the meaning of EDSA. I was pleasantly surprised when I watched my then 10-year-old son answer on TV, “EDSA was when we stood up when we were being manipulated.”

Talking to my son about Martial Law and EDSA is like my parents talking to me about “Japanese time” and “Liberation” when I was his age. This year we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and, in particular, the Battle for the Liberation of Manila in February-March 1945 which for my parents was a defining period of their late teens. My son is graduating

from grade school. When I was in his shoes in 1975, it was the 30th anniversary of the Philippine liberation from the Japanese. Next year, we mark the 30th anniversary of the victory of EDSA People Power in February 1986 which for me was a high point of my youthful sociopolitical awakening and involvements. I find these generational parallels quite striking.

There is a literature in sociology that asks how generations are formed and become significant in social change. Generations are not to be equated with chronological age-cohorts. What makes them distinctive is their shared experience of a traumatic historical event that produces a collective consciousness with potential for action. But while this experience can set a generation apart from both the past and future, the focus need not be on generational gaps or conflicts. The very acts of storytelling that lead to generational self-identification also create the space for listening to others, appreciating what has come before and will follow, and forging intergenerational bonds. Social change can arise from generational dialogues.

But what kind of generational stories we tell will make a difference. If the stories of traumatic historical events are not just about injustice, destruction, and brutality, but also about how people can overcome violence, respond generously to a call to service despite adversity, and discover human dignity amidst seeming inhumanity, the possibilities for forging human solidarity, promoting the common good, and building lasting peace are enhanced.

My parents' families were fortunate to have lived in the northern end of Manila, not far from the UST concentration camp which was liberated early in the Battle of Manila.

They were saved from the burnings, bombings, and barbarities mercilessly inflicted upon the civilian residents of southern Manila. Their Liberation stories were full of their work as attendants in emergency makeshift hospitals. My mother wrote about her experiences in her 1948 college yearbook: "It was those first weeks of Liberation...I could not help feeling that I had some obligation...I had also heard of the lack of hospital workers and had listened to heart-rending tales of casualties pouring in hundreds from the Intramuros zone. I had felt so inexpressibly grateful that everyone in our family was spared. Here was the chance to prove that gratitude in deeds!" She tells stories of feeding an old lady whose mouth had been shattered by shrapnel, of comforting a young woman who lost practically her entire family, of admiring the devoted presence of a man for his girlfriend whose body was completely burned. She also says that the happiest birthday of her life was her 20th in 1945, because a 17-year-old paralyzed girl she had cared for and prepared received her first Holy Communion that day.

This human face of World War II was also reinforced by a favorite TV show from the 1960s -- *Combat!*. It was not about war-making per se, but about the daily struggles, dilemmas, and hopes of an American army squad in France. The war was the setting, but it was a show about human dignity amidst violence, which even the German enemies were seen to possess.

I experienced the EDSA Revolution from thousands of miles away because I was an overseas graduate student that school year. This is probably one reason why I see EDSA as not just the four days of 22-25 February 1986, but as a longer process of socio-political awakening, formation,

organization, and practice in active nonviolence that was inspired by the self-giving of Ninoy Aquino in August 1983. Fr. Catalino Arevalo, S.J. said shortly after the triumph of People Power that EDSA as a communal faith experience was "a disclosure story -- a story of a person responding to what God is asking him [or her] and that in turn moving others to respond." It was about being stirred by the bravery and selflessness of Ninoy and Cory Aquino, Evelio Javier, the Namfrel volunteers, the computer workers who walked out of the Comelec, the military personnel, the Church people, and many others who defied the violent dictatorship. These little stories of personal calling, painstaking work, self-sacrifice, and commitment converged in a nation overcoming differences and fears and emerging victorious at EDSA. Together we profoundly witnessed God as present and moving in history.

There is another crucial historical moment we are facing as a people today: Mamasapano, the Bangsamoro, and the continuing struggle for peace in Mindanao. How will our present generation engage the unfolding story, and how will we tell it to the next?

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Hindi Ka Nag-iisa: A call for social solidarity, political engagement

By Benjamin T. Tolosa, Jr.

20 August 2015 - <https://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Opinion&title=hindi-ka-nag-iisa:-a-call-for-social-solidarity,-political-engagement&id=113803>

On August 21, we mark the 32nd anniversary of the assassination of former Senator Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. It has been said that commemorations create the sense of a public past. They become part of the cultural rituals and practices that sustain social memory.

But why is it important to tell the story of Ninoy's death again and again? And how should it be told in dialogue with generations who did not experience martial law, and may not fully appreciate the struggle against the dictatorship and the continuing challenges to defend and deepen democracy?

This year is particularly significant because on February 25, 2016 we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the EDSA Revolution.

It can be argued that the Aquino assassination and its aftermath created the conditions for the triumph of People Power in 1986. Indeed a central paradox of those years of democratic transition in the Philippines is how did senseless and treacherous violence beget meaningful and triumphant active nonviolence?

If a generation is defined in terms of a shared experience of and a collective response to a traumatic event, how did the

experience of the Aquino assassination in 1983 become a catalyst for political engagement that culminated at EDSA in 1986?

I want to focus on a key part of this story that may be overlooked especially by those who did not live during that time. Thus this crucial dimension may be lost and erased from social memory.

The story starts not with Ninoy's murder in 1983 while in the custody of his military captors at the Manila International Airport, but with his conversion experience in 1973 while in solitary confinement for 30 days in a 4 meter x 5 meter prison cell in Laur, Nueva Ecija.

He described this harrowing but ultimately grace-filled experience in a letter he wrote that year to former Senator and fellow political prisoner Francisco "Soc" Rodrigo.

Ninoy was stripped of all his possessions including his eyeglasses and wedding ring, and issued only two briefs and two t-shirts for a whole month. He had not seen his family for sometime and was expecting to be killed at any moment. He suspected he was being poisoned so he refused to eat even the meager food rations given to him.

He wrote: "I became so depressed and despondent... At this point of my desperation, I questioned the justice of God."

But while meditating on the life of Christ by praying the mysteries of the Holy Rosary, he said "it dawned on me how puny were my sufferings compared to Him whose only purpose was to save mankind from eternal damnation... With this realization, I went down on my knees and begged for His

forgiveness. I know I was merely undergoing a test, maybe in preparation for another mission... Thy Will Be Done! These words snatched me from the jaws of death. In Laur, I gave up my life and offered it to Him... picked up my cross and followed Him."

It is in this light of being called to conversion and mission ten years earlier, that the iconic image of Ninoy's bloodied and outstretched body on the tarmac on August 21, 1983 makes fullest sense. So does his undelivered arrival statement where he writes, "I return voluntarily armed only with a clear conscience and fortified in the faith that in the end justice will emerge triumphant."

And identifying himself with Gandhian nonviolence, he foresees what would be his most lasting contribution to the struggle against the dictatorship: "the willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful answer to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived."

In his homily during the mass commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Aquino assassination (two years ago), Fr. Catalino Arevalo, S.J. pointed out that Ninoy's death was truly a sacrifice -- a gift of self.

From this perspective then, martyrdom is not about the violence inflicted by the murderers on a passive victim. It is about the martyr's active witnessing and testimony.

"[W]hat matters is what the victim's spirit makes of what is done to him: the act of violence is transformed into an act of self-giving; the hatred-cum-killing becomes love-in-sacrifice."

It was this active witnessing in the context

of conversion and mission that became personally and collectively empowering and liberating for many Filipinos of the 1980s.

What may have started as visceral outrage against a brazen and brutal murder became a deeper summons to sociopolitical engagement and commitment.

As Fr. Arevalo also said almost 30 years ago, Ninoy's self-giving was a disclosure story -- "a story of a person responding to what God is asking of him and... in turn moving others to respond." It gave rise to the processions of people at his wake and funeral, the many prayer-vigils and demonstrations in the "parliament of the streets," the critical and active participation in the 1986 snap election, and the popular uprising and victory at EDSA.

Indeed Ninoy's story was only one of many other disclosure stories, both big and small, which served as invitations for people to come out of comfort zones and give of themselves despite the potential costs. These individual and organized responses manifested the people's repudiation of the Marcos dictatorship. They were clear signs from an emboldened and empowered citizenry that the regime was no longer in control despite its continued possession of instruments of violence and repression. "Hindi ka nag-iisa" was no longer just an expression of personal sympathy amidst death and grief. It became a call and challenge for social solidarity and political engagement towards the common good.

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EDSA and De la Costa

By Benjamin T. Tolosa, Jr.

23 February 2016 - <https://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Opinion&title=edsa-and-de-la-costa&id=123450>

This column is not about a particular intersection in Makati, because the two roads do not actually meet. Moreover, it may seem strange to link the great Jesuit historian, nationalist and humanist, Fr. Horacio de la Costa, whose centenary we mark this year, with the EDSA People Power Revolution, the 30th anniversary of which we commemorate this week. Father de la Costa died, after all, in March 1977 -- almost a decade before the momentous events of February 1986.

In his newly launched book, *The Philippines: An Asiatic and Catholic Archipelago*, French Jesuit political scientist, Fr. Pierre de Charentenay suggests a way by which we can view EDSA anew through the eyes of the "gentle genius." He uses Father de la Costa's insight on the hybridity of Filipino culture and institutions as the central theme and organizing framework for a book on Philippine history, politics, and religion. Ours is a split culture -- with fissures and disjoints between formal institutions and

long-held informal norms and practices. Many of these formal rules and rituals were simply superimposed by colonial authorities on local community life and structures. Moreover, Filipino elites (political, economic, cultural) have become so alienated from the lives, concerns, language, and wisdom of the poor that many official policies and programs do not resonate with and respond to the most pressing needs of the majority. This hybridity is at the heart of the challenges and dilemmas of nation building and social transformation in the Philippines. The Filipino people, including our leaders, are often caught in the contradictory logics of personalism and particularism on one hand, and rational public institutions that should promote the common good, on the other.

But if Father de la Costa's reading of Philippine history and society can be used to analyze the country's problems, so too can it be used to understand our successes. In particular, Father de la Costa can also help us appreciate the nation's singular triumph over the brutal and corrupt Marcos dictatorship thirty years ago. The hybridities are also evident at EDSA and how it came about. During those times, however, these characteristics came together to transcend personal purposes to achieve the wider social good. It is in this sense that Father de Charentenay calls EDSA a "founding act" for the Philippines, akin to the French revolution.

On the surface, EDSA was in significant ways a spontaneous mobilization of individuals and groups, many of whom came together as schoolmates, officemates, friends, and family members. It was a direct response to a personal appeal from Cardinal Sin over Radio Veritas to surround the military camps and protect the rebel

soldiers. But it was also underpinned by a longer process of painstaking education, organization, and mobilization that had been going on since the late 1960s and early 1970s, but especially after the assassination of ex-senator Benigno "Ninoy" S. Aquino, Jr. in 1983, in what was then called the "parliament of the streets." These formative experiences in active non-violence as a strategy, principle and even spirituality, led to the internalization among key EDSA participants of what Fr. Jose Blanco S.J. termed *alay dangal*. It was a new political translation of bayanihan inspired by Ninoy's heroic self-sacrifice.

More immediately, EDSA emerged out of a strategic decision to support Corazon C. Aquino in the snap presidential election, to protect the ballot in an organized manner through National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), and to protest the massive electoral fraud and violence through a calculated civil disobedience campaign. A key catalyst was the CBCP's historic post-election statement which declared the Marcos government as having "no moral basis" because it had deliberately subverted the people's will in the electoral process. The bishops who were closely listening to and discerning the situation with the people, advised in solidarity that what was called for was a "non-violent struggle for justice." Thus even though what the Reform the Armed Forces Movement and Juan Ponce Enrile had planned and tried to carry out was a military coup, what resulted was a massive popular uprising for democratization.

Father de Charentenay observes, "Christians' participation were surprisingly mundane, yet effective: personal contact with soldiers, women's participation, prayers in front of soldiers, a young priest

celebrating his first Mass on the barricades, with the most iconic being tanks surrounded by nuns saying the rosary or carrying statues of the Virgin. These events touched a cultural and religious background common to all belligerents, including the dictator threatened... It matched the culture of a people whose religion was part of it. Nowhere is civil society that close to spirituality and Catholicism."

Father de la Costa would surely have been pleased with what was happening in 1986. Using his words and insights, EDSA can be seen as a hopeful sign that even amidst cultural hybridity and fissures, Catholicism was no longer just a "social fact" -- "a quality of the cultural climate" generated by centuries of colonialism. For those who saw the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship as part of bearing witness to Christ, it was "a deeply personal commitment" -- "a matter of conviction." It was becoming "a faith of which one can give an account, which one can justify by a reasoned argument."

In a distinctly Filipino manner and style, the Catholic faith had become part of national life and indeed a source of unity. Moreover, the Church was being experienced as a "community" rather than just an "institution." It was not just about the "ecclesiastics" but more "the ecclesia, the gathering-together, the assembly of God's people."

As Father de la Costa had hoped, the Church at EDSA was no longer *sila* but *tayo*. But the faith in God and in the Church as community also translated crucially into a faith in ourselves -- as a people capable of sociopolitical transformation.

So yes, EDSA and De la Costa do intersect after all, and it is truly an opportune

moment that we commemorate both this year.

But as Father de la Costa has also reminded us, history is only prologue.

Even as EDSA is a genuine popular achievement, we are also aware of the many limitations of its vision and outcome, especially in the area of social justice and inclusiveness. For Fr. Horacio de la Costa, ultimately what is crucial is not only how we understand our history, but also how we act because of it.

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Tipping point and the Marcos burial

By Alma Maria O. Salvador

22 November 2016 - <http://bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Opinion&title=Tipping-point-and-the-Marcos-burial&id=136694>

An Ateneo de Manila professor has, in social media account, apologized to his millennial-students for the “complacency” of the EDSA generation of elders and vanguards to guard against the re-entrenchment of Marcos power in the Philippine society.

This is a point of view worth reckoning against what we may have thought of as evidence and symbolisms of our own vigilance and remembering of EDSA that we believe our gatekeepers and we have helped to institutionalize against dictatorship. Symbols that we thought have memorialized Post-EDSA Philippines’ Never Again response to Martial Rule: A

Presidential Commission on Good Government, a People Power monument, a museum, commemoration of the EDSA holiday and of Martial Law’s declaration on Sept. 21, 1972; the education of the youth and the role of media in never letting us forget are some examples.

Apparently these concrete symbols have not been commensurate to the ideal whole of nation approach that few countries with a desire to learn from its history of violence such as Germany has built governmental, media, academia, private sector and societal institutions to unite against acts of historical revisionism and collective forgetting.

Apparently our symbols did not stand strong enough against other structures that were far bolder and deeply entrenched to exonerate the Marcoses from any of their crimes or to allow them to evade prosecution and incarceration.

History has already established that President Corazon Aquino allowed Imelda Marcos and her children Imee, Irene and Bongbong to return to the Philippines in 1991 to face trial but the judicial system was so weak to stand up against Marcos's gargantuan wealth.

Our societal efforts may not have matched the bolder structures that allowed the Marcoses to incrementally inch in and to consolidate their return to power absent any barrier imposed on them to run for public office. During Corazon Aquino's presidency, only five years after the Marcos's exile to Hawaii and the People Power that ousted them, Imelda and Bongbong were given the opportunity to compete and to set foot in the Congress. In 1998, Imee Marcos captured the province of Ilocos Norte as its governor. The electorate, the first past post the system and local elite intra-murals allowed the Marcoses to seek and recapture second and final terms of public office.

We have not instituted long term countermeasures, direct or indirect to prevent the Marcoses from reestablishing their strongholds at the local and national governmental levels. And perhaps our fervor to prevent a dictator's burial at the Libingan ng Mga Bayani is not as strong as Bongbong Marcos's desire to vindicate his family's honor and capture the presidency -- slowly but surely.

Bongbong has seized national power, with his 2010 senatorial victory. Slowly, media

have reflected the indicators of the shifting tides in public opinion for the former dictator as the surveys in 2011 revealed. In the second year of Benigno S. C. Aquino III's term, the House of Representatives successfully passed Resolution no. 1135 urging the Aquino III administration to allow Marcos's burial at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. A few months ago, Bongbong Marcos nearly won the vice-presidential elections. He is currently contesting the electoral results that have favored vice-presidential candidate Leni Robredo.

Social media has been quick to implicate the schools for the youth's miseducation in the light of Marcos's heroism and his role in society. Many have clamored for an "accurate" Martial Law curriculum in the basic and tertiary levels of education.

As in the symbols of EDSA, this is a comparatively weak response in the face of the larger issue of the plight of the marginalized to realize their rights to education and to participation -- in general so that these can serve as equalizers against the political and electoral institutions that have favored only the moneyed and powerful interests to govern.

Post-EDSA, national and local politics have remained deeply dynastic. At the local, district and national levels, the first past the post and the system of plurality of elections continue to tilt the balance of power in support of money politics and "uncontested political races".

During the last 2016 local elections, hundreds of candidates including Imee Marcos ran unopposed and were "assured of victory" in their bailiwicks. Entrenched clan politics has enabled the Marcoses to subdue their electorate and their opponents by

capturing only a plurality of seats in a system where limited elite circulation prevails.

These factors and Rodrigo Duterte's new patronage and authoritarian politics have changed the political opportunity structure that eventually connived to pave the way for a Marcos burial at the Libingan ng Mga Bayani.

Such was an unthinkable and dubious act. How this government owns up to this act and not risk its political survival will be a next major concern.

Our long-term challenge is to participate in the building of institutions that will promote access to power and justice in an oligarchic political-economic system. These may be considered part of a whole of nation -- an integrated strategy against dynastic political-economic forces that entrench the interests of only a few and disenfranchise the many.

Meanwhile, the immediate challenge for us is to guard against the next Marcos move to contest the 2016 vice-presidential elections. This time around it will be on our watch.

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Why Many Filipinos Support Martial Law 30 years After (and why they should think twice)

By Benjamin Roberto G. Barretto

25 July 2017 - <https://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Opinion&title=why-many-filipinos-support-martial-law-30-years-after-%28and-why-they-should-think-twice%29&id=148702>

The specter of martial law (ML) haunted the Philippines when Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. (better known as BBM and son of the former dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos) ran for the vice-presidency in the May 10 national elections and almost won. Social media got flooded with both positive (accomplishments) and negative (destructive) information about his father's more than 20-year rule -- true or false news posted by ML victims, trolls, and what have you. The country's social media arena further got flooded with comments here and there, pro- and anti-, right and wrong and everything else in between.

In the sea of ML news and comments, some Ateneans posted pro-martial law comments prompting this writer to remind his Ateneo Political Science students then that there were only two reasons they could justify supporting martial law.

First, their families benefited from it and/or second, they accepted what they read and hear without verifying facts and sources. The latter being very un-Atenean as they were expected and trained to be critical thinkers. I was wrong. There were more reasons and they are complicated and interrelated.

A year after elections, ML was declared (though not in the whole country but in Mindanao) by President Rodrigo R. Duterte in response to the Marawi siege. The Supreme Court by a majority vote of 11 for and 4 against declared it constitutional. Surveys, likewise showed support for the declaration.

Self-interest has been a reason then and now for supporting ML, which will certainly benefit those who will have the authority to implement them and exploit them for their own business interests. There is also that culture or system of dependence by Congress and politicians on the President. The Filipino cultures of "*utang na loob*" and "*pakikisama*" with the President as he shares valuable resources and power with politicians are still very much alive in Philippine politics today.

Fear and self-preservation -- with or without basis. Dictators exploit them most from people who cannot seem to protect themselves. Fear comes not only from criminality and terrorism. Some would opt to support (or at least be silent) because of troll bullying. Those directly threatened by violence have the right to fear and valid reason to seek whatever solution to simply be alive.

Despair, desperation, and even anger as nothing much has improved 30 years hence, is real. There are still 25 million poor Filipinos -- the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer. Corruption has never been eradicated. Patronage politics and political dynasties never left. Criminality, rebellion, and terrorism threats are justifiable concerns.

Ignorance particularly for those who never experienced ML -- the millennials never

bothering to check facts and sources to determine alternative or fake news as they read social media has been blamed upon them by elders. Maybe true, but why were they not taught in the first place about the facts on ML when they were in grade school or in high school? We repeatedly hear "those who do not learn from the past are bound to repeat the mistakes of the past." Yet, those who did experience ML back then are now frontline supporters because of loyalty, self-interest, and other reasons.

And then there is apathy (who cares) -- as long as it does not affect my business, my family, my way of life, I am for it. Collateral damage is fine as long as it is not a family member. Every person for him/ herself.

One more reason is worth adding.

President Rodrigo R. Duterte keeps stating, "I declared ML because I love my country. I will do everything to protect my country!" Majority of his supporters truly believe that only their President -- their only savior -- can protect the country, the same accolade given by supporters to former dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos. Almost like worshipping a God religiously.

I did not support ML back then and certainly do not support the present ML. I do not have the right to speak for those who support President Duterte's declaration of ML.

But this I know.

Self-interest (selfishness), fear and self-preservation, despair, desperation, and anger, ignorance, and apathy and savior worshipping -- these were the same reasons why ML from 1972 to 1981 happened, prospered, and destroyed our country back then.

When Filipinos begin to be unselfish again, brave to stand up and protect their rights, fight instead of just being desperate and angry, seek the truth, start being men and women for others caring for the poor, and stop worshipping politicians as if they were gods -- only then will we again earn the respect of the whole world.

I know because I was there. I experienced martial law and its effect on our people and economy. And I was part of the 1986 EDSA revolution that showed and taught the whole world the simple values of courage, truth, self-confidence, and less dependence on politicians, service for others, empathy (*malasakit*) and faith in a loving God.

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Dictatorship, autogolpe, and martial law: Insights from 1972

By Millard O. Lim

21 November 2017 - <https://www.bworldonline.com/dictatorship-autogolpe-martial-law-insights-1972/>

In his memoirs *Voice of Dissent*, the late senator Arturo Tolentino recalls that after reading Proclamation 1081 and General Order 1 he exclaimed: "This is a coup d'état! This is a coup d'état by AFP Commander-in-Chief Marcos of the Philippine Government." Did Ferdinand Marcos govern under a state of martial law under the 1935 Constitution or did he execute a coup d'état and what's the difference between the two?

Article VII, Section 10 (2) of the 1935 Constitution reads: "The President shall be commander-in-chief of all armed forces of the Philippines, and, whenever it becomes necessary, may call out such armed forces to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion, insurrection, or rebellion. In case of invasion, insurrection, or rebellion, or imminent danger thereof, when the public safety requires it, he may suspend the

privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, or place the Philippines or any part thereof under Martial Law.”

This is lifted from Section 21(b) of the 1916 Jones Law. The governor general was “commander in chief of all locally created armed forces and militia” and was “responsible for the faithful execution of the laws of the Philippine Islands of the United States.” He could “call upon the commanders of the military and naval forces of the United States in the Islands ...or the militia or other locally created armed forces, to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion, insurrection, or rebellion; and he may, in case of rebellion or invasion, or imminent danger thereof, when the public safety requires it, suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, or place the Islands, or any part thereof, under martial law.”

Proclamation 1081 cites the 1935 Constitution as basis for martial law but adds: “...and, in my capacity as their commander-in-chief, do hereby command the armed forces of the Philippines... to enforce obedience to all the laws and decrees, orders and regulations promulgated by me or upon my direction.” Thus did Marcos claim legislative power which, under the 1935 Constitution, was vested in Congress.

General Order 1 was more blatant: “NOW, THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND E. MARCOS, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, do hereby proclaim that I shall govern the nation and direct the operation of the entire Government, including all its agencies and instrumentalities, in my capacity and shall

exercise all the powers and prerogatives appurtenant and incident to my position as such Commander-in-Chief of all the Armed Forces of the Philippines.” Emphasis was on Marcos as C-in-C, not president. C-in-C Marcos will now “govern the nation and direct the operation of the entire Government.”

With 1081 and GO 1, FM became legislator in lieu of Congress and placed the entire government, including the Judiciary, under his authority as C-in-C. Were these acts in accordance with the 1935 Constitution’s martial law provision or were they actions of one who had just executed a self-coup (autogolpe)?

Carl Schmitt distinguishes two dictatorships.

A “commissary dictator” is made by the constitution to carry out a specific function or purpose. He only has executive functions: to execute laws, not to replace them or create new ones. This is a “classical” dictator because, like the dictators of the Roman Republic, he is commissioned by the duly constituted authorities to exercise extraordinary powers under exceptional circumstances for a delimited purpose (to wage war, suppress revolts). Once accomplished, the dictator steps down and the duly constituted authorities resume control.

The 1935 Constitution and the Jones Law provided for a commissary dictatorship. They commissioned a dictator with extraordinary power (martial law) under exceptional circumstances (rebellion, invasion, or insurrection) with a specific mission (end the rebellion, insurrection, or invasion).

By attaching the power to call out the military to his responsibility of faithfully executing the laws, the Jones Law made the governor-general a purely executive dictator.

By contrast, Schmitt's "sovereign dictator" does not receive extraordinary power from a constitution to execute a specific commission for a definite period. He claims some form of popular investiture and is legislative and constitutive, not merely executive. The "popular mandate" is not just to execute laws but to legislate even new constitutions to achieve a revolutionary agenda. Thus, sovereign dictators are also "revolutionary dictators" like the Committee of Public Safety of the 1789 French Revolution.

1981 and GO 1 established a sovereign dictatorship. Slogans like "Democratic Revolution" and "New Society" evince FM's design to be a "revolutionary dictator." The litany of martial law reforms in Proclamation 2045 (which lifted martial law in 1981) are beyond the commission of a commissary dictator under the 1935 Constitution.

FM claimed to be a "constitutional dictator" under the 1935 Constitution but the martial law commissary dictatorship was a ruse. He actually self-couped and became a sovereign revolutionary dictator with legislative and constituent powers. The latter was exercised in 1976 when he introduced amendments to the 1973 Constitution and orchestrated a "referendum-plebiscite" to have them ratified.

The 1987 Constitution's Article VII, Section 18 similarly commissions a commissary dictatorship with extraordinary powers to execute a specific mission under

exceptional circumstances but occasional outbursts of establishing a "revolutionary government" from the incumbent C-in-C when he is vexed by someone or something is a different creature altogether. Can this Republic abide another sovereign dictator?

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Is Duterte a resurrected Marcos?

By Carmel V. Abao

10 September 2018 - <https://www.bworldonline.com/is-duterte-a-resurrected-marcos/>

After Senator Leila de Lima, Senator Trillanes now seems next in line for Malacañang's retaliatory moves against prominent critics.

In both cases, the purposive arbitrariness of Malacañang has been on full display. In De Lima's case, intimate sexual relations — otherwise deemed personal and beyond the scope of state encroachment — were highlighted. In Trillanes' case, procedural technicality was invoked. This recent move is clearly suspect, not only because revoking

amnesties has never been done before but also because Trillanes was not the only military officer involved in the mutiny/amnesty being questioned. Why then were the other mutineers such as Nicanor Faeldon (now part of Duterte's government) spared from the same fate? Malacañang's issue thus is not the mutiny or the amnesty, but Trillanes himself. In the vernacular, we have a term for this: "*hinaanapan lang ng butas.*"

In a democracy, no one is supposed to be

penalized for holding and expressing his or her political beliefs. This latest episode thus begs the question: Are we now under a dictatorship? Is Rodrigo Duterte a resurrected Ferdinand Marcos?

DEMOBILIZING THROUGH FORCE

The demobilization of the opposition through force is often the distinguishing mark of a dictatorship. Such demobilization also happens in democracies, but in dictatorships, it is done through illegitimate or duplicitous, coercive means.

According to Mark R. Thompson in his 1995 book *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines*, "Marcos demobilized much of the traditional opposition by abolishing Congress; shuttering pro-opposition newspapers, radio stations, and television stations; banning demonstrations; and imprisoning many leaders of the opposition."

Similar developments have taken place: (i) while Duterte has not abolished Congress, he has captured the legislature through a "supermajority" in the House of Representatives and the removal and/or weakening of opponents in the Senate, (ii) Duterte has also tried to "shutter" media institutions such as Rappler, ABS-CBN and *Inquirer*, (iii) Senator de Lima has been in jail for one and a half years and Senator Trillanes' arrest now seems forthcoming, and (iv) Duterte's intervention in the Judiciary has also been revealed in the ouster of Chief Justice Sereno through a quo warranto. Moreover, just like Marcos, Duterte has been looking to the military and the police as a base of support.

Both Marcos and Duterte also made/make

use of "enemies" as mobilizing factors. Communists for Marcos, drug users and pushers for Duterte. Consolidating around enemies was/is the way by which these leaders separate/d the grain from the chaff: those who did/do not acknowledge the (identified) "enemies of the state" are also their (Marcos's and Duterte's) enemies.

Marcos's type of dictatorship, prevalent in the '70s — the kind that demobilizes traditional opposition and directs and mobilizes the political apparatuses of the state to centralize power in a military junta or a "strongman" — has been labelled by some scholars, most notably by the Argentinian political scientist Guillermo O'Donnell, as "bureaucratic authoritarianism."

In the regimes between Marcos and Duterte, demobilization of the opposition also happened but it came in the form of capturing hitherto opposition forces through material inducements and political horsetrading (e.g pork barrel). What sets Duterte apart from these regimes and makes him more similar to Marcos is his use of force to quell dissent and mobilize support.

All this has fostered a politics of fear and a culture of violence — exactly what Marcos built and what Duterte is now rebuilding. In Marcos's time, this kind of politics and culture resulted in more than 70,000 imprisonments, 34,000 torture victims and 3,240 deaths (as per Amnesty International). In Duterte's time, the number is just as alarming: more than 20,000 deaths. The dominance of fear and violence makes Duterte's regime a de facto dictatorship — even without the Marcos-style proclamation of martial law.

POPULAR SUPPORT

One observable difference between the Marcos and Duterte regimes is the level of political cohesion within their ranks. Marcos's Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) was monolithic. Meanwhile, Duterte's PDP-Laban — the once irrepressible opposition party that challenged the Marcos dictatorship — has splintered into factions. Very recently, we saw — on national TV — the in-fighting between Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Pantaleon Alvarez for the House Speakership post. Before that, we saw the political skirmish between Alvarez and presidential daughter-Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte, between Alvarez and Congressman Florendo, and, between Congressman Fariñas and the Marcoses. Even on the federalism issue, we see a divide between Duterte's political operators and his economic managers.

While Duterte's camp lacks political cohesion from within, it has something that Marcos did not have: a massive, popular support base. Thus, while Marcos was "bureaucratic authoritarian," Duterte has been labeled as "populist authoritarian." Duterte may not have a KBL (although Sara Duterte's Hugpong is probably on its way to becoming a KBL) but he has the DDS and a number of Mocha Usons in and outside of government.

The presence of these supporters creates a semblance of democracy and this, in turn, provides justification for the Duterte camp to deny any suggestion that Duterte is indeed dictatorial. For them, the DDS are an indicator of inclusion and pluralism, not dictatorship.

Duterte's supporters are, in fact, active, not passive — owing in large part to the

effectiveness of the rhetoric and imaging that Duterte has been carrying. Unlike Marcos who presented himself (and Imelda) as some sort of royalty, Duterte has projected himself as *hoi polloi* — no different than the common *tao* (common man, to be exact). His manner of dressing, speaking/cursing are all tailor-fitted to that image. Even his rape jokes are presented as ordinary or commonplace.

Despite this rhetoric and imaging, Duterte is actually surrounded by rich business people more than "ordinary people." This alliance with the elite (most likely the elite displaced by the previous government) is something that Duterte has in common with Marcos. In both cases, the preference for the elite and the middle class and the disregard for the lower classes (the poorest of the poor) are apparent — in practice.

From the lens of class, Marcos and Duterte are thus comparable. From the lens of human rights, they too are comparable although the institutional-structural violence under Marcos was more pronounced and visible (given also the length of the Marcos dictatorship). From the lens of gender rights, Duterte is the worse dictator.

SAME DAMAGE

The question of "who is better/worse" may actually not be the most essential of public conversations. What we probably need are long conversations on why we keep on producing leaders with very authoritarian ways.

I see at least two reasons why: (i) because, after Marcos, our fundamental political-economic structure remained unchanged in the sense that sections of society were

always excluded — and these sections readily serve/d as potential/actual base for whoever promises social inclusion, and (ii) our social institutions — our families, schools, churches, social and political movements — are highly hierarchical and undemocratic; we have no culture of democracy; dictatorial rule is thus always a temptation.

Marcos and Duterte may not necessarily be of the same mold, but dictatorship, regardless of “type,” is always damaging to a nation’s political development, economic potential and societal fabric. And the damage is always deep, multi-dimensional and far-reaching.

The best analogy I can think of is rape. No matter the circumstances, the effect of rape is always the same: human and societal brokenness. *Hindi mahalaga kung sa talahiban o sa kwarto nangyari ang rape, kung kakilala o di kakilala ang rapist, kung bata o matanda ang na-rape, kung “mabait” o sira-ulo ang nang-rape, kung “malaswa” o mala-birhen ang na-rape o kung maganda o pangit.*

Rape is rape. Dictatorship is dictatorship.

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Marcos vs Manglapus @ 30

By Millard O. Lim

23 September 2019 - <https://www.bworldonline.com/dictatorship-autogolpe-martial-law-insights-1972/>

In 1989, ex-President Ferdinand Marcos was dying. Exiled in Hawaii since February 1986, the Marcos family asked the Philippine government of President Corazon Aquino to let them to return to the country and allow Marcos to die here. Aquino refused, arguing that the return of the Marcoses would have dire consequences on political stability and economic recovery. Marcos took legal action and filed a special civil action suit for mandamus and prohibition with the Supreme Court. Made respondents were a

number of senior officials of the Aquino administration led by then Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Raul Manglapus. The writ of mandamus would order the respondents to issue the Marcoses the necessary travel documents to allow their return while the writ of prohibition would enjoin them from implementing the president's ban.

On Sept. 15, 1989 the SC rendered its decision. In Marcos vs. Manglapus (G.R. No.

88211), by a slim majority of eight to seven, it, through Justice Irene Cortes as ponente, upheld the government ban on the return of the Marcos family. It ruled that the president has the power to impose such a ban and that she did not act arbitrarily or with grave abuse of discretion.

What power was the president exercising when she denied the right of the Marcos family to return to their country? In answering this question, *Marcos vs. Manglapus* clarified the nature and extent of the president's executive power. The president, under the constitution, has specific powers; that is, powers explicitly granted to her by the constitution and enumerated therein. But "the powers of the president cannot be said to be limited only to the specific powers enumerated in the Constitution. In other words, executive power is more than the sum of specific powers so enumerated."

The power involved was the president's "residual unstated power" that is "implicit in and correlative to" the president's constitutional duties to serve and protect the people, maintain peace and order, protect life, liberty and property, and promote the general welfare. This is a wide discretionary power that allows the president to fulfill her duties as "steward of the people" and "protector of the peace." Aquino was exercising this power when she imposed the ban on the return of the Marcoses and clipped their right to return to their country.

The president's residual unstated power is still subject to the constitution and to the judicial power to "determine whether or not there has been a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any branch or instrumentality

of the Government" (Article VIII, Section 1). In exercising its judicial review, the Court checks but does not supplant the executive. It merely ascertains whether the president has gone beyond the constitutional limits of her powers. It neither exercises the power vested in the president nor determines the wisdom of her acts. In *Marcos vs. Manglapus*, the Court resolved to determine whether Aquino's claim that the return of the Marcoses would harm the national interest and the general welfare had factual basis. If such factual basis existed, the ban would be constitutional and there would be no grave abuse of discretion on Aquino's part. The Court ruled affirmatively.

Students of constitutional law will note that the residual unstated power of the president, insofar as it is anchored upon and incidental to the promotion and protection of the general welfare (*salus populi*), is simply the police power of the state. The only significant difference is that whereas police power is traditionally vested in the legislature, *Marcos vs. Manglapus* underscored and highlighted that the executive too has inherent police power derived from and correlative to the constitutional duties and obligations of that office.

Since *Marcos vs. Manglapus* laid down the doctrine of the president's residual unstated power three decades ago, no Philippine president has again used this power. To secure the legality and validity of their acts, presidents since Aquino have relied on the specific powers of their office; powers that have textually demonstrable basis and limits. President Fidel Ramos's emergency power to solve the energy crisis was Congress-delegated (Article VI, Section 23(2)). President Joseph Estrada's all-out war against the Moro Islamic Liberation

Front (MILF) in 2000, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's "states of emergencies" in 2003, 2006, and 2008, and the incumbent's perpetually extended martial law in Mindanao are all anchored on the specific power of the president as commander-in-chief (Article VII, Section 18). Even the incumbent's three-year old "anti-drugs war" arguably rests on the presidency's executive power (Article VII, Section 1) and duty to faithfully execute the laws (Article VII, Section 17). The laws in this instance being the Dangerous Drugs Act and related provisions of the Revised Penal Code. There is thus no need for President Rodrigo Duterte to invoke *Marcos vs. Manglapus* as legal ground for his forceful approach to eradicating the country's narco-industry and he has happily not done so.

Reliance on the presidency's specific powers is a fortunate development as these are checked and constrained by both Congress and the judiciary. The president's residual unstated power, upon the other hand, is clipped more amorphously by a constitution that is still subject to judicial interpretation when the occasion is ripe for the Court to review the constitutionality of acts done on the basis of this power.

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What is oligarchy?

By Miguel Paolo P. Rivera

24 February 2020 - <https://www.bworldonline.com/what-is-oligarchy/>

The term “oligarchy” again enters our popular imagination. With the celebration of the EDSA People Power Revolution today, there are those who will point out that this revolution succeeded in merely doing what the word “revolution” literally imputes: replacing the singular will of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos with the interests of diversified economic and political elites.

It is easy to grasp why this sentiment is turning into a legacy of the revolution. In the 34 years since People Power, our country’s democratic institutions (especially the

bureaucracy) are subject to the whims of political and economic elites that thrive under a culture of corruption, impunity, coercion, and patronage. Our society and economy are subject to recurring crises in resources, energy, the environment, health, peace and order, among others.

Social cleavage along class, religion, sexuality, and ethnicity impedes attempts of cohesion, solidarity and discourse. The Duterte administration pays lip service to the cause of displacing this web of oligarchic interests. For while the President

pronounces his hatred for this or that oligarch, they end up merely replacing an entrenched set of oligarchic interests with a mix of old and new oligarchs of their own.

The ongoing attempt of the administration to strong-arm the cancellation of the ABS-CBN broadcasting franchise presents us with a very public glimpse into these nefarious attempts of oligarchic replacement and revolution.

In order to strengthen our views on these issues, perhaps now is a good time to again ask: what really is oligarchy?

Perhaps indicative of the persistence of oligarchies within political civilizations, one of the most dominant definitions of oligarchy comes from the Greek philosopher Aristotle. In *The Politics*, Aristotle defines an oligarchy as the rule of the wealthy over the State, where wealthier men have greater privileges than their poorer citizens: "For the real difference between democracy and oligarchy is poverty and wealth. Wherever men rule by reason of their wealth, whether they be few or many, that is an oligarchy, and where the poor rule, that is a democracy" (III viii 1279b 17 — 20).

Aristotle warns us that an oligarchy arises precisely when a society mistakenly views wealth and its accumulation as the highest good that human beings can attain (regardless of how many are ruling), and as such are keen to affirm the leadership of its wealthiest members over all others. For Aristotle, an oligarchy breeds a self-destructive society as wealth is an end that is incompatible with that of the common good. Ultimately, Aristotle suggests that a "polity" can only really be effective and just when both oligarchic and democratic forces are balanced (or effaced) in such a way that

the political institutions are unable to give too much power to one over the other.

Another widely cited definition comes from the German sociologist Robert Michels. In his work *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (1911), he defines oligarchy as an "organization which gives birth to the domination of the elected over the electors, of the mandataries over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization says oligarchy." This is what scholars now call "the iron law of oligarchy." Michels argues that the concentration of power in an organization or society to those at the top is an intrinsic and inescapable effect of scaling up any form of human organization, whether it be political parties, churches, or nation-states. He states that: "It is the inevitable product of the very principle of organization... Every party organization which has attained to a considerable degree of complication demands that there should be a certain number of persons who devote all their activities to the work of the party."

What enables these persons to attain oligarchic control are their access to resources that ordinary members of an organization might be incapacitated to have access to, such as: superior knowledge, control over the means of communication with the membership, and skill in the art of politics and organization.

For Michels, it does not matter whether the original aims of the organization are collectivist or democratic. Any complex social organization will inevitably create a more privileged few whose interests become inimical to the many for "a universally applicable social law, every organ of the collectivity, brought into

existence through the need for the division of labor, creates for itself, as soon as it becomes consolidated, interests peculiar to itself. The existence of these special interests involves a necessary conflict with the interests of collectivity."

From these two definitions stem our popular understanding of oligarchy: the rule of a wealthy few over an organization such as the State, such that their interests gain priority over the needs of the many or the common good. We must emphasize that oligarchic rule is a distinct form of minority rule as we tend to mistake any elite rule as oligarchic rule.

Jeffrey A. Winters, a political scientist from Northwestern University, reminds us in his work *Oligarchy* (2011) that other types of elite rule (defined as extreme concentrations of power to the few) are subject to various modes of power dispersal or democratization that are relatively executable. However, the source of oligarchic power, i.e., wealth and its accumulation, is notoriously difficult to disperse or equalize.

In the kind of world we live in today, massive amounts of wealth inevitably leads to the capture of political power in order to maintain and protect that wealth. Key to defining oligarchs today, according to him, is in understanding that "oligarchs alone are able to use wealth for wealth's defense." This "wealth defense" has two components: "property defense (securing claims to wealth and property) and income defense (keeping as much of the flow of income and profits from one's wealth as possible under the conditions of property rights)." Oligarchy, therefore, "refers to the politics of wealth defense by materially endowed actors."

Winters applies this framework in understanding oligarchies to a short section in his book devoted to the Philippines. In it, he describes Filipino oligarchy as "fully matured" even well before Marcos's "sultanistic oligarchy" during martial law. He also laments the fact that oligarchs in the Philippines, in contrast to other oligarchs from other countries, have never been fully disarmed. As such, an integral tactic of wealth defense in Philippine society remains in (government-backed) violence and coercion.

Filipino oligarchic power is also expansive in the sense that it is not concentrated on a specific ethno-linguistic group (compared to our neighbor Indonesia). Finally, the political shifts in power throughout Philippine history had never really imbued Philippine political institutions with a "high" sense of the rule of law, which Winters argues is necessary to constrain oligarchic behavior.

If it is true that the concentration of power to the few is an inherent feature of any organization, and that the Philippine experience with oligarchy is deeply-rooted in its history, culture, and politics, wherein lies our hope in going beyond oligarchic rule?

Jacques Rancière, a French philosopher, in his work *Hatred of Democracy* (2005), reminds us that at the heart of any argument for any hierarchical order based on domination is oligarchic logic. Rancière, echoing Michels, writes: "There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as democratic government. Government is always exercised by the minority over a majority."

What can debase this oligarchic logic is what Rancière calls the scandal of democracy. This scandal is the kind of democracy that is

not based on any claims of natural rule or hierarchy. He writes: "the scandal lies in the disjoining of entitlements to govern from any analogy to those that order social relations ... it is the scandal of a superiority based on no other title than the very absence of superiority."

Democracy therefore is the disruption of hierarchical (oligarchic) logic by those who have no right to rule. Democracy, for Rancière, is "not based on any nature of things nor guaranteed by any institutional form. It is not borne along by any historical necessity and does not bear any. It is only entrusted to the constancy of its specific acts. This can provoke fear, and so hatred, among those who are used to exercising the magisterium of thought. But among those who know how to share with anybody and everybody the equal power of intelligence, it can conversely inspire courage, and hence joy."

Perhaps an example will help elucidate these passages. I was recently asked by a student why the EDSA People Power Revolution is categorized as a form of democratic action, given that at its root, it would not have happened if it were not for the coup d'état launched against President Marcos and the subsequent plea of the late Cardinal Sin to protect the coup leaders holed up in Camp Crame.

What we must bear in mind against this response is that it was precisely the presence of the people in EDSA which exemplifies the undefined logic of democracy that can disrupt oligarchic logic. If it were true that only oligarchs and the elites mattered, we would have in our history either the continuance of the dictatorship or the installation of just another military regime against that

dictatorship. But it took the power of unintelligible people with no titles, capacities, claims to rule, or expertise — and their presence in a space that they had no right to be in — to give us a glimpse of the real meaning of democracy.

Regardless of how it began, the outcome of the People Power Revolution relied on a democratic gamble. This rare, brief manifestation of *demos* (people) and *kratos* (power) was enough to force these two warring oligarchic logics to a direction that neither of them had planned nor expected. Whether this direction can be maintained or had already been lost, I can only hope that I will see us manifest this capacity again when we most need it.

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