

Political Democratization and Political Crises in Taiwan and the Philippines: A Comparative Perspective

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Taiwan and the Philippines are neighboring countries, divided by the Bashi Channel, which is roughly 300 kilometers wide. These two countries are different in several ways, but they share similarities and differences from a political perspective. After being ruled by an authoritarian government for years, both Taiwan and the Philippines started political democratization in the mid-1980s.

The Philippines was the first country in Southeast Asia to start political democratization when unarmed Filipinos (People Power Revolution I) overthrew the authoritarian regime of Ferdinand Marcos) in February 1986, whereas Taiwan also made significant political changes when the Nationalist Party (or Kuomintang, KMT), due to both domestic and external pressures, decided to lift martial law on 15 July 1987, initiating a series of political reforms on the economically thriving island. While political democratization in the Philippines was from the bottom up, a process initiated by the People Power Revolution, Taiwan's political democratization has been from the top down, a process initiated by the KMT, the then ruling party.

It has been twenty years since the implementation of political democratization in these two neighboring countries. Both countries have made somewhat achievements on democratic reforms, but these two neighboring are also facing some political crises. While political crises in the Philippines have to do with domestic political and economic factors, Taiwan's political crises have involved both domestic political disputes and external threat from Mainland China. This paper will use Linz's and Stepan's three elements for a consolidated democracy (i.e. behaviorally, attitudinally, and constitutionally), to examine the outcome of political democratization in these two neighboring countries.¹ This paper then argues that, given the twenty years of political democratization in the two countries, Taiwan has shown a very different outcome from that in the Philippines. Taiwan is close to what Linz and Stepan have defined for a consolidated democracy, whereas the Philippines is still struggling for an ideal polity.

This paper includes four sections. The first section explores the programs of political democratization in both Taiwan and the Philippines, whereas the second and the third sections investigate political crises in the two neighboring countries. The last section uses three elements of a consolidated democracy to examine the polity of these two countries.

Political Democratization in Taiwan and the Philippines

Given the similar nature of authoritarian rule before the mid-1980s, Taiwan and the Philippines actually were quite different in the development of their political economy. While Taiwan's political situation was relatively stable, Taiwanese also enjoyed high economic growth during the 1970s and 1980s. The Philippines, on the other hand, suffered not only political instability due to a number of rebel groups, but also a stagnant and, sometimes, negative economic growth during the same period of time.

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These differences of political economy between Taiwan and the Philippines laid a sound basis for the distinctive outcomes of political democratization in these two neighboring countries when both countries began to implement democratic reforms in mid-1980s.

Taiwan and the Philippines, however, do share four similarities since the implementation of political democratization, which have shaped the programs of democratic reforms in these two neighboring countries.

Constitutional amendments

As political reforms were initiated in both Taiwan and the Philippines, both countries first of all began to revise their constitutions, a legal foundation to implement political democratization. The case of the Philippines is much simpler than that of Taiwan, mainly because the Philippines revised its constitution only once in February 1987 whereas in Taiwan there have been seven constitutional amendments since early 1991.

The first important job for Corazon Aquino after assuming the post of the Philippine President in February 1986 was to organize a committee to revise the constitution, which was passed by three fourth (75.45 percent) of the Filipinos through a nationwide referendum in February 1987. There were two key amendments, among others, in the new constitution. One was to limit the power and the number of consecutive terms of the President of the Philippines. The 1987 Constitution gives more power to Congress in checking the President in exercising his/her power. The President is required to get approval from Congress before he/she signs treaties with a foreign country. Also, the 1987 Constitution stipulates that the President of the Philippines may serve for only one term of six years, in contrast to the previously two four-year terms.

Moreover, the new constitution limits the terms of Congressmen. Senators serve one term of six years and are not allowed to serve more than two consecutive terms, whereas House members serve one term of three years and are not allowed to serve more than three terms in a row. The rationale behind this amendment is to discontinue the political oligarchy in the Philippines that is long dominated by a few big rich families.

Regarding Taiwan's constitutional reforms, the first amendments were made in May 1991, which ended the tenure of legislators of the Legislative Yuan and delegates of the National Assembly elected on Mainland China in 1947.² They were then to be directly elected by the people of Taiwan, strengthening the political legitimacy of the ROC government on the island. The second amendments were passed in May 1992, which designated, among other things, the ROC President, Taiwan Governor, and Mayors of Taipei City and Kaohsiung City were to be elected by the people in the Taiwan area.³ The third constitutional amendment of July 1994 included ten articles, which stipulates that the ROC President is to be directly elected by the people of Taiwan for the first time.

The major contribution of the fourth constitutional amendments in July 1997, a political manipulation between the KMT mainstream faction and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP),⁴ was to downsize the Taiwan provincial government, which meant that there would be no more direct elections for Taiwan's governor after 20 December 1998. The fifth amendment of the constitution was passed in September 1999. According to the amendment, the people of Taiwan no longer directly elect delegates to the National Assembly. They are appointed in accordance to the seat distribution in the Legislative Yuan, the lower house of parliament. Regarding the sixth constitutional amendment of April 2000, political manipulation between the KMT and the

DPP was again involved, because the National Assembly was downsized,⁵ due to the concern about the expansion of James Soong's political influence.⁶

The most recent (the seventh) constitutional amendment was made in June 2005, which reduced the number of legislators from 225 to 113, consisting of 73 directly elected legislators from geographic constituencies in the Taiwan area, 34 from party lists (5 percent threshold), and 6 from the aboriginal areas. The National Assembly was abolished and the Legislative Yuan has now become the highest and sole legislative organ in Taiwan.

Bolstering Political participation

Due to the constitutional amendments in both Taiwan and the Philippines, Taiwanese and the Filipinos began to enjoy more political participation in the decision-making process from the local level to the central level, a fundamental requirement for a democracy.

During the martial law period, it was only the rich Philippine families who were able to establish their own patron-client relationships, a network to develop their political connections to the government, and gain advantages and privileges in running their businesses and corporations. Since 1987, things have changed in the Philippines, however, and one significant change was the bolstering of political participation of the Filipino masses.

Two approaches were introduced. The first was to eliminate appointed officials in the government from the central level to the local level. In the past, President Ferdinand Marcos had appointed a certain portion of government officials,⁷ thus extending his political control and economic dominance to most parts of the Philippines.⁸ Due to the expanding political participation, an increasing number of government officials are now elected. The parliament passed the Local Government Code (LGC) in 1991, which authorizes a greater allocation of internal revenue collections to local governments. Filipinos and civil organizations without political alliance with the top few are now eligible to participate in the policy-making process at the different levels of local government. As a result, some progressive and reform-minded local politicians have entered politics through direct elections, challenging the old political factions.⁹

The second approach was to eliminate appointed legislators in the legislative body, who were first dismissed in the mid-1970s, and later controlled by Marcos.¹⁰ More importantly, the new constitution limits the terms of legislators to no more than three consecutive terms, an ideal design for reducing the control of the rich families and big landlords. The number of new faces in the Congress has thus increased, especially during recent years. For example, comparing House Representatives of the 13th Congress (July 2004 to June 2007) and the 14th Congress (July 2007 to June 2010), the number of newcomers has increased from 36 percent to 48 percent.¹¹

Taiwanese's political participation has undergone similar changes. The ROC actually began to hold regular and periodic local elections in Taiwan in 1950, but, due to the practice of martial law, Taiwanese were not allowed to vote for elections at the national level. Things have changed since the lifting of martial law in July 1987 and, more importantly, since the first constitutional amendments of May 1991, because Taiwanese are now free to participate in politics from the local level to the central level of the government.

For example, legislators in the Legislative Yuan and delegates of the National Assembly were previously elected on the mainland in 1947, but now the people of Taiwan directly elect them.¹² As for the ROC Presidents, the delegates of the National Assembly elected them in the past, but now (since March 1996) Taiwan citizens have

been authorized to directly elect the President of the ROC. The Mayors of Taipei City and Kaohsiung City were previously appointed by the central government, but the citizens of these two cities have directly elected them since December 1994. Although the Province of Taiwan was downsized in the fourth constitutional amendment of July 1997, Taiwan citizens did have an opportunity to directly elect the Taiwan Governor in December 1994.

Restructuring Political dominance

Prior to democratization, political dominance by one specific force was very much in evidence in both Taiwan and the Philippines, but things have changed since the mid-1980s. In the Philippines, it was Marcos and his associates that dominated politics, economy and society through Marcos' political party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (New Society Movement), and his network of patron-client relationships. Since 1987, political dominance in the Philippines has been restructured. The old factions of Marcos' camp have gradually declined, whereas new political forces have been emerging.

New political parties were firstly allowed under Corazon Aquino. Since 1987, several new political parties have been established, laying the foundation for realigning the political environment in the Philippines, but it is the President who creates and realigns political parties, and not vice versa.¹³ For example, the People Power Party was the dominant political force during Aquino's presidency from 1986 to 1992, whereas Lakas-NUCD (Lakas ng Tao—National Union of Christian Democrats), established in 1992 by a number of Congressmen supporting for Ramos' presidential election, was the largest political party during the Ramos presidency. As expected, political parties in the Philippines realigned again during and after the May 2004 presidential election. In the 13th Congress (from July 2004 to June 2007) and 14th Congress (from July 2007 to June 2010), President Arroyo's coalition, LAKAS-CMD, holds a majority of seats in the House, becoming the largest political party in the archipelago.

Secondly, there is no more only one dominant force in the Philippines. In the past, rule by a strong man was the destiny of Filipinos, but now Filipinos have more rights and opportunities to get involve in public affairs. Joseph Estrada, for example, was from a poor family but he became Vice President (1992-1998) and later the President of the Philippines (1998-2001) through general elections. Mainly people from the middle and lower classes supported him. It should be noted that big and rich families are still powerful in the Philippines,¹⁴ but they are no longer the dominant force in the archipelago.

Taiwan has also restructured its political domain. The case of Taiwan is very different from that of the Philippines in this regard, however, because Taiwan has been politically divided by the Pan-Blue camp (including the KMT, the New Party, and the People First Party) and the Pan-Green camp (including the DDP and the Taiwan Solidarity Union) since the beginning of this century,¹⁵ rather than by several political parties. Taiwan is also different from the Philippines in the timing of its political restructuring. The Philippines restructured its political dominance right after the downfall of Marcos, but Taiwan did not restructure its political dominance until the turn of the century. The third difference is that Taiwan's political restructuring includes both the central government and the local governments, while the Philippines is mainly directed by the politics at the central level.

The change in Taiwan's political dominance was firstly highlighted by the March 2000 presidential election. The election produced the first president of the nation who belonged to the opposition. Chen Shui-bian won the presidency again in March 2004

after another even more competitive election by a margin of only 0.228 percent of the votes cast.

The year 2001 dealt another blow to the KMT in the legislative election held in December 2001, because the DPP, after the election for the Fifth Legislative Yuan (February 2002 to January 2005), became the largest party in the Legislative Yuan by winning 80 seats,¹⁶ as compared to only 66 seats won by the KMT. Although the DPP did not become the majority party in the legislature, it was the first time that the KMT lost its majority in the Legislative Yuan. The DPP continued to be the largest party after the December 2004 legislative election (winning 88 seats), in spite of the increasing number of seats for the KMT (86 seats). Similar to the case in the Fifth Legislative Yuan, the Pan-Green camp did not win the majority of seats in the Sixth Legislative Yuan (February 2005 to January 2008); rather, the Pan-Blue camp still controlled more than half of the seats in the legislative body. In the most recent elections, held on January 12, 2008, for the Seventh Legislative Yuan (February 2008 to January 2012), the opposing KMT, however, won a landslide victory by taking 81 out of 113 seats at stake, as compared with only 27 seats taken by the ruling DDP and 5 seats by other minor parties.

In short, political restructuring in the Philippines means the fall of Marcos and his replacement by various newly established political parties during and after the presidential elections. Taiwan's political restructuring means the reshuffling of political dominance between the Pan-Blue camp and the Pan-Green camp. In both cases, the restructuring increased political participation and brought about the end of politics dominated by one single political force.

More Guarantees for the Rights of individuals

The protection of human rights has been regarded the most fundamental value for democracy. Human rights representing an aggregation of a set of individual freedoms and rights, which include freedoms of expression and religion, equality before law, protection from unlawful acts by the state (e.g. imprisonment or forced labor), etc., and political rights (freedoms of assembly, association, and press, etc.), are especially important, mainly because the degree of civil rights and political rights people enjoy reflects the differences in the polities where they reside.¹⁷ Prior to political democratization in the Philippines, the nation was not democratic.¹⁸

However, things have changed since the implementation of the 1987 Constitution. Nevertheless, the Philippines may not have reached international standards of human rights because of occasional unlawful actions and incidents violating human rights.¹⁹ Compared to the situation in the Philippines in the 1970s and 1980s, however, the archipelago has improved its record on human rights. According to one Filipino scholar who has done political analysis on the Philippines for years, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), for instance, "has moved successfully to investigate many reports and actual cases since its inception."²⁰ According to the Freedom House, the status of the Philippines has improved from "partly free" in 1986 to "free" in 1987, although the archipelago was rated as "partly free" again in recent years from 2005 to 2007, due to "a spate of political killings specifically targeting left-wing political activists."²¹

Taiwan shares a similar story. Taiwan did not have a good record on human rights, mainly because of the practice of martial law from 1946 to 1987. Things have changed since the lifting of martial law in July 1987 and a series of political reforms that followed. People in Taiwan now enjoy a wide range of freedoms and political rights, similar to those in most Western countries. As a small island with 23 million

people, Taiwan now has 116 political parties, 35,887 civilian associations, 135 cable television channels (owned by 63 private companies), 4,825 magazine publishers, 8,357 book publishers, and more than 20 nationwide newspapers.²² The ruling party in Taiwan is now checked not only by a strong opposition force, but also multilaterally by a large number of independent mass media outlets and numerous civil organizations.

In addition, Article 18 of the Additional Articles of the 1992 Constitution strengthened and augmented the content of human rights, including health benefits and insurance for all people, equal rights for men and women, protection of the disadvantaged, and protection of the aboriginal people. Due to a series of efforts, Taiwan's record on human rights has significantly improved. According to the Freedom House, Taiwan's civil liberties rating has improved from "2" in 2004 to "1" in 2005 due to "improvements in the rule of law, including the consolidation of judicial independence",²³ although Taiwan's political rights rating declined from "1" in 2006 to "2" in 2007 due to "concerns about corruption, particularly links among politicians, business, and organized crime."²⁴

Political crises in Taiwan

While Taiwan and the Philippines have changed their polities since the implementation of political democratization in mid-1980s, the road to democracy is not rosy, however, due to a number of political crises. By "political crisis" I mean the existing social, economic, and political phenomena in a country that have become a threat to the current political development.

Divided National Identity

Taiwan's democratic achievements do make Taiwanese more proud of the place they reside, but the island's democracy has also brought about two unique crises, with the divided national identity is the most significant one.

Taiwan has been under the rule of the Republic of China (ROC) since 1945.²⁵ The KMT continued to rule the island till May 2000, promoting the ideology of a greater China (i.e. there is one China and Taiwan is a province thereof) through educational and cultural policies. This "one China" policy and ideology was challenged by political activists, particularly those who or whose relatives were persecuted by the KMT during the martial law period. This anti-KMT force later became a significant foundation of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), established in September 1986. One of the key goals of the DPP is to seek for Taiwan's eventual independence from China. When the KMT was in power, the DPP played low profile on the promotion of its political ideology. Things have changed since May 2000 when Chen Shui-Bian became president. The political ideology of an independent Taiwan (i.e. separating from the Chinese mainland) then began to prevail around the island.

The DPP government has been relatively successful in promoting the identity of an independent Taiwan. Having being ruled by the DPP between 2000 to 2008, the people in Taiwan are now politically divided. While the Pan-Blue supporters continues to uphold the ROC as their national identity, leaders of the DPP, especially the DPP fundamentalists, promote "Taiwan" or "Republic of Taiwan" as their national identity.²⁶ Before Chen Shui-Bian took over the presidency of the ROC, this issue had already been there, but had not been politically significant. Since the beginning of Chen's presidency, or, more specifically, since Chen's second presidency, the issue of

a divided national identity has emerged, mainly because of Chen's endorsement of the so-called Taiwan localization (or consciousness) movement.

From a democratic point of view, Chen has his own will and political freedom to promote his and his party's political ideology, but the problem is that Chen and his party intend to ignore the political history of the ROC that is commonly shared by the KMT and the Pan-Blue supporters. As the President of the ROC, Chen probably is the only head of government in the world that does not recognize the official title of the country he represents.²⁷ Accordingly, the island's national identity is politically divided between Taiwan (supported by the Pan-Green camp) and the ROC (supported by the Pan-Blue Camp).

Political Uncertainty

Given Taiwan's political progress in the last two decades, the people of Taiwan still worry about their political future. Taiwan has actually been under the threat of the People's Republic of China (PRC) for decades, politically and militarily. Since the ROC government fled to Taiwan in 1949, the ROC and the PRC have been fighting for the representation of the Chinese people around the world, especially during the Cold War era.

When the PRC opened its door to the world in the early 1980s, the then weak Asian giant began to become strong and stronger. This has made the PRC more eligible in winning diplomatic partners around the world and gaining the legitimacy of the sole Chinese representation in world politics. The ROC, on the other hand, is gradually losing its diplomatic partners in the international community, and, as a result, the ROC on Taiwan is no more competing with the PRC over the Chinese representation.

Political dispute and confrontation between Taiwan and China worsened when the DPP became the ruling party in May 2000.²⁸

Although Taiwan and China have engaged close economic relations in recent years, political dilemma across the Taiwan Strait is still there. This is the political uncertainty that people in Taiwan have to face, regardless which party is in power.

Political Crisis in the Philippines

The Philippines has a very different story from Taiwan over political crises. While Taiwan's political crises have to do with a divided national identity between the Pan-Blue and the Pan-Green and external threat from China, political crises in the Philippines result from extra-constitutional groups, lack of credibility of nationwide elections, and poor economic performance.

Extra-constitutional groups

Since the implementation of democratic reforms, the Philippines continues to be bothered by insurgent groups, including the New People's Army (NPA), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and *Abu Sayyaf* (a Muslim separatist group). Although the Philippine government has undergone a series of negotiations with these armed groups, they still exist and continue their unconstitutional fight against the legitimate government. Ironically, these illegal armed forces are not powerful, but the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are not able to pacify them. In a recent negotiation between the Philippine government and the MNLF in early February 2007, the MNLF even took fifteen government representatives as hostages, including a regional military commander of the AFP.

In addition, the Philippines is often disturbed by military coups, mostly initiated by high-level officers in the army. During the Aquino presidency, there were five coups, and incumbent President Mrs. Arroyo also endured two coups (i.e. a one-day coup on 27 July 2003 and one on 24 February 2006). Recently, the Philippines experienced another coup on November 29, 2007, which lasted only a few hours. Although all these illegal attempts failed to overthrow the ruling government, the legitimate government of the Philippines keeps being threatened by military coups. The Philippines has undergone political democratization for more than twenty years, but the archipelago's politics is still under the shadow of military coups.

Less Credibility of Nationwide elections

Holding nationwide elections is an important indicator of political reform, simply because it reflects the capability of the ruling government to implement public will through generally acknowledged legal mechanism. The Philippines has accomplished nine nationwide elections, including three elections for the President of the Philippines and six for the Congress, most of these elections were neither peaceful nor successful.

First of all, leaders of rebel groups do not recognize the results of these general elections and some of them even refuse to join the elections. Secondly, incidents of violence and fraud have kept breaking out during the elections, which made nationwide elections insecure and, thus, not trustworthy. Finally, military coups are also threatening the legitimate government after the elections, including five coups during the Aquino presidency and three coups during the Arroyo presidency. The People Power Revolution II, for example, made former President Joseph Estrada step down in January 2001, but Mr. Estrada did not officially resign from the presidential post, making President Arroyo's presidency lack of credibility and legitimacy.

In democratic countries, nationwide elections are constitutional mechanisms for the change of governments and legislatures, and they are thus to be fully respected and followed by the general public. But, this is not the case in the Philippines. Due to the above factors, nationwide elections in the Philippines are not generally respected by the Filipino masses, and, as a result, elected leaders are often being challenged. In September 2007, for example, there was another big rally in Manila protesting against President Arroyo's corruption. This is one of the key reasons of political instability in the Philippines since the beginning of Mrs. Arroyo's presidency.

Poor Economic Performance

The Philippines has not enjoyed a favorable economic growth since the mid-1980s, which has become one of the reasons for political crisis in the archipelago. The average economic growth rate of the Philippines was 5.4 percent between 1970 and 1983, but the Philippines' economy began to decline in 1983. On the average, there was only 1 percent economic growth between 1983 and 1990. GNP was US\$510 in 1978 and amounted to US\$515 in 1986.

As the Philippines has continued to enjoy political democratization since the turn of the century, the archipelago also maintained relatively stable economic growth rates (see Table 1). It was not until the year 2005 that the Filipinos enjoyed US\$1,042 for GNP per capita, still lower than the level of 1996. One more thing to be noted is that the unemployment rate has kept rising since the turn of the century, exceeding more than 10 percent in 2000 (see Table 1). This explains the increasing numbers of Filipinos going overseas for job opportunities.²⁹ This also means that Filipinos did not improve their economic situation during the last decade. On the contrary, Filipinos

are economically worse off than they were before the Asian financial crisis.

Apparently, the first half of the 1990s was the only period in which Filipinos experienced a little economic growth, which was mostly under the leadership of President Fidel Ramos. Other than that, the Philippines did not make economic progress, showing little connection between political democratization and economic growth. In other words, Filipinos experienced little economic growth after the archipelago's political reforms.

Table 1: The Political Economy of the Philippines, 1950-2005

	1965-86	1986	1992	1998-2000	2001-2005
Political changes	Marcos rules	People Power Revolution I, Start of democratization, ruled by the People Power Party	Ramos regime through the Lakas-NUCD	Estrada regime through the LAMMP	PPR II in 2001 and Arroyo succeeded Estrada, Arroyo won presidency in 2004, ruled by the Lakas coalition.
Economic growth	5.4% (1970-83)	-7.3% (1985) 6.8% (1988)	3.0% (1990) 4.7% (1995)	-0.6% (1998) 3.4% (1999) 4.4% (2000)	3.0% (2001) 4.4% (2002) 4.5% (2003) 6.0% (2004) 5.1% (2005)
Unemployment	---	7.1% (1985) 8.3% (1988)	8.1% (1990) 8.4% (1995)	9.6% (1998) 9.6% (1999) 10.1% (2000)	9.8% (2001) 10.2% (2002) 10.1% (2003) 10.9% (2004) 10.3% (2005)
GNP per capita	US\$510 (1978)	US\$515 (1986)	US\$1,184 (1996)	US\$896.1 (1998)	US\$1,042 (2005)

Source: The Asian Development Bank (http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Key_Indicators/2003/default.asp) accessed July 22, 2007.

Examining Democracy

For both Taiwan and the Philippines, twenty years have passed since the implementation of political democratization. But, is democracy in Taiwan and the Philippines already consolidated? The rationale behind this issue is that both Taiwan and the Philippines do not have to worry about their future political stability if they are termed a consolidated democracy. On the contrary, both Taiwan and the Philippines would continue to struggle with political uncertainties if their democracy is not consolidated.

There is a great deal of literature examining democracy or consolidated democracy, of which the works by Juan L. Linz and Alfred Stepan are prominent. Linz and Stepan have defined three elements for a consolidated democracy, providing a theoretical framework to examine those countries that are undertaking political democratization. According to Linz and Stepan, a consolidated democracy includes the following three elements:

- (1) Behaviorally, no significant political or institutional actors attempt to achieve the goal of creating a non-democratic regime or turning to vio-

lence to secede from the state. (2) Attitudinally, a majority of public opinion holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate means of governing collective life in a society. (3) Constitutionally, all political forces become subjected to and habituated to the resolution of conflict within the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process.³⁰

This paper now uses these three elements to examine the results of democratization in Taiwan and the Philippines.

Behaviorally

First of all, the behavioral element of a consolidated democracy indicates that all parties involved maintain a lawful position and orderly manner in playing power politics, without the intention to divide the country violently. Even if discrepancies about elections may come about, all actors involved shall deal with these problems through peaceful means; anything unlawful and unconstitutional is strictly forbidden. In the Philippines, previous elections were known for fraud, cheating, killings, corruption and violence, indicating the uncertainty and instability in the archipelago. The violence and chaos in the 1986 presidential election was just one example, mainly because of the distrust of Filipinos toward the then Marcos regime.

The situation has improved a little since 1987, but political transition in the Philippines is still not stable. The transfer of power from Mr. Joseph Estrada's regime to that of Mrs. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in January 2001 is an example. Although Mrs. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was constitutionally sworn in as the 14th President of the Philippines on 20 January 2001, Mr. Estrada did not officially resign from the presidential post. The so-called People Power actually played a key role behind the political transition in both February 1986 and January 2001. The positive side of the two People Power Revolutions is that they did not cause deaths and injuries, but, strictly speaking, People Power Revolution per se is neither peaceful nor constitutional.

In addition, the Philippine government has been troubled for years by the secessionist movements in southern Mindanao Island, a well-known Islamic area in the predominantly Catholic nation. The local Moro people do not trust the electoral process implemented by the decision makers in Manila. As stated earlier, the four illegal armed forces in the Philippines occasionally initiate armed conflicts, killings, hostage-taking, and torture, including those during the election times. During the last fifteen years, nationwide elections were generally peaceful in northern and central areas of the archipelago, but they were not in the South. It was reported that more than 900 people died of political murders since Mrs. Arroyo's presidency in January 2001.³¹ The ruling leaders in the Philippines are therefore obligated to show the world its will and capability to conduct more peaceful elections in every part of the archipelago before becoming a consolidated liberal democracy.

Comparing with the Philippines, Taiwan is much more peaceful, mainly because Taiwan did not suffer either military coups or armed secessionist groups since the early 1950s. Although there are discrepancies and even disputes in Taiwan's elections, major parties and their leaders in Taiwan have followed the rules of the game. In the most disputed 319 shooting incident in the 2004 presidential election, for example, the opposition parties (the Pan-Blue camp) did not initiate a coup or any unlawful actions against the ruling government. Even though the crowd took over the street in front of the Presidential Hall from late evening of 19 March 2004 for the next four days and more than 500,000 people went to the street again on 26 March

2004 shouting for justice and for President Chen Shui-bian to step down, these huge public gatherings ended peacefully.

Constitutionally

Secondly, the constitution requires that major strategic groups and elites strictly abide by the procedures of the Constitution and related legislation in holding nationwide elections and handling the affairs of transfers of power. Even when there are discrepancies in the elections or shifts in power, ruling elites and opposition leaders shall accept constitutional management and obey the results according to a set of constitutional procedures. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the Philippines. Since the implementation of the 1987 Constitution, the archipelago has successfully experienced four turnovers of ruling parties, but the legitimate government keeps being threatened by military coups. In addition, the Philippines has been troubled by other unconstitutional armed forces for years, including the NPA, the MNLF, the MILF, and *Abu Sayyaf*.

In spite of continual negotiations between the Philippine government and these armed groups, they still exist, continuing their unconstitutional fight against the Philippine government. Ironically, these illegal armed forces are actually not very powerful, but the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have not been able to pacify them. In other words, the Philippines has held several nationwide elections, but the Philippines does not qualify as a consolidated democracy, as illegal armed forces exist. Should the Philippines accomplish more constitutional and peaceful nationwide elections in a row without any unconstitutional measures challenging the legitimate government, the archipelago will then have the chance of becoming a liberal and consolidated democracy.

Taiwan has not experienced a military coup since the ROC government moved to the island in late 1949. During the martial law era, the opposition party was strictly under the control of the KMT government. Ever since the lifting of martial law in July 1987, the opposition parties (then the Pan-Green camp) have grown rapidly but they still followed the publicized legislation in conducting their political activities. While upholding the ideology of Taiwan's eventual independence, which is against the ROC Constitution, the Pan-Green camp is actually promoting a secessionist movement, but their political activities are constitutional; they are not using armed force to replace the legitimate government. Chen Shui-bian, leader of the Pan-Green Camp, even won the presidency in the 2000 nationwide election, which has encouraged the Taiwan independent movement, but it does not threaten the legitimacy of the ruling government.

Attitudinally

Finally, the attitudinal element indicates that a consolidated democracy requires both institutional mechanisms and commonly acknowledged norms for the civilians to follow, and, as a result, it takes time to nurture this kind of democratic culture. The Philippines has carried out three presidential elections and five senatorial elections in the last fifteen years,³² but the archipelago in the meantime suffered military coups and armed rebellions, which damaged the legitimate government and ongoing political reforms as well. Therefore, given the previous general elections held in the last two decades, the Philippines did not meet the requirements for a consolidated democracy, mainly because the archipelago failed to maintain the institutionalized mechanisms that should have been followed by all major groups during a sustainable period of time.

The case of Taiwan is, again, different from that of the Philippines. Taiwan held regular local elections during the martial law period from 1950 to 1987. Since the first amendments to the ROC Constitution in May 1991, the island has successfully held three nationwide presidential elections in 1996, 2000, and 2004, and another five general elections for legislators in the Legislative Yuan in 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, and 2004. Without experiencing any military coups or other unconstitutional means of securing power since 1987, Taiwan actually has gone through a period of time that is required to nurture a democratic culture.

Apparently, the attitudinal criterion implies that holding constitutional and peaceful nationwide elections only twice or three times will not be good enough to establish a popularly acknowledged culture for democracy. Therefore, this paper argues that a transitional nation needs at least five consecutive nationwide elections before being termed a consolidated democracy, and, most importantly, there should be no break in the process of carrying out these constitutional and peaceful nationwide elections. It also means that the ruling government shall be able to maintain constitutional mechanisms and peaceful order in society during the period of carrying out these nationwide elections. Should there be any coup, severe outbreak of violence, or unconstitutional means of securing power prior to reaching the goal of consolidated democracy, a transitional nation like the Philippines will have to start from scratch in an assessment of progress toward a consolidated democracy.

Conclusion

Given the social and cultural differences between Taiwan and the Philippines, these two countries started political democratization at the same time in the mid-1980s after being ruled by an authoritarian government for years. Taiwan and the Philippines have shared a number of similarities since the implementation of political democratization, including constitutional amendments, bolstering political participation, restructuring political dominance, and more guarantees for the protection of individual rights, as examined in the paper. These programs basically reflect the requirements for a transitional nation moving towards democracy.

Taiwan and the Philippines also face political crises since the implementation of political democratization. Taiwan is troubled with a divided national identity between “the ROC” (supported by the Pan-Blue camp) and “Taiwan” (supported by the Pan-Green camp). Given the political progress on the island, Taiwan, however, faces uncertainties as to its political future, because of the threat from the PRC. Although these two issues are not threatening Taiwan’s current political democratization, they are potential political crises that Taiwanese have to deal with in the coming years. Since political democratization, the Philippines has also met several crises, including unconstitutional rebel groups, less credibility of nationwide elections, and poor economic performance.

Finally, this paper examines the results of political democratization in these two island countries by using three elements for a consolidated democracy that are defined by Juan L. Linz and Alfred Stepan. Given the two political crises in Taiwan, the island actually has been doing quite well since the implementation of political democratization in 1987, making its polity gradually move from authoritarianism towards a consolidated democracy. The Philippines seems not to meet the requirements of a consolidated democracy, behaviorally, constitutionally, and attitudinally. Given the democratic reforms in the Philippines in recent years, the archipelago still keeps being

bothered by a number of unconstitutional events, including rebel groups and military coups. Although the Philippines has accomplished several nationwide elections, these elections fail to win trust from the Filipino masses. The Philippines has to accomplish more successful nationwide elections in a row before it may be termed a consolidated democracy.

Endnotes

¹ Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 5-6.

² The National Assembly originally approved the ROC Constitution in December 1946, which was designed on a scale for all of China, including Taiwan.

³ This means the ROC president was to be elected by the National Assembly members elected in the Taiwan area, while the Taiwan Governor and Mayors of Taipei City and Kaohsiung City were to be directly elected by the citizens of these two cities.

⁴ Mr. Lee Teng-hui led the KMT Mainstream faction and a two-thirds majority is needed for the passage of constitutional amendments.

⁵ Since the National Assembly was downsized, it was not necessary to hold elections for the delegates of the Assembly in May 2000.

⁶ James Soong won 36.4 percent of the votes in the March 2000 presidential election, only 3 percent behind Chen Shui-bian, the winner of the election.

⁷ In March 1976, Mr. Marcos forced forty popularly elected governors to resign, and then appointed his clients to replace those in these posts.

⁸ After the sugar and coconut industries were monopolized by President Marcos, these two industries became a base for Mr. Marcos to extend his political and economic influence in the country. See Gary Hawes, *The Philippine State and the Marcos Regime* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

⁹ A Japanese scholar did a study on the rise of Mayor Jesse Robredo of Naga City in Southern Luzon. For details, see Takeshi Kawanaka, *Power in a Philippine City* (Chiba: Institute of Developing Economies and Japan External Trade Organization, 2002).

¹⁰ In April 1978, Filipinos went to the polls for a government-designed referendum to elect legislators in the Congress. The result was that the Marcos-created New Society Movement won 152 seats while the opposition party won 13 seats. The remaining seats were appointed by Marcos.

¹¹ Available at <http://www.congress.gov.ph/members/profiles/index.php?pg=stats>, accessed 5 January 2008.

¹² Due to the program of downsizing the government institutions, the National Assembly was downsized in the sixth constitutional amendments of April 2000 and was abolished in the seventh constitutional amendments of June 2005.

¹³ Many scholars hold this perspective, see, for example, Renato S. Velasco, "The Philippines," in *Democracy, Governance, and Economic Performance*, eds. Ian Marsh, Jean Blondel and Takashi Inogushi (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1999), 167-202.

¹⁴ President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, for instance, is from a big and powerful family, whose father had been the President of the Philippines from 1961 to 1965.

¹⁵ Taiwan Solidarity Union, under the leadership of former ROC President Lee Teng-hui, was established in July 2001.

¹⁶ Ten DPP legislators quit their jobs before the end of the term, whereas one KMT legislator resigned.

¹⁷ Some scholars even take a broader perspective, based on citizenship, to interpret human rights. For instance, Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson contend that being a citizen, he or she, especially for an immigrant and indigenous person, should have civil rights, political rights, social rights, gender rights, and cultural rights. See Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 84-128.

¹⁸ In December 1972, Mr. Marcos created citizen assemblies by an executive order to take over legislative functions of Congress. More than 45,000 citizen assemblies were established during the period of Mr. Marcos' rule. See A.E. Laptian, "Citizens Assemblies in the Philippines: Institutional-Building under Martial Law," *Asian Profile*, 3(4) (1975): 417-420.

¹⁹ According to a report by Amnesty International, for example, the Philippines is still reported to have “arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial executions and ‘disappearances’ in the context of military counter-insurgency operations, and armed political groups were responsible for grave abuses, including killings, torture and hostage-taking.” Available at <http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2002.nsf/asa/philippines!Open>, accessed October 5, 2003.

²⁰ John Funston, ed., *Government and Politics in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001), 280.

²¹ <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&country=7253&year=2007>, accessed 5 January 2008.

²² All these figures refer to those companies registered with the government at the end of 2005.

²³ For details, visit the website of Freedom House at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2005&country=6843>, accessed March 29, 2006.

²⁴ <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&country=7283&year=2007>, accessed 5 January 2008.

²⁵ Being defeated by Japan in the 1894 Sino-Japanese war, the Ch’ing dynasty then ceded Taiwan to Japan.

²⁶ For related articles on the issue of Taiwan’s identity, see Yun-han Chu and Jih-wen Lin, “Political Development in the 20th Century Taiwan: State-Building, Regime Transformation and the Construction of National Identity,” *China Quarterly* 165 (March 2001):102-129; Yun-han Chu, Angelina C. Yee, “Constructing a Native Consciousness: Taiwan Literature in the 20th Century,” *China Quarterly* 165 (March 2001): 83-101; “Taiwan’s National Identity Politics and the Prospect of Cross-Strait Relations,” *Asian Survey* XLIV (4) (July/August 2004): 484-512.

²⁷ Chen said several times in public that the ROC does not exist any more.

²⁸ There is a great deal of literature on Taiwan’s relations with China. See, for instance, T. Y. Wang, “Cross-Strait Relations After the 2000 Election in Taiwan: Changing Tactics in a New Reality,” *Asian Survey* XLI (5) (September/October 2001): 716-735; Yu-Shan Wu, “Theorizing on Relations across the Taiwan Strait: nine contending approaches,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 9(25) (November 2000): 407-428.

²⁹ <http://www.poea.gov.ph/html/statistics.html> , accessed 12 October 2007.

³⁰ Juan L. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 5-6.

³¹ *ET News*, December 10, 2007.

³² The three presidential elections were held in 1992, 1998, and 2004, whereas the five elections for Senator were held in 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, and 2004.