

## Authoritarian Rule, Legitimacy Crisis, and Destruction of Political Institutions: The Philippines under Marcos

AKM Khairul Islam

***Abstract:** It is very difficult to provide political goods without the aid of effective political institutions (Jackson, and Rosberg, 1982). However, most of the cases, authoritarian rulers destroy the credibility, efficiency and effectiveness of political institutions. Nonetheless, those measures can not ensure long-term regime survival as well as political stability of the country. The question is why authoritarian rulers destroy political institutions? The study tries to answer this question. The research argues that legitimacy crisis compel authoritarian rulers to use political institutions for their regime survival that destroy the credibility and efficiency of the political institutions. The short-term consequences of authoritarian rule were coercion, intimidation, torture, and economic decline. But long-term costs were much more devastating. Marcos virtually destroyed every political institution such as bureaucracy, army, press, judiciary, and Electoral Commission in the Philippine, which is required for democratic governance. The paper is divided into three sections: section one discusses how President Marcos tries to consolidate his power by different legitimization process by using and abusing state institutions; section two discusses why and how his legitimization process failed; and last section discusses how Marcos destroyed state institutions in the Philippines during his long authoritarian rule for his regime survival.*

Legitimacy crisis is a common problem for most of the authoritarian rulers, whether military or non-military regimes. Due to lack of legitimacy, authoritarian rulers use coercion, violence, and other forms of unlawful political means at some point during their tenure to stay in power. However, those measures are not enough for their long-term regime survival and political legitimacy. They need to seek some sort of legitimate authority and power that extend beyond coercion and intimidation (Kassem, 2004). For their legitimacy, authoritarian rulers try to extend their power base in different segments of the society by means of coercion as well as using state resources and regulatory advantages. Nature and distribution of patronages depend on the

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\* PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, e-mail: akmkhair@siu.edu

necessity of the authoritarian rulers. Initially they distribute patronages to the army, civil bureaucracy, and segment of the business elite (Casper, 1995). Later, they also provide state patronages to their newly build party members. Deprive the opposition members from state patronages is also one of the most important sources of opposition containment and control. However, the use of state patronages for political purpose destroys the capability and legitimacy of state institutions. Authoritarian rulers virtually destroyed every political institution such as bureaucracy, army, press, judiciary, and Electoral Commission in the Philippine.

It is very difficult to provide political goods without the aid of effective political institutions (Jackson, and Rosberg, 1982). The question is: why do authoritarian rulers destroy political institutions? This research tries to answer this question by arguing that legitimacy crisis compel authoritarian rulers misuse state power for their regime survival that destroy state institutions. The article uses the Philippines under President Ferdinand Marcos as a case study. The paper is divided into three sections: section one discusses how President Marcos consolidated his power by different legitimization process and by using and abusing state institutions; section two discusses why and how his legitimization process failed; and last section discusses how Marcos destroyed state institutions in the Philippines during his long authoritarian rule.

#### The Consolidation of the Dictatorship:

By imposing martial law on September 21, 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos ended the Philippines' long experiment of American-style democracy and destroyed the superstructure of constitutional government that had been developed during American colonial rule and after independence. He dissolved Congress, suspended civil liberties and rights, and abolished the 1935 constitution by promulgating a new constitution. By imposing martial law, Marcos imposed one-man rule on the Philippines. Even though he formally lifted martial law in 1981, but the country remained under one man rule until the downfall of his regime in a people's revolution in February 1986.

After imposing martial law, Marcos stated that the main reason of martial law was to save the country from economic distress, corruption, and mismanagement. He repeatedly blamed the U.S.-style democratic system that failed to address the basic problems of the country and was unresponsive to the needs of society and especially the common people (Tiglaio, 1988). Marcos further explained that the growing violence of the country by extreme leftist and rightist elements had reached such a magnitude that it was impossible to control without martial law.

When Marcos imposed martial law, the Philippine people in general accepted the imposition of martial law as an alternative to political instability, riots, violence, corruption, and inefficiency (Verela, 1995: 55). Many people in the business community accepted martial law in the hope that it would produce a better business environment for them. The common people supported martial law in the hope of economic development, discipline, and better governance. However, his long authoritarian rule did not produce any intended results that people expected. It was devastating for the citizens of the Philippines.

Within a few months of martial law, Marcos arrested thirty thousand people. Most of them were communists, but those groups also included several important opposition politicians such as senators and congressmen and leading journalists (Thompson, 1995: 59). Marcos also appropriated the wealth of his opponents in order to lessen their ability to form any alliance against his rule (Thompson, 1995: 59). He was able to implement his rule without much resistance because most of the opposition politicians were willing to join his party with promise of patronage, which is traditional norm in Philippine politics. Thompson (1995:60) argues that most of the anti-Marcos opposition politicians abandoned their opposition activities because:

In pre-martial law politics, opposition to the regime could be quite materially rewarding if the outs got back in power. But now there were no polls, and all state patronage seemed to be permanently in Marcos's hands. Government largesse was available only to those in his good grace. Because the private

interests of factions, not ideological programs, drove Philippine politics, it is understandable that most formerly anti-Marcos politicians did not denounce the regime but instead tried to ingratiate themselves with it.

Initially Marcos regime had many of the characteristics of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes that were present in other East and Southeast Asian countries (Wurfel, 1990; Haggard, 1990). All opposition was crushed; government relied on technocrats and bureaucrats for policy formulation and implementation. Economic policy favored private entrepreneurs, multinational corporations, and labor-intensive export-oriented industrialization (Wurfel, 1990). But after few years, President Marcos changed his strategy and relied more on his political party for regime legitimization. He later provided state resources and regulatory advantages to his party members to strengthen his support base in different section of the society.

To reduce the political cost of martial law, Marcos tried to provide a legal and constitutional basis for his regime from the very beginning of **martial law. Legal justification of his rule was necessary not only** to gain political support from the Filipinos but also from the United States and donor agencies such as the World Bank, IMF, and Asian Development Bank (Celoza, 1997). Before martial law, the presidential term had been four years and no person had been eligible to be president more than eight consecutive years. Marcos wanted to change the constitution to stay in power more than two terms. But most of the members of the constitutional convention were unwilling to change the constitution. Marcos needed to impose martial law to stay in power more than two terms. Those members of the constitutional convention opposed constitutional change before martial law were sent to prison. He forced the remaining members of the Constitutional Convention hurriedly submitted a constitutional draft to Marcos. He ratified the new constitution on January 15, 1973, and called it the "Philippine style of grass-root democracy" (Tiglao, 1988: 28). The new constitution gave him enormous legal power, which was virtually a license of unrestrictive power. Further consolidation of his dictatorial rule came in 1974, when the Supreme

Court upheld the constitutionality of martial law in the case of Benigno S. Aquino vs. Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile, et. al. (Tiglao, 1988:29). Carl Lande (In Kang, 2002: 83-84) argues that "Marcos's skill in using the law and the constitutional amendment process to destroy the rule of law...served to disarm those of his opponents... who could find no legal means of blocking him."

To consolidate his power base, Marcos formed an umbrella political party, the *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (New Social Movement) or KBL, to establish a 'New Society' in the Philippines. The slogan of his new society was "discipline is required for development" (Celoza, 1997: 126). The goal of his new society was to "increase concern for the poor, increase discipline and coherence in the government, and provide leadership for development" (Kang, 2002: 137). Less than few years after the proclamation of martial law, Marcos forced the ruling elite either to capitulate to dictatorship and embrace Marcos's 'New society' or be sent to jail or forced into exile (Tiglao, 1988:27). Marcos's new political party (KBL) was used to distribute state patronage network to strengthen support base for the regime (Casper, 2000). KBL dominated Philippine electoral politics from 1978 to 1986 (Casper, 2000).

After initial consolidation of his power, Marcos tried to legitimize his military rule by conducting different referenda and elections like many other dictators. In July 1973, a referendum was held asking the people whether they wanted Marcos "to continue as president beyond 1973 and to finish the reforms he started under martial law" (Tiglao, 1988:27). There were many irregularities in the referendum, and Marcos got a 90.61 % yes vote. The Election Commission was not neutral and government officials helped to gain support for Marcos regime (Celoza, 1997). After winning the first referendum, another referendum was held asking the people whether they preferred Marcos "to continue as president or prime minister of the Philippines" (Tiglao, 1988:27). After that, National Assembly (Interim *Batasang Pambansa*) elections were held in April 1978, which were characterized by massive electoral fraud and violence. Out of 183

seats, Marcos' KBL party won 169 seats (Casper, 2000). In all these referenda and elections, Marcos got an absolute "yes" vote and landslide victory. In one instance, he got a statistically improbable 99% per cent votes. All of these referenda and elections were held during a period of economic prosperity that made middle and upper class people less apathetic about civil and political rights (Tiglao, 1988). By these rigged referenda and elections, Marcos established a pseudo legal basis for his authoritarian regime.

Marcos also tried to consolidate his power base by some 'state building' measures and carrying out some 'social and economic reforms' for middle and lower class people (Thompson, 1995). Land reform was the center-piece of social reforms. At the end of 1960s, import-substitution industrialization faced a dead end due to inefficiency, monopoly, lack of market, inequitable distribution of income, and mass poverty (Tiglao, 1988). Marcos changed industrial policy and relied on export-oriented industrialization. During the early years of martial law from 1973-78, he had some success. Economic growth was 7% and other indicators of the economy were also good. His export-oriented industrial policy was also successful during the early years of his rule. From 1972 to 1978, the non-traditional manufacturing sector grew at an annual rate of 30 per cent. In 1972, non-traditional manufacturing exports were valued at US \$ 116 million and reached US \$1,045 million in 1978 (Tiglao, 1988: 31). The first few years of martial law were also fruitful for the national elite. Corporate profits of the country's top 100 corporations jumped to 1.3 billion Peso in 1972, 3.02 billion Pesos in 1973, and 3.5 billion peso in 1974 (Tiglao, 1988: 31). Foreign direct investment, especially Japanese investment, also helped to propel economic growth. In 1968 total Japanese investment was P1.6 million, but it reached P693.51 million in 1976 (Tiglao, 1988). Huge financial assistance from the United States and Multilateral Agencies also helped to generate better economic growth during the early years of martial law (Table-1). Some authors (Ames, 1987:16) argues that "Sometimes the new government is temporarily successful, but in reality the military's

success is as likely to be mere luck, because coups tend to occur just as the bottom of economic slides."

**Table-1: United States. Economic Aid to the Philippines: A Comparative Study of Two Four-Year periods FY 1969-1972 and FY 1973-76 (in millions of dollars)**

Official Aid	FY 1969-72	FY 1973-76
Aid Loans and Grants	56.2	240.5
PL 480 (Food for Peace)	88.3	77.3
Other Official Aid	9.7	9.8
Sub Total	154.2	327.6
<b>US Government Corporations</b>		
Export-Import Bank	251.8	843.9
Overseas Pvt. Investment Corp.	164.9	170.8
Commodity Credit Corp.	92.6	82.4
Sub-total	509.3	1097.1
<b>Multilateral Agencies</b>		
World Bank and Affiliates	153.8	697.0
Asian Development Bank	101.8	309.6
International Monetary Fund	112.1	490.7
Sub-total	377.7	1497.3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1041.2</b>	<b>2922.0</b>

Source: Bello, 1977, In Brillantes Jr., 1987: 108

The initial success of the regime consolidation was possible for some other reasons. First, the social discontent of the sixties and early seventies was directed against an apparently stagnating social and political order. People were very frustrated about the existing political system and they wanted a change. Overholt argues that "[t]he vast majority of Philippine society strongly supported Marcos. Most of the rest acquiesced in his reforms. Most people were convinced that Philippine democracy could not in any case long survive the perpetuation of crime, inequality and poverty, and incoherent economic policy" (in Igaya, 1999: 10). Second, at the time of martial law, there were no effective political parties to represent the interests of the common people. The elite-based political party system was easily paralyzed and managed by Marcos. Therefore, he did not face any challenges from political parties. Third, due to the expansion of the economic activities of the state by foreign aid and loans, Marcos

was also able to generate economic growth as well as satisfied his clients (Tiglao, 1988).

Overall, Marcos tried to consolidate his power by increased militarization, endless legalistic manipulations, debt driven growth, and a clientelistic political system (Aquino, 1982). However, his initial success did not last long due to economic crisis, corruption and economic mismanagement.

*Economic Crisis, Erosion of legitimacy and the Fall of the Regime:*

Within a few years, most of the positive economic signs had started to disappear. Economic growth slowed and the income gap intensified in the Philippines at the end of 1970s (Wurfel, 1990). Wurfel (1990: 114) argues that "slow economic growth was associated with a shift in regime type away from technocratic efficiency back to a more traditional neo-patrimonialism." Like most of the authoritarian regimes, Marcos rejected the orthodox principle of economics that is "getting the price right" as a development strategy. Instead, he used expansionary fiscal policies as a means to gain support from different strata of the society. Massive government spending was necessary to strengthen the regime's support base of the middle and upper classes (Tiglao, 1988). Local funds for this purpose were limited because of the huge military budget in the early years of military rule (Table - 1). Local resource mobilization by imposing tax was not politically viable because it could create discontent among middle and lower class people. It was also difficult because of corrupt and inefficient internal revenue and custom departments in the Philippines. To support his massive infra-structural and big capital intensive industrial projects, Marcos embarked on a 'debt-driven strategy of growth' and 'crony control of selected industrial development' such as sugar and coconut industries (Rivera, 2002; Haggard, 1990). During the early 1970s, foreign debt was possible because of the expansion of international liquidity due to the huge accumulation of petrodollars in western banking centers. The accumulation of petrodollars also brought down international interest rates and increased the availability of bank loans for third world countries (Tiglao, 1988: 41). When the commodity



boom ended and the world recession extended to the late 1970s, the international rate of interest increased once again. Like other third world countries, the Philippines fell into a debt-trap that ultimately led to a deep recession of the economy (Tiglao, 1988; Haggard, 1990). In 1972, the debt service ratio was 5.2 per cent of the GDP and it reached 28.4 per cent in 1985 (Table- 2). During the early 1980s, the debt crisis reached such a magnitude that new bank loans were needed to service the debt. The huge debt-service ratio forced Marcos to reduce defense and social expenditures in the late 1970s (Table-2).

Table- 2 Distribution of Expenditure by Sectors, 1972-85

Year	Economic	Social Services	Defense	General Public Services	Debt Service
1972	30.2	9.6	9.6	26.9	5.2
1973	41.9	10.0	10.0	18.7	5.7
1974	47.7	14.4	14.4	10.8	4.5
1975	46.9	18.4	18.4	10.7	5.2
1976	42.2	18.4	18.4	15.4	5.1
1977	34.5	22.7	22.7	13.0	7.8
1978	35.9	12.9	12.9	18.0	8.9
1979	38.9	14.4	14.4	10.7	9.0
1980	41.2	12.5	12.5	17.1	9.3
1981	39.7	11.1	11.1	19.9	8.7
1982	36.3	11.4	11.4	19.0	10.0
1983	31.0	12.3	12.3	18.5	17.2
1984	30.2	11.0	11.0	13.6	22.1
1985	32.9	23.9	8.6	9.2	28.4

Source: Magno, 1994:138

Economic growth was also unsustainable due to massive conuption and the unprecedented plunder of state resources by Marcos's family and his cronies (Rivera, 2002). Most of the big projects undertaken by Marcos were based on political considerations instead of economic rationality. These projects were mostly foreign funded, ambitious, and economically unviable, and required huge capital, high technology,

and managerial skill that were absent in the Philippines (Buss, 1987). Some projects were never completed, some were dropped after inauspicious beginnings, and some were economically unviable (Buss, 1987). Marcos and his family and his cronies almost extracted commissions from all of these projects. Marcos' cronies penetrated every root of the Philippine economy; they received kickbacks, payoff, evaded tax, and deposited their illegal money in foreign banks (Buss, 1987). Marcos was called 'Mr. ten per cent' due to his involvement in massive corruption (Buss, 1987). Not only Marcos, the first lady, Imelda Marcos, was also involved in massive corruption scandals. Her extravagant lifestyle and misuse of power seriously affected the legitimacy of the regime and gradually weakened the regime's middle and upper class support.

Table - 3 Philippine Economic Crisis Indicators, 1980-85

	1975-1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Real GDP Growth	6.4	5.0	3.4	1.9	1.1	-7.1	-4.1
Inflation	9.9	17.6	12.4	10.4	10.0	50.3	24.9
Current Account /GNP	-4.6	-5.4	5.4	-8.1	-8.1	-3.5	0.0
Fiscal Deficit/GNP	---	3.0	5.7	5.4	3.2	2.8	2.2
Unemployment	---	8.1	8.9	9.5	7.9	10.6	11.1
Capital Formation	---	30.7	30.7	28.8	27.5	19.2	14.3

Source: Haggard, 1990: 235

Marcos's legitimacy started to erode from the very beginning of the 1980s, due to serious economic crisis, inflation, income inequality, unemployment, corruption, and unprecedented plunder of the national economy by Marcos, his family, and his cronies. Due to lack of a viable political organization, Marcos did not face any serious challenge during the late 1970s. But huge public protests extended to almost every province of the country during the early 1980s (Celoza, 1997: 125). Various organizations such as students and youth organizations, labor unions, peasant organizations, urban poor, women, and various professional organizations such as teacher: lawyer, journalist and even different church organizations attended mass rallies. Army officers, and especially junior officers graduated

from the Philippine military academy, were also very frustrated due to massive corruption and lack of professionalism in the Armed forces.

During the early 1980s, however, deteriorating economic conditions and Marcos' ill health triggered the loss of investors' confidence and massive capital flight (Wurfel, 1990). Business confidence also declined due to political instability (Lande, 1986). In October 1983, the government was unable to pay its foreign debt and asked 483 creditors for a memorandum (Villegas, 1986: 145). The debt crisis stopped the flow of trade credit of \$3 billion, which further aggravated the economic condition of the country (Villegas, 1986: 145). In 1984, The Centre for Research and Communication reported that industrial production declined 20 per cent and more than 400,000 workers lost their jobs (Villegas, 1986: 145). Many wealthy and powerful families also started to believe that the Marcos regime was destroying their wealth and withdrew their support from his regime (Cezola, 1997).

The assassination of the main opposition leader Benigno Aquino shocked the whole nation. More than one million people attended Aquino's funeral and joined anti-Marcos demonstrations in the street of Manila and expressed their feeling against Marcos. People from all sectors of the society attended the anti-Marcos demonstrations. The legal oppositions were also able to show their strength for the first time since the imposition of martial law in 1972. As the anti-Marcos demonstration rose, the failing economy started to deteriorate further. To get rid of this situation, Marcos declared National Assembly elections on May 14, 1984. Confident of victory, he liberalized the rules on free speech, and suspended the preventive detention act (Buss, 1987). Marcos spent 5 billion Pesos from the central bank to win the elections (Buss, 1987). Despite huge electoral spending and cheating, opponents captured 59 out of 183 seats (Buss, 1987). In Manila, the ruling party won only 6 seats out of 21 seats despite an all out effort (Buss, 1987).

Due to the assassination of Benigno Aquino, the anti-Marcos demonstrations and the failing economy, the U.S. withdrew its support for Marcos's regime and exerted pressure for early presidential

elections and further political liberalization (Wurfel, 1990). Marcos agreed to hold an early election to renew his mandate (Wurfel, 1990). Marcos was confident that the opposition would remain divided during the election. Opinion polls had predicted that Marcos could win the election with only a modest amount of cheating if there were two candidates (Wurfel, 1990). Initially the opposition was divided, but pressure from civil society organizations, church bishops, and common people, caused oppositionists to unite against Marcos. They selected Aquino the sole candidate to fight against Marcos.

Marcos heavily relied on patron-client networks and money for his electoral victory. He distributed billions of Pesos from public and private funds (Wurfel, 1990). According to Varela (1995: 67), it was open suspicion, "that the central bank vault was ripped open to finance the campaign and massive vote buying. ...A \$700 million outflow was registered in the balance sheet of the Central Bank during the campaign period." But when local leaders realized that Marcos victory was unlikely, they pocketed most of the money rather than distributing it for electoral purposes (Wurfel, 1990). Marcos did everything such as snatching the ballot boxes, intimidating NAMFREL (National Movement for Free Elections) and opposition party poll watchers, and creating violence to win the election (Wurfel, 1990).

When voting finished and election results started to come in, it was clear that the opposition candidate Corazon Aquino had won. Marcos claimed victory, though, and the opposition started to demonstrate. The opposition protests gained further strength from the reaction of the Church and the US government (Wurfel, 1990). During 22-25 February, 1986, a mutiny from a section of army officers supported by a massive people mobilization forced Marcos out of power (Rivera, 2002).

#### Authoritarian Rule and the Destruction of Political Institutions:

In all types of political system, military and police forces play key role in maintaining internal stability and defending the country. But in an authoritarian regime, military play key political roles in protecting the

authoritarian regime (Kaseem, 2004). Without the support from armed forces, it is virtually impossible for an authoritarian regime to survive. Constant flow of state patronage and strategic alliance with high level military officials are required in gaining and maintaining continuous support from the armed forces (Kaseem, 2004). Right after declaring martial law, Marcos moved quickly to gain personal control of the military. Tiglao (1988: 52) argues that "Despite his assertions that martial law did not represent a military takeover, the fact was he institutionalized the military as a locus of power in the Philippine society." He expanded armed forces rapidly; the number of troops was 102,000 in 1975 and it reached 156,000 by 1980 (Thompson, 1995:55). The military got the lion's share of the budget. In 1972, military budget was P800 million, and it reached P4 billion in 1976 (Tiglao, 1988: 52). Marcos promoted officers one grade, increased their salaries 150 per cent, raised other benefits, and set up a company to invest new wealth of the military officers (Thompson, 1999). Massive increase of the military budget was possible because of huge economic and military aid from the United States in the early years of military rule (Table-1). Not only did Marcos increase salaries and other benefits of the military officers, he also appointed military officers as managers and directors of government-owned corporations as well as private owned establishment (Tiglao, 1988: 53). In return for their loyalty, Marcos tolerated corruption of top officers that undermined the professionalism of the military, reduced their efficiency, intensified their internal conflicts, and increased inequality among the military officers (Thompson, 1999). Lande points out that "loyalty in turn was rewarded by a growing tolerance of corruption, of the arbitrary use of power, and of other abuses. There was, in short, an increased reliance on primordial ties and traditional incentives rather than on the rewards commonly associated with military professionalism" (in Thompson, 1995:55). Abueva (1983 in Tiglao, 1988: 54) describes the relationship between Marcos and the military as such:

President Marcos has enlarged the size, role, power, emoluments and benefits of the military as no other Filipino President would

have done. In the process, the president and the military officers have become consciously dependent on each other for their continued power and preeminence in the country. The President's assertion that civilian authority is supreme over the military is tenuous: it applies mainly to his own relationship with the military but even he cannot easily control the military in the provinces, the partnership has made it difficult to allow any alternatives to the political status quo.

Celoza (1997: 131) further argues that:

The military increased its power and influence and became more involved in politics. Civilian control over the military decreased as soldiers became involved in influencing the balance of power and influencing succession to power. Military professionalism was sacrificed in favor of loyalty and the democratic principle of civilian supremacy.

During Marcos's rule, the Philippine army protected and served the interests of Marcos and his cronies and did not behave like a national army (Thompson, 1996). It was deeply involved in politics, rigged elections, and suppressed the opposition. The military antagonized much of the populace by arbitrary repression and torture. Due to torture and repression, revolutionary elements such as communist movements and Islamic fundamentalism grew stronger. The number of New People's Army (NPA) increased from several hundred fighters just immediately before martial law to 8,000 in the 1980 and 20,000 in 1983 (Thompson, 1996:184). Due to politicization of armed forces, post-Marcos democratic regime faced difficulty in controlling armed forces. During her six-year term, President Aquino faced unprecedented challenges from the politicized armed forces. The Philippines faced more coup attempts than any other newly democratic countries (Thompson, 1996). From November 1986 to December 1989, seven coup attempts were led by RAM, which was loyal to the defense secretary Enrile or led by Marcos loyalists in the army or by combine RAM and Marcos loyalists.

After imposing martial law, Marcos formed a Commission for Reorganization, a joint executive-legislative group, to reorganize the bureaucracy (Celoza, 1997). The main objectives of the reorganization committee were "promoting simplicity, economy and efficiency in the government to enable it to pursue programs consistent with national goals for accelerated social and economic development; and improving the service for transacting public business in government agencies" (in Celoza, 1997: 86). After a few years of martial law, Marcos shifted his regime away from "technocratic efficiency back to a more traditional new-patrimonialism" (Wurfel, 1990: 114). Within a few years of martial law, Marcos dramatically increased the size and control of the bureaucracy and also the power of the bureaucrats in the name of professionalism and technical efficiency to ensure the support of the top bureaucrats (Celoza, 1997: 86). Within less than ten years of martial law, he increased the number of public sector corporation from thirty two to ninety three (Celoza, 1997: 88-89). The main reasons for the expansion of the public sector were government takeovers of Marcos's opponent's business companies and his crony's business establishment to bail them out of bankruptcy (Celoza, 1997:89). Due to the huge expansion of public sector corporations, the national government needed to spend huge sums of **money** on subsidies, equities, and capital investment. According to the Philippine central bank, due to the huge expansion of public sector corporations, almost 73 per cent of the public debt was incurred by public sector corporations (Celoza, 1997: 89). Expansion of the public sector corporations increased the authoritarian control of the economy, encouraged corruption and inefficiencies, and opportunities to use government resources to win support for the Marcos regime. Richard Doner argues that "the critical locus of decision-making was the presidential place, not the technocrats and economic bureaucracy" (in Kang, 2002: 84). Kang (2002: 84) also argues that "[t]he technocrats had no indigenous support base that would allow them to press forward with their ideas for reforming the Filipino economy. Instead, cronies close to Marcos were able to circumvent almost any policy implemented by the bureaucrats." During Marcos's long authoritarian

rule, the autonomy, efficiency, and professionalism of the bureaucracy declined due to authoritarian control of the bureaucracy. Many believe that bureaucratic inefficiency, and corruption slowed economic growth. Bureaucrats use their power for personal enrichment, not for national development Celozza (1997: 131) argues that:

Standards of civil service eroded, and the abuse of public office became pervasive. Public bureaucracy was used for private gains such as the establishment of monopolies and the use of the public treasury for private wants and personal functions. Public officials blurred the boundaries between public and private domain.

Authoritarian control over bureaucracy, and personalism in recruitment also blocked channels of upward mobility for honest and dedicated officials who lacked personnel and official connections, or unwilling to create those kinds of connections (Geddes, 1994).

When Marcos imposed martial law, his first target was the mass media. Before martial law, the Philippine press was the "freest in Southeast Asia and perhaps in third world countries" (Wurfel, 1988: 122). It was one of the most important components of the Philippine democracy during the 1960s. The press was most critical about political corruption and arbitrary use of power and the relationship between the press and the president was confrontational. Therefore, it is very difficult for authoritarian rules to stay in power with a free press. After imposing Martial law (by Letter of Instruction No. 1), Marcos ordered the closure of all newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations until a further order of the president (Tiglao, 1988:29). By another presidential order (presidential order no-2-A), he ordered the mass arrest of leading journalists. Marcos tried to justify the crackdown in terms of the need "to dismantle the oligarchic structure of ownership" (Wurfel, 1988: 123). But Marcos allowed the opening of newspapers and magazines to oligarchs who were, loyal to him and his regime. *Bulletin Today*, *The Daily Express* and its sister organization *TV Channel -9* (owned and controlled by his family and friends) were allowed to open subsequently (Tigalo, 1988). That way, his family members and cronies monopolized the print media for



many years (Tiglao, 1988:29). During his long authoritarian rule, professional journalism was virtually absent and lost all credibility to the Filipino people. In 1974, Marcos himself admitted that official media had lost credibility and become "too sycophantic" (Wurfel, 1988).

Elections are a vital component of any democratic political system. The role of the Election Commission is very important in conducting free and fair elections. Before martial law, the reputation of the Election Commission was neutral and uncontroversial. Marcos destroyed the credibility of elections and the Election Commission as an independent and neutral institution. He manipulated Election Commission to win different referenda and elections. Hedman and Sidel (2000: 25) describe the Marcos era as one of "wholesale fraud in the Philippine electoral history." Due to massive electoral fraud in different referenda and elections, people lost confidence in elections. Election Commission lost its credibility as an independent and neutral organization that was a big blow for Philippine democracy.

Marcos also destroyed the credibility and integrity of the judicial system. During democratic era, corruption and nepotism were not uncommon in the lower level judiciary. Lower level judges were also vulnerable to local politicians (Thompson, 1995:55). But the upper level judiciary, especially the high court and the Supreme Court, were relatively corruption-free, independent, and neutral (Thompson, 1995). But during martial law, the entire judicial system was under the control of Marcos and his administration. He limited the power of the judiciary and of the judges. He could dismiss any judge arbitrarily and assign jurisdiction of many cases from civil court to the military tribunal (Thompson, 1995:55). Celozza (1997: 84) argues that "During the martial law years, the Supreme Court provided an image of legitimacy and continuity to the regime while it was increasingly being subordinated to presidential authority. Its jurisdiction and independence contracted while the scope of authoritarian influence and control expanded. To survive, the judiciary bent to presidential authority as did other government branches. In the process, it institutionalized the authoritarian regime." Thompson argues that the

judiciary submitted to the regime in such a magnitude that "Chief Justice Enrique Fernando held a parasol over Imelda Marcos during a public gathering" (Thompson, 1995:55).

Before the Marcos administration, the political power of the President was restrained by the legislature. The first Marcos administration (1966-69) was marked by a decisive shift of the center of power towards the presidency (Doronila, 1985). After imposing martial law, Marcos established absolute control over legislature. Freed from legislative interference, Marcos ruled by decree, centralized national police forces under the armed forces of Philippines, established monopolies of major commodities of export, and parceled out regulatory control of the strategic sectors of the economy, such as banking, insurance, construction, energy, food processing, gambling, media ports, telecommunications, and transportation to close circle of family members and his cronies (Sidel, 1999). Some scholars argue that the political system constructed by Marcos was "a weak authoritarian" regime despite the centralization of his power (Haggard, 1990: 216). Haggard (1990: 216-7) points out some characteristics of the weak authoritarian state: first, this type of regime relies heavily on "crony" capitalists for its power base; second, it relies heavily on instrumental and patron-client networks for societal support; third, the capacity of the state is very weak compared to other types of authoritarian state such as bureaucratic authoritarianism or developmental state. Celozza (1997: 131) argues that:

The lack of an orderly process for changing regimes and for transferring power, and the absence of predictability and stability in institutions and government practices weakened the constitution as a framework for political process.

One scholar (Hawes, 1987: 82) points out that "Marcos did not stimulate rational economic planning. The newly expanded coercive and administrative powers of the state were not used to generate economic dynamism and rationality. The surplus was not extracted for investment in new industry. Instead, the power of the state was used for individual political goals." Billions of dollars in foreign aid and

loans were plundered by Marcos, his family and his cronies, a major cause of the country's debt crisis (Haggard, 1990). During the 1970s the president's salary and other benefits were approximately U.S \$ 13000 per year, but by the end of the Marcos era, he had reportedly amassed U.S \$10-13 billion (Thompson, 1996). In the early 1980s the Philippine nation was bankrupt, inflation was high, and funds were insufficient to service the debt (Steinberg, 1999:134).

In the late 1970s, Marcos sought regime legitimacy not through technocratic efficiency and economic growth like other East Asian countries but by centralizing the patronage of state resources (Wurfel, 1990). Marcos centralized power and coercion and monopolized the distribution of patronage and privilege. In fact, Marcos was "the Philippine state" under martial law (McCoy 1993), so much so that Thompson (1995) describes his regime as "*sultanistic* rule." Thompson (1995: 51) further argues that "A *sultanistic* dictator exercises power not for a particular class but for the benefits of family and friends." McCoy (1993: 436) argues that "rather than breaking this system of rent seeking, Marcos' martial-law regime represented its apogee. His major achievement, and ultimately failure, lay in his attempt to restructure the national elite, replacing established families with a coterie of his own." Marcos's authoritarian regime relied heavily on the state's patronage network for its legitimacy and power base. He created a group of cronies for his political survival. Thompson describes these monopolies as "each crony had his kingdom: Benedicto was the sugar king, Cojuangco the coconut king, Floirendo the banana king, Campos the drug king, and, according to the buttons on the intercom system at Malacanang Place, Ferdinand Marcos was simply the King" (Thompson 1995:54). By establishing monopolistic control on the economy, his cronies earned unlimited profits. One study conducted by Aquino (1982) shows that 81 families controlled almost all the banking and other industrial sectors of the Philippine economy during early 1980s.

**Conclusion:**

No institutions remained unaffected during Marcos's long dictatorial rule. During Marcos era, corruption and graft were common practice in the high echelons of both civil and military bureaucracy and even in the judiciary (Thompson, 1995; Varela, 1995). Public accountability was forgotten at every level of government. For his short-term regime consolidation, Marcos only satisfied a small group of people, monopolized business and gained huge profits, and plundered the economy. Due to economic mismanagement, corruption, and cronyism, economic conditions of the common people deteriorated, unemployment increased, inflation soared, and poverty and income inequality deteriorated.

Due to massive corruption and mismanagement of the economy by Marcos regime, real wage declined and real poverty aggravated that provided fertile ground for mass discontent, guerilla operations, and strengthened communist movements (Thompson, 1996: 184). His 'new society' was worse than the 'old society'. Verela characterizes Marcos's new society as "by the same 'patronage and personnel aggrandizement' with the added elements of plunder, political and moral turpitude and bankruptcy greed, oppression, graft and corruption, and 'kleptocracy,' to mention a few" (Verela, 1995:60). Aquino (in Hutchcroft, 1991: 418) argues that "while corruption has always been part of the Philippine political life, it reached epidemic and flagrant proportions during the Marcos years." Another scholar (Steinberg, 1999: 219) points out that "the legacy of Ferdinand Marcos is profound. His and his cronies' widespread and greedy corruption, including the license to smuggle funds abroad and maintain foreign accounts, not only drained the society of vitality, needed working capital but also weakened its moral fiber." Marcos initially declared war against oligarchy, but he created a new oligarchy that was absolutely dependent and loyal to him and worst than the previous one.

When Marcos imposed martial law, most of the Philippine elite supported him "to break the dead end it faced in the early 1970s"

(Tiglao, 1988: 27). But at the end of 1970s, the elite realized "the Frankenstein monster it had helped create which threatened to eat them up one by one to drive the entire nation into an economic and political holocaust" (Tiglao, 1988: 27). When Marcos came to power in 1965, the Philippines was far ahead of Thailand, Indonesia and even South Korea in terms of per capita income, GDP growth rate, and other macro-economic indicators (Buss, 1987). In 1965, the exports of the Philippines were equal to those of South Korea. But in 1985, South Korean exports were seven times bigger than those of the Philippines (Buss, 1987). Buss (1987: 50) points out that "under Marcos, the Philippines sank from second to Japan (in Asia) in economic progress to second-to-none in poverty and despair." Litonjua (1994:1) observes that "In the 1950s, before Marcos, the Philippines was hailed as Asia's economic and political showcase for democracy; it was lamented that, after Marcos, the Philippines had become Asia's basket case."

The post authoritarian democratic governments in the Philippines inherited a highly politicized military, weak and inefficient bureaucracy, corrupt judiciary, and legislators who were elected by rigged elections (Thompson, 1996; Varela, 1995). Casper (1995: 179) argues that "an authoritarian regime influences the political life of a country not only while it is in power, but even after it has been overthrown." Former President Aquino accused Marcos of "the unholy union of insatiable greed and limitless power, of mindless borrowing and reckless expenditure, [which] explains the virtual collapse of the Philippine economy: he [Marcos] has taken us to the waiting room of the world bank with an empty basket in our lap" (in Buss, 1987 : 54). It is very difficult to avoid the legacies of authoritarian rule. In many parts of the world, post-authoritarian regimes are facing tremendous difficulty in consolidating their democracies due to the authoritarian legacies.

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