



A Comparative Survey of

*DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT*

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What Democracy Means to Filipinos



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# Asian Barometer

A Comparative Survey of Democracy, Governance and Development

## Working Paper Series

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# WHAT DEMOCRACY MEANS TO FILIPINOS<sup>1</sup>

Linda Luz Guerrero and Jose V. Abueva

## **Brief history of democracy in the Philippines**

The Philippines is the first democratic republic in Asia.

For over 300 years, from 1565 to 1898, Filipinos were governed by Spanish authoritarian colonial rulers. The first Philippine Republic was established in 1899 under the Malolos Constitution by the Filipino revolutionary government led by General Emilio Aguinaldo, who also became its first President. The republic, however, was short-lived as it was annexed and governed by the United States as a “colonial democracy” in 1902 until 1946. In 1935, authorized by an act of the U.S. Congress, and approved by the U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Constitution framed by an all-Filipino constitutional convention was finally ratified by the Filipino electorate. The 1935 Constitution described the Philippines as a “republican state” or representative democracy

During the final decade of American colonial rule and colonial democracy, from 1935 to 1946, the transition Philippine Commonwealth operated under the 1935 Constitution. During the Japanese occupation, from 1942 to 1945, the 1943 Constitution was promulgated but this was nullified with the restoration of the Commonwealth after World War II. With the withdrawal of American sovereignty in 1946, the restored Republic continued to operate under the 1935 Constitution.

During the first quarter century of the 1946 Republic, and until September 1972, politics and administration were normal and predictable, so to speak. They manifested a basic continuity under a largely free elite democracy by the regular alternation in power of the political elite who formed the two major parties and shifted between them. This condition signified to some extent the people’s power through the ballot to change their leaders, not necessarily as a mandate for new policies or reforms but more to boot the rascals out and replace them, hopefully, with honest or less venal leaders.

The existence of peasant unrest that became a communist rebellion was part of the normality of the whole postwar period. This was a revolutionary expression of the people’s dissatisfaction with the performance of democracy because of widespread poverty and inequity and prevalent corruption and injustice, guided by Communist ideology, first oriented to the Soviet Union and then to the People’s Republic of China under Mao Tse Tung.

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President Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law in September 1972. The 1973 Constitution was brought about by a popular desire of the Filipinos to write their own post-colonial constitution. As it was completed under Martial Law, it was not ratified in a plebiscite as called for in the 1935 Constitution but through managed community assemblies. It transformed the Philippine nation-state into what Marcos called a “constitutional authoritarianism”. The 1973 Constitution also described the Philippines as a “republican state”.

President Marcos wielded all governmental powers, subordinating to himself the three branches of government, the constitutional bodies, and all local governments. The institution of the Interim Batasang Pambansa (National Assembly) in the 1978 election and the formal lifting of Martial Law before the presidential election in 1981 hardly diminished the concentrated powers of Marcos to rule through presidential decrees and orders. Inclusive of his first 7 years of legitimate rule as the duly elected, and reelected President, Marcos stayed in power for 20 years, with the crucial support of the military.

It was the assassination by the military of former Senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino Jr in August 1983 that triggered the people’s collective outrage and made them regain their courage to mount a spreading popular clamor for justice, freedom and democracy.

Under the escalating domestic and international pressure to liberalize his regime, Marcos decreed a presidential election for February 7, 1986. Opposition groups united to support Corazon C. Aquino, Ninoy’s widow, to run against Marcos. When the Batasang Pambansa declared Marcos as the winner, Mrs. Aquino called for civil disobedience. The clandestine and reformist segment of the military, the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), and then Minister of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile activated their planned for a coup d’etat.

When Marcos learned of the plot, Minister Enrile and the RAM were forced to mutiny. They were joined by General Fidel V. Ramos, then the Vice-Chief of Staff and Commander of the Constabulary and Integrated Police Force. Many more defected from the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It was mainly the call of Cardinal Sin that brought in the multitude who would form the human barricade at EDSA to protect the mutineers and the many more who forced Marcos to leave Malacanang.

The peaceful EDSA Revolution, as it now known, began on February 22, 1986. On February 25<sup>th</sup>, both Corazon Aquino and Ferdinand Marcos took their oath of office as President of the Republic. That evening though Marcos and his family were forced to leave Malacanang by helicopter to Clark Air Base enroute to exile in Hawaii.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Constitution, the 1986 Freedom Constitution, was promulgated by the government of Corazon Aquino (February 1986-June 1992) as a transitory organic law. The present 1987 Constitution was ratified by the Filipino people and was designed to restore democracy, and partly to prevent the recurrence of authoritarianism.

Since 1992, there have been proposals to once again change the Constitution. There were moves initiated under President Fidel Ramos ( July 1992-June 1998), under President Joseph Estrada (July 1998-January 2001) and now under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (January 2001- ). None have prospered because concerned leaders and citizens deemed constitutional change untimely. They did not trust Congress to propose amendments that appeared self-serving.

So what does “democracy” mean to Filipinos? To answer this question this paper presents the findings of national surveys carried out by the Social Weather Stations (SWS), in particular its March 4-23, 2002 national survey for the East Asia Barometer Project on *Democratization and Value Changes in East Asia*<sup>2</sup> (henceforth to be referred as the EAB survey). It also cites results from a national survey on *Filipino Citizenship: National Identity, Political Culture and Behavior, Governance and Democracy* by the University of the Philippines in November 2001.

### **Most Filipinos can interpret the meaning of “Democracy”**

SWS has run 3 national surveys on this question. The EAB survey and a September 22 to October 2, 2000 survey had Filipino voting-age adults as respondents and a March 30 to April 25, 1996 survey had the Filipino youth (15 to 30 years old). The 2000 adult survey asked this question: What, for you, is the meaning of the word “democracy”? In Filipino, the national language, the question asks: *Para sa inyo, ano ibig sabihin ng salitang ‘demokrasya’?* The 2002 adult survey asked an identical question but added a follow up prompter: “What else? *Ano pa po?*” The 1996 youth survey asked the question: “How will you define ‘democracy’? *Paano mo ilalarawan ang ‘demokrasya’?*”

Almost three-fourths (71%) among the youth in 1996 gave an answer. Among Filipino adults, 71% in 2000 and 74% in the EAB survey gave their interpretations of “democracy” (Slides 2, 3). All these are good news since they were all asked to respond to an open-ended question, rather than choose from among suggested meanings of “democracy.” In other words, the respondents were strictly on their own in giving or not giving their answers.

*And one-fourth to nearly one-third did not know what “Democracy” meant.* More than one-fourth of the adult respondents could not, or did not, answer the question: 29% in 2000 and 26% in 2002. The youth in 1996 had not done better: 29% of them also had no answer or could not answer what “democracy” meant to them (Slides 2, 3).

The proportion of more than one-fourth to nearly one-third of Filipinos 15 to 30 years old unable to define or describe what the word “democracy” means to them seems high for a people who live in a country that is “a democratic and republican State” according to the 1987 Constitution. Filipinos have experienced democratic rule for 44 years since 1946—under the 1935 Constitution, the 1986 Freedom Constitution, and the

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<sup>2</sup> The National Taiwan University provided partial funding support.

1987 Constitution—except only for the authoritarian interlude under the Marcos dictatorship from 1972 to early 1986. As an American colony from 1902 to 1946, minus the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945, Filipinos had also practiced and enjoyed a good measure of political freedom and autonomy in the “colonial democracy.”

*Positive assessment of ‘democracy’: first and highest meaning: ‘democracy’ as political freedom, civil liberties.* Across the three surveys, Filipinos who gave answers to the question interpreted ‘democracy’ mostly in terms of some key elements of liberal democracy: 52% in the youth survey in 1996, 73% in the 2000 adult survey, and 64% in the EAB survey in 2002. These elements are political freedom, civil liberty, and human rights in general, political participation, citizen empowerment, equality before the law, elections and popular vote, and majority rule. Together, this aspect of democracy was the most salient and ready association that the respondents expressed in their answers. All other interpretations were far below it.

The recognition by a bare majority of the youth and by two-thirds to three fourths of the adults (among those who answered the question) that their civil and political rights are defining elements of Filipino democracy is based not only on “book knowledge” or documentary information but also on their live and felt experience, even though they hear or read reports about occasional violations of these rights.

Many older citizens lived through the dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos (September 1972 to February 1986) and through the gradual and then mounting opposition to it that led to the peaceful “EDSA Revolution” that ended the Marcos regime. Consequently, they were politicized by the suppression of political and civil rights, the abuse of power, and massive corruption that led to the struggle for “Justice, Freedom and Democracy.” They became conscious of their rights, *ang mga karapatan ng mamamayan*.

*Positive assessment of ‘democracy’: a far second meaning: “democracy” in broad, abstract terms.* A far second in ranking in the three surveys were the respondents’ interpretations of ‘democracy’ in broad terms like national unity, solidarity, mutual help, a peaceful life, harmony, national progress, well-being, a better country, patriotism, love, truth. In a sense these may not be definitions or understandings of “democracy” but hopes and aspirations for the kind of society and nation they want. The distribution of the responses varied as follows: 14% in 2000; 13% in 2002; and 2% in the youth survey in 1996.

*Positive assessment of ‘democracy’: a third meaning: democracy in general, populist terms.* An even farther third in ranking were interpretations of ‘democracy’ in general (populist) terms like “government of the people,” “by the people,” “and for the people,” or power of the people: 11% in the adult survey in 2000; 3% in the adult survey in 2002 and 2% in the youth survey in 1996. The last two figures indicate a very low awareness of the basic idea of the people’s sovereignty or popular sovereignty in a republican State as expressed in the present 1987 Constitution: “The Philippines is a democratic and republican State. Sovereignty resides in the people and all government

authority emanates from them” (Sec.1. Article II). An almost identical provision is found in both the 1935 Constitution and the 1973 Constitution.

Positive assessment of ‘democracy’: a very low fourth meaning: “democracy as good governance”. A very low fourth in ranking were interpretations of ‘democracy’ in terms of good governance, like law and order, reform, openness, fairness, honesty, responsibility: 0.4% in 2000; 2% in 2002; and nothing mentioned in the youth survey in 1996.

Positive assessment of ‘democracy’: fifth and far below: “democracy” in terms of the economic and social system. Fifth and far below in rank were interpretations of ‘democracy’ related to the economic and social system like equal opportunities, employment, and taking care of the poor. The distribution of the responses was: 0.4% in 2000; 3% in 2002; and 1% the youth survey in 1996.

Positive assessment of ‘democracy’: sixth and lowest: “democracy” as individual behaviors. Lowest and sixth in rank were interpretations of ‘democracy’ in terms of individual behaviors of people. These are freedom within legal limits, performs duties as citizens, law-abiding, respect for others, trust, responsibility, self-reliance, rational. The percentages of total responses in each of the surveys are very low, negligible, or none at all: 0.2% in 2000, 3% in 2002; and zero in the youth survey in 1996.

Negative assessments of “democracy”: The youth’s in 1996. When the youth survey was conducted in March 30 to April 25, 1996 the country was relatively peaceful and politically stable. Nearly four years under President Ramos, the economy had materially improved and there were no military interventions, unlike in the administration of President Aquino that had inherited the aggravated problems of over 13 years of the Marcos dictatorship. The Government’s peace talks with the Moro National Liberation Front was on the verge of a breakthrough. But negotiations for peace with the Communist rebels through the National Democratic Front made little progress. Although certain conditions had improved, people’s assessments of democracy would reflect their own life experience and their impressions of the state of the nation, politics and government.

Recall that the youth were asked the following question: “How will you define “democracy”? *Paano mo ilalarawan ang “demokrasya”?*”

In response, small percentages of young respondents who defined “democracy” in their interview criticized it in terms of undesirable conditions they had observed. The responses added up to about 3% or at that time about 656,000 15-30 year olds. Their responses included the following:

*Maraming gulo*/Much trouble, disorder, crime, killing  
*Walang pagkakaisa*/No unity among the people  
*Hindi fair sa maliliit*/Unfair to the small people  
*Makapagsasarili ng desisyon*/Selfish governance  
Revolution (referring to rebellions, coup attempts)

*Walang improvement ang bayan, puro utang/*  
 No progress, increasing public debt  
*Mahirap ang ekonomiya dahil pabagobago/Economy*  
 is in bad shape because of inconsistent policies  
*Magulo ang sistema ng demokrasya/kailangan maayos*  
 Democratic system is disorderly, needs reform  
*Walang karapatan ang bawat tao/People have no rights*  
*Magulo, uso ang red tape, may palakasan/Inefficient,*  
 red tape, and favoritism  
 The rich get richer, the poor get poorer.  
*Sobrang luwag, kahit anong sabihin pwede/Anything goes.*  
*Hindi maunlad, umaasa na lang sa ibang bansa/*  
 Not progressive, dependent on other countries  
*Hindi masyadong strict sa kriminal/Rather easy on*  
 criminals

As can be gleaned from the above list, topping the youth's criticism of "democracy" were the nation's troubles, the disorder, killings and crime; the lack of national unity; unfairness to the small people (the poor), and the selfish interests of government decision-makers. These observations and assessments, however, should be seen against the far greater majority of positive interpretations and assessments of the meaning of "democracy" to the young survey respondents.

*Negative assessment of Filipino "democracy" by adults in 2000.* When the question was asked: "What for you is the meaning of the word democracy? "*Para sa inyo, ano ibig sabihin ng salitang "demokrasya?"*", about 3% of Filipino adults or about 1.5 million 18 year olds and above criticized 'democracy' in terms of the following undesirable conditions:

*Yong paghihirap ngayon/It's the poverty we have now.*  
*Magulo ang bansa/The country is in trouble.*  
 Martial law/Undemocratic  
*Madaling magalit/Quick to anger*  
*Hindi mahigpit sa batas/Weak law enforcement*  
*Walang kalayaan/No freedom*  
*Walang pagkakaisa ang tao/Lack of national unity*

At the time of this survey of adults in September 22 to October 2, 2000, President Joseph Estrada was being accused of massive corruption by his gambling buddy, Ilocos Sur Governor Luis "Chavit" Singson. Investigative reports focused on the new mansions and lavish lifestyles of the President's mistresses. He was also savoring victory in his "total war" against MILF rebels in Mindanao.

A few weeks later he became the first President to be impeached and on January 20, 2001 he was forced to resign in another peaceful "people power" revolt known as EDSA 2. This was virtually a replication of the world famous peaceful EDSA revolution

that toppled the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986. This time, however, the revolt involved many more aroused citizens across the land; and the Vice-President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, succeeded the ousted President.

As revealed in the survey, criticisms of democracy centered on poverty, a troubled nation, and even, possibly, “martial law.” The vaunted pro-poor President Erap was being shown to be insincere, incompetent, lazy and more interested in other worldly concerns.

*Negative assessment of Filipino “democracy” by adults in 2002.* The question was identical to the one asked in the survey in 2001: “What for you is the meaning of the word democracy? *“Para sa inyo, ano ibig sabihin ng salitang “demokrasya?”* But the respondents who answered were then asked: “What else? *Ano pa po?”* Some 4% of the respondents or about 1.9 million Filipino adult citizens expressed their understanding of “democracy” negatively:

*Magulo/puro kaguluhan/*, Chaotic, raging conflict, unstable  
*Parang giyera/It’s like war.*  
*Kaguluhan ng kapwa Filipino/* Disorderliness of each Filipino  
*Puro away/All contention, fight*  
*Hindi nagbibigayan, nag-agawan ng posisyon/*No accommodation, spoils system  
*Lumalabag sa batas/Breaking the law*  
*Kahirapan ng pamumuhay/A poor life*  
*Ang wala lalong naghihirap/* The poor get poorer  
*Walang magawang maganda ang namumuno?/*The leaders do nothing good  
*Mahirap magdeside sa pamamalakad/Poor governance*  
*Sarili lang nila ang demokrasya/* It’s only for their selfish interest  
*Against sa pamamahala ng bansa/* Against the national interest  
*Hindi pagkakaintindihan ng bawat isa/Lack of mutual understanding*  
*Walang pagkakaisa/Lacks unity*  
*Parang Komunista ang gobyerno/* The government is like Communism  
*Kalayaan ipaglaban ang kamalian/* Freedom promotes the wrong things  
*Gobyerno nagdedesisyon sa atin/* Government decides for us

When the survey was conducted from March 4 to 23, 2002, political turmoil and instability were continuing. The removal of President Estrada the year before was followed by his arrest, imprisonment, and arraignment for plunder, by the failed siege on Malacañang (the President’s office and residence) by Estrada’s urban poor partisans in May 2001 in hopes of reinstating him, by the bitterly contested congressional and local elections in November 2001, and by his unrelenting challenge to the judiciary as he insisted that he was still the President. He denied the reality of his ouster, imprisonment and trial. He also rejected and denied the fact that the Supreme Court, Congress, and the people, in various surveys, had accepted the legitimacy of his replacement by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Apparently, in the 2002 EAB adult survey some politically conscious citizens were distressed, if not also dismayed, by the political turmoil and uncertainties and their effects on the economy and on their personal security and livelihood. These seem to impress them more than the positive aspects of democratic rule and governance.

It must be stressed that on the whole, the great majority of Filipinos expressed positive interpretations of the meaning of democracy in response to the open-ended question posed to them in the three national surveys of 1996, 2000, and 2002.

### **Democracy is best suited to the Philippines**

In the 2002 EAB survey, using a scale of 1 to 10 where “1” means that democracy was “completely unsuitable” and “10” means it was “completely suitable.”, Filipinos on average gave a score of 7.4, meaning Filipinos indicated that democracy was suitable for the Philippines. This sentiment cut across locations, gender, age groups and socio-economic classes. The score was relatively higher among rural residents, those residing farther from the National Capital Region, the lower classes, and the older age groups (Slide 4).

### **Democracy is preferred over authoritarianism, but one out of three (36%) is weakly committed to democracy**

Also in the 2002 EAB survey, almost two out of three Filipinos (64 %) felt that democracy is always preferable to any kind of government. Almost a fifth (18 %) felt that under certain circumstances, an authoritarian government is preferable. Another fifth did not care whether the Philippines is democratic or not (Slide 5)

The November 2001 U.P. national survey asked a similar question, enough to make a reasonable comparison with the EAB data. Nearly three-fourths (72 %) of the survey respondents in 2001 chose the statement—“Democracy is the best political system in all circumstances.” It appears that the preference for “democracy” as a political system or a kind of government had dropped some 8 % from November 2001 to March 2002.

While 13 % of November 2001 survey respondents chose the statement—“In certain circumstances, a dictatorship could be a good thing.”—18 % of the EAB survey chose the statement—“Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one.” Again, apparently in March 2002, 5 % more Filipinos were open or receptive to a an authoritarian government

Finally, the indifference of the respondents to either form of government was almost the same in the two surveys: 18 % among the respondents in the EAB survey chose the statement—“For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or non-democratic regime.” Among the November 2001 U.P survey

respondents, 16 % chose the statement—“Whether we live in a democracy or a dictatorship makes no difference to people like me.”

The indifference of some 16% or 18 % of the respondents in the two surveys to the kind of government in the country can be explained by their perception that the quality of their lives and the problems that they faced did not improve (1) under the democratic government before the Marcos dictatorship; (2) under the Marcos dictatorship; and (3) since the restoration of democracy after the EDSA revolution in 1986.

When the indifference to a democratic regime or authoritarian government (18 %) **and** the openness or receptivity to a “non-democratic regime” (18 %) in the EAB survey are added together, a full one-third (36 %) appears to be uncommitted, or only weakly committed, to democracy as a political system or form of government. This should be a wake-up call to the Filipino nation: leaders and citizens alike, who may be complacent about the perceived and objective failure of Filipino democracy to deliver on its promise of a better life for the people, and a more effective and less corrupt government.

Further, the Filipinos’ preference for democracy is indicated by the large majorities that rejected different proposals for shifting to one or another authoritarian form of government. Among these the most unacceptable authoritarian alternative was having technocrats decide everything (Slides 6, 7). The results show the following:

1. The idea of having technocrats decide everything was rejected by 77 %.
2. The idea of a one-party system was rejected by 70 %.
3. The idea of having a strong leader decide everything was rejected by 69 %.
4. The idea of a military government was rejected by 63 %..

### **Democracy can solve society’s problems**

As of March 2002, about three out of five (61 %) Filipinos feel that democracy is capable of solving the problems of Philippine society (Slide 8). The most optimistic are the young, the upper middle classes, and males.

Almost after a year Corazon C. Aquino was declared as the new president, Filipinos were asked to compare the Aquino administration with the just ended Marcos regime. On all issues presented, Filipinos rated the Aquino administration as better (Slide 9). There were 68% saying that the new administration is better in terms of telling the truth and 3% saying it is worse, for a net score of +65. There was also feeling of relief for fighting of corruption in government (+64), protecting human rights (+62), acting according to what people want (+61), having a more peaceful society (+53), developing livelihood opportunities for ordinary people (+50), and even promoting land reform (+47).

In comparing the present Arroyo administration with that of Marcos, Filipinos felt that there was no situation, on various issues, where the Marcos regime was better. Many Filipinos rated the Arroyo administration definitely better with respect to freedom

of speech and association. While pluralities felt that nothing had changed from the Marcos regime in regard to most of the social and economic issues, the responses tilted toward a favorable view of the Arroyo administration (Slides 10, 11). It should be realized that many younger citizens do not really know or remember how it was during the Marcos dictatorship from September 1972 to February 1986, which was 31 to 27 years ago. The results show:

1. On freedom to say what one thinks, 59 % said the present system is “Better,” 24 % said it is the “Same,” and 17 % said it is “Worse.”
2. On freedom to join any organization, 49 % said the present system is “Better,” 37 % said it is the “Same,” and 14 % said it is “Worse.”
3. On the equal treatment of people by the government, 42 % said the present system is the “Same” as during the Marcos regime, 40 % said it is “Better,” and 18 % said it is “Worse.”
4. On being able to influence government, , 43 % said the present system is the “Same” as during the Marcos regime, 39 % said it is “Better,” and 18 % said it is “Worse.”
5. On the independence of the courts, 41 % said the present system is the “Same” as during the Marcos regime, 36 % said it is “Better,” and 23 % said it is “Worse.”
6. On crime prevention, 37 % said the present system is the “Same” as during the Marcos regime, 36 % said it is “Better,” and 27 % said it is “Worse.”
7. On economic development, 35 % said the present system is the “Same” as during the Marcos regime, 34” said it is “Better,” and 30 % said it is “Worse.”
8. On political corruption, 42 % said the present system is the “Same” as during the Marcos regime, 29 % said it is “Better,” and 28% said it is “Worse.”
9. On the gap between the rich and the poor, 48 % said the present system is the “Same” as during the Marcos regime, 26 % said it is Better, and 26% said it is “Worse.”

### **Declining satisfaction with the way democracy works**

One can surmise that with the restoration of democracy under President Aquino, the nation was euphoric. As Slide 9 earlier showed, the Aquino administration had positive ratings on different issues when compared to Marcos’s time. Even comparing the Marcos administration with the current Arroyo administration, Filipinos thought the situation better now especially with regard freedom of speech and association.

The first time SWS monitored satisfaction with how democracy works was in November 1991. Almost half (45%) were satisfied with democracy under President Aquino, increasing to 50 % near the end of her presidency. Satisfaction rose to 70 % early in President Ramos' time and then fluctuated to a low of 46 % and a high of 64 % in December 1997 towards the end of his term. From President Estrada's high point of 70% % when he started in mid-1998, satisfaction with democracy plummeted to 42 % in September 2000 when he was facing charges of massive corruption and incompetence that would force him to resign in January 2001 and be succeeded by the Vice-President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Since then the trend has been for more citizens becoming dissatisfied with the way democracy works. Satisfaction hit a low of 34 % under President Macapagal Arroyo in September 2001, in the wake of unrelenting opposition challenges to her legitimacy by Estrada loyalists, then it improved to 44 % by November. The March 2002 EAB survey showed her highest rating so far at 52% satisfied with democracy under her administration. As of September 2003 satisfaction reached an all-time low of 29 %.

It has been 17 years since the EDSA revolution that ended over 13 years of the Marcos dictatorship. Under the 1987 Constitution, Filipinos have restored and modified their democratic institutions. A vibrant civil society has emerged in which thousands of people's organizations and non-governmental organizations actively participate in governance and public affairs. However, what Filipinos have is still an "elite democracy" that has favored largely the already rich and powerful minority and upper middle class while largely placating and excluding the majority of the citizens, especially the poor, in the exercise of power and the enjoyment of the fruits of development.

Low economic growth, ineffective governance, political instability, unabated corruption, and rapid population growth have prevented the Philippines from achieving the degree of national progress of neighboring Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea, and China. The Philippines is not winning the race with highly competitive economies, let alone with the chronic and worsening problems of a nation of 82 million people that now adds 1.7 million more babies each year.

By and large, political leaders have lacked vision, courage and the political will to overcome the inertia of their parochialism and populism, content mainly with winning elections and remaining in power. The brilliant exceptions do not form a critical mass or a solid and progressive political party that can get the country out of its vicious cycle of relative stagnation.

Thus, the Philippines continues to suffer from mass poverty, high unemployment and underemployment, homelessness, social inequality and injustice, low levels of social services, endemic corruption, rebellion and criminality, and environmental degradation. . Unable to mobilize the needed revenues for public investments in infrastructure and for social services, the government is increasingly dependent on domestic and foreign borrowing and indebtedness.

In this situation, aspirations for peace, national unity, reducing poverty, curbing corruption, and bringing about a just and humane society continue to elude Filipinos. The post-EDSA political system and Filipino political leaders have not provided the nation with the badly needed institutional framework and policies for overcoming our chronic and worsening problems.

To reiterate, it appears that the single most important factor that has set the Philippines behind the dynamic “tiger economies” in East Asia is her lack of “good governance,” or the deficit in leadership. “Good governance” may be defined as responsive, efficient and effective policy-making and implementation under the rule of law. Good governance depends crucially on effective political institutions, the political will of competent and committed leaders, effective and accountable political parties, and the support and cooperation of a dynamic business sector and civic-spirited citizens

### **Economic development is deemed more important than democracy.**

But while Filipinos prefer and support democracy compared to an authoritarian political system, they regard economic development as of a higher priority at present (Slide 13). Only 2 % agree that economic development and democracy “are equally important.” While 12 % agree that “Democracy is definitely more important,” as much as 68 % agree that “Economic development is definitely more important.” And while 8 % agree that “Democracy is somewhat more important,” 10 % agree that “Economic development is somewhat more important.”

The greater importance Filipinos assign to economic development is a commentary on the fact that Filipino democracy has not resulted in peace and political stability and substantial economic development: in more jobs, higher income, reduction of poverty and socio-economic inequality, and general prosperity, especially in relation to several progressive Asian countries.

### **Continuing hope for better conditions, better times and a democracy that will work for Filipinos**

In this gloomy setting more and more leaders in various walks of life are realizing that nothing less than the transformation of the political system is in order. This would require the revision of the present Constitution, basic reforms in the party system and electoral system, and appropriate policy changes.

Also needed in the long term are societal change and the development of a civic culture of responsible leaders and responsible citizens. To meet these long-term requirements, appreciable progress in reducing poverty and achieving equitable economic growth is obviously necessary. This demands a virtuous cycle of reform and renewal.

From our national survey data we see that the Filipino people continue to be optimistic about the future despite their admission that their life had worsened, and

despite their dissatisfaction with their kind of democracy. Their pride in being Filipino is high. Their faith in God is deep and they are hopeful that they can make their lives better somehow. These are constructive beliefs and attitudes that can and should be tapped in nation-building and improving their democratic institutions.

**MEANING OF DEMOCRACY TO FILIPINO YOUTH**  
**SWS March-April 1996 National Survey**  
*Multiple response allowed*

<b>Freedom and civil liberties</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>In negative terms</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>In broad/abstract positive terms</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>In generic/populist terms</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>In terms of social and economic system</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>No answer</b>	<b>29</b>

*Question: How will you define "democracy"?*

**MEANING OF DEMOCRACY TO FILIPINO ADULTS**  
**SWS September-October 2000 and SWS/East Asia**  
**Barometer March 2002 National Surveys**  
*Multiple response allowed*

	Sep-Oct 2000	Mar 2002
Freedom and civil liberties	73%	64%
In broad/abstract positive terms	14	13
In generic/populist terms	11	3
In negative terms	3	4
In terms of good governance	0.4	2
In terms of social and economic system	0.4	3
In terms of individual behaviors	0.2	3
No answer	29	26

*Question: What for you is the meaning of “democracy”? What else?*

# SUITABILITY OF DEMOCRACY FOR THE PHILIPPINES

## SWS/East Asia Barometer March 2002 National Survey

### Row percentages

	<u>Unsuitable</u>					<u>Suitable</u>					
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>Ave.</u>	
2.5	1.8	2.7	2.4	10	14	15	15	10	26	7.4	

**PREFERENCE BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND  
AUTHORITARIANISM  
SWS/East Asia Barometer March 2002 National Survey**

**“Democracy is always preferable  
to any other kind of government.” 64%**

**“For people like me, it does not matter  
whether we have a democratic or  
a non-democratic regime.” 18**

**“Under some circumstances,  
an authoritarian government can  
be preferable to a democratic one.” 18**

**Question: Which of the following statements comes closest to your own  
opinion? (SHOWCARD)**

# ATTITUDES TOWARDS VARIOUS FORMS OF AUTHORITARIANISM

## SWS/East Asia Barometer March 2002 National Survey

	<u>Strongly/ Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Somewhat/ Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Net*</u>
The military should come in and govern the country.	37%	63%	-25
No opposition party should be allowed to compete for power.	30	70	-39
We should get rid of parliament and elections, and have a strong leader decide things.	31	69	-39
We should get rid of parliament and elections, and have the experts decide everything.	23	77	-54

**NUMBER OF AUTHORITARIAN ALTERNATIVES  
REJECTED  
SWS/East Asia Barometer March 2002 National Survey**

<b>None</b>	<b>4 %</b>
<b>One</b>	<b>12 %</b>
<b>Two</b>	<b>20 %</b>
<b>Three</b>	<b>28 %</b>
<b>All four</b>	<b>36 %</b>

## CAN DEMOCRACY SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS? SWS/East Asia Barometer March 2002 National Survey

“Democracy is capable of solving  
the problems of our society.” 61%

“Democracy cannot solve  
our society’s problems.” 39%

**Question:** Which of the following statements comes closest to  
your own opinion? (SHOWCARD)

# COMPARISON OF AQUINO ADMINISTRATION WITH MARCOS ADMINISTRATION SWS March 1987 National Survey

	Better <u>now</u>	The same <u>now</u>	Worse <u>now</u>	Net* <u>+65</u>
Telling the truth to the people	68%	27%	3%	+65
Fighting corruption in government	68	26	4	+64
Protecting human rights	65	31	3	+62
Acting according to what the people want	65	30	4	+61
Bringing about a more peaceful society	61	30	8	+53
Developing livelihood opportunities for ordinary people	56	36	6	+50
Land Reform	51	39	4	+47

# COMPARISON OF PRESENT ARROYO ADMINISTRATION WITH MARCOS ADMINISTRATION (Slide 1 of 2)

SWS/ East Asia Barometer March 2002 National Survey

	<u>Much/</u> <u>Somewhat</u> <u>better now</u>	<u>The same</u> <u>now</u>	<u>Somewhat/</u> <u>Much</u> <u>worse now</u>	<u>Net*</u>
Everyone is free to say what they think	59%	24%	17%	+42
You can join any organization you like	49	37	14	+36
Everyone is treated equally by the government	40	42	18	+22
People like me can have an influence on government	39	43	18	+21
Judges and courts are free from political interference	36	41	23	+13

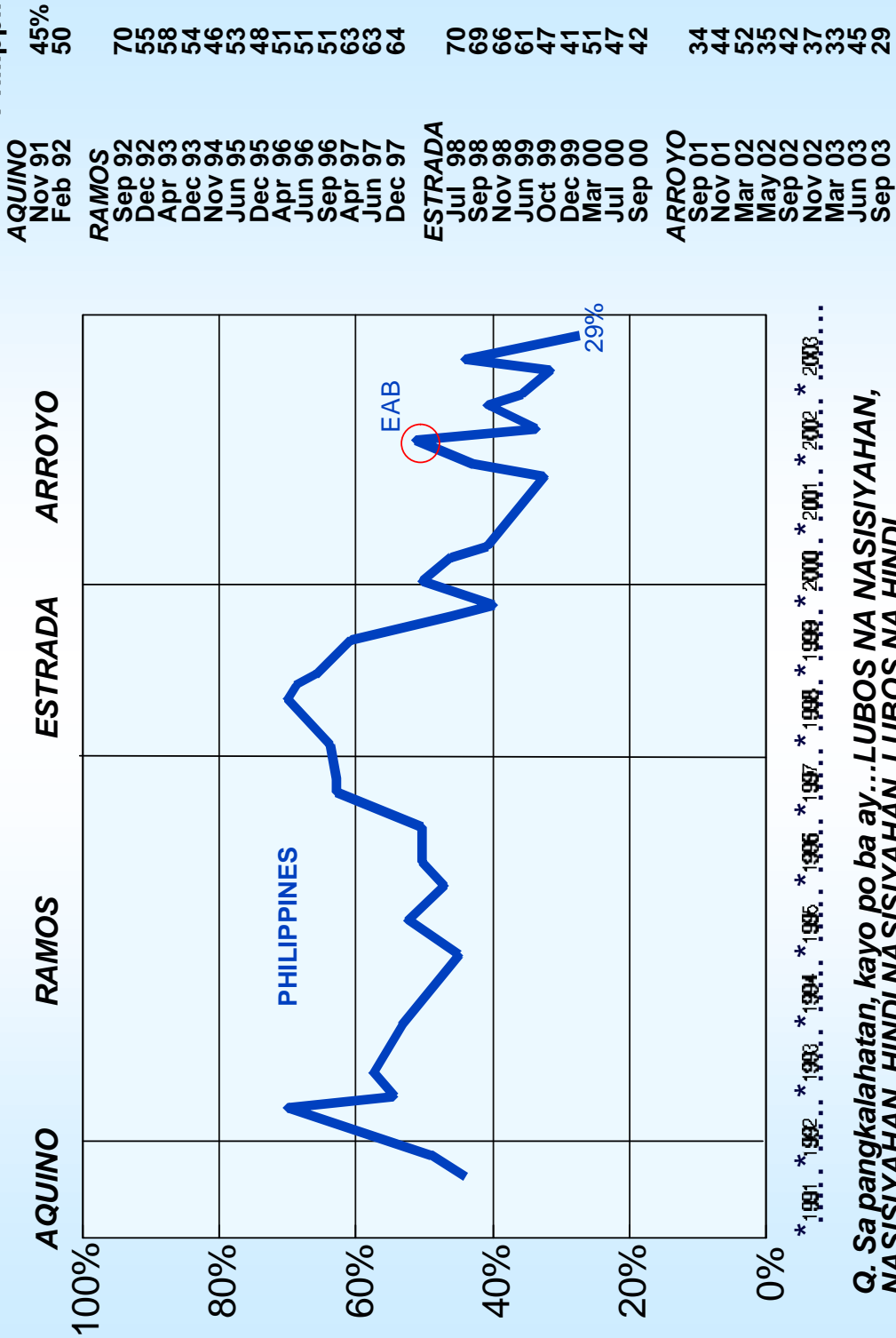
# COMPARISON OF PRESENT ARROYO ADMINISTRATION WITH MARCOS ADMINISTRATION (Slide 2 of 2)

SWS/ East Asia Barometer March 2002 National Survey

	<u>Much/ Somewhat better now</u>	<u>The same now</u>	<u>Somewhat/ Much worse now</u>	<u>Net*</u>
Preventing crime and maintaining order	36%	37%	27%	+9
Economic development	34	35	30	+4
Corruption in politics and government is under control	29	42	28	+1
The gap between the rich and the poor has narrowed	26	48	26	+1

# % SATISFIED WITH THE WAY DEMOCRACY WORKS, NOVEMBER 1991 TO SEPTEMBER 2003

Philippines



\* 1991..1992...1993..\*1994..\*1995..\*1996..\*1997..\*1998..\*1999..\*2000..\*2001..\*2002..\*2003....

**Q. Sa pangkalahatan, kayo po ba ay...LUBOS NA NASISIYAHAN, NASISIYAHAN, HINDI NASISIYAHAN, LUBOS NA HINDI NASISIYAHAN sa takbo ng demokrasya sa Pilipinas?**

## WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT: DEMOCRACY OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT? SWS/East Asia Barometer March 2002 National Survey

Economic development is definitely more important	68%
Economic development is somewhat more important	10
Democracy is somewhat more important	8
Democracy is definitely more important	12
They are bought equally important	2

*Question: If you had to chose between democracy and economic development, which would you say is more important?*

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# Asian Barometer

## A Comparative Survey of Democracy, Governance and Development

The Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) grows out of the Comparative Survey of Democratization and Value Change in East Asia Project (also known as East Asia Barometer), which was launched in mid-2000 and funded by the Ministry of Education of Taiwan under the MOE-NSC Program for Promoting Academic Excellence of University. The headquarters of ABS is based in Taipei, and is jointly sponsored by the Department of Political Science at NTU and the Institute of Political Science of Academia Sinica. The East Asian component of the project is coordinated by Prof. Yun-han Chu, who also serves as the overall coordinator of the Asian Barometer. In organizing its first-wave survey (2001-2003), the East Asia Barometer (EABS) brought together eight country teams and more than thirty leading scholars from across the region and the United States. Since its founding, the EABS Project has been increasingly recognized as the region's first systematic and most careful comparative survey of attitudes and orientations toward political regime, democracy, governance, and economic reform.

In July 2001, the EABS joined with three partner projects -- New Europe Barometer, Latinobarometro and Afrobarometer -- in a path-breathing effort to launch Global Barometer Survey (GBS), a global consortium of comparative surveys across emerging democracies and transitional societies.

The EABS is now becoming a true pan-Asian survey research initiative. New collaborative teams from Indonesia, Singapore, Cambodia, and Vietnam are joining the EABS as the project enters its second phase (2004-2008). Also, the State of Democracy in South Asia Project, based at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (in New Delhi) and directed by Yogendra Yadav, is collaborating with the EABS for the creation of a more inclusive regional survey network under the new identity of the Asian Barometer Survey. This path-breaking regional initiative builds upon a substantial base of completed scholarly work in a number of Asian countries. Most of the participating national teams were established more than a decade ago, have acquired abundant experience and methodological know-how in administering nationwide surveys on citizen's political attitudes and behaviors, and have published a substantial number of works both in their native languages and in English.

*For more information, please visit our website: [www.asianbarometer.org](http://www.asianbarometer.org)*