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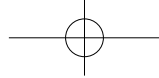
# Korea and the Philippines: A Comparative Study of Political Leadership in Development\*

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## Introduction

In evaluation of political leadership skills of South Korean presidents, strongman presidents, namely Syngman Rhee, Park Chung Hee, and Chun Doo Hwan, often scored higher than the other more democratic presidents, specifically in aspects of managerial skills, crisis management, and most especially achievements (Kim 2007a). The current president Park Geun Hye is the daughter of former dictator Park Chung Hee and her election in 2012 showed that she enjoys the support of the older generation who had experienced the government led by her father. In the Philippines, despite lessons from the Ferdinand Marcos presidency, strongman presidential candidates have gained substantial support from the people. Rodrigo Duterte's popularity as "The Punisher" in Davao City explains his win as president of the country in the 2016 elections.

So, what is the allure of authoritarian leaders in countries that struggled to gain their democracy? Despite the human rights abuses under the Park Chung Hee administration, a lot of South Koreans now fondly look back to his presidency and appreciate his method in pushing for the country's rapid economic development. Similarly, Filipinos recognize that Duterte executes methods that are questionable but nobody doubts the fact that he gets things done. These would point to the fact that with threats from within and outside, Filipinos believe that the Philippines needs a strongman as president.

This study seeks to look into the role of political leadership in development in South Korea and the Philippines. Moreover, the focus will be on leadership in democratic settings, with a special emphasis on the appeal of a strongman leader.

## Linking Leadership and Development in Democratic Transitions

A central question revolves around what the relationship between political leadership and development is. Benjamin Jones and Benjamin Olken (2005) find that a leader's effects on economic growth are limited to those settings in which they are relatively unconstrained. This is fairly consistent with the idea

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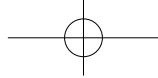
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of the Asian “developmental state” popularized by Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore and Park Chung Hee of South Korea. Generally, leaders in autocracies, enjoying the absence of a legislature to question their decisions, appear to have a positive effect on economic growth.

Kenichi Ohno (2006) says that the presence of a leader with proper vision and decisive action is crucial for development. But he further argues that not all strong leaders are effective leaders. It is actually economic literacy that is the key requirement. In most developing countries, weak policies lead to economic stagnation and vice-versa. Hence there is a need to prepare institutions, human resources, and infrastructures to grow by introducing industrial policies for rapid growth and reducing growth-caused evils. To do this, East Asian countries adopted authoritarian developmentalism. Key components of this authoritarian developmentalism include (1) development as a supreme national goal; (2) a technocrat group to support the leader and execute policies; (3) legitimacy derived from successful development; and (4) popular support (because of rising income). What creates these four conditions is a powerful and economic literate top leader who is the primary force of change (Ohno 2006). Why is such power concentration needed? Ohno (2006) further explains that growth requires a combination of mutually enforcing policies. A more flexible state is needed to mobilize resources as needed. The state must initially take the lead in pushing for reforms because the private sector is weak in most developing countries. If democratic participation is allowed, policy making and implementation may be too slow and thus unable to achieve results.

Authoritarian developmentalism is also not seen as an enduring feature. It is a temporary regime of convenience, needed only to push up the country to a higher level (Ohno 2006). Once a certain level is reached, such concentration of power becomes a hindrance to further development. Ohno (2006) cites Toshio Watanabe (1998) who argues “if development under authoritarian regime proceeds successfully, it will sow the seeds of its own dissolution.” In other words, autocracy will eventually be obsolete with social change and democratic ambition.

The evidence on authoritarianism and development shows that the proof on regime type and development is inconclusive. William Easterly (2011) critiqued the notion that autocracy is superior for growth. He finds that although most of the big growth successes over the period 1960-2008 occurred



in autocracies, only few of all autocracies actually resulted in a big growth success, while a slightly higher percentage were big growth failures (Easterly 2011). So it can be seen that most of the world's big growth successes have been autocracies, but they also resulted in most of its big growth failures.

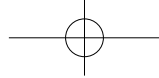
Tim Kelsall (2014) argues that leadership explains why some autocracies succeed so spectacularly when others fail and why there is a greater range of performance among autocracies. Because autocracy puts fewer restraints on the leader, it simplifies the transmission mechanism between his or her own characteristics and economic performance, so that benevolent leaders produce exceptionally good outcomes, and bad leaders exceptionally poor ones (Kelsall 2014). Jones and Olken speculate that: "Democracies may be able to prevent the disastrous economic policies of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe or Samora Machel in Mozambique; however, they might also have constrained the successful economic policies of Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore or Deng Xiaoping in China" (qtd. in Easterly 2011, 24).

Similar to Ohno's argument, Kelsall (2014) also highlights the importance of political will and good development policy. Successful leaderships build effective institutions to implement their policies and thereby avert the threats they face. Easterly notes, "Great Man" theories of history require "strong assumptions about the autocrats' ability to motivate the government bureaucracy, solve knowledge problems, and overcome other elite interests running contrary to growth" (Easterly and Pennings 2015).

In her literature survey of leadership, politics, and development, Heather Lyne de Ver (2008) saw that there is only few mainstream "leadership" literature that focuses on the role of leadership for economic and social development. Where leadership is considered, there tend to be very few studies on the relationship between leadership and development, more so a political perspective on leadership.

South Korea and the Philippines are relevant cases as these two came from an era of authoritarianism in the 1960s and 1970s before they underwent a transition period to re-democratization. Moreover, their periods of re-democratization happened around the same time.

In South Korea, Park Chung Hee seized power with a military coup which ushered the country into a period of dictatorship. As the leader, he led the country to several notable milestones, including playing a significant role in the development of the South Korean economy by shifting its focus to



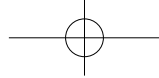
export-oriented industrialization. Echoing Jones and Olken's argument, this was possible because Park Chung Hee effectively suppressed dissent and was able to fill important government positions with technocrats. His authoritarian position fast-tracked the implementation of his government's strategic planning. Hence, he is often the popular example of a typical politician in East Asia where authoritarian developmentalism prevailed (Watanabe 1998).

But despite the regime's economic achievements, a strong democratization movement flourished. It came to surface with protest campaigns against the exploitation of labor and human rights abuse. The regime responded to protestors by denying their voices altogether. It even enacted the Yushin Constitution, which led to an even more repressive dictatorial system, under the pretense of national security (Jung and Kim 2008). This continued until his assassination in 1979.

The succeeding military leaders continued the kind of rule of Park Chung Hee. It was not until military man Chun Doo Hwan announced his choice of another military man Roh Tae Woo as the next president that the people put immense pressure on the government to give way to direct presidential elections and restoration of civil liberties (June 1987 Uprising). But because of the disunity among pro-democracy forces, Roh Tae Woo was elected as president with a bare plurality. It was not until 1993, that Kim Young Sam was elected as the first civilian president in over 30 years, marking the start of democratic reforms in the country.

The Philippines enjoyed a long period of democratic rule after gaining independence from the United States until the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos. In 1965, Marcos won the presidential election and his first term was remembered for various public work projects that generally improved the people's lives. He ran for a second term and won. The second term, however, was marked by socio-economic disorder brought about by internal and external factors, including agitated student groups who demanded reforms and a growing Communist insurgency. The crisis intensified in 1970 during a massive protest that came to be known as the First Quarter Storm, where protesters were forcefully quelled by military forces. Such protests continued until the declaration of martial law in 1972. Amnesty International (AI) has estimated that during this time, 70,000 people were imprisoned, 34,000 were tortured, and 3,240 were killed (Hapal 2016).

Although martial law was lifted in 1981, Marcos retained almost all of



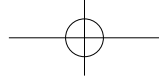
powers he had under the martial law, such as the law-making powers and the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. A staunch critic, then senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino Jr, was assassinated in 1983. Snap elections were held in 1986 which had two winners declared. A few days later, the People Power Revolution was staged which led to Marcos leaving the country under advisory by the US government. Cory Aquino then became president of the country.

Interestingly, despite some similarities in their history, South Korea and the Philippines experienced different economic fortunes. Most analyses agree that while South Korea was a success story, the Philippines is just the opposite. While both Park and Marcos attempted to launch what Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson call “extractive growth,” this was a success in South Korea but not in the Philippines. It is said that Marcos did not have the state apparatus needed to foster economic growth like in Park’s South Korea (Acemoglu and Robinson 2013).

What went wrong? The Marcos years have been characterized as fueled by “debt-driven growth.” The economy appeared to have improved because the president was heavily borrowing. But while this strategy worked in other Southeast Asian countries, poverty continued to increase in the Philippines. While Marcos enjoyed unconstrained power, the economy was mismanaged. Rampant corruption and cronyism resulted from the authoritarian control of the dictator (Mendoza 2016). Economists Noel De Dios, Vic Paqueo, Solita Monsod, et al. said in 1984 that in lieu of a strong developmental rationale, the Marcos government pursued the opportunity to use government activity as a vehicle for private gain (Mendoza 2016).

Mark Thompson (1996) shows that the collapse of the Marcos regime was not just the result of a bad economic crisis and the elite reconfigurations. The downfall of Marcos was also due to the weakness of the Philippine state. Thompson (1996) says that Marcos had to increase foreign borrowing because he had corrupt and thus ineffective revenue collectors. His analysis shows that state effectiveness matters in the survival of authoritarianism, and unlike Park Chung Hee’s strong state in South Korea, Marcos’s regime was characterized by a weak state. Thompson (1996) further argues that the personalization of power in the Philippines actually facilitated democratization as it weakened the state institutions that Marco needed for patronage.

Paul Hutchcroft (2011) wrote on the leaderships of Park and Marcos,



stating that despite similarities in having high concentration of personal authority and power, the regimes of these two men produced huge contrasts in political economic outcomes. South Korea experienced rapid industrialization while the Philippines experienced disastrous economic predation. Hutchcroft explains this by stressing the importance of both leadership (i.e., agency) and political and institutional contexts (i.e., structure). Park had the advantage of developmental structural preconditions. Marcos inherited and even nurtured a patrimonial bureaucracy.

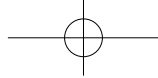
After the Park and Marcos experience, both South Korea and the Philippines experienced democratization. Both countries' re-democratization has been led by opposition leaders, who have been the force behind the struggle against authoritarian and anti-democratic leaders. The re-democratization experience has been largely characterized by dissident-turned-leaders.<sup>1</sup>

Whether as a strong developmental state or a captured patrimonial state, both authoritarian governments received pressure to gamble with relatively free national elections, as Chun Doo Hwan and Marcos experienced in December 1987 and February 1986 respectively. Marcos lost this gamble with dissident leader Cory Aquino emerging as the winner despite the electoral commission officially announcing Marcos as the winner. After the struggle during the People Power Revolution, and his family leaving the country, the election results paved the way for Aquino to start a series of democratic reform, starting with a new constitution. South Korea's re-democratization started as a form of elite accommodation. Chun Doo Hwan surrendered to the people's demand for elections and for the restoration of civil liberties. Full transition to democracy came much later with the opposition votes divided among two dissident leaders in the 1987 elections—Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, leading to the victory of military leader Roh Tae Woo. After Roh's term, power was peacefully transferred to Kim Young Sam who then won the next presidential elections.

So how have *dissident-turned-leaders* fared as presidents? To answer this question, the cases of South Korea's "Two Kims," Kim Young Sam (1993-1998) and Kim Dae Jung (1998-2003); and the Philippines' "Two Aquinos," Corazon Aquino (1986-1992) and Benigno Aquino III (2010-2016) will be

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1. Dissidents are those who formally oppose the existing political structure. Sometimes, they are also known as opposition leaders or democracy activists.



discussed. For South Korea, both Kims led the struggle against the authoritarian rule of Park Chung Hee and his military leader successors. For the Philippines, the first Aquino was made the leader of the struggle against the Marcos rule, while the second Aquino, was made the leader of the opposition against former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's rule (while not particularly authoritarian but considered generally as anti-democratic).

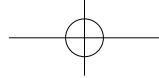
In setting the stage for the comparison, a notable difference must be mentioned. The modes of transition between the two countries are dissimilar. South Korea made its democratic transition through the mode of reform. Roh Tae Woo, popularly elected as president, passed through the process of democratic consolidation and his party merger with Kim Young Sam's party was one of the major reasons behind the latter's winning of the presidency. Meanwhile, the democratic transition in the Philippines came in the form of a revolution. Corazon Aquino took power through a series of street protests that eventually ousted Marcos. Another difference is that South Korea was said to have rectified its authoritarian legacy more effectively while the Philippines never adequately came to terms with it (Lee 2003). South Korea was able to spearhead a bold purge of authoritarian leaders wherein two former presidents and military leaders were prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned. By contrast, the Philippines failed to confront the past, despite initial efforts to investigate human rights abuses. Eventually, Marcos family members and cronies returned to the political scene.

## Two Kims in South Korea

With his election in 1993, Kim Young Sam became the first civilian to hold the presidential office in South Korea in over thirty years. Before becoming president, he was a known democracy activist, having a rich political background as a former congressman. He is also considered to be one of the leaders of the opposition, with one of his most popular acts being a 21-day hunger strike protesting then president Chun Doo Hwan in 1983.

His administration established civilian control over the military and attempted to reform government and economy, starting with an anti-corruption campaign. He sent two former military presidents, Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, to prison on charges of treason and corruption. According





to Sunhyuk Kim (2000), these arrests and imprisonments of the two ex-presidents established a clear border between the democratic system in place and the authoritarian past. The prosecution of former dictators unambiguously symbolized the end of the authoritarian era and the beginning of a democratic one.

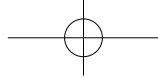
The campaign also led to the dismissal of 1,363 public officials (Jonsson 2014). Kim Young Sam even sent one of his sons, Kim Hyun Chul, to prison. Another 242 were forced to resign because they had acquired wealth improperly. In the private sector several hundred people were arrested or indicted for improper behavior (Jonsson 2014). To ensure greater transparency in politics and business, he introduced the real-name financial transaction system that banned false-name bank accounts that were central to the web of corruption that involved business and government (Errington 2004). The president asserted that the country suffered from the “Korea disease” characterized by widespread corruption and weak political authority (Jonsson 2014). And so he strived to cure the country of this disease.

The president also disbanded the Hanahoe (“we are one faction”)<sup>2</sup> that had ten army members and was a major foundation of the former authoritarian rule. Among the purged personnel were dozens of high-ranking generals closely linked to former presidents Chun and Roh who had been promoted thanks to their personal connections with them. According to the Korean scholar Sin Tong Jun (2009; qtd. in Jonsson 2014), without the president’s strong determination, it would have been impossible to get rid of Hanahoe. The president’s approval rate in April of 1993 was 90 %, in May 88 %, and in August 79 %. The level of popularity was higher than for any other president (Jonsson 2014).

Despite these successes in democratic reforms, Kim Young Sam ended his presidency on a bad note. Two major issues contributed to his fall from grace: (1) economic crisis; and (2) corruption scandals. The most crucial economic issue was the economic crisis in 1997 where South Korea teetered on bankruptcy and had to be helped by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The country was forced to seek a 58 billion dollar bailout led by the IMF in his final weeks in office.

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2. A military elite group like a freemasonry whose members are recruited mostly by the regional background among the Korean Military Academy graduates.



Kim Young Sam introduced a series of policies aimed at liberalizing the economy through deregulation and lessening government intervention. Included in this process is the liberalization of the currency exchange rate, foreign direct investment, and insurance (Heo et al. 2008). With this, it ushered a flow of foreign capital and a rise of mercantile banks or quasi-financial companies to handle foreign capital, but it came with a problem: these institutions lacked experience in dealing with foreign capital (Heo et al. 2008), which resulted in the high foreign debt of Korea banks. This can be explained by the immature institutionalization of political and economic organizations, which were formed during the developmental authoritarian era of Park Chung Hee. A close relationship between the government and private companies was fostered during the authoritarian era and this made transparency in financial transactions difficult during the Kim Young Sam years. There were also other factors that led to a decline of international competitiveness, namely the legalization of labor unions. As a consequence, labor strikes became frequent disrupting the business cycles (Heo et al. 2008).

While it was his son who was slapped with corruption charges, there were allegations that Kim Young Sam himself may have taken millions of dollars in illegal campaign funds. In March 1996, a key aide who had worked for him for 19 years was arrested for taking \$900,000 in bribes in return for favors to businessmen. In June 1996, the head of the Security Oversight Commission was arrested due to charges of accepting bribes. A few months later, the defense minister was arrested for having accepted money from a defense contractor. Finally, in November 1996 the health and welfare minister resigned due to suspicion of accepting a bribe. The corruption scandals seriously damaged the Kim administration's moral authority (Jonsson 2014). His reform drive was undermined when he and his aides, including his son, were connected to the Hanbo Steel collapse scandal in 1997. It was difficult to carry on his anti-corruption drive when he was not as morally upright as claimed.

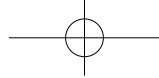
The president's approval rating went to below 10% in 1997. People were of the opinion that "the President was a good man but was crippled by a lack of intelligence and broad-mindedness" and "had he not succeeded [as president], he would have been remembered as a 'success story'" (Kristof 1997). It was generally said that he lost much of his popularity because of a perception that he offered little leadership. The financial crisis was blamed on the mismanagement of the president and he was seen as having betrayed and humiliated the country

(Kristof 1997). It is useful to note that during this time, the people had been used to decades of economic success. Hence, they saw the crisis as a distressing blow to their well-being (Gallup Poll, July 1998; qtd. in Jaung 2002).

Meanwhile, the election of Kim Dae Jung in 1997 was seen as marking Korea's full transition to democracy. Kim Dae Jung led an opposition party and represented the underprivileged Jeolla region of southwestern Korea. It was also partly because of the public's loss of faith in the Kim Young Sam administration that led to the election of Kim Dae Jung (Flake 2008).

As a dissident, Kim Dae Jung was also a prominent opposition figure during the Park Chung Hee years and the presidency of Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo. He was also a survivor of assassination attempts, imprisonment, a death sentence, and exiles in Japan and the United States. So in 1998, Kim Dae Jung's presidency began with high hopes as a "government of the people." He promised to consolidate democracy. At his first post-election conference, he vowed to build a society without discrimination and confrontation. He pledged to "overcome the national crisis and take a new leap forward" and to simultaneously promote "democracy and a market economy" (Kim Dae Jung Inaugural Address). The government started with a bold program of reforms, adopting a list of one hundred reform measures to be accomplished during the president's term (Kihl 2005). An advantage that Kim Dae Jung had was his background as a political outsider (Jaung 2002). Since he was not part of the traditional political elites, he was not constrained from tearing down the old order responsible for the prior economic failure. He also enjoyed an electoral mandate that led to the opposition party not obstructing his initial economic reform (Jaung 2002).

As a leader, Kim Dae Jung was well known for his "government of the people." He pursued an economic policy known as "DJnomics"—which was based on his efforts to promote democracy and market economics. He took office amidst an economic crisis so his focus was on economic reform and restructuring, mostly recommended by the IMF. This was said to significantly alter the landscape of the South Korean economy. The reforms undertaken in the labor, finance, and corporate sectors have been hailed by many as "effective and successful" and his economic management has helped the country to recover quickly from the 1997 crisis (Ahn 2000). While the economy shrank by 5.8% in 1998, it grew by 10.2% in 1999. Foreign media called this recovery a miracle and observers credited the president for this turnaround. In the aspect



of security, he was also successful. He won the Nobel Peace prize in 2000 for his work on North-South reconciliation, democracy, and human rights.

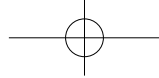
But his presidency was not without issues. People criticized him to be suffering from a political handicap. He generally lacked legislative support: among the 238 bills introduced in the National Assembly during the regular session ending in December 1999, less than 40 had been acted on by lawmakers and he also refused to compromise with the opposition Grand National Party (Jonsson 2014). He further filled key positions in the government with his people, who mostly were from the Jeolla region and they lacked experience and expertise in government. Much like his predecessor, business scandals also tarnished his last year in office. His sons (Kim Hong-Up and Kim Hong-Gul) were convicted of bribery and tax evasion. Even his Nobel win was tainted significantly by reports that at least several hundred million dollars had been paid to North Korea (Jonsson 2014).

What about his success as an economic manager? During the financial crisis in 1997, one of the strategies employed by Kim Dae Jung to bolster the economy was to introduce shortsighted consumption policies. These policies in turn encouraged reckless allocation of credit with little regard to risk. The Kim Dae Jung administration strongly encouraged credit card spending, while this policy helped the economy grow in the short term, the negative consequences came soon after because the growth was boosted by debt (Scofield 2004). This resulted in more than 3.2 million Koreans with bad credit ratings and led to a decrease in spending in the years 2003 and 2004 (Chu 2015). In the end, DJnomics was able to solve the crisis but with little regard for long-term effects. These problems were then inherited by the next president Roh Moo-hyun.

Hoon Jaung (2002) also argued that the improved economic conditions failed to save Kim Dae Jung from unpopularity in the later years because these reforms failed to better the lives of the lower class. The members of the lower class, who were the president's most loyal supporters, were badly affected by the neoliberal reforms initiated as the solution to the crisis and they soon withdrew support for the president (Jaung 2002).

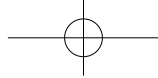
So what went wrong with the promising leadership of the two Kims? The weaknesses of these Korean dissident-turned-leaders seem to be in their lack of administrative experience and their weak moral ascendancy.

Kim Young Sam had no previous administrative experience. He studied philosophy at Seoul National University and soon entered politics



as a legislator. He was too much involved in fighting the dictatorial regimes that he never actually had the chance and time to learn statecraft. While his passion and aggressive actions won him the presidency, it was not enough to make him effective in that post. Although he served as a member of the National Assembly prior to his election to the Blue House, it was not a good preparation. The National Assembly during the years of Park Chung Hee and his successors was not a place to make laws but actually a place where one can protest the government legally. It was another extension of the movement of democratization.

Korean scholars have mentioned that Kim Young Sam's vision of a New Korea was vague. This vision was best captured in his inaugural address where he said that: "The New Korea will be a freer and more mature democratic society. Justice will flow like a river throughout this land. This New Korea will be a sharing community, working and living together in harmony." To cure Korea of its disease, he offered three reforms—to root out corruption, revitalize the economy, and enhance national discipline. Unfortunately, this vision seemed weak compared to what his authoritarian predecessors had offered. Additionally, with the lack of capable technocrats appointed in government and the eventual financial crisis, Kim Young Sam did not get popular support and was even delegitimized due to the corruption scandals and the economic failure at the end of his term. This resulted to the opposite of what Ohno (2006) listed as key components for authoritarian developmentalism. Interestingly, Kim Young Sam was also perceived as authoritarian in mentality and psychology. He relied on recommendations from his informal aids in appointing people to key positions, rather than a clear rule of meritocracy. His style of political leadership was not so much the "rule of law" as the "rule of man" and this was because he enjoyed unprecedented legitimacy as a civilian ruler. So he did not just rule through "legal legitimacy" but also tried to base his legitimacy on morality (Hahm and Rhyu 1999). He believed that his government was a legitimate one, which pursued righteous missions, so he believed that its policies should not be criticized. Consequently, public participation in politics was hampered, and the bureaucracy and the ruling party were relegated to supporting institutions that blindly implemented the president's orders (Jonsson 2014). In a way, Kim Young Sam found himself torn between idealism and realism. He thought of himself as different from Park Chung Hee and his military successors. He believed that executive power would be safe in his hands (Errington 2004).

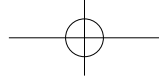


Kim Young Sam's reform drive focused on getting quick results and changing the people in government rather than on reforming the system (Kim 2007a). The problem with this approach was that he tended to view corruption and other problems in the government and politics as an individual phenomenon rather than as a systemic problem. Consequently, his agenda was backward-looking rather than future-oriented (Kim 2007a). It was a combination of a "boss style" of leadership and low organization skills and an inefficient policy-making team that resulted to no workable programs. And because he failed to institutionalize his reforms, democratization was delayed when his moral integrity came into question with the corruption scandals involving his family and friends (Hahm and Rhyu 1999).

But the biggest failure accorded to Kim Young Sam is the financial crisis of 1997. To a large extent, Koreans blamed him for what happened. While realizing that the crony capitalism in the country contributed to the crisis, people still felt that the president did not exercise good leadership at that crucial time. Kim Dae Jung is generally remembered better because of how he managed the crisis upon his assumption as president. He became the leader of South Korea at a difficult time but he somehow managed well.

Just like Kim Young Sam, Kim Dae Jung also had authoritarian tendencies. He seemed to have a sense of superiority believing that he knew best. It was noted that no one dared to say "no" to the president at any meetings, but everyone was present there to carry out his orders (Jonsson 2014). It is reported that he rarely delegated authority and did not handle state affairs in a systematic way, but his cabinet and his party followed his intentions all of the time (Jonsson 2014). Just like Kim Young Sam, Kim Dae Jung wished to rush his reforms through during his electoral mandate and the crisis atmosphere gave him the edge over the opposition-dominated assembly. Kim Dae Jung enjoyed the authoritarian advantage of not having an opposition to go against his initial economic reforms, echoing Jones and Olken's (2005) earlier point about successful development under an authoritarian leadership. The unconstrained setting makes it easy for a leader to push for the reforms needed for a quick recovery.

Kim Dae Jung will always be remembered for being one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's great dissidents. Unfortunately, he also ended up as one of its most disappointing leaders. According to Kim Choong Nam (2007a), corruption during his administration reached unprecedented levels. This is also supported



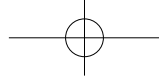
by data from the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index showing that South Korea fell from rank 27 in 1996 to rank 43 in 1998, and then down to rank 50 in 2003. People say that “He entered the Blue House as a hero but left office in disgrace and disappointment” (Kim 2007a).

What lessons can be gotten here in terms of the relationship between political leadership and development? Generally, it can be said that the initial economic performance of democratic government in Korea did not live up to the expectations. First of all, the presidential system in democratized Korea is limited to a single non-renewable term of five years. Since the president cannot run for another term, political accountability becomes insignificant, and he is prone to coming up with short sighted policies, leaving the next president to bear the costs of such bad decisions.

Second, while authoritarian leaders like Park Chung Hee generally appointed technocrats in government positions, leaders in the democracy tend to appoint their political allies. Leaders like Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung used their authorities to use cabinet posts to payback whatever political debt they owe in winning the elections. Thus, those appointed in government positions were not necessarily the best people for the jobs and this led to problematic policymaking.

Third, these leaders under the democratic South Korea still maintained an authoritarian leadership style. In the interest of expediency and efficiency, believing that they were different from their dictator predecessors, they rushed the reforms they wanted at the expense of dialogue and participation. These presidents were very imperial. They were used to deciding by themselves instead of collaborating with other people. Hence, democracy in South Korea may have been valid on paper but not fully realized in practice.

Interestingly in 2014, South Korea elected Park Geun Hye as president, despite being “the daughter of Park Chung Hee, the dictator. Why so? One explanation that is most widely accepted is that the majority of people in South Korea do not remember her father, as a repressive dictator. In fact, he seems benign compared to the other dictators that came up in other parts of the world. Rather he is remembered as the driving force behind the country’s unprecedented economic success. Many people accept the fact that the country then had many civil liberties infringed upon. But no one also denies that Park Chung Hee made South Korea what it is today. Furthermore, his positive legacy is not just a sentimental opinion. Scholars call Park Chung Hee’s authoritarian



regime as a developmental dictatorship or developmental autocracy, a form of authoritarian regime that grew the economy so much that it ended up providing the foundation of later democratization. In a way, we can say that Park Geun Hye capitalized on this, as seen in how she packaged herself during the campaign and even as the president. She shows that her advantage is that she is her father's daughter.

## Two Aquinos in the Philippines

In the case of the Philippines, there are the two Aquinos. Corazon "Cory" Aquino was the widow of the assassinated opposition leader Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. After her husband's death, she became more active and visible in demonstrations against the dictatorial regime of Ferdinand Marcos. She served as the symbolic figurehead of anti-Marcos political opposition. While she was a "mere housewife," she became a representation of a moral, honest leadership as she was the complete opposite of Marcos. He was charming, cunning, and ruthless while she was a reluctant widow. Until she came into the picture, Filipino leaders had been strong and male and Corazon Aquino broke that pattern.

The peaceful EDSA Revolution of 1986 led to the birth of the Fifth Republic of the Philippines with Cory Aquino as the president following Marcos' ouster. She abolished the old constitution and returned the country to its democratic state before martial law. As president, and with the power of a revolutionary government, she initiated radical democratic reforms which include abolishing the old constitution, creating the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), dissolving the Marcos allies-dominated legislature, and reorganizing the judiciary to restore its independence. In 1987, the people ratified the new constitution, with emphasis on civil liberties, human rights, and social justice.

Cory Aquino is best remembered for her role as a symbol of democracy in the country. While she started as a symbol of the anti-dictatorship movement in the 1980s, she continued to play that role well into her presidency and after. For a lot of Filipinos, she is not just a former President. She is also the moral conscience of the Filipino people. People looked to her leadership when her successor Fidel Ramos attempted to amend the constitution to extend the

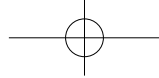


presidential term limit and when the administration of succeeding presidents Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo were ridden with corruption scandals.

One of the biggest issues of her administration was political stability. She faced repeated military coup attempts and communist insurgencies. It has been argued that because of this, she never had the opportunity to succeed. The political unrest scared away investors. The administration had to bear with the resulting strain of the power and transportation infrastructure. Moreover, social and economic reforms also stopped, bringing the delivery of basic services to a halt (Hamlin 2009).

Cory Aquino also did not prove to be an able administrator. As president, she was not able to streamline the bureaucracy, leading to the numerous underpaid employees to be susceptible to accepting bribes. She also largely ignored human rights violations by several vigilante groups, indirectly utilizing them to fight communists. Plans to privatize state-owned enterprises have not materialized during her term, partly because the people appointed to the positions had no incentive to do so, they wanted to keep their jobs (Karnow 1990). Her decision to abolish the Department of Energy was a major disaster for the nation. This action diminished the country's energy priorities. The government simply failed to understand the magnitude of its energy situation. Therefore, the nation suffered almost from an almost decade-long serious energy crisis. Another glaring example was how she handled the issue of the influence of the wealthy and landed families. Traditional political patterns reasserted themselves in this period of re-democratization. Despite the passage of an agrarian reform law, her promise of land reform for peasants faltered because of her attachment to her family's sugar plantation. Critics said she could not go against the business interests of her family. The land reform law was faulted as giving too much leeway to landlords, allowing them to avoid the program, and not enough resources given to farmers for their land development use.

Cory Aquino's administration, much like the two Kims of South Korea, was also plagued with issues of the merit of the people she appointed in position. Gerardo Sicat (2011) says that her chosen political advisers comprised a diverse group. There were the hardcore politicians (which included her relatives), the victims of the Martial Law era, the former political enemies of Marcos, businessmen seeking to be favored, etc. In fact, her administration was characterized with "Kamag-anak Inc." (Family, Inc.), referring to her relatives



who were interfering in government and using their position to further their interests. Stanley Karnow (1990) noted an interview wherein the president admitted to regarding the issue of her family against taking advantage of her position short of ordering them to be inactive or go into exile, she does not know what else she can do. She also lacked a reliable political party to support her as the loose coalition of political leaders who supported her rise to power was only united in overthrowing Marcos. This coalition quickly dissolved after her election.

Another issue faced by the Philippines then was enormous debt (considered as odious by many), amounting to \$28 billion. Despite advice against by national economists, the president claimed that the country would honor all its debts. She was seen to have succumbed to the pressure of international creditors, like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Critics say that Cory Aquino failed to maximize the use of her enormous political capital to mobilize international assistance for her political and economic success. International support was present but it was of a small scale, not sufficient to carry the country forward, to overcome the huge resource gaps that she inherited.

The economy did pick up with the international community's support. But economic growth did not last long due to a series of unfortunate events that included a major earthquake in Luzon, typhoons in Visayas, a prolonged drought, and continued coup attempts. But all in all, the first Aquino administration worked on two objectives: democratization and de-Marcosification. In effect, the Cory administration is seen as a "restorative regime" (Velasco 1997). Cory would be best remembered as the "mother of Philippine democracy," but as others have put it, her true shortcoming was experience.

Cory Aquino was able to move beyond the expectations of economic success under a democratic regime. This was due to a combination of two factors. First, the previous Marcos regime did not bring the country to successful development. Hence, there was no "authoritarian developmentalism" to speak of in the case of the Philippines. Secondly, the expectation for a Cory Aquino administration was quite low. Having been persuaded to run for the presidency, Cory positioned herself as a transitional leader. Although supporters urged her to run for a second term in 1992, she refused. She referenced her stepping down from power in her 1991 State of the Nation Address, saying "This is the glory

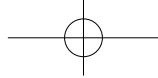
of democracy, that its most solemn moment should be the peaceful transfer of power.”

Three presidents later, these shortcomings will be repeated in the case of her son, Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III. Strictly speaking, Noynoy Aquino was not so much of a dissident or opposition leader like the Two Kims or Cory Aquino. While his past record as a politician has been unremarkable, he won the presidency in 2010 on a platform of good governance. He was catapulted into the limelight after the death of his mother a year before the elections. Suddenly, Filipinos were looking to the Aquinos as a symbol of hope for Philippine democracy, him being the heir. His role as a dissident would come in his anti-Arroyo campaign. He packaged himself as the opposite of the old regime of the Arroyo presidency. He convinced the people with his slogan *Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap* (loosely translated as “Without corruption, there won’t be poverty”) and promised the people of a transition from a president who tolerates corruption to a president who will fight it.

As president, Noynoy Aquino struggled to rid the country of its image as one of the most corrupt in Asia. He successfully pushed for the impeachment of chief justice Renato Corona (who was tied to the previous administration), the arrest of Arroyo and three powerful senators who are currently being tried for their association with the pork barrel scam. The country also experienced a strong and steady economic growth in the past years, having one of the highest growth rates in the region, surpassed only by China. Using the high political capital he enjoyed, he targeted to help the poorest of the poor with controversial programs like the 4P’s or the country’s conditional cash transfer program and the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP), a stimulus package with the purpose of fast-tracking public spending for economic growth.

He also did his best to lead by example. He went around Metro Manila with his no siren policy, even in the middle of a heavy traffic or even if it sometimes meant being late for appointments, showing how determined he is in showing that he will not exempt himself from the policies of the country. He also is known for his austerity measures. For trips abroad, he would often take a very lean delegation with him and fly commercial.

But his leadership also disappointed a lot of Filipinos. The first issue was the partiality of his anti-corruption campaign. While Renato Corona was successfully impeached and convicted for not declaring his dollar accounts in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN), a lot of other public



officials, some of which include the President's allies who served as prosecutors in the impeachment trial, have also not complied with the law. These men have refused to release copies of their actual SALN to the public. Notably, those that were hailed to courts during the pork barrel scam are mostly small fry and the big-fish exceptions mostly belong to the political opposition. While lawmakers are escaping justice, the middle ranking officials and employees of implementing agencies that were said to act on behalf of the legislators have been charged with criminal offenses (Parreño 2015). The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) reports that the number of lawmakers charged is fewer than the number of them that could be indicted based on evidence gathered by the Commission on Audit (COA) and the whistleblowers (Parreño 2015).

The economic growth experienced by the country has also been largely seen as non-inclusive growth, or growth that does not reach the poorest of society. Income inequality continues to be a glaring problem, particularly issues of unemployment, low income and productivity, and poverty. The Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines pointed out that there has been a lack of growth in the agriculture and mining sectors, which have the greatest potential for rural employment and development (Cabuenas 2016). Sicat (2016) adds that another shortcoming contributing to the lack of inclusive growth is the lag in attracting foreign direct investments. It is a natural limitation in the foreign investment policy that the president himself has supported. Noynoy Aquino has not only withheld support to the movement to amend the economic provisions of the constitution, his government has also widened the negative list that excludes foreign direct investment participation in the economy (Sicat 2016).

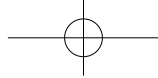
Although widely popular at first, his ratings have seen a consistent dip as he unsuccessfully hurdles various challenges to his leadership. The first major challenge to his leadership was the embarrassing Manila hostage crisis in 2010. His government's weak handling of the crisis raised fears and questions about his managerial competence. During the hostage taking, it was not clear who was in charge, and it exposed factionalism in the president's administration. The 2013 typhoon Yolanda also highlighted the weakness of Noynoy Aquino's leadership. International media like CNN, BBC, and Associate Press slammed the Aquino administration's slow, inadequate, and disorganized aid operation, noting that even days after the typhoon struck, the government did not seem to have reached the affected areas yet (Torres-Tupas 2013). Then there was also the 2014 political skirmish with the judiciary over the use of "savings" in DAP

and the 2015 Mamasapano clash, dubbed as the biggest loss of government elite force in history. In the end, Noynoy Aquino's version of "Matuwid na Daan" or Righteous Path remained at a conceptual level. While it was effective as a campaign promise, it failed at delivering results. It was not clear to the people how the anti-corruption drive actually bettered their lives.

What can we say about the leadership of these pro-democracy leaders Cory and son Noynoy Aquino? Much like the Korean leaders, the government also suffered from a lack of meritocracy. From the technocrats that were utilized by Ferdinand Marcos during his presidency, there was a shift to political allies of the ruling president. If Cory had her "Kamag-anak Inc." (Family, Inc.), Noynoy had his "KKK" which is short for *kaklase*, *kakampi at kabarilan* (schoolmates, allies, and shooting buddies). For example, the president defended Transportation Secretary Joseph Emilio Abaya, a good friend and partymate, despite failing to resolve Metro Manila's miserable traffic, particularly the dire state of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and the Light Rail Transit (LRT) and mismanaged international airports with their *laglag bala* scams. In fact, it is the disappointing work of some of his men and his continued support for them that added to the people's increasing frustration with the president.

These two leaders also suffered from looking too much to the past, at the expense of moving forward. As president, Cory Aquino attempted to purge everything that had Marcos' mark, without considering that not all Marcos' legacies were bad for the country. In doing so, she rejected the government's full-scale industrialization program; scrapped the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant and the entire national energy program, disregarded Imelda Marcos' cultural projects, and handpicked individuals to write a new Constitution. She also banned the Marcoses from returning to the country to answer charges against them (although she lifted the ban later in her term). Noynoy Aquino would similarly look to the past. He is known for putting blame much of his problems on the legacy of his predecessor. His administration has been accused of being too cynical of the previous administration. The president was so allergic to anything related to Arroyo that there was a need to redo previously conducted studies that were ready for implementation, delaying crucial projects.

Sicat (2011) observes that a leader's role would have been to unite the nation as quickly as possible after consolidating power. This was the only way that Cory Aquino would have moved toward nation-building and problem-solving. This may have also been the only way that Noynoy Aquino could have



been a better leader. Under both leadership, there was definite healing of the disunity that stormed the country.

Lastly, it can be said that while people rallied behind these two to take up the mantle of leadership, in reality they just lacked the skill to run the country. It was a case of having big shoes but really small feet. Cory Aquino had never been tested in past leadership struggles. She did not have the qualities that were needed to guide the country in times of grave crisis (Sicat 2011). Political analyst Amando Doronila credits Cory Aquino's leadership failure to her unwillingness to exercise power. He explains that she sees herself as a figurehead and that she operates on the theory that the political institutions she restored would "create their own magic and dynamism" (Karnow 1990). Noynoy Aquino has been known for his ineptitude and incompetence in leadership. But as political analyst Clarita Carlos said, the Filipino people "elected him knowing him, warts and all" (Sabillo 2015). Prior to becoming president, he did not have such a good track record, as seen in his lackluster record as a legislator. People would all agree that his rise to the presidency was a matter of luck, a combination of the death of his much-loved mother who symbolized democracy and the people's clamor for change, coming from a corrupt Arroyo presidency.

For this reason, in the 2016 elections the Filipino people opted for another change, not continuity. Noynoy Aquino's anointed, Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, lost the presidency to Davao City mayor Rodrigo Duterte. Roxas represented a continuation of what the Noynoy Aquino government started. As the "Pambatong Daang Matuwid" (Champion of the Straight Path), Roxas represented the very ideals of Noynoy Aquino's leadership. In his endorsement speech, Noynoy Aquino pointed that Roxas is "the one who is certain to pursue the straight and narrow path." As it ruined out, the presidential endorsement could have actually been a bane to Roxas' campaign. University of the Philippines professor Aries Arugay says that what he had was a "campaign in denial," which portraying that things are very good and hence the only need is to build on what has been achieved (Cupin 2016). The reality is the Philippine situation is not good. Issues of traffic, crime, and lack of infrastructure abound (Cupin 2016). Roxas' campaign failed to admit the failures of the Noynoy Aquino's administration, the greatest being the lack of competence even with undisputable integrity.

Perhaps this explains the attractiveness of certain candidates in the 2016 elections. Ferdinand Marcos's son, Bongbong Marcos finished as second in a

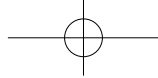
close race for the vice-presidency. The former dictator's son credits his popularity to his father's legacy. Another popular candidate was Rogrigo Duterte, who won as president. Simply put, his appeal is that he gets things done. Running a message of "care" and "strength" and ability to empathize, Duterte portrayed himself as one of the people. Moreover, his record shows that he was effective as an administrator in Davao City. He was able to deliver action as mayor, a sharp contrast to the Aquino administration which is known for being indifferent to the people and "missing in action" in crises situations like the Manila hostage-taking, typhoon Yolanda, and the Mamasapano massacre.

## Conclusion

Democratic leaders in South Korea and the Philippines were generally seen as disappointments. In South Korea, both presidents Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung were politically incapacitated in their final years due to corruption scandals that involved their families and close associates. Their authority and leadership received fatal blows. It was said that the two Kims both long practiced a kind of delegative democracy, keeping the party system weak, and ensuring the subordinate status of National Assembly. The presidents under the democratic era had as much power as they had during the dictatorial era. Both presidents Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung dominated over the political parties they had founded, marginalizing the role of the parties and excluding them from the decision-making process, an opinion that entirely concurs with the above account.

While this style of leadership may have been successful in helping to secure a transition to democracy against an uncompromising regime, this "reform authoritarianism" style no longer meets the expectations of the Koreans. The latter is unfavorable to consolidation because of its combative nature (Errington 2004). Kim Young Sam hoped to limit the opportunity of dissenters to mobilize opposition by limiting consultation on his policies. Similarly, Kim Dae Jung wished to rush his reforms through while his electoral mandate and the crisis atmosphere gave him the edge over the opposition-dominated assembly (Errington 2004).

In the Philippines, the Aquinos were leaders that carried the mantle of moral leadership (fighting against dictatorship and/or corruption) and



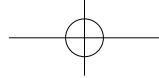
championed the way to democratization. Carrying the narrative of EDSA, both mother and son were not visionaries or social reformers. Cory Aquino was very much a product of her time and place. She was from a landowning family and a devout believer of the Catholic faith. And so she restored democracy to what she knew it to be, an elitist democracy (Coronel 2009). Noynoy Aquino, meanwhile has a stellar pedigree. As the son of democracy icons, he believed that he had a righteous mission in leading the country. This is why he tends to claim exclusivity of the fight against corruption. This is also why he stressed that gains from his administration may just be wasted if his anointed is not elected. What he failed to understand is that development does not depend on leaders alone. More importantly, it depends on strong institutions.

The EDSA narrative was useful in the past, but it has long lost its magic. The “holier than thou” discourse has been proven to be ineffective given a people frustrated with the lack of development in the country. EDSA politics is not helpful for democracy because it has always been a version of elite democracy.

What the Kims and the Aquinos had in common was that they all had the background of anti-government struggle and maintained that mentality even in their presidency. These leaders also looked at themselves as saviors of the country and thus allowing themselves to be blinded by their own faults, leading to their failure in governance.

In the struggle for democratization, there is the rise of dissident-turned-leaders who became instrumental fighting the evils of authoritarian rule and corruption. In South Korea, democratic leaders like Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung had a background of anti-government struggle and even in their presidency they maintained the mentality of the struggle. They pursued ambitious goals and fell short of accomplishing them. In the Philippines, the mantle of democratic leadership seems to have fallen on the shoulders of the Aquinos. From Cory Aquino, who led the fight against the Marcos dictatorship, to his son Noynoy Aquino, who led the battle against the corruption of the Arroyo administration, these two presidents have personified the moralist brand of leadership. But both Aquino presidents have failed to produce any substantial reforms in the Philippines, leading to massive disappointment. Because of the disappointment of people with such leaders, they have begun to think more favourably of authoritarian and corrupt leaders who are remembered to be efficient and task-oriented managers that lead countries to development.



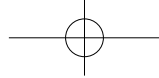


While strongman successors have not yet proven to be capable of delivering development, with Park Geun Hye's impeachment and that the Duterte presidency is too early to be evaluated, a good lesson to learn is that successful democratic leaders need to shed the anti-government mentality in order to successfully lead a country.

Anti-government struggle is different from governing. Organizational management is essential to successful leadership. Opposition skills are not the same as management skills. In the end, it may very well boil down to the fact that having political will marks effective leadership. This is the great advantage of authoritarian leaders. A good democratic leader must be able to learn this skill amidst checks to power.

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## Abstract

This study seeks to look into the role of political leadership in development in South Korea and the Philippines. The central question revolves around what are the major points of convergence and divergence of leadership in these two countries. Moreover, the focus will be on leadership in democratic settings. This study will build on previous comparative studies on political leadership in South Korea and the Philippines, most of which have been focused on the dictators Park Chung Hee and Ferdinand Marcos. After the Park and Marcos experience, both South Korea and the Philippines experienced democratization. It is in this context that this comparative study is situated. It aims to continue the comparison and see if the conclusions made before still persist today. To what extent does leadership still play an invaluable role in shaping the development of these countries? This study then focuses on the political nature, mechanics, and concrete outcomes of leadership in two different political systems.

**Keywords:** political leadership, democratization, democratic deficit, authoritarian advantage