Philippine Elections and Political Parties and Democratic Accountability, 1986-2010

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Elections and Democracy

- Two features of democratic, representative political systems:

- First, a system of free, fair, and competitive elections and guarantees of basic civil and political rights.

- Second, a system by which rulers are held accountable for their public actions by citizens.

Have Philippine elections been largely "free, fair, and competitive?"

- A history of electoral manipulation and election-related violence and coercion.

- Poor electoral governance: the COMELEC as a classic example of organizational incompetence and elite capture.

- Continuing dominance of electoral contests by powerful political families.

Parties and Democracy

- Parties as the most important agents of political representation and political aggregation of interests in modern democracies.

- Institutionalized party systems facilitate effective governance by providing structure to democratic politics in the electoral arena and legislature.

Can Elections Serve as Mechanisms of Accountability ?

- **The "mandate" view**: "elections serve to select good policies or policy bearing politicians."

- **The "sanctioning" view**: "elections serve to hold governments responsible for the results of their past actions."

- Elections as the **selection of "good types"** of political leaders independent of reelection incentives.

Elections and Structural Constraints on Choice

- In societies where power relationships are acutely unequal, structural constraints on electoral choices are real.

- In such situations, elections may serve to legitimize the rule by powerful elites skilled in the use of material incentives, cooptation, coercion, and outright violence.

Elections and Political Families

- Why focus on political families?

- Political Families as enduring structures of economic and political power.

- In contrast, political parties are largely unstable and weakly institutionalized in the country.

Political Families and Elections, 1987-2010.

- A political family defined.

- Of 77 provinces in this study, 71 or 92 percent have political families.

- A total of 167 families.

- 81 families or 48 percent are old elites.

- 86 families or 52 percent are new elites.

- On the average, each province has 2.17 political families.

Political Families: Breadth and Depth

- Provinces with higher income, health, and education indicators (HDI 2006) have more political families.

- The top 20 provinces on HDI outcomes have an average of 2.8 families.

- The lowest 20 provinces on HDI outcomes have an average of 1.8 families.

- Provinces with mid-level HDI show an average of 2.03 families.

Political Families: Breadth and Depth

- Since the 1992 elections, the governorships in 5 provinces have been ruled by a single family (Rizal, La Union, Lanao del Norte, Leyte, and Agusan del Sur).

- Since the 1987 elections for representatives, 18 districts in the country have been ruled by a single family.

- Only 6 provinces have no political family: Nueva Vizcaya, Aklan, Ifugao, Catanduanes, Kalinga, and Eastern Samar).

Turnover Rates for Governors and Representatives, 1987-2010

- For governors, the average turnover rate for the period 1992-2013 is a low 1.82.

- Thus, for a period of 21 years (1992-2013), incumbent governors would lose office for only 5.46 years.

- For representatives, the average turnover rate for the period 1987-2013 is also low at 1.88.

- Thus, for a period of 26 years (1987-2013) incumbent representatives would lose office for only 5.64 years.

Turnover Rates: Regional and Provincial Patterns

- Lowest turnover rates for governors: Region 13 and Region 1.

- Lowest turnover rates for representatives: Region 7 and Region 3.

- Highest turnover rates for governors: Region 4-A and CAR.

- Highest turnover rates for representatives: ARMM and CAR.

Turnover Rates by Provincial HDI Rank

- For top 20 HDI provinces, the average turnover rate for governors was lower at 1.70 compared with the lowest 20 HDI provinces at 1.90.

- For representatives, the top 20 HDI provinces had a higher turnover rate at 1.79 compared with the lowest 20 provinces at 1.61.

- Mid-level HDI provinces had lower turnover rates for both their governors and representatives compared with the richest and poorest provinces.

Implications of Low Average Turnover Rates for all Provinces

- There is very weak evidence for elections serving as accountability mechanisms viewed from either the "mandate" or "sanctioning" perspective.

- From the "selection of good types" view, why would the "good types" be almost monopolized by the dominant families in their provinces?

- All data show the continuing dominance and resilience of the political families, both old and new.

Political Parties: Why Unstable and Weakly Institutionalized?

- Two approaches to understanding the nature of political parties:

- The social bases and origins of parties: how social cleavages are represented and advanced by parties.

- The impact of political institutions and electoral rules.

Impact of Political Institutions and Electoral Rules on Party Formation

- The Philippine presidential system: a powerful president and its impact on party formation.

- Term limits on the presidency, Congressional representatives and local officials.

- Election of president and vice-president.

- Election of Senate members.

- Synchronized elections.

- The Party List election system.