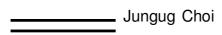# PHILIPPINE DEMOCRACIES OLD AND NEW

Elections, Term Limits, and Party Systems

Jungug Choi

The Philippines is the only presidential democracy in the world using a plurality-rule electoral system to select its chief executive that has experienced a dramatic change in that system. The change altered the effective number of presidential candidates that participated in the vote. The country's experience provides a rare opportunity for those interested in the effects of electoral procedures on presidential party systems to test their theoretical propositions.

The island nation has had two contrasting, democratic, presidential party systems since achieving independence from U.S. colonial rule in 1946. Prior to the authoritarian Marcos regime, the country had a two-party system, while since Marcos's fall a multiparty system has obtained. What is interesting is that the old presidential parties have experienced a transformation, yet the plurality-based electoral system remains intact. The pre-Marcos system was a textbook example of Duverger's Law in action, which argues that elections based on plurality rule tend to create bipartisan systems. The country's present electoral system, however, runs counter to what this law predicts.

Clearly, a change has taken place that requires explanation. After all, as late as 1992 the Philippines was being cited side by side with the U.S. as a

representative example of bipartisanism; in the words of Shugart and Carey, "[T]hese two cases are thus the purest two-party systems that we observe. Over time these two countries have had practically no important third parties or presidential candidates, so high are the barriers that plurality rule imposed to minor parties."[1] This article seeks to explain why Shugart and Carey's observation is no longer valid in the case of the Philippines. The first section demonstrates that the Philippines has experienced two contrasting presidential systems under plurality rule-based elections. To do so, it presents a calculation of the effective number of presidential candidates in all democratic elections from 1949 to 1998. The article then discusses potential explanations for why the country's party system has been transformed. Then, based on a historical comparison, I argue that the data show that primary responsibility for the dramatic increase in the effective number of presidential candidates lies with the new single-term limit. Based on this, I argue that plurality rule does not bring about bipartism when accompanied by such a limitation. The article concludes with an assessment of the implications for democratic stability.

Same Electoral Framework, Contrasting Party Systems

As is frequently the case elsewhere, the Philippines presidential elections since 1949 have been held in a single nation-wide ballot. Each elector casts a single direct vote and the winner is determined by whoever obtains a simple plurality. Before the Marcos interlude, the presidential term was four years and incumbents were eligible for a second term. No person could serve as president more than eight consecutive years. In the 1987 Constitution, the presidential term was extended to six years, but an incumbent was limited to only one term. Additionally, mid-term replacements who served for four years or more also were ineligible to run for a second term.

The effective number of presidential candidates can be calculated with the same formula used to measure the effective number of candidates per district in parliamentary elections: $1/ + p_i^2$, where "p" is the proportion of the vote each candidate earns in the district.[2] Unless the same party fields multiple candidates in a single-member district, the effective number of candidates is equivalent to the total number of political parties. Thus, the effective number of parties in presidential elections is limited to the number of political parties

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1. Matthew S. Shugart and John M. Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Systems* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 222.

2. Rein Taagepera and Matthew S. Shugart, *Seats and Votes: The Effects and Determinants of Electoral Systems* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 79.

TABLE 1 *Effective Number of Candidates (N_p) in Philippine Presidential Elections*

Year	N_p
1949	2.4
1953	1.7
1957	3.3
1961	2.0
1965	2.2
1969	1.9
1992	5.8
1998	4.3

SOURCES: Commission on Elections, *Votes Received by Candidates for President and Vice-President by City and Municipality in the Elections of April 23, 1946, and November 8, 1949* (Manila: Bureau of Printing [BOP], c. 1950); id., *Report of the Commission on Elections to the President of the Philippines and the Congress on the Manner the Elections Were Held* (Manila: BOP, 1954, 1958, 1962, 1967, and 1971); id., *Main Report and Lists of Winning Candidates*, vol. 1 of *Report of the Commission on Elections to the President and Congress of the Republic of the Philippines on the Conduct of the Synchronized National and Local Elections of May 11, 1992* (Manila: Commission on Elections, c. 1993); and id., Commission on Elections Resolution, no. 3047-A, May 29, 1998.

NOTE: The 1946 election was excluded from the table because it was a transitional election held before independence became official. The 1986 snap election was excluded because it occurred under a constitution different from those of the pre- and post-Marcos eras. The election was neither fair nor free.

presenting candidates. As in other studies, the effective number of presidential candidates will be denoted with the capital letter, N_p.

The history of Philippine presidential elections in terms of N_p is shown in Table 1. As can be seen, there was an increase in the effective number of presidential candidates after the Marcos period. Four of the six presidential elections held prior to authoritarian rule conformed to Duverger's Law. Even the two that were exceptions, those of 1949 and 1957, offer results that are still within the permissible range of a variant of the law: the Generalized Duverger's Rule, according to which the effective number of candidates or electoral parties in a single-member district ranges from 1.5 to 3.5.[3] In these two exceptional contests, the incumbent presidents, Roxas and Magsaysy, could have run for second terms. However, both died in office and their vice-presidents became the governing party candidates.

One can also notice the remarkable change in the party system by considering the proportion of votes that candidates other than the top two received in presidential elections. Throughout the pre-Marcos era, the electoral

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3. Ibid., p. 145.

strength of minor candidates was low, though again with the exceptions of 1949 and 1957. In 1953, 1961, and 1969, the other candidates statistically earned 0% of the vote, while one candidate earned 12% of the vote in 1949 and three candidates split 31% in 1957. In contrast, the strength of these runner-up candidates in post-authoritarian elections increased—in 1998, eight of these individuals divided 44% of the vote in the wake of a surprising performance in 1992 when their combined share of the vote (58% split between five individuals) was higher than that of the top two candidates. The evidence thus demonstrates that the old bimodal presidential party system was replaced by a new multimodal presidential party system after the demise of the Marcos regime.

One may argue that the new multiparty system is transient. As time passes, the current multicandidate electoral field may gradually be replaced by a bipartisan system. In other words, there are those who might argue that the Philippines's contemporary party system, like its democracy, is not consolidated yet. This view is not convincing, even if not completely mistaken, considering that the effective number of presidential candidates in the two consecutive post-Marcos elections has been much greater than any election before his regime. Nonetheless, it is my belief that the current party system is more likely to be permanent.

Explaining the Systemic Change

Having observed a significant change in the Philippine party system, how does one account for the shift? There are several variables to be considered. They may be broken down into the institutional and non-institutional varieties.

Institutional Variables

There are three institutional variables that one may wish to consider as explanations for the transformation. They are the type of electoral system used to select the Philippine president, the peculiarities of the balloting system in use, and the synchronization of presidential elections with those for the legislature.

As has already been observed, the Philippines's presidential elections have all been governed by the plurality rule for determining the victor. Given this uniformity, the electoral system simply cannot account for the shift seen in the country's party system even though Duverger's Law might anticipate otherwise. If the post-authoritarian period had adopted a majority-rule voting system with run-offs, the change to the party framework would be less intriguing since its circumstances would satisfy Duverger's Law perfectly.

The peculiar Philippine ballot system, combined with the synchronization of national and local elections, is sometimes thought to be the cause of the

extensive post-Marcos fragmentation. The system involves the use of write-in ballots. None of the candidates' names are preprinted and voters must inscribe the names of their most-preferred candidates in blanks next to corresponding offices.[4] During election campaigns, political parties do not make or announce any closed list of approved candidates for the open seats on the ballot. Instead, each candidate is free to make and hand out sample ballots showing where to fill in their names. All other blanks are either left blank or filled in with the names of his or her campaign allies, who are not necessarily members of the candidate's party. Senatorial candidates often make initial sample ballots, which may be subsequently altered by congressional and other candidates.

Why is this ballot system conducive to party fragmentation? Carl Landé offers the following explanation:

> The write-in system of voting, augmented by the distribution of sample ballots [that is, unofficial ballots which voters carry in voting booths with candidates' names already filled in], impedes the growth of solidarity among candidates of the same political party. Unless they know that they must swim or sink together, members of a party, running for different offices, are under little compulsion to work together as a team, either during their election campaigns or after they have been elected. But sample ballots allow their originators or distributors to put together their own slates of recommended candidates which may include popular members of a rival political party to the detriment of their own party-mates.[5]

In other words, the write-in or open ballot system weakens party unity and solidarity and consequently increases fragmentation.

But it must be remembered that the same balloting system, like the presidential electoral system, was used for all of the elections studied here. Until the early 1950s, the ballots also included a section for straight party votes, but the section was deleted thereafter. Fragmentation has occurred since the end of the dictatorship and the restoration of normal democratic elections under the system in effect prior to the Marcos years, but given the uniformity of the balloting circumstances the cause for the shift to multiparty and multicandidate presidential contests must lie elsewhere.

Finally, given the synchronization of presidential, senatorial, and congressional elections, one might suspect that the timing of the legislative elections influences the effective number of presidential candidates. However, as Cox observes, the direction of primary influence is from presidential to legislative elections; that is, the timing of the higher-profile elections influences the

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4. See the Commission on Elections home page at <http://www.comelec.gov.ph> or <http://www.halalan2001.com> for a sample ballot.

5. Carl H. Landé, *Post-Marcos Politics: A Geographical and Statistical Analysis of the 1992 Presidential Election* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p. 101.

lower-profile elections and not the other way around.[6] If his analysis is correct, then synchronized legislative elections or any presumptive change to the legislative party systems will have little effect on presidential party systems and the possibility of change in them.

However, there is an opposing view. Shugart and Carey note that in those countries where proportional representation is used, a third party can hope to win some seats and then also run its own presidential candidate. This would raise the median effective number of presidential candidates as well as the median effective number of parties obtaining votes in congressional elections.[7] This implies that legislative elections can influence the effective number of presidential candidates. That said, in the Philippines it is difficult to disentangle what that influence might be since all presidential elections, excepting the snap election of 1986, have been held concurrently with congressional contests. This complex issue will be taken up again below during the discussion of the effect of electoral competition at the local level on the presidential party system.

The discussion up to this point has focused on the potential institutional variables that might account for the post-Marcos party fragmentation in presidential elections. The conclusion thus far is that none of the institutional variables convincingly accounts for the remarkable change in the presidential party system. But as I argue below, it is in fact an institutional variable—the single-term limitation—that is primarily responsible for the system's transformation. However, before I present the explanation for why this is so, two non-institutional explanatory variables—ethnolinguistic heterogeneity and subnational bifactionalism—need to be considered.

Non-Institutional Variables

Deviations from Duverger's Law, i.e., multipartism in elections by plurality rule, are often explained by the existence of ethnolinguistic or regional cleavages. It is true that the Philippines is a multiethnic society and ethnolinguistic ties are salient in elections. For instance, in his study of the country's 1992 presidential election, Landé concludes "that, for almost all seven candidates, linguistic regional loyalties played a more important part in determining the sources of their electoral support than did other types of census variables [such as religion, education, income, home ownership, and farm tenancy]." He further notes that "[a]mong the explanatory census variables in the tables, languages showed most of the strongest correlation coefficients

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6. Gary W. Cox, *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 211–12.

7. Shugart and Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies*, p. 222.

and percentages of variance in votes accounted for after the influence of other variables had been removed."[8]

Nonetheless, any theoretical explanation for the emergence of a new multi-candidate system that is rooted in the Philippines's ethnolinguistic cleavages is problematic because ethnolinguistic voting is not unique to the country's post-authoritarian political environment. Hirofumi Ando's dissertation on the pre-martial law presidential elections notes that

> a rather high degree of ethnic-linguistic voting was observed in the presidential elections between 1946 and 1969. . . . The independent variables [linguistic affiliation, socioeconomic status, and party preference or identification] explain less than half of the variance in the partisan voting as the squared multiple correlation coefficients in the seven elections denote. Besides, only the cultural-linguistic variance has the exclusive explanatory power for the presidential voting over the last 25 years.[9]

Ando went on to argue that "presidential voting over the past quarter century cannot be predicted or explained by the major ecological variables or the party preference variable. It can be explained to a large degree by a particularistic variable, namely, the ethnolinguistic affiliation with the voters."[10]

Ando's pre-authoritarian finding is remarkably similar to Landé's 1992 political cleavage analysis. Thus, it is difficult to believe that ethnolinguistic heterogeneity is responsible for the extensive fragmentation in the contemporary Philippine presidential elections, because social heterogeneity is a constant variable in both the pre- and post-authoritarian periods. Bimodal presidential competition was sustained over the 20 years of the pre-martial law presidential elections *despite* social heterogeneity.

In this conjunction, there are two contending views concerning the effects of social structure on party systems in the comparative literature. The first view argues that sociological variables provide sufficient explanation on their own for the development of the extant political party system; the effect they have on political party systems is independent of how they interact with such institutional variables as plurality rule. In contrast, the second view holds that the social structure—in the Philippines's case, a structure typified by heterogeneity—by itself does not have any independent effect on political party systems; rather, its importance is a matter of how it interacts with institutional variables. Using data from stable Western democracies, Ordeshook and Shvetsova find that the effect of social heterogeneity on political party

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8. Landé, *Post-Marcos Politics*, pp. 60 and 81.

9. Hirofumi Ando, "Election in the Philippines: Mass-elite Interaction through the Electoral Process, 1946–1969" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1971), pp. 77 and 83.

10. Ibid., p.103.

systems varies depending on district magnitude.[11] Cox, using an expanded data set including many developing democracies, concludes that

> the effective number of parties appears to depend on the product of social heterogeneity and electoral permissiveness, rather than being an additive function of these two factors. The intuitive formulation of this finding is that a polity can tend toward bipartism either because it has a strong electoral system or because it has few cleavages. Multipartism arises as the joint product of many exploitable cleavages and a permissive electoral system. . . . [More specifically,] the effective number of presidential candidates is an interactive product of social and electoral structure.[12]

However, the results of the Philippines's democratic presidential elections do not support either of these views. The country's pre-Marcos era presidential elections show that ethnolinguistic heterogeneity was not sufficient to create multipartism. Despite the presence of such heterogeneity, those elections produced a standard bipartisan system. As for the elections that have been held after the authoritarian era, they demonstrate that the appearance of multipartism is not dependent on the interaction of social heterogeneity with a permissive electoral system. These elections have produced a multiparty system without such interaction. To again foreshadow my argument below, the plurality rule does not cause bipartism when accompanied by single-term limitation; likewise, a strong electoral system tends to create multipartism if such a limitation is imposed along with it.

The second noninstitutional variable that can potentially affect the presidential party system is subnational regionalism. Some would argue for the possibility that the new multicandidate system seen in the Philippines's presidential elections reflects a concurrent transformation of the subnational bipartism that characterized local communities in the pre-Marcos era. Thus, it is necessary to return to the question of whether or not subnational contests or congressional elections at the district level had any influence on presidential elections.

Writing in his seminal work on the pre-martial law Philippine party system, Landé claimed that, even though the causal relationship might be a reciprocal one, national bipartisan competition reflected local or subnational bipartism. The origin of the local bipartism in turn lay in the dyadic or bilateral personalistic relationships characteristic of Philippine society at the local level:

> In a homogeneous community devoid of the multiple segmentation of castes, lineages, or religious denominations and intensely devoted to the carrying on of popu-

11. Peter Ordeshook and Olga Shvetsova, "Ethnic Heterogeneity, District Magnitude, and the Number of Parties," *American Journal of Political Science* 38:1 (February 1994).

12. Cox, *Making Votes Count*, p. 221.

larity contests of all sorts, competition predictably produces two major groups, each supported by roughly half of the population. . . . This functional bifactionalism [in local communities] . . . appears to have been a factor in the persistence of a [national] two-party system during most of the country's recent history. [Once again,] the remarkable stability of the two-party system since 1946 can be traced in large part to the stability of the provincial factional alignments and rivalries upon which they are based.[13]

This is a variety of what Cox calls projection theory: local bipartism, in Landés's scheme, projects itself onto the nation-wide electoral field.[14]

The primary interest in the present article does not lie in analyzing the causality of linkage between national and subnational bipartism. Rather, as noted above, it is in whether or not the bipartism-to-multipartism transformation at the national level has been accompanied by one in the subnational party system. I analyze congressional elections at the district level to see if this is the case. While congressional elections may be for seats in a national government body, the unit of competition itself is a local district; hence, the results of congressional election reveal local elite alignments.

Table 2 shows the effective number of congressional candidates (N_c) at the district level at those times when there was a concurrent presidential election. The cut-off points are set at 2 and 3.5. Duverger's Law predicts that there will be 2 candidates since the district magnitude is 1 and the electoral system uses plurality to determine who has won and lost. As for 3.5, this is the maximum number of candidates that the Generalized Duverger's Rule allows with a district magnitude of 1.

If the post-Marcos era presidential elections had reflected local-level elite realignments, the effective number of congressional candidates at the district level should also have increased after the authoritarian interlude. One therefore would have expected the proportion of $N_c \leq 2$ in the table to have decreased and the proportion of $N_c > 3.5$ to have increased. However, the data in the table do not bear this prediction out. The proportion of districts whose effective number of candidates was smaller than or equal to 2 in 1998 was not notably different from those seen in the pre-Marcos era. The proportion was virtually equivalent to those seen in the 1960s and considerably greater than those of the 1940s and 1950s. In addition, the proportion of districts with the effective number of candidates greater than 3 in 1998 was not remarkably greater than what was seen before the onset of the authoritarian regime. It was by and large smaller than those of the pre-authoritarian period. Thus, there was no dramatic change in the pattern of traditional local

13. Carl H. Landé, *Leaders, Factions, and Parties: The Structure of Philippine Politics*, Southeast Asian Studies Monograph Series, no. 6 (New Haven: Yale University, 1965), pp. 18 and 34.

14. Cox, *Making Votes Count*, pp. 182–85.

TABLE 2 *Effective Number of Candidates (N_c) in Concurrent Congressional Elections at the District Level*

Year	$N_c \leq 2$	$2 < N_c \leq 3.5$	$3.5 < N_c$
1949	26.5	62.7	9.8
1953	27.5	56.9	15.7
1957	25.6	62.4	12.0
1961	41.3	48.1	10.6
1965	52.4	40.8	6.8
1969	55.1	38.5	6.4
1998	54.3	36.2	9.5

SOURCES: Commission on Elections, *Votes for Members of House of Representatives 1946–1949: Votes Received by Candidates for Members of House of Representatives on April 23, 1946, and November 8, 1949* (Manila: BOP, c. 1950); id., *Report of Commission on Elections* (Manila: BOP, 1954, 1958, 1962, 1967, and 1971); Commission on Elections, "Certified List of Province Candidates May 11, 1998, National and Local Elections" (Manila: Commission on Elections, February 14, 2000), computer printout.

NOTE: Election results for 1992 are unavailable; the official report on the results of the 1946 election in major urban areas including Manila was incomplete. The effective number of political parties when counted at the local district level is lower since Philippine political parties field more than one candidate under the same party banner for some congressional districts, which are called "free zones." Consequently, the effective number of congressional candidates in such free zones is not the same as the effective number of congressional political parties. The focus here is on the effective number of candidates; party labeling is disregarded.

bipartism. In other words, despite the major change to the presidential party system after Marcos, pre-authoritarian local elite alignments did not experience any notable transformation.

Consequently, the dramatic increase in the effective number of presidential candidates participating in modern elections is not due to some factor inherent in local districts. It is more likely to be related to a failure of national-level elites to coordinate with one another. The next section will show that, rather than the variables that have been explored above, the principal cause for the transformation in the party system is the single-term limitation introduced with the 1987 Constitution.

Term Limits and Party Systems

The effective number of candidates in the pre-authoritarian presidential elections with two-term limitation was much smaller than the corresponding figure in the post-authoritarian contests that use the same plurality-based electoral system but have a single-term limitation. In this section, I demonstrate the difference through a comparison of congressional and senatorial elections with presidential elections, focusing on term limits.

TABLE 3 *Effective Number of Candidates (N_s) and the District Magnitude (M_s) in Concurrent Senate Elections*

Year	N_s	M_s	N_s/M_s
1953	14.7	8	1.8
1957	21.6	8	2.7
1961	16.2	8	2.0
1965	16.8	8	2.1
1969	14.9	8	1.9
1992	31.2	12	2.6
1998	25.1	12	2.1

SOURCES: Commission on Elections, *Report of the Commission on Elections* (Manila: BOP, 1954, 1958, 1962, 1967, 1971, and 1993); and id., "National Tally Sheet: Senatorial Canvass Report, no. 16" (Manila: Commission on Elections, September 9, 1999), computer printout.
NOTE: Results for the 1949 senatorial election were unavailable. There were no term limits from 1953 to 1969, while a two-term limit had been imposed on senators by the time of the 1992 and 1998 elections.

With respect to congressional elections, the data show that there has not been any significant change in the effective number of candidates at the district level since the end of the authoritarian era. I argue that is due to the fact that a three-term limit has been adopted for those offices, unlike the single-term limit placed on the presidency. Senators likewise do not face a limit of only a single term—a two-term limit was introduced after Marcos—and senate elections during the same period also have not experienced a dramatic change in the effective number of candidates. The voting system used for senatorial elections has been that of bloc voting, a variation on the plurality rule, which allows an elector to cast as many votes as there are open seats in a given district. The electoral district for the senate has not changed: the nation at large still constitutes the district being contested. Arguably, if the new senate elections had adopted single-term limitation like new presidential elections, the effective number of senate candidates would have gone up.

The results of concurrent senate elections since 1953 presented in Table 3 show that the effective number of candidates has increased after the democratic transition. However, the district magnitude also has increased from eight to 12. Dividing the effective number of candidates (N_s) by the district magnitude (M_s) yields a comparable measure, N_s/M_s. There is not much difference in this weighted N_s between the pre- and post-authoritarian periods. It is true that the value of N_s/M_s in 1992 (2.6) was a bit higher than Duverger's Law predicts. Nonetheless, this figure was still lower than the greatest number in the old democratic period (2.7). The value of N_s/M_s in Philippine senate elections has never exceeded 3.5, the upper limit of the

Generalized Duverger's Rule at a district magnitude of 1. The small change in the weighted effective number of candidates in senate elections after the democratic transition may be largely due to the fact that incumbent senators are allowed to seek immediate reelection, unlike presidential candidates.

The historical comparative analysis of the Philippine presidential, congressional, and senatorial elections leads to a conclusion that single-term limitation tends to mitigate or cancel off the Duvergerian effect of plurality rule. This suggests that plurality rule by itself does not produce the Duvergerian effect unless accompanied by an immediate reelection rule.

If this is the case, how then does the single-term limitation increase the effective number of presidential candidates or, alternatively, mitigate the downward pressure by Duverger's Law? First, the single-term limitation increases the effective number of candidates in plurality, rule-based elections because none of the individuals running has the incumbency advantage. Such a limitation significantly lowers the entry barrier for prospective candidates. Second, the restriction also lowers the cost of loss since a loser in one election is granted another opportunity to run soon. Third, it shortens the cycle of elite circulation as a greater number of persons will have served as president in a given period. Fourth, the time horizon of the players in presidential contests shortens, making it more difficult to coordinate candidacies. In general, shortsighted players find it harder to cooperate with one another or create strong comradeship. Under plurality rule with a single-term limitation, prospective presidential candidates have a strong incentive to campaign independently instead of joining forces with other candidates.

Term Limits and Party Systems: Beyond the Philippines

One may still suspect that this systematic finding is idiosyncratic or case-sensitive to the Philippines; it might not be robust if applied to other democratic countries. One of the best ways to tackle this challenging question would be to do a regression analysis of presidential elections in other countries while controlling for other influences on the effective number of candidates. In this article I will not conduct a statistical test of the hypothesis that a single-term limitation, when combined with plurality rule, makes the effective number of candidates greater than Duverger's Law predicts or, to put this another way, that plurality rule when accompanied by a single-term limitation does not have its putative effect on a political party system. Instead, I will discuss another Asian case, the South Korean presidential election in 1987, that seems to indicate that the conclusion reached in the Philippines's case is not idiosyncratic.

It is well-known that in 1987 South Korea's two opposition parties failed to coordinate a united opposition candidacy against the government party's

presidential candidate despite the chances for a single candidate to succeed under the pure and simple plurality rule used to decide the contest. A fragmented presidential party system emerged as a result and the government party won the presidency with 36.6% of the national vote. Many believe that the primary reason why the democratic opposition camp failed to coordinate was because of the emergence of regionalism as a newly dominant political cleavage after the decline of the violent confrontations between democratic and authoritarian camps. Others believe that the democrat's failure arose once the confrontations between the democratic and authoritarian camps shifted to the ballot box instead of street violence, the opposition was split by regionalism.

It would not be difficult to explain multipartism in the country's subsequent plurality rule-based parliamentary elections in 1998 as a consequence of regional divisions since the districts in those elections were subnational. Yet, it is not so easy to offer regional divisions as an explanation for the opposition's failure to coordinate in the nationwide presidential election. Regionalism might explain how many votes each presidential candidate obtained in the election, but it still falls short of explaining why the democratic opposition camp at the beginning failed to unite behind a single candidate against the relatively strong one entered by the government.

The ruling Democratic Justice Party (DJP), which had won about 30% of the vote in the 1985 National Assembly election, was expected to get at least that much in the 1987 contest. If the opposition had been united, the DJP's chance of winning the all-important election would have been low. In a three-way race, however, the DJP stood a good chance of winning. According to a national survey published in the *Los Angeles Times*, Roh Tae Woo, the governing party candidate, was backed by 30.8% of the respondents, followed by the two leading pro-democracy candidates—Kim Dae Jung (16.4%) and Kim Young Sam (14.7%)—and then Kim Jong Pil (8.3%). The remaining 30% divided between "can't say" and "no response."[15] This survey gave strong evidence that the DJP's candidate would be more likely to win the election in a three-way competition.

Despite the prospects that the DJP's candidate would win such a contest, the two leading pro-democratic candidates nevertheless did not choose to coordinate. The vote for the opposition camp thus was split and Roh won the election. The decision by the two Kims to forego working together arguably was because of the fact that, owing to the single-term limitation, they would have to wait only five years if they lost before they got another opportunity to make a bid for the presidency. Furthermore, they would each have a better

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15. Sam Jameson, "Paper Faces Prosecution Threat If It Publishes Results," *Los Angles Times*, November 24, 1987, p. 5.

chance of getting elected if they waited, since Roh would not be able to contest again. Even if they didn't work together in 1987 to keep the DJP candidate out, they still could expect to have a good chance to become president in the near future.

Conclusion

The Philippines's current party system differs significantly from the bipartisan system that functioned prior to the authoritarian Marcos interlude. The various institutional and non-institutional variables often used to account for the effective number of political parties or candidates that can be expected to appear under given conditions did not provide sufficient explanation for this dramatic shift having taken place. They could not offer reasons behind the substantial increase in the effective number of presidential candidates after the demise of the Marcos regime. Looking more closely, one finds in comparing congressional and senatorial elections with presidential contests that only in this latter category is there a substantial increase in the effective number of candidates and the emergence of a multiparty framework. The other national elections retain their pre-authoritarian bipartisan nature.

The explanation for this transformation to the Philippines's presidential party landscape is that the manifestation of this divergence lies in the adoption of a single-term limit for presidents in the 1987 Constitution. In general, the country's experience indicates that the plurality rule when accompanied by a single-term limit does not lead to a bipartisan system as Duverger's Law might otherwise lead one to expect. The case here implies that the Duvergerian effect of plurality rule is nullified or mitigated by the presence of such a limitation and consequently a multiparty system results. Furthermore, the South Korean case showed that this finding can be applied to other countries that bar incumbent presidents from seeking immediate reelection.

After its long experience of predatory authoritarianism, the Philippines has introduced term limits for all elected representatives—most notably its presidents—to prevent the revival of despotism and distribute power more equitably. The multicandidate landscape that now typifies presidential elections appears to be what those who crafted the 1987 Constitution had intended. Yet, the extensive partisan fragmentation of such elections is more likely to create governments with weak mandates and less able to operate effectively. Ultimately, this ironically could lead to democratic instability, which would be the last thing that the Constitution's authors wanted.