

Reorganizing the Executive Branch of Government for Political Development: The Philippine Experience

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Changes in the executive branch of government may be due to: a) formal changes in the Constitution particularly as to the form of government; b) the behavioral dynamics of the chief executive; and c) the reorganization of the bureaucracy. The political system in the Philippines has moved from a developing democracy within a presidential form to a constitutional-authoritarian regime with mixed presidential-parliamentary form to a struggling resurgent democracy with a presidential form of government. These changes were provided for in the 1935, 1973 and 1987 Constitutions. Political development in the Philippines has been influenced by executive leadership, that is, the Philippine President. This is said to be due to the patriarchal culture of the Filipinos. The political style or the built-up image of a president affects the political processes of authority and public opinion. Each president has his own style of reorganization which is used to design the kind of organization and system that would improve performance.

Statist Approach To Political Development: Terms of Reference

The Philippines has experienced a series of events in the political sphere of social life. This raises the question of whether the political system has improved or deteriorated. In the technical language of the social sciences, the matter is a case of development. But by itself, the very notion of development eludes universal definition and any discussion may have to stipulate meanings and indicators.

Generally, development conveys the idea of change from one form to another where certain characteristics are taken up. There are some processes of change, certain directions as well as conditions occurring on the observed phenomena, to indicate that development has taken place.

Development in the political sense must certainly refer to human behavior and the exercise of power. Society as a collectivity of individuals has, over time, created structures entrusted with the power to make decisions for all. The dynamics of power relationships are usually referred to as politics.

The analysis of politics has been facilitated by the intellectual abstraction of reality into theories, models, or approaches. One of these is the so-called sys-

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tems-approach, which looks into the interactions of structures, functions, and processes - the very idea of political system intended to make analysis dynamic by getting away from the traditional analysis of the constitution and parts thereof. Furthermore, it posited that political analysis need not be limited to specifically defined phenomena as a state but expanded to an identified political system which can be operationally described and analyzed.¹

The state or statist approach to development need not necessarily be outmoded. It can continue to serve the purpose of understanding development in the formal aspects of the state while the systems approach can provide another level of understanding by focusing on the real forces of power interactions.

Focus of the Paper

This paper deals with changes in the executive branch of the Philippine government due to: a) formal changes in the Constitution, particularly on the form of government; b) the dynamics of behavior of the chief executive; and c) the reorganization of the bureaucracy. Basically, the question or issue is the impact of these reorganizations of the executive branch of government to the directions of political development in terms of a resurgent democracy after the people's revolution of February 1986. What has been articulated is the restoration of democratic norms, principles and practices after the downfall of a so-called authoritarian regime.

The following conceptual framework provides the direction for the study of the Executive branch. (See Figure I)

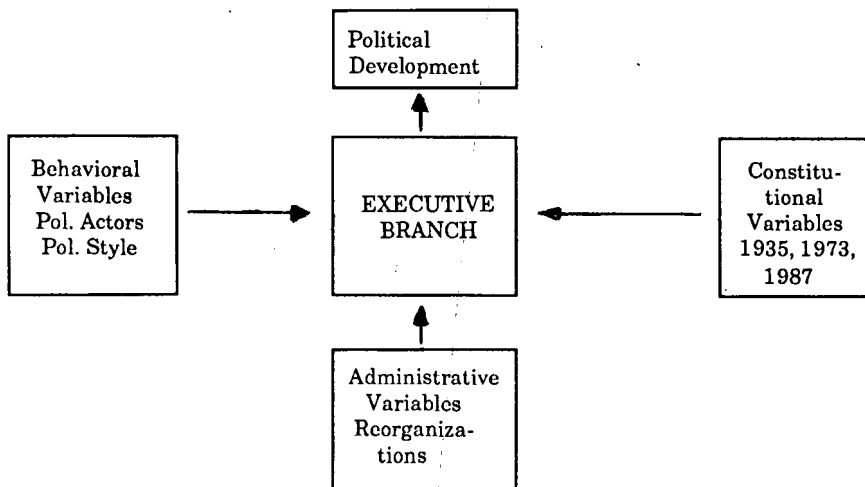


Figure I. Conceptual Framework for the Study of the Executive Branch

The features of the executive branch of government in the Philippines can be understood in terms of:

- 1) the experience with the rule of deposed F. Marcos labeled as constitutional authoritarianism;
- 2) the onset of the Aquino regime with orientations towards the restoration of democracy, freedom and constitutionalism;
- 3) the changes in the 1935 Constitution under the 1973 and 1987 Constitutions;
- 4) the political style of the chief executive; and
- 5) the reorganization plans for the administrative system focusing on the significance of the 1959 Government Survey and Reorganization Commission (GSRC), the 1972 Integrated Reorganization Plan (IRP) by the Commission on Reorganization, the 1984 Revisions on the IRP by the Presidential Commission on Reorganization and the 1986 Reorganization Plan of the Presidential Commission on Government Reorganization.

The basic assumption of this paper is that in Philippine political experience, the President has played a prominent role in influencing the directions of the political system.

Forms of Development of The State: The Range of Theories

In terms of time dimension, theories on the state have been labeled as ancient-classical (B.C. To Fall of the Roman Empire), medieval (from the Fall of the Roman Empire to the Renaissance), modern (the Renaissance to the post Industrial Revolution); and contemporary (the post World War II).²

The quality of state theories can be described around the criterion of whether the focus is on the ideal state or the actual state. The idealist - speculative - philosophic type develops the normative nature of the elements of the state - the "what ought to be" which serves as a framework of values. The empirical form of theories describes and explains "what is actually happening," to provide a realistic and actual typology of states.

Implications of State Theory To Political Development

The concern of theories in political development has been the very nature of "what constitutes a developed political system." Some of the terminologies used to identify political development are structural differentiation, participation, democratization, integration, and capabilities.³

On the other hand, theories that have concentrated on the state deal directly with the issues of power, who should rule, how many, what for, what are the relationships of power structures, and what are the ends and means.

In effect, the form of government is the central issue: The ancient philosophers Aristotle and Polybius have anticipated that there is no form of state and government that can be permanently stable - every form of government carries with it a germ of decay. To this, Montesquieu responds with his concept of the branches of government - which is the antecedent of most present forms of government.

Contemporary constitution-making can therefore be viewed as an attempt towards development. The history of the rise and fall of governments and the changes in the constitution of states indicate a continuing search for the suitable power structure.

Types of States and Forms of Government

Contemporary labelings of the kinds of states and forms of government do not merely denote the answer to the question 'who should rule,' but address the question on the extent of the power to rule.

Authoritarian states are thought to have governments with a tighter control over the ruled. Who should rule (in theory); or who are in control (in practice)? The case could be that one strong man rules, or a few, or a party, or the military.⁴

The fascist state continues to convey the authoritarian control of government as it has been in World War II Italy. On the other hand, the socialist state of Marx, with its dictatorship of the proletariat and state control of the means of production has been viewed as authoritarian by Western capitalists.⁵

Newer forms of states labeled as corporatist and as bureaucratic - authoritarian have emerged. The state government apparatus absorbs or co-opts other structures of government such as the bureaucracy, or the private sector in order to impose power and control over the lives of the people and behavior in society.

Democracy, the anti-thesis of authoritarianism, is a traditional if not a classic theory which locates the source and exercise of power in the hands of the people, the majority thereof, or its representatives. Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau have catapulted the social contract theory as the basis of power with which democracy has had enough reason to justify itself. But the trials of democracy continue to test Aristotle's position that democracy could be the rule of the mob. The people-based power of democracy also faces the contentions of the elitist position of Mosca and Pareto that with all the sugar-coating of democracy, the truth is that only a few rule.

The questions of source of power and who should rule have set the parameters for contending ideologies and have labeled states and governments as communist or democratic. This time it is not a question of number but a matter of economic relationships to power structures. That is, whether free enterprise or state ownership of the means of production becomes the core principle of the state.

Core principles of power are inevitably determined and accepted by societies to underlie if not constitute, the intrinsic nature of their state. But after that point is settled, the matter of form of government becomes another crucial question. After all, the design of the machinery by which the state will operate is just as important as its ideology. Government, its structure, functions and powers is the pipeline of state operations.

Montesquieu's notion of the three branches of government - the executive, legislative, and judicial, reminds the modern world of what Aristotle had already long ago thought of as a mixed constitution or polity. The mixture of the elements of the rule of one, rule of the few, and rule of the many, attempts to remedy the germs of decay of the rule of one, a few or of many people. The parliamentary and presidential forms of government have thereby evolved to resolve the problems of ancient kingship, aristocracy and democracy, which eventually, in time, turned into dictatorship, tyranny, oligarchy and anarchy.⁶

Despite the years of experience in politics and government, it is still difficult to choose between presidential and parliamentary forms of government. In theory and in practice, the stipulation of the arrangement of power between and among the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, as well as between government and the people, characterize whether authoritarianism or democracy exists.

Issues of Political Development: The Case of the Philippines

Fundamental Changes

The political development of the Philippines as a state in terms of ideology and form of government can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The Philippines was a DEVELOPING DEMOCRACY, PRESIDENTIAL in form when it became an independent state in 1946 till 1972. This was characterized by the presence of a two-party system, periodic elections, pressure group politics and national economic planning, as well as the operations of a bicameral legislature and an independent judiciary.
- 2) The Philippines became a CONSTITUTIONAL - AUTHORITARIAN regime, with a mixed PRESIDENTIAL-PARLIAMENTARY form of government, having BUREAUCRATIC-AUTHORITARIAN features from 1972-1986. This was characterized by martial-law, the strong-man rule of former Pres. Marcos, the abolition of the legislature, a new Constitution of 1973, and greater role of the bureaucracy.
- 3) The Philippines is now a struggling RESURGENT DEMOCRACY since February 1986, anchored on the concept of "people's power," restructured by a Constitutional Commission into a presidential form of government, and threatened by instabilities from a dissatisfied military organization, a communist insurgency and separatist Muslim rebels.

The Pivotal Role of Executive Leadership

It will be observed that political development in the Philippines has been strongly influenced by executive leadership, i.e., the Philippine President. Explanations have laid out the influence of patriarchal culture of the Filipinos — the tendency to depend on elders, or, on so-called "elites" in society. It has also been said that Filipino culture has strong streaks of authoritarian-submission patterns tracing it from the historic rule of the *datus* to the autocratic rule of the Spaniards. But while this is so, US democratic influences have oriented the Filipinos to principles of consent, legitimacy, suffrage, and participation.

These assertions can thus be advanced:

- 1) The formal structure of government is related to either strengthening or weakening executive leadership. In a presidential system, the

executive is weakened when the President does not belong to the party in power. However, when the President's political party is in power in the Legislature, the party and the President's leadership can push for decision-making. In the Philippines, a weak executive - strong legislature tendency has taken its toll in creating problems and instabilities.

- 2) The rise to power of Marcos when he proclaimed martial law demonstrated the capacity of a strong executive to make changes in society. The Constitution of 1935 was set aside in favor of the 1973 Constitution, reorganizing government into a parliamentary system.

In the constitution, the President's exercise of executive powers in the 1935 Constitution was supplanted by the Prime Minister in the 1973 Constitution. But in practice, Marcos' leadership style and use of referenda justified his exercise of both types of executive powers in both Constitutions.

Marcos declared martial law, and abolished the institutional manifestations of democracy: legislature, elections, political parties. It was authoritarianism that was constitutional. It was a set-up that was supposedly intended for national development through:

- a) reorganization of the bureaucracy for development administration;
- b) centralization of planning for economic development; and
- c) one-party system for quick and responsible decision-making in lieu of the tedious process of legislation and elections.

The Marcos years were an experience in political and administrative restructuring.

- 3) The fall of Marcos in 1986 placed the Philippines among the ranks of democracies in transition — from authoritarian one-man/one-party rule to democracy. The onset of the Aquino government from a people's power - February revolution signalled another dismantling of the structure of government. The 1986 Constitutional Commission is another attempt in restructuring political leadership for political development.

Restructuring Political Leadership

From the opinions expressed about the time of the sessions of the Constitutional Commission of 1986, two contentions are possibly valid:

- 1) The role of the executive was a critical factor for the choice of system of government.
- 2) The historical experience that showed the tremendous impact of the powers of the Chief Executive resulted in some form of phobic reaction to structural loopholes towards authoritarianism.

For instance, Ramon Gonzales, a 1971 Constitutional Convention delegate, wrote that the biggest mistake of the 1934 Constitutional Convention was "the failure to include in a transitory provision, the elimination of a provision authorizing the President to declare martial law and suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in case of invasion, insurrection or rebellion or eminent danger thereof."⁷

Of course this raised further debates on the need of the state for defense and protection against threats and dangers to its security. The point though was the need for the provision of excessive powers for the Executive. Thus, attention was called towards limiting the powers of the Chief Executive.⁸

As to whether the system should go presidential or parliamentary, the arguments included that the Presidential system of government can provide an effective check and balance against the abuses or excesses in any one of the three main branches of the government but that term of office and martial powers of the President would have to be curtailed.⁹

The final test as to what direction the system of government should go was the ratification of the Constitution in February 1987.

The features of constitutional change concerning the powers of the Executive Branch of government in the Philippines are briefly summarized below.¹⁰

Table 1. Executive Power Compared

<i>1935 Constitution As Amended</i>	<i>1973 Constitution As Amended</i>	<i>1987 Constitution</i>
1) Executive power shall be vested upon the President	1) Executive power shall be exercised by the Prime Minister with the assistance of the Cabinet	1) Executive power shall be vested upon the President

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 2) President holds office for a term of 4 years | 2) PM... may resign for any cause without vacating his seat in the National Assembly | 2) President has a term of 6 years not eligible for reelection |
| 3) President is elected by direct vote of the people | 3) PM is elected by a majority of members of National Assembly from among themselves | 3) President is elected by direct vote of the people |
| 4) President appoints heads of executive departments, offices of Army, Navy, Air Force | 4) Prime Minister appoints members of cabinet, majority of whom are from the National Assembly | 4) President appoints heads of executive departments, Offices of armed forces, Navy... |
| 5) President submits budget of receipts and expenditures | 5) PM presents programs of government | 5) President submits a budget of expenditures and sources of financing... |
| 6) President has control of all executive departments, supervision of local government | 6) PM has control of all ministries | 6) President has control of all executive departments, bureaus, offices |
| 7) President is Commander-in-Chief of all Armed Forces and whenever necessary may call on Armed Forces to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion, insurrection, or rebellion. In case of invasion insurrection, he may suspend the privilege | 7) PM is Commander-in-Chief of all Armed Forces of the Philippines and when it becomes necessary may call out such Armed Forces to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion, insurrection, or rebellion. In case of invasion, insurrection, he may suspend the privilege of the | 7) President is Commander-in-Chief of all Armed Forces of the Philippines, he may call out such Armed Forces to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion or rebellion, when the public safety requires it, he may, for a period not ex- |

<p>of the writ of habeas corpus or place the Phil. or any part thereof under martial law</p>	<p>writ of habeas corpus, or place the Phil. or any part thereof under martial law</p>	<p>ceeding 60 days suspend the writ of habeas corpus or place the Phil. or any part thereof under martial law. (Art. VII Sec. 18 stipulates limitations by Congress and review by the Supreme Court. Martial law does not suspend the Constitution).</p>
<p>8) President has power to grant reprieves, commutations... except in cases of impeachment..</p>	<p>8) The PM except in cases of impeachment may grant reprieves, commutations, pardons.</p>	<p>8) Except in cases of impeachment, the President may grant pardon, reprieves, commutations.</p>
	<p>9) PM may contract and guarantee foreign and domestic loans...</p>	<p>9) President may contract or guarantee in behalf of the Republic of the Philippines.</p>

**The Domain of Executive Power:
The Administrative System**

The domain of the Chief Executive is and has always been the executive departments, bureaus and offices over which control is explicitly stipulated. He shall ensure that the laws are faithfully executed.

The direct pipeline of power of the executive is this hierarchy of bureaus and offices - the machinery for the delivery of services in pursuance of law and national policies. The bureaucracy, as this organization has been generally referred to, is the institutionalization of the political and administrative leadership of the executive. The performance of the system of administration spells the performance of the executive on which he stands or falls.

The style of leadership of the President empirically translates democratic theory and constitutional principles into practice. And by the dynamics of

political power, this control is excessively exercised. The President's orientation towards centralization or decentralization is a matter of informal subterfuges around formal structures and legal provisions. Such conditions were observed to some extent in the Marcos administration, and, still to be determined in the Aquino government, with its pronounced policy of consultation with the people, democracy, participation and people's power.

In the case of most of the presidents, reorganizations were used as instruments to design the kind of organization and system that would facilitate performance.

Reorganization in Retrospect: Stimulus, Objectives and Thrusts

- 1) In 1947, a year after independence, President Manuel Roxas addressed the post World War II problems with changes in the administrative system to achieve maximum efficiency and economy in government operations.¹¹
- 2) By 1949, President Elpidio Quirino again saw the need for reorganization for greater efficiency, improvement of public service, economy of means and responsiveness to public needs.¹²
- 3) The third reorganization was undertaken by Pres. Ramon Magsaysay who still saw the necessity of a general reorganization to deal with waste of funds, government misconduct and inefficiency. Republic Act No. 997 and 1241 became the enabling acts for the Government Survey and Reorganization Commission (GSRC) to undertake a more comprehensive reorganization than those before.¹³
- 4) President Carlos P. Garcia was not satisfied with the then existing system, even if the GSRC had attempted to address the issues of morality and efficiency.¹⁴
- 5) President Diosdado Macapagal initiated his own reform program in 1962 to improve the formulation and implementation of consistent economic plans and fiscal and monetary policies, maximum coordination of departments of the executive branch for economic objectives.¹⁵
- 6) In 1965, Pres. Ferdinand Marcos organized a Commission on Reorganization (COR). It took 3 years of preparation for a bill to be enacted (RA No. 5435) in September 1968. The Integrated Reorganization Plan was submitted to Congress in December 31, 1970 but its adoption was delayed by varying reactions. Even until August 1972, the prospects of adopting the IRP was uncertain. A Presi-

dential Commission to Review and Revise the Reorganization Plan was created in December 1979 with the same members as the COR. The declaration of martial law in September 21, 1972 gave Marcos the power to implement the IRP. PD No. 1 eventually effected the IRP as the first administrative reform measure of the martial law regime.¹⁶

The IRP was described as innovative and was geared towards growth. Compared to the GSRC - which employed a foreign consultant, Louis J. Kroeger - the IRP was an all-Filipino effort with the participation of the private sector, the members of Congress and the Cabinet.

The objectives of the IRP were to promote simplicity, economy and efficiency in the government to enable government to pursue programs for social and economic development. These may be accomplished through structural and operational changes such as: a) limiting expenditures; b) eliminating duplication and overlapping; c) consolidating; d) abolishing services, activities and functions not promoting efficiency; and e) defining and limiting such services and functions.¹⁷

The key guiding principles of the IRP denote the responsiveness of the Plan and the Commission to current indicators of development as responsive capabilities, administrative efficiency, accountability, decentralization, and access. These may be gleaned from the following principles:¹⁸

- a) establish an administrative system that is development oriented;
- b) reorganize administrative machinery to increase its capacity to implement;
- c) achieve greatest output from the manpower, financial and other resources available;
- d) group bureaus and offices and other organizational units to minimize conflict, overlapping and duplication and achieve simplicity, economy and efficiency;
- e) foster administrative decentralization on delegation of authority for greater participation;

- f) clarify lines of authority, improve channels of communication and strengthen the spirit of responsibility and accountability in public service;
- g) adopt safeguards within the administrative system; and
- h) take into account cultural and environmental factors in administration.

By June 1978 much of the IRP was accomplished, with major modifications. Starting May 1973, new departments were created namely: the Department of Tourism; the Department of Public Highways (1974); the Department of Industry (June 1974); the Department of Youth and Sports Development (1974); the Department of Energy (1977); and the Department of Human Settlements (June 1978).

Other departments were reorganized and split such as the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources into the Department of Agriculture and Department of Natural Resources.¹⁹

By 1978 an Interim *Batasang Pambansa* was convened and at the same time existing departments were renamed ministries. This was part of the change from presidential to parliamentary system of government. With this, the heads of ministries became members of the National Assembly.²⁰

Ministries were again reorganized by splitting or expanding them as in the case of the Ministry of Public Works, Transportation and Communication which became the Ministry of Public Works and Highways in July 1981 and the Ministry of Transportation and Communication. The Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Industry were reconstituted to Ministry of Trade and Industry (July 22, 1981).²¹

Further amendments to the Constitution in 1981 separated the office of the Prime Minister from that of the President. The Cabinet was headed by the PM and made responsible to the *Batasang Pambansa*. Then, there was the creation of an Executive Committee headed by the Prime Minister which could assist the President in the operations of government. The amendments in 1984 later abolished the Executive Committee but provided for the position of an elective Vice-President.²²

7. Corazon Aquino assumed the presidency after the February 22-25, 1986 people's revolution that forced Marcos to leave the country. Aquino created the Presidential Commission on Government Reorganization (PCGR). The report of the PCGR stated that the main problems of the bureaucracy are:
- a) centralization of authority;
 - b) interventionist structures, policies and programs; and
 - c) bureaucratic gigantism.²³

The PCGR observed that government corporations increased from 75 in 1970 to around 250 in 1985. These had become the instrument for the so-called cronies to plunder the economy for their own purposes. The PCGR perceived that government was converted into a centralized machinery with decision-making in Malacañang through presidential decrees, executive orders and letters of instruction. The Marcos government was said to have intervened with the private sector, bringing industries under government sponsored monopolies. The host of ministries, commissions, offices, boards, authorities and corporations overlapped and duplicated functions. There emerged a huge, gargantuan administrative machinery with a maze of inter-relationship.

In effect, the PCGR had enough reason to undertake another exercise in reorganization planning.

*Restructuring The Executive Branch by Reorganization Plans:
Some Key Macro-Points of Observation*

The reorganization plan serves the purpose of providing guidelines and alternative structures for administration.

Here are some points for observation concerning the macro-features of the plans undertaken by the: a) Government Survey Reorganization Commission (GSRC) in 1959; b) by the Commission on Reorganization (COR) in 1979; c) the Presidential Commission on Reorganization (PCR); and d) the Philippine Commission on Government Reorganization (PCGR).

**Table 2. Reorganization Plan Compared:
Some Key Points of Observation**

<i>GSRC Plan 1954-1956 Pres. Magsaysay RA 997 & RA 1241</i>	<i>COR IRP Sept.'68 Mar. 1972 RA 5435</i>	<i>PCR IRP June 1984 Adjust- ments</i>	<i>PCCR 1986</i>
1.1.detachment of auxilliary staff functions from the Office of the Pres.	1.1.departments and agencies given functions from the Office of the Pres.	1.1.creation of new de- partments; splits and mergers of departments	1.1.conge- neric or conglome- rate ap- proach to reduce number of depart- ments
1.2.Social wel- fare adminis- tration to Department level		1.2. changing of depart- ments to ministries as transi- tion to parliament- ary system; members of <i>Batasang Pambansa</i> as heads of minis- tries	1.2.less direct approach by use of Pre- sidential Coordina- tors to interface the Of- fice of the Pre- sident with de- partments & sectors
		1.3.crea- tion of Office of Prime Minister separate from Of- fice of the Pre- sident	
		1.4.Cabinet under Prime Minister with	

- new relationship with Office of the President
2. Centralization in the Office of the President because of current level of development
3. decentralization by setting regional offices of Ministries
3. decentralization by means of local autonomy; expansion of financial resources for local executives; less control; basic services at local levels
- 3.1. initiating the development of local autonomy
- 3.1. giving the departments the load in the Office of the President
- 3.2. field extension of national agencies with increased authority in the regions
- 3.2. regionalizing the field offices of departments
- 3.3. setting up regional development councils for technical and political participation
4. deconcentration by delegating functions to regions
4. deconcentration by delegating authority to field offices in the regions
4. deconcentration by setting up regional offices under the

			charge of one deputy minister
		5.1. devolution by setting up autonomous regions in Mindanao (plebiscite 1979, 1982)	5.1. devolution by setting up autonomous politics that will take care of central functions while reserved functions will be undertaken by the federal government
		5.2. devolution by creating an integrated form of local government in Metro Manila (referendum Feb. 1975)	
6. Centralized national economic planning for socio-economic development by revitalizing the National Economic Council	6. integrate development planning at local, regional and planning levels with the new NEDA as central planning agency with regional development councils	6. NEDA as central planning for economic development; with regional planning development	6. national economic planning allows privatization; relaxes government intervention in private industry
7. Division of country into 8 regions with regional centers	7. Division of country into 11 regions with regional centers	7. Division of country into 13 regional centers	

8. New civil service law and setting up of regional structures

8. simplified civil service with 3 tier structure and new Career Executive Service

8. reform the Civil Service Commission; Compensation structure tenure, training

9. New department model standardizing staff functions into
a) planning
b) financial/management
c) adm. service

9. departmental to new ministry model with pattern of integration of staff functions in central office and decentralization in the regions
a) planning
b) finance & management
c) administrative services
d) technical

9. ministry model of 1 minister, 3 deputy ministers 2 for bureaus and 1 for regions

Key Issues in The Plan as Implemented²⁴

*Government Service Reorganization Commission (GSRC).*²⁵ The GSRC initiated some significant directions for the development of both administrative and political systems. It laid the groundwork for bringing the government to the people through decentralization of power although it continued a seemingly paradoxical orientation of centralizing power in the President. This double-edged thrust was deemed appropriate because the existing situation was not ready for a full blown decentralization, and that the culture was not ready to get out of centralization. But at the same time, there was the anticipation that the future called for developing the ability or capacities for decentralization.

The initial step for people participation, access and decentralization was the organization of field extensions of national agencies on a regional basis, with increased delegation of authority to the regional offices. The GSRC paved the way for the clarification of the relationships between the national and local governments and greater autonomy to local authorities. The country was divided into 8 regions with a regional center. Furthermore, field operations were to be guided by administrative standards and management policies.

The Office of the President became the focal point for decision-making and the GSRC attempted to streamline the units therein. The issue, though, was the right number of agencies/offices reporting directly to the President.

The GSRC saw the need for national economic planning as it sought to empower and revitalize the national Economic Council, and reduce its size and clarify its functions.

Also, the GSRC recommended a new Civil Service Law and changes in the structure of the Civil Service Commission.

While the GSRC plan can be credited for these seminal contributions, the actual and real problems of implementation offset the intent. Some of the problems that surfaced included either the weak linkage between the President and the offices under him, or on the other hand, too tight and centralized control. There were interferences from Congress particularly impinging on the merit system of the civil service on decision-making. National economic planning was also undermined by a number of factors including the creation of The Presidential Economic Staff which had more access to the President.

The exercise in decentralization showed the gaps in local-regional-national interrelationship. There were also weaknesses in administrative and management policies and processes that linked central and field offices.

Reorganization experienced problems in location of centers, transportation and communication that slowed down the intent of access by the people to government services.

The gaps in the GSRC plan were supposedly addressed by the Integrated Reorganization Plan of 1972 but the experience in reorganization under the Marcos rule had problems of its own.

*The Integrated Reorganization Plan (IRP).*²⁶ It will be observed that the 1972-1986 rule of Marcos was characterized by the reorganization of executive branch almost continuously by way of new structures and mergers or division of existing structure into new ones. The rationale was always development and responsiveness to changes. What was produced was a confusion of what services are done by which agencies. The reorganization objectives of economy, efficiency and effectiveness became academic in the face of the proliferation of agencies, as well as of government corporations.

The problems in the implementation and revision of the IRP may be summarized as arising from the designs for control and political power. Local

government, specifically the barangay, was the power base of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL), the ruling party headed by Marcos thus putting into doubt the very nature of participatory democracy and decentralization. Even the civil service system was placed under allegations of having been coopted into implementing government policies and programs.

There may have been real structural and managerial weaknesses in the text and implementation of the IRP but basically, the anti-Marcos cry of "plunder" has given such stigma to reorganization. As such, the Aquino government calls for change, such as the "de-Marcosification" of the bureaucracy.

But the concepts of autonomous regions, deconcentration, devolution, decentralization, participatory planning as emphasized by the IRP were pursued by the PCGR and the Constitutional Commission indicating the impact of these directions in government reorganizations.

The Presidential Commission on Government Reorganization (PCGR). In the context of the political events that toppled the Marcos regime and the onset of a new government which pledged the return to democracy, the PCGR advanced a very radical alternative of federation. The implications are tremendous because of the lack of experience in this form of government set-up compared to the years of experience in centralization of power. This alternative called for the creation of autonomous polities that will take care of the business of government within respective territories. National and central functions were to be turned over to regional governments with reserved powers for the general federal government. This set-up suggested a full-blown autonomy which had been spurred by the agitation in Muslim Mindanao and the Cordillera regions.

On the other hand, the more traditional approach for the PCGR's option to continue the efforts towards decentralization or local autonomy is through:

- a) deconcentration of central powers and functions and resources to regional and field offices of the national government;
- b) devolution which is the transfer of national government powers, functions and resources to local governments; and
- c) privatization whereby government would relinquish certain functions in favor of the private sector.

This open-mindedness of the PCGR cannot bring about specific features of reorganization unless a decision is made between the two options. This

predicament was resolved by the Constitutional Commission (ConCom) as it incorporated the features of autonomy of regions, devolution, deconcentration and decentralization, within a unitary presidential system of government. Somehow, the Commission pre-empted the implementation of the PCGR plan. On the other hand, it may be said that the Commission took the directions of the PCGR but instead of choosing one between the two alternatives, the Con Com blended the alternative proposals.

Specifically, Article X, Section 14 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of regional development councils or similar bodies for local autonomy, economic and social growth in the region. Autonomous regions for Muslim Mindanao and the Cordilleras represent the compromise with federalism within a unitary framework of government.

Furthermore, the Constitution provides that local governments shall have powers under a decentralized arrangement with the President exercising supervision over them.

In effect, both the PCGR and the Constitutional Commission decongested the powers of the Chief Executive.

Proceeding further, the PCGR can be credited for a new approach in consolidating the Cabinet. The restructuring of the Cabinet to a manageable size was to be done by disaggregating larger ministries or by consolidating smaller ones. But the PCGR, anticipating resistance in this approach, presented a fall-back position. A less direct approach is the creation of the staff - advisory support within the Office of the President through presidential coordinators. This will effect an interface between the President and other agencies, offices and sectors. Offhand, this proposal conveys more realism as the people may not be able to take too many dramatic changes all at once.

As a last point of observation, the PCGR designed a ministry/department model thereby redesigning the IRP model. But the use of Executive Orders by President Aquino for reorganization of specific departments and of other features of government may yet test the provisions of the PCGR Reorganization Plan.

Impact of the Restructuring of the Executive Branch

Political Macro-Framework of Government: The Tensions of Executive Power

Basically, the changes in the processes and power relationship of the executive branch of government, particularly of the Chief Executive, exert a tremendous impact in defining the very nature of the government. The classic forms are presidential and parliamentary — with variations, as nation-states

take their historico-socio-cultural-economic foundations into consideration. In the Philippines, the experience of a mix of parliamentary and presidential powers created confusion. And while a lip-service transition to parliamentary form was attempted, the position of President, not to mention the personality of the occupant, threw the balance of power in its favor.

The features of executive power situate the government, as well as the state as a whole, in the continuum of totalitarianism and democracy.

The answers to the classic questions of political-state theory help point out this locus of the state and its government:

<i>Question</i>	<i>The Answer of the Philippine Political System</i>
a. who rules	the people
b. what is the source of power?	the people
c. who exercises the power of the people?	representatives
d. how is power exercised?	through the executive, legislative, judicial branches of government
e. is power absolute or limited?	limited
f. how is power limited?	

It is the last question that creates the tension in what has been laid out in the previous questions and answers as a democracy.

Although this paper focused only on the executive branch of government, the question is should executive power be stronger and legislative power weaker or vice-versa? Also, would an equalization of power be really possible? What is the problem with Philippine democracy in this regard?

As it is, the process of constitutional experimentation shows the bias for the clipping of presidential executive powers and the strengthening of the decision-making powers of the elected representatives in the legislature.

But the experience of the rise and fall of political regimes show how the dynamics of power-play by political actors can transgress the government-by-constitution to a government-by-men.

The Dynamics of Power: Political Leadership Style

The executive head of government in search of real power, functions and roles can be the style of political leadership. The very personality of the chief political actor affects the operationalization of the executive position.

Very briefly, the political style of Marcos was a powerful combination of abilities for rhetoric, image-building, and symbolism. He succeeded in using the martial law powers of the 1935 Constitution to replace the traditional institutions of democracy. Eliminating the two-party system and elections, he resorted to a one-party system, the KBL, and use of referenda, with the barangay as local government unit, and military support to consolidate control. The bureaucracy and the private sector were brought into the mainstream of government to implement the policies and programs of the regime. More importantly, he succeeded in clamping down opposition as he made political prisoners out of those who did not cooperate with him.

On the other hand, Corazon Aquino created the image of a "plain housewife" taking it upon herself to pursue the cause of slain husband Ninoy Aquino. Her campaign for presidency promised freedom for political prisoners and the restoration of power to the people. Her 18-month regime is characterized by her peace negotiations with leftist - communists and separatist Moslems; release of political prisoners; restoration of the legislature and elections under a Constitution drafted by an appointed Constitutional Commission and ratified by the people.

As Corazon Aquino has declared her orientation to freedom and democracy, the political processes of public opinion, pressure groups, and party systems have again surfaced for interest articulation and participation.

For both Marcos and Aquino, the use of Executive Orders permitted the flow of executive power and authority into government structures. With these, the signature of the Chief Executive caused things to happen as the "wheels" of bureaucracy were put to work.

Executive Power and The Bureaucracy

It is the bureaucracy that actually carries out the functions of regulation, protection, extraction and delivery of services.

Executive power and authority directs this machinery for administration and implementation - which in these later years has also assumed new roles of planning and policy formulation.

Furthermore, executive power and authority have time and again reorganized the bureaucracy and the system of administration.

What has been the impact of these major reorganizations of the bureaucracy?

First, the GSRC Reorganization Plan, the Commission on Reorganization's Integrated Reorganization Plan and the PCGR underscored the traditional administrative norms of *simplicity, economy, efficiency and effectiveness* in the design of government departments, bureaus, offices and corporations.

The Office of the President was the principal target in the decentralization of functions. The usual strategy was abolition or merger of agencies that were duplicating or overlapping, and the transfer of these to departments.

The question here is the basis of the abolition, merger, or transfer.

The IRP provided for the following criteria for the retention in the Office of the President:

- a) the agency is a purely advisory or consultative body to the President;
- b) the agency provides staff assistance to the President;
- c) the functions of the agency require coordination of departments or entities;
- d) the functions of the agency require the personal attention of the President.

The PCGR reviewed the bureaucratic practice of the Marcos regime which modified the IRP and found the need to phase-out 38 government corporations and to privatize 87 others. The number of agencies attached to the Office of the President, as well as the more than 3,000 offices and 27 ministries, required streamlining.

The PCGR's recommendation on the reduction of the ministries was based on the following criteria:

- a) its area of concern is explicit in the Constitution;
- b) its scope of service is national or international;
- c) its target constituency is the majority of the population;

- d) its concern is fundamental and permanent;
- e) its boundaries of responsibilities are distinct; and
- f) it is paramount in the hierarchy of priorities.

Second, the more important issue is the purpose this shuffling has done for the Chief Executive.

The other guiding principle of the three reorganization plans show interesting contrasts.

The GSRC reasoned out that the Chief Executive needed a centralized machinery as the system was not prepared and decentralization will still have to be paved out in the future.

The IRP clearly stated that government should be enabled to pursue programs for social and economic development - thus making a bureaucratic - authoritarian system a convenient excuse for development during martial law.

The PCGR anchored reorganization on the guiding principle of promoting private initiative - thus reinforcing liberal democracy and capitalism.

Finally, the reorganization plans laid down the cornerstones of decentralization, deconcentration and devolution which if given the right kind of political and administrative practice can deal with the norms of access and participation for a resurgent democracy.

Towards Political Development: Some Variables on the Role of the Executive Branch

Based on the articulated demands of the people since the February revolution, the indicators of development in politics and government may be said to be:

Participation and people consultation
Free, honest, clean elections
Freedom of speech, press, assembly
Autonomy
Territorial consolidation/integration
Stability: use of democratic processes for transition
Delivery of goods and services: socio-economic welfare
Conflict resolution

Figure 2. Demands in Philippine Society: Indicators of Political Development

In Easton's framework of the political system, the demands of the society are inputs to the decision-making or conversion processes and turned into outputs.²⁷

The fall of the Marcos regime and the rise of the Aquino government released the articulation and aggregation of interests and demands through the resurgence of democratic structures and processes, as political parties, interest groups, a free media, the election of representatives and the reestablishment of the legislature were realized.

In essence, the thrust of the post February 1986 people's revolution is the return to constitutional and democratic practice to bring about the concomitant dimensions of national development: economic, social and political development.

But in the Philippine experience, the President is expected to provide the leadership and make decisions; and to implement these to the degree and in a manner legitimated and supported by the people.

At the same time, democratic practice considers the legislature as being composed of elected representatives of the people charged with functions of law-making and decision-making.

In adopting the presidential system, the tensions of power and power balance can lead to stability when check and balance operates as ideally construed; or, to instability as when domination overshadows the role and functions of other institutions.

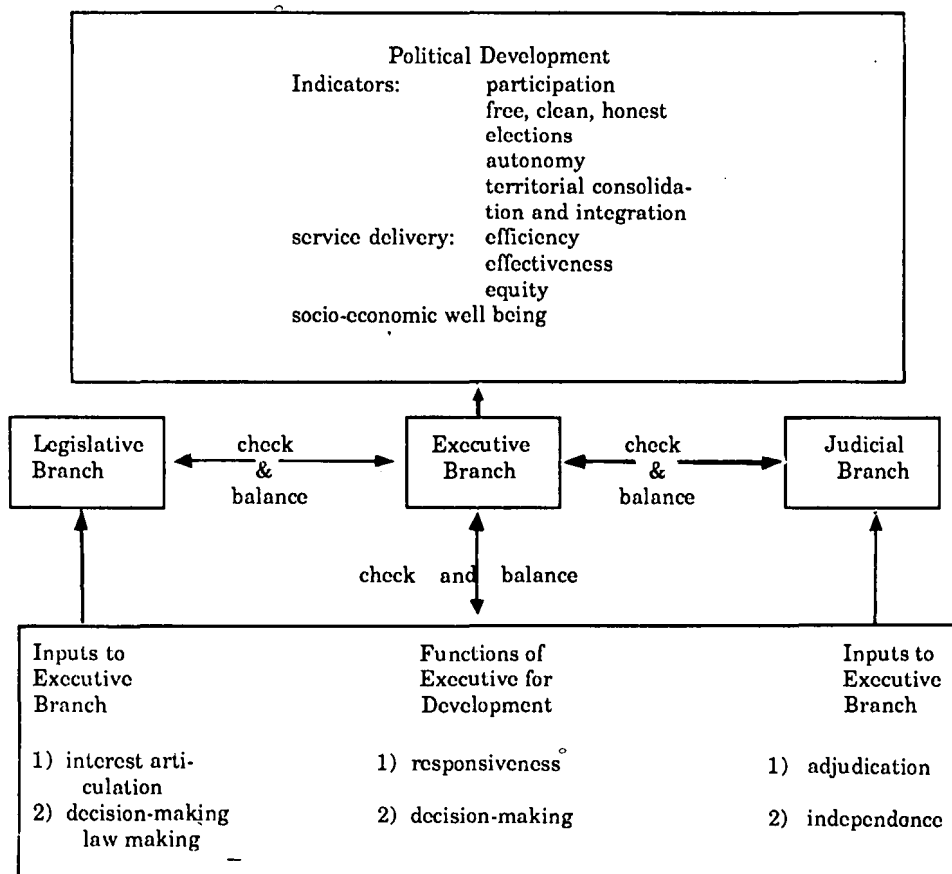
Finally, as the daily grind of the presidential functions of implementation, administration and execution occurs in the arena of the bureaucracy, the development thrust in administration spans the theories of public administration. As reorganization plans and practices have revealed, the development-oriented values and goals are:

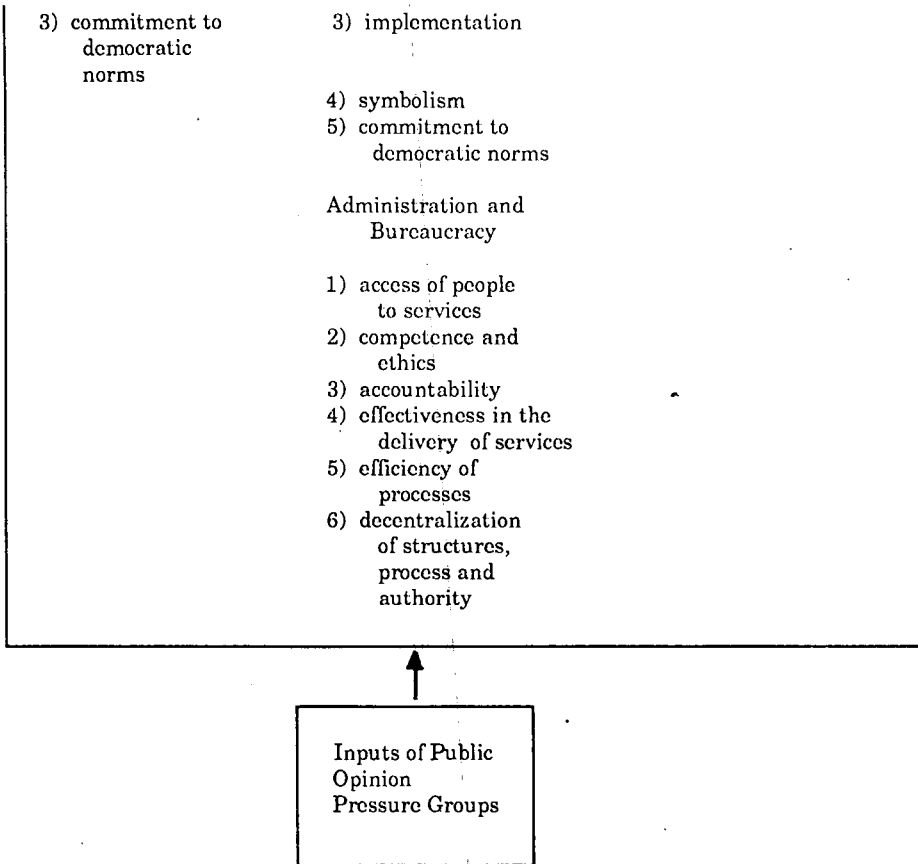
- access to services by the people;
- equity;
- participation in political processes;
- accountability of government to the people;
- competence and ethics of civil servants;
- effectiveness of outputs and delivery services;
- efficiency in time and resources.

Its mechanisms are:

- decentralization of structure, process and authority;
- privatization;
- consultation;
- civilian bureaucracy;
- military bureaucracy within constitutional and democratic norms.

These interactions can be summarized and illustrated below:





The path to the restoration of democratic norms and practice is easily seen as hazardous particularly as the *coup* attempts threaten the foundations of a struggling, resurgent democracy. The variables can interact in many possible ways resulting in different scenarios of political and administrative development. Coming out of an experience with authoritarian - bureaucratic type of political system excusing itself for the cause of development administration, the Philippine political system is adroitly working out its responsive capabilities amidst many odds.

Endnotes

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¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Commission on Reorganization, *Integrated Reorganization Plan*, 1972; Also in Presidential Commission on Organizing Government For Effective Development Administration, June 1984.

¹⁷Presidential Commission on Reorganization, p. 7.

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¹⁹*Ibid.* p. 21.

²⁰*Ibid.* p. 25.

²¹*Ibid.* p. 21-24.

²²*Ibid.* p. 26.

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²⁴Comparison of the following plans

- 1) Government Survey and Reorganization Commission, 1954-57.
- 2) Commission on Reorganization, Integrated Reorganization Plan, 1972.
- 3) Presidential Review Commission, 1984.
- 4) Presidential Commission on Government Reorganization, 1986.

²⁵Abueva, *op. cit.*

²⁶The PCGR critiqued the IRP practice of the Marcos regime in the first two parts of its report.

²⁷David Easton, *The Political...*, *op. cit.*