The Middle Classes and Democratization in the Philippines: From the Asian Crisis to the Ouster of Estrada *

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Introduction

In the aftermath of the Asian crisis, the political tumult that transformed the political landscape of the major Southeast Asian countries struck in varying forms. In Indonesia, the crisis provoked the fall of one of the world's longest reigning authoritarian regimes. In Malaysia it triggered a political crisis involving the ruling party's two most powerful leaders and resulted in a significant loss of political support for the ruling coalition in the 1999 general election. In contrast, the crisis which first erupted in Thailand in 1997 hastened the passage of a new reformist constitution and a new government of elected civilians in the same year.

In the Philippines, the Asian crisis overtook the country at a time when a modest level of economic recovery from the stagnation of the post-Marcos decade began to take shape and inspire a new level of business confidence. Compared with its more severe impact on Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, the Asian crisis proved less destabilizing initially for the Philippines because of the country's much lesser exposure to foreign borrowings and to short-term capital flows.[1] Moreover, the cataclysmic first year of the crisis in the region coincided with a turnover election in the country of a new president in 1998 (Joseph Ejercito Estrada), providing the government initially with a high degree of political legitimacy. At the end of 1998, however, the severity of the crisis clearly manifested itself with the decline of Philippine real GNP per capita below that prevailing in 1981".[2] By the 31st month of a six-year incumbency, Pres. Estrada found himself ousted from power on 20 January 2001 by a massive people's mobilization ignited by an aborted impeachment trial and climaxing in the military's withdrawal of support from the presidency.

In the three major Southeast Asian countries severely affected by the Asian crisis (Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia), the reversal of the high growth rates that propelled their economy and underpinned their regime legitimacy directly and immediately provoked their respective political crisis. In the Philippines, a difficult process of economic recovery, no doubt, severely constrained the process of democratic

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consolidation. However, the crisis that led to the ouster of the Estrada administration took shape initially as a result of an inept leadership that got mired increasingly in corruption and shady deals involving relatives, cronies and high government officials. Later, the president himself would be exposed as the orchestrator of a grand scheme of enriching himself and family through an illegal numbers game (*jueteng*), stock manipulations, and diversion of government funds. Accused of pervasive cronyism, corruption, and ineptitude, the Estrada administration further galvanized opposition to the government with its pursuit of a highly contentious plan to amend the constitution in 1999. Unlike in Thailand where overwhelming public approval met the adoption of the new constitution seen as a necessary step toward democratic consolidation, the initiative for constitutional change in the Philippines was identified with partisan elite interests and faced widespread challenge and opposition.[3] The failure of the administration's poverty program and its pursuit of a contentious, costly war in southern Philippines (Mindanao) against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) further fanned the flames of political opposition to the government.

This paper examines the role of the middle classes in the process of democratic transition and consolidation in the Philippines, particularly in light of the Asian crisis and the upheaval leading to the ouster of President Estrada. It also analyzes the ideas and attitudes of the middle classes in the Philippines on a set of related themes about society and politics as seen from the results of a survey conducted in Metro Manila in 1997 at the onset of the Asian crisis.

The Middle Classes in the Philippine Context[4]

Reflecting the lack of sustained high economic growth in the country during the last three decades in contrast with that of East Asia and the more robust economies of Southeast Asia, the middle classes in the Philippines constitute a smaller proportion of the population. Surveys and studies using either the gradational or relational methodological approaches to social class in the Philippines estimate that the middle classes by the end of the 1990s range from 10 to 12% of the working population or of total households.[5] In this paper, the middle class is classified into three fractions: the new middle class of professionals, administrators and managers; the old middle class of the traditional petty-bourgeoisie and small employers with less than 10 workers; and the marginal middle class of white collar workers in the relatively low-paying occupations with little work autonomy.

While small in numbers, the middle classes have in fact played important political roles in varying conjunctures since the declaration of independence in 1946. There are a number of important factors that account for the political role of the middle classes in the country on a scale seemingly out of proportion to their actual numbers. First, an educated middle class highly concentrated in Metro Manila and later in the major urban centers emerged as early as the American colonial period due to a combination of a number of

factors. Manila's role as a center of the export and import trade in the country spawned a lot of diverse professional and technical services. In this context, American colonial policy introduced a system of mass public education and initiated the Filipinization of the civil service which opened up new opportunities for employment as professionals in the civil service. Thus, by the twilight of American colonial rule in 1939, one author estimates that those employed as professionals (accountants, engineers, lawyers, physicians, and college professors) teachers and government civil servants including those performing clerical tasks constituted 18 percent of the labor force in Manila.[6]

By the 1950s, a remarkable economic growth initially propelled by exchange controls and import substitution which saw the manufacturing sector growing at an average annual rate of 12 percent, nurtured a generation of new middle classes rooted in the private business sector and outside the state bureaucracy. This economic growth also sparked an education boom at the tertiary level resulting in the proliferation of numerous colleges and universities providing relatively cheap education, albeit of very uneven quality. As economic growth slowed down and later stagnated in the ensuing decades, the relatively large sector of college-educated individuals with middle class outlooks who could not find stable and satisfying jobs proved to be a potent factor for the political activism of this segment of the middle classes.

A second factor for the significant political presence of the middle classes lies in the country's legacy of a formal electoral democratic system which allowed for a far greater space in articulating and organizing middle class interests of various kinds. Thus, the country's history of regular electoral contestations, free media and formal guarantees of civil and political rights have also served to develop the political skills and confidence of key fractions of the middle classes. Not even the authoritarian rule of Mr. Marcos was able to effectively stifle the activism of civil society organizations even while many were forced to go underground at the height of martial rule.

Finally, the development and growth of a significant segment of the new and old middle class fractions outside of the direct control of the state has enhanced the role of the middle classes in waging political actions. Even the lower middle classes directly nurtured by the state such as the huge numbers of public school teachers and other civil servants have not developed any strong sense of professional or institutional loyalty to the state, making them more open to oppositionist activities against the state itself. In the economies of the NICs of both East and Southeast Asia, the state exerted a more direct and pervasive control in the growth of its own middle classes. Nurtured by greater economic affluence and constrained by authoritarian political environments, the middle classes in these states faced more daunting conditions for activist and reformist politics. While the developments discussed above have served to condition the politics of the middle classes in the Philippines, it must also be made clear that there is no distinct and predictable role associated with middle classes. In actual historical circumstances, middle class political propensities and practices have ranged from right- wing conservatism and radicalism to liberal and left-wing political causes.

Since the postwar years, a number of outstanding features and tendencies have underpinned middle class politics and social behavior in the Philippines. First, all of the major oppositionist political projects and movements during these years had middle class leaderships. In turn these activist movements relied strongly on constituencies of university students and college educated professionals as their initial base of political support even while such projects self-consciously aimed at organizing other social classes and sectors for their ultimate political goals. Second, these major organized political movements led by middle class personalities have been invariably influenced by the following ideologies: Marxist-Communist, conservative and radical schools of Christianity, syncretic versions of liberal-pluralist views, and in particular in the Southern Philippines, Islamic fundamentalism and radicalism. Third, there has been a significant rate of out-migration whether as permanent residents (mainly to the United States, Canada and Australia) or overseas contract workers (Middle East, Southeast Asia, Japan and Europe) particularly by the educated fractions of the middle classes.

Middle Class Politics During the Period of Formal Electoral Democracy, 1946-1972

During the postwar period up to 1972, middle class involvement in politics ranged from conservative to moderate and radical projects. Among the educated progressive middle classes during this period , the most compelling political issue focused on fleshing out a nationalist and democratic alternative political program to what was then perceived as a government run by the country's most powerful dynastic political clans largely subservient to American political and economic interests in the region. In the context of the economic downturn that overtook the manufacturing growth in the fifties, two major oppositional political responses emerged. The first was Marxist-Maoist inspired and gathered strength with its militant youth-student organizations in the sixties and climaxed with the launching of a new communist party in 1968. Of the 13 founding members of the new communist party, 10 came from middle class families and the founding chairman, Jose Ma. Sison, while born into a landed clan worked as a university professor.[7] Moreover, during the formative years of the new party the overwhelming majority of the party's initial core of cadres were university students and intellectuals from middle class families. The guerrilla movement founded by the new party in 1969 also gained its momentum with cadres recruited from militant student and youth organizations. Under the direct influence of the new party, several sectoral and people's organizations were formed in the sixties and seventies and most of these were also led by cadres with middle class backgrounds.

The second significant oppositional political response to the crisis of the sixties and seventies centered on a grouping of parties and organizations directly inspired by Christian reformism and radicalism. These church-based movements also emerged as a direct response to what was then perceived as the developing hegemonic political threat posed by Marxist-inspired organizations.[8] Among the Catholic-based organizations, the influence of the social activism of the papal encyclicals of the sixties was significant with much of the initial political guidance coming from Jesuit priests and theologians. One concerted attempt to develop a formal national political party anchored on principles of Christian social democracy was exemplified by the founding of the Christian Social

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Movement in the sixties and later the National Union of Christian Democrats. Two of these church-inspired organizations continue to have a political presence in current politics: the Democratic Socialist Party of the Philippines (PDSP) founded in 1973 and KASAPI, organized in 1969. A more radical version of Christian activism also emerged under the influence of Marxism, Maoism and the liberation theology of Latin America and would take organizational root with the founding of the Christians for National Liberation in the early seventies. Like the Marxist inspired parties and organizations that were formed during the sixties, the church-based reformist and radical movements were also led and staffed by middle class professionals and college graduates.

A third strand of middle class politics during the fifties and sixties is seen in the reformist liberal activism of professionals and business entrepreneurs who founded citizen's parties for good government or sought to safeguard and reform the electoral process. The best example of a middle class organization best known for its continuing project of monitoring electoral processes and results is the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL). Founded in 1951 under American auspices, the organization has succeeded in institutionalizing itself as the country's unofficial guardian of electoral contests, particularly of the counting of votes, and has involved in the process many leading professionals, church and business personalities. Middle class liberal activism during this period was also dramatized by the mobilization of political support for many independent candidates during the election in 1971 for members of a commission to draft a new constitution.

The decade of the fifties and sixties also marked the second wave of out-migration of substantial number of Filipino professionals to the United States.[9] Most of the professionals who immigrated to the United States at this time were nurses and medical doctors. During this period, Filipinos constituted the biggest number of nurses in the United States while the medical doctors were the second biggest group of migrant doctors, next only to those from India. The pre-war and post-war wave of migrations have in fact made the Filipino community in the United States the fastest growing group of immigrants from Asia. This "brain drain" first to North America and later to various countries of Asia, the Middle East, and Europe is one of the enduring proclivities of the educated Filipino middle class.

During the liberal democratic period, middle class political activism made its most dramatic impact with the popularization of a nationalist consciousness and political program articulated through both Marxist revolutionary idioms and Christian social activism. Moreover, by propagating the nationalist program through the use of *Pilipino*, the national language, these political movements advanced immensely the acceptability of a common language of every day discourse. In light of the practice of the elites in using English as the official means of communication and the traditional hostility of other major ethnic linguistic groupings to the use of *Pilipino*, this political popularization of the national language by nationalist and revolutionary organizations was an important contribution to national consciousness and identity.

Finally, reflecting their structural weakness as a political constituency, the middle-class led political movements during this period deliberately sought and cultivated systematic linkages and coalitions with other social classes and sectors, primarily those of the peasantry and agricultural workers, and the urban poor and industrial workers. Whether as a product of conscious ideology and strategy or a pragmatic political response, these political and organizing efforts by the middle class-led political movements and parties largely defined their political credibility and organizational strength.

Middle Class Politics During the Authoritarian Rule of Marcos, 1972-1986

During the authoritarian rule of Marcos, middle class politics needs to be situated in the context of the struggle against the dictatorship. Shaped by the earlier alignment of political forces during the sixties, the organized involvement of middle class fractions against authoritarian rule was mediated through three basic political forces: 1) the Marxist-Maoist inspired organizations under the leadership of the new Communist party and the much smaller independent Marxist-socialist organizations; 2) the Christian-rooted political movements and parties with the more militant ones adopting variations of Christian social democratic ideologies; and 3) the organizations propelled by liberal democratic ideologies such as KAAKBAY (Movement for National Independence and Sovereignty) headed by the well-known liberal oppositionist politician, the late senator Jose W. Diokno. Along the same mold were organizations such as MABINI and the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) made up of human rights lawyers opposed to the dictatorship.

In the southern part of the country in Mindanao, middle class opposition to authoritarian rule took on a special dimension due to the special religious ethnic factor. Among the ethnic Muslims, middle class participation in the struggle was principally mediated through the originally separatist Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) whose leadership also included many university educated intellectuals and students including its founding head, Nur Misuari, who once taught at the University of the Philippines.

A unique process of middle class radicalism took place during the period of authoritarian rule with the politicization of the military. As an institution, the military in the Philippines has an officer corps made up overwhelmingly of recruits from middle class families. By the early eighties, the protracted war with the communist-led guerrillas and the separatist Muslim armed parties in the context of the cronyism and lack of professionalism of the top loyalist Marcos generals had demoralized the younger battle-hardened officer corps. Spearheaded by the class 1971 graduates of the Philippine Military Academy, a reformist faction identified with then Secretary of National Defense Enrile developed within the military. This would later constitute the nucleus of the mutinous faction that ignited the February uprising. Unlike other processes of middle class activism whose success usually required systematic linkages and coalitions with

other social classes and sectors, the middle class military officers were in control of an institution that could propel them into power without any need for a social and political base.[10] Fortunately for the Aquino administration that replaced the authoritarian rule of Marcos, the seven coup attempts launched by military rebels all failed. But at the same time, the politicization of the military, like in most transitions to democratic rule, became the most de-stabilizing problem that the first two post-Marcos administrations (Aquino and Ramos) had to address.

In terms of the composition of the middle classes, another important feature of authoritarian rule under Marcos was the rapid expansion of the state bureaucracy. With its direct intervention and control of various aspects of the economy, the Marcos administration created several government owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs). In 1975, employment in GOCCs totalled 41,250; by 1984, employment in these same government corporations reached 134, 453, an increase of 226 percent. During the same period, the entire government civil service also experienced a 145 percent increase from 533,284 in 1975 to 1,310,789 in 1984 (Civil Service Commission 1986). Among the civil servants, public school teachers at varying levels proved to be the most responsive to the anti-dictatorship struggle and a number of both aboveground and clandestine militant organizations emerged from their ranks.

In 1983, the assassination of oppositionist senator Benigno Aquino Jr. who was returning from political exile in the United States provided a decisive turning point in the struggle against authoritarian rule. Aquino's murder took place in the context of an intensifying economic crisis and more than a decade-long struggle against the dictatorship by communist-led armed guerrillas in the countryside and several legal and clandestine organizations in major cities and town centers all over the country. The assassination of the well-known opposition leader further fractured the remaining elite support for the dictatorship and opened up new opportunities for coalitional politics among various parties and organizations of different political persuasions. With the emergence of a far broader and more determined opposition, many sectors traditionally cowed by the dictatorship were emboldened to join open actions of defiance against authoritarian rule. Thus, during the twilight years of the authoritarian regime some of the most vivid open protests erupted in the very centers of high commerce and finance involving the professionals, white collar workers, and the anti-crony business personalities.[11]

Through four days of military mutiny and a people's uprising from 22-25 February 1986, the struggle against the dictatorship climaxed with Mr. Marcos fleeing to Hawaii under American auspices.[12] It has become fashionable to refer to the four days of mutiny and uprising in February 1986 as the "middle class revolution" that signalled the end of the dictatorship. It is of course true that many of those who played leadership roles during the uprising, particularly in the EDSA[13] part of the confrontation, were professionals and middle class personalities including the mutinous military officers and the ubiquitous priests and nuns. It is also true, however, that in other areas of the popular uprising, in particular the Mendiola area in the vicinity of the presidential palace, left-wing organized labor organizations had a pronounced political presence. What needs to

be explained more carefully is the genuinely popular nature of the uprising that galvanized the participation of the people from all walks of life, rich and poor alike.[14]

In the struggle against the authoritarian rule of Marcos, middle class leadership was pervasive among all opposition groups across ideological and political lines with the exception of the political parties led by anti-Marcos politicians from conservative, long established political and economic clans. It was difficult, however, to construct stable coalitional linkages among various groups of competing ideological outlooks and political strategies. For instance, the assassination of Aquino provided excellent opportunities for coalitional politics against the dictatorship. In another sense, however, by pushing the Marcos administration into a politically defensive stance, this same event opened up the democratic space that allowed smaller, less ideological opposition groups to be less dependent organizationally on the much bigger political formations. On the whole, the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship showcased the political strengths and weaknesses of the middle classes in their political practices as class fractions. As a source of political leadership, the middle classes, especially its most educated segment, have indeed responded to all kinds of political projects, whether as technocrats of the Marcos dictatorship, cadres of revolutionary parties, or army coup leaders. But it is this same flexibility and contradictoriness which stresses the limitations of the middle class as a constituency for political action.

Middle Class Politics During the Post-Marcos Period Since 1986

With the restoration of formal democratic rule following the popular ratification of a new constitution and the holding of elections in 1987, the electoral system once again became the main arena for legitimizing political contestations in the country.[15] The transition to democratic rule, however, has been extremely contentious and protracted. Reflecting the problem of a politicized military, the Aquino-led successor administration to authoritarian rule had to weather no less than seven coup attempts in its first four years in office. It took the next administration under former General Ramos, elected as president in 1992, to successfully conclude a political settlement with the military rebels in 1995 and a peace accord with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1996. Following the Ramos administration, the Estrada presidency elected in 1998 has yet to work out a political solution vis-à-vis the local communist-led challenge, now more than thirty years in armed opposition. Moreover, the government continues to face another armed challenge from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a breakaway armed party from the MNLF.

For many middle class-led organizations and middle class personalities, the opening up of democratic space and the restoration of electoral contests in the post-Marcos period signalled a serious reexamination of strategies and tactics for political practice and contestation. Many have opted to explore the opportunities and possibilities provided by the democratized conjuncture, in spite of all its faults and weaknesses. The passage of the Local Government Code in 1991 further provided incentives for NGOs and smaller, new political parties to contest political power at the local levels of government. With the revival of the electoral process, much of the more moderate strand

of middle class activism centered on the revival and strengthening of NAMFREL as the electoral watchdog particularly during national elections.

In taking advantage of these new arenas of organizing and mobilizing, many developmental NGOs and people's organizations (POs) have formed political networks to support progressive candidates or work out coalitions with the existing political parties. More recently, these networks have formed new political parties in response to the party list system , resulting in the first set of elected party list candidates in the lower house of Congress in the 1998 national elections. Another tendency has been reflected in simply maximizing the political and organizational reach of developmental and advocacy NGOs and people's organizations but uncoupling this effort from any armed political movement. A good example of this is the political activism that has animated the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), the country's biggest single developmental NGO.[16]

These new possibilities for political action and strategy sparked by the transition to a more open polity highlights the most crucial aspect of policy debates across all political and ideological spectrums: does the newly opened up political space provide enough opportunities to pursue fundamentally transformative socio-political projects without resorting to armed struggle? In its various manifestations, this contested claim has been one of the reasons for the internal debates that have bedeviled the armed communist movement in the country since 1986, leading to serious organizational splits.[17] After the ouster of the Estrada administration, however, almost all the major Marxist-inspired left-wing political formations including those aligned with the underground Communist Party of the Philippines had put up their own legal political parties to contest the May 2001 elections, particularly the party-list system.

In response to the restoration of formal democratic rule, all of the oppositional formations and parties influenced by Christian social activism have embraced the electoral system as the legitimate arena for political contestation. Following the successful peace negotiations concluded with the government in 1995, the once clandestine military rebel formations have also come out in the open. With the active participation of personalities with military backgrounds in electoral contests, a new generation of soldier-politicians has emerged in fact.

One important area for further understanding middle class behavior lies in their participation in the phenomenon of contract labor overseas. In the search for better work opportunities abroad, Filipinos have served as overseas contract workers in significant numbers. One study shows that "the number of processed Filipino contract workers increased twenty-fold over a 16-year period, from just over 36,000 in 1975 to almost 700,000 in 1991" (Cariño 1992:6). During a 12 year period from 1895 to 1996, statistics from the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency show that an average of 600,000 Filipinos left the country as overseas contract workers. From 1986 to 1994, the average dollar remittances of these overseas workers constituted 17 percent of the country's annual exports. [18]

The extent of middle class participation in the overseas Filipino workers (OFW) phenomenon is indicated by data on their educational backgrounds. Using data from the 1995 Census of Population, one author calculates that of those with at least some college background, 22 percent had served as OFW. The same data show that of those with at least a college degree, 16 percent had been OFWs (Jackson 1997:44). One other study completed in 1983 also reveals that over 50 percent of the Filipino migrant workers surveyed had completed college, or had at least taken some college subjects (Gibson 1983).[19] An important aspect of the OFW experience that needs to be systematically studied lies in the way this process has reconstituted identities and transformed the social, economic, and political positions of the workers and their families.[20] For its political implications, it may be argued that the OFW phenomenon has provided a safety valve that undercuts the social basis for political activism and militancy. On the other hand, it may have also produced a new generation of community leaders with political skills and more diverse resources and more receptive to progressive political projects and less tolerant of the traditional ways of doing things.

Another significant arena of middle class politics lies in the support for charismatic religious movements, in both their Catholic and Protestant variants. While not new in the country's cultural and religious tradition, these charismatic movements took on a special fervor starting in the mid-eighties with the founding of El Shaddai, the biggest Catholic charismatic movement claiming a card-carrying membership of half a million.[21] Among the Protestant groups, the most influential are the Jesus is Lord Fellowhip and Jesus Miracle Crusade. Spawned during periods of economic and political crisis, these movements have thrived due to their ability to address some popular need or longing, either ignored or unattended to by established institutions including the government.

An important indicator of middle class support for these religious movements can be inferred from the socio-economic profile of the regular listeners of radio station DWXI which regularly airs the El Shaddai programs. During the Monday to Friday airings of El Shaddai's programs, one survey reveals that 40 percent of the regular listeners belong to Class C which is the equivalent of the middle classes in the classification scheme used by consumer research organizations in the country.[22] Showing organizing and mobilizing skills and the sophisticated use of mass media, these religious movements have started to showcase their ability to influence political contests. For instance, during the last presidential elections in 1997, the El Shaddai through their leader Brother Mariano "Mike" Velarde, endorsed Estrada, the presidential winner, while the other movements supported other candidates. In the mass mobilizations leading to the ouster of Estrada, the El Shaddai figured in a massive mobilization which was played up by the administration to be in its favor.

With the restoration of elite democratic rule in the post-Marcos years, much of middle class activism has veered toward open, legal and electoral means of struggle. The political opening, however, has taken place in the context of continuing economic malaise and the government's inability to negotiate a political settlement with two protracted armed challenges: the communist-led guerrilla movement and the separatist

Muslim movement in the south now represented by the MILF. Since the period of independence, middle class leadership of various kinds of political organizations, movements and parties have been pervasive and significant. A more open political arena is no doubt congenial to the exercise of political leadership over various kinds of organizations by middle class fractions, especially of its most educated sectors. But the working out of successful coalitional political arrangements between the middle classes and other classes and sectors to achieve long-term socio-political ends is a more difficult process. Of course, it can also be argued that in the advent of a sustained period of economic growth in a liberal democratic system, the possibilities of a largely middle class constituency primarily influencing the political turn of events becomes greatly enhanced. As shown in past historical conjunctures, middle class fractions can provide the leadership for almost all kinds of political projects. They are politically important not because of their numbers or cohesiveness, certainly absent in the Philippine context, but because of their possession of technical competencies and political-organizational skills, highly prized by both the elites and oppositional movements of the disadvantaged classes. Organically linked to any group or movement, these competencies and skills can have an impact far beyond the physical numbers of its middle-class partisans and practitioners.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey data used for this study were obtained from a sample of 800 household heads or spouses living in Metro Manila's class C *barangays*.[23] The households were randomly chosen from a total of 60 barangays in 6 of Metro Manila's cities and municipalities. Sample sizes were allocated in proportion to the number of C households in the city or municipality registered in the 1990 census. In addition to the survey, supplementary data from a random sample of 100 D/E households in a *barangay* located in an industrial site and 66 households belonging to the AB class were obtained for comparative purposes.[24]

In the survey, 652 actual respondents were classified as members of the middle classes after a cross-tabulation of occupation and employment statuses and the consideration of other variables such as supervisory powers in the workplace, income, and size of company. Those classified as new middle class include professionals, managers and administrators; the old middle class include those self-employed in the non-agricultural sector and small employers with less than 10 workers; and the marginal middle class include those relatively lower paid and low-skilled white collar workers like clerks and secretaries in government offices. However, those working as clerks, secretaries, and executive assistants in big corporations were classified as new middle class because of more stringent educational and qualification requirements and also higher compensations. Two comparator groups of 34 capitalist respondents and 45 working class respondents are included in the survey. In the study, the new middle classes make up 43 percent of the total sample, the old middle classes, 28 percent, and the marginal middle classes, 18 percent.

Based on the survey data, the following most important views of the middle classes on society, politics and the economy may be inferred. First, the MCs are highly conscious of class divisions and differences in Philippine society and the difficulty of class mobility. However, this perception about the potential for class-based conflicts rooted in a strong class awareness is tempered by a strong belief that such class differences may be addressed through education and the cultivation of a work ethic (industriousness). Moreover, a huge majority of the MCs also consider their political ideas as "definitely close to the center" further implying that they will most likely address issues of class differences and conflicts through moderate political practices.

The middle classes tend to favor giving workers more power in government, respecting workers' rights during labor strikes, and ensuring that management does not openly exploit workers even while making profits. However, middle class support tends to be more cautious and ambivalent in actual conflict situations involving labor and management particularly in cases where the MCs are called upon to provide concrete and direct forms of support and involvement. At the height of the mass protests against Estrada, some of the most uncanny mobilizations resulted in mutually agreed upon walk-outs by both capitalists, managerial staff, and workers against the government. One people's march from the provinces also culminated in a public lunch hosted and joined in by the capitalists and business executives of the country's leading financial center (in Makati) and residents of nearby upper class communities.

There is also strong middle class support for government assistance to small and medium-sized business companies as against the big corporations. On the practice of government operation of business corporations, the MCs show a split opinion as to its impact on wages and jobs with about half agreeing as to its favorable impact and the other half disagreeing.

In terms of involvement with interest groups and social movements, the MCs give their highest level of support to environmental issues and organizations, followed by human rights and student concerns. Since environmental issues also command the highest level of involvement and support from the capitalist and worker respondents, this suggests the possibility of the environment becoming the focal point of a broad basis of political unity and action across all social classes.

The middle classes share with both capitalist and worker respondents a remarkable consensus on the first four national problems perceived to be the most serious: corruption, environmental pollution, public safety and crime, and prostitution. While these perceptions have to be situated within the context of the period when the survey was conducted and completed (early 1997), the consensus does reflect a set of persistently intractable national problems. Remarkably, it was the corruption expose against Estrada which triggered the sustained mass mobilizations leading to his downfall.

An overwhelming majority of the middle classes perceive the Philippines as a democratic country and recognize that a democratic form of government is suitable for the development of Philippine society. In the same breath, however, a significant

majority (seven out of ten) are not averse to accepting any form of government, democratic or not, as long as it does a good job for the country. This potential middle class constituency for an authoritarian project is further seen in a majority of MC views affirming that government can disregard public opinion as long as it knows what is best for the country. It must be pointed out, in this regard, that middle class support for authoritarian rule under Marcos was strongest during its first two years when the government used an iron hand in dealing with public disorder and the economy temporarily benefited from the rise in prices of the country's major export commodities.

Consistent with the country's historical voting record, the middle classes show an impressive voting turnout (eight out of ten). However, other forms of electoral practices such as supporting political parties, attending public rallies, passing flyers for candidates, and donating money to candidates indicate quite a low level of participation from the middle classes. This is partly explained by the weakly institutionalized political parties which are unable to provide a continuing fulcrum for mass political education and mobilization. It must also be pointed out, however, that other forms of political action and practices not limited to electoral activities are not captured by the questionnaire. One such form of direct political action, the mass mobilizations that led to Estrada's ouster, show an extraordinary participation by the middle classes from various fractions.

The middle classes show a healthy self-image and a very high regard of their contribution to the development of Philippine society. Considering themselves as the "vanguard of democracy", they strongly deny that they have been indifferent to the demands of the poor or more concerned with political freedom than economic growth. In their ranking of their most preferred goals for the country, they share with both capitalists and workers the view that maintaining a high rate of economic growth and political order in the nation are the two most important.

Finally, in comparing the findings of the historically grounded analysis offered in the first part of the paper with that of the survey data, one theoretical and empirical gap stands out. Given its own theoretical assumptions and levels of generalization, the survey data are unable to address and explain the process of middle class radicalization that took place during three recent historical conjunctures in Philippine society: (1) the breakdown of formal elite democratic rule during the sixties and early seventies; and (2) the struggle against authoritarian rule and the transition to formal democratic rule during the Marcos and post-Marcos periods; and 3) the mass mobilizations leading to the downfall of the Estrada administration. On the other hand, the survey findings provide us with broad generalizations about systemic characteristics of the middle class which transcend the particularities of historical conjunctures. Without glossing over differences in theoretical assumptions and logic of analysis, a closer reading of the findings of both approaches, no doubt, contributes to a better understanding of the politics of the middle classes in Philippine society.

The MiddleClasses and Estrada's Electoral Victory in 1998

Riding high on a populist appeal to uplift the poor majority in the country, Joseph Ejercito Estrada, better known as "Erap", won the presidential elections in May 1998. He received 40 percent of the total votes cast and a huge margin of more than 6 million votes over his closest rival.[25] A popular movie star who cut his political teeth on being a town mayor, then a senator and vice-president, Estrada won overwhelmingly the support of the lower and poor classes which constitute about 88 percent of the voting households. Using a catchy, populist slogan of "Erap para sa Mahirap" (Erap for the Poor),[26] Estrada won almost half (47.7 percent) of class E, the poorest households which make up 25 percent of the voting population and almost 40 percent (37.9%) of class D, the lower classes which account for about 63 percent of total votes.[27]

What was surprising about Estrada's electoral victory was his creditable performance among the upper and middle class voters, a small fraction of the voting population (only about 12 percent) but its most moneyed and educated sector.[28] Spurned by the influential Cardinal Sin and the Catholic church hierarchy for his well-known womanizing and profligate lifestyle, dismissed by many educated upper and middle classes for his lack of a college degree, a lackluster legislative record, and lack of managerial skills, Estrada was not expected to do well with the class ABC voters. However, he ended up receiving the second highest percentage of votes for class ABC, trailing Senator Roco, the winner of this voting segment, by only 3.1 percent.

A confluence of two major developments can explain Estrada's relatively good showing among the class ABC voters. First, a major political party headed by Senator Edgardo Angara (who ended up running as Estrada's losing vice-presidential candidate) decided to ally with Estrada thus allaying to some extent the fears of the middle classes about a lightweight presidency.[29] Another important support for Estrada's candidacy and eventual accession to the presidency emerged when a core of middle class intellectuals, some developmental NGOs, and party-list groups decided to work for Estrada's campaign.[30] A number of these middle class intellectuals are graduates or faculty members of the University of the Philippines and four of them ended up being appointed to key cabinet and sub-cabinet positions.[31] This group of middle class intellectuals who actively supported Estrada may be loosely grouped into three broad political tendencies: those who had been professional politicians or worked mainly with mainstream, established political leaders or power brokers; those who had worked with activist or reformist people's organizations and NGOs, including revolutionary organizations in the past; and those recruited mainly for their technocratic skills and managerial reputations. The more idealistic of the middle class intellectuals saw the populist Estrada presidency as an opportune vehicle for defining and shaping a progressive vision and agenda for the people. Little did they know, however, that they would be largely marginalized by Estrada who depended more on his crony business and political associates--- most of whom had no official accountabilities--- for crucial government policies and decisions.

The Unraveling of the Estrada Presidency and Gangster Capitalism

Coming into power in 1998, about a year after the Asian economic crisis first erupted in Thailand, the newly elected Estrada administration faced at least four major

interrelated problems crucial to democratic consolidation: crafting a strategic economic strategy to address the economic crisis and spur economic growth; resolving the continuing armed challenges (Communist and Islamic) to central government; improving governance practices and procedures by strengthening key public institutions; and decisively addressing an endemic culture of corruption and cronyism. On all counts, Estrada performed badly. He dissipated his initial base of political support and legitimacy by a thoroughly inept leadership style and a hedonistic lifestyle fuelled by corruption at the highest levels. Before his midterm incumbency was over, Estrada succeeded in provoking a wide-based multi-sectoral opposition which brought together key players and organizations from the leftwing parties and formations, Christian churches, organized business, civil society and peoples' organizations and the opposition mainstream political parties. This unprecedented coalition of forces against a sitting president eventually forced the withdrawal of military support from Estrada in the aftermath of sustained peoples' demonstrations following an aborted impeachment trial in the Senate.

Estrada's personalistic style of leadership relied on a circle of cronies, relatives, former classmates, and a large number of presidential advisers and consultants with no line responsibilities and public accountabilities. This practice effectively undermined the official cabinet in the making of important decisions and resulted in the absence of coherent and integrated policies. Estrada held irregular cabinet meetings and was more comfortable in the company of a shadowy but powerful circle of business and political cronies making up what was referred to as the "midnight cabinet" that made important decisions during routine sessions of drinking and gambling with the president.[32] Moreover, Estrada also failed to make good use of a proven existing mechanism to coordinate executive and legislative governance matters by not taking seriously the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC). Karina David, the deposed president's former Housing Secretary who resigned in 1999 in protest against Estrada's style of governance provides an insider's account of these practices:

> A style of governance marked by a lack of discipline and professionalism. The process of decision-making was chaotic, personalistic, fragmented and seemed to have no place for careful study; a penchant for luxury and good time that ran against the administration's avowed pro-poor stance; the undeniable presence and ascendancy of close friends, relatives and classmates who influenced policy for personal gain without any public accountability.[33]

In the aftermath of the Asian crisis and the difficult challenges imposed by increasing globalization trends, Estrada's leadership style proved most ill-suited for the times. What eventually provoked its demise was an unmitigated practice of cronyism and corruption with the president himself exposed as the orchestrator and beneficiary of many sordid deals and illegal practices. While cronyism and corruption had long bedevilled past governments, the magnitude and pervasiness of these practices in such a short period during the Estrada administration amounted to a "gangster capitalism" that galvanized popular opposition to the government.[34]

Estrada's impeachment rap was triggered by the expose of erstwhile crony and gambling buddy, Governor Singson, that the president regularly received P10 million pesos (about $208 thousand dollars at P48=$1) each month since November 1998 from gambling lords of an illegal game (*jueteng*). Moreover, Singson also charged Estrada of diverting to his personal account P130 million pesos (about $2.7 million) from a P200 million tobacco excise tax due the governor's provincial government. During the impeachment trial at the Senate, the prosecutors uncovered documentary evidence, corroborated by key witnesses, that Estrada kept a P3.2 billion peso account (about $67 million) under an assumed name. A bank executive, Clarissa Ocampo, who served as a major witness testified that she saw Estrada openly sign the bank account in the presidential palace using his assumed fictitious name. Prosecutors have further unearthed additional bank documents indicating that Estrada may have accumulated as much as P20 billion pesos (about $417 million) during 31 months of office and stashed away in several banks under different aliases. Estrada's family including his five acknowledged mistresses also kept bank accounts amounting to hundreds of millions of pesos. Moreover, Estrada, through his network of cronies and front corporations had bought land and houses estimated at P1 billion pesos for his own family and extended families.[35]

Indeed, Estrada excelled in gangster capitalism: privatizing existing resources through illegal means and using these resources for non-productive outlets such as the purchase of mansions and real estate or stashing these funds away in secret bank accounts. Through the testimony of Edgardo Espiritu, former finance minister of Estrada, the impeachment trial also revealed that the former president was part owner of BW Resources Corp. with his business crony Dante Tan.. In late 1999, BW Resources nearly caused the collapse of the Philippine stock market with its insider trading and stock manipulation. Espiritu further testified that at the behest of Estrada, BW Resources also obtained a P600 million loan from the Philippine National Bank without the proper collateral.[36] Furthermore, Estrada through his cronies also facilitated the use of billions of pesos of pension funds controlled by the government for private corporate mergers and acquisitions (such as the merger of Equitable and PCI banks) which netted the crony brokers millions of pesos.[37]

The Ouster of Estrada: A Vanguardless Upheaval

As early as 1999, calls for Estrada's resignation started to be aired by various civil society organizations and personalities alarmed by increasing cases of corruption, cronyism, and the overall mismanagement of government. The former president coddled the Marcoses and their cronies, pursued a divisive move to revise the constitution, harassed the country's leading newspaper for its critical stance, allowed the flourishing of various forms of gambling, and protected his business cronies and relatives implicated in corrupt practices and shady deals. By his second year in office, Estrada embarked on a costly militarist approach to the Islamic secessionist movement in the Southern Philippines which drained the government's budget and caused thousands of refugees. The war policy, however, simply forced the Islamic militants to shift to a deadlier guerrilla strategy. Meanwhile, the administration had nothing significant to show for its poverty program by way of food security and agricultural modernization, land reform,

housing for the poor, and the alleviation of poverty of the poorest 100 families in each town and city which were all touted as the government's priorities.

All of these damaging practices laid the groundwork for the mass mobilization against Estrada that reached a critical stage with Governor Singson's revelations in October 2000 about the former president's criminal involvement with organized illegal gambling. Initiated by the House of Representatives and formally tried by the Senate, the impeachment process got aborted when a majority of senators aligned with Estrada decided to disallow the opening of a crucial bank document as one of the evidences against Estrada, triggering the walkout by the prosecution staff. Within three hours after this event was broadcast in media and multiplied in cell phone text messages, hundreds of thousands would converge on the EDSA shrine, climaxing in a massive people's march four days later towards the presidential palace, effectively forcing Estrada out of office.

The ouster of Estrada stands out for a number of landmarks in the history of recent popular mobilizations in the country. First, the struggle against Estrada brought together an extraordinary political relationship among normally antagonistic groups which saw left-wing and right wing parties, big business and labor unions, upper and middle classes and the urban poor, Christians and Muslims, Communists and anti-Communists, coming together to topple the administration. Unlike its marginal role in the final days of mobilization against Marcos in 1986, the organized Left forces, particularly those rooted in Marxist traditions, played a leading role not only in activating its own forces but in initiating broad alliances and participating in joint multi-sectoral political actions.[38] Among the more dramatic instances of collective forms of resistance and unity cutting across class lines were the mutually agreed upon actions between management and labor unions to go on strike against the government.

In the fall of Marcos, a military mutiny triggered off the peoples' mobilization endowing the military leaders and their civilian patrons a contested heroic claim to ending the dictatorship. No such claim can be sustained by any military leader or faction in the expulsion of Estrada since it was the peoples' mobilization which proved to be decisive from start to finish and which pushed the military heads to abandon the president at the last minute. One military faction in alliance with some opposition politicians claims to have prepared a plan for a mutiny against Estrada.[39] However, this was overtaken by the determined peoples' march to Mendiola (site of the presidential palace), a crucial decision which effectively sealed the president's fate as he and his family hurriedly left the palace in fear of their lives.

Another remarkable feature of the peoples' resistance that forced Estrada out of power was the decentralized spontaneity of the mass mobilizations. There was no single hegemonic center of leadership whether of a party or an individual. There were visible national leaders such as Cardinal Sin and former presidents Aquino and Ramos but they were in no position to define the temper or tempo of the mass actions. Instead, there were intersecting political initiatives from several political groups and formations of diverse ideological leanings but united by a shared interest of ousting Estrada who had come to embody everything they did not want of a leader at that period in time.[40] No doubt, this multi-centered leadership and decentralized mobilization were facilitated by the

technology of modern communications which enabled tens of thousands of people to be informed and mobilized in a matter of minutes. This also allowed for an easier and far wider process of mobilization outside of Metro Manila, particularly in key urban and town centers.

Reflecting the contradictions of globalization in its compression of time and space, the ouster of Estrada also accentuated how a seemingly local-national political struggle can incorporate a more inclusive notion and practice of citizenship with the active participation of Filipinos dispersed the world over. A collective resistance transcending national sovereign borders becomes a reality as an "imagined" Filipino community is enriched in the process of struggle by both communities of immigrant families and contract workers abroad. Linked interactively with each other and various Philippine political networks through Internet websites, electronic discussion groups and related instruments of modern satellite communications, the Filipino diaspora has become an immediate continuing presence, intervening in and interrogating even the most local struggles. While their presence in the past was acknowledged mainly in economic discourses or in glib praises of their being "modern heroes", their electronic yet real interventions in Estrada's ouster compel a rethinking of a future that incorporates both their present and future aspirations.

As in the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship, the middle classes once again played important roles in the ouster of Estrada. While middle class politics partakes of different ideological persuasions from radical to liberal and conservative streams, it may be considered to be an embodiment of some kind of a modern consciousness acquired through higher education and standards of living and varying forms of contact with and appreciation of Western modernity. A possible exception to this tradition may be the middle class Muslim intellectuals who have embraced an anti-Western, Islamic identity and fundamentalism. Such an outlook, however, is probably best understood not as a repudiation of modernity but a redefinition of its meaning in light of local cultures and its antagonisms with Western practices. In the language of one historian, the middle classes "lust for the tranquility promised by an idealized modernity" but in many developing countries this lusting is oftentimes compromised and constrained by realities of poverty and political instability.[41] For the middle classes, this quest for varying aspects of modernity gets to be articulated and filtered through various political idioms (conservative, reformist or revolutionary). Or in the case of the Philippines, this "lusting" also seeks fulfillment in the promises of foreign shores.

Metro Manila is a particularly volatile place for the acting out of middle class dreams and frustrations because in its own contradictory and grotesque ways it is the closest thing to an "idealized modernity" within the grasp of many middle class families. Moreover, there is in Metro Manila a significantly large concentration of middle class households estimated from 24% to as high as 40% of all households. Even while an influential segment of the middle class intelligentsia supported initially Estrada's rise to power, the unraveling of the presidency increasingly made clear the threat and danger that his administration posed to middle class lifestyles and aspirations. The economic downturn that accompanied each scandal and corruption case in the administration not

only made it difficult to maintain middle class amenities but also assailed its prevailing values of justice and fairness. To succeed, however, middle class activism whether in its reformist or revolutionary forms must typically find support from other social classes and institutions to anchor its aspirations and interests. It helped a lot, of course, that the political struggle against Estrada was waged in an environment of formal democracy with legal guarantees for the exercise of civil and political rights. Moreover, the Filipino middle classes in both the public and private sectors have not developed a sense of either institutional loyalty or deference to the state in contrast for instance with those of Singapore and Malaysia where aggressive state policies have deliberately underwritten modernity projects for its middle classes.[42]

In the mobilization against Estrada, middle class intellectuals and professionals assumed leadership roles in the struggle whether of the various left-wing parties of either the Marxist tradition or of Church-inspired radicalism, to the thousands of NGOs and peoples' organizations of different political persuasions, to the business executives and professionals of Makati-based companies and the stock market, and the many sectoral organizations of professionals, urban poor, industrial workers, women, peasants and fisherfolks, and the ethnic minorities. During this period, the closest thing to a constituency that expressed the concentrated sensibilities of a middle class outlook is perhaps best represented by the members of electronic discussion groups who discussed with each other over the internet.[43] The internet and cell phone texting have become the political armaments of choice of the middle classes. Of course, the upper classes also have easy access to these instruments but they have not used it with the same fervor that marked middle class practices. Thus, in the four climactic days of struggle against Estrada, a national crisis enabled the people through their various organizations, many led by middle class intellectuals and professionals, to transcend their fragmented identities and interests, temporarily to be sure. But let it not be forgotten that the most sophisticated intellectual defenders of Estrada also count some of the best middle class lawyers and professionals in the country, stressing once again the manifold entanglements of middle class politics.

Conclusion

The middle classes played important roles in the two most recent historic episodes of democratization in the country: the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986 and the ouster of Estrada in 2001. With their special skills and training, a sharpened sense of "modernity" and the particular political opportunities opened up during these conjunctural struggles, the middle classes assumed leadership roles in various organizations and movements. Their participation, however, was articulated and pursued through different political idioms and persuasions, reflecting the many contradictory aspects of their social, economic and political embeddedness.

In the struggle against Estrada, the participation of the middle classes was enhanced by the largely decentralized nature of the mobilization process reflecting the presence of many centers of political initiative. Moreover, the middle classes were able to use effectively modern means of communications such as mobile cell phones and the

internet in the mobilization process. Reflecting the contradictory aspects and opportunities opened up by globalization, the struggle against Estrada also marked for the first time the active, systematic participation of the Filipinos overseas, made possible by the technology of advanced global communications.

While reflecting the continuing vibrancy and militancy of the peoples' movement and civil society, the ouster of Estrada, however, also underscores the weakness of existing political institutions. How to address this problem and prevent the further politicization of institutions with no clear mechanism of public accountability such as the military is one of many challenges facing middle class politics as the society once again transits to a hopefully more normal phase of political life and democratic consolidation.

Endnotes

[1] For studies on the Philippines and the Asian crisis, see, Manuel F. Montes, "The Philippines as an Unwitting Participant in the Asian Economic Crisis," in Karl D. Jackson, ed., *Asian Contagion: The Causes and Consequences of a Financial Crisis* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), pp. 241-268; Emmanuel S. de Dios, *The Economic Crisis and its Impact on Labour* (Quezon City: Philippine Center for Policy Studies, 1999); Joseph Y. Lim, "The Philippines and the East Asian Economic Turmoil," in Jomo K.S., ed., *Tigers in Trouble: Financial Governance, Liberalisation and Crises in East Asia* (Hongkong: Hongkong University Press, 1998), pp. 199-221; and Paul Hutchcroft, "Neither Dynamo nor Domino: Reforms and Crises in the Philippine Political Economy," in T.J. Pempel, ed., *The Politics of the Asian Economic Crisis* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 163-183.

[2] Emmanuel S. de Dios, *The Economic Crisis and its Impact on Labour*, p.3.

[3] For comparative studies on the responses of Thailand and the Philippines to the Asian crisis, see, David Wurfel, "Convergence and Divergence Amidst Democratization and Economic Crisis: Thailand and the Philippines Compared," *Philippine Political Science Journal* 20, no. 43 (1999): 1-44; and Paul Hutchcroft, "After the Fall: Prospects for Political and Institutional Reform in Post-Crisis Thailand and the Philippines," *Government and Opposition* 34, no. 4 (Autumn 1999):473-497.

[4] This section on the politics of the middle classes from the postwar period to the Ramos administration (1992-1998) draws heavily from Temario C. Rivera, "Middle Class Politics: The Philippine Experience," *The Journal of Social Science*, 45 (September 2000), pp. 1-22.

[5] Surveys conducted by the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia in the Philippines as well as several consumer research companies best typify gradational approaches to identifying social class which use key indicators of socio-economic status such as the durability of the home, maintenance of the house, condition of the yard, type of neighborhood, educational attainment and occupation of the household head, and home facilities. The relational approach to class divides into Marxist and Weberian perspectives with the former defining class primarily in relation to production; the latter accommodates this definition but stresses market skills and capacity as the crucial determinant of class position. In actual empirical studies, both Marxist and Weberian relational approaches have used occupation as one indicator of class with Marxist researchers combining it usually with indicators of autonomy, supervision and decision-making powers in the workplace. For a comprehensive discussion of methodological issues involved in defining social classes in the Philippine context, see Maria Cynthia Banzon Bautista, "Surveying Urban Middle Classes: Methodological Notes," 20 March 2000 (unpublished manuscript).

[6] See Daniel F. Doeppers, *Manila, 1900-1941: Social Change in a Late Colonial Metropolis* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1984), p.53.

[7] For background historical material on the new Communist Party of the Philippines, see Jose Ma. Sison, *The Philippine Revolution: The Leaders View* (New York: Crane Russak, 1989); Gregg R. Jones, *Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); and Francisco Nemenzo, "Rectification Process in the Philippine Communist Movement," in *Armed Communist Movements in Southeast Asia*, edited by Lim Joo-Jock and S. Vani (Hampshire, England: Gower, 1984).

[8] Philippine-Church state relations are analyzed in the following books: Wilfredo Fabros, *The Church and Its Social Involvement in the Philippines, 1930-1972* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1987); Robert L. Youngblood, *Marcos Against the Church: Economic Development and Political Repression in the Philippines (*Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990); and Mario V. Bolasco, *Points of Departure: Essays on Christianity, Power and Social Change*. (Manila: St. Scholastica's College, 1994).

[9] The first cycle of migration to the United States took place under American colonial rule during the twenties and thirties involving primarily cheap labor for the plantations of Hawaii and California and canneries of Alaska. During this period, the labor-migrants were mostly young men from the rural areas of Luzon . The third wave of migration to the United States occurred during the seventies and eighties involving this time the parents and immediate relatives of the professionals who had immigrated after the war (the second wave of migration) and had become citizens of their adopted country.

[10] Various aspects of the politicization of the military are analyzed in the following works: *The Final Report of the Fact Finding Commission (pursuant to R.A. No. 6832)* October 1990. This was the report of the presidential commission created by Pres. Aquino to conduct a fact-finding investigation of the 1989 military rebellion and the involvement of military and civilian officials and private persons in this failed project. *Kudeta: The Challenge to Philippine Democracy* (Manila: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 1990; and Felipe B. Miranda, " The Military: At the Crossroads of Politicization," *Duet for EDSA 1996: Looking Back, Looking Forward*, Lorna Kalaw Tirol, ed., (Manila: Foundation for Worldwide People Power, Inc., 1995). pp. 63-87.

[11] See for instance, Ma. Cynthia Banzon Bautista, "The Protest Movement and White Collar Workers of Makati after the Aquino Assassination". U.P. Department of Sociology Paper, Series No. 1, 1985.

[12] For a comprehensive analysis of the rise and fall of the Marcos dictatorship, see Aurora Javate De Dios, Petronilo Bn. Daroy, and Lorna Kalaw Tirol, eds. *Dictatorship and Revolution: Roots of People's Power* (Metro Manila: Conspectus Foundation, Inc., 1988).

[13] EDSA stands for the initials of the highway named after Epifanio de los Santos, a historian of the Philippine revolution against Spain. The major part of the people's uprising in February 1986 converged at a portion of EDSA which runs between the two major military camps where the rebellious factions of the military launched their mutiny against Marcos. A religious shrine was subsequently built in one section of EDSA and has served as the convergence point for many political rallies and mass services including the mobilizations against Estrada.

[14] Seeking a more culturally nuanced explanation for the participation of workers and the urban poor in the popular uprising, Michael Pinches deploys the notion of *communitas*. This captures the extraordinary sense of camaraderie generated by the event while explaining the management of shame in its contradictory aspects of resistance and accommodation to the established order. See his "The Working Class Experience of Shame, Inequality, and People Power in Tatalon, Manila," *From Marcos to Aquino: Local Perspectives on Political Transition in the Philippines.* edited by Benedict J Kerkvliet and Resil B. Mojares (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991), pp.166-186.

[15] For an assessment of developments ten years after the formal restoration of democratic rule in 1986, see Lorna Kalaw Tirol, ed., *Duet for EDSA 1996: Looking Back, Looking Forward* (Manila: Foundation for Worldwide People Power, Inc., 1995).

[16] Various aspects of the activities of NGOs, and peoples organizations and their relations with the state are analyzed in: Marlon A. Wui and Ma. Glenda S. Lopez, eds. *State-Civil Society Relations in Policy-Making.* (Quezon City: The Third World Studies Center, 1997); and Miriam Coronel Ferrer, ed., *Civil Society Making Civil Society* (Quezon City: The Third World Studies Center, 1997).

[17] For a discussion of the problems that have beset the communist-led armed revolutionary movement in the country since 1986, see Joel Rocamora, *Breaking Through: The Struggle Within the Communist Party of the Philippines* (Metro Manila: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 1994); and Patricio N. Abinales, ed., *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986.* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1996).

[18] Data calculated from the *Philippine Statistical Yearbook, 1995* and the POEA, Employment Info Series 1 (1) 1993.

[19] Katherine D. Gibson, "Contract Labour Migration from the Philippines: Preliminary Fieldwork Report." Department of Human Geography, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University. Cited in Benjamin B. Cariño, "Migrant Workers from the Philippines" *Philippine Labor Migration: Impact and Policy*, edited by Graziano Battistella and Anthony Paganoni (Quezon City: Scalabrini Migration Center, 1992).

[20] Some studies that address the various aspects of this phenomenon include: Anne-Marie Hilsdon, "The Good Life: Cultures of Migration and Transformation of Overseas Workers in the Philippines," *Pilipinas,* no. 29 (Fall 1997): 49-62; R. Pertierra, ed., *Remittances and Returnees: The Cultural Economy of Migration in Ilocos* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1992); and Noel D. Vasquez, "Economic and Social Impact of Labor Migration," *Philippine Labor Migration: Impact and Policy*, edited by Graziano Battistella and Anthony Paganoni (Quezon City: Scalabrini Migration Center, 1992): 41-67.

[21] For a study of El Shaddai, see Grace R. Gorospe-Jamon, "The El Shaddai Prayer Movement: A Study of Political Socialization in a Religious Context" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of the Philippines, 1999).

[22] Survey findings by the Asia Research Organization and cited in Grace Gorospe Jamon, "The El Shaddai Prayer Movement: A Study of Political Socialization in a Religious Context". This same survey shows that 56 percent of the regular listeners of the radio station belong to Class DE, the equivalent of the low-income and poor social classes.

[23] In the Philippines, a *barangay* is the smallest political-administrative unit. *Barangay* officials are elected every three years. In the methodology and classificatory scheme of consumer research studies, class "C" *barangays* represent the middle class communities.

[24] For a full discussion of the conceptual issues and methodological approach used in this survey, see Ma. Cynthia Banzon-Bautista, "Exploring the Middle Classes in the Philippines," 1999.

[25] A total of 11 candidates contested the 1998 presidential elections but only four got more than 10 percent of the total votes cast. Estrada, who received 39.86 % of the votes was followed by the following: former speaker of the House Jose de Venecia, 15.87%; Senator Raul Roco, 13.83%; and former Cebu Governor Emilio Osmena, 12.44%. These figures are from official electoral results issued by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC).

[26] "Erap" is Estrada's adopted nickname popularized by his movie roles and the name "Estrada" itself is actually his adopted movie name. His real family name is Ejercito and after becoming president, he was officially called Joseph Ejercito Estrada.

[27] The class categories referred here are gradational concepts that have been used by both opinion poll survey institutions and consumer research companies. Using a gradational scheme, Classes AB refer to the upper class, Class C to the middle classes, Class D to the lower classes, and Class E to the poorest class. Because of their small numbers, classes AB and C are usually combined into just one class, ABC. For the key socio-economic indicators used to identify these classes, refer to note no. 5. The data on Estrada's electoral performance by socio-economic classes used here are from the Social Weather Stations (SWS) 1998 National Exit Poll. See http://www.sws.org.ph/exitpsdc.htm Unfortunately, the Commission on Elections does not generate election data correlated with social classes.

[28] If class ABC is disaggregated, class AB would be about 2 percent, and class C, 10 percent of the voting population.

[29] For the upper and middle classes, Angara's record as a well-established lawyer, former president of the University of the Philippines, and former Senate President, provided some balance to what was perceived as Estrada's lack of intellectual and managerial skills.

[30] The May 1998 national elections also saw the implementation for the first time of the constitutional mandate for the election of party-list representatives which will make up 20 percent of the total membership of the lower house of Congress. A political party running under the party-list system must win at least 2 percent of the total votes cast for the party list to be entitled to a seat in the lower House. In the 1998 elections, of the 123 parties accredited by the Commission on Elections for the party-list elections only 13 parties succeeded in getting at least 2 percent of the votes cast. For a preliminary assessment of the 1998 party-list elections see, Agustin Martin G. Rodriguez and Djorina Velasco, *Democracy Rising? The Trials and Triumphs of the 1998 Party-List Elections*, Quezon City: Institute of Politics and Governance and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1998.

[31] Those appointed to key government positions included: Felipe Medalla, director-general of National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA); Benjamin Diokno, secretary of the Department of Budget and Management; Leonor Briones, National Treasurer; and Horacio Morales, secretary of Agrarian Reform. The first three are all professors at the University of the Philippines (U.P.) while Morales, also a U.P. graduate, headed the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), the country's biggest development NGO. All four decided to stick it out with Estrada and resigned only the day before the president was forced out of power.

[32] See Ellen Tordesillas, "The Nocturnal President" Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 1999. Among the regular members of the "midnight cabinet" were: Governor Luis Singson, Representative Luis Asistio and business cronies such as Dante Tan, Ramon Lee, Lucio Co, Jaime Dichavez, William Gatchalian, Eusebio Tanco, Jacinto Ng, Charlie Ang, and Mark Jimenez. After a falling out with Estrada and other cronies over the disposition of franchise rights over a recently legalized form of gambling (lotto), Gov. Singson provided the expose on Estrada's systematic collection of illegal gambling fees that would ignite the mass movement to oust the president. The other cronies were involved in various forms of corruption and influence peddling including stock market manipulations, corporate takeovers using government funds, monopoly trading, money laundering, and fronting for bank accounts and corporations identified with Estrada and his family. Two other powerful allies of Estrada are Eduardo Cojuangco, Jr., an original Marcos crony and head of the country's biggest manufacturing conglomerate; and Lucio Tan, one of the country's wealthiest businessman charged with multi-billion peso tax evasions and owner of the Philippine Air Lines, Philippine National Bank, Allied Bank, Fortune Tobacco and a number of other big corporations.

[33] Statement by Karina Constantino-David in neveragain@egroups.com ,19 October 2000.

[34] For a discussion of the concept and practice of "gangster capitalism", see Nancy Holmstrom and Richard Smith, "The Necessity of Gangster Capitalism: Primitive Accumulation in Russia and China," *Monthly Review*, vol. 51, no. 9 (February 2000), pp. 1-15.

[35] See Sheilah S. Coronel, Yvonne T. Chua, Luz Rimban, and Vinia Datinguinoo, "A Scandal of Grand Mansions," Business World (Internet Edition, http://www.bworld.com.ph , 28-30 November 2000).

[36] *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Internet edition, http://www.inquirer.net, front page, 20 January 2001).

[37] See for instance, Isagani A. Cruz, "Losers and Gainers," in http://www.inq7.net/opi/2001/feb/24/opi_iacruz-1.htm

[38] One of the left formations, the *Sanlakas* and *Bukluran ng Mangagawang Pilipino*, whose main base of support is the labor sector, pursued a dissonant call for the resignation of all public officials and the holding of new elections. Nonetheless, both organizations participated actively in the mass mobilizations against Estrada.

[39] For a discussion of the mutinous plans of a military faction identified with Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa of the Philippine Marines, see Carlito Pablo, "Go Count the People" in http://www.inq7.net/nat/2001/feb/25/nat_4-1.htm

[40] The major political groupings involved in the mass mobilizations against Estrada include the following: 1) the left parties with a Marxist-heritage including Bayan, Sanlakas, Akbayan and their affiliate organizations; 2) KOMPIL II, a broad multisectoral formation of several NGOs, peoples' organizations, church-related groups, labor federations, and the social-democratic left parties; 3) the Council for Philippine Affairs (COPA), a grouping of politicians, businesspersons and military contacts, and headed by Jose Cojuangco, former representative and brother of former Pres. Aquino; 4) the Kangkong Brigade, composed of mostly local government officials led by Governor Jose Lina; 5) the various Christian Churches, both Catholic and Protestant; 6) the business sector led by the Makati Business Club; 7) the Philippine Consultative Assembly, a grouping identified with former Pres. Ramos and Gen. Almonte; and several other more or less autonomous smaller organizations in the Metro Manila area and in other urban and town centers in various parts of the country. Universities and colleges served as major sources of demonstrators as shown by the huge numbers of students in attendance in the rallies and marches.

[41] See Brian P. Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). I thank P. N. Abinales for alerting me to this book and its useful insights on middle class lives.

[42] For an illuminating study of how the Malaysian state systematically used foreign female domestic workers to underwrite the "modernity " project of its middle classes and command its political support , see Christine B.N. Chin, *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian "Modernity" Project* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

[43] Among the most active electronic discussion groups during the mobilization against Estrada were: neveragain@egroups.com, elagda@yahoogroups.com, pinoytok@egroups.com, and Uperapresign@egroups.com