

Democratization Halfway through the Term of Another President Aquino: The 2013 ADI Survey in the Philippines

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Introduction

By its midterm in 1989, President Corazon “Cory” Aquino’s administration had “revived a dead economy” (posting a 6.7 percent growth in 1988), placed virtually all school age children in school, caused unemployment to decline significantly since 1985 (the year before Aquino took office), and caused poverty to decline significantly since 1985—or at least Cory Aquino claimed these achievements in her fourth (1989) state of the nation address (SONA). Several other figures showing socioeconomic development peppered that speech—a typical feature of Philippine SONAs. Cory Aquino was proudest, however, of something she did not quantify—her administration’s political achievements:

In little over a year, we uprooted a dictatorship and planted the freest democracy in the world – with all its good and bad features. We held elections that were the freest and most participative in the history of this – perhaps of any – republic in the world.

Our swift democratization was done against the advice that I reserve emergency powers in the face of rising military adventurism and communist terrorism. But I believed then-and time has proved me

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right—that this nation shall find no greater source of strength to defend democracy than in the enjoyment of all its rights and liberties. Democracy is our faith and the root of our strength to defend it. (C. Aquino 1989)

Over three years after the EDSA Revolution that toppled the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship, Cory Aquino believed that her administration's greatest achievement was still the restoration of democracy, or at least the resumption of Philippine democratization. Indeed, the ouster of Marcos led to the dismantlement of government monopolies, the restoration of democratic government institutions, the restoration of press freedom, the grant of spaces for civil society to have greater engagement in policy formation, and numerous other changes that placed Philippine democratization back on track—all of which happened under Aquino's watch. It seems that whatever crisis her administration faced—whether the “military adventurists” and “communist terrorists” she mentioned, the Mendiola Massacre,¹ the persistence of human rights violations,² and the like—Aquino could always fall back upon those post-dictatorship accomplishments as her main legacy to her constituents.

Certainly, no other Philippine president has been able to make similar claims. Nevertheless, almost every SONA of every Philippine president since Cory Aquino contain direct references to a democracy that must be protected or respected, directly or indirectly harking back to the gains of the Cory Aquino presidency. Curiously, her son's SONAs are among those who buck this trend. Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III, elected in 2010, prefers his administration's conceptual anchor to be the “straight path” (*tuwid na daan/landas*), which, based on his statements, seems to be focused on ridding the bureaucracy of corrupt and inefficient officials, equitably distributing wealth, and ensuring the rule of law. Still important to him, however, are figures and ratings indicating economic growth and social inclusion, such as the following highlighted in his last SONA: the 7.8 percent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in the first quarter of 2016, the attainment of “investment grade status from two of the most respected credit ratings agencies in the world,” and the four million families benefitting from the government's conditional cash transfer program (B. Aquino 2013). Based on Noynoy Aquino's pronouncements, he seems to believe that Philippine democracy is already secure, or that structural changes are unnecessary—his administration's main task is to ensure that it is in excellent working condition for the sake of his “bosses,” the Philippine citizenry.

Many are convinced that that is not the case. One assessment from a political watchdog nongovernmental organization (NGO) stated that three years of the Noytoy Aquino administration “only entrenched elite governance,” as “he has done no institutional reforms - which are the call of the times - and never will he” (CenPEG 2013). A professor from the UP School of Economics gave President Noytoy Aquino only a “passable” score in economic development in his first three years in office, given that the actual GDP growth is far from target, the Philippines remains the poorest among the ASEAN-5 economies (the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore), and that overall, the growth Aquino boasts of is not inclusive (Diokno 2013). Lastly, according to the Movement for Good Governance, a “coalition of citizens and organizations that was organized to build a constituency for better governance,” the Noytoy Aquino government is “making gains in delivering what the president has promised,” with the caveat that these gains are being achieved “with a slow pace” (2013).

Asian Democracy Index (ADI) assessments in the Philippines have been ongoing since 2011, about a year into Noytoy Aquino’s term. The Philippine team was particularly interested in completing an ADI survey round in 2013, as this year marks the Noytoy Aquino administration’s midterm. Moreover, 2013 is an election year—in May, twelve senators and all other elected officials from members of the House of Representatives down to local government officials in the city or municipality level were elected. In October, elections were to be held for posts at the lowest administrative unit level, the barangay. Are the abovementioned apparent beliefs of Noytoy Aquino regarding Philippine democracy justified? Is it no longer necessary to explicitly invoke democracy as the people’s “faith,” as Cory Aquino did? Or are those who say that the Aquino administration is performing poorly in steering the Philippines toward substantial democracy correct? What do specialists on these matters collectively think?

The 2013 ADI Survey in the Philippines: Methodological Notes

Our 2013 Asian Democracy Index (ADI) survey data were generated from a total of twenty-nine experts. We categorized 45 percent of these experts as Left-Left leaning, while the remaining 55 percent were categorized as Right-Right leaning. To reiterate the Philippine team’s heuristic categorization of respondents,

In classifying whether a respondent is [(extreme) Left-Left Leaning (L-LL)] or [(extreme) Right-Right Leaning (R-RL)] the research team made the following assumptions: 1) those who are known (by their reputations, publications, etc.) to exhibit critical or dissenting opinions against the Philippine government and its policies, at the same time are avowedly supportive of “socialist” socioeconomic policies are classified as left-left leaning; 2) those who have worked for the Philippine government, either in the bureaucracy or as consultants, and/or subscribe to the government’s “neoliberal” socioeconomic policies are classified as right-right leaning. (Reyes, Berja, and Socrates 2012, 138)

The Philippine team encountered a number of challenges in data collection this year, the most notable of which is the aforementioned 2013 elections—many potential respondents were expected to be unavailable until after the elections, as some of them were involved in the elections in various capacities, such as candidate, campaign manager, tracking poll manager, and election watchdog head.

Survey Methodology

Sample Selection and Respondent Profile

As in previous years, for the 2013 survey, the Philippine research team made a long list potential respondents, all of whom can be considered experts in politics, economics, or civil society. The list includes experts from the academe; nongovernmental/civil society organizations (NGOs/CSOs); and what the team refers to as the private sector, members of which, as we have stated before (Reyes, Berja, and Saturay 2012, 125), “are not affiliated with the government or any academic institution, nor are primarily affiliated with NGOs/CSOs.” The experts were then categorized according to their ideological leanings (L-LL or R-RL).

The respondent profile according to field, institutional affiliation, and ideological leaning can be found in table 1. As in the previous survey, our target sample size was fifty-four, or twice the prescribed minimum for a national ADI survey, which is our way of trying to keep our data potentially comparable with that of other teams while making possible a set of respondents that are evenly divided in terms of ideological categories. While clearly we failed to meet our target sample size, our sample is still in excess of the common CADI minimum and is still a fair mix of L-LL and R-RL individuals.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Field	Affiliation	NO. of L-LL	NO. of R-RL
Politics	Academe	1	1
	NGO/CSO	1	3
	Private Sector	1	2
Economy	Academe	2	3
	NGO/CSO	1	3
	Private Sector	0	2
Civil Society	Academe	3	0
	NGO/CSO	1	1
	Private Sector	3	1
		13	16

Geographic Coverage

As with previous surveys, the 2013 survey includes respondents from all of the country's three major island groups: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, though most of the respondents were at the time of data collection based in the National Capital Region/Metropolitan Manila.

Data Collection

The survey ran from June to November 2013, less than a month after the 2013 local-legislative elections until a few weeks after the October barangay elections. However, the majority of the filled-out questionnaires were returned to us by early August 2013, just before the so-called “million people’s march” in Manila against the heavily abused “Priority Development Assistance Fund” (the latest euphemism for Congressional discretionary funds) (Mangosing et al., 2013). The quantitative-qualitative ADI questionnaires—each corresponding to one of the three ADI fields—that the Philippine team has been using since 2011 were again the study instruments. As before, constraints in distance, time, and resources made it difficult for the researchers to conduct face-to-face interviews. Only one face-to-face interview was conducted in 2013. The rest of the respondents answered the questionnaires that were sent (mostly by email) on their own. Most of the respondents were given on average one week to return their filled-out survey instruments. Most of them were given a deadline extension if they failed to submit on time.

The team sent a total of ninety invitations to potential respondents. Four of the fifteen 2011-2012 “panelists”—those who participated in

both the 2011 and 2012 survey rounds—stated that they could not participate in the 2013 survey round due to previous commitments or did not reply to the team’s invitations. 52.78 percent of previous respondents explicitly or constructively refused to/were unable to participate or withdrew participation from the 2013 survey. The overall refusal rate (including those who constructively refused or withdrew their participation) for 2013 is 67.78 percent, the highest since the 2011 pilot test. For some, this may have been due to respondent fatigue (since they have been answering the same survey instrument every year since 2011). For others, it may have been partly due to work they had to do in connection to the elections.

Analytical Method

As in last year’s survey, the Philippine team complied with the analytical method delineated in the latest version of the ADI Guidebook (CADI 2012).

Findings

Table 2 summarizes the preliminary estimates derived from the results thus far of the 2013 CADI ADI survey in the Philippines. For reference, table 3 shows the overall results of the 2012 survey. The aggregate scores of every subprinciple in politics and civil society clearly went down. Interestingly, the aggregate ratings in every subprinciple under economy went up, but even then the (dismally low) score economic pluralization received remains the lowest among all the field subprinciple scores. Taking into account Noytoy Aquino’s statements on the Philippines’ supposedly improving economic fundamentals, does this increase suggest that what can be construed as SONA spin is actually true? Is trickle-down economics actually working in the Philippines? Or is this rise in ratings attributable to the fact that the overwhelming majority of the 2013 economy survey respondents are right leaning? If one focuses only on the decline in figures, one might think that the respondents are generally of the opinion that the 2013 elections were questionable, or that the Philippines’ “vibrant” civil society is in fact growing weaker. Such interpretations are tempered by the optional explanatory comments, which we will dwell upon in relation to the ratings in the following field-based subsections.

Table 2. Estimates of Democracy Indices (Philippines 2013)

Core Principles	Subprinciples	Fields			Subprinciple Indices	Core Principle Indices
		Politics	Economy	Civil Society		
Liberalization (L)	Autonomy	5.92	5.30	4.29	5.17	5.02
	Competition	4.11	4.95	5.56	4.87	
	Pluralization	4.47	2.93	3.91	3.77	
	Solidarity	5.49	4.48	5.00	4.99	
Democracy Indices		L = 5.01	L = 5.13	L = 4.92	Philippine ADI = 4.70	
		E = 4.98	E = 3.70	E = 4.46		

Table 3. Estimates of Democracy Indices (Philippines 2012)

Core Principles	Subprinciples	Fields			Subprinciple Indices	Core Principle Indices
		Politics	Economy	Civil Society		
Liberalization (L) Equalization (E)	Autonomy	6.00	4.48	4.84	5.11	5.12
	Competition	4.68	4.30	6.43	5.14	
	Pluralization	4.65	2.28	4.70	3.88	
	Solidarity	5.85	4.31	5.50	5.22	
Democracy Indices		L = 5.34	L = 4.39	L = 5.64	Philippine ADI = 4.84	
		E = 5.25	E = 3.30	E = 5.10		

Before proceeding any further, it should be noted that the 2013 respondents—whether frequent participants or “new blood”—gave less comments than the respondents of previous surveys. Although we have less to “work with” this year, we cannot downplay the value of what insights we did receive from our astute and highly knowledgeable respondents.

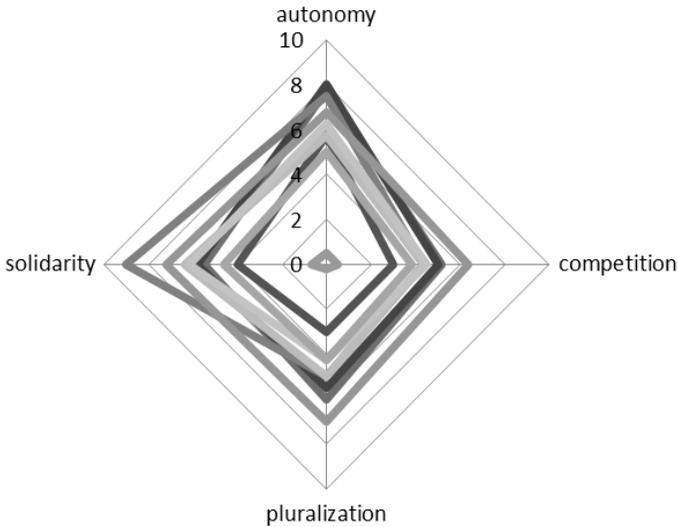
Politics

In the field of politics, the mean score in liberalization is higher than that of the equalization score, which is consistent with the results of previous survey rounds. The difference in the scores between political liberalization and equalization from 2011 to 2013 is smaller in 2013 than in previous survey rounds, however; it was .4 in 2011, .09 in 2012, and .03 in 2013, suggesting increasing political cynicism, i.e., the existence of legislation guaranteeing political freedoms are increasingly being perceived as insufficient evidence that political de-monopolization is successfully proceeding in the Philippines. This is borne out by a closer examination of the qualitative data per subprinciple under the political field. Figure 1 shows that there are few (though distinct) outliers among the respondents of the 2013 politics survey in the Philippines, suggesting that the opinion summations made below are fairly valid.

Political Autonomy

Most of the political survey respondents pointed out that violence from elements of the state still persists, though one L-LL and two R-RL respondents thought that it is occurring far less frequently now than it has during recent memory. The respondents were also generally of the opinion that citizens generally enjoy basic freedoms such as freedom of assembly; whether or not the state listens to those who publicly assemble is another matter. Opposition against the state is seen as generally permissible, though some of the respondents said that no genuine political opposition exists; one L-LL respondent even saw fit to describe political parties in the Philippines as “electoral machinery set up by powerful professional politicians to get themselves elected into power, remain in power, and extend their power by dynastic expansion.” Another L-LL respondent went so far as to state that “[in] the Philippines’ social context, no real opposition movement is allowed; only farcical opposition that does not rock the boat, so to speak, is.” The latter is an outlying opinion, however.

Figure 1. Mean Scores in the Political Field Per Subprinciple



Political Pluralization

As regards the indicators in the political pluralization field subprinciple, most of our respondents agreed the tripartite system of checks and balances appears to—but actually rarely—functions well. As one R-RL respondent noted, “transparency has never been a word one associates with government.” One respondent highlighted the continuing failure of Congress to pass the Freedom of Information Bill. Many of the respondents noted how oligarchs and other traditional elites generally control the legislature and that there are no ideologically defined political parties to speak of (though there are many in Congress who [claim to] represent particular sectoral interests, especially the partylist representatives). Lastly, the respondents were generally of the opinion that public consultations and other displays of “participatory governance” generally do not result in marginalized voices having a say in policy formulation. As one R-RL respondent stated, “[we] have public hearings in [Congress] on issues under [deliberation; how] well our parliamentarians listen to the public is a different story.”

Political Solidarity

As regards the indicators in the political solidarity field subprinciple, our experts were divided on citizen participation in political processes (the right-leaning experts generally believed that due to their participation in elections and frequent vocalization of their complaints, political participation by Philippine citizens is fairly commendable), but they all agreed that generally, citizens have a high degree of trust in the executive (especially President Noynoy Aquino), Congress, and democracy as an ideal. There were conflicting accounts on voter turnout by R-RL respondents, though voter turnout is in truth fairly high in the Philippines. Also worth highlighting is the low to middling scores of the respondents to the item corresponding to the affirmative action attribute—a clear slide downward in opinion from last year on the matter of the state looking out for the welfare of the marginalized.

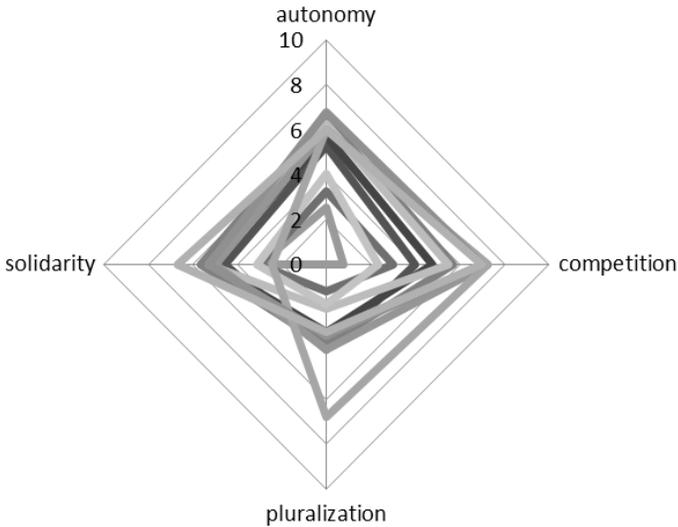
Economy

As in previous ADI surveys, economic liberalization still scored better than economic equalization in 2013; the far-below-the-median economic pluralization score continues to bring down the overall economic index. This continuing condition, which reflects continuing widespread inequality in the Philippines, thus annuls any overall positive evaluation of the Philippine economic field. For a graphic representation of how our respondents rated the items in the economy survey, see figure 2. As in the political field, there seem to be few consistent outliers among the economic specialist set, which may, as previously mentioned, be primarily due to the dominance of R-RL respondents.

Economic Autonomy

The respondents did not reach consensus as regards political influence on private companies, likewise on how well prohibitions against forced labor are enforced. On the other hand, there was a generally middling opinion of how well labor rights are guaranteed and a shared belief that the government is not highly influenced by foreign capital (though one of the L-LL respondents seriously disagrees). However, they thought that the same cannot be said of the government's relationship with local elites. One R-RL respondent noted that the "local oligarchy has far more influence than foreign capital" on the Philippine economy.

Figure 2. Mean Scores in the Economic Field Per Subprinciple



Economic Competition

Among the series of indicators concerning economic competition, overall, the respondents had varied opinions on how transparent private companies are. None of them believed that Philippine companies are highly transparent; disclosure to the Security and Exchange Commission, many of them note, is selective. They also believe that competition among small and large companies is generally poor because of unbridled monopolization. On labor laws, ideological divides become fairly well-drawn. The L-LL respondents rated labor rights protection from 0-5, with one of them highlighting contractualization and labor commodification as a state-supported stance. Meanwhile, some of the R-RL respondents (of a libertarian bent) thought that labor laws are “overprotected” in the Philippines.

Economic Pluralization

Regarding the economic pluralization field subprinciple, most of our respondents were of the opinion that economic power is largely only in the hands of a small elite. Save for one respondent, economic, income, and asset disparity was seen as very high, therefore evaluated negatively, by the respondents; the lone wolf respondent contended that inequality is a

“natural thing,” thus economic inequality in the Philippines is generally acceptable. That R-RL respondent also believed that urbanization and development will eventually reach today’s poor provinces/regions). The others simply relied on current objective reality, which is partly characterized by, in the words of one L-LL respondent, “glaring” abject poverty. That same L-LL respondent was an outlier on the subject of labor market discrimination; while the others stated that labor market discrimination is not a very serious problem in the Philippines, this respondent gave a 0 to the item corresponding to that indicator, noting that “labor inequality still exists” despite legislation that aims to combat it, and how, in his opinion, union activities are “discouraged” in the Philippine workplace.

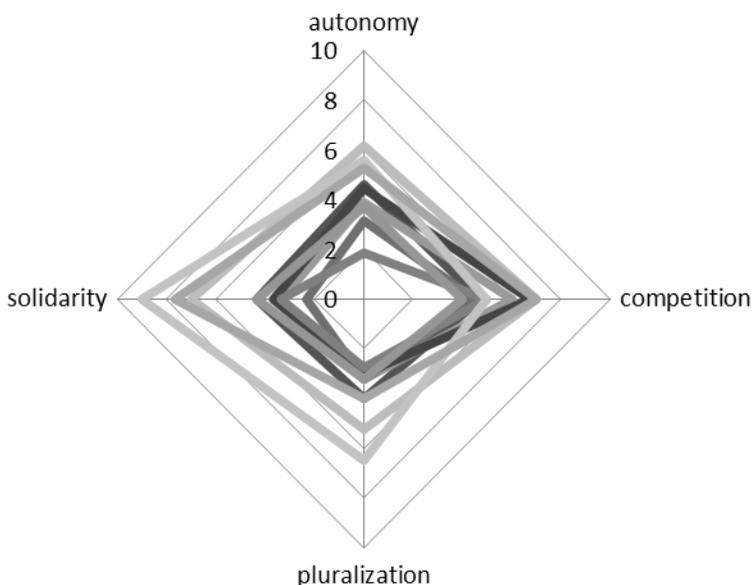
Economic Solidarity

As regards the field subprinciple of economic solidarity, the experts in the Philippine economy agreed that support systems for the poor exist and have short-term positive effects but they are divided in their opinion as to its long-term effects. There is a middling evaluation of social insurance programs but they generally think that labor unions are poorly organized. Consequently, these labor unions have little influence on central government policies and hardly participate in management processes. The respondents added that public monitoring of private companies hardly exists. This is probably contributes to the persistence of poor compliance to labor protection laws. Lastly, they contended that the general public is not or largely losing enthusiasm in eliminating economic inequality, at least for government-led efforts toward that aim. Some of the respondents, however, think people in NGOs show more enthusiasm as regards this matter than government and the general public.

Civil Society

The difference between the scores for civil society liberalization and civil society equalization is proportionally similar to the difference in the scores for the same field principles in previous surveys, though, as previously mentioned, in the current survey, the item scores given were relatively lower than the scores in previous years. Figure 3 shows that the respondents generally agreed in their evaluation of the conditions/situations covered by civil society competition, but were somewhat split on the matters contemplated by the other civil society subprinciples.

Figure 3. Mean Scores in the Civil Society Field Per Subprinciple



Civil Society Autonomy

According to most of the civil society survey respondents, the following observations applied for indicators in the civil society autonomy field sub-principle: NGOs/Civil Society Organizations are generally free from government interference, but they can be censored by political forces; one R-RL respondent reminded us that there is a Cybercrime Prevention Act that might be used to “muzzle Internet freedom.” They also believed that the few government-supported NGOs/CSOs that exist have some influence on society (since many of them have members in key government posts) but this influence remains limited. All respondents noted that private companies have a high degree of influence in Philippine society (though NGOs are relatively free from such influence). Save for two, our civil society survey respondents share the view that the state fails to meet citizens’ basic needs (and if at all, largely for political purposes), as shown in the prevalence of poverty in the country. The two who thought otherwise cited the state’s Conditional Cash Transfer program, which, by the time of our survey, already had some observable positive outcomes. The majority thought that access to education in the Philippines is limited (though one

L-LL and all the R-RL respondents think it is adequate). Lastly, a point of near-consensus—save for two in the L-LL camp—our respondents think that Philippine society is by and large tolerant—even respectful—of people of different backgrounds, affiliations, and beliefs.

Civil Society Competition

Regarding the civil society competition subprinciple, the respondents are divided on NGO influence and internal democratic processes—one of the R-RL respondents thought that NGOs/CSOs are highly influential in society, particularly when juxtaposed with the government, and function very democratically even within networks, while the other R-RL respondent, an NGO/CSO member himself, noted how “personalistic” some NGOs have become, and how embezzlement has happened within “big organizations.” Generally, the L-LL respondents gave far less praise to these organizations in terms of influence and “internal democracy,” though one of them defended NGOs as “[promoters of] democratic values such as participation and transparency.” Overall, however, all of them believe that NGOs/CSOs are representative of people’s interests and are by various measures diverse.

Civil Society Pluralization

Moving on to responses related to the civil society pluralization: our respondents are divided on media fairness, with the majority saying that it is generally free (three L-LL respondents beg to differ, giving scores of “3” to the item on media freedom). The majority acknowledge that there is a fairly wide information gap (even with new information communication technologies such as social media sites) and that there are hardly any cultural facilities to speak of (though one L-LL respondent noted that access to cultural facilities is hardly a “bread and butter” issue for the majority), and a very poor distribution of power throughout the country (though less so, says one R-RL respondent, in urban areas).

Civil Society Solidarity

As regards civil society solidarity, the 2013 respondents say that affirmative action programs—if they exist at all—are largely ineffective in the Philippines. Save for one R-RL respondent, who gave a rare 10 to the item about concerned with citizen’s participation in civil society work, all of our respondents agree that NGOs/CSOs are numerous but do not attract a significant number of citizen (non-member) participants. Lastly,

our respondents thought that NGOs, overall, have some influence in government policymaking—a high amount of influence, as per the R-RL group and one L-LL respondent; the latter highlighted how the Aquino administration is working closely with NGOs/CSOs to “alleviate poverty.”

Summary of Findings and Analysis

The results of 2013 survey, despite the increase in the scores in the economic field, are consistent with those of the 2011 and 2012 surveys. The following summation of findings generally still applies:

- 1) while measures—legal or otherwise—to assure the continuation of democratization in the political, economic, and civil society fields exist, the implementation of these measures is poor or negligible;
- 2) government corruption and other abuses of power are checked in principle both by governmental and nongovernmental bodies, but such abuses persist because these monitoring mechanisms are poorly implemented, especially at the local government level;
- 3) there is also a dearth of legislation and other means to ensure transparency and accountability among nongovernmental power holders;
- 4) coordination among the means and agents to address inequality in power and resource distribution in all the aforementioned areas of society is lacking.

[O]ne can validly conclude that there is a lack of significant united opposition to multi-field monopolization in the country, even if monopolies are anathema according to the law and popular belief. The doors to successful sustainable de-monopolization are open...but the few who struggle to keep them open are barely able, if at all, to combat those who would rather keep the status quo. (Reyes, Berja, and Socrates 2012, 163-164)

Indeed, the problems of Philippine democratization mentioned by our 2013 crop of respondents are the perennial problems stated by themselves or those before them since the ADI survey was first conducted in the Philippines. Hardly any of the respondents gave comments along the lines of “this situation has been alleviated” or “it is much better now.” In fact, many of the two-/three-time respondents gave comments to the effect of “same as last year” or “not much change from before.”

We hardly expected the contrary. Speaking as observers/scholars in the fields of Philippine politics, economics, and civil society ourselves, we

are well aware that the advances trumpeted by the country's second President Aquino in his 2013 SONA obscure certain undeniable facts, such as the still egregious gap between the very few rich and the immense poor. We know that elections may have become somewhat more credible thanks to automation, but, having participated in these elections and having lived through the campaign season circus, we know that many politicians were as "traditional" as they come, e.g., with their "volunteers" distributing "sample ballots" with their names emphasized outside election precincts. Moreover, as numerous studies/well-informed journalistic accounts have shown (e.g., Mendoza et al. 2013; Rood 2013), dynasties still rule in the Philippines even after an election during a "reformist" administration.

Soft Validation of Results

If outside assessments of Philippine democracy or the substantive constituents thereof are any indication, the above quoted overall assessment may not change even if our team had obtained data from more respondents, forming a set that is more clearly bifurcated along ideological lines (L-LL and R-RL). Two such assessments—from Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit—are shown in table 4.

The 2013 Freedom House Report described the rule of law in the Philippines as "generally weak." It also noted that the country has "a few dozen leading families [that] continue to hold an outsized share of land, corporate wealth, and political power"; has an inefficient and "dirty" judiciary; and the extent of authority afforded to the military therein has led to "arbitrary detention, disappearances, kidnappings, and abuse of suspects...numerous killings of leftist journalists, labor leaders, and senior members of legal left-wing political parties"(Freedom House 2013). While Freedom House (2013) noted that in the Philippines, government censorship is not a major issue as media institutions are allowed cover controversial topics and criticize the government, it also observed that observes that "newspaper reports often consist more of innuendo and sensationalism than substantive investigative reporting" while describing state-owned television and radio stations as lacking strict journalistic ethics. Lastly, while it did note that "Philippines is one of the few countries in Asia to have significantly closed the gender gap in the areas of health and education," Freedom House (2013) also emphasized that trafficking of women for forced labor remains a major problem in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, in EIU's democracy index, the Philippines was ranked sixty-nine out of 167 states in 2012. This is the second-highest ranking

achieved by the country since the Index was created in 2007. However, the Philippines remains categorized as a “flawed democracy.” Countries within this category have been characterized by low levels of political participation, weak democratic cultures, and significant backsliding in recent years in some areas such as media freedoms (EIU 2012, 8).

Table 4. Assessments of Philippine Democracy/Freedom, 2011-2013

Index	2011/2012 rating	2012/2013 rating
Freedom House	3.0 – Partly	3.0 – Partly
Freedom in the World	Free (2012)	Free (2013)
Economist Intelligence Unit	6.12 – Flawed Democracy	6.3 – Flawed Democracy
Democracy Index	(2011)	(2012)

Sources: EIU (2011, 5), (2012, 5); Freedom House (2012), (2013)

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According to EIU, the Philippines needs to seriously address its “weak political culture.” By political culture, EIU refers to a “sufficient degree of societal consensus and cohesion to underpin a stable, functioning democracy” as well as popular support and perception for democracy over other possible forms of government, and strength of autonomy between church and state (EIU 2012, 35-36). The EIU thinks that Philippines has made no progress over the past five years in addressing this problem. The country scored 3.13 for political culture in 2012, the same score it has posted since 2007.

Also worth mentioning here are the results of the 2013 Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) of Transparency International (TI). The GCB is based on an international survey of 114,000 respondents spread across 107 countries. It examines the role of corruption in people's lives, specifically their experiences with bribery, their personal views on corruption in their country, and their willingness to act against it (TI 2013, 3). TI noted that in 2013, the Philippines was one of thirty-four countries whose citizenry believed that corruption had decreased in their country (TI 2013, 7). 12 percent of the total number of Philippine respondents reported paying a bribe (TI 2013, 34). The police, public officials/civil servants, and political parties were identified by the Philippine GCB respondents as the top three most corrupt institutions in the Philippines (TI 2013, 37). Meanwhile, 84 percent of the GCB respondents from the Philippines stated that they would partake in one of five actions against corruption (TI 2013, 40). These actions include: signing a petition asking the government to do more to fight corruption, taking part in a peaceful protest or demonstration against corruption, joining an organization that works to reduce corruption as an active member, paying more to buy goods from a company that is clean/corruption-free, spreading the word about the problem of corruption through social media, and reporting an incident of corruption (TI 2013, 32).

Moreover, as previously mentioned, the overall Human Development Index score of the Philippines, .654, is still in the medium range, and is hardly any different—although increasing—from the overall score of the Philippines in the preceding five years (UNDP 2013). In the 2013

Human Development Index, the Philippines ranked 114 out of 186 countries being monitored (UNDP 2013, 143). Historically, the Philippines has made very little progress in terms of human development. Beginning in 1980 when it had an initial index score of 0.561 the Philippines has only progressed minimally to settle at its current level of 0.654 in 2012 (UNDP 2013, 149). Over the last three decades the Philippines has increased its score by only 0.093 and remains in the category of Medium Human Development country. Its subpar performance is further highlighted when compared with similar countries within the same category. Countries categorized as Medium Human Development have been able to increase their HDI scores by 52.7 percent while the Philippines' growth rate is only 16.6 percent since 1980.

However, though most observers/scholars—both those we consulted for our survey and the external ones detailed above—find the state of democratization and related processes under the Noynoy Aquino administration disappointing, the public overall seems to feel that democracy is working better now than ever before, at least according to one polling group—seventy-five percent of Filipinos were satisfied with the way Philippine democracy works, higher than the average in Europe and Latin America, says one Social Weathers Stations poll conducted just before the May 2013 elections (SWS 2013a); the survey conducted after the 2013 elections showed that 64 percent were still satisfied with democracy under Noynoy Aquino, about as many during his mother's midterm (SWS 2013b). Speaking of the recent polls, based on a cursory comparison of headlines in 2010 and 2013, there are fewer complaints of election-related fraud in the 2013 elections. Also, the current dispensation is currently enjoying a reputation for passing landmark laws—e.g., the Reproductive Health Law, the new Sin Tax Law, and the Anti-Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Law—that the specialists consulted thus far have hardly mentioned in their responses. There is a possibility that these may affect the responses of respondents of future ADI surveys. Then again, not that long ago, a scam involving a “bogus” NGO and the Priority Development Assistance Fund of certain legislators started drawing attention not only to misuse of government funds, but also to NGO transparency and accountability. Also, the local “mega-transnational” companies are getting bigger and bigger—one of them showing much interest in building an enormous media empire. Lastly, the undeniable political power/income/asset/information access inequality in the Philippines will make anyone think twice before saying that de-monopolization is progressing happily in the country.

Comparison with Findings from the Previous Year (2012)

It is difficult to compare the findings of the 2013 survey with that of the 2012 survey, given the difference in the number of respondents (forty-six in 2012, seventeen more than the respondents in 2013) and the relative unevenness in the number of respondents per sector (ideological as well as institutional affiliation) this year, among other reasons. In any case, as can be seen in tables 2 and 3, has been alluded to or directly stated elsewhere in this paper, the changes in overall mean field subprinciple scores from 2012 to 2013 are minimal.

Conducting a statistical comparison of scores, either from 2011 to 2013 or from 2012 to 2013, is suspended for this year, pending a re-examination of the value of conducting such tests given the abovementioned variability in respondent size per year. It was decided that comparing the results of “panelists” would also be suspended this year because of the aforementioned decrease in the number of respondents who participated in all surveys and the likelihood that another modification in this subgroup or the emergence of similar subgroups will occur in the 2014 survey cycle (e.g., there will be some respondents who participated in all surveys, some who participated in three surveys, and so on). We believe that a meaningful comparison of the scores of frequent ADI survey participants can only be done after the last of the initial (guaranteed funded) four survey rounds of the project are completed, given how having panelists were not in the original research design.

Concluding Thoughts

With results like these, it is hard to be optimistic about the state of Philippine democracy. In fact, most of the political scientists that we asked to review our 2011 and preliminary 2012 results had authored a book that essentially said that since the year Cory Aquino took the reins of government, even after a dictatorship was overthrown, the Philippines could still not be described as a democracy; the political system can best be described as a “non-democratic oligarchy” (Miranda et al. 2011, 23). It may be that the younger President Aquino’s cessation of allusions to democracy as the faith of the Philippines is less a manifestation of democratic consolidation than the dilution of “democracy” as an aim, leading to its substitution in government rhetoric by the “straight path.” However, the specialists consulted thus far think that Filipinos still have faith in democracy.

If only to highlight this faith, and to emphasize that democratization is a continuous de-monopolization process that requires the participation of the entire citizenry, the Philippine team is already more than happy to continue the survey. But it is also more than willing to help in a development of a tool kit that may have implications not only for policymakers and consultants, but also for those in the public who trusts that democracy will eventually come to the Philippines.

Notes

1. In a massive protest action for the implementation of a radical land reform program, over a dozen protestors were killed by government gunfire from anti-riot forces assembled on Mendiola bridge, a traditional protest site that leads directly to the presidential palace. Most sources say that the shooting was unprovoked, though reportedly there were instigators from communist rebels among the ranks of the protestors. See Maglipon (1987) and Supreme Court (1993).
2. FRC-HRD (1987) contains a long list of human rights violations committed during the first year of the Cory Aquino administration.
3. Calculations are based on figures provided in table 2, “Human Development Index Trends 1980-2012,” published in the Human Development Report 2013.

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