Formulating Reforms in the Philippine Electoral System:

Insights from the 'ELECTORAL SYSTEM REDESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT' project

Paul Hutchcroft

Professor of Political and Social Change

Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Studies

Australian National University

Overview of presentation

I. Genesis of DFAT-TAF project on 'Electoral System Redesign for Development': from academic research to generating ideas for possible political reform

II. Three basic types of political reform: how electoral system fits in

III. Three basic principles of political reform

IV. Public education: on-line articles early 2016

V. Analysis and reform proposals: contributing ideas to the larger political reform process

VI. Electoral reform and the strengthening of political parties

PART I

Genesis of 'Electoral Redesign for Development' Project

The 'money politics' project

- Patronage politics in 4 SEAsian countries
- Multiple collaborators
- Goal of linking research to political reform initiatives

Prospects for Political Reform (in brief)

- No magic bullet when it comes to curbing entrenched practices of patronage politics
- But can examine comparative experiences with political reform
- Electoral system reform has the relative advantage of minimizing scope for unintended consequences
- Electoral system redesign in Japan: from multi-member districts to mixed "single-member district plurality" (SMDP) and proportional representation (PR)
- Korea has also adopted mixed SMDP-PR system
- Consequences of 2009 electoral system redesign in Indonesia: shift from party-centric to candidate-centric variety of PR
- Highlights electoral systems' strong potential for altering nature of political parties and party systems

Why Does Money Politics Matter to ODA?

- <mark>Relative mix of policy versus patronage</mark>

- Basis of how politicians *appeal to voters*: policy, patronage, identity, charisma, coercion, etc.

- Basis of how politicians are *accountable to voters.* Character of representation

- Influence on linkages among politicians, both executive-legislative relations and central-local relations. Understanding logics of governance.

- <mark>Provision of goods and services (who gets what, why and how efficiently), in such key arenas as</mark>
  - <mark>Infrastructure</mark>
  - <mark>Health, education and social protection</mark>
  - <mark>Humanitarian response</mark>

- <mark>High cost of elections a motivation for corruption</mark>

- Patronage shading into bossism: local protection rackets and coercive mechanisms

- <mark>How to improve democratic governance and electoral mechanisms</mark>
  - <mark>Role of constituency development funds</mark>
  - <mark>Ballot design and polling procedures</mark>
  - <mark>Redesign of electoral systems</mark>

Say No to Money Politics
(Antara /M.Agung Rajasa)

Implications for development

- **Throughout much of Southeast Asia and the Pacific, development outcomes are commonly undermined by political systems that**

  - **privilege the quest for patronage over the implementation of policy;**

  - **skew service delivery to narrow electoral considerations rather than broader development objectives; and**

  - **incentivise corruption to finance election campaigns that are centred around give-aways rather than issues.**

Defining electoral systems (1)

- By electoral system, this project refers primarily to the many formulas used around the world to **convert votes to seats**.
- They include (but are by no means limited to):
- simple 'first past the post' (FPTP) plurality systems, aka 'single-member district plurality' or 'winner take all'
- majority-inducing run-off systems
- proportional representation systems
- the party list system (unique to the Philippines)
- various hybrids

Defining electoral systems (2)

- When we speak of electoral systems, we are also referring to

- arrangements to **_elect national and local executives_** (e.g., plurality vs majority-inducing two-round systems)

- **_district magnitude_** (the number of seats per district)

- **_ballot structure_** (e.g., whether Pres and VP are elected together or separately)

Electoral systems:
What it is not

- When we speak of electoral systems, we are NOT referring to the following:

- electoral administration
- electoral adjudication
- voter education
- international election monitoring
- etc.

'ESRD' as project of the Australia-Asia Foundation partnership

- Scoping visit of Ben Reilly, Murdoch University, Oct 2015
- Public education campaign in advance of the May 2016 elections
- July 2016 workshop, bringing together international and domestic resource persons as well as a wide group of stakeholders (and potential stakeholders)
- Subsequent publication of papers
- Small core group formed, composed of representatives from DFAT, TAF, Lawyers Network for Truthful Elections (LENTE), Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (IPER), and the Center for Legislative Development (CLD)

PART II

Electoral system reform in
the context of other types of
political reform

Three basic decisions of democratic political reform (diversely mixed & matched around the world)

I. Central-local relations: unitary or federal?

II. Representational Structures: presidential, parliamentary, or a hybrid of the two?

III. Electoral System: Plurality, Proportional Representation, Party List, or some combination of the above?

Three **distinct** (yet interrelated) decisions

Mixings and Matchings Across the 3 Decisions (electoral system as noted)

I.A. *Federal Presidential*
- The United States (First Past the Post, Electoral College)
- Brazil (Proportional Representation, Two-Round System for presidency)
- Mexico (mixed FPTP & PR)

I.B. *Federal Semi-Presidential*
- Austria (Proportional Representation, TRS for presidency)
- Russia (mixed FPTP & PR, TRS for presidency)

Mixings and Matchings Across the 3 Decisions (electoral system as noted)

I.C. *Federal Parliamentary*
- Australia (preferential, variant of PR)
- Canada (FPTP)
- India (FPTP)

II.A. *Unitary Presidential*
- The Philippines (FPTP, Party List, multi-member plurality, no TRS for presidency)
- Indonesia (PR, TRS for presidency)
- Chile (PR, TRS for presidency)

Mixing and Matching Across the 3 Decisions (electoral system as noted)

II.B. *Unitary Semi-Presidential*
- France (TRS for parliament and presidency)
- South Korea (mixed FPTP and PR)
- Taiwan (mixed FPTP and PR)

II.C. *Unitary Parliamentary*
- Japan (mixed FPTP and PR)
- United Kingdom (fully a unitary system prior to Scottish devolution, now hybrid) (FPTP)

PART III

Three basic principles of political reform

3 Basic Principles of Political Reform
(with 3 corresponding basic questions)

Principle 1:

▪ Study and understand the pre-existing conditions.

▪ There is no one-size-fits-all reform. Each country has its own distinctive historical configurations of power and authority.

Question 1: What are the basic problems needing to be solved? (Rather than: here is the clearly obvious preferred solution—what are the problems that might justify its promulgation?)

3 Basic Principles of Political Reform
(with 3 corresponding basic questions)

Principle 2:

- Understand the nature of the underlying political institutions, especially the two critical institutions of the bureaucracy and political parties.

- If both are weak, whatever is constructed may end up being unstable. (A bit like constructing a house on shifting sands?)

Question 2: What is the underlying capacity of the administrative system (the bureaucracy) and political system (through political parties able to aggregate societal demands and present coherent policies in the public sphere)?

3 Basic Principles of Political Reform
(with 3 corresponding basic questions)

Principle 3:

- Recognize and anticipate unintended consequences.
- The bigger the reform, the bigger are likely to be the risks of unintended consequences.

Question 3: Are there smaller—and hopefully more predictable—reform solutions that could perhaps resolve the problems that have been identified?

PART IV

Public Education Project
Early 2016

Rappler articles and videos

- 'Elections: What PH can learn from the world' (Rappler.com)

- [Electing a president: Picked by some, rejected by many](#)
- [Single ticket: How about voting for president and VP together?](#)
- [PH party list: Making it more representative](#)
- [Party list: Who gets to choose candidates?](#)
- [Zipper system: How to get more women elected](#)
- [Philippines: How to elect a better Senate](#)
- [Electing local governments: Are there other ways to do it?](#)

PART V

Analysis and Reform Proposals

July 2016 workshop

Engaging stakeholders

- Comelec chair

- Party list pioneers

Presentations from prominent Philippine and international experts (1)

- **Allen Hicken, University of Michigan,** "Electoral System Design: Why It Matters to Development Outcomes"
- **Ben Reilly, Murdoch University**: "Primer on Electoral System Design for Development"
- **Allen Hicken**: "When Does Electoral System Reform Occur?" (a comparative analysis of the political dynamics of reform)
- **Socorro Reyes, Center for Legislative Development**: "Gender and the Electoral System"
- **Ed Aspinall, Australian National University:** "Lessons from a Neighbour: Indonesia's Experiences with the Open-List"

Presentations from prominent Philippine and international experts (2)

- **Ramon Casiple, Institute for Political and Electoral Reform**: "Political Party System: Orphan of Weak Philippine Democracy"

- **Meredith Weiss, State University of New York-Albany**: "Patronage Politics and Parties in the Philippines: Insights from the 2016 Elections" (with comparisons to Malaysia and Indonesia)

- **Julio Teehankee, De la Salle University**: "Modalities for Reforming the Electoral System: Institutional Choice and the Philippine House of Representatives"

- **Nico Ravanilla, University of California-San Diego**: "Multi-member Plurality System in the Philippines and Its Implications: Senate, ARMM, Province, City and Municipality"

PART VI

Building Stronger Parties

Paths to Building Stronger Political Parties

- Much work has gone into the Political Party Development Bill, which seeks to 'promote party loyalty, discipline and adherence to ideological principles, platforms and programs' through means that include:

- Mandates that parties must 'craft a clear policy agenda and program of governance'

- Penalties for 'political turncoatism'

- Party development and campaign subsidy performance monitoring and reporting system (to be designed and implemented by COMELEC and COA)

- Limits on voluntary contributions to political parties

- Accreditation of *national* political parties

- State subsidy fund for accredited national parties

In conclusion

- There is of course no magic bullet for building stronger political parties and curbing entrenched patronage structures.

- That said, the adoption of a more party-centric electoral system in the Philippines could have major long-term potential to change the way that politics is done and thus greatly enhance the development prospects of the country into future decades.

- Of all political reforms currently being considered, electoral system reform is arguably the one that would bring the **highest degree of efficacy** with the **lowest risk of unintended consequences**

Maraming/Daghang
salamat!

Mayroon bang tanong?

Naa ba'y pangutana?