

## Where Do Regimes Come From? Where Do They Go? The Philippines Between Neopatrimonialism and Oligarchy

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**ROY KARADAG**

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**THE PHILIPPINES BETWEEN  
NEOPATRIMONIALISM AND OLIGARCHY**

**InIIS-Arbeitspapier Nr. 37  
2011**

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**InIIS-Arbeitspapier Nr. 37/11**

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**Abstract**

Despite decades of experience with democratic institutions since the end of World War II, the quality of Philippine democratic development has been limited, at best. Even the successful civil societal mobilization against Ferdinand Marcos neopatrimonial regime did not generate a political framework in which an effective state apparatus is capable of backing democratic values associated with the formal institutional setting. Why is that the case? This paper attempts to answer this question by tracing the regime origins and dynamics of the Philippines since the late days of Spanish colonialism. It is argued that what ultimately determines institutional changes of contemporary regimes is not so much the age of democratization they currently live in, but the historically-grown conflict structures that constitute patterns of legitimization and delegitimization.

## 1. Introduction

More than three decades after the beginnings of the third wave of democracy, we currently find ourselves in lively debates on contemporary forms of political rule across the world. Two sets of questions are at the center of these post-democratization debates. The first set involves questions of classifying regimes: how do we define democracy? What characterizes autocracies? According to which criteria do we differentiate between regimes? What makes more sense, gradual or taxonomical typologies? The second set focuses on the factors explaining regime changes: what makes authoritarian regimes deteriorate? Which mechanisms are involved in these processes? How do authoritarian regimes legitimize themselves and remain durable, if not stable? Is political economy, history, or political culture the appropriate framework to study regimes? (Bank 2009; Kailitz 2009; Schlumberger & Karadag 2006)

Within these academic debates, the concept of patrimonialism/neopatrimonialism has gained renewed attention among scholars trying to make sense of phenomena of systemic corruption, informality, weak state institutions, pervasive clientelist and patronage networks and cultures of personal-trust-making undermining bureaucratic roles and procedures. Originally based on Max Weber's political sociology, scholars have successfully applied the concept across a variety of countries, regions and eras. In this process, the concept traveled from describing socio-economic modes of traditionalism to include forms of modern domination in which patrimonial and rational-legal forms of legitimacy and practices are combined (Eisenstadt 1973). Through this analytical step, the idea of neopatrimonialism was made ready to enter the democratic transitions debate, at a time when the notion of 'democratic consolidation' was heavily criticized and the objective was to identify the structural sources of failed transitions and classify regimes (Bratton & VandeWalle 1997; Hutchcroft 1998) as well as economic orders (Schlumberger 2008; Karadag 2010).

However, in recent years, the concept of neopatrimonialism has been challenged by a new wave of studies that attempt to analyze the durability and stability of authoritarian regimes by highlighting the impact of formal institutions on political processes, state-society relations and contentious politics. While scholars like Helmke & Levitsky (2006) pointed to the informal nature of political rule in late developing countries, Brownlee (2007), Gandhi (2008), Magaloni (2009), Lust-Okar (2005) and Albrecht (2008) refer to the authoritarian capacities to structure the political field for opposition movements and parties and thereby go beyond the patrimonial elements of continuous elite reshuffling, personalism, centralized patronage and traditional legitimacy that Eisenstadt (1973), Roth (1968), Pawelka (1985) and Bill & Springborg (1994) identified as relevant mechanisms of rule.

This paper analyzes the Philippine neopatrimonial regime between 1972 and 1986 under President Marcos. Arguing from within the historical-institutionalist framework (cf. Thelen 1999; Mahoney 2000; Streeck & Thelen 2005; Thelen & Mahoney 2010), the aim is to trace the origins of patrimonialism, which can only be understood in relation to the *ancien regime* that emerged with the institutionalization of social power structures in the early years of U.S. colonialism (1899-). What was established was an oligarchic regime and a fragmented (rather than a cohesive) state apparatus. Within this regime, the state provided only a

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minimal degree of autonomy and capacities, i.e. of state power as a potentially autonomous source of social power to the political elites in power. Political competition was structured along the rules of pork barrel and patronage, not of ideological or social cleavages. Also, heavily regionalized power structures were established given the way the U.S. institutionalized the political process to maintain social order during the ongoing War of Resistance (1899-1902). Such are the socio-political origins of 20<sup>th</sup> century Filipino regimes as they have been accounted for with notions of “cacique democracy” (Anderson 2005), “booty capitalism” (Hutchcroft 1998), “bossism” (Sidel 1999), “anarchy of families” (McCoy 1993) and “contested democracy” (Quimpo 2008) to underline the high degrees of continuity better explained than in rational choice institutional theories.

However, recently, scholars have opted for a more dynamic historical institutionalist approach to account for endogenous institutional changes (Mahoney 2001; Mahoney & Thelen 2010; Slater 2010), an idea that is essential to explain Filipino patrimonialism under Marcos, how it suspended oligarchy and why, compared to other experiences (e.g. Suharto in Indonesia; the Arab World), it was only of relatively short durability. Marcos relied on the same strategies, repertoires of authoritarian and patrimonial leaders, as elsewhere: centralization, personalism, cronyist allocation of resources, elite recruitment, informality, a ruling party, electoral fraud, a nationalist-developmental ideology and brute repression against liberals, communists, ethnic and religious minorities. Still, his rule longed only for fourteen years under authoritarian institutions, after six years as elected president within the oligarchic regime. The argument proposed here is that Marcos’ patrimonialism suffered from the same problems of state weakness and lacking state power that prevented him to break the power of established family business oligarchs and traditional politicians. Due to lacking mobilizational resources elite defections accelerated since the early 1980s and prevented the possible electoral legitimation of his rule in the snap elections of 1986. As a result, a field was created in which liberalizing mechanisms could not be contained by the patrimonial state apparatus.

Still, transitions from neopatrimonial rule usually do not end in democratic regimes. Instead, the default result is oligarchy, which denotes a set of formally democratic institutions with low degrees of state capacities. Liberalizing politics expands the number of players in the new regime, but it does not restrain the illiberal practices that are relied on to gain and accumulate political (and economic) power. So far, and this holds for the current transitions in the Arab world after 2011 as well, there has been no neopatrimonial breakdown that increased state power. After decades of systemic, top-down corruption and clientelism, it just seems highly unlikely that liberal democracies with a effective law-abiding state can be build against such established political practices. Historical institutionalism with its focus on power struggles and their reproduction demonstrates the dilemma of establishing post-patrimonial capacities to establish democratic rule as the relevant struggles for state power in the Philippines have been fought long before Marcos (and presidents after him) came to power which heavily constrained the capacities to accomplish just that.

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## 2. Regimes, origins and changes

What will be presented shortly in this section is an attempt to conceptualize the origin of modern regimes as part of a broader historical explanatory tool that may hold for a variety of late developing countries. This will be done through the framework of historical institutionalism, a framework that has for too long been charged of mainly being able to describe patterns of durability and continuity.

First, what are regimes? They are defined here as fields of contestation in which individual and collective actors compete for gaining, maintaining and maximizing political power. This field is structured by rules specifying the modes of gaining, exerting and losing power, who can participate and the range of political power, its material and normative resources. Political power, the capacity to make and enforce collectively-binding decisions, is aimed at and operates through the state, in Weberian terms the “human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.”

Through this very broad definition of regimes, we include the notion of institutions, i.e. those rules specifying the rules of the game, rules that are enforced and guarded and which ultimately represent “distributional instruments laden with power implications.” (Mahoney & Thelen 2010: 8) Based on these definitional propositions, we may start differentiating between regime types, e.g. the original democracy, authoritarianism, totalitarianism and the recent democracy, hybrid regime, authoritarianism divides. Within these typologies, patrimonialism/neopatrimonialism is a subtype of authoritarian regimes, in which no effective competition for relevant decision-making offices takes place, civil rights and political liberties and the mechanisms of participation are inhibited.

Regimes, and the institutions through which they operate, are “enduring legacies of power struggles” (Thelen 1999: 388), legacies that have a lasting impact on actors’ practices reproducing them in the ongoing struggles for political power.<sup>1</sup> These legacies result from the fact that at one point in time, there crystallized a certain solution and institutionalization of existing power relations that, in the highly technical language of path dependency, came with a lock-in effect and self-reinforcing stabilization of this institutional outcome. However, this pattern only reflects one possible path after the critical juncture. Another possibility, to account for change mechanisms, is James Mahoney’s ‘reactive sequence’ model according

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<sup>1</sup> This power-oriented view on institutions clearly breaks with rational choice and New Institutional Economics assumptions. In the words of Claus Offe “the origin of institutions must be looked for *not* in terms of purposive rational and deontological terms [...]. Institutions and institutional changes are more consistently explained in terms of the balance of social power that they reflect rather than in terms of the goals and objectives that they are claimed to serve.” (2006: 12) In an similar vein, Moe alludes to the necessary differentiation between ‘governance structures’ and ‘political systems’: “Governance structures are relational contracts in which actors agree to procedures that allow them to adjudicate disputes, adjust to new developments, and otherwise ensure that their original agreement is maintained over time in a changing environment. [...] What makes such stylized governance structures different from political systems, however, is that they are voluntary. Political systems are different. Centuries of political philosophy notwithstanding, there is no social contract in any meaningful sense that can account for the foundations of government. In all modern societies, people are typically born into the formal structure of their political system, do not agree to it from the onset, and cannot leave if they find it disadvantageous (unless they leave their country).” (2006: 40-41)



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to which what matters is the mobilization of actors and groups against the institutionalized outcome (Mahoney 2000; 2001).<sup>2</sup> In their search for further modes of endogenous institutional changes, Streeck & Thelen (2005) and Mahoney & Thelen (2010) have conceptualized a variety of change mechanisms (*layering, drift, displacement, conversion*) that may be gradual but still trigger revolutionary changes in the long run.

Besides this distributional dimension that creates boundaries in the political field between incumbents, challengers, outsiders and beneficiaries, what matters for the maintenance of a regime are the actual practices of relevant political actors and the way these practices are regularized and confirm or oppose the material and/or normative pillars of the regime's institutional framework. As Tilly & Tarrow noted, each regime consists of "regular relations among governments, established political actors, challengers, and outside political actors, including other governments" (2006: 45), where in each regime, there exists an acknowledged set of repertoires political actors may resort to. Shaped by former power struggles, meaning systems and cultural representations, new repertoires enter the field through creative actions of relevant political figures, actions that may be emulated and that may thereby, although it can differ from the rules of the game, change the face of the respective regime (Migdal 2001).

The introduction of new repertoires of action by political elites makes sense only by relating them to the same social struggles that gave birth to the respective regime in a particular country. They create new meaning systems and legitimize themselves by articulating the legitimacy gaps of the existing political, socio-economic and cultural orders and the contradictions arising from the uncovered gaps between 'images' and 'practices' linked to them. It is argued in this paper that the origin of regimes and their persistent contradictions is to be traced back to the great transformations taking place in the nineteenth century, when the expansion of capitalist social relations, the erosion of liberalism and the creation of new nationalist identities undermine colonial and imperialist orders in the global periphery. In the Philippine case, these forces weaken Spanish colonial institutions and create sites of contention that are then determined by the entry of the newly rising U.S. colonial empire which established formally democratic and decentralizing institutions which consolidated the political power of agrarian oligarchs. After this 'critical juncture', the continual non-democratic exclusion of rival social groups from the arena of contestation represented the predominant legitimacy flaw in the Philippines, a flaw to be later instrumentalized by figures like Marcos in his attempt to create the 'New Society'.

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<sup>2</sup> Through the reactive sequence, Mahoney (2001) presents a more complex picture of the longue durée legacies of liberalism in Central America in which each early institutional framework faced particular opposing pressures, the reinforcing path was broken, and a variety of long-term outcomes is portrayed. See Karadag (2010) for the adoption of this historical model to explain path ruptures in Turkey and the Philippines.

### 3. State formation and regime origins in the Philippines

In this section, I will briefly highlight the historically-grown regime patterns that were shaped by three factors: Spanish colonialism, the impact of capitalist transformations and the institutional outcome enforced and guarded by the new U.S. colonial power at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will see that within the new oligarchic regime, there existed a dynamic tendency toward the centralization of political power as it was first successfully realized by Manuel Quezon, first President of the Philippine Commonwealth (1935-1941), whose strategies of electoral manipulation, repression, bossism and party patronage represents the blueprint for all later, including Marcos', patrimonial experiments that were increasingly being institutionally contained.

#### 3.1 Spanish colonialism and capitalist transformations

Before the Spanish conquest, the Philippine archipelago consisted of a multitude of socio-cultural localities. In general, settlements were usually to be found along rivers and the coasts the latter of which developed trading relations with foreign, Asian and Arab, but mostly Chinese, traders. Within these settlements (*barangays*), the social organization was divided along three separate strata. *Datus* formed a distinctive type of hereditary nobility that had political, military, juridical and economic roles. Distinguished by charisma and traditional animistic practices (through the use of magical items), *datus* attained military capacities and economic wealth through which they could sustain their own power bases that could be measured by the number of dependent households. The common people (*tao*) paid tributes and were linked to them through bonds of servitude (either after committing crimes and being convicted or through economic indebtedness). These forms of servitude, however, were not of a strict juridical nature and would not prevent upward mobility, given the specific conditions of mutual interdependence. In-between *datus* and *tao* were the *maharlika* (*timawa* in the Visayan Islands), a kind of warrior nobility that belonged to the *datus'* households and acted as their entourages in war and in public ceremonies. While they usually did not labor and were exempt from paying tribute, in the Tagalog-speaking regions, lower-standing *timawa* performed agricultural labor for the *datus*.<sup>3</sup>

What was particular about Spanish colonialism in the Philippine archipelago was its mixture of military and missionary activities. While it took Spain several decades to establish its hold over Cebu, Luzon and the Visayas (Mindanao would only come under effective Spanish control in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century), the lack of Spanish personnel induced the empire to set up local authorities with the help of local chieftains and Catholic friar orders

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<sup>3</sup> "For several reasons, *barangay* social stratification escaped rigidity. The delicate web of linkages which bound the community together blurred any tendencies toward caste. Landholding arrangements differed sufficiently to assure a gradual rise and fall of individual fortunes. Complex marital patterns, together with intricate social gradations growing out of them, alleviated the long-term impact of status. Women also occupied elevated positions and constantly influenced their offspring's destination through gentle or shrewish treatment of husbands and male relatives. The system, in brief, functioned in accord with tribal dynamics. Its relatively simple forms bore little or no resemblance to European corporate and contractual configurations." (Sturtevant 1976: 23-24; emphasis in original)

who quite early sent their missionaries into most parts of the archipelago. These friars (Augustinians, Franciscans, Dominicans and – with interruptions – Jesuits) were highly effective in their activities by incorporating local animistic cults (e.g. the replacement of magical items through Catholic icons and symbols), thereby appropriating the role of shamans who before acted as intermediaries towards spiritual sources (Stanley 1974: 17). Furthermore, the Spanish could also instrumentalize the already existing social stratification for their purposes. They depended on the cooperation of *datus* who would help in the *reducción* process in order to uphold their privileged status. They were assigned *cabezas de barangay* or *gobernadorcillos*, collected tributes for the colonial state, while they themselves were exempt from paying. This strategy upheld and both transformed the pre-colonial social and political setting, with the former *datus* now forming the *principalía* (Simbulan 2005).<sup>4</sup>

For several centuries under Spanish rule, the Philippine archipelago was serving mainly as entrepôt in the famous galleon trade and as a source for tribute payments to the Spanish crown. The institutional framework that secured these economic activities strengthened the role of the Spanish friars who controlled non-expansive commercial agriculture oriented toward local markets. Two related factors set the shift in motion toward a capitalist, export-oriented economic order, the first one being the official plan of Governor-General Basco y Vargas (1778-1787), and the second one being the influence of western capital that – combined with the ongoing internal dynamics of the rise of *indio* and *mestizo* landowning classes – created a new, unified peripheral economy based on export cash crop agriculture and the opening of the archipelago into the world economic system (Corpuz 1997).

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Philippine agricultural exports rose continuously to levels unseen before. With the independence of Spain's Latin American territories, the already unprofitable galleon trade came to an end (between 1815 and 1821). The forces that spurred these new economic developments were British and U.S. trading and financial houses who directed investments into cash crop agriculture. Increasingly, lands and forests were cleared for new plantations, so that export crops (sugar, abaca, indigo, coconut, coffee) became the most profitable products to cultivate. Rice, as the traditionally main product in the subsistence economy and for tribute payments in kind (in 1830, only three provinces left for tribute in kind), had to give way in the course of the monetarization of the economy. Also, individual British, U.S., French and Spanish entrepreneurs came to the Philippines as commercial agents and invested in these areas, most prominently in the sugar industry (Larkin 1993; Billig 2003) Even though the international price for sugar was decreasing continuously until World War I, the Philippine sugar industry formed the politico-economic bloc that would dominate power relations until the post-colonial era. Also, in this sector, we see a highly differentiated division of labor between western financial houses and entrepreneurs, *mestizo* landowners and Chinese middlemen. The latter, since the latest immigration waves, were initially thought to contribute to the promotion of the industry as rural workers. Instead, they regained their privileged positions as commercial agents, retailers, provisioners of the urban centers and as tax collectors, pushing the *mestizos* into

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<sup>4</sup> “Preserved in at least some measure of their traditional role, the *principalía* had a strong interest in maintaining the status quo and were in no sense a challenge to the priests. An element of continuity, they mediated between the Spanish and a population too large and diffuse to be governed directly.” (Stanley 1974: 14)

landholding and commercial agriculture<sup>5</sup>, while western financial houses were mainly focusing on exporting the crops to Britain, the U.S., and, to a minor extent, to Spain (Legarda 1999; Wickberg 1965).

Similar to Europe and other regions, a capitalist and landowning class emerged through practices of dispossession and the commodification of labor. While bonds of reciprocity tied landowners to tenants and rural laborers, under the new economic order, money turned into the overarching source of social status. With the increased monetarization of the economy, peasants kept falling into debt traps and decreased in their social position. The money nexus set up more rigid hierarchies and boundaries, leaving to them the choice between fleeing the land or rebelling against friars and landholders.

In political terms, the Spanish colonial order was challenged by several factors: new claims made by new rural and urban elites for political participation according to the predominant global scripts of liberalism which had triggered conflicts between liberals and conservatives in Spain; reforms in the field of education that opened a new avenue of “social advancement” (Abinales & Amoroso 2005: 92); and the beginnings of new nationalist identities that radicalized the opposition against the Crown as it became obvious that the struggle of Spanish liberals did not include the interests of ilustrado elites for self-representation.

Who were the propagators of the Filipino nation, and what claims were made? Urban elites and professionals, western-educated intellectuals and agrarian expressed their interests in substantive political reforms, most influential of which was José Rizal.<sup>6</sup> They actively participated in debates with their liberal allies at home and in Spain, writing books and pamphlets. The first organized group called itself *La Solidaridad* in 1889 and was active in Spain. At the beginning, claims hovered mainly around issues of equality and changing the Philippine status from colony into a Spanish province. For a long time, the „propagandists” (Schumacher 1991) did not desire independence from Spain, but rather called for an end of friar power in the archipelago. It was only later, with the escalation of political struggles in the mid-1890s that national independence developed into a tangible concept worth fighting for as it became clearer every year that the reformist path would not bear any tangible fruits. The fact that reforms, and not revolution, was the desired goal may also reflect the *ilustrado* backgrounds of the propagandists. Most of these actors belonged to the new upper classes, with backgrounds in commercial agriculture, urban professions. These groups called for the establishment of political institutions in which they would exert privileged positions as the arbitrators between the Spanish and the Filipino nation, through rebuilding the solidarity

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<sup>5</sup> “For the most part it was the Chinese who facilitated the commodification of agriculture, but it was the *mestizos* who capitalized on the increasing value of land and thus became a landed elite holding key offices in rural Luzon.” (Wilson 2004: 51; emphasis in original)

<sup>6</sup> José Rizal, born in 1861, was to become the ideological father of the revolutionary uprisings of the Filipinos in 1896 against Spain and in 1899 against the USA. During his studies at various universities in Europe, he gained fame and popularity back at home by his two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891) which captured the sufferings of the Filipino at the hands of colonial authorities and friar orders while at the same time constructing the ethnic Chinese as alien to the Filipino nation (Hau 2000: 142). In Europe, he worked together with other Propagandists (especially Marcelo del Pilar) in lobbying for political reforms, equality and assimilation of the Philippines into the Spanish Empire. However, he would break with del Pilar’s assimilationist stand and upon his return to the Philippines create his own organization, La Liga Filipina, through which to promote reform back at home.

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linkages between the mother country and the new nation which the Crown and the friars have for too long disrupted.

While Rizal was exiled to Mindanao, other nationalist actors created the *Katipunan*, a secret society that was planning armed uprisings against the Spaniards. Rizal himself cautioned against violent actions, deeming such attempt to be preliminary. Even so, his stand and treatment by the colonial authorities provided mobilizational resources for the members of the radically-minded Katipunan under Andrès Bonifacio. As the Spanish were on the verge of preemptively striking against the organization, Bonifacio proclaimed the uprising on 24 August 1896, four months before Rizal was executed by the Spanish as he was charged with leading the rebellion.

### 3.2 US colonialism

While the Katipuneros faced enormous challenges against the Spanish troops, in 1898, the revolutionary cause took an unexpected turn with the breakout of the U.S.-Spanish War on April 24. While the primary reason for the war was linked to the rebellion in the Cuban colony and the opportunity of the U.S. to get rid of the Spanish in their newly defined domains, the U.S. sent naval troops to the Philippines. After an easy and decisive victory in Manila bay on 1 May under Admiral Dewey, Filipino forces tried to use the occasion and, with more or less coordination with U.S. troops, further liberalized several cities and provinces. Yet, the U.S. entry also stirred much unrest and uncertainty among the Katipuneros as to the actual goals of the U.S. in Southeast Asia. Aguinaldo, the new leader of the *Katipunan* since 1899, would not succeed in being recognized formally (despite the declaration of independence on 12 June 1899) by the U.S. who rather started their peace negotiations with Spain under the condition that the *Katipunan* would not be legitimized. With more and more U.S. troops in the country (and Manila in August 1898), frictions between them and Filipino resistance fighters were becoming increasingly unavoidable (cf. Miller 1984: Chap. Three).

The treaty of Paris in December 1898 finally outlined the goals of the new empire. According to the treaty, Spain lost all its remaining colonies. While Cuba would be granted formal independence, Puerto Rico and the Philippines would fall under the authority of the USA. Still reckoning that the anti-imperialist positions in Congress would prevent the ratification of the treaty, Aguinaldo started to implement his own state-building visions and on January 23, 1899, proclaimed the Republic of Malolos. In the framework of this first Asian republic, the power of landed elites and urban *ilustrados* was to be institutionalized elites through controlled political participation (Abinales & Amoroso 2005: 113). Simultaneously, the U.S. sent the first Philippine Commission under Cornell University president Jacob Gould Schurman to assess the necessities and possibilities of U.S. rule. In midst of these preparations on both sides, open fights erupted between U.S. troops and Filipinos in Manila in early February, paving the way for the second war of independence on 4 February 1899 (Miller 1982: 63), a war that was won by the Americans within three years through a mixture of military operations, political cooptation of urban and rural elites and massive dislocations that destroyed the social bases of the resistance, which directly and indirectly caused the death of quarter a million natives (Corpuz 1997: 205-206).

In their proclaimed goal of democratic tutelage, the Americans set up a central administrative apparatus under the appointed Governor-General which was restricted for colonial officials (Executive Bureau, Bureau of Audits, Department of Interior, Department of Commerce and Police, Department of Finance and Justice, Department of Public Instruction, Bureau of Agriculture). The Executive Bureau, as laid out in the Civil Service Act in 1901, was designed to centralize the investigative and monitoring capacities of the boards, thereby marking the locus of bureaucratic rationality of the new administration. In fact, the Bureau adhered to these goals and made use of its capacities to curb abusive behavior, both by American (1902-03, 17 charged and sent to prison) as well as by Filipino officials (1903-1913, 2300 cases leading to 1500 penalties). At the same time, native actors were to be included through limited representative institutions. Starting at the provincial and regional levels with elections that took place during the war, these cooptation measures culminated in national elections and the establishment of the Philippine Assembly in which the first generation of national Filipino elites came together.

How did this form of political institutionalization and representation relate to the other pillar of social engineering, the administrative capacities of the colonial bureaucracy? Frankly, it directly opposed it. These administrative powers were undermined by the political ruses of patronage and power, to which American politicians of the high era of U.S. machine politics were well-accustomed.<sup>7</sup> Governor-General Taft and the Philippine Commission were confronted with a dilemma of having to choose between bureaucratic rationality and impartiality and political control through cooperation with local elites. They chose the latter to “reinforce the power of the indigenous elites rather than to sow the seeds of popular government” (May 1980: 42).<sup>8</sup> Even though the Americans criticized and openly attacked forms of ‘caciquismo’ as remnants of the Spanish era, their own mode of state-building in terms of bureaucratic rationality became a “monumental failure” (Hutchcroft 2000: 288). For, U.S. officials themselves played along patronage rules to uphold authority. Similar to the Spanish before them, the U.S. lacked the will of the capacities, given these contradictory goals, to counter corrupt practices and the hegemony of the national oligarchy which rested upon local bossism. With the inauguration of the PA, the *Nacionalistas* were effective in deepening, despite last-minute measures of the PC to control such capacities, the Filipinization of bureaucracy and politics. One such measure was the reform of the Civil Service Act in 1908 according to which municipal treasurers were to be appointed by the

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<sup>7</sup> See Abinales (2003) on the similarity of discourses and problems between machine politics and progressivism in the U.S. and the Philippines; also May (1980) on the social conservative background of the members of the PC, Paredes (1988b) on Taft’s strategy of shifting patronage resources from the *Federalistas* to the Quezon and Osmeña factions. The best account of these early patronage structures is Cullinane (1989) who outlines in detail the decline of the *Federalistas* in terms of patronage capacities.

<sup>8</sup> “From the outset the interaction between these aspiring political elites and the Americans was one of give and take: Americans sought peace and order and acquiescence to their major political and economic policies for the colony; Filipino elites sought security for their social and economic positions in the indigenous society and a greater share in running the colony. In the exchange, Filipinos succeeded very early in obtaining considerable control over local politics and government. What they gave up in national sovereignty and long-term economic and cultural subordination, they gained in local autonomy and, by 1907, the ability to ensconce themselves in key national-level positions (seats in the national legislative assembly and high bureaucratic offices). By this time they had both consolidated their positions in the colonial government and established political mechanisms and relationships that permitted them in most cases to avoid colonial scrutiny.” (Cullinane 2009: 69)

municipal councils, an act that “removed one of the most important local posts from civil service protection and transformed it into an explicitly political post.” (Hutchcroft 2000: 291)

Although these power constellations were structured in a bottom-up way marked by high degrees of political fragmentation due to the absence of cohesive national elites, there was indeed room for maneuver for political actors to accumulate wealth and power. The newly validated rules of patronage (Go 2008) were a strong obstacle to political cohesion. There existed no ideological or organizational basis for it, and although the prevalent power-sharing institutions (between the Philippine Assembly, the Senate, the U.S. Governor-General, and the local and regional assemblies) reflected this fragmentation, the case of Manuel Quezon, the political champion of his time, underlined the dynamics toward centralization and ‘patrimonialization’ inherent in the oligarchic regime. These dynamics did not translate into a full-fledged patrimonial regime only because of the Japanese invasion in 1942, Quezon’s flight into exile, and the proclamation of the new Republic.

What were the new repertoires of political elites? And how did Quezon change these in such a way that allowed him to acquire such a powerful position unforeseen by the colonial and Commonwealth institutions?

First, Quezon stood at the head of and steered the Filipinization process. As leader of the PN and President of the Senate, he controlled the allocation of loans of the Philippine National Bank (PNB) in exchange of donations from wealthy businessmen, sugar barons and bankers, thereby successfully entrenching himself as the essential broker of scarce financial resources.<sup>9</sup> Turning the PNB into a vat patronage source, he successfully outcompeted rivals, coopted and bought others, while signaling to the rest that all success, political and financial, depended on having good relations with him.

Second, Quezon excelled in and superseded other elites in his engagement in local politics. More so than earlier Manila-based elites (e.g. the Federalistas in the 1900s), he actively incorporated local affairs under the Nacionalista umbrella. Interested in containing conflicts between rivaling local and regional factions, Quezon did not hesitate to strain the financial resources of the bureaucracy and the party and to use brute force to punish competitors.

Third, and maybe most important in this colonial setting, since his time as residential commissioner in Washington D.C., Quezon could rely on his support networks within the Congress and the State Department by effectively signaling that the problem of maintaining colonial social order could only be solved by him. While his policies and extra-legal measures met with heavy criticism from the Governor-General, relations with U.S. political elites were usually quite good so that, effectively, the ‘democratic’ framework the U.S. officials set up did

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<sup>9</sup> “Quezon’s wealthy backers were lavish in their support. Andres Soriano of San Miguel Corporation extended Quezon a ₱ 65,000 ‘loan’ and Joaquin Elizalde of Elizalde y Cia ₱ 45,000 on similarly generous terms. The Philippine Sugar Association contributed amounts of up to ₱ 50,000 to the Party regularly during the 1930s. Individual planters with large crop loans from the Philippine National Bank were expected to make regular contributions to Quezon’s wing of the Nacionalista Party as well. When PNB debtors contributed only ₱ 20,000 in July and August 1940, for example, Nacionalista leaders considered this a ‘poor showing’ and suggested that ‘Quezon exert pressure on the heavier debtors of the bank for more substantial donations.’ And pressure he did.” (McCoy 1988: 134)

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not represent any realistic obstacle to measures of power maximization that breached the existing institutions. Subsequently, with these vast power resources at hand, Quezon did not plan to recede from the Commonwealth Presidency and exerted enormous political pressure to change the Commonwealth constitution, measures that only came to a halt with the Japanese invasion and Quezon's death in 1944.

### **3.3 The post-independence regime**

Despite the similarity of the political institutional framework of the new independent Philippine Republic in 1946 and the continuity of political personnel (as almost none of the collaborators with Japan were charged), new structural features shaped the rules of political patronage. First, the hegemonial status of the PN disintegrated in the course of World War II and the Liberal Party (LP), although not distinguishable from the PN concerning socio-economic background and policy orientation, emerged as a rival political machine. Second, the Huk rebellion in the late 1940s was a major social force as it had gained had gained countrywide social control during the war and was capable to lead, at least in Luzon, a near civil war as it was barred from the political stage in 1946. Third, and most important, in 1949 the regime would for the first time enact policy changes toward import substitution industrialization that strengthened the potential autonomy of the state. However, these instruments merely served to centralize patronage resources in the hands of the President who could arbitrarily direct resources to economic elites.

After the decisive steps for institutional and economic reconstruction were passed in 1946, the political game resumed where it had been interrupted by the war. However, Roxas' candidacy under the new Liberal Party (LP) label and his victory over Osmeña (with the financial support of General McArthur) signaled one important shift, the transition to multi-party politics, the further decentralization of political power structures; in short, the end of quasi-patrimonial rule as intended by Quezon. It turned out, though, that the extension of political contestation did not lead to the realization of democratic practices and public accountability. Both the PN and the LP remained mere patronage machines and were not distinguishable in terms of ideology and social background (Landé 1964; Franco 2001; Thompson 1995). Turncoatism was a standard practice depending on personal rivalries, and elections became a highly expensive way of guaranteeing control, as patronage allocation, not ideological disputes, decided over victory or failure. Accordingly, the elections of 1949, in which Quirino (who assumed office after Roxas' fatal heart attack in 1948) rigged the electoral outcome, as of 1957, with Carlos Garcia maintaining the presidency, almost brought the country to the verge of bankruptcy. Furthermore, there were no mechanisms guaranteeing that candidates even tried to make the outcome look like a clean affair. So, while pre-war elections were similarly certain in outcome because of the patronage hegemony of the PN, the heightened and fierce competition after the war opened political institutions for newcomers as financial contributions were essential resources, no matter from whom. Factionalism was blossoming, limiting the state's infrastructural power and continually



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overburdening the treasury, even against the resistance of free election movements (cf. Hedman 2006).<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. Oligarchic decay and Marcos' temporary neopatrimonialism

In the aftermath of Ferdinand Marcos' election to President in 1965, the Filipino oligarchy underwent substantive transformations, both in politics and the economy. Faced with the predominance of traditional families in Congress, on the one hand, and mounting social pressures for change, Communist and Mindanao separatists, on the other hand, Marcos successfully resorted to new forms of mobilization and patronage that disrupted the institutional setting. With his new prerogatives as authoritarian ruler after 1972, Marcos relied on the Church, the military, technocrats and new middle classes to whom he promised an end of the decaying features of the country's backward-oriented oligarchy. By abolishing political competition, Marcos could indeed vest more powers into the state apparatus to an extent unseen in Filipino history.

However, contrary to the proclaimed attempts to end oligarchic rule and to create a 'New Society', Marcos, and his wife Imelda, continued to rely on the principles of political business and patrimonial plunder. In spite of the fact that they brought order and certainty into the political arena, their strategies of monopolizing patronage resources in a highly arbitrary manner simultaneously undermined this certainty. Through divide-and-rule tactics, he punished rivaling families, promoted established and created new family riches.

##### 4.1 Breakdown of oligarchy

Marcos' first presidential election victory displayed the usual features of Philippine political contestation. Formerly being member of the incumbent LP, Marcos defected to run for presidency under the *Nacionalista* banner to render his commitment to change more credible and to distance himself from the widely-perceived corruption of the Garcia (1957-61) and Macapagal (1961-1965) years. His successful re-election, though, indicated that something bigger was going on in the political process. Winning clearly against Sergio Osmeña Jr. and gaining overwhelming majorities in Congress, Marcos seems to have been among the first Filipino politicians to realize those changing opportunities.

The broader range of political opportunities emerged due to the social and ideological transformations after almost twenty years of import substituting industrialization. Theoretically, the executive disposed of selective allocation capacities to counter established political families. Also, the President enjoyed relatively higher degrees of autonomy from business actors given the emerging rivalries between different factions of capital (industrial vs. agrarian) and the decreasing cohesiveness of the sugar bloc, even though the

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<sup>10</sup> See Kang (2002: 127) and Thompson (1995: 35) for the direct link between years of elections and the overburdening of the budget. See also Sidel (1999: 64-65, 89) for the link between national contestation and local boss structures in Cavite and Cebu, respectively.

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diversification patterns eased those tensions to a certain extent and safeguarded the families against new political intrusions.<sup>11</sup>

What explains the lower importance of traditional agrarian elites? As the sugar industry was in shambles after World War II, a whole series of new centrals was built which at that time was mainly financed by foreign capital and which were more geographically dispersed (Hawes 1987: 93). Most important, however, higher degrees of urbanization transferred the essential sources for political survival, i.e. votes, into the cities, marking a process that called for new types of patronage allocation. Before, rural local bosses tied to the landowning elites, through force and favors, operated effectively for the respective party machine. Now, political parties had to focus on the urban social landscape. Doing this, new spaces for societal and political mobilization emerged because of the persistent high degrees of social inequality, urban unemployment and middle-class disappointment with the unbroken corrupt practices of officials and politicians. A process of radicalization began, with new political groups on the stage who radically tried to alter the political rules of the game.

In these urban milieus, especially in Manila, parallel to leftist movements around the world, the main groups opting for radical change were students (Nationalist Youth), middle-class intellectuals, former Huks, Social Democrats and members of the PKP. Opposing the quasi-feudal nature of Filipino capitalism and the neo-colonial state of the country (as one of the most important regional supporters of the U.S. Vietnam war), they partly acted in continuity to earlier protest movements. They uncovered the long-lasting legitimacy gaps of the national elites and openly broke with the reformist path of the PKP and other parties working through the institutional framework. Thus, in 1969, José Maria Sison split from the PKP and founded the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which adhered to Maoist tactics and established its own military wing (New People's Army, NPA) to stir rural rebellion which has lasted until today (Kessler 1989; Weekley 2001; Quimpo 2008).

Still, similar claims were also made by Marcos himself who tried to distinguish himself from traditional forms of oligarchic plunder and decay. In line with the political philosophy of the Katipunero revolutionary Apolinario Mabini (Steinberg 2000: 122), Marcos articulated the necessity of a strong and cohesive state through which to counter agrarian oligarchs and to promote industrial development autonomously from neo-imperialist capital. For the time being, Marcos had nothing to fear from the new CPP-NPA group because it was organizationally undermanned and had only few linkages to urban working classes and professionals (Weekley 2001). But, beginning in 1970, shortly after his re-election and inauguration in which he "outgunned, outgooned, and outgolded" his rivals, radical student groups intensified their anti-Marcos demonstrations in Manila. Marcos turned to open repression in what was called the First Quarter Storm, for which Marcos blamed trapos cooperating with the CPP-NPA (Thompson 1995: 40).

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<sup>11</sup> "There is one other reason for diversification [...]: in an economy in which wealth depends to such a large degree on access to the state machinery, diversification helps to guard against the uncertainties of change in political leadership. A family cannot depend exclusively on investments assisted by *current* friends in the Palace, for example, because in the *next* administration those investments may be jeopardized by a lack of necessary connections in key government offices." (Hutchcroft 1991: 427; emphasis in original)

Early afterwards, activities spread to urban labor groups as well, mostly due to the increasing inflationary pressures, which resulted from an IMF agreement for further devaluating the peso after new balance-of-payment problems. Strikes were increasing in numbers in these years, but even these protests could be contained by the regime. The ultimate justification for the suspension of civil rights (e.g. the habeas corpus writ in 1971) and the declaration of martial law arose from the wave of terrorist bomb attacks in 1971 and 1972. On August 21, 1971, a bomb attack on a LP rally for the midterm senatorial and municipal elections left 9 people dead and close to 100 wounded (Thompson 1995: 44). With no sufficient proof, LP members, student activists and media companies belonging to traditional politicians openly held Marcos responsible for the attack. LP victories in the elections, ongoing urban terror, the intensification of the insurgency in Mindanao by the recently-formed Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)<sup>12</sup>, and the failure of the president to alter the constitution (through the Constitutional Convention in 1971) that would have allowed him to run for a third term under a parliamentary regime, served as background factors for the declaration of martial law in 1972. The final trigger for this step was the staged assassination attempt on Secretary of Defense, Juan Ponce Enrile (Thompson 1995: 46).

Thus, the oligarchic regime eventually broke down, not by, as many elite members has feared, communist uprisings, but by a president riding on the fears of anarchic breakdown and unwilling to abide to the rules of political turnover. Oligarchic power had to face severe legitimacy gaps which were interpreted both by anti-systemic movements and by Marcos as problems inherent to the concept of 'oligarchy'.<sup>13</sup> There is an internal dynamism in oligarchies power constellations that arise from high degrees of political and economic power concentration *and* high degrees of social inequality and political exclusion. On the one hand, rulers are thus tempted to extend their capacities vis-à-vis traditional politicians through mobilizing the discontented. On the other hand, elite actors favor an authoritarian ruler guaranteeing their elite status to a deepening of political liberalization. Social change, urbanization and political radicalization provided such opportunities.

## 4.2 Authoritarian powers

One other important mechanism through which Marcos effected political centralization was his own use of patronage channels. In the highly competitive post-war regime, pork barrel was allocated to representatives and through them trickled down to their constituencies for projects in rural development, public infrastructure, schools, hospitals and housing.<sup>14</sup> Marcos

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<sup>12</sup> Here, too, Marcos' repressive tactics themselves radicalized the conflict, especially after the Jabidah massacre in 1968; see Abinales (2000: 166).

<sup>13</sup> "Masking his power grab in the language of reform, Marcos claimed that he declared martial law to save Philippine society from the extreme left and extreme right elements he portrayed to be threatening the political order. He declared himself to be leading a 'democratic revolution' where the political center would meet the threats from the left and the right. He promised to establish a 'New Society'. The 'democratic revolution' of the 'New Society' would also consist in breaking the privileges of the traditional oligarchy and would initiate what he termed to be the 'democratization of wealth.'" (Manapat 1991: 84)

<sup>14</sup> Also, as national leaders before and after him, Marcos relied on brute force, on the one hand, and on targeting regional power brokers, bosses, who supported his rivals. One prominent example of the implications of political centralization on the provincial level was the downfall of Justiniano Montano, Sr., who has 'ruled' the Cavite region since the 1930s, being engaged in landholding and

re-election was accompanied by excessive patronage measures relative to the usual amount of public resources spent. The 1969 elections thus turned into the most expansive election campaign in Filipino history, amounting to 250 million dollars which contributed (as did Quirino's victory in 1949) to the necessity of an IMF agreement which forced him to devalue the peso.

Also, Marcos began politicizing the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). He enlarged the AFP to fight the NPA and the MNLF through increasing their budget (1972: 880 million pesos, 1976: 4 billion pesos) and growing military aid from the U.S. (rising from 18 million to 43 million dollars between 1970 and 1975) and increased its prerogatives through transferring police forces under its authority.<sup>15</sup> He more actively engaged in questions of recruitment and promotion as he appointed his relatives and friends to important positions, especially his cousin and former bodyguard, Fabian Ver, to the position of chief of staff. Also, he granted his clients economic powers through the redistribution of confiscated assets. Through these measures, "the armed forces were no longer the servant of the state under martial law, but the bastion of a particular regime. Backed by his generals, Marcos wiped out warlord armies, closed Congress, and confiscated corporations. The president included the military in every aspect of authoritarian rule – censorship, repression, and governance. Officers became corporate managers, civil servants, local officials, and judges." (McCoy 1999: 192)

Marcos, together with his wife Imelda, reproduced his hold on power by further demobilizing the opposition which during the 1970s consisted of traditional politicians, armed insurgents and the radicalized left. For a while, though, his rule was secure. After a first major wave of repression, media censorship and the installation of a new façade parliament, the presidential couple coopted elite segments through promotions in the vastly expanding bureaucracy. Further, broad parts of the population adopted a wait-and-see approach, as they were exhausted by the deadlock between President and Congress, the unstoppable corruption and open clashes between students and police forces. The new middle classes and professional felt particularly relieved as Marcos claimed to professionalize public service.

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commercial agriculture, real estate, smuggling, money-laundering and, principally, providing votes. Because of Montano's support for Macapagal in 1965, Marcos did not hesitate to undermine his position and support the rival Cavite faction. Sidel depicts this strategy in the following manner: "Constabulary campaigns against smuggling, Commission on Elections crackdowns on election anomalies, and congressional intrigues to undermine Montano's influence and resources considerably weakened Montano's hold on Cavite. In 1966, for example, Marcos's allies in the House of Representatives launched an exposé on smuggling in Cavite, naming Lino Bocalan and the Montanos as the leaders of a major syndicate in the province. A carrot-and-stick courtship of Bocalan proceeded, with Malacañang first threatening, then rewarding, the notorious smuggling lord through court cases and disruption of his operations. Thus Marcos demonstrated to Bocalan that business as usual required direct relations with Malacañang, rendering Montano's protection and brokerage services redundant." (1999: 69)

<sup>15</sup> Beyond these reorganization measures, Marcos also promoted paramilitary troops, especially in Mindanao; see Kessler (1989: 120). In whole, Kessler concludes that "Marcos played to the military's inherent factional weakness under the guise of strengthening it. The periodic claims of reform, reorganization, and personnel reassignments were meant not to improve the military but to lessen American pressure for change and to enhance his control of the military. Marcos feared that a strong, professional military might ultimately overthrow him, and at times he even promoted the idea that the military might take over in order to discourage opponents. Ironically, he was right." (1989: 122)

Technocratic governance seemed to tackle the ravages of factionalism and the old cacique order.<sup>16</sup>

The responses of former elite members and social groups varied profoundly during the following years. Traditional politicians had basically been crushed by the dismantling of political institutions which functioned as their sole avenues for power and patronage. Powerful factions were weakened from above through selective arrests and prosecutions (e.g. Benigno Aquino Jr., Senators Ramon Mitra and Francisco Rodrigo). The toughest treatment, though, was felt by the Lopez family.<sup>17</sup> Fernando Lopez, Vice-President and close ally of Marcos, and his brother Eugenio, had to watch how they were stripped of their corporations, assets and media networks, as Marcos was holding Eugenio Lopez Jr. as ransom. In light of these harsh treatments that symbolized the will and the capacity of the ruler to break with the past, many trapos chose to give up resistance and entered the *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (New Society movement, KBL), the quasi-ruling party Marcos had established in 1978, in order to get at least some access to patronage resources and financial benefits.<sup>18</sup> With patronage channels secure, the support of the AFP, the Catholic Church, and traditional politicians, the first national elections under martial law in 1978 prevented the opposition forces, who were still highly visible in political discourses, even from exile or from jail (Aquino, Tanada, Diokno, among others), from uniting, split over the question whether their participation in the elections would legitimize the Marcoses, who would have rigged the elections anyway (cf. Thompson 1995: Chap. Four).

### 4.3 Patrimonial capitalism

These political transformations had direct implications for the Philippine economy which rapidly developed into a patrimonial order. Marcos adopted measures of rent allocation, predation and favoritism on a purely personal basis, which he could only accomplish given his aloofness from political competition. Despite his new state capacities, the Marcos regime degenerated into yet another symbol of Third World kleptocracy. The arbitrariness involved in his dealing with businessmen created a context in which even wealthy entrepreneurs and families could not count on the efficacy of their own personal networks and thereby extended high degrees of uncertainty towards those that had hitherto been able to protect their ventures. The sole source of capital accumulation, of creating and destroying wealth laid in the hands of the presidential family. Two facets of economic processes will be dealt with here; first, the macroeconomic and institutional changes towards export-oriented industrialization (EOI), and second, the concrete mechanisms of centralized corruption.

The tentative shift from import substitution to EOI, which occurred in most late developing countries at that time, was the consequence of ideological transformations within the

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<sup>16</sup> “Technocratic influence increased under Marcos, in part as a result of technocrats’ links with international financial institutions. [...] The technocrats, however, remained highly dependent on Marcos, and his political concerns limited the extent to which he delegated policymaking authority. In the end, the technocrats served Marcos by helping to hoodwink international lenders.” (Bowie & Unger 1997: 118).

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed account of the rise of the Lopez family, see McCoy (1993).

<sup>18</sup> On the role of ruling parties in authoritarian contexts and the difference between the Philippine and the Malaysian experience, see Brownlee (2007, 2008).

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international financial institutions (IFIs) and in western donor countries, the breakdown of the Bretton Woods international monetary regime and the first oil price revolution of 1973/74 which put enormous pressures on import-dependent developing countries. These institutional changes began with the devaluation of the peso in 1970, the same year that the Export Incentive Act was passed that foresaw FDI promotion measures mainly through subsidizing export manufacturers (tax rebates, tariff exemptions). Industrial relations were altered, disfavoring the working classes. Wage reductions, a ban on strikes, the founding of compulsory trade unions and constraints on independent ones<sup>19</sup>, countrywide exceptions to applying the minimum wage as well as open repression under the martial law provisions systematically undermined the bargaining powers of labor.<sup>20</sup> And, the main channels to attract FDI were the Export Processing Zones, the first of which was established in 1972 in Bataan. Firms investing in these zones, which had almost no backward linkages to local economies and therefore cannot be regarded as competing with local manufacturing capitalists, were granted favorable tax exemptions, foreign exchange allocation for imports without having to face any restrictions concerning repatriation or labor standards (Bello, Kinley & Ellinson 1982).

Yet, steps toward agrarian and manufacture export promotion did not solve the biggest problem of the Philippines, which was the deteriorating foreign debt which increased from 20 to 26 billion dollars between 1981 and 1986 (Bello 1999). Therefore, to secure access to international capital markets, in 1980, the Philippines was one of the first countries worldwide (among others, Turkey) which experienced stricter conditionality criteria by the IFIs through Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and Structural Adjustment Loans (SALs). From then on, the country was forced to institutionalize its reform measures by actively enacting import liberalization through tariff reductions and the lifting of import restrictions (Bowie & Unger 1997: 116).

The reform wave of the early 1980s led to serious problems of manufacturers who had until then only produced for the protected national market. Yet, the costs were mainly born by small and medium capitalists who did not have extensive ties to the political center which was, again, a critical resource to acquire export incentives and to arrange joint ventures with foreign partners, mainly MNCs. So, while local manufacturers, rural and urban workers felt these transformative pressures that ruined many of them (and pushing impoverished workers into the ranks of the NPA), big manufacturers profited disproportionately, as did agrarian exporters, except for the sugar industry which experienced a drastic decline in importance and political influence.

After the reconstruction of the sugar industry and the expansion of milling capacities until the 1970s, the sugar bloc's influence reached its peak in 1973 and 1974 (gaining 766 million dollars in export revenues). Its decline was rapid and long-lasting, though. In 1974, the expiration of the Laurel-Langley Act and the non-extension of the Sugar Act by U.S. Congress ended the preferential treatment for Filipino sugar in the U.S. market and for the

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<sup>19</sup> 5640 of 7000 registered trade unions were formally not acknowledged; see Bello, Kinley & Ellinson (1982: 142).

<sup>20</sup> Also, in the 1970s, Marcos actively promoted exporting labor through the Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB) to profit from the oil price revolutions via remittances and decreasing unemployment (Tyner 2009: 53).

first time forced it to compete on the international commodity markets, causing export revenues to decline to 200 million dollars within the next years. The biggest hit to the sugar barons, though, came from Marcos' reorganization measures of the industry. Via several presidential decrees, the Philippine Exchange Commission (PHILEX) was granted monopoly control over sugar trading and exporting (by unilaterally setting the price at which it bought sugar from planters and millers). And, in 1977, PHILEX was transferred from the PNB to the newly-created Philippine Sugar Commission (PHILSUCOM) headed by Roberto Benedicto. So, through fiat, Marcos monopolized the central domain of the former landed elites and transferred the sector's surplus into the hands of his long-term friend and close ally who began "milking the sugar industry at each opportunity" (Manapat 1991: 106). Benedicto belonged to the inner circle of Marcos's new cronies, he was appointed to head the PNB from 1966 to 1970, was ambassador in Japan (1972 to 1977) where he used his influence to arrange deals for himself and for Marcos. Benedicto rapidly diversified into banking (acquiring the Republic Planters Bank from the Ayala group), shipping, the media industry, proving to Imelda Marcos that he was indeed "smarter than others" (Manapat 1991; cf. Hawes 1987: Chap. Three).

In the coconut oil industry, Marcos applied similar tactics. Contrary to the declining sugar sector, the coconut industry had been on the rise and developed into the main export cash crop until the 1970s, which was due to more favorable world market prices. Starting in 1974, through a wave of laws and decrees, the administration enforced a coconut levy which was administered by COCOFED, an association of coconut farmers and landowners to promote the development of the industry. The levy, however, estimated between 475 million and 575 million dollars between 1974 and 1982, landed in the hands of the Secretary of Defense, Juan Ponce Enrile, and Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco. The increase of the levy and the sale of the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) to the Coconut Consumers Stabilization Fund gave these two cronies enormous powers over the sector. They bought up milling capacities (close to 80% of the sector) and outmaneuvered traditional politicians, for example, by forcing the Ayala Group to sell its coconut corporations *Legaspi Oil* and *Cagayan de Oro Oil* to the UCPB (cf. Manapat 1991; Hawes 1987: Chap. Two; Aquino 1987: 39-43).

So, with the helping hand of the president, whole industries were transformed into de-facto monopolies and used for private gain and self-enrichment in return for being part of Marcos' social support base. Examples of centralized cronyism are abundant, as figures, among many others, like Enrile<sup>21</sup>, Cojuangco<sup>22</sup>, Silverio<sup>23</sup> and Disini<sup>24</sup> entrenched themselves in all

<sup>21</sup> Juan Ponce Enrile, Jr. was one of Marcos' very early associates. Starting his business career as corporate lawyer after having obtained his degree at Harvard Law School, he became Commissioner of Customs after Marcos' 1965 electoral victory, a position that allowed him to profit from abundant bribery opportunities. After a short period as Secretary of Justice, he was appointed Secretary of Defense and continued to secure his business interests and those of his clients and other Marcos cronies. While the coconut industry reorganization was certainly his biggest coup, Enrile presided over an economic empire ranging from agriculture, logging, banking and shipping (Manapat 1991: 163-205).

<sup>22</sup> Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco, who is the cousin of later President Corazon Aquino, belongs to a well-established family of hacenderos, millers and bankers. His brother Ramon also came to enormous riches in the Marcos years, mainly through gaining the monopoly of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) through close links to the government and other dominant families (e.g. Yuchengco). He made excessive profits by enforcing high costs for low-quality services. According to Manapat, Danding "was one of Marcos' closest and most loyal cronies" (1991: 217), especially as Representative of Tarlac in the 1960s. With his control over the coconut industry, via

relevant economic spheres. The most successful profiteers, however, were the Marcoses themselves. Through a wide network of private and public funds, foundations and dummy businessmen, the Marcos family reaped as much as between five and ten billion dollars from the two decades they ruled the country, thereby easily overshadowing their cronies and relatives (Manapat 1991: Aquino 1987). Thus, Marcos had no problems combining the needs of export promotion with satisfying his cronies' and his own financial needs. Tariff liberalization did not pose a danger to his strategy of debt-driven growth. As Hutchcroft outlines, "the IMF-sponsored tariff reduction program [...] was undermined in part because specific corporations were exempted through presidential decree; similarly, efforts to increase the country's tax effort were hindered in part by tax incentives granted to Marcos' associates" (Hutchcroft 1991: 433).

#### 4.4 Delegitimization

Yet, Marcos' patrimonial regime faced serious problems of order, which arose from the contradictions of debt-driven growth and the mobilization capacities of his opponents. Current account deficits and the huge public debt after the second oil price revolution curtailed the plunder did not directly curtail the plundering capacities of Marcos and his cronies, but they did so indirectly because more and more non-crony businessmen had to bear the overall costs of the growing macroeconomic imbalances. For instance, when the ethnic Chinese entrepreneur Dewey Dee fled the country in January 1981, leaving behind close to US\$ 85 million in outstanding debt in a multitude of banks and investment houses, the whole banking system was in danger as banking regulation and supervision had been superseded by political connections and influence, which linked Dee to the core of Marcos' cronies. To curb the damage Dee had done, state resources were needed to bail out banks,

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the UCPB, Danding quickly diversified into food processing, sugar, chemicals and, to secure these ventures, maintained his own private army. His most valued asset, though, was the acquisition of San Miguel Corporation, for a long time the most profitable company of the country, by buying out the two dominant families, the Zobels and the Sorianos (Manapat 1991: 206-253).

<sup>23</sup> Ricardo Silverio is one of the only new cronies without any connection to old money. He mainly came to wealth through political business only, finding his way into the business elite after Marcos came to power. He did so through cheap government loans (e.g. for his Delta Motors Corporation), lack of regulatory oversight and discriminatory treatment of his rivals. Through his financial house Philfinance, Silverio was deeply involved in fraudulent banking activities, which led to the bank's bankruptcy (with 70 million dollars in outstanding debt). Yet, the bank was bailed out and Silverio's access to commercial loans was secured by the state, all the while he extracted funds from his companies and banks and transferred them to his real estate projects in California (Manapat 1991: 267-273).

<sup>24</sup> Herminio Disini similarly profited from his connections to the Marcoses, as he was married to Imelda's cousin. Before he fled the country to Austria in 1982, he led more than 50 companies in tobacco, logging, petrochemicals, textiles, real estate, airlines and financial services. His important early success came with his Philippine Tobacco Filters Corporation that profited from government regulation disfavoring his competitors. A similar elimination took place in the field of logging in the Ilocos region. He was involved in many activities of graft, by getting access to investment funds from or through the government, the most notorious project being the nuclear power plant of Bataan, which has not been operative since. "Disini would first acquire firms with loans from foreign, government, and local private sources. He would then milk these firms and dissipate its assets. After bleeding the firms to the point of bankruptcy, he would turn these firms over to the government, which was then left holding an empty bag (Manapat 1991: 337). The massive and uncontrolled lending of his Interbank to Dewey Dee contributed enormously to the financial crises, at which he lost the goodwill of the President (Manapat 1991: 316-343).



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and here again, “the biggest beneficiaries of the bailout had been crony-owned firms” (Hutchcroft 1998: 153).

Marcos was increasingly estranging parts of the business community (who formed the Makati Business Club in 1981 to voice criticism over economic affairs), the technocrats who had less to say as “Marcos sat back and let the cronies run things” (Hutchcroft 1998: 167), the middle classes whose earnings were disappearing with rising inflation rates, groups within the AFP who were not content with the continuing fight against the NPA and their own politicization, and many traditional politicians who were excluded from patronage resources that Marcos allocated directly to *barangays*. Yet, Marcos was still controlling political affairs and censoring media coverage. In 1981, he declared the end to martial law and prepared the 1984 presidential elections which did not seem to pose a risk after the United Front of communists and *trapos* fell apart at the beginning of the 1980s (Thompson 1995: 102-109).

However, Marcos himself, or Imelda who was thought to be responsible, made a big mistake in his dealing with his main rival, Benigno Aquino. After his prison term and his exile in the U.S. from where he could not directly influence the tactics of the several opposition groups, Aquino decided to return to the Philippines to run for President in 1984. Upon his return to on August 21, 1983, he was taken into custody and assassinated on the area of the Manila International Airport. This step caused country-wide outrage against the brutality of the Marcos regime and transformed Aquino into a martyr whose life story and death could be interpreted in the *pasyon* tradition. The regime for the first time faced mass demonstrations the biggest of which was Aquino’s funeral procession which was attended by circa two million demonstrators (Thompson 1995: 116). The assassination weakened patrimonial order as societal resistance came from a broad range of groups, the Catholic Church, more members of the business community, the RAM movement within the AFP and the U.S. State Department which developed further ties toward opposition figures. Yet, four months of demonstrations did not convince Marcos or receding from or sharing power. As expected, he won the 1984 elections through excessive fraud and coercion (348 people killed, 107 injured), but oppositionists were able to win 60 seats (of 183) in the legislature, especially in urban centers where Marcos could not influence the ballot as in the countryside. Opposition factions used the next year to agree on a single figure to run for President in the following elections, and chose Corazon ‘Cory’ Aquino – at the expense of Salvador Laurel.

In November 1985, Marcos announced on U.S. television the holding of snap elections in the Philippines on February 7, 1986. Basing his electoral strategy on money, terror and fraud, Marcos was not willing to experience another partial defeat as in 1984. As usual, Marcos assumed that the declaration of the formal results would bring him some relief and would further weaken the opposition. That was his final mistake. With the help of the civil society based NAMFREL and the Catholic Church, the opposition did not accept COMELEC and rather declared Cory’s moral victory over Marcos. When RAM officers staged a coup d’état on February 22, which was precipitated by the AFP who intended to arrest the RAM officers under Juan Ponce Enrile (who was at that day joined by Fidel Ramos), Cardinal Sin organized mass demonstrations on the *Epifanio de los Santos* boulevard (EDSA) which lasted for four days. Marcos finally resigned, after his last supporter, U.S. President Ronald

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Reagan<sup>25</sup>, asked him to do so, and went into exile to Hawaii, while the masses of the peaceful EDSA revolution endorsed Cory Aquino.

## 5. Restoring oligarchy

As Marcos went into exile, the outcome of the transition was not clear at all. On the one hand, Cory Aquino gained enough social support based on her charismatic legitimacy and did not have to include the Communists who committed a historic mistake in boycotting the 1986 elections (Weekley 2001). On the other hand, she had to deal with RAM officers and Salvador Laurel, who competed with her for the institutional outlook of the post-Marcos regime and the political leadership in that regime. She tried to control them by including them in the interim government, but coup d'état attempts in 1986 and early 1987 after the replacement of Enrile and Laurel showed that Cory was facing enormous challenges. Only as she appointed Fidel Ramos chief of staff were the links between the opposing RAM factions and Marcos loyalists organizationally weakened.

The constitutional convention she assembled decided to reinstate the pre-Marcos political institutions and rules, with the only exception that presidents may serve for one term only. Although such amendments were intended to counter any further examples of political monopolization, the acceptance of the constitution and the first elections for Congress and municipal governors in 1987 soon led to the same constellations of influence as before Marcos. Accordingly, traditional political families, many of whom did not have access to political decision-making under the martial law regime, could re-establish their countrywide hold over Congress. Gutierrez' analysis of the 1987 electoral outcome illustrates this new and old phenomenon. In many instances, "the clan rather than the party is the more dominant form of political organization in the country" (1992: 161).

How did the recapturing of the political sphere by traditional families take place? First, Cory Aquino herself came from the Cojuangco family and displayed rather social conservative positions. Second, even though she gained enough popular legitimacy as the symbol of the People Power uprising, the precarious cooperation with the RAM officers forced her to look for allies among many political families to make the transition possible. Only with such consent-building measures among the elite did she survive the coup attempts of Enrile and Laurel. Third, shortly after the revolution, she was willing to negotiate peace agreements with the CPP-NPA and pave the way for its legal participation in the new regime, but due to the resistance to that attempt by Ramos and agrarian elites, she had to refrain from that strategy. Subsequently, the field was open to "political clans reasserting themselves as the real source of power in the Philippine electoral politics" (Gutierrez 1992: 160; cf. Anderson 2005).

To consolidate her position, Cory publicly committed herself to undo the excessive damages of the martial law regime. Politically, she called for investigation into the human rights abuses

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<sup>25</sup> On the deteriorating relationship between the Marcoses and the U.S., mainly by reorientations within the State Department after the Aquino assassination, see Bonner (1987: Chap. 15) and Thompson (1995: 153).

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of the AFP. However, these efforts were undermined by the RAM officers. Economically, she targeted the riches of the Marcoses and the corporations of their biggest cronies. Even before the 1987 elections, the Philippine Commission on Good Governance (PCGG) was established which in the following sequestered 260 companies and froze Marcos' foreign bank assets. Thereby, many traditional families regained their assets, such as the Lopez family which re-established control over most of the companies Marcos had redistributed to his followers in the 1970s (especially those Eduardo Cojuangco held through the UCPB). Concerning the issue of land reform, the contradictions of restoring oligarchy by a popular leader came to the surface. Despite numerous demonstrations in Manila and Aquino's own promises for land redistribution, the policy outcome, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), was meager compared to the expectations of the rural population and maintained the highly unequal distribution of land ownership (Putzel 1992; Borras & Franco 2005).

Thus, we conclude that the Aquino administration re-established and consolidated oligarchic rule in the Philippines. Because of the absence of countervailing powers (only two leftist deputies in the House of Representatives), the intensification of armed struggle between the NPA and the AFP, the similarity of social support bases (trapos, AFP, Church), alternative political institutional outcomes did not materialize – and would probably not have been possible in light of the resistance of RAM officers to Aquino. Although Cory managed to arrange a rather peaceful transition (as the last of the seven coup d'état attempts occurred in 1989), the new regime faced the same structural legitimacy problems as the pre-Marcos regime. In the political process, the important features until today have been the lacking institutionalization of political parties, the predominance of pork barrel and vote buying, the non-existence of ideological cleavages, continuous transgressions of institutionalized roles and high degrees of impunity, and political violence at election times.

Only one pattern of politics was different from the post-WW II regime, namely the substantive fragmentation of political power structures. The earlier two-party system was replaced by a plurality of parties tied to prominent figures who use them as patronage machines. Internal rivalries prevented ideological and organizational cohesion, and the high degrees of members switching their allegiance to other parties or creating new ones (turncoatism), tend to weaken the authority of the leaders. For elections, loose patchwork coalitions are set up, not to form ideological blocs, but merely to mobilize patronage resources at the local levels. Thus, Gutierrez argues that “pork barrel [...] can be considered as the single greatest attraction to politicians to seats of power and has been the source of funding for many a politician's electoral base” (1998: 59).

Finally, what characterizes the post-1986 dynamics is the institutionalized containment of the neopatrimonial solution. Presidents could run for one term only, and their prerogatives were balanced by the House of Representatives and the Senate, an institutional pattern that renders the success of political and economic reforms dependent on enormous side payments to parliament members (Eaton 2002). Thus, although this institutional containment of neopatrimonialism and the temporal limits to self-enrichment, graft and predation, this short-term hold on power induces presidents to maximize the potential gains from these activities (as each of them operates as a *roving* rather than a *stationary* bandit, in Olsonian terms) and creates enormous incentives to change the institutionalized limit.

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Since the presidency of Aquino, every president, especially Fidel Ramos and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo have invested huge patronage resources into coalition-building efforts to change the constitution into a parliamentary system, as they became aware of the 'politician's dilemma' (Geddes 1994) they faced. According to this scenario, Presidents who gain power through the usual games of patronage and personal corruption networks are heavily constrained by these same patterns as soon as they enter office. In fact, this represents the legacy of Marcos' neopatrimonialism: the institutionalized succession of top-elite figures who preside over fragmented state structures that renders each of these actors into a quasi-patrimonial ruler. What makes oligarchic rule to durable in the Philippines is the fact that when Joseph 'Erap' Estrada mobilized lower strata for his election in 1998 and the 2001 episode of contention and succeeded in presenting himself as a populist president, this new repertoire met with the resistance of established elites and their civil societal organizations, corporations and media networks that collectively ousted him from the presidency and restored the usual mechanisms and deficiencies of the oligarchy (Reid 2006; Hedman 2005).

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have highlighted the processes leading to the emergence of a neopatrimonial regime out of the dynamics inherent the modern Philippine oligarchy. I referred to centralizing dynamics in the absence of effective institutions that could have stalled the monopolization of power, the patrimonialization of the regime.

These dynamics were realized first by Manuel Quezon who, more than his rivals, became aware of a new exploitable opportunity structure that came with the expansion of Filipino capitalists through the PNB through which he managed to capture brokerage powers between businessmen, urban elites, local bosses and U.S. colonial officials and elites. The post-independence regime introduced institutional containers (two-term limit for presidents), while further excluding potentially rival social groups (Democratic Alliance, Huks), which perpetuated the delegitimation of the regime through the continuous transgression of formal modes of conduct.

As Quezon, it was then Marcos who led the ruling mechanisms of the oligarchy to its "logical conclusion" (Anderson 2005: 343) as he reaped the benefits and opportunities of heavy industrialization, splits within national capitalists and the increasing articulation of dissent by new social groups (technocrats, middle classes) and radicalizing students. Reinterpreting the oligarchic narrative as the main obstacle to development and democracy, Marcos transformed into the "supreme cacique" (ibid.) and disrupted the linkage between traditional elites, capitalists and their social bases. Without effective electoral competition, Marcos could centralize patronage resources and channels. The Martial Law regime seemed to be the only drastic instrument to break with the country's past.

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What does this case study of neopatrimonial rule, its origins and downfall tell us about the overall state and usefulness of the concept of neopatrimonialism?

First, for the durability and legitimacy of neopatrimonial rule, the creative agency of rulers and opposition figures have to be taken into account (Slater 2010). Especially when elections are relied upon without excessive despotic pre-manipulation of the process, elections can be transformed into newly contentious episodes in which there is the capacity for radical change, as it did occur in 1986. With the support of those established civil societal organizations that could vest legitimacy into the electoral process before Marcos (Hedman 2006), Cory Aquino succeeded in morally contesting Marcos' hold on power so that stolen elections (a feature well known in modern Filipino politics) are indeed "more than the final straw" (Kuntz & Thompson 2009) for the breakdown of authoritarianism.

Second, the breakdown of neopatrimonial regimes usually does not lead to the establishment of functioning democratic institutions. How could it if the relevant transition figures are elites of the ancient régime? As rival social groups were further excluded from the political game (or chose not to participate as the CPP did in 1987), where should effective pressures for political change within the new old regime come from? The new institutions and their formal goals are in effect subverted to the re-formed "clientelist electoral regime" (Franco 2001) based on the competition for patronage resources as the main avenue to gain political and economic power. Accordingly, approaches within rational-choice transitology (Przeworski 1991) and the contentious politics paradigm (McAdam, Tilly & Tarrow 2001; Tilly & Tarrow 2006) can tell us about relevant dynamics and mechanisms that erode authoritarian/neopatrimonial rule, but after that the historically grown structural sources of regimes come to the fore again which determine where the transition path leads to.

Related to the second point is the issue of state power and the state-regime linkage. Based on the works of Mann (1984), Weiss & Hobson (1995) and Ertman (1997), we can state that neopatrimonial regimes and practices do seldom come with a powerful state apparatus. While they rank high in despotic power, they tend to lack infrastructural power (at least when compared to more cohesive forms of authoritarianism or democratic countries). This results from the divergence between the patrimonial and legal-rational elements of neopatrimonial rule which generally prevents a systemic intertwining of state and societal forces through which social relations can be successfully altered. Given the lack of infrastructural power (and institutional trust) in neopatrimonial regimes, it cannot be expected that its erosion and the introduction of democratic institutions will increase the state's infrastructural power. Instead, they create enormous incentives for post-transition actors and groups to reproduce state institutions as mere patronage resources. In the case of the Philippines, the political fragmentation in the post-Marcos regime has contributed to a substantive decrease of political certainty, both for political elites and societal groups. This 'politician's dilemma' induces each Post-Marcos president to attempt to alter the institutional framework in order to overcome the one-term presidency limit and, at the same time, to plunder the state as rapid as possible, both for private reasons and in order to sustain precarious social support bases. However, so far, no one, not even Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who seemed to strain the limits of the new institutions as none did before her except Marcos (Hutchcroft 2008, Quimpo 2009), managed to re-form an authoritarian, i.e. a new neopatrimonial regime, in the Philippines.

To conclude, neopatrimonialism is still a valid concept through which to analyze and properly understand political processes in many late developing countries. Although we can assume that there exists a variety of pathways toward neopatrimonial rule, it is essential to bear in mind the Philippine pathway out of the centralizing dynamics inherent in the oligarchic regime. In fact, the Philippines represent an interesting case for comparative research. For example, what differentiates Marcos' 'New Society' from Suharto's 'New Order' is that the latter began ruling within a military junta which later evolved into a distinctive neopatrimonial regime which may explain why Suharto ruled longer than Marcos (Slater 2010). Contrary to that, a comparison with the Arab varieties of neopatrimonialism may highlight the structural sources of delegitimation in these anciens régimes, the predominant contemporary conflict structures and the ideological repertoires rulers rely upon to stabilize their rule.

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Nr. 30/04	Peters, Bernhard; Schultz, Tanjev; Wimmel, Andreas	Publizistische Beiträge zu einer diskursiven Öffentlichkeit. Eine themenübergreifende Inhaltsanalyse deutscher Zeitungen und Zeitschriften
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