Philippine Politics and Governance
Quarter 1: Week 8 - Module 8
The Philippines has a presidential, unitary, and republican system of government. Under a presidential system of government, the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches are separate and distinct from each other. This means that each of the branches has its own powers and responsibilities, and that each is expected to work in its own sphere. Such setting is guided by the principle of separation of powers (figure 6.1). While it is true that they are distinct from each other, one branch is granted powers to check on the others’ exercise of privileges. This constitutional guarantee which assures that one branch does not abuse its powers is known as the doctrine of checks and balances (figure 6.2). Remember, however, that while the branches of the government are guided by these principles, they also are expected to work and cooperate with each other in providing for the welfare of the citizens. In this module, the structure and organization, powers and responsibilities, and issues and challenges of the Philippine executive are discussed.

**OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the module the learners should be able to:

- explain the roles and powers of the Philippine president
- analyze how contemporary Philippine presidents exercised their powers
- critique the Philippine presidents’ exercise of power
Let’s now start with your activity. First, you have to answer the pre assessment questions provided in this section to help you recall important information related to our topic which you may have learned before. The good in it is it enhances your ability to evaluate and deal effectively with your own learning concerns.

**Activity I.** Arrange the following presidential succession in the table below. Use numbers to indicate the first succession until the last succession.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Elpidio Quirino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Carlos P. Garcia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sergio Osmeña</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ferdinand Marcos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gloria Macapagal Arroyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Diosdado Macapagal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Manuel L. Quezon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fidel Valdez Ramos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jose P. Laurel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Corazon Aquino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Manuel Roxas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rodrigo Roa Duterte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ramon Magsaysay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Benigno Aquino III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Joseph Estrada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity II.** Guess who are the following President being shown below. Use the number from the table in Activity 1
The Executive

Figure 7. Principles of Separation of Powers

Figure 8. Principles of Checks and Balance in the Philippine Government
https://www.google.com/search?q=principle+of+checks+and+balance+in+the+philippine+government&tbm
Executive Power

Executive power is roughly defined as the power to implement laws in one country. If the legislature’s task is to create or make laws while the judiciary’s duty is to interpret or apply these laws, the executive branch of the government is vested the power to execute these laws and make sure that they are properly implemented.

The structure, organization, powers, responsibilities, and prohibitions of the executive branch are provided under Article VII of the 1987 Constitution. Section 1 states that the “executive power is vested in the President of the Philippines.”

Given this, the president is entrusted to execute laws, and control and administer government affairs. The president is also regarded as the government’s chief executive officer. But before we have an elaborate presentation of the specific powers of the president, it is first necessary to look at the qualifications, manner of election, and terms of office of the president and the vice president.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Official</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Manner of Election</th>
<th>Term of Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>1. A natural-born citizen</td>
<td>The president and vice president shall be elected by a direct vote of the people</td>
<td>Six years The term begins at noon on June 30. The president shall not be eligible for reelection (Section 4, paragraph 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. A registered voter</td>
<td>(Section 4) The person having the highest number of votes (plurality method) shall be elected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Able to read and write</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. At least 40 years of age on the day of the election</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. A resident of the Philippines for at least 10 years immediately preceding his or her election (Section 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>1. A natural-born citizen</td>
<td>The president and vice president shall be elected by a direct vote of the people</td>
<td>Six years The vice president shall not serve for more than two successive terms (Section 4, paragraph 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. A registered voter</td>
<td>(Section 4) The person having the highest number of votes (plurality method) shall be elected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Able to read and write</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. At least 40 years of age on the day of the election</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. A resident of the Philippines for at least 10 years immediately preceding his or her election (Section 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Should there be any questions pertaining to the election, the Supreme Court shall be the one to settle questions about the election, returns, and qualifications of these officials. As provided by Article VII, Section 4: “the Supreme Court, sitting en banc, is the sole judge of all contests relating to the election, returns, and qualifications of the President or Vice President.” The Supreme Court serves therefore as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal.

The presidential election is held on the second Monday of May, unless otherwise provided by law. In case of a tie, the candidate who will win will be chosen by the vote of a majority of Congress (both Senate and House of Representatives), voting separately.

There are, however, instances when the position of president or vice president will be vacated. This is an issue of presidential succession and the constitution also has provisions regarding such circumstances.

**Powers of the President**

The Philippine president is granted specific powers by the Constitution. The following are some of his or her powers:

- Control over all executive departments, bureaus, and offices
- Power of general supervision over local governments and autonomous regions
- Power to nominate, appoint, and remove officials
- Budgetary and fiscal power
- Military power (him or her being the commander in chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines)
- Power to contract or guarantee foreign loans on behalf of the country
- Pardoning power
- Powers to check other branches of the government

**Checks on the President’s Power**

As what has been mentioned earlier, the branches of the government are given the ability to check on the other branches' exercise of power. This will also provide political stability and prevent abuse. Here are the ways on how the president’s exercise of power is checked:

- The Congress specifies the conditions and restrictions of certain powers it assigns to the president.
- Only through the authorization and specifications of Congress could the president exercise power of taxation.
- The Congress can request the department heads under the executive department to appear and be heard on any matters pertaining to their corresponding departments.
- The Congress can override the president’s veto by two-thirds vote in each house.
- The Supreme Court may declare executive orders and proclamations unconstitutional.
- The Supreme Court may review the declaration of martial law and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.
Reforms are what people demand from presidents in times of difficulties and troubles that are happening in the society.

Philippine Presidents during the Contemporary Period (Fifth Republic)

Before discussing the presidents of the Fifth Republic (post-Martial Law period) and the issues they encountered during their term of office, look at the time line below so that you would have an idea of the succession of power after 1986.

Figure 10. President of the 5th Republic of the Philippines

Corazon C. Aquino

President Corazon Aquino has been regarded as an icon of Philippine democracy. It was during her term that the Philippines found its way back to democracy and constitutionalism.

Her leadership directed redemocratization in the Philippines, that is, rebuilding of democratic political institutions that were abolished during Marcos’s time. It was under her administration that elections and other mechanisms for popular participation in governmental affairs—including political parties and the civil society—were restored. Definitely, her administration focused on the transition from authoritarianism to democracy. Apart from these, constitutionalism was also restored, wherein civilian authority was held supreme over the military and the independent and coequal branches of the government were created.

While Aquino’s government was characterized by bargaining and compromise, there were important legislations that were passed such as the Local Government Code of 1991 (discussed in module 9). She also dealt with the issues and charges of human rights violations by the military during the Martial Law. Aquino, however, was not able to prosecute the involved military leaders because she needed their support for

Reforms are what people demand from presidents in times of difficulties and troubles that are happening in the society.
The current constitution is a product of President Corazon Aquino’s administration.

Aquino’s presidency was not without criticisms. While she vowed to work on corruption and transparency, her administration would later on be criticized for its failure to deliver basic services and allegations of corruption among her wealthy and influential relatives.

Fidel V. Ramos

President Fidel Ramos is known for his vision of Philippines 2000. His administration opened the Philippine economy to foreign investors, prompting increased investments in the country after Martial Law.

He consolidated the gains of redemocratization, whose foundations were laid by Aquino. Among his ideals was the Philippines 2000, which focused on political continuity and strong improvements in the economy. While skepticism about a possible declaration of martial law grew during his time, he respected constitutionalism when he stepped down from the presidency for the 1998 general elections.

Ramos dealt well with the members of the Philippine legislature through the rainbow coalition strategy directed by then Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. This strategy brought together various political parties to support the legislative agenda of the president. Because of this harmonious relationship, significant legislations were passed through the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council. But Ramos’s ability to deal well with the members of the Congress is not only attributed to the strong political leadership of the Lakas-NUCD, but also to his strong political skills, which he was able to develop as a former military general.

However, just like his predecessor, Ramos was seen to be weak in prosecuting military rebels. While Ramos was credited for keeping the military within their constitutional limit, his inability to punish military personnel who violated human rights exhibited his dependence on this group as well. It was also in his administration that the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa–Soldiers of the Filipino People–Young Officers’ Union (RAM-SFP-YOU), and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) returned to the folds of law through peace talks. Regarding bureaucratic reforms, Ramos continued modernization and capacity-building in the government. He also modernized the Armed Forces, the Commission on Elections, the Department of Justice, and the Sandiganbayan. To address the problems on peace and order, Ramos forged negotiations and peace agreements with rebel groups. If Aquino projected in the international arena the image of Filipino people
While the president is the head of state and one of the most powerful persons in the country, there is no individual more powerful than a united people who want to create societal change.

Joseph E. Estrada
Joseph Estrada was a former movie star. He became known for his charisma and appeal to the masses. But because of plunder and corruption in the government, he was deposed and was succeeded by his vice president.

Estrada was known as the president of the masses. His campaign battlecry “Erap para sa mahirap” brought hope to the masa (lower class people) who saw him as the president who could relate to them. At the core of his government policies was addressing the problems of poverty, criminality, and corruption. He wanted to further democratize governance by being a roving president—holding offices in Visayas and in Mindanao. Aside from continuing the democratic consolidation, Estrada gave cause for constitutionalism when he answered questions against his administration during the impeachment complaint he faced in 2000.

Unlike the previous president, Estrada did not have a good rapport with the members of the 11th Congress. Later on, the House of Representatives, through Speaker Manuel Villar, obtained the required signatures for Estrada’s impeachment. Estrada also pleased and displeased members of the military after suspending the modernization of the Armed Forces and cutting its financial resources. He defended the move by saying that the government had to tighten its budget. It was also during Estrada’s administration when a total war against the Muslim terrorists and secessionist groups was launched. Nonetheless, he prioritized reforms in the law enforcement agencies and the judicial system to bring about peace and order.

Just like his predecessor who vowed to fight graft and corruption, Estrada failed to address this systemic problem. In fact, his administration was rocked with issues of diversion of funds and plunder. Ultimately, he was charged of four counts of corruption. He was eventually deposed in 2001 when the Filipino people called for his resignation in the EDSA People Power II.
Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

A former member of the Congress, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo rose to power in the EDSA People Power II when she, as vice president, assumed the country’s top governmental post after Estrada was ousted. In 2004, she was elected for a fresh presidential term, where she served until 2010, amidst issues of massive electoral fraud against Fernando Poe Jr. Her primary agenda was known as the Strong Republic.

Credited for bringing the trust of the international arena back to the Philippine government, Arroyo continued democratic consolidation during the term of Estrada. Legislative–executive relations were definitely excellent during the time of Arroyo because unlike her predecessor, While the president is the head of state and one of the most powerful persons in the country, there is no individual more powerful than a united people who want to create societal change. 86 Philippine Politics and Governance she was more familiar and skillful in dealing with the members of the Congress. While impeachment complaints were attempted due to the issue of massive electoral fraud during the 2004 elections—infamously known as the “Hello Garci” scandal— it did not prosper as she was supported by her allies in the Congress.

Learning from the past experiences of the previous presidents and the Oakwood Mutiny that challenged her administration, she appointed several retired military officers in her administration while keeping a close watch over the military’s needs so as not to disappoint them.

In spite of bureaucratic reform during her administration, Arroyo was criticized for appointing political allies to vital governmental offices. There also was a weak reform in the justice system, the Commission on Elections, and the Bureau of Internal Revenue. While she declared to fight graft and corruption in her first State of the Nation Address (SONA), introduced several key strategies, and even established new anticorruption agencies during her administration (following the onset of the Fertilizer Scam and the NBN-ZTE scandal), questions about the effectiveness of these policies and institutions were raised. Arroyo faced graft and corruption cases filed against her during the administration of President Benigno S. Aquino III.

Benigno S. Aquino III

Benigno S. Aquino III’s rise to power started when the people called for him to run as president months after his mother, former President Corazon Aquino, died in 2009. In 2010, he won the presidential election and became the 15th president of the country. Aquino began his efforts to get rid of a corruption-laden government via the campaign slogan “Daang Matuwid.” His SONA focused on governance reform and anticorruption.
Good governance reforms were established, including the reformation of procurement and budgeting processes to ensure efficiency and to reduce opportunities for corruption. While others believe that the impeachment of the late Chief Justice Renato Corona in 2011 was politically motivated him being an Arroyo appointee, the Aquino administration believed it was part of the reform for accountability and restoration of integrity.

The Aquino administration’s efforts to address systemic corruption have received favorable commendations from both international and local organizations, which resulted in the improvement of the country’s performance on corruption and political stability. However, the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) scam rocked the administration’s efforts toward “Daang Matuwid” and its promise of good governance, greater transparency, and accountability.

In 2012, the Philippines experienced one of its highest economic growth rates. The first quarter GDP of 2013 was at 7.8%, up from 6.8% in 2012 and 3.6% in 2011. Fitch Ratings, Standard and Poor’s, and Japan Credit Rating Agency have also rated the Philippines at the investment grade level. Similarly, the World Economic Forum ranked the Philippines 65th in the Global Competitiveness Index, up from 85th in 2010.

As in the previous administrations, Aquino was challenged by the search for an enduring solution to the peace problem in the country. In October 2012, the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signed a peace agreement. The agreement served as the framework agreement that would create an autonomous political entity called Bangsamoro, which will replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The bill, called the Bangsamoro Basic Law, that would have established this political entity was not passed because it was met with strong public opposition after the Mamasapano incident in Maguindanao, where 44 PNP Special Action Force commandos were killed after a “misencounter” with the Moro rebels.

Aquino’s administration also saw a reform in the education sector after the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 was signed. The law institutionalized the K to 12 Basic Education Program, an expanded curriculum which aimed to decongest the previous basic education program, and make it at par with regional and international standards. Despite the aims of All presidents experience challenges in their leadership. Most of these are longtime challenges that are rooted in the injustices and wrong decisions committed by leaders in the past. 88 Philippine Politics and Governance the reform, several groups pointed out that the government should have addressed first the lack of classrooms, textbooks, and other resources instead of adding two years in the basic education.

Finally, the Aquino administration has also been very outspoken in defending the country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity in the West Philippine Sea, after China’s claims in sovereign rights. In January 2013, the government
All presidents experience challenges in their leadership. Most of these are longtime challenges that are rooted in the injustices and wrong decisions committed by leaders in the past.

**Rodrigo R. Duterte**

Before being elected as president, Rodrigo Duterte was the longest-serving mayor of Davao City for a total of seven terms. Running with the campaign slogan “Change is Coming”—primarily with a platform of having a corruption-free government and crime and drug-free society—Duterte won as president with a total of 16,601,997 votes or 39% of the total votes cast in the May 2016 elections.

In his promise to stamp out corruption and criminality, he said: “I will be strict. I will be a dictator, no doubt it; but only against forces of evil—criminality, drugs, and corruption in government.” Having successfully rallied the campaign under these themes, Duterte, however, has been criticized for the absence of a coherent socioeconomic policy during this period. Known for his inflammatory comments, he has also long been besieged by allegations of ties to death squads, extrajudicial killings, and human rights violations.

Based on the eight-point economic agenda of Duterte released on 12 May 2016, the administration is set to continue the previous administration’s policies. The following are the targets:

- **1.** Continue and maintain the current macroeconomic policies. Reforms in tax revenue collection efforts will be complemented by reforms within the bureaucracy of tax collecting agencies.
- **2.** Accelerate spending on infrastructure by addressing major bottlenecks, and maintain the target of setting aside 5% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) to infrastructure spending.
- **3.** Ensure attractiveness of the Philippines to foreign investors, and enhancing competitiveness in doing business in the country. This also means reducing crime to attract investors, and increase security of businessmen and consumers.
- **4.** Provide support services to small farmers to increase productivity and improve market access. Provide irrigation and better support services to farmers. Promote tourism in the rural areas.
- **5.** Address bottlenecks in our land administration and management system.
- **6.** Strengthen basic education system, and provide scholarships for tertiary education, which are relevant to private employers’ needs.
7. Improve tax system by indexing tax collection to inflation rate, “to enable those who earn a little to have more in their pockets.”
8. Expand and improve implementation of the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program.

In his first SONA delivered at the opening of the 17th Congress, Duterte focused as well on his campaigns for good governance, peace and order, women’s rights, and transparency. Moreover, the president has been very vocal about the administration’s war against drugs despite having been heavily criticized for the killings associated with his campaign.

Explore

Enrichment Activity:

A. Identify.

1. The president who was able to win the election garnering 39% of the total votes?
2. The President that made a reform in education and signed the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 institutionalizing the K-12 Program?
3. The government that was characterized as bargaining and compromised?
4. He was known to be the President of the masses?
5. The President that rose to power due to the so-called EDSA II?

B. Discussion: Briefly discuss the following statements below. Your answer will be rated based on the rubric shown.
1. How similar or different were the presidents in their exercise of their powers?

2. What were the challenges each of them faced? What does these challenges say about the strength of their administrations?

3. Given the enormous problems of the country at present, what do you think are the qualities that a president should possess? Why?
### Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Writing</td>
<td>Description has no new information and ideas are poorly organized</td>
<td>Description provides few information but ideas are poorly organized</td>
<td>Description provides new information and ideas are fairly organized</td>
<td>Description provides some new information and organized</td>
<td>Description was written neatly, very well informative and well organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar, Usage and Mechanics</td>
<td>There are misspelled words, and punctuation and grammatical errors that interfere with the description provided</td>
<td>There more than 5 misspelled words, and punctuation and grammatical errors that interfere with the description provided</td>
<td>There are less than 5 misspelled words, and punctuation and grammatical errors that interfere with the description provided</td>
<td>Few misspelled words and no punctuation errors but were able to provide a description</td>
<td>Virtually, no spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors and were able to provide a very good description</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**DEEPEN**

**ESSAY.** Knowing that corruptions and other major crimes are rampantly happening, as a learner you are given the chance to critique the bill that allows Death Penalty. What will your criticism be and why? You are to discuss your answer in not less than 3 paragraphs. Your Criticism will be rated based on the rubric provided below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary 5 points</th>
<th>Very Good 4 points</th>
<th>Good 3 Points</th>
<th>Acceptable 2 points</th>
<th>Fair 1 point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening paragraph</td>
<td>Critiques clearly and concisely the conflicts with the use of figures of speech. With the absence of grammatical error</td>
<td>States the purpose of the idea. With less grammatical errors</td>
<td>States the main topic but it is not engaging and does not outline the structure</td>
<td>Does not state the purpose. Lots of grammatical errors</td>
<td>Does not state the purpose. Unclear on all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Main Point</td>
<td>Briefly describe the current</td>
<td>Each paragraph has some</td>
<td>Idea lacks detail. Writing of</td>
<td>No evidence to support ideas with</td>
<td>Does not state the purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Test I. True or False. Write T if the statement provides a correct information, write F if otherwise. Put your answer on the line provided before the number.

___1. The Congress specifies the conditions and restrictions of certain powers it assigns to the Senate.
___2. Only through the authorization and specifications of Congress could the president exercise power of taxation.
___3. The Congress can request the department heads under the executive department to appear and be heard on any matters pertaining to their corresponding departments.
___4. The Congress can override the president’s veto by two-thirds vote in each house.
___5. The Supreme Court may declare executive orders and proclamations unconstitutional.

Test II. Enumeration. Enumerate at least 5 Presidents who seem to have governed the country at their best.
1. ________________________
2. ________________________
3. ________________________
4. ________________________
5. ________________________
**Test III. Name Me.** Provide the name of the following pictures of the President below. Choose your answer on the box provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuel L. Quezon</th>
<th>Elpidio Quirino</th>
<th>Ramon Magsaysay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emilio Aguinaldo</td>
<td>Jose P. Laurel</td>
<td>Manuel Roxas</td>
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