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EDSA 1: Significance of People's Peaceful Power Revolution in the World

The EDSA "People Power" revolution of 1986 remains one of the most significant political events in Philippine history, symbolizing the people's collective defiance against authoritarian rule. It marked the end of Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship and the restoration of democracy in the country, inspiring similar movements worldwide. However, the long-term impact of EDSA remains debatable, with some scholars arguing that it primarily restored the pre-Marcos elite rather than bringing genuine systemic reform. This paper critically examines the EDSA revolution's significance, its immediate and long-term effects on Philippine society, and the extent to which it represented true democratic progress.

The EDSA movement was a pivotal moment in Philippine history, reshaping the nation's political landscape and reinforcing the power of grassroots activism (Curaming & Claudio, 2010 as cited in https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228159594_A_Historicised_ReAssessment_of_EDSA_'People_Power'_1986). The event led to the overthrow of Marcos, largely due to the participation of military defectors, civil society groups, and religious leaders who rallied millions of Filipinos in a peaceful protest (Curaming & Claudio, 2010 as cited in https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228159594_A_Historicised_ReAssessment_of_EDSA_'People_Power'_1986). The Church played a crucial role, with figures like Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin mobilizing the masses to support the rebellion (Curaming & Claudio, 2010 as cited in https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228159594_A_Historicised_ReAssessment_of_EDSA_'People_Power'_1986). While hailed as a victory for democracy, EDSA did not fully dismantle the structures of elite dominance, as many pre-Marcos oligarchs returned to power and continued to control key economic and political institutions (Curaming & Claudio, 2010 as cited in https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228159594_A_Historicised_ReAssessment_of_EDSA_'People_Power'_1986). Moreover, the revolution's influence extended beyond the Philippines,

serving as a model for other pro-democracy movements in Asia and Eastern Europe (Curaming & Claudio, 2010 as cited in https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228159594_A_Historicised_ReAssessment_of_EDSA_'People_Power'_1986). However, despite its global resonance, the EDSA revolution also demonstrated the limitations of mass mobilization in achieving deep, structural change, as seen in persistent issues of political dynasties and economic inequality (Curaming & Claudio, 2010 as cited in https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228159594_A_Historicised_ReAssessment_of_EDSA_'People_Power'_1986). This duality underscores both the power and the constraints of "People Power" in creating lasting democratic reforms.

The EDSA revolution remains a defining event in Philippine history, representing both the triumph of collective action and the complexities of democratic transition. While it successfully ended an authoritarian regime, it also highlighted the challenges of sustaining meaningful political change. The movement's legacy continues to influence political discourse, demonstrating the potential of civic engagement while cautioning against the persistence of elite control. Ultimately, EDSA serves as both an inspiration and a reminder of the continuous struggle for genuine democracy and equitable governance.