



## The Invisible Mass

Asst. Prof. Frederick Iguban Rey, Ph.D. 

*Department of Political Science and the Sociology Department, The Pontifical and Royal, University of Santo Tomas  
Research Center for Social Sciences and Education, The Pontifical and Royal, University of Santo Tomas  
Councilor (2013-2022) Municipality of Malinao, Province of Aklan, Republic of the Philippines*

### Suggested Citation

#### Suggested Citation:

Rey, F.I. (2023). The Invisible Mass. *European Journal of Theoretical and Applied Sciences*, 1(4), 347-360.  
DOI: [10.59324/ejtas.2023.1\(4\).33](https://doi.org/10.59324/ejtas.2023.1(4).33)

### Abstract:

Founded on clientelism, Philippine politics was crafted to pass a single political corridor, none other than the formation of clans and dynasties more powerful than political parties and ideologies. In a patron-client relationship, the exchanges of favors transcend generations of voters and politicians laying the foundations for perpetual indebtedness. It is in this endless stream of favors — sought and gained— that the politicians and the masses, form a

reservoir of dynastic bonds and obligations. Competition, as an essential feature of democracy, manifests itself in granted favors and welfare provisions among power-wielders, transforming the elections into a dole-out contest for local elites. Political kindness breeds an enduring image of good statesmanship and public service. Through interviews, this qualitative study seeks to create a solid understanding of political participation in Aklan's political environment. The data were collected from a congressman, a vice governor, board members, mayors, and key informants. The interview transcripts were coded and subjected to analysis in order to learn more about the nature and customs of political engagement in Aklan. There were twenty (21) responders in total for the study. Finally, this research proposes the different forms of political dynasties and their distinct characteristics. It recommends a cordial reception of all forms of political dynasties except the failed dynasty and argues that prohibiting the appearance of a political dynasty through the passing of the Anti-Dynasty Bill (ADB) is unjust, inhuman, and undemocratic.

**Keywords:** *indebtedness, patron-client, political dynasty, reciprocity.*

### Introduction

A political dynasty refers to the situation wherein members of the same family are occupying elected positions either in sequence for the same position or simultaneously across different positions (Mendoza et al., 2013:1). Scholastic energies were exhausted to describe and even attack this entity, which seems to be a structural defect in a generally good system. For quite sometime, social scientists argue that, political dynasties are significant conditions in the deterioration of a dynamic political competition thus contributing to poor political

performance that enhances socioeconomic problems. Yet even with expert articulations on its ill effects, the voting population continues to pursue their mystic love affair with dynastic families.

In 1901, during the American colonial period, Western models of democratic practices were introduced into the new colony. Paredes (1989:150) in Teehankee reiterated that *elections and other democratic institutions were primarily imported into the Philippines from Western models. The emergence of institutions such as constitutional law, the secret ballot,*



*the referendum, political parties and legislature in the Philippines was a product of American colonialism. Hence, colonialism became the defining force in the emergence of democracy in the Philippine nation-state. Under the supervision of the colonial masters, the Philippine democratic process and political participation commenced and was characterized by a patron-client relationship. Scholars in Teehankee (2002:151) argued that Philippine party politics, at that period, was characterized by clientelist interactions between the Filipino politicians and their American colonial patrons...electoral campaigns were neither venues for the discussion of social issues nor mass appeals for voters, but negotiations between national political personalities and the provincial landowning elites (Grossholtz, 1964; Tancangco, 1988; Paredes, 1989).*

It is in this endless stream of favors —sought and gained— that the politicians and the masses, form a reservoir of dynastic bonds and obligations. Competition, as an essential feature of democracy, manifests itself in granted favors and welfare provision among potential power wielders, transforming the elections into a dole out contest for local elites. Political kindness breeds an enduring image of good statesmanship and public service.

*Tancangco (1988) still in Teehankee, observed that in the Philippines the strength of a party like the NP (Nacionalista Party) was largely dependent on a network of relationships that were based on patronage which its leaders and members established with local elites, interest groups, party supporters, and the masses (:153). Similarly, in the United States, Feinstein (2010) was convinced that people elect politicians because of “brand loyalty.” The aura of political proficiency manifested by a familiar family name seemed to convince the electorate that it is their duty to vote for the candidate. The successful commodification of politicians by its media specialists, putting emphasis on the political triumphs of the previous generation, enhanced the potential creation of dynasties through name recall.*

Feinstein (:571) discovered that, *for all candidates in open-seat House contests between 1994 and 2006, (he) found that dynastic politicians enjoy “brand name advantages,” giving them a significant edge over*

*comparable non-dynastic opponents.* Clubok, Wilensky, and Berghorn (1969) determined that family ties in the US Congress gradually declined over time. Few years prior to 1969, Laband and Lentz in Feinstein (2010:573) estimated that the members of (US) Congress in 1965 had politically active fathers and that dynastic members tended to be younger and more likely to run unopposed for reelection. When these political scions were challenged for reelection, their challengers tended to spend more money per vote than did candidates running against non-dynastic incumbents.

Considering politics as an occupation, it was argued that the intergenerational transfer of craftsmanship as well as social capital may place second-generation politicians at a competitive advantage vis-à-vis new entrants...the financial resources and connections that public positions provide may enable aspiring second-generation politicians to pursue educational and professional opportunities that can help ease the path to politics (ibid:574). This commonly held assumption regarding dynasty challenges the legitimacy of political investments. The same research identified two possible advantages of a dynasty: First, dynastic politicians may benefit from increased access to human capital via relevant past political experiences. Second, dynastic politicians may enjoy greater access to financial capital through pre-established donor networks (ibid:575).

These presuppositions reveal the imbalance of power and resources that may potentially put the second-generation politician in a more advantageous position over the new entrants. Feinstein argued that *dynastic candidates assume a brand name advantage over first-generation candidates based on the Democratic candidate’s vote share in open-seat House elections held between 1994 and 2006 US elections (:577).*

The seemingly close connection between dynasty and poverty creates a panoramic, yet, unscientific view of the whole. Poor competition is not always equated to poor accountability. Some social observers insist that *political dynasties imply extended time horizons for socio- economic reforms and enable adequate planning and implementation of*

*policies with long-term goals. Politicians with short and/or tenuous tenures tend to shun the difficult but necessary reforms that pay-off in the future and yield to populist demands in order to improve their chances of reelection (Feinstein, 2010:573).*

*Research evidence showed that, in conditions of poverty, there is an arguably high or increase prevalence of political dynasties (Mendoza et al., 2013:5). This fact however is just a portion of the totality; the same inquiry argued that political dynasties are not necessarily associated with any more (or any less) poverty reduction when compared to non-dynasties. Specifically, the results suggest that non-dynasties, on average, may be failing to offer better governance that lead to significant reduction in poverty. Indeed, this interpretation coheres with the observation that political parties in the country are not really offering nor supporting policies that benefit the poor but instead are introducing policies that entrench political dynasties. Even some non-traditional and non-dynastic politicians that are elected into office appear to be pulled to engage in the traditional politics and form new dynastic clans of their own (:7).*

It can be argued that although dynasties exist, the political defects are not completely the result of poor competition, but rather, a revelation of collective apathy, detachment, and ignorance. In addition, Teehankee (2007) argues, *the emergence and persistence of political dynasties stems from the highly unequal socio-economic structure of Philippine society and the failure of the country to develop a truly democratic electoral and party system. Weak institutions and their associated outcomes—such as education—also contribute to an environment wherein power is effectively monopolized by a small elite group.*

Mendoza et al. (2013) explains that *the educational deficiency of a person defines one's participation in the province of politics as he considers how poverty and inequality could help create the demand for patrons. In an environment beset with aggregate shocks and crises, and absent a strong social safety net (e.g. unemployment insurance, health insurance, redistributive transfers), the poor have little recourse but to seek support from local patrons. Aside from academic proficiencies, Coronel in Mendoza suggests that a combination of factors like wealth, popularity, political machinery,*

*alliances, myth, and violence contribute to the formation of political dynasties.*

The abhorrence and disgust hurled at political dynasties emanate from the belief that political dynasties are linked to weak political competition, poor accountability, concentration of political power, and perpetuation of patron-client relations and traditional politics. *Under these conditions, political dynasties contribute in sustaining poverty in a country (Mendoza, 2013).*

Furthermore, without ignoring the failures of dynastic families, it can also be argued that the formation and dominance of dynastic families in politics primarily proceeds from the fact that the values of the “fittest” were validated and accepted by the collective. The battle for political legitimation exhibits the power of the social, through suffrage. Therefore, the deformities and structural distortions or the splendor and magnificence that reside in political institutions are all products of the social. The ugliness of its political representatives is simply the reflection of its collective foolishness.

*Baudrillard (1983) laments that the masses do not radiate; they absorb all radiation from the outlying constellations of State, History, Culture and Meaning. They are inertia, the strength of inertia, the strength of the neutral.* The social's inability to absorb its real power makes them merely a potential location of power. Although the social recognizes its potent potentiality, its spirit and might disappears in the silhouette of fleeting apathy and political dormancy.

The collective moves in a universally detached consciousness, suddenly active suddenly inactive, a primitive intelligence lost in history, captured by the present and held hostage by its shortsightedness. Baudrillard (1983) continues, *the masses drift somewhere between passivity and wild spontaneity, but always as a potential energy, a reservoir of the social and of social energy; today a mute referent, tomorrow, when they speak up and cease to be the "silent majority," a protagonist of history - the masses have no history to write, neither past nor future, they have no virtual energies to release, nor any desire to fulfill.*

The social, being uninterested and removed from the labors and burdens of political life,

allows those who consider politics as their vocation to grow in power and independence. As members of the clan slowly navigate the complicated alleys of politics, they invest more social and cultural capitals. Such investment overtime accumulates and eventually yielding greater rewards resembling the opaque impression of a dynastic family.

While the political family acquires greater access to exclusive satellites of power, *the mass on the other hand, absorbs all the surrounding energy and light rays, to collapse finally under its own weight* (Baudrillard, 1983). Unable to neither create meaning nor define its purpose, the sovereign mass surrenders its power to those who understand it.

Querubin (2011:2) argues, *political dynasties, exemplify a particular form of elite persistence in which a single or few family groups monopolize political power... the tendency of elites to persist and reproduce their power over time, potentially undermining the effectiveness of institutional reforms... When a person holds more power, it becomes more likely that this person will start, or continue, a political dynasty...* Like any other trade, either by vocation or profession, some families decide to invest in politics. Over time, the investment gains rewards that will benefit the family or the clan through the legitimization of the majority.

## Political Dynasties and Philippine Politics

Article 2, Section 26 of the 1986 Philippine Constitution provides, that *the State shall guarantee equal access to public service and prohibit political dynasty as may be defined by law*, in order to secure a level political playing field. Thus, even without the scientific tools to define what a political dynasty is, many scholars and analysts believe that, *political dynasties can be effective in preventing the people from communicating their real needs to the government. They can weaken existing governance and accountability mechanisms... preventing the best and the brightest from serving in the government, and/or biasing policies in favor of certain elite groups* (ibid:1986).

Arguably, the formation of a political dynasty is anchored on the gifts and triumphs of a generation. The family enjoys the approval of

the majority because of its virtuosity. Thus, a dynasty is a testament of honor and righteousness, a legacy. However, the critic on the evils of political dynasty emanates from the miserable fact that a number of successors had devalued their glorious past through political fraud and bad governance.

The next generation politician takes advantage of history by living under borrowed statesmanship without shame or honor. Younger politicians, like second-generation seeds planted on the same land, turn out to be less productive, and are degenerate versions of what was once noble and beautiful.

Consequently, in order to combat the perceived oppressions of dynasties, various legislative measures were proposed. Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago attacked dynastic families in her explanatory note for a proposed legislation by citing Article 2, Section 26 provision of the Constitution as mentioned earlier. She stressed that, *to give force and effect to this provision, the playing field of the political arena should be levelled and opened to persons who are equally qualified to aspire on even terms with those from ruling politically dominant families.* The Senator further argued that *Philippine society, many sociologists note, revolves around the system of extended families. However, this extended family system, an otherwise beneficial concept when applied to the social aspects of human behavior, finds its pernicious effects in the political arena where public office becomes the exclusive domain of influential families and clans that are well-entrenched in Philippine politics* (Fifteenth Congress of the Republic of the Philippines, N/A).

In this context, it can be argued that Santiago's bill interrupts the natural tendency of families from accumulating capital by taking advantage of their collective proficiencies and craft familiarity (i.e. political skill) violating the very logic of adaptive advantage. If the family is well equipped in the trade and practices of politics, it may sound despotic to constraint the family members or the clan to pursue and invest more resources to magnify their political rewards. It can therefore be further argued, that the dynasty in itself is neutral, and that the monopoly of political power may not guarantee political abuses.



It may be correct that *the socio-economic and political inequities prevalent in Philippine society limit public office to members of ruling families*, this essay insists that it is grossly violative and unconstitutional for two reasons; **first**, it will offend the electorate by limiting the options of whom to vote and **second**, the right to participate in the electoral process on the part of the candidate since Santiago's bill seeks to prevent an interested *person who is the spouse of an incumbent elective official or relative within the second civil degree of consanguinity or affinity of an incumbent elective official to hold or run for an elective office simultaneously with the incumbent elective official within the same province or occupies the same office immediately after the term of office of the incumbent elective official*.

Santiago's bill, likewise, elaborated on the proximity of the second civil degree of consanguinity or affinity which refers to the person *who may be a brother or sister, whether of full or half-blood, direct ascendant or direct descendant, whether legitimate, illegitimate or adopted, including their spouses*. The Santiago bill exempts elected officials at the Barangay level.

Former Sen. Alfredo S. Lim in his sponsored bill even extended the prohibition up to the third degree of consanguinity or affinity (first cousin). This perceived threat, roughly substantiated by common sense and historical biases, led the Senator to assume that *by abolishing dynasties, we are strengthening our party system because, rather look up to the candidates, the electorate will make their choice on the basis of party principles. Hence, the bill seeks to end the exercise and control of political power and authority in a political unit by two or more members of the same family*.

In the House of Representatives, Cong. Erlinda M. Santiago sponsored a Bill of the same nature with the limitation similar to that of Sen. Mirriam Santiago (second degree of consanguinity or affinity) and argued that in a dynastic democracy there is a *skewed distribution of power... mirrors the imperfections in our political system...and that political offices are family heirloom which politicians hand to the next generation without considering talent, competence and integrity*. Distant to the appreciation of the above-mentioned politician was the belief that

poverty and dynasty has no correlation (Teehankee, 2007).

The recent study in Philippine politics published by the Ateneo School of Governance (AsoG) and by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) entitled *How to Win an Election: Lessons From the Experts* (Go and Cruz, 2009) synthesize realities from the field by expressing that, it is the family or the clan that is at the forefront of assuring individual and collective well-being rather than the state, and secondly, elected officials act as patrons and brokers through whom and from whom the electorate can access government resources. The same study mentions the character of Philippine politicians to be more of a *parent-like* rather than a *manager*. Parental leadership is very much similar to the benign patron who provides for the well-being of the children.

Therefore, it must be emphasized that in the rural Philippines, families are united by blood but divided by politics. Making it more vital that the Anti-Dynasty Bill should be grounded on factual data and appropriate framework. It is the task of this paper to fill this academic and political void.

## Methodology

This is a qualitative research with exploratory motif. It was intended to develop *basic facts, a well-grounded picture* (Neuman: 1994) of the different forms of political participation in Aklan political arena. As a qualitative study, this research studied things in their *natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them* (Denzin, 1998). The interview technique was used allowing the researcher to capture the *meanings* based on their individual perceptions and experiences (Corbetta, 2003) as the research arrives at the *source or the nucleus of truth*. Twenty-one (21) interviews were conducted to detail and elaborate on the forms of political participation. Similarly, the case study approach was employed treating the entire province as a case in hand in order to uncover contextual conditions crucial to the phenomenon under investigation. It allowed

the researcher to be immersed and consumed by the data. By seeking an in-depth understanding of these types of political participation, the realities of Philippine rural politics, the case of the province of Aklan becomes more apparent and fathomable. Data came from the following sources: Congressman (1), Vice-governor (1), Board Members (8), Mayors (6), and key informants (5). Transcripts were coded and sorted to aid the researcher in the composition of the final report. The narratives of these respondents provided elucidation on the nature and practices of political participation in the Province of Aklan and the entire edifice of its political machinery. In total, there are twenty-one (21) respondents for this study.

## Results and Discussions

The succeeding discussions are the results gathered from the field using various qualitative data gathering techniques previously mentioned in the methodology section. The elaborations below provide a deep synthesis *first*, on the functions and dysfunctions of political dynasties. This study differentiates various forms of political dynasty that may serve as a basis in empowering the constitutional provision in the prohibition of few clans and families dominating the political interaction.

*Second*, on the evolving trend of political campaigning in the Province of Aklan; this study presents the transition of the blogosphere from a communication tool into an apparatus of political destruction. *Finally*, this research presents a detailed analysis on the role of armed combatants in the political system. Some of the names were change upon the request of the participants.

### The Power of the Incumbent

It has been argued so many times that the incumbent politician is almost impossible to unseat and has been the point of departure of numerous analysis on wicked governance. *First* and foremost, aside from the name recall advantage (JMiraflones, 2016: 4; Torres, 2016: 2),

running against the incumbent and its office is a very difficult battle (Neron, 2016: 5; Patron, 2016: 3; Torres, 2016: 2) since the resources of the state is available for one's disposal (Igo, 2016: 10; JMiraflones, 2016: 7; Solanoy, 2016: 9; Quimpo, 2016: 1). The incumbent is already dominating the show, as a "public servant" while the new entrant is just a promise yet to happen (Templonuevo, 2016: 7; Cawaling, n/d; JMiraflones, 2016: 4; Solanoy, 2016: 9). To unseat a governor in Aklan one must face a 1.6 billion yearly challenge, the annual budget of the province (Dela Cruz, 2016: 10).

*Second*, the assistance (Flores, 2016 :6; JMiraflones, 2016: 7) and indiscriminate goodwill (Marquez, 2016: 6; Fernandez, 2016: 6; JT Hiram, 2016: 6) granted to the constituents during incumbency will always be remembered on the day of the election, popularly known as *utang na loob* in Filipino or *utang nga buot* or *kataeamdam* in Aklanon (Neron, 2016: 4). Finally, and the most crucial element, is the narrative of good governance (Templonuevo, 2016: 7; Bandiola, 2016: 1) since the voters make sure that political clans and families pay for their flawed administration (JMiraflones, 2016: 5).

The patron-client relationship occurs both in the psyche of the politician and voter. On one hand, the politician accepts and even strives to make it one's obligation to provide for the needs of the constituents (Gelito, 2016: 9; JMiraflones, 2016: 4) while the voters on the other hand, since the beginning of Philippine democracy, created a psyche of dependency. Favor seeking and favor granting transferred across generations (JT Hiram, 2016: 5; MMiraflones, 2016: 4; Torres, 2016: 1) typifies the voter-politician relationship.

Aklan politicians (Flores, 2016: 4; Marquez, 2016: 3; Tejada, 2016: 7; MMiraflones, 2016: 4; JMiraflones, 2016: 3; Neron, 2016: 4) however elaborate that the terrain of Aklan politics for new entrants is very accommodating and forgiving, they insist Aklanon voters always take into account the previous performances of the incumbent making one's office as the barometer of public service allowing it to work in favor or against the elected official. A close reading of the past administration puts a sudden end to one's

political fantasies or legitimizes the beginning of a dynasty (MMiraflores, 2016: 5; JMiraflones, 2016: 7). On the other hand, the new comer is burdened by one's lack of experience in public office (Fernandez, 2016: 6; Tejada, 2016: 7). The sudden shift of power in the narrative of Aklan politics may be triggered by the circumstances of the entire province. The fall of the Legaspis and the rise of the Garcia dynasty and Roberto "Nono" Garcia who served as the longest governor of Aklan for fourteen years (14) was a consequence of a protest vote after the violent Cabugao Massacre in Altavas, Aklan. Making Aklan politics very dynamic and in some instances issue-based rather than fanatic supporters of a clan.

The leveled playing in Aklan politics allows every qualified aspirant to be an option during the election process (Flores, 2016: 3). One's family name is not an assurance to win an election, Fernandez (2016: 6) argued that personal character, qualifications, deep connection with the people (pakikisama, magandang pagkatao, pagpapakumababa) and inclusive in extending assistance to the people's needs increase one's potential to hold power (Igo, 2016: 10; Bandiola, 2016: 1). It was reiterated that dynastic families seeks to concentrate power (Solano, 2016: 9) and control at all levels (Tejada, 2016: 6; Torres, 2016: 1) and has the tendency to defend its member at all costs (Igo, 2016: 7; JMiraflones, 2016: 2; Neron, 2016: 1) and cover up its previous mistakes (Fernandez, 2016: 6; Sugang, 2016: 4; Tejada, 2016: 7; JMiraflones, 2016: 6; Solano, 2016: 11; Torres, 2016: 4). But bad governance as well as shortcomings of the past should not be a burden to new generation of politicians. Instead, it may serve as a basis for improvement, since every politician is unique and autonomous being, the Lapid for example (Gelito, 2016: 4), the former Senator Manuel "Lito" Lapid won because he was the people's man, the pop culture icon Leon Guerrero who fought for the oppressed but the second generation of Lapid politician was a former Sangguniang Kabataan provincial president making him the youth sector representative at the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Pampanga at became its governor at a very young age of

twenty-four (24). Pres. Benigno "Pnoy" Aquino III during his incumbency appointed Mark Lapid as the Chief Operating Officer of Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA). His education and experience in public service provides him a wider horizon with regards to politics and governance (Gelito, 2016: 4).

Interestingly, Aklan politics is a succession of dynasties such in the case of the Legaspis, Quimpos, Garcias and now the Mirafloreses. Interestingly, in a general sense dynastic families truly dominate in a given time but soon its glory fades (Gelito, 2016: 7; Dela Cruz, 2016: 7). Gelito further reiterated that dynastic families have a control mechanism to preserve its dominance. **First**, they will block or make it known to strong candidates that their political careers are terminal and that selected positions are exclusive for the members of the clan. **Second**, the dominant clan may offer elective positions that will not challenge the security of the clan, a higher or a lower position whatever the case may be. In some instances co-terminus positions are offered to balance and neutralize all interests. The office of the incumbent also becomes a source of confidence (Templonuevo, 2016: 3; Sugang, 2016: 4; MMiraflores, 2016: 1) for other members of the clan to seek public office. Certain families had created and mastered the strategy of how to keep family members in power may it be through money, terrorism (Sugang, 2016: 3) or other techniques.

## Types of Political Dynasties

This segment of the research seeks to elaborate on the different forms of political dynasties and their distinct characteristics. Understanding the various appearances of a dynasty facilitates the correct treatment on how to rectify academic and political discourses related to the matter.

## Types of Political Dynasties

The attempt to qualify (JMiraflones, 2016: 16; Neron, 2016: 2) the different guises of political dynasties in the country seeks to address a

number of confusions on the presence of clans dominating the political calisthenics.

### Functional Dynasty

Refers to a clan with family members elected to public office *either in sequence for the same position or simultaneously across different positions*. This is characterized by a meaningful concentration of political power to a single family or clan that is devoted to good governance, accountability and struggles for political equality of the fragile sectors of society.

### Emerging Dynasty

Refers to a clan that is a new entrant in the electoral exercise with family members starting to be elected to public office *either in sequence for the same position or simultaneously across different positions*. This is characterized by the clan's potential considering its political capital to establish a political dynasty in the years to come.

### Failed Dynasty

Refers to a clan with family members elected to public office *either in sequence for the same position or simultaneously across different positions*. Poor accountability, biased policies and administrative abuses among others that lead to bad governance characterize this type of dynasty.

### "Fat Dynasty"

Refers to a clan with family members elected to public office *either in sequence for the same position or simultaneously across different positions*. Ronald U. Mendoza and his team first used the term in 2013, liberally; it may also refer to the presence of powerful families that had been politically dominant for over some period of time with immense influence over other politicians, with almost absolute control over political resources and the strong command over the voting population. Fat dynasties may likewise describe the involvement of "multiple" family members in the political exercise without necessarily being abusive and malignant, functional or emerging.

### "Thin Dynasty"

Refers to a clan with family members elected to public office *either in sequence for the same position or simultaneously across different positions*. Ronald U.

Mendoza and his team first used the term in 2013, liberally; this condition differs from "fat dynasty" in terms of the lesser degree of power and influence in relation to other politicians, the political resources and the voting population. Thin dynasties may likewise describe the involvement of a "few" family members in the political exercise without necessarily being abusive and malignant, functional or emerging.

\*\*\* "Multiple" and "few" remains to be undefined in the case of fat and thin dynasties.

Given the different typologies and an accurate paradigm on political dynasties, this inquiry proposes a cordial reception of all forms of political dynasties except the failed dynasty. A failed dynasty is unjust, inhuman and undemocratic (Tejada, 2016: 6). Further elaboration below seeks to magnify several weaknesses of efforts to contain and limit political participation though the passing of the Anti-Dynasty Bill.

## Objections Against Anti-Dynasty Bill

This research brings into twelve (12) major objections against the approval of the proposed Anti-Dynasty Bill. The objections spring from current understanding that there are variants of political dynasties and only the failed dynasties and not all forms of dynasties must be held accountable for their excesses and misdeeds.

### A. Limits the Choices of the Voters

The Anti Dynasty Bill seeks to castrate failed dynasties to create an aura of leveled political playing field. The initiative to attack these failed dynasties spring from the fact that a number of political families all over the country created a pattern of arrogance, crime, corruption, and administrative indolence. Overtime, neglecting collective good while expanding and prolonging the clan's tenure in power, hostile sentiments started to emerged on the dangers of political dynasties. Considering all these facts attributed to failed dynasties, it may be argued however that



by prohibiting individuals who belong to the “fat,” “thin,” failed or emerging dynasties to run in public office immensely limit the available options for voters during the elections (Templonuevo, 2016: 2; Cawaling, n/d: 2). To limit the options of an already quotidian list of aspiring candidates is a catastrophe (Fernandez, 2016: 6) in the artificial war towards good governance. It must be highlighted that even in the cities but most especially in the provinces, remote towns and barangays and specifically in the province of Aklan; the proficiency, passion, interest, (JMiraflones, 2016: 2; Solanoy, 2016: 8) the material and immaterial assets to hold a public office resides on few families. Similarly, local and national elections are struggles for power between and among families connected by blood or by affinity. If the Bill eliminates the possibility of individuals who are related to active politicians to run simultaneously for public office, the nation’s resources, its *best and brightest* will be removed of its opportunity to write their own political narratives. It is not only the presence of the dynasties that block the participation of the *best and brightest* (Torres, 2016: 2; Dela Cruz, 2016: 4) but many are truly uninterested in politics; they do not want themselves to be burdened by the obligations of public office (Igoy, 2016: 8; JMiraflones, 2016: 6) or they simply do not have the motivation (MMiraflones, 2016: 4).

In fact, the Anti-Dynasty Bill is a political cleansing, a simulated war against its own people rightfully provoked by abusive governance but erroneously, arrogantly, and ignorantly proposed to a establish a chimera of political egalitarianism. At the end, it will be the Triumph of the Abstain (Flores, 2016: 7; Fernandez, 2016: 6).

### **B. Suppress the Constitutional Right of the Individual to Participate**

The Bill intends to violate one’s constitutional right to vote and be voted. The very essence and spirit of democratic participation becomes selective and restrictive. Article 5 of the Philippine constitution assures every citizen of their right to actively participate (Flores, 2016: 4; Fernandez, 2016: 6; Gelito, 2016: 3; JMiraflones,

2016: 4; Neron, 2016: 3; Quimpo, 2016: 3) in the electoral process unless otherwise disqualified by law. For as long as the elected official remains faithful to one’s mandate by providing sound administration, political equality, and welfare to the frail and marginalized and not only to serve the interest of the family, extended tenureship in power is legitimized (Sugang, 2016: 2; MMiraflones, 2016: 4).

The minimal requirements cited by the constitution is the very logic of collective engagement intended by the framers of the constitution wherein the citizens are defined only by the essentials (age of maturity, residency requirement, and the ability to read and write) and not by one’s family name. The constitution further states that: no literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage. The Anti-Dynasty Bill therefore is a proposal alien and whose residency is not recognized by the Philippine constitution.

### **C. May Amplify Intra Family Feud**

The Bill was anchored on the belief that the family protect, tolerate and even encourage other members of the clan to abuse public office. Interestingly however, Philippine political narrative reveals the different guises of intra family feud from husband against wife, brother against brother, between first cousins (Templonuevo, 2016: 10; Sugang, 2016: 7) among others. These political aspirants share the same family name but they are no strangers to deep political cleavages resulting to highly publicized domestic disagreements. The Bill therefore acts as an accelerant to an already malevolent situation that may result to a national crisis; family members murdering their own to eliminate competition (Fernandez, 2016: 6; JMiraflones, 2016: 9; Neron, 2016: 7, Solanoy, 2016: 12; Torres, 2016: 5; Dela Cruz, 2016: 15). A new crisis that may be created by the Anti-Dynasty Bill.

### **D. Negates the Fitness or Adaptive Advantage of the Family/Clan**

The family like the society overtime evolves and acquires adaptive advantage. Only the fittest to adapt and not really the strongest will survive

passing on to its offsprings accumulated proficiencies and superiority over other families (MMiraflores, 2016: 1, JMiraflones, 2016: 1; Neron, 2016: 1) through socialization. Thus, the Bill prohibiting members of the same family to engage in a trade they do best negates the very *Nature*, *Spirit* and the *Beingness* of that family and its individual members. The Anti Dynasty Bill violates the natural tendencies of the family, an equal or leveled political playing field as claimed by the proponents of the Anti Dynasty Bill should not invalidate the narrative of the clan by neutralizing its ability to reproduce. In the case of Aklan, there are occasions where the transfer of power is obvious, but one can argue that the heir is an excellent version of the forebearer who considers at all times the welfare of one's constituents (Marquez, 2016: 13; Fernandez, 2016: 6; Igo, 2016: 10; JT Hiram, 2016: 7) and whose passion and resolve for humanity is pure and spotless. Moreover, the existing mechanisms of control instituted by the State makes it very difficult for elected officials to take advantage of the people's money (Templonuevo, 2016: 3). Finally, nobody can ascertain (Flores, 2016: 3; Marquez, 2016: 4) that new entrants will not violate public trust since greed and materialism is an individual battle to fight (JT Hiram, 2016: 7; MMiraflores, 2016: 5, Dela Cruz, 2016: 5) transcending all time, space, gender and other social categories.

Truthfully, not all natural tendencies are moral or legal but surely to limit the participation of the individual to construct and deconstruct one's political system is a tyranny.

#### **E. Legitimizes Collective Apathy By Attacking Clans And Families That Devoted Their Cultural Capital In Understanding And Wielding Political Power**

It has been brought to light so many times that political dynasties are simply by-products of collective apathy, poor choices, memory loss, and idolization. Without collective approval, dynasties will surely come to an end (MMiraflores, 2016: 3; Patron, 2016: 1). It is therefore again asserted that the masses and not the wicked politician who invested their cultural capital (Solanoy, 2016: 8) should be held

accountable on the triumph and proliferation of failed dynasties.

#### **F. Anti- Dynasty Bill Negates the Very System We Espouse by Debunking Meritocracy.**

The illusion of crisis created by scholars as they attack the vicious cycle of irresponsible governance mistakenly annulled individual merit and success on the basis of family name to obtain collective approval and political power. Thus, the Anti Dynasty Bill neutralizes the bureaucratic system adopted by responsible public administration.

#### **G. Prohibits Career Politician**

The mastery of statecraft is achieved by slowly and painfully learning the distinct language of diverse valuations, silently and solitarily mindful of the monotony of conflict, generously and universally attached to the principle of the common good and most of all tenaciously and obsessively drawn to politics. The passing of the Anti-Dynasty Bill is a cryptic legislation that will abort interested individuals to achieved their fullness in the realm of politics. The arduous labor towards the understanding, appreciation and near perfection of political life requires extended exposure in the field of governance. It may even demand for generations of politicians from a single family, each and every generation socialized to the subtleties of administrative practice that stretches out for perfection (Quimpo, 2016: 2). Good governance is contagious (Templonuevo, 2016: 5) that can run deep within the political culture of the clan. Thus, the appreciation of a dynasty should be on a case to case basis since the failure or success of a dynasty is dependent on the competence of its practitioners (Sugang, 2016: 1; JT Hiram, 2016: 5; MMiraflores, 2016: 2; Neron, 2016: 4; Bandiola, 2016: 2; Torres, 2016: 1; Quimpo, 2016: 3; Torres, 2016: 4; Dela Cruz, 2016: 10).

And the seed of political desire is indiscriminating, it may be sown in the heart of a scientist, a medical or legal practitioner, a military man, someone with very modest cultural capital or once again to somebody who belongs to a political dynasty. To pass the Bill is to

savagely and foolishly sever the opportunity of a nation to produce career politicians and virtuous statesmen and women who with steadfast hearts and steady hands are writing the history of this country.

#### **H. Anti-Dynasty Bill Failed to Recognize Party Dynasty**

This research further discovered that the control for power dwells not only within powerful clans but also in dominant parties. The sense of continuity, that the heir will pursue the same vision of good administration, was used to justify the dominance of dynastic families (Cawaling, n/d: 2; JT Hiram, 2016: 5; JMiraflones, 2016: 7; Neron, 2016: 1; Dela Cruz, 2016: 12). But the Anti-Dynasty Bill failed to recognize not only clans, but also political parties create a dynasty (Patron, 2016: 1; Quimpo, 2016: 2) that may follow the same blueprint of ethical governance. And within the party programs, habits and protectionist temper are very well in place to widen, deepen and extend the influence and might of the organization. Since dynastic tendencies occur both in parties and clans, the rotational system of public administration may be arrange among parties and families to take turns in governance. Since political parties and clans are not resistant to self-perpetuation, rotational administration is an absurd proposition to an already obscure struggle for accountability and ethical statesmanship.

#### **I. Political Dynasty versus Dynasty in Public Office**

One fact that precedes political dynasties in the distortion of sound public administration is the dynasty in public offices. The monopoly of families, clans, and clicks serving in the public offices, in many instances, override the power and influence of elected politicians who come and go depending on the ebb and flow of the election (Dela Cruz, 2016: 15). People through popular vote decided to entrust only few years of governance (Templonuevo, 2016: 2) to people who belong to the same clan.

Equally accountable as the wicked politician, are the transgressions of dynastic families and syndicates (Torres, 2016: 3) in public service that

chokes all efforts to achieve honest and emphatic governance. These are the families, whose members are spread all over the system controlling the treasury, engineering, general services, accounting and budget offices among others extremely capable of sabotaging the elected official (Torres, 2016: 3-4). Political dynastic families are transitory occupants of political power whose reign may end at any given time while dynastic career public professionals are secure in their positions and protected by the law of the land.

#### **J. Violates the Selection Through Consultation Practices of Political Organizations**

The current Anti-Dynasty Bill ignores the consultative processes in the identification of candidates done by parties and clans prior to the filling of candidacy. In this process, the entire political organization becomes democratic and participatory in the sense that the leaders from the grassroots acquire a freehand in endorsing and selecting (JT Hiram, 2016: 5; JMiraflones, 2016: 3; Bandiola, 2016: 2; Torres, 2016: 2) a candidate.

#### **K. Failed to Consider the “umay” (Fed-up) Factor**

The electorate, although most of the time delayed in their realization, recognizes the fact that somewhere along the way the tenure of dynastic families must end. Decades of allegiance makes the voters tired and fed-up of voting for candidates who belong to the same political clans (Patron, 2016: 2; Quimpo, 2016: 2). Even without the Anti-Dynasty Law, deep within the subconscious of the masses rise the general sentiments to finally elect new administrators.

#### **L. Legitimizes the Illegimate**

By prohibiting immediate family members to run for public office, the law legitimizes the illegimates by institutionally corrupting the family. The Anti-Dynasty Bill innocently and ignorantly ransacks the opportunities of the legal heirs to exploit the family advantage. Similarly, it gives the heirs unrecognized by law, a

providential moment to marginalize the inner members of the clan.

## Understanding Rural Political Dynamics

### A. The Politician and Public Service

It is common for many politicians that their guiding principle prior to entering the political arena is public service (Flores, 2016: 1; Gelito, 2016: 1; Cawaling, n/d; MMiraflores, 2016: 1; JMiraflones, 2016: 1; Quimpo, 2016: 1) and paying back to the community (Marquez, 2016: 1; JT Hiram, 2016: 4; JMiraflones, 2016: 7; Neron, 2016: 2). They believed that an elected office provides power (*poder* or *gahum*) and legitimate authority to execute their visions of social reform (Flores, 2016: 1). Similarly, it gives the politician influence over one's constituents as well as support from different agencies of the government (Gelito, 2016: 2). Once in public office, the resources and the power of the state become available for the politician to exhaust based on one's foresight and interests. The idea of public service springs from two variables of political correlations; first is the election of the politician to public office and second, social reform and responsive governance. The office allows the politician to utilize public funds in the name of collective interest. Public service, therefore, is absent when the legitimizing power of political office is removed and vice versa.

Patronage politics is the root of dynastic formations, since by using the resources of the state; the elected politician acquires a sense of indebtedness (*utang na loob* or *katacamadan*) that ensures reciprocity during elections on the part of the electorate (Torres, 2016: 4; Dela Cruz, 2016: 5).

### B. Political Dynasty and Democracy

Many of the participants interviewed for this research did not agree that multiple elections of family members *in sequence for the same position or simultaneously different positions* (Mendoza et al., 2013: 1) is wicked. They were convinced that the people render their decision on who are the best governors and public administrators during the

election; they had the mandate of the people (Bandiola, 2016: 2; Patron, 2016: 1). At this point in time, the Miraflones may be projected and even accepted as the most powerful political clan in Aklan but, it is only because the members of the clan made themselves available as an option for people to vote during elections.

Entrance to political office is loose (Bandiola, 2016: 2; Quimpo, 2016: 2) and uncensored, new names appear and at the same time, the Miraflones and the rest of the incumbents were most of the times challenged during the political exercise (Cawaling, n/d: 1) making it known that the terrain is even and the voters only legitimized that the Miraflones or the one's previously elected were the best choices from among the candidates. They had the qualifications, the heart for public service, and the experience and the people embrace it by giving them the mandate to hold public office (Templonuevo, 2016: 4).

In fact, it is not really the family name that defines one's participation or non-participation in the political exercise but its one's willingness to gamble social and cultural capital. The absence of political competition or the uneven playing field is characterized by the fact that only a few families are inclined to take the risk of an election (Torres, 2016: 2), allocating a certain amount of cash to fuel the campaign (Sucgang, 2016: 3; JMiraflones, 2016: 4; Patron, 2016: 3; Quimpo, 2016: 3; Dela Cruz, 2016: 9). Spending millions of pesos for the campaign sounds ridiculous to many who worked and fought hard to earn a living (JT Hiram, 2016: 6; Patron, 2016: 3). Running for a political position against an incumbent or a dynasty is one thing and the fear of losing is another.

Many are shunned by the thought defeat (Torres, 2016) but there are families designed for politics (Solanoy, 2016: 7; Dela Cruz, 2016: 7).

Thus, poor competition is not really a result of the presence of dynastic families, but in reality, only few individuals and clans are truly predisposed to the promises of political adventures.

They insist that the element of popular democracy through voting is simply a



manifestation of the people's will, the family with its members elected in multiple political positions are qualified (Flores, 2016: 2), they made people happy (Marquez, 2016: 2) and worked it out during the campaign period (Gelito, 2016). In a general sense, the elections in the province had evolved into a relatively peaceful (Flores, 2016: 21; Marquez, 2016: 15; Fernandez, 2016: 5; Ibarreta, 2016: 6) pursuit allowing politicians to insist that as long as voters are not harassed, successful elections of family members from the same clan has no malice (Cawaling, n/d: 1).

## Types of Popular Governance

**Patronage Governance** – voters who seek welfare provision from elected officials, may be a functional governance. This is prone to the formation of a “dynasty.”

**Functional Governance** – voters who seek intelligent laws that will provide order, political well-being, and equal political rights. A stretching out for the formation of a “legacy.”

**Anticipatory Governance** - is a psyche that allows the administrator to imagine, predict and anticipate the movements of social life. By discovering the patterns and understanding the laws governing social life, the governor can then formulate humanizing policies that will enhance the well-being of the people.

The forms of popular governance mentioned above, seek to identify two types of electorates based on their voting orientation. The first one sees the politician as a patron since they depend on the welfare and humanitarianism extended to them by the politician, while the second type elects a candidate whom they see as a competent and proficient public administrator. The third type of governance uses the Sociological lens as an aid to humane governance.

## Conclusion

A political dynasty is when family members hold elected positions, leading to concerns about political competition and good governance.

During the American colonial period, democratic practices were introduced in the Philippines, characterized by a patron-client relationship.

Dynastic politicians have advantages in name recognition and resources. While dynasties are associated with poverty, non-dynastic politicians do not necessarily reduce poverty more than their dynastic counterparts.

Dynasties form due to factors like wealth and alliances. Weak institutions and apathetic masses contribute to their persistence. Dynasties reflect an imbalance of power and weak institutions.

Article 2, Section 26 of the Philippine Constitution prohibits political dynasties to ensure a leveled political playing field. Critics argue that dynasties weaken governance, accountability, and effective communication with the people. Therefore, legislative measures were proposed seeking to create a more equitable political arena by addressing the dominance of influential families.

However, this study claims that such measures interfere with the natural accumulation of capital and will limit electoral options.

This study concludes that there should be a cordial reception of all forms of political dynasties as suggested except the “failed dynasty.”

It is finally argued that the absolute prohibition of the appearance of a political dynasty through the passing of the Anti-Dynasty Bill (ADB) is unjust, inhuman, and undemocratic. Rightful appreciation and understanding of political dynasties in the Philippines will rectify all illogical assumptions that disable proper regulation of dysfunctional dynasties.

## References

- Baudrillard, J. (1983). *In The Shadow Of The Silent Majorities Or The End Of The Social And Other Essays*. New York: Semiotext(e).
- Clubok, A.B, Wilensky, N.M. & Berghorn, F.B. (1969). *Family Relationships, Congressional Recruitment, and Political Modernization*.

*Journal of Politics*, 31, 1035–1062.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2128357>

Feinstein, B.D. (2010). The Dynasty Advantage: Family Ties in Congressional Elections. *Harvard University Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 35(4) 571-598.

Fifteenth Congress of the Republic of the Philippines. (N/A). Retrieved from <http://www.senate.gov.ph/lisdata/1061690911.pdf>

Go, M.G. & Cruz, B. (2009). In Hofileña C.F. (ed.). *How to Win an Election*. Ateneo de Manila.

Mendoza, R. Beja, E., Venida, V. & Yap, D. (2013). *Political Dynasties And Poverty: Resolving The "Chicken Or The Egg" Question*. MPRA Paper No.

48380. Retrieved from <http://mpa.ub.uni-muenchen.de/48380/>

Paredes, R.R. (ed.). (1989). *Philippine Colonial Democracy*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Querubin, P. (2011). *Political Reform and Elite Persistence: Term Limits and Political Dynasties in the Philippines*. Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies.

Teehankee, J.C. (2010). Party Politics: Internet Campaigning in the Philippines. *Philippine Political Science Journal*, 31(54), 87-116.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01154451.2010.9723526>

Wallerstein, I. (2006). *European Universalism*. New York City.