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The Family that Rules Together: Persistence of Family Politics in the Philippines

Julio C. Teehankee
De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

In the Philippines, the family has not only been the basic unit of society but has also been the primary organizational base of politics. Specific personal and familial rivalries fuel local factional rivalries that mobilize support for the national political parties. The continuing dominance of families in Philippine politics and the underdevelopment of the party and electoral system have given the impression that "[p]olitical clans, rather than parties, are the main vehicles for political mobilization and access to political office." (Gutierrez *et al*., 1992)

The more powerful political families are popularly, although pejoratively, referred to as *"oligarchs"* or *"political dynasties."*[1] One of the provisions of the 1987 Constitution is the banning of political dynasties, roughly defined as the holding of multiple positions in the state of close members of one family. However, Congress – the perceived bastion of political dynasties, have so far failed in passing an enabling law.[2]

Political families in the Philippines have managed to maintain their dominance at local and national politics. They have utilized a wide array of adaptive strategies to ensure elite reproduction. However, they are not impervious to socio-economic change. Term limits have accelerated the process of generational shift as new blood has been infused into the ranks of the political elites. The shift is superimposed on certain transformations in the relationship between local and national politics. Hence, the strategy of elite reproduction is not only limited to a generational change within political families, but can also be construed as adaptation to the socio-economic and political environment. In effect, the political clans are also forced to change their tactics and strategies in order to survive.

[1]President Marcos declared martial law on the pretext of dismantling the dominance of the oligarchy. Later, he formed his own set of "cronies."

[2]Among the few legislators who introduced and valiantly fought for the "Anti-Dynasty Bill" in 1987 was Senator Teofisto Guingona, who ironically fielded his wife Ruth for the Governorship of Misamis Oriental in 1995.

The paper argues that political families and clans continue to play a major role in shaping socio-economic and political relationships in the country by clogging the state-society nexus. The continuing survival of these families and clans can be attributed to its ability to adapt to the shifting contours of national politics and economy while effectively maintaining its base at the local level.

Political Families and Society

The family lies at the core of the Filipino kinship system. The family functions as the only "corporate unit" in the society since all collective actions emanate from and are first unified in the family. Thus, all personal considerations are usually subsumed under the interest of the family. Consequently, Philippine social organization as a whole may be described as "familial" in nature since almost all social activities in the community gravitate around the family. Thus, within the corpus of other factors such as wealth, age and social status, kinship ties are very important organizing and legalizing elements of social behavior. Generally, the family serves as the basis of local group alignment and institutional organization, while kinship makes possible the classification of relatives into well-defined categories and harmonious relations (Jocano, 1998).

Buttressed by an informal ideology that legitimates the role of kinship in Philippine politics, elite families often carry out a wide range of social, economic and political functions. Politically, the word *family* does not only refer to *household*, as narrowly defined by demographers, nor does it equate to *kinship*, as broadly utilized by ethnographers. The term that best describes the political role of the Filipino family is *kinship network*,[3] that is, "a working coalition drawn from a larger group related by blood, marriage, and ritual" (McCoy, 1994, p. 10).

It has been observed that most accounts of Filipino politics point to the intense political competition among rival political families, and the transfer of power between members of a family. In the absence of clear socio-economic cleavages and the weakness of the state, the family persists as a primary unit of political organization in the

[3]McCoy asserts that these kinship networks act as the source of strength for families, in their competition for political office and profitable investments. In order to maximize coordination and influence, a kinship network creates an informal political team that assigns specialized role to its members.

Philippines (See Figure One). Bilateral descent is the core of Filipino kinship.[4] Distinct from the patrinlineal descent and unilineal kinship practiced by the Chinese family, Filipino kinship is defined bilaterally to include a wide social network of real and fictive kins (McCoy, 1994).

Filipino kinship has been described as "a generational corporate group devoid of lineal or vertical continuity but expanded horizontally within each generation with ego as the central figure" (Yasusi Kikuchi, 1991, p. 55). Brian Fegan (1994, p. 51) observes that:

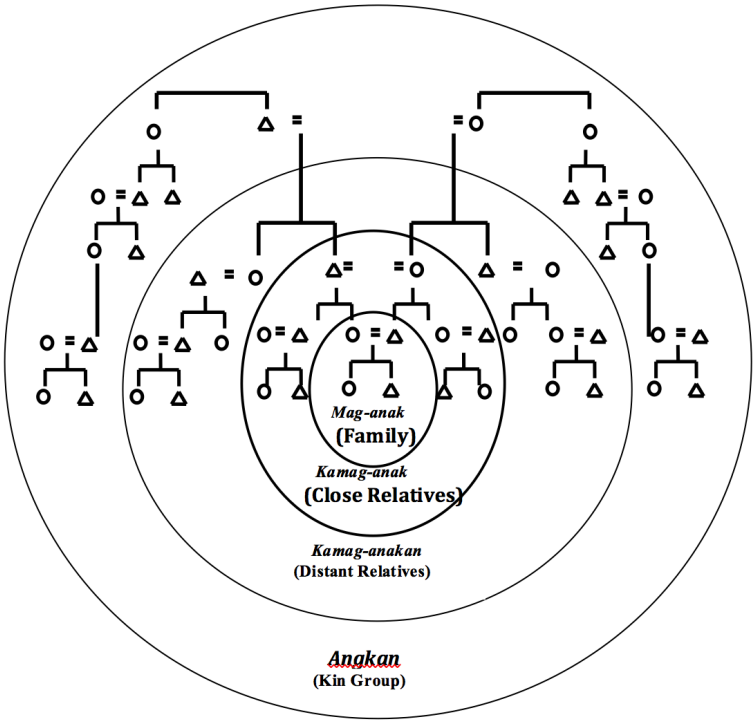
> [I]f we make a reasonable assumption that each couple in the Philippines has an average of 6 children, then it follows that an average individual has some 5 siblings, 6 children, 30 nieces and nephews, 10 uncles and aunts, 60 first cousins, 120 first cousins of his parents, and 720 second cousins. If all of these are married, they link the individual into the similar families of each of their spouses. Each individual who also has a *kumpadre* acquired at baptisms, confirmations, and the wedding of his children and those made when he was invited to sponsor rituals for the children of his allies, plus classmates, village mates, business associates, and friends.

Theoretically, the core group of the kinship system is the *angkan*, which is composed of a group of related families from which descent is traced. On the other hand, the circle of effective or potentially effective relatives is known collectively and popularly as *magkakamag-anak*. The known and cooperative relatives or personal kindred are known as *kamag-anak* (See Figure One). However, the composition of the personal kindred is amorphous. The membership of the personal kindred is comprised of known and cooperative kin who are in continuous flux. Thus, the group of kinsmen or personal kindred is not static (Jocano, 1998).

[4]These kinship networks act as the source of strength for families, in their competition for political office and profitable investments. In order to maximize coordination and influence, a kinship network creates an informal political team that assigns specialized role to its members (McCoy, 1994).

Figure One

The Filipino Family Organization



Source: F. Landa Jocano, *Filipino Social Organization: Traditional Kinship and Family Organization*, Metro Manila: Punlad Research House, 1998.

Political Families and the State

The effectivity of the family as political unit, more than the individual, is rooted in the fact that it has a permanent identity as a named unit that enables it to transfer reputation, loyalties and alliances to other relatives from members who die or retire. Also, being born to a political family serves as an environment for role models and apprenticeship, as well as identification to a prestigious family name. The family also brings with it a built-in political organization of full-time, unpaid and loyal staff motivated by family honor. In addition, the variety of talents, background, and network within a family gives rise to division and specialization of political tasks (Fegan, 1994).

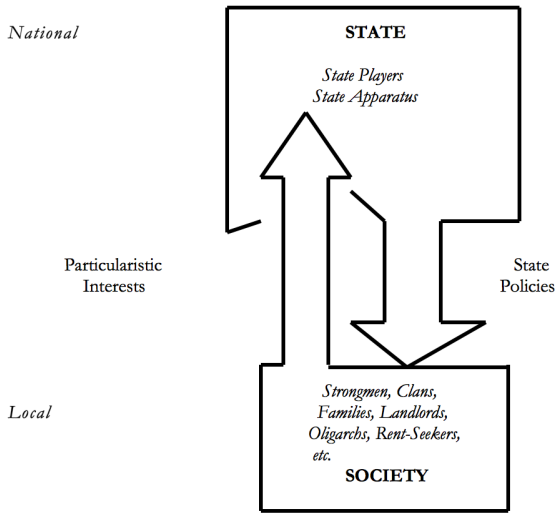
With the parent's exercising their authority and enforcing discipline, the home is every child's first government. Generally, political customs and activities are also reflections of the values and practices acquired at home that carried over to the

community. Thus, younger generations that are brought up in a political family usually adopt the campaign gimmicks, election strategies, and other political practices that they have observed and learned from adult family models. They are also exposed to the family's alliances and factional loyalties, and subsequently align with their parent's preferences (Medina, 1991).

The state is a potent organization that stands above other formal and informal social formations since it seeks predominance through rules that bind the behavior of the people. State capabilities refer to "the capacities to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate and use resources in determined ways" (Migdal, 1988, pp. 4-5). However, the efforts of the state to formulate and implement social binding policies are affected by the fragmentation of social control that heavily affects the state's capability to enforce its avowed goals (See Figure Two). The difficulty of state leaders in implementing intended policies is a result of strong resistance within society, specially on the local level in which the opposition is led by "strongmen" (e.g. bosses, landlords, chiefs, clan leaders, etc.) (Migdal, 1988).

Figure Two

Captured State



Source: Author's own.

The family possesses the capacity to construct aggregates since it is predicated on continuity. The concept of filiation posits that personal qualities such as courage, assertiveness and shrewdness can be transmitted from generation to generation just like physical characteristics, instead of dying with individuals who possess these characteristics (Beckett, 1994). Politics have largely contributed to the longevity of most of these dynasties.

> Economic might and political power have often proved to be mutually reinforcing, spinning an upward spiral of dynastic success. Yet those familial continuities frequently observable within the state apparatus . . . exemplify nepotism more than so-called dynasticism. "Dynasties" survive as such over the generations by establishing a solid base in propriety wealth that lies outside of the state apparatus and does not depend solely upon the ebb and flow of the family's political fortunes (Sidel, 1994).

Just like social status or economic resources, political offices can be turned into assets that can be passed on to next of kin. Following the Filipino concept of *"pamana"*, this study asserts that political power can be bequeathed to the heirs of dominant politicians – *"ipinamanang kapangyarihan"* (bequeathed power). It is common to encounter a family of lawyers or doctors. It is also not unusual to have successful businesspersons who have inherited their family businesses.[5] In the same manner,

> [m]any politicians try to transform their electoral offices into lasting family assets, building what Filipinos call a "political dynasty." Once entrenched, influential politicians often work to bequeath power and position to their children, in effect seeking to transform the public office that they have won into a private legacy for their family. For all politicians, provincial or national, office is inevitably ephemeral. But private wealth gained during their term in power, if substantial, can be passed on, giving succeeding generations the means to compete for office

[5]Prominent examples are Gabby Lopez, Jose Concepcion III, Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, Lance Gokongwei and Antonio Cojuangco.

> . . . the profits from a successful congressional office are so high . . . Hence, the most successful politicians are those who can invest their heirs with the wealth and the good name needed to campaign effectively for office - a factor that blends the individual with the familial, the provincial with the national, and warlordism with rent seeking (McCoy, 1994, pp. 24-25).

Nonetheless, unlike private business enterprises, political positions are essentially within the public sphere. Thus, these positions are not simply handed over to next of kin but they should also pass through an intervening process of election. Hence, the scions of political clans should also go through a modicum of preparation in order to compete in the political arena against others who covet their position. Their easy access to resources of power, property and privilege accumulated by the previous generation provides them an advantage, but they must also be competent in wielding and utilizing these resources in order to achieve electoral victory.

Oftentimes, these political scions must also contend with challenges from within their clans. Since Filipino kinship is organized primarily on bilateral principles, the only unit which best resembles corporateness is the nuclear family. Beyond this unit, the structural definition of kinship relations is blurred. Thus, "[t]here is a complex network of interweaving, overlapping, and ramifying ties which strings individuals and groups of individuals together" (Jocano, p. 51). While this may initially redound to the benefit of the political clan, it may also result in the emergence of intra-clan feuds. As Miriam Coronel Ferrer (1997, pp. 2-4) notes,

> [s]ince the Commonwealth period, there are now as many as three generations descended from the leadership of that time. Bilateral kinship ties of Filipino families ensure that after each generation there is an exponential increase in the number of blood cousins. Multiply these further by intermarriages with other clans and you have overlapping, intergenerational kinship ties. Add to these ties children born into second or third families, whether as a result of widowhood (as in the case of Osmeña and Macapagal), or wanton virility usually associated with

> power (the Cuneta case, for example). Unfortunately for them, the number of posts has not increased at the same rate as the growing brood of relations, each one an heir to the family name.

Adherence to family traditions is a strong source of motivation for the continuation of political legacy. In addition, a continuing hold on governmental positions offers the opportunity to further accumulate the family's wealth, prestige and power. With several members of the clan claiming their stake in the family's political legacy, it is not uncommon to see internal feuds brought about by sibling rivalries, jealous mistresses and spurned wives. The growing division of political clans makes it necessary for competing clans to demonstrate their political skills over and above their claim to the family name (Coronel Ferrer, 1997).

Continuity and Change in Family Politics in the Philippines

Political families thrive at the local level. Based on the projection of the Ateneo School of Government, 70% of local government officials shall be dynastic by 2040. The 'political clan' has become the most prevalent and preferred form of organization in local politics. In the absence of stable party organizations, the clan provides a ready corps of supporters through longstanding personal networks (De Dios 2007). As McCoy (1994, p. 10) emphasizes,

> such familial coalitions bring some real strengths to the competition for political office and profitable investments. A kinship network has a unique capacity to create an informal political team that assigns specialized roles to its members, thereby maximizing condition and influence.

Dependence on local political clans as the vehicle for clientelistic exchanges by national level politicians (i.e., president and senators) provides a strong disincentive for the institutionalization of political parties. Moreover, congress acts as a nexus for national–local clientelistic exchanges.

Around 285 national political families have shaped the political life of the Philippines (See Table One). Of this number, 111 (35%) are *durable clans* that won

legislative and local seats in between the early years of Philippine electoral democracy from 1907 to 1972 and continue to dominate national and local politics until the present. But political power in the country is concentrated in the hands of 124 (39%) of *dominant clans* that have won legislative and local seats in between the periods of authoritarian and post-authoritarian rule from 1972 to the present. 50 (16%) can be classified as *dormant clans* that have lost their legislative and local seats but still maintain their political machines for a potential electoral comeback. A smaller number, 34 (11%) are *defunct clans* that have completely lost their legislative and local seats and have ceased their electoral participation or moved to another constituency.

Table One

National Political Families in the Philippines

Regions	Durable	Dominant	Dormant	Defunct	Total
National Capital Region	6	22	8	1	**37**
Cordillera Administrative Region	4	2	4	1	**11**
Region 1 - Ilocos	8	7	3	3	**21**
Region 2 - Cagayan Valley	3	5	1	3	**12**
Region 3 - Central Luzon	14	6	3	5	**28**
Region 4A - CALABARZON	11	11	1	3	**26**
Region 4B - MIMAROPA	3	9	2	5	**19**
Region 5 – Bicol	6	12	7	2	**27**
Region 6 - Western Visayas	10	9	3	3	**25**
Region 7 - Central Visayas	12	8	4	2	**26**
Region 8 - Eastern Visayas	6	5	5	0	**16**
Region 9 – Zamboanga Peninsula	4	4	0	0	**8**
Region 10 – Northern Mindanao	7	6	0	1	**14**
Region 11 - Davao	9	5	1	1	**16**
Region 12 - SOCCSKSARGEN	2	3	0	0	**5**
Region 13 - Caraga	3	6	2	2	**13**
Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)	3	4	6	2	**15**
Total	**111**	**124**	**50**	**34**	**319**

Source: Collated by author

Durable Clans

The durable clans are composed of the traditional elite families who have been active in local and national politics since the period of colonial and post-colonial state-building. The social and class structure in the Philippines initially molded a landowning system that enabled a core of landed families to accumulate economic and political power.[6] Most of the durable clans emerged from the caste-like *principalia* (nobility), who served as *gobernadocillo* (petty governor) or *cabeza de barangay* (village head), during the Spanish colonial period.[7] The educated scions of the *principalia*, the *ilustrados*, formed the core of the revolutionary struggle against Spain. More than a hundred years since Emilio Aguinaldo assumed the presidency of the revolutionary government in 1898, his relatives continue to hold congressional and local positions in the province of Cavite (Tiongson-Mayrina & Villarta, 2007). His grandnephew, Cesar Emilio Aguinaldo Virata, served as the second Prime Minister of the country's short-lived Parliament from 1978 to 1986.

The traditional elite families continue to be politically dominant throughout generations and constitute a modern *principalia* (Simbulan, 1965). The country's 15th president, Benigno S. Aquino III, for example, served three terms at the House of Representatives from 1998 to 2007, was elected to the Senate in 2007, and eventually won the presidency in 2010. His father was former senator and assassinated Marcos opposition leader, Benigno S. Aquino Jr. and his mother, Corazon C. Aquino, was the 11th president.[8] His clan is also one of the few that have been active in Philippine politics for more than a hundred years. Four generations of Aquinos have represented the province of Tarlac in the various incarnations of the Philippine legislature. The grand

[6]Three centuries of Spanish colonial rule had resulted in the emergence of a landed oligarchy whose wealth was linked to export agriculture. The political and economic power of the landed elites was further consolidated during the US colonial period that saw the increase in the percentage of tenants among the agricultural population. Thus, "the process of land acquisition by the elite, through royal land grants, landgrabbing and privileged access to legal formalities, created a system of property rights which tended to appear arbitrary to peasants in the *barrios*. It made the claims for the 'sanctity of private property' more questionable in later debates about redistributive agrarian reform" (Putzel, 1992, p. 60).

[7]Simbulan (1965) identified some of the political elites who descended from the traditional *principalia*. These included the Cojuangcos of Tarlac, the Sumulongs and Rodriguezes of Rizal, the Laurels of Batangas, the Primiciases of Pangasinan, the Osmeñas of Cebu, the Quirinos of Ilocos Sur, the Magsaysays of Zambales, the Montaños of Cavite, the Fuentebellas of Camarines Sur, etc.

[8]Corazon was a scion of the rich landowning and politically active Cojuangco clan.

patriarch of the clan, Servillano Aquino, was a landowner and a general in the revolution against Spain and was a representative in the country's first legislative body—the Malolos Congress of 1898 (Coronel et al., 2004).

The legacy of American colonialism in the Philippines was more of oligarchy-building rather than state-building. The Americans were able to coopt the local caciques but did not exert any effort to undercut their local power base. Instead, they reinforced the decentralized nature of the Philippines by introducing representative institutions rather than strengthening the central state bureaucracy. This enabled the local caciques to consolidate their control of the national state and facilitated the emergence of a *"national oligarchy."* The oligarchy possessed "a firm economic base outside the bureaucracy, absolute control of representative institutions, and – through the latter – thorough penetration of the administrative departments of government" (Hutchcroft, 1998, pp. 25-26). Hence, protracted American rule in the Philippines helped shape the dynamics of the modern state. A resilient oligarchy, rooted in land and export agriculture, emerged within a tradition of authoritarian-clientelistic politically fractured polity, and a continuing marked dependence on foreign external source (Rivera, 1994).

The Ortega clan, for example, has dominated the northern province of La Union since the appointment of Joaquin Ortega Sr. as the first civilian governor of La Union by the Taft Commission in 1901. A year later, the Spanish mestizo born in Cebu was to be the first elected governor of the province. The family observed its 100th year of public service in August 2001. Ten of Ortega's 14 children have served as governors or representatives or have married spouses who have served in the military and the judiciary. Two of his sons – Francisco and Joaquin – dominated La Union politics from the 1920s to the 1960s. About 30 descendants from the second to the fourth generation have served in all political positions such as governors, representatives, board members, mayors, vice mayors, councilors, and village heads of La Union towns and capital city (Gutierrez, 1994; Coronel et al., 2004).

Dominant Clans

Majority of the national political families that dominate current national and local elections rose to power during 14 years of authoritarian rule under Ferdinand Marcos and

the subsequent redemocratization after his ouster by a military-backed people power uprising in 1986. The Marcos era was characterized by the deprivation of the old elite's political influence in Congress and the reduction of its economic power (transferred to the Marcos cronies). Marcos initially attempted to purge and reform the state apparatus, but gradually came to treat it as a patrimonial mechanism for buying support with money and jobs (Hutchcroft, 1991).

Because of the abolition of Congress, the power base of almost half of the members of the traditional political families was removed. Thus, cabinet members and other presidential appointees emerged more powerful as they derive their status from the President. This was particularly evident in key appointees in economic and financial agencies (the "technocrats") and in the military. The political change initiated in 1972 by Marcos has affected, not only the type of persons holding political office, but also in the balance of power between elites of wealth and office holders. The economic fortunes of personalities close to the Marcos-Romualdez clan continued to prosper until 1981. This led to the deepening conflict between the traditional and new elites, or, between the "oligarchs" and "cronies."[9] These two economic groups competed for state-resources, with the latter having the advantage. While cronies like Cuenca, Disini and Silverio were benefiting tremendously from government financial credits, others like Benedicto, Cojuangco and Floreindo were accumulating political power even faster than wealth. The second group whose fortunes were derived from the major agricultural exports (sugar, coconuts and bananas) were all Central Committee members of the Marcos political party – Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (Wurfel, 1983).

The new political families emerged at the local level during this juncture were generally composed of middle class professionals who cultivated their own political machines. Before the declaration of martial rule, they were able to sustain their political machines through external governmental resources provided by their national and provincial allies. When the authoritarian regime centralized the distribution of political resources, most of them were integrated into the centrally directed political machinery

[9]The "cronies" were composed of Marcos' fraternity brothers, close political allies and relatives of the First Family. They included Roberto Benedicto, Antonio Floreindo, Juan Ponce Enrile, Eduardo Cojuangco, Manuel and Fred Elizalde, Dante Silverio, Rodolfo Cuenca, Geronimo Velasco, Herminio Disini, Lucio Tan, Jose Campos Yao, Rolando Gapud, Roman Cruz, Bienvinido and Gliceria Tantoco, the Romualdez and Marcos families and their associates. For a comprehensive and detailed discussion, see Manapat, 1991.

(i.e. Ministry of Local Government, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan). Others decided to link up with some of the new national elites, particularly the cronies who were able to consolidate both wealth and power through the regime's monopoly of export agriculture. Those who were able to solidify their local political support and build autonomous machineries found little need to capitulate to the regime. Some of them formed the core of the local opposition to the Marcos regime.

New political families, like the one established by Jose Maria Zubiri in Bukidnon, have successfully transformed economic and social capital into political capital, through the adept use of the machine, in order to challenge the grips of the older Fortich clan. (Angeles, 1996) The elder Zubiri has managed to articulate progressive issues in the national arena, while maintaining clientelistic networks in his province. Juan Miguel Zubiri, who was first elected to Congress in 1998, shares his father's outspoken and often progressive views on national issues. However, the younger Zubiri has exhibited his own distinct political style by emerging as one of the more prominent and media savvy among his congressional cohorts. Through a combination of his fine looks and issue advocacy, he has surpassed his father in terms of national prominence. The younger Zubiri served three terms in the House before winning a seat in the Senate in 2007. His victory was marred by controversy amidst allegation of election fraud and he resigned from his post in 2011. He regained his senate seat in the 2013 elections. His brother, Jose Zubiri III, took over his congressional seat and served three terms from 2007 to 2013. Another brother, Manuel Zubiri, was elected in his constituency in 2016.

The Acostas of Bukidnon is one of the primary examples of new professionals who have decided to make an alternative career out of politics. Both Socorro Acosta and her son Nereus, hold Ph.D. degrees and have spent some considerable time in the academe and private sector. Socorro was a former political ally of Jose Maria Zubiri. They first worked togethr under the KBL, when Zubiri was elected to the Batasang Pambansa in 1984. After the 1986 people power uprising, Zubiri affiliated with the Liberal Party and pushed Acosta's congressional candidacy in 1987. Both had a political falling-out in 1992 when Zubiri organized the Nationalist People's Coalition in Bukidnon for Eduardo Cojuangco, while Acosta decided to stay with the LP.

Given their professional backgrounds, the Acostas have employed non-traditional political means in the arena of traditional politics. What they lacked in terms of political resources, such as the backing of local mayors and barangay captains, they made up for through alternative structures and mechanisms in the grassroots, in the terrains of civil society. They have harnessed the support of the local NGO community, the women's movement and farmer's cooperatives. However, the non-traditional NGOs organized by the Acostas have taken the traditional political role of the political machine. In 2016, Nereus was found guilty by the anti-graft court "giving undue preference to Bukidnon Vegetable Producers Cooperative, where his mother former Manolo Fortich mayor Socorro Acosta was director and cooperator." (Cayabyab & Tupas, 2016) Despite, the conviction, his sister, Maria Lourdes Acosta-Alba, is on her second term in their constituency.

Some new political players were active in the anti-Marcos struggle and served in the Aquino administration before embarking on a political career. Most were elected to Congress, and some were even successful in vanquishing established political dynasties (Doronila, 1995). Among the new political families, the Lagmans of Albay have played a major role, not only in national and local politics, but the Philippine Left as well. The Lagmans have fought the Marcos dictatorship in two fronts – both legal and underground. The Lagman clan has opted to operate on two strategic and ideologically distinct levels. While Edcel Lagman has emerged in the national political scene through the parliamentary struggle, his brother the late Felimon "Popoy" Lagman has made a name in radical working class politics.[10] They have achieved this by utilizing their anti-Marcos credentials, mass politics and the articulation of progressive issues. While the two arenas of struggle are incongruous in the Philippine context, the brothers have adeptly utilized each to push their political advocacies Edcel has consistently been a voice of progressive causes in the bastion of traditional politics.

[10] Felimon "Popoy" Lagman, joined the communist underground movement. He rose to become the Secretary of the *Komiteng Rehiyon ng Metro Manila-Rizal* (KRMR [Regional Committee of Metro Manila-Rizal]) of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Popoy was one of the key figures in the split in the Philippine Left. Together with other party leaders and members, he broke away from the leadership of Chairman Jose Maria Sison, forming the so-called "Rejectionists (RJ) Bloc."[10] Unknown assailants assassinated him at the University of the Philippines a few weeks after the ouster of President Estrada in 2001.

Most politically active clans in the past tended to traverse two or more traditional political parties as insurance to their familial interests. The Lagman clan has opted to operate on two strategic and ideologically distinct levels. While Edcel has emerged in the national political scene through the parliamentary struggle, his brother Popoy has made a name in radical working class politics. Edcel has established himself as a progressive in the bastion of traditional politics; on the other hand, some critics have accused Popoy of being a revolutionary with "*trapo*" (traditional politician) tendencies. While their forebears have been active the local politics of Albay, it was only in the post-Marcos period that they have attained national political prominence. They have achieved this by utilizing their anti-Marcos credentials, mass politics and the articulation of progressive issues. While the two arenas of struggle are incongruous in the Philippine context, the brothers have adeptly utilized each to push their political advocacies.

However, Edcel's progressive posturing has been tarnished by his shifting political alliances and dynasty-building. Despite his progressive credentials, he was also allied with Ramon Mitra and Jose de Venecia, both traditional machine politicians who successively served as House Speakers in the 8th and 9th Congress. He served as Vice Chair of the powerful Committee of Appropriations for three terms and made key decisions in the national budget that included the distribution of pork barrel funds. He ran and lost in the senatorial ticket of Joseph Estrada in 1998. His daughter Krisel Lagman Luistro served for two terms from 1998-2004. In 2004, he reassumed his old house seat. He was one of the prosecutors in the impeachment trial against former ally President Estrada. After the ouster of Estrada in 2001, he opted to run but lost in the 4th district of Quezon City, while his daughter Krisel successfully ran for reelection in Albay. He served for another three term as Albay representative beginning 2004. He staunchly defended President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo amidst several impeachment attempts, but switched sides upon the assumption of President Benigno Aquino III. His son, Edcel "Grex" Lagman warmed his legislative seat for one term in 2013 before reassuming it in 2016. He is currently one of the fierce oppositionists to the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Dormant and Defunct Clans

Vilfredo Pareto noted that history is "a graveyard of aristocracies" (cited in Keller, 1991, p. 227). The longevity of most prominent dynasties in contemporary Philippine society can be accounted by its role as the basic unit of capital accumulation and corporate control and its successful concentration and retention of propriety wealth. For the traditional landowning families, two alternative trajectories have been observed: an increase in familial power or dynastic self-liquidation. The former refers to instances in which landed properties are converted into corporate vehicle in order to facilitate continued familial solidity (i.e. the Lopezes). The latter refer to rapid dissolution of the dynasty (i.e. the Tuazons) through inheritance, intermarriage, and investment diversification (Sidel, 1994).

Despite their tenacious hold on political power, both durable and dominant clans also suffer from electoral setbacks and political misfortunes. Their ability to comeback and regain power largely depends on the depth of their social capital, the effective mobilization of resources and machinery, and their political astuteness. Hence, some political families who are defeated in elections can remain dormant for some time, only biding their time to reboot their political careers. Examples are the Enrile clan of Cagayan and the Josons of Nueva Ecija.

In other cases, the dynastic hold of some political families collapses and they completely disappear from the electoral arena. These defunct political families have lost, not only their grip on political power, but their entire machinery and supporters as well. A combination of agential and structural factors often contribute to the erosion of dominance of a political family (Rosuelo, 2016). Notable example is the Montano clan of Cavite

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