

Political Dynasty in Isabela City as Perceived by Selected Residents of Sumagdang, Isabela City, Basilan

Abegail C. Indama¹, Satra Asmad²

^{1, 2}Public Administration Department, Basilan State College, Isabela City, Basilan, Philippines-7300
Email address: abegailcarpioindama@gmail.com

Abstract— Political dynasty for the longest time has been part of most if not all of the political cultures that we have today. People gradually get accustomed to this political setting – having families to rule the barangay, city, province and the country. This setting usually receives backlashes from the society. It is perceived as having the government as something that one may pass on to their kin – hence killing the essence of a healthy political competition. However, if we are to look into the concept of political dynasty, one may say – it is not that bad at all. Many nations which have monarchies as their form of government got their shoulders on their wheels and have seen the light at the end of the tunnel – been developed. This study adopted a descriptive – quantitative approach to determine the perceptions of selected residents of Isabela City with regard to the concept of Political Dynasty. This study generally aims to determine the insights of citizens on the practice of political dynasty in Isabela City, Basilan. Results presents the perceptions of residents whether or not candidates, given the conditions will win an election or not. Many are yet to be considered to fully determine the underlying factors why residents perceived political families and corrupt officials to win the elections.

Keywords— Political Dynasty, Elections, Perceptions.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines for the longest time has outwardly embraced the concept of political dynasty as a culture of which has existed in almost all levels of political units. Many studies in the past argued that political dynasty exacerbates the fair competition in the political landscape. It kills the natural competition by centralizing the power within the boundaries of known family clans. Statistics say that from 1995 to 2007, 31.3% of all district representatives and 23.1% of provincial governors were replaced by relatives such as wife, son or daughter, cousin and the like. However, the impacts of this known dynasties on the continuously worsening socio-economic conditions of some communities until now was found unsubstantiated.

Isabela City as the capital of the southern island of Basilan has a total land area of 22,373 hectares and a population of 112,788 based from the 2015 census. It is composed of 45 barangays with 18 urban barangays and 27 rural barangays. The practice of political dynasty in Isabela City is no unheard story. The city passed through different dynasties who ruled and sat in power for years and years. The recent election marked another start for a clan who dominated the political spots in the city. The Hatamans outdone the decade-long

enthroned Akbar family. The presently elected Mujiv S. Hataman, Lone District 1 Representative won with a huge margin against his opponents. While Sitti Djalila T. Hataman, the Congressman’s wife outrun the former mayor and vice-mayor Cherrylyn Santos-Akbar with Kifli Hataman as the newly elected city vice mayor. On the other hand, Kifli Hataman’s father, Jim S. Hataman, retained his post as the provincial governor of Basilan for his second term.

In concept, the impact of political dynasty on the socio-economic development of the province requires a rather empirical approach. Poverty brings about political dynasty or political dynasty begot poverty. This illusive question poses some illusive assumptions. Relevant studies argued that political dynasty can weaken governance and accountability. This at times block effective communication between communities and the government. Nonetheless, for special cases, political dynasty may stem positive impacts to the full realization of existing policies and programs. Continuity of development programs is but one of the perceived prospects of having political families.

Hence, in light of this pressing societal concern, this study would like to solicit the insights of citizens on whether political dynasty serves as a factor to poverty or a key to change and development. The result of this academic endeavor would in some way provide governments with valuable inputs on how the community reacts to the concept of families running the government.

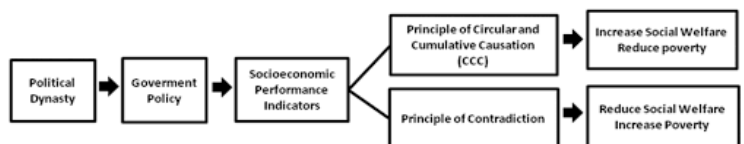
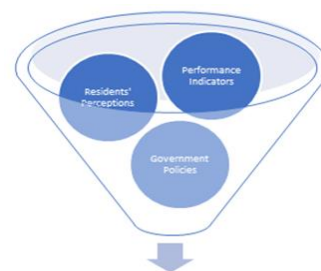


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework



Political Dynasty
Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

In viewing political dynasty, different factors are to be considered in terms of underscoring the net impact of the same. Some perceived to be factors are the government policies crafted to counteract the impacts brought about by dynasts; the performances and developments initiated by dynasts in the community; and residents' perceptions towards this practice. In doing so, this offers a more realistic approach in looking into the concept of political dynasty not only as a pressing problem which have stemmed increased poverty and marginalization among citizens but as well as a catalyst of continuous socio-economic development. For the benefit of this study, the researchers shall focus only on the residents' perceptions as one of the spheres to be discussed when weighing the net impact of dynasts in the communities, leaving the rest for future studies.

Political dynasty has been apparently entrenched within the culture of the country's political process. Whatever the roots were, for no reason – people cannot go away from it. Relevant studies in the past have perceived political dynasties as hindrances to economic development. It seemingly narrows the choices of the public by directing the mindsets of the people to the choices they only have in their hands. Hence, in response to this persistent political concern, this study would like to explore and the perceptions of selected residents on how they view the practice of political dynasty.

This study generally aims to determine the insights of citizens on the practice of political dynasty in Isabela City, Basilan. This specifically intends to identify the perceptions of residents whether or not candidates, given the following conditions will win an election or not:

1. A candidate carrying the surname of a prominent family has greater chances to an elective office, even if he is a newcomer;
2. Political candidates who come from influential political families and are perceived to be “good” leaders;
3. A candidate running for public office who has a relative in incumbent elective or appointive position i.e., father, mother, brother/sister, uncle or cousin;
4. A contender for public office whose candidacy has been endorsed by a wealthy relative or a prominent politician;
5. Being a wife, son or daughter or in-law of an influential incumbent politician with huge resources and network of alliances;
6. A political leader with whom the voter has identified themselves due to his family's background and experience in politics;
7. A relative of an influential political clan running for an elective position who possesses personal traits such as “madaling lapitan, malinis na pagkatao, matulungin sa mga nangangailangan”;
8. A candidate coming from a well-established political family seeking election who is perceived to be corrupt;
9. A candidate who was an “anointed” successor of an elder relative who is to retire from public office;
10. A political candidate who has won successive terms in public office due to a large kinship network

The practice of political dynasties has long been perceived as a negative culture of which most local governments grip.

They seemingly consider the political posts they hold as something that they can pass through their descendants like an heirloom. However, as this study aims to provide holistic and square view on the general image of dynasties in the community, the residents' insights would in some way draw a clearer picture on what political dynasties really intend to paint.

This study, in essence would provide readers with the perceptions of residents on having their lines of political choices. This will similarly provide readers with the respondents' stands given the conditions in every item. At the end of this study, one will be able to determine how the respondents perceive candidates coming from prominent families.

This study was conducted at Isabela City, Basilan with convenience sampling as a method of obtaining the respondents of the study. It covers the insights and perceptions of residents on political dynasties that are existent in the city. For the benefit of this study, the researchers shall not cover and discuss other variables and factors other than the perception of residents as guided by the adopted survey instrument. All other factors apart from this shall form the limitations of the study and will be subject for future researches.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers administered a survey questionnaire to thirty five (35) respondents of Barangay Sumagdang, Isabela City, Basilan Province. The questionnaire is consists of ten (10) items underscoring the respondents' perceptions on Political Dynasty. Tables show the mean responses of respondents on the items as listed in the survey questionnaire used.

Table 1. Q1. A candidate carrying the surname of a prominent family has greater chances to an elective office, even if he is a newcomer

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sure to win	17	48.6	48.6
Likely to win	11	31.4	31.4
No Effect	2	5.7	5.7
Not Likely to win	5	14.3	14.3
Total	35	100.0	100.0

Table 1 shows the mean response of respondents to Item No. 1 on whether candidates carrying the surname of a prominent family have greater chances to win an elective position, even if he/she is new to the field of public service. Based from the conducted survey, 48.6 percent believes that candidates from prominent families will surely win. On the other hand, 31.4 percent perceives that they will likely win the election. However, 14.3 percent believes that coming from a known family cannot guarantee success during election. While 5.7 percent of the respondents believe that coming from a recognized family has no effect to any election campaign.

Table 2. Q2. Political candidates who come from influential political families and are perceived to be “good” leaders.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sure to win	9	25.7	25.7
Likely to win	21	60.0	60.0
No Effect	1	2.9	2.9
Not Likely to win	3	8.6	8.6
Will not win	1	2.9	2.9
Total	35	100.0	100.0

60 percent of the respondents believe that candidates who come from influential political families and are perceived as good leaders are likely to win elections. While 25.7 percent believes that these candidates will surely win given the influence their families have in the community. On the other hand, 8.6 percent believes that candidates from prominent families are not likely to win elections. 2.9 percent agrees that coming from known families and having the image of a good leader have no effect in winning an election. The same percent goes for the respondents who believe that these candidates will have harder time to win the election notwithstanding their image as good leaders.

Table 3. Q3. A candidate running for public office who has a relative in incumbent elective or appointive position i.e., father, mother, brother/sister, uncle or cousin

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sure to win	11	31.4	31.4
Likely to win	19	54.3	54.3
No Effect	1	2.9	2.9
Not Likely to win	4	11.4	11.4
Total	35	100.0	100.0

31.4 percent of the respondents believe that candidates with relatives in the government will surely win the elections. While 54.3 percent foreseen these candidates to have light to moderate chance in winning. However, 11.4 percent claims that having relatives in the government cannot guarantee victory. 2.9 percent on the other hand believes that this factors has not effect or impact in winning an election.

Table 4. Q4. A contender for public office whose candidacy has been endorsed by a wealthy relative or a prominent politician

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sure to win	8	22.9	22.9
Likely to win	19	54.3	54.3
No Effect	4	11.4	11.4
Not Likely to win	4	11.4	11.4
Total	35	100.0	100.0

22.9 percent believes that candidates with political endorsement from wealthy relatives or prominent politicians will surely in the elections. 54.3 percent sees these candidates to likely win. 11.4 percent on the other hand argues and claims that these candidates will not likely win the elections despite

the endorsements from prominent personalities; while 11.4 percent believes that this do not have any effect.

Table 5. Q5. Being a wife, son or daughter or in-law of an influential incumbent politician with huge resources and network of alliances.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sure to win	6	17.1	17.1
Likely to win	16	45.7	45.7
No Effect	10	28.6	28.6
Not Likely to win	3	8.6	8.6
Total	35	100.0	100.0

17.1 percent of the respondents believe that being a wife, son or daughter or in-law of an influential incumbent will surely win the elections; 45.7 percent likely to win; 28.6 percent for no effect; and a minimal 8.6 percent believes that these candidates will not likely win.

Table 6. Q6. A political leader with whom the voter has identified themselves due to his family’s background and experience in politics.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sure to win	4	11.4	11.4
Likely to win	16	45.7	45.7
No Effect	9	25.7	25.7
Not Likely to win	6	17.1	17.1
Total	35	100.0	100.0

11.4 percent of the respondents believe that candidates with wide experiences in politics as supported by their family backgrounds will surely win the elections; while 45.7 percent answered likely to win; 25.7 percent for no effect; and 17.1 percent argues that these experiences may not warrant sure win during the elections, hence have chosen not likely to win as their response.

Table 7. Q7. A relative of an influential political clan running for an elective position who possesses personal traits such as “madaling lapitan, malinis na pagkatao, matulungin sa mga nangangailangan”.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sure to win	3	8.6	8.6
Likely to win	16	45.7	45.7
No Effect	9	25.7	25.7
Not Likely to win	6	17.1	17.1
Will not win	1	2.9	2.9
Total	35	100.0	100.0

8.6 percent of the respondents believe that candidates who are approachable, has good integrity and are responsive to the needs of their constituents will surely win the elections. 45.7 percent for likely to win; 25.7 percent on no effect; 17.1 percent will not likely win; and 2.9 percent believes that these traits may not guarantee majority votes during elections, hence will not win.

Table 8. Q8. A candidate coming from a well-established political family seeking election who is perceived to be corrupt.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sure to win	7	20.0	20.0
Likely to win	7	20.0	20.0
No Effect	13	37.1	37.1
Not Likely to win	8	22.9	22.9
Total	35	100.0	100.0

20 percent of the respondents believe that candidates who were previously perceived as corrupt officials still have the chance to win the elections. The same percent applies to respondents who thinks that being corrupt do not block candidates from winning – likely to win; 37.1 percent on the other hand believes that this image has no effect; and 22.9 percent – not likely to win.

Table 9. Q9. A candidate who was an “anointed” successor of an elder relative who is to retire from public office.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sure to win	5	14.3	14.3
Likely to win	13	37.1	37.1
No Effect	10	28.6	28.6
Not Likely to win	4	11.4	11.4
Will not win	3	8.6	8.6
Total	35	100.0	100.0

14.3 percent who was an “anointed” successor of an elder relative who is to retire from public office will surely win the elections. 37.1 percent – likely to win; 28.6 percent – no effect; 11.4 percent – not likely to win; and 8.6 percent for will not win.

Table 10. Q10. A political candidate who has won successive terms in public office due to a large kinship network

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sure to win	10	28.6	28.6
Likely to win	12	34.3	34.3
No Effect	7	20.0	20.0
Not Likely to win	5	14.3	14.3
Will not win	1	2.9	2.9
Total	35	100.0	100.0

28.6 percent of the respondents believe that candidates who have won successive terms in public office will surely win in the elections. 34.3 percent – likely to win; 20 percent – no effect; 14.3 percent – not likely to win; and 2.9 for will not win.

Descriptive Statistics		
Item Questions	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. A candidate carrying the surname of a prominent family has greater chances to an elective office, even if he is a newcomer;	1.8571	Likely to win
2. Political candidates who come from influential political families and are perceived to be “good” leaders;	2.0286	Likely to win
3. A candidate running for public office who has a relative in incumbent elective or appointive position i.e., father, mother, brother/sister, uncle or cousin;	1.9429	Likely to win
4. A contender for public office whose candidacy has been endorsed by a wealthy relative or a prominent politician;	2.1143	Likely to win
5. Being a wife, son or daughter or in-law of an influential incumbent politician with huge resources and network of alliances;	2.2857	Likely to win
6. A political leader with whom the voter has identified themselves due to his family’s background and experience in politics;	2.4857	Likely to win
7. A relative of an influential political clan running for an elective position who possesses personal traits such as “madaling lapitan, malinis na pagkatao, matulungin sa mga nangangailangan”;	2.6000	No effect
8. A candidate coming from a well-established political family seeking election who is perceived to be corrupt;	2.6286	No effect
9. A candidate who was an “anointed” successor of an elder relative who is to retire from public office;	2.6286	No effect
10. A political candidate who has won successive terms in public office due to a large kinship network	2.2857	Likely to win

Likert Scale:
 1.0 – 1.49 (Sure to Win)
 1.5 – 2.49 (Likely to win)
 2.5 – 3.49 (No effect)
 3.5 – 4.49 (Not likely to win)
 4.50 – 5.0 (Will not win)

III. CONCLUSION

Political dynasty for the longest time has been part of most if not all of the political cultures that we have today. People gradually get accustomed to this political setting – having families to rule the barangay, city, province and the country. This setting usually receives backlashes from the society. It is perceived as having the government as something that one may pass on to their kin – hence killing the essence of a healthy political competition. However, if we are to look into the concept of political dynasty, one may say – it is not that bad at all. Many nations which have monarchies as their form of government got their shoulders on their wheels and have seen the light at the end of the tunnel – been developed. This led us to question the political dynasty that we have in the country, what made it different from the ones implemented by other countries. Generally, the points of choices made by voters at the first place contributed to the political setting that we presently have. If the government has known the stands of the voters in choosing whom to elect; it might have been able to make both ends meet.

Having considered these concerns, this study was moved to determine the stand and perceptions of selected residents on how they perceive a candidate to win in an election. The results of the study prove that being a novice in the field of politics does not directly imply that one is lesser than the others who have been in the service for years. There were some who have run for political positions for the first time who have won the election. Hence, this is supported by the result of the study as shown in Item No. 1. Further, having an image of good leadership has a push factor towards winning an election. Candidates who have relatives in the government

or incumbent elected officials were also perceived to win as much as candidates with official endorsement from prominent and influential politician will. Candidates with vast political experiences was likewise believed to have an edge among others in terms of winning an election. Having the traits which make one closer to the community such as being open to concerns, responsive and with the good moral standing will surely hit the political spot that one seeks. On the other hand, being “corrupt” was perceived by most of the respondents to have no effect in winning an election. This significantly implies that corrupt officials dressed as morally upright beings still get to be welcomed by most voters despite of this image. Perhaps, most voters feel subordinate over the political influence and power of such candidates.

This study might not have holistically covered the perceptions of the residents in terms of other variables, still the take-off points of the resulting data shows that people with the present culture that we have today have been used to the arrangements – having political families and unexperienced officials rule the community. They have this mindset that at some point question the integrity that one has. Notwithstanding the image of corruption, still people chose to put these candidates to positions that later on would be used to eat the system from within.

People power as they say. We all have the power and authority to choose whom we perceive as someone who can uplift the community from the tails of poverty, unemployment, crime and others. The same reason why we have regular

elections to reassess whether our prior lines of choices were able to give justice to the trust endowed upon them. However, at times, elections turn out to be something of gains for others. Some perceive elections as the time to monetarily earn in return for the votes they will give. Sad to know, the results of this study opened our eyes that the voters, the people were really to blame for all those corrupt officials leaching the government. At the first place, we were the ones who put them to those positions. Ironically, based from the result, people are aware of the inner motives of this politicians – yet they chose to go along.

Many are yet to be considered to fully determine the underlying factors why residents perceived political families and corrupt officials to win the elections. This calls for another relevant study that shall dig deeper on these aspects which may include the socio-economic profile of the respondents; having economic and social status of respondents considered.

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