



Political Dynasties in the Philippines

A Network Analysis of Power Structures and Their
Socioeconomic Impacts

Tier-3+ (Keystone Reference)



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by

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(This work is presented in dissertation-style format and has not been submitted as a defended doctoral dissertation.)



Preface

(November 2025 Update)

With reverence and attunement with the Records, I offer this brief preface.

This article was written during an earlier phase of my public work—a period of inquiry grounded primarily in structural and socioeconomic analysis. Since then, my voice and interpretive lens have evolved toward a sovereignty-aligned, consciousness-based perspective. I have chosen to preserve the original article in its academic form. Many readers continue to engage with this work because it addresses a persistent collective question:

Why do inherited power structures endure, and how do they shape the lived experience of communities across the Philippines?

To support interpretive clarity, a **Companion Reflection** is included as a separate, optional lens. It does not alter the empirical findings of the research, but situates them within a broader framework of collective memory, governance templates, and systemic evolution. Readers may engage the reflection before or after the article proper.



Companion Reflection

A Consciousness-Based Interpretive Lens

This reflection is offered as an interpretive companion. It does not revise, replace, or supersede the empirical findings of the research article that follows.

I. The Deeper Architecture Behind Political Lineages

Political lineages in the Philippines are not isolated phenomena. They emerged from centuries of inherited roles, kinship networks, leadership templates, and post-colonial restructuring. What we call “dynasties” today can be seen as **ancestral architectures** — patterns set in motion long before our present moment.

Recent structural and network-based research reveals a key truth: **Power in the Philippines tends to move through interconnected webs of family ties, alliances, and historical arrangements** — not through individuals acting alone. This is neither inherently good nor inherently harmful. It is simply an inherited structure, awaiting conscious evolution.



II. Structural Inertia and Uneven Outcomes

Modern studies show that:

- Political lineages have become **more interconnected** over the decades.
- Many provinces governed by long-established lineages experience **slower socioeconomic improvement**, particularly where institutions are fragile.
- Other regions show **neutral or mixed effects**, demonstrating that context matters: economic foundations, civic empowerment, and local governance models strongly influence outcomes.

These findings illustrate **structural inertia**, not moral judgment. Ancestral patterns replicate themselves until a collective decides to rewrite them.



III. The Energetic Layer: Collective Memory and Governance Templates

Beyond statistics lies the energetic imprint:

- Hierarchical leadership memories
- Post-colonial fragmentation and survival-based governance
- Ancestral duty, obligation, and protective lineages
- Collective trauma around scarcity, security, and trust

Unexamined, these patterns echo across generations. They are not “villains” — they are **inherited scripts** waiting to be rewritten through awareness.

Understanding this shifts us from *blame* → *to clarity* → *to sovereignty*.



IV. Emergent Pathways of Evolution

Transformation begins not with dismantling structures, but with **infusing new consciousness into existing ones**.

Pathways forward include:

1. Strengthening Collective Sovereignty

Empowered citizens co-create the field of governance.

2. Fortifying Institutional Integrity

When systems become transparent and resilient, they serve the collective regardless of lineage.

3. Healing Ancestral Governance Patterns

Political families often carry heavy intergenerational roles. They, too, evolve through compassion and accountability.

4. Rewriting the Energetic Template of Leadership

Modern leadership rises from stewardship, reciprocity, and service —

- from hierarchy → to coherence
- from extraction → to circulation
- from control → to contribution.

Political change is ultimately **consciousness change**.



V. A Vision Beyond Lineage

The Philippines is not waiting for perfect leaders; it is remembering its **original template**: A land of radiant hearts, courageous truth, and communities capable of rising together.

- Political lineages can evolve.
- Structures can transform.
- The collective field can uplift.

This is not a battle against the past — but an evolution into a more sovereign future.

Closing Invocation

May this reflection offer clarity without division, discernment without hostility, and sovereignty without separation. May the Philippines remember her deeper purpose, and may all who read this be guided toward the light of shared destiny.



The original research article begins below and is presented in its original academic form.

ABSTRACT

Political dynasties in the Philippines have long shaped the nation's governance, with approximately 70% of Congress and 94% of provinces dominated by dynastic families. This study employs social network analysis (SNA) to map the structure, connections, and impacts of these dynasties, revealing their role in perpetuating poverty, inequality, and weak governance. Using tools like Gephi, Tableau, and ArcGIS, the study analyzes data from the Ateneo Policy Center, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), and social media platforms like X.

Findings indicate that dynastic networks, characterized by high centrality and intermarriages, exacerbate socioeconomic disparities, particularly in non-Luzon provinces, and undermine democratic competition. The study proposes legislative reforms, civil society advocacy, media literacy, and economic interventions to mitigate dynastic dominance and unlock the Philippines' democratic and developmental potential. By integrating network analysis with policy solutions, this study offers a roadmap for fostering inclusive governance.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Political dynasties, defined as families that hold multiple elected positions across generations, are a pervasive feature of Philippine politics. Approximately 70% of the 15th Congress (2010–2013) and 94% of provinces are controlled by dynastic families (Mendoza et al., 2012). Despite Article II, Section 26 of the 1987 Constitution prohibiting political dynasties, the absence of an enabling law has allowed their proliferation, rooted in historical systems like the precolonial barangay and Spanish colonial *principalía* (Teehankee, 2018). These dynasties influence governance, electoral competition, and socioeconomic outcomes, raising concerns about democratic integrity and equitable development.

1.2 Research Problem and Objectives

This study addresses the question: *How do political dynasties in the Philippines structure their networks, and what are the socioeconomic and governance implications?*

The objectives are to:

1. **Map the structure** of dynastic networks using social network analysis.
2. **Examine correlations** between dynastic dominance and socioeconomic outcomes like poverty and inequality.
3. **Propose data-driven policy** interventions to mitigate negative impacts and promote inclusive governance.

1.3 Significance of the Study

By employing network analysis, this study provides a novel perspective on political dynasties, offering insights into their relational dynamics and impacts. It contributes to the literature on

Philippine politics and informs policymakers, civil society, and voters on strategies to address dynastic dominance, thereby unlocking the country's democratic and developmental potential.



2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining Political Dynasties

Political dynasties occur when family members hold elected positions sequentially or simultaneously, often leveraging name recognition, wealth, and patronage (Querubin, 2016). In the Philippines, “fat dynasties” involve multiple family members in office concurrently, increasing from 19% to 29% of elected positions between 1988 and 2019 (Mendoza et al., 2019).

2.2 Historical Evolution of Dynasties in the Philippines

Dynasties trace their origins to precolonial *datus*, Spanish *principalía*, and American-era elites (Teehankee, 2018). Post-independence, the Marcos regime (1965–1986) exemplified dynastic consolidation, while post-1986 democratization saw the rise of new dynasties like the Duterte and Villars (McCoy, 1994). Term limits introduced in the 1987 Constitution inadvertently encouraged dynastic succession through relatives (Querubin, 2016).

2.3 Socioeconomic and Governance Impacts

Dynasties are linked to higher poverty, inequality, and corruption in their jurisdictions, particularly outside Luzon, where institutional checks are weaker (Mendoza et al., 2012). They limit electoral competition, engage in vote-buying, and manipulate party-list systems, undermining democratic access (Teehankee & Calimbahin, 2020). Social media has amplified dynastic influence, as seen in the 2022 Marcos campaign (Ong & Tapsell, 2022).

2.4 Network Analysis in Political Studies

Social network analysis (SNA) maps relationships among actors, using nodes (individuals/families) and edges (relationships) to analyze power structures (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). In political science, SNA has been used to study elite networks and patronage systems, offering a framework to visualize dynastic connections and their impacts (Knoke, 1990).



3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative social network analysis with qualitative insights from policy documents and social media. The design maps dynastic networks, correlates them with socioeconomic data, and proposes interventions.

3.2 Data Sources

- **Ateneo Policy Center (APC):** Dataset on local government leadership (2004–2016), tracking dynastic prevalence by family name.
- **Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ):** Data on candidates and dynastic patterns for the 2025 elections.
- **Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA):** Poverty incidence and Human Development Index (HDI) data.
- **Commission on Elections (Comelec):** Electoral records for candidate affiliations and outcomes.
- **X Platform:** Posts used as illustrative samples to assess public sentiment and disinformation dynamics (Fonbuena, 2024; archived posts available upon request).

3.3 Network Analysis Framework

- **Nodes:** Politicians or families.
- **Edges:** Family ties, intermarriages, political alliances, or party affiliations.
- **Metrics:** Degree centrality (number of connections), betweenness centrality (control over information flow), and clustering coefficients (network density).
- **Correlations:** Link dynastic metrics to poverty, HDI, and electoral outcomes using regression analysis.

3.4 Tools and Software

- **Gephi:** For visualizing dynastic networks and calculating centrality measures.
- **Tableau:** For interactive visualizations of dynastic prevalence and socioeconomic correlations.
- **ArcGIS:** For geospatial analysis of dynastic control by province.
- **NodeXL:** For analyzing social media influence on X.
- **r:** For statistical analysis of correlations between dynastic metrics and socioeconomic outcomes.

3.5 Limitations

- Family name-based tracking may miss intermarriages or unrelated individuals with the same surname.
- Data excludes barangay officials and some party-list representatives.
- Social media analysis is limited by platform biases and access restrictions.

4. Results

4.1 Structure of Dynastic Networks

- **Dense Networks:** Dynasties form interconnected webs through blood ties, intermarriages, and alliances. The Marcos-Romualdez clan, for instance, spans Ilocos Norte and Leyte, with high degree centrality (Mendoza et al., 2019).
- **Party Dominance:** The Nacionalista Party hosts the highest share of dynastic members in Congress (Teehankee, 2018).
- **Horizontal Dynasties:** Families like the Dutertes hold multiple roles (e.g., mayor, senator, vice president), consolidating power across government branches.

4.2 Socioeconomic Correlations

- **Poverty and Inequality:** Dynastic provinces, especially outside Luzon, exhibit higher poverty incidence and lower HDI (Mendoza et al., 2012). Regression analysis shows a positive correlation ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) between dynastic control and poverty.
- **Wealth Disparities:** Dynastic politicians have higher net worth and win by larger margins, indicating resource advantages (Querubin, 2016).
- **Political Violence:** Two of three dynasty persistence measures correlate with increased electoral violence ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.05$) (Teehankee & Calimbahin, 2020).

These correlations indicate association rather than causation.

4.3 Regional Variations

- **Luzon vs. Non-Luzon:** Luzon's competitive business environment mitigates dynastic poverty impacts, while non-Luzon provinces suffer from dynastic monopolies (Mendoza et al., 2012).

- **Geographic Hubs:** Families like the Singsons (Ilocos Sur) and Ortegas (La Union) dominate specific provinces, creating regional power centers.

4.4 Role of Social Media

- **Influence Amplification:** Dynasties use platforms like X for branding and disinformation, as seen in the 2022 Marcos campaign (Ong & Tapsell, 2022).
- **Public Sentiment:** X posts show polarized views, with supporters praising dynasties (e.g., Duterte fans) and critics labeling them a “joke.” Illustrative social media sentiment samples (X platform, 2024–2025).
- **Disinformation Risks:** Dynastic campaigns leverage social media to sway voters, necessitating media literacy interventions.

5. Discussion

5.1 Implications for Governance and Democracy

Dynastic networks undermine democratic competition by limiting access to political roles and fostering patronage politics. Their control over multiple government branches reduces accountability, increasing corruption risks (Teehankee & Calimbahin, 2020). The correlation between dynastic dominance and poverty highlights their role in perpetuating inequality, particularly in resource-rich but institutionally weak regions.

5.2 Policy Interventions to Unlock Potential

- **Legislative Reforms:** Enact an anti-dynasty law to enforce Article II, Section 26 of the 1987 Constitution, limiting family members in office (Erice, 2024). Strengthen term limits to prevent dynastic succession.

- **Civil Society Advocacy:** Support groups like the Movement Against Dynasties (MAD) to unify anti-dynasty efforts (Teehankee, 2018).
- **Media Literacy:** Promote fact-checking and voter education to counter dynastic disinformation on social media (Ong & Tapsell, 2022).
- **Economic Reforms:** Foster competitive business environments to reduce dynastic collusion with local elites, especially in non-Luzon provinces (Mendoza et al., 2012).

5.3 Role of Technology and Data Visualization

Tools like Gephi and Tableau can visualize dynastic networks, raising public awareness and informing policy. ArcGIS enables targeted interventions by mapping dynastic control against socioeconomic metrics. NodeXL can monitor social media campaigns, guiding voter education efforts.



6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

This study reveals that political dynasties in the Philippines form dense, interconnected networks that dominate governance and exacerbate poverty, inequality, and political violence. Using SNA tools, the study maps these structures, highlighting their regional variations and social media influence. Legislative, civil society, and technological interventions are critical to mitigating their negative impacts.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should:

- Incorporate barangay-level data to capture grassroots dynastic influence.

- Explore the role of intermarriages in dynastic networks using advanced SNA metrics.
- Assess the long-term impact of anti-dynasty laws once enacted.



7. Living Archive Extensions (*Optional*)

The following essays and codices are offered for readers engaging this study within a broader interpretive and civic education context. They are not cited sources for the empirical analysis.

- **Understanding the Filipino Psyche: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Pathways to Growth** – *How collective traits of resilience, utang na loob, and pakikisama both empower and entrap political structures.*
- **Unshackling Progress: Transforming Filipino Mindsets for National Development** – *Breaking psychological and cultural patterns that allow dynasties to persist.*
- **Closing Old Contracts: Releasing Karmic Financial Bondage** – *Dynasties as karmic contracts binding generations in cycles of control and inequality.*
- **The New Covenant of Nations: Transparency, Integrity, Reciprocity, Love** – *Envisioning governance beyond dynastic rule, rooted in collective responsibility.*
- **From Scarcity to Synchrony: Global Resource Redistribution under Divine Law** – *How dynasties perpetuate scarcity, and what synchronized systems of abundance could replace them.*
- **Matriarchy in the Shadows: Unraveling Gender Dynamics in the Philippines** – *Exploring how patriarchal dynasties have sidelined feminine forms of leadership.*
- **Planetary Stewardship Blueprint: Embracing Our Sacred Responsibility** – *Situating the dismantling of dynastic power within a planetary movement toward ethical stewardship.*



8. Glossary

- **Degree Centrality:** The number of direct connections a node (e.g., politician) has in a network.
- **Betweenness Centrality:** The extent to which a node lies on the shortest paths between other nodes, indicating control over information or influence.
- **Clustering Coefficient:** A measure of how nodes cluster together, indicating network density.
- **Fat Dynasties:** Families with multiple members holding elected positions simultaneously.
- **Patronage Politics:** A system where politicians distribute resources or favors to secure loyalty and votes.
- **Principalía:** The hereditary elite class during Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines.



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