

Emerging Dynasties in the Post-Marcos House of Representatives

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Philippine history has long been characterized by the durability and resilience of political clans and dynasties. Some traditional clans have been politically active for more than two generations since the American colonial, Commonwealth and post-war era. They are historically rooted in the rural elites whose principal sources of wealth were land ownership and export plantation agriculture. On the other hand, fourteen years of authoritarian rule have engendered new political clans who rose to prominence during the period of the Marcos dictatorship.

The ouster of the Marcos dictatorship and the restoration of formal democratic institutions have seen the emergence of new political players, mostly middle-class professionals and entrepreneurs who entered politics during the Aquino and Ramos administrations. However, some of these political players have begun to establish their own political dynasties. This article seeks to profile a segment of emerging political clans in the post-Marcos House of Representatives.

Continuity and Change in Elite Politics

The perpetuation of political dynasties in the Philippines is not simply a function of socio-psychological and biological reproduction of the elites. The adaptive strategies of the political clans have mirrored the shifting contours of the country's socio-economic and political terrain (McCoy, 1994: 1). They have traversed the western-style liberal democratic regime of the post war period, to the authoritarianism of the Marcos era, and subsequently the restoration of liberal democratic institutions in the post-Marcos

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period. They have also been shaped largely by transformations in the political economy.

The traditional political clan, the most resilient among the country's political elites, can be traced to a resilient landed oligarchy that have managed to diversify into non-agricultural economic interests through time. Both the new and emerging clans ascended from new social forces (i.e. urban-based middle class professionals) that have links to the modern sector of the economy. Their adaptation to socio-economic and political transformations has engendered modifications in their strategies through several historical junctures.

From 1946 to 1972, a weak central state had to contend with multiple pockets of autonomous local power (Rivera, 1994: 112). Initially, the predominance of patron-client and kinship ties in these local areas was reflective of the reciprocal, largely feudal, relations present in an agrarian society (Kerkvliet, 1995: 404). However, the myth of reciprocity would occasionally be shattered by the outbreak of political violence or warlordism in certain areas of the country (Sidel, 1999: 12-19). Warlordism was oftentimes a manifestation of the blurred boundaries between local power, rent-seeking, and illegal economic activities (i.e. smuggling, jueteng, illegal logging, etc.). While warlordism and political violence have been both integral and recurring characteristics of local politics in the Philippines, these have not been immune to the impact of change. Urbanization, the rise of new social forces, and the growing influence of mass media have diminished the potency of political terrorism. Most political warlords have either been replaced or defeated. Others have reinvented themselves to suit the changing times.

Emerging Political Players

Through the years, politicians of upper and lower middle class background have made headway into the national arena. In the House of Representatives, for example, most upper-middle class legislators can be divided into those who emerged from local government units, and those who were engaged in established

profitable professional practice or businesses. Lower-middle class legislators were able to access national political office through the government bureaucracy or the support of influential patrons (Gutierrez, 1994: 38-39).

The continuing process of socio-economic transformations has opened the political system to greater participation by a broader segment of the populace. With the decline of the old oligarchic features of Philippine politics, more social classes are integrated into the ruling elites. Previously, most influential political factions derived their power from extractive natural resource industries and plantation agriculture.¹ While a segment of traditional politics remain, there has been a major shift in favor of export manufacturers, service sector entrepreneurs, and a rising middle class. These emerging groups have exerted decisive power in the selection of political class and the adoption of key state policies (Magno, 1994: 32-33).

The profile and class composition of the population have been altered during the last two decades. There has been a sharp decrease of the rural population as majority of the population have come to reside in cities or highly urbanized towns.² The urban residents are engaged with economic activities that are marginally related to land-based production. The ascendant classes of industrialists, entrepreneurs and professionals are fast eroding the dominance of the landed elites. Despite its perceived inadequacies, the agrarian reform program has created some impact on land tenancy. In addition, the economic share of agricultural production has declined in proportion to the manufacturing and service sectors. In fact, the expansion of the economic share of garments, electronics, handicrafts, agro-industries and the service sector has further eroded the dominance of the landed elites (Velasco, 1997b: 103).

Profiles of Emerging Clans

The following are profiles of a portion of the emerging clans in the post-Marcos period in Philippine politics. These comprise two generations who have served in the re-established Congress.

Specifically, they belong to middle-class professional backgrounds, mostly entrepreneurs, who were active in the anti-Marcos opposition movement that included cause-oriented groups. They entered politics during the Aquino and Ramos administrations and have been elected in the post-Marcos House of Representatives for three consecutive terms. Upon reaching their term limits, their sons ran and won in their stead.

Del Mars of Cebu

Raul Veloso del Mar was a successful lawyer, and an active civic and business leader in Cebu before he entered politics. Although he was relatively new to Cebu City politics when he won the first district congressional seat in 1987, he belongs to the influential Veloso and Osmeña clans. His mother, Rosario Chiong Veloso, is a niece of Estafania Chiong Veloso, first wife of President Sergio Osmeña. Del Mar is a cousin of Senator John Osmeña and former Cebu Governor Emilio Osmeña. His wife, Melanie Borromeo, belongs to another branch of the Veloso clan and is distantly related to four representatives from the Visayas – Antonio V. Cuenco, Eriberto V. Loreto, Ramon Durano III, and Alberto S. Veloso (Gutierrez, 1994: 124).

Raul was born on March 20, 1941 in Cebu City. He holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from the Ateneo de Manila University, and a BMP Managerial Process and Practice certificate from the Asian Institute of Management. Del Mar has been active in various socio-civic and business endeavours, and was the Governor for Region VII of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Makati Business Club [MBC], 1994).

His name was first floated in Cebu City politics in 1984, when John Osmeña campaigned for his inclusion in the opposition ticket. However, the local opposition party, Panaghiusa,³ opted to field Marcelo Fernan and Antonio Cuenco for the *Batasang Pambansa*. Nevertheless, Del Mar filed his candidacy as an independent and lost the election (*Mr. & Ms.*, May 11, 1984: 23). He was active in the anti-Marcos opposition movement, and spearheaded the signature campaign to draft Corazon Aquino as presidential

candidate in 1985. After the EDSA uprising, he was offered a slot in the Cebu City council, but he opted to serve as Airport Manager of the Mactan International Airport from 1986 to 87 (R. B. del Mar, interview, May 24, 1999; MBC).

Raul successfully ran for Congress under the Partido Panaghiusa in 1987. He garnered 41.3 percent of the votes in a field of nine candidates. In 1992, he was re-elected under the same party with 70,960 votes. Just like most representatives from Cebu, del Mar shifted to Lakas NUCD-UMDP in 1995⁴ and was re-elected for his third consecutive term unopposed (COMELEC, 1987, 1992, 1995).

After completing his third term, his son Raoul B. del Mar won the seat he vacated in 1998. He justified the fielding of relatives for public office by saying these people are "highly qualified and competent." "Their being the congressman's relative is only incidental. They are academically qualified, in fact more qualified than we are. We should not make a big issue out of it," he said (*The Manila Times*, February 9, 1998: 8).

The younger del Mar ran under the Probinsiya Muna Development Initiatives (PROMDI), and supported the failed presidential bid of Emilio "Lito" Osmeña. He ran practically unopposed in the 1998 congressional elections. After the elections, he joined the Laban ng Masang Pilipino (LAMP). However, LAMP Vice President for the Visayas, Senator John Osmeña, purged him, and all those identified with PROMDI, from the party.⁵

Born on February 10, 1965, Raoul is a medical doctor. He finished his medical studies at the Cebu Doctor's College, and went to various hospitals in Los Angeles and Maryland for his externship. The young doctor was also accepted for residency at the State University of New York. He served as his father's Chief-of-Staff from 1997 to 1998. Despite his promising medical career, Raoul points to the inevitability of following in the footsteps of his father, "if one of your parents is in politics, it is really a family-oriented [endeavour]." Even when he was a medical intern, his allowance would usually run out since people who knew him as the son of the

congressional representative would seek him out and ask for financial help. He believes that his eventual candidacy offered the electorate the option to continue his father's eleven years of public service. "I really grew up in a political family, and when you see it [everyday], it gets ingrained in you," he shared (R. B. del Mar, interview, May 24, 1999).

This exposure has also encouraged him to get into public service despite his father's hesitance, "he knew I spent 14 years of my life in medicine . . . but it is really public service when you go into [a political] profession . . . it is really to help the people." Similar to his medical practice, he gets the same satisfaction in helping out people in politics. "How many people can run for Congress and win?" he asked, "being a [representative] is no joke, it's a privilege, an honor given to you by the people." Nevertheless, he believes that political position cannot simply be passed on from one generation to another. He asserts that he was elected on his own merits and the critical electorate of Cebu City, "if I wasn't a doctor, I wouldn't get elected." (R. B. del Mar, interview, May 24, 1999).

Raoul utilized his medical background in his electoral campaign by focusing on health care. He distributed health care cards that provide free and comprehensive medical services to his constituents. Nonetheless, his father bankrolled his campaign and provided the political machinery, "I was lucky because my father performed very well, and the [electorate] saw in me the potential to [do the same] . . . they knew that if I didn't, my father will be on my back" (R. B. del Mar, interview, May 24, 1999).

Aside from his father and PROMDI's machinery, he actively courted the support of the NGOs and POs in Cebu. He regularly consults these organizations with regard to his legislative work. Aside from being Senior Vice Chair of the House Committee on Health, he has distinguished himself in Congress as a vocal critic of legal and illegal gambling. He was also active in the opposition to the Estrada administration's efforts at amending the Constitution. In 2001, the younger Del Mar yielded his congressional seat back to his father.

Fuas of Siquijor

Orlando Bongcawel Fua Sr., son of former municipal mayor Marcelo Fua Sr., has emerged as a dominant political force from the rural island of Siquijor in the immediate post-Marcos period.⁶ The smallest island in Central Visayas was for decades dominated by politicians affiliated with the Nacionalista Party.⁷ The party metamorphosed into the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan during the Marcos years. This dominance was dismantled after the 1986 EDSA uprising with the purge of local officials and the OIC (Officer-in-Charge) takeovers (Rocamora, 1992: 10).

Fua was active in the anti-Marcos opposition movement, and was appointed OIC governor of Siquijor in 1986. During the 1987 congressional elections, he ran and won his first elective position under the PDP-Laban-Lakas ng Bansa coalition. He garnered 62.7 percent over two rivals that included Eulogio Omictin Jr. of the KBL-NP-GAD coalition (COMELEC, 1987). In 1992, he was re-elected under the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP) with 16,830 votes (COMELEC, 1992). By this time, Fua and close political ally, Governor Ben P. Aquino dominated the party and local government machinery in the province (Rocamora, 1992: 10).⁸

Fua shifted to the Lakas-NUCD-UMDP in 1995, and was re-elected for a third term. He won with 48.39 percent of the votes over three rival candidates (COMELEC, 1995). Orlando was born on June 30, 1933 in Lazi, Siquijor. He holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of San Carlos. Fua practiced law from 1959 to 86, and was involved in the operation of transport firms. He was engaged with both land and sea transport, operating the VIP Taxicab in the late 60s, the Orlines-Cebu shipping line from 1979 to 92, and the Orlines-Siquijor line from 1981 to 83.⁹ As a lawyer, he served as president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Siquijor Chapter. In addition, he helped form the Philippines-Taiwan Friendship Society, and was the most vocal pro-Taiwan representative in the House (Gutierrez, 1994: 151).

In 1998, his son Orlando "Shane" Anos Fua Jr., ran and won the congressional seat he vacated. The younger Fua was born

on April 7, 1971 in Lazi, Siquijor. He completed his A.B. Political Science and Bachelor of Laws education from the University of San Carlos. Orlando Jr. has been practicing the legal profession since 1987, until he ran and won a seat in the Provincial Board in 1995. Just like his father, he served as chapter president of the IBP. He also served as municipal chair of the People's Economic Council (PEC) of Siquijor, and vice chair of the Provincial Federation of PECs, Siquijor from 1989 to 90. Running under the Lakas NUCD-UMDP, he defeated four contenders. These included his father's constant rival, Guido Gahinhin, who ran under the Laban ng Makabayang Masang Pilipino (LAMMP). He obtained 59.69 percent of the votes (COMELEC, 1998). Since 1986, the Fua clan has transformed itself into a dominant force in the politics of Siquijor. Two of Orlando Sr.'s brothers have served in the Provincial Board: Agustin B. Fua (1987 to 1992) and Marcelo B. Fua (1998 to present). His son, Orpheus A. Fua, served as OIC mayor in 1987, while another, Orville A. Fua, was elected mayor of Lazi in 1998. This dominance was underscored by Shane Fua, "regardless of the political party we ally ourselves [with], our being inveterate political participants in any political exercise has strengthened and [continuously oiled] our machinery" (O. Fua Jr., interview, March 27, 2000). After seating out for one term, Orlando Sr. ran and won back his congressional seat in 2001 under the Lakas-NUCD-UMDP.

Lagmans of Albay

Edcel Castelar Lagman has emerged as a foremost voice of progressive issues in a bastion of traditional politics. His family has also begun to play 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. Edcel's brother, labor lawyer Hermon Lagman, was a victim of the Marcos regime and has been missing since 1976. His mother, Cecilia, has served as chair of Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearances (FIND), a human rights group (Gutierrez, 1994: 173).

Another brother, 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 The labor union *Bukluran ng Manggawang Pilipino* (BMP [Solidarity of Pilipino Workers]) was reorganized and chaired by Lagman after the split.¹¹ Under his leadership, the BMP has led several mass protest actions against the Ramos and Estrada administrations.¹² At the height of the "Juetengate" scandal and the impeachment trial of President Estrada, he led the call for the resignation of both the president and vice president. Unknown assailants assassinated Popoy Lagman at the University of the Philippines a few weeks after the ouster of President Estrada in the aftermath of EDSA II.

Edcel was born on May 1, 1942 in Tabaco, Albay, to Pedro Eduardo Lagman Jr., a retired Assistant City Fiscal of Caloocan, and Cecilia Castelar. He holds a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of the Philippines, where he was also Managing Editor of the Philippine Collegian and Editor of the UP Law Register. Edcel has worked in the three branches of government since he was 25. In 1967, he was Legal Officer IV at the Office of the President in Malacañang. The following year, he transferred to the Judiciary, as Legal Assistant at the Presidential Electoral Tribunal and Technical Legal Assistant of the Chief Justice's Office. By 1969, he worked in the Legislature as Deputy Head of Staff of the Senate Technical Staff on Justice, and became Chief Legal Counsel and Head of Staff of the same body from 1970 to 72 (MBC, 1991).

He ran for a seat in the 1971 Constitutional Convention, but lost in the election. Upon the declaration of martial law, he established a private law practice with Miguel Romero – a friend of former Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. The law firm specialized in the protection of human rights and the defense of victims of unjust incarceration (Gutierrez, 1994: 173). After the 1986 EDSA uprising, President Aquino appointed Lagman Deputy Minister for Budget and Management.¹³

In 1987, Lagman vied for a seat in the Eight Congress as Representative of Albay's first district under the Lakas ng Bansa. He garnered 37.83 percent of the votes against ten rival candidates. In fact, he won in all of the district's six municipalities (COMELEC, 1987). He distinguished himself in the House as an advocate of a genuine agrarian reform program. Lagman was a major proponent of the failed "Debt Cap" bill that sought to limit the country's annual external debt payments to 15 percent of merchandise export receipts. He was also one of the active proponents of the abrogation of the American bases in the country (MBC).

When the Lakas ng Bansa merged with other pro-Aquino parties to form the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), Lagman became an active and ranking member. Despite his progressive credentials, he supported the presidential candidacy of Speaker Ramon Mitra – the quintessential traditional politician. Thus, he was not oblivious to the requisites of practical politics.

. . . Edcel Lagman once said that in order to be relevant and effective, a representative must have a split personality. He or she should be able to focus on both national issues and district matters. Devoting time to national concerns makes the representative responsible for national policy-making, but addressing district matters assures him or her of reelection (Gutierrez, 1994: 9).

Lagman was overwhelmingly re-elected under the LDP in 1992. However, his wife, Cielo Burce who ran for mayor of Tabaco lost by a narrow margin.

He continued articulating progressive causes in the Ninth House. Lagman pushed for the passage of the Magna Carta for Students, and the Integrated Magna Carta for Teachers and Non-Teaching Personnel. He opposed the re-imposition of the death penalty, the proposed anti-terrorism bill, and the oil deregulation law. At the height of protest against the passage of the extended value-added tax law, he co-chaired the *Koalisyon ng mga Mamamayan Laban sa VAT* (KOMVAT [Citizen's Coalition Against VAT]).

He remained with the LDP, closely allying himself with Senate President Edgardo Angara. In 1995, he won his third consecutive term under the Lakas-Laban coalition by winning 57.59 percent of the votes against two other candidates (COMELEC, 1995). Despite the coalition with the Ramos Administration, he continued to take an oppositionist stance in the House. He was one of the vocal opponents of attempts to amend the Constitution. A recognized leader of the Progressive Bloc, he served as Assistant Minority Floor Leader in the Ninth and Tenth House. In addition, he served as Vice Chair of the powerful Committee of Appropriations from 1987 to 1998. Together with Representatives Rolando Andaya and Feliciano Belmonte, Lagman constituted the "troika" that made key decisions in the national budget that included the distribution of pork barrel funds.¹⁴

In 1998, he was included in the senatorial slate of the Laban ng Makabayang Masang Pilipino (LAMMP), the coalition that supported the presidential ticket of Joseph Estrada and Angara. While he lost his senatorial bid, his daughter Krisel Lagman Luistro won his congressional seat. She was elected with 60.86 percent of the votes, defeating two rival candidates (COMELEC, 1998).

Krisel first served as Barangay Captain of Sogod, Bacacay, Albay. She was Association of Barangay Chairmen (ABC) President of the town and President of the *Liga ng mga Barangay* (Barangay League) of the province. By virtue of her position in the Liga, she became a member of the provincial board. In addition, she was elected director of the National *Liga ng mga Barangay*. She also serves as the Vice President for Luzon of *Sanlakas* – the political organization of her uncle Popoy Lagman.

Born on November 9, 1968, Krisel was raised in Manila. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology from the University of the Philippines. In addition, she graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health from the Neumann College, Aston, Pennsylvania, USA. Before her election to Congress, she served as Chief-of-Staff in her father's District Office. Krisel is married to Ramon Luistro. While her father rose to

political prominence during the post-Marcos period, she traces her political lineage to several relatives who have been active since the Commonwealth period. Her mother's great grandfather was former Catanduanes Governor and Senator Jose Vera. A granduncle, George Almojela, also served as governor of Catanduanes, while her uncle, Alex Burce was elected mayor of the municipality of Tabaco. On her father's side, several members of the Lagman clan have served as mayors and vice mayors. Eligio Lagman, a great granduncle, served as Assemblyman of Pampanga in the Commonwealth period (K. Lagman-Luistro, interview, May 31, 1999).

Aside from her admitted emulation of her father's record of public service, she was drawn into politics out of her views of social issues and concern. "The existing poverty and injustice, not only in my district but nationwide . . . I think these are enough to motivate anyone to make a change," she said, "*hindi man natin makita yung pagbabago ngayon* [we may not immediately see the results] eventually the seeds have been planted" (K. Lagman-Luistro, interview, May 31, 1999). Indeed, she has sustained her father's advocacy of progressive issues in the House. She has taken a hard stance opposing death penalty and urged the passing of the long-stalled Magna Carta for Students. Krisel has also articulated her views on the plight of the "*desaparecidos*" and the peace process with the underground Left.¹⁵ In her first year in Congress, she has personally encountered the darker side of legislative politics when she was offered a one million pesos bribe in exchange for the purchase of P5 million worth of textbooks for her district.¹⁶ She rejected and exposed the offer.

Krisel asserts that her family is committed to serving their constituents' interest, and that it is a commitment that money cannot buy. "*Pag naniniwala ang mga tao na natutulungan mo sila, palagi ka nilang iboboto* [if the people believe that you can help them, they will always vote for you]," she said. The kind of help that she and her father have extended to their constituents include legislated social programs and infrastructure projects. Just like her father, she points to the dual role of a legislator, "you are representing [the

constituents] in legislation, but at the same time you have to take care of their immediate needs." When asked if these assistance can be construed as patronage, she answered, "we [provide them] not just with what they ask [but with services] that will improve their lives . . . and if because of that improvement in their lives *may mararamdaman silang utang na loob sa amin, iboboto nila kami* [out of debt of gratitude they vote for us]." However, she qualifies, "you serve them because you want to help them" (K. Lagman-Luistro, interview, May 31, 1999).

While she believes in the urgency of electoral reforms, she does not see any need to impose a ban on relatives running for public office. Asserting that political scions still need to go through the process of election, she said that, "it's not automatic, it's not by succession, you have to be elected to the position." She is not against political dynasties, claiming that qualified relatives of politicians should not be deprived the opportunity to present themselves to the electorate. "We should not underestimate the voters . . . there is no one family that has a monopoly of the traits of a good politician or legislator, so you [let the people decide who they want to vote for]" (K. Lagman-Luistro, interview, May 31, 1999).

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 have 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. 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.¹⁷ The assumption of Krisel to Edcel's seat can be viewed as an indication that even progressive politics is not immune from the temptation of political reproduction and perpetuation.

Edcel was an active member of the private prosecution team in the impeachment trial against President Joseph Estrada. For the 2001 congressional elections, he affiliated with Raul Roco's *Aksyon Demokratiko* and decided to file his candidacy for the fourth district of Quezon City. The elder Lagman, together with former Quezon City Mayor Mel Mathay, were defeated by councilor Nanette Castelo-Daza. On the other hand, Krisel was re-elected for a second term under the Lakas-NUCD-UMDP.

Romualdos of Camiguin

Pedro Palarca Romualdo initially represented the island province of Camiguin in the 1971 Constitutional Convention. The declaration of martial law put his political career on hold. He became active in the anti-Marcos opposition (Gutierrez, 1994: 241). In 1984, he ran for a seat in the *Batasang Pambansa* under the Mindanao Alliance,¹⁸ but lost to Jose P. Neri of the *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan*. Neri has been entrenched in Camiguin politics since it was still a sub-province of Misamis Oriental (Institute for Popular Democracy [IPD], 1998).¹⁹

The province of Camiguin has produced leaders who have served in the regional and national levels, including outspoken Marcos oppositionist Homobono Adaza. Old elite families have surnames like Neri, Luspo, and Borrromeo. These families have since been politically inactive. The Romualdos have emerged as the most prominent political clan in the post-Marcos period (IPD).

Born on June 29, 1935 in Mambajao, Camiguin, Romualdo obtained a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the East. He was a senior partner of the RGC7 Associates law office from 1972 to 87. Later, he acted as legal consultant for Philippine Sinter and the Aboitiz Corporation. Among his assets are real estate properties in Mambajao and Cagayan de Oro. He is a co-owner of MG Health Center, and is a stockholder in the AMR Merchandising and General Services Inc. (Gutierrez, 1994; IPD, 1998).

Before his election to the 1971 Constitutional Convention, he was a close political adviser of Governor Jose Neri. He was appointed as secretary of the provincial board, when Camiguin became a province in 1964 (J.J. Romualdo, interview, May 18, 1999). In 1987, he was elected to the House under the PDP-Laban-Lakas ng Bansa coalition, garnering 42.8 percent of the votes. Romualdo defeated former governor and representative Jose P. Neri who ran under the banner of UNIDO-KBL (COMELEC, 1987). His wife, Araceli Modina-Romualdo was elected mayor of Mambajao in 1988.²⁰ She would serve for three consecutive terms, having been re-elected in 1992 and 1995 (Gutierrez, 1994: 241).

By 1992, he was re-elected under the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP). His son, Jurdin Jesus ran for governor but was defeated by the incumbent Antonio A. Gallardo.²¹ Just like most representatives, Romualdo worked hard to provide service to his constituents through resources drawn from the national government. He has provided 2,000 scholarships and several infrastructure projects. Romualdo was responsible for facilitating the granting of franchise operation to Camiguin Telephone Cooperative, the transformation of Camiguin School of Arts and Trade into the Camiguin Polytechnic State College, and the upgrading of Camiguin Hospital into a tertiary hospital under the Department of Health (IPD, 1998).

In 1995, former Member of Parliament and party mate in the defunct Mindanao Alliance, Homobono Adaza, challenged him. By this time, he was already affiliated with the administration party, Lakas NUCD-UMDP, while Adaza ran under the local coalition of the Nacionalista Party and Laban. Romualdo defeated Adaza by a margin of 337 votes (COMELEC, 1998).²² His son Jurdin again lost by a narrow margin to Governor Gallardo.

Media and national attention was drawn to Romualdo, amid the controversy generated by attempts of the Ramos administration to amend the Constitution and extend the President's term of office beyond 1998. As Chair of the House Committee on Constitutional Amendments in the Tenth House and Lakas party stalwart, Romualdo

was tasked to steer the controversial proposal through the legislative mill. Strong opposition from the Senate and the public, led by former President Corazon Aquino and Cardinal Jaime Sin, prevented the charter change move (Florentino-Hofileña, 1997: 143-144).²³

Upon reaching his term limits, Romualdo contested and won the gubernatorial post in 1998. His wife, Araceli, did not run for any position and instead concentrated on the congressional campaign of son, Jurdin (Gutierrez, 1994: 241). On their third electoral confrontation, Jurdin Jesus finally defeated Antonio Gallardo, taking over his father's vacated congressional seat. Running under the Lakas NUCD-UMDP, Jurdin defeated LAMMP-candidate Gallardo by a margin of 7,437 votes (COMELEC, 1998). In addition, his brother, Noordin Efigenio, was elected vice mayor of Mambajao.

Born on July 29, 1960 in Manila, Jurdin holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics degree from Xavier University, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the East. He first served as private secretary to his father from 1987 to 91, and later as Chief-of-Staff from 1991 to 1998.²⁴ In addition, he was an honorary member of the Camiguin Electric Cooperative, Inc., and the Camiguin Telephone Cooperative, Inc. He was a member of the Provincial Development Council, and was a trustee/ board member of the Camiguin Polytechnic State College.²⁵ The younger Romualdo also owns a labor agency supplying labor requirements both within and outside the province (IPD, 1998).

His early exposure to the political activities of his parent's has greatly affected his decision to run for public office: "I campaigned on the platform of continuity of progress," he said. He views his present role as a continuation of the service his father has rendered to the province. However, he viewed his previous electoral defeats as manifestations of the people's will over the so-called political dynasties. In his view, political scions still has to present themselves to the electorate and face their judgement. His experience demonstrated that blood relations are no guarantee for political success (J.J. Romualdo, interview, May 18, 1999).

Upon his assumption to Congress, he joined the administration party – Laban ng Masang Pilipino (LAMP) and is affiliated with the pro-administration “Bright Boys.” His father opted to remain with the opposition party – Lakas-NUCD-UMDP. He justified his shift to the administration party as a political necessity in order for him to serve his district. In his view, pork barrel funds are still necessary for a small island province like Camiguin. “*Mas gusto ko nga na tinatawag na trapo kung ibig sabihin nito ay tumutulong ka sa kapwa* (I prefer to be called a ‘traditional politician’ if it means helping others),” he said (J.J. Romualdo, interview, May 18, 1999).

Financing for his campaign came from his parents. He stated that his family does not have any business interest in the province, and that his family’s primary activity is politics and public service. Thus, the government projects that they deliver to their constituents are very crucial for their line of work (J.J. Romualdo, interview, May 18, 1999). J.J. Romualdo was re-elected in 2001, under the banner of the Nationalist People’s Coalition (NPC).

Conclusion

Democratization and economic liberalization in the post-Marcos transition have cleared the path for the emergence of new political players. The diversification and expansion of the economy has allowed non-elite political players, of middle-class professional and entrepreneurial backgrounds, to penetrate the political arena. Most of them were active in the anti-Marcos struggle and served in the Aquino administration before embarking on a political career. Most contested and won legislative seats in Congress, and some were even successful in vanquishing established political dynasties (Doronila, 1995: 1).

The entry of the relatively affluent, better-educated and well-informed urban middle class into Congress augurs well with the articulation of socio-political and economic reform issues (Velasco, 1997a: 290). However, the inherent weakness of the electoral and party system has not eroded the crucial role of pork and patronage

in legislative politics. Thus, even the emergent reform-oriented political class is not impervious to the methodologies of traditional politics.

The four political families classified as emerging political clans in this study rose to prominence in the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. They were all active participants in the parliament of the streets who have adapted well in the halls of Congress. They probably represent the next wave of new political players with a highly specialized and professional background. However, they have also proven proficient in the ways of traditional politics. ❖

Notes

¹ In fact, "much of what has been described as 'traditional' politics rested on the abilities of landed political elites to deliver blocked votes from communities that depended on the big families for access to land production and were bound to the same by long ties of patronage. National electoral competition was largely organized around alliances of local landed elites projecting factional alliances to national power" (Magno, 1994, p. 32).

² However, "there is much 'horizontal' movement (geographic, rural-to-urban) among the population, rendering the urban-rural dichotomy unimportant. On the other, there is hardly any 'vertical' movement (socio-economic mobility) . . . Urban and rural locations are transients. Income level and ethnolinguistic identities are fixed" (Magno, 1992, p. 9).

³ "Partido Panaghiusa's phenomenal metamorphosis into a monolithic party machine in Cebu could be traced back in 1983 when the loosely-knit group of anti-Marcos factions forged an alliance called Coalition Panaghiusa. During the major electoral battles against the Marcos regime, the Cuenco and Osmeña factions welded it into a 'fighting political machine'. The fusion included the Cuenco brothers and the Osmeña brothers. The former consisted of Antonio 'Tony' (who won as congressman in the south district of Cebu City in 1987) and Jose 'Boy' (who was the city's OIC mayor before the 1988 local elections). The latter included John 'Sonny' (who was Cebu City's OIC mayor before he ran and won as senator in 1987) and Emilio 'Lito' (a businessman and real estate developer who ran and lost in the 1978 Batasan polls)." See Clamor, 1993, fn., p. 113.

⁴ By this time, the core of Partido Panaghiusa shattered into several pieces. Antonio Cuenco affiliated with the LDP and supported the presidential bid of Speaker Mitra in 1992. After the elections, he affiliated

with the Lakas NUCD-UMDP. Lito Osmeña ran, but lost, as the vice presidential candidate of Fidel Ramos under Lakas. This triggered a running feud with brother Sonny, who initially was the runningmate of Danding Cojuangco under the Nationalist People's Coalition. The senator opted to run for re-election, and would later shift to the LDP. The feud continued when Lito organized the Probinsiya Muna Development Initiative (PROMDI) as a vehicle for his unsuccessful presidential bid in 1998, while Sonny supported the candidacy of Joseph Estrada under the Laban ng Makabayang Masang Pilipino (LAMMP).

⁵ Another apparent reason for his expulsion was his active opposition to efforts of the Estrada administration to amend the Constitution (Sun Star Manila, September 4, 1999, p. 6). In a realignment of forces, in preparation for the 2001 elections, former representatives Antonio Cuenco and Raul del Mar have signified their support for former Cebu City mayor Thomas Osmeña and his local political machine – the Bando Osmeña-Pundok Kauswagan (BO-PK) (Sun Star Manila, September 6, 1999, p. 6).

⁶ Marcelo Fua Sr. was an appointive municipal mayor of Lazi and served for two years (O. Fua Jr., interview, March 27, 2000).

⁷ According to Rocamora (1992, p. 10), "Siquijor has a small 'upper class' of politicians, senior bureaucrats, a few professionals and Chinese traders who would be 'middle class' in the larger islands. The majority of the people barely survive on rocky, hilly land and depleted fishing grounds. In between are government clerks and teachers and petty traders moldering in frustration and boredom. It would be difficult to organize class struggle on the island because income differences are not large. But there is a large pool of educated young people waiting to be tapped for socio-economic projects."

⁸ Siquijor benefited much from Fua's close affiliation with the Aquino administration. For example, the province was one of the earliest small islands chosen by the National Power Corporation to enjoy low-cost electric service. A directive that President Aquino included in her May 1, 1988 Labor Day message (Montesa, 1988).

⁹ Shipping is a lucrative business enterprise in the island since, "the ferry boats and the pumpboats provide just about the only means of transportation between Siquijor and the large neighboring islands of Negros Oriental and Cebu" (Montesa, 1988, p. 3).

¹⁰ Doctrinal disputes and leadership struggle have resulted in the splintering of the Philippine communist movement into the "Reaffirmists" (RAs) and the "Rejectionists" (RJs). The former is composed of party members who remain loyal to the ideological formulations and leadership of CPP founder Jose Ma. Sison. The latter are key party leaders and members who broke away from Sison's leadership. The RJs are divided into four distinct organizations. For a detailed discussion, see Alecks Pabico, 1999, pp. 31-35.

¹¹ The *Bukluran ng Manggawang Pilipino* was first organized at the height of martial law in 1976. It subsumed 130 unions and 40,000 members. It defied the authoritarian regime by mounting strikes and protest actions (Guevarra, 1995).

¹² Among the successful protest actions initiated by the BMP was the *Kilusang Roll Back* (KRB) – a broad coalition of organizations and individuals ranging from the left to right of Philippine society that successfully protested against the oil price increase under the Ramos administration. Initially, the BMP supported the presidential bid of Joseph Estrada since Popoy's brother, Edcel, was part of LAMMP's senatorial ticket. After the election, the BMP became Estrada's staunch critic after he indicated support for tycoon Lucio Tan in the management and labor controversy involving the Philippine Airlines (PAL).

¹³ In addition, he was appointed Trustee of the Local Water Utilities Administration and Alternate Director of the Light Railways Transit Authority. He was likewise Chair of the Task Force on Accounts Payable and Chair of the Bids and Awards Committee of Procurement Service under the same ministry (MBC, 1991).

¹⁴ Eric Gutierrez (1998, p. 70) notes, "[t]he political opposition's pointman in the committee [was] Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman . . . he could have become the chair in 1992 were it not for his party affiliation. Lagman is a steadfast member of the Laban party, while Andaya has joined the ruling Lakas-NUCD. Like Andaya, Lagman was also appointed budget undersecretary by then President Aquino in 1986."

¹⁵ With regard to the peace process, she has taken the cudgels for her uncle's faction, "Joma Sison is not the alpha and omega of the solution to the insurgency problem. The correct way of solving the problem is holding talks with the more numerous factions which have broken away from Sison." She bewailed Sison's continued use "of his personal image-building apparatus [that keeps the] other rebel groups based in the country . . . outside the negotiations." In her view, the ultimate solution can only be attained if the government addresses the social and economic causes of armed conflict with a strong political will (Diaz, 1999, p. 1)

¹⁶ The alleged bribe giver was also implicated in the "textbook scandal" that rocked the executive branch. It was reported that Mary Ann Maslog offered P3 million to certain Malacañang officials in exchange for a P200-million contract (Gadil, 1999, p. 7).

¹⁷ 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*" tendencies. Former comrades have bewailed Popoy's unorthodox tactics in dealing with both rivals and allies. In addition, his political organization, *Sanlakas*, decided to participate in the 1998 elections. It managed to elect a party-list representative in the House. In a rare television appearance made after

his release from military custody in the early 90s, Popoy said, "*kung kinakailangan na lumusong sa babuyan upang ipamukha sa mga baboy ang kababuyan nila ay gagawin natin* [if we have to jump into the pigsty to expose them, we will]." For a detailed discussion of Popoy's role in the Philippine Left, see Pabico, 1999.

¹⁸ The Mindanao Alliance was formed during the 1978 Interim Batasang Pambansa election, electing Reuben Canoy as the lone oppositionist from Mindanao. During the 1980 local elections, its prominent leaders were elected: Homobono Adaza as Governor of Misamis Oriental, Aquilino Pimentel Jr, Mayor of Cagayan de Oro City, and Jesus Sanciangko Jr., Mayor of Ozamis. Aside from Esmeraldo Cudal, who won as Vice Governor of Bukidnon province, hundreds of town mayors, vice mayors and council members were elected under the party (Canoy, 1984). By 1984, the party was splintered when Pimentel formed the Partido Demokratikong Pilipino (PDP), while Canoy allied with former Marcos Press Secretary-turned-oppositionist Francisco Tatad to form the Christian Democratic Party (CDP). Governor Adaza was left with the remnant of the MA, allying with Salvador Laurel's United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO). The split manifested in Camiguin with Romualdo and Pedro Adaza competing for the lone seat under MA.

¹⁹ A dentist by profession, Neri was first elected as a municipal councilor in 1955. When Camiguin became a sub-province, he was elected as the first lieutenant governor in the 1957 special election; re-elected in 1959 and 1963. Upon Camiguin's conversion into a regular province, he was elected as the first governor in 1967. Two years later, he was elected to the Seventh House (Official Directory, 1969-72). During the martial law period, President Marcos appointed Neri as governor (IPD, 1998).

²⁰ She hails from Baybay, Leyte, where her family owns vast tracts of land, and has been active in local politics since the '50s. She is also related to the influential Loreto clan (J. J. Romualdo, interview, May 18, 1999).

²¹ Gallardo was a protege of Romualdo, until their political falling-out in 1992 (J. J. Romualdo, interview, May 18, 1999). He would serve three consecutive terms as governor from 1987 to 1998. A lawyer by profession, Gallardo's family is active in agricultural endeavours, particularly copra (IPD, 1998).

²² According to an internal report of the Institute for Popular Democracy, Romualdo spent an estimated P30 to 40 million for his re-election campaign.

²³ Romualdo admitted his preference for a parliamentary form of government in a forum sponsored by the Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs. However, he was constrained to maintain his neutrality, given his position in the House (Florentino-Hofileña, 1997).

²⁴ While he obtained his law degree, he was not able to take the Bar examination. A failed assassination attempt on his father in 1987, forced

neutrality, given his position in the House (Florentino-Hofileña, 1997).

²⁴ While he obtained his law degree, he was not able to take the Bar examination. A failed assassination attempt on his father in 1987, forced him to assume the role of private secretary and bodyguard (J. J. Romualdo, interview, May 18, 1999).

²⁵ Data culled from his curriculum vitae.

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