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## “The Rise of Political Dynasties in a Democratic Society”

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2014 Arryman Fellow

May 16, 2015

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**Keywords:** *Political dynasty, subnational politics, competitive authoritarianism, democratization*

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## The Rise of Political Dynasties in a Democratic Society\*

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### 1. Introduction

In March 2013, 26-year old Mohammad Makmun Ibnu Fuad was inaugurated as the *Bupati* or “Regent” of Bangkalan District, East Java.<sup>1</sup> He became the youngest regent in today’s Indonesia. What makes Makmun’s success more interesting is the fact that he replaced his father Fuad Amin Imron who had just completed his second term since taking office in 2003.<sup>2</sup> Makmun was not alone. In Indonesia, there are many politicians who replace their family members as governor, regent, district head, or mayor. For example, in Kediri (East Java), Haryanti Sutrisno

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<sup>1</sup> *Bupati* or regent is an executive position at a jurisdiction level similar to a county in the United States. This paper employs the terms district, city, and municipality interchangeably to refer to administrative governmental units one level below provincial government.

<sup>2</sup> Law No. 22/1999 and Law No.32/2004 on regional government stipulate that the regional executive head—governor (province), regent (district), and mayor (municipality/city)—can be elected for only two terms (five years per term).

succeeded her husband Sutrisno as the regent. In Gowa (South Sulawesi), Ichsan Yasin Limpo replaced his brother Muhammad Syahrul Yasin Limpo as district regent after the latter won the gubernatorial election. In addition to executive office succession, a variation of this familial politics is the expansion of power by dynastic politicians to other executive offices in neighboring districts or to the legislative branch. In Banten Province, for instance, some family members of the former governor Ratu Atut Choisyah become regent or deputy regent in four different districts, while others become legislators at the district, provincial, or national level. These cases are just some examples of the emergence of political dynasties in a consolidating democracy like Indonesia. A similar phenomenon can be found in many democratic societies around the world.<sup>3</sup>

This study examines the monopolization of political power by political elites who are connected by familial ties at the subnational level in a consolidating democracy. It explores the underlying causes of the formation of political dynasties—generally defined as a form of monopoly of political power and holding public office by politicians based predominantly on family connections—and the political mechanisms that enable subnational dynastic politicians to preserve and to extend their power in a consolidating democracy.<sup>4</sup> The starting point of this study is the fact that inherited power succession and expansion of a power base for elected office through a democratic mechanism are possible.<sup>5</sup> These kinds of strategy are commonly found in

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<sup>3</sup> Political dynasties can be found in other democracies such as Japan, Greece, India, the Philippines, and the United States.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to make a distinction between political dynasties in well-established democracies and in consolidating democracies, as well as to separate political dynasties in consolidating democracies from dynasties in authoritarian regimes. The three regime settings—well-established democracy, consolidating democracy, and authoritarian—present three different political contexts wherein dynastic politicians operate. Consequently, the causes and the purposes of political dynasties in these types of regime may differ from one another. As a first step, the current research focuses on the rise of political dynasties in consolidating democracies only.

<sup>5</sup> This paper is not arguing that dynastic succession and expansion of power bases are impossible in democratic countries. In fact, political dynasties exist in many well-established democracies. The way dynastic politicians

pre-modern political systems and authoritarian regimes.<sup>6</sup> In some countries, the emergence of political dynasties can be observed clearly at the subnational level.<sup>7</sup>

The existence of political dynasties in democratic societies, particularly in a consolidating democracy, has sparked debate among pro-democratic activists, scholars and policymakers. In many cases, activists, political experts, politicians, and scholars have charged political dynasties with being a stumbling block to democratic consolidation, an erosion of the quality of democracy, a source of corruption, a root cause of underdevelopment, and an obstacle to reformist candidates' ability to occupy office.<sup>8</sup> Some responses to the existence of political dynasties have emerged, such as introducing anti-dynastic laws; essentially, however, these responses are contradictory to democratic values.<sup>9</sup>

Given the salience of the rise of political dynasties during democratic consolidation, this study seeks to answer the following questions: Why do political dynasties emerge in democratic

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occupy office in well-established democracies, however, is different from that of dynasties in transitioning democracies. As argued by Prewitt and Stone (1973, p.133) "Democracy, except in certain radical formulations, does not deny an (hereditary) elite, but it urges that the qualifications for this elite be talent, accomplishment, and achievement, rather than birth and blood line." In their seminal work, Dal Bó, Dal Bó, and Snyder (2009, p. 116) find that even in the U.S., inherited transfer of power does exist despite the general perception that such kind of power transfer is undemocratic.

<sup>6</sup> Brownlee (2007); Clubok, Wilensky, and Berghorn (1969); Fukai and Fukui (1992); Levitsky and Way (2010, pp. 28-29); Patrikios and Chatzikonstantinou (2014, p. 93). Dahl (2005, 11-24) explains that political "modernization" in New Haven, Connecticut occurred when political elites from "patrician families" were no longer able to dominate local politics due to the emergence of new leaders who had better ability to mobilize the masses. He further argues that five factors contributed to this change: 1) introduction of the secret ballot; 2) broader suffrage; 3) population growth; 4) political parties as a new mode to mobilize the masses; and 5) a more flexible democratic ideology (Dahl, 2005, pp. 20-24). See also Huntington (1968, pp. 93-191).

<sup>7</sup> This study focuses only on the rise of political dynasties at the subnational level, primarily because studying dynasties at this level minimizes the variations that may occur if the study is conducted in cross-country research—such as institutional settings, technological differences, and colonial experience, among others (Balisacan and Fuwa (2003, 2004)). In other countries, direct continuation of power from the incumbent to his/ her family member and expansion of political power to other executive or legislative branches are also observable at the national level.

<sup>8</sup> See for instance Asako, Iida, Matsubayashi, and Ueda (2012); Balisacan and Fuwa (2003, 2004); Brookhiser (1999); Directorate General of Regional Autonomy (2013); Fernandez (2014); Kompas (2013a, 2014); Marshall (2014); Matt (1996); Patrikios and Chatzikonstantinou (2014, p. 95). Ishibashi and Reed (1992, p. 376), however, find that level of competitiveness among candidates increases when dynastic politicians join electoral competition.

<sup>9</sup> Kompas (2013b); Republika (2011a)

societies? How do dynastic politicians capture, sustain, and expand their power? Within democracies, why do dynasties exist in some places and not in others?

This paper proposes three main arguments. First, institutional change in the leader selection mechanism from a centralized-authoritarian to a decentralized and democratized system may lead to an unintended consequence—the rise of political dynasties at the subnational level. In a centralized selection system for subnational leader, local elites may not have been able to capture public office because everything was strictly managed by the central government. The new mechanism opens a window of opportunity for local elites to consolidate and expand their power base by utilizing undemocratic methods.<sup>10</sup>

Second, the rise of political dynasties at the subnational level in consolidating democracies is caused primarily by the ability of incumbent dynastic politicians to create an “uneven playing field” by exploiting their family networks and material wealth to help their family members to win office.<sup>11</sup> Family networks are useful for the politicians to exercise various forms of an informal “menu of manipulation”<sup>12</sup> such as vote buying, misappropriation of state financial resources and infrastructure, politicization of state institutions (mobilization of state apparatuses), and intimidation through thug groups. Additionally, unlike political dynasties in developed democracies that rely on family name, self-perpetuation of political power by dynastic politicians in consolidating democracies relies more on their material wealth to win an election.<sup>13</sup> In many cases, they accumulate their material wealth through illicit funding mechanisms such as manipulating the state budget and receiving kickbacks from government

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<sup>10</sup> This paper echoes Sidel (1999) argument on local political bosses in the Philippines.

<sup>11</sup> This paper borrows this term from Levitsky and Way (2010, pp. 9-12)

<sup>12</sup> “Menu of manipulation” is a term coined by Schedler (2002) to describe various methods commonly used by authoritarian regimes to manipulate elections.

<sup>13</sup> “Self-perpetuation of political power” is a term borrowed from Dal Bó et al. (2009)

contracts. Moreover, dynastic politicians use their family networks and material wealth for their territorial politics in order to prevent the intrusion of national political actors or central authorities into subnational level politics.<sup>14</sup> Whenever dynastic politicians lose their grip on territorial control, their ability to consolidate and expand their dynastic control diminishes. In short, dynastic politicians in a consolidating democracy may capture public office—to either create, strengthen, or expand their power base—through a democratic process, i.e., election, but by exercising anti-democratic methods. Therefore, the capacity of a politician to create, consolidate, and expand his/her political dynasty depends on: 1) the strength of the informal family network; and 2) the size of accumulated material wealth garnered by using his/her status as an incumbent. These two factors help dynastic politicians to create an arena of uneven competition that seriously hinders the opposition from capturing office at the subnational level.

Finally, this paper argues that, in many cases in consolidating democracies, incumbents need to build a political dynasty in order to mitigate the risks that may occur during and/or after they step down from office, including legislative opposition during their tenure, possible defeat in the reelection campaign, and potential prosecution after leaving office.<sup>15</sup> In cases where holding office is an important source of illegal wealth or used to defend business interests, dynastic capture of offices is strongly favored. Incumbents select family members to replace them in their position and/or to strengthen their power base primarily because family members

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<sup>14</sup> Gibson (2005) calls this “boundary control.”

<sup>15</sup> Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 28) mention that some risks that may follow the succession of a ruler in a competitive authoritarian regime are “possible seizure of wealth and prosecution for corruption or human-rights violations.” Brownlee (2007, pp. 595-628) also mentions that dynastic succession may be an alternative for departing autocratic leaders to protect themselves from possible threats, such as criminal prosecution, after they have left office.

are the most trustworthy alternative for the incumbent, in that “blood is thicker than water.”<sup>16</sup> Family ties become the primary elite selection mechanism to protect the incumbent’s interests.<sup>17</sup>

The arguments of this paper draw on and support a range of existing literatures. In particular, this paper is related to the literature on hybrid regimes in the age of democratization, particularly with “competitive authoritarianism.”<sup>18</sup> This literature refers to a point on a spectrum where a regime exists somewhere between democracy and authoritarianism. Democratic elements—such as competitive elections, respect for civil liberties, and actors’ commitment to democracy as the only viable channels for political transition—exist, but “the playing field is heavily skewed in favor of incumbents.”<sup>19</sup> Additionally, this research resembles Gibson’s “subnational authoritarianism” because the focus is on deviations from democratic ideals that occur at the subnational level.<sup>20</sup> This paper’s case study shows that even though at the national level a democratic framework exists, at the subnational level competitive authoritarian practices remain evident. Therefore, the emergence of political dynasties at the subnational level should be understood as a form of subnational competitive authoritarian regime, and yet this non-democratic phenomenon is achieved through formally democratic procedures. This creates a kind of “dissonance of legitimacy.” On the one hand, dynastic families visibly compete in the legitimate democratic game. On the other, voters know there is something illegitimate about political positions consistently being dominated by a single family, or worse, specific offices

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<sup>16</sup> Querubin (2010, p. 2) also mentions that relationship among family members enables politician to cooperate, and together they can solve collective action problem easily.

<sup>17</sup> Prewitt and Stone (1973, p. 133); Putnam (1976, pp. 4, 52, 61). In some cases, however, incumbents may select non-family members to succeed or to expand their power base.

<sup>18</sup> Bogaards (2009); Bunce and Wolchik (2010); L. J. Diamond (2002); Gibson (2005); Levitsky and Way (2010); Ottaway (2013); Schedler (2006). For discussions on variations of democratic and authoritarian regime see Levitsky and Way (2010, pp. 13-16)

<sup>19</sup> Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 5)

<sup>20</sup> Gibson (2005, 2010); Snyder (2001). This paper also speaks to other works on democratization at the subnational level such as Behrend (2011); Cornelius, Eisenstadt, and Hindley (1999); Gervasoni (2010b); Giraudy (2010); Sidel (1999). Most of these works focus on subnational democratization in Latin America.

passing directly from one family member to the next. Finally, this paper also speaks to the literature on elites in democracy, particularly regarding the existence of oligarchy in a democratic society. This paper shows that political dynasty can be a political alternative for elites to accumulate and defend their wealth.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the prevalence of political dynasties across political systems, research on political dynasties in a democratic society is limited.<sup>22</sup> The existing literature discussing the emergence of political dynasties can be divided into two camps. Scholars who study primarily the emergence of political dynasties in the U.S. dominate the first camp.<sup>23</sup> These scholars argue that the most crucial distinction that differentiates American dynastic politicians from non-dynastic politicians is the former's family name that provides "brand name advantage," a cardinal factor to attract voters and perpetuate power.<sup>24</sup> Their family name also opens their access to political positions in political parties, informal networks that supported their predecessors, and financial backing for political campaigns.<sup>25</sup> The family factor also serves as a channel of socialization and education that enables members of political dynasties to gain knowledge about politics and public policy.<sup>26</sup> These scholars assume that dynastic politicians operate in a well-established democracy. The name-brand effect is important in all political systems, but not sufficient in explaining the rise of political dynasties in consolidating democracies or in hybrid regimes, where dynastic politicians may exercise illegal mechanisms to win elections without being worried about sanctions from formal institutions.

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<sup>21</sup> Winters (2011) defines oligarchy as a "wealth defense mechanism." This paper shows that a political elite (incumbent) can turn into an oligarch by using his/her formal power to build a political dynasty. This strategy is designed to overcome potential threats to his/her wealth after leaving office.

<sup>22</sup> For discussions on hereditary succession in autocratic regimes, see for example Brownlee (2007); Park (2011); Stacher (2011)

<sup>23</sup> See Clubok et al. (1969); Crowley and Reece (2013); Dal Bó et al. (2009); Feinstein (2010); Hess (1966)

<sup>24</sup> Crowley and Reece (2013); Feinstein (2010)

<sup>25</sup> Hess (1966); Ishibashi and Reed (1992)

<sup>26</sup> Kurtz (2001); Putnam (1976)



The second camp explains the emergence of political dynasties in a consolidating democracy. Scholars in this camp argue mainly that historical legacy (including family heritage), poor economic conditions, low party institutionalization, weak law enforcement, personalistic voting behavior, and failure of democratic institutions to alter the previous regime's source of power lead to the emergence of political dynasties.<sup>27</sup> Although these studies are useful, they are limited in explaining variations within a country, i.e., answering why some regions are dynastic prevalent and others are not, despite the fact that these regions operate under a similar party system, historical legacy, economic condition, centralized law enforcement agencies, etc.

This paper fills the gap by arguing that the rise of political dynasties in a consolidating (or flawed) democracy is not caused merely by institutional weaknesses but occur also because the dynastic incumbent encounters several political challenges which force him/her to take strategic action for mitigating potential risks.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the incumbent's ability to build and strengthen his/her family networks, to accumulate wealth, and eventually to create an uneven playing field, is crucial in determining his/her success in building a political dynasty.

This study employs a case study from Indonesia, specifically from Banten Province, to support its arguments.<sup>29</sup> Indonesia is selected because since decentralization and direct local election were introduced in 2005, approximately 60 political dynasties have emerged in various provinces and districts/municipalities.<sup>30</sup> Banten has been identified as a dynastic-prevalent area, where at least eleven family members of the governor occupy various public offices.

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<sup>27</sup> See for instance Amundsen (2013); Buehler (2013); Camp (1982); Chhibber (2013); Harjanto (2011); McCoy (2009); Mendoza, Beja Jr, Venida, and Yap (2012); Querubin (2011, 2013); Thompson (2012).

<sup>28</sup> See also Fajar (2014) for a study on durability of sub-national political leaders in post-authoritarian regimes.

<sup>29</sup> Some excellent studies on Bantenese political dynasty: Masaaki and Hamid (2008) and Hamid (2014)

<sup>30</sup> Kompas (2013a)

This paper is structured as follows. First, it establishes a working definition of political dynasties and discusses past literature on the topic. Second, this paper builds the theoretical framework to explain the emergence of political dynasties at the subnational level in democratic societies. In the third section, the paper reviews the institutional setting of Indonesia's post-Suharto democracy to set the context of where dynastic politicians operate. The fourth section presents the case study. Finally, this paper provides the conclusion and recommended for further research.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Establishing a working definition of political dynasties**

Previous studies define political dynasties in various ways. Dal Bó et al. (2009, pp. 116, 119) define political dynasty “those from a family that had previously *placed a member in Congress.*”<sup>31</sup> Ishibashi and Reed (1992, p. 367) and Asako et al. (2012, p. 2) define a political dynasty simply as a group of politicians who inherit public office from one of their family members who occupies the office. In the same vein, Thompson (2012) describes political dynasties simply as another type of direct and indirect political power transition involving family members. Additionally, Querubin (2011) defines a political dynasty as one or a small number of families who dominate the power distribution in a particular geographic area.<sup>32</sup> His definition is similar to those of other scholars like Camp (1982). A stricter definition by Hess (1966) posits a political dynasty as “any family that has had at least four members, in the same name, elected to

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<sup>31</sup> Rossi (2009b, p. 4) and Feinstein (2010, pp. 571, 578) also use a similar definition. Feinstein, however, expands the meaning of office from Congress only, to governor and U.S. senator as well.

<sup>32</sup> In his earlier work, Querubin (2010, p. 3) defines a dynastic politician as someone who has family members who served as a member of Congress or Governor prior to the election. In this definition, Querubin captures the importance of sequencing.

federal office.”<sup>33</sup> These definitions are useful but unable to capture important variations that, based on this research’s initial observations, may occur.

First, the definitions by Dal Bó et al., Rossi, Ishibashi and Reed, Asako et al. and Thompson do not cover the expansion of monopoly of power that may occur simultaneously in different branches of a democracy. This study argues that political dynasties are not merely about *continuation* but also include *expansion* of power to other branches of democratic institutions (for instance, legislative or executive branches at lower or higher levels). For instance, if A is a governor of a province and A’s family member B is a member of that province’s parliament, then the definition set by Asako et al. is unable to capture this phenomenon as a political dynasty. Their definition applies only if A is a governor and B directly replaces A in a subsequent election.

Second, the definitions offered by Dal Bó et al., Feinstein, Rossi, Thompson and Querubin may not be effective in capturing the phenomenon of political dynasties because they do not consider the time factor. To illustrate, if A is a governor from 1945 to 1950, and B is A’s family member who is elected governor in the same province in 2010, Thompson’s and Querubin’s definitions encounter a difficulty in showing how A’s position helped B to secure the office, because the span between their tenures is too long and A’s influence in that province may have already disappeared. In other words, timeframe is an important consideration for establishing a definition of political dynasties.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Clubok et al. (1969, p. 1040) use sons, grandsons, nephews, brothers, or first cousins as examples of familial relationship. These examples are even more restrictive because they focus on male politicians only (Kurtz 1989, p. 338).

<sup>34</sup> Time frame is important regarding dynastic succession. Two dictionary definitions of a dynasty are “a sequence of rulers from the same family, stock, or group” and “a series of rulers or leaders who are all from the same family, or a period when a country is ruled by them” (Cambridge Dictionary Online; Dictionary.com, 2015).

Finally, Hess' strict definition of political dynasties is also problematic for several reasons. First, in many countries family name may not be a part of local tradition. For instance, in Indonesia, it is common that an individual has a single name, without a family name. Thus, many members of political dynasties do not share a family name with the dynasties' founders. Second, Hess specifies that at least four members of the family must have been elected to various public positions. His definition is problematic because it does not capture variants of political dynasty that currently have fewer than four members who have succeeded in securing public office.

In this study, political dynasty is defined as elected public officials (governor/ mayor/ regent/ legislator) who have a familial connection with an incumbent at the same, lower, or higher level (district to provincial) based on marital relationship, vertical lineage, or extended family. These officials may be elected in during the tenure of the incumbent or in a subsequent period.<sup>35</sup> This definition captures not only a broad timeframe for office succession but also a family's power expansion to other executive and legislative branches.

## **2.2 The origins of political dynasties**

Several scholars have explained some reasons behind the emergence of political dynasties in a democratic society. By utilizing historical records from the U.S. Congress, Dal Bó et al. (2009) argue that the period of an incumbent's occupying office is positively correlated

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<sup>35</sup> The working definition of this research implies that two family members' occupying the same office but not in an immediately subsequent period (i.e., there is an intervening period with an office holder who is not a member of the family), should be categorized as a political family (see also Kurtz (1989, pp. 335-338)). A political dynasty consists of at least one political family. A political family, however, does not necessarily turn into a political dynasty. This paper's definition of political dynasty is similar to that of Patrikios and Chatzikonstantinou (2014), but they focus more on political dynasties in the parliamentary branch.

with the probability of the creation of political dynasty of the incumbent's family.<sup>36</sup> They argue that this phenomenon is an example of "power begets power." Their research is also supported and expanded by Feinstein (2010) on the electoral origins of American dynasties in Congress, Crowley and Reece (2013) on American governors; and Kurtz (1995) on the Justices of the U.S. and Louisiana Supreme Courts; and (2009a) on Argentinian political dynasties. According to this group of scholars, the main reason behind dynastic politicians' success is their "brand name advantage."<sup>37</sup> Dynastic brand name advantage is not only beneficial for attracting voters, but it may also help dynastic politicians to occupy minor positions in their party organization, and their family name provides a wider access to financial contributors for their political campaigns.<sup>38</sup> Dynastic politicians also have greater opportunity to secure support from traditional informal groups that previously supported their predecessors (for summary see Table 1).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Dal Bó et al. (2009, p. 116)

<sup>37</sup> The root of these scholars' argument is prior works by Clubok et al. (1969); Hess (1966); Kurtz (1989); Lott Jr (1986)

<sup>38</sup> Crowley and Reece (2013). Feinstein (2010, pp. 585-589), however, rejects these hypotheses.

<sup>39</sup> Asako et al. (2012); Dal Bó et al. (2009, pp. 116, 132); Ishibashi and Reed (1992); Kurtz (2001)

**Table 1. Summary of Literature on the Origins of Political Dynasties in Democracies**

Authors	Year	Origin of Political Dynasties	Countries
Hess	1966	Brand name advantage, local connection	The United States
Kurtz	1995, 2001		
Dal Bó et al.	2009		
Feinstein	2010		
Crowley and Reece	2013		
Rossi	2009 a,c		Argentina
Fukai and Fukui	1992	Informal, heredited & individualistic strong campaign organization	Japan
Ishibashi and Reed	1992		
Asako et al.	2012		
Kurtz	2001		Japan, Mexico
Camp	1976	Poor economic condition	Mexico
Mendoza et al.	2012		The Philippines
Harjanto	2011	Weak party institutionalization and institutional change	Indonesia
Amundsen	2013	Weak party institutionalization	Bangladesh
Querubin	2010	Historical legacy and institutional change	The Philippines
Chibber	2013	Weak party institutionalization, absence of civil society, centralized financing	India
Kerklivet	1995	Weak central government	The Philippines
Quimpo	2007		
Mc.Coy	2009		

Source: compiled by the author

The underlying assumption of scholars who believe in “brand name advantage” as the primary source of dynastic success is that family name serves as quality assurance of a politician’s accountability. Following the theory of elite socialization, these scholars believe that members of political dynasties are more exposed than others to a conducive environment for internalization of particular political values, education on how to run political strategies, and familiarization with life as a politician.<sup>40</sup> Thus, members of political dynasties naturally want to follow the career path of their predecessor. In some societies, family becomes a primary channel for elite selection and recruitment.<sup>41</sup> In Kurtz’s (1989, 332) words “politics has become

<sup>40</sup> Clubok et al. (1969, p. 1036); Kurtz (1989, p. 349; 2001)

<sup>41</sup> Kurtz (1989); Putnam (1976, pp. 4, 39, 47, 52, 61). Kurtz (1989, 332) argues that family plays an important role in shaping someone’s decision to become a political leader. Similarly, Feinstein (2010, p. 589) argues that dynastic

something of a ‘family business’.” Additionally, given that name recognition is an important part of winning an election, and it is costly to create name recognition from nothing, the candidates have an immediate advantage over their non-dynastic competitors. And if the name has positive connotations from the past, the candidate with a recognized name enjoys an opportunity to piggyback on the “symbolic identity” associated with the family name. This logic is similar to the concept of product brand in the commercial market wherein customers will buy products only from a company they trust. In the electoral market, voters have a tendency to vote for “good” politicians with proven accountability. Furthermore, dynastic politicians are assumed to have a long-term strategic calculation. If dynastic politicians want their family members to succeed their position or to get elected for other office, then these politicians must maintain their accountability and deliver their campaign promises to the electorate. Additionally, this line of argument suggests that dynastic privilege can be an effective mechanism to deter the incumbents from pursuing private interests that may harm public interests.<sup>42</sup> Implicitly, this group of scholars assumes that dynastic politicians work under a well-established and institutionalized democratic framework wherein: 1) voters have (almost) perfect information about politicians’ behavior; and 2) the rule of law works effectively to punish any misconduct by politicians.

Although these theories are useful in explaining why political dynasties appear in well-established democracies, their generalizability is limited. Their basic concepts do not explain the rise of political dynasties in consolidating democracies settings where: 1) voters lack basic information for assessing politicians’ performance; and 2) the rule of law is weak and politicians may exploit state resources illegally for their personal interests without concern for any

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politicians have the opportunity to consult their predecessor regarding their chances before they join an election. It is important to note that Putnam (1976, 61) and Clubok et al. (1969, 1036) argue that in modern societies, family as an elite selection mechanism becomes less popular.

<sup>42</sup> Crowley and Reece (2013); Dal Bó et al. (2009); Feinstein (2010)

repercussion from the state.<sup>43</sup> Many dynasties in developing countries do not merely rely on their family reputation.<sup>44</sup> In many cases, they utilize illegal and coercive means to influence the electorates.<sup>45</sup> Even if they rely on their family reputation, the reputation may represent not accountability but rather fear.

Research on political dynasty in consolidating democracies has offered some more useful views on how dynastic politicians are able to consolidate and expand their power base in developing countries. Some scholars argue that an economic factor contributes to the emergence of political dynasty in these countries. Studies by Camp (1976) in Mexico and Mendoza (2012) on Philippine dynastic politics suggest that the rise of political dynasties can be attributed in part to traditional societies and poor economic conditions under which voters with lower economic status tend to vote for dynastic politicians. Poor electorates present a conducive environment for dynastic politicians—who are mostly local or national level oligarchs—to exploit their material wealth for patronage politics.

Another explanation for the rise of political dynasties in consolidating democracies is the theory of weak central government vis-à-vis powerful local and national oligarchs. Scholars who propose this theory posit that the state's inability to enforce the law and the national elite's dependency on local oligarchs provide a fertile ground for local strongmen to build their dynasties.<sup>46</sup> In the Philippines, for instance, the colonial legacy privileged local landed oligarchs such that they became highly powerful; the resulting power was further strengthened through a series of political reforms, including the introduction of local direct elections and elections for

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<sup>43</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996, pp. 7-15) argue that five interacting arenas—civil society, political society, rule of law, state bureaucracy, and economic society—must present to make a democracy consolidated. Furthermore, as argued by Burton, Gunther, and Higley (1992, p. 5), democracy is not yet consolidated when elites do not agree on rules of the game of democracy and they maintain low level of trust among them.

<sup>44</sup> Hess (1966)

<sup>45</sup> McCoy (2009)

<sup>46</sup> Hasibuan (2013); Irmansyah (2014); Kerkvliet (1995); McCoy (2009); Querubin (2010); Quimpo (2007)



national legislatures including the senate.<sup>47</sup> Two consequences emerged from this change in institutional arrangement. First, political parties were never institutionalized; and second, national government became dependent on the power of local oligarchs.<sup>48</sup>

Futhermore, the failure of political parties in establishing democratic intra-party selection and promotion mechanisms has provided fertile ground for dynastic politicians to dominate the decision making within the party organization, including to nurture, promote, and select the party's candidates for elections. Studies by Chhibber (2013) in India; Harjanto (2011) in Indonesia; and Amundsen (2013) in Bangladesh propose the similar argument that poor party institutionalization is the culprit that paves a way for dynastic politicians to capture nomination of the party's candidate for elections.

This paper extends the arguments by scholars who study political dynasties in consolidating democracies. The main problem with these arguments is an inability to explain variations within a country. If the situation at the national level is similar to that at local levels—weak state, strong local oligarchs, and poor party institutionalization—then why do political dynasties occur only in some provinces or districts throughout the country rather than in all of them? Additionally, these lines of argument are unable to explain why some dynastic politicians are able to consolidate and expand their power, while others—who theoretically have the same opportunity—fail. Finally, most of these arguments put too much emphasis on a normative vision of democracy, i.e., formal democratic institutions functioning as expected by democratic ideals. In fact, many countries that experience regime transitions may or may not become

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<sup>47</sup> Querubin (2010, pp. 5-7)

<sup>48</sup> Querubin (2010, p. 7; 2011) also argues that in the Philippines, the introduction of term limits has failed to curb the persistence of political dynasties. On the contrary, term limits may accommodate dynastic consolidation and expansion, as well as may deter potential challengers from competing against dynastic politicians. This paper shares Querubin's argument and posits democratic institutional changes may present an unintended consequence that is an extreme concentration of power in a small number of elites who secure, consolidate, and expand their power base through democratic procedures. This line of argument is based on Acemoglu and Robinson (2008).

consolidated democracies. Some of them may return to authoritarian regimes, while others may become stuck in the two regimes. The latter arrangement includes some functioning formal democratic institutions and simultaneously, some informal institutions.<sup>49</sup>

This research aims to fill the gap by proposing that variations within countries can be explained by looking at how incumbents who want to build a political dynasty exploit their family networks and material wealth, as well as how such incumbents manage to engineer an “uneven playing field” at the subnational level, favoring the incumbent’s family members.<sup>50</sup> Creating an uneven playing field can be accomplished through various strategies (mostly illegal), such as controlling the local elections management and supervisory body, exploiting an informal coercive-repression mechanism, conspiring with local law enforcement agencies, mobilizing local government apparatuses and physical resources, exploiting the local government budget for targeted social aid, and many more.<sup>51</sup> The range of approaches highlights the importance of the dynastic incumbent’s ability to control local “territorial politics.”<sup>52</sup>

### **3. Theoretical framework**

Democratization should be understood not solely as a national-level phenomenon. Dahl (1971, p. 12) argues that each country has a varying degree of democratic contestation and inclusiveness that can be observed at not only the national level but also the subnational and social organizational levels. It is possible for politics at the national level to display a high degree

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<sup>49</sup> O'Donnell (2010, p. 24)

<sup>50</sup> Levitsky and Way (2010, pp. 9-12).

<sup>51</sup> Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 10) consider an uneven playing field exists when “1) state institutions are widely abused for partisan ends, 2) incumbents are systematically favored at the expense of the opposition, and 3) the opposition’s ability to organize and compete in elections is seriously handicapped.” Furthermore, they suggest that an “uneven playing field” can be observed by looking at access to resources, media, and law (Levitsky & Way, 2010, pp. 10-12)

<sup>52</sup> This paper borrows Gibson’s (2005, pp. 15-17) concept of territorial system, particularly emphasizing the interaction between subnational site and scale of political action.

of contestation and inclusiveness, while politics at the subnational level show the contrary. Hegemonic politics at the subnational level may coexist with a democratic framework at the national level. Moreover, politics at the subnational level are confined within a national institutional framework. Therefore, a different approach is needed to analyze democratization at the subnational level. A prominent scholar on subnational politics says “Subnational democratization is not democratization in short pants.”<sup>53</sup>

This research employs two main theories to frame the explanation of the rise of political dynasties at the subnational level: competitive authoritarianism and subnational authoritarianism. This paper argues that these two concepts are relevant because self-perpetuation of political power of dynasties in consolidating democracies is not the same as their counterpart in more developed democracies. Unlike in the latter, political dynasties in consolidating democracies win elections by employing methods that are commonly found in authoritarian regimes--for example, vote buying, misappropriation of state budget and facilities, mobilization of state apparatuses, repression, and electoral fraud. This does not mean that a country like Indonesia or the Philippines is an authoritarian state. In fact, these countries have undergone regime transitions from authoritarian to more democratic. The transition, however, may lead in different directions: stable and consolidated democracy, hybrid regimes, and reversion to authoritarian regime. To complicate matters, there are countries that show real progress toward consolidated democracy at the national level, but at the subnational level, local political elites may not operate according to formal democratic institutions. The local practice eventually creates competitive authoritarian enclaves at the subnational level. It is argued here that although these dynasties operate in a

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<sup>53</sup> Gibson (2005, p. 9)

formal democratic framework, they have the ability to influence the electoral outcome by employing informal institutions.

Levitsky and Way (2010) are the first scholars to coin the concept of competitive authoritarianism.<sup>54</sup> They define competitive authoritarianism as a regime wherein political elites operate under formal democratic institutions and election is the only way for leadership transition, but the incumbents have flexibility to manipulate the playing field for their electoral advantage.<sup>55</sup> At the heart of their argument, they believe that competition does exist and oppositional forces have an opportunity to replace the incumbent, but the playing field is unequal; or, using the authors' words, "a distinguishing feature of competitive authoritarianism is *unfair competition*." The inequality of the playing field is marked by three factors: 1) the ability of the incumbent to exploit state institutions; 2) special treatments that are directed to support the incumbent's advantage; and 3) subtle discrimination against the opposition's attempts to organize and compete.<sup>56</sup>

Unevenness of the playing field in a competitive authoritarian regime is also related to the opposition's access to resources, media, and the law. Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 10) argue, "Inequality in terms of access to resources happens when incumbents use the state to create or maintain resource disparities that seriously hinder the opposition's ability to compete." In this sense, incumbents may legal or illegally tap the state financial resources, systematically mobilize the bureaucracy, and illegally monopolize financial access to the private sector. Access to media is uneven when the incumbent controls broadcasts or news articles to his/her electoral advantage.

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<sup>54</sup> The concept of competitive authoritarianism is closely related to other concepts that indicate the position of a regime on the spectrum of authoritarianism versus democracy. Some scholars have termed such a hybrid regime as "semi-authoritarianism," "incomplete democracy," "transitional democracy," "flawed democracy," and "unconsolidated democracy." These terms, however, have flaws of their own. For more information, see Levitsky and Way (2010, pp. 13-16).

<sup>55</sup> Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 5)

<sup>56</sup> Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 10)

Independent media may exist but its coverage is very limited compared to the mainstream media. The incumbent may control the media directly or by proxy through various methods such as ownership by a family member or crony, patronage, or media buying (exclusive contracts). Finally, access to the law is uneven when the incumbent is able to “buy” law enforcement agencies to support his/her political interests, thus obtaining an opportunity to abuse the law without concern for further consequences.

Competitive authoritarianism is different from full authoritarianism, because in the latter, opposition does not have any formal channel to contest the executive power of the incumbent.<sup>57</sup> Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 12) note, “In competitive authoritarian regimes, incumbents are forced to sweat.” Additionally, in a competitive authoritarian setting, protection of civil liberties does exist in the sense that media is relatively independent, and freedom of expression and freedom of association are guaranteed. Nevertheless, on many occasions, oppositional forces are not really free from “informal repression” by the incumbent. Candidates from opposition parties, journalists, and activists may experience “legal” repression such as selective lawsuits and various kinds of threats; they may even be murdered.<sup>58</sup>

Competitive authoritarianism is a powerful concept for explaining the success of incumbents, including dynastic politicians, in winning unfair elections. Levitsky and Way, however, focus only at the national level, whereas this paper focuses its unit of analysis at the subnational level. Thus, this concept needs to be supported by another theory that explains the political dynamic between formal democratic institutions at the national level and informal competitive authoritarian practices at the subnational level. This distinction is important for

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<sup>57</sup> Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 7)

<sup>58</sup> It is important to note that informal repression in Indonesia is not as severe as in other countries such as Malaysia and Russia.

several reasons. First, in many countries, the practice of competitive authoritarianism may be unobservable at the national level but obvious at the subnational level. Second, intervention of central authorities may hinder the incumbent's efforts to fully practice authoritarian methods at the subnational level. Third, by focusing on the subnational level, this paper will be able to build controlled comparisons, i.e., minimizing potential lurking variables and hence increasing accuracy in describing and theorizing about dynamic complex processes of political transformation within a country.<sup>59</sup> These three reasons are why a theory that can explain the dynamics of national-subnational politics is important.

In this context, it is important to include the theory of subnational authoritarianism by scholars who specialize in subnational politics in Latin America. Scholars who work on this topic generally agree that it is possible for two different regimes—democratic and authoritarian—to exist in the same territory, even in consolidated and mature democracies.<sup>60</sup> Gibson (2010, 2013) calls this situation “regime juxtaposition.” This juxtaposition, he argues, creates an arena of conflict between political power at the national and subnational governments. Furthermore, authoritarian elites at the subnational level have to deal with challenges and pressures presented by the democratic national regime. He further argues, “Authoritarian incumbents dedicate major efforts to insulate their jurisdictions from such pressures and to limit access by local oppositions to national elites and resources.” Furthermore, “These “boundary control” efforts involve institutional strategies in multiple territorial arenas.”<sup>61</sup> Additionally, governance and coalition-building strategies of the national elites have influential effects on the

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<sup>59</sup> Snyder (2001)

<sup>60</sup> Gervasoni (2010a, 2010b); Gibson (2005, 2010, 2013); Giraudy (2010); Herrmann (2010)

<sup>61</sup> Gibson (2013, p. 5)

survivability of local authoritarian regimes.<sup>62</sup> Thus, the ability to capture the power, the endurance, and the stability of authoritarian (or competitive authoritarian) regimes at the subnational level depends on the relation between local and national regimes.

Gibson further argues that the existence of subnational authoritarian enclaves in democratic countries is inseparable from how territorial politics are organized; he defines territorial politics as how politics are “organized and fought out across territory.”<sup>63</sup> In exercising their territorial politics, local authoritarian incumbents try to localize conflicts that occur at the subnational level and obstruct their opponent’s access to political backing and resources from the national level. In other words, the incumbents will try to prevent intervention from political powers at the national level.<sup>64</sup> Whenever the local authoritarian regimes fail to maintain their territorial politics, they will likely lose their power.

How do subnational competitive authoritarian regimes exercise their boundary control? More importantly, how can these regimes be detected? This kind of regime becomes apparent when competing parties (particularly the incumbents) employ various methods of electoral manipulation to win elections. In this context, it is important to consider the “menu of manipulations” as proposed by Schedler (2002). He argues fourteen strategies can be employed by political elites. In an authoritarian regime, these strategies can be formal or informal. These are: reserved positions and domains, exclusion and fragmentation of opposition forces, repression and unfairness, formal and informal disenfranchisement, coercion and corruption, electoral fraud and institutional bias, tutelage and reversal. These strategies violate seven

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<sup>62</sup> Gibson (2013); Giraudy (2010)

<sup>63</sup> Gibson (2013, p. 15)

<sup>64</sup> Gibson (2013, pp. 24-30)

normative premises of democracy, including: empowerment, freedom of supply, freedom of demand, inclusion, insulation, integrity, and irreversibility.

This paper argues that not all methods of manipulation are relevant to the discussion of competitive authoritarianism at the subnational level. Some of these methods are not possible because formal democratic arrangements at the national level and power of the central government do not allow for subnational governments to create restrictions against the national constitution or laws set by the central authority. For example, if in an authoritarian regime the incumbent can prohibit particular candidates from joining an election (exclusion), in a subnational competitive authoritarian setting this exclusion is not possible because of the existence of national laws that regulate specific requirements for individuals who want to participate in elections. This kind of situation forces political elites at the subnational level to rely mainly on informal strategies, particularly non-programmatic distributive strategies,<sup>65</sup> because the democratic institutions at the national level limit the possibility of their formally restricting the opposition forces. In many cases these informal strategies are viable alternatives to “cheat” limitations set by formal institutions. This limitation is another indicator of the tension between national and subnational regimes; and consequently, it affects the subnational authoritarian powers in fully exercising all strategies of manipulation. Therefore, this paper selects only informal strategies by the incumbent as indicators of competitive authoritarianism at the subnational level.

As mentioned earlier, the ability of an incumbent to build a political dynasty at the subnational level in a consolidating democracy depends on how he/she can “insulate” his/her jurisdiction from political pressure from the national political actors and state authorities. By

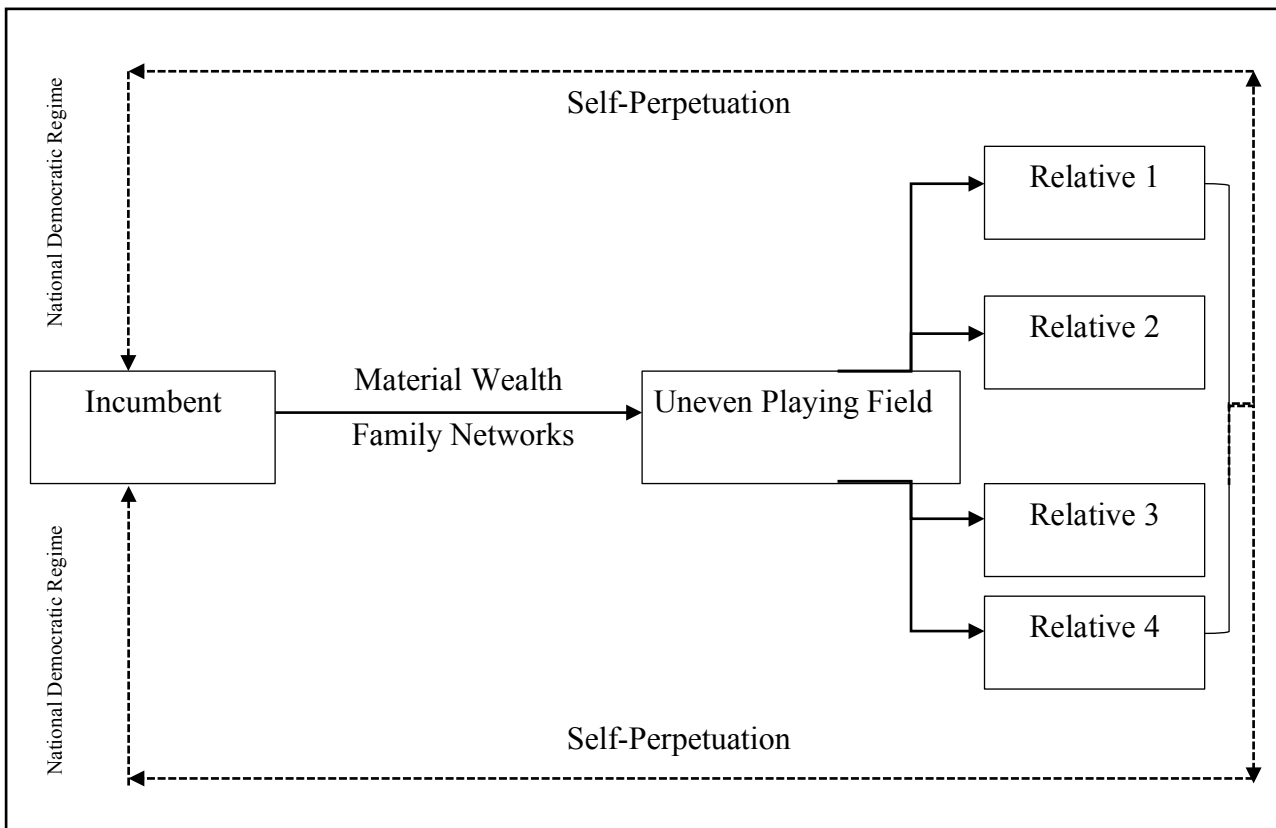
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<sup>65</sup> This paper borrows “non-programmatic distributive strategies” from Stokes, Dunning, Nazareno, and Brusco (2013)



using his/her status as the office holder, the incumbent may accumulate his/her material wealth (legal and illegally) and use this material wealth, along with his/her family networks, to tilt the playing field in order to help family members to win office in different branch and/or level of government. These family members, in return, will help the incumbent to strengthen his/her power in the region, particularly when the incumbent seeks reelection; or if another family member runs for office in a legislative election from the same electoral district. The aggregate of this process is the self-perpetuation of dynastic political power (see Figure 1). These scenarios illustrate how “power begets power” in consolidating democracies.<sup>66</sup>

**Figure 1. Self-perpetuation of Political Power of Political Dynasties in Consolidating Democracies**



Source: author

<sup>66</sup> Recall that “power begets power” is a term coined by Dal Bó et al. (2009).

Using the logic of subnational authoritarianism, political dynasties may keep using this mechanism as long as: 1) they can tame the local oppositions and delink these oppositions from national political actors or authorities through various means, both legal and illegal; and 2) the national-level political actors and authorities do not intervene in local issues.<sup>67</sup> By doing so, political dynasties exercise their territorial politics.<sup>68</sup> On the contrary, if political dynasties fail to exercise these strategies, their domination in the region may be in jeopardy. Additionally, in some cases, penetration to other jurisdictions in order to expand the dynasty's power base may also be limited by the existence of other powerful actors who can control their jurisdictions more effectively than the dynasty, so that the actors can halt the territorial expansion of the dynasty. In this context, the decentralization design plays a crucial role because it determines the devolution of power at various subnational governmental levels. For instance, if the decentralization design gives more power and authority to district head rather than to governor, then the district head may have more flexibility to consolidate his/her power at the district level and increase his/her leverage vis-à-vis the governor. By using this framework, this paper analyzes a case study from Banten Province—a dynastic-prevalent area in Indonesia.

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<sup>67</sup> The incumbent at the subnational level must also satisfy the political interest of party's elite at the national level, for example by delivering more votes during legislative elections.

<sup>68</sup> Gibson (2013, p. 15)

### 3. Institutional Context

#### 3.1 Institutional change: Decentralization and democratization at the subnational level in post-Suharto Indonesia

The fall of Suharto in 1998 was a critical juncture for the country that led to various institutional changes in Indonesia, including remodeling the relationship between central and regional government. Therefore, the rise of political dynasty at the subnational level in Indonesia is inseparable from the introduction of decentralization and democratization in post-New Order Indonesia. Prior to the introduction of these two institutional changes, political dynasty did not exist at the provincial and district/municipality levels. During the New Order regime, political dynasty could be found only at the apex of the country's pyramidal structure of power, i.e., Suharto and his family, and at the lowest level of the pyramid, i.e., village-level political institutions.<sup>69</sup>

Indonesia during Suharto's regime was a highly centralized state. Governor, regent, and mayor were appointed by Jakarta. If there were initiatives from a local House of Representatives (DPRD) to nominate local political elites, these elites had to pass screening tests by the intelligence agency and eventually they had to secure Suharto's blessing before the Ministry of Home Affairs gave its approval. This policy was in place because Suharto wanted to avoid any accumulation of power in the regions so as to prevent secession movements or the rise of potential political challengers that might endanger the country's stability and, more importantly, his legitimacy.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> For instance, Suharto appointed his daughter Siti Hardianti Rukmana (Tutut) as the Minister of Social Affairs. At the village level, it is argued that many village chiefs (*kades*) inherited their power from family members (Komar (2013).

<sup>70</sup> Suharto learned from the experience of his predecessor, Sukarno, who had to face a series of rebellion in some provinces in Indonesia.

The fall of Suharto's regime in 1998 provided an impetus for greater devolution and transfer of administrative matters from the central government down to district-level government, accompanied by complicated financial redistribution arrangements. In a very short period of time, Indonesia has been remodeled from very centralized to one of the most decentralized countries in the world.<sup>71</sup> Suharto's successor, B.J. Habibie, introduced these policies to minimize the risk of regional secessionist movements<sup>72</sup> and to show that the new government has a strong commitment to fulfill demands of the reformist movements by bringing the government closer to the people for a more responsive, down-to-earth, and effective public policy. In the period of 1999-2004, however, the local head of government (governor and regent/mayor) was still selected by the local DPRD.<sup>73</sup> In 2004, to improve the accountability and the legitimacy of the local leaders, the Megawati administration introduced direct local elections for head of government at the provincial and district/ municipal levels.

These new institutional arrangements, i.e., decentralization and direct local elections, have presented a number of unintended consequences including environmental, economic, social, political, and for security.<sup>74</sup> In regard to the unintended political consequences, two things need to be highlighted here. First, the local heads of government, particularly the regent and the mayor, have become very powerful political actors.<sup>75</sup> They are now in control of local

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<sup>71</sup> Buehler (2010); Pisani (2014)

<sup>72</sup> The fall of Suharto in May 1998 intensified the secessionist movements in several provinces such as Aceh, Papua, and East Timor. In 1999, through UN-sponsored referendum, East Timor gained its independence and changed its name to Timor Leste. Additionally, the central government had to deal with several communal conflicts across Indonesia, such as in Banyuwangi (East Java), Ambon (Maluku), Sambas (West Kalimantan), and many other places. For more information see Crouch (2010).

<sup>73</sup> The superior power of the DPRD to elect the local government head presented another problem: money politics to buy the vote of local MPs by the candidates became rampant. This is one of the underlying reasons that the Megawati administration introduced the direct local elections.

<sup>74</sup> On economic issues see: Saad (2001); security issues: John F. McCarthy (2004); Wilson (2010); environmental issues: John F McCarthy (2002); social issues: Duncan (2007); political issues: Buehler (2010); Buehler and Tan (2007).

<sup>75</sup> In the Indonesian term, they are called *raja kecil* (small king).

bureaucracy and the local government budget, as well as the authoritative power to impose local tax (retribution), issue permits, and enact local regulations (*perda*). This new situation creates a new and localized rent-seeking regime as well as new tension with the central government.<sup>76</sup>

Second, these institutional configurations allow new local strongmen—along with “old elites”—from various backgrounds (former military officers, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, religious leaders, and many others) to compete for public office.<sup>77</sup> Choi (2014) argues, however, that the emergence of these new elites does not necessarily reflect democratic improvement in Indonesia. Both “old” and “new” elites employ the same old tactics to gain the electorates’ support and establish their political position, primarily by exploiting their patron-client networks and money politics.<sup>78</sup> The introduction of direct local elections in particular has provided a mechanism for some of the local strongmen to consolidate and increase their power by forming their own political dynasties.<sup>79</sup>

### **3.2 Defining decentralized Indonesia in the post Suharto era**

Before this paper discusses the rise of political dynasty, it is necessary to understand the kind of political environment in which the subnational dynastic politicians operate. In other words, it is important to identify what kind of Indonesia exists after the fall of Suharto’s authoritarian regime. Is it a democracy, a consolidating democracy, or even a semi-

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<sup>76</sup> Central government has the authority to annul local regulations that contradict laws at a higher level of government.

<sup>77</sup> Buehler (2007). Choi (2014) classifies the “old” and “new” elites as the “holdovers” and the “risers.”

<sup>78</sup> Choi (2014, pp. 366-367)

<sup>79</sup> See also Sidel (1999) for their excellent studies on political dynasties in the Philippines.

democracy/semi-authoritarian regime wherein democracy is widely accepted as “the only game in town” for a leader’s succession but from which many elements of democracy are missing?<sup>80</sup>

Defining Indonesia at the state level may be extremely complicated, and scholars define it in various ways. First, those who support the theory of democratic transition and consolidation would argue that today’s Indonesia is a consolidating democracy. That is since the collapse of Suharto’s regime in 1998, the country has successfully transitioned from an authoritarian to a consolidating democracy, marked by greater freedom of the press; civil liberties; and competitive, free, and fair elections without “obvious threats or potent anti-democratic challengers on the horizon.”<sup>81</sup> This group of scholars believes that Indonesia is on the right trajectory to becoming a liberal democracy, but several fundamental issues, such as corruption, poor party institutionalization, defective law enforcement, and many more must be resolved before the country can be a fully consolidated democracy.

The second group of scholars—led by Winters, Hadiz, and Robison—believes Indonesia’s democratization “has changed the form of Indonesian politics without eliminating oligarchic rule.”<sup>82</sup> Distribution of political power is determined by actors’ material power.<sup>83</sup> This camp argues that Indonesia’s transition to democracy has altered only the rule of the game for power succession without changing oligarchic rule.<sup>84</sup> That is, oligarchs have adapted to the new democratic environment. Robison and Hadiz argue “these are interests (old oligarchic power) that have been able to secure their position via new and shifting alliances; they have been able to

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<sup>80</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996, pp. 1-15)

<sup>81</sup> Abdulkaki (2008, pp. 151-172); Carnegie (2008, pp. 515-525); L. Diamond (2010, p. 23); Freedman and Tiburzi (2012, pp. 131-156); Mietzner (2009, pp. 105-123; 2014, pp. 111-125; 2015); Mietzner and Aspinall (2010, p. 17)

<sup>82</sup> Ford and Pepinsky (2014, p. 2). It is important to note that although the oligarchic camp shares several similarities in their arguments, they also differ in terms of theoretical background, definition, focus, unit of analysis, the identity and importance of non-oligarchic actors, and scale of analysis. See Ford and Pepinsky (2014, pp. 2-6)

<sup>83</sup> Winters (2014, pp. 11-12)

<sup>84</sup> Ford and Pepinsky (2014, pp. 2-3); Mietzner and Aspinall (2010, p. 1)

essentially reinvent themselves within Indonesia's new democracy, and indeed to appropriate it."<sup>85</sup> As a result of these developments, Winters defines Indonesia after 1998 as a "criminal democracy in which untamed ruling oligarchs compete politically through elections."<sup>86</sup>

This study resonates with the argument of the second camp and emphasizes the role of material wealth in the production of political power for understanding the political dynamics in Indonesia. Furthermore, this study extends the oligarchy argument by proposing that for dynastic political elites at the subnational level, material wealth plays a very critical role in their political operation, specifically in helping their family members to win office. In other words, they use their material wealth to defend their power and particularly to secure their access to continued accumulation of the material wealth itself.<sup>87</sup> These families may generate and accumulate their material wealth through legal and illegal mechanisms. Additionally, the incumbents may manipulate government programs to subtly support their family members in election campaigns. In this sense, the boundaries between public and private interests are somewhat blurred.<sup>88</sup>

To further clarify what kind of state Indonesia is, this paper argues that analysis of Indonesia's political regime should be separated between the national level and the subnational level. The distinction is important because by using this approach, Indonesia at the national level is a democratic country, but at the subnational level, signs of a competitive authoritarian regime are apparent in some parts of Indonesia.<sup>89</sup> At the national level, stronger democratic competition is evident and manipulation favoring the advantage of the incumbent creates social, political, and

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<sup>85</sup> Robison and Hadiz (2004, p. 256)

<sup>86</sup> Winters (2011, p. 180)

<sup>87</sup> Additionally, Winters (2011, 2014) argues that oligarchy occurs when a condition of extreme material inequality exists between the oligarchs and the masses. One of the indicators he uses is Forbes' 150 richest men in a country. In this regard, dynastic politicians may not be as rich as oligarchs at the national level. These politicians, however, are comparatively far richer than the majority of the population in their jurisdictions, and most importantly they use their material wealth for, among other purposes, wealth defense.

<sup>88</sup> Huntington (1968, pp. 60-61)

<sup>89</sup> Recall that Gibson (2005, pp. 5-6) calls this situation "regime juxtaposition."

legal repercussion. At the subnational level, however, politicians (particularly the incumbent) have more flexibility to manipulate the electoral playing field for their own advantage. In many cases, they utilize their material wealth—one of the sources is from illicit state budget appropriation—to alter the playing field in their favor. By doing so, the dynastic politicians may have a bigger opportunity to perpetuate their power, or in Dal Bó, Dal Bó, and Snyder's (2009, p. 116) words “power begets power.”<sup>90</sup> In this context, this paper analyzes the rise of political dynasties in decentralized Indonesia.

#### **4. Case Study: the Rau Dynasty in Banten**

Banten is located in the western part of Java Island. Banten can be considered a new province in that it was created after the fall of Suharto in 1998.<sup>91</sup> Established in October 2000,<sup>92</sup> Banten Province consists of four municipalities and four districts.<sup>93</sup> Prior to its establishment, Banten was a part of West Java province. The establishment of Banten as a province was inseparable from the role of local civil society organizations and public figures who have been very influential in that area since the New Order regime.

One of the most important public figures for the establishment of Banten as a new province was the late Haji Chasan Sochib.<sup>94</sup> Haji Chasan started his business as a rice dealer at

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<sup>90</sup> In this paper, however, the self-perpetuating power of dynastic politicians is generated through a different mechanism than suggested by Dal Bó, Dal Bó, and Snyder (2009).

<sup>91</sup> During Suharto's regime, there were only 27 provinces (including Timor Timur or East Timor)

<sup>92</sup> Official Website of Banten Provincial Government (2014)

<sup>93</sup> The four municipalities are South Tangerang, Cilegon, Serang, and Tangerang. The four districts are Serang, Lebak, Pandeglang, and Tangerang.

<sup>94</sup> Masaaki (2004, p. 23) reports that initially Haji Chasan was reluctant to support the formation of Banten as a province. The fall of Suharto, however, altered his position and he became a staunch supporter of the formation of Banten Province.



Rau Market, Banten.<sup>95</sup> He subsequently became a main logistic supplier for the Siliwangi military division.<sup>96</sup> He then developed his business as a contractor, under the banner of CV Ciomas Raya, for various development projects during the New Order regime.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, Haji Chasan held key positions in several organizations such as the local Chamber of Commerce (Kadin) and the local Association of Contractors (Gapensi). These two organizations were crucial because contracts for government development projects require local suppliers to have certification from Kadin and Gapensi. In short, Haji Chasan's strategic position in the two organizations gave him leverage to coordinate and distribute the spoils of government projects to his associates.<sup>98</sup> Haji Chasan's monopoly over development projects in Banten provided his family with enormous wealth.<sup>99</sup>

Apart for being well known as a local entrepreneur, Haji Chasan was also well known as the leader of local martial arts champions (*jawara*) through a civil society named "Indonesia Association of Bantenese Men of Martial Arts, Art, and Culture (PPPSBBI)."<sup>100</sup> These *jawara* are also well known as "private security providers" who are sometimes involved in violent actions to achieve their objectives.<sup>101</sup> These *jawara* played a crucial role in silencing public resentment over the provincial government, as well as the involvement of *jawara* in the local

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<sup>95</sup> Haji Chasan's political dynasty is well known as the "Rau Dynasty," referring to its origin in Rau Market (Republika, 2011b).

<sup>96</sup> Masaaki (2004, p. 23)

<sup>97</sup> The company also won several projects from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB) (Masaaki, 2004, p. 23).

<sup>98</sup> Masaaki (2004, p. 23)

<sup>99</sup> Haji Chasan then handed over this monopoly to his son Tubagus Chaeri Wardhana (Wawan) who became the head of local Kadin. The continuation of the economic monopoly from Haji Chasan to Wawan has ensured that the largest share of government projects goes to Haji Chasan's family. Haji Chasan's fortune also came from his share in Krakatau Steel (one of the biggest steelmakers in Southeast Asia) and his tourism businesses.

<sup>100</sup> Tempo (2011)

<sup>101</sup> *Jawara* are local martial arts (*silat*) experts wearing black uniforms and equipped with machetes (Masaaki, 2004, p. 23). See also Masaaki and Hamid (2008) and Tempo (2011).

parliament.<sup>102</sup> The *jawara* intimidated those who openly criticized the local government, the role of *jawara* in Banten's economic and political dynamics, and Haji Chasan and his family. More importantly, the local law enforcement agencies (the police and the public prosecutor office) did not make any further inquiry into these intimidations.<sup>103</sup>

As an "old player" in Bantenese politics, Haji Chasan was also associated with Golkar, Suharto's main political vehicle. It is easy to understand the linkage between the two. Golkar needs civilian groups to mobilize the masses during elections and to suppress dissenting opinion against the New Order regime. Haji Chasan with his *jawara* was the most capable actor to accomplish these tasks. As noted by Hamid (2014, p. 591) "During the New Order, some *jawara* and the *Satuan Karya Jawara* (the *Jawara* Work Squad) were organized by the Golkar party."

Haji Chasan's role in Golkar continued after the fall of Suharto in 1998. The role of Haji Chasan and his family in the 1999 general election was unknown. Later however, Haji Chasan became one of the local spokespersons of Golkar during the 2004 election.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, Haji Chasan's son-in-law Hikmat Tomet was the head of Golkar branch in Banten. Some of Haji Chasan's relatives also became Golkar MPs and occupied key positions in the party at various levels of government.

In short, Haji Chasan's initial power in Banten was built on three sources: financial power (from his exclusive access to government projects), coercive means (from his patronage over the *jawara*), and political party (family members that occupy several key positions in the local Golkar branch). Through the first part of 2001, Haji Chasan did not yet control the local executive office. This situation changed in October 2001.

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<sup>102</sup> Hamid (2014, p. 580)

<sup>103</sup> Hamid (2014, p. 580)

<sup>104</sup> Masaaki (2004, p. 23)

Haji Chasan knew how to adapt to the new democratic environment. In 2001, Ratu Atut Choisyah, one of Haji Chasan's daughters and the wife of Hikmat Tomet, became the first deputy governor of Banten. Atut accompanied Djoko Munandar who became the first governor of Banten. Their success was impossible without Haji Chasan's support (among that of others) through mobilizing the *jawara* to intimidate the local MPs.<sup>105</sup> In addition, allegedly, the pair of Djoko-Atut won the election by bribing the local legislators.<sup>106</sup> Atut's success made Haji Chasan's power omnipresent in Banten. Now he had financial resources, control over the *jawara*, major party backing, and a daughter who controlled the executive government. It is reported that anyone who wanted to occupy important positions within the bureaucracy in Banten had to secure Haji Chasan's blessing, not that of the governor.<sup>107</sup>

In 2005, the governor of Banten at that time, Djoko Munandar, was implicated in a corruption case. The Indonesian president at that time, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, temporarily dismissed Djoko from his position as the Governor of Banten.<sup>108</sup> Automatically, Atut became the acting governor of Banten. The change of leadership from Djoko to Atut was crucial because it occurred just a year before Banten held its first local direct election. It meant that Atut had full control over the local bureaucracy, making Haji Chasan's power even stronger.

In 2006, Atut, with her running mate Muhammad Masduki, won the first direct gubernatorial election in Banten, achieving 40.15 percent of the vote.<sup>109</sup> Her opponents rejected Atut's victory and accused her of various types of electoral fraud, including mobilization of local

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<sup>105</sup> Recall that until 2005, regional executive heads were elected by the local House of Representatives (DPRD).

<sup>106</sup> Tempo Interaktif (2001)

<sup>107</sup> In an interview, Haji Chasan called him the "Governor General of Banten," an informal position that fits his power profile perfectly: a man more powerful than the formal governor. See also Hamid (2014, pp. 580-581)

<sup>108</sup> Kompas (2013d)

<sup>109</sup> Detik (2006)

bureaucracy and vote buying.<sup>110</sup> Atut's victory, however, became the starting point of the rise of the Rau Dynasty in a competitive electoral system.<sup>111</sup>

### *The anatomy of the Rau Dynasty*

Since Atut became the governor of Banten, some of her family members have succeeded in occupying several elected public positions at various levels, in both executive and legislative branches (see Figure 2). In 2008, Atut's half-brother Tubagus Khaerul Jaman was elected as Deputy Mayor of Serang City. In 2009, six members of the Rau Dynasty were elected in legislative and executive elections in Banten.<sup>112</sup> Atut's late husband Hikmat Tomet was elected as a member of the national legislative body (DPR) representing Golkar, and her son Andika Hazrumy secured a position in the Regional Representative Assembly (DPD), a senate-like body in the Indonesian parliament.<sup>113</sup> Andika's wife Ade Rossi Khaerunnisa was also elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) of Serang city local parliament (DPRD II). Ade was not alone, because Atut's stepmother Ratna Komalasari (Haji Chasan's sixth wife) was also elected as an MP in the same parliament. Additionally, Abdul Aden Khaliq, Atut's brother-in-law, was elected as a member of Banten provincial legislature (DPRD I). Along with Abdul, Atut's cousin Ratu Ella Wurella was also elected as a legislator in the same parliament. Finally, another Atut's stepmother Heryani Yuhana (Haji Chasan's fifth wife) was elected as an MP of Pandeglang district DPRD II. In this election, they were nominated by Golkar, except for Andika (nonpartisan) and Ratu Ella Wurella (PDIP).

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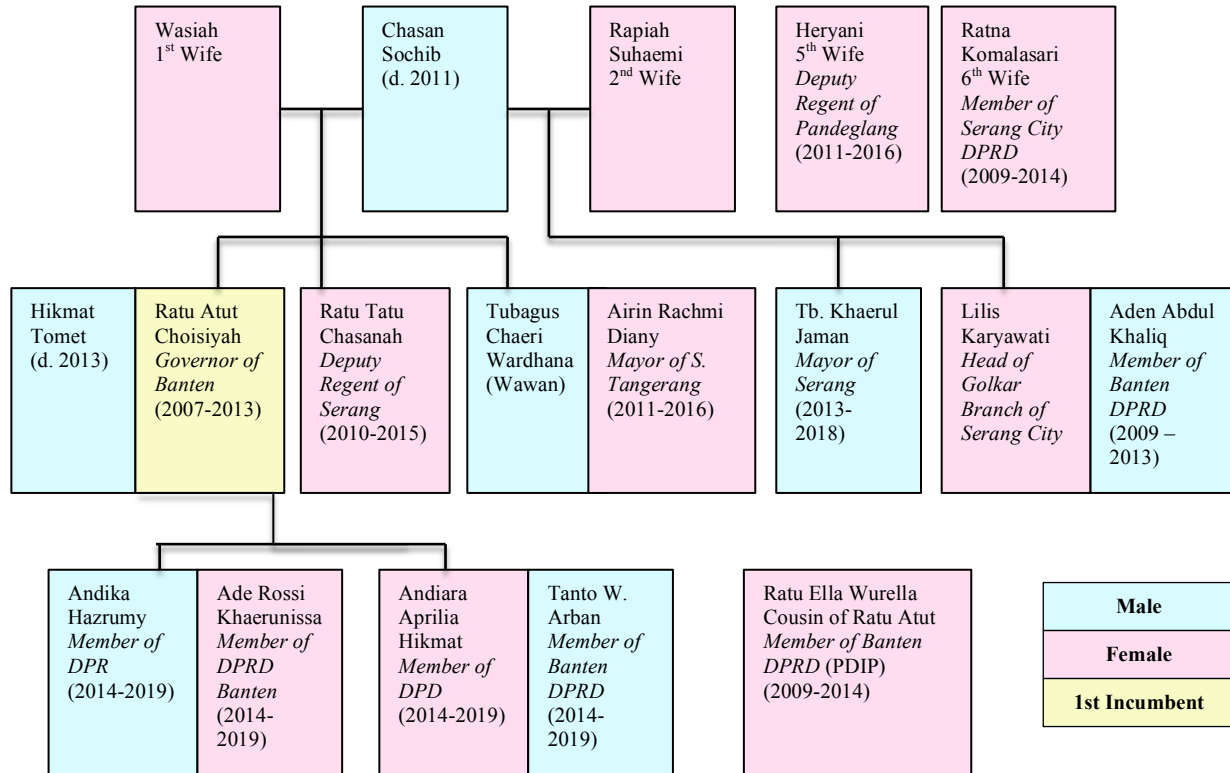
<sup>110</sup> Rakyat Merdeka Online (2006); The Ministry of Home Affairs (2006)

<sup>111</sup> Recall that "Rau" is associated with the origin of Haji Chasan.

<sup>112</sup> Pandeglang is one of the strongholds of Haji Chasan's *jawara* network. In the gubernatorial election in 2006, Atut-Masduki won 42.3 percent of the total votes in Pandeglang. See Masaaki and Hamid (2008, pp. 126, 131)

<sup>113</sup> In the 2014 legislative election, Andika won a seat in DPR representing Golkar.

**Figure 2. Anatomy of the Rau Dynasty**



Source: modified from Hamid (2014, p. 584)

Furthermore, the Rau Dynasty expanded and consolidated their domination in Serang district, Tangerang city, and Serang city. In 2010, Atut’s sister Ratu Tatu Chasanah was elected as the deputy regent of Serang district. In 2011, Airin Rachmi Diany (Atut’s sister-in-law) was elected as the mayor of South Tangerang district.<sup>114</sup> Finally, Atut’s brother who was the Deputy Mayor of Serang City, Tubagus Haerul Jaman, won the 2013 mayoral election of Serang city and became the mayor of the city. The family’s superiority continued in the 2014 legislative election (see Table 2).

<sup>114</sup> In 2008 Airin lost the Tangerang city mayoral election. In 2008 Tangerang was divided into two cities: Tangerang and South Tangerang. Airin won the election in South Tangerang city in 2011.

**Table 2. Formal Position of the Members of Rau Dynasty**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Family Relationship</b>	<b>Formal Position</b>	<b>Other Position</b>
Haji Chasan Sohib (died 2011)	Head of the family (until 2011)	-	Head of Kadin Banten, Head of Gapensi Banten, Head of PPPSBI (all until 2011)
Heryani Yuhana	Haji Chasan's fifth wife	Golkar MP in Pandeglang DPRD (2009-2011) Deputy regent of Pandeglang (2011-2016)	-
Ratna Komalasari	Haji Chasan's sixth wife	Golkar MP in Serang City DPRD (2009-2014)	-
Ratu Atut Choisyiah	Haji Chasan's daughter	Deputy Governor of Banten (2001-2005) Caretaker of Banten Provincial Government (2005-2006) Governor of Banten (2006-2013)	-
Hikmat Tomet (died 2013)	Atut's husband	Golkar MP in national parliament (DPR) (2009-2013)	Head of Golkar provincial branch of Banten (2009-2013)
Ratu Tatu Chasanah	Haji Chasan's daughter	Deputy Regent of Serang (2010-2015)	Head of Golkar provincial branch of Banten (2014-present)
Tubagus Chaeri Wardana (aka Wawan)	Haji Chasan's son; head of the family since 2011	-	Head of Kadin Banten
Airin Rachmi Diany	Wawan's wife	Mayor of South Tangerang (2011-2016)	-
Tubagus Khaerul Jaman	Haji Chasan's son	Deputy Mayor of Serang City (2008-2013) Mayor of Serang City (2013-2018)	-
Lilis Karyawati	Haji Chasan's daughter	-	Head of Golkar district branch of Serang
Aden Abdul Khaliq	Lilis' husband	Golkar MP in DPRD Banten (2009-2013)	-
Andika Hazrumy	Atut's son	Member of DPD (2009-2014) Golkar MP in DPR (2014-2019)	-
Ade Rossi Khaerunissa	Andika's wife	Golkar MP in Serang City DPRD (2009-2014) Golkar MP in Banten DPRD (2014-2019)	-
Andiara Aprilia Hikmat	Atut's daughter	Member of DPD (2014-2019)	-
Tanto W. Arban	Andiara's husband	Golkar MP in Banten DPRD (2014-2019)	-

Source: modified from Hamid (2014, p. 584)

All of them are members and nominated by Golkar. Some of them hold important positions within the party, both at the national and local levels. Atut herself was the deputy treasurer from 2004-2009 and head of the Women Empowerment Division of Golkar from 2009-2014. Her late husband Hikmat Tomet was the head of Golkar provincial branch from 2009-

2013. When he died in 2013, the position was transferred to Ratu Tatu Chasanah (one of Atut's sisters). Additionally, another of Atut's sisters, Lilis Karyawati, is the head of Golkar district branch of Serang.

The Rau Dynasty and Golkar seem inseparable. On the one hand, Golkar needs the Rau Dynasty to maintain the party's domination in Banten. It is proven that total votes to members of political dynasty can be extremely high. On the other hand, the Rau Dynasty needs Golkar as the family's political vehicle, particularly prior to the local direct election period. Members of the family do not necessarily need Golkar as their party machinery, but they need the party to fulfill administrative requirements for the local elections.

Despite the formal positions held by Atut and her family members, the real power holder is not Atut. When he was alive, it was Chasan Sochib who made all the important decisions, including for coordinating the *jawara*, distributing development project contracts, and deciding promotions within the bureaucracy. When Chasan died in 2011, the *de facto* position of power holder was transferred to his son Tubagus Chaeri Wardhana (Wawan; Atut's brother).<sup>115</sup> Wawan also inherited the position as the head of local Kadin from his father.

#### *Analysis of the Rau Dynasty's victory*

By looking at the pattern in Table 2, the Rau Dynasty dominates the politics in four districts/municipalities, including: Serang city, Serang district, South Tangerang, and Pandeglang.<sup>116</sup> These areas are the backbone of electoral support for Atut and her family

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<sup>115</sup> Tempo (2011, pp. 12-15)

<sup>116</sup> The dynasty failed to capture elected office in Lebak, Tangerang district, Tangerang city, and Cilegon. Initially, Pandeglang was under control of Dimiyati Natakusumah, the district regent from 2000 to 2009. In 2009, however, Dimiyati was implicated in a corruption case and acquitted only in October 2011. The case that implicated Dimiyati was heavily impacted his wife Irna Narulita's nomination in the 2010 direct local election in Pandeglang. As a consequence, Irna was able to secure only 41.27 percent of the total vote and lost from the pair of Erwan Kurtubi-Heryani (Atut's stepmother), with 49.62 percent.

members. The family's domination in these areas is not surprising; three factors explain the superiority of the Rau Dynasty. First, these areas are under the control of the *jawara*. It has been reported that opposition candidates, supporters of the opposition, officials of the local election management body, and local bureaucracy who did not support family members of the Rau Dynasty have received various forms of intimidation by unknown parties, allegedly the *jawara*. For instance, one of the competing candidates in the 2011 gubernatorial election, Wahidin Halim, received an intimidating letter from Atut's father Haji Chasan and was attacked by unknown men when he was in his car.<sup>117</sup>

Second, financial backup has played a crucial role in supporting Atut's winning election. Based on Atut's official report to the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in 2006, the governor's wealth was Rp. 41.9 billion (US\$ 3.2 million).<sup>118</sup> In addition, the late Atut's late husband owned Rp. 33.8 billion (US\$ 2.57 million), while Atut's son Andika Hazrumy owns Rp. 19.6 billion (US\$ 1.49 million).<sup>119</sup> The reported amounts, however, are allegedly much smaller than what the family really owns. To avoid KPK's suspicion, most of the money that came from illegal sources goes to Atut's brother Wawan. Wawan acts like a Chief Financial and Operating Officer, where he manages the collection and distribution of the family's wealth. It is difficult to get the actual data on how many assets that Wawan owns because he is not a public official and thus does not have to report his assets to the KPK. To illustrate, based on KPK's raid on Wawan's house, the Agency found two Ferraris, a Lamborghini Aventador, a Nissan GTR, a

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<sup>117</sup> The Indonesian Constitutional Court (2011, pp. 10, 23)

<sup>118</sup> JPNN.com (2013)

<sup>119</sup> Vivanews (2013)



Bentley, and 200 land-ownership certificates.<sup>120</sup> This family is extremely richer than most of the Bantenese population whose total spending was about Rp. 828.735 (US\$ 63) per month.<sup>121</sup>

Allegedly, most of the family's wealth was generated from illegal sources. As mentioned earlier, the Rau Dynasty has an informal monopoly over government projects in Banten. A preliminary finding by the ICW and Banten Transparency Society (MTB) found that the Rau Dynasty managed to secure 175 government projects worth IDR 1.148 trillion (approximately US\$ 88.3 million).<sup>122</sup> These projects were distributed to at least ten companies owned by the Rau Dynasty and 24 companies owned by Atut's cronies.<sup>123</sup>

Additionally, Atut's position as an incumbent has provided her with more flexibility than her competitors. She controls a Rp. 6.052 trillion (US\$ 461 million) provincial government budget. She is not only able to distribute government projects to her family firms, but as a governor she also has the flexibility to illegally exploit the state budget to support her campaign, through preferential aid allocation directed to various social organizations under the Rau Dynasty's patronage (see **Table 3**). Allegedly, most of the money from these various social aid programs was used to finance Atut's campaign.<sup>124</sup> With the family's wealth and the ability to manipulate the government budget, it is easy for the dynasty to finance the campaigns of its family members. The family wealth is particularly useful for securing support from political parties and financing the campaign operation of Atut and her family members, including for vote buying and other illegal methods.

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<sup>120</sup> Vivanews (2013)

<sup>121</sup> Based on 2013 data, retrieved from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of Banten Province (2015)

<sup>122</sup> Berita Satu (2013)

<sup>123</sup> Kompas (2013c)

<sup>124</sup> Liputan 6 (2015); Suara Pembaruan (2015)

**Table 3. Allocation of Provincial Budget to Some Social Organizations Under the Control of the Rau Dynasty**

Member of the Rau Dynasty	Organization	Provincial Budget Allocation
Ratu Tatu Chasanah	The Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) Banten Chapter; the Integrated Health Service (Posyandu) Forum Banten Chapter; National Movement for Social Welfare (GNKS) Banten Chapter	Rp. 7.5 billion (US\$ 572.725)
Tubagus Chaeri Wardhana	The Indonesian Chamber of Commerce (Kadin) Banten Chapter	Rp. 9 billion (US\$ 688.315)
Andika Hazrumy	Disaster Preparedness Cadets (Tagana) Banten Chapter; Youth Group (Karang Taruna) Banten Chapter	Rp. 10 billion (US\$ 763.452)
Adde Rossi Khaerunissa	Himpaudi Banten Chapter; BKOW Banten Chapter; P2TP2A Banten Chapter	Rp. 5.6 billion (US\$ 428.220)
Unknown, but related to the Rau Dynasty	Majelis Taklim Al-Choisyah; Darussolichin Foundation; Welfare Charity Foundation	Rp. 6.6 billion (US\$ 504.233)

Source: Tempo.co (2013a, 2013b)

According to Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 28), this kind of organized corruption represents the importance of informal institutions in competitive authoritarianism. Informal institutions become a vital feature of competitive authoritarianism because the incumbent is unable to achieve his/her objective (for instance, raising money for an election campaign) through formal mechanisms, and changing the rules of the game is practically impossible due to the existence of a more superior law that regulates the limits of donations in elections. Moreover, the organized corruption by the Rau Dynasty signifies the disparity of access to resources by the incumbent that can “seriously hinder the opposition’s ability to compete.”<sup>125</sup>

Third, Atut’s status as an incumbent has helped her to manipulate the playing field to support her winning. Based on the Indonesian Constitutional Court (MK) proceeding related to gubernatorial election in Banten, the incumbent has been charged of conducting a “massive, systematic and structured” electoral manipulation. The accusations include: manipulation of the

<sup>125</sup> Levitsky and Way (2010, pp. 9-11)

voters' list by the local election management body (KPUD); an implicit message from KPUD to support the incumbent; manipulation of the vote counting software; partisanship of local bureaucrats; misuse of government facilities; partisanship by the local election supervisory body (*Panwaslu*), and many more. MK proved that some of these accusations were valid.<sup>126</sup> MK did not find, however, that the putative manipulation was “massive, systematic, and structured,” the prerequisite to cancel the election result. By using this loophole, Atut and her team were still able to win the election.

These findings show that the incumbent was able to manipulate the playing field to support her campaign. She faced tough competition from her competitors and won the election with less than a ten percent margin. Nonetheless, by manipulating the playing field, the incumbent was able to secure her victory against her competitors. As argued by Levitsky and Way (2010), a competitive authoritarianism is marked by a “meaningful competition” but the playing field is uneven. The unevenness seriously undermines the opposition’s competitiveness in the election.

The strategy of manipulating the playing field is also indicated in the victory of Atut’s family members, particularly those who have won the executive local elections.<sup>127</sup> For example, in the 2010 South Tangerang election, the opposition charged that there was a sudden and systematic reorganizing of local public officials by the provincial government directed at supporting the governor’s sister-in-law (Airin) in the election. The reorganization was part of the elections strategy to smoothe Airin’s chance to occupy the leadership in South Tangerang. Additionally, in many provincial governmental events, Airin was included as an official guest at

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<sup>126</sup> The Indonesian Constitutional Court (2011)

<sup>127</sup> This paper has not yet found data on electoral manipulation in legislative elections involving Atut’s family members.

which she could subtly promote herself as a candidate in the upcoming election and coordinate with local officials. Airin was also able to install her campaign materials and conduct meetings with her campaign team on government premises. In short, government officials were systematically mobilized and government facilities were misused to support Airin's campaign. Furthermore, the opposition found a strong indication that the integrity of the local electoral management body was compromised by favoring Airin in the election. Finally, the opposition also accused Airin of using money politics to support her campaign.

These kinds of accusation were limited not only to Airin. Similar manipulations also occurred in other places where family members of Atut competed, including in Serang district and Serang municipality, as well as in Pandeglang district. Nevertheless, as with other electoral manipulations, it is difficult for law enforcement agencies and the Court to prove a direct connection between the governor's support and the success of her family members in local direct elections due to various reasons such as lack of evidence and limited capacity of the state apparatuses to investigate the manipulations. The difficulty in proving a direct connection allows members of political dynasties to keep manipulating elections. Additionally, in cases where the Court found electoral manipulations, there were no strong punishments to the perpetrators. More importantly, as shown below, when the Court's integrity is compromised, proving electoral manipulation by members of political dynasties becomes even more difficult.

Finally, the success of Atut's relatives in the district-level direct elections and legislative elections helped Atut to further strengthen her power, particularly during her reelection campaign. She won her reelection with 49.65 percent of the total votes. The opposition charged that in areas where Atut's relatives held official positions, there were systematic and structured

electoral manipulations such as violent and non-violent intimidations, kidnapping, money politics, collusion with local KPUD, and mobilization of local state apparatuses.<sup>128</sup>

These irregularities show that Atut's family networks operate in two ways in consolidating and expanding the family's power base. First, as incumbent, Atut has the ability to help her family members who seek office at the district level. By utilizing provincial state apparatuses, public facilities, and possibly public funding, the governor helped her family members during the campaign period. Second, after these family members won the local election, in return they helped Atut to further strengthen her political power to win the reelection campaign by mobilizing the state apparatuses at the district level as well as using public facilities and public funding.<sup>129</sup> Controlling district-level government is particularly important because, as previously mentioned, executive leaders at this level have more power to control district-level state apparatuses, to appropriate the state budget, and to generate more rents (legal and illegal) for their personal interests. The aggregate of these processes is self-perpetuation of power by the Rau Dynasty, where Atut's power produces more power to the family. This is an example of power-begets-power as coined by Dal Bó, Dal Bó, and Snyder (2009).

#### *The limit of dynastic consolidation and expansion*

Despite dynastic domination in subnational politics, apparently there is a limit on political dynasties' power to consolidate and to expand their territorial supremacy. This paper argues that dynastic consolidation and expansion depend on a dynasty's ability to fully exploit informal family networks, to accumulate material wealth, and eventually to manipulate the playing field in order to provide electoral advantages for family members. It is worth noting that

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<sup>128</sup> The Indonesian Constitutional Court (2011)

<sup>129</sup> Additional data on total votes recapitulation per district are needed to strengthen this claim.

in several areas, a political dynasty's ability to fully exercise its power also may be limited by the existence of other political dynasties. Finally, dynastic consolidation and expansion may also be limited when political actors and authorities at the national level intervene or impose a new regulation that reduces the opportunity for local dynastic politicians to compete in subnational elections.

Regarding the ability to exploit informal family networks fully, examples from two districts in Banten shed some light on the limitation of the Rau Dynasty's family networks. Two members of the Rau Dynasty have attempted to capture the office of the regent of Tangerang District in 2008 and 2012. A sister-in-law of Atut, Airin Rachmi Diany (now mayor of South Tangerang), initially lost against the incumbent Ismet Iskandar, in 2008. Nonetheless, the Rau Dynasty, through Airin, was later able to capture the regional office in the Tangerang area after the district was divided into two subnational administrations—Tangerang District and South Tangerang Municipality. In a subsequent election in Tangerang District, Ismet's son, Ahmed Zaki Iskandar, defeated Atut's brother-in-law Aden Abdul Khalik, signifying another loss for the Rau Dynasty. The Iskandar family's superiority in Tangerang obstructed the Rau Dynasty's ambition to expand its power base in Banten Province. In this district, the Iskandar family was able to exercise effective "border control" because the district head had more access to local bureaucracy and the local budget which prevented the Rau Dynasty from penetrating this area.<sup>130</sup>

The power of the Rau Dynasty was also in jeopardy when the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) arrested Atut and Wawan in 2013 for their involvement in a bribery case which also implicated the then Constitutional Court Justice Akil Mochtar. KPK arrested them for conspiring to manipulate the Court's ruling in one district-level election in Banten. Atut and

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<sup>130</sup> Ismet Iskandar was implicated in a corruption case regarding the procurement of a firefighter mobile unit in 2003. This case, however, never got into the Court (Sindonews, 2012)

Wawan were sentenced to jail for seven and five years respectively. Furthermore, this case revealed that Atut and Wawan were implicated in various other corruption cases in Banten, particularly regarding procurement in health facilities. Some of the cases took place in Atut's jurisdiction (Banten) and in Wawan's wife Airin's jurisdiction (South Tangerang).<sup>131</sup>

Atut's and Wawan's involvement in this corruption saga is significant in two ways. First, it proves that dynastic networks can be used by political elites to accumulate wealth by tapping state resources via various methods such as government project allocation. The money they receive from this process may be used to support the consolidation and expansion of the family's territorial control. Second, continuation of a political dynasty might be threatened when a national-level agency intervenes in local issues, potentially disrupting the balance of power at the subnational level (but not automatically leads to a regime change). In this context, this paper shows that the power of local dynasty to control its territory is not unlimited.

These limitations, in part, may explain why some political families in some regions succeed to build and to maintain their dynastic domination, while others fail. If a very strong family like the Rau Dynasty is unable to overcome the enormous challenges that limit their ability to consolidate and expand their power, then it is understandable why other political families or incumbents with smaller resources tend to be less successful in building and expanding their own political dynasties. This explanation, however, is not yet complete. There are many other potential explanatory variables that may present a better understanding about why political dynasties occur in some places and not in others.

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<sup>131</sup> Others of Atut's relatives, Lilis Karyawati and John Chaidir, were also implicated in various corruption cases in Banten (Merdeka, 2013).

## **5. Conclusion and Future Direction**

This analysis has shed some light on what causes political dynasty, how incumbents build political dynasty, and what are the limits on dynastic expansion and consolidation. Institutional changes that give more power to the regional leaders and the introduction of direct local election provide an arena for local elites to capture public office and to consolidate and expand their power base by utilizing the family networks. Informal family networks, material wealth, and the ability to make the playing field uneven are important for politicians' capacity to build their dynasties. Additionally, the ability of the local political dynasties to prevent "unfortunate" intervention by central authorities (parties and government agencies) play an important role for dynastic expansion and consolidation.

The case study of this paper shows that the Rau Dynasty is able to dominate local politics in Banten precisely because the dynasty can tilt the playing field by exploiting the family networks and material wealth to support the incumbent's relatives. The ability of the Rau Dynasty to self-perpetuate its power relies on informal "menu of manipulation," rather than its brand name advantage. Additionally, this paper shows that dynastic consolidation and expansion of the Rau Dynasty and the ability to control its territory is not unlimited. The existence of other political dynasties and the intervention from national political actors and central authorities may hinder the family's ambition to multiply its power bases.

The arguments of this paper, however, need to be tested with more cases. Other areas that show dynastic prevalence, such as South Sulawesi, South Sumatera, and Central Kalimantan, would be good places to further test the argument of this paper. Cross-country and cross-region comparisons would also be beneficial for further strengthening the current argument.



Additionally, this paper only partially reveals why dynasties exist in some places and not in others. More research is required to answer this question. An incumbent's political ambition may be a plausible hypothesis worth exploration. It is premature to conclude that all politicians want to build political dynasties; some incumbents may not be interested in building political dynasties after they finish their term limits. Additionally, using the rentier theory in explaining dynastic variance across the subnational level is also worth exploration.<sup>132</sup> It is too early to say that areas with natural resources are more prone to dynastic capture. Initial observation suggests that political dynasties may occur in resource-rich areas like Kutai Kartanegara and in areas that lack natural resources such as Bantul.

Another promising line of research is investigating why citizens vote for dynastic politicians. This paper's arguments imply that the ability of a political dynasty to skew the playing field might also be influential in shaping voter preferences, regardless of the reputation of a political dynasty. Nevertheless, arguments proposing that cultural factors play an important role in shaping voter preference toward a particular family are also worth investigation. In short, there is room for further exploration to obtain a more complete picture of the rise of political dynasties in consolidating democracies. \*\*\*

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<sup>132</sup> See for example Gervasoni (2010b)

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