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# **THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS: A PRELIMINARY PROFILE**

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## The Philippine Senators

### *Fame, Wealth and Name*

The Senate of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress is composed of twenty three (23) Senators: Edgardo J. Angara, Joker P. Arroyo, Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano. Pia S. Cayetano, Miriam Defensor Santiago, Franklin M. Drilon, Juan Ponce Enrile, Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero, Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada, Teofisto “TG” Guingona III, Gregorio B. Honasan II, Panfilo M. Lacson, Manuel “Lito” M. Lapid, Loren B. Legarda, Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos, Jr., Sergio R. Osmeña III, Kiko Pangilinan, Aquilino Martin “Koko” dela Llana Pimentel III, Ralph G. Recto, Ramon “Bong” Revilla, Jr., Vicente C. Sotto III, Antonio “Sonny” F. Trillanes IV and Manny Villar. It is currently headed by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Ejercito-Estrada, Majority Leader Vicente Sotto III and Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano.

Notably, the Senate of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress is male dominated, with only three (3) women members in the persons of Senators Miriam Defensor Santiago, Pia S. Cayetano and Loren Legarda.

Law is the dominantly declared profession of the Senators of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress. In fact, eleven (11) of them are lawyers. Other professions declared are actors, military/police officers, businessmen and journalist/reporter.

*Table 1. Senators and their Profession*

<b>Profession</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lawyers	11	48%
Actors	4	17%
Military Officers	3	13%
Businessmen	2	9%
Journalist/Reporter	1	4%
No data	2	9%
Total	23	100%

The participation of celebrities, however, in senatorial elections populated the Philippine Senate with media and showbiz personalities. Currently, eight (8) Senators may be said to have gained their senate seats, either because they are celebrities themselves or they forge matrimonial alliances with celebrities. For those who are not celebrities themselves nor married to one, they keep pace by celebrity endorsements, knowing so well that showbiz is a viable route to power.

Senators Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada, Manuel “Lito” P. Lapid, Ramon “Bong” Revilla, Jr. and Vicente C. Sotto III are celebrities in their own right.

Initially, Senator Pia S. Cayetano was unknown to the Philippine electorate, only to gain popularity with her TV advertisements as the runner, biker and swimmer.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, she maintains her media activities as co-host of *Usapang de Kampanilla* (DZMM 630 khz) and *Ang mga Payo ni Compañero* (DZMM); as columnist of *Compañero y Compañera* (People’s Tomight) and Baby Magazine and Good Housekeeping; and Radio Host of *Compañero y Compañera*.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Senator Loren Legarda was a TV anchor of ABS-CBN from 1986 up to the time, when she won a senate seat in 1998.

Interestingly, Senators Kiko Pangilinan and Ralph G. Recto are not far from the celebrity world as they were married to “Megastar” Sharon S. Cuneta and “Star for all Seasons”- turned-politician Vilma Santos-Recto, respectively.

Indeed, the “celebritification”<sup>3</sup> of the Philippine Senate may have brought quite a difference in the general composition of the Philippine Senate. As the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) puts it, “While the House of Representatives remains the bastion of local power and of families with a political base, the Senate is a contested field where, at the moment, celebrity power dominates, easing out the traditional clans and paving the way for the entry of new men and women to that most exclusive elite assembly.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, in the Philippine Senate of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress, “the established clans have been eclipsed by newer showbiz-and-media-based political families like the Estradas, Revillas and Cayetanos.”<sup>5</sup>

The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that the term of office of the Senators shall be six years, and no Senator shall serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.<sup>6</sup> Presently, twelve (12) of the senators are first termers, and eleven (11) of them are second termers.

Table 2. *Terms of Office*

Terms of Office	Number	Percentage
First termers	12	52%
Second termers	11	48%
Total	23	100%

<sup>1</sup> Profile of Senator Pia S. Cayetano. Official Website of Philippine Senator Pia S. Cayetano. Available: [http://senatorpiacayetano.com/?page\\_id=2](http://senatorpiacayetano.com/?page_id=2)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (2004). Fame and family dominate senatorial race. Available: <http://pcij.org/stories/politics/fame-and-family-dominate-senatorial-race/>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Section 4, Article VI, The 1987 Philippine Constitution.

Half of the senators are elected every three (3) years to ensure that the Senate is a continuous body. The batch of Senators who were elected in May 2007 will serve until 2013 (Senators Batch 2013), while the batch of Senators who won the May 2010 elections will serve until June 2016 (Senators Batch 2016).

Among the Senators Batch 2013, Senators Angara, Arroyo, Lacson, Pangilinan and Villar were reelected. Returning to the halls of the Senate are Senator Legarda who served from 1998 to 2004, and Senator Honasan who previously served from 1995 to 2001 and from 2001 to 2004. The four (4) neophytes of the Senators Batch 2013 are Senators Pimentel, Trillanes IV, Escudero and AP Cayetano.

As for Senators Batch 2016, reelected were Senators Cayetano, Ponce-Enrile, Estrada, Lapid, Revilla and Defensor-Santiago. Senators Drilon, Osmeña, Sotto III and Recto previously served in the Senate. Senators Drilon and Osmeña both served their first and second terms from 1995 to 2001 and 2001-2007, respectively, only to return in 2010. Senator Sotto III also served his two (2) consecutive terms from 1992 to 1998 and from 1998-2004. Senator Recto likewise served from 2001 to 2007. Unfortunately, Senators Sotto III and Recto lost their senatorial bids in 2007. Senators Marcos, Jr. and Guingona III are the two (2) neophytes of Batch 2016 Senators.

In sum, six (6) Senators are newcomers in the Philippine Senate of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress.

*Table 3. Re-electionist, Returnees and Neophytes*

Senators	Number	Percentage
Reelectionists	11	48%
Returnees	6	26%
Neophytes	6	26%
Total	23	100%

As may be gleaned from previous Congresses, neophytes rarely make it to the Senate, unless one has name and fame. Truly, the six (6) newcomers affirms such reality. Undoubtedly, Senator Pimentel is one step forward to the senate door, because he is his father's son. Aside from having the illustrious names, Senators Escudero, AP Cayetano, Marcos, Jr. and Guingona III have long political experience, giving them the greater edge of being elected to the Senate. As for Senator Trillanes IV, he is the only one to have become a Senator without a father who had done so earlier. Neither did he previously hold an elective position. He, however, gained popularity for leading the 2003 Oakwood Mutiny, when he and a group of three hundred twenty one (321) soldiers took control over the Oakwood towers in [Makati City](#) as a protest for the alleged rampant corruption in the military and in the Philippine government itself.

Table 4. *Senator and their Terms*

Senators	Terms		
	Number	Starts	Ends
Juan Ponce Enrile	2	2010	2016
Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada	2	2010	2016
Alan Peter Compañero S. Cayetano	1	2007	2013
Vicente C. Sotto III	1	2010	2016
Edgardo J. Angara	2	2007	2013
Joker P. Arroyo	2	2007	2013
Pia S. Cayetano	2	2010	2016
Miriam Defensor Santiago	2	2010	2016
Franklin M. Drilon	1	2010	2016
Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero	1	2007	2013
Teofisto “TG” Guingona III	1	2010	2016
Gregorio B. Honasan	1	2007	2013
Panfilo M. Lacson	2	2007	2013
Manuel “Lito” M. Lapid	2	2010	2016
Loren B. Legarda	1	2007	2013
Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos, Jr.	1	2010	2016
Sergio R. Osmeña III	1	2010	2016
Kiko Pangilinan	2	2007	2013
Aquilino Martin “Koko” dela Llana Pimentel <sup>7</sup>	1	2007	2013
Ralph G. Recto	1	2010	2016
Ramon “Bong” Revilla, Jr.	2	2010	2016
Antonio Fuentes Trillanes IV	1	2007	2013
Manny Villar	2	2007	2013

Typically, the Philippine Senate is a “rich man’s chamber.” It is very wealthy and has always been. As borne out from the net worth of its incumbent members, reflected in their latest Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN),<sup>8</sup> the Senate is composed of multimillionaires. Most of its members are also businessmen in some sort, in the context that they are shareholders/stockholders in various companies and have business interests in real estate, retail and food business.

Table 5. *Senators and their Business Interests*

Business Interests	Number	Percentage
Have business Interests	14	61%

<sup>7</sup> Assumed office on 15 August 2011 after winning election protest against Miguel Zubiri who earlier resigned on 03 August 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Mendez, C. (2012). Marcos, Estrada join list of richest senators. Available: <http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?publicationSubCategoryId=63&articleId=807432>

No business interests	2	9%
No business interests but spouse has	3	13%
No data	4	17%
Total	23	100%

Senator Villar is still the richest among the members of the current Senate. He has a networth of Php 854.243 M. He, together with wife Cynthia A. Villar, is a shareholder in the following companies: Fine Properties, Inc., M.B. Villar Co., Inc., Mooncrest Property, Hollinger Holdings and Manuella Corporation.<sup>9</sup>

The Senate's second richest is Senator Ralph Recto with a net worth of Php 426.028 M.

Senator Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. ranks third with a total net worth of Php 311.193 M with no liabilities.<sup>10</sup> It must, however, be noted that his net worth does not include his share in the estate of his father.<sup>11</sup> Senator Marcos, Jr. and his wife Louise Aranate have business interests with Augustus Management, Inc., a management company in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte. His wife has business interests in NIV Property Holdings and MOST (Marcos, Ochoa, Serapio, Tan) law firm.<sup>12</sup>

Senator Jinggoy Estrada is in the fourth place with a net worth of Php 166.727 M. He has no business interests, but his wife Presentacion Estrada is a stockholder of S-E-N-J-I Corporation, Lucky J4J Resto, Inc., HK Choi, Inc., Choi Palace, Inc., Quick Choi, JELP Real Estate Development Corporation and Golden Treasure Enterprise.<sup>13</sup>

Senator Ramon "Bong" Revilla has a networth of Php 147.217 M and has business interests in Jomarog, Inc. and Villa Jose Jacinda, Inc.<sup>14</sup> He is the fifth richest Senator.

Senator Juan Ponce Enrile has business interests with JVPE Holdings, Inc. and Canlubang Golf and Country Club.<sup>15</sup> He and his wife are listed as major stockholders of JAKA Investments Corporation. They also own shares at the Alabang Country Club, Inc. Senator Enrile has a networth of Php 117.26 M.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> RAPPLER.COM (2012). Senators who disclosed 2011 SALNs. Available: <http://www.rappler.com/nation/4556-2011-saln-of-senators>

<sup>10</sup> Supra, note [8].

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Supra, note [9].

<sup>14</sup> Supra, note [8].

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Senator Sergio Osmeña III has a networth of Php 105,47 M. In his SALN 2010, he indicated therein that has no business interest but has a Php 21.6 million real properties.<sup>17</sup>

Senator Teofisto Guingona III has a networth of Php 82.520 M. He is a stockholder in at least nine (9) firms. These include Tierra Minerva Properties Development Corporation, Guimaras Realty, Inc., Southern Flagship Realty, Inc., First Tropical Blooms, Inc., Firm Builders Realty Development Corporation, Sta. Lucia Investments, Inc., Ayala Land and Ayala Corp.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, his wife Ma. Victoria Guigona is a stockholder in twenty five (25) firms.<sup>19</sup>

Senator Edgardo Angara receives dividends from BPI, GMA Network, Manila Electric Co. and Republic Cement Corporation.<sup>20</sup> He also owns shares in Accra Investments Corporation, Ayala Land, Inc., Aboitiz Power Corporation, Philex Mining and Chinatrust (Phil) Commercial Bank Corporation.<sup>21</sup> His networth is in the amount of Php 78.273 M.

Senator Pia Cayetano is connected with Tatoonine Holdings Corporation.<sup>22</sup> She has a networth of Php 72.058 M.

Senator Vicente Sotto III does not have any business interests but has a networth of Php 58.920 M.

Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago is connected with Narsan Holdings, while her husband is involved in NS & MD Corporation, NMAM Corporation, DEFSAN Corporation; and NARCMIR Corporation. She has a networth of Php 69.694 M.

Senator Loren Legarda is a stockholder in Manila Polo Club, Loren Legarda and Associates (LLAI) and Bai-A-Labi Corporation. She has a networth of Php 45.680 M.

Senator Franklin Drilon has interests in Violet Orchids Holdings Corporation and Orchids Galore, Inc. He has a networth of Php 44.937.

Senator Alan Cayetano has business interests in Pateros Development Corporation, Slarep Development Corporation, Sanpil Holdings, Cayetano Family Foundation, Inc., APSC Tapat Development Corporation, LokalBooks, Inc., Celebrity Sports Plaza, Inc. and Fuego Development Corporation.<sup>23</sup> He has a networth of Php 23.210 M.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Supra, note [9].

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Supra, note [8].

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

Senator Panfilo Lacson has no business interest, but his wife Alice is involved with the Golden Beret Security Agency and Megastar Real Estate Corporation.<sup>24</sup> He has networth of Php 22.637 M.

Senator Gregorian Honasan III has a nethworth of Php 20.837.

Senator Manuel Lapid has no business interests, but his wife Marissa Lapid is connected to Waltermart Construction Supply (Porac, Pampanga), Generics Pharmacy and MTL Enterprises.<sup>25</sup> His networth is Php 18.5 M.

Senator Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III has a networth of Php 17.078.

Senator Francis Pangilinan has agricultural properties in Marinduque and Pangasinan, shares in Manila Pearl Corporation, Marbleland Mining and Development Corporation, Lockwell Builders, Inc. and FRD Food and Spices.<sup>26</sup> His networth amounts to Php 14.564 M.

Senator Joker Arroyo has a networth of Php 11.05 M.

Senator Francis Escudero is a partner of EMSAVVIL Law and a networth of Php 9.867 M.<sup>27</sup>

Senator Antonio Trillanes IV is the poorest with a networth of Php 3.897 M. He has no business interests.<sup>28</sup>

*Table 6. Senators and their Networth*

<b>Senators</b>	<b>Networth (Million)</b>
Manny Villar	Php 854.213
Ralph G. Recto	426.028
Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos, Jr.	311.193
Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada	166.727
Ramon “Bong” Revilla, Jr.	147.217
Juan Ponce Enrile	117.726
Sergio R. Osmeña III	105.47
Teofisto “TG” Guingona III	82.520
Edgardo J. Angara	78.273
Pia S. Cayetano	72.058
Vicente C. Sotto III	58.920
Miriam Defensor Santiago	69.694

<sup>24</sup> Supra, note [9].

<sup>25</sup> Supra, note [8].

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Supra, note [9].

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



Loren B. Legarda	45.680
Franklin M. Drilon	44.937
Allan Peter "Compañero" S. Cayetano	23.210
Panfilo M. Lacson	22.637
Gregorio B. Honasan	20.837
Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid	18.50
Aquilino Martin "Koko" dela Llana Pimentel	17.078
Kiko Pangilinan	14.564
Joker P. Arroyo	11.05
Francis "Chiz" G. Escudero	9.867
Antonio Fuentes Trillanes IV	3.897
Total	<b>Php 2, 722,296,000.00</b>

### *The Philippine Senate is still a family affair*

In his study, "Family and Politics: Dynastic Persistence in the Philippines, Pablo Querubin reiterates that an important source of power in many societies is the family. He explains that "[f]amilies, when compared to other groups, are better able to cooperate and solve the collective action problem. Their hierarchical structure and high levels of trust allow for coordinated decisions concerning issues of succession and intergenerational transmission of economic resources across time. Most importantly, not only can families exercise their power outside formal institutions of government, but they can also take over these institutions and capture the political system."<sup>29</sup> He went on to define "political dynasty" as referring to families who have wielded formal political power for more than one generation.<sup>30</sup>

Aside from recognizing the political institutions that lead to the emergence of powerful local elites and hindered the emergence of strong parties and a strong central state, Querubin acknowledges that the existence of political dynasties is also attributed to the importance of kinship in Philippine culture, not forgetting, that kinship in the Philippines transcends politics.<sup>31</sup>

True enough, the primacy of family in Philippine society cannot be underrated. The 1987 Philippine Constitution recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation.<sup>32</sup> As such, the State is obliged to strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Querubin, P. (2010). Family and Politics: Dynastic Persistence in Philippines. Michigan Institute of Technology.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Section 1, Article XV, The 1987 Philippine Constitution.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

More importantly, the Filipino family often provides what the State cannot. Thus, for the ordinary Filipino, the family provides the socialization, education, employment, health care, security and recreation. For the elite family, however, name, fame and wealth are the best legacies, which become the next generation's capital to wield and further their power.

The stubbornness of political dynasties in the Philippine political arena shows how deeply rooted familial politics is in Philippine society. Like the House of Representatives, the Philippine Senate of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress is similarly dominated by members of old and new political clans. Unsurprisingly, more than half of the current Senators still come from political families.

Eight (8) of the incumbent Senators who are second or third or even fourth generation dynasts of old political clans are Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Edgardo J. Angara, Teofisto "TG" Guingona III, Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr., Sergio R. Osmeña III, Ralph G. Recto, Francis "Chiz" G. Escudero and Vicente C. Sotto III.

Senator Ponce Enrile is the son of Alfonso Ponce Enrile who served as Representative of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Cagayan Province (1922-1925), while Senator Angara is the son of then Representative Jose A. Angara of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Tayabas (Quezon Province) (1934-1937).

Senator Guingona III is the grandson of Teofisto Guingona, Sr., who served as a Representative of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Negros Oriental (1910-1912) and as a Senator (1919-1925). His father, Teofisto Guingona, Jr. served as Senator (1987-2001) and eventually as Vice President of the Philippine Republic (2001-2004).

Senator Marcos, Jr. prides himself with his patriarchal and matriarchal political lineage. From his patriarchal line, he is the grandson of Mariano Marcos who served as Representative of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Ilocos Norte (1925-1930). And, from his matriarchal line, he is also the grandson of Norberto Romualdez who served as Representative of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Leyte (1935-1941). He is likewise the son of former President Ferdinand E. Marcos and now Representative Imelda R. Marcos of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Ilocos Norte.

Remarkably, the political rein of the Osmeña clan is more than a century already. In early 1906, Sergio Osmeña, Sr. embarked on his term as governor as the leading ilustrado and political figure in Cebu City.<sup>34</sup> Moving up in the political ranks, he became the Representative of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Cebu from 1907 to 1922. After which, he served as Senator from 1922 to 1935. He eventually became the Vice President and President of the Philippine Republic from 1935 to 1944 and from 1943 to 1946, respectively. The political legacy of President Sergio Osmeña was passed on to his son Sergio Osmeña, Jr., who served

<sup>34</sup> Sergio Osmeña and Politics in Cebu. Available: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/49083885/Sergio-Osmena-and-Politics-in-Cebu>

as the Representative of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Cebu, then to his grandsons, John Henry Osmeña and Sergio Osmeña III.

Senator Recto's political history roots from his grandfather, Claro M. Recto, who served as Representative of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District of Batangas (1919-1927) and as Senator for three decades (1931-1961). His father, Rafael R. Recto, also served as Representative of Batangas (1984-1986).

The political lineage of Senator Escudero may be traced back from his great, great grandfather, Manuel Escudero, who served as Representative of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Sorsogon (1916-1919) and from his father, Salvador Escudero III, who served as Representative of the same district (1984-1998).

As for Senator Sotto, his political lineage starts with his granduncle Senator Filemon Sotto (1916-1922) and with his grandfather Senator Vicente Y. Sotto (1946-1953).

Disappointingly, the fall of Marcos in 1986 did not at all tilt the balance of political power. Still, many political families who held power in the pre-martial law years blossomed at the House. As noted by Querubin, of the two hundred (200) Representatives elected in the 1987 elections, one hundred thirteen (113) were either members of established political dynasties or had served at some point between 1946 and 1986.<sup>35</sup>

Similarly, the birth of the 1987 Philippine Constitution has not quenched the appetite for power by members of the political dynasties. The term limit rule for all elective positions, both in national and local elective positions, and the constitutional mandate on the prohibition of political dynasties, failed in limiting the reign of political clans.

For one, the elected officials circumvented without impunity the inconvenience of the term limit rule, when they are successfully replaced by their relatives or by their own political dummies, or when they easily switch to other elective offices.

Similarly, the constitutional prohibition on political dynasties enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution<sup>36</sup> has come to naught, for the reason that no enabling law was ever passed for its implementation. Such does not, however, come as a surprise as the Congress is and has always been populated by members of political dynasties.

The unpopularity of passing an anti-dynasty bill in Congress is the same scenario in the 1986 Constitutional Commission, relative to the inclusion of the said anti-dynasty provision. The unpopularity of the said provision was manifested in the words of Commissioner Nolleto when he said, "It seems to me that the resolution asking for a

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<sup>35</sup> Supra, note [29].

<sup>36</sup> Section 26, Article II.

provision in the Constitution to prohibit political dynasties is very popular outside but does not seem to enjoy the same popularity inside the Constitutional Commission.”<sup>37</sup> The matter was then subjected to a tedious debate.

While Commissioner Nolledo authored and proposed the inclusion of the provision, taking into consideration the realities of Philippine politics as a matter of inheritance,<sup>38</sup> Commissioner Monsod wanted it deleted on the belief that the right of the people to a free choice on who their political leader should be is curtailed.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, Commissioner Ople ideally argued that the evils of society is not caused by the existence of political dynasties but the result of economic imbalance. Support of the provision, however, came from Commissioners Guingona, Sarmiento, Foz, Quesada and Colayco.<sup>40</sup> Be that as it may, the provision was successfully incorporated after hurdling two (2) votations. There was the votation on the motion to completely delete the provision by Commissioner Monsod, the result of which was seventeen (17) in favor and eighteen (18) against.<sup>41</sup> This was followed by the votation on the motion to delete the phrase, “and prohibit political dynasties,” from the provision by Commissioner Rodrigo, the result of which was eighteen (18) in favor and twenty one (21) against.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, the 1986 Constitutional Commission incorporated the anti-dynasty provision in the 1987 Philippine Constitution to express the state policy of democratizing political power by preventing its concentration in the hands of the few and regulating, at the least, the politics of inheritance. True enough, the State is constitutionally mandated to prohibit political dynasties, but the problem surfaces on the absence of a well-defined meaning of the term political dynasties. As may be gleaned from the deliberations of the Constitutional Commission, the framers naively left the matter to legislation. History, however, is a witness to the fact that no defining law has ever been passed and enacted by the legislature, even after twenty five (25) years from 1987. This does not come as a surprise, since Congress is the playingfield of politicians belonging to political clans. Even President Cory Aquino failed to include an anti-dynasty bill, unlike the comprehensive agrarian reform law, as one of the priorities of the legislative agenda of her administration. Yet, it would have been easy for her, taking into account her overflowing goodwill after EDSA People Power I, to call on experts, who would draft one, and submit it to Congress as urgent. Apparently, the insertion of the phrase “as may be defined by law” was a fatal mistake of the framers or perhaps a necessary compromise for the inclusion of the provision on the prohibition of political dynasties. Successfully and favorably, this worked well for the pedigreed politicians in Congress up to this time.

<sup>37</sup> IV Records of the Constitutional Commission, pp. 935-936.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pp. 933-935.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 936.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, pp. 938-940.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, pp. 941-942.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, pp. 946-954.

While new names emerged in the Philippine political landscape after the Marcos era, they only did so just to establish their own dominance once they set foot on the political grounds. Among the new and emerging dynasts of the Philippine Senate of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress are Senators Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada, Cayetano siblings, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Aquilino Martin “Koko” Pimentel, Ramon “Bong” Revilla and Manny Villar.

Senator Estrada is the son of President Joseph Estrada (1998-2001) and Senator Luisa “Loi” P. Ejercito Estrada (2001-2004). President Estrada also served as Senator (1987-1992) and Vice President of the Philippine Republic (1992-1998).

Sibling Senators AP Cayetano and Pia Cayetano traces back their political lineage to their father, Renato L. Compañero Cayetano, who served as Senator (1998-2004).

Senator Defensor Santiago is related to Ilo-Ilo, 3<sup>rd</sup> District, Representative Arthur D. Defensor, Sr. and Quezon City, 3<sup>rd</sup> District, Representative Matias V. Defensor, Jr. His son, Narciso D. Santiago, III served as the Representative of the ARC Partylist from 2010 to 2013.

Senator Revilla, Jr. is the son of Ramon Revilla, Sr., who served as Senator (1992-2004).

Senator Villar’s ascendance to politics started when he served as Representative of Las Piñas-Muntinlupa, Lone District (1992-1998) and of the Lone District of Las Piñas (2001-2004). His wife, Cynthia Villar, took over his seat in the House of Representative (2001-2010), when the latter became a senator in 2004. Due to term limits, Cyntia Villar was replaced by his son, Mark A. Villar, as Representative of the Lone District of Las Piñas City.

Senator Manuel “Lito” M. Lapid’s son, Mark Lapid, was the governor of Pampanga from 2004 to 2007.

Through conjugal relations, Senators Legarda and Pangilinan are also part and parcel of political dynasties of the Levistes and of the Cunetas, respectively. Moreover, Senators Soto III and Pangilinan are also relatives by affinity. Senator Pangilinan’s wife, Sharon Cuneta, is Senator Soto’s niece through Sotto’s wife, Helen Gamboa.<sup>43</sup>

Only Senators Arroyo, Drilon, Honasan, Lacson, and Trillanes do not belong to a political family.

*Table 7. Senators and their Membership to Political Clans*

Membership to a political	Number	Percentage
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<sup>43</sup> Esguerra, C. (2012). Philippine Senate is a family affair. Available: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/176293/philippine-senate-is-a-family-affair>

<b>clan</b>		
Member of a political clan	18	78%
Not a member of a political clan	5	22%
Total	23	100%

According to Roger Olivares, co-founder of Citizens Anti-Dynasty Movement, “[p]olitical dynasties control elective positions not just in a vertical manner, but also in a horizontal manner, where the dynasty controls several key positions within a city or a province.”

The Philippine Senate of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress is no stranger to such situation. As a matter of fact, fifteen (15) of the twenty three (23) Senators have relatives who are currently holding elective positions. Eleven (11) of these fifteen (15) have relatives who are members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress, serving in tandem with them.

*Table 8. Senators and their Relatives in Elective Positions*

<b>Senators</b>	<b>Relatives who currently hold elective positions</b>		
	<b>Names</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Office/District</b>
Juan Ponce-Enrile	Juan Ponce-Enrile, Jr.	Son	Cagayan, 1 <sup>st</sup> District
Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada	Joseph Victor Estrada	Sibling	San Juan City, Lone District
	Emilio Ramon Ejercito	First Cousin	Governor, Laguna
AP Compañero S. Cayetano	Pia S. Cayetano	Sibling	Senate
	AP Compañero S. Cayetano	Wife	Mayor, Taguig City
	Lino Edgardo Cayetano	Sibling	Barangay Captain, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig
Edgardo J. Angara	Juan Edgardo Angara	Son	Aurora, Lone District
	Bellaflor Angara-Castillo	Sibling	Governor, Aurora
	Arturo Angara	Sibling	Mayor, Baler, Aurora
	Karen Angara	Niece	Councilor, Baler, Aurora
Pia S. Cayetano	AP Compañero S. Cayetano	Sibling	Senate
	Maria Laarni Cayetano	Sister-in-Law	Mayor,

			Taguig City
	Lino Edgardo Cayetano	Sibling	Barangay Captain, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig
Miriam Defensor Santiago	Arthur Defensor, Sr.	Cousin	Governor, Ilo-Ilo
	Arthur Defensor, Jr.	Cousin	3 <sup>rd</sup> District, Ilo-Ilo
Francis “Chiz” G. Escudero	Salvador H. Escudero III	Father	Sorsogon, 1 <sup>st</sup> District
	Antonio Escudero, Jr.	Uncle	Vice-Governor, Sorsogon
	Ramon Escudero	Uncle	Vice-Mayor, Casiguran, Sorsogon
	Dennis Escudero	Uncle	Councilor, Casiguran, Sorsogon
	Rico Hatoc	Uncle	Councilor, Casiguran, Sorsogon
Teofisto “TG” Guingona III	Ruth de Lara Guingona	Mother	Mayor, Ginoog City
	Benjamin Guingona III	First Cousin	Councilor, Zamboanga City
Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos, Jr.	Imelda R. Marcos	Mother	Ilocos Norte, 2 <sup>nd</sup> District
	Imee R. Marcos	Sister	Governor, Ilocos Norte
	Angelo M. Barba	First Cousin	Vice-Governor, Ilocos Norte
	Mariano Marcos II	First Cousin	Board Member, Ilocos Norte
	Ferdinand Martin Romualdez	First Cousin	Leyte, 1 <sup>st</sup> District
	Alfred Romualdez	First Cousin	Mayor, Tacloban City
Sergio R. Osmeña III	Tomas R. Osmeña	Sibling	Cebu, 2 <sup>nd</sup> District
Kiko Pangilinan	Vicente C. Sotto	Uncle-in-Law	Senate
	Gian Carlo	Cousin-in-Law	Councilor, Quezon City
Ralph G. Recto	Vilma Santos-Recto	Wife	Governor, Batangas
Ramon “Bong” Revilla, Jr.	Lani Mercado-Revilla	Wife	Cavite, 2 <sup>nd</sup> District
	Ramon Jolo Revilla III	Son	Board Member (ABC President)
	Strike Edwin Revilla	Brother	Mayor, Bacoor, Cavite
	Casimiro Ynares	Brother-in-Law	Governor, Antipolo
Vicente C. Sotto III	Valmar Sotto	Brother	Councilor, Parañaque City

	Gian Carlo	Son	Councilor, Quezon City
Manny Villar	Mark A. Villar	Son	Las Piñas, Lone District
	Vergel Aguilar	Brother-in-Law	Mayor, Las Piñas City

In the final analysis, the Philippine Senate is the politics of the wealthy, famous and pedigreed. It is for those who have the money and the resources. It is for those whose leadership is etched on popularity, either because they are celebrities or have rendered service to the country during crucial periods. It is for those who have political lineage, helping them ensure their place on the political pedestal.

### ***Assembling a Coalition of Political Clans***

According to Professor Roland G. Simbulan, “political parties are supposed to be important vehicles for collective action and empowerment of their constituencies to influence and shape public policy where the masses can emerge from the inertia of powerlessness to improve their lives and lift them from poverty.”<sup>44</sup> He further asserts that “political parties are also expected to provide much of the political education of their constituencies [and] act as venues for the articulation of the concerns of constituencies and help them to influence or fiscalize policy-making in government.”<sup>45</sup>

Contrarily, however, Philippine political parties are perform the functions for which they are created. They are temporary political alliances, lacking ideological platforms, non-participatory and non-representative. Their very essence of existence is put into oblivion, reduced to nothing but “mere ritualized expressions of the prevailing elite coalitions.”<sup>46</sup>

The Senators of the 15th Congress flaunt the names of eight (8) political parties in the halls of the Philippine Senate. Members of Liberal and Nacionalista, as well as those who are Independent, occupy four (4) seats each, followed by members of Lakas Kampi, who occupy three (3) seats. Members of NPC, PDP-LABAN and PMP occupy two (2) seats each, while one (1) seat each is occupied by LDP and PRP.

*Table 8.*

<sup>44</sup> Simbulan, G. Contemporary Political Parties in the Philippines. Available:

<http://www.yonip.com/archives/misc/misc-00074.html>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Joyce Aceron (2009). Reforming the Philippine Political Party System. Published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.



Political Parties	Number	Percentage
Liberal	4	17%
Nacionalista	4	17%
Lakas-Kampi	3	13%
NPC	2	9%
PDP-LABAN	2	9%
PMP	2	9%
LDP	1	4%
PRP	1	4%
Independent	4	17%
Total	23	100%

Judging the party alignments of the incumbent Senators from the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress to the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress and excluding all the neophyte Senators, only Senators Defensor Santiago, Estrada, Pangilinan and Revilla may be considered as party loyalists. Senator Angara may in one way or another be considered a party loyalist of LDP, as he remained with the said party after being an Independent from 1987 to 1992. The opposite, however, happened with Senator Arroyo who remained to be an Independent ever since his political career, only to become a member of the LAKAS-KAMPI in 2010. Senator Honasan never joined any political party.

The party alignments of the incumbent Senators from the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress to the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress affirms the ad hoc characteristic of Philippine political parties. They are unable to command party discipline and typically lack ideological platforms as manifested by party switching or party defections of its members.

Indeed, turncoatism has been a fixture in Philippine politics when seen in the context of politicians being allowed to become members of several parties or coalitions, at their convenience.<sup>47</sup> Politicians assemble to form political parties for elections and post-elections incentives in the form of nominations for elected office, campaign finance, electoral value of a party label (party reputation), pork and committee assignments.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Table 9. *Senators and their Political Parties*

Senators	15 <sup>th</sup> 2010- 2013	14 <sup>th</sup> 2007- 2010	13 <sup>th</sup> 2004- 2007	12 <sup>th</sup> 2001- 2004	11 <sup>th</sup> 1998- 2001	10 <sup>th</sup> 1995- 1998	9 <sup>th</sup> 1992- 1995	8 <sup>th</sup> 1987- 1992
Ponce Enrile	PMP	PMP	PMP		Ind.	Ind.	Ind.	Naciona lista
Ejercito Estrada	PMP	PMP	PMP		PMP	PMP	PMP	
AP Cayetano	NP	NP	NP	LAKAS- CMD	LAMMP			
Sotto III	NPC	NPC		LDP	LDP	LDP	LDP	
Angara	LDP	LDP	LDP	LDP		LDP	LDP	Ind.
Arroyo	LAKAS- KAMPI	Ind.	Ind.	Ind.	Ind.	Ind.	Ind.	
P Cayetano	NP	LAKAS- CMD	LAKAS- CMD					
Defensor Santiago	PRP	PRP	PRP		PRP	PRP		
Drilon	LP		LP	Ind.	LAMMP	LAKAS- NUCD		
Escudero	Ind.	Ind.	NPC	NPC	NPC/ LAMMP			
Guingona III	LP	LP	LP					
Honasan II	Ind.	Ind.		Ind.	Ind.	Ind.	Ind.	
Lacson	Ind.	UNO	Ind.	LDP				
Lapid	LAKAS- KAMPI	LAKAS- KAMPI	LAKAS- KAMPI	LAKAS- KAMPI	LAKAS- KAMPI	NPC	NPC	
Legarda	NPC	NPC		LAKAS- CMD	LAKAS- CMD			
Marcos, Jr.	Naciona lista	KBL	KBL	KBL	KBL		KBL	
Osmeña III	PDP- LABAN		PDP- LABAN	PDP- LABAN	LP	LAKAS- NUCD		
Pimentel	PDP- LABAN	PDP- LABAN						
Pangilinan	LP	LP	LP	LP				
Recto	LP	Naciona	LAKAS-	LDP/	LDP	LDP		

		lista	NUCD	LAMMP				
Revilla, Jr.	LAKAS-KAMPI	LAKAS-KAMPI	LAKAS-KAMPI		LAKAS-CMD	LAKAS-CMD		
Trillanes IV	Ind.	UNA						
Villar	Naciona lista	Naciona lista	Naciona lista	Naciona lista	LAKAS-NUCD	LAKAS-NUCD	LAMMP	

### ***Conclusion***

The profile of Philippine Senate of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress is no different from the previous Congresses. It was found out that seventy eight percent (78%) of its current members belong to political clans. Also, sixty one percent (61%) of them have their own business interests, thirteen percent (13%) of them have no business interests, but their spouses have. Likewise, one hundred percent (100%) of them are millionaires.

It must not escape notice as demonstrated in this study that celebrities with their fame are beginning to ease out the members of political clans, who have long concentrated political power in their hands. It is therefore logical for the members of political clans to forge matrimonial alliances with celebrities. Moreover, while celebrity power facilitated the entry of new men and women in the exclusive chamber, which was once reserved for the wealthy and for the political clans, the celebrities-turned-politicians have also ended up establishing their own political dynasties.

Since Philippine elections is costly, the sustenance of political dynasties also meant the sustenance of the latter's material or economic base.<sup>48</sup> Previously, land ownership, sugar plantations, coconut milling, mining and logging concessions bankrolled to capture political power.<sup>49</sup> More recently, however, wealth from trade and commerce, banking, telecommunications and media, food and beverage chains, real estate, corporate law, and other new industries paved the entry of new politicians to government.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, the Senators venture into different businesses, as shareholders/stockholders and owners in real estate, retail, food industries and other industries, knowing so well that sustaining their economic base allows them to continue in public office, and their government posts in turn enables their businesses to survive.<sup>51</sup>

Wealth and fame, however, are not enough to establish a political dynasty, hence, political clans forge alliances with other political families.<sup>52</sup> This brings to the fore the importance of political parties. These are "pieced together for elections and post-election battles for patronage."<sup>53</sup> Such being the case, Philippine political parties are superseded by political clans, in the sense that these are temporary and unstable coalitions whose members are vulnerable to party switching or defections. More than this, the political clans are the real political parties,<sup>54</sup> for at the core of these parties are the wealthy families and their political machineries who perform the functions of the political parties.

The composition of each political party to which the Senators of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress belong to confirms the nature of political parties as the alliances of political clans. Comes with these alliances is the accepted practice of turncoatism as shown by the party switching or defections of the Senators themselves, except for a few who are party loyalists.

Indeed, turncoatism in the context of party switching or defections are part and parcel of the political tactics of political clans in the preservation and expansion of their power and influence. Once in office, they spend their time consolidating these political dynasties by doling out jobs, favours and pork-barrel funds to their supporters. Wisely, they conveniently join the camp of the

<sup>48</sup> CenPEG (2010). What's new and old in Philippine politics. Available:

<http://bulatlat.com/main/2010/07/03/what%E2%80%99s-new-and-what%E2%80%99s-old-in-philippine-politics/2/>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Coronel, S. (2007). The seven M's of dynasty building. Available: <http://pcij.org/stories/the-seven-ms-of-dynasty-building/>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Rocamora, J. (1997). "The Constitutional Amendment Debate: Reforming Political Institutions, Reshaping Political Culture." In Glenda Gloria (ed.). *Shift*. Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs. p. 106.

<sup>54</sup> Simbulan, G. Contemporary Political Parties in the Philippines. Available:

<http://www.yonip.com/archives/misc/misc-00074.html>

leader who can provide the most largesse and benefits in terms of nominations for elected office, campaign finance, electoral value of a party label (party reputation), pork and committee assignments, to the extent of leaving without impunity their parties in the process. Worse, some political clans even field their family members in all the major parties, to maximize their leverage.

Despite the bad taste of Philippine politics, being dominated by political dynasties, there are a few worthy officials who are respected for their track record in public service or for their service rendered to the country during crucial times. It was in high hopes that they were elected for a senate seat by the Filipinos. Moreover, the greater challenge is to democratize political power through greater political participation. This will only happen when the seats in the Senate, as well as in the House of Representative, are not only reserved to those who has the wealth, the fame and the family name. Although, “there a few such worthy officials [who] should not be unfairly mixed with the relatives of disreputable clans that are able to remain in power through poll irregularities, political patronage, physical superiority and other questionable factors militating against merit as the singular criterion for public service.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Cruz, I. (2007). End political dynasties. Available:  
[http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view/20070428-62944/End\\_political\\_dynasties](http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view/20070428-62944/End_political_dynasties)

## The District Representatives of the Lower House

The 15<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Philippines (2010-2013) is composed of 308 members both from the House of Representatives and the Senate - 23 belong to the Upper House while the remaining 285 belong to the Lower House. Of the 285 Lower House Representatives, 229 are District Representatives and the other 56 are from Party-List Groups.

The Philippines has 229 Legislative Districts; of this figure, only a total of 228 seats are occupied as of 02 May 2012 since Rep. Ignacio 'Iggy' Arroyo died on 26 January 2012 during his term and no replacement has yet been elected. Rep. Antonio Diaz of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Zambales died on 03 August 2011 and was replaced by Rep. Omar Ebdane who was elected in office in a special election held on 04 February 2012. Rep. Ronald Singson, representative of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Ilocos Sur and son of Ilocos Sur Governor Luis 'Chavit' Singson resigned from office on 01 March 2011 when he was convicted for drug possession in Hongkong. Rep. Ronald Singson was replaced by his brother, Ryan Singson who won in a special election held on 28 May 2011.

For purposes of computing the percentage of the figures shown in the various tables of this study, the total number of the legislative districts – 229 – will be used. Out of 229 district representatives seating in the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress, figures show that 53.71 % are first termers and the other 46.28% are re-elected members from the legislative districts (Tables 1 & 2). Four of the 123 first-termers are returnees to the Hall of Congress. Returnees, as defined in this study, are members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress who have previously held a legislative seat during the previous Congresses but who haven't been active in electoral politics for at least two terms since their last stint in Congress. They made their political come-back by running in the 2010 elections and winning a seat in the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress. The data does not include those who have continuously held elected or appointed government positions while they were not in Congress. The data does not also include those who have family members that replaced them in office during their absence in Congress. Those who made their political come-back in the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress are Rep. Giorgidi Aggabao of the Lone District of Santiago City who was a representative of the 4<sup>th</sup> District of Isabela

during the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, Rep. Ronald Cosalan of the Lone District of Benguet who served as the province's representative to Congress in 1995-2001.

When it comes to work experience in government, the profile of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress district representatives would tell us that 115 members have had experiences holding an elected local government positions, either as local executives or members of local legislative body; 2 members - Rep. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Rep. Rodolfo G. Biazon - have had experience being elected to a national position; 28 members previously occupied appointed national positions, like Rep. Arthur Yap of 3<sup>rd</sup> District of Bohol who used to be the Agriculture Secretary during the time of Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; Rep. Jesus Emmanuel of 1<sup>st</sup> District of Bukidnon, former Administrator of National Irrigation Administration and Philippine Coconut Authority; Rep. Anthony Rolando Golez of Lone District of Bacolod City who used to be a Presidential Spokesperson for Disaster Information and Management; Rep. Leopoldo Bataoil of 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Pangasinan, former head the National Capital Region Police Office; Rep. Romeo Acop of 1<sup>st</sup> District of Antipolo City, former Director for Comptrollership of the Philippine National Police during the time when Sen. Panfilo Lacson was the Head of the PNP; and Rep. Miro Quimbo of 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Marikina who used to head the Home Dev't. Fund, to name a few. (Table 3)

**Table 1. Terms – House of Representatives**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Termers</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>53.71%</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Termers</b>	74	32.31%
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Termers</b>	32	13.97%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2. Composition of the House of Representatives**

<b>Total number of re-elected Representatives:</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>46.28%</b>
<b>Neophytes in Congress</b>	92	40.17%
<b>Neophytes in Electoral Politics</b>	42	18.34%
•With Relatives in elected position	27	64.28% of 42
•No relatives in elected position	15	35.71% of 42
<b>Bench-warmers</b>	8	3.49%
<b>Returnees</b>	4	1.74%

**Table 3. Experience in Public Service.**

<b>Members who held national appointed positions</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>12.22%</b>
<b>Members who held national elected positions</b>	2	0.87%
<b>Members who held local elected positions</b>	115	50.21%

As to work experience in the national legislative body, the data gathered shows that 92 of the 123 first-termers are neophytes in the Legislative Department, meaning, they have not yet served in either the Lower or Upper Chamber of Congress, though they may have served in the local government level. The number of Congress neophytes accounts for a considerable 40.17% of the total number of



district representatives. Of the 92 Congress neophytes, 42 can be considered as neophytes in electoral politics although not necessarily without experience in joining an electoral contest or holding appointed government positions. These members haven't previously held elected posts and that it is only during the May 2010 General Elections that they first won elected government seats. Out of the 42 political neophytes, 27 are members of political family who have or who have had family members in elected positions. The remaining 15 of the 42 political neophytes do not and never had family member elected in government.

This data on political neophytes reflect the reality in Philippine politics that the probability of winning an electoral contest is considerably higher if one has existing and established election machinery in the locality where the congressional candidates are hoping to represent. It is for this reason that there is small number of political neophytes in the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress, as far as district representatives are concerned. Smaller still is the number of political neophytes who are not members of a political clan. Thus, even if we categorize some district representatives as political neophytes by virtue of the fact that they haven't previously won any political seat, the fact remains that their political victory can be attributed largely to their family name and the political machinery that comes with it.

For the other 15 political neophytes who do not belong to any political family and who do not have any family member in elected government office, they got their political advantage from the fact that they or a member of their family held a high national government position. Still for the other political neophytes who do not have any of the aforementioned circumstances, it appears that they got their edge by banking on their popularity, like Rep. Emmanuel "Manny" Pacquiao of Lone District of Sarangani and Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez of 4<sup>th</sup> District of Leyte.

The foregoing data shows that Philippine electoral politics has not yet reached a level of maturity that should have been present in a democratic society like the Philippines. In fact, some scholars put forth the notion that Philippines can't be really described as a democratic society but can be aptly described as "non-

democratic oligarchy.”<sup>56</sup> Filipino political scientist, in a study made for the UNDP, advanced:

Indeed, a “nondemocratic oligarchy” aptly sums up the key features of the Philippine political regime. Its oligarchic social structure has severely limited access to power to a few dominant political families while the means of accessing power has been largely undemocratic in the absence of genuinely free and fair elections, the minimum requirement for any democratic regime.”<sup>57</sup>

### ***Politics as a Family Affair***

Just like the previous Congresses of the Philippines, the present Congress continued to be a bastion of political dynasties. Familiar surnames peppered the roll of House members signifying that the hold of certain political families in local and national politics remain strong and uninterrupted. It also seems to signify that political dynasty has become the norm in Philippine politics, accepted as reality by the public, which is contrary to the State Policy embodied in Article II the Philippine Constitution. Section 26 of Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that the State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service and prohibit dynasties as may be define law. Despite the clear mandate of the Constitution, political dynasty still can’t be considered as illegal as there is still no enabling law to speak of. In fact, even the definition of what would constitute political dynasty has not been laid down and has been left to the discretion of the Legislative Department.

Many definitions have been given to the term political dynasty, some associate the term with families whose members have exercised formal political power for more than one generation;<sup>58</sup> others defined it as line of hereditary leaders of any powerful family or similar group.<sup>59</sup> Whatever the definition one could give to the term, it all boils down to the simple fact that it involves the holding of political

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<sup>56</sup> FELIPE MIRANDA, ET.AL, CHASING THE WIND: ASSESSING PHILIPPINE DEMOCRACY 184 (Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines 2011) [hereinafter Chasing the Wind].

<sup>57</sup> Id.

<sup>58</sup> PABLO QUERUBIN, FAMILY AND POLITICS: DYNASTIC PERSISTENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES 2 (Michigan Institute of Technology 2010) [hereinafter Family and Politics].

<sup>59</sup> QUIOGE, 2009

power or influence over a certain jurisdiction by a political clan or family<sup>60</sup> for a considerable period of time, usually transcending generations and governments. As succinctly put by social commentators, “regimes come and go but the families remain. Political parties are formed and disbanded but the clans that make them up stay on.”<sup>61</sup>

As it is, the possibility of enacting an enabling law prohibiting political dynasties is as far fetch as having the sun circle around the earth, especially considering the composition of the Philippine Congress in the present and previous years. Of the 229 district representatives, 161 members or 70.30% of total district representatives have declared that they have/have had family members who are elected and/or appointed to a public office (Table 4). For the district representatives who have/have had relatives elected in office, 153 have/have had relatives elected in local government posts, 40 have/have had relatives elected to national posts and 50 members have/have had relatives who are appointed to national posts. (Table 5)

**Table 4. Relatives in Government.**

<b>Members who have/have had Elected and Appointed^ Relatives</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>70.30%</b>
<b>No data*</b>	68	29.69%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>100%</b>

^Appointed Positions do not include positions in government that are not appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

\*No data' will be treated as the data referring to members that do not have relatives in government service.

**Table 5. Members with Elected Relatives in Local and National Position.**

<b>Members who have/have had relatives in elected local positions</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>66.81%</b>
<b>Members who have/have had relatives in elected national</b>	40	17.46%

<sup>60</sup> For purposes of this study, family members up to fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity (first cousins, granduncles and aunts, grandnephews and nieces and the in-laws of the same degree) will be considered in the classification of persons belonging to a political family or clan.

<sup>61</sup> SHELA CORONEL, ET.AL., THE RULEMAKERS: HOW THE WEALTHY AND WELL-BORN DOMINATE CONGRESS 40 (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism 2004) [hereinafter The Rulemakers].

positions*		
<b>Members who have/have had relatives in appointed national positions</b>	50	21.83%

\*Elected national positions would include elected party-list representatives.

In a study made by the Asian Institute of Management Policy Center<sup>62</sup> “at least 115, or 68 percent, of the members of the 15th Congress (House of Representatives) elected in 2010 have relatives who have been members of the 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th congresses, or local officials who were elected in 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2010. A bigger number — 144 — are related to other members of Congress or local officials elected in 2001, 2004 and 2007.”<sup>63</sup>

This figure would tend to reflect the prevalence of political dynasties in the country, which in turn would indicate the level of maturity of Philippines as a democratic nation. Even during the 1986 Constitutional Convention, the issue on political dynasty has been exhaustively debated upon, with some members of the Constitutional Convention questioning the inclusion of the provision on prohibition of political dynasty in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Some members of the Constitutional Convention argued that prohibiting political dynasty will curtail the right of the people to a free choice on who their political leader should be.<sup>64</sup> Others maintained the view that there are areas where the word dynasty is misapplied to distinguished family like the Cojuangcos and Aquinos of Tarlac. They argued that while there are indeed these distinguished families, this is not to say that Philippine society has been immobile as there are people who have risen through their own efforts to become successful competitors in the political arena.<sup>65</sup> Thus, with the composition of Congress and the kind of policy-makers that we have now and then, it is no wonder that political dynasty has remained strong and resilient through-out the years.

While some members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress belong to an established political clan whose political lineage and history goes as far back as the Spanish and American period – like the Abayas of Cavite or the Cojuangcos, Duranos, Aquinos,

<sup>62</sup> SATUR OCAMPO, 2011. Political Dynasties still dominate Congress. *Philippine Star*. October 7.

<sup>63</sup> Id.

<sup>64</sup> JOAQUIN BERNAS, THE INTENT OF 1986 CONSTITUTION WRITERS 151 (Rex Bookstore 1995).

<sup>65</sup> Id.

Romualdez, Fuentabellas – some members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress belong to political families that are products of recent historical events. Some of the most influential political families today first rose into power after the Martial rule, taking advantage of the suspension of political influence of the Marcos cronies right after the 1986 EDSA Revolution. The 1986 People Power Revolution saw the entry of new players in the political arena with the laying low of the Marcos allies and the appointment by then Pres. Corazon Aquino of OIC public officials, especially in the local government level.

Some politicians got elected to their first government post in 1987 like the father of Rep. Noynoy Rolando Andaya Jr. of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Camarines Sur or the father of Rep. Dakila Cua, now Quirino Governor Junie Cua; others got their first position by virtue of the appointment to an elected post by then President Corazon Aquino like Rep. Antonio Alvarez of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Palawan who was appointed as OIC Mayor of San Vicente, Palawan in 1986; Eduardo Calixto, the father of Rep. Imelda Calixto-Rubiano who was appointed as OIC Mayor of Pasay in 1986. The family of Rep. Marlen Binay of Makati came into power with the appointment of now-Vice President Jejomar Binay as OIC Mayor of Makati after the 1986 EDSA Revolution.

Getting their foothold, most of the prominent political figures developed and continuously consolidate their power until their influence has become deeply-rooted in the local politics. At present, there are 86 district representatives who belong to political families that started establishing political influence after fall of the Marcos regime and after the 1986 People Power Revolution while 71 district representatives belong to a political family that has been in power even before EDSA. (Table 5)

**Table 5. Old or new political families**

<b>Pre-EDSA political families</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>31.04%</b>
<b>Post-EDSA political families</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>37.55%</b>

Still, there are those elected to Congress who do not belong to political families but who nevertheless seem to be in the process of consolidating their political influence and firming up their political machineries for the benefit of other members of the family who are minded to run for office.

Jason Almonte, son of Rep. Jorge Almonte of 1<sup>st</sup> District of Misamis Occidental who served as the Mayor of Oroquieta City from 2007-2010, was elected as Mayor of Oroquieta City, taking the place of his father when the latter won a seat in Congress in the 2010 elections.

Jennifer Barzaga won as Mayor of Dasmaringas City, replacing her husband, Representative Pidi Barzaga, as Mayor of Dasmaringas City when he was elected to Congress in 2007.

Sandra Eriguel ran and won as Mayor of Agoo, La Union, replacing her husband, Rep. Eriguel who, after serving for three terms as Mayor of Agoo, La Union, was elected to Congress in 2010.

Rep. Nelson Dayanghirang of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Davao Oriental as been elected to Congress in 2007 and since that time, two of his relatives were elected to local government post – his brother, Jun Dayanghirang and nephew, Jon Marco Dayanghirang.

Rep. Francisco Noel of An-Waray Party-list is a member of the Noel Family of Cebu who had been in politics during the olden times, his great grandfather, Don Florencio Noel being the gobernadorcillo of CarCar, Cebu. The Noel family has not been seen in Cebu politics for a long time until the election of Rep Francisco Noel as Party-List Representative in 2004.<sup>66</sup> At present, his wife, Josephine Lacson-Noel, is the representative of the Lone District of Malabon.

### ***Territorial Expansion of Political Families***

The problem with political dynasty is that the families tend to expand but the number of elective positions in a political territory remains constant. This would now create a situation where there would be a shortage of juicy political posts to accommodate the increasing number of family members. The tendency therefore is to have conflict within the family since members would have to fight it out to determine who among them or which side of the branch will wield political power.

The Duranos of Cebu is currently embroiled in a turf war between members of the family. At present, Nito Durano (father of Rep. Red Durano of 5<sup>th</sup> District of Cebu) is the Vice-Mayor of Danao City while his brother, Boy Durano, is the City

<sup>66</sup> <http://carcarfamilies.wordpress.com/houses-monuments/h-noel/> retrieved on 11 May 2012.

Mayor. The two brothers filed a recall petition against one another in 2011 to oust the other from their respective posts. This move from the brothers to recall one other is a clear manifestation of the raging battle for supremacy between the brothers for the control of the Danao City in Cebu. According to reports,<sup>67</sup> this is not the first time that the Duranos of Danao City has locked horns with one another. In 1988, the late Thaddeus “Deo” Durano, also a brother of Vice-Mayor Nito and Mayor Boy Durano ran against the latter for Mayoralty in the local election. Last 2010 local elections, Jesus “Don” Durano, another Durano brother ran against Mayor Boy under the Liberal Party ticket. It is said that Vice-Mayor Nito Durano supported the candidacy of Don Durano against Mayor Boy Durano; ironically, Don Durano is currently the city administrator of Danao and is supporting Mayor Boy’s recall petition against Vice-Mayor Nito Durano.<sup>68</sup>

Another classic case of family in-fighting is the conflict between Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte and his son Camarines Sur Gov. L-Ray Villafuerte. It was reported that the conflict between father and son started in 2004 when the son won the gubernatorial race. L-Ray took over the gubernatorial position when the old man Villafuerte finished his 3 terms and was elected to Congress.<sup>69</sup> It was reported that upon assuming office, L-Ray removed all of his father’s supporters from their employment in the Provincial Capitol. In the succeeding election, L-Ray fielded his own people to run against incumbent officials allied with his father.<sup>70</sup> This conflict between father and son is another case of family members slugging it out to determine who will wrest control of the political power in the locality. To remedy the problem and avoid inter-family conflicts resulting from politics, families either expand their territories, create a new political territory by carving out old ones or they make use of government institutions like the party-list system.

Some political families had the foresight of fielding their family members in territories other than the area where the family was rooted. They usually make use of the previous residency of their spouses, the residency of their ascendants or the place where their business is situated.

The Cojuangcos, as established as they are in politics, had its share of family in-fighting over the control of Tarlac politics. In 1965, Danding Cojuangco fought his

<sup>67</sup> <https://politika2013.wordpress.com/2011/12/12/whats-next-for-the-duranos/>, last accessed on 15 March 2012 at 1:30 pm.

<sup>68</sup> <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/cebudailynews/news/view/20110429-333598/Red-to-keep-hands-off-Durano-feud-in-Danao>, last accessed on 15 March 2012 at 2:00 pm.

<sup>69</sup> <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/49459/family-feud-worsens-with-creation-of-new-camarines-province>, last accessed on 15 March 2012 at 2:30 pm.

<sup>70</sup> Id.

cousin Peping Cojuangco over a position in Tarlac. He lost in that particular election but won as Governor of Tarlac in 1967. Two years thereafter, he locked horns again with Peping Cojuangco and defeated his cousin in a violent and bitterly fought election to become the representative of Tarlac.<sup>71</sup> Probably learning from this experience, Danding's family took their politics elsewhere instead of fighting it out with the other branches of Cojuangco family for the control of Tarlac. Thus, at present, the Danding Cojuangco branch of the family has transported their politics to Negros Occidental and Pangasinan. Carlos "Charlie" Cojuangco, son of Danding Cojuangco, was the representative of the 4<sup>th</sup> District of Negros Occidental from 1998-2007 while Danding's other son, Marcos Cojuangco was the representative of the 5<sup>th</sup> District of Pangasinan from 2001-2010. Mark Cojuangco's spouse, Kimi Cojuangco took over the same office after Mark finished his three terms and is currently the 5<sup>th</sup> District Representative of Tarlac. Danding Cojuangco was able to establish his family's political influence over these provinces by reason of his various businesses and corporations in the aforementioned areas. As aptly observed by Sheila Coronel in the book *Rulemakers*:

"(Danding) Cojuangco's contribution to dynasty building is conflict avoidance within the clan. He did this by conceding the second district of Tarlac to his cousins. He also got out of the Cojuangco tribal ground and carved out new districts for his sons...

Not all political families can do this, of course. Cojuangco succeeded only because of the geographical spread of his formidable business interests. He runs the Northern Cement Corp. in Pangasinan and owns 3,000 hectares of land in Negros Occidental. Rather than dissipating resources in a debilitating family feud, he simply expanded his political influence so there would be enough to go around."<sup>72</sup>

There are other political families who do not have to bring their politics far from their area of influence; they only need to expand to other legislative district within the Province, thus consolidating their political influence over the entirety of either the province or the region.

It appears that the Dimaporos of Lanao del Norte has been expanding their territory to cover the entire Province of Lanao Del Norte. Two Dimaporos sit in the House of Representatives today - Alia Fatima Dimaporo of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Lanao

<sup>71</sup> Supra note 6 at 113 citing Parreno 2003.

<sup>72</sup> Supra note 6 at 97.



Del Norte and Imelda Dimaporo of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District of Lanao del Norte, daughter and wife of Abdullah Dimakuta Dimaporo, the former Governor and Representative of Lanao Del Norte. The family's son, Khalid Dimaporo, is the present Governor of the province. In the same vein, the Jalosjoses of Zamboanga del Norte seems to be gearing towards controlling most of the juicy positions in Zamboanga del Norte. At present, the Jalosjoses hold three legislative districts in Zamboanga del Norte – 3<sup>rd</sup> District held by Rep. Cesar Jalosjos, 2<sup>nd</sup> District held by Rep. Romeo Jalosjos Jr. and the 1<sup>st</sup> District held by Seth Jalosjos – not to mention family members who occupy various elected local positions.

For those who do not have the machinery or the means to infiltrate other political territories, they solve the problem by creating a new political subdivision from an existing one. Interesting case is the proposal to divide the territory of Camarines Sur. Camarines Sur Rep. Arnulfo Fuentabella filed HB 4278 which seeks to divide the province of Camarines Sur into 2 provinces – Nueva Camarines and Camarines Sur. Rep. Fuentabella, a congressman in his last term, represents the fourth district of Camarines Sur. It was said that the move to divide Camarines Sur is but driven by the self-serving agenda of some Camarines Sur officials who want to have a territory where they can take political control.<sup>73</sup>

Still, there are political families who make use of the opportunities provided by the party-list system to further expand their political influence and to generate positions that can accommodate other family members. We can see a trend in today's political scene whereby political families are slowly encroaching into the domain reserved for the marginalized sector of the society – that of the party-list system. The framework of the Party-List in the Philippines is laid down in RA 7941. Section 2 of the said law provides:

“The State shall promote proportional representation in the election of representatives to the House of Representatives through a party-list system of registered national, regional and sectoral parties or organizations or coalitions thereof, which will enable Filipino citizens belonging to the marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations and parties, and who lack well-defined political constituencies but who could contribute to the formulation and enactment of appropriate legislation that will benefit the nation as a whole, to become members of the House of Representatives. Towards

<sup>73</sup><http://www.philippinenews.com/latest-news/3078-camarines-sur-split-new-province-called-nueva-camarines.html>, last accessed on 15 March 2012 at 3:41 pm.

this end, the State shall develop and guarantee a full, free and open party system in order to attain the broadest possible representation of party, sectoral or group interests in the House of Representatives by enhancing their chances to compete for and win seats in the legislature, and shall provide the simplest scheme possible.”

The Party-List System is supposed to be a mechanism whereby the marginalized sector or the society’s underprivileged would have representation in Congress. The idea is that candidates belonging to the marginalized sectors who can not afford to wage a regular electoral campaign or who do not have the political machinery to do so would have the opportunity to be voted for in Congress to represent the interests of the sector to which they belong. However, looking at the profiles of the Party-list representatives in the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress, it seems that political families are setting their sights on party-list elections, either to expand their stronghold or just to avoid the rigors of local politics.

Here are some party-list representatives who belong to political families or who have relatives that are elected to public office:

1. Sharon Garin of AAMBIS-OWA, a party-list organization representing small farmers in far-flung areas, is a member of the political clan of Garin of Ilo-Ilo and is related by affinity to the political clan of the Caris and Loretos of Leyte.
2. Daryl Grace Abayon of AANGAT TAYO, a multi-sectoral party that represents women, children and the elderly, is the daughter of former Northern Samar Representative Harlin Abayon.
3. Maximo Rodriguez of ABANTE MINDANAO, a PL organization that represents the victims of war conflicts in Mindanao, is the brother of CDO Representative Rufus Rodriguez.
4. Raymund Robert Estrella of ABONO, a PL organization representing Filipino farmers, belongs to the political family of Estrellas of Pangasinan.
5. Francisco Emmanuel Ortega, also of ABONO, belongs to the political family of the Ortegas of La Union.

6. Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo of AGP, a PL organization representing tricycle drivers and security guards, is the son of former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Aside from the regular political family joining in the fray of party-list elections, we also see businessmen bankrolling the candidacy of some party-list organizations and then fielding their family members as its first or second nominee. Case in point is the AKO-BICOL Party-List which faced a disqualification case filed by BAYAN MUNA during the 2010 Elections. It was alleged by the Complainants that AKO-BICOL is an organization which does not really represent the marginalized sector of the society and it was being bank-rolled by a local tycoon of Bicol who happens to be the brother of its first nominee, Christopher Co. The disqualification case came to naught as AKO-BICOL garnered the highest number of votes for Party-List during the 2010 election and was able to get three seats in Congress.

Considering the present situation of the Party-list system in the country and the trend that is emerging, it is but probable that we would see more and more political families joining the party-list election.

### ***Political Positioning and Alignment of Political Families***

For political families, one of their considerations in choosing parties to which they will align themselves with is the survival of the political clan or family. They would have to align themselves with the authority that is presently in power, otherwise, it would be very difficult for them to find funds that will be used in their machinery to hold and consolidate their people in their district. Also, aligning one's self to the present administration will make it easier for these political families to tap various government resources from the national government that would be used in their own district. It is for this reason that political families change political party affiliation with the changing of the guards in Malacanan, especially given the situation that membership to a political party here in the Philippines is wholly dependent on the personality and the machinery of the party and not on ideology, platforms, or position on key issues.

This is why if we look at the composition of political parties in the HOR during the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress, 122 HOR members belong to the then-ruling LAKAS party headed by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. This figure slightly decreased to 107 during the May 2010 elections. When Pres. Noynoy Aquino, who belongs to Liberal

Party, won the 2010 Presidential election, there was a tremendous shift from LAKAS to LP in the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress. Those LAKAS members who did not join the ruling party LP, but who nevertheless support the PNoy administration, formed the National Unity Party in January 2012, which is politically aligned with the current administration. (Table 6)

**Table 6. Shift in Political Affiliation**

Party	15 <sup>th</sup> Congress (June 2010- present)	%	May 2010 elections	%	14 <sup>th</sup> Congress (2007- 2010)	%
LP	81	35.37%	47	20.52%	31	14.41%
LAKAS- KAMPI CMD	52	22.70%	107	46.72%	122	56.74%
NPC	33	14.41%	29	12.66%	25	11.62%
NUP	32	13.97%	-	-	-	-
NP	20	8.73%	26	11.35%	24	11.16%
PMP	5	2.18%	6	2.62%	2	0.93%
PDP- LABAN	2	0.87%	2	.87%	5	2.32%
UNO	1	0.43%	-	-	-	-
LDP	1	0.43%	2	.87%	1	0.46%
KBL	1	0.43%	1	.43%	-	-
Ind.	1	0.43%	7	3.05%	4	1.86%
Others		-	2		5	2.32%

<b>TOTAL</b>	229	100%	229	100%	215	100%
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Aside from aligning one’s self to the ruling political party, there are still some ways where one can assure their and their family’s well-being and political survival like joining the majority bloc of the House. Even if one belongs to a political party other than the ruling party, one can still be assured of timely release of pork barrels or juicy committee leadership by joining the majority bloc and/or supporting the bills and legislative measures advanced by Malacanan. In the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress, as far as district representatives are concerned, 200 district representatives are members of majority and only 28 are members of the minority.

**Table 7. Majority and Minority Membership**

<b>Members of Majority</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>87.33%</b>
<b>Member of Minority</b>	28	12.22%
<b>Neither Majority nor Minority</b>	1	0.43%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>100%</b>

***The Lower House’s Profession and Business Interests***

If we look at the lower house’s membership to profession, 34.90% of the 229 district representatives declared that they are businessmen/businesswomen/entrepreneurs and only 25.32% are lawyers. In the past Congresses, it is the legal profession that tops the list when it comes to professional membership. It has been said that since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, law has been the preferred profession of those who embark in political career;<sup>74</sup> however, there is an emerging trend where the business profession is dominating the lower house. (Table 8) Even those who declare that they are members of the legal or medical or

<sup>74</sup> Supra note 6 at 12.

other profession likewise indicate that they are, at the same time, businesspersons or entrepreneurs.

**Table 8. Membership to profession.**

Profession	District Reps	%
Business	80	34.90%
Lawyers	58	25.32%
Engineers/ Architects	15	6.5%
Doctors	11	4.8%
CPA/ Accountants	9	3.9%
Journalists	6	2.6%
Sports/ Entertainment	5	2.18%
Teacher/ Academe	4	17.46%
Military/ Police	4	1.74%
Nurses	2	0.87%
Others	11	4.8%
No data	38	16.59%

Thus, if we look at the data on the properties and business interests of the district representatives, we could see that most district representatives have declared that they have interests in some companies as director or stockholders and most have declared ownership of agricultural, commercial or unclassified lands. It would seem that most district representatives' main source of income, besides their salary provided by the government, come not from their practice of profession but from engaging in business enterprise, be it agro-industrial, trading, real estate, etc.

This information can be a testimony to these glaring realities: that more often than not, only those who have the means to wage a costly campaign can win a seat in Congress; and that more often than not, businessmen vie for a seat in Congress or bankroll candidates to be elected in Congress because the Halls of Congress can provide avenues for expansion and protection of business interests.

In view of the all the data and the information collected, one can reasonably make the observation that when it comes to winning a seat in the House of Representatives, two important things must come in handy – one, an established political clan that has some degree of control or influence in local politics; and two, a political arsenal made up of unlimited resources. These two could ensure a strong and formidable political machinery that can deliver victory come election time.

Because District Representatives are elected by legislative district, it would be reasonable to say that their politics is inextricably woven with that of the local politics. Thus, we see district representatives having members of his immediate family occupying local positions. The probability of an electoral victory is much greater if one has locally elected family members, who, by virtue of their work, are visible to the local residents and who can be readily approached for assistance. It seems that one can not win as a district representative if he/she does not have the support of a political family in the area. In conjunction with family ties is the family's political arsenal. It has been said that "the families that endure and survive political upheaval are more likely to be those that have sustainable economic base to finance their participation in electoral battles."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Supra Note 6 at 86.

## Partylist Representatives

The Filipino electorate was first introduced to the partylist system during the 1998 May elections. One hundred twenty three (123) partylist groups participated, but only thirteen (13) partylists, with a total of fourteen (14) representatives, were elected.

With the result of the May 2010 elections, forty three (43) partylists, with a total of fifty six (56) representatives, emerged as winners.

*Table 1. Partylist Representatives and Partylist Represented*

Congress	Number of Partylist Representatives	Number of Partylist Represented	Number of Participating Partylist
11 <sup>th</sup>	14	13	122
12 <sup>th</sup>	15	10	162
13 <sup>th</sup>	24	16	66
14 <sup>th</sup>	55	33	93
15 <sup>th</sup>	56	43	187
<i>Source:</i>			

Republic Act No. 7941 was enacted by Congress, mandating the promotion of proportional representation through partylist election of House of Representatives who belong to the marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations and parties and who lack well-defined constituencies.<sup>76</sup> Once in Congress, the partylist representatives contribute to the formulation and enactment of appropriate legislation that will benefit the nation as a whole.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Section 2, Republic Act No. 7941.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.



Since the partylist system does not refer to the representation of a number of people in a particular district but the representation of the marginalized and underrepresented sectors, “the party or organization must factually and truly represent the marginalized and underrepresented constituencies.”<sup>78</sup> Accordingly, the nominees of the party or organization must be “Filipino citizens belonging to marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations and parties,”<sup>79</sup> and those “who do not have this ideological quality (which incident is not easily proved or disproved) were not qualified to be partylist representatives.”<sup>80</sup>

Table 2. *Partylist Group, Sector, Profession and Networth*

Partylist Group	Sector	Representative	Profession <sup>81</sup>	Net Worth <sup>82</sup> (2011)
1 CARE	Energy Consumers	Salvador P. Cabaluna III	Lawyer	7,490,000.00
		Michael Angelo C. Rivera	Businessman	8,361,506.51
1-UTAK	Transport	Homer A. Mercado	Businessman	65,014,804.52
A TEACHER	Teachers	Mariano U. Piamonte, Jr.	Teacher	5,113,000.00
		Julieta R. Cortuna	Businessman	15,244,000.00
AA KASOSYO	Products &	Nasser C.	Businessman	14,655,000.00

<sup>78</sup> Ang Bagong Bayani-OFW Labor Party, et al. v. Ang Bagong Bayani-OFW Labor Party Go! Go! Philippines, G.R. No. 147589, 26 June 2001.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Bernas, Joaquin, SJ (2010). The evolution of the party-list system. Available:

<http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view/20100214-253232/The-evolution-of-the-party-list-system>

<sup>81</sup> Certification of Nominations, Election Records and Statistics Department, Commission on Elections.

<sup>82</sup> GMA News Online (2012). A house of millionaires and one billionaire. Available:

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/261779/news/specialreports/a-house-of-millionaires-and-one-billionaire>

	Consumers	Pangandaman		
AAMBIS-OWA	Farmers	Sharon S. Garin	Lawyer	25,868,194.23
AANGAT TAYO	Women, Youth, Elderly & OFWs	Daryl Grace J. Abayon	Accountant/ Registered Nurse	23,443,903.00
ABANTE MINDANAO	Urban Poor & Lumads & IP in Mindanao	Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.	Lawyer	9,120,000.00
ABONO	Farmers	Robert Raymund M. Estrella	Agriculturist	12,597,927.00
		Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega III	Politician	17,200,743.36
ABS	Professionals	Catalina G. Leonen- Pizarro	Businessman	40,375,377.50
ACT TEACHERS	Teachers	Antonio L. Tinio	Professor	1,161,567.68
AGAP	Farmers	Nicanor M. Briones	Accountant/ Businessman	46,018,319.00
AGBIAG	Ilocanos & Farmers	Patricio T. Antonio	Employee	55,641,886.76
AGHAM	Professionals	Angelo B. Palmones	Journalist	17,966,576.00
AGP	Tricycle Drivers & Security Guards	Juan Miguel Macapagal-Arroyo	Politician	99,254,309.00
AKBAYAN	Multi-Sectoral	Kaka J. Bag-ao	Lawyer	1,098,320.30

		Walden F. Bello	Professor	3,974,400.00
AKO BICOL	Bicolanos	Rodel M. Batocabe	Lawyer	30,237,702.50
		Christopher S. Co.	Businessman	91,063,195.68
		Alfredo A. Garbin, Jr.	Lawyer	9,680,000.00
ALAGAD	Urban Poor	Rodante D. Marcoleta	Lawyer	12,200,000.00
ALE	Labor	Catalina C. Bagasina	Former Mayor	*133,938,000.00
ALIF	Indigenous Communities	Acmad M. Tomawis	Businessman	48,530,000.00
AN WARAY	Waraynons & Poor Sectors in the Region	Neil Benedict A. Montejo	Businessman	*19,690,000.00
		Florencio G. Noel	Businessman	13,105,000.00
ANAD	Rebel Returnees	Pastor M. Alcover, Jr.	Security Consultant	5,450,000.00
ANAKPAWIS	Labor	Rafael V. Mariano	Farmer	46,946.73
ANG KASANGGA	Micro Entrepreneurs	Teodorico T. Haresco	Businessman	92,814,808.25
APEC	Electric Cooperatives	Ponciano D. Payuyo	Accountant	7,105,095.00
ATING KOOP	Cooperatives	Isidro Q. Lico	Lawyer	14,114,222.68
AVE	Teachers	Eulogio "Amang" R.	Educator	24,240,000.00

		Magsaysay		
BAGONG HENERASYON	Women, Youth & Urban Poor	Bernadette R. Herrera-Dy	Former City Councilor	8,721,000.00
BAYAN MUNA	Multi-Sectoral	Teddy A. Casiño	NGO Worker	91,000.00
		Neri J. Colminares	Lawyer	697,701.00
BUHAY	Pro-Life	Irwin C. Tieng	Businessman	20,054,633.83
		Mariano Michael M. Velarde, Jr.	Businessman	53,326,935.26
BUTIL	Farmers	Agapito H. Guanlao	President/CEO (Cooperative Bank)	15,691,000.00
CIBAC	Anti-Corruption	Cinchona Cruz-Gonzales	Lawyer	82,917,907.00
		Sherwin N. Tugna	Lawyer	3,852,000.00
COOP NATCO	Cooperatives	Cresente C. Paez	Agriculturist	6,553,000.00
		Jose R. Ping-ay	Engineer/ Businessman	19,400,000.00
DIWA	Labor	Emmeline Y. Aglipay	Lawyer	8,900,942.00
GABRIELA	Women	Emmi A. De Jesus	NGO Worker	1,240,000.00
		Luzviminda C.	Educator	*4,890,184.00

		Ilagan		
KABATAAN	Youth	Raymond V. Palatino	Blogger	195,000.00
KAKUSA	Prisoners	Ranulfo P. Canonigo	Sales Manager	2,647,208.00
KALINGA	Urban Poor	Abigail Faye C. Ferriol	Teacher	483,006.00
LPGMA	LPG Consumers	Arnel U. Ty	Businessman	15,184,112.50
PBA	Athletes	Mark Aeron H. Sambar	Businessman	11,640,820.00
SENIOR CITIZENS	Elderly	Godofredo V. Arquiza	Businessman	19,985,000.00
		David L. Kho	Lawyer	59,521,515.00
TUCP	Labor	Raymond Democrito C. Mendoza	Lawyer/ Businessman	2,079,515.00
UNA PAMILYA	ANG Filipino Family	Reena Concepcion G. Obillo	Government Official	6,087,424.00
YACAP	Anti-Corruption	Carol Jayne B. Lopez	Businessman	29,444,000.00

Unfortunately, the profile of the partylist representatives of the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress indicates that the partylist system, Filipino style, is nothing but a defiance of its noble intentions.

For one, the partylist representatives are wealthy. As revealed by their latest Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth, most of them are multimillionaires.

Catalina C. Bagasina is the wealthiest partylist representative with a declared networth of Php133,938,000.00. Juan Macapagal-Arroyo comes second with a declared networth of Php99,254,309.00. Teoderico T. Haresco ranks third with a declared networth of Php92,814,808.25. Christopher S. Co and Cinchona Cruz-Gonzalez are fourth and fifth with declared networth of Php91,063,195.68 and Php82,917,907.00, respectively.

On the other hand, Rafael V. Mariano is the poorest partylist representative with a networth of Php 46, 946.00. He is followed by Teddy Casiño, Raymond V. Palatino and Abigail Faye C. Ferriol with netwoth of Php 91,000.00, Php 195,000.00 and Php 483,006.00, respectively. Also joining the list of the poorest partylist representatives is Neri J. Colminares with a networth of Php 697,701.00.

*Table 3. Millionaires and Non-Millionaires*

<b>Partylist Representatives</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Millionaires	51	91%
Non-Millionaires	5	9%
Total	56	100%

Significantly, most of the partylist representatives are businessmen and lawyers, the professions typical also of the legislative district representatives. Other representatives are educators, accountant, agriculturist, blogger, farmer, journalist, NGO worker, sales manager and security consultant. Some partylist representatives indicated two (2) professions, with business as the other profession.

*Table 4. Partylist Representatives and their Profession*

<b>Profession</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Number</b>
Accountant	1	Government Official	1
Accountant/	1	Journalist	1

Registered Nurse			
Accountant/ Businessman	1	Lawyer	13
Agriculturist	2	Lawyer/Businessman	1
Blogger	1	NGO	2
Businessman	15	Politician	2
Employee	1	President/CEO (Cooperative Bank)	1
Engineer/Businessman	1	Public Servant	1
Farmer	2	Sales Manager	1
Former City Councilor	1	Security Consultant	1
Former Mayor	1	Teacher/Educator/Professor	6

The crux of the matter, however, is that the various professional background of the partylist representatives do not at all reflect the bonafide membership of the partylist representatives to the party or organization, which they ought to represent. Moreover, lacking the first hand knowledge and experience of the needs and struggles of the sector, as revealed by their professional background, might result to the inability of the partylist representative to address the concerns or interests of the particular sectors being represented.

Striking is the case of Ang Galing Pinoy Partylist Representative Juan Miguel “Mikey” Arroyo, son of former President and now Congressman Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who is said to represent the tricycle drivers and security guards. There is no record of the representative, working as such or engaged in a business concerning said sectors.

Meanwhile, Teodorico Haresco of KASANGGA represents the micro-entrepreneurs. His profile, however, shows that he is not a small time businessman. He is the chairman and CEO of Winace Holdings Philippines,<sup>83</sup> a management company with local and international subsidiaries,

<sup>83</sup> Philstar.com (2009). Harvard trained executive joins Winace Group of Haresco. Available: <http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=492240&publicationSubCategoryId=66>

which includes: Seventh High, Eco-Coral Coporation, One White Beach Land Development Corporation, Technostrat Corporation, Integritas, Inc., Winace Security Agency, Inc., Winace Manpower Agency, Inc., and Winprinting, Inc.<sup>84</sup>

While Juliet Cortuna of A-Teacher Partylist represents educators, her track record shows that she is more of a businesswoman rather than a teacher. In 1975, she worked as an External Auditor of Sycip, Gorres, Velayo and Company, one of the country's biggest auditing and accounting firm. Afterwhich, she served as the portfolio officer of State Investment House from 1976 to 1980 and as account manager of Producer's Bank from 1980 to 1984. Currently, she is the President/General Manager of Dreamland Travel and Tours, President of ARC Trading and Milling Corporation and Proprietor of Worldwide Marketing of RLR Squalene.

On the other hand, the wealth of Catalina Bagasina of ABS Partylist comes from her involvement in eight (8) companies, including Front Cargo Forwarders, Inc., FCF Lending Investor, Inc., Catalina C. Bagasing Foundation, Inc., Catalina Manpower Services, Manicris International Express, Inc., Front Printers, Inc., Argus Corporation and Asian Cargo Express.<sup>85</sup>

As for Christopher Co of AKO BICOL Partylist, he comes from a business clan. The Co family conglomerate owns [Misbis Lands](#), the developer of Embacardero waterfront, a multi-million peso leisure project in Albay and Hi-Tone Construction, the most favored contractors of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).<sup>86</sup> They also have [business interests](#) in construction, real estate, hotel resort development and memorial plan.<sup>87</sup> They likewise own Sunwest Group of Companies that operates Sunwest Water and Electric Co. (Suweco) that is involved in the USD 9 million [Misibis solar, wind and mini-hydro power project](#) in Cagraray Island.<sup>88</sup>

Moreover, the accreditation of AKO BICOL must be once more revisited by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC). In the Resolution dated 29 June 2010, the COMELEC upheld the legitimacy of the organization as a regional political party. It also emphasized that most of its votes are from Bicol. It must be pointed out, however, that the said partylist represents the Bicolanos, who are already represented by their regular district

<sup>84</sup> Winace Website. Available: <http://www.winace.com.ph/index.php>

<sup>85</sup> Mungcal, C.A. (2010). Party-list Profile: ALE. Available: <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/research/2010-candidate-profiles/05/06/10/profile-ale-party-list>

<sup>86</sup> Villegas, R. (2010). Ako Bikol: from obscurity to party-list dominance. Available: <http://www.thepoc.net/thepoc-features/politi-ko/2010-election-watch/7204-ako-bikol-partylist.html>

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.



representatives. Such being a case there is duplication of their representation in the House of Representatives. Worth noting also is the fact that there are already eighteen legislative districts, giving the Bicol region eighteen regular representatives.

A number of of the partylist representatives were also former government officials, either in elective or appointive positions.

Catalina C. Bagasina and Jose R. Ping-ay were former mayors of Sasmuan, Pampanga and Sta. Cruz, Ilocos Sur. Bernadette R. Herrera-Dy (2001-2010), Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega III (2001-2007) and Garbin A. Alfred, Jr. served as councilors of Quezon City, San Fernando City and Legazpi City, respectively. Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo first joined the House, when he was elected as Representative of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Pampanga. Patricio T. Antonio also once served as the Representative of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Cagayan (1995-1998).

Nasser C. Pangandaman served as the Secretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform (2005-2010). Reena Concepcion G. Obillo left government service as Senior Agrarian Reform Officer of the Department of Agrarian Reform to join the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress. The same is true with Raymond Democrito Mendoza who was the former Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, Research and Legislative Affairs of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Cinchona Cruz-Gonzales worked as a legal counsel with the office of the Solicitor General (1994-2006). Acmad Morohum Tomawis served as the Executive Director of the Office of Muslim Affairs (1998-2001). He also served as Assemblyman of ARMM (1990-1996), OIC Provincial Governor of Lanao del Sur (1987-1989) and OIC Mayor of Marawi City (1978-1979).

Seemingly, the partylist system is an option for former government officials to gain a congressional seat of their own, without fear of competing with candidates for the legislative district representatives during elections. "In reality, they are only being used by traditional politicians who cannot win in the regular elections and by ambitious individuals who want to share in the bounty of congressmen to smuggle themselves into the House."<sup>89</sup>

*Table 5. Partylist Representatives and their Government Service*

Partylist Representatives	Number	Percentage
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<sup>89</sup> Cruz, Neal (2010). Abolish the party-list system. Available: <http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view/20100722-282629/Abolish-the-party-list-system>

Who held elective position	9	16%
Who held appointive position	6	11%
Who held elective and appointive position	2	3%
No data	39	70%
Total	56	100%

Even more telling is the fact that the partylist system ushered the entrance for members of political dynasties to the halls of Congress. Of the fifty six (56) partylist representatives, ten (10) of them belong to political clans. Out of the ten (10), eight (8) have relatives currently occupying national and local elective positions.

ABONO Partylist Representatives Robert Raymund M. Estrella and Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega III have one common denominator, that is, their family background in politics. Aside from the fact that they are the sons of wealthy elite in the north, they hailed from prominent political clans.

Robert Raymund M. Estrella is a member of the established Estrella political clan of Pangasinan. His political lineage may be traced back from his father, Roberto Estrella, who served as Representative of the 5<sup>th</sup> District of Pangasinan in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress (1969-1972), followed by his grandfather, Conrado F. Estrella, who served as Representative of Pangasinan in the Interim Batasang Pambansa (1978-1984) and in the Regular Batasang Pambansa (1984-1986). His uncle, Conrado Estrella, Jr., served also as Representative of the 5<sup>th</sup> District of Pangasinan in the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress (1987-1992). Conrado Estrella's son, Conrado Estrella III, served as Representative of the 6<sup>th</sup> District of Pangasinan in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Congress and returned in the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Congress.

The Ortegas remain to be the dominant and most durable political clan in La Union, even after one hundred eleven (111) years from 1901, when the family patriarch, Joachin Ortega, was

appointed by the Americans as the first Filipino Civil Governor of the province.<sup>90</sup> At present, Francisco Emmanuel Ortega III of ABONO Partylist is joined by his Uncle Victor Francisco C. Ortega of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of La Union in the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Daryl Grace J. Abayon of AANGAT TAYO is the wife of former Congressman Harlin Abayon of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Northern Samar (1998-2007), who before becoming a member of the House served as Governor of the same province (1988-1998), and as Mayor of San Antonio, Northern Samar (1982-1986). On the other hand, Neil Benedict Montejo of ANWARAY comes from the political family of the Montejos of Leyte.

Interestingly, a number of partylist representatives have relatives simultaneously sitting with them at the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress. They are Nasser C. Pangandaman, Sr., Sharon S. Garin, Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr., Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo and Florencio Noel.

Nasser C. Pangandaman, Sr. seats at the House with his son Mohammad Hussein P. Pangandaman of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Lanao del Sur, while Florencio Noel is with his wife Josephine Veronique, who is the Representative of the Lone District of Malabon. On the other hand, Juan Macapagal Arroyo has his mother Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and his sibling Diosdado “Dato” Macapagal Arroyo, representing the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Pampanga and the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Camarines Sur, respectively. If not for the death of his Uncle Iggy T. Arroyo, Representative of the 5<sup>th</sup> District of Negros Occidental, there would have been four Arroyos at the House. Likewise, Sharon S. Garin and Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr. have their siblings serving in tandem with them at the House.

Eulogio “Amang” R. Magsaysay of AVE Partylist is related by affinity to Representative Ma. Milagros H. Magsaysay of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Zambales.

It may be gainsaid that the AVE Partylist is that of the Magsaysay clan as they formed and controlled it. Its first nominee is Eulogio “Amang” R. Magsaysay, while its third nominee is his mother, Adelaida “Baby” R. Rodriguez.

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<sup>90</sup> 109 years of Ortegas in La Union; Gordons, Magsaysays in Zambales. Available: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view/20100427-266655/109-years-of-Ortegas-in-La-Union-Gordons-Magsaysays-in-Zambales>

Moreover, if AVE Partylist is for the Magsaysays, KAKUSA Partylist is for the Jalosjos. While it is true that no Jalosjos is a nominee of the said partylist, former Zamboanga del Norte Romeo Jalosjos is its chairman emeritus. Aside from this, KAKUSA garnered its eighty percent (80%) from Region IX, particularly Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay and Zamboanga del Sur.<sup>91</sup> Hence, it may be gainsaid that KAKUSA is an extension of the Jalosjos political dynasty.

*Table 6. Membership to a Political Clan*

Partylist Representatives	Number	Percentage
Who are members of a political clan	12	21%
Who are not members of a political clan	44	79%
Total	56	100%

*Table 7. Partylist Representatives and their Relatives in Government Positions*

Partylist Representative	Relatives Currently Holding Local and National Elective Positions		
	Relative	Position	Office
Nasser C. Pangandaman, Sr.	Mohammad Hussein P. Pangandaman	Representative	1 <sup>st</sup> District, Lanao del Sur
	Nasser P. Pangandaman, Jr.	Mayor	Masiu, Lanao del Sur
Sharon S. Garin	Jeanette Garin	Representative	1 <sup>st</sup> District, Ilo-Ilo
	Oscar Garin, Jr.	Vice Governor	Ilo-Ilo
	Christine Garin	Mayor	Guimbal, Ilo-Ilo
	Nimfa Garin	Mayor	San Joaquin, Ilo-Ilo
Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.	Rufus Rodriguez	Representative	2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Cagayan de Oro

<sup>91</sup> Election Records and Statistics Department, Commission on Elections.

Bernadette Herrera-Dy	Alex Herrera	Councilor	Quezon City
	Victor Garcia	Board Member	Aklan
Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega III	Victor Francisco C. Ortega	Representative	1 <sup>st</sup> District, La Uñion
	Manuel "Manoling" Ortega	Governor	La Uñion
	Alfredo Pablo C. Ortega	Mayor	San Fernando City, La Uñion
Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo	Gloria Macapagal Arroyo	Representative	2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Pampanga
	Diosdado "Dato" Macapagal Arroyo	Representative	2 <sup>nd</sup> Districtive, Camarines Sur
Florencio Noel	Josephine Veronique R. Lacson-Noel	Representative	Lone District, Malabon
Eulogio "Amang" R. Magsaysay	Ma. Milagros H. Magsaysay	Representative	1 <sup>st</sup> District, Zambales
Raymond Mendoza	Emmi Lou Taliño-Mendoza	Governor	North Cotabato
	Regelio Taliño	Mayor	Carmen, North Cotabato

Since the partylist system is an alternative way to smuggle oneself to the halls of Congress, the candidates conveniently devised easier ways to to have their entry inside the chamber. Learned in the ways of traditional politicians, they choose target bailiwicks depending on their size and characteristics and on the total votes needed for election. Given a vote target and the campaign cost, candidates concentrate in areas where they have solid supporters, paying little attention to ideological platforms.

Moreover, for those partylist representatives, belonging to the political clans, there is no need to choose target bailiwicks as these were long established. The partylist representatives then become simply an extension of the traditional political elite. As for other partylist representatives

who do not belong to one, they simply have to establish their ties with local political lords within the region. Apparently, regionalizing the votes secures a congressional seat. It seems then that establishing a regional sector is preferred by political opportunists. But, again, regional sectors do not escape the danger of being merely creations of the traditional politicians.

*Table 8. Partylist and Votes Garnered in their Bailiwick*

Partylist Group & Representative	Bailiwick	Votes Garnered	Total Number of Votes	Percentage of Bailiwick Votes over Total Number of Votes
AAMBIS-OWA Sharon S. Garin	Region VI Iloilo Antique Capiz Guimaras Aklan Total	168,365 24,997 11,986 5,741 4,932 <b>216,021</b>	357,804	60%
ABONO Robert Raymond M. Estrella Francisco R. Ortega III	Region I Pangasinan La Union Ilocos Sur Ilocos Norte Total	413,787 180,200 4,927 3,266 <b>602,180</b>	766,993	78%
AGBIAG Patricinio Antonio	Region II Cagayan Isabela Nueva Vizcaya Quirino Batanes	116,058 26,309 1,890 959 41	263,234	55%

	Total	<b>145,257</b>		
AGAP	Region IV-A		516,052	69%
Nicanor Briones	Batangas	301,741		
	Cavite	22,212		
	Quezon	15,474		
	Laguna	11,916		
	Rizal	5,581		
	Total	<b>356,924</b>		
AGP	Region III		269,273	60%
Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo	Pampanga	142,203		
	Nueva Ecija	15,394		
	Bataan	2,255		
	Bulacan	1,523		
	Tarlac	428		
	Zambales	319		
	Aurora	8		
	Total	<b>162,130</b>		
KAKUSA	Region IX		234,788	80%
Ranulfo P. Canonigo	Zamboanga del Norte	126,315		
	Zamboanga Sibugay	58,887		
	Zamboanga del Sur			
	Total	1,464		
		<b>186,666</b>		

## *Conclusion*

The increase in the number of partylist representatives in Congress through the years, since its introduction to the Filipino electorate, does not mean that representation for the marginalized or underprivileged in Philippine society has also increased. The study has demonstrated that there are partylist representatives who are not supposed to be in their seats, and there are partylist organizations which are actually “bogus”.

Sadly, with the wealthy and pedigreed occupying congressional seats reserved for the marginalized and underrepresented, the partylist system, Filipino style, defies the very reason for its enactment. The opportunity provided for its intended beneficiaries to gain proportional representation in the House of Representatives have even become slimmer with the participation of those who have the money and those who have the family name. In the end, the marginalized and the underrepresented remain as such. Yet, the partylist system was supposed to counter the traditional elitist district level politics, where only candidates, who have money and name, gain power.

Adding to injury is the confusion and misunderstanding among decision makers, which contributed to the problematic implementation of the partylist system.<sup>92</sup> For the moneyed and pedigreed, such confusion and misunderstanding is a blessing,<sup>93</sup> as it opened new opportunities for them to maintain and expand their influence and power.

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<sup>92</sup> Wurfel, D. The Partylist System: Sectoral or National? Success or Failure? Available: <http://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/kasarinlan/article/viewArticle/321>

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.



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