


**Working  
Paper**

# Corruption and Political Dynasties in East Kalimantan

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APRIL 2020

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Citation: Herdiansyah Hamzah, *Corruption and Political Dynasties in East Kalimantan*, Working Paper 4/2020, Auriga Nusantara, Jakarta, 2020.

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# ABSTRAK

Political dynasties in East Kalimantan have shown significant developments in the last decade. A number of factors have encouraged political dynasties to flourish in East Kalimantan: *Firstly*, undemocratic political party institutions; *Secondly*, political parties' lack of capacity to develop organizational financial independence; *Thirdly*, regulatory factors that allow political dynastic consolidation; *Fourthly*, extremely low political awareness among the floating mass of voters; and *Fifthly*, the persistent strong feudal culture in our societal order. So, how does corruption relate to political dynasties?

Theoretically, relationships between corruption and political dynasties tend to be ambiguous. On the one hand, political dynasties are strongly influenced by a 'reputation building incentive', aimed at building a favorable public image. But on the other hand, political dynasties are also strongly influenced by a 'stockpiling-wealth incentive'. This shows their true greedy nature through uncontrolled accumulation of wealth, which is part of their strategy for preserving hereditary power from one generation to the next. It is this tendency towards uncontrolled wealth accumulation that propagates a corrupt nature. Despite their best reputation building efforts, this true, corrupt nature is hard to conceal.

**Key words:** corruption, political dynasty, East Kalimantan.



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# I. Introduction

A sting operation or *Operasi Tangkap Tangan* (OTT) carried out by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in East Kutai district in early July 2020 confirmed the vulnerability of political dynasties to corruption. In the operation, East Kutai District Head, Ismunandar was arrested together with his wife, Encek Unguria Riarinda Firsasih, who held office as Chair of the East Kutai District Legislative Assembly (DPRD).<sup>1</sup> In addition to Ismunandar and his wife, KPK also named three district government office heads as suspects: Head of the East Kutai Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda), Musyaffa; Head of the East Kutai Finance and Asset Management Agency (BPKAD), Suriansyah; and Head of the East Kutai Public Works Office (PU), Aswandini.<sup>2</sup> Musyaffa and Suriansyah are brothers from the same family.<sup>3</sup> Ismunandar and his wife, together with the three agency heads were alleged to have accepted bribes from two contractors, Aditya Maharani and Dedy Ariyanto, associates who secured projects in East Kutai.<sup>4</sup>

The KPK sting operation against Ismunandar and his wife in East Kutai has added to the list of political dynasties embroiled in corruption cases. Before the East Kutai case, at least six political dynasties have been involved in a whirlpool of corruption, including: Ratu Atut Chosiyah in Banten province, Syaekani Hassan Rais in Kutai Kartanegara district, Atty Suharti in Cimahi municipality, Fuad Amin Imron in Bangkalan district, Sri Hartini in Klaten district, and Yan Anton Ferdian in Banyuwangi district.<sup>5</sup> Over the last decade, the trend for regional dynastic politics has seen a significant rise. From 2010-2014, sixty-one regions applied dynastic political practices. The number has continued to increase, and now stands at 117 or approximately 21 percent of all our autonomous regions.<sup>6</sup> Referring to Ministry of Home Affairs data, political dynasties are distributed evenly throughout Indonesia, in regions like Banten, West Java, East Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi and Kalimantan.<sup>7</sup>

Discourse on political dynasties has often been restricted to normative aspects, limited only to

<sup>1</sup> Kompas.com, "OTT Bupati-Ketua DPRD East Kutai: Suami-Istri Tersangka Korupsi", <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/07/04/06432981/ott-bupati-ketua-dprd-kutai-timur-suami-istri-tersangka-korupsi?page=all>, Accessed on 9 September 2020.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Selasar.co, "Suami-Istri dan Kakak-Adik Ini Diamankan Terkait OTT KPK Di Kutim", <https://selasar.co/read/2020/07/03/2247/suami-istri-dan-kakak-adik-ini-diamankan-terkait-ott-kpk-di-kutim>, Accessed on 9 September 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Tempo.co, "KPK Geledah 5 Tempat Terkait OTT Bupati East Kutai", <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1363515/kpk-geledah-5-tempat-terkait-ott-bupati-kutai-timur/full&view=ok>, Accessed on 9 September 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Kompas.com, "6 Dinasti Politik dalam Pusaran Korupsi, Suami-Istri hingga Anak-Orangtua Bersekongkol", <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2018/03/02/07292391/6-dinasti-politik-dalam-pusaran-korupsi-suami-istri-hingga-anak-orangtua?page=all>, Accessed on 9 September 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Republika.co.id, "Cengkeram Korupsi Di Daerah Politik Dinasti", <https://republika.co.id/berita/qd2p4c328/cengkeram-korupsi-di-daerah-politik-dinasti>, Accessed on 9 September 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Kemendagri.go.id, "Kemendagri: Dinasti Politik Semakin Meluas", <https://www.kemendagri.go.id/berita/baca/11872/kemendagri-dinasti-politik-semakin-meluas>, Accessed on 9 September 2020.

conclusions on whether or not they are allowed. Though we could portray many dimensions to a political system that perpetuates this hereditary approach. Consequently, this 'whether or not' debate was deemed resolved following Constitutional Court (MK) Decision No. 33/PUU- XIII/2015.<sup>8</sup> This MK decision provided a legal formal basis for political dynasties in Indonesia, particularly in *Pilkada* or regional head elections. It was based on the *ratio decidendi* or rationale that discriminatory treatment should be prevented in regional head elections, as the right to elect and be elected is a constitutional right of all citizens. However, despite not being prohibited, political dynasties are still deemed 'unethical' in government systems. Approaches based on kinship politics in determining public office for elected officials are filled with conflicts of interest.

In East Kalimantan, political dynasties have shown a sharp upward trend in the last ten years.

This situation is proportional to the tendency by certain political clans to dominate power and natural resources. The KPK sting involving the Ismunandar political dynasty in East Kutai district, preceded by that of the Syaokani Hasan Rais political dynasty in Kutai Kartanegara district, has reignited discourse on how tightly interconnected political dynasties are with corruption crimes.

Accordingly, this paper aims to provide a simple analysis of two important issues: *Firstly*, factors causing the growth of political dynasties in East Kalimantan. What aspects are influencing the recent significant increase in prevalence of political dynasties in East Kalimantan? *Secondly*, what the relationships are between corruption and political dynasties. Do political dynasties have characteristics that tend to drive their actors to behave in ways that lead to corruption?

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<sup>8</sup> Constitutional Court Decision No. 33/PUU- XIII/2015 can be downloaded from the following link: [https://mkri.id/public/content/persidangan/putusan/33\\_PUU-XIII\\_2015.pdf](https://mkri.id/public/content/persidangan/putusan/33_PUU-XIII_2015.pdf). Accessed on 15 September 2020.

## II. Political Dynasty Theoretical Framework

Political dynasties are frequently referred to in different terms, including “political dynasties”, “dynastic politics”, “political families” and “kinship politics”. These terms have a commonality when referencing the contexts of their discussion, i.e., hereditary power passed down within one family group generally based on bloodlines. However, in literal terms, a political dynasty is different to dynastic politics. Political dynasty or political family refers to an established political entity, whereas dynastic politics or kinship politics refers to the choice of approach used by a relatively new or emerging political entity. However, both terminologies are inseparable, like two sides of the same coin. In many pieces of literature, political dynasty is understood as the capacity of a family to bequeath hereditary power. Jemma Purdey, for instance (referencing McCoy, 2002 and Teehanke, 2001), defined political dynasty as follows: “Political dynasty refers to the ability of a family to inherit and to accumulate power and wealth from one generation to the next and frequently functions across a variety of political systems and across time.”<sup>9</sup>

Park Seung Woo provides the following definition of political dynasties: “In general, the term “political dynasties” is defined as traditional

political families or the practices by these political families of monopolizing political power and public offices from generation to generation and treating the public elective officers almost as their personal property”<sup>10</sup> William R. Adan, a retired professor and former rector of Mindanao State University in the Philippines, defined political dynasties as being about: “the ownership and the control in the distribution of power and the economic benefits of a politically defined area.”<sup>11</sup>

Of course, political families do not necessarily become political dynasties. There are specific preconditions for calling a political family a political dynasty. Accordingly, Andrew J. Masigan in an opinion piece in *Business World* entitled “Evils of Political Dynasties”, provides the following view: “When does a political family become a political dynasty? A political dynasty is established in two instances. First, when an elected government official is succeeded by a member of his household up to the first degree of consanguinity or affinity. Second, when several members of a family occupy various positions in government simultaneously.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Purdey, J., Political families in Southeast Asia. *South East Asia Research*, 24(3), 2016, pp. 319–327. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967828X16659027>. Downloadable through the following link: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0967828X16659027>. Accessed on 22 August 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Park Seung Woo, *Oligarchic Democracy in the Philippines: Democratization Sans Disintegration of Political Monopoly*. In *States of Democracy: Oligarchic Democracies and Asian Democratization*, edited by Cho Hee Yeon, Lawrence Surendra, and Eunhong Park, Earthworm Books, Mumbai, 2008, pp. 117–136.

<sup>11</sup> Mindanews.com, “Turning Point: Political Dynasty, Corruption and Poverty”, <https://www.mindanews.com/mindaviews/2018/12/turning-point-political-dynasty-corruption-and-poverty/>, Accessed on 22 August 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Bworldonline.com, “Evils Of Political Dynasties”, <https://www.bworldonline.com/evils-of-political-dynasties/>.



Political dynasties are not a new phenomenon. In the United States, the Kennedy and Bush clans are two examples of political dynasties holding office during different periods. The Bush political clan even bore two presidents: the 41<sup>st</sup> president, George Herbert Walker Bush; and 43<sup>rd</sup> president, George Walker Bush. In addition to presidents, the Bush political clan has also produced state governors, a CIA director, senator, and bankers.<sup>13</sup> Political dynasties have also been going on for a long time in other parts of the world. In India, the world will never forget seven generations of the Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty.<sup>14</sup> In the Philippines, we should not ignore famous political clans like the Aquino, Marcos, Arroyo, Binay, Duterte and Roxas families.<sup>15</sup> So, political dynasties are a long-standing phenomenon. According to Dal Bó *et al.*, in the United States of America, the prevalence of dynasties is higher amongst legislators than in other jobs.<sup>16</sup> Political systems are deep rooted in Southeast Asia. As Jemma Purdey explains, "The political family

has an entrenched place within the modern political systems of South East Asian states. Current and former national leaders of the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore are members of political dynasties and elsewhere in the region family networks play central roles in the political lives of these nations."<sup>17</sup>

A study by Farida Jalalzai and Meg Rincker in 2018 discovered the fact that one in ten executive officials across the world belongs to a political family.<sup>18</sup> This study analyzed the backgrounds of 1,029 executive office holders, particularly presidents and prime ministers in office between 2000-2017. As many as 119 of these office holders, or 12% of the total had family relations with political clans. By region, North America had the highest percentage with approximately 25%, then Latin America and Europe each with around 13%, followed by Asia with around 11%, and Sub-Saharan Africa with around 9%.<sup>19</sup> Below is a tabulation of office holders by region.

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bworldonline.com/evils-of-political-dynasties/, Accessed on 22 August 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Wikipedia.org, "Keluarga Politik", [https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keluarga\\_politik](https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keluarga_politik), Accessed on 15 September 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Okezone.com, "Tujuh Turunan Dinasti Politik Nehru-Gandhi Di India", <https://news.okezone.com/read/2016/02/11/18/1309300/tujuh-turunan-dinasti-politik-nehru-gandhi-di-india>, Accessed on 15 September 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Wikipedia.org, "Political dynasties in the Philippines", [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political\\_dynasties\\_in\\_the\\_Philippines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_dynasties_in_the_Philippines), Accessed on 15 September 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Ernesto Dal Bó, Pedro Dal Bó, and Jason Snyder, Political Dynasties, The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) Working Paper Series, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2007, Downloadable at: <https://www.nber.org/papers/w13122.pdf>. Accessed on 6 July 2020.

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<sup>17</sup> Purdey, J. (2016)., Op. Cit.

<sup>18</sup> Jalalzai, Farida, and Rincker, Meg, Blood is Thicker than Water: Family Ties to Political Power Worldwide. *Historical Social Research* 43 (4), 2018, pp. 54-72. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.43.2018.4.54-72>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Table 1. Executive Office Holders by Region

Region	Number (%)	Office holders with family ties	Percentage of office holders with family ties
Europe	417 (41)	54	13
Sub-Saharan Africa	312 (30)	29	9
Asia	204 (20)	23	11
Latin America	88 (9)	11	13
North America	8 (0)	2	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,029 (100)</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: Farida Jalalzai and Meg Rincker (2018)

## III. Analysis

### 1. Factors contributing to the growth of political dynasties in East Kalimantan

Political dynasties have experienced significant developments in East Kalimantan over the past decade. After the Syaukani Hasan Rais<sup>20</sup> political dynasty faded after his daughter, Rita Widyasari<sup>21</sup> was also embroiled in a corruption case, there has been no decline in political dynasties in East Kalimantan. In fact, they have become increasingly prevalent.

Based on data processed from various sources, at least seven political dynasties are dominating the political stage in East Kalimantan with families dominating political institutions, from regional heads, to DPR, DPD and DPRD legislative and representative assemblies. Actors in political dynasties in East Kalimantan are shown in the table below.

**Table 2. Political Dynasties in East Kalimantan**

No.	Actor	Family relationship	Position	Party	Note
1	Ismunandar	Husband	East Kutai District Head	Nasdem	Elected to office for 2016-2021
	Encek UR Firgasih	Wife	Chair of East Kalimantan DPRD	PPP	Elected to office for 2019-2024
	Siti Rizky Amalia	Daughter	East Kalimantan DPRD member	PPP	Elected to office for 2019-2024
2	Neni Moerniaeni	Mother	Mayor of Bontang	Golkar	Elected to office for 2016-2021
	Andi Faisal Sofyan Hasdam	Son	Chair of Bontang DPRD	Golkar	Elected to office for 2019-2024

<sup>20</sup> Syaukani Hasan Rais was the Kutai Kartanegara District Head named a suspect by KPK in 2006 during his second term in office.

<sup>21</sup> Rita Widyasari is Syaukani Hasan Rais' daughter, who also served as Kutai Kartanegara District Head, before being named a suspect by KPK in 2017 during her second term in office.

## Analysis

No.	Actor	Family relationship	Position	Party	Note
3	Yusriansyah Syarkawi	Father	Paser District Head	Golkar	Elected to office for 2016-2021
	Hendra Wahyudi	Son	Chair of Paser DPRD	PKB	Elected to office for 2019-2024
	Yenni Eviliana	In law (wife of Hendra Wahyudi)	East Kalimantan DPRD member	PKB	Elected to office for 2019-2024
4	Rudi Mas'ud	Younger brother	DPR-RI member	Golkar	Elected to office for 2019-2024
	Hasanuddin Mas'ud	Older brother	East Kalimantan DPRD member	Golkar	Elected to office for 2019-2024
	Rahmad Mas'ud	Older brother	Deputy Mayor of Balikpapan	Golkar	Elected to office for 2016-2021
	Abdul Gafur Mas'ud	Younger brother	North Penajam Paser District Head	Demokrat	Elected to office for 2018-2023
5	Mahyuddin	Older brother	DPD-RI member	-	Elected to office for 2019-2024
	Mahyunadi	Younger brother	East Kalimantan DPRD member	Golkar	Elected to office for 2019-2024
	Maswar	Younger brother	East Kutai DPRD member	Golkar	Elected to office for 2019-2024
	Marsidik	Younger brother	East Kutai DPRD member	Golkar	Elected to office for 2019-2024
6	Awang Faroek Ishak	Father	DPR-RI member	Nasdem	Elected to office for 2019-2024
	Awang Ferdian Hidayat	Younger brother	DPD-RI member	-	Elected to office for 2019-2024
	Rima Hartati	In law (wife of Awang Ferdian Hidayat)	East Kalimantan DPRD member	PPP	Elected to office for 2019-2024
7	Syahrie Jaang	Husband	Mayor of Samarinda	Demokrat	Elected to office for 2016-2021
	Puji Setyowati	Wife	East Kalimantan DPRD member	Demokrat	Elected to office for 2019-2024

Source: Compiled from various sources.

When categorized, there are two classifications of political dynastic model in East Kalimantan: *First*, political dynasties that exist within one region, but with office held in different political institutions: As an example, this phenomenon occurred in East Kutai district. Before Ismunandar was named a suspect by KPK in its sting operation against alleged corruption, his wife, holding office as the Chair of the East Kutai District DPRD, was also arrested by KPK.<sup>22</sup> The Ismunandar political clan controlled the regional government, while at the same time controlling the legislative assembly. In addition to East Kutai district, a similar phenomenon has transpired in two other regions in East Kalimantan province, i.e., Bontang municipality and Paser district. In Bontang, the office of Mayor is currently held by Neni Moerniaeni, while her son, Andi Faisal Sofyan Hasdam is serving as the Chair of the Bontang Municipality Legislative Assembly (DPRD). Interestingly, when her husband, Sofyan Hasdam, served as Mayor of Bontang for a second term from 2006-2011, Neni Moerniaeni was serving simultaneously as the Chair of the Bontang Municipality DPRD. A similar thing happened in Paser district, where the office of district head was held by Yusriansyah Syarkawi, while the position of Chair of the Paser District DPRD was held by his son, Hendra Wahyudi.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, former East Kalimantan Governor for two periods, Awang Faroek Ishak, is now a member of the Republic of Indonesia House of Representatives (DPR-RI) for the Nasdem party, while his son is serving simultaneously as a member of the Republic of Indonesia House of Regional Representatives (DPD-RI) representing East Kalimantan.<sup>24</sup>

*Second*, political dynasties that exist in different regions with office held in different political institutions: In the Mas'ud political clan, for instance, Rudi Mas'ud, Chair of the East Kalimantan Golkar Party Regional Leaders Council, is currently serving simultaneously as a DPR-RI member. Meanwhile, his brother, Hasanuddin Mas'ud, serves as a member of the East Kalimantan DPRD, also representing the Golkar party. At the same time, two other brothers hold office in regional governments: Rahmad Mas'ud as Deputy Mayor of Balikpapan, and Abdul Gafur Mas'ud as the North Penajam Paser District Head.

The same thing is happening with the M brothers from East Kutai. Mahyuddin, is a DPD-RI member, while his three younger brothers, Mahyunadi, Maswar and Marsidik, are elected members of regional legislative assemblies: Mahyunadi at the East Kalimantan provincial level, and both Maswar and Marsidik at the East Kutai district level. The same applies to Syahrie Jaang, the current Mayor of Samarinda and Chair of the Kalimantan Demokrat Party Regional Leaders Council whose wife, Puji Setyowati, is a member of the East Kalimantan DPRD representing the same party for 2019-2024.

The fundamental question is: what factors cause the growth of political dynasties in East Kalimantan? There are several crucial things that are making political dynasties increasingly fertile in East Kalimantan: *Firstly*, undemocratic political party institutions, not only in decision-making processes within political parties tending to be monopolized by certain groups, but also in the failure of political parties to carry out their functions in recruitment and cadre forming processes: As an example, in contesting

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<sup>22</sup> During the same period, Ismunandar's daughter, Siti Rizky Amalia was also an elected member of the East Kalimantan DPRD representing the PPP party for 2019-2024.

<sup>23</sup> At the same time, Yusriansyah Syarkawi's daughter in law and wife of Hendra Wahyudi, Yenni Eviliana is serving as a member of the East Kalimantan DPRD representing the PKB party for 2019-2024.

<sup>24</sup> During the same period, Awang Faroek Ishak's daughter in law and wife of Awang Ferdian Hidayat, Rima Hartai is serving as

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a member of the East Kalimantan DPRD representing the PPP party for 2019-2024.

regional head elections, decisions on nominating candidates are made by only a handful of elite party members. This undemocratic situation leads to control over party decisions being in the hands of only one group. It is this that becomes the embryo of the perpetuation of political dynasties within political parties. So, why do political dynasties have party political interests? Looking at the experiences of two members of political dynastic clans in East Kalimantan elected as a district head and a mayor in the 2015 regional elections, neither nominated themselves through party political channels. Both Rita Widayari and Neni Moerniaeni nominated themselves as independent individuals. However, once they had been inaugurated and officially taken office as district head and mayor, the jockeying for influence in political parties began. This shows that consolidation of power and access to all resources are far more effective through political parties. This aligns with a point raised by Ernesto Dal Bó, *et al.*, who stated that, "When a party safely controls a state, those in control of a party can afford to favor candidates to whom they are connected by family or social ties."<sup>25</sup>

*Secondly*, political parties' lack of capacity to develop organizational financial independence. This provides room for groups with established financial resources to become dominant. Today, almost all political parties are controlled by oligarchical groups; groups that are economically able. Undemocratic political party institutions, as outlined in the first point above, are also worsened by a deficient political party financial design that opens the door to a monopoly of power by oligarchical groups with strong financial resources. Ultimately, it is this monopoly of power based on financial capacity that fosters the growth of political dynasties.

*Thirdly*, regulatory factors that allow political dynastic consolidation. The burdensome requirements for nomination in regional head elections, for instance, limit entry and only allow access by certain kinship groups.<sup>26</sup> This aligns with high political costs, such as "*nomination dowries*", that are only accessible to those with adequate financial resources. It is this door that provides consolidation room for political dynasties.

*Fourthly*, persistently low political awareness among the floating mass of the electorate. Consequently, there is no form of 'social control' over the dominance of certain political clans. The logic is simple, political dynasties will continue to become stronger parallel to weak public control. This absence of social control results in mechanisms for checks and balances not working, either within political parties or in relations between political institutions in the regions. However, this relatively low political awareness has also been a result of political parties not carrying out the political education that should be their responsibility to provide.

*Fifthly*, the persistent strong feudal culture in our societal order. This is marked by the continued strength of patron-client relationships, principal-agent relationships, and the like. This feudal culture causes an undemocratic climate in societal sociopolitical dynamics. Including in political traditions, where certain kinship clans have the potential to be associated as being "*God's representatives*", making them difficult to criticize, let alone refute. This situation helps to perpetuate political dynasties.

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<sup>25</sup> Ernesto Dal Bó, Pedro Dal Bó, and Jason Snyder (2007)., *Op. cit.*

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<sup>26</sup> The requirement for 20 percent of seats or 25 of valid votes, and requirements for independent nominations means access to nomination for regional head elections is limited, and only accessible to certain political clans.

## 2. The relationship between corruption and political dynasty

Is a political dynasty unquestionably corrupt? Not necessarily, but the corrupt tendencies of political dynasties are hard to deny. Is this hypothesis correct? Let us conduct a short test. In principle, political dynasties provide space and a path for corruption, particularly when they are born and proliferate prematurely. A politician born from a political clan without being forged from experience and undergoing proper processes in becoming a party member is certain to be a product of substantial financial capital, and not from a grassroots political tradition, and will therefore be vulnerable to corruption in his or her efforts to maintain power at a later date.

However, in some cases political dynasties also need to build a reputation disassociating themselves from corruption. In his thesis entitled "Essays on Political Dynasties: Evidence from Empirical Investigations", Ashikur Rahman explained that theoretically, relationships between corruption and political dynasties tend to be ambiguous. On the one hand, political dynasties are strongly influenced by a 'reputation-building incentive'.<sup>27</sup> Explaining this opinion, Rahman wrote the following:

"As I will argue below, theoretically the overall relationship between dynasty-politics and corruption is ambiguous. More specifically, dynastic politicians who desire dynastic succession at the highest political office can be influenced by what I call the 'reputation-

building' incentive. This incentive suggests that members of political dynasties, while they are in office, will try to abstain from corrupt activities since they would want to create a positive reputation for their family. Besides, this positive reputation will act as a signal to the people that their family is in politics to serve the public interest. As a result, if this incentive is strong, then it is likely that dynasty-politics is associated with lower levels of corruption across countries."<sup>28</sup>

Rahman also explains that conversely, political dynasties can also be influenced by what he calls the 'stockpiling-wealth incentive'. Rahman describes this as follows:

"Contrary to the reputation-building incentive, dynastic politicians can also be dominated by the stockpiling-wealth incentive. This incentive suggests that dynastic politicians, while they are in office, will use their position to amass a fortune so that their future generations can 'buy' their way to office. They can also appoint their preferred people to key positions in the government and bureaucracy (and in the process accumulate political capital) so that the elections contested by their future generations are manipulated in their favor."<sup>29</sup>

The tendency of political dynasties to greedily accumulate political and especially financial capital results in corrupt authority. Despite trying to build as positive a reputation as possible, the true corrupt nature is hard to conceal. For that reason, Rahman says countries where political dynasties are more prevalent, tend to be more corrupt.<sup>30</sup> Rahman explains this as follows:

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<sup>27</sup> Ashikur Rahman, *Essays on Political Dynasties: Evidence from Empirical Investigations*. PhD thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), 2013, p. 88. This thesis can be downloaded from: <http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/605/>. Accessed on 23 August 2020.

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

## Analysis

"Countries with influential political dynasties (or at least with immediate dynastic successions at the highest political office) are on average more corrupt. Likewise, this message is difficult to reconcile with the reputation-building story, but it lends some support to stockpiling-wealth incentive which suggests that dynastic politicians will pursue succession in the political arena through developing political machineries and accumulating financial capital."<sup>31</sup>

It is undeniable that political dynasties provide a lot of space for corruption. According to Beatriz Paterno, there are at least three reasons why political dynasties should be restricted: *Firstly*, political dynasties corrupt the systems of checks and balances; *Secondly*, the centralities of dynasties to politics lowers the costs associated with committing corrupt acts; and *Thirdly*, the continued success of political families despite corruption charges undermines the rule of law and perpetuates a system of corruption in government.<sup>32</sup> If we reflect on the KPK sting operation in East Kutai district, the hypothesis on political dynasties corrupting the systems of checks and balances finds its basis for justification. When Ismundar held office as East Kutai District Head and his wife was Chair of the East Kutai District DPRD simultaneously, checks and balances for institutional performance became completely paralyzed. One of which was overseeing the upstream to downstream flow of the regional APBD budget. All APBD budgetary policies could easily be finalized behind closed doors, and not in the public domain as they should have been. Even when oversight was visible, it only took the form of procedural formality.

Situations where political dynasties develop to become stronger and more established make investigating instances of corruption far more difficult. This is illustrated by what happened in the Philippines. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the most influential church-based group in the Catholic majority country, gave a statement illustrating how political dynasties have fostered corruption in the country. The CBCP statement was covered by Gulf News, a UAE-based English language newspaper, as follows: "The continued dominance of political dynasties in the country makes it more difficult to combat corruption, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said. Political dynasties breed corruption and ineptitude, said the statement signed by Cebu Archbishop Jose Palma, CBCP president."<sup>33</sup> Further, political dynasties' dominance also makes it easier for them to coopt actors in civil society movements. According to Tadem and Tadem, as cited by Jemma Purdey, "The mobilization of civil society movements against dynasties is made more difficult because in many cases they have already been coopted by the dynastic families through social welfare and charity distribution."<sup>34</sup> This cooption weakens civil society efforts to fight corruption.

Factually, the Corruption Eradication Commission's arrests of two political dynasty clans in East Kalimantan, namely that of former Kutai Kartanegara District Head, Rita Widayarsi, and former East Kutai District Head, Ismundar, confirm how prone political dynasties are to corruption. Political dynasties and corruption have a strong correlation. Political dynasties are

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 120.

<sup>32</sup> Beatriz Paterno, "The Philippines Must Break the Power of Political Dynasties", <https://globalanticorruptionblog.com/2014/12/01/the-philippines-must-break-the-power-of-political-dynasties/>. Accessed on 22 August 2020.

<sup>33</sup> Gulfnews.com, "Political Dynasties Worsen Problem on Corruption", <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/philippines/political-dynasties-worsen-problem-on-corruption-1.1139597>. Accessed on 15 September 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Purdey, J. (2016)., *Op. Cit.*



not necessarily corrupt. However, they tend to be destructive by creating sharp inequalities, and laying out a path for corruption to occur. Political dynasties have a greedy tendency to accumulate wealth as part of a strategy to perpetuate hereditary power. It is this tendency towards uncontrolled wealth accumulation that propagates a corrupt nature. As political dynasties not only provide inequality in the distribution of political power, as discussed by Dal Bó *et al.*<sup>35</sup>, they also limit access to financial resources in their regions only to their own political clans. It is this that causes the tendency to use excessive discretion in all of their policies, which veers towards corruption. Therefore, with these corruption prone characteristics in mind, it is sensible for KPK and other law enforcement authorities to center their surveillance efforts on the activities of political dynasties in the regions.

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<sup>35</sup> Ernesto Dal Bó, Pedro Dal Bó and Jason Snyder. (2007). *Op. Cit.*

## IV. Conclusions

Based on the explanations and discussion above, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. A number of factors have caused the significant growth of political dynasties in East Kalimantan: *First*, undemocratic political party institutions; *Second*, political parties' lack of capacity to develop organizational financial independence; *Third*, regulatory factors that allow political dynastic consolidation; *Fourth*, extremely low political awareness among the floating mass of voters; and *Fifth*, the persistent strong feudal culture in our societal order.
2. Political dynasties and corruption have a strong correlation. Political dynasties are not necessarily corrupt. However, they tend to be destructive by creating sharp inequalities, and laying out paths for corruption to occur. Political dynasties have a greedy tendency to accumulate wealth as part of a strategy to perpetuate hereditary power. It is this tendency towards uncontrolled wealth accumulation that propagates a corrupt nature. Despite best efforts to build a reputation, this true corrupt nature is hard to conceal.





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