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Initiative on an Anti-Political Dynasty Act:
Data from the Top Five Most Dynastic Philippine
Provinces**

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Assessing the Potential Success of the People's Initiative on an Anti-Political Dynasty Act: Data from the Top Five Most Dynastic Philippine Provinces

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Introduction

Article II, Section 26 of the 1986 Philippine Constitution notes that: “The State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service, and prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law (Official Gazette 2014).” Implicit in the wording is the acknowledgement by the framers of the Constitution that people empowerment and concentration of political power cannot coexist in a functional democracy. Further, the economic discipline sees the possible effects of political dynasties in public service akin to the effects of oligopolies in the markets—both could lead to particular inefficiencies that can harm the economy. And from the political and legal standpoint, anti-dynasty legislation could help prevent conflicts of interest from interfering with the checks-and-balances inherent in the country's governance framework.

Yet three decades after the Constitution clearly mandated Congress to enact an anti-dynasty law, and despite the downside of political elites articulated in the fields of social sciences (with literature in the Philippines dating back since the 1960s), no such legislation has been passed.

As such, efforts are now underway to mobilize support for a petition for the enactment of a national legislation on an Anti-Political Dynasty Act through people's initiative. This is made possible by Article VI, Section 32 of the Constitution, that enables the public to propose a law “after the registration of a petition therefore signed by at least ten per centum [10%] of the total

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number of registered voters, of which every legislative district must be represented by at least three per centum [3%] of the registered voters thereof” (Official Gazette 2014). For this initiative to succeed, it requires gathering the signatures of nearly 5.2-million registered voters spread across the entire country. If successful, this would, in turn, pave the way for a referendum or plebiscite on an Anti-Political Dynasty Act.

While it is difficult to ascertain the forthcoming support for the petition, analysts concede that the most challenging areas in the country for the petition organizers will probably include those with the highest concentration of political dynasties in local government. Based on the AIM Policy Center’s database on political dynasties, the five most dynastic provinces in the country include Maguindanao, Sulu, Bulacan, Dinagat Islands, and Ilocos Norte (see figure 1). The first three provinces belong to the top ten lists of all three indicators of dynastic concentration for the incumbent term of office. Dinagat Islands is consistently included in the list of highly dynastic provinces in the Policy Center’s database, and it maintains its position for two of the three dynasty indices as shown in figure 1. Ilocos Sur had also consistently ranked very high in the dynastic concentration indices for the previous years, albeit it failed to appear on the top ten lists for the 2013-2016 term of office.

I. Case study: Maguindanao

To help assess the prospects for collecting enough signatures in these provinces, we turn to data on the 2013 elections. In particular, we examine the Mayoral votes in each of the municipalities in some of these provinces, in order to arrive at a rough barometer of potential support for the petition. In each municipality, we disaggregate the votes for dynastic and non-dynastic candidates for mayor. If we take Maguindanao as an example, based on the 2013 elections data, at least one dynastic and one non-dynastic candidate was fielded in 20 out of the 37 cities and municipalities. These cities and municipalities include Cotabato City, Barira, Buldon, Kabuntalan, Parang, Sultan Kudarat, Sultan Mastura, and Northern Kabuntalan in the first legislative district; and Ampatuan, Shariff Aguak, South Upi, Gen. S. K. Pendatun, Mamasapano, Paglat, Guindulungan, Pandag, Mangudadatu, Datu Hoffer Ampatuan, Datu Salibog, and Shariff Saydona Mustapha in the second legislative district. Votes for non-dynastic candidates (even when losing) could be considered a latent demand for alternative (non-dynastic) leaders—and this in turn could also be useful as a rough indication of who might be more

inclined to support the anti-political dynasty petition.

Figures 2 and 3 provide a synthetic snapshot of the votes for non-dynasties in each of the municipalities for the two legislative districts in Maguindanao. In figure 2, the first legislative district produced 52 thousand votes for non-dynastic Mayoral candidates. In total, this represents 16 percent of the total number of voters in that district. This clearly satisfies the required minimum 3% for the petition, or at least 9.5 thousand signatures for the first district. The required signatures can all be gathered in Cotabato City, where there were roughly 26 thousand non-dynastic Mayoral votes in the recent elections.

As for figure 3, the second legislative district is associated with 16 thousand votes for non-dynastic Mayoral candidates. They constitute 7% of the total registered voters in this district. This also satisfies the 3% minimum (equivalent to 6.9 thousand signatures for the second district). Unlike the first district, however, the anti-dynasty advocates need to visit more than one municipality to obtain enough signatures in the second district.

Figure 4 also illustrates the voter turnout in the second district towns with non-dynasty voters. Each bar represents voter turnout, expressed as percentage and divided into dynastic, non-dynastic, and abstained shares of voters. One way to gather the needed signatures is to concentrate in the towns with the highest concentration of non-dynasty voters. Another way is to look at towns with the highest shares of non-dynasty voters and those who “abstained”, with the assumption that those who abstained can be influenced to take part in the signature campaign.

II. Top 5 Most Dynastic Philippine Provinces

Figure 5 replicates figure 4 for the rest of the five most dynastic provinces in the Philippines, providing a rough guide on whether the 3% minimum is at all feasible for these provinces. The horizontal violet line indicates 3% of the total registered voters—the minimum percentage for a successful legislative petition and the primary benchmark for the analysis of this paper. The blue bars indicate the non-dynastic voters as a percentage of the registered voters in a certain district.¹

At this stage, it is already possible to identify where the anti-dynasty petitioners could potentially face more challenges in gathering signatures. For example, the lone district of San

¹ In constructing figure 5, the following municipalities and cities were not included given that needed data were either missing or not publicly available: Maguing, Mulondo, Piagapo, Saguiran, Tamparan, Taraka, Bayang, Butig, Calanogas, and Lumbaca-Unayan in Lanao del Sur, and Jolo and Panglima Estino in Sulu. Their non-inclusion in the analysis is unlikely to affect the main observations in this paper.

Jose del Monte City, Bulacan did not register any non-dynasty vote at all.²

It has been highlighted in the introductory paragraphs that so-called “non-dynasty votes” are a crude measure of support for anti-dynasty legislation. There are caveats to this assumption, to be sure. For one, a voter may have chosen a non-dynastic candidate because of the latter’s higher competence and more palatable platform vis-à-vis other candidates, and not because the candidate is a non-dynasty per se. Moreover, a voter may be against political dynasties in the sense of unwillingness to vote for dynasty-affiliated candidates, but this does not automatically translate into support for a law prohibiting dynasty members from participating in the elections. For the said voter, it is still possible that they might see such legislation as running counter to a candidate’s right to vote and be voted upon.³

In legislative districts with relatively high non-dynastic constituency, signature-gathering may remain successful despite the aforementioned caveats. Potential difficulties thus lie in the districts with non-dynasty voting constituency equal to or just above the 3% threshold, such as in the second district of Maguindanao (6.82% of total registered voters), first and second districts of Sulu (4.75% and 5.05% respectively), and second district of Bulacan (7.99%).

Nevertheless, the viability of the anti-dynasty petition in the legislative districts under study remains promising especially if the analysis extends to the municipal level. Table 1 presents municipalities and cities with the largest non-dynasty votes in each of the legislative districts of the five provinces under study. If we assume that non-dynastic votes in the 2013 elections will translate to signatures in the anti-dynasty petition, there could be a strong latent demand for alternative (non-dynastic) leaders even in these provinces where dynasties tend to dominate. In most legislative districts, the needed signatures can be gathered within two or three cities/municipalities alone, as shown in the first table. Furthermore, some of the said cities and municipalities are headed by non-dynastic incumbents, which could translate to official support and networking opportunities at the grassroots level.

In conclusion, even though possible hurdles can be encountered in particular legislative districts (identified in the preceding paragraphs), the overall picture is that there could be enough potential supporters of the petition in the five most dynastic provinces (comprised of twelve

² Nevertheless, we find this to be a curious result worth further investigating.

³ In fact, this argument was used by a senator and scion of a Metro-Manila-based political dynasty in opposing anti-dynasty proposals in the Senate. See Louis Bacani, "Nancy Binay criticizes anti-political dynasty bill," *The Philippine Star* (Mandaluyong City), November 22, 2013, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2013/11/22/1259596/nancy-binay-criticizes-anti-political-dynasty-bill> (accessed June 16, 2014).

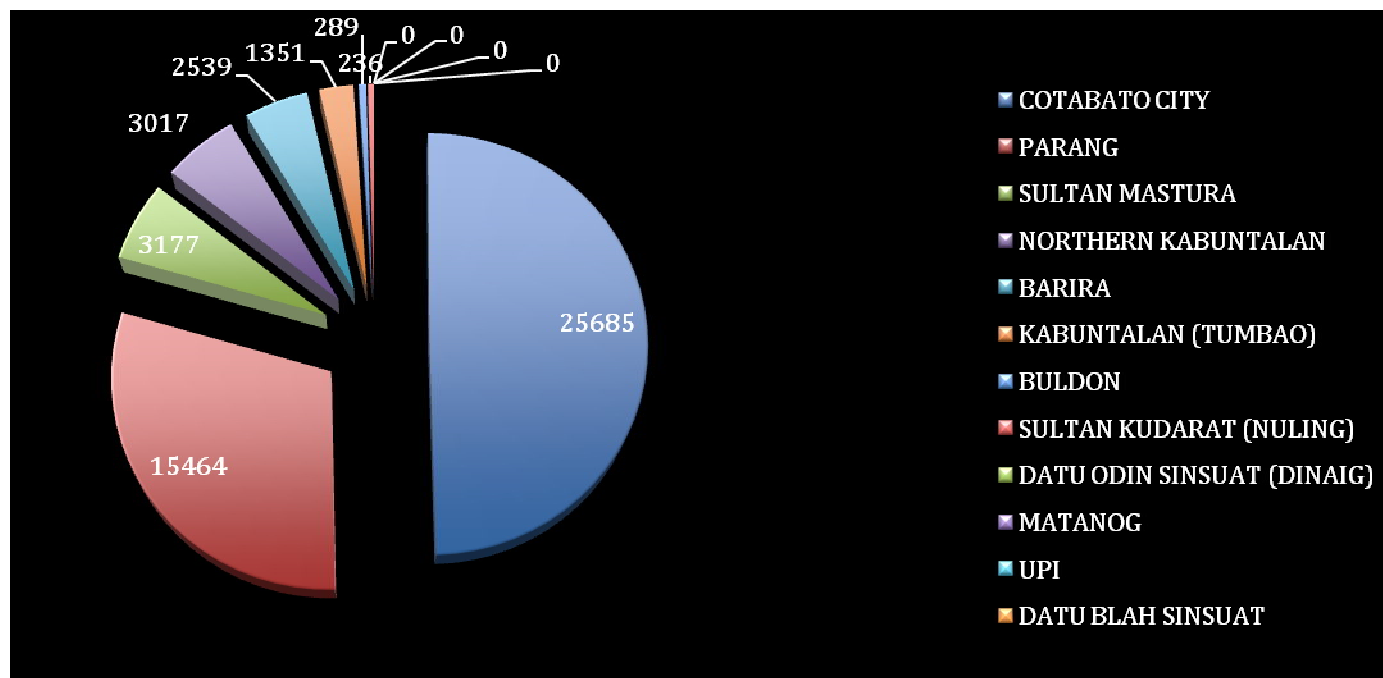
legislative districts) as their share in each district, in most instances, matches or exceeds the minimum requirements.

Figure 1. Ranking of Provinces according to Dynastic Concentration for 2013-2016 Term

	DYNASTIC SHARE	LARGEST DYNASTIC CLAN (SHARE OF TOTAL POSITIONS)	DYNASTIC COMPETITION- HERFINDAHL
TOP 1	MAGUINDANAO	DINAGAT ISLANDS	DINAGAT ISLANDS
TOP 2	BATANGAS	MAGUINDANAO	GUIMARAS
TOP 3	SULU	BILIRAN	MAGUINDANAO
TOP 4	ILOCOS NORTE	BULACAN	SULU
TOP 5	PAMPANGA	CAMIGUIN	APAYAO
TOP 6	LANAO DEL SUR	OCCIDENTAL MINDORO	BULACAN
TOP 7	BULACAN	SULU	AURORA
TOP 8	CATANDUANES	BATANES	CATANDUANES
TOP 9	MASBATE	MARINDUQUE	BILIRAN
TOP 10	ISABELA	TAWI-TAWI	BATANES

Source: AIM Political Dynasties Database (Version 2013).

Figure 2. Distribution of Voters for non-dynasties among the municipalities of Maguindanao First District

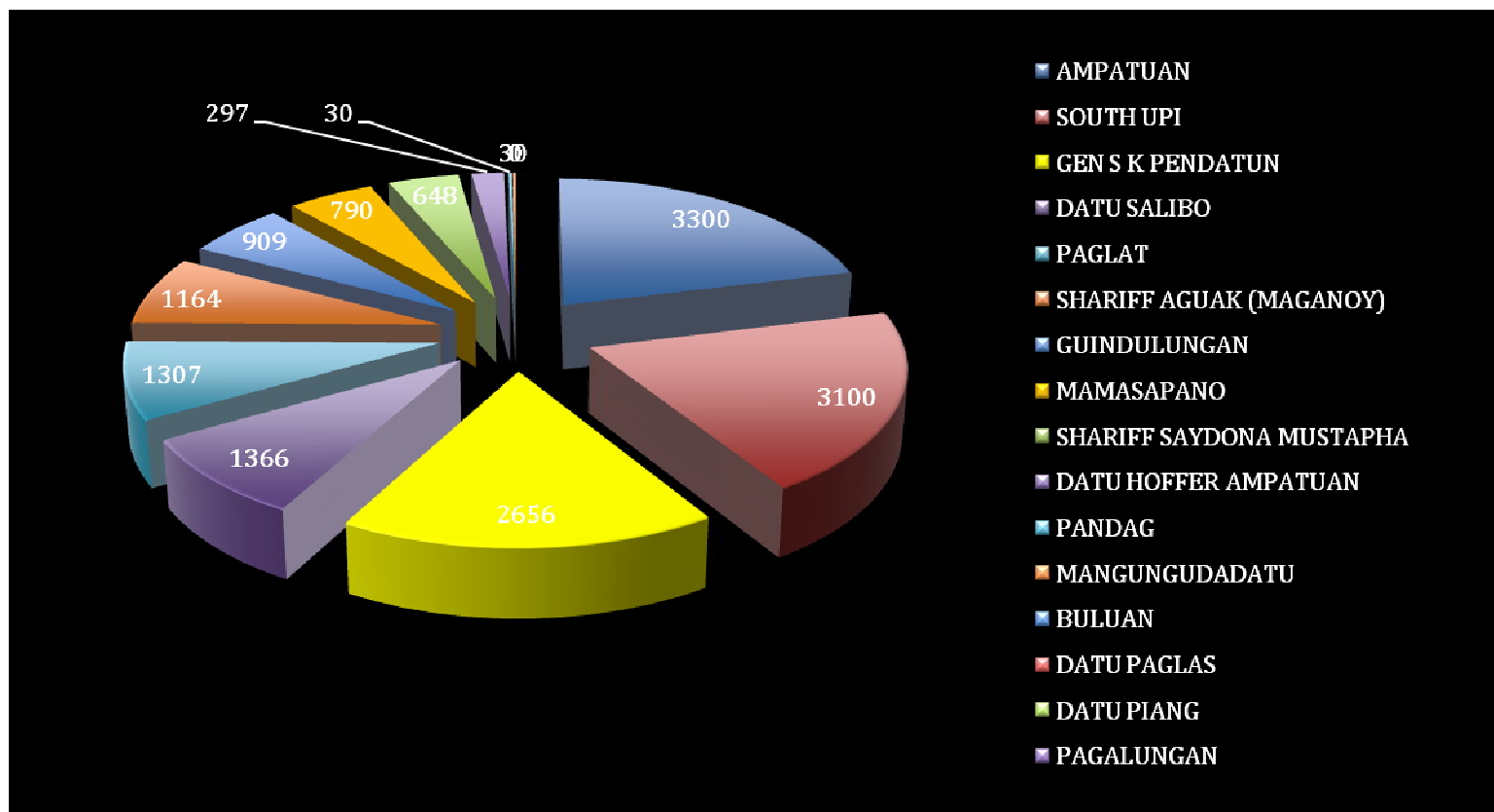


Sources: Commission on Elections. "2013 National and Local Elections Statistics." COMELEC Website.

<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/> (accessed May 29, 2014).

AIM Political Dynasties Database (Version 2013)

Figure 3. Distribution of Voters for non-dynasties among the municipalities of Maguindanao Second District



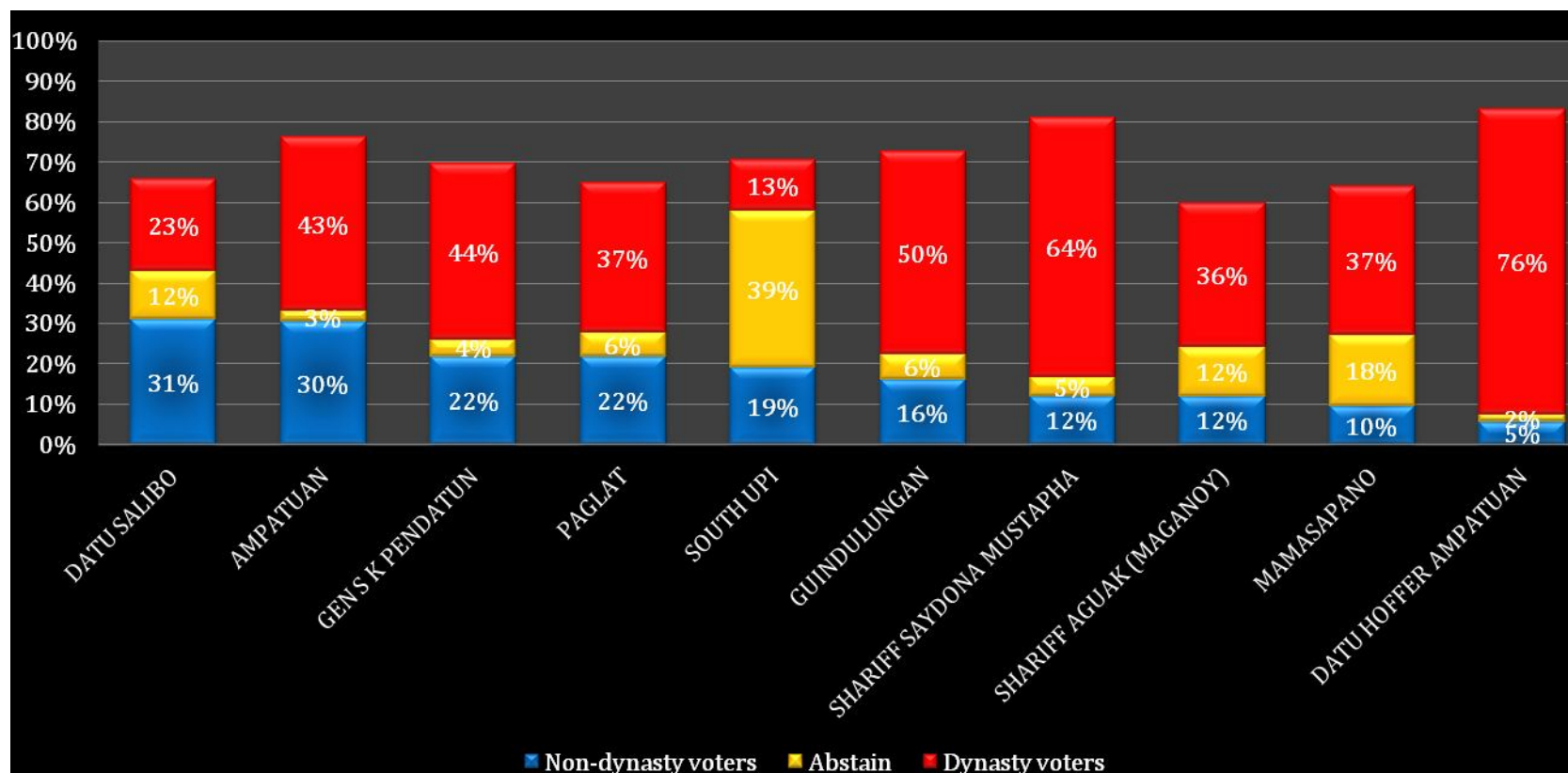
Sources:

Commission on Elections. "2013 National and Local Elections Statistics." COMELEC Website.

<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/> (accessed May 29, 2014).

AIM Political Dynasties Database (Version 2013)

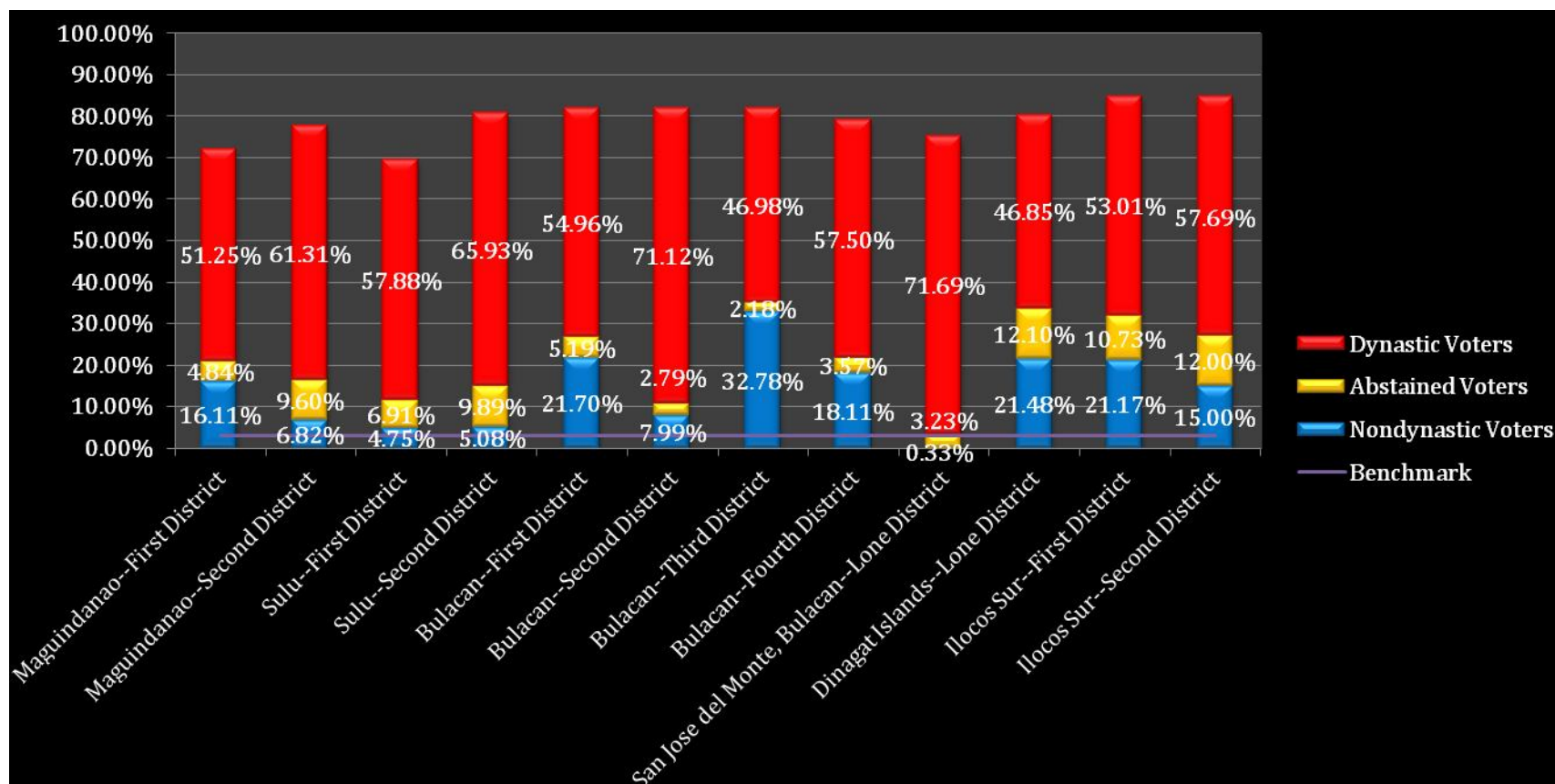
**Figure 4. Voter turnout decomposed to dynastic, non-dynastic, and abstained voters
(in % of registered voters per municipality)**



Sources:

Commission on Elections. "2013 National and Local Elections Statistics." COMELEC Website.
<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/> (accessed May 29, 2014).
 AIM Political Dynasties Database (Version 2013)

Figure 5. Percentage Contribution of Non-Dynastic, Dynastic, and Abstained voters to Total Registered Voters



Sources:

Commission on Elections. "2013 National and Local Elections Statistics." COMELEC Website.
<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/> (accessed May 29, 2014).
 AIM Political Dynasties Database (Version 2013)

Table 1. Summary of Municipalities with Largest Non-Dynastic Mayoral Votes in Provinces with Largest Dynastic Concentration

Province	District	Minimum number of signatures needed	Municipalities/Cities with Largest Non-Dynastic Mayoral Votes (Number of votes in parenthesis)	Municipalities/Cities with Non-Dynastic Incumbent Mayors
Maguindanao			Cotabato City (25,695)	Cotabato City
	First	9,636	Parang (15,464) Sultan Mastura (3,177)	Northern Kabuntalan Parang
Sulu	Second	6,861	Ampatuan (3,300) South Upi (3,100) Gen. S. K. Pendatun (2,656)	Datu Salibo South Upi
	First	4,403	Pangutaran (6967)	Pangutaran
Bulacan	Second	3,070	Lugus (2,943) Omar (1,531) Pandami (727)	N/A
	First	10,368	Pulilan (28,374) Hagonoy (26,389) Calumpit (20,239)	Hagonoy Pulilan
	Second	10,689	Baluiag (24,715) Plaridel (3,765)	Baluiag
	Third	8,994	San Rafael (47,719) San Ildefonso (46,507) Angat (26,622)	Dona Remedios Trinidad Norzagaray San Miguel
	Fourth	9,394	Marilao (26,957) Santa Maria (15,417) Obando (14,332)	N/A
	San Jose del Monte City	5,489	N/A	N/A
Dinagat Islands	Lone District	1,961	Loreto (5,727) Basilisa (3,286) San Jose (3,023)	Loreto
Ilocos Sur	First	5,051	Cabugao (18,560) Caoayan (7,787) Santa Catalina (4,082)	Cabugao Caoayan Santa Catalina
	Second	6,996	Cervantes (5,682) Santa Maria (4,199) Suyo (3,634)	Alilem Cervantes Lidlidda Nagbukel Quirino (Angkaki) San Emilio Sugpon Suyo

Source: AIM Policy Center staff calculations using 2013 COMELEC data.

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