

# Factors that Contribute to Factionalism in Philippine Political Parties: The Case of PDP-Laban

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## Abstract

PDP-Laban is one of the most notable parties during Martial Law because the party helped oust the late dictator. However, infighting and factionalism within the party affected their image and reputation. The paper focuses on the case of factionalism that emerged in PDP-Laban right after the authoritarian regime. The article aims to contribute to the study of Philippine Politics by further discussing the factors contributing to factionalism particularly in the case of PDP-Laban party. Results show that disunity, different ideologies, and the existence of so many elite leaders and political dynasties with a good number of followings in PDP-Laban triggered the emergence of factions in the party. The party that once helped oust a dictator lost its essence over time. Anti-Party hopping law and adaptation of a Closed-List Proportional Representative (CLPR) may urge the parties to be disciplined and show loyalty to their respective party. It could also lessen the rampant party switching and factionalism.

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**Keywords:** *Faction, Factionalism, Infighting, parties, party system, PDP-Laban*

## Introduction

Factions may positively and negatively impact parties and the party system. It could keep the parties and coalitions collected, making parties and unions fall apart. It could also be a channel for voicing concerns within parties and act as a communication belt for bargaining, conflict resolution, and consensus-building. (Chambers and Ufen, 2019; Gillespie et al., 2005; Köllner and Basedau, 2006: 21ff).

Intra-party factionalism in the Philippines has been evident since the Philippines' birth of the Philippine party system. It started as two factions in the post-war era and evolved into multi-factionalism after the authoritarian regime. The number of factions increased while institutionalism remained low (Hicken, 2014). Factionalism in the post-war period occurred because local elite politicians were after favors from the colonial leaders, while factions that happened after the authoritarian regime was from the opposition factions formed during Martial Law.

The subject of this paper is the PDP-Laban party. The writer chose this as the case study because, aside from it being one of the notable parties that emerged during Martial Law and played an important role in ousting the dictator, the party suddenly gained recognition, a massive number of followings, and dominance because of the rise of then Davao Mayor Rodrigo Roa Duterte. Still, despite this reputation, infighting within the party is inevitable because of the party members' motives and lack of loyalty. The party slowly lost the essence that it once had.

In 2010, the party was considered small since only a few members occupied high government seats; that's why the party focused on expanding its reach and following, which resulted in a complicated and more factionalized party. This seminar paper aims to give an overview of factionalism in the Philippines and how this contributed to and is relevant to factionalism within the PDP-Laban Party.

The paper focuses on the party factions in the Philippines, particularly the factions that emerge from PDP-Laban. (1) how these factions emerged, (2) what factors triggered this emergence, (3) how it affects the image of the party, and (4) how it will affect the political institutions in the Philippines. The scope of this study will only include the period wherein factions in PDP-Laban first emerged until the end of the filing of substitution for the presidential elections in 2022.

The paper will use a qualitative case study on PDP-Laban as its methodology. The study will overview the factions that emerged in the Philippines and factions that occurred from PDP-Laban. The data and interpretation will be based on the materials gathered and current news of the party's status.

The seminar paper aims to contribute to the study of Philippine Politics and literature that focuses on factionalism.

## **Overview of the Philippine Political System**

The Philippine party system was introduced and established under American rule in 1900. The first national party, Partido Federal, was launched in the same year. Two elections followed this under the United States colony in 1906 and 1907 (Hicken 2018). Partido Federal was headed by Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera and Benito Legarda, Manila-based elites that advocated for “autonomous government under an American protectorate” (Cullinane, 2003). That party was established before the first national election under American colonial rule (Teehankee, 2012).

During this period, there was a patron-client relationship between the American colonial patron and Filipino politicians. Colonial patrons indirectly proposed policies and manipulated the local politicians to implement them in return for their favors or aid (Teehankee, 2020). This led to internal factional strife between local politicians because they competed for acceptance from the colonial patrons (Paredes, 1989). Colonial patrons bolstered their political power through the factions they made composed of local politicians.

American colonial rule was the one that introduced the leadership methods, co-optation in municipal (1903), provincial (1903), legislature (1907), and the presidential elections under Philippine Commonwealth (Paredes, 1989).

The first political parties formed under American colonial rule continue to exist today, one way or another (Teehankee, 2012). Unlike Western democracies, the Philippine polity was structured less by distinct classes and organized interest groups. Moreover, the large extent of dyadic ties seen in Philippine politics is vertical, i.e., the relationship between the prosperous and wealthy patrons and their poor and dependent clients (Landé, 1965).

There are three reasons why political parties failed to develop, according to Manacsan and Tan (2005). First, the post-war Philippine executive’s budgetary and allocative powers limited the politicians from having credible opposition in fear of abolishing the already established patronage structure. Second, after the Second World War, the Anti-Sedition Law of 1901 and suppression of the left-wing parties prevented the formation of counter-elite groups. Lastly, political parties during the post-war have weak internal organization, structure, and discipline. This resulted in a lack of party loyalties and rampant party switching.

In the case of the Philippines, clientelism continues to exist and

shapes party politics. It is evident in the lower house of representatives; wherein many switched parties in pursuit of clientelistic networks (Teehankee, 2012). In addition, 60.2 percent of party switchers would jump to the incumbent president's party, which causes short-lived political giants (Teehankee, 2012).

For the past five administrations, because of presidential patronage, these parties continue to dominate, namely, the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino which was known during the term of Corazon Aquino, Lakas National Union of Christian Democrats–United Muslim Democrats of the Philippines (NUCP-UMDP) founded by Fidel V. Ramos, Laban ng Makabayang Masang Pilipino by Joseph Estrada, and Liberal Party by Benigno Aquino III (Teehankee, 2012). Now, the PDP-Laban is emerging once again because of Rodrigo Duterte.

There are two significant concerns in the local politics in the Philippines, first, who is the main generator of funds from the central government, and second, who controls the economic activities (legal and illegal) in the community (Rocamora, 2004).

The absence of solid and legitimate political parties in the Philippines causes rampant clientelistic networks (Teehankee, 2012). This practice shaped the political parties and influenced the type of clientelistic strategies that the party would implement (Hicken 2011).

The Nacionalista Party (NP) and Liberal Party (LP) dominated Philippine politics from 1946 to 1972. These parties have identical policies, structures, and social makeup. Under the authoritarian regime, the intra-elite competition between these parties was stopped briefly (Teehankee 2012).

When the late dictator Marcos was ousted from office in 1986, this could be an excellent opportunity to restore democratic rule and change the pro-elite party system in the Philippines. However, because the same old politicians returned, the pre-martial law rules and patterns emerged no change happened. The only difference is it now involves multiple parties (Teehankee, 2012).

Most of the parties that emerged after the authoritarian regime was from mass movements, organizations, and parties that anti-Marcos's politicians created. On the other hand, some politicians who were once part of Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) Marcos' political party either switched or created their parties. This only shows how fluid and underdeveloped the parties are in the Philippines. The emerging parties hampered the consolidation of large, mass-based national parties (Teehankee, 2012).

The rampant splitting and merging of parties to form coalitions

weaken the linkages of the party among the people in the society. The 'democratic accountability' is changed to 'clientelistic accountability' (Teehankee, 2012).

## **Overview of the Philippine Political Party System**

Despite the long history of the Philippine Party system, it is still considered not institutionalized and one of the prime reasons for the country's obstacles in achieving democratic stability and good governance (Hicken, 2015).

Hicken (2015), Hutchcroft, and Rocomora (2003) argue that how the democracy in the Philippines unfolded was one of the core reasons for its lack of development. The colonial bureaucrat and the elites created a style that would work in favor of their side, which was carried over and dominated the Philippine policy until today. (Hicken, 2015)

To further understand the meaning of institutionalization, Hicken (2015) defines it using external and internal dimensions. A party is considered Institutionalized if there is a pattern of interparty competition and if the political actors see parties as legit and necessary in democratic consolidation or process. Aside from this, institutionalized parties have a high degree of value infusion (Levinsky, 1998). Membership in these parties is considered valuable and could quickly identify one party to another. There is a strong link between the party and identifiable social interest. This means that the party is deeply rooted in society.

On the other hand, a weakly institutionalized party has a high degree of instability. There are high birth and death rates of parties. There is also a few or no lasting relationship between the party and interest groups. No distinct policies and identities could link the people and the party. Moreover, the alliances were based on convenience (Hicken, 2015).

Electoral volatility aims to see the degree of variation among party votes from one election to another. The higher electoral volatility means less stable party competition. However, it is not a perfect measure for assessing the party system in the Philippines because party labels are fluid, making them difficult to measure (Hicken, 2015).

Table 1. Electoral Volatility in Asia

Country	Years	Number of Elections	Volatility: 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Elections	Volatility: Last Election	Average Volatility
Malaysia II	1974-2013	10	8.6	4	10.1
Singapore	1968-2011	11	24.6	20.4	15.4
Taiwan	1992-2012	7	8.6	11.5	16.5
Sri Lanka	1947-2010	14	27.7	9.0	16.6
Japan	1947-2012	24	27.4	16.3	16.8
<b>Philippines I</b>	<b>1946-1969</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>18.5</b>
India	1951-2009	15	25.1	11.3	19.2
Cambodia	1993-2013	5	27.9	22.9	24
Indonesia	1999-2009	3	25.2	29.8	27.5
Malaysia I	1955-1968	4	38.8	36.4	30.6
Timor Leste	2001-2012	3	49.0	22.5	35.8
South Korea	1988-2012	7	41.9	35.2	36.5
<b>Philippines II</b>	<b>1992-2013</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>57.0</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>38.3</b>
Thailand I	1979-1991	4	40.8	32.1	38.4
Thailand II	1992-2011	8	48.7	58.2	42.0

Source: Party and Party System Institutionalization in the Philippines, Hicken 2015.

The Philippines' party system is divided into pre-and post-martial eras. The pre-martial law era comprises seven elections from independence up to the martial law era (1946 to 1969)—based on Hicken's (2008) computation. The average electoral volatility during this period is 18.5. However, the post-martial law era (1992 to 2013) shows that the average electoral volatility is 38.3. It indicates that the results of the past election could not be a good indicator of the results of the next election. The party system in the Philippines is more volatile after the martial law era. (Hicken, 2015)

Hicken (2015) argues that the introduction of early elections involving the elites instead of mobilizing the needs of mass organizations hampered institutionalization. Institutionalization could significantly affect the country's democratic governance and consolidation (Hicken, 2008; Hicken, 2015).

Hicken (2015) cited three ways it could affect democratic consolidation: first, if the party and party system are under-institutionalized political actors will have limited constituencies; second, due to lack of institutionalization within parties, voters will have difficulty in putting politicians accountable. Lastly, since the party institutionalization is low, voters' disappointment might result in inconsistency and contradiction among voters' knowledge of democracy versus less democratic leadership. This may give way for anti-party or anti-democratic leaders to rise to power (e.g., Marcos and Duterte).

## Overview of Factionalism in the Philippines

The Philippine party system is full of factions of elites and intra-elite competitions—the number of factions increases over time and low institutionalism (Hicken, 2014). The resilience of factionalism in the Philippine party is rooted in institutional and structural history (Teehankee, 2020).

The Nacionalista Party, a grand old party, established in 1907, had gone through several factions. It was divided into two factions in 1922 and 1933 (Osmeña and Quezon Wing). In 1946, a faction (Osmeña and Roxas Wing) emerged under the grand old party and later left the party and established its name, the Liberal Party (Teehankee, 2020). After the independence of the Philippines from American colonialism, these two parties dominated the elections from 1946-to 1972.

Small parties emerged, but only a few survived (Lande, 1967). The two dominating parties are alike because they are both made by wealthy landowners competing for power. The parties have internal organization because they lack ideological differentiation, are more

on intra-party factionalism and are after the state machinery (De Dios and Hutchcroft, 2003).

In 1972, the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law. This resulted in the halt of elections for six years—intra-elite competitions and other parties' activities were all on pause. During this time, several members of NP and LP switched parties and joined the most dominant party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL). Marcos created this party to consolidate authoritarian rule (Teehankee, 2020).

Ferdinand Marcos and his wife, Imelda, successfully consolidated all political power and authority—their dominance of KBL hindered the growth of factionalism within the dominant party (Tancangco, 1988). But when Marcos' health declined, the Former First Lady and wife of the dictator, Imelda Marcos, led a faction under KBL. It was challenged by the factions of then-Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Ambassador Eduardo "Dading" Conjuangco Jr. (Wurfel, 1983-1984). Ferdinand Marcos later absorbed the Nacionalista Party into KBL and allowed Former Senate President Jose Roy to form a faction. Another faction from NP emerged and became the opposition's core group, the United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO). This was led by former House Speaker Jose B. Laurel (Salonga, 2006).

UNIDO, the unified significant opposition party, was formed in 1979 and composed of twelve political parties. Under this were the following: Nacionalista Party (Laurel Wing), Liberal Party (Roxas Wing), Lakas ng Bayan, Mindanao Alliance, and Regional Parties. (Tancangco, 1988). This unified coalition was headed by Salvador Laurel Jr. and PDP-Laban's Aquilino Pimentel Jr. (Teehankee, 2020). Former President Cory Aquino rose to power with the help of this faction. However, this faction didn't last long due to disagreements and personal motives.

The LP also split into two factions (Salonga and Kalaw Wing). (Salonga, 2006). Several opposition groups emerged nationally and formed parties for their specific regions instead of the national constituencies. (Kimura, 1992; Tancangco, 1988).

PDP-Laban was a product of the merger of Mindanao-based PDP and Luzon-based Laban founded by former senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino in 1978 (Tancangco, 1988).

## Post-Authoritarian Regime

After the authoritarian regime, Aquino formed a Constitutional Commission (Con-Com) to redesign the constitution. The Con-Com was composed of old politicians (Marcos-era politicians), elites, other members of social sectors, and some members of KBL and the



opposition (Shin, 2012). Since old politicians took part in the Con-Com, they adapted the previous form of government before the authoritarian regime. This move benefited the said politicians the most.

Marcos was able to abolish the post-war two-party system. However, the establishment of KBL paved the way for other regional parties. This intensified intra-elite factions in the Philippines (Tangcango, 1988). On the other hand, alliances of factions also triggered the emergence of a multi-party system (Kimura, 1992; Tangcango, 1988).

The development of a multi-party system triggered the increase of intra-party factionalism in the Philippines. The parties formed after the authoritarian regime are from factions from previous old parties or parties created by the opposition (Lomax, 1995).

## Rise to power of Duterte

The 2016 election is known to be the first “social media election” that led to the dramatic win of Duterte (Sinpeng, Gueorguieve, and Arugay, 2020). In his campaign, his team took advantage of social media (Ressa, 2016). His rise to power is credited to his social media presence during the elections. However, the 2016 election was not ordinary compared to previous elections since it involved weak national-level parties, patronage-based local machines, cash payouts, and violence (Weiss, 2020).

Duterte may not have been engaged in his social media platforms compared to his opponents during this time. Still, Duterte’s keyboard army established a social media presence and messaging that captured the attention of the masses. However, there was evidence that some of the pro-Duterte platforms’ social media traffic was generated by influencers, bots, and foreign entities (Ong Cabañes, 2018).

The followers of Duterte were considered distinct because they voted as a group, proactively campaigned for him online, and would probably join offline rallies just to support him (Sinpeng, Gueorguiev, and Arugay, 2020). His followers would praise him on social media and post negatively about his opponents. The “bandwagon effect” boosted the popularity of Duterte, which led to his winning.

Duterte’s *miting de avance* rally was filled with tens of thousands of supporters who traveled from across the country just to be part of his final campaign (McCargo, 2016). Despite the warnings from the incumbent President Benigno Aquino III at that time, Duterte was able to touch the people from different socioeconomic spectrums through his vulgarity with the tagline “*Tapang at Malasakit*” and “*change is coming.*” Surprisingly, even some academic scholars, doctors, and human rights

lawyers cheered for Duterte despite his machoism mentality and extra-judicial killing problem-solving policy. (McCargo, 2016)

Duterte was seen as the president who was one of the masses compared to his rivals like Mar Roxas, who was labeled as an elite or *trapo* (traditional politician). Duterte's claim of change and a clenched fist were more of a threat than a promise (McCargo, 2016). Several religious groups endorsed Duterte during his campaign. The Kingdom of Jesus Christ supported him by setting up a vast billboard declaring their endorsement; Iglesia ni Cristo, known to be endorsing candidates among their congregation with 1.7 million voting members, was courted by several politicians every campaign period, showed their support to Duterte. (McCargo, 2016)

His unfiltered and straightforward performance on televised debates earned him a reputation as a ruthless and anti-crime candidate. His character was associated with authenticity and masculinity themes (McCargo, 2016). Unlike the incumbent President Aquino and Aquino's endorsed candidate Roxas, who has a high-class and elite background, Duterte was seen as more authentic because he is not afraid of swearing and cursing everyone. Aside from this, he is boasting his womanizing mentality (McCargo, 2016).

Duterte's anti-politician sentiments gave him an edge over other candidates who were schooled. Pro-Duterte argues that despite electing a well-educated president, we are still in the same situation (McCargo, 2016). These comments led to a growing nostalgia for the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos' Martial Law administration, which was seen as "*disciplined.*" The Marcos nostalgia led to campaigns across the country, urging the Filipinos to pick the son of the late dictator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. to be Duterte's vice president. This phenomenon led to the rehabilitation of the Marcos dynasty (McCargo, 2016).

## Factions that Emerged under PDP-Laban

The PDP-Laban party played an important role in ousting the late dictator. Lakas ng Bayan Party, also known as Laban, was founded by former Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino and served as the principal opposition party during Martial Law. On the other hand, Partido ng Demokratikong Pilipino was founded by Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. on February 6, 1982, along with the leaders from Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, and Davao. In 1986, PDP and Laban merged after the assassination of Ninoy Aquino.<sup>1</sup>

1 PDP-Laban is a merge of two progressive parties during Martial Law. Lakas ng Bayan, commonly known as "Laban" was founded and formed by Former Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. and , Former and Senator Lorenzo Tañada. The party's purpose

The leaders of the alliances formed under UNIDO were also composed of politicians from prominent clans. The founders of the PDP-Laban were from elite families. Aquino came from an influential family in Tarlac. On the other hand, Pimentel, and the other leaders from Visayas and Mindanao have a good number of followers from well-known families and old politicians. Former President Corazon Aquino is also from an elite family in the North.<sup>2</sup>

When Aquino won, there were notable changes in the parties that helped her rise to power. After the regime, many members of KBL switched parties; opposition parties like PDP-Laban also increased their membership, and UNIDO was dissolved in 1987.

While PDP-Laban garnered more members because of the party's popularity due to playing an essential role in ousting the dictator, disputes inside the party started to rise when they accepted the former members of Marcos' KBL into their party. This disagreement led to the split of PDP-Laban into two factions – the Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. wing and the Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. wing. When Conjuangco left PDP-Laban, he formed a coalition with House Speaker Ramon Mitra Jr. and launched the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (Kimura, 1989; Baclig, 2021). Two well-known politicians headed the first two factions that emerged under PDP-Laban.

Based on the writer's research, no specific data states that the two factions were able to reconcile; however, in an article released last 2013

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is to bid candidates that would represent the opposition. On the other hand, Partido ng Demokratikong Pilipino (PDP), was formed by Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr, and leaders from Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, and Davao. (Lorenzana, 2021)

2 The Influence of Aquinos started way back 1880s. Braulio Aquino was the gobernadorcillo of Tarlac from 1885 to 1887; his son, Servillano "Mianong" Aquino, served as the military governor when the Spaniards surrendered. Servillano also took part in the Malolos Convention, where he was promoted as Brigadier General and Deputy to the Congress by Aguinaldo. Servillano is, also known as "Igno," a law graduate of the University of Santo Tomas who married Maria Urquico from a prominent family of rice traders. Benigno was then elected as representative of the second district of Tarlac. He started the political dynasty of the Aquinos. On the other hand, Cojuangcos is also a well-known family. They placed their hopes for political power when their sole heir, Melecio, won a seat in the first national Assembly in 1907. However, two years later, he died of a heart attack. Melecio's son, Pepe, followed in his footsteps in politics. Conjuangcos and Aquinos also had a series of political contests. (Vibal, 2020)

by Inquirer.net, Jose “Peping” Cojuangco Jr said that he will always be with Laban.<sup>3</sup> (Martinez-Clemente, 2013).

In 2010, the Former Mayor of Makati Jejomar Binay, the patriarch of the political clan of Binay in Makati, ran for vice presidency under the PDP-Laban. Around that time, PDP-Laban is still considered a minor party since only a few members occupy high government positions. The party tried to strengthen the party networks. Following his win, then VP Binay formed a coalition with Former President Joseph Estrada’s Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP), in 2012.<sup>4</sup>

Party Executive Vice President Joey de Venecia and VP Binay continue strengthening their ties with local networks and expanding their party. Still, some experts see this as an attempt to remove Pimentel from the party.<sup>5</sup>

Binay served as the PDP-Laban’s chairman, while Pimentel remained the party’s “nominal president.” The two leaders had a misunderstanding in leading the party. Pimentel insisted that Binay is only in charge of party matters and should not interfere in coalitions or campaign issues. Pimentel was referring to the UNA coalition senatorial slate that includes Miguel Zubiri. In 2007 Senatorial polls, Pimentel accused Zubiri of cheating.<sup>6</sup>

In an interview with a local TV network on March 2, 2014, Binay reiterated that *“Meron kasing problema sa party, especially sa leadership. Ayaw ko mang mag-break up ‘yung partido, sabi ko kailangan tanggapon na natin ‘yung nangyayari. Dahil sa maraming pagkakataon na kami, ‘yung mga leaders in particular, hiwa-hiwalay pa asa pagsabak sa halalan.”*

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3 Jose “Peping” Cojuangco Jr. started his political career early. He served as the campaign manager of Former Senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino Jr. in Lakas ng Bayan Party also known as LABAN. (Silvestre, 2011)

4 To further expand and gain new members for the 2013 Elections, PDP-Laban formed a coalition with Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino and called it United Nationalist Alliance (UNA). De Venecia mentioned in an interview that the two parties complement each other. PDP-Laban is more “institutionalized,” while PMP is popular because of Former President Joseph Estrada. (Macaraig, 2012)

5 The party continues to strengthen its presence through its local network because its goal is to dominate and be the ruling party in the 2016 elections. (Macaraig, 2012).

6 Pimentel bolted at UNA for the inclusion of resigned Senator Miguel Zubiri in their senatorial slate. Pimentel accused Zubiri of cheating in the 2007 senatorial election. Pimentel then choose to be part of the administration slate (Macaraig, 2012)

(Translation: There's a problem in the party, especially in the leadership. While I don't want the party to break up, I said we need to accept what is happening. Because in many instances, we and the leaders in particular were divided in strategizing for the elections.)<sup>7</sup>

The disunity in the party led to the departure of Binay.<sup>8</sup> In an interview with Binay, he stated that party disunity was the primary reason he left. Some party members were from the majority bloc, while others were from the minority bloc. Many speculated that he referred to Senator Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, who is in the majority bloc, and his daughter Senator Nancy Binay, who is in the minority bloc.<sup>9</sup> Binay went on with his presidential candidacy but eventually lost. On the other hand, Pimentel replaced him as the party's chairman and endorsed Former Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte as the standard-bearer, which later won against Binay and other candidates. Duterte is also from a political clan in Mindanao.

In the case of PDP-Laban, way back in 2010, they wanted to grow their followings. When VP Binay won, they used this as a channel for gaining new members. However, as the party grows, it is more prone to factionalism. The party slowly lose its common ideology, and they are now expanding and gaining new members.

The tension within the party didn't stop there. In 2018, the 11<sup>th</sup> national assembly was held, which was led by Atty. Rogelio Garcia, PDP-Laban's national council chair, and Wilfredo Talaga, chair of the National Capital Region membership committee and president of Makati council of PDP-Laban. The goal of this assembly was to remove Pimentel and former House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez from their

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7 Interview for Former VP Binay with TV 5 | From the article of Rappler.com entitled: Binay forms new party, says PDP factionalized ; Similar report from the article of Inquirer.net entitled: "Binay: I Left PDP-Laban Due to Disunity in Party."

8 Binay cited that the leaders of PDP-Laban disregarded the party's decision for them to form a coalition with United Nationalist Alliance (UNA). PDP-Laban has had a coalition with UNA in several elections since 2010. In the 2013 mid-term elections, only Nancy Binay, JV Ejercito, and Gringo Honasan were part of the magic 12. (Aveñdano, 2014)

9 Former Vice President Jejomar Binay stated that there is a problem in the lead with his party, PDP-Laban. Because of the disunity, he will depart from the party. In his interview, he also reiterated that he is not the standard-bearer for the 2016 Presidential elections. (Aveñdano, 2014)

positions. Pimentel condemned this assembly.<sup>10</sup>

Pimentel emphasized, *“They are **rogue members** who will be dealt with according to party rules. We have already expelled some of them and, after a thorough investigation, will expel a few more. The others do not need to be expelled because **they aren’t legitimate party members**. Because may process and pagsali sa partido, and karamihan diyan di nakumpleto ang proseso”* (Translation: There’s a process to join the party, and most of them did not complete the process).<sup>11</sup>

Garcia and Cesar Cuntapay, one of the active members of the PDP-Laban issued a resolution declaring *“persona non grata”* to Alvarez and Pimentel.<sup>12</sup> Pimentel immediately issued a statement saying that *“**That group does not represent the Party**. Whatever their complaints, someone who has expanded the base of PDP Laban in the House of Representatives from 3 to 123 members cannot be said to have done or be doing acts inimical to the Party. Speaker Alvarez has in fact strengthened the Party with quality members and was crucial in the passage of laws that forward the Change we in the Party advocate.”*

Pimentel urged Cuntapay to file a complaint to the PDP-Laban’s arbitration procedure formally. He also advised Cuntapay to *“immediately cease”* doing such actions that may affect the image of the PDP-Laban party.

There were reports that before the assembly, PDP-Laban members planned to switch to Lakas Party in time for the 2019 polls. This report was based on the statements of House Deputy Speaker Rolando Andaya. This might be due to Former President and now Pampanga Congressman Gloria Macapagal Arroyo’s takeover of the House speakership from Alvarez.<sup>13</sup> This move proved that the party

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10 From the article: Pimentel, Alvarez 'unseated' as PDP-Laban leaders of Camille Elemia, Rappler (July 27, 2018)

11 Garcia Wing tried to unseat Pimentel and Alvarez as party leaders during the 11th National assembly. However, Pimentel condemned this action and called it an unauthorized assembly, and he also planned to remove these members from the party. Pimentel remained as the party president despite this dispute in the party. (Macaraeg, 2021)

12 Koko denies PDP Laban has declared Alvarez 'persona non grata' a Press Release by the Senate of the Philippines released last August 25, 2017

13 House Deputy Speaker Rolando Andaya Jr., one of the members of the Lakas Party, revealed that there were members of PDP-Laban who were planning to switch parties. One of the possible factors of this change of heart is when Pampanga Representative



members are not loyal to the party but only have “loyalty” to those in power. Aside from this, the allies are growing discontent with President Rodrigo Duterte’s party.<sup>14</sup>

In an interview with CNN Philippines, Andaya said “*Congressmen felt they were boxed out or kept in the dark kaya nagkaroon doon pa lang nagkalamat na ang relasyon e.*”<sup>15</sup> (Translation: Congressmen felt they were boxed out or kept in the dark, the rift between the relationship of the party members started there).

The tension between the two factions didn’t stop there. Singer Ferdinand “Freddie” Aguilar filed his certificate of candidacy for senator for the 2019 midterm elections and ran under the PDP-Laban party. He also claimed that he had a certificate of nomination and acceptance signed by Talaga from the party, but the Pimentel-Wing disowned him as one of the senatorial bets.<sup>16</sup> This could be an indication of how weak the intra-party solidarity in the PDP-Laban party is.

Aguilar proudly announced his candidacy when he filed his COC. He said “*After 40 years po ay nakumbinsi na po akong tumakbo sa Senado. Matagal na po nila akong kinukumbinsi dahil daw po sa aking mga advocacies sa kanta ko for 40 years, at ang nagpapayag sa akin ay mga ordinaryong mamamayan lang po*” (Translation: After 40 years, I was finally convinced to run for the Senate. They’ve long been trying to convince me because of my advocacies in my songs for 40 years, and it’s the ordinary people who convinced me to do this)<sup>17</sup>

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Gloria Macapagal Arroyo took over the speakership from Alvarez. Moreover, this created tension with the representatives allied with President Duterte. Andaya also stated in an interview that many of the members (congressmen) were left out of the decision-making process. He also shared that PDP-Laban has strict guidelines on choosing the provincial leaders. (Cepeda, 2018)

14 From the article: Lawmakers 'left out in the cold' now eyeing to leave PDP-Laban of Mara Cepeda, Rappler.com (July 26, 2018)

15 From the article of CNN Philippines entitled: Deputy speaker: Some solons plan to leave PDP-Laban to join Arroyo's former political party on July 26, 2018

16 Freddie Aguilar, one of the supporters of President Duterte, ran for Senator “under” PDP-Laban. However, the ruling PDP-Laban party (Pimentel Wing) disowned him. Pimentel Wing reiterated that Aguilar doesn’t have a Certificate of Nomination and Acceptance (CONA) that would permit him to run under the party’s slate. The CONA that Aguilar issued by Garcia Wing. (Paterno, 2018)

17 From the article release by Rappler.com entitled: Koko Pimentel, Freddie Aguilar first to file COCs for senator of Paterno

Ron Munsayac, the public information officer of PDP-Laban, released a statement saying *“Although we welcome his run for senator, the party did not issue a CONA to Freddie Aguilar. We have yet to see his documents, but, speaking with authority, ‘di namin siya in-issue-han ng CONA (We did not issue him a CONA)”*<sup>18</sup> he also emphasized that Aguilar is not part of the PDP-Laban Party.

Due to this confusion, Comelec Commissioner Rowena Guanzon gave Garcia Wing and Pimentel Wing ten (10) days to submit their written arguments. On November 28, Comelec declared Pimentel Wing as the legitimate PDP-Laban Party.<sup>19</sup>

COMELEC released a formal statement saying that *“The Commission still maintains its recognition of the officers of Pimentel Group and PDP-Laban’s legitimate officers authorized to act for and on behalf of PDP-Laban.”*<sup>20</sup>

Fast forward to 2020, Pimentel stepped down as the party president but remained an active executive officer. Vice-Chairman and Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi and Party Secretary-General Melvin Matibag were upset by Pimentel’s decision. Boxer turned Senator Emmanuel “Manny” Pacquiao is now the PDP-Laban’s acting president.<sup>21</sup>

Pacquiao warned his party members about their illicit party decisions. He said in an interview *“Isa lang masasabi ko: Yung salita mo panindigan mo. Huwag mo kainin yung salita mo na wag muna pulitika, at tulong muna sa tao (...) Huwag mong dinidivide ang mga myembro*

Esmaguél II on October 11, 2018

18 From a separate article release by Rappler.com entitled: PDP-Laban disowns Freddie Aguilar despite ‘certificate’ of Paterno Esmaguél II on October 11, 2018

19 The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) stepped in to fix the factions in PDP-Laban. After conducting a hearing and submission of statements—Pimentel Wing was recognized. The poll body considered the following factors for their resolution: (1) Petition to register additional party short name, logo, and other matters were filed by Pimentel Wing, (2) The group’s statement of contribution and expenditure. (Tomacruz, 2018)

20 Formal statement released by COMELEC, taken from the article released by Rappler.com entitled Pimentel group is legitimate PDP-Laban – Comelec by Sofia Tomacruz on November 30, 2018

21 Boxer-turned-politician Senator Manny Pacquiao was the party’s President. The turnover was confirmed by PDP-Laban Executive Director Ron Musayac. On the other hand, Senator Koko Pimentel was now the party’s Executive Vice Chairman. (Gotinga and Cepeda, 2020)



*ng partido para gamitin sa sarili mo... Unless tumulong ka, pero kung umiikot ka para sa pulitika wag mo lasunin utak ng partido.... Hindi ko yan pinapahintulutan. Hindi yun sanctioned, 'di yun authorized, (...) Hindi ako nakikipagaway sayo pero.... hindi ako ang tao na pwede mong larularuin, warning lang,"* (Translation: I only have one thing to say: Stand by what you said that we should help our countrymen first, and not focus on politics. (...) Don't divide the members of the party to serve your own purpose. Unless you're helping, but if you're going around to talk about politics, don't poison the minds of the party. I do not allow it. I do not sanction it. That was not authorized (...) I am not starting a fight with you.... but I am not the type of person you can fool, just a warning.)<sup>22</sup>

The conclusion he refers to is the resolution signed by some party officers and members that urges Duterte to run for the vice presidency in 2022. Cusi Wing called for an assembly; Pacquiao, on the other hand, issued a memorandum circular among the members to prevent them from going.<sup>23</sup>

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22 From an interview with Manny Pacquiao, taken from an article released by Camille Elemia of Rappler.com entitled 'Duterte for VP? Pacquiao warns PDP-Laban members over 'unauthorized' reso on March 12, 2021

23 Pacquiao released a memorandum circular dated May 25 that urges his party mates to don't attend the national assembly on May 31, spearheaded by Vice-Chairman Alfredo Cusi. Pacquiao also stated that pandemic should be the priority instead of politics. On the other hand, the agenda of the "national assembly" on May 31 is the following: (1) The report of the party chairman regarding programs implemented during his term as the President of the Republic, (2) Consultation with the elected members from local government, regarding their response to Covid-19 transmission. (Elemia, 2020)

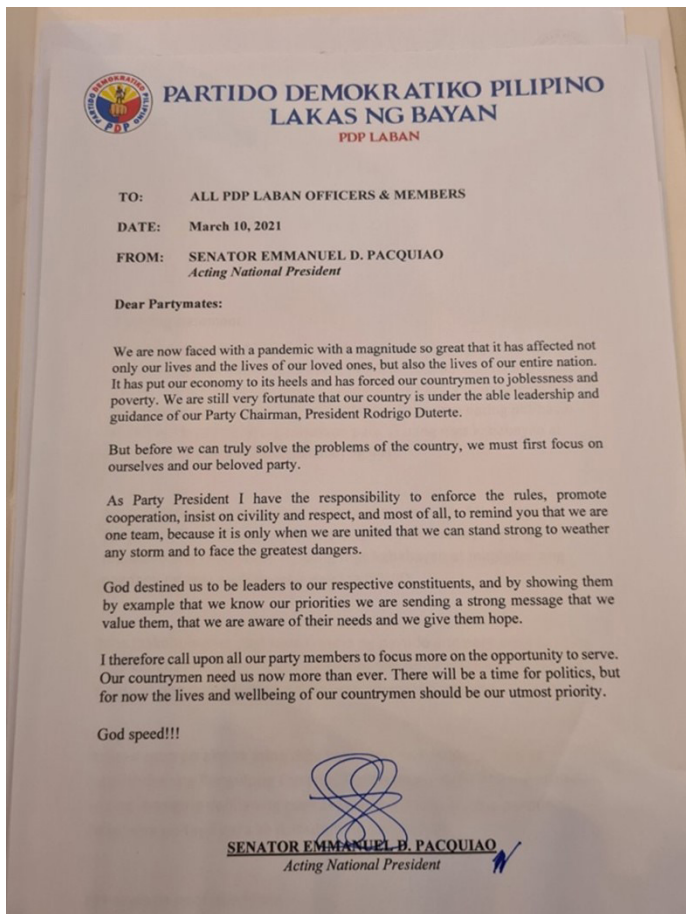


Figure 1 Directive from Acting Party President Senator Emmanuel “Manny” Pacquiao to his partymates | Source: Rappler.com

The tension between Pimentel/Pacquiao Wing and Cusi Wing became stronger when Pacquiao boycotted the said national council meeting—Cusi even requested Comelec to consider the Pimentel/Pacquiao Wing illegitimate. Despite this, Duterte still urged his members to be united.<sup>24</sup> Pacquiao criticized Duterte’s statements over the West Philippine Sea and made allegations about corruption in the administration.

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24 On May 30, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said that President Duterte directed Cusi to organize and preside at the council meeting. This meeting was opposed and boycotted by Pacquiao. Duterte urged his party members to be united and stand together. (Cepeda, 2021)

Pacquiao said in an online interview, *“Sa akin, nakukulangan ako. Nakukulangan ako kumpara doon sa bago pa siya tumakbo, nag-e-eleksyon pa lang. Dapat ipatuloy niya yun para magkaroon din naman tayo ng respeto,”* Pacquiao had said.” (Translation: For me, I find it lacking. I find it lacking if compared to what he said before he ran, during elections. He should have continued that so we earn some respect.)<sup>25</sup>

These actions of Pacquiao led to Duterte making a statement in his nation’s address that Pacquiao is no longer his ally. Duterte said, *“Go to Congress and start talking (...) If you will fail to do that, I will campaign against you, because you are not doing your duty. Do it because if you will not, I will just tell the people, ‘Do not vote for Pacquiao because he is a liar.’”*<sup>26</sup>

In return, Pacquiao filed resolutions against Cusi, Party Secretary-General Melvin Matibag, and Membership Committee Head Astra Naik for supporting the incumbent Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte for running as president even if she’s not a party member, and another resolution invalidating the assemblies held on May 31, and July 17, 2021, organized by the Cusi Wing.<sup>27</sup>

PDP-Laban Cusi Wing held a national assembly in Clark, Pampanga, attended by President Duterte. Based on the statement released by Spokesperson Harry Roque, the national assembly was instructed by President Duterte to Cusi.

Munsayac reacted to Roque’s statement. He said in a Viber thread, *“It’s very clear that ONLY the Chairman (President Duterte) in coordination with the Party President (Manny Pacquiao) can call on the Party’s National Council and/or Assembly (...) Also, if this purported council meeting [were] sanctioned by our chairman, how come we have not received any formal communication from the chairman/President Duterte, only an announcement from his spokesperson who isn’t even a party mate.”*<sup>28</sup>

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25 From the article released by Pia Ranada of Rappler.com entitled ‘Mag-aral ka muna nang husto,’ Duterte tells Pacquiao after West PH Sea comment on June 8, 2021

26 Statement of Duterte during his national address taken from the article by Mara Cepeda of Rappler.com entitled Battle lines drawn: Duterte threatens to knock out Pacquiao on June 29, 2021

27 A month later, Duterte made a strong statement that Pacquiao was no longer his ally in his weekly address. This is due to Pacquiao’s claim that Duterte’s administration is corrupt and his desire to run as president in 2022. Duterte even challenged Pacquiao to name the corrupt officials. (Cepeda, 2021)

28 Response of Munsayac to Harry Roque regarding the assembly held in Clark, Pampanga. Taken from the twitter thread of CNN Philippines

This assembly plans to oust Pacquiao as the President and unseat Pimentel as executive vice president. Cusi was then elected as the president of his wing. Duterte blamed the rift on Pimentel and emphasized that PDP-Laban owed him a lot since the party only became active when he ran for the presidency in 2016. Pacquiao and Pimentel's wing refused to acknowledge their assembly.<sup>29</sup>

Roque defended the assembly and belittled the PDP-Laban before Duterte's presidential bid in 2016. During the press briefing, he said, *"We know PDP-Laban had very few members before Pangulong Duterte became president (...) PDP-Laban's membership was just one jeepney before President Duterte joined it. If they will expel him, then you will return to just a handful (that fits into) a jeepney."*<sup>30</sup>

It was unclear what exactly happened to the two factions under PDP-Laban when Pacquiao showed his intention to run for the executive position in 2022. He then filed his candidacy for presidency under the PROMDI Party, a Cebu-based regional party.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, PDP-Laban Cusi Wing endorsed Senator Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa as president and Senator Bong Go as vice president. Duterte gave Cusi Wing the signal to choose who would be the party's senatorial bets.<sup>32</sup>

Dela Rosa said in an interview during his filing of candidacy, *"Yan ang diskarte, kasi kung maaga ka magbalita, titirahin ka talaga. Kaya tinatago natin,"* (Translation: That's the strategy, because when you announce

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29 The National Assembly to oust Pacquiao and Pimentel held in Pampanga was not recognized by Pacquiao-Pimentel Wing. In this assembly, Duterte blamed Pimentel. He also reiterated that the party owes him [Duterte] because the party "only woke up" because of him. (Ranada and Elemia, 2021)

30 Statement of Spokesperson Harry Roque, defending Duterte against the statements made by Pimentel, taken from the article by Christina Mendez and Emmanuel Tupaz of PhilStar entitled Duterte to preside over PDP-Laban meeting on July 15, 2021

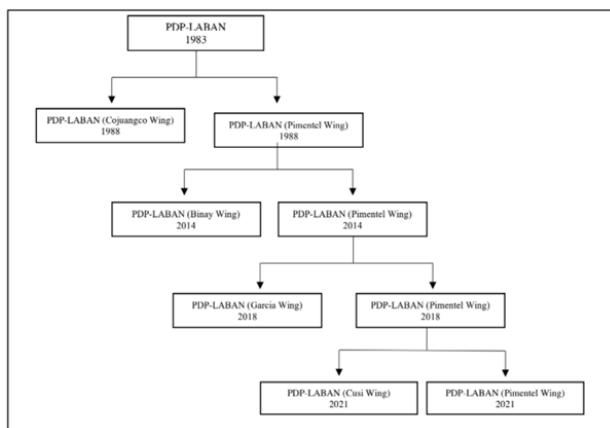
31 Progressive Movement for the Devolution of Initiatives or Probinsya Muna Development Initiative (PROMDI) is a Cebu-based party founded by former Cebu governor Lito Osmeña in 1997. Osmeña ran for the presidency in 1998; since then, the party has been dormant. The party also has a background on disqualification last 2001 because, according to COMELEC, they are not representing the marginalized group. (Macasero, 2021)

32 In an interview, Senator Bato revealed that he was only chosen as the Cusi Wing's standard-bearer two hours before filing the Certificate of Candidacy (COC). He was also shocked by his nomination. (Punzalan, 2021; Santos, 2021)

early, they'll target you. That's why we have been hiding it.)<sup>33</sup>

However, days before the last day of filing substitution for candidacy, Dela Rosa withdrew his presidential bid because “that is what the party wants.” His then running mate, Go, ran for presidency under Pederalismo ng Dugong Dakilang Samahan (PDDS), a party that aims to support Duterte’s “programs” and the establishment of Federalism.<sup>34</sup> President Duterte, on the other hand, will run for senator under Go’s party.<sup>35</sup>

## PDP-Laban Factions Flow Chart From 1988-Present



**Figure 2: Party Factionalism in the PDP-Laban 1983-2021 | Source: Factional Dynamics in the Philippine Party Politics 1900-2019 by Teehankee J.C., 2020**

<sup>33</sup> Statement of Senator Ronaldo “Bato” Dela Rosa during his filing of candidacy to Presidency. The statement is taken from the article of CNN Philippines entitled Bato Dela Rosa to run for president in 2022 on October 8, 2021

<sup>34</sup> Pederalismo ng Dugong Dakilang Samahan (PDDS), was founded by Greco Belgica. The party was accredited by COMELEC last October 2018. The party's main objective was to support the president’s program, including federalism. Cusi said that the filing of Go under PDDS was done to avoid further legal complications. On the other hand, Go said that this decision to run for the presidency was at Duterte’s request. (Cupin, 2021; Rey 2021)

<sup>35</sup> Duterte announced his desire to run as Senator. He is walking back on his promise of retiring from politics. He is running under the party of Go. (Gomez, 2021)

The Cusi Wing, who proposed a Go-Duterte Tandem, was left with no one as the standard-bearer for the executive position.

The factions in PDP-Laban only show that the party has so many leaders that caused the party's division. Each leader has their own goals and agenda beneficial for their political gains. These political actors didn't take the party seriously. They were just after who was the powerful patron that they could rely on.

PDP-Laban may have contributed a lot to the history of democratization, but they slowly lose their essence as a party. Its infighting and factions overshadowed the legacy that the party once had.

In an article released by John Nery of Rappler, the author reiterated that the factions in Duterte's ruling coalition have different political agendas but came together to help him win in 2016. However, these same factions are the ones who put his post-presidency plans into jeopardy. The more they publicize their situation, the more complicated it becomes.

The disunity amongst the members and leaders is the main reason factions formed within the party. Pimentel Wing continued to survive and be an influential member/officer of PDP-Laban because of Koko Pimentel's father, the founder. PDP-Laban is still ruled by a mighty clan, famous personalities with considerable followings, an elite who use the party as a front for their political agendas, or a combination of these three characteristics.

## Effects of Factionalism on the Philippine Institutions

Factionalism has a positive and negative effect on the party and party system. (Gillespie et al., 1995; Köllner and Basedau, 2006: 21ff). It could act as a communication belt for bargaining, conflict resolution, and consensus-building. It could help keep the parties and coalitions together but also make parties and unions fall apart. Factions could also be a way of representing voices within parties. (Chambers and Ufen, 2019).

Factions can inhibit the authority and effectiveness of party leadership in less-developed parties. (Samuels, 2004). Even though factions could help raise voices within the party, this could lead to party volatility, fragmentation, and lack of party cohesion (Boucek, 2009; Gunther and Hopkin, 2002). The party officials, like the politicians, could also have difficulty developing party branding, and voters may have difficulty making the politicians accountable for their actions. It could also significantly affect policymaking. A highly factionalized party system tends to be less decisive in policymaking and relies more

on intra-party factions. (Chambers and Ufen, 2019).

Factions vary in a different range; they may be institutionalized or programmatic. Factions may have a deep link in society or elitist groups. It may last for years or decades or vanish in just a few days. This is evident in various parties. (Belloni and Beller , 1978; Köllner and Basedau, 2006).

Knowing that the PDP-Laban only garnered many members after the 2010 and 2016 Presidential Elections, the factions that emerged under PDP-Laban will likely not fruit into a new party. Unlike the other factions that emerged in the previous parties like Nacionalista Party and Liberal Party.

In the case of PDP-Laban, they might lose many members and supporters after the 2022 Presidential Elections. Many members are probably jumping to the dominant party after the 2022 Presidential Elections, especially since the party doesn't have a standard-bearer.

The current factions in the party may reconcile, or the power might be back to Pimentel, just like what happened in the previous sections that emerged in the party.

## Conclusion

Factionalism in the Philippines was able to survive through time. From bifactionalism during world war to multi-factionalism of the post-authoritarian regime multi-party system. (Teehankee, 2019). Elections were introduced before the development of institutions of mass politics during the American Colonization. This hampered the development of more cohesive national-oriented parties in the Philippine party system. The weak link between parties and social interest leads to a lack of party loyalty and factionalism. A lack of institutionalization might happen if the prominent actors will not view the political parties as legitimate and necessary (Hicken, 2018).

The Post-Authoritarian regime is considered an Elite Democracy. Politics were controlled by factions which is why the Philippines have weak political Development (Quimpo, 2007).

The current situation of PDP-Laban only shows how weak intra-party solidarity is. Factions were often found in parties composed of many leaders with personal followings. Leaders of the faction were able to encourage followers by their followers' favors. The loyalty of party members varies from one another (Lande, 1967).

Each leader has their ideology, so the members are divided on which leader and goals they should follow. Parties with a similar, single ideology are considered "more solid" (Chambers and Ufen, 2020). In the



case of PDP-Laban, they have so many leaders with different ideologies. They may have had a common goal of ousting the dictator before, but after attaining that goal, they lost the essence of their party over time. As an outsider, I see that they are using the party as a “branding” tool for their ambitions and not something they must be committed to.

The institutionalization of factions is rare (Chambers and Ufen, 2020). How the electoral system works and party laws are possible factors in why there is an emergence of factionalism (Belloni and Beller, 1978; Gryanviski, 2004, Köller and Basedau, 2006; Morgenstern, 2001). National-level politicians rely heavily on local political clans, mostly from prominent families (Teehankee, 2020).

In the case of the Philippine parties, party switching, mergers, and splits are rampant. Some politicians would switch to the dominant party after the presidential election (Hicken, 2009; Lande, 1996) – just like during the first wave of factionalism in the PDP-Laban. Old politicians from KBL were jumping to PDP-Laban because Marcos had already lost his power. The acceptance of these new members led to the division of the party. This could have been prevented if the Philippines had anti-party-hopping laws, but reforms have been stalled for years (Chambers and Ufen, 2020).

Last-minute party hopping, mergers, and splits are evident in the Philippines. One of the best and most recent examples of PDP-Laban is when Dela Rosa withdrew his presidential candidacy. At the same time, Go withdrew his vice-presidential candidacy and joined an “allied” party to run for the presidency. If the Philippines have more party-focused policies, candidates may at least show loyalty and respect to their parties.

After the authoritarian regime, Aquino’s Con-Com opted mostly for old politicians from affluent families or elites; some were from the opposition and social sector. The old politicians adapted the old forms of government (Shin, 2012), thus, resulting in factionalism-prone and less disciplined parties. A candidate-centered party system is more prone to factionalism (Chambers and Ufen, 2020).

The building blocks of politics are not the parties but the powerful clans who continue to be robust and governing. The political clans continue to adapt and evolve, and their continuing dominance could be the reason for poor institutionalism and failure in the democratic electoral and party system (Teehankee, 2020).

## Recommendation

Based on the readings and other materials I have gathered for this paper, political institutionalism in the Philippines is very low. In the



case of PDP-Laban, they started as a party with a common ideology. They eventually became a party led by elites and dynasties who were only after more political power.

If the political parties lack incoherence and unity like in the case of PDP-Laban, the political contention will most likely lead toward patronage and pork. In line with that, a well-designed electoral reform could strengthen the political parties and lead to a political system that focuses on policies and programs rather than pork and patronage (Hutchcroft, 2020).

Aside from that, it is essential to pay attention to the current electoral system because it could be a channel of reformation in the political system. A Closed List Proportional Representation (CLPR) is a more disciplined and organized type of electoral system that could help urge the party members to be loyal to their respective parties, unlike the current electoral system, which is the First Past the Post (FPTP). This electoral system could be an opportunity for the parties to be more united and stronger internally. (Hutchcroft, 2020).

The Philippines should have an anti-party hopping law to minimize the rampant party switching, merger, and factionalism. Strict standards and guidelines must be enacted on what kind of parties should be accredited. These standards would help lessen the parties not genuinely helping the people they represent. A detailed and more specific law should be imposed for who should be declared a “qualified candidate” during the election. These may help the parties to be organized and institutionalized. Moreover, concerning the other candidates, it would be better if the substitution process were stricter so they could not use it as part of their political drama.

Lastly, it is essential to remember that reforms will not automatically give the results we want. Habitual practice for change and respecting the rules will result in a better political system.

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