



companies, and real-estate moguls had recast Remulla as a facilitator, gatekeeper, and broker for big business (and big crime) interests with solid economic bases and political contracts outside Cavite.¹¹³ For the foreseeable future, control over Cavite's economy will lie in the hands of Manila-based and foreign corporations serviced by Governor Remulla's successors.

This pattern of protracted rule over entire provinces by predatory mafia-style bosses has parallels elsewhere in the Philippine archipelago. In general, provincial bosses have entrenched themselves in provinces where illegal activities, transportation chokepoints, or heavily state-regulated industries and agricultural sectors dwarf concentrations of land and capital and are available for privatization and monopolization through coercion and control over the agencies of the state. As in Cavite, provincial bosses in such provinces have entrenched themselves for decades at a time but have failed to pass on these provincial empires to their children in dynastic fashion. As in Cavite, moreover, the penetration of some such provinces by foreign and Manila-based corporations in recent years has begun to subordinate provincial bosses to the national and international interests and logic of capital.

The careers of provincial bosses Aguinaldo, Montano, and Remulla are instructive for their limitations as well as their longevity. When compared to established dynasties in other congressional districts and provinces in the Philippines, these bosses' inability to pass on the provincial mantle to their progeny appears as noteworthy as their success in entrenching themselves in power for decades at a time. Their failures to establish enduring footholds outside the state machinery reflect distinctive features of the local landscape and reveal the importance of state power at the provincial level for control over the commanding heights of the provincial economy.

In this regard, the mafia-style municipal and provincial bosses of Cavite have differed sharply from the dynasties entrenched in the municipalities and congressional districts, and also at the provincial level, in Cebu. The following three chapters focus on the most successful and enduring municipal, congressional, and provincial dynasties of Cebu Province.

Sidel, Cavite's Cerezo, and Cane

The Small-Town Dynasties of Cebu

The preceding two chapters described a mafia-style form of bossism in Cavite that thrived throughout the twentieth century on the lucrative illegal economies afforded by suburban Cavite's proximity to Metro Manila and the insecure property rights associated with landholdings in the province. Municipal and provincial bosses used their elective state offices to control key sectors of local economies and to construct local political machines. Yet the same features of Cavite's political economy that have facilitated mafia-style bossism in the province have similarly inhibited dynasty-building: bosses have remained entrenched for decades but were unable to establish a solid base in proprietary wealth independent from the state that was invulnerable to political manipulation and inheritable from one generation to the next. Thus they remained heavily dependent on state resources and private violence for both capital accumulation and electoral competition. Instead of passing their small-town or provincial empires to their children they rose and fell through the interventions of more powerful politicians outside their local bailiwicks.

By contrast, this chapter and the two that follow describe a distinctively dissimilar form of bossism in the small towns, congressional districts, and capital of Cebu Province. In this province, interfamilial economic and political competition was the pattern over the course of the twentieth century, and it was dramatically less violent and decidedly more paternalistic than that in Cavite. In several small towns and con-

gressional districts and at the provincial level as well, entrenched dynasties have enjoyed enduring monopolies over economic activities and political offices within their respective bailiwicks. This dynastic form of bossism in Cebu has operated in a local political economy far more hospitable than Cavite's to the accumulation of proprietary wealth independent of state office, secured from political intervention and intrigue, and easily transferred from one generation to the next.

Cebu's municipal, district, and provincial dynasties contrast starkly with the mafia-style, single-generation bosses of Cavite, and they appear, at first glance, to exemplify the "political clans" and "political dynasties" discussed in recent scholarship on local politics in the Philippines.¹ However, the enduring dynasties of Cebu have relied far less on landownership and patron-client ties to retain control over their localities than has previously been assumed. The case studies here provide ample evidence that the emergence, entrenchment, and endurance of such dynasties often rested instead on the skillful use of state office and the construction of political machines.²

In the 50 or so municipalities of Cebu Province there has been a distinctive pattern of electoral competition and capital accumulation among a Chinese mestizo elite. This pattern owes much to the history of land settlement and class formation in Cebu Province. A case study of the Escario clan of Bantayan highlights the structural features of the local political economy that facilitated the entrenchment of this single most enduring small-town dynasty in Cebu Province. The contrast between municipal politics in Cebu and Cavite suggests some conclusions about small-town bossism throughout the Philippines, which are offered at the end of the chapter.

The Political Clans of Rural Cebu

As in Cavite, intense competition between local factions has long characterized small-town politics in Cebu Province, and skulduggery, vote-buying, and violence have persistently intruded upon municipal elections. According to one leading scholar of Cebu's history, even in pre-World War II electoral contests, when suffrage restrictions limited the size of the electorate, "such practices as *hakot* (ferrying voters in hired trucks or rigs to public rallies and polling centers), *pakaon* (feeding the voters), and *pangbulga* (intimidation) were already common."³ Violent incidents also occasionally flared up during prewar election campaigns.⁴ In the postwar era, the expansion of the electorate only made politicians more reliant on vote-buying, fraud, and violence. An

election protest filed in 1947 before the Cebu Court of First Instance, for example, described the following election "anomalies" in the municipality of Pinamungahan:

(1) Some ballots written in favor of Nemenzo were written by persons other than the electors themselves; (2) the presence of heavily armed policemen and special policemen who intimidated voters to vote for the respondent; (3) the opening and grabbing of ballots; (4) absence of lights in voting booths forcing electors to fill ballots in the presence of inspectors' table[s] and dictated by a policeman; (5) that 50 ballots cast in favor of the petitioner were [intentionally] marked with ink and invalidated; (6) ballots bearing the name Piczon Carlos and Carlos were not read in favor of Piczon; (7) searching of Nacionalista voters and changing the sample ballots with sample ballots of the Liberal candidates.⁵

Moreover, such electoral tactics have remained in use in Cebu Province throughout the postwar period. A lawsuit cited the following allegations of "massive fraud and irregularities" in the 1992 election in the municipality of Ginatlian:

The ballot boxes were stuffed with manufactured and/or fake ballots. . . . The ballot boxes were opened by members of the Board of Election Inspectors even after they had been closed and sealed. . . . There was massive vote buying and intimidation of voters to coerce them to vote for certain candidates. . . . Votes for the petitioner/protestant were not counted in his favor. In certain precincts petitioner/protestant's watchers were not allowed to observe the proceedings of the Board of Election Inspectors. . . . Election returns were "doctored" or tampered with to favor the respondent/protestee. . . . Members of the Board of Canvassers who were highly partisan in favor of respondent/protestee manipulated the canvass of election returns to favor the respondent/protestee.⁶

In fact, the "anomalies" and "irregularities" cited in these election-protest cases were by no means anomalous or irregular: in every postwar election up to 1998, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) listed several Cebu municipalities among the "critical areas" meriting Comelec and Constabulary intervention.

However, small-town politics in Cebu has been considerably less violent than in Cavite. Election-related killings have been extremely rare, and Cebu town mayors have been more sparing in their use of violence.⁷ Whereas all 21 Cavite towns have had a municipal mayor or chief of police who was either murdered or accused of murder, in the entire postwar period and in all 52 towns of Cebu, only three town mayors have lost their lives to assassins' bullets, and only a few municipal executives have been accused of murder in court.⁸

As in Cavite, town mayors in Cebu used their control over municipal police forces as a means of regulating and monopolizing illegal activities.

For example, mayors have long been involved in *jueteng* (illegal lotteries), and syndicates organized by town mayors have used the province's insular geography and Cebu City's role as the premier interisland port of the Visayas and Mindanao to smuggle contraband (e.g., American cigarettes, Japanese motorbikes) from passing foreign vessels.⁹ In 1990 the killing of a Constabulary informer brought to light the smuggling activities of the municipal mayor of Argao, a town located on Cebu's southeast coast.¹⁰ In addition to smuggling, Cebu town mayors have used the municipal police forces to engage in selective and extortionary enforcement of laws that prohibit dynamite fishing in their municipal waters. Mayoral involvement in illegal fishing has assumed various forms: imposition of "protection" payments on local fishermen, intercession on behalf of fishermen apprehended for illegal fishing, and connivance in the marketing of explosive materials used in so-called blast-fishing.¹¹ In more than a dozen Cebu towns where fishing is a mainstay of the local economy, fishermen use dynamite every day, with which they are said to have destroyed 86 percent of the province's original coral reefs.¹²

Along with regulatory powers over these illegal activities, Cebu town mayors have enjoyed enormous discretion over key contracts, concessions, and monopoly franchises in their towns. As in Cavite, municipal executives in Cebu have been known to manipulate the dispensing of government funds within their municipalities by influencing the location of construction projects (e.g., paved roads, public markets, schoolhouses), fixing the employment of workers and the awarding of contracts, and skimming off funds allocated for public works through overpricing, ghost projects, and padded payrolls. In this regard, it is perhaps worth recalling that Cebu was the site of one of the biggest public works scandals in recent Philippine history, involving the embezzlement—through falsification of public documents—of millions of pesos allocated for the construction of a paved highway linking the southern towns of the province to Cebu City.¹³

In addition, Cebu town mayors control mining and quarry concessions within their municipalities.¹⁴ In Argao in 1991, the mayor awarded his own brother a permit to quarry sand and gravel in the Argao River. While the mayor's brother raked in hundreds of thousands of pesos by selling the sand and gravel to a local construction company contracted by the provincial government to pave a road through the town, local farmers found their irrigation facilities and farm lands disrupted by the excavation.¹⁵ Moreover, mayors also have the authority to award (and to terminate) monopoly franchises for ice plants, gasoline stations, and cockpits.¹⁶ In particular, Cebu's cockfighting arenas—the least capital-intensive and most lucrative monopoly franchises awarded by municipali-

ties—have served as focal points for small-town political battles and as prizes for the winners of mayoral elections and their local allies.¹⁷ Finally, since the 1970s, Cebu's town mayors have profited from the construction of golf courses, residential subdivisions, and industrial estates in the municipalities immediately north and south of Cebu City. In a pattern reminiscent of that in Cavite, they dispensed building permits, passed municipal zoning ordinances, approved reclamation projects, and used government-owned land selectively to further their own interests.

In postwar Cebu, however, more of the small-town mayors have been products of the entrenched landed dynasties of the province, whose bases in corn, coconut, and sugar holdings have remained relatively independent of state power over the years. Perhaps the best example of such small-town political dynasties is the Villacarlos family, whose members occupied the mayorship of Madridejos town from the end of World War II through 1986, and who have owned more than 500 hectares of land planted with coconut and corn. Other cases abound: the Pepitos, whose scions have served as municipal mayor of Consolacion since 1955 and whose land holdings in the town have amounted to nearly 300 hectares; the Almagros, with nearly 600 hectares of corn fields and a long history of political prominence in Dalaguete; the landed Ursals, who have ruled San Remigio with few interruptions since 1946. The Gantuangcos of Carcar and Aloguinsan, the Barbases of Toledo City, and the Tumalakos of Oslob have similarly combined large landholdings with long-term mayorships in their respective municipalities.¹⁸

Along with these large landowners, other long-time mayors emerged out of the local commercial élite, whose control over the links between their municipalities and Cebu City complemented their small-town political power. The To-ons of Asturias, for example, long prominent in the copra (dried coconut meat) trade in the municipality, have held the town mayorship since 1967. Municipal heads of the Philippine Coconut Producers' Federation COCOFED in Cebu have included Benito Aller (Alegría mayor, 1951–86), Sergio Baguio (Cordova mayor, 1959–76), Pedro Cabaron (Moalboal mayor, 1955–63, 1976–86), Elpidio de Dios (Carman mayor, 1947–80), Librada Pace (Barili mayor, 1959–76, 1988–95), José Tumalak (Oslob mayor, 1963–80), and a member of the Binghayan clan, whose members held the mayorship of Balamban from 1955 to 1967 and from 1988 to the present.¹⁹ Politically successful owners of bus companies have included Geronimo Estimo, onetime mayor of Moalboal, and the Cetna family, whose members served four terms as mayor of Pinamungahan and were succeeded in 1986 by another bus-company clan, the Yapbas (three terms to date). Other bus-line owners have preferred to back entrenched town mayors, such as the Librandos of Badian,

who long supported five-term mayor Juanuario B. Agravaante Jr. (whose family owns extensive coconut lands), and the Bendebels of Balamban, who forged an alliance with the Binghay clan, whose scions have held the town mayorship for four terms.²⁰

In contrast with the gangster-politicians of Cavite, the small-town bosses of Cebu have ruled as representatives of local élite families, whose properties and commercial interests have not depended so heavily upon the ebbs and flows of municipal politics. Only two women have served as municipal mayors in Cavite; thirteen women have held town mayorships in Cebu, including longtimers Librada Pace of Barili (1959-76, 1988-95), Beatriz Calderon of Samboan (1967-86), Beatriz Durano of Danao (1955-71), and Remedios Escario of Bantayan (1959-67, 1992-95). Whereas in Cavite most postwar mayors were essentially "new men," numerous Cebu mayors since 1946 have been the sons or daughters of prominent prewar landowner-politicians.²¹

The political preeminence of these landed dynasties in the small-towns of Cebu reflects a provincial political economy that historically fell largely outside the purview of state control and remained in the hands of private capitalists with roots in Cebu City. As they did in Spanish colonial Cavite, the religious orders established landed estates in Cebu (in Mandaue-Banilad, Cebu City, and the Talsay-Minglanilla area), but these so-called friar lands amounted to no more than 10,000 hectares and comprised less than 10 percent of the arable land in the province.²² Commercialization of agriculture in Cebu during the nineteenth century followed a pattern not unlike that observed in the hinterlands of Manila and Iloilo, wherein the opening of Philippine ports to foreign trade led urban merchants to encourage the cultivation of commercial crops in demand in world markets. Following the opening of Manila's port in 1834 and the abolition of Spanish provincial governors' trading monopolies in 1844, Cebu emerged as a major entrepôt for export crops—most notably sugar—from the Visayas and northern Mindanao, which were shipped to European and American markets via Manila. In Cebu Province itself, this development led to the rapid expansion of sugar cultivation:

During the 1840s, Cebu's hinterland and most of the lowland plains along the east coast were turned over to sugar cultivation, crude milling devices were erected, and sugar was shipped to Manila for export. By mid-century Cebu province had become one of the Philippines' leading sugar producers and Cebu City was well on its way to becoming a major centre of commerce.²³

The primary beneficiaries of Cebu's emergence in the 1840s and 1850s as a regional emporium were Chinese mestizo merchants based in Cebu City. Descendants of immigrant men from Fujian Province who had con-

verted to Catholicism and married Cebuana women (*indias*) in church ceremonies, Chinese mestizos inherited the capital and cash-economy experience of their *sangleys* (trader) forefathers, while enjoying less onerous tax burdens, freedom of mobility, and rights to own property and participate in town government, according to Spanish colonial tax classification and legal restrictions.²⁴ Already dominant in interisland, retail, and wholesale trade, Chinese mestizo merchants in Cebu City became the primary lenders to farmers in need of cash to expand their sugar cultivation. By extending credit, they gained control of the sugar trade and, through purchases and *pacto de retroventa* (mortgage) agreements, acquired landholdings in the east coast towns where sugar cultivation had expanded. Dispossessed of their land and lacking capital and commercial networks of their own, Cebuano smallholders in these towns thus became tenants of urban-based Chinese mestizo merchant-moneylender-landlords.²⁵

Following the opening of Cebu's port to world trade in 1860, the increasing availability of credit in the Visayan entrepôt accelerated capitalist penetration of the countryside and further concentrated landownership in the hands of urban-based Chinese mestizo merchants. Beginning in the 1860s, American and British commercial houses based in Manila established permanent offices in Cebu City and started to finance local entrepreneurs. Commercial opportunities also attracted Spanish and Chinese immigrants. The increased availability of capital stimulated cultivation and land speculation in Cebu Province such that "towns located on the northeast and western coasts of the island, previously of peripheral importance as producers of agricultural export crops, quickly became major centers of sugar, tobacco, and abaca cultivation."²⁶ In contrast with their scattered holdings in the eastern towns in the 1840-60 period, Cebu's now more fully capitalized urban merchant-moneylender-landlords amassed large estates or haciendas throughout the province in the two decades following the opening of the city's port, through purchases and *pacto de retroventa* mortgage agreements, while dispossessed Cebuano smallholders fell into tenancy in greater numbers.²⁷ In the 1880s, a crisis in the world sugar market, induced by competition from the European sugar beet industry, led to a reduction in the demand for—and price of—Philippine sugar. As the price and volume of sugar declined, owners of sugar land in towns of Cebu Province fell into bankruptcy and gave up their estates to urban creditors. The result was a further concentration of landholdings in the hands of Cebu City-based merchant-moneylender-landlords.²⁸

By the turn of the century, this mostly Chinese mestizo commercial-landowning élite had crystallized into a Cebuano oligarchy with roots in both town and country. Today their scions dominate small-town politics

in Cebu. One scholar has noted that in nearby Bohol and Leyte and in northern Mindanao,

The acquisition of provincial lands led to an elite emigration from Cebu. Most of these elite families, however, did not wholly uproot themselves; on the contrary, most left behind parents or siblings and retained their urban property. A number of brothers, cousins, or in-laws of the leading merchants established themselves in the municipalities and fed business into the family's ventures in Cebu, often obtaining loans from their wealthy merchant relatives. Of the original 30 or so principal families of the *mestizo gremio* in the early 1850s, most had clearly established branches of their family in the provinces by the 1890s. There were very few Parian [city-based] *mestizo* families who did not have links with one or more prominent provincial families by this time; for some the links were substantial. The expansion of the urban elite into the city's widening hinterland was the beginning of the formation of a province- and region-wide elite.²⁹

Since its formation at the turn of the century, this largely Chinese *mestizo* elite has adapted to changing market conditions by diversifying and specializing production in Cebu Province. Today, plantations in several northern towns furnish cane to two sugar centrals, cattle pastures in several towns on the southeast coast provide meat for Cebu City slaughterhouses, and poultry farms on Bantayan island off the northwest coast supply chickens, eggs, and dung (for fertilizer) to markets throughout the Visayas. More generally, coconut groves and cornfields throughout the province supply the warehouses of major milling corporations in Cebu City through networks of small-time corn millers and copra traders, while fish and seafood from Cebu's coastal waters flow into Pasil market on trawlers, pumpboats, and trucks.

In these increasingly capital-intensive commercial networks, as in the residential subdivisions, factories, and tourist resorts concentrated in Metro Cebu but also scattered throughout the province, descendants of Cebu's nineteenth-century Chinese *mestizo* dynasties have by and large preserved and expanded their families' properties and commercial interests, while newcomers—especially Hokkien-speaking immigrants from China's Fujian Province—have made significant inroads.³⁰ At the same time, the twentieth century witnessed the further immiseration of the broad mass of Cebu Province's population; increasing land scarcity has led to agricultural "involution" on marginally productive corn lands, environmental degradation of the remaining forest cover, mangroves, and fishing beds, and migration to the swelling slums of Cebu City.

Over the course of the twentieth century, Chinese *mestizo* elite families of nineteenth-century vintage parlayed their predominance in landownership and commercial networks in Cebu Province into commensurate preeminence in municipal politics. With suffrage severely restricted by the

TABLE 4
Correlation Between Manila Administration and Cebu Mayors, 1955-80

Local Election	Administration Party	Mayors Elected
1955	Nacionalista	52 Nacionalistas
1959	Nacionalista	52 Nacionalistas
1963	Liberal	46 Liberals
1967	Nacionalista	48 Nacionalistas
1971	Nacionalista	46 Nacionalistas
1980	KBL	50 Nacionalistas

American colonial regime, members of elite families of Cebu Province dominated the municipal elections held in 1901 and—through patronage networks, vote-buying, electoral fraud, and violence—largely retained their preeminence throughout the century as the electorate expanded.³¹ Unlike in Cavite, in Cebu Province a landed-commercial elite with a solid economic base independent of the state has persistently dominated small-town politics.

Nonetheless, state patronage has also proved decisive in many municipal election contests between rival elite families. During the Liberal Party administrations of Manuel Roxas and Elpidio Quirino, for example, 51 Liberal mayors were appointed by Liberal governor Manuel Cuenco (who had been appointed by President Roxas) in 1946 and Liberal Cuenco protégés won 48 (of 51) mayorships in the elections of 1947. But when President Quirino supported Nacionalista gubernatorial candidate Sergio "Serging" Osmeña Jr. four years later in 1951, only 33 Cuencista Liberals won reelection.³² Subsequent elections evidenced a similarly close and consistent correlation between the party of the incumbent administration in Manila and the affiliation of mayors elected in the small towns of Cebu (see Table 4).³³

Unlike in Cavite, however, where the province-level rivalry between Montano and Camerino in the early postwar period and the entrenchment of Governor Remulla in the 1980s and 1990s were decisive in small-town political contests, in Cebu the representatives of the province's seven congressional districts were key players in municipal elections over the same periods. For example, longtime congressman Ramon M. Durano Sr. of Cebu's 1st district (1949-72) assisted in the installation and reelection of such protégés as Pedro Monsanto (mayor of Catmon, 1939-86), Tiburcio Donaire (mayor of Poró, 1967-80), and Margarito Maningo (mayor of San Francisco, 1946-63 and 1967-86). Before the imposition of martial law, the Cuencos similarly promoted mayors in the family bailiwick—the 5th district—while longtime congressman Manuel

Zosa (1949-65, 1969-72) likewise provided for his allies in the municipalities of the 6th district.³⁴ In the post-Marcos era, Congressman Celestino E. Martinez Jr. swept in protégés in all nine municipalities in his (4th) district in 1992, while his counterpart in the 2nd district, Congressman Crisologo Abines, "carried" (*magdala*) eleven associates to mayoral victories, including two siblings and a close business crony.

In sum, the municipal mayors of Cebu have been members of small-town dynasties with extensive landholdings and commercial interests. While not averse to using coercion and profiting from illegal activities, Cebu town mayors have depended less on violence in election contests and relied less on "rackets" for capital accumulation than their counterparts in Cavite. Although they did not hesitate to exploit their discretionary powers over the local economy and were vulnerable to the interventions of political enemies, town mayors in Cebu have typically represented elite families whose economic bases in landownership and commerce lay largely outside the realm of political regulation, manipulation, and intrigue.

Like the municipal bosses of Cavite, some of the small-town dynasties of Cebu were more successful than others in entrenching themselves in power, as suggested by the above-noted high level of turnover in mayorships in the province. In many towns, competition between rival clans together with the machinations of congressional and provincial opponents prevented dynasties from establishing themselves. In other towns, however, small-town dynasties entrenched themselves for many years by using their proprietary wealth, the discretionary powers of the mayor's office, and state patronage to control key sectors and nodal chokepoints of the local economy. Among such longtime Cebu clans, the Escario family of Bantayan was the most successful twentieth-century small-town dynasty, ruling their municipality with only one brief interruption (1986-88) from 1937 to this writing in 1999.

Chicken Dung, Coconuts, and Crabs:

The Escarios of Bantayan

In the three and a half decades of the twentieth century before a member of the Escario family was elected mayor, no single "dynasty" dominated the political and economic life of Bantayan, a coconut, corn, fishing, and poultry town on the island of the same name off the northwest coast of Cebu. Instead, large landowning families of Chinese mestizo ancestry such as the Abellos, Arcenases, Causinges, Escarios, Lozadas, Roskas, Ru-

bios, and Ybáñezes were active and dominant in municipal politics, but no one clan dominated the town's economic and political life.

Residing in Spanish colonial-style houses around the town plaza, these landowning families formed a close-knit small-town oligarchy, whose members not only intermarried but in many cases also claimed a common ancestor, Manuel Rubio, who emigrated from Capiz Province (on the nearby island of Iloilo) to Bantayan early in the nineteenth century. Availing himself of the commercial opportunities of the period, Rubio acquired large landholdings on Bantayan island. As one of his ancestors noted many years later: "This Manuel Rubio came to own very many large landholdings which he planted with coconut and corn. He had land in almost all of the barrios or barangays in the three municipalities of Bantayan, Madridejos, and Santa Fe."³⁵

Much of Rubio's land was passed on to his daughter, Maria Rubio, and her children, who married into the Escario and Arcenas families. Yet much of Rubio's inheritance went to an "illegitimate" son (*anak sa gawas*), Bengno Causing, whom Rubio had fathered during an extramarital affair with the daughter of a prominent Chinese merchant (Kao Sing) who is believed to have held the opium franchise for northern Cebu for some period during the late nineteenth century. Assuming ownership of many of his father's properties after his death, Causing married an Escalona and fathered daughters who were betrothed to Abellos, Arcenases, and Roskas. Early postwar land tax records suggest how these clans divided up their common forefather's properties: Abellos: 158 hectares; Causing: 470 hectares; Escarios: 405 hectares; Lozadas: 617 hectares; Rubios: 125 hectares. Competing in highly restricted municipal elections beginning in 1901, scions of these landowning families and their allies took turns occupying the mayor's office of Bantayan (see Table 5).

A set of fortuitous circumstances facilitated the successful Bantayan mayoral candidacy in 1937 of Isidro Escario, whose family subsequently broke this pattern of intra-oligarchy competition and established firm political and economic control over the municipality. In 1934, Mayor Pedro Lozada appointed Isidro, the son of former mayor Felixberto Escario, as a land tax collector in the office of the municipal treasurer, a consolation prize to his father who had lost the mayoral race to Lozada. When Lozada, an aging and inattentive mayor, ran for reelection in 1937, he found himself opposed by his erstwhile tax collector, who had begun to campaign "while in the field" and had earned the support of important landowners (e.g., the Rubio family) through his sympathetic property tax assessment and collection practices. Moreover, Escario was married to the former Remedios Abello, whose father, a retired schoolteacher, was a municipal councillor, and whose mother was a Causing with extensive

TABLE 5
Bantayan Mayors, 1901-37

Term	Mayor
1901-1908	Gregorio Escario
1908-1910	Margarito Escario
1910-1912	Gregorio Escario
1912-1916	Roque Villacin
1916-1919	Pedro Lozada
1919-1922	Roque Villacin
1922-1928	Felixberto Escario
1928-1931	Mariano Causing
1931-1934	Jose Ybañez
1934-1937	Pedro Lozada

landholdings.³⁶ In addition, Escario demonstrated a willingness to use violence and intimidation to win the mayorship: today Escario's friends and foes alike recall that Lozada was afraid to leave his home to campaign on election day. Finally, Escario no doubt benefited from the intensification of political rivalries at the provincial level, between longtime Cebu kingpin Sergio Osmeña Sr. and the up-and-coming Mariano J. Cuenco. In 1935, President Quezon had appointed Cuenco to the patronage-rich position of secretary of public works and communications, a ruse designed to undermine Quezon's longtime rival for national dominance, Vice-President Osmeña. Thus, unlike in previously Osmeña-dominated elections, Escario could avail himself of generous campaign support from provincial rivals eager to secure a base in the municipality.³⁷ Drawing strength from his discretionary use of municipal offices, his alliance with local landed families, his willingness to employ violence, and his access to state patronage, Isidro Escario went on to defeat Lozada in the municipal elections and assumed the mayorship in 1937.

In subsequent years, the Escario family employed these same tools to retain their hold over Bantayan; first Isidro (1937-59), then his wife, Remedios (1959-67), and eventually their sons Jesus (1967-86) and Rex (1988-92) assumed the mayorship.³⁸ As in other towns in Cebu, the Escarios have used the town's police force to profit from illegal activities in the municipality.³⁹ Bantayan's rich fishing grounds—known for a plentiful supply of crabs and other marine delicacies—are a major source of livelihood for a few thousand town residents.⁴⁰ The selective enforcement of regulations prohibiting dynamite and purse-seine trawl fishing in municipal waters has proven a useful mechanism for extortion and patron-

age and has allegedly allowed Escario cronies to monopolize the sale of explosive materials in the town.⁴¹ Moreover, as in other towns in Cebu, the Escarios have evidently engaged in the protection of illegal lotteries known as *jueteng* in Bantayan, which in recent years have operated out of the residence of a barangay councilman in the *poblacion*, less than 100 meters from the church.⁴² In addition, the Escarios maintained close relations throughout the 1960s with the famed Cebuano pirate Isabelo "Be-loy" Montemayor, who often spent time with his relatives on the islet of Botiguis, which lay within Bantayan's municipal boundaries and fell well within the Escario family's domain.⁴³ The Escarios not only engaged in blue-seal cigarette smuggling and gun-running with Montemayor but also protected and profited from his frequent acts of "piracy."⁴⁴ Finally, as suggested by the recent indictment of Rex Escario (Isidro's son and Bantayan mayor, 1988-92) for his role in a 1990 bank robbery in Mandau City, members of the Escario family have also been involved in other illegal activities in Bantayan and elsewhere in Cebu Province.⁴⁵

Aside from these illegal activities, the Escarios have used the mayor's office to facilitate their seizure of monopoly privileges in Bantayan's economy. For example, Isidro Escario emerged in the postwar period as the



Rex Escario, mayor of Bantayan, Cebu (1988-92), accused of election-related violence and involvement in a major Cebu City bank robbery.

sole *contratista* or labor broker and recruiter in Bantayan for sugar plantations on the nearby island of Negros Occidental that required seasonal migrant workers (*sacadas*). Over the years, hundreds of *sacadas* from among poor Bantayan residents came to depend on Escario for cash advances, known as *anticho*, especially during the lean months:

The people of Bantayan in particular suffer severe food shortages resulting from the monsoon rains which hinder them from regularly pursuing their main source of subsistence—fishing. With their corn still growing, and fish supply rather scarce, food prices soar, forcing sacada households to fall back on cash advances from the *contratista*. The earnings to be had from cane-cutting are so little that the *contratista's* cash advance cannot be done without, and in this way a large section of this assetless rural poor is condemned to migrate every season as the monsoon rain comes.⁴⁶

By advancing credit at high interest rates to the *sacadas* during the monsoon season in Bantayan and primary commodities at inflated prices during the milling season in Negros, Escario came to maintain his captive following of poor dependents in a state of permanent indebtedness. As town mayor, Escario possessed the authority to prevent Bantayan *sacadas* from renegeing on their work contracts; as *contratista*, he received payment directly from the plantation owners for the work of the laborers he had recruited and supervised.⁴⁷

Along with this monopoly on labor contracting, the Escarios controlled commercial activity going into and out of Bantayan. In the 1960s, the Escarios built a private port in the coastal barrio of Baigad that was said to be capable of accommodating two vessels easily and of storing more than 2,000 sacks of rice. With boats carrying San Miguel beer and Coca-Cola arriving twice weekly in Baigad, the Escarios, according to the records of the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), earned more than 3 million pesos in *arriastre* (stevedoring) fees in 1991 alone.⁴⁸ At the public port in the *poblacion* of Bantayan, meanwhile, the family of Isidro Escario's brother Epifanio has long held the lucrative *arriastre* contract, earning hundreds of thousands of pesos in annual fees while, according to PPA officials, pocketing deductions from their poorly paid workers' salaries that were supposed to be invested in the government social security system. In addition, the Escarios engineered the passage of a municipal ordinance in the 1980s that prohibited the ferry linking Bantayan with nearby Cadiz, Negros Occidental, from docking at the pier, ostensibly to prevent damage to the vessels during low tides along Bantayan's shore. Instead, the daily ferry—which services a lively trade in eggs and chicken dung as well as a steady flow of human traffic—was forced to anchor a few hundred meters away from the pier, leaving ferry passengers

and cargo at the mercy of an Escario-operated dock-to-ferry shuttle service that charged exorbitant rates.⁴⁹

In contrast with the more brazenly predatory, land-grabbing, and monopolistic tendencies of longtime mayor Cesar Casal of Carmona, Cavite, however, the Escarios have always shared control over the Bantayan economy with relatives and allied families in the town. Escario cousins have held the franchises to operate the sole ice plant and *sabonggan* (cock-fighting arena), the Abello clan has maintained the only (movie) theater, and the closely allied Mercado family has operated the one bus company on the island, linking Bantayan not only to Madridejos but also to Santa Fe, where Bantayan-bound passengers and cargo arrive daily on the ferry from Cebu. Moreover, while the Escarios have played prominent roles in both the fishing industry and the copra trade over the years, they never succeeded in driving out the other owners of large coconut groves and fishing boats in the town.⁵⁰ The family has refrained from assuming a role in Bantayan's rural bank or in the electric cooperative that distributes electricity to the three municipalities of Bantayan island.

The Escarios have maintained close alliances with commercially prominent immigrant Chinese families in Bantayan, whose uncertain citizenship status and dependence upon municipal monopoly franchises necessitated mayoral protection and favor. The patriarch of one of these clans, Ho Laysan, was an immigrant from Amoy (Xiamen), Fujian Province, who arrived in Bantayan in 1938 but did not obtain Philippine citizenship for himself and his family until 1980. His family established the town's general store, selling everything from hardware to dry goods to beer. According to some Bantayan residents, the Laysans have always enjoyed lenient regulatory treatment in their business: sugar stolen from passing Victorias Sugar Mill barges and lumber bought from illegal loggers on Leyte, for example, are sold without police intervention. Moreover, when cans of kerosene at the Laysans' store started a fire in April 1973 that burned down the municipal hall, hospital, public market, and numerous houses, causing nearly 20 million pesos in damage and rendering 5,000 families homeless, Mayor Jesus Escario and the town police force allegedly protected the Laysans from an angry mob of Bantayan *poblacion* residents who sought violent retribution.⁵¹ After the fire, the Laysans moved their general store to a slightly less central location and opened a separate gasoline station (with a municipal franchise) that services all the fishing boats and motorized "tricycles" in the town. For these privileges and protection services, the Laysans have rewarded the Escarios with generous financial support during elections, as has Noy Quiamco, the Chinese immigrant businessman (now a Philippine citizen) who owns the ferry servicing the Bantayan-Cadiz route.

The Escarios also benefited over the years from mutually beneficial ties with successive congressmen, from whom they extracted generous state patronage in exchange for electoral support (votes) in Bantayan. In the 1950s, for example, Isidro Escario enjoyed close relations with his distant relative Nicolas G. Escario, representative of Cebu's 7th district (1949-57), who had married into a wealthy Negros-based family of sugar barons and founded the Cebu Institute of Technology in Cebu City.⁵² In the 1960s, with patriarch Isidro elevated to a seat on the Cebu Provincial Board and then briefly to the vice-governorship, the Escarios likewise supported the successful candidacies of Tereso Dunon for the 7th district congressional seat (1961-69), and in the 1970s they cultivated a warm relationship with longtime 1st district representative Ramon M. Durano Sr., whose influence had expanded throughout Cebu Province during the decade before martial law and survived the abolition of Congress in 1972. In the post-Marcos period, the Escarios similarly affiliated themselves with Congressman Celestino ("Junie") Martinez Jr., who won successive elections in the 4th district (comprising much of the pre-martial-law 7th district, including Bantayan) by massive margins in 1987, 1992, and 1995. Although ex-mayor Rex Escario was convicted for awarding in 1990 a 400,000-peso public works project without public bidding, the Escarios assumed considerable discretion over the pork barrel delivered to Bantayan by their successive patron-saint congressmen.⁵³

Over the years, even as the local electorate swelled from fewer than 23,000 voters during the Commonwealth era to more than 300,000 in 1992, the Escarios' control over much of the local economy virtually guaranteed consistent electoral successes in Bantayan for the family. Flush with funds from their various family businesses and illegal activities, the Escarios have always amassed considerable war chests for election-campaign expenses such as payments to voters, *lders*, poll-watchers, election inspectors, and vote counters and canvassers. Enlisting members of prominent allied families as candidates for the municipal council, the Escarios cobbled together election slates representing key factions of the local oligarchy. By mobilizing tenant farmers and workers on their extensive landholdings, *sacadas* from their work as *contratistas*, employees in their assorted businesses, and beneficiaries of their patronage, the Escarios also built up a large network of dependents.

The Escarios undoubtedly also benefited from a widely acknowledged reputation as generous patrons and providers to the poor and downtrodden folk of Bantayan. Isidro Escario, who passed away in the 1970s, served as the sponsor of countless weddings and baptisms in Bantayan, while his wife Remedios, popularly known as "Ma Mediong," remained—even in the eyes of her most hardened political enemies—the

unsurpassed "Santa Claus" of the town.⁵⁴ In fact, many Bantayan residents claim that the Escarios provided assistance of various kinds to town residents of modest means and no known affiliation with their municipality's most prominent family. Over the years, all these acts of generosity supposedly bound countless members of the voting public to the Escarios through bonds of fictive kinship (*compadrazgo*) and obligation that proved enduring. Some were even provided burial places in the family-owned cemetery, Bantayan's Eternal Gardens.

Nonetheless, the family has consistently resorted to violence, intimidation, and electoral fraud to guarantee the reelection of successive Escario mayors and their allies. Beginning with his first election in 1937, Isidro Escario relied not only on the threat of violence to defeat his rivals for the mayorship, but also on the illicit election-day assistance of sympathetic schoolteachers, who by law have been tasked with receiving and counting election ballots.⁵⁵ In the 1960s and early 1970s, incidents of political violence appear to have escalated in Bantayan. Escario henchmen (including Police Chief Salvador Abello, the brother of Remedios Escario) intimidated voters and killed off a few of the family's enemies, and Constabulary troops assumed control of the town police force for protracted periods.⁵⁶ Moreover, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Escarios continued to rely on such hardball tactics to win elections: in early 1988 Rex Escario and five armed companions barged into the home of an opposition sympathizer (the son of a barangay captain) one night, beat him up, and nearly shot him dead with an M-16.⁵⁷ In the midst of the attack, the future mayor of Bantayan is said to have vented his rage against the unreliability of his family's supposed "clients": "What offenses have the Escarios committed that you can call us thieves and hustlers, when you don't even pay rent for your shed on our land?"⁵⁸ Finally, after the May 1992 elections, among the most closely contested in the postwar history of Bantayan, opponents claimed that Remedios Escario won election through the introduction in many precincts of fake ballots by sympathetic (and/or paid-off) schoolteachers serving as election inspectors, backed up by a campaign of harassment and intimidation perpetrated in part by some 80 "goons" imported from the nearby provinces of Negros Occidental and Masbate.⁵⁹

The past few elections, it might be argued, were the most closely contested in Bantayan, not only because province-level rivals of Congressman Martinez supported the Escarios' foes, but also because economic growth in the town had allowed many local residents to outgrow their dependence on the goodwill of Bantayan's most powerful clan. Encouraged by the extremely hot and arid climate and the low costs of sand and fishmeal on the island, local elite families have since at least the 1970s in-

vested heavily in poultry farms, which supply the three Visayan metropolises of Bacolod City, Iloilo City, and Cebu City with millions of eggs and thousands of bags of chicken dung.⁶⁰ While roughly a third of these products are exported via the Escarios' private port in Baigad, the bulk of this brisk trade flows out through the public ports of Bantayan and Santa Fe, bringing massive profits and commercial links to poultry farmers that weaken their dependence on the Escarios.⁶¹ The rich fishing beds off the coast of Bantayan, moreover, are an enormous source of wealth for families who own large fishing vessels (*kabkab* and *bantigan*);⁶² in the late 1980s an American company established a crab meat processing plant in the town and bought its fresh crabs directly from local fishermen.⁶³ Similarly, Bantayan island's beautiful white-sand beaches attract tourists, and the small airport in Santa Fe may someday service resorts owned by local families (e.g., the decidedly anti-Escario Habahib/Ybáñez clan) with connections to travel agencies and Philippine Tourism Authority offices in Cebu City. Finally, the close connections between Bantayan and Cebu City allow members of wealthy families in the town to strike their fortunes in construction, port services, and real estate in the province's booming urban center or to rise to prominent positions (such as a Regional Trial Court judgeship) in the government, even as less fortunate Bantayanons head off to work as factory laborers, itinerant peddlers, domestic servants, construction workers, and seamen in Cebu City, Manila, and such distant destinations as Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia. All these developments gradually undermined the Escario family's once virtually monolithic control over the Bantayan economy.

Nonetheless, the Escarios remain the masters of Bantayan for the foreseeable future. Through bonds of affinity, consanguinity, and fictive kinship, the family is still central to all political alliances among the town's most prominent families. Through years of control over the mayor's office and the economy, moreover, at the beginning of the twenty-first century the Escarios retain significant regulatory and proprietary powers in local commerce. Finally, its links to powerful patrons in Congress and in the provincial capital as well as its sizable following of dependents in Bantayan give the clan distinctive advantages over potential political rivals. Thus, although Isidro is dead, and two of the couple's sons excused themselves from politics, the aging Remedios has served as mayor since 1992, with her daughter—Geraldyn Escario Cañares—as vice-mayor, and various nephews and cousins wait in the wings to follow in her footsteps. In short, unlike longtime mayor Cesar Casal of Carmona, Cavite, the Escarios of Bantayan constructed a small-town empire of dynastic proportions that has endured for nearly 60 years and promises to outlive, in some form, its original progenitors.

Conclusion

This chapter has contrasted the mafia-style municipal bosses of Cavite with the conditions that allowed a dynastic version of bossism to flourish in the small towns of Cebu. In Cebu, the commercialization of agriculture in the nineteenth century under the auspices of Cebu City-based Chinese mestizo merchant capital presaged the political entrenchment in the American colonial period of landed-commercial elite families in the small towns of the province. Less reliant on violence and illegal activities for electoral success and capital accumulation than their counterparts in Cavite, municipal mayors in Cebu have represented elite families whose economic bases in landownership and commerce have remained relatively independent of political intervention and permitted political succession over the generations in the manner of small-town dynasties.

Despite the different manifestations of bossism in Cebu and Cavite, the pattern of variation in the longevity of small-town bosses and dynasties in the two provinces has depended upon virtually identical contextual factors rooted in the local political economies. In both Cavite and Cebu, the most enduring small-town boss or dynasty of the province operated in the municipality where the local economy was most susceptible to regulation and/or appropriation by the town mayor. While in the case of Carmona, the government's expropriation of large landed estates and the centrality of the communal lands to the local economy facilitated the entrenchment of longtime mayor Cesar Casal, in Bantayan the flow of commerce through transportation bottlenecks and the importance of municipal regulations and franchises for the local fishing industry likewise prefigured the Escarios' enduring hold over political and economic power in the town. In both Carmona and Bantayan, moreover, close links to markets, production sites, and processing centers outside Cavite and Cebu allowed the municipal mayor to assume a monopolistic brokerage position in the local economy.

Although these two municipalities may have been administrative "outliers" in the provinces of Cavite and Cebu, they are by no means outlying cases. In Cavite, Casal's mayoral longevity in Carmona was fairly matched by that of Telesforo Unas, longtime mayor (1955–86), provincial board member (1988–92), and congressman (1992–95) of Maragon-don, a town noteworthy for its lack of large landowners, its extensive public forests, pastures, and quarry, and its proximity to market towns in the neighboring province of Batangas. In Cebu, the Escarios' long reign over Bantayan is replicated today by the Abines clan on the southern tip of the province, who control the ferry route to nearby Negros Oriental,

the bus franchise to Cebu City, and the local fishing industry, courtesy of Abines scions in the mayorships of Oslob and Santander and in Cebu's 2nd district congressional seat (see Chapter 5).

Moreover, the two small towns discussed in this chapter and Chapter 2 suggest patterns of variation in the longevity of small-town bosses and dynasties elsewhere in the Philippines. In short, long-term bosses and dynasties survive and prosper in municipalities whose economies lend themselves most readily and most fully to monopolistic or oligopolistic control. In some such municipalities, where the public or state-regulated sphere of the economy dwarfs locally available concentrations of private capital, notoriously criminal, predatory, mafia-style bosses depend heavily on violence and access to state offices and resources for political self-perpetuation and capital accumulation. In other municipalities, by contrast, where proprietary wealth is more concentrated and more secure, local dynasties combine the discretionary powers of the mayor's office, alliances, and oligopolistic arrangements with other elite families, local and extra-local patronage networks, and private capital accumulation to entrench themselves over successive generations. In both instances, however, control over the mayor's office—and over the local agencies of the state apparatus—has bolstered the fortunes of the small-town boss or dynasty.



The District-Level Dynasties of Cebu

In contrast to Cavite, where there has been a succession of entrenched provincial bosses, in Cebu, family dynasties have constructed political machines and economic empires at both the congressional district and the provincial level. This two-tiered pattern reflects the distinct political economy of town and countryside in the island province. In the six rural congressional districts of Cebu, supramunicipal dynasties emerged and flourished, achieving domination over large population centers, control of nodal commercial and transportation chokepoints, and/or command over concentrations of private capital in the local economy. At the provincial level, a single dynasty based in Cebu City retained preeminence for most of the twentieth century by allying itself with urban merchant capitalists and by building a political machine centered in the Visayan entrepôt but radiating out into the province as well.

This chapter examines the pattern of dynastic bossism in the congressional districts of Cebu Province. An examination of the single most enduring district-level dynasty in the province underscores the role of state-based resources and prerogatives for the construction of a supramunicipal empire and political machine capable of withstanding both the problems of dynastic succession and the ebbs and flows of national politics. Sketches of two more recent—but already fully entrenched—dynasties in other rural districts of Cebu provide examples of alternative paths to capital accumulation and machine building for “political clans” in the province. Taken together, these three case studies exemplify pat-

terms of dynastic bossism while emphasizing the coercive—rather than clientelistic—nature of production and social relations in the coal mines, factories, sugar plantations, and fishing fleets owned by these district-level dynasties.

In the pre-marital-law era, dynastic entrenchment was evident in several congressional districts in Cebu. In the 4th district, for example, various members of the Argao-based Kintanar clan, the dominant political force in the district's most populous town, held the congressional seat from 1938 through 1969. More impressively, the Cuenco family, proprietor of the bus company that linked the small and impoverished towns of the southern coast to Cebu City,¹ represented the 5th district in the national legislature with only two interruptions from 1912 through 1969, while a distant relative and longtime crony, Manuel A. Zosa, the scion of a prominent landowning clan in the town of Barili, stood for the neighboring 6th district in Congress from 1949 through 1965 and again from 1969 to 1972. Yet the most enduring political machine and economic empire constructed in all the rural congressional districts of Cebu was that of Ramon M. Durano Sr., who claimed the 1st district seat from 1949 through 1972, retained significant influence during the post-marital-law Marcos era, and passed on his bailiwick in dynastic form to his son Ramon ("Nito") Durano III, who has represented what now constitutes the 5th district since 1987.

Congressional District Dynasties: The Duranos of Danao

In Barrio Dungo-an, Danao City, just a 45-minute drive north from Cebu City, lies a monument to the progenitor of Cebu's most famous congressional district dynasty: the burial site of the late Ramon M. Durano Sr. (1905–88). Covered with fresh flowers that are replenished weekly, his tomb lies in a tiny chapel that is almost encircled by busts of all the Popes in the history of Christianity, each facing the late Durano family patriarch. Framing the chapel and this collection of Popes, life-size dioramas of biblical scenes—such as the Last Supper and the Nativity—fill out the grounds of the Ramon M. Durano Sr. Home for the Aged, which is adjacent to the Church and orphanage that also bear his name and just across the road from his publishing house and bakery. Surrounding these monuments to Durano's beneficence and position in the Catholic community, substantial landmarks of his family's remaining worldly empire radiate out in the four cardinal directions: salbeds stretch east to the coastline;

several hectares of sugarcane plantation line the highway south toward Cebu City; the "industrial welfare estate"—a sugar mill, ice plant, and cement factory—lie on the northbound road; mines and large landholdings extend west to the mountains. In the neighboring towns, mayors and other local notables remain to this day beholden to the late Durano, having benefited handsomely from his long tenure as representative and acknowledged political kingpin of Cebu's former 1st congressional district. Durano's sons have served as the district's representative to Congress and as the mayors of Danao City and the nearby municipality of Sogod. Elsewhere in the province, in Cebu City (and to a lesser extent in the nation's capital, Manila), scores of Durano relatives and protégés still hold positions in Customs, the Port Authority, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the ranks of the police, and various law firms and construction companies. From its metaphysical, religious, and political center at his gravesite, Durano's empire lives on.



Longtime Cebu congressman Ramon M. Durano Sr., who ruled Danao City and the surrounding towns from 1949 until his death in 1988.



Ramon ("Nito") Durano III, elected Cebu congressman (5th district) in 1987 and heir to much of his father's local empire. Family patriarch Ramon M. Durano Sr. succeeded in passing on the empire he built up over the years to his sons and daughters.

In its style and structure, this memorial to Durano projects an elaborate myth about the late congressman's hold over the former 1st district of Cebu. Situating Ramon Durano Sr. among the larger pantheon of Christianity and emphasizing his public commitment to the Catholic Church,² the layout of the burial site locates the source of the Durano family patriarch's power in his putatively privileged access to the spiritual world and identification with the institutions of organized religion, thus obscuring the roots of his political success and economic fortune in the exploiting of state-based resources, privileges, and perks. While highlighting Durano's well-publicized reputation as a great patron and philanthropist, the design of the surrounding testimonies to his beneficence conceals his extraction of monopoly rents, exploitation of labor, and expropriation of scarce resources from the broad mass of the local population.³ His derivative authority and state resources masked as personal prowess and beneficence, Durano thus appears as the source of all life and death, wealth and power in his bailiwick.

Yet however impressive in scope and remarkable in style, this monument's projection of Durano's authority claims little in the way of an at-

tentive audience. The burial grounds remain almost entirely empty, the church has fallen into disrepair, and the old-age home and orphanage are virtually deserted. Only the caretaker, Durano's longtime personal bodyguard, maintains a permanent vigil, standing by the memory of the boss whose life he protected for many years. Less closely affiliated local residents, meanwhile, evince little nostalgia for the late Durano's use of violence, intimidation, and fraud during elections, his implication in several murders, his sponsorship and protection of illegal economic activities, recalling too his penchant for pilfered government funds, fixed concessions and contracts, behest loans, landgrabbing, low-wage labor, and union-busting. Regardless of popular sentiment, Ramon Durano Sr.'s worldly empire lives on, his political machine, business enterprises, and landholdings passed on to his family in classic dynastic form.

Before the election of Ramon M. Durano Sr. in 1949, the 1st congressional district of Cebu was the bailiwick of the Rodriguez family,⁴ a Boggo-based clan with extensive landholdings in the northern sugar-belt towns of the province.⁵ Celestino Rodriguez, for example, held the 1st district seat in the Assembly from 1907 to 1912 and again in 1935-38 and 1941-46; he also served in the Senate from 1916 to 1925. Celestino's brother, Pedro Rodriguez, held Cebu's 7th district seat in the Assembly from 1907 to 1909 and succeeded Celestino for two terms in the Senate (1925-28, 1928-31); his son, José V. Rodriguez, represented Cebu's 7th district in the House of Representatives (1941-46, 1946-49) and served as mayor of Cebu City (1952-55). A nephew, Buenaventura Rodriguez, represented both the 1st district (1931-34) and the 7th district (1934-35, 1935-38) of Cebu in the national legislature and was provincial governor of Cebu from 1937 through 1940. Owning large haciendas in the Boggo-Medellin sugar belt, claiming genealogical and cultural ties to Spain, and fraternizing and intermarrying with wealthy Chinese mestizo families from Cebu City, the Rodriguezes were prominent representatives of the provincial oligarchy.⁶

In the late 1930s, however, the Rodriguezes came into conflict with another prominent political clan in Cebu, the Cuencos. Don Mariano Jesus Cuenco, the family patriarch, had represented Cebu's 5th district in the national legislature for five consecutive terms (1912-28) and served two terms as governor of Cebu (1928-31, 1931-34) while his brother, Miguel Cuenco, settled into the 5th district seat (1931-65). Although they did not have large landholdings, the Cuencos enjoyed close ties with prominent commercial interests in Cebu City and owned one of the two major bus companies in the province, the Bisaya Land Transportation Company. In 1936, Mariano Jesus Cuenco was appointed secretary of public works and chairman of the National Power Corporation, positions that

allowed him to build up a province-wide patronage machine in Cebu against Vice-President Sergio Osmeña Sr., longtime Cebu provincial kingpin and political rival of both Quezon and Cuenco.⁷ In 1937, with Quezon's blessings, the Cuencos and the Rodriguezes forged an alliance against Osmeña and succeeded in electing Buenaventura Rodriguez to the provincial governorship of Cebu. Soon after the elections, however, the Rodriguezes' claims to provincial leadership of the Partido Nacionalista evidently upset the Cuencos and their supporters, who helped a prominent landowner from the town of Borbon, Tereso Dossdos, to unseat the new governor's uncle, Celestino Rodriguez, in the 1st district in the following year's congressional elections.⁸

Yet with the Rodriguezes renewing their alliance with Vice-President Osmeña and Dossdos bowing out in 1941, Secretary of Public Works Mariano Jesus Cuenco needed a new foil against Celestino Rodriguez in the 1st district.⁹ Danao, the most populous municipality in the district, was the ideal site for a beachhead against Rodriguez, yet the dominant politician in the town, longtime mayor and wealthy landowner Paulo Almandras, was closely identified with the Osmeñas. Almandras, however, had married Elicia Durano, the daughter of Demetrio Tan Durano, a local merchant of Chinese mestizo extraction who served several terms as municipal councilor in Danao in the first decade of the twentieth century. Moreover, Elicia's brother, Ramon Durano, was the baptismal godson of the wealthy landowner and municipal councilor Salvador Gonzales and had married the daughter of Severo Duterre, another local notable who had won twelve consecutive terms on the municipal council of Danao. In 1934, Ramon Durano won a seat on the Danao municipal council on the Almandras-Osmeña ticket, but his aspirations clearly stretched beyond the small-town political entourage of his brother-in-law. Already the owner of several sailing vessels and proprietor of a modest but successful interisland trading network, Durano entered law school in Cebu City in 1935 and within a few years had passed the bar examination and begun practicing as an attorney.¹⁰ Blessed with political capital from his father and baptismal godfather, affinal ties to the Almandras clan, and considerable ambition, Durano was an ideal candidate for Cuenco's scheme to weaken the local Osmeña machine and build up a counterforce to Rodriguez in the district.

In the late 1930s, moreover, a significant development in the economic life of Danao provided Cuenco with the perfect opportunity to earn the allegiance—and advance the fortunes—of Ramon Durano. In 1924 the National Development Company, a government agency, had founded the Cebu Portland Cement Company (CEPOC) and set up a cement factory in Naga, Cebu. Requiring massive amounts of coal for production, the

company established its own mining operations—the Danao Coal Mines—on a 12.8-hectare plot in a mountainous area of Danao, where geological surveys had indicated coal deposits of more than 1 million metric tons. In 1938, moreover, CEPOC increased its Naga plant's capacity to 2,500 barrels (10,000 bags) of cement per day, necessitating accelerated extraction from its Danao Coal Mines and expanded reliance on private mine operators for its supply of coal.¹¹ Already installed as secretary of public works and chairman of the National Power Corporation, Mariano Jesus Cuenco won appointment in 1939 as president and general manager of CEPOC. Offering capital and contracts, Cuenco generously set up Durano as one of the company's primary suppliers of coal.¹² Enriched by his coal-mining contracts and backed by Cuenco, Durano ran for Congress against Rodriguez in the 1941 elections but failed to defeat the well-heeled sugar baron.

Wartime and postwar developments, however, improved the position of Durano over his potential rivals in Cebu's 1st district. During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines (1942–45), Durano joined an anti-Japanese guerrilla group operating in the mountains of Cebu, which was led by an American, Aaron Feinstein (aka Harry Fenton), who had worked as a radio announcer in Cebu City before the war. Fenton was feuding with another American, Captain James Cushing, for supreme control over the guerrillas and developed a reputation as a megalomaniac, murderer, and rapist.¹³ In a brutal campaign ostensibly aimed at eliminating Japanese collaborators and spies within the guerrilla movement, Fenton and his subordinates, U.S. military intelligence reports dryly noted, "went to extremes and many wanton killings of innocent citizens were reported."¹⁴ Durano, rising in the ranks from lieutenant/judge advocate to captain and intelligence officer (G-2) in Fenton's staff, exploited his discretion over guerrilla "justice" to order the "executions" of his prewar political enemies in the 1st district. In 1942 and 1943, Durano arranged for the murders of more than 40 of Congressman Celestino Rodriguez's *hiders*, including the mayors of Tabogon, Sogod, Carmen, and Danao. These killings effectively decimated Rodriguez's political machine.¹⁵

Early postwar national and provincial political trends also favored Durano's ascendancy to the 1st district seat. Although Quezon's death had left Osmeña as the president of the republic in 1945, and Osmeñistas—including Jovenal Almandras, Durano's nephew—swept the congressional elections in Cebu in April 1946, Manuel Roxas's victory over Osmeña in the presidential election of May 1946 boosted the fortunes of the Cuenco family in the province. In April of that year, Mariano Jesus Cuenco was reelected to the Senate, and in June Roxas appointed

Cuenco's son, Manuel Cuenco, provincial governor of Cebu along with 51 municipal mayors selected by the Cuencos.¹⁶ In 1947, Manuel Cuenco won election to the governorship, along with 48 out of 51 municipal mayoral candidates loyal to his family.¹⁷ In 1949, moreover, Senator Cuenco became president of the Senate, the most powerful member of the bicameral legislature.

Meanwhile, Senator Cuenco continued to promote his Danao-based protégé, Ramon Durano. In 1946 he offered Durano a seat on the provincial board and, when Durano declined, arranged for his appointment as general manager of the Cebu branch of the National Coconut Corporation (NACOCO), a government body created before the war ostensibly to support coconut planters against volatile market conditions and monopolistic middlemen. In 1946, for example, the Cebu branch of NACOCO received hundreds of thousands of pesos from the national government for the purchase of copra from local producers at subsidized prices (for resale to private copra exporters) and for loans to coconut planters.¹⁸ Under Durano's stewardship, which coincided with an unprecedented boom in copra exports from Visayan ports,¹⁹ the Cebu branch of NACOCO doctored copra purchase and sales records to deliver a hefty percentage into the aspiring politician's election-campaign war chest.²⁰ In the early postwar years, moreover, Durano's coal-mining operations received exceedingly favorable treatment from the government: the Rehabilitation Finance Corporation provided a 30,000-peso loan for a 50-kilowatt generator to supply light and power in Danao to both residents and coal-mining companies,²¹ and CEPOC increased both the volume and the price of coal it purchased from private suppliers.²²

Banking on his ample campaign war chest, expanding role in the economy of the 1st district, and close ties to the patronage-rich Cuencos, Durano rode easily to victory in the 1949 elections on the coattails of the incumbent Quirino administration. In an election still remembered today for the unprecedented vote-buying, violence,²³ intimidation and fraud perpetrated by Liberal provincial governors and other local *líders*,²⁴ coercive interference in the canvassing of votes at the municipal and provincial level led to spurious victories for Liberal candidates to the Senate and helped Quirino win reelection over José P. Laurel.²⁵

In Cebu, the Cuencos played the leading role in the Liberal Party sweep of the province in the November 1949 election. With Manuel Cuenco installed as the governor, Miguel Cuenco seated in the 5th congressional district, and Cuenguistas entrenched in 48 municipal mayorships and countless positions in the Constabulary and Commission on Elections, a well-oiled machine was already in place. In addition, in October 1949, one month before the election, Senate President Mariano Cuenco released

more than 700,000 pesos of pork-barrel funds in Cebu Province, including 123,000 pesos for the 1st district.²⁶ On election day, moreover, a campaign of violence and terror orchestrated by the Cuencos swept Cebu Province.²⁷ As the House Electoral Tribunal later concluded in a 1952 decision on the 1949 election in the 3rd congressional district of Cebu:

A group of armed men, said to be special policemen of the respective municipalities comprised in the Third District of Cebu, ranging between 30 and 50 in number . . . was organized with official sanction in every municipality to round up the houses of the Nacionalistas, to coerce the Nacionalistas to vote for the Liberals or at least to refrain from voting in the election; to threaten and to manhandle all Nacionalistas who were stubborn or who would resist the pressure made to bear upon them and to shoot them if necessary "so that they could no longer vote."

For this purpose, the most notorious characters in the town were drafted as members of the Special Police Force, which usually was under the command and control of the Chief of Police of the town or under some other important local leader but always with official sanction and with some degree of authority emanating from either the Municipal Mayor or from the Chief of Police of the town, and with the apparent tolerance of the officials in high government circles. . . .

[They] were furnished with deadly weapons such as Thompsons, carbines, pistols and other kinds of firearms. The said firearms were usually supplied by the Chief of Police and were given a license to possess them to show official authority and to give upon each member the impression that they were protected by the government.²⁸

These so-called Special Police Forces were highly successful in manufacturing the desired election results for the Liberal Party in the municipalities of the 3rd district.

The names entered in the registry list of voters in many instances were dictated and controlled by the Special Policemen; the voting booths were destroyed in many precincts and the voters had to prepare their ballots on the table of the board of inspectors, within the sight and subject to the inspection of the Special Policemen and the Liberal Party watchers. . . .

On election day, voters who were going to or were entering the polls were threatened and driven away; many of them were mauled and maltreated and forced to return to their homes. Two Nacionalista voters were killed and the killers were a regular policeman and two Special Policemen. . . .

Special Policemen . . . went to the polling places and filled up all unused ballots. Complete stubs were taken and filled up by them and the ballots so voted were all deposited in the ballot boxes. And the Board of Inspectors were just impotent to maintain the majesty of the law.²⁹

In the 1st district, where Ramon Durano won election to Congress by using similar tactics,³⁰ an electoral protest filed by Osmeñista Florencio S.

Urot, his defeated opponent, also detailed extensive fraud and violence but was dismissed on a technicality.³¹ Once seated in Congress, Durano began to entrench himself in power, using violence and state office to construct a provincial empire that would last his lifetime and survive him through his children.

For Durano, violence proved a valuable tool in consolidating his hold over the 1st district. During elections, in which Durano defeated a succession of local landowners, he fielded scores of armed goons whose intimidation of voters and election inspectors helped to guarantee winning margins in the district for the congressman as well as his candidates for local, provincial, and national office.³² In the 1965 election, for example, according to his political opponents:

Thousands of goons were hired by Congressman Durano to prevent the voters from casting their votes for his rival. Fourteen political leaders of Mayor Abel Borromeo of San Francisco, Camotes, were kidnapped the day before the election and brought to Danao City. While six managed to escape, eight of them are still unheard of up to the present. Among those kidnapped was Apolinar Carregena of San Francisco, Camotes, who was crucified and brutally tortured. He is now living in Davao City where he evacuated with his family.³³

For the pre-marital-law era, these events were hardly anomalous: Danao and other towns in Cebu's 1st district figured among the "sensitive hot spots" listed by the Commission on Elections in every election from 1951 through 1971. During the Marcos era, moreover, Durano deployed the coercive resources at his disposal to deliver massive victories in his bailiwick for Marcos in the presidential races of 1965, 1969, and 1981 and in the various marital-law referenda and plebiscites in the 1970s.³⁴ In the 1986 "snap" presidential elections, he likewise arranged for the padding of voters' registration lists, oversaw vote-buying and bribery of election inspectors, and fielded scores of armed goons who harassed and intimidated voters, opposition campaign workers, and election-watch volunteers, attacked polling places, and, in a few cases, stole ballot boxes from voting centers.³⁵

Aside from elections, Durano also reacted violently to intrusions into his bailiwick by his opponents in the provincial government. In 1952, for example, Durano and Danao's vice-mayor Manuel Yray were tried for the murder of Danao's acting mayor, Peda Tecala, whom Governor Sergio Osmeña Jr. had appointed after suspending the congressman's protégé, Pedro Sepulveda, from the municipal mayorship for criminal and administrative violations.³⁶ In 1966, Durano likewise figured in stories circulating in Cebu about the assassination of Raul Borromeo, the newly named assistant provincial fiscal whose brother served as municipal mayor of San Francisco, Camotes (1963-67), and whose family owned

large landholdings on the Camotes Islands, thus infringing upon Durano's bailiwick in the 1st district.³⁷

Outside the sphere of electoral competition, Durano also consistently wielded violence to advance his accumulation of proprietary wealth and economic supremacy in the 1st district. With local police and Constabulary forces in his pocket and a bevy of armed retainers at his disposal, Durano always had the upper hand in disputes over rival mining claims in Danao.³⁸ In the late 1960s and early 1970s, moreover, when demand for sugar on the world market reached a new high, Durano began to acquire large landholdings in towns in the 1st district for conversion into sugar plantations, applying intimidation when necessary to pressure smallholders to vacate their plots.³⁹ Once, small landowners in a remote barrio of Danao were summarily evicted by Durano, threatened by armed men who accompanied bulldozers to raze the buildings on their lands, and "laughed at by members of the police department" for daring to file a complaint against the congressman.⁴⁰ In addition, Durano's monopoly of violence in Danao and the surrounding towns allowed him to enforce harsh labor discipline and maintain appalling working conditions in his enterprises without fear of organized resistance among the workers.⁴¹ Finally, in 1966, Durano established the Insular Police Agency, a company staffed by ex-convicts, thugs, and professional strike-breakers whom he hired out to plantation owners in the Bogo-Medellin sugar belt to drive out the Associated Labor Union locals and to install company unions under the umbrella of the Durano-controlled Free Workers Association.⁴²

Durano's monopoly on coercive resources and his control over local law-enforcement agencies also allowed him to sponsor lucrative illegal activities in Danao. After the war and under Durano's aegis and protection, hundreds of small-scale makers of homemade or recycled guns—popularly known as *palitik*—prospered in Danao;⁴³ their products were used widely throughout the Philippines and exported to markets in Japan and Taiwan. Thanks largely to Durano's intervention and influence, the makers of *palitik* suffered only infrequent and ineffectual police interference in their illegal production and marketing of firearms. Moreover, following the evolution of commercial links between various Durano enterprises and Japan, the construction of a Durano-owned private wharf and drydock facilities in Danao, and the establishment of Danao as an official Philippine port in 1969, Durano was able to smuggle contraband in and out of his hometown.⁴⁴

Along with the benefits of a monopoly on coercive resources in Cebu's 1st district, Durano also enjoyed access to state patronage commensurate with his position in the national legislature. During his long tenure in

Congress, Durano served as a ranking member of committees on mining, public works, franchises, and reparations, his legislative interests in Manila corresponding to his business concerns in Danao. Careful to align himself with the ruling party in every administration, Durano was usually among the more favored congressmen in the disbursement of pork-barrel funds.⁴⁵ He evidently used his congressional seat to evade taxes and customs duties, to solicit clients for his law firm, and to win concessions and franchises for his companies.⁴⁶ In the early 1960s, for example, he obtained a franchise to operate an electric company and ice plant servicing Danao and neighboring towns. Construction companies owned by the congressman and members of his family likewise prospered through privileged access to government public works projects. Finally, Durano installed numerous relatives and protégés in government posts,⁴⁷ especially those that offered rich rent-seeking opportunities (e.g., customs collector, city tax assessor, provincial fiscal).⁴⁸ By the late 1960s, Cebu City newspapers began printing annual birthday greetings to Congressman Durano from the public works department, the courts, the tax collector, and other public offices.⁴⁹

For delivering large majorities in Cebu's 1st district to every successful presidential candidate, Durano enjoyed warm relations with Malacañang, especially during the administrations of Carlos P. Garcia (1957-61) and Ferdinand E. Marcos (1966-86), two presidents who rewarded him with special privileges and resources. In 1961, for example, with Garcia's support, Durano succeeded in converting the municipality of Danao into a chartered city, a status that granted the congressman's hometown a significant degree of autonomy from the provincial government of Cebu. Because Durano's relatives and cronies held the Danao mayorship and other elective posts,⁵⁰ such offices as city treasurer, engineer, fiscal, judge, and superintendent of schools fell to protégés nominated by the city mayor, appointed by the president, and confirmed by the Congress's Commission on Appointments.⁵¹

With the blessings of successive presidents and the backing of government financial institutions, moreover, Durano built up an elaborate economic empire in his district. In the 1950s, Durano expanded his control over the coal-mining industry in Danao. In 1954, with President Ramon Magsaysay's assent, two Durano allies won election to the Board of Directors of CEPOC, the government-owned cement firm that purchased coal from Durano's mines in Danao.⁵² Through these two well-placed allies, Durano was assured of favorable treatment in his dealings with CEPOC. In 1958, moreover, President Garcia rewarded Durano for his support in the election of the previous year by arranging for the Reparations Commission to finance Durano's construction of a cement plant in

Danao City.⁵³ Designed as the centerpiece of the Durano-owned Universal Cement Company, the plant was equipped for production of 10,000 bags of cement per day; its construction cost more than 6 million dollars in goods and services provided by the Kobe Steel Works in Japan.⁵⁴ Over the next few years, the Universal Cement Company also acquired some 1,600 hectares of property and secured a 900-hectare concession in Danao to expand coal-mining operations for raw materials and fuel.⁵⁵ Durano's empire in Danao further expanded in the late 1960s with generous support from President Ferdinand Marcos. Durano easily obtained loans to pay off his companies' accumulating bills and permission to roll over his mounting debts to the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).⁵⁶ A multi-million-dollar loan from the DBP also enabled Durano to construct a sugar central in Danao in 1968 with the assistance of the Mitsubishi Corporation.⁵⁷ Durano's political clout helped to facilitate crop loans from the Philippine National Bank to planters who pledged their sugar to the Durano Sugar Mills and to ensure favorable treatment from the quasi-government sugar monopoly, the National Sugar Trading Corporation.⁵⁸ By the mid-1970s, the Durano central was receiving sugarcane from nearly 5,000 hectares within its milling district and producing more than 300,000 piculs (nearly 20,000 metric tons) of sugar per year.⁵⁹

Though heavily reliant upon privileges and resources derived from the patronage of national politicians, Durano's empire survived intact in the face of adverse economic, political, and personal circumstances. In the early 1980s, falling sugar prices on the world market, slack demand for cement in the Philippines and abroad, and a banking crisis in Manila combined to bankrupt Durano's companies, idling his sugar mill and closing his cement plant.⁶⁰ In 1986, moreover, Durano's high-profile support for Marcos in the "snap" election proved a liability once Corazon C. Aquino assumed the presidency. The Ministry of Local Government summarily replaced the Duranos and their protégés in various local government posts with "officials-in-charge" who had supported Aquino in Cebu, while the Presidential Commission on Good Government came under pressure to launch an investigation into the former congressman's "best loans" and "ill-gotten wealth."⁶¹ Finally, in October 1988, after years of declining health and at the ripe age of 82, Ramon M. Durano Sr. passed away, dying intestate and leaving his empire in considerable disarray.⁶² A near-fatal gunfight between two of Durano's sons, Jesus ("Don") and Thaddeus ("Deo"), earlier that year had suggested that a struggle over the patriarch's legacy might divide the family.⁶³

Nonetheless, the Durano family weathered this crisis and entrenched itself as a second-generation dynasty in the renamed 5th congressional

district of Cebu.⁶⁴ Months after Aquino became president, the aging family patriarch had pledged his support to the new administration and, through the intercession of (future House speaker) Ramon V. Mitra Jr., gained ruling party support for the successful candidacy of his favorite son, Ramon ("Nito") Durano III, for the 5th district congressional seat.⁶⁵ Less than a year later, Ramon Durano Sr. was elected mayor of Danao City as an official candidate of the Aquino administration.⁶⁶ Having skillfully reached a political settlement with the new government, the Duranos salvaged their economic empire, avoided sequestration of their properties by the Presidential Commission on Good Government, and retained ownership of the Durano Sugar Mills.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, after the Duranos relinquished control over the heavily indebted Universal Cement Company to government banks in 1986, scions of the prominent Manila-based Araneta and Zobel de Ayala clans teamed up to buy Universal Cement from the Asset Privatization Trust and reopened the cement plant in Danao City in late 1991.⁶⁸ Taking note of the Durano family's prominence and ownership of the land on which the cement plant was built, the Aranetas and Ayalas took care to include the Duranos as partners and placed three members of the clan on the new company's seven-member board, including Beatriz Durano, Ramon Sr.'s widow, whom they named chairperson.⁶⁹ Moreover, by providing plots of land, assurances of "labor peace," and assistance in securing tax and tariff "incentives," the Duranos coaxed the Mitsumi Electric Company of Japan to set up a factory in Danao City in 1988.⁷⁰ Today, the Mitsumi plant employs more than 3,000 residents of Danao City and neighboring towns and, together with the Durano Sugar Mills and the reopened cement plant, has reestablished the Duranos as partners in Danao's "industrial welfare complex."⁷¹

By 1992, Ramon Durano Sr.'s favorite son, Congressman Nito Durano, had asserted his position as the new family patriarch and consolidated his hold over the 5th congressional district of Cebu. In the absence of a will, the estate of Ramon Durano Sr. went to his widow, but the old man had already transferred control over the sugar mill, titles to numerous properties, and most other valuable assets to Nito before his death in 1988.⁷² Though Durano family squabbles may persist,⁷³ Congressman Nito Durano's supremacy is beyond dispute. In the May 1992 elections, with his feuding brothers Jesus ("Don") and Thaddeus ("Deo") winning reelection to the mayorships of Danao City and Sogod respectively, Congressman Durano recaptured the 5th district congressional seat easily. He received at least 73,000 votes more than his closest rival, including 99 percent of all votes cast in Danao City, and delivered sizable margins to his favored candidates for the provincial governorship and the presidency. In 1995 Congressman Durano was reelected (virtually unchal-

lenged), as were various other family members. In short, although Ramon M. Durano Sr. began his political career as a notoriously predatory and violent aspiring boss, he clearly succeeded in passing on his Danao-based empire to his family.

The New District Dynasties:

Haciendados and Fishing Magnates

After the ouster of Marcos in 1986, a gerrymandering of the congressional districts in Cebu created new possibilities for supramunicipal dynasties in the province. The old 1st district monopolized by Ramon Durano Sr. reemerged as the 5th district dominated by his son, but the exclusion of Boggo and its inclusion among the towns of the new 4th district—comprising the nine municipalities of northern Cebu and Bantayan island—helped elevate the Boggo-based Martinez clan to new heights of wealth and power.

The Martinezes, who owned large tracts of land in the Boggo-Medellin sugar belt and on the nearby island province of Leyte, had intermarried with the prominent Espinosa clan of Masbate, and claimed Spanish lineage, resembled at first glance latter-day versions of the well-heeled Rodriguezes, the sugar barons who dominated the old 1st and 7th districts of Cebu for much of the prewar era. But the family patriarch, Congressman Celestino ("Junie") E. Martinez Jr., was far less genteel than his *haciendado* counterparts of yesteryear; he had a wide reputation for ruthlessness and a violent temper. As mayor of Boggo from 1971 to 1986, Martinez asserted his economic domination over the municipality, using the town police to close down his rivals' cockfighting arena and assuming the presidency of the municipal branch of the Coconut Producers' Federation (COCOFEED).⁷⁴ Once elected to the 4th district congressional seat (in 1987), moreover, Martinez began planning his own coconut oil mill in Boggo.

As owner of only one of many sizable haciendas in the Boggo-Medellin sugar belt, however, Martinez still depends upon the goodwill and support of his fellow *haciendados*, whose economic might dwarfs other concentrations of private wealth in the 4th district. Long the vice-president of the Boggo-Medellin Sugarcane Planters' Association and a shareholder in the Boggo-Medellin sugar central, Martinez earned the praise of other sugar barons for his support of landowners' interests in the national legislature and his resourcefulness in assisting them with other business ventures in Cebu City and Manila.⁷⁵ Indeed, his influence may well be responsible for the nonimplementation of agrarian reform in northern



Celestino E. Martinez Jr., elected Cebu congressman (4th district) in 1987. Martinez, a Spanish mestizo, has enjoyed the full support of large landowners in the sugar plantation belt of northern Cebu that constitutes his district.

Cebu. With generous backing from other sugar planters, ample access to pork-barrel funds,⁷⁶ and a demonstrated willingness to use violence against his political foes,⁷⁷ Martinez has entrenched himself in the 4th district for the foreseeable future. In the May 1992 elections, he won reelection by a margin of nearly 37,000 over his closest rival, delivering majorities in the 4th district to his favored candidates for the provincial governorship and the presidency, and sweeping in his protégés and allies (including Remedios Escario of Bantayan) in eight out of nine municipalities—results repeated, if not improved upon, in the 1995 elections. With the congressman's mother, Nilda E. Martinez, elected to the Bogo vice-mayorship, his 22-year-old son among the winning municipal councilors in the town, and his kinsman Mariano Martinez seated, along with another protégé, on the provincial board, the Martinez dynasty became virtually unbeatable.

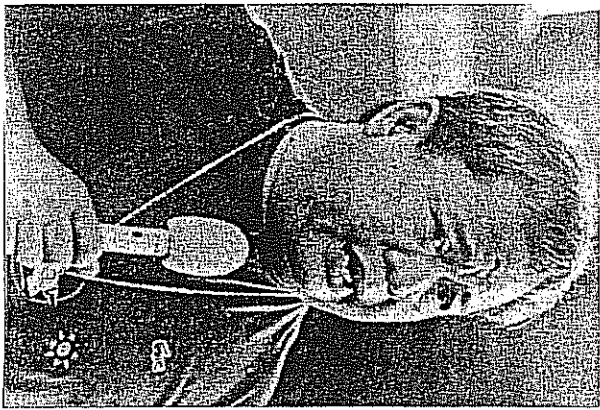
Meanwhile, a new center of political and economic activity has emerged on the southern tip of the island, where the Abines family has built up a considerable political machine and economic empire in the new 2nd district. The family patriarch, Apolonio Abines Sr., served two terms as a

municipal councilor (1959–63, 1964–67) and one term as vice-mayor (1968–71) of Oslob, but remained under the shadow of long-term town mayor José Tumalak (1964–80), the owner of large landholdings in the municipality. Although Apolonio Sr. passed away in the 1970s, his son Crisologo (“Sol”) captured the mayorship of neighboring Santander town in 1971 and served continuously until 1986. Apolonio Abines Jr., Sol’s brother, succeeded the late Tumalak to the mayorship of Oslob in 1980, and various Abines siblings have held the mayorships of the two towns since 1988. In 1987, moreover, Sol Abines won election to Cebu’s 2nd district seat in Congress; after being reelected in 1992 and 1995, he helped his brother Apolonio Jr. capture the vice-governorship of the province and swept protégés into local office in several municipalities.

In a district notable for small landholdings, low corn and coconut yields, depleted fishing beds, and massive poverty, the Abines family constructed a supramunicipal empire based on fishing and land transportation enterprises. At the center of the Abines empire is their control over the so-called *muro-ami* fishing industry. *Muro-ami* is a highly effective fishing method introduced to the Philippines by Japanese fishermen in the 1920s: a large cone-shaped bag net is held 40 to 80 feet beneath the surface of the sea; long “scare-lines” of nylon ropes are held by swimmers and attached to stones that are repeatedly dropped on the sea bottom (or often a coral reef) to drive the fish into the net.⁷⁸ By one account, Japanese *muro-ami* fishermen who had been fishing since the 1930s on reefs off the coast of nearby southern Cebu lost their nets and other gear during World War II to local “militia,” who used the equipment and established methods to revive *muro-ami* fishing in the postwar era.⁷⁹ Among the leading recruiters and foremen in these operations was Apolonio Abines Sr.:

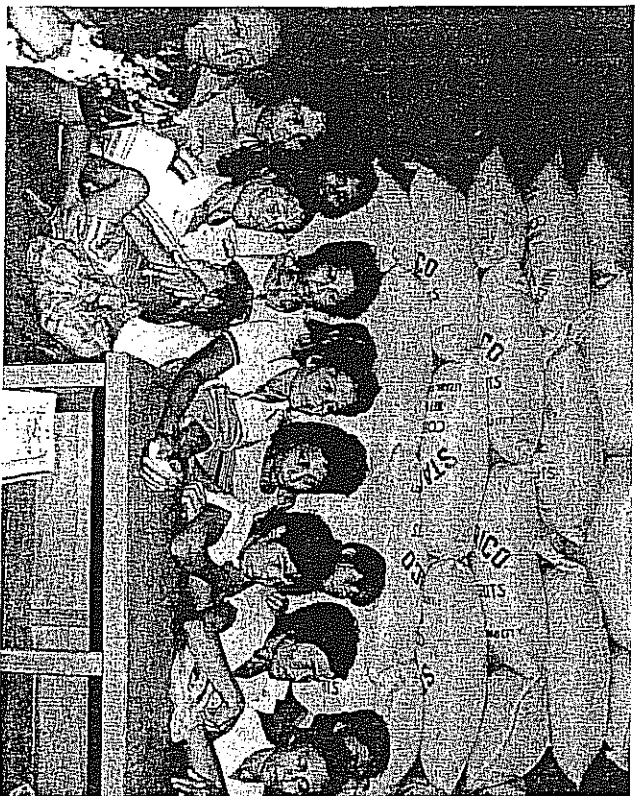
He was a tough task master, always exacting the best from his workers in any weather while fishing. But he is also said to have been generous and always on hand to extend assistance to his workers when needed. He had a passion for cockfighting, which he turned to his advantage when he became a manager. When his best fishermen lost money in the cockpit, he lent them money, and so retained them as laborers.⁸⁰

When *muro-ami* fishing began to exhaust the seabeds off the southeastern Cebu coast in the 1960s, Abines started to market his expertise—and his captive labor force—farther afield, supplying *muro-ami* divers to the Cavite- and Manila-based San Diego family, whose fleet took regular expeditions to remote waters off Palawan. When the San Diegos’ fishing (and cigarette smuggling) businesses declined in the late 1960s along with the political fortunes of the family’s patron, Cavite congressman Justino and S. Montano Sr.,⁸¹ the Abineses bailed out and formed a successful



Crisologo Abines, elected Cebu congressman (2nd district) in 1987. The Abines family's fishing fleet and bus company constitute the biggest business in the southern part of Cebu.

An Abines family store. The Abines family's district is one of the most infertile and impoverished parts of Cebu Province. Family control over the local economy is monolithic.



partnership with another fishing company based in Navotas, Metro Manila, the Frabal Fishing and Ice Plant Corporation.⁸²

With more than 30 large ships, the Abines-Frabal *muro-ami* fleet led regular ten-month expeditions to bring more than 7,000 residents from the southern towns of Cebu (as well as Siquijor and Negros Oriental) to the remote waters of the South China Sea. Based on a small island off the coast of remote Palawan,⁸³ the fleet made daily fishing trips to nearby reefs, each vessel carrying more than 300 swimmers (*pescadores*) who jiggled the heavily weighted "scare-lines" and worked in tandem with divers who set and retrieved the nets at more than 80 feet below the surface, all under the close supervision of taskmasters (*maestros*) and several overseers (known as *yamada* from the Spanish word for barker or messenger, *llamador*).⁸⁴ While these boats commuted every day for ten months between the fleet's home base and the reefs, larger Frabal ships transported the iced fresh fish to the wharves of Dagatdagatan, Navotas, in Metro Manila, for marketing and sale.

With encouragement from the Abines clan's political enemies, these *muro-ami* fishing operations began to attract considerable public controversy in the mid-1980s, and journalistic accounts appeared in a Cebu City-based weekly magazine, Manila daily newspapers, and foreign publications.⁸⁵ Prominent marine biologists, for example, released findings that *muro-ami* fishing caused extensive damage to Philippine coral reefs, which led to the imposition of a temporary ban on the fishing method.⁸⁶ Scholars and labor rights advocates, moreover, focused on Abines-Frabal's use of child labor, citing confirmed reports that a large number of *muro-ami pescadores* were in fact young boys no more than ten years of age.⁸⁷ Subsequent studies exposed the extremely harsh labor conditions on the Abines-Frabal fishing fleet, where the young swimmers, working twelve to fifteen hours a day with only the lightest of meals, suffered from "kidney infection, chest pains, fever, vomiting blood, hepatitis, typhoid fever, stomach cramps, headaches, hunger, and fatigue. Two . . . had been beaten, one on the head with a paddle, leaving a large scar, by their managers for refusing to dive further on a day; in one case because of fatigue, in the other case because of chest pains."⁸⁸ One team of researchers compiled a list of 43 *muro-ami* fishermen who died or disappeared from February 1982 through August 1985 alone,⁸⁹ while an investigative reporter who visited Talampunan island off Palawan in 1989 discovered "easily over a hundred graves" of *pescadores* who had drowned or otherwise died while at work on the Abines-Frabal fleet. Reportedly, because many of these deaths remain unrecorded the Abineses are able to use the names of their former employees to provide false identities to illegal Taiwanese immigrants whom they have allegedly smuggled into Cebu from ren-

devious points in the South China Sea off Palawan. As Ramon Binamira, action officer of the Presidential Committee on Illegal Fishing and Marine Conservation noted: "Even in death, the *muro-ami* operators perpetuate their lies."⁹⁰

In their recruitment and payment of *muro-ami* fishermen, moreover, the Abines family relied upon "credit bondage" to maximize profits from the exploitation of their labor force.⁹¹ Offering a cash advance of 300 pesos to attract recruits, the Abines also extended credit in kind to fishermen's families—a monthly *bala* (from the Spanish word *vale*, meaning credit receipt or promissory note) of one bag of rice or corn and one sack of pig feed—at their local stores in Oslob and Santander. This arrangement, astute observers have noted, enhanced both labor discipline and surplus extraction:

Clearly, credit lines and employment are intertwined and by means of this strategy, customers of the Abines stores are not only registered, they are easily prey to overpricing. It was reported that the price of a bag of rice was increased from P50.00 to P80.00 or that 50 kilos of corn grits worth P275 actually weighed only 46 kilos. From the gross incomes, the "vale" still has to be deducted.⁹²

While their families accumulated debts at the company store back home in southern Cebu, the *muro-ami* fishermen labored in the remote waters of the South China Sea without benefit of a written contract with Abines-Frabal and in exchange not for wages, but for a small share of the profits—calculated by the companies based on their rendering of accounts in Metro Manila.⁹³ On a piece-rate basis, the company bosses allowed the *pescadores* to clean and dry rejected fish for sale—at deflated prices—to the *maestros*, who in turn sold the dried fish (*bulad*) to Abines-Frabal for a hefty markup.⁹⁴ By paying the fishermen a share of the profits rather than a wage, the Abines also evaded labor laws that mandated minimum wages and social security benefits. Moreover, the Abines family allegedly made sure that workers' homecomings to southern Cebu from their ten-month expedition coincided with the dates of local *barrio fiestas*:

In the cockfights and mah jong games that accompany a *fiesta*, the fishermen are likely to lose large chunks of their pay in gambling, making it necessary to borrow from their recruiter in exchange for returning to sea on the next voyage. This concatenation of events is probably not accidental. We learned, for example, that the recruiter is a cockfight aficionado and owns a large personal coliseum full of cocks.⁹⁵

Expanding from *muro-ami* fishing operations, the Abines clan's empire in southern Cebu came to encompass key features of the local economy, such as the cockfighting coliseum. In the 1970s, for example, the Abi-

nesses responded to growing demand for transport to Cebu City and improved road conditions in the impoverished towns of southern Cebu by starting a bus company. By the late 1980s, the Abines Bus Company coaches virtually monopolized the route from the southern tip of the province to Cebu City—where the Abines-owned ferry also provided the sole link to the neighboring island province of Negros Oriental. The Bacolod City-based Ceres bus company, which had expanded its operations from Negros to include Leyte and large portions of Mindanao, found it moves to obtain a franchise for southern Cebu frustrated and its buses vandalized and thus opted to cede the route to the Abines family. The Librando clan, whose bus company covered the route from Badjan on the southwestern coast of the province to Cebu City, likewise yielded to Abines pressures and agreed to settle for an abbreviated schedule and itinerary for its vehicles. As the monopoly franchise holder, moreover, the Abines bus company developed a reputation for pursuing profits ruthlessly. In numerous towns along the southern coast of Cebu province, residents recall incidents in which a speeding Abines bus hit a pedestrian and, in accordance with company policy to avoid costly hospital bills, backed up over the wounded victim to finish the job. Such stories, in which the Abines bus drivers are invariably described as hardened, heavy-set former logging truckers from Mindanao, may in fact be apocryphal, but they capture local sentiment about the Abines clan.

The Abines family thus came to wield nearly monolithic control over the economy of southern Cebu. Where necessary, family members used coercive sanctions to enforce their economic powers: for example, the shop and home of Felix Tan, a Chinese storeowner in Oslob, were burned down (and his father died in the fire) after he stopped borrowing money from the Abineses.⁹⁶ On Sunlilon, a 23-hectare coral-lined island off the coast of Oslob, the Abineses repeatedly violated an agreement with Silliman University in 1974—and a government order of 1980—designating a 750-meter section of densely populated reef slope on the island's western side a national park and marine sanctuary and fish reserve. Allegedly employing dynamite and *muro-ami* techniques, and using threats of violence to drive out Silliman personnel, the Abines family's fleet fished out the reef by the mid-1980s, destroying much of the coral in the process.⁹⁷ Once Sunlilon was exhausted of its marine resources and returned to the municipality of Oslob, it became the site of an Abines-sponsored beach and diving resort designed to appeal to upscale Japanese tourists.

In the sphere of electoral competition, moreover, the Abineses have repeatedly used coercion to defeat their rivals in the 2nd district and to deliver solid majorities to their patrons in the national political arena.⁹⁸ By

attending meetings of local public school teachers' associations,⁹⁹ registering scores of *mirro-ami* fishermen from Negros Oriental to vote,¹⁰⁰ and offering free passage on Abines buses to local residents and their relatives in Cebu City,¹⁰¹ Crisologo Abines has taken care to make pre-election preparations against his rivals in the 2nd district.¹⁰² On election day, moreover, the Abines family has saturated the municipalities of the district with armed goons to supervise vote-buying, drive away ward leaders, watchers, and voters identified with his opponents, and, post themselves inside polling places and voting centers, interfere in the casting, counting, and canvassing of votes.¹⁰³

The Abineses' electoral successes, in turn, have protected their business enterprises from government intervention and private competition and enhanced their hold over the 2nd district. Congressman Crisologo Abines, for example, served as chairman of the House Sub-Committee on Fisheries, a position that allowed him to subvert attempts to enforce the ban on *mirro-ami* fishing.¹⁰⁴ His brother, Apolonio Abines Jr., elected vice-governor of Cebu in 1992 and again in 1995, headed the Provincial Bantay Dagat Sugbo Council, the interagency body tasked with monitoring and eliminating illegal fishing in the province. With the 2nd district congressional seat, the vice-governorship, and two town mayorships in family hands, the Abineses have also enjoyed considerable discretion over the flow of state patronage into southern Cebu, including funds designated for cooperatives supposedly composed of former fishermen displaced and unemployed because of the nominal ban on *mirro-ami*.¹⁰⁵ With a mutually enforcing economic empire and political machine, the Abines family dynasty in the southernmost towns of Cebu will almost certainly live on in the twenty-first century with another generation of the late Apolonio Sr.'s descendants.

Conclusion

The preceding description of the district-level dynasties of Cebu contrasts with the pattern of provincial-boss entrenchment in Cavite described in Chapter 3. In Cebu, wealthy and powerful families have maintained their economic and political hold over congressional districts for decades at a time, and passed on their bailiwicks, in classic dynastic fashion, to their descendants. These families exercised political power in tandem with command over privately owned empires: coal mines, factories, sugar plantations, bus companies, and fishing fleets. Even longtime congressman Ramon M. Durano Sr., who began his career as a business crony of Senator Cuenco and a rentier capitalist dependent upon government con-

tracts and concessions, established a firm base in proprietary wealth that survived his death and allowed his family to retain its economic preeminence in Danao City and surrounding towns.

To a considerable extent, the diverse political economy of Cebu prefigured the entrenchment of dynasties—rather than individual bosses—in the largely rural congressional districts of the province. In several districts, the concentration of voters in one populous town, command of commercial and transportation chokepoints, or control over sites of intensive production offered district-level dynasties more solid bases for electoral self-perpetuation and capital accumulation than the more heavily state-regulated landscape of Cavite. In each district, dynastic consolidation commenced when the combined processes of capital accumulation and state intervention helped concentrate wealth in the hands of a single family. The introduction and expansion of coal mining in Danao in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the exhaustion of southern Cebu fishing beds through *mirro-ami* fishing by the late 1960s, and the threat of agrarian reform in the Bogo-Medellin sugar belt in the late 1980s thus prefigured the emergence and entrenchment of congressmen Durano, Abines, and Martinez, respectively.

While ruling in dynastic fashion, these families have controlled their respective congressional districts as ruthless bosses. Using state offices, they accumulated wealth from government loans, contracts, concessions, and monopoly franchises. Using the local coercive and law-enforcement agencies of the state, these families have proven willing to employ violence to protect and monopolize illegal economies, defeat political rivals, intimidate potential commercial competitors, and maintain strict labor discipline in their various enterprises. These dynasties have been more diversified than their counterparts at the municipal level in their economic activities and more dependent on state resources and prerogatives than previous analyses have suggested. Contrary to the standard portrait of such families as "patrons" who deliver particularistic goods and services to grateful and loyal clientele, moreover, these dynasties have combined paternalistic pretensions with violence and intimidation to acquire wealth and property, exploit labor, and mobilize followers during elections. In short, as much as the mafia-style provincial bosses of Cavite, the district-level dynasties of Cebu are examples of the broader phenomenon of bossism in the Philippines.



A Provincial Dynasty: The Osmeñas of Cebu City

The Cuencos, Duranos, Martinezes, and Abineses entrenched themselves as supramunicipal dynasties in the rural districts of Cebu, but these families were less successful in their bids for province-wide power. The Cuencos did succeed—with the help of Manila-based patrons like Manuel Quezon and Manuel Roxas—in achieving provincial hegemony in Cebu for brief periods in the 1930s and 1940s. Ramon M. Durano Sr., moreover, began to approach similar heights of power in the late 1960s,¹ when two sons-in-law, one cousin, and a close crony won election to the legislature, thus granting the longtime 1st district representative effective control over five of Cebu's seven congressional seats.² While the abolition of Congress in 1972 cast the extent of Durano's influence in Cebu into doubt, by the mid-1980s his relatives and cronies held two seats in the Batasang Pambansa (National Assembly), the vice-governorship, and a second seat on the provincial board, but Eduardo Gullas, scion of a prominent Cebu City-based family and close associate of First Lady Imelda Marcos, retained the governorship.³ Only in 1992 did another bid for province-wide power by a rural dynasty succeed, when Congressman Abines, Durano, and Martinez teamed up to help 6th district representative Vicente ("Tingting") Dela Serna win the governorship.⁴ Dela Serna, however, lost his bid for a second term in 1995 when the Cebu City-based Osmeña clan, backed by three other Cebu congressmen and the Ramos administration, successfully fielded a close ally, former 3rd

district congressman Pablo Garcia Sr., as their gubernatorial candidate and thus recaptured the provincial capital.

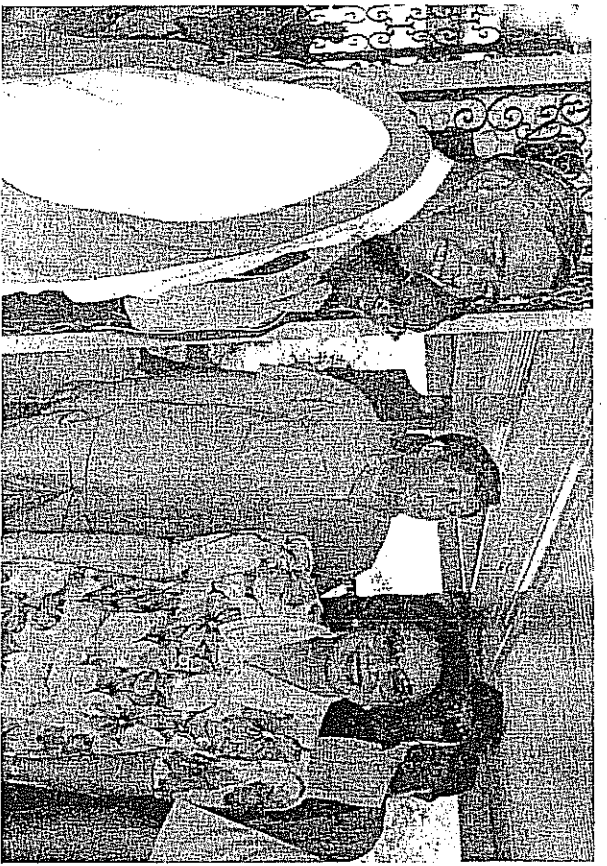
In fact, throughout most of the twentieth century, political power at the provincial level in Cebu remained in the hands of the Osmeña family, whose style of rule, base in Cebu City, and ties to urban commercial interests distinguished them from the Cuencos, Duranos, Martinezes, and Abineses of Cebu's largely rural congressional districts. As one scholar has noted:

The Osmeñas are an interesting case study of power maintenance not only because their prominence spans a century but because they do not conform to certain stereotypes about political kingpins, or "warlords" in the Philippines. They do not exercise monopolistic economic control in their bailiwicks; they do not maintain "private armies" or engage in a rule of systematic, direct repression; and they are not gladihanding, traditional patrons. Their main base of electoral support—Cebu Province, particularly metropolitan Cebu—is a highly urbanized area with a heterogeneous population, a complex occupational structure, a developed media infrastructure, high levels of literacy, and a large concentration of modern, voluntary organizations.⁵

In contrast with the mafia-style bosses of Cavite and the municipal- and district-level dynasties of Cebu, the Osmeñas have practiced a more attenuated—but no less enduring or successful—form of bossism in the Philippines. The pages that follow examine how three successive generations of Osmeñas constructed, defended, and developed a province-wide empire and political machine in Cebu over the course of the twentieth century and how the ingredients of the Osmeñas' success in the province allowed them to emerge time and again as contenders for national power.

The Founding of the Osmeña Dynasty

As Cebu City evolved from an island entrepôt into a major manufacturing center during the twentieth century, and as the provincial electorate expanded from fewer than 500 voters (in 1906) to more than 500,000 (in 1992), the Osmeña clan remained at the center of politics in both Cebu City and Cebu Province. In the prewar colonial and commonwealth periods, Sergio Osmeña Sr. represented the 2nd district of Cebu (Cebu City and environs) for five terms in the National Assembly and the House of Representatives (1907–22), won a Senate seat for five subsequent terms (1922–35), and served as vice-president (1935–44) and later president (1944–46) of the Philippine Commonwealth. In the postwar, pre-marital-law period, his son, Sergio ("Serging") Osmeña Jr., served variously as



Emilio ("Lito") Osmeña, Cebu governor (1988-92) and vice-presidential candidate of the Lakas-NUCD Party in 1992, seen here with then presidential candidate Fidel V. Ramos and then president Corason C. Aquino. Although he lost his bid for the vice-presidency, Osmeña's contribution to the Ramos presidency helped to solidify the family's position in the national arena, a strategy deployed by two earlier generations of Osmeñas. (Nonoy Duran, *Manila Times*)

Cebu provincial governor (1951-55), Cebu city mayor (1956-57, 1960-72),⁶ Cebu 2nd district representative (1958-61), and senator (1966-71); he also ran unsuccessfully for the vice-presidency (1961) and the presidency (1969) of the Philippine Republic. Finally, in the post-Marcos era, a revival of Osmeña family fortunes saw a third generation take power: Sergio's son Tomas ("Tommy") won two successive terms as Cebu City mayor (1988-95), and nephews Emilio ("Lito") Osmeña Jr. and John ("Sonny") Osmeña served as Cebu provincial governor (1988-92) and senator (1988-95), respectively. The family's latest representative on the national political scene, Lito Osmeña, lost a 1992 bid for the vice-presidency of the republic but, as the former running mate of incumbent president Fidel Ramos, gained considerable access to Malacañang and discretion over the flow of national state patronage to Cebu, even as his cousin, Serge Osmeña, assumed a Senate seat after the 1995 elections.

The backdrop to Sergio Osmeña Sr.'s emergence in 1906 as the preeminent figure in Cebu provincial politics prefigured his family's continuing political success in the province for decades to come. Osmeña was born in 1878 into one of Cebu City's most prominent and wealthy Chinese mestizo families. His grandfather, Severino Osmeña, owned extensive rural and urban properties and was among the leaders of Cebu City's Chinese and Chinese mestizo community. Upon his death (ca. 1860), however, the Osmeña fortune fell to the family of his first wife, leaving Sergio, born out of wedlock to a daughter of Severino's second wife, unable to take full advantage of his family's social and economic resources.⁷ Nevertheless, Sergio attended elite educational institutions in Cebu and Manila at the turn of the century and enjoyed close ties with prominent *ilustrado* figures during the short-lived Philippine Republic (1898-1901).⁸ Among his closest and most important associates during this period were Juan Climaco, the leading *ilustrado* among the remaining insurgents in the mountains of Cebu province, and Nicasio Chiong Veloso,⁹ one of the wealthiest Chinese residents of Cebu City,¹⁰ Chiong Veloso not only sponsored Osmeña's founding of the first daily newspaper in Cebu, *El Nuevo Dia*, but also groomed his young protégé to be a son-in-law.¹¹ Less than a year after his April 1901 marriage to Estefania Chiong Veloso, Osmeña won another victory when his ally, the surrendered insurgent leader Juan Climaco, with support from Osmeña's newspaper and contacts among both Cebuano urban élites and American colonial officials, won election in February 1902 as provincial governor of Cebu.

Over the next few years, Osmeña passed the bar examination, continued publishing his newspaper, and won two terms on the municipal council of Cebu and appointments as acting provincial governor and provincial fiscal.¹² Thanks to these appointments, the backing of American and Cebuano influentials, and the blessings of his mentor, the ailing (and retiring) governor Juan Climaco, Sergio Osmeña won election by a wide majority to the provincial governorship of Cebu in February 1906.¹³ Moreover, after Osmeña emerged as a leading figure in the provincial governors' convention later that year, he joined a Manila-based committee formed ostensibly "to assist the colonial government" in making preparations for the Philippine Assembly.¹⁴ With American support and a close protégé installed as his successor to the Cebu provincial governorship, Osmeña won election as Cebu's 2nd district representative to the Philippine Assembly in 1907 and became majority floor leader soon thereafter. This series of events marked the beginnings of the Osmeña dynasty in Cebu.

In subsequent years, as the Cebu electorate grew, Sergio Osmeña and his descendants used the same ingredients of his ascendance to provin-

cial-level power to maintain their preeminent position—links with national-level political patrons, discretionary powers over the local state apparatus, and ties to the urban commercial élite of Cebu City. Their local electoral success and national political influence helped the Osmeñas entrench themselves in both Cebu City and Cebu Province and, with mixed success, they asserted the family's presence in the national political arena. While Cebu was transformed from a turn-of-the-century agricultural entrepôt into a regional center of export-oriented industry, the Osmeña dynasty's mode of political reproduction remained largely unchanged.

State Resources and Dynastic Ambitions

Over the years, the Osmeñas used their considerable influence in Manila to consolidate control over the city and province of Cebu. Like Aguinaldo and Tirona in Cavite, Assembly Majority Leader Sergio Osmeña enjoyed some measure of discretion over the Bureau of Lands' sale of the former friar estates in Cebu,¹⁵ which consisted of approximately 10,000 hectares of prime land in the Banliad district of metropolitan Cebu (roughly 1,900 hectares) and the east coast towns of Talisay and Minglanilla (roughly 8,100 hectares), just south of the city.¹⁶ Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison further enhanced Osmeña's control over these well-situated tracts by issuing an executive order in 1918 handing over more than 6,000 hectares of unsold land to the provincial government of Cebu for disposal.¹⁷ The implications of these arrangements are apparent in the acquisition by Osmeña relatives and cronies of large landholdings on the former friar estates, the retention by the provincial government of valuable real properties, and the electoral strength long enjoyed by successive Osmeñas in the populous towns of Talisay and Minglanilla.

A 1936 law granting Cebu status as a chartered city, moreover, facilitated the Osmeñas' construction of an urban political machine.¹⁸ The law, which Vice-President Osmeña had carefully nursed through the legislature and convinced newly elected president Manuel Quezon to sign, stipulated that the mayor of Cebu City, appointed by the president with the approval of the Commission on Appointments, would enjoy broad discretionary powers over the granting of municipal licenses and permits, the awarding of appointments and salaries to city employees, and the bidding of public works contracts to private companies. While key city posts—the city fiscal, the judge of the municipal court, the city engineer, the chief of police, and the city treasurer, assessor, and superintendent of schools, and all these officials' deputies—were subsequently nominated

by the city mayor, appointed by the president, and confirmed by the Commission on Appointments, the city mayor was authorized by law to appoint, promote, suspend, or remove all other officers and employees of the city government.

Although the Cebu City mayorship became an elective post in 1955,¹⁹ the office—to which Don Sergio's son, Sergio, and grandson, Tommy, won repeated election—retained these considerable powers over the local state apparatus. In the pre-martial-law period (1955–72), aside from the personnel prerogatives noted above, the Cebu City mayor also exercised direct control over such diverse bodies as the Osmeña Waterworks System, Cebu Lottery Commission, Board of Assessment Appeals, and Cebu City Planning Board.²⁰ By 1966, the Cebu City bureaucracy had swollen to almost 4,000 employees (including nearly 1,000 policemen), mostly "nontechnical" workers recommended by the mayor and the elected city councilors, themselves Osmeña protégés. In numerous cases, two or three appointees served in one position, rotating at intervals of ten days each month and splitting the meager pay. Casual laborers appointed by the mayor and the city councilors on a quota basis filled the padded payrolls of public works projects, their numbers reaching well over 14,000 in 1965 alone.²¹ In a city whose voting population was at the time less than 80,000, the Osmeña-controlled government bureaucracy clearly constituted a major source of employment. Moreover, in the post-Marcos period, despite the expansion of civil service eligibility to more government employees, the passage in 1991 of a new Local Government Code reaffirmed the Cebu City mayor's control over the significantly expanded local bureaucracy.²²

In addition, the Osmeñas' hold over the agencies of the local state apparatus through the mayor's office allowed the family to exercise considerable regulatory powers over the economy of Cebu City. Osmeña influence over the Cebu City Police Department and the city fiscal's office also permitted highly selective enforcement of the law in the metropolis.²³ Clearly, political and pecuniary considerations often likewise governed the awarding of licenses for street vendors and stalls in the public market by a division of the bloated Office of the Mayor.²⁴ Meanwhile, the Osmeñista city council used its manifold prerogatives—in levying taxes, granting business permits, special licenses, public works contracts, and monopoly franchises, and enacting ordinances—to control the local economy.²⁵ Finally, through the Municipal Board and the Board of Assessment Appeals, as well as the Office of the City Assessor, Osmeña mayors retained the authority to review and revise business and property tax assessments in accordance with local political and economic considerations.²⁶

Once entrenched in City Hall, the Osmeñas mobilized an elaborate political machine that mustered majorities for the family and its candidates in local, congressional, and national elections. With thousands of ward *leaders*, henchmen, and assorted hangers-on spread throughout populous Cebu City, the Osmeñas have thus been able to carry provincial elections and to deliver large blocs of votes to national-level allies among the candidates for the national Senate and the presidency. Even in 1992, despite Marcos-era revisions of the election code that exclude the Cebu City electorate from voting for candidates to provincial posts, Mayor Tommy Osmeña won reelection by a margin of more than 100,000 votes, garnering a majority in 95 percent of the city's precincts, sweeping in his vicemayor, the two city congressmen, and fifteen of sixteen Osmeñista city councilors, and delivering an impressive bloc of votes to presidential candidate Fidel V. Ramos.²⁷ Moreover, throughout Cebu Province the Osmeñas used family alliances and patronage to build up a network of small-town notables loyal to the city-based clan. Enjoying election-day treatment from the Constabulary and the Commission on Elections commensurate with their family's influence in Manila, the Osmeñas and their allies also used "ghost" public works projects with huge padded payrolls to mobilize voters and to bankroll massive vote-buying in Cebu Province.²⁸

Over the generations, the Osmeñas enhanced and enlarged their property holdings to become by far the single largest landowner in Cebu.²⁹ Inherited from Severino Osmeña and Nicasio Chiong Veloso or acquired through purchase (from the Bureau of Lands, the Cebu provincial government, and private individuals), Sergio Osmeña Sr.'s landholdings in Cebu totaled more than 1,700 hectares upon his death in 1961, including haciendas in Carcar (598 hectares), Borbon (398 hectares), Carmen (268 hectares), Aloguinsan (213 hectares), and Medellin (129 hectares), as well as large urban properties in Cebu City.³⁰

Over the years, critics repeatedly charged Osmeña family members with using political power to enhance the value of their properties. Opponents of Sergio Osmeña Sr., for example, pointed to his real-estate speculation in the replanning of the city's burnt downtown district in 1905 (which he helped direct as provincial fiscal), the controversial manner in which he came into the Osmeña inheritance, and his use of public resources in the development of his haciendas in Cebu. . . .

Controversy surrounded the Osmeña-owned Cebu Heights Company. The realty business of the company was built around a big tract of the old Banihad Estate (some 37 hectares), titled to Juana Osmeña, Don Sergio's mother, with a 1919 buying price of P.008 or less than one centavo per square meter. Until 1936, when the construction of the Provincial Capitol began, this area was largely uninhab-

ited (except for the old country house of Don Sergio and four or five other houses). It was only after the Capitol complex was begun that the boom in the real-estate business of Cebu Heights started. Don Sergio was instrumental in the Capitol project and in fact donated the lot for the Capitol building.³¹

Accusations against Sergio Osmeña in the 1950s likewise focused on a highly questionable exchange of urban properties between the Osmeña-controlled provincial government and the Osmeña-owned Cebu Heights Company, as well as public works projects allegedly designed to enhance the value of Osmeña lands.³² Adversaries of Emilio ("Lito") Osmeña Jr. in the 1990s raised similar questions about the properties and profits he acquired in connection with the provincial real-estate and construction projects during his term as Cebu provincial governor (1988-92).³³

The Osmeñas' political influence in Manila and preeminence in Cebu also facilitated the advancement of the family's various business interests. In the prewar period, the Cebu Autobus Company, managed by a crony of Sergio Osmeña Sr., dominated land transportation in Cebu City and Cebu Province with a fleet of more than 100 buses. In the postwar period, a controlling share of the company's stock was purchased by the De La Rama Steamship Company, whose president was none other than Sergio Osmeña himself.³⁴

The De La Rama Steamship Company, moreover, received considerable assistance from the national government. The company's founder, Esteban De La Rama, owned substantial sugar lands and shares of a sugar central in Negros Occidental, was on friendly terms with Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon, and won a Senate seat on Quezon's Nacionalista slate in 1941. His steamship company, which had held the franchise for the Negros-Iloilo route since its incorporation in 1931, acquired two interisland vessels and three oceangoing vessels with funding from the government-owned National Development Company (NDC) in the last years before World War II. In 1948, Sergio Osmeña, who had married Don Esteban's daughter Lourdes De La Rama in 1942, became president of the De La Rama Steamship Company and, with the help of his *compadre*, President Elpidio Quirino, obtained NDC funds for the purchase from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries of three new oceangoing vessels to replace those commandeered by the U.S. Armed Forces and sunk or worn out during the war.³⁵ Critics of the 15-million-peso deal noted that the agreement between De La Rama and the NDC was signed in October 1949, less than a month before the elections, and that Sergio Osmeña reportedly contributed 100,000 pesos to Quirino's presidential campaign that year and publicly pledged 1 million pesos to his reelection bid in 1953.³⁶ Following Quirino's defeat in the 1953 elections, the Magaysay administration began to reconsider the terms of the De La

Rama-NDC partnership (which delivered 15 million pesos in profits to the company and more than 1 million pesos in losses to the government) and eventually terminated the 1949 contract.³⁷ A similar series of events unfolded in 1962, when an Osmeña-controlled company won an exclusive contract from the Cebu City government to reclaim 160 hectares of foreshore along Cebu City and Mandanao. The Osmeña company repurchased the reclaimed land on favorable terms and with generous financing from the government-owned Development Bank of the Philippines. However, with the election of Osmeña nemesis Ferdinand Marcos to the presidency in 1965, local and national opposition to the reclamation mounted and the project eventually ran aground.³⁸

Brokers for Cebu's Local Oligarchy

Access to state resources and control over state office helped to advance the Osmeñas' real-estate interests and other business ventures, but throughout the twentieth century the family remained at best first among equals in Cebu City's commercial élite. A large entourage of political lieutenants, lawyers, contractors, fixers, ward *hiders*, and assorted hangers-on always surrounded the Osmeña's leading members, linking local law firms, construction companies, and a host of small businesses to the family's political machine. Moreover, the predominance of unnaturalized Chinese immigrants, mostly Hokkien-speakers from Fujian Province, as proprietors of commercial establishments in Cebu City strengthened the leverage of those entrenched in City Hall over a local capitalist class self-conscious about its foreign origins.³⁹ Yet the Osmeñas could never simply parcel out sectors of the thriving Visayan port economy among family members and friends in the manner of the Duranos of Danao or the Abinales of southern Cebu. Instead, a close-knit local oligarchy—comprising a handful of merchant dynasties of Chinese, Spanish, and mestizo lineage—operated a cartel of shipping companies and agricultural processing centers in the city that dominated the copra and corn trade throughout the Visayas and Mindanao and the interisland shipping industry of the entire archipelago for many decades.⁴⁰ Over the years, these dynasties—the Gotiaocos, Chiongbians, Lus, Aboitizes, and Escanos—consistently supported, socialized and occasionally intermarried with the Osmeña clan, while refraining from entering Cebu politics themselves.⁴¹ In exchange, the Osmeñas provided these dynasties—along with urban real-estate and merchant families like the Aznars, Gaisanos, and Lhuillers—access to government financing and contracts and guaranteed friendly regulation of their business operations.

Consanguinal and affinal ties, as well as bonds of fictive kinship, have linked the Osmeñas to these Cebu City-based merchant dynasties. Members of the Gotiaoco clan, for example, claimed for many years that Sergio Osmeña Sr. was the illegitimate—but recognized—son of family patriarch Pedro Gotiaoco (1856–1921), a turn-of-the-century Chinese immigrant who established Gotiaoco Hermanos, Inc. (a prominent abaca, rice, and copra-trading firm), the Insular Navigation Company (an interisland shipping fleet), and the Visayan Surety and Insurance Corporation (affiliated with a U.S.-based insurance company) in Cebu in the early years of the twentieth century.⁴² In 1918 one of Gotiaoco's sons, Manuel Gotianuy, founded the Cebu Shipyard and Engineering Works, Inc., together with a group of other Chinese businessmen.⁴³ As of 1999, Gotiaoco's grandson remained on the company's board of directors along with executives from major shipping companies and representatives of majority shareholder (since 1989) Keppel Philippines Shipyard, a Singapore-based corporation with interests in two other marine repair facilities in the archipelago.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, in the prewar era, Doña Modesta Singson Gaisano, allegedly Gotiaoco's daughter by another wife, founded the Gaisano family's highly successful restaurant, department store, and real-estate empire, which expanded over the years.⁴⁵ Finally, Gotiaoco's grandsons by a third wife included two of the Philippines' most prominent multi-billionaire Filipino Chinese tycoons: banking, food, real-estate, and manufacturing magnate John Gokongwei Jr., and banking and real-estate mogul Andrew Gotianun. In short, successive generations not only maintained but even expanded the fortune passed on to them by family patriarch Pedro Gotiaoco. Although claims to consanguinal ties between various Gotiaocos and Osmeñas may well be apocryphal, reports that Sergio Osmeña Sr. kissed the hand of his supposed father in gratitude for his financial support ring true to those familiar with the intertined stories of these two dynasties' business and political success.⁴⁶

Over the years, the Osmeñas also maintained close ties to the Aboitizes; a granddaughter of Sergio Osmeña Sr. married a scion of this prominent Spanish mestizo clan. Family patriarch Paulino Aboitiz was a seafarer of Basque extraction who settled in the Visayan island province of Leyte in the late nineteenth century. He married the daughter of a Basque shipowner and became a major figure in the abaca trade between Leyte and Cebu.⁴⁷ With generous funding and lenient credit terms from the Cebu branch of the government-owned Philippine National Bank (PNB) in 1917,⁴⁸ his descendants expanded their family abaca business but quickly switched to the more lucrative copra trade in the post-World War I boom. By the eve of World War II, the Aboitizes had become the second-largest copra exporters in the Philippines. In 1928, moreover, to-

gether with the Escaña clan, the Aboitizes founded La Naviera Filipina, which became the largest interisland shipping company in the Visayas in the interwar era.⁴⁹ After World War II, the Aboitiz family established its own shipping lines, diversified into logging (West Basilan Timber Company, Port Banga Timber Company), flour milling (Pillsbury-Mindanao Flour Milling Corporation), banking (Cebu City Savings and Loan Association, First Insular Bank of Cebu, Union Bank of the Philippines), manufacturing (Aboitiz Manufacturing, Pilipinas Kao, Cebu Oxygen & Acetylene), and real estate. With landholdings in Leyte, logging concessions in Mindanao and Basilan (in the 1950s), and four electric companies in their hands, the Aboitizes created an extensive empire linking Cebu to its hinterlands in the Visayas and Mindanao.⁵⁰

Over the years, the Aboitizes depended upon the Osmeñas for a variety of business favors. In purchasing the Cebu Ice and Cold Storage Plant in 1917, founding electric companies in Leyte, Mindanao, and Sulu, and owning shares in Metro Cebu's Visayan Electric Company, the Aboitizes often required—and received—assistance in acquiring and renewing franchises and protection from critics of their local electric power monopolies.⁵¹ Successive Osmeñas handed Aboitiz companies lucrative franchises and contracts, such as the Cebu City *jai-alai* fronton concession in the 1960s and the controversial provincial road-paving projects of the early 1990s.⁵² With Osmeñas as their business partners and political patrons, the Aboitizes also allegedly received preferential treatment for their companies from government regulatory agencies.⁵³

Another example of the close personal ties that have bound the Osmeñas and these preeminent merchant dynasties together was the June 1964 marriage of Victor S. Chiongban and Maria Luisa Cabrera Briones.⁵⁴ The bride was the daughter of José Briones, a loyal Osmeña political lieutenant who served as Cebu provincial governor from 1956 through 1961 and held the 2nd district seat in Congress for two terms (1961–65, 1965–69) before stepping down to make way for John Osmeña. The groom was the son of William Chiongban, a longtime congressman from Misamis Occidental (1953–72, 1987–92),⁵⁵ whose family's Cebu-based shipping company—William Lines—had expanded its interisland fleet by purchasing three vessels from Sergio Osmeña's De La Rama Steamship Company in 1949.⁵⁶ Over the years, William Lines evolved into one of the leading interisland shipping firms, even as the Chiongban's other business interests expanded to include a fleet of oceangoing vessels (Eastern Shipping Lines), a paper mill, two fishing companies, a food-processing conglomerate (Virginia Food Products, Inc.), and a network of prawn farms, cattle ranches, piggeries, and plantations in Cebu and Mindanao.⁵⁷

Other noteworthy figures in the bridal entourage included principal sponsors Lourdes Osmeña (wife of Sergio Osmeña Jr.), Cayetano Lu Do, Asuncion Escaña, best man Douglas Lu Ym, and bridesmaid Teresita Escaña. Cayetano Lu Do and his nephew Douglas Lu Ym were descendants of family patriarch Lu Do, who immigrated to Cebu in 1889 from Xiamen (Amoy), Fujian. They occupied key managerial positions in the Lu Do & Lu Ym Corporation, a company prominent in the coconut and corn products industry and in the Cebu City real-estate market. The Lu family had operated a coconut oil factory before World War II; in 1945 it used U.S. government contracts to rebuild and in 1951 received U.S. Mutual Security Agency funding to build a large cornstarch manufacturing plant in Cebu.⁵⁸ Rebuilt and expanded after World War II, the Lu Do & Lu Ym Corporation's coconut oil refinery, moreover, became the largest in Asia, said to have handled between one-third and one-half of all Philippine coconut exports in the postwar era.⁵⁹ The Lus' Philippine Corn Products, founded in the early 1960s, processed corn from all over the Visayas and Mindanao. The family of Asuncion and Teresita Escaña traces its roots back to Spanish merchants who bought up land in Leyte in the late nineteenth century and played a prominent role in the abaca and sugar trade that linked the hinterlands of Leyte to Chinese and Spanish compradors and foreign commercial houses in the Visayan entrepôt of Cebu. Already owners of steamboats by the late 1890s, the Escañas later established their own interisland shipping company, the Escaña Lines, a sizable fleet of passenger and cargo vessels. The centerpiece of the Escañas' business empire, however, has been the Visayan Electric Company (VECO), established in 1905 and managed by family members since they became principal stockholders in 1918.⁶⁰ Having won a 50-year franchise from the Philippine legislature (dominated by Sergio Osmeña Sr.'s Nacionalista Party) in 1928,⁶¹ VECO remained the sole distributor of electricity in greater metropolitan Cebu throughout the century, despite recurring attacks on its "exorbitant rates and inefficiency,"⁶² persistent power failures and brownouts,⁶³ and fraudulent billing practices.⁶⁴

In the early 1990s, the Osmeñas' willingness to service the business interests of Cebu City's leading merchant dynasties were apparent in the policies of Mayor Tommy Osmeña and his cousin, former provincial governor Lito Osmeña. While the Cebu City Assessor's Office allegedly undervalued the real-estate holdings of Osmeña allies, the provincial government sold off plots of prime urban land to the Gaisano family and to Michel Lhuiller, one of Lito Osmeña's closest associates.⁶⁵ Lhuiller, descendant of a former French consul to Cebu and owner of a nationwide network of pawnshops and jewelry stores, was also reported to have sponsored the import of the illegal narcotic methamphetamine by-

drochloride ("shabu") through the Cebu Port and the Mactan-Cebu International Airport, allegedly with the active assistance of Bureau of Customs and Philippine National Police officials installed by the Osmeñas.⁶⁶ In 1992, moreover, Lito Osmeña engineered the appointment of Cebu-based attorney Jesus Garcia Jr. as secretary of the Department of Transportation and Communication.⁶⁷ Garcia had previously served as legal counsel to the Conference of Interisland Shipowners and Operators, the cartel of mostly Cebu-based shipping lines—including the Aboitiz, Chiongbian, and Escaño companies—whose collusion in setting cargo and passenger rates, oligopolistic practices in sharing and dividing inter-island routes, violations of safety and other regulations, and successes in obtaining tax and tariff exemptions had come under mounting criticism in recent years.⁶⁸ As transportation secretary, Garcia helped to protect the shipping cartel's interests throughout the archipelago during a period of rapid deregulation, while monitoring the local front as chairman of the newly created, autonomous, and powerful Cebu Port Authority and the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority.⁶⁹

Over the years, successive Osmeñas also serviced the interests of Manila-based magnates with investments in Cebu. Sergio Osmeña Sr., for example, assisted and purchased shares in the Madrigal Oil Mill, which was owned by his long-time friend Vicente Madrigal, the Manila-based business tycoon.⁷⁰ Sergio Osmeña likewise maintained a close alliance with the managers of the Soriano family-owned Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corporation, whose operations in Toledo City, Cebu, constituted the largest copper-mining complex in East Asia.⁷¹ He also included prominent Manila businessmen like Francisco Delgado and Carlos Palanca Jr. among the incorporators of his own Cebu-based real-estate company, the Cebu Development Corporation.⁷² In his term as provincial governor of Cebu, Lito Osmeña similarly established a close alliance with the Ayala family, whose Makati-based banking, food processing, and real-estate empire teamed up with the Cebu provincial government in a major land development deal and bond issue.⁷³ In this deal, Cebu Province sold three parcels of land in Cebu City totaling 251 hectares for more than 700 million pesos to the Cebu Property Ventures and Development Corporation, a joint venture between the provincial government of Cebu and the Ayala Land Corporation.⁷⁴ A further tie-up has linked the Ayalas' Cebu interests to mining, publishing, and real-estate mogul Alfredo Ramos, the Soriano family, and the Asia-wide empire of Malaysia-born, Hong Kong-based taipan Robert Kuok.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, the Osmeñas also reportedly intervened on behalf of major Manila-based companies bidding for two controversial reclamation and construction contracts.⁷⁶

Because the Osmeñas' business and political success always depended on the cooperation of national patrons in Malacañang, the dynasty experienced the greatest difficulties when in conflict with hostile presidents. In the 1930s and 1940s, for example, presidents Quezon and Roxas supported the Cuenco clan in Cebu as a foil against their rival, Sergio Osmeña Sr., whose son subsequently reclaimed supremacy in the province with the support of President Quirino once the Cuencos ran afoul of Malacañang.⁷⁷ In the late 1950s, Sergio Osmeña likewise found himself under political siege when Boholano president Carlos Garcia attempted to make Cebu part of his Visayan regional bailiwick. Garcia built up Congressman Ramon Durano, filled local government offices and padded public payrolls with his supporters in the province, and supplied the prominent Ytengsu family, long active in the copra trade, with the government licenses and funds to start up a major flour mill in Opon (now Lapu-Lapu City).⁷⁸ During Marcos's two elected presidential terms (1966-69, 1970-72), he similarly worked to undermine the Cebu base of Sergio Osmeña, who ran against him for the presidency in 1969.⁷⁹ During the martial-law era, moreover, while Sergio and other Osmeñas were in exile in the United States, Marcos named a close associate of his wife, Eduardo Gullas, Cebu provincial governor and installed a similarly pliable figure as Cebu City mayor.⁸⁰

During this period, Marcos and his cronies also seized key sectors of the Cebu economy. For example, Marcos forged a close alliance with the Associated Labor Unions, based on the Cebu waterfront, promoting its leaders to patronage-rich government posts and high-ranking posts in the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines. Marcos's golf partner, construction magnate Rodolfo Cuenca, obtained the franchise for major stevedoring operations in the Cebu port area, even as Marcos associate Alfonso Yuchengco and frontmen José Yao Campos and Rolando Gapud wrested the contracts for reclamation projects along the foreshore area of Cebu City and Mandaua City from companies controlled by the Osmeñas and their allies.⁸¹ Meanwhile, the coconut industry in Cebu fell under the aegis of an interlocking directorate of government and quasi-government monopolistic/monopsonistic agencies run by Marcos crony Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. and Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile.⁸² The United Coconut Mills, a Cojuangco-and-Enrile-directed conglomerate of mills and trading companies that monopolized both copra milling and trading, incorporated the Lu Do & Lu Yin Corporation's extensive facilities into its empire and named Douglas Lu Yin executive vice-president for marketing and a member of the Board of Directors.⁸³ Finally, previously obscure Anos Fonacier, a town-maire of President Marcos from Sararat, Ilocos Norte, assumed great prominence in Cebu, taking over the

Abolitz family's *jai-alai* fronton franchise, publishing his own daily newspaper, and obtaining massive government funding to build a luxury hotel in Cebu City and several tourist resorts on Mactan Island and elsewhere in the province.⁸⁴

This heavy-handed intervention by Marcos in the local economy, however, prompted Cebu's opposition politicians and disaffected elite families to rally around the Osmeña family in the early to mid 1980s. Thus, with the ouster of Marcos and the inauguration of Corason C. Aquino as president in February 1986, the third generation of the Osmeña dynasty was able to resurrect its urban political machine and its preeminence among the leading Chinese and Spanish mestizo merchant dynasties of Cebu City. Today, with their protégés installed in Cebu City Hall and the provincial capitol, and with a visible presence on the national stage, Don Sergio Osmeña's grandsons—Lito, Sonny, Tommy, and Serge—are well placed to extend the family dynasty well into the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

At the provincial level, the Osmeña family dynasty dominated the political and economic life of Cebu for most of the twentieth century. It used its urban political machine in Cebu City and its alliances with major mercantile interests in the port metropolis to entrench itself over the generations. Unlike the congressional district-level dynasties in their bailiwicks, however, the Osmeña family never seized monopolistic control over the Cebu economy. While not ashamed to promote family real-estate holdings and other business concerns by means of state resources and powers, the Osmeñas have been careful to identify their interests with those of Cebu City's close-knit local oligarchy, whose cartelized shipping companies, copra and corn-processing facilities, and manufacturing concerns have long benefited from government largesse. Thus Tommy and Lito Osmeña closely associated themselves with the rapid growth of the city and the province, a phenomenon popularly known as "Ceboom." Unlike the dynasties in the rural congressional districts of Cebu, moreover, the Osmeñas have successfully evaded direct implication in electoral violence and illegal economies, though their ward *líders* and business affiliates certainly engaged in coercive and unlawful practices with the family's acquiescence, and even encouragement.

Overall, this two-tiered pattern of dynastic entrenchment at the congressional-district and provincial levels in Cebu reflects both the structure of state institutions and the nature of the local political economy. On the one hand, the division of Cebu Province into seven or more congressional

districts laid the groundwork for supramunicipal empires to be constructed with the pork-barrel, patronage, and other privileges afforded all members of the House of Representatives. The broad definition of the Cebu City charter likewise facilitated the emergence and consolidation of an urban political machine in a metropolis whose voting population could—until excluded by a revised electoral code in the 1970s—swing election contests in the entire province. On the other hand, the importance of major production sites outside Cebu City—Danao coal mines, Bogo-Medellin plantations and sugar mill, South China Sea fishing beds—in the provincial economy of Cebu undermined the empires of supramunicipal dynasties in several rural congressional districts. Similarly, the overwhelming concentration of capital, government resources, and population in Cebu City has guaranteed the long-term hegemony of this preeminent entrepôt and manufacturing center of the Visayas and Mindanao over the hinterlands of Cebu Province. Control over this considerable economic and electoral base has allowed the Osmeñas, unlike their counterparts in Cavite, to assert themselves in national politics, both in the Senate and in recurring bids for the presidency.

Although the dynastic nature and two-tiered structure of boss rule in Cebu contrasts with that observed in Cavite, a similar pattern of variation over time is observable in both provinces. In Cavite and Cebu, bosses have emerged and prospered with the assistance of national-level patrons but foundered upon the intervention of opponents in Malacañang. While the district- and provincial-level dynasties of Cebu have claimed more solid bases in the local economy than their counterparts in Cavite, long-entrenched politicians in both provinces (Justiano Montano Sr. of Cavite and Sergio Osmeña of Cebu) found themselves economically dislodged or (in Montano's case) politically destroyed when their common archenemy, Ferdinand E. Marcos, established himself as the Philippines' first and only national-level boss. The final chapter of this book thus concludes with a reexamination of the small-town, congressional, and provincial bosses of Cavite and Cebu in light of the bossism observed in other parts of the Philippine archipelago and at the national level.