

## **Dynastic Politics and Party Persistence: Mechanisms of Elite Power Reproduction in Indonesian Democracy 2024 Elections**

**Moch. Fauzie Said<sup>1</sup>, Novy Setia Yunas<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>Brawijaya University, Indonesia

Veteran No.10-11, Ketawanggede, Kec. Lowokwaru, Kota Malang, Jawa Timur 65145

\*corresponding author [mfauziesaid@ub.ac.id](mailto:mfauziesaid@ub.ac.id)

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study critically examines how dynastic politics and party persistence reproduce elite power in Indonesia's 2024 elections. It highlights a central paradox: elections remain procedurally competitive, yet democracy's substance is increasingly weakened by oligarchic consolidation. Using a qualitative approach, the research combines a systematic review of literature with critical discourse analysis. The findings show that dynastic politics has become entrenched in both executive and legislative institutions. Nearly 30 percent of parliamentary members are linked to political families, while the rise of Gibran Rakabuming Raka, son of President Joko Widodo, as vice president reflects the normalization of political dynasties in democratic settings. Party persistence is reinforced through cartelization, bureaucratic co-optation, and strategic alliances that cut across ideology. Together, these dynamics create a pattern of "elite circulation without renewal," where leadership changes but power remains concentrated within oligarchic networks. The implications are profound: Indonesia risks becoming a pseudo-democracy in which electoral procedures continue but meaningful competition, representation, and accountability are hollowed out. This contributes to democratic backsliding and narrows the space for citizen participation. By integrating classical elite theory with contemporary Indonesian evidence, this study highlights how dynastic politics and party persistence function as dual mechanisms of elite power reproduction.

**Keywords:** dynastic politics, party persistence, elite theory, oligarchy, democracy

### **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia's post-1998 democratic transition has produced a fundamental paradox in the consolidation of democratic politics. On the one hand, Indonesia has succeeded in building a relatively stable democratic institutional infrastructure with regular, competitive, and peaceful elections for more than two decades. But on the other hand, the practice of electoral democracy has actually become an arena for the reproduction of elite power

that is getting stronger through dynastic political mechanisms and the persistence of political parties. As argued by Robison and Hadiz (2022), "How does democracy survive in a polity that has witnessed consistent autocratisation trends for an extended period?" which marks a shift from democratization towards what can be called "limited democracy" or "illiteral democracy".

This phenomenon is reflected in three ways: first, the emergence of a "cross-party dynasty presidency" through the candidacy of Gibran Rakabuming Raka which shows the use of executive power for the benefit of the family (Scott, 2024); second, the persistence of the old party that maintains dominance through strategic adaptation, co-optation of popular figures, and cross-ideological alliances (Amirell, 2003; Warburton, 2021); and third, the hybridization of dynastic politics with party persistence that gave birth to "political elite cartels" based on clientelistic networks and cross-party coalitions for the reproduction of power (Gasimov, 2021).

The phenomenon of the reproduction of elite power through dynastic politics and the persistence of the party in the 2024 election can be comprehensively understood through the theoretical framework of the political elite developed by the three leading figures of the Italian School of Elitism: Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and Robert Michels. Political elite theory offers a relevant analytical lens for understanding how power has always been concentrated in a handful of individuals or groups that have organizational superiority and strategic resources.

Elite theory has its roots in the works of thinkers such as Mosca, Pareto, and Michels, who argued that power is inherently concentrated in the minority, regardless of the prevailing political system (Gasimov & Nasirov, 2024; Pakulski, 2018). This theory posits that a "ruling class" or "power elite" emerges, often leading to oligarchic rule even in democratic societies (Nardis, 2020). The theories and concepts of the political elite of thinkers such as G. Mosca, V. Pareto, and R. Michels have been examined, and extensive

comparative analysis has been conducted between them. In-depth studies of different approaches play a remarkable role in understanding the nature of political elites (Gasimov & Nasirov, 2024).

From Pareto's perspective, the concept of "circulation of elites" is the key to understanding the dynamics of power reproduction in the context of Indonesian electoral democracy. Pareto distinguishes between the elite "lions" who use power and authority, and the elite "foxes" who rely on deception and manipulation. As explained in his theory, "Class I corresponds to the adventurous 'foxes' in Machiavelli, and Class II to the conservative 'lions,' particularly in the ruling elite" (Casstevens, 1989). In the context of the 2024 election, the phenomenon of dynastic presidents shows how Indonesia's political elite combines these two strategies using the authority of the incumbent (lions) while manipulating the rule of law through sophisticated political maneuvers (foxes).

Drochon (2020) in his reinterpretation of Michels's theory shows the contemporary relevance of the iron law of oligarchy: "universal suffrage and political parties, is still the context we operate in today, so that... the terms the 'elite theorists' first coined, 'ruling class' (Mosca), 'circulation of elites' (Pareto) and the 'iron law of oligarchy' (Michels), are still the terms through which we try to articulate our political predicaments". This explains why the phenomenon of persistence of political parties in Indonesia is not an anomaly, but a structural tendency inherent in modern political organizations.

In the context of the 2024 elections, the iron law of oligarchy is manifested in the ability of established political parties to adapt to changing political dynamics without changing their internal power structures. These parties have managed to maintain their dominance by co-opting popular figures (such as the Jokowi phenomenon co-opted by an established party coalition) or by creating strategic alliances that transcend traditional ideological lines.

Within the framework of the political elite theory, the reproduction of

power through dynastic politics and the persistence of the party in the 2024 election cause academic anxiety, because it shows the contradiction between the formalism of procedural democracy and the substance of democracy that is increasingly degraded. This phenomenon challenges the assumption of the theory of democratic transition, which predicts that consolidation will give birth to open competition. Instead, it strengthens the proposition of elite theory that electoral democracy becomes an instrument of legitimization of elite domination. Taufik (2023) shows how autocracy in the Jokowi era fundamentally changed the character of Indonesian politics, according to the prediction of elite theories about oligarchic tendencies in modern politics.

Dynastic politicians benefit from inherited political capital, such as name recognition and financial resources, which provide them an electoral advantage over non-dynasts (Bhat, 2023). In the context of the 2024 election, the phenomenon of Gibran Rakabuming Raka's candidacy as a vice presidential candidate shows how the political elite uses the kinship mechanism to ensure the continuity of power across generations.

Scott (2024) identifies how "Behind the victory of his chosen successor in February's elections lies a complicated story of how outgoing President Joko Widodo's co-opted much of Indonesian society while consolidating immense power". This phenomenon can be analyzed through Mosca's concept of the "political formula", that is, the doctrine or ideology used by the political class to legitimize their dominance. In Indonesia's case, the "political formula" used is a narrative about development continuity and stability that requires the transfer of power to a figure who is "tested" and has "leadership DNA".

Within the framework of the theory of the political elite, the mechanism of reproduction of power through dynastic politics and party persistence can be understood as a systematic strategy to maintain what Mosca calls "organizational superiority". The political elite not only hold power through control over material resources, but also through a monopoly on the "political skills" and "organizational capabilities" needed to operate in the modern

political system.

Liddle and Mujani (2024) analyze how "Indonesia's president claims he is curbing democracy today to save it later", a paradox that shows the sophistication of elite strategies in using democratic rhetoric to legitimize anti-democratic practices. This is in line with Pareto's concept of elite "foxes" who use "combinations" or clever manipulations to maintain their dominance.

The phenomenon of hybridization between dynastic politics and party persistence in the 2024 election reflects what can be called "elite circulation without elite renewal". Despite changes in individuals holding positions of power, the structure and logic of power remain controlled by the same elite network. This explains why the leadership transition from Jokowi to Prabowo did not result in a fundamental change in governance patterns, but rather a change in personnel within an oligarchic power structure that remained essentially unchanged.

The concept of anxiety in politics, particularly regarding outsider figures, plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and trust in political systems. This anxiety can affect perceptions of political legitimacy and the role of elites (Albertson & Gadarian, 2015). In Latin America, for instance, the role of elites in democratization is complex, with elite attitudes influencing various dimensions of democracy, sometimes in contradictory ways (Guedes-Neto, 2022). The 2024 election then demonstrates how the label "outsider" can be manipulated by the political elite to build legitimacy, while still perpetuating an oligarchic pattern of power reproduction. From the perspective of elite theory, the "insider-outsider" dichotomy is a false dichotomy because all who succeed in a position of power will inherently be part of the dominant political class.

Presidents can leverage their authority to intervene in judicial matters, undermining the independence of the judiciary (Alikhan, 2023). Empirical irregularities occur related to the checks and balances mechanism in the Indonesian presidential system. The 2024 election demonstrates how the

executive power can utilize its position to influence the electoral process through various means, ranging from judicial intervention to mobilizing state resources for family politics. Liddle and Mujani (2024) analyze how "Indonesia's president claims he is curbing democracy today to save it later", a paradox that shows the complexity of the dynamics of executive power.

The criminalization of political opponents and the decline of judicial activism under President Jokowi have narrowed the field of democratic contestation, indicating a significant regression in democratic practices (Baker, 2023). This academic anxiety is further strengthened when it is associated with the global trend of democratic backsliding. Indonesia, which has been considered a success story of democratization in the Southeast Asian region, is now showing symptoms of systematic democratic decline. Mietzner (2024) emphatically states that "Indonesian voters have made Prabowo Subianto, a special-forces commander with a dark past, their next president. Even as voters flocked to the polls, his election is a harbinger of democracy's decline".

Studies on dynastic politics and party persistence in Indonesia still leave several *knowledge gaps*. First, the two are often analyzed separately, even though the 2024 election shows synergistic interaction in the reproduction of elite power (Kenawas, 2023). Second, the literature has not explained the new phenomenon of "cross-party dynastic presidentialism" involving the president's family in coalition with former rivals. Third, the understanding of the adaptation of elites to socio-political dynamics is still limited. However, the 2024 election shows their flexibility, in line with the findings of Aspinall and Mietzner (2019) regarding stagnation to regression of democracy. Fourth, there are methodological gaps because studies are more quantitative or historical-descriptive, while qualitative mechanism analysis is rare. Fifth, the study of the long-term implications for the quality and sustainability of democracy is also limited, as the study focuses more on the description of dynastic politics without linking it to the framework of

*democratic decline and authoritarian regression.*

Research on the reproduction of elite power through dynastic politics and party persistence in the 2024 election has a high urgency due to several converging factors. Temporally, the post-Jokowi transition marks the end of the era of *outsider politics* towards the dominance of the established elite. Structurally, the strengthening of *democratic backsliding* requires an in-depth analysis of the gradual decline of democracy (Mietzner, 2020). From a methodological perspective, the abundance of data on the 2024 election opens up opportunities for the study of power mechanisms through institutional instruments. Comparatively, Indonesia, as the world's third-largest democracy, makes an essential contribution to understanding the variation of the global *democratic recession* (Fossati, 2024). Practically, this study serves as an early warning of the risk of the consolidation of systematic authoritarianism if the reproduction patterns of elite power are not well documented.

Several quantitative indicators can be referred to as preliminary evidence about the intensity of the reproduction of elite power in the 2024 election. The 2024 election data show an intense concentration of support for candidates connected to the established elite, namely 78.2% of the votes for Prabowo-Gibran (58.6%) and Ganjar-Mahfud (16.9%) (Firdaus et al., 2023), while Anies-Muhaimin, who is relatively less affiliated with the incumbent elite, only won 24.9% (Gunanto, 2020). The dominance of the elite is also reflected in the composition of the cabinet, where about 70% of strategic positions are filled by figures with experience or affiliation with major parties (Ananta, 2024). In addition, *the survival rate* of political parties remains high, with 8 out of 10 parties in the House of Representatives for the 2024–2029 period being old parties, while only two new parties managed to enter with small gains. The concentration of power is increasingly evident, with 60% of key ministerial positions being occupied by figures who have kinship or patronage relationships with the incumbent elite, showing a systematic



pattern of power reproduction (Kompas, 2024).

These quantitative data provide an initial indication of the solidity of the reproduction mechanisms of elite power that need to be analyzed more deeply through a qualitative approach that can reveal the microscopic mechanisms behind these macroscopic phenomena. Based on the elaboration of the four dimensions above, empirical phenomena, academic anxiety, knowledge gaps, and research urgency, the research on "Dynastic Politics and Party Persistence: The Reproduction Mechanism of Elite Power in the 2024 Indonesian Democratic Elections" has a strong academic justification and high practical relevance to undertake.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study combines qualitative approaches, systematic literature review strategies, and critical discourse analysis to reveal the dynamics of political dynasties in Indonesia. This methodological framework enables an in-depth exploration of how dynasties are reproduced, perpetuated, and legitimized in the public sphere.

Qualitative research is an umbrella term that is typically used in contrast to quantitative research and captures research approaches that predominantly rely on collecting and analyzing qualitative data (i.e., data in the form of words, still or moving images, and artifacts). Qualitative research encompasses a wide range of research approaches with different philosophical and theoretical foundations and empirical procedures. Other assumptions about reality and knowledge underlying these diverse approaches guide researchers with respect to epistemological and methodological questions and inform their choices regarding research questions, data collection, data analysis, and the writing of research accounts (Greckhamer & Cilesiz, 2022).

The systematic literature review provides a foundation for tracing continuity and change in dynastic politics. Hart (1998) defines this process as selecting and analyzing relevant sources, while Jesson, Matheson, and Lacey (2011) emphasize its interpretive and critical function. According to Boote and



Beile (2005), such reviews help identify patterns, gaps, and comprehensive insights. In this study, the literature review covers election regulations, party policies, media archives, and academic works.

Finally, discourse analysis (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002) is applied to uncover how political identities and legitimacy are constructed through language and symbols. In the 2024 elections, this method reveals how candidates from political families employ discourse to strengthen their image and normalize dynastic practices.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **The Basis for Critical Thinking on the Emergence of Dynasty Politics and the Persistence of Political Parties in the 2024 Elections**

In the 2024 elections, the pattern of elite power reproduction intensified, in line with Mietzner's (2024) findings that after a relatively successful post-authoritarian transition, Indonesia has experienced democratic backsliding since the 2010s. The 2024 elections confirmed three increasingly prominent symptoms in Indonesia's electoral democracy, namely:

- 1) 2024 Presidential Election Results. The General Elections Commission (KPU) declared that the Prabowo–Gibran ticket had won 58.6% of the national vote (KPU Decision No. 360/2024). The fact that Gibran is the son of President Joko Widodo symbolically marks the elevation of dynastic practices to the pinnacle of the national executive branch. Asian Survey's analysis succinctly summarizes the 2023/2024 phenomenon: "The selection of President Jokowi's son for a vice-presidential ticket signaled the continuation and intensification of dynastic politics" (Aspinall, Lay, & Mietzner, 2024).
- 2) Dynasties in the DPR 2024–2029. ICW mapped 174 of the 580 members of the DPR RI 2024–2029 (around 30%) as having political kinship ties (ICW, 2024). This proportion illustrates how internal party candidate

selection and access to family networks become channels for the reproduction of power at the legislative level (Prakoso & Kosandi, 2024).

- 3) Party Persistence in DPR seat acquisition. The KPU's decision shows that eight parties have passed the 2024 parliamentary threshold. The seat distribution ranks the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), the Golkar Party, and the Gerindra Party as the top three. This pattern affirms findings on party institutionalization, as stated by Zeng (2019), that “parties utilize clientelism to maintain support, suggesting that established parties with patronage systems.” As summarized by Kristiyanto (2023), “organizational endurance is linked to resource access and local networks,” which is reflected in the continuity of major parties' performance from one election to the next. Furthermore, Yıldırım (2019) states that “incumbent parties are often able to control state resources in ways that allow them to garner support in a clientelistic fashion.”

The emergence and strengthening of dynastic political thinking and the persistence of parties in the 2024 elections are logical consequences of the configuration of the elite, party cartelization practices, resource inequality, and institutional arrangements that facilitate the consolidation of power by a narrow group. This research was analyzed by combining classical elite theory (Pareto, Mosca, Michels) and contemporary applications in Indonesia (Aspinall, Muhtadi, & Warburton, 2020; Mietzner, 2024).

### **Reading the 2024 Elections with Elite Theory**

Classical elite theory asserts that in every society, an organized minority (the elite) tends to dominate the majority. Michels formulated the “iron law of oligarchy,” which states that modern organizations, including political parties, tend to become dominated by a small group of leaders (Nikulin, 2023). In the context of contemporary Indonesia, this elitist reading is enriched by recent empirical findings.

Aspinall, Muhtadi, & Warburton (2020) show that the decline of democracy in Indonesia “comes from politicians who enjoy popular support,”

not merely from an apathetic public; they write: “regression in Indonesia has come at the hands of politicians enjoying popular support” (Aspinall et al., 2020). This quote is important because it shifts the focus of analysis from ‘voter-blaming’ to the power structures of elites who can ride on popular preferences through patronage, media, and coalitions of interest.

Mietzner (2024) emphasizes the mechanism of collusion at the elite level: “Elites have both produced executive aggrandizement and contained its scope” (Mietzner, 2024). This means that elites both produce and control the extent of power concentration: expanding it when it is beneficial and limiting it when it incurs excessive political costs. This logic explains why political dynasties and party persistence both endure, as both are instruments of power stabilization in a high-cost electoral market.

On the party side, Kristiyanto (2023) explains that the resilience and institutionalization of parties in Indonesia are largely supported by the need for strategic adaptation, resources, and electoral incentives. He writes that “party institutionalization is shaped by strategic adaptation to electoral incentives” (Kristiyanto, 2023), so parties with access to resources, candidate networks, and patronage machinery will be more resilient to shocks.

Kenawas (2023) documents the expansion of dynasties after the Reformasi and concludes that dynasties “grew more than threefold between 2010 and 2018” (Kenawas, 2023). This sharp increase indicates that electoral democracy does not necessarily limit political kinship; on the contrary, the design of local competition and the costs of contestation open up space for the social and economic capital of political families to be replicated at the national level.

Party cartelization, i.e., collusion among parties to manage competition and state resources, drives a logic of candidate selection that minimizes electoral risk. Parties in politically costly electoral contests tend to choose candidates from political families because they bring the family “brand,” donor networks, and bureaucratic-executive access, which act as electoral assets and

minimize the risk of defeat (Zaldy, 2020). Political parties with strict discipline can leverage the power of dynastic candidates' brands to maintain cohesion and promote party loyalty among voters. These candidates typically have access to extensive donor networks, which can significantly fund campaigns and ensure competitive viability (Marland & Wagner, 2019).

With Michels' framework, elite control over party organizations makes it difficult for non-dynastic candidates to penetrate closed structures. Aspinall et al. (2020) remind us that the decline of democracy actually “comes from politicians who enjoy popular support,” so that the popularity of political families—built through patronage and the media—becomes a machine of legitimacy. Meanwhile, Mietzner (2024) asserts that elite collusion also controls escalation so as not to threaten the stability of the electoral regime. As a result, dynasties become a “rational” compromise for parties: maximizing the probability of winning without disrupting the elite equilibrium.

Empirical evidence of cartelization in the 2024 elections includes: (a) the victory of tickets involving the symbolic inheritance of executive power (Aspinall, Lay, & Mietzner, 2024); (b) the proportion of DPR members with family networks ( $\pm 30\%$ ) (ICW, 2024); (c) the consistency of major parties' performance. This sequence demonstrates the alignment between party electoral incentives and dynastic strategies (Kristiyanto, 2023).

Electoral competition in Indonesia is known to be high-cost politics. Family networks provide mobilization infrastructure, volunteers, logistics, and local media that reduce the marginal costs of campaigns. Kenawas (2023) shows that dynastic expansion is inseparable from the ability of the political family “to leverage resources across electoral cycles.” Normatively, this narrows the access of new non-oligarchic candidates.

The rise of business politicians in Indonesia has led to a fusion of private power and public office, where business success is rewarded and entrepreneurs exercise political power directly. As a result, there has been a merger of private power and public office in an unprecedented form and level

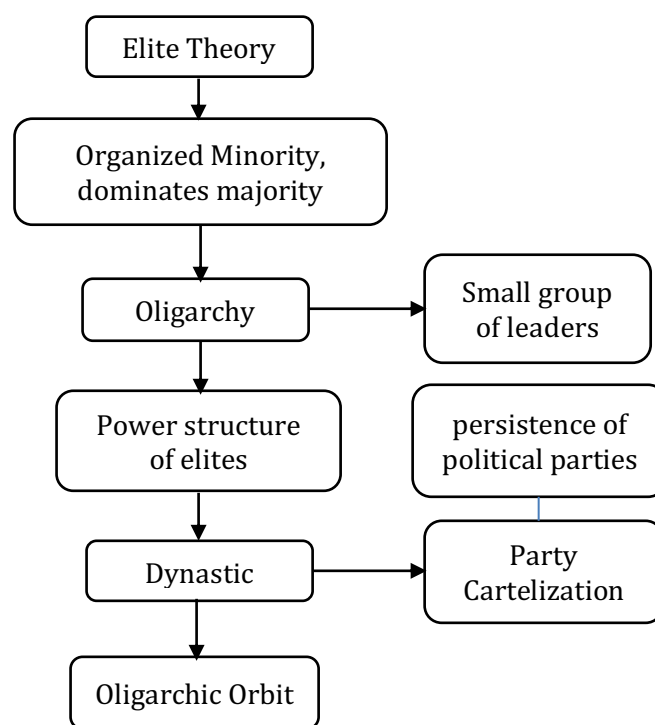
in Indonesian political history (Warburton, 2024). Meanwhile, Kristiyanto (2023) writes, "party institutionalization is shaped by strategic adaptation to electoral incentives," so the most 'efficient' adaptation is often to maintain the same patronage architecture from one election to the next.

The 2024 election is also influenced by the configuration of the rules of the game and institutional decisions that directly or indirectly open up space for elite continuity. In the logic of elite theory, the ruling group will attempt to modify the rules of the game to maintain dominance. Elite collusion that "generates and limits the expansion of power" (Mietzner, 2024) is evident in the functioning of institutions, candidate selection, the formation of large coalitions in parliament, and the rules governing the nomination threshold.

The combination of these rules creates a high barrier to entry for actors outside the network. As a result, the established old political family and party benefited more. In other words, the persistence of parties and dynasties is two sides of the same coin, both facilitated by institutional structures designed or maintained by elites. When politics is presented as entertainment, family connections—especially the president's children—are increasingly easily narrated as "continuation" rather than nepotism. As a result, voter preferences are encouraged to accept *familial succession* as a natural mechanism of *elite socialization* (Satriawan et al., 2025). Aspinall et al. (2020) shift the lens from the narrative of 'elite versus the people' to a more complex relation: the elite capitalizes on popular preferences and, at the same time, those preferences are shaped by patronage structures, media, and family symbolism. Therefore, voter support for dynastic candidates is not a paradox, but rather a proof of the success of the fabrication of legitimacy by the elite.

The 2024 election shows double consolidation, dynastic politics that reach the level of the national executive, and the persistence of established parties in the legislature. In the optics of elite theory, these two symptoms are not anomalies but the result of party cartelization, high political costs, and institutional structuring that facilitates the reproduction of power. The 2024

data, ticket victories along kinship lines, the proportion  $\pm 30\%$  of members of the House of Representatives are dynastical networks, and the consistency of major party performance, support the claim that Indonesia's electoral democracy is in an oligarchic orbit that is "produced and at the same time limited" by elite collusion (Mietzner, 2024). The solution requires institutional design interventions and incentives that reduce resource access inequalities and open up spaces for merit-based competition.



**Figure 1.** Reading the 2024 election with elite theory

The chart presented above depicts the relationship between several key concepts in elite theory, with a particular emphasis on dynastic politics and political party persistence. Through this analysis, we will explore how these elements interact with each other and their impact on power dynamics and public participation. Elite theory argues that in every society, there is a small group of individuals who wield significant power and influence. Thinkers such as Vilfredo Pareto and Robert Michels have shown that although democratic systems strive to distribute power evenly, in reality, power tends to accumulate in the hands of the elite. In this context, it is important to

consider the implications of elite domination for social justice and political participation.

One particularly relevant aspect of this analysis is dynastic politics. Dynastic politics refers to the phenomenon whereby power and political positions are passed down within certain families, creating a cycle of power that is difficult to break. In many cases, individuals from powerful families have greater access to resources, networks, and opportunities, while those from less privileged backgrounds are hindered in their pursuit of positions of power. This not only hinders social mobility but also creates ongoing inequality, where only a select few have access to power and influence.

Dynastic politics also contributes to the strengthening of oligarchy, in which a small group of individuals continuously dominates the decision-making process. When power is inherited within families, there is a tendency to maintain the status quo, which often ignores the needs and aspirations of the wider community. In this context, dynastic politics can be seen as an obstacle to the innovation and change necessary for the advancement of society. The dissatisfaction that arises from this injustice can spark social movements, but organized elite forces often hamper these movements.

In addition, the persistence of political parties plays an important role in maintaining the elite power structure. Party cartelization, in which political parties collude to maintain power and avoid healthy competition, creates an environment in which political change is difficult. In a cartelized political system, parties tend to collaborate to maintain the status quo, ignoring the needs and aspirations of the people. This can lead to political stagnation, where better alternatives do not have a chance to emerge. When political parties no longer compete openly, the people lose the opportunity to elect leaders who are more representative and responsive to their needs.

The elite power structure depicted in this chart shows that organised elites can control and manipulate policies for their interests. Policies often do not reflect the needs of the wider community, but rather favour the elite.



Dissatisfaction among the wider community, who feel marginalised from the decision-making process, can lead to social instability and conflict. This chart provides a clear picture of how elite theory, dynastic politics, and political party persistence are intertwined in shaping power structures. While there is potential for stability in elite-dominated systems, critics of these systems argue that the dominance of a small group of individuals can lead to social injustice and discontent.

### **Political Dynasties and Party Persistence in the Implementation of the 2024 Elections as a Form of Elite Power Reproduction: A Critical Analysis**

The 2024 General Elections in Indonesia have marked a new phase in the national political constellation characterised by the worrying phenomenon of the strengthening of political dynasties and the persistence of parties in perpetuating elite power. This phenomenon not only threatens the principles of substantive democracy but also shows how Indonesia's political power structure has undergone systematic oligarchisation. This analysis aims to critically examine how political dynasties and the persistence of political parties in the 2024 elections function as mechanisms for the reproduction of elite power that threaten the consolidation of Indonesian democracy.

The 2024 elections have become a silent witness to the massive expansion of political dynasties covering almost all regions of Indonesia. As noted in the ICW report, "Almost All Provinces in Indonesia Are Affiliated with Political Dynasties," this phenomenon has become a systematic pattern in Indonesian politics, no longer an anomaly. This data indicates that the mechanism of electoral democracy has been co-opted by dynastic interests to maintain and expand their power base.

Wadipalapa and Tyson (2025), in their analysis of "Cross-Party Presidential Dynasticism in Indonesia: Evidence from the 2024 Presidential Elections," reveal a new dimension of political dynasties that is no longer limited to single-party affiliation but has developed into a more complex and difficult-to-detect cross-party network. This phenomenon of "cross-party

dynasticism" shows how political elites have successfully transcended party ideological boundaries to create strategic alliances that prioritise the perpetuation of power. In other words, instead of giving birth to "new lions" or alternative elites as Pareto imagined, Indonesian democracy perpetuates old elites in new packaging.

The most worrying aspect of the political dynasty phenomenon in the 2024 elections is how legal institutions have become instruments of legitimisation for practices that substantially undermine democratic competition. ICW's report with the provocative title "Supreme Court 'Legalises' Jokowi-Prabowo Political Dynasty" indicates that there has been a politicisation of judicial institutions that are supposed to be the guardians of the constitution and democratic principles.

Sulistiyowati et al. (2024) in "Reflections on the Constitutional Court's decision in the 2024 presidential election on Indonesian politics and democracy" provide an in-depth analysis of how judicial decisions have provided space for political dynasty practices to flourish under the pretext of controversial constitutional interpretations. This phenomenon shows that checks and balances in Indonesia's political system have undergone significant erosion. One manifestation of the party's persistence in perpetuating power is through the mobilisation of the state civil apparatus (ASN) that violates the principle of neutrality. Roretta (2024) in her report revealed that "264 ASNs Proven to Violate Neutrality in the 2024 Election", a figure that only represents detected cases and is most likely the tip of the iceberg of a more massive practice.

This phenomenon indicates that political parties have successfully co-opted the state bureaucracy as a political machine for electoral interests. Violations of ASN neutrality are not merely individual actions, but are part of the party's systematic strategy to utilise state resources in political contestation. This reflects how the boundaries between the state and parties have undergone a dangerous blurring.

ICW's report on "Election Fraud in 2024: Monitoring Findings and Potential Fraud in Quiet Days, Voting, Counting, and Vote Recapitulation" (2024) reveals a pattern of fraud that is no longer sporadic but has become an integrated modus operandi in electoral strategy. This fraud spans multiple stages, from quiet days to vote recapitulation, demonstrating a high level of sophistication and coordination among political actors.

**Table 1.** Comparison of classical elite theory (Pareto, Mosca, Michels) with the 2024 election phenomenon

| Classical Elite Theory                 | Key Concepts                                                                                         | The 2024 Election Phenomenon                                                                                                                      | Critical Analysis                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vilfredo Pareto - Circular glass Elit  | Old elites are replaced by new elites through the circulation of power (elite circulation).          | The Jokowi-Prabowo political dynasty, Gibran as vice president, and local dynasties such as Kerry Saiful Konggoasa in Konawe.                     | Elite circulation is stuck; the new elite that emerges comes from the family circle of the old elite → political stagnation.            |
| Gaetano Mosca - Minoritas Organized    | Power has always been controlled by a minority of elites who are better organized than the majority. | Political parties support dynastic candidates under the pretext of "electoral assets," with almost the entire province affiliated with dynasties. | Political parties function as a tool for the elite minority to maintain hegemony, not as a channel for the aspirations of the majority. |
| Robert Michels - Iron Law of Oligarchy | All modern organizations (parties) tend to fall into the hands of a few elites (oligarchy).          | Political parties monopolizing nominations, normalization of dynasties by the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court.                         | Procedural democracy works, but the substance is oligarchic: parties are locked into the iron law of oligarchy.                         |

*Source: Various reports, processed by the authors, 2025*

Kompaspedia (2024) in "The phenomenon of election violations in 2024" notes that "In the midst of political contestation, election violations are allowed to occur," indicating a systematic tolerance for practices that undermine electoral integrity. This phenomenon shows that violations are no longer aberrations but have become a normalized part of Indonesia's democratic process.

A et al. (2024) in "From Solo to the Palace: the anatomy of political communication in the formation of Jokowi's Dynasty" analyzed in detail how political dynasties are not formed spontaneously but are the result of a planned and systematic political communication strategy. Dynasty formation involves narrative construction that legitimizes the transfer of power within the family circle as something natural and acceptable.

Syihadat et al. (2024) dalam studi kasus "Political dynasties in the context of local democracy (Study of political sustainability of the Kerry Saiful Konggoasa Dynasty in the 2024 Konawe Regency Regional Head Election)" menunjukkan bahwa pola dinasti politik tidak hanya terjadi di tingkat nasional tetapi telah mereplikasi dirinya hingga ke tingkat kabupaten. Fenomena ini mengindikasikan bahwa dinasti politik telah menjadi model yang diadopsi secara luas oleh elit politik di berbagai tingkatan pemerintahan.

Ultimately, this has implications for democracy and citizens' rights. Marwenny et al. (2024) in "Political Dynasties from the Perspective of Democracy and Citizens' Rights in General Elections in Indonesia" argue that the phenomenon of political dynasties is not just a technical electoral problem but a fundamental violation of the rights of citizens to obtain equal political representation. Political dynasties create systematic entry barriers for candidates from outside the elite circle, thus limiting citizens' political choices.

Noak (2024) in "Analysis of the existence of political dynasties in village head elections in Indonesia" shows that the penetration of political dynasties has reached the most basic level of government, namely the village level. This phenomenon indicates that political oligarchization has become a comprehensive and deep-rooted phenomenon at all levels of government.

The phenomenon of political dynasties and party persistence in the 2024 elections challenges basic assumptions in democratization theory that assume that competitive elections will result in elite turnover and more inclusive representation. Hidayat (2024) in "The 2024 general elections in Indonesia: issues of political dynasties, electoral fraud, and the emergence of a

national protest movement" identifies that elections have degenerated into rituals that facilitate elite reproduction rather than genuine democratic competition.

Maydani et al. (2024) in "Dynastic Politics in Democratic Countries" argued that the existence of political dynasties in a country that claims to be democratic shows a fundamental contradiction in the praxis of Indonesian democracy. Procedural democracy that only emphasizes electoral aspects without considering the substance of competition and representation has created space for elites to manipulate the system for their interests.

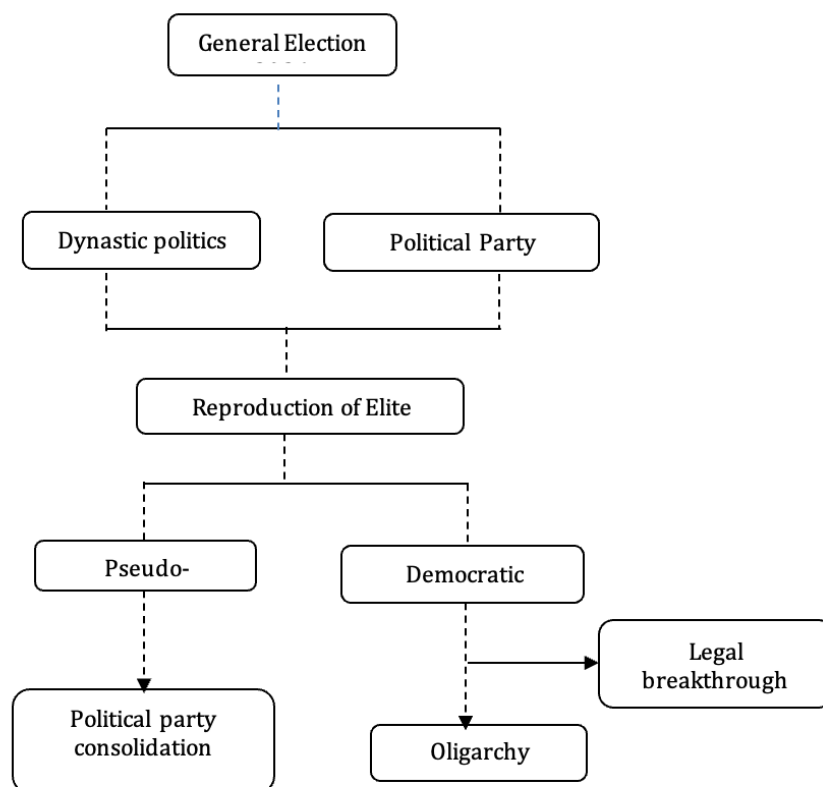
Agustin et al. (2024) in "The Dynamics of Political Tensions After the 2024 Elections in Maintaining Democratic Stability in Indonesia" analyzed how the phenomenon of political dynasties has created political tensions that have the potential to threaten democratic stability. This tension does not only stem from competition between elites but also from the growing discontent of the community towards a political system that is considered unresponsive to their aspirations. Furthermore, it emphasizes that the political tensions after the 2024 elections reflect efforts to maintain democratic stability in conditions where elites control almost all political channels. Thus, Indonesian democracy is at significant risk of substantive erosion, namely the loss of the essence of people's representation, even though formal procedures continue to run.

Panggabean and Harahap (2024) in "Islamic Perspectives on Political Dynasties (Case study of political dynasty issues in 2023-2024)" offer a normative perspective that criticizes political dynasties from the point of view of the values of justice and equality in Islam. This normative critique is important because it shows that the rejection of political dynasties does not only stem from modern political theory but also from traditional values rooted in Indonesian society.

The 2024 elections have marked a new phase in Indonesia's political evolution, characterized by institutional capture by political elites through political dynasty mechanisms and party persistence. This phenomenon is no

longer an anomaly but has become a systematic pattern that threatens the substance of Indonesian democracy. Political dynasties and party persistence have functioned as effective elite power reproduction mechanisms, supported by the co-optation of legal institutions, mobilization of state apparatus, and normalization of practices that undermine electoral integrity.

The long-term implication of this phenomenon is that Indonesia is caught in a "democratic trap" where democratic procedures are maintained but the substance of democracy is eroded. To overcome this challenge, structural reforms are needed that not only target legal-formal aspects but also the transformation of political culture that rejects the practice of political dynasties and encourages genuine and inclusive political competition.



**Figure 2.** Anatomy of Oligarchization: Conceptual Networks of Elite Power Reproduction in the 2024 Election

This conceptual chart illustrates the oligarchic system formed in Indonesia's 2024 elections, where each element is interrelated to create a vicious cycle of elite power reproduction. Dynastic politics functions as the

primary mechanism to create entry barriers for political actors outside the elite circle. In the 2024 elections, political dynasties have evolved from a sporadic phenomenon to a systematic pattern that limits access to power to certain families, creating path dependency in Indonesia's political system.

Political party consolidation and Political Party Persistence show the transformation of parties from instruments of representation to machines of power perpetuation. This persistence is realized through institutional capture - bureaucratic co-optation, manipulation of regulations, and mobilization of state resources for the party's electoral interests. Legal breakthrough represents the use of legal institutions to legitimize anti-democratic practices. This phenomenon marks the degradation of the rule of law into rule by law, where controversial judicial decisions allow political dynasties to participate despite contradicting the spirit of the constitution.

Oligarchy in the context of the 2024 elections has evolved into network oligarchy, an elite network that is interconnected through family, business, and political relationships. This structure is more resilient because it does not rely on a single individual but on an integrated system. Democratic Erosion manifests through the gradual degradation of democratic institutions, not through classical authoritarian means. Democratic procedures are maintained within the framework of competitive authoritarianism, creating conditions for pseudo-democracy - a system that has formal democratic institutions but loses the substance of genuine competition.

The reproduction of Elite Power is the outcome of the interaction of all these elements, ensuring the continuity of oligarchic domination through sophisticated and multi-layered mechanisms. The strength of this chart lies in the systemic interconnection, namely:

- Political dynasties provide personal vehicles for oligarchs
- Party persistence provides institutional vehicles
- Legal breakthroughs provide legitimacy
- Reproduction of power ensures continuity



The conceptual chart provides a framework for understanding Indonesia's democratic crisis after the 2024 elections. Each element forms a mutually reinforcing vicious cycle, from political dynasties to pseudo-democracy.

## CONCLUSION

The 2024 elections in Indonesia have become an important momentum that shows how procedural democracy can be trapped in the paradox of oligarization. The practice of dynastic politics and the persistence of the party that is getting stronger is not just an electoral phenomenon, but a systematic mechanism of the reproduction of elite power. Within the framework of the elite theory of Pareto, Mosca, and Michels, it can be seen that the expected circulation of the elite is stopped because the new elites that emerge come from the old elite family circle; political parties function as an instrument of an organized minority that maintains hegemony; And the iron law of the oligarchs works through a party locked in the leadership of a handful of dominant figures.

This phenomenon indicates that democracy in Indonesia is experiencing a substantive regression. Electoral procedures are still ongoing, but the substance of democracy, namely open competition, inclusive representation, and control of power, is being eroded. Dynastic politics at the national and local levels, accompanied by cross-party coalitions oriented towards the stabilization of power, created what is called *pseudo-democracy*. Legal breakthroughs made through court rulings strengthened the normalization of the dynasty. At the same time, bureaucratic mobilization and the use of state resources further emphasized the blurring of boundaries between state and party.

The long-term implication of this situation is that Indonesia is trapped in a democratic trap, where democratic procedures are maintained as legitimacy. However, an increasingly complex network of oligarchs erodes their substance. Electoral democracy, which was supposed to be a means of rejuvenating the elite, turned into a tool of reproducing the old elite with new

packaging. This has the potential to cause public dissatisfaction, narrow the space for citizens' political participation, and strengthen the representation gap.

Thus, the main conclusion of this study is that the 2024 election confirms the tendency of oligarchy consolidation through dynastic political symbiosis and party persistence. To prevent further democratic decline, structural reforms and political cultural transformation are needed that can open up spaces for meritocratic competition, reduce dependence on family patronage, and restore the party to its function as a channel of people's representation, not just a reproduction engine of elite power.

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