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The Influence of Family in Shaping the Political Culture of Society

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to reveal the influence of family in shaping the political culture of the Dayak community in Kurun Subdistrict, Gunung Mas Regency, along with the challenges involved. This paper is the result of the author's research using a qualitative descriptive method conducted from September to November 2025. Using Gabriel Almond's approach to the role of the family in shaping political culture, this paper describes 1) the family as a medium of political socialisation for children and family members; and 2) the family providing information about politics to children and family members. Several obstacles to the role of the family in shaping the political culture of society are: 1) the lack of knowledge and insight of children and family members; 2) the many political terms that children and family members do not understand; 3) differences of opinion between parents and children; and 4) the lack of communication time between parents and children.

Keyword:

Family influence, political culture, political socialization and obstacles.

INTRODUCTION

Political culture is a system of values and beliefs shared by a community. The formation of political culture in individuals occurs through political socialisation. Political socialisation first occurs within the family environment, where the family serves as the primary agent of socialisation individuals undergo in preparation for becoming members of society. Political socialisation is an instrument that seeks to preserve a political system. A country's political system is always surrounded by various political behaviours displayed by its citizens. Each behaviour exhibited has its own characteristics that differ from those of others. One reason for these differences is the presence of distinct political cultures within society.

The political culture of a country is inseparable from the cultural characteristics of its society. The role of society in political life is highly dependent on the political culture that

exists and develops within society. Indonesian citizens must understand the political culture of each community group. Every citizen, in their daily lives, almost always comes into contact with aspects of practical politics, both symbolic and non-symbolic. In its implementation, political culture can occur directly or indirectly through political practices. Indirectly means merely hearing information or news about political events that have occurred, while directly means that the person is involved in a particular political event.

In principle, political culture is one of the many cultural elements within the environments that surround it, influencing and shaping the political system. Political culture indirectly underpins the political system. Then, as stated by Ardian and Bilqista, political culture is related to attitudes and norms, namely open and closed attitudes, a person's militancy towards others in social interactions, leadership patterns that encourage confrontation, and attitudes of mobility that maintain or encourage the status quo and policy priorities (emphasising economics and politics) (Ardian and Bilqista, 2025: 7). The various behaviours of all citizens in many respects are oriented towards political culture. Whether they realise it or not, individuals are strongly bound to the cultural values of the place where they live. Political culture refers to the tendency of individuals to behave in accordance with the political system in their country. In the political culture approach, individuals are the main subject of study and are empirical in nature. Meanwhile, political socialisation is an instrument that seeks to preserve a political system. Through a series of mechanisms in political socialisation, individuals from generation to generation are educated to understand what, how, and for what purpose the political system that functions for them exists.

Political culture is closely related to the role of the family because it is within the family that political education is first taught by parents to their children. However, so far, the family's role as a mediating structure between individuals and the state has lost its autonomy in bringing its citizens into civil society, as it has been co-opted by the state. Therefore, in order for the family to function optimally as an institution of political socialisation for the nation's future generations, the family's role must be strengthened by fostering a democratic political culture in everyday family life. In other words, families must dare to abandon their role of "making society more like the state" and move towards the role of "making the state more like society", where the role of the state is taught to be on the side of the public or the public interest rather than the individual (Cholitin, 1998: 45).

Within the family environment, parents play a strategic role in imparting social and religious values, instilling them in their children (the next generation). Parents' habits in acting and responding to everything in daily life become role models for their children to follow. The family is the first and foremost educational environment, because before humans are introduced to other educational institutions, the family is the primary one. Humans

undergo an educational process from birth, even from the first time they are in the womb, within the family (Hadikusumo, 2000: 63).

After growing up, a child as an individual begins to interact with the community around them. Individuals in society undergo a process of socialisation so that they can live and behave in accordance with the values and norms that apply in the society in which they live. Socialisation is a learning process through which a person acquires knowledge, skills, values, and norms in order to adapt to a community. Individuals who have undergone the socialisation process will behave in accordance with the expectations of the community around them.

This paper examines the role of the family in shaping political culture. This paper is the result of the author's research in Kurun Subdistrict, Gunung Mas Regency, from September to November 2025. In Kurun Subdistrict, the community's political culture is rooted in the Dayak Ngaju tribe, where the Dayak Ngaju language is predominantly used in daily life at home, at work, and in various public facilities. Dayak political culture generally respects elders, is loyal to family and country, is loyal to leaders, and tends to be egalitarian in the context of social strata. This research is important to understand how the family plays a role in shaping the political culture of the local community. To that end, there are two important questions to be answered: *First*, how does the family play a role in shaping the political culture of the community? and *Second*, what are the challenges of the family's role in shaping the political culture of the community?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses descriptive qualitative research, as described by Lexy J. Moleong (2000: 3), namely that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behaviour. Meanwhile, descriptive research aims to describe existing phenomena. The research was conducted in Kuala Kurun City, Gunung Mas Regency, because, based on observations, the people in this city are very enthusiastic about political matters, especially during the 2024 legislative elections, the 2024 Gunung Mas Regent elections, and the 2024 Central Kalimantan Governor elections.

As elections or regional elections approach, as in other regions, citizens' enthusiasm for political discourse usually increases. This fact is evident in the community of Percut Sei Tuan Subdistrict, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, where the 2024 elections are seen as a celebration of democracy, followed by the application of the correct values of political culture, through proper election stages and the emergence of competent and capable leaders, so that various parties must participate in political development (Brutu, et al., 2023: 40).

Data from the Regional Electoral Commission in Gunung Mas Regency shows that the community's political participation in the last three elections and regional elections exceeded 70%. The data sources in this study were 20 parents and 45 children who were at least 17 years old or already married. The data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation.

As Gabriel Almond argues, political culture is "a distinctive orientation of citizens towards the political system and its various components, and their attitudes towards their role in that system" (Almond, 1991: 21). Meanwhile, Larry Daimond defines political culture as "the beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideas of a society about their political system and the role of each individual in that system" (Daimond, 2003: 207). Almond and Verba (1990: 203) further state that political culture contains political objects, namely:

1. Cognitive component: an individual's knowledge and beliefs about politics, such as state institutions, political figures, political policies, state symbols and the political system. By having political components, individuals have a political culture that believes in the role of the state, justice and the rule of law.
2. Affective component: feelings towards a particular political system that can cause individuals to accept or reject it, as well as the political behaviour of political actors towards that political system.
3. Evaluation component: a person's decision or opinion about a political object, which typically involves a combination of value standards and certain criteria in accordance with the feelings that an individual already has.

In Indonesia, there are several characteristics of political culture, which Afan Gaffar (1998: 235) explains as follows:

1. Strict *hierarchy*; where Indonesian society is largely hierarchical, showing differences or levels of superiority and inferiority;
2. *Patronage*: a prominent pattern of political culture, namely the *patron-client* relationship that interacts with resources such as power, position/office, protection, attention and material goods;
3. *Neo-patrimonialism*: the behaviour of citizens who still display *patrimonial* political traditions and culture, i.e., being under the direct control of state leaders.

Several factors influence political culture, namely:

1. A good level of education among citizens is a good political education for citizens, which enables the emergence of a democratic political culture;
2. A good and prosperous level of the citizens' economy will increase the level of citizens' political participation;
3. Political reform: a new political culture can be built through political reform, which can be revolutionary in nature;

4. Supremacy of law; without the supremacy of law, society will tend to be apathetic and view politics as nothing more than a lie;
5. Independent media: The existence of independent media fosters an open and dynamic political culture.

Meanwhile, according to Miriam Budiardjo (1981: 25), the form of political culture in a society is influenced by several things, including:

1. The history of the development of the political system;
2. Religion within a society;
3. Ethnicity;
4. Social status;
5. Concepts of power or leadership.

In Indonesian society, according to Clifford Geertz (2000: 321), political culture has developed into three segments: the *abangan* political culture, represented by small farmers; the *santri* political culture, represented by devout Muslims; and the *priyayi* political culture, represented by the educated and upper classes, particularly civil servants. In order to form a political culture that is in line with Indonesia's indigenous culture, there needs to be political socialisation activities from various political agents, including the family as the smallest agent of political socialisation. According to Gabriel Almond, in Masoed and MacAndrews (2000: 37-40), the means of political socialisation are as follows:

1. Family is the first institution individuals encounter. The family is also a very strategic means of political socialisation, especially in shaping basic personality and social attitudes in children, which later influence their political orientation.
2. Peer groups are an effective means of political socialisation after children leave the family environment. In peer groups, individuals will perform certain actions because their friends in the group perform those actions;
3. School is a formal means of political socialisation established by the state. Schools have an obligation to provide knowledge about the political world and the role of the younger generation in it;
4. Formal or informal organisations formed on the basis of work can also play a role as agents of political socialisation;
5. The mass media is a secondary group political socialisation agent;
6. Direct political contact can take the form of real experiences felt by an individual in political life.

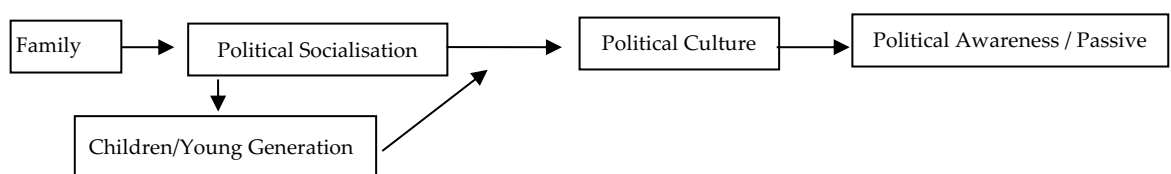
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Role of the Family

In Kurun Subdistrict, Gunung Mas District, as the object of this study, the formation of individual political culture cannot be separated from the role of each family. Field data confirms the role of mothers as female figures in the family. The family is a space for transmitting political values to the younger generation. Mothers are the primary teachers tasked with passing these values on. This is because mothers are psychologically close to their children. Mothers are the source of answers for every child who wants to know something. Mothers are considered the closest to their children because most are housewives who spend more time at home, preparing their children's school supplies and their husbands' work attire. When children return from school, it is also the mother who first welcomes them and communicates with them about their experiences. Therefore, it is the mother who influences the daily culture that shapes children's mindsets and development.

Then, no less important than the mother's role in the family is the father's. In essence, politics is related to decision-making. Decisions are made based on common interests. The father, as the head and leader of the family, is usually the centre of decision-making. Even if the decision has been made by the children and mother, it is still consulted with the father. Even though he is the centre of decision-making, the father can still leave the decision to the mother or the child. Therefore, this model of decision-making in the family can be categorised as a democratic model. Democratic means holding a family meeting and discussing the decision to be made with family members. Contingency means that something is still uncertain, so the decision-making process is still uncertain and must wait for the right time and place. Therefore, the father's role is central as the final decision maker. In this case, the father plays a role in shaping the child's character to become a leader with democratic and contingency traits in adulthood.

An illustration of how families shape the political culture of society is shown in Figure 1 below:



Data source: author's analysis of primary data, 2025.

Whether children in the family, as the younger generation, will be politically aware or, conversely, remain passive depends heavily on the political actions instilled in the

household. The above illustration shows that the political culture of society or citizens is formed, in part, by the family.

Furthermore, children, as the younger generation, learn and express themselves as social beings in their interactions with groups. Most interactions between parents and children have implications for the future, as the family is where each individual learns to relate to others. The interaction between children and their parents determines how individuals respond to others throughout their lives. Family conditions greatly influence children's social, political and cultural lives. Children hear family discussions, ranging from daily household matters to social and political issues outside the home. These discussions, which may be between the father and mother regarding political choices in elections or regional elections, as well as issues related to daily family life, can certainly influence children's thinking and their development into mature individuals with leadership qualities. Children and young people have the potential to be critical, idealistic, innovative, supportive and highly motivated (Sanusi and Darmawan, 2016: 25).

The role of the family as a medium for political socialisation for children or young people, carried out during family gatherings or while watching television together, is the most effective way to foster critical thinking, curiosity, and sharpness of mind. Thus, the family serves as a medium for political socialisation, shaping its members' political choices. The role of the family as a medium for political socialisation can be carried out through casual conversations or discussions that unconsciously instil political values in children and other family members. The family is a medium for political socialisation through everyday conversations. It is within the family that parents and children often engage in light political "conversations" about everything, so that, without realising it, certain political knowledge and values are transferred and absorbed by the child. According to field information, a mother told her child about the importance of voting in joint policy-making. Through their mother's story, children will always remember the importance of voting in joint policy-making, such as in school elections for student council president.

With the family acting as a medium for political socialisation, it is hoped that a child will behave politically in accordance with the political values that apply in the community, wherever the child is. The pattern applied by parents is not only through light conversation, but also through discussion. Discussion is a process of talking, exchanging thoughts, ideas, and opinions between two or more people, verbally, with the aim of reaching an agreement or understanding. Through these discussions, parents and children can expand their knowledge and gain valuable experience. Discussions conducted by parents in their role as a medium for political socialisation with their children take place while watching television programmes that broadcast news about national or regional political developments, such as elections or regional elections. Elections, or regional elections, not only enable democracy to

operate at the grassroots level (giving people the right to vote), but also make the power exercised by election winners *legitimate*. Thus, the pattern of parents discussing politics as a medium of political socialisation for children, carried out while watching television during family gatherings, can introduce political ideas and foster political understanding among children and all family members.

2. The Family as a Source of Political Information

The formation of political culture occurs through political socialisation, which shapes attitudes and patterns of behaviour. In addition, political socialisation is a means for a generation to "pass on" political standards and beliefs to the next. Information about the role of political parties in daily life is also very important. The problem with political parties is that most of them are considered to lack a clear social basis, in that they are seen as only working in the run-up to elections. Furthermore, the loud voices or criticism of political parties regarding the government's running do not necessarily reflect the people's voices and aspirations. Therefore, it is important for parents to provide their children with information about the role of political parties.

Families who provide political information to their children have positioned themselves as the primary agents of political socialisation. Families play a major role in providing children with political information. Parents have the opportunity and obligation to instill political values in their children. Through this parental role, it is hoped that a good political culture can be formed in children. This role does not mean guiding children to participate in practical politics, but rather providing them with political understanding and awareness of the importance of every citizen engaging with politics. This is because politics involves policies closely related to the price of rice and other daily necessities.

It has been confirmed in the field that the information provided by parents in the political socialisation of children is in the form of information about political values. Values are very important in human life as a whole. Meanwhile, politics is a set of principles, conditions, methods, and tools used to achieve specific goals. It has been confirmed that in across families, children's curiosity about politics is very high, especially given the large number of politicians who come from the entertainment world or were previously artists, which makes children even more enthusiastic about seeking political information. This fact has been confirmed by several pieces of information in the field: when artists enter the world of politics, news about them is automatically broadcast on television, so that children also obtain information about politics through television.

The above facts confirm that parents, in particular, play a very important role in their children's political socialisation. They are the first people who must impart political values to

their children before they reach adulthood and enter society. In addition, children can also obtain political information from television and the social media they follow every day.

3. Challenges of the Family's Role

In shaping the political culture of society, families face various challenges. Some of these challenges can be confirmed by the following facts:

- a. Limited knowledge and insight of parents regarding various daily information that they should convey to their children. There is information that must be conveyed, and there is also information that does not have to be conveyed. Lack of knowledge and insight of parents is one of the challenges faced by children in receiving political information from their parents and other family members.
- b. A lack of understanding of certain political terms and other terms used in various media makes it difficult for parents to explain things to their children. Terms such as "merger", "lobby", "amendment", "legislative body", "coalition", "opposition", and "participation", which often appear in various political media, make it quite difficult for some parents to explain to their children.
- c. Differences of opinion often arise. This occurs when children, as first-time voters in elections or regional elections, have different political views and choices from their parents. Differences of opinion are inevitable, and every parent eventually accepts their children's political opinions and choices. Such differences of opinion are common. Through these differences of opinion, children can strengthen their identity and character, and learn to understand the character of others.
- d. Parents lack time to interact with their children. This is confirmed by children whose parents both work in offices, where both parents leave for work in the morning and return home in the evening. The same is true for children who attend full-day school, leaving in the morning and returning home in the evening. When they arrive home, they are already tired and only have time for a brief discussion at the dinner table. This limited time is a challenge for parents in providing political education to their children.

The challenge parents face in providing political education to their children is the lack of time to communicate with them. Communication takes the form of in-depth conversations between parents and children. The lack of communication makes the relationship between parents and children less close psychologically. The lack of communication between children and their parents will negatively impact children's development. Children's communication skills become less honed, making them more individualistic.

The above facts indicate that the challenges faced by the family in shaping the political culture of the Kuala Kurun Subdistrict, Kurun District, Gunung Mas Regency

include: first, the lack of knowledge and insight among children. *Second*, there is an abundance of political terms that children and parents alike do not understand. *Third*, differences of opinion between parents and children. *Fourth*, the lack of time for communication between parents and children.

CONCLUSION

The role of the family in shaping the political culture of the community in Kuala Kurun Subdistrict, Kurun District, Gunung Mas Regency is 1) as a medium of political socialisation for children and young people; and 2) providing information about politics to children and young people. Thus, the results of this study confirm Gabriel Almond's (2000) view that the role of the family can shape the political culture of children as individuals through the role of political socialisation, which is particularly strategic for the formation of children's basic personalities and social attitudes that will later influence their political orientation.

The challenges faced are 1) children's lack of knowledge and insight; 2) the many political terms that children do not understand and parents do not comprehend; 3) differences of opinion between parents and children; 4) lack of communication and interaction between parents and children because they only have time to interact in the evenings and on weekends when the family gathers.

In the future, it will be important for families, especially parents, to engage in political socialisation in order to shape children's political culture, with the aim of giving children an understanding of politics, as many children still know little about politics. Attention and support in the form of good parent-child relationships are needed in shaping political culture through political socialisation. Political parties must be sensitive to this fact by implementing political education activities for families (every head of household) in every village and sub-district.

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