Symbolic Violence in Indonesian Families during Presidential Elections: Forms, Influencing Factors, and Impacts

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the forms, factors, and impacts of symbolic violence in families during presidential elections. This study used a phenomenological involving five adults aged 19 to 40 years as subjects of the research. Subjects were selected based on inclusive criteria, including having voting rights and having experienced symbolic violence during the presidential election. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The study found that symbolic violence in families during elections manifests in various subtle but effective forms of parental domination, such as moral bullying, sharp criticism, and the use of religious and family status narratives to impose political views. Parents often use religious values to legitimise their pressure on children, compelling them to conform. Homogeneous social environments, political organisations, and conservative backgrounds reinforce this authoritarian attitude. The impact on children includes internal pressure to hide differing political views and a fear of family conflict, leading to a sense of constraint and lack of freedom. This pressure also weakens trust in parental authority and creates emotional distance, resulting in unhealthy family relationships. These findings have implications for policymakers, educators, and social organizations by informing the design of interventions that support individual political freedom and promote healthier family relationships grounded in mutual respect and open communication.

Keywords: Democratic, election, , family, political, symbolic violence

INTRODUCTION

During presidential elections in Indonesia, differences in political views often seep into intimate family dynamics. Children may face criticism from parents who invoke moral or religious authority to undermine child's political choices, resulting in emotional

distance, tension, or silent resistance within the household (Gunawan & Bahari, 2024). These experiences demonstrate that democratic contestation can manifest as a subtle form of pressure in the private sphere. Elections in democratic systems, including in Indonesia (Zaman et al., 2023), are designed to guarantee free, fair, and participatory political rights (Sarbaini, 2020). However, this democratic ideal often clashes with deep-rooted family values and hierarchical norms in the household, which ultimately gives rise to symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2017).

In the Indonesian context, political rights are guaranteed in Article 43 Paragraphs (1) and (2) of Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, which guarantees that every citizen has the right to vote and be elected through direct, public, free, secret, honest, and fair elections (Suwanto & one Melany, 2023). Similarly, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Konstitusi, 2014) highlighting the central role of the people in democratic governance. The study specifically focusses on Indonesia's presidential election, a period often marked by rising political tensions and polarisation. Although presidential elections are formally public and political events, their effects often extend into the personal realm, especially within the family, where political differences can trigger tension. The motivation for this research arises from the observation that political contestation at the national level can manifest symbolic violence in family relationships.

Citizens have the right to vote freely or discretionally, but sometimes they encounter obstacles related to technical matters and intangibles. Technical obstacles include various violations and fraud, including abuse of voting rights (Rasji et al., 2023), law enforcement against less-than-optimal election crimes (Septiono et al., 2023), issues related to honesty and fairness in elections, ranging from money politics to unprofessional election organisers (Imawan & Ratna, 2020). Intangible obstacles, on the other hand, involve symbolic pressures, particularly within families where dominant members, such as parents, exert coercive influence over younger or subordinate family members in political decision-making.

This type of pressure can be understood through Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, a form of non-physical domination embedded in everyday interactions and internalised power structures (Burawoy, 2019). Unlike overt violence, symbolic violence operates subtly—through moral arguments, emotional pressure, and hierarchical expectations—making it harder to detect or resist. In familial settings, it often manifests as demands for loyalty, shame, or religious justification, especially when parents expect children to conform to political choices. Symbolic violence is accepted as 'normal' by both parties and thus perpetuated without open conflict.

In the context of Indonesian elections, symbolic pressure within families can be exacerbated by broader campaign strategies. Political parties often mobilise religious or community figures to influence

voters (Barokah, 2023; Fiorentina et al., 2023). These figures, perceived as moral authorities, indirectly reinforce familial dominance over political choices. As a result, parents may use similar religious or communal arguments to legitimise pressure on their children, blurring the line between persuasion and coercion. This contradicts the democratic ideal of free political choice (Suwanto & Melany, 2023).

Some studies discussing violence in elections are influenced by factors such as political agencies (Momen et al., 2020), ethnic territory, weak institutions, and a culture of violence (Jenkins, 2020). Visual representations of violence during elections play an important role in shaping public perception and can have an impact on the representation of democracy (Jones, 2021). The violent metaphors used by political candidates can also influence voting behaviour, depending on the resonance with audience characteristics and political orientation (Kalmoe, 2013). Electoral violence is a global problem, with studies exploring its causes and consequences around the world (Saha, 2022). However, most of these studies focus on public and visible forms of violence, such as physical clashes, institutional weaknesses, or media influence. This study, by contrast, focuses on how electoral contestation penetrates the private sphere, particularly the family through symbolic violence. While previous research has analysed violence at structural and societal levels, this study contributes by revealing how subtle and invisible power operates interpersonally within families during the presidential election.

Based on the description above, this study aims to explore and analyse in depth the authoritarian attitudes of parents that form symbolic violence against children in the context of the election of presidential candidates in the Indonesian elections. This study also aims to identify the underlying factors of dominance and its impact on children. The findings in this study are expected to contribute to public understanding and provide insight for policymakers in encouraging democratic values in the family environment. This research is based on the argument that parental authoritarianism as a form of symbolic violence has diverse backgrounds, depending on the role and position of parents in the family structure. Further explanations will be presented in the following sections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of Symbolic Violence

Symbolic violence is a central concept in Pierre Bourdieu's thought to explain how social dominance is maintained through invisible but highly effective mechanisms. Symbolic violence operates subtly through social representations, language, knowledge, and meaning that are legitimised by the dominant institutions in society (Bourdieu, 2017). It works through internalising values and norms by the dominated party, where dominance is accepted voluntarily as a natural thing, without realising it as a form of oppression (Lindell, 2022).

In family structures, symbolic violence is present when parents use their normative authority to shape children's views of

the world, including in terms of politics, religion, and morality (Ulya, 2017). This dominance does not always come in the form of explicit prohibitions, but rather through symbolic language full of meaning, such as moral advice, religious postulates, or family expectations conveyed compassionately. The child then internalises these values as an unquestionable truth. Narratives such as "choosing a leader is a religious responsibility" or "this family always chooses a certain party" become instruments of symbolic power that narrow the space for critical thinking and individual autonomy in the family (Fatmawati, 2020).

Bourdieu also emphasised that symbolic power is only effective if there is a supportive *habitus*, that is, mental structures and dispositions formed through social experience from an early age (Stahl & Mu, 2024). In an ideologically homogeneous family, this *habitus* forms communication and power relations patterns that leave no room for open resistance. Children with different views tend to be silent, hide differences, or give in for family harmony (Ulya, 2017). Because it works through symbolic legitimacy, this domination is rarely realized as violence by perpetrators and victims, and instead becomes the most established social reproductive mechanism in preserving power relations inequality (Burawoy, 2019).

Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory developed by Albert Bandura explains that human behaviour is not only formed through direct experience, but also through observation, imitation, and reinforcement of the actions of other individuals who are considered models (Bandura & Walters, 1977). The model usually has an emotional closeness or symbolic authority, such as a parent in a family context. In the domestic environment, children observe their parents' mindsets, attitudes, and responses to social issues, including political choices, and use them as a reference in shaping their preferences. This process transmits family values and political orientations between generations, even without explicit verbal communication (Bandura, 2011).

In practice, the family's social learning process is often unrealised as a form of ideological formation. When children accept political values from their parents without questioning or critically evaluating, there is a passive but deeply rooted internalisation process. In the context of symbolic violence, this theory explains how the dominance of political values in the family does not always appear through verbal coercion or open emotional pressure, but rather through the repetition of parental attitudes and views considered the absolute truth. This makes social learning theory relevant to understanding how the legitimacy of symbolic power in the family is strengthened by social processes that seem natural but keep a hidden domination structure (Wahyuni & Fitriani, 2022).

Theory of Authority

Max Weber classifies authority into three ideal types: traditional authority, charismatic

authority, and rational-legal authority (Weber, 2009). Traditional authority is derived from hereditary customs and values, accepted as legitimate because it has long existed in specific social structures. Charismatic authority relies on a leader's charm or exceptional qualities, while rational-legal authority relies on formally recognized laws and rational systems (Conger, 1993). In interpersonal and family relationships, traditional authority is often the basis of power relations between parents and children, especially in societies that still uphold patriarchal values and seniority. In this context, the role of parents is often considered absolute and unquestionable, including instilling political, moral, or religious values (Riches, 2010).

However, as a child's age and reflective capacity increase, such traditional forms of authority can undergo shifts or even rejections. Children begin to reassess parents' authority based on rationality and freedom of thought, especially when the values instilled clash with social reality or their personal views. In the context of symbolic violence in the family, this conflict arises when parents use their traditional authority to impose political preferences on children. In contrast, children develop a more rational and critical mindset. This process of resistance can be read as a transition from obedience to customary-based authority to an orientation to authority based on argumentation and logical consideration, which in Weber's terminology, reflects the characteristics of modern and democratic societies (Conger, 1993).

Conflict Management Theory in the Family

Conflict management theory departs from the assumption that differences of opinion, including political views, are normal and even healthy in interpersonal relationships, as long as they are managed constructively. K. Thomas and Kilmann (1978) developed five main styles in dealing with conflict: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. In parent-child relationships, the competitive (dominant) style is often used by parents who feel they have absolute authority. At the same time, children tend to choose avoidance or accommodating styles to avoid tension. When differences in values are not discussed openly but suppressed in the family's hierarchical structure, an imbalance of power emerges (Kilmann & K. Thomas, 1975)This pattern creates ideal conditions for the emergence of symbolic violence since dominance is not directly challenged but accepted as a form of obedience in the family structure.

Furthermore, Bowen, through Family Systems Theory, emphasized the importance of the concept *of differentiation of self*, which is the ability of individuals to remain emotionally connected to the family while maintaining autonomy of thought and personal identity (Haefner, 2014). In authoritarian families, this capacity is often hampered by expectations of uniformity of values. Hocker and Wilmot (2018) Emphasized that healthy and equal communication patterns are key to resolving interpersonal conflicts. When families fail to establish open

spaces for dialogue, conflicts are managed dysfunctional, and children are not given space to express differences safely. In this context, symbolic violence emerges as an expression of conflict management failures, in which emotional pressure, symbolic manipulation, and moral legitimacy are used to control the child's choices, rather than to understand or bridge differences.

METHOD

Research Design

This research used a qualitative design with an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach (Larkin et al., 2019). This approach was chosen because it aligns with the research's objective, which is to explore the experience of symbolic violence in the family during the presidential election in Indonesia, especially when dominant family members impose their political preferences on others.

Based on these objectives, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What forms of symbolic violence are experienced by young adults in Indonesian families during the presidential election?
2. What factors contribute to the emergence of symbolic violence in the family in the context of political contestation?
3. How does symbolic violence affect the emotional and political autonomy of individuals in the family?
4. What strategies do individuals use to resist symbolic pressure from dominant family members?

Participants

Participants were selected through snowball sampling techniques, starting from the initial contact known to the researcher and meeting the inclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria include:

1. Indonesian citizens between the ages of 19 and 40;
2. Have the right to vote in the presidential election;
3. Experienced symbolic violence (whether verbal, emotional, or ideological) from family members during election time;
4. Willing to become a participant and sign an informed consent form.

Five participants were selected, representing diverse family backgrounds, education levels, and political experiences. To maintain confidentiality, the identities of participants are disguised using initials.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was carried out from February to October 2024 through semi-structured in-depth interviews, each lasting 60 to 90 minutes. Interviews are conducted in person or through a secure video conferencing platform, depending on the situation and the comfort of the participants. The interview questions were open-ended and directed to explore participants' experiences related to political pressure in the family, communication dynamics, emotional responses, and strategies to deal with or resist such pressure.

In addition to the interviews, the researchers also recorded observations in the

form of non-verbal expressions, emotional responses, and social context during the interview. Some participants also provided supporting documents such as screenshots of conversations in family groups that contained religious or ethnic-based political pressures.

All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and transcribed *verbatim*. The transcript is then sent back to the participant to be verified as a form of member checking to increase the credibility of the data.

The data were analysed by following the six-step IPA procedure (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021), namely reading and rereading, initial note-taking, develop initial themes, connecting themes in each case, moving on to the next case, and identify patterns across cases. The process of coding and organising data is assisted by NVivo software version 14. To increase the accuracy of the analysis, the researcher conducts team discussions (peer debriefing) and records audit trails during the process.

Research Validity and Ethics

To maintain the validity of the research, several strategies are applied:

1. Credibility. Gained through long engagement, member checking, and peer discussion.
2. Transferability. Rich descriptions of participants' backgrounds and social contexts are provided in the results section.
3. Dependability and confirmability. Maintained through recording audit trails and critical reflection on the researcher's position (researcher reflexivity).

All participants have signed a participation consent form and been given an explanation of data confidentiality and the right to terminate participation at any time. Names and personal information are obscured in all results reporting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Data of Research Subjects

Table 1presents the demographic data of five research subjects. Three of the subjects are female and two subjects are male that aged between 19 to 40 years. In terms of marital status, IM and NH are still single, while RN, HN, and AB are married. Education levels vary from high school to postgraduate, with jobs including teachers, students, employees, lecturers, and content creators. The perpetrators of symbolic violence in the subject include close family members, such as biological mothers, aunts, fathers, mothers-in-law, and wife's family. Regarding the tendency of political direction, IM, RN, and HN subjects did not follow the perpetrators of symbolic violence, while NH and AB followed.

Findings of the Research Results

The collectivist family culture in Indonesia upholds hierarchy and obedience to parents, so political views are often considered part of family identity and values (Usman, 2024). As a result, there is moral pressure on young family members to follow family

Table 1
Demographic data of research subjects

Dimension	Subject IM	Subject NH	Subject RN	Subject HN	Subject AB
Age	30	19	34	40	25
Gender	Woman	Woman	Man	Woman	Man
Marital status	Single	Single	Married	Married	Married
Education	Master's degree	Senior High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Bachelor's degree
Religion	Islam	Islam	Islam	Islam	Islam
Number of children	-	-	2	3	1
Number of siblings	4	3	2	4	3
The first child	3	3	1	1	2
Work	Teacher	Student	Official	Lecturer	Content Creator
The perpetrators of symbolic violence are-	Biological mother: Aunt	Father; Mother	Father-in-law	Mother-in-law	Wife's Family
Political orientation	Not following the perpetrators of symbolic violence	Following the perpetrator of symbolic violence	Not following the perpetrators of symbolic violence	Not following the perpetrators of symbolic violence	Following the perpetrator of symbolic violence

political choices. The political experience of the New Order period that suppressed differences of opinion also shaped the attitude of the older generation towards authority and political expression, which still affects inter-generational relations to this day. Coupled with the strong influence of religious and ethnic identities in politics, political discussions in the family become complex and prone to symbolic violence wrapped in the pretext of morality or communal loyalty.

Furthermore, this study has formulated the research problem described in the previous chapter. An overview of the findings of this study can be seen in Figure 1.

Based on Figure 1, the three problem formulations have successfully found answers. The formulation of the problem consists of the form of symbolic violence of parents against children in the tendency to vote in the presidential general election, factors influencing symbolic violence in the family during the presidential general election, and the impact of symbolic violence in the family during the presidential general election will be described in the discussion below.

Forms of Symbolic Violence by Parents against Children in the Tendency to Vote in the Presidential Election

In the elections, symbolic violence by parents often appears through linguistic and relational strategies, such as verbal abuse, stereotyping, euphemisms, dominance in discussions, gaslighting, and rejection (Weininger, 2003). In the context of family
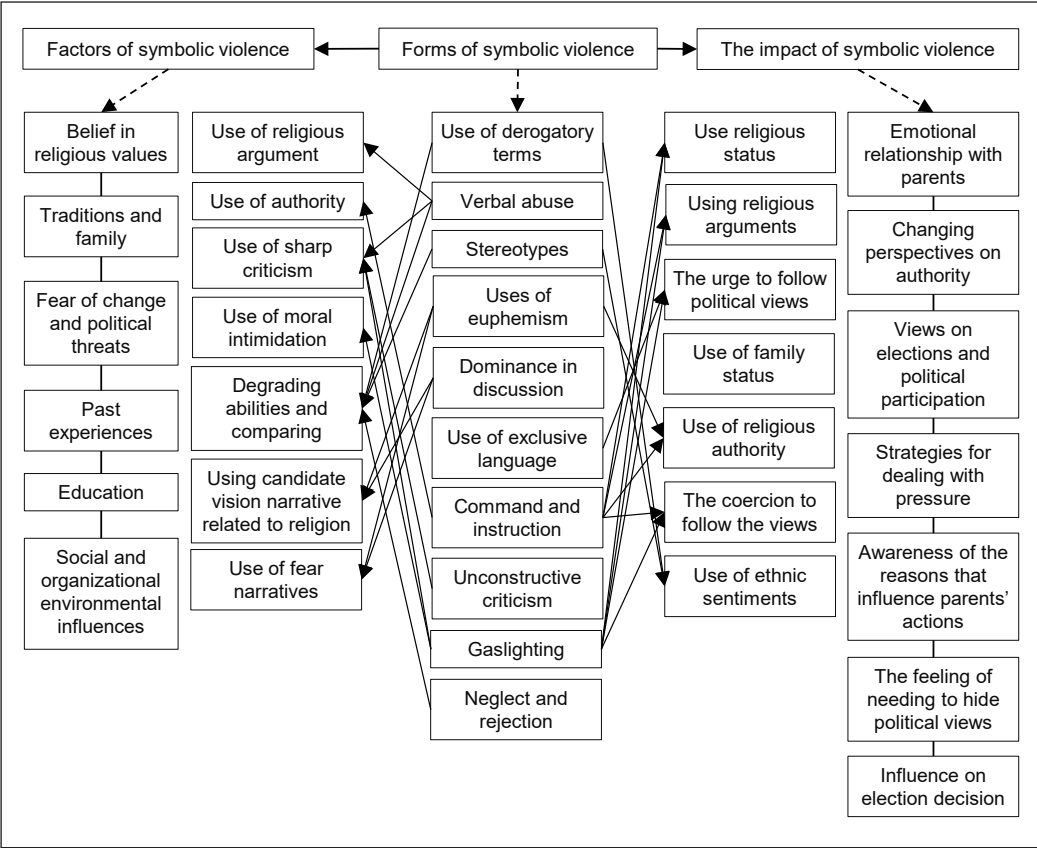
Figure 1. Findings of the research results

relationships, symbolic violence does not arise through physical domination, but rather through everyday language, moral expectations, and implicit hierarchies internalised by both parents and children. In contrast to apparent violence, symbolic violence works subtly, through shame, guilt, demands for loyalty, and moral justification that make more difficult to recognize and resist. In Indonesian families that uphold hierarchy and obedience to parents, symbolic violence often appears in the form of religious rhetoric, moral judgments, and unspoken expectations of conformity. These practices are often considered part of normal parenting, but they can undermine the political autonomy and emotional well-being of younger family members.

The use of religious arguments to pressure children politically, such as in IM's case that creates moral and emotional coercion. IM's parents framed political obedience as a religious obligation, generating a gaslighting effect that led to self-doubt and guilt (Arismunandar, 2009). In Bourdieu's view, religious discourse can project an illusion of absolute truth that silences dissent (Siregar, 2016), while Foucault notes that such authority is often

used to symbolically discipline individuals (Bernauer, 2004).

Using authority as a control tool in the context of children's political elections creates power dynamics that significantly affect individual autonomy, as experienced by IM research subjects. When parents use their positions of authority to regulate a child's political choices, this is not just an instructional act but a form of command and instruction that reinforces the hierarchy within the family. Pierre Bourdieu explained that authority in the family functions as a power mechanism that reinforces parental dominance (Colaguori, 2010) so that the child feels that the right to vote independently is not only ignored but also prohibited. In the case of IM, the mother felt entitled to regulate all aspects of her child's life, including political decisions. This limits IM's freedom to explore political options different from their parents' wishes. Domination through this authority is detrimental to children's autonomy in political decision-making. The inability to independently explore or express political views creates significant internal conflicts, in which the desire to meet parental expectations clashes with the desire to explore personal identities and values (Solomon, 2012).

Degrading a child's chosen candidate with sharp criticism without providing constructive solutions or alternatives is a form of communication that is detrimental and can potentially have a profound psychological impact. In this context, the criticism that the IM receives

against its chosen candidate is considered unconstructive because it focuses more on attacking the candidate than building a better understanding of political choice. Noam Chomsky stated that this kind of criticism, which is not equipped with suggestions or solutions, only serves to degrade the child's position and make him feel that his political choices are worthless (Purdy, 1994). This makes IM feel that his views are not appreciated. As a result, doubts arose in the IM about the validity of his political choices. This sense of inferiority can create more significant uncertainty in future political decision-making. This symbolic violence is also marked by verbal abuse.

Furthermore, gaslighting instills doubt in children's political choices, making them feel irrational or disobedient. In this context, Pierre Bourdieu explains that gaslighting can make children feel guilty and doubt their capacity to think rationally (Fatmawati, 2020). In NH's case, his mother considered herself a child who never obeyed and was reluctant to be freed from the shackles of leaders she considered unjust. This creates an atmosphere full of emotional pressure. By using strong religious and moral arguments, NH was made to feel that his political choices were wrong and reflected more profound moral deficiencies. This causes NH to feel trapped in the conflict between his will and the perceived moral demands of his parents, which further aggravates the psychological burden he experiences. Judith Butler notes that this kind of verbal attack weakens a child's position in the discussion, reducing their ability to think critically

and independently.(Butler, 2021) In this case, NH feels intimidated by a negative assessment of his ability to assess existing political choices.

Degrading children's critical abilities through comparisons with students of the 1998 generation creates a significant psychological impact on NH's self-confidence, where Erving Goffman highlights that this kind of comparison is a form of stigmatisation that makes children feel inferior if they are not able to meet the standards that are considered higher (Wilson & McGuire, 2021). NH experiences intense pressure when her father attributes her lack of critical ability to an inability to think deeply, causing NH to feel degraded and lose her identity as an individual who has the potential to contribute to political discourse. Critical skills that are considered indicators of high intellect, if not met, give rise to feelings of inferiority. Furthermore, the use of stereotypes about a particular generation reinforces the symbolic dominance of parents, as explained by Pierre Bourdieu that stereotypes are used to maintain power structures within the family, leaving the child trapped in high and unrealistic social expectations (Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016). NH feels pressured to conform to the standards expected of previous generations. This tendency reflects Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2017), in which individuals submit not through physical coercion, but through moral obligations that they feel, which have been internalized over time as part of their family habitus.

The use of religious-related vision narratives by NH parents serves as a form of covert domination, in which political discussion is framed in seemingly positive religious values but limits the exploration of alternative options (N. Thomas, 2021). NH's parents associate political choices with religious norms. Hence, NH feels pressured to support specific candidates perceived as more "religious," and critical analysis is considered an act of disobedience to religious values.

The use of religious status by RN parents to suppress political choices reflects social control that limits individual freedom. RN felt pressured by his father-in-law to choose specific candidates based on religious views. Michel Foucault stated that using religious status strengthens the unquestionable hierarchy of power (Bernauer, 2004), leaving RN caught between her family's expectations and her desires. In addition, the practice of gaslighting makes RNs doubt their judgment and critical abilities, creating symbolic subordination (Colaguori, 2010).

The use of religious arguments to regulate children's political choices is an intense form of symbolic control, especially in religious families. RN parents use religion to dictate political choices, emphasizing that voting for a particular candidate is part of religious morality. This left the RN in a moral dilemma, where his political choices were perceived as a religious responsibility with significant consequences. Pierre Bourdieu called this symbolic subordination, suppressing the autonomy of the RN and encouraging him to submit to the will of

his parents for the sake of religious purity. (Wacquant, 2013).

The insistence on following parents' political views for the family's good name and religion is a form of symbolic control. In HN's case, her mother-in-law pressured her to support candidates supported by religious organisations in which her husband's extended family was participating, considering that some of her family members were leaders of the mass organisations. Judith Butler calls this use of exclusive language symbolic violence (Butler, 2021). By associating the excellent name of the family and religion with political choices, children lose their autonomy and feel that they have to follow the family to maintain their image.

The use of religious authority as a tool of political control in the family is very effective in pressuring children to follow their parents' political views. In the case of HN, her mother-in-law emphasised choosing candidates suggested by her role model religious leaders (kiai), citing emotional and spiritual closeness to the candidate. Michel Foucault stated that religious authority strengthens the power structure in society (Bernauer, 2004). This deprived the HN of personal freedom because opposing political views meant opposing religious authority.

Coercion follows the political views of parents by emphasizing moral and religious aspects, trapping the child in severe emotional distress. In AB's case, her parents considered her political responsibility a moral obligation to the state and religion. Pierre Bourdieu calls this use of moral arguments symbolic subordination, in which social forces, such as religion and morality, pressure individuals to submit to parental authority (Wacquant, 2013). For AB, political choice is no longer an individual right but a social obligation that must be fulfilled according to religious and moral norms. This left AB in a moral dilemma: rejecting parental choices meant violating sacred values. Judith Butler added that moral arguments can create deep guilt (Butler, 2021).

The use of narratives of fear and ethnic sentiments to suppress children's political choices is a common tactic used to create anxiety against other groups. In AB's case, her mother-in-law took advantage of ethnic stereotypes to instill fear that if a particular candidate were not chosen, other ethnic groups would dominate. Teun Van Dijk calls these ethnic stereotypes symbolic violence that strengthens power structures by emphasising ethnic differences as a threat (Van Dijk, 2002). This creates psychological pressure that makes AB feel that his political choices must be based on being vigilant against the threat constructed. Pierre Bourdieu added that these stereotypes shape society's way of thinking and create a social hierarchy that strengthens the power of the dominant group (Blommaert, 2015).

Although the forms of symbolic violence differed, the patterns of domination shared a similar structure. IM, NH, and AB experienced strong moral and religious pressure, including theological arguments, sharp criticism, and dismissal of their autonomy. RN and HN show how symbolic

power also stems from extended families, such as in-laws or religious figures. While IM and AB faced direct pressure from parents, NH and RN were gaslighted through generational or religious superiority. HN and AB also encountered control through kinship and community expectations. Despite differing contexts, all cases reveal that symbolic violence operates systemically through internalized values, morality, and authority reflecting how family habitus in electoral politics reinforces broader social hierarchies.

Factors Influencing Symbolic Violence in the Family during the Presidential Election

Experts argue that a variety of factors, including education, past experiences, social environment, and organisational affiliation, influence symbolic violence. Symbolic violence occurs when social dominance is accepted as "normal" through individuals internalising dominant values often rooted in the social and educational environment (Bourdieu, 2017). Ideologies enforced through the state's ideological apparatus, such as schools and families, play a role in strengthening this symbolic violence (Althusser, 2006). In addition, a homogeneous social environment within a particular organisation or group reinforces symbolic control because individuals feel pressured to conform to established norms. These factors create conditions where symbolic violence continues to be maintained in a broader social context (Giddens & Sutton, 2021).

Research by Lahire shows that parents' values shape the younger generation's political attitudes. Parents with strong religious beliefs often perceive political choices as a reflection of morality and family identity (Lahire, 2003). If a child chooses a different candidate, they can be considered a betrayal of family values, creating significant psychological pressure. Parents can use unfounded messages from social media to discredit other candidates in elections. This is in line with Bourdieu's view of ideological dominance maintained through invisible violence, making it difficult for children to develop independent political views (Krisdinanto, 2014).

Family traditions and values are key factors that trigger symbolic violence in the context of general elections. Previous research by Miller and Sears has shown that parents' political orientation is often influenced by values that are passed down from generation to generation in the family, which are then passed on to children (Miller & Sears, 1986). Meanwhile, within the framework of Bourdieu's theory, family traditions, and values that influence political choices are a form of habitus, which is a mental structure that is instilled through socialization from an early age and influences the way a person sees the world and makes decisions (Bourdieu, 2017). Parents' strong habit of family traditions in politics often leads them to neglect their children's autonomy in voting. The study results show that when children choose different candidates, this can be perceived as an act of disloyalty, strengthening the

political dominance of parents within the family.

Previous research by Furedi highlighted how fear of external threats, such as political change, can reinforce authoritarian behaviour in the family. Parents who feel threatened by political change often respond with stricter measures of control over their children (Furedi, 2005). This fear is reflected in parents' efforts to ensure their children do not vote for candidates perceived to bring dangerous change in elections. IM subjects revealed that their parents often worry that different political choices can negatively impact the family personally and socially. These concerns reinforce the pressure on children to follow the same political views to protect families from perceived threats.

Past experiences and educational backgrounds play an important role in shaping parents' political attitudes, which are then passed on to their children through the mechanism of symbolic violence. Pierre Bourdieu explains that symbolic violence is an act that imposes norms, values, and worldviews through subtle means that are not seen as direct coercion but have a significant impact on the subject who receives it (Weininger, 2003). Parents who have a conservative educational background or past political experience tend to feel that their political views are the only right choice, so they feel entitled to impose those views on their children.

Pierre Bourdieu, through his theory of symbolic violence, explains that dominant power operates subtly through internalised social practices so that individuals unconsciously follow the rules of non-physical violence (Bourdieu, 2017). He also introduced the concept of habitus, which shows how social experiences shape an individual's perspective, including in politics. The parental habitus formed by a uniform social environment creates an authoritarian mindset transmitted to the family (Oliveira & da Silva, 2022). Political views considered correct by the social group of parents are part of a habitus that is difficult to change, and parents feel the need to assert it to their children (Ulya, 2017) This process creates symbolic violence in the form of control over children's political choices, which is often seen as protection against external political threats.

Although the backgrounds and social contexts of each participant were different, the factors that influence the occurrence of symbolic violence in the family showed similar structural patterns. IM and AB, for example, are under intense political pressure from parents who have conservative ideological experiences and deep religious upbringing. This pattern shows how *the habitus* formed from past experiences and the educational environment creates certain moral beliefs that are then inherited and imposed on the child. Meanwhile, RN and HN show how a homogeneous social environment thick with religious organisational affiliations reinforces the demand for political uniformity within the extended family. NH, despite coming from a seemingly more flexible family, remains under intense pressure through narratives of fear and generational comparison, another

form of symbolic control that stems from broader social structures. In general, the participants showed that symbolic violence does not arise solely from the personal intentions of parents, but is rooted in value systems that have been internalised through a long process of socialisation: from formal education, family culture, to social and religious affiliations. In line with the views of Bourdieu and Althusser, symbolic power in these cases works through social structures that shape unconscious ways of thinking and acting, so that dominance becomes seemingly natural and difficult to question even in domestic spaces.

The Impact of Symbolic Violence on the Family during the Presidential Election

Symbolic violence, according to Pierre Bourdieu, is an invisible power that individuals accept as natural (Weininger, 2003). In parent-child relationships, symbolic violence occurs when parents instill political views that are considered normative without opening up space for discussion. This internalisation process is often unconscious by the individual but results in emotional distancing. This tension creates a change in emotional state (Conway, 2017), especially when the parents do not recognize or value the child's opinion. The subject of HN, for example, felt less appreciated when his views differed, which widened the emotional distance between them. Symbolic violence operates in the family structure by demanding obedience without equal dialogue, leaving the child feeling isolated and lacking a

strong emotional bond with the parents (Conway, 2017).

The change in perspective on authority experienced by informants can be explained through Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, which emphasises how power can operate indirectly and disguised through symbolic mechanisms (Mustikasari et al., 2023). In the family context, parents often play the role of authority figures considered to have legitimacy in determining political views and other values. Symbolic violence arises when individuals are forced to accept these values as the norm in the absence of room for questioning. However, the informants' experience showed resistance to this symbolic power, and they began to question the views of their parents and other authority figures. This signifies a shift in the symbolic power structure from passive obedience to independent thinking.

Max Weber's theory of authority is also relevant to understand this change. Weber distinguishes between traditional authority, which is based on habit and social acceptance, and rational authority, which is built on critical evaluation (Conger, 1993). In this case, parental authority initially serves as unquestioned traditional authority. However, over time, informants developed a critical attitude more aligned with rational authority.

The research results on the impact of symbolic violence in elections can be explained through John Stuart Mill's theory of individual freedom (Loizides et al., 2023). Mill argued that individual freedom, including voting, is essential for human development. Despite experiencing

pressure from their families, informants such as IM and NH respect the freedom to make political choices independently. This award aligns with Mill's idea that freedom of thought and choice is the key to the progress of individuals and society. The theories of political participation from Verba, Nie, and Kim are also relevant, stating that political participation is a means of expressing preferences and influencing public policy (Nie et al., 1974). In addition, the informant's experience can be analysed through James C. Scott's theory of symbolic resistance, which suggests that resistance to domination can occur symbolically, such as sticking to political choices despite pressure (Ho, 2011).

The results of research on strategies for coping with parental pressure in a political context can be analysed using the family conflict theory of Murray Bowen, which emphasizes the importance of self-differentiation in family relationships (Bridge, 2019). In this study, informants such as IM, NH, and AB tended to avoid political discussions to avoid conflicts with parents. Bowen argues that individuals with low self-differentiation often struggle to express their views openly in stressful situations, such as political differences. Their choice to avoid discussion or hide their political views reflects an effort to maintain family harmony despite having to suppress self-expression. This suggests that pressure from parents creates an imbalance between the need to express oneself and maintain a good relationship with the family. This strategy of avoiding conflict can also be analysed through the theory of social harmony in the context of collectivist culture, as proposed by Geert Hofstede. In collectivist cultures, maintaining harmonious relationships in the family is often prioritised over openly expressing disagreements (Bridge, 2019).

Discussions about informant awareness of the influence of parental actions in political contexts can be analysed through political socialisation theory, which emphasises that political values and views are passed down from generation to generation through family interactions. According to Almond and Verba, political socialization is how individuals acquire political attitudes, values, and beliefs (Potulski, 2020)The informant realized that parents' actions, including imposed political views, were greatly influenced by their background and education. For example, IM points out that the previous generation's authoritarian upbringing shaped their parents' political views. This understanding is in line with the theory of political socialisation, which emphasises how parents' experiences affect how they educate their children regarding political choices.

In addition to political socialization, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus is also relevant for understanding the impact of parents' backgrounds and life experiences on their views (Hallatu, 2021). Habitus is a disposition system resulting from the process of socialisation of individuals in a particular social environment (Mustikasari et al., 2023). In this context, the actions of parents, as expressed by the RN subject, are influenced by "their work circles, life experiences, and friends of the mass

organisation," suggesting that their habitus comes from their life experiences and social interactions. This theory explains that parents' political views do not arise from a vacuum but instead reflect their social structure, influencing how they guide children in a political context.

The theoretical discussion of the impact of symbolic violence on the feeling of the need to hide political views can be explained through the theory of symbolic violence by Pierre Bourdieu. Symbolic violence refers to a form of domination in which individuals submit to norms and rules without realising that they are being dominated (Weininger, 2003). In this context, parents become symbolic agents of power who control political discourse in the family, so children need to hide their political views to avoid conflict. For example, IM and AB subjects prefer hiding their political opinions. This act reflects the internalisation of the symbolic power of parents, where children feel they cannot express different views. This theory explains how children unconsciously accept this condition as "normal" in family power dynamics.

In addition, Erving Goffman's impression management theory can also be used to understand the behaviour of hiding political views. According to Goffman, individuals often manage the impression they create in front of others to avoid conflict or maintain self-image (Pernelet & Brennan, 2023). In this case, children try to manage their impression in front of their parents by not expressing conflicting political views to avoid muddying family relationships. The

social control theory is also relevant in this discussion, especially in explaining how parental social pressure affects children's behaviour. Social control refers to the mechanisms society uses, including the family, to maintain order and adhere to applicable norms (Costello & Laub, 2020).

In analyzing the influence of parental pressure on the decision to choose, the theory of *symbolic violence* from Pierre Bourdieu is very relevant. This theory explains that symbolic violence is a form of domination that is carried out subtly and indirectly, in which the dominated party accepts and obeys specific rules or values without realising it (Schubert, 2022). In this context, pressure from parents to follow particular political views can be understood as a form of symbolic violence experienced by children. As seen in the NH and AB Subjects, they follow the symbolic pressure of parents to avoid conflict and maintain family harmony. This reflects how parent-driven family norms create emotional and social pressures for children, ultimately influencing their political decisions. These findings are consistent with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, in which political attitudes and behaviours are absorbed through repeated exposure and reinforcement in family settings.

The theory of *Social Learning* by Albert Bandura can also be used to understand children's behaviour in response to parental pressure (Muneer, 2021). According to Bandura, individuals learn through observation and imitation of the behaviour of others, especially people who have

authority or emotional closeness (Wahyuni & Fitriani, 2022). In this case, children such as NH and AB tend to follow their parents' political views and learn and imitate the political attitudes dictated by the family environment.

Although each participant experienced symbolic violence in different contexts, there were consistent patterns that emerged. IM, NH, and AB tended to hide their political preferences in order to maintain family harmony. This reflects the internal pressure resulting from parental symbolic dominance. In contrast, RN and HN experienced more complex dynamics, where influence came not only from parents but also from extended family and religious institutions. These findings show that symbolic violence affects not only individual behaviour but also reinforces obedience within wider social networks. Participants such as IM and NH showed signs of beginning to question their parents' political values, which indicates a shift from traditional authority to a more rational mindset as described by Weber. However, they still avoided direct confrontation, suggesting that the collectivist values that prioritise harmony over conflict remain influential. Symbolic violence therefore shapes both behaviour and inner conflicts, including the way individuals manage impressions and negotiate political autonomy in subtle ways.

As researchers who live within collectivist and religious cultures, we are aware that some forms of symbolic violence may be perceived as normal or even as moral advice. This awareness makes us reflect on our own positionality and challenges us to stay critical while respecting the cultural context of the participants. The stories we heard were filled with tension but also love and loyalty, which shows that symbolic power often works not through hostility, but through affection and moral duty.

This study highlights that symbolic violence during presidential elections in Indonesia does not only occur in the public sphere. It also penetrates private family life through parental authority, religious norms, and social expectations of obedience. These findings underscore the need to promote a more humanistic and dialogical form of democracy within the everyday context of family life.

CONCLUSION

The study found that symbolic violence in the family during elections manifested itself through subtle but effective parental dominance, including the use of authority, moral intimidation, sharp criticism, and narratives of religion and family status to legitimise their political views. Parents often create a narrative of fear regarding the consequences of choosing a candidate that is considered contrary to religious values, thereby limiting children's freedom to make political choices. A homogeneous social and organizational environment reinforces the authoritarian attitudes of parents, encouraging them to maintain conservative views. The psychological impact on children is significant; They feel compelled to hide different views to maintain family harmony,

which creates emotional distance and leads to unhealthy family relationships, where symbolic control replaces open dialogue.

Implications of the Study

This research provides theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study extends Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence into the context of political interactions within the family, by showing how domination can take place subtly through parental authority, religious values, and sociocultural norms. The study also emphasises the importance of respectful communication to shape individual political autonomy. In practical terms, these findings offer insights for policymakers, educators, and civil society organizations to encourage democratic values from the family environment. Efforts to improve political literacy, critical thinking, and open dialogue at home can help reduce coercive dynamics and support political awareness that respects differences.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

While this study provides in-depth insights, there are some limitations that need to be noted. The use of a small sample of five participants limited the transferability of the findings to a wider population. In addition, the qualitative Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach used in this study did not allow quantitative measurement of the prevalence of symbolic violence in the context of a larger society.

Further research is recommended to involve a larger and more demographically and culturally diverse number of participants in order to make the scope of the findings broader and more representative. A mixed-methods or quantitative approach can also strengthen results by complementing the depth of qualitative insights through measurable data. Longitudinal studies can also provide a better understanding of the dynamics of symbolic violence in family political communication over time or across election periods.

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