

BLOOD TIES AND POLITICS

The Influence of Political Polarization
upon Family Life

Edited by Louie Benedict R. Ignacio,
Veronica L. Gregorio, Clarence M. Batan
and Sampson Lee Blair

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES
IN FAMILY RESEARCH

VOLUME 31

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CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES IN
FAMILY RESEARCH VOLUME 31

**BLOOD TIES AND POLITICS:
THE INFLUENCE OF
POLITICAL POLARIZATION
UPON FAMILY LIFE**

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FOREWORD

Over recent years, the nature of politics in nations around the globe has become increasingly heated and polarized, with much of this change being attributed to various sources, including news outlets, online websites, social media, and forms of communication technology. However, discussions about politics, alongside debates and arguments, frequently occur within the familial context. Sharp divides in the political attitudes of family members often result in open arguments, with some tensions escalating to the point of straining or terminating relationships.

While researchers have long recognized the significance of familial influence in shaping political beliefs, little is known about how the more disruptive and turbulent nature of contemporary politics is affecting families and family relationships. For instance, in the 2020 US primary elections, the daughter of Republican candidate Robert Regan famously urged voters not to vote for her father, blaming his views on his political beliefs, which she felt did not align with her own. A similar instance in the Philippines involved the son of senatorial candidate Loren Legarda, who published an open letter asserting that his mother's support for certain candidates marked her as a "fascist enabler." These examples highlight not only the generational divides in political outlooks but also the deeply personal, even intimate, nature of these ideological differences.

This volume explores four major themes that have surfaced through recent research on families and politics, shedding light on how political participation, polarization, value transmission, and institutional influences intersect within familial bonds. These themes offer a comprehensive exploration of family dynamics, showing how political beliefs are reinforced, challenged, or adapted in response to societal pressures.

FAMILY INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

The chapters in the first part of the volume investigate how family ties serve as enabling and constraining forces in shaping political involvement. Elieser Nicolas and Jesus Medina in their chapter, "The Pivotal Role of Family History in Writing Local History: The Case of the Barzagas in Dasmariñas City, Cavite (1986–2022)," show that through family-led initiatives, the political family of Barzagas have contributed significantly to transforming Dasmariñas from a rural area into a first-class urban center, highlighting the enduring impact of family legacies.

In "*Pagnakura* of the Bangsamoro Women in Tawi-Tawi, Philippines: How Dynastic Politics Enable Women's Political Participation in Muslim Communities," Madzween Joy K. De Asis examines how family political ties support women's

entrance into politics in Muslim communities. Muslim women in Tawi-Tawi often leverage familial political connections to gain leadership roles, while still navigating traditional patriarchal norms. These women's stories reveal the complex ways that family structures can both empower and shape political identities.

Further examining family influence on political participation, Soumodip Sinha uses a Bourdieusian framework to illustrate how political socialization within the family influences the political engagement of university activists in India. In "It's in the Family': Narratives of Learning and Doing Politics," the author shows that family support is instrumental in nurturing political identities among student leaders, who frequently describe their families (by blood and by political affiliation) as a vital source of political, social, and cultural capital.

FAMILY DYNAMICS AND POLITICAL POLARIZATION

The second part of the volume highlights how political polarization within families reflects and intensifies broader societal divides. Mark Christian J. Acido and Danica Mai N. Bernal explore the tensions arising from ideological clashes within Filipino families during the 2022 presidential election. In "Navigating Divergent Perspectives: Deconstructing Filipino Children's Reddit Narratives on Having Parents with Opposing Political Views During the 2022 Presidential Election," the study analyzes children's experiences in families where political views are sharply divided, revealing the resilience required to balance familial respect with political disagreement.

In "Respect My Opinion: A Case Study on the Political Relational Dialectics Between Parent and Child," Gabriel S. Balerio and colleagues investigate generational conflicts in Filipino families, focusing on the communication challenges posed by divergent political views. Using Relational Dialectics Theory, the study identifies the communicative behaviors, both confrontational and non-confrontational, that families adopt in managing these differences, underscoring the emotional costs of political polarization.

Expanding the exploration of polarization to an academic context, Ankush Pal, Mohammad Ali, and Amber examine family dynamics in response to the politically charged environments of two universities in India. The chapter "Education During Polarization: Investigating the Family Experiences of Students of NLM and MLN" reveals how students' political affiliations shape family interactions, where diverging views can strain familial bonds, as families grapple with the perceived social implications of their children's educational choices.

TRANSMISSION OF POLITICAL VALUES ACROSS GENERATIONS

In the third part of the volume, the transmission of political values across generations is examined as a central mechanism of political socialization within families. John Mark H. Villanueva provides a systematic review of studies on

intergenerational transmission mechanisms in “A Family Affair: A Systematic Review of Intergenerational Transmission Mechanisms of Political Values.” The review identifies direct and indirect mechanisms of political socialization, such as parental influence and media, which contribute to the intergenerational continuity of political beliefs.

In “Socialization into Politics: Parental Position-Taking and Value Formation in Children Among Elite and Non-elite Groups,” Modesto Gayo and María Luisa Méndez uses a comparative approach to study political value formation in Chilean families. The research shows that while parents in both elite and non-elite groups play significant roles in shaping their children’s political identities, factors like education and socio-economic status also mediate this transmission process.

Similarly, in “Uncovering the Dark Side: Social Capital and Political Beliefs in Filipino Families,” Louie Benedict R. Ignacio and colleagues discuss how the need for social acceptance within the family can drive members to conform to shared political views, even if it conflicts with their personal beliefs. This chapter highlights the pressures that family norms place on individual autonomy within the political sphere.

CULTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCE ON FAMILY AND POLITICS

The final part of the volume explores how cultural norms and institutional frameworks influence family politics. It reflects on the impact of Confucian familism on family and justice in China. In “The Priority of Family Over Justice: A Reflection of the Impact of the Cultural Revolution in China from the Perspective of Confucian Familism,” Andrew Tsz Wan Hung argues that Confucian values prioritize familial loyalty, which can create ethical tensions when family interests conflict with societal justice.

In “Conceptualizing Family Members as ‘Bantay’: Intersections with and Implications of Philippine Healthcare Policy,” Jaconiah Shelumiel T. Manalaysay examines how cultural expectations in the Philippines shape family caregiving roles within the healthcare system. The study finds that families often bear the responsibility of informal caregiving, a role both financially and emotionally demanding, which underscores the significant cultural expectations placed on family members to provide care.

Lastly, Mohamed Hafiz investigates how state-backed religious institutions in Singapore reinforce conservative family values. In “Religion, Family, and Politics: Anti-Genderist Discourses in Singapore Muslim Friday Sermons From State-Supported Religious Organizations,” the author analyzes sermons from the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, showing how religious narratives uphold traditional family roles and resist societal shifts toward inclusivity.

CONCLUSION

The themes explored in this volume reveal the multifaceted nature of family and politics in contemporary society. From the foundational role of family in political

participation and leadership to the challenging dynamics of political polarization, the studies gathered here provide a comprehensive view of how families navigate political beliefs and affiliations. Intergenerational transmission of values and the influence of cultural and institutional frameworks further underscore the complexity of these interactions.

In an era where political divides often feel insurmountable, understanding the role of family in shaping and sustaining political ideologies is essential. Families serve as both the first site of political socialization and as arenas where political conflicts are played out in deeply personal ways. This volume offers insights into how political beliefs are not merely personal choices but are influenced and reinforced within the close-knit bonds of family. By understanding these dynamics, we gain a clearer view of the forces shaping political attitudes and the ways families can either bridge divides or further entrench them.

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PART I

FAMILY INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

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CHAPTER 1

THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF FAMILY HISTORY IN WRITING LOCAL HISTORY: THE CASE OF THE BARZAGAS IN DASMARIÑAS CITY, CAVITE (1986–2022)

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the transformative role of the Barzaga family in the development of Dasmariñas, Philippines, over the past two decades. Through socio-economic initiatives, the family has significantly influenced the political and economic landscape, contributing to the city's progression from a rural area to a first-class urban center. The research, grounded in kinship theory and employing qualitative historical design, utilized interviews and document analysis to identify key themes related to the Barzaga family's political involvement, electoral dynamics, and broader societal impacts. Findings revealed seven main themes, highlighting the family's contributions to political events, economic growth, health, and community well-being. Recommendations for future development include enhancing political preparedness for younger family members, expanding cultural and tourism initiatives, improving healthcare

and educational infrastructure, optimizing urban planning, and establishing a new legislative district. This study underscores the importance of familial influence in shaping local history and development narratives.

Keywords: Barzaga family; Dasmariñas; family history; political contributions; local history; genealogy

INTRODUCTION

History is often associated with past events. However, history is more than telling past events, names of important individuals, and different chronological dates, Cruz (1982); Dado et al. (2015); Diokno et al. (2015); Halili (2010); Habana et al. (2013); Reid & MacAfee (2007). The Greek term of the word history is *historie* which means inquiry. History means more than basic understanding about the existing facts. In the Philippines, history is called *kasaysayan*. It is rooted in two words: *salaysay*, which means a narrative or a story and, more importantly, *saysay* or meaning (Ocampo, 2013, p. 2; Ocampo, 2014; Ocampo, 2015). Based on the etymology of Dr Ocampo, narrative stories must have a meaning. Hence, stories must be scrutinized on the facts and their sources. Names, dates, and places are important in writing history, but it must have a sense of value to be called a history.

Moreover, Calairo (2001) mentioned in his book *Cavite in Focus: Essays on Local Historiography*, *Kinakailangang ang isang manunulat ng kasaysayan ay may sapat na kaalaman ukol sa mga batis at metodolohiyang pangkasaysayan upang ang kanyang paghahayag ng nakaraan ay mayroong katotohanan*. The author accentuates the sources and methodology in presenting truths of history. Concrete examples of primary sources which can be used in writing local history are family history and genealogy.

One of the branches of history is family history. A validated and factual family history consists of struggles in life, achievements, and contributions to the society. Before a historian can write the history of a community or a nation, the historian must understand the stories, experiences, and personal life of a family because focus on the family goes beyond the personal sphere and translates to broader impacts in the society and social involvement (Morillo et al., 2013, p. 6).

Nowadays, local and family history are not only printed in written texts, but it can also be found on the internet. In a book titled, *The Art of Ancestor Hunting in the Philippines* by Dr Luciano P.R. Santiago (1990), he mentioned the agreement of the Catholic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to be microfilmed almost all surviving church books in the Philippines. These records are now digitized and available through the FamilySearch.

In a study, Chu (2014); Chao (2016); Durie (2017), cited the importance of FamilySearch in his journal *Reconstituting Histories of Filipino Families With Chinese Ancestry: Methodology, Sources, and Relevance*. Most of the records found in FamilySearch are records from the Roman Catholic Church. These are baptismal, marriage, and death records. Calairo (2001); Calairo (2020), mentioned, *Ang pangunahing batis ay yaong mga dokumentong orihinal tulad ... dokumentong pansimbahan (parochial records)*. These documents can be considered as

primary sources because they contain salient information. Also, these can be used as a basis for their analysis on important events in the course of our history.

Cadell (2002); Caceres (2010); Smith (2017); (Tucker, 2009), Sweeney (2010) explained that genealogy is the study of family lineage; early times knowledge about their ancestors and lineage strengthens their position and religious statues in the community. It became a basis for their inheritance, positions, and affiliations.

This was affirmed by genealogy of Sulu, and according to Majul (1997), the meaning of “Tarsila” is a chain or link containing genealogical accounts which is used to trace the ancestry of an individual or family to a famous personality in the past who was either an important political figure or religious leader. Moreover, it supports the claim of families to secure political power and honor from their community. Hence, a family history is also connected with politics and power. Once a family allows politics to be a dominant part of their history and chooses to be involved in politics, they later turn out to become political families.

Furthermore, Majul (2010) explained that *datus* of barangays became the *cabezas de barangay* when the barangay was transformed into a subdivision unit of the *pueblo*. Up to 1785, the position of *cabeza* was hereditary. Moreover, there were families which were exempted from *polo y servicio* or forced labor and the paying of taxes to Spanish authorities. These were some of those exempted families of Lakandula, Soliman, Gatmaitan, Gatbonton, Salonga, Laya, Lapira, Macapagal, Salamat, Manuguit, Balinguit, Banal, and Kalaw. These families who were exempted were powerful and influential families during the Spanish era and managed to remain wealthy even after the Spanish colonization. Some of them were owners of *hacienda*, and they were involved in politics.

According to Borromeo-Buehler (1985); Roces (2000), traditional or pre-European political organization is seen as being based on *Politica de familia*. This concept is used to mean a political process wherein the kinship groups as rivals or allies. *Politica de familia* thrives in a setting where elite family groups and their supporters [compete] for political power. An example of this political process is the history of dynastic power of the Montano family, who reigned for decades were removed from the local and national spotlight due to powerful alliances of Remulla and Marcos.

According to Rood (2012), Montano was dislodged when rival Juanito “Johnny” Remulla was favored by Marcos (1979–1986). Remulla, with prototypical Filipino politician agility, was victorious again under Corazon Aquino (1988–1992). He added, once a political power is gained by one family alliance, it is used relentlessly to accumulate family wealth and prominence pragmatically bending the rules of the law to gain access to special privileges.

For example, Sidel (1999); Sidel (2012) mentioned about the *hacienda*-based clans in the Philippines. We have the sugarcane *hacienda* owned by Cojuangco of Tarlac. The Fortich is known in Bukidnon for their large plantation of pineapples. Also, there are shipping empires owned by Aboitiz, Escaño, and Chongbian. In Manila, we have real-estate dynasties hosted by the Ayala, Araneta, Ortigas, and Tuazon. Most of these *hacienda*-based clans became political clans.

Gutierrez et al. (1992); McCoy (2002); Mendoza et al. (2012), defined a political clan as a family and it is extended relations or network, whose members have controlled for over a long period (20 or more years) the formal elective post in

a locality or political subdivision. A political clan that maintains power through generations has been referred to as a political dynasty. Moreover, there are political clans that established their family to politics. Some of the families are Durano of Danao, Dimaporo of Lanao, Osmeña of Cebu, and Lopez (Sidel, 2012, p. 110).

The province of Cavite also has their local version of these political families. We have the Aguinaldo of Cavite El Viejo (Kawit); the Tirona and Topacio of Imus; the Cuenca of Bacoor; the Campos of Dasmariñas; the Alvarez of Noveleta the Trias, Viniestra, and Ferrer of San Francisco De Malabon (today it is General Trias); the Nazareno of Naic; the Mojica of Alfonso, Indang, and Mendez; and the Kiamson of Silang (Sidel, 2012, p. 110). These families are considered Inquilino – they were local political officers and lived the lucrative contracts to Cavite’s vast friar lands added by Sidel (2012). We can derive from the research of Sidel that the Barzaga family is not included among the influential and powerful political families during the Spanish era and Philippine revolution of 1896. However, after the People Power Revolution of 1986, Barzaga became one of the focal leaders in politics.

According to Garcia (1992), the first known settlers who immigrated to the area (Dasmariñas) before it became a municipality were the families of Gil Tirona, Catalino Barbuco, Vicente Guevarra, Eleuterio Geda, Eustaquio Fauni, to name a few. These families came from the nearby towns of Imus and Bacoor, as well as Kawit and Noveleta. Later, a major political faction centered on the inter-marriage between the Carungcong, Mangubat, and Barzaga.

One of the families that shaped the history of local community of Dasmariñas is the Barzaga family. The biography of the Barzaga family shows that some of its members served the people of Dasmariñas since the 1896 revolution. According to Calairo’s book *Liping Kabitenyo: Talambuhay ng mga kilala at di-kilalang Kabitenyo*, Francisco Barzaga, also known as Kapitan Kiko, was the first in the family to serve in the field of public service. Calairo (1999) mentioned that he served in Dasmariñas in various positions such Kapitan ng bayan, Justice of Peace, Presidente Municipal, Municipal Treasurer, Municipal Councilor, Municipal Clerk, and Clerk of Court.

After more than a century, Kapitan Kiko was followed by Elpidio “Pidi” Frani Barzaga Jr. When he became an Officer-in-Charge (OIC) mayor in 1986 and elected mayor in 1998, additional family members joined the politics, and they have been in power for more than two decades. They have a “husband–wife team,” and one of their children is presently a city councilor too (Calairo, 1999; Garcia, 1992).

According to Gutierrez et al. (1992), Barzaga was defeated twice during the 1987 and 1988 elections. He ran as Congressman for Second District of Cavite, but he only received 20.16% votes from the electorates against Renato Dragon who won by 33.70% votes. Also, he ran for vice-gubernatorial position, but he only received 17.51% votes against the 37.27% votes of Telesforo Unas.

Elpidio “Pidi” Barzaga served as a mayor Dasmariñas for 12 years. Before he passed away, Pidi Barzaga served as a representative of the lone district of Dasmariñas. His better half, Jennifer Barzaga, is the sitting mayor of the City of Dasmariñas. They have three sons namely Francisco, Elpidio III, and Lorenzo. His son Francisco is also serving as city councilor (Tiongson-Mayrina, 2010).

According to Balisacan & Fuwa (2004); Porcalla (2013), the Barzaga family is known for their years of service in Dasmariñas. The people of Dasmariñas voted for the members of the Barzaga family to be elected for decades and embraced the political dynasty and until now trust the government under their leadership. The physical evidence that they changed the course of Dasmariñas is the numerous socio-economic projects and businesses that entered since the family took power. Also, the family continued to expand their allies and networks that extended their service. However, local historians wrote few records about the accomplishments and the successful social relations of the Barzaga to Dasmariño. Few researchers analyzed the political network of the Barzaga family which may have changed the course of their career as politicians.

This study focused on the life and works of the Barzaga family most especially the services of the Barzaga family to the people of Dasmariñas and their contributions to the local community on the following aspects such as political history and socio-economic development. This study sought to identify the life and works of the Barzaga family in writing the local history of Dasmariñas between 1986 and 2022.

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What was the family background of Barzaga and their contribution/role to the political history of Dasmariñas?
2. What was the family background of the Barzaga and their contribution/role in the economic development of Dasmariñas?
3. What were the other contributions of the family in the history of Dasmariñas?

The researcher conducted the study using a theoretical framework known as the kinship theory. The kinship theory structure has three parts namely: kinship structure, kinship politics, and patron–client system.

KINSHIP THEORY

The kinship theory is a multidisciplinary concept that examines the role of familial relationships in shaping social, political, and economic structures. This theory has three main components that focus on social organization, power dynamics, and economic reciprocity within kin networks.

The connections of kinships can create an idea that communities are interrelated to each other and might belong to the same family. There are societies which primarily started with small families. Hence, these families are the one creating their own history. In this case, kinships, genealogy, and history are interdependent subjects. One can support another because it is like a woven cloth that binds them to do a common cause in the history of their families. This notion determines the extent of importance by family history to local history.

In the Philippine setting, Torres (1985) explained that kinship relations extend on both sides to include grandparents, siblings of parents, and their own offspring ... Marriage and other rituals expand the kinship structure. Hence, a family in the Philippines is not about the nuclear family only. Extended family members are always included in the picture.

Kinship Structure

According to [Jocano \(1969\)](#), the kinship structure has been consistently identified as the primary socialization unit in Philippine society. Moreover, he said, “Extensive documentations reveal that the family is the earliest and most continuously functioning agency in socialization.”

Kinship structure is about the organization of family relationships and how these relationships are categorized within a cultural and sociological context. It can be categorized into various types of kinship systems, such as patrilineal, matrilineal, and bilateral descent, which determine inheritance, lineage, and social roles ([Schneider, 2020](#)). Patrilineal is widely accepted across Filipino society. Moreover, in Filipino culture, the kinship structure often highlights even the extended family networks, such as their cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents, creating a structure of social support and obligation ([Bautista, 2022](#)).

In the instance of the Barzaga family, their sphere of political power may be understood as the result of a dynamic kinship system that enables them to mobilize political support and resources from inside their community. According to Lopez and [Bañuelos \(2021\)](#), this type of organization enables family members to use their connections for political and social purposes, as well as to leave a lasting imprint on local administration.

Kinship Politics

According to [Roces \(2000\)](#), kinship politics is what motivated individuals and families to run for office, make or break political alliances, legislate on behalf of the family, and expose the graft and corruption of those outside their family group in the process. The Filipinos’ primary allegiance is indisputably still to the family, dwarfing any sentiments that emphasize loyalty or consideration for the national interest. And the family’s desire to wrest political power [to] promote its economic wealth, using kinship connections and the interlocking network of social obligations is the stuff behind Philippine political behavior.

Moreover, he pointed out that kinship politics looks at the ways in which family connections affect political dynamics and decision-making inside a community. These families use their own networks for political families’ footholds to win elections, arrange funds, and carve out a political legacy. The Philippines has a lot of political dynasties. When family members keep passing election offices down through several generations, the result is a line of succession that shapes both local and national policies.

Patron–Client System

According to [Enriquez \(1976\)](#); Santos & De Guzman (2021); [Stein \(1984\)](#), the patron needs the client as much as the client needs the patron. The former needs to trust, the latter needs to be trusted. The result is not merely a role of complementarity, but a symbiosis in which a hierarchical superior/inferior or superordinate/subordinate structural relation masks as authoritarianism infantilizing one, irrespective of conscious intent. Indeed, one can discern two levels of messages by the patron, the overt one being you need me to protect you, and the covert one being I need you to protect you. The main idea about the patron (political family/clan) and the client