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Paternalist Culture of the Sambas-Malay Society in the 2018 Regional Head Elections

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Abstract:

This article examines the paternalist culture of the Sambas Malay in the West Kalimantan regional head elections in the period from 2018 to 2023, where choosing a leader is part of a religious call. The study is based on a qualitative analytical approach in examining the paternalist culture of the Malay when the candidates won the 2018 gubernatorial elections. Purposive sampling technique was used to determine research informants who are representatives of ethnic Malay community leaders and religious leaders (ulemas), as well as ethnic Malay voters. The results of the study show that a paternalist culture regarding ulema figures played a role in providing awareness to the Sambas Malay to use their voting rights according to their conscience. The emotional solidarity of the Sambas Malay remains significant in choosing a leader with the same belief (aqeeda), and therefore, participating in the regional head elections is considered as a religious call.

Keywords: Malay ethnicity, paternalistic

1. Introduction

According to the West Kalimantan Central Statistics Agency (BPS Provinsi Kalimantan Barat, 2021), the population of West Kalimantan was 5.414.390 in 2020. The Malay and the Dayak as natives of West Kalimantan were relatively balanced in number. At the political level, both the Malay and the Dayak have a primordial attitude characterized by a shared emotional sense of religious and geographical bond. The fact was reflected in the event of the Regional Head Elections at the provincial level for the position of Governor of West Kalimantan in 2018. This event began with the candidates from the two largest ethnic groups, the Malay and the Dayak, running for governor of West Kalimantan. The two ethnic groups were polarized into two major forces in the practical political arena during the regional head elections.

The strengths of the candidates in the West Kalimantan's regional head elections could be seen in the 'battle' between the Malay and the Dayak for Governor and Deputy Governor for the 2008-2013 and 2014-2018 terms (Fatmawati, Suryadi, & Juliansyah, 2019). The two terms of the governorship of West Kalimantan were secured by the pair of the Dayak representatives. It is because there was only a pair of candidates from the Dayak ethnic group, while the Malay had 3 pairs. It could easily be predicted that the pair representing the Dayak ethnic group won the previous elections. The experience of the defeat in the two previous elections has raised ethnic and political awareness among the ethnic Malay. This was evidenced in the 2018 West Kalimantan provincial head elections.

These two groups' strengths are based on consideration of their respective support and figures in the 'battle' of the regional head general elections. There was a turning point in the struggle for ethnic identity as a political force. There was only one pair of candidates from the Malay ethnic group, while the Dayak had two. Based on this phenomenon (Jumadi & Yakoop, 2013), ethnic fanaticism served the main factor that contributes to the candidate's victory. Each of the supporters made their best effort to build ethnic awareness to ensure victory in the elections.

The social phenomenon for the West Kalimantan regional head elections is full of ethnic-based political identity. Candidates running for governor would build political identity for ethnic representation as they are figures representing each ethnic group. The use of ethnicity in regional head elections is identity politics that represents certain groups, as Haboddin (2012), Fatmawati (2008), and Jumadi and Yakoop (2013) explained that identity politics emerges from the issue that *native sons* are considered entitled to occupy positions of political elites and the government. When a figure represents a certain group, such as ethnic Malay, then the majority of the voters are Malays, and the same applies to the Dayak. The map of the strengths of these two groups (Fatmawati et al., 2019), Haboddin (2012), began to emerge in the elections of the Governor of West Kalimantan, in the periods of 2008-2013; 2014-2018, and 2019-2024. Each of the two groups selected candidates based on ethnicity. According to Hemay and Aris (2016), the figures were chosen due to ethnic sentiments and the image of the figures, which means it has an influence on voter behavior.

In paternalist traditional societies, according to Aprilia, Alvionita, Khoiri, Abrori and Amalia (2021), the figure that people support comes from the emotional solidarity that is considered as family. Therefore, paternalist culture is a hierarchical position for someone who has an authority over society. This person is a religious figure or community figure who is highly respected and admired by the community as a central figure. The role of community leaders and religious leaders is the main factor in attracting supporters. The 'personage' factor is a Muslim figure, who is respected and can attract the sympathy of as many supporters as possible. The power of Islamic figures served the basis for the elections of the Governor of West Kalimantan. Muslim figures can mobilize the masses to seek their support. The support for the political regime as described by Islam and Islam (2018) also occurred in Bangladesh. Such support is not to build an Islamic government but to mobilize political support as a tool for their political legitimacy.

Sambas Regency is one of the regencies in West Kalimantan with the largest ethnic Malay population, with a total of 634.412 people in 2018 according to Central Statistics Agency (BPS Kabupaten Sambas, 2018). During the regional head elections held on 27 June 2018, this region had the largest voters compared to other districts. The victory of the ethnic Malay candidates was part of the struggle of the voters to elect the ones that represent their ethnic identity. This victory was also inseparable from the role of religious leaders in determining the candidates' electability. This is evidenced in the election results where the majority of votes came Sambas district, with 289.672 votes, out of a total number of 2.588.541 voters (Fatmawati et al., 2019). These votes came from the Muslim population that is made up of 76 percent of the total population. One of the factors of these landslide votes is the paternalist culture is still strong in the Sambas Malay community. In several previous elections, voters from Sambas district mostly abstained from the vote, but this time in the regional head elections they have a strong desire to be part of their responsibility. The gubernatorial election victory lies in his participation in giving a conscious vote. Their vote can determine the gubernatorial election victory. From here, the following study explains how the victory of the Malay candidates was determined by the strong paternalist culture in the community. The role of religious figures is crucial in influencing the voters (constituents). The role of religious leaders (*ulemas*) in Islam, is a very important in raising awareness among the community members as part of their duty to provide a view of the importance of participation in regional head elections.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Paternalist Culture as Social Capital

Paternalist describes a figure culture that has a considerably strong influence on a group of people in the form of obedience to those who are considered to have charisma (authority). Erlangga, Frinaldi, and Magriasti (2013) and Aprilia et al. (2021) explained that a paternalist leader is viewed as the one that protects his subordinates so as to create a sense of security. This paternalist culture is likened to a father who is responsible for providing a sense of security for his children making them dependent on their parents. Therefore, this culture when applied in society requires its members to voluntarily agree to what has been determined. An idealist figure is often considered to be able to protect and have contributed to people's safe and peaceful life. Regardless of whether the decision is right or wrong, or maybe one day it is not what they desired, people are bound to their groups and cannot escape from their environment.

The most common characteristics of the paternalist culture are the obedience of a group of people or society to a figure (leader) who becomes a role model. Rizal and Nurhidayat (2018), Aprilia et al. (2021) argues that the attitude of protective leader tends to result in a collective attitude among the mass, thus causing collective obedience that unites people. A figure or leader has a strong influence on his subordinates because he has the capacity as a role model recognized by others (society), where all his opinions or decisions are considered to represent the majority of people. The figure that appears in a paternalist culture is of course the one who is widely known by the community and is considered to have contributed to the community such as a customary leader, religious leader and community leader. This paternalist culture is characterized by a strong primordial attitude (Aprilia et al., 2021). These figures as informal leaders are naturally 'appointed' by the community without any conspiracy or other goals, but merely due his authority and services they have provided to the community.

Regarding the paternalist culture in the ethnic Malay environment, these figures are known as religious leaders who are highly respected. The most influential figures are among others the *ulemas* (*ustaz*/Islamic preacher) (Öztürk, 2021). From the ethnic Malay's perspective, an ulema is someone who has religious knowledge and always provides guidance and advice for the good of the *ummah*. When there is a matter that needs a solution in society, the ulema provides recommendations based on references from religious law that comes from the Holy Book, then the community (*ummah*) obeys the verdict. When referring to the view of the Islamic Holy Book, the Qur'an, it is found in Surah An-Nuur verse 51 which means 'we have heard and we obey'. From the quotation of the Qur'an, it can be explained that the *ummah* listen to and follow the advice or views of leaders or *ulema* figures as long as the advice is for the good of the *ummah*. Therefore, his views are obeyed by his followers as a form of obedience to the Islamic teachings.

2.2. Ethnic Identity and Identity Politics

The definition of identity according to Eriksen (1993), (Barth, 1988), is that identity refers to the individual's relationship with the values observed by the group. Identity is something inherent within the individual with an essential aspect of the deep affinity of a group, therefore identity is closely related to one's social group, and being part of that group.

Ethnic group is a psychological bond based on family ties, shared religion or language. Similarly, according to Barth (1988), every society has a social group, and forms a social identity, namely ethnic identity, cultural diversity gives

birth to an ethnic identity characterized by differences in ethnicity, religion, language, habits, traditions and customs when social relations forms between communities. Ethnic identity becomes a form of strength if the group has certain goals. When this ethnic group compete to fight for its shared interests, the group turns into a struggle in the name of identity politics. The presence of this identity politics, according to Aprilia et al. (2021), highly upholds loyalty.

Along with identity politics, it is associated with issues of ethnicity and religious groups. Meanwhile, the concept of identity politics, according to Purwanto, (2015) which is a political practice based on group identity, ethnicity, religion, and geography, is used as a force to achieve goals. Likewise, Weber's (1978) view, as quoted by Sanderson, (2000), religion has a social function with special privileges, used as a tool to legitimize social positions for those in power. Fatmawati et al. (2019) also explained that identity politics is a collective struggle as a political forum in seeking mass support. This identity politics is often used in the underlying primordialism to gain power. Jumadi and Yakooop (2013), and Abdillah (2002) argue that identity politics in West Kalimantan often appears in ethnic and religious symbols in every local government head election. In this way, they are able to win people's sympathy making it appear as a representation of their group identity. According to Valgarðsson, Clarke, Jennings, and Stoker (2020), identity politics requires the presence of political trust which is the main goal. Öztürk (2021) explained that identity politics based on religious symbols is used in political competition where religious symbols and narratives justify the act of political competition between Al-Qaeda and Islamic State in Turkey and the Balkans.

The Malay ethnic identity comes from a long history of the origins of the Malay which has become a debate among the experts. Therefore, in discussing the ethnic Malay, this paper limits its scope to the opinion of Barth (1988) that the Malay are characterized by an identity seen from the characteristics of religious, language, customs, and social life customs. The Malay in West Kalimantan have certain specifications, and the most important identity is that they are synonymous with Islam. For the people of West Kalimantan, the term 'Malay' is a feature of their ethnic identity, as by Fatmawati (2008), Mustansyir (2015) that the ethnic Malay are bound by their traditions of 'Malaydom', for example, they are Muslim, speak the Malay language, practice Malay customs, and the Malay moral spirit reflects the Islamic spirit. Traditions that are based on an Islamic spirit in social relations serve as a way of life, regulating them on how to socialize, greet each other, help each other when family members or friends need help. Meanwhile, Mustansyir (2015) argues that the Sambas Malay are a sub-ethnic of Malays, which are unique in terms of language, customs, arts, etc.

3. Research Methods

One of the methods used in this research was literature review using a qualitative approach with descriptive research which aimed at revealing the facts regarding the paternalist Malay culture when the candidates won the 2018 gubernatorial elections. Furthermore, the data were collected using the techniques of interview, observation and documentation. The data in this research consist of primary and secondary data. Research informants were determined through a purposive sampling technique, by selecting the previous informants. Primary data were obtained from informants that represent community leaders and religious leaders (*ulemas*) of ethnic Malay, as well as ethnic Malay voters, supported by secondary data from the Sambas Regency profile in 2018, as well as data from the Sambas Regency General Elections Commission regarding voter data and the election results from Sambas Regency.

It was then followed with data analysis technique using the Miles and Huberman model which consists of data reduction, data display, verification and conclusion drawing (Muhadjir, 1998). The data analysis stage included data related to the Malay paternalist culture in the 2018 Regional Head Elections. In the data reduction stage, various data that had been collected were sorted out and grouped according to the analysis categories, including, *first*, the role of religious leaders in providing recommendations and awareness to the public about the importance of participating in the Regional Head Elections; the *second* category was the recommendations of religious leaders to ensure voters to give their votes to the candidates of their choice; and *third*, to establish solidarity among one another. It was then followed by displaying the data based on the categorization of paternalist culture, and finally conclusions were drawn. The next stage as the last stage was performing triangulation, where valid data were the main requirement, and then the triangulation technique was used to verify the informants and the experts as references including religious leaders, traditional leaders, experts who understand matters related to the Malay and play a role in the West Kalimantan Regional Head Elections. Finally, verification was made with regard to references that are relevant to the context of the paternalist culture of the Sambas Malay in the West Kalimantan Regional Head Elections.

4. Results

Sambas Regency is one of the regencies in the West Kalimantan Province with the majority of the population being ethnic Malay (Mustansyir, 2015), and (Fatmawati et al., 2019). The name *Malay* refers to the indigenous of West Kalimantan, while the Sambas Malay are one of the ethnic Malay groups originating from Sambas Areas (Fatmawati et al., 2019). The language used by the Sambas Malay is a Sambas Malay dialect which has certain characteristics. The religious life of the Sambas Malay is synonymous with Islam. The descendants of the Sambas Malay ancestors are Muslim, while the Sambas Sultanate (Mustansyir, 2015) came from ethnic Malay immigrants from the Malaka or the Malay Peninsula who were Muslim. They inhabited the surrounding Sambas River. The Sambas Sultanate was founded around 671 AD (Mustansyir, 2015), since then the Sambas Malay people have been followers of Islam for generations until now.

The Islamic religious life of the Sambas Malay can be seen in daily life which is characterized by mosques and Islamic-based schools (*pesantren*). For the Sambas Malay, religious-based education is very important because when their children enter school, the virtues of religious schools are the basis for the formation of Islamic values in their children. The

education they pursue is of course to continue the traditions of their ancestors, hoping to establish a foundation of Islam in their children.

When referring to the religious life of the Sambas Malay, it can be seen in their obedience to religious leaders or *ulemas*. The role of the *ulema* figures became the forerunner to the election victory in the next period, namely the period of 2018-2023, which the Malay candidates, Sutarmiji and Ria Norsan, won. It became a new chapter in the West Kalimantan gubernatorial election, because there was only one pair of candidates from the Malay running for governor and deputy governor. The decision to support the candidates was of course made through careful consideration and it became a joint decision.

The Malay did not want to experience defeat as in the previous periods, 2008-2013 and 2014-2018. In the two previous elections, the candidates from the Dayak ethnic group won the elections. The victory of the Dayak was based on careful consideration, as at that time only one pair of candidates running for governor and deputy governor, while there were three pairs of candidates from the Malay ethnic group. Obviously, the Malay voters were divided as it could be predicted that they would suffer defeat. Based on the reality, the defeat was essentially caused by the Malay candidates themselves who refused to pave the way for only one pair. This means that the defeat was intentional as it was predictable in advance.

In the Gubernatorial Election for the 2019-2024 period, this time there was only one pair of candidates from the ethnic Malay. However, it should be noted that the elected pair certainly had considerable achievements as they were both former local government heads. It is the priority of the Sambas Malays to vote for a leader according to a joint decision, and this time the victory was very much anticipated. It turned out that the determination to secure victory is a must. Needless to say, emotional solidarity is a major factor in the gubernatorial election, as explained by Widagdo (2016), that there is an emotional bond between potential leaders and voter behavior, which in this case it is based on the shared religion and ethnicity. The role of religious leaders and community leaders has a very significant influence on the candidates' electability. Thus, candidates who run for regional head elections must seek permission and assistance, especially from religious leaders. This is because religious leaders or *ustaz* have a lot of followers who would listen to their ideas and opinions, while what the candidates say would probably fall on deaf ears. The candidates have a huge interest in the religious leaders. Therefore, paternalist culture as social capital has an important role in mobilizing the masses to comply with a joint decision.

5. Discussion

Referring to social capital as described by Fukuyama (2002) that it is formed in society which contains a set of social values and social norms that are built through mutual trust, cooperation and mutual cooperation among community members. Maintaining social capital as a forum for community appreciation to establish mutual trust in one another, making strong social ties in society should appear voluntarily without coercion. Social capital in relation to ethnicity is to build a belief and a sense of togetherness as a new force with a common goal. The reason for the victory in the West Kalimantan Gubernatorial Elections as a new chapter in this election can be explained as follows.

5.1. Respecting the 'Figure' as Social Capital

Ethnicity factor is related to the figure as a reference from group representatives to achieve common goals. The existence of this figure has become a 'symbol' in building solidarity in the arena of regional head elections from among them. Candidate figures from a certain group are respected figures and have experience. Likewise, Doherty (2007), explained that people judge the behavior of political figures whether it is in accordance with their personality and then community makes them role models. Needless to say, as political figures, they should have a track record of experience and achievements, meaning that the candidate who runs for an office should have the capacity to lead. In addition, prospective leaders (Paskarina, Hermawati, & Suparman, 2019), are determined based on the criteria; popularity and electability.

There are figures who run as candidates in regional head elections, so the role of community leaders in providing insight to the public in this light is very important. Paternalist culture, according to Aprilia et al. (2021), holds fast to figures who are regarded as community leaders. Meanwhile Fatmawati et al. (2019) argue that in traditional society, people highly respect a religious figure who is considered an important figure in society. Meanwhile, Hemay and Aris (2016) revealed that in the regional head elections in Bengkulu, one of the candidates was a well-known ulema in Bengkulu. People voted for the candidate because he was seen as a representation of their religion. Through imaging, the figure has a selling point to gain public sympathy, and in addition, people think that such a figure can provide hope for the desired progress.

Sambas is also famous for its homogeneity with the majority of the people being Muslim. In the Malay community, an ulema is considered an important figure because he is seen as someone who can provide protection and peace for the community. This person is very charismatic and authoritative, fatherly in nature and a central figure in socio-religious and social life. He is the person to whom people come for consultation, seeking solutions to their problems. The Malay obey the ulama, as a reference for asking questions and consultation. Therefore, in the event of a regional head election, he plays a role in providing views to the public so that they participate in the regional head election. According to Muslim, Kolopaking, Dharmawan, and Endriatmo (2015), ulemas have a socio-political stance as informal figures.

Ulemas and volunteers as well as the community members work in hand in providing awareness to the public so that they do not abstain from voting as this is an opportunity that only happens once every five years that should not be wasted, and that it should be used wisely. Each vote counts because it may determine a victory. In fact, people are

enthusiastic about using their right to vote through elections. The efforts of community leaders to increase votes can be seen in the determination of the volunteers and scholars to visit remote areas that are difficult to reach. They even use their own money to cover the operational costs, but their morale is high as they were also assisted by the *ulemas*.

The 2018 West Kalimantan gubernatorial election results show that Sambas Regency ranked the highest in the number of votes cast compared to other districts. Unlike in the previous elections where voter participation was only around 63 percent, in the 2018 elections, it increased to 76 percent (Fatmawati et al., 2019). In addition, it also indicates that emotional closeness and public awareness affected the increase of people's enthusiasm to use their voting rights. This victory was due to the sincere intention of the entire Malay community to support the candidate for Governor of West Kalimantan without any coercion whatsoever.

5.2. Obedience to the Decisions of the Ulemas

According to Pawito and Kartono (2013), this exemplifies the traditional state of society that still strongly adheres to religious values, especially in the Sambas Malay community, where society is based on Islamic culture and values. The Sambas Malay community considers the ulemas to have a central position in providing a view or opinion. With regard to the paternalist culture of respecting religious figures, the Sambas Malay can be viewed in this way as they strongly supported the candidates in the 2018 West Kalimantan gubernatorial elections. This community figure culture makes it easier to mobilize the public to become part of the regional head elections. On the other hand, it is interesting to see the followers of a figure, in this case the Sambas Malay community, obey the decision. Such decision is believed to be part of the struggle to 'unite' the votes unanimously for the recommended candidate. Regarding the event of the 2018 West Kalimantan gubernatorial election, it is the responsibility of all elements of society to participate because it is the right time to win the election.

Obedying leaders and ulemas is part of obedience to influential and charismatic figures in society. In the ethnic Malay's view, obeying a leader in this case an ulama, is a form of observing religious teachings, as described in the Holy Qur'an in Surah An-Nuur verse 51 which means 'we have heard and we obey'. It means that Muslims should listen and obey their leader. Obedience in this regard means that if the leader recommends doing a good deed, and forbidding the bad, and as long as the decision is for the good (benefit) of the people, then they must obey it. The same thing is described by Muslim et al. (2015) that people hold fast to the ulemas, and that the ulemas act as informal figures.

In addition, it is the responsibility of Muslims to choose a leader based on their beliefs, as explained by the ulemas, in accordance with the teachings of Islam in the Holy Book of the Qur'an in Surah Al-Maidah verse 51 there is an obligation to choose a leader in accordance with the Islamic faith (same *aqeeda*). If they choose a candidate other than a Muslim, then it is a sin. This belief makes people afraid of voting for candidates who do not share their faith. One of community leaders reported that in the regional head elections, one's conscience cannot be deceived. Thus, the Sambas Malay elected their leader based on the same faith (same *aqeeda*). Therefore, participating in elections is viewed as a religious call. Religion and politics must go hand in hand (Jati, 2014), Muslim et al. (2015), if a religious call is an obligation, then it must be obeyed.

The respondent also explained that in Islamic teachings, Islam and politics cannot be separated. Politics is synonymous with power. People in power have the authority to make a policy that is in accordance with the values in Islamic teachings. Therefore, for the Sambas Malay community, the leader who comes from the Muslim community is expected to have concern for Muslims, and their obligations do not conflict with Islamic values. Obedience to the leader, in their view, the way to build peace in society. Obedience to the leader was described in an interview with one of the ulemas in Sambas, Mr. Smr, as follows:

Winning the popular vote in the 2018 West Kalimantan gubernatorial election is inseparable from the role of the ulemas who raised awareness among the public, regarding obedience to the leader in this case which is mandatory, and people must respect what has been decided by the ulemas. At that time, the Sambas Malay community spontaneously gave their support for the ulama's decision while respecting the role of community leaders and volunteers in channeling the votes of the Malays. Euphoria in mobilizing public support was part of the efforts of campaign team for the governor candidates, Mr. Sutarmiji and Norsan.

Paternalist culture stems from the strong local primordial culture. The Malay are natives of Sambas who identify themselves as Muslims. Ethnic awareness in identifying themselves as the Malay is a force to fight for existence by supporting candidates from their own ethnic group (Fatmawati et al., 2019). They assume that the struggle to ensure the existence of the Sambas Malay community is a common interest for the common good. Similarly, the role of political figures, as Doherty (2007), Widagdo (2016) argued, is to gain the public trust. In a similar vein, Paskarina et al. (2019) stated that the election of a figure-based regional head usually receives public support.

5.3. Building Solidarity

The event of the regional head election, as a turning point, has raised awareness among the Malay community in building brotherhood between fellow Muslims. Although not all Muslims there are ethnic Malays, the Muslim community in Sambas used their bargaining power and solidarity to establish the bond between different groups of Muslims. In other words, the emotional closeness of Muslim candidates with the Muslim voters not only occurred among the Malay ethnic group, but it also came from Muslims of other ethnic groups. They believe it is their responsibility to elect Muslim candidates as part of them, and thus the event of gubernatorial election is considered a call to maintain their existence and their religious values.

The spirit of solidarity is based on the awareness of electing the Malay candidates as part of the struggle to preserve the dignity of the Malay as respectable people. This idea applies not only to the Sambas community, but to the entire Malays in West Kalimantan. Emotional strength becomes an attitude that awakens the Malay to unite in an Islamic bond.

Participating in the election of leaders, in this case the regional head, in the view of the Malay, is a religious call as it is believed to be their responsibility and therefore must be obeyed. According to the opinion of the ulemas they follow, in the Islamic teachings, Islam and politics are inseparable. Politics is power, people in power have the authority to make policy. Leaders' policy that are in accordance with the Islamic values must be followed. A Muslim leader is expected to have concern for Muslims, as long as his policies do not conflict with the Islamic values. Therefore, when a Muslim takes part in the political arena, it is practically a religious call. The following is a more detailed explanation on the main issues of the paternalist culture of the Sambas Malay community regarding the West Kalimantan regional head elections.

	Paternalist Dimension	Paternalist Values
a.	Respecting the Figure	1) The figure as a fatherly symbol that protects and look after his children. 2) A respected and charismatic figure. 3) The ulema as the central figure. 4) Emotional closeness.
b.	Obeying the Ulemas' Decision	1) The Sambas Malay community holds fast to religious values. 2) The Malay community obeys the decisions of ulema figures 3) Obeying the leaders, in this case the ulemas, is a form of religious teachings. 4) I have heard then I obey the decision.
c.	Building the spirit of social solidarity	1) Brotherhood between fellow Muslims. 2) The spirit of social solidarity. 3) Preserving the dignity of the Malay as respectable people.

Table 1: Paternalist Culture of the Sambas Malay Community in the 2018 Regional Head Elections

Source: Results of observations and Interviews in 2020

The table above shows that the paternalist culture is strongly attached to the Sambas Malay community in the West Kalimantan regional head elections because the Sambas Malay profoundly observe religious values, highly respect the ulema figures as role models. The Sambas Malay believe that obeying the leader is part of religious teachings. A religious call is an obligation that must be obeyed. The spirit of solidarity is built based on brotherhood among Muslims as part of the fight for existence and dignity of the Malay as respectable people.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1. Conclusion

In light of the discussion above, it can be concluded that the regional head election was marked by identity politics concerning the issues of the native sons between the Malay and the Dayak. In the previous regional head elections in West Kalimantan, the candidates of the Dayak ethnic group won as there was only one pair of candidates running for the Governor, while the Malay were represented by 3 pairs of candidates. So, it was predictable that the Dayak won the election. However, in the period 2018-2023, the Malay won the West Kalimantan Gubernatorial Election. It was possible due the fact that there was only one pair of candidates from the Malay ethnic group running for Governor in the election. Thus, the votes were secured by the pair.

The victory of the ethnic Malay candidates was inseparable from paternalist culture through a religious figure who are considered a prominent figure in the Sambas Malay community. Paternalist culture is strongly attached to the community through leading figures that bring emotional closeness among the people. They believe that obeying the leader is part of religious teachings. Electing a leader based on the same *aqeeda* (faith) is part of a religious call. Following the opinion of the *ulemas* is a form of obedience to the leader.

6.2. Recommendation

- The political identity of a society could be used as an identity characterized by emotional relationship of a group of people which serves as a momentum for building a sense of solidarity in a congenial atmosphere
- In every Regional Head Election, a paternalist approach is often used as a group's awareness to exercise their right to vote by electing a credible figure who fights for the lives of his people. However, good relations with other groups in the community should be maintained as well.
- Charismatic figures could be role models in the life of a society as part of religious teachings. These figures should have a place in the midst of society where they can be accepted by all circles (groups) and play a role in providing awareness to the people to use their right to vote according to their conscience.

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