Power Politics Contestation in Symbolic Relations of Tidore Local Leader Election

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Abstract. This article aims at describing the philosophy of "*toma loa se banari*" as a strategy to garner political support for Tidore Local Leader Election and to describe the mobilization of clan relations in the power struggle in Tidore. This research uses a qualitative method with an ethnographic research type. Pierre Bourdieu's theory is used to analyze political phenomena in the power struggle in Tidore. The research findings show that "*toma loa se banari* "philosophy is one of the important elements in the victory of elite in local leader election. Moreover, clan mobilization in communal society in Tidore is very influential for the victory of the leader since the majority of voters are cultural people who are submissive and obedient to Tidore's local wisdom values. The hope for democracy in the future is that the values of local wisdom will continue to exist in creating the quality of democracy at the local level.

Keywords: power struggle, *toma loa se banari*, local leader election.

Introduction

Political contestation in Indonesia cannot be separated from the persistent political culture, including in Tidore, where political culture still has a strong relationship with political practice. This political culture has even become a capital for mobilizing support. It is realized that in Tidore so far, symbolic, cultural and economic capital are the most important parts in the world of democracy. All of these assets must be related to one another so that they can run in line with the political goals of a candidate.

The interaction and relations between local elites in Tidore are also a "key factor" in the framework of the continuity of democracy in Tidore. It is quite clear that the classification of elite groups, both political elites and traditional/sacred elites, seems to have inherent knowledge in the political space where elite group relations are very beneficial for political purposes. On this occasion, we can refer to the previous election in Tidore. Political facts can be seen in the political construction of Mahifa, the Regent of Tidore for two periods, who mobilized and built this sacred relationship in the political public sphere. Elites in Tidore build sacred relationships with traditional/sacred elites (sowohi) to pray and use mystical powers as an effort to gain power.

This phenomenon indicates that the two major instruments of knowledge and power are interrelated. The relationship between the elites becomes a perspective that political mysticism is important. In the political construction of Tidore, there is no significant correlation between the values and norms stated in the incompatible "kei se kolan" constitution. But, on the other hand, we can see that the political construction in Tidore cannot be separated from the rationality in seeing a figure as a candidate for regional head.

The same thing discussed by Ruray (2006:77) quoted by (Wahid, 2018). Contemporary political phenomena in North Maluku and Tidore, in particular, indicate

that the people of North Maluku have lost their esoteric dimension due to the depletion of social ethics. The implications of Sufism are not imprinted in social behavior. In addition, the problem of democracy cannot be separated from money politics as revealed by Halilul Khairi (2020) in Local Elections (Pilkada): Money Politics and Cukong Democracy.

"Doxa evokes a sense of limits or a sense of reality" as it stated in Bourdieu (1986: 471) quoted by (Karl Maton , 2014). It refers to several qualities of doxa, one of which is obedience to a command or rule. The order is a structure that is inseparable from the two domains, namely the real world and the world of thought, which are accepted as undeniable truths. Hanna (in Andreas & Rusadi, 2018) stated that orthodoxy is a discourse used by agents who occupy a dominant position in the field. Meanwhile, heterodoxy discourse is usually used by groups in dominant positions. Bourdieu P., (2016) proposes the concept of habitus in public reasoning; he realizes that he borrowed it from scholastic philosophy. In short, the concept of habitus represents a "theoretical intention" to get out of the philosophy of consciousness without discarding agents; in essence, it is a practical operator for the construction of objects." Each subject expresses according to the values and perspectives they have, but in that arena, they will show a fundamental difference since it is influenced by the capital. Humans live in the arena and have a habitus. In the arena/field, humans express the same age as the capital they have.

The political constellation in Tidore cannot be separated from the rationality and mystical dimensions; that approach of such dimensions has become a political habitus in Tidore which has been practiced at every moment. Elites/political actors have different dynamics. They come from outside Tidore with great expectations, pouring out their political rationality attained from qualified empirical sources and experience. However, they have to realize that Tidore has strong mechanisms and legitimacy for it. Symbolic power has become a strong instrument to produce power. Until now, symbols about Tidore people's entities are attached as clichés or embedded in consciousness that sticks in the belief. Hence, this study aims at answering the question of how the philosophy of "Toma Loa se Banari" applied as a political strategy in the contestation of Local Leader

Elections (*pilkada*), and what are the cultural relations and mobilization strategies of clans in the power struggle. These two questions become the most important part in the deepening of the political phenomenon of Tidore which is full of dynamics.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of ethnographic research. Research subjects are determined purposively by selecting people who really understand and are involved with the research focus, such as the political elite, *sowohi* (customary leaders) and sultan of Tidore.

The researchers present and go directly to the research field to explore the phenomenon of democratic politics occurred. Data were collected through interviews using interview guidelines (instruments), observation and document study. Data analysis was based on ethnographic analysis, namely (1) domain analysis, (2) taxonomic analysis, and (3) component analysis (Spradley, 2007).

Results and Discussions
The Philosophy of "Toma Loa se Banari":
Political Strategies in the Contestation of Local Leader Election

Talking about "toma loa se banari" is certainly related to an understanding of religion and custom. Symbols have the power to shape the political reality in Tidore; even symbol can be used as a power production and attached to certain political elites and actors. Symbol can also make itself a figure and subject that represents certain values and meanings. Symbols have a strong allure so that they are able to lead social groups into their interest. Today's modern political order cannot be separated from the functionalization of symbolic power, and even symbols themselves cannot be separated from structures and political elites and actors who have an orientation to construct a political reality. A cultural political discourse lives in the realm of bureaucracy based on customary values with the hope of realizing social justice for the Tidore community.

Although women still don't have an ideal portion in politics, it is necessary to increase the number of women as human resources to fill the position in public affairs. (Hannah, 2020) stated male dominance as

a leader is a sign of a symbol everywhere. If the quality of women is sufficient, then it can become the most important part of the symbol of victory.

Two dimensions that bind strongly in the symbol of "*toma lo se banari*" are religion and custom. Religion is more on the way of tarekat (Sufism) led by joguru, while custom is led by *sowohi*. This symbiosis has been a way of life for the Tidore people until now. Thus, it is possible for such symbiosis to present in the political arena and the values live well in political rituals. Although Tidore is known as an Islamic empire, symbolic and social capital does not refer to a particular organization such as those in Java (Kholifah, 2020). The political and social capital attached to Nahdatul Ulama Islamic boarding school is a force used to bargain positions with the elite of political parties (Salim, 2021). The objectivity that is fought for in political practice is also part of a well-consolidated social capital. Direct democracy is so large from level to level that it requires political parties to take advantage of the power of local wisdom as an instrument for gaining votes (Budi, 2020).

The symbol of *'toma loa se banari'* became an issue and a political strategy in the struggle for power in Tidore. All candidates require political ideas and ideas in the philosophy of 'toma loa se banari' as a commitment and critical attitude of the candidate pair on the path to the truth. All directions, visions and missions of the candidate are shrouded in this philosophy. It can be seen in 2020 local leader election in which candidate pairs such as Basri Salam-Guntur Alting (BAGUS) who are keen to talk about traditional and cultural issues, package the spirit of Tidore HEBAT which is based on the values of "*toma loa se banari*". The candidate pair Ali Ibrahim-Muhammad Sisen (AMAN) who took the themes of Tidore "jang folui" (Tidore is good in all aspects) also tied one important value in the philosophy of "*toma loa se banari*". Meanwhile, the candidate pair Salahuddin Adrias-Muhammad Taha (SALAMAT) brought a big theme of cultured Tidore with vision and mission. During the interview in the field, ng the researchers found out that the majority of informants said the very principal things for Tidore people was always done by Mr. Achmad Mahifa; he placed a bureaucracy based on Tidore traditional values, lived the spirit of the history of change marked by the Nuku revolution and until now it is

commemorated as anniversary of Tidore (HJT) whose peak event is on April 12th. Such meaning describes the momentum to seize the change of the Tidore people from all aspects of life (Daulay & Sabri, 2018). The meritocratic tradition requires capital and habitus in the political arena, synergy of economic capitalism, social capitalism, and symbolic capitalism. Moreover, practical politics is more than that.

Referring to the opinion of Bourdieu (2020) regarding the symbol, he said the symbol is universal (myth, language, art and science) as instruments for knowing and constructing a world that contains objects. The universes comprise of "symbolic forms". Max noted in his writings "Theses on Feuerbach" that the neo-Kantian tradition recognizes there is an "active aspect" in cognition. The context of the case in Tidore is so clear that the community understands the philosophy of "*toma loa se banari*" to be the grip of the Tidore people that can move the indigenous people who are so clinging to the philosophy. Another social effect is the legitimacy of "*toma loa se banari*" that enables it to mobilize and map clan-based social networks in Tidore. The symbol "*toma loa se banari*" is able to produce political practices that represent a traditional power in Tidore according to Bourdieu (Fashri, 2014). Through the symbol itself (language, discourse, images, etc.), we express our thoughts, concepts and ideas of something. Thus, the representation of "*toma loa se banari*" symbol is a reality about the values of honesty and truth or a straight path to the truth from Tidore political realm, not just a slogan in the arena of power struggles; it is about managing power to become a basic source in completing development policies in Tidore. This symbol of "*toma loa se banari*" comes from Islam (Al-Qur'an) and custom (Tidore wisdom) (figure 1).

From the field findings, the researchers built a synthesis that has been described in the figure above. This conception of symbolic capital is rooted in a belief of Tidore people as an accumulation of ancient Tidore religion and wisdom. The symbol of "toma loa se banari" is not only a traditional representation but also a religious symbol for Tidore people. In the 1950-1960 eras, scientists in France studied semiology for universities to read signs and expanded to the level of reading meaningful language, images, symbols and signs. Rolan Barthes is a seminal scientist with his semiotic work that helps a lot in
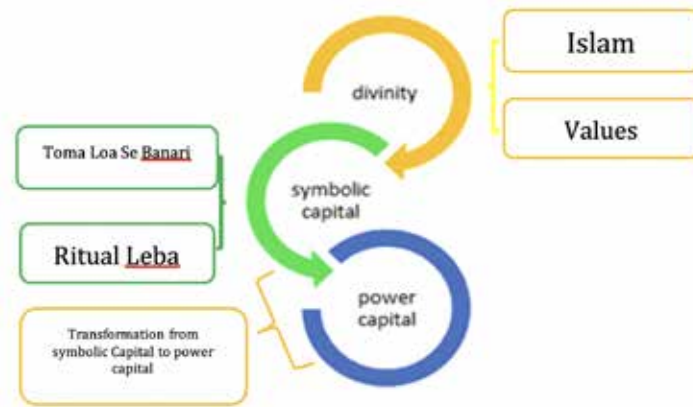
Source: Primary data is processed by researchers

Figure 1. From Symbolic Capital to Power Capital

reading signs and symbols and deepening the meaning conveyed in the sign, which affects on the meaningfulness.

Cultural Relation and the Strategy of Clans Mobilization in the Power Struggle

The social pattern in Tidore tends to be based on clan which is proven through some notes and research results on the history of the area that have been found. The researchers illustrate that the clan community explicitly divides a territory based on clans through customary decisions. In Tidore, the clan entity show where the person's village is from, and the cycle of distribution is well known. The clan ties are so strong that each clan has its own traditional house (*fola hali*). In its traditional house, this clan group performs a ritual process hosted by the sowohi clan.

Recently, since the first local leader election took place in 2005, this clan community has become a political space by the elite and political actors. The presence of elites and political actors is to ask for blessing of every *sowohi* in the traditional house (*fola sou/hali*). The presence of elites and political actors involves children's clan. The clan community can be asked for supporting elites and political actors in their political interests. This support can be given with certain agreements, for example, assisting traditional houses. The strategy involves the clan community of *sowohi* and important actors in the clan as a success team of the elite and political actors. These elites and political actors utilize the characters of *sowohi* clan to legitimize the interests of power struggle. Weber stated in (Michael Rush & Phillip Althoff, 2011) that leaders need legitimacy. There are three main types of legitimacy:

first, the authority of the "eternal yesterday" of customs sanctified through indescribable ancient confessions and habitual orientation to conformity. This is called traditional domination. Second is the authority with extraordinary personal grace and absolute obedience to belief in revelation, heroism or other qualities of individual leadership. This is called charismatic dominance. Third is the dominance of the virtue of "rational legality." From these three types of legitimacy, according to the researchers regarding the case of regional elections, especially in the context of clan community mobilization in the power struggle arena in Tidore, two types of legitimacy both traditionally and charismatically become important. It is because sowohi clan and its actors are charismatic people and act as representatives of clan community entities in Tidore, especially in Gurabunga, who have the direct influence on clan communities for political purposes. Social networks and customs are very important in politics (*pilkada*) in Tidore. Bourdieu (Fidel, 2011) stated the structure of values and ways of thinking is called 'habitus', which is the bridge between the agency of the subject and the objective position. Social groups can use cultural symbols as distinguishing sign that marks and establish their position in social structure. The position of agents in the arena is also determined by the relative capital-specific strategies they employed to achieve their goals.

Our democratic process is ongoing. However, notes that politics at the local level is still being held captive by the power of local strongmen and itinerant bandits (Yusoff, 2010). Aspinall dan Mas'udi (2017) mentions the introduction of direct elections

is seen as an effort to deepen democracy by giving personal roles to the Indonesian. The researchers may have different findings with the opinion above. This study found that the presence of traditional leaders marked by the existence of local wisdom values in the democracy arena in Tidore. These values become the guideline and order of democracy in the perspective of democracy in Tidore.

The clan community in Tidore has become one of the strongest social forces. For centuries, this relationship in the clan has become a slick social strength and solidarity. The clan community was formerly part of the social power for social and war purposes;, even in the social classification the clan had been regulated by the sultanate as a sharia world power. Likewise, clan community meetings and rites are for the political interests of the elite and certain actors they support. Political voter sentiment has now strengthened and even each clan has been mapped based on the support of certain elites and actors. Yahya, (2021) states the consolidation and interrelationships between the islands support each other so that it manifests the essence of social change there, and vice versa in the politics of power in Tidore. The worst side in power is our mental weakness in fighting greed on the throne/dynasty itself (Muksin et al., 2019).

In addition, the findings from the field through observations by the researchers at Gurabunga Tidore show there are mystical/supernatural powers reside. In this sacred village, the direction of clan's interests is very visible. At both legislative elections and Local Leader Elections (*pilkada*), clan actors are mobilized to get clan support for certain elites and political actors. Even the head of clan (*sowohi*) gave political instructions with an open attitude and had support. The legitimacy of the clan head and clan community is reached by clan meetings in their respective clan houses, after which these instructions and decisions are voiced throughout the clan relations throughout the Tidore area. The mobilization of these clans was very strong during the 2005-2010 regional elections because they were related mystically/supernaturally according to ancestral orders (*papa se tete*) through a long ritual as mentioned by previous researchers regarding the *gam paka* event (from the proposal of *bobato* shari'a). Then, there is position of Achmad Mahifa as one of the traditional children of *Soa Romtoha*

Tomayou who worked so massively. It also cannot be separated from the position of Mahifa clan as a clan of the leader (Amir Hamzah) who is symbolized as the ruler of the kulano jinn/nature. *Sowohi* is not just a traditional actor who only deals with ritual matters, but the real effect is that *sowohi* is able to mobilize political support for certain candidates, especially support from clan people and sacred relations in Tidore indigenous community. Elites and political actors see that *Sowohi* is one of the actors who is still trusted by the clan community and is a source of reference for their words and actions. The clan community cannot be born from what is said by *sowohi* because *sowohi* is a real representation of their belief in their ancestors and the owner of essence power which is part of the cosmology of Tidore people's power. Political rituals cannot be separated from the entity of Tidore people, among others, in determining the position of campaign billboards, what day considered good for the campaign, all is observed in Tidore's falaq science (Wahid, 2018).

The consolidation and mobilization of political support is different in both the legislative and Local Leader Elections. Nevertheless, some groups resisted the decision of *sowohi* clan. After carrying out resistance, these groups of minority children in Gurabunga received threats in a way that *sowohi* no longer held *boso kene* rituals, *leba* or rituals related to traditional celebrations and medical processions. This incident, according to Bourdieu (Hariyatmoko, 2010), is assessed as a form of symbolic violence; a show of symbolic domination where domination is forced and suffered by obedience.

What has been described by Bourdieu above has occurred during the process of mythical/occult or (sacred) legitimacy from sowohi for certain candidates, but there is resistance to domination, and threats that sound sacred are emerging that create fear to a child of adat. One of the cultural relations seen from the candidate's background is clan. Since the clan relation is the locus of meeting interests, it becomes a legendary bond in the social structure of Tidore people. The clan used/attached by a candidate is able to move and encourage psychological and sociological voters as political support for a particular candidate, meaning that clan preference becomes one of the important aspects of political support. This cultural approach is one of the qualified relationships

to move the clan community in political interests. In politics, it tends to be related to two clans at once, whether it's the clan of the father or the mother of a candidate. The view on biopolitics discussed by Khaldun (Wahid, 2018) explains that a conception is very relevant to the modern political phenomenon in Tidore. The spirit of biopolitics is explicitly measured to the DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) relation of a figure (regional/family relationship). So far, the mobilization of political power with a clan approach or cultural network has become very effective, even the clan groups have become one of the ideal portions and are in the main ring of power. The survey findings ahead of the Local Leader Election in Tidore showed that the grouping of voter preferences with a percentage of 48.8% of respondents still uses a sociological approach in choosing regional heads, while the rationality aspect is 28.8%, followed by psychological aspects of 7.8% (source: Report of Index Politik Indonesia, 2020).

Cultural rationality as an approach to primordial sentiment is meant as sociological approach. The position is both rationality but the latter is more accepted in modern politics Hannibal (Greene, 2007). The best way of strategy is not just relying on words since words only touch the surface, while a leader must be able to grab people's hearts and emotions. In the political context (*pilkada*) in Tidore, such thing is important because the emotional approach is a psychological approach to cultural society as stated by Frager (2015). Psychosocial domain refers to the spiritual medium (Joni, et al. (2020)). Political relations are still very strong in the political context in Indonesia.

The legitimacy of the sowohi clan can bring about changes in collective political interests; even its roots can provide a political engineering towards the path of divinity. Not all *sowohi* do have a capability to move clans in the political field; *sowohi* are in the highest mokhom or what is called *gosimobarakati*. Due to the dynamics of power struggle in the Local Leader Elections (Pilkada), one phenomenon that sticks out above the surface is that people will join *sowohi* who are powerful and have great spirit abilities, not small spirit that don't have the ability (classification of *sowohi*/sacred *gosimo* vs non sacred *gosimo*). Such debates became a story in the life of Gurabunga people found out by the researchers and became an empirical proof of public awareness in Gurabunga.

From symbolic capital, it metamorphosed into a power capital of the people in the political struggle in Tidore. Strong belief in customs, values and traditions has produced the domination of political consciousness, or to adapt Boudieu's term, is orthodox. Strategy at the level of preparing fortresses and gates for the sacredness of each figure, therefore, in the political battle in Tidore, the field of battle is not necessarily the realm of science, but the growth of mystical/ occult approaches. Hence, as the opinion of Bourdieu (2020), it bets (enjeux) things and specific interests. The stakes are not reducible to the stakes and interests peculiar to the field. In the context of Bourdieu's speech, it is so relevant to the mystical/ occult relation in Tidore. Elites and political actors use traditional figures, smart people and they prepare the arena/field to face each other with mystical powers (mystical vs mystical). It is something impossible if scientific results are juxtaposed with the results of mystical/occult work because the methods are different. Therefore, it is natural that in the findings, researchers discover there are different opinions in logical/scientific that is much stronger and not responding to what mystical/ancestral powers rely on. Even the mystique haunts the political world so that the direction of political objectivity is uncertain about its political substance and feels shadowed by a strong mystical mechanism. Then it can be said that the mobilization of clan support does not only mean the mobilization of voters, but also the mobilization of political power which is marked by the work of *sowohi* and *gosimo*. *Sowohi* and *gosimo gam* represent the social network of the clan community (Dewi, K. H., Kusumaningtyas, A. N., Ekawati, E., & Soebhan, S. R. (2018)). The potential for social solidarity is actually where social capital develops and works.

The power of the ancestors (*papa se tete*, *kapita* and *momole*) becomes a strength, optimism and militancy that must live in an elite and political actor so that the model of the long rituals is to maintain mental and strength in the political struggle (Mukti and Rodiyah, R. (2020)). Indonesian politics is part of the dimensions of custom and tradition as it is a human entity of the archipelago.

From the research findings, it is clear that symbolic capital becomes a model in producing power in Tidore. Symbolic capital mentioned is a strategy with a multi-

approach: dimensions of rationality and mystical/occult. What Bourdieu talked about doxa and habitus is real in political life in Tidore where elites and political actors tend to take local approaches (local wisdom) to gain political support since the political process is always passed by traditional rituals and political strategies with a locality approach. If this research is directed at the type of ethnographic research, of course, we do not fully use a mere human-centric approach but also included the surrounding environment as an important thing in constructing this reality. The political phenomenon of Tidore (*pilkada*) related to jinn, spirits, *suanggi*, ancestral power (mystical/ supernatural) is a relationship that is built in the political world; making no mistake like the pilgrimage to sacred places (*jara goya and jere*) in Tidore is part of the construction of political habitus. Safitri & Adnan, (2020) stated this social capital is utilized optimally through intense interaction and communication with more constructive political agendas. The influence of titles and clans can be constructed in the political realm. In the case of South Sulawesi, the influence is on *karaeng* and *andi* titles (Haboddin & Bachtiar, 2020).

The 2020 Pilkada tried to use a clan power approach but did not have a serious effect on the candidate's political support map. The notes written by Idrus (2020) revealed that the Basri Salama and Guntur Alting pairs are so well understood as one of the candidates who have relations with the Sultanate since the clan of the Mayoral candidate from the BAGUS candidate pairs has the same surname as the Sultan of Tidore (Husain Alting Syah); this issue led to Tidore's public opinion and has a political effect on other candidate pairs such as the SALAMAT. The candidate for deputy mayor from the SALAMAT, Mr. Muhammat Taha, behaved and looked for the roots of his mother's clan relation, which incidentally had an alting and dano clan background. These two clans are clans in the sultanate circle (descendants of the sultan of Tidore), even several villages belong to the same clan accept him (Muhammad Taha) to run a campaign. Thus, the conclusion is that the relationship between clans has influenced the political field, but it is not as strong as it was 10 years ago.

On December 9, 2020, quick count data recap started to moving up. All candidate pairs started to tense up with all the equipment at each victory post waiting

for the C1 form data to be announced by the success team and witnesses from each candidate pair. The day is sinking at Tugulufa beach when supporters of Ali Ibrahim and Muhammad Sinen (AMAN vol 2) won with a presentation of (29,320) votes, followed by candidate pairs number 3 Salahuddin Adrias-Muhammad Taha (SALAMAT) at the second place with (19,552) votes and Basri Salama-M.Guntur Alting in the last place with the percentage of votes (16,251) out of a total of 65,123 thousand valid votes. From this analysis, we can see some key elements of the Bourdieusian analysis of the political field: the habitus of those involved in it, their reproductive strategies, the capital values, and basic forms of rationality and reason inherent in it as it stated in opposition and contradiction, and different field structures (Grenfell, 2014).

Conclusions

The power struggle between political elites is carried out through the capitalization of symbolic capital embedded in the socio-cultural system of the Tidore community. The political elites need to have the ability to justify the relevance of symbolic capital to the mental experience and subjectivity of prospective voters so that it becomes a disposition system (habitus) among prospective voters to elect the political elite.

The maintenance of the process of production and reproduction of an attitude of adoration or admiration (doxa) among potential voters for a series of substances and essences of symbolic capital is linked to the power desired by the political elite. The local wisdom itself symbolizes the political elites who are fighting as local leaders with all their big ideas based on Tidore culture to advance Tidore, so that the noble ideals of the journey of democracy in Tidore can bring prosperity and progress.

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