

Conference Paper

The Role of Local Elites in Building Social Harmony in Bulutellue Village, Sinjai District

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Abstract.

This can be proven by the high enthusiasm of the village community in participating in the general elections in 2019. Elections are welcomed with excitement because they will be used as an arena to refresh leadership in both the executive and legislative institutions. People have a great desire to have national leaders who are sincere, committed, and willing to sacrifice in the spirit of nationality. Elections are used as an arena for strengthening democracy that allows power to be operated properly and maximally for the benefit of the general public. However, the very open democratic space also leaves problems in society, namely division due to differences in political choices. Each of them tries and struggles to present their party, presidential and vice presidential candidates as the best. This article will review the efforts of village-level elites in overcoming the phenomenon of division in the community in Bulutellue village as part of the dynamics of the 2019 general election. The method used in this research is the historical method which consists of four stages, namely heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The results showed that local elites in Bulutellue village consisting of the village government, businessmen, and religious leaders could overcome community division and realize a harmonious life based on local wisdom, sports, and religious preaching.

Keywords: 2019 election, community division, local elite

1. Introduction

In an effort to realize the commitment to create political stability and development continuity, by learning from the experience that ideological conflicts in the past had resulted in weakening and making the bureaucracy ineffective, the New Order government then tried to nourish the bureaucracy from the center to rural communities. An effective bureaucracy to support economic growth was a prerequisite set by the New Order government [1,2] New Order governance, which is state control over all levels of society in various sectors of life, especially rural areas, tends to be stable and far from the hustle and bustle of politics, because local politics are not allowed to exist in rural areas [3]

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Rural conditions, which were socially described as safe and peaceful and far from the hustle and bustle of politics, then changed when the New Order government ended, marked by Soeharto's resignation speech as President of the Republic of Indonesia on May 21, 1998. After Soeharto's resignation, Indonesia entered a new phase known as the reform era. One of the characteristics of the reform era is the opening of democratic space that provides opportunities for rural local communities to actively participate in the decision-making process directly through the mechanism of general elections. Elections in the reform era were characterized by the number of political parties and legislative candidates who contested to attract public sympathy to occupy the positions of members of the DPR, DPRD at the provincial, district / city, DPD levels, as well as the direct election of presidential and vice presidential candidates.

Since the Republic of Indonesia was in the reform era, elections have been held five times, namely in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019. The 2019 elections were a new experience for the Indonesian people, including those living in rural areas. The 2019 election is the most complicated election in the history of the Republic of Indonesia. It is said to be the most complicated because it is carried out simultaneously in one day to elect the president / vice president and legislative members [4]. The 2019 elections also left problems, especially in rural areas, namely the contestation of the presidential / vice presidential elections followed by only two pairs of candidates (Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf Amin versus Prabowo Subianto-Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno), which divided the community who faced each other into the arena of two supporting camps so that conditions tended to heat up [5] The condition of community division during the 2019 election process was also found in Bulutellue Village, Sinjai Regency, South Sulawesi (Epong, 2019).

The condition of community division that occurred in Bulutellue Village during the 2019 election process needs further research in order to find a picture of the condition of the community in this village after the 2019 election. The initial picture can be assumed that the community division in this village will slowly lead to social harmony. This assumption is based on Auguste Comte's opinion that the crisis that occurs in society will be able to regain resolution and even balance [6] Village community harmony will be achieved because they have similarities in livelihoods that require cooperation with each other. Villagers also have the same awareness to always maintain kinship ties between them in order to achieve safety and happiness together [7] This is reinforced by Hasanuddin based on empirical findings that the community in Banuroja Village is characterized by a harmonious life so that differences can be overcome properly so as not to lead to endless conflict [8]

Social harmony in the rural environment is not only influenced by the structural conditions of rural communities that always prioritize kinship, cooperation, help, and faith, but also supported by the emergence of agents or actors who influence people's thoughts and behavior. In Anthony Giddens' perspective, changes that occur in the community cannot be separated from the emergence of individuals who are overwhelmed by awareness from within themselves to create a harmonious society [9] The category of actors who have a role in the community consists of two, namely official actors and unofficial actors. Official actors are the government, while unofficial actors are individual citizens consisting of community leaders, traditional leaders, and religious leaders [10]

In the context of rural communities, what is categorized as an actor is the village elite group. The village elite group has a potential role in bridging various interests in the community. Referring to Vilredo Pareto, the elite in the village community consists of individuals involved in the village administration (the village head and his apparatus) and individuals who are not in the village administration but have influence in the community based on customary, religious, and economic legitimacy, for example: religious leaders, traditional leaders, rich people, and civil servants.

In an effort to provide explanations related to the societal phenomena associated with this study, several sociological concepts are used. The description of the role of the village elite in reducing and handling community division to realize a harmonious society is the focus of this paper. Ralph Dahrendorf outlines that social roles are a central theme in sociological studies which are defined as guidelines or norms of behavior expected of individuals who occupy certain positions in the social structure of society [11] Individuals who are in the social structure are categorized as local elite groups who have an important role in decision-making at the local level. Suzanne Keller elaborates that elites are defined as a minority of individuals who are authorized by society to provide services that are beneficial to the common good. Elites are given the responsibility to solve various problems that occur in the community where they live [12]

Many studies related to the role of elites in society have been conducted, among others by [13] who found that the appearance of actors has led to social change in Gundhi Village, namely changes in people's mindsets accompanied by changes in the physical condition of the environment which was initially slum, then turned into an organized and clean environment. Another study was also conducted by [14] which highlighted the success of development in Pangauban Village thanks to the Village Head's ability to utilize his social capital. Specifically regarding the involvement of village elites in organizing the 2019 elections, it has been researched by [15] who found that the elites among the Tengger Tribe have a very important role in the 2019 election process so that

it can be carried out successfully. Likewise, the results of research by [16] that in order to increase the vote acquisition of the Joko Widodo and Ma'ruf Amin pairs, the elite in Southwest Aceh mobilized all their abilities to mobilize support from the community. The focus of this paper is more directed at the role of village elites, especially in Bulutellue Village, in their efforts to rebuild social harmony after the 2019 elections among people who had experienced division in the 2019 election process.

2. Method

Papers can be written using qualitative research methods. The type of research uses a humanities approach, especially historical science. As a historical research, four stages were carried out as proposed by Kuntowijoyo, namely heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography [17]. Heuristics is the stage of data collection through interviews. The data that has been collected is then criticized to determine whether it is valid or not. After the data is confirmed, interpretation is carried out so that there is a causal relationship between the data. The last stage is historiography or historical writing which is poured in the form of articles to provide useful information for the development of science in the field of humanities sciences, especially historical science.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Elite and community dynamics in bulutellue village

Understanding the people of Bulutellue village cannot be separated from the social system of the Bugis people. In the Bugis knowledge system, in addition to nobility status as a measure of the ideal quality of Bugis people, there are also four other measures, namely courage, wealth, intelligence and piety [18]. Particularly among the Bulutellue community, there are three social forces that are most influential in the social dynamics of the community: the government (Village Head), religious leaders, and the rich. The existence of these three cultural entities is highly respected by the community and is considered a node of community power in carrying out various activities.

The government system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia recognizes the existence of the village as a legal entity that is given the authority to organize and manage its own government within clear territorial boundaries. The village is given the authority to manage its territory with the establishment of a village government based on the principles of legal certainty, prioritizing public order in running the government,

open, professional, accountable, effective, efficient, and paying attention to diversity and local culture [19] Governance at the village level is led by a Village Head who is directly and democratically elected by the community. The position of Village Head in Bulutellue Village is highly respected by the community. This respect is based not only on the position attached to the individual as a Village Head official, but the current Village Head, Andi Sudirman, is the son of Andi Hasanuddin Hasan, the former Village Head of Bulutellue who served for around 30 years as well as a very instrumental figure in the formation of Bulutellue Village, which was previously part of Lamatti Riattang Village. Andi Sudirman is known by the community as a figure who grew up in a noble family environment so that in his behavior and speech he always shows respect for the people around him regardless of age and occupation.

For the people of Bulutellue Village, the position of Village Head should not be given to just anyone. There is a kind of unwritten law held by the community that a person who wants to become a Village Head must be seen from the background of his descendants along with his economic capabilities. A person who is given the mandate to serve as Village Head must have sufficient rice fields or gardens. This requirement is taken into consideration by the community because a Village Head will certainly receive many visits from the kecamatan or kabupaten government, for which the Village Head must prepare a banquet for these guests. In organizing a banquet, the Village Head must have sufficient material preparation and not burden the community, although the community in Bulutellue Village has its own awareness to provide labor and material assistance to welcome visits to the village.

The community's respect for the Village Head is also based on the realization that the current Village Head was democratically chosen by the community with the intervention of the Almighty God. The agreed leader must be obeyed as part of religious teachings as long as the leader acts in accordance with religious teachings and regulations set by the state. Thus, respect for the Village Head is based on the position attached to him, noble status, respect for the democratic choice of the community, and religious doctrine.

The image of Bulutellue Village as a religious social area has placed religious figures (imam, khatib, and bilal) as respected elites. In contrast to the Village Head and his officials, religious figures have their own charisma, which is enough to color the social dynamics of the community in Bulutellue Village. If the Village Head is respected and has an important role because of his capacity as a government leader who is democratically elected by the community, then religious figures are formed and respected on the basis

of the community's interest in performing religious rituals that require assistance and guidance from people who have religious understanding.

As in the implementation of Friday prayers, based on the provisions of the Shari'a it is not valid Friday prayers if not attended by 40 worshipers. It is this religious value that encourages people in Bulutellue Village to establish mosques in each village (dusun) as a means of worship and must be enlivened. It is this religious obligation that encourages each individual in Bulutellue Village to become a community by forming religious social organizations based on the authority of religious figures. This religious orientation also slowly forms institutionalization with the presence of places for teaching the reading and writing of the Qur'an and meetings related to religion, such as majelis taklim and recitation at the mosque. Networks between religious leaders then became a means of Islamic proselytization that further strengthened the influence and authority of religious leaders in the community.

The existence of religious figures is highly respected by the people of Bulutellue Village. This respect is based on the fact that religious figures display a pious attitude and are very wise in solving problems faced by the community. Religious figures are able to provide services to the community without expecting any strings attached, for example in organizing weddings, deaths and aqiqah. In addition, the average religious figure has studied at an Islamic higher education institution such as IAIN/UIN Alauddin, Muhammadiyah University of Makassar, and Muslim University of Indonesia. Thus, religious figures in Bulutellue Village are increasingly respected because they have the double advantage of being people who understand Islamic sciences and are highly educated (scholars).

It is a reality that the history of the people of Bulutellue Village does not describe a static and homogeneous society in terms of economic activities, but is pluralistically constructed. The construction is reflected in the diversity of livelihoods and socio-economic identities that then place them in various roles. The rich, characterized by the possession of abundant property (wealth), occupy an honorable position in the perspective of the Bulutellue Village community. Such wealth can be seen from the amount of income earned, the size of land owned, and ownership of a private car.

One actor who is quite influential and occupies an elite position because of his wealth in Bulutellue Village is Abdul Rahman Taming. In his daily life, he manages businesses engaged in building construction, especially transportation and agricultural infrastructure, namely CV Lubis and CV Anugerah. The presence of these two companies has been a distinct advantage for the people of Bulutellue Village because they have had employment opportunities both as builders and laborers. Building materials used,

especially stones for foundations, are supplied on average from the local community, if the construction project is in the Bulutellue village area or in an adjacent area.

In addition to managing two companies, he owns a large amount of agricultural land in the form of rice fields and gardens. He obtained the land through inheritance from his parents and his own efforts by buying land from others. The land he owns is not managed by himself, but is handed over to others using a profit-sharing system. He does this as an effort to help others who do not have agricultural land, but have quite a lot of needs, both household needs and needs for their children's school fees. Although he is a successful businessman, this success does not make him keep a social distance from the community around him. He is known by the community as a generous person. Every fasting month he always gives alms to the poor and orphans. Similarly, when the new school year approaches, he always sets aside some of his income to buy clothes and school supplies for children from underprivileged families.

The community's respect for Abdul Rahman Taming is also based on his willingness to always provide assistance to people who have urgent needs, especially in financial matters. When a family has difficulty or lack of funds to carry out a wedding party or aqiqah, he always provides a loan within a certain period of time that has been mutually agreed upon. Loans given to others are not charged interest, because for him it is not appropriate to benefit from people who are distressed.

3.2. Elite efforts to build social harmony

The day after the voting in Bulutellu Village, the political frenzy began to subside. The community continued their normal activities in earning a living for their families. Conversations that sometimes led to small debates at ronda posts, substations, and shopfronts regarding support for the election slowly turned towards conversations related to agricultural conditions. However, it cannot be denied that the election still leaves euphoria for those who feel they have won, and a sense of disappointment for those who have lost after watching the quick counts from various survey institutions. Differences in election choices still leave a division in society.

In response to the division in the community, the local elite, in this case the Village Head, religious leaders, and businessmen, immediately took steps to create social harmony in the community. They want the community to return to knit togetherness in the frame of local wisdom contained in the oral tradition: malilu sipakainge, mali siparappe, rebba sipatokkong, sirui menre tessirui nno (remind each other when they forget, help each other when they flood, support each other when they fall down,

cooperate to obtain good and avoid bad). This local wisdom is part of the guidelines for managing life ([20] and is understood as an effort to realize community cooperation and unity in implementing rural development programs.

Approximately one week after the election, Andi Sudirman as the Head of Bulutellue Village gathered the village government officials (Head of RT, Head of RW, Head of Hamlet), religious officials, and community leaders in the village hall to discuss the efforts that must be taken to reunite the community in the frame of brotherhood and immediately forget the various political dynamics of the village before the election. During the meeting, it was agreed that various activities would be carried out, such as religious activities, sports and art activities whose implementation was coordinated by the parties related to these activities.

Activities that are coordinated directly by the Village Head and assisted by other village government officials are the implementation of the month of service and the strengthening of night patrol activities. Entering the month of May 2019, every Sunday a community service activity was held to clean up the environment which started at around 08.00 until 11.30. Community service activities involve all community members from various age groups, genders and types of work. Women mostly prepare the food, which is coordinated by the Bulutellue Village PKK board. This activity was carried out to re-realize community awareness of the importance of togetherness in fostering peace at the village level.

Each hamlet in Bulutellue Village has two ronda posts. Routine night patrol activities are carried out to anticipate various actions that are feared to threaten village order. Night watch activities are carried out by involving the local community. Every night there are five people on duty. Especially on Sunday nights, the night watch also involves the hansip in each hamlet. The night watch is considered effective in bringing the community together, because the people in the village like to gather at the ronda post, even if it is not their turn to be on guard. Thus, the ronda post functions as a public space to bring peace to the community.

Another effort in realizing social harmony is by organizing sports activities. The momentum of the commemoration of the Republic of Indonesia's independence day was used by the Bulutellue Village Government in collaboration with a group of entrepreneurs to provide moral and financial support to the community in organizing a football match. Soccer teams from each hamlet as well as teams on behalf of clubs were given the opportunity to carry out matches. During the match, people from various hamlets in Bulutellue Village always came every afternoon to watch the soccer match held at Pakkiseng Field.

Religious leaders also participate in seeking harmony in Bulutellue Village. Their efforts include conveying messages of peace every time they deliver the Friday prayer sermon. In addition, the recitation activities held every Wednesday night at several mosques in Bulutellue Village are used by religious leaders to provide awareness to the entire community of the importance of harmony in order to realize a peaceful life. The religious leaders emphasized that Muslims in Bulutellue Village are bound together by the rope of brotherhood, so that a sense of caring, helping each other, working together must be maintained. The brotherhood of fellow Muslims should not be undermined just because of differences in political choices. These differences must be forgotten in order to uphold the harmony and integrity of social life.

4. Conclusion

The political hustle and bustle in the dynamics of the 2019 general election still colors community life in Bulutellue Village. The behavior of political elites that can be witnessed by the public on television and social media reflects the competition to try to attract public sympathy to provide support to their parties. In the competition for people's support, social media and television media show their behavior along with their supporters to bring each other down by means of negative campaigns and black campaigns. These conditions had an impact on the community at the grassroots level, including in Bulutellue Village. Each supporter of a political party and supporter of a presidential candidate did not escape the discourse competition that led to tension between each party. Community life in Bulutellue Village experienced division as a result of the 2019 general elections. Of course, this condition was not allowed to drag on by the local elite, so they tried to thaw the post-election community life, in order to realize a peaceful and harmonious society.

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