

KINSHIP POLITICS IN ELECTORAL POLITICS: A CASE FROM BAUBAU CITY

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Abstract

This research aims to describe and analyze the kinship politics of the Buton community with its patrimonial culture in maintaining political power in Baubau City. The phenomenon of kinship politics in maintaining political power in Baubau City is seen based on the dimensions of mutual agreement and satisfying kin obligations. Then this research uses qualitative methods to answer the formulation of research problems. The result of this research is that mutual agreement was formed from the history of the Buton community which eventually formed a pattern of power based on kinship relations. The pattern of mutual agreement forms a common interest between the Koumu and Walaka groups. Furthermore, in terms of satisfying kin obligations, the practice of kinship politics can be seen because the people of Baubau City still uphold kinship ties and cultural values. Kinship politics in Baubau City is realized in the form of selecting candidates from Koumu and Walaka in the regional head election in Baubau City.

Keywords: Kinship Politics, Electoral Politics, Baubau City

1. Introduction

Baubau City is a city characterized by diverse and complex social life, but kinship politics in Baubau City still occurs in the political process. In regional head election events, especially mayors and deputy mayors, a kinship based on customary and cultural backgrounds has led to the dominance of regional head and deputy regional head candidate pairs from Buton ethnic noble groups, namely Kaomu and At least from three mayoral election events in Baubau City, It was only during the 2018 Baubau City Election that there was one

candidate for vice mayor from the Bugis ethnic group, who was paired with a mayoral candidate from the Kaomu group.

Kinship in the elections in Baubau City plays an important role in determining how candidate pairs should prioritize the interests of kin groups when running for office and when elected, and what is interesting about kinship politics is that kinship is also a means of regulating conflict, so that candidates for regional head pairs can accept whoever wins the elections. As stated by a traditional leader, after the election results are released, everyone reunites as a family, whoever wins will embrace the loser because kinship must be maintained. Currently, three castes can still be observed in Baubau society: Kaomu, Walaka, and Papara. Meanwhile, the Babatua group, which is synonymous with slaves, no longer exists, along with the abolition of human slavery. The three castes play various social and political roles in Baubau City.

Since it was held for the first time in 2008, the local elections in Baubau City have always been won by pairs of mayors and vice mayors who come from the noble groups of Kaomu and Walaka, although this position can be seen as an exchange when compared to the royal or sultanate period. During the kingdom or sultanate, the Kaomu group was chosen by the Walaka group to become king or sultan, but in this democratic era the position of mayor is always filled by the Walaka group and the deputy mayor is filled by the Kaomu group.

The democratic political system procedurally provides space for anyone to be able to advance and be elected by the community, but kinship politics in Baubau City which is still high in the end contribute to the victory of regional head candidates who have a noble group background. Despite living in a democratic political climate and an open era, the people of Baubau City still uphold their kinship ties and cultural values which are then implemented in political life, and this condition does not only apply to noble groups but is also carried out by the Papara community as a lower group in the traditional kinship system of the Buton community.

Based on the experience of three elections in Baubau City, only in 2018, there was a deputy mayor candidate who came from outside the Buton community, this deputy mayor candidate was Ikhsan Ismail who had a Bugis ethnic background, while the mayoral candidate of that time was Wa Ode Maasra Manarfa who had a noble background from Kaomu. Various informants stated that although Mrs. Maasra came from the Kaomu group, she was not right in choosing a deputy partner who had a background from outside the Buton tribe. Mrs. Maasra's defeat, as stated by the informants, was not due to gender reasons, but to the inaccuracy in choosing a vice mayor.

The people of Baubau City, with their strong Buton cultural values, still consider that the 01 and 02 (a term often referred to by informants to label the mayor and his vice mayor) are filled from the Walaka or Kaomu group. This traditional agreement has also never been violated by the Papara community, although some of the Papara groups in Baubau are no longer those with low economic backgrounds or small communities. Although some of these Papara groups have become members of the regional legislature, and businessmen, and occupy important positions in state companies, when they face elections events and meetings between various figures, there is still an agreement to uphold and carry out cultural values.

As stated by a Kaomu figure who also has a close kinship relationship with Mrs. Maasra, Mrs. Maasra was not ever given input by family and leaders. Her lack of listening to input from elders led to members of the family leaving Ibu Maasra, an important point being when she was asked to discuss the reasons for choosing the deputy mayor candidate.

The decision to leave Mrs. Maasra is indeed a difficult thing, but all of that is expected by community leaders to be used as a lesson not to leave the group and to listen to the advice given by the leaders. At least the momentum to choose a candidate pair from outside the native Buton community in the 2018 elections is still not felt right, and this was also stated by other informants who also said that for the next 10 years, it might still be difficult to win other candidates from outside the Buton tribe.

The election of Baubau City, which is always filled by several pairs of candidates for regional head and vice regional head from Walaka and Kaomu, shows the dominance of this noble group in local democratic events, even though the advancement of several pairs of candidates from Walaka and Kaomu does not cause divisions among kin members. For them, the main thing is how the candidate pairs can convince the community to advance the region, and after being elected they must realize what has been promised. One thing that should not be forgotten after being elected is that the mayor and deputy mayor must maintain good relations and communicate intensively with the community and leaders, as stated by the informant that listening to the input of traditional leaders is important because later in the next elections the views of the leaders will be listened to by the community.

Kinship is defined as "one soul" so that individuals have part of an extended self (David, 2020). Across cultural and religious traditions, the family has been a central institution since the dawn of human civilization. This clashes with western liberal values (David, 2020). In

the view of (Hammel, 2005) the existence of kinship in politics is that the culture and institutions of kinship influence the level and form of the marginal political product (MPP) and its members. The analogy of MPP is the same as the value of allies, MPP can take many forms, it can be group size intimidation or dominance of power and rituals (Hammel, 2005). With the existence of kinship in politics, where this kinship is based on the cultural background and the kinship institution itself, it also creates group power as a political product, the power of this group becomes capital, which can be used during political contestation.

David (2020) stated how kinship politics can be seen from the family paradigm, where the family is considered the initial model of political society, David then analogized how leaders are fathers, while society is like children. According to Kuper (1969), kinship politics is characterized by the presence of a general arrangement, where people with anthropologically similar kinship backgrounds then gather to form a general agreement based on mutual recognition to form a single community. Kinship politics allows a particular anthropological kinship group to maintain the dominance of its tribal majority in controlling, organizing, and leading several regions.

For some researchers, kinship politics is often equated, referred to, or associated with dynastic politics (Asako et al., 2015; Dal Bó et al., 2009; Mukti & Rodiyah, 2020; Querubin, 2012), although there is no uniform definition. According to Dal Bó et al. (2009) dynastic politics occurs when a politician has a family relationship with the previous politician. This is in line with Querubin (2012) who stated that dynastic politics is a special form of elite efforts to maintain power in which one or several family groups monopolize political power. Furthermore, dynastic politics can occur when one family member occupies a political position previously held by his relatives (Asako et al., 2015). Based on the opinions of the aforementioned experts, the researcher concludes that what is meant by a political dynasty is the phenomenon of political practices to maintain and expand power from and for the ruling family environment. So the form of a political dynasty is built by preparing the family members concerned in a pragmatic political education and recruitment system. Political dynasty can also be interpreted as a process of directing the regeneration of power for the benefit of certain groups (for example, elite families) for the purpose of obtaining or maintaining power in a country, region, or political party.

Kinship politics in Haboddin's (2017) view comes along with political liberalization and decentralized political practices. Kinship politics is an old concept in political science studies. In simple terms, kinship politics is interpreted as similar to nepotism behavior because kinship politics practices the distribution of power among blood family members (Haboddin, 2017). This meaning illustrates that in kinship

politics power is distributed among family members. Family members can be wives, children, siblings, and in-laws.

Based on the explanations of the aforementioned experts, the researcher concludes that kinship politics is a political practice that can operate within the scope of political and government institutions by introducing family members and relatives from generation to generation without caring about the interests of the wider community and later the families and relatives in the office are expected to 'look after each other' so that they can last long in power. In this study, kinship politics refers to the efforts of regional heads of regents and mayors to place families and relatives in strategic positions within the government and encourage families and relatives to participate in controlling all forces outside the government that affects their power. In this case, political power in the legislature and political forces in formal and informal community organizations, in other words, these efforts are made to monopolize power for the sake of political stability and the perpetuation of power.

In electoral democracy, kinship is more than just a political network, kinship can be used to mobilize members in groups, even relatives who want to fight, and they will fight each other (with other groups) as a fulfillment of obligations as relatives (Lyon, 2019). Kinship has an impact on the emergence of electoral political dynastic networks, especially how individuals then act as representatives of cultural and interest groups (Lyon, 2019). The things that encourage a form of kinship to be able to win someone in the process of competing for positions in government are the obligation to fulfill a form of reciprocal relationship, fulfilling kinship obligations, providing a resilient relationship system that can handle high levels of conflict and disruption in formal leadership role holders. By applying the notion of mutual obligations and responsibilities triggered by kinship relationships, they can mobilize these networks.

The power of kinship politics lies in the support of extended family communities that are interpreted as having traditional family ties, so its scope is broader than just political dynasties built based on nuclear families. Kinship politics tends to perpetuate power by controlling all political power or resources through kinship support. Elected regional heads try to use their position to play the role of the main resource owner. Through their position, these political leaders have many opportunities to use public institutions as their domain of power and distribute public resources under their control as a means of exchange for certain goals when needed. Success teams soon turn into political brokers because they are considered to have second-order resources.

Kinship politics theory is used as an analytical framework to describe power in the context of local politics, including in understanding the phenomenon of kinship politics in maintaining political power. Then, researchers examine the phenomenon of kinship politics based on the dimensions of the obligation to fulfill a mutual agreement and satisfy kin obligations. Thus, the practice of kinship politics held by dynasties will show how power operates and maintains its political power in the regions. Mutual agreements stem from the roots of historical kinship, where relationships between kin members create a basis for common interests. This relationship is considered to play an important role in various matters, including providing power support. There needs to be a reciprocal relationship between kinship members, those who receive support for formal political positions, and those who provide support based on kinship interests. For those who are elected to formal political positions, once elected, they must fulfill their kinship obligations, which are based on what was previously agreed upon. Likewise, kin members who previously provided support also have kinship obligations to support their kin members who are currently occupying public positions. This condition is built to secure the position of the group in an area from potential or other group threats that want to displace the dominance of the ruling kin group.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Referring to what is to be researched, namely kinship politics in maintaining power in Baubau City, this research is considered more appropriate when using qualitative methods. In qualitative research, the main research instrument is the human instrument. The choice of qualitative method in this research is also based on the problem to be studied, namely by exploring or building a deep and meaningful explanation behind a political reality. Data sources in the research are divided into two types of data sources, namely primary and secondary data sources. Primary data is data obtained directly through observation, interviews with several informants, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). In this study, data in the field was collected using various techniques or methods, such as interviews, observation, and documentation. Testing the validity of data in this research is based on certain criteria, namely the degree of trust and truthfulness of data from informants seen from the truth of their descriptions, conclusions, and explanations, whose suitability can be seen from other important texts/documents related to kinship political practices in maintaining power in Baubau City.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Mutual Relationships in Baubau Electoral Politics

The reform provides more open opportunities than the previous two orders (Old Order and New Order). In the post-reform era, the public can elect regional heads directly using the right to vote. The direct election system provides flexibility for the community to determine. Such a democratic system reopens the opportunity for the community to choose whomever they want, including the belief to give the regional head seat to the sons of the region.

Through the new regional head election system, local people can vote and vote directly. This voting right gives the community the freedom to determine the choice of regional head. The symbol of the regional head who is the leader of the region seems to be the goal for people who have always been familiar with the sultanate. The sultan or leader who controls a certain area has the authority to regulate the course of government. This makes the local government closer to the community because it is directly elected by the community.

Voter behavior became slightly different after the change in the direct regional head election system. Because the basis of understanding regional heads reopens memories of sultanates and kingdoms in ancient times, the community supposes that choosing a leader is choosing a sultan in ancient times. Indirectly, the culture has not faded completely. There are indications of a return to the past such as the division of the Kaomu, Walaka, and Papara community groups.

Not only voter behavior but the context of regional head candidacy is also influenced by the cultural context. As a logical consequence, actors who run for regional heads are part of the region. In the context of social change, change is not easy to occur unless there is a major event that directly changes the order of society. Anyone can run for the regional head. Those who run for regional heads to be directly elected are also regional sons.

This opportunity is utilized by the sons of the region. For the sons of regions that were once in power, the descendants of these nobles can take back the position of the regional head. This opportunity reinvigorated the concept of kinship, which then played a major role in supporting and maintaining both groups of aristocratic (Kaomu and Walaka) in formal power. To this day, kinship relations continue to play an important role in the determination of regional heads.

We give the term kinship to the relationship between Kaomu, Walaka, and Papara not based on caste relations. The question that arises is why this relationship is interpreted as kinship. We need to look at today's social context. Although in the past groups were classified into nobles and non-aristocrats, this is no longer the case today because all people have the same position in the eyes of the

state and the eyes of the law, including procedural democracy. When elections are based on procedural democracy, there are no more castes in society.

The absence of caste (in the sense of aristocratic and non-aristocratic groups) does not just disappear, there are still those who believe in this system of society as a culture. The culture formed from the behavior patterns of the community since ancient times continues to strive to survive. However, instead of being a coercive system of society, this culture uses new clothes, which we call kinship relations.

Political parties capture this culture to win their candidates. In the context of political party pragmatism, who is most likely to be won through elections will be welcomed by political parties. The culture of the Baubau community has not escaped the attention of political parties. The kinship culture of the Baubau community is a dominant factor in regional head elections.

Our findings in the field, based on the experience of several post-reform elections, there was a regional head candidate who came from the Kaomu group (Mrs. Masrah) but was paired with a person from the Bugis tribe, and in the end, the pair lost to the downfall. From this fact, pairs of regional head candidates from the Walaka and Kaomu groups are difficult to defeat. This is the strongest symptom of kinship politics. As stated by one community leader from Walaka, it is necessary to unite them to win a political contest. Although a change may occur, it will certainly take a long time.

Kinship relationships are built on culture and interests. The interest in power meets the romance of the past that is trying to be preserved, resulting in a pattern that shapes the relationship. Efforts to preserve kinship are marked by the frequency with which people vote for those who used to belong to the aristocratic class. If faced with a candidate who does not come from aristocratic status then he will lose.

The relationship is not obvious, there is no formal agreement that requires someone to be from the nobility. This is what we mean by the confluence of cultural preservation and political interests. This can be seen as a fairly obvious reflection. But to explain this relationship we further explore how these kinship relationships work.

These relationships are thought to play an important role in many ways, including in providing power support. There needs to be a reciprocal relationship between kinship members, those who receive support to occupy formal political positions, and those who provide support based on common interests (kinship interests).

Relationships between kinship members create a basis of common interest. Reciprocal relations are a pattern that runs in the Buton sultanate community. This kinship relationship is often carried out

based on the common interests of the community there. In its journey, there are three groups in the Buton sultanate today, namely the Kaomu Group and the Walaka Group, which are noble, and the Papara group, which is a group of ordinary people. The noble group is an educated and educated group of people. Having traces and backgrounds that are educated and educated as well, people from this noble group are carried and elected at the Buton regional election event.

Of course, the votes given by noble groups to candidates are not given just like that. There is a kind of reciprocity given by the victory of the regional head candidate; our bottom line is on the victory of the candidate to become the regional head, not to the figure who won. If the regional head who wins the election contestation comes from among the nobles, then the nobles feel that they are returning to tradition, maintaining the tradition that they think should be like that. We interpret this event as political prestige. A certain feeling or emotional condition that contains pride when feeling represented. Our findings suggest that the majority of the population in the Baubau area is made up of nobles. If they win the regional head election then they have maintained the line of nobility.

This research emphasizes a political culture that is thick with kinship. Kaomu and Walaka make one of the candidates from their clan to be the leader. In electoral techniques, we found alternations between Kaomu and Walaka as head and vice-head. This combination usually places Kaomu as head and Walaka as deputy but is not rigid as they sometimes alternate.

The second mutuality is political access. The elected mayor and vice mayor come from the nobility. The placement of the nobility at the head of the government gives the electorate free access to the benefits of resource utilization, economic policy, and political policy. More widely open opportunities are utilized by regional heads to provide reciprocity to voters.

Political access is given to those who win elections. Although the scope of democracy is the community as a whole, kinship politics requires the winner of the regional head election to give back to the community. By granting political access, supporters of the winner of the regional head election get something in return. In other words, reciprocity is the provision of two entities that support each other to get mutually beneficial benefits.

Democracy ensures that every community gets the same rights. The people of Baubau are no exception. Policies issued by the government must cover all levels of society. Efforts to provide equal access to all people become an important issue in kinship politics.

What about non-aristocratic communities such as Papara and migrants, there seems to be an effort to maintain a balance in the community. Our findings in the field suggest that former noble chiefs who served in the previous term as mayor distributed political resources toward others, those outside the majority. However, for government and political positions as well as access to the economy, the distribution also appears to be regulated as reciprocity of kinship.

Apart from these issues, some obstacles threaten kinship politics. Reciprocal relationships can be unsmooth due to non-fulfillment of the initial agreement or not running optimally. For example, in some cases of recent governments, not only has Papara been sidelined but the stability of kinship in the nobility has also been questioned. If Kaomu and Walaka cannot maintain kinship, which is characterized by dissatisfaction among the nobility and leads to horizontal conflict, then there is no other way but to put kinship as the main goal. If this is not done, it will increase the influence of Papara and other migrant groups. On the other hand, it will nourish democracy. If the regional head is locked into the majority vote that will determine the winner, in the legislature the people can place their representatives as well. This will make democracy healthier.

The research found that there is a reciprocal relationship between the community and the candidate. The power of the nobility itself is of course based on the principle of kinship or kinship. The two noble groups jointly conduct political communication to find an agreement on who will become the regional head and deputy regional head. Collectively, the Buton people from both Kaomu, Walaka, and Papara groups support whomever the candidate is, as long as there are representatives from the Kaomu, Walaka, and Papara groups. As long as there are representatives from the Kaomu and Walaka groups, the community will fully encourage the candidate to win.

The common interest in this mutual relationship is power. We explored the extent to which power in reciprocal relationships is generated. Based on observations and interviews, we found that the scope of this power is formally the regional head and deputy regional head. The formal institution that is in the scope of kinship politics is the regional head and his deputy. Kinship consolidation in the context of this study is in these two formal institutions. The Walaka and Kaomu groups are the key holders in the backstage political control process. Both share roles in local politics, not only in Baubau but also in other districts in Buton.

The Walaka and Kaomu groups compromise and communicate with each other to determine who occupies the position of the regional head and deputy regional head. This process has occurred on several occasions during regional elections. The process of alternating between the Kaomu and Walaka groups is the core of kinship politics. In this process, there is a binding agreement to win the electoral

competition faced by the regions under the purview of Walaka and Kaomu.

The formal regional head election system allows anyone who meets the requirements to run for the regional head. This system opens up ample opportunities for the community to compete with any group in the region. Conversely, the community also has the right to determine which regional head candidate to choose to become a leader, including based on the agreement they have made based on inherent cultural values.

The results of the political communication process that has been built by the original Buton community groups have shown success in winning the Bau-Bau regional head who is native to Buton and comes from a noble group. Since the first local elections were held in Baubau City, no candidate from outside the native Buton community has succeeded in winning the election contestation. This shows that the Buton people still maintain kinship politics, fulfilling the commitment to give leaders to nobles such as Walaka and Kaomu.

However, it is not completely closed, kinship politics still provides space for other groups to contest, just not for the heads and deputy heads of regions that are still held by two aristocratic groups (Kaomu and Walaka). For example, members of the legislature can be elected from outside the noble group, so that some members of the Papara community or other community groups outside the indigenous Buton community can occupy seats as local legislative members after obtaining votes from voters.

The necessary criticism of the application of kinship politics is that it often makes regional conditions undeveloped, this can occur due to the election of regional heads who are not based on competence, only looking at closeness and kinship. Papara groups who enter the government mostly rely on closeness to the regional head but do not have good knowledge of leadership. We found similar opinions on the culture of kinship politics in Baubau. There is a condition for maintaining a healthy democracy based on kinship politics. Modern Baubau people realize that not everything they do will be perfect. In our findings, this self-criticism reinforces that what they do is done consciously.

This is a criticism that in the kinship process, there is no harm done if it sticks to knowledge and has high integrity to advance an area. It must also be realized by the community that the community supports people who will advance from the nobility but should not rule out people who have higher achievements and knowledge. Because basically, it is not that the community does not help their relatives, but for the better progress of the region, it is also necessary to pay

attention to the competence of prospective leaders. However, as stated by community leaders from Kaumo and Walaka, in reality, many of those who currently fill political positions in the government do not work by community expectations.

The strong interaction process in the Buton community is certainly built from the results of various kinds of relations, both economic, political, social, and cultural, which are seen from the perspective of where they live. The interaction process carried out continuously by the Buton community will certainly create a sense of closeness both joy and sorrow between members of the community.

Each individual has a very strong dependence on their group, which in turn is ready and willing to follow and support the interests of the group (Anggariani, 2013). This will create a sense of security in the community if they have a leader who comes from the nobility. The leader in question is the regional head of Bau-bau. The Papara community, who are ordinary people who are not highly educated, still have the right to enter the political sphere because only the key holder (regional head) must be from the noble group. Papara groups can sit in government institutions but must be related to the regional head and deputy regional head.

After being elected, the regional head must fulfill kinship obligations, these obligations are based on what has been previously agreed. Likewise, members of relatives who previously provided support also have kinship obligations to support members of their relatives who are currently occupying public positions. This condition is built to secure the position of the group in a region from potential or other group threats that want to displace the dominance of the ruling kin group.

Democratic incentives provide opportunities for anyone who has met the requirements to be able to vote and be elected. The openness of this electoral system interacts with local customs such as kinship. People are not unaware that there will be consequences if kinship becomes the main principle in the regional head election process. We collected criticisms derived from findings in the field.

The whole reciprocal relationship boils down to one goal, why is it that the preservation of culture, the rekindling of the spirit of the past, is still maintained to the point of influencing the electoral process? This relationship is a direct relationship that goes through several electoral processes. This is done so that political power can survive, one of which is the process of mutual relations in kinship politics.

The process of political communication involving the nobility, election to victory, and power sharing are efforts to keep power within the nobility. While democracy provides an open space for

political participation, people use this opportunity to revisit the romance of the past through the principle of equality in democracy.

3.2 Satisfying Kinship Obligations in Baubau Electoral Politics

In studying the phenomenon of kinship politics, the dimension of satisfying kin obligations is a dimension that needs to be studied more deeply in addition to mutual agreement. In this study, the dimension of fulfilling kin obligations in kinship political practices can be seen. This is especially true when observing the dynamics of the elections held in Baubau City, which is heavily influenced by customs and traditions.

The understanding of kinship values ultimately influences the existing political dynamics. The existing community harmony does not only play a cultural role but also has a political role. Community harmony is a party that contributes to the mobilization of political support votes when elections are held in Baubau City. In addition, it seems to be common knowledge to the local community that nominations in elections in Baubau City or even positions as regional heads are controlled by the Walaka and Kaomu customary groups. This happens because the local community believes in customs related to kinship with ancestors whereas the Walaka and Kaomu customary groups are seen as the lineage of previous traditional rulers. This view gives rise to political influence where the Walaka and Kaomu groups are considered the most entitled to positions of power.

In the social strata of Buton society, the Kaomu and Walaka groups are included in the ruling elite. The Kaomu group or group are nobles who come from the lineage of the first king, the men of this group have the first name La Ode and women are given the first name Wa Ode, while the Walaka group is descendants of the founding fathers of the Buton Kingdom. In political and governmental power, the Kaomu and Walaka groups both have access to central power and they are entitled to occupy certain positions, these conditions can still be felt in the current local political map in the Buton Islands, namely with the division of power roles that give rise to kinship politics.

As discussed in the previous section, since the first local elections in Baubau City were held in 2008, the local elections have always been won by pairs of mayors and deputy mayors from the Kaomu and Walaka customary groups. When referring to the historical background, there is indeed an exchange of positions when compared to what happened during the kingdom or sultanate period. During the kingdom or sultanate period, the Kaomu customary group was chosen by the Walaka customary group to occupy the position of king or sultan, but after Indonesian independence, especially in this

democratic era, the position of mayor is always occupied by part of the Walaka customary group while the position of deputy mayor is occupied by part of the Kaomu customary group.

The position of political leadership itself is a position that can be obtained by every individual either as a status that is sought through a long process, or a status that is outlined based on kinship relations (Kontjaraningrat, 2009). In the context of politics in Baubau, although regional head elections are part of a democratic agenda that goes through a long process, politically it cannot be denied that the practice of kinship politics makes positions of power only controlled by certain family networks. The Walaka and Kaomu groups communicate and coordinate with each other in determining the candidate pairs for regional heads who are promoted to represent their groups, determining who becomes mayor and who becomes deputy mayor. This kinship political practice still has the support of the Baubau community, as evidenced by the pairs of mayoral and vice-mayoral candidates nominated by Walaka and Kaomu who always managed to win the elections.

The implementation of elections in Baubau City itself when observed is always filled by several pairs of candidates for regional head and deputy regional head from Walaka and Kaomu. This condition further shows the existence of political dominance by certain community groups, in this case, Walaka and Kaomu, which are seen as having the primacy of traditional nobility in the implementation of local democracy. Even so, the emergence of several regional head candidates from Walaka and Kaomu did not cause divisions among kin members or damage existing kinship values.

When all candidates follow existing kinship values, the political dynamics move towards the ideas brought by each candidate. For local adat groups, the main point after kinship values is how the regional head candidates can convince the community to advance the region, and after being elected they must realize what has been promised. This creates an attachment between the elected regional head and the kinship group. One thing that should not be forgotten after being elected is that the mayor and deputy mayor must maintain good relations and the intention to communicate with the community and leaders, as stated by the informant that listening to the input of traditional leaders is important because, in the next election, the views of the leaders will be listened to by the community.

The political phenomenon of kinship political practices is evident when tracing the dynamics of elections that have been running so far in Baubau City. Based on research findings, of the three elections held in Baubau City, it was recorded that only in 2018 there was a candidate for deputy mayor who came from outside the Buton community. This deputy mayor candidate is Ikhsan Ismail, who

genealogically has a Bugis tribal background. The mayoral candidate who was his partner at that time was Wa Ode Maasra Manarfa, who genealogically has a Buton noble background from the Kaomu customary group. Referring to information provided by research informants, that although Wa Ode Maasra Manarfa was a regional head candidate with a genealogical background of the Kaomu customary group, he was considered inappropriate at that time in choosing his vice mayoral partner who had a genealogical background from outside the Buton tribe.

Wa Ode Maasra Manarfa's defeat, as stated by informants, was not due to gender reasons, but to the reason for not choosing a deputy. This case shows how the kinship system plays a role in mobilizing vote support for regional head candidates. When kinship values are practiced by regional head candidates, there is a reciprocal relationship where kinship customary groups will also mobilize their support for the regional head candidates. Thus, there is a continuity between regional heads who continue to practice kinship politics to gain political support and kinship customary groups who can mobilize political support on the condition that kinship values are upheld.

As information obtained from a Kaomu community leader who also has a close kinship relationship with Wa Ode Maasra Manarfa, it is not that Maasra has never been given input by her family and Buton Tribe community leaders regarding kinship values that are upheld in election political contestation. Maasra was seen by local community leaders as lacking in listening to input from elders by choosing a deputy mayoral partner who did not follow kinship values, namely between Walaka and Kaomu, at that time Maasra chose a deputy mayoral partner who even came from outside the Buton Tribe. This view then led to political consequences for Maasra's candidacy as regional head, which made other kin members withdraw their support from Maasra's candidacy.

The community leaders or elders of the Buton Tribe viewed the decision to withdraw political support for Maasra at that time as a difficult decision. However, they ultimately felt that the decision needed to be made where all of this was expected by community leaders to be used as a lesson not to leave the group and to listen to the advice given by the leaders. At least the momentum to choose a candidate pair from outside the native Buton community in the 2018 regional head election is still felt to be not right, and this was also stated by other informants who also said that for the next 10 years, it might still be difficult to win other candidates from outside the Buton tribe.

Based on the problems in the Wa Ode Maasra Manarfa candidacy case, it can be observed that the important point of the political

problems that occurred was Maasra's decision to choose a deputy mayor who was considered not to follow the traditional values upheld by the Buton people. It appears that the existing customary groups can use their ability to mobilize votes as bargaining power to make regional coconut candidates compromise by following and maintaining customary values, which is a practice of kinship politics.

The strong position and influence of customary leaders in the dynamics of local politics in Buton, including in Baubau City, can be seen from the ability of the Walaka group during the kingdom and sultanate period to depose kings or sultans who upheld customary values or norms based on religion. The customs that have been built since long ago and are still maintained today, coupled with the position of the customary leader of each group who is still highly respected by the population, make the customary leader not only a unifying symbol in the social and cultural fields but also a determinant in the political aspect.

Not only regional head candidates, kinship politics also extends to party management in Baubau. Existing parties are trapped in customary patterns without being able to criticize them. Although there are no written provisions that limit a person from being able to sit in the government in Baubau, even positions as regional legislative members can be filled by people who come from outside Buton. There are still limitations for people without strong kinship networks to fill strategic positions in the regional government.

Looking deeper, the socio-political background of the Baubau City community, with its strong tribal values and culture of the Buton people, considers that the position of the regional head is absolutely a position given to people from the Walaka or Kaomu customary group. This long-standing traditional agreement is also adhered to and has never been violated by the Papara community.

Despite the current conditions, some of the Papara groups in Baubau are no longer those with low economic backgrounds or small communities as was the case during the kingdom or sultanate period. Currently, some of these Papara groups have become members of the regional legislature, entrepreneurs, and occupy important positions in state companies. Despite their improved social conditions, when facing regional elections and meetings between various leaders, people from the Papara group still follow the agreement to uphold and carry out existing cultural values or in this case kinship practices that support the Walaka and Kaomu customary groups politically.

These institutions of communal harmony that have a strong influence in determining regional head candidates, as well as mobilizing votes and financial support, do not just end when the elections are over. Of course, some consequences must be lived by the elected mayor and

deputy mayor who is supported by community harmony. The elected regional head has an attachment to the indigenous people and their kinship network, or what is referred to in this case as the dimension of satisfying kin obligations.

Some views criticize the current practices of applying kinship values, and he considers that this situation shackles regional heads in the preparation and placement of positions in regional government. In addition, political positions outside local government organizations are also sometimes affected by the rigidity of understanding kinship values in a democracy. In the end, this kinship becomes something that binds the regional head, if he does not prioritize traditional kinship interests, other candidates can later replace his position. On the one hand, there is also a race among candidates to gain public sympathy by getting closer to traditional leaders.

As a result of the political attachment of regional heads to indigenous peoples and their kinship networks, this has an impact on various sectors of government, including policy-making and the running of the government bureaucracy. The kinship relationship between the regional head and members of the regional legislature, plus the intervention of community harmony, makes the regional policy-making process narrow and exclusive. Finally, public policies are difficult to develop to meet public needs because they have been influenced by parties who have interests and kinship with regional heads and regional legislative members. The formal decision-making process prioritizes kinship interests and will hinder regional development to progress.

The running of the regional government bureaucracy is also disrupted by the entrenched practice of kinship politics. Elected regional heads tend to appoint their relatives to fill strategic positions in the regional bureaucratic structure. This is done not only as a form of fulfilling the obligation of relatives to prioritize the closest relatives in giving the mandate of office, but also to maintain power.

In line with Haboddin's (2017) view, kinship politics can simply be interpreted as similar to nepotism behavior, because kinship politics carries out the practice of distributing power among blood family members or based on kinship networks. From this meaning, it can be illustrated that in kinship politics, power is distributed among family members such as wives, children, siblings, and in-laws.

Kinship politics is an effort by the ruler to place families and relatives in strategic positions to build a political empire in the government. This effort is made so that those who are members of kinship politics can protect each other and remain in power, in addition to being able to control the government by the wishes of the family. Placing

families or relatives in strategic positions will make it easier for the ruler to control and control all the things the ruler needs (Agustino, 2010).

Such is the case in Baubau where the former mayor, AS Tamrin, who has served two terms since 2013, is related to many local public officials. His biological brother is the Deputy Chairperson of the Baubau City Legislative Body for the 2019-2024 period, while his biological sister serves as the Head of the Baubau City Regional Planning Agency. Not to mention the nieces and nephews and brothers-in-law who also fill strategic positions in the Baubau City Legislative Council and local government bureaucratic structures. However, there are also many positions filled by people outside of kinship. Kinship status in this case does not dominate all political and bureaucratic positions in the region, but rather serves as a status to gain prioritization and control over certain positions.

The practice of kinship politics in the dimension of discriminatory efforts in the form of efforts to fulfill the obligations of relatives cannot continue to be tolerated. Conceptually and in terms of implementation, the practice of kinship politics can harm democracy. Not only has it narrowed the opportunity for regional heads and political leaders to be born from outside the kinship dynasty mechanism between the Kaomu and Walaka groups, but it has also weakened the legislative control function over the executive. In Baubau City, members or chairpersons of the legislature are filled by kinship politics, and although they do not come from the same party, their success is also supported by family relationships that grow into political dynasties (Harjudin & Zuada, 2020).

Kinship politics exists as a result of the weak institutionalization of parties and the proper implementation of the functions of political parties, resulting in a tendency to strengthen kinship politics, which can be a shortcut for political parties to win political contestation to ensure the existence of certain political regimes (Haryanto, 2017). Kinship politics is an act of political recruitment that can produce family members who occupy political/government positions and are not based on their abilities, in other words, not through predetermined procedures, but rather based on considerations of kinship relations, such as descent and marital ties (Purwaningsih, 2015).

When looking at the Indonesian context, the concept of an ideal bureaucracy is outlined in line with the bureaucratic reform that has long been launched. Law Number 43/1999 on State Civil Service explicitly regulates the neutrality of employees or State Civil Apparatus in government. As stated in article 3 in the 6th point in the law, it emphasizes that efforts to maintain the neutrality of civil servants from political influence are to ensure the integrity,

cohesiveness, and unity of civil servants. So that they can focus all their attention, thoughts, and energy on the tasks assigned to them.

The non-neutrality of bureaucrats has an impact on the running of the wheels of government, such as distorted public interests, public services that are not optimal, and the placement of positions that are not objective and professional and even tend to look at closeness or involvement in elections which results in incompetent bureaucrats being chosen to fill certain positions in the Regional Government structure. Such as the culture of massive reshuffling of structural positions within the Regional Government after the election of a new regional head. Problems will occur when the reshuffle process is not based on performance/competence but based on political closeness to the newly elected regional head. If the new leader can create an ethical climate in the civil service, it will certainly have a positive impact on the performance of an organization (Sabrina, 2012). However, assessments based on closeness will make bureaucrats more oriented toward building personal political relations with the authorities rather than improving their performance or competence in developing their careers (Prasodjo & Rudita, 2014).

The beliefs and practices of traditional cultural values that have been carried out since long ago have undeniably formed manners in the daily life of the Buton people. Values that were born from the kingdom, sultanate, and post-independence era, especially in the current Reformation era, are still held firmly by the local community, including politicians and regional heads. In the dynamics of practical politics in Baubau City, manners towards traditional leaders are something that is also maintained by the Mayor of Baubau, although in some cases there are also traditional leaders who feel dissatisfied with what has been done by the mayor who is considered not to pay too much attention to the interests of the people here or the indigenous people of Buton.

The communication network that has been well established and maintained so far by local traditional leaders has made kinship ties in Baubau City still strong until now, in some of these meetings the mayor and vice mayor were even present either simultaneously or alternately. The presence of regional heads in joint activities with traditional leaders is a sign of their respect for traditional leaders or traditional elders, although a figure from the Walaka said that traditional leaders did not ask to be respected, the values that have been maintained have made this dynamic continue over time.

Indeed, the concept of kinship that develops in the values and culture of the Buton people is to hold ethics or manners as a view of human behavior according to good measure, values, and norms. Good manners that are following ethics are generally understood at the

elite level of society consisting of the Kaomu and Walaka groups, therefore manners become a role model for a group of people in acting and behaving.

Buton society in its kinship life has instilled three pillars of norms, namely legal norms, social norms, and customs. In the noble class of Buton, manners have become a guide to identity and strengthening status as a society that understands manners and ethics in behavior. It is quite different for people who are in the lowest hierarchy of social stratification in traditional communities, although in many decisions those at the bottom will follow the decisions of the elite community, namely the nobles from Kaomu and Walaka.

Along with the development of information technology and political education in the community, there will be an awareness that the practice of kinship politics, which has been considered part of the custom, has the opportunity to hinder the progress of Baubau City itself. Political competition for the position of the regional head, which should be filled with a battle for ideas and thoughts on development, is only limited to continuing the social and political status that is considered an inheritance. The resulting public policies become inappropriate because the process is limited by the kinship circle around the regional head.

4. CONCLUSION

This research raises the phenomenon of kinship politics that occurs in Baubau City. Kinship politics is seen from the efforts made by regional heads in placing their families and relatives in strategic positions in the government and outside the government. The explanation of the phenomenon of kinship politics that occurs in Baubau City is seen based on the dimension of the obligation to fulfill a mutual agreement and the dimension of satisfying kin obligations.

This reciprocal relationship is seen from the history of the community which eventually forms a pattern of power based on kinship relations. The characteristics of the community in Baubau City are historically divided into aristocratic and non-aristocratic communities. The noble group is represented by groups of Kaomu descendants and Walaka descendants. This reciprocal relationship also shapes the existence of common interests. This shared interest is manifested in the form of power-sharing from the noble group. However, from the field findings, it is also known that the kinship politics that occur in Baubau City are not completely closed. There is still room for groups outside the aristocracy to get involved in local politics. However, this does not apply to the position of the regional head.

The results of the field findings and discussion show that the dimension of fulfilling kin obligations in kinship political practices can be seen. This is observed in the dynamics of elections held in Baubau City, which is strongly influenced by customs and traditions. The community in Baubau City is known as a society that still upholds kinship ties and cultural values. It can be concluded that the dimension of fulfilling kinship obligations in kinship politics in Baubau City is realized in the form of selecting couples in elections in Baubau City. Couples in the elections are always filled by several pairs of regional head and deputy regional head candidates from the Walaka and Kaomu groups.

Based on the results of field findings and discussion, practical suggestions that can be conveyed include the Baubau City Government is expected to open opportunities or access in the fields of education and economy for all communities, not only for certain groups. For the people of Baubau City, it is necessary to continuously socialize on the importance of electing regional heads based on competence and qualifications, not just based on lineage. Further research needs to be conducted with different research methods, which can see the perceptions of the people of Baubau City regarding the kinship political system in their area.

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