



Thugs and village politics: Analysis of social capital in the dynamics of village head elections in Sinjai Regency

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ABSTRACT

The election of village heads is one form of democracy in the village. The concept of democracy is what provides the basis and mechanism of power based on the principle of equality and human equality. Democracy places humans as the owners of sovereignty which is then known as the principle of people's sovereignty. To fulfill the rights of each human being cannot be achieved by each person individually, but must be together. Along with the rapid development and construction as an impact of globalization, the phenomenon of thuggery has emerged as one of the negative impacts that occur indirectly from the development of globalization. The phenomenon of the emergence of political thuggery must be prevented as early as possible by all existing political forces, and political parties are actually most responsible for the emergence of this political thuggery, especially for political parties, either directly or indirectly, which encourage the emergence of mass action and the plundering of government power.

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1. Introduction

Village Head Election, also known as "Pilkades", is a process of people's sovereignty involving direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair elections by qualified Village residents from the nomination stage to the inauguration of the elected candidate. The community can freely determine who they want to be their leader (Bismo, 2020)(Basri & Irawan, 2023)(Puansah et al., 2024). In addition, Pilkades, also known as the election of the village head, is an election that is carried out directly in a village by its citizens who choose their leader. This is an election carried out in a country with a democratic system that allows its citizens to enjoy freedom of speech, opinion, and choice in accordance with the law (Waworuntu, 2022)(Herianto, 2022)(Suarlin & Fatmawati, 2022). There are reports from the community regarding political violence in the 2023 village head elections in Sinjai Regency, many people feel disadvantaged because several thugs distributed money to the community so that they would have to follow what was chosen later when the election time came even though it was not in accordance with their conscience and they received threats in the form of rice fields or gardens that were being worked on would be pulled and replaced by other people.) Ideally the purpose of holding elections is to allow for the

change of officials who will represent the interests of the people and also carry out the principle of people's sovereignty and the principle of citizens' basic rights. The existence of orderly and peaceful words is because those two things are the desire and essence of the change of leadership that is packaged with the implementation of elections. Changes in leadership that are not orderly and peaceful, such as the rampant violations of elections, for example violence, can trigger social chaos and chaos in the midst of society. Violence is an act of violation that can cause chaos among the people in Sinjai Regency.

The implementation of village head elections in Indonesia is often colored by identity politics. Identity politics practices are carried out by some people, candidates, campaign teams and anyone involved in the victory who competes in politics both at the national and local levels, including in village government because it can promise a fairly large chance of winning for these candidates. So it is not surprising that identity politics still often occurs in Indonesia, especially in the Village Government. Identity politics that have occurred so far are feared to be able to cause divisions between communities, if identity politics continues to occur. Groups that are dominant in identity are feared to be able to dominate minority groups. Speaking of identity politics, there are many types of identity politics that come from religion, ethnicity, gender, territorial differences, and clans. However, the most frequently seen and faced are religion and ethnicity. Actually, identity politics is not always negative, but can also be used as a political marketing strategy. The negative effects are dividing society, causing conflict, and ultimately causing chaos or differences of opinion. Therefore, identity politics is always viewed negatively by society. In addition, there is a possibility that identity politics will occur, but it will only occur when there is a possibility (Rosha et al., 2023). When injustice arises, identity politics is a tool of struggle used by a group to fight for the goals of the group. This usually also arises as a result of conflict between groups. They believe that there are similarities in characteristics or ethnicity and tribalism in the group (Rahmawati, 2024). According to several studies, identity politics in Indonesia is considered a bad political practice because of efforts to accept or reject certain individuals or social groups based on their identity. This is reflected in the unwillingness of the community to elect leaders or integrate with other groups that have different identities, or other socio-political conflicts based on identity (Lestari, 2019). Identity politics can be simply interpreted as a political strategy that focuses on a distinction that utilizes a primordial bond (Arya & SH, n.d.) (Redhani et al., 2020) (Dedi, 2022). Identity politics can also be said to be a tool for politics within groups, be it ethnic, religious, tribal, or even others who have a certain goal, and can be a tool as an indicator of the identity of the group (Surya et al., 2021).

The election of the Village Head is a local political activity that is not related to political parties but has a complete political content, such as the strategy of selecting village head candidates using local identity politics and dynasties because of the power of family and genetics to influence voters (Akmaluddin & Ibrahim, 2022). Likewise, in the context of Village Head Elections in various villages in Indonesia, the role of national identity politics in democratic contestation at the national and regional levels is the basis for shared strength to achieve the goal of identifying individuals to determine their choices, behavior undergoes transformation. It is undeniable that identity politics, especially at the village level, especially in village head elections, can hardly be abandoned, apart from the many identities that can be sold by prospective candidates, identity politics also provides a fairly large chance of winning (Salim, 2018). This cannot be allowed, even though identity politics is considered a tool of struggle by certain identity groups. However, if this happens continuously, it is feared that it will actually damage democracy, give rise to dominant groups and conversely there will be minority groups that could be oppressed.

2. Method

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. Sugiyono (2019:3) states that in qualitative research, data collection is not guided by theory but is guided by facts found by

researchers during field research. Therefore, the data analysis carried out is inductive based on the facts found during the study). The data collection process involves 3 important activities, including data reduction, data obtained from the field is recorded carefully and in detail. Data display, a set of structured information that allows for drawing conclusions and taking action. The presentation can be in the form of a brief description, chart, or relationship between categories, but in qualitative research it is usually presented in a narrative. Verification, the process from the beginning of data collection, then the researcher summarizes the problems in the field, then records them until drawing conclusions (Surya et al., 2021). This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, where the aim is to describe the social situation. The purpose of this study is to explain events that occur in the social environment. Data triangulation is carried out by checking data that has been obtained from the same source using different techniques such as data obtained from observation results, then checked with interviews. (Wingarta et al., 2021) According to Nazir (1988:63) the descriptive method is a method for examining the condition of a group of people, an object, a condition, a system of thought or a group of events in the present. The purpose of this descriptive research is to create a systematic, factual and accurate picture, description or painting of the facts, characteristics and relationships between the phenomena being investigated. By using this method we will provide a clear and systematic picture of the facts in the research field. Through a case, collecting existing data, clarifying and then analyzing problems by connecting existing theories to solve a problem appropriately.

3. Analysis and Results

3.1. Forms of thuggery in village head elections

Thuggery that occurs in society has its own form. At least in general, thuggery can be classified into two forms, namely physical and psychological. This classification is what the author then uses as a measure in reviewing the thuggery that occurred in the village head elections in the villages of Sinjai Regency. From various statements from informants, the author concluded that the thuggery that occurred in the village head elections in Sinjai Regency was only psychological and not physical. There were several people—in addition to the informants who had been previously determined—whom the author interviewed regarding the form of thuggery in question.

3.2. Background of Political Thuggery in Social Review

It must be acknowledged and realized together that society in a village including in Sinjai district has its own forms of structure, such as social groups, culture, social institutions, social stratification, to power and politics. Where all of these levels have a certain degree of dynamics that cause different behavioral patterns, depending on each situation faced. The differences that exist in society as mentioned, on the one hand, are believed to have a positive impact with the interaction between one individual or group with other individuals and groups because in society there must be social order. However, on the other hand, some also say that such differences can be a medium for social conflict, because each society has its own interests and goals which may differ from each other. In this regard, there are two opposing social theories in viewing conflict, namely structural functional and conflict theory. Structural functional views conflict as a phenomenon that contains deviant behavior. On the other hand, Parsons in his writing entitled *Knowledge and Society*, assumes that society moves in a state of balance, and every institution and action in society supports the state of balance or social order. Such reasoning then has initiated an idea, that conflict is seen as not part of the dynamics of the social system, therefore it is considered a deviation. By itself, the context of peace is interpreted as a condition of the formation of a harmonious state, balance (equilibrium) and consensus of all elements of the social system.

In a different way, Conflict Theories view conflict as a form of human interaction in forming a social system. Conflict has been viewed as a symptom inherent in society. In this case, the

occurrence of thuggery in politics that occurred in Sinjai Regency can be justified through this theory. This means that society which is ecologically located on an archipelago known for its heat and consists of The majority of coastal people who are hard-hearted will tend to do rough actions in their daily behavior. This is also based on the statement of Nawar and Turhamun, where according to them, thuggery in the village head elections is more caused by habits that occur every year, in addition to the rough nature of the community as the Sinjai community in general.

3.3. Overcoming Political Thuggery with Political Ethics

In Sinjai Regency, there are many academics, politicians, cultural figures and others who are trying to overcome or at least... minimize such actions. although, it is said that conflict is natural phenomenon and can provide positive implications in social life as recognized by sociologists, will be different when thuggery occurs in the political realm. In politics everything can change up to one hundred and eighty degrees. According to Dony Kleden there is no other way but to return to the basic foothold in politics, namely political ethics. Political ethics actually wants to touch on the moral aspect of politics. Political ethics are usually contrasted with individual ethics, group ethics, or institutional ethics that only voice one-sided aspirations. So, the presence of political ethics actually wants to overcome various barriers of interest and fight for the common welfare (society).

4. Conclusion

The background that caused political thuggery in the village head elections in Sinjai Regency is (a) a tradition of violence that is still quite deeply rooted in community life, (b) politics and power that to a certain extent can justify any means (including thuggery) to achieve the desired goals, c) a fairly tough character compared to other regions, and (d) economic factors, which are indicated by the existence of certain individuals (including thugs) who want to reap financial benefits in the village head election process in Sinjai Regency.

Meanwhile, the form of thuggery that occurred in the village head election in Sinjai district only in the form of psychological actions not physical. This is proven by the absence of actions that indicate physical beatings. However, it is only in the form of threats, rewards, coercion, to money politics or money politics. In Coser's theory, this kind of political thuggery can be classified as a realistic conflict, and in Simmel's theory it can be categorized as an integrative conflict not destructive.

The settlement of village head election disputes that prioritize deliberation according to the principle of the original autonomy of the village must be implemented by the Village Government according to the mandate of the Village Law, of course there is nothing wrong with it. The deliberation mechanism carried out by the village head election committee and then the decision of the village head election committee is final and binding or if there is a dispute in the village head election, the Regent/Mayor is obliged to resolve it within 30 (thirty) days. There is no limitation of access to the research location, it is just necessary to ask a lot of questions to the local residents. This research can be expanded to analyze similar phenomena in other areas, by conducting the same research by getting a lot of information from local residents about the events that occurred when the village head elections were held in the area.

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