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Dynamics of Participatory Culture in Elections: From Tudang Sipulung Culture to Open Discussion and the Phenomenon of Money Politics

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ABSTRACT

Active community participation in the election process is very important in guarding this democratic party. Of course there is dynamics in this participation. Apart from that, the transformation of the *tudang sipulung* culture towards open discussion and the phenomenon of money politics are part of the dynamics of active community participation in this election process. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods with the aim of explaining the transformation of *tudang sipulung* culture into open discussion, the phenomenon of money politics and the dynamics of participatory culture in elections

INTRODUCTION

Society in Indonesia is generally known as a pluralistic society or what we know as plural society where this society was formed through the unity and bonds of an ideology that we know as Pancasila. We have known for a long time that Pancasila itself is an ideology owned by the Indonesian people with its motto "Unity in Diversity". We can interpret this motto as unifying the nation because depicting diverse differences will still make us one as a complete nation. Apart from that, we also know that Indonesia is a diverse, multidimensional country, which means that Indonesia is rich in ethnic, religious and racial diversity. However, the fact is that currently, this diversity does not preclude the occurrence of social changes that have the potential to pose a threat to the nation's noble values and can change the system of rules of life of the Indonesian people and their lifestyle patterns.

Since elementary school, we have always been given explanations about the democratic system that exists in our country. As we know, this system is a government system that has been adopted by this nation for a long time. Of course, each system has its own purpose. The aim of this democratic system is to establish and produce state sovereignty and prosperity for the Indonesian people. To achieve this goal, good and harmonious cooperation between the government and the community is definitely needed to produce decisions that will affect the sovereignty and welfare of the community and nation as a whole. We can see one realistic form of a democratic system from the general elections that we just held some time ago.

General elections (elections) are a momentum where people are free to speak out and express their aspirations regarding the choices they have made for themselves which come from their own conscience. Therefore, sometimes this election is also said to be a 'democratic party' where the votes of each community have a big influence on the election results. The existence of public participation in an election is of course very important because this is a form of community sovereignty, especially those that adhere to a democratic system. We can see this

form of sovereignty in the election process, where the election aims to elect and determine people who can be trusted to carry out and provide supervision over the running of a country's government. During the pre- and post-election process, the community and community leaders will usually discuss things with each other *tudang sipulung* or discussion groups which can be a means of providing space for mediation and negotiation. *Tudang Sipulung* This is usually done by upholding democratic principles and also prioritizing local wisdom values. As we know, there are several local wisdom values that are always upheld by the Bugis-Makassar community, such as *sipakatau* (mutual respect), *sipakainge* (reminding each other) and also values *sipakalebbi* (glorify each other). Usually this *Tudang Sipulung* is done in a predetermined place. But, at the moment *tudang sipulung* then transformed into an open discussion that is carried out freely which is usually held in coffee shops or places that allow for open discussions.

In every election we often encounter a phenomenon known as 'money politic' which could actually damage the meaning of democracy itself. This money politics is usually carried out by political elites to obtain votes in general elections and elections held to elect the head of government. This money politics has become a habit that has been carried out even in previous elections. On February 14 2024, Indonesia held a democratic party to elect the head of state and council members who will be the people's representatives for the next five years. Certainly a phenomenon money politic this cannot be avoided.

The two things above are the two main topics that will be discussed in this article, but both will be discussed using an anthropological lens. We can see that if seen from an anthropological point of view, both phenomena money politic As well as cultural transformation, we can understand that both can occur as a response or result of social, political, cultural and economic dynamics occurring in society. Of course, certain factors such as the increasing influence of globalization, increasingly modern education and demands for the importance

of increasingly inclusive political participation will also influence the Bugis-Makassar community to adopt and implement open discussion practices. Apart from that, if seen from an anthropological perspective, the money politics phenomenon is a reflection of the power structure, cultural values and the form of interaction patterns that occur between individuals.

METHODS

The research method used is a descriptive qualitative method by conducting observations and literature studies. Observation is able to help the writer to directly observe the conditions that occur in the field so that the writer is able to describe the conditions in the field through descriptive narratives. As for literature studies, it certainly helps writers in analyzing theories and empirical findings that can be found from the literature used.

The construction that is then born from this literature study will embody a thought in formulating the concept of participatory culture in elections, *Tudang sipulung* culture and money politic phenomenon which is able to help the author see developments and challenges in the current era. So it is hoped that this article can then help other similar research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Tudang Sipulung* Cultural Transformation Towards Open Discussion

Forms of participation in the community are related to a sense of togetherness in reaching consensus. In particular, the Bugis-Makassar community is no stranger to *Tudang Sipulung* culture. This culture also has strong values of togetherness and brotherhood. Apart from that, it is also known that there is value *I don't agree and I don't agree* which are the moral values of the Bugis-Makassar community which can then become role models in running a government system (Putri, 2016:7). As we know that, This *tudang sipulung* is a very important concept for the Bugis-Makassar people, who are already known to the public that they are a tribe that occupies an area in South Sulawesi.

As previously explained, we can give an idea that this *tudang sipulung* has the meaning of 'a meeting to hold discussions'.

In his writing (Dollah, 2016:180) etymologically, *tudang sipulung* derived from the word '*tudang*' comes from the Bugis language which means 'sit' and '*sipulung*' which means 'gather'. As for the terminology, *tudang sipulung* has the meaning of sitting together and gathering and then deliberation can be held. This is of course done to obtain consensus on the issues raised in the deliberation. Traditionally, this *tudang sipulung* is a traditional meeting in which there are community leaders and people who are considered leaders. In *tudang sipulung* usually discussed matters that require various thought patterns and views related to people's lives in their environment, such as social life, politics and the economy of the community. Of course, this *tudang sipulung* was previously carried out in traditional houses and then led by their traditional leaders who were considered to have important influence.

From the explanation above, we can see that *tudang sipulung* is a culture where this culture is carried out in order to find solutions to every problem discussed through joint deliberation. This is certainly able to become a forum for the community to discuss and discuss various phenomena that occur so that joint decisions can be made. There are other aims of the *tudang sipulung*, namely discussion of social and political issues, as a means of obtaining consensus, preserving culture and traditions as well as strengthening solidarity and a sense of unity. Thus, this culture is not just an ordinary traditional gathering, but this culture is an integral part of the social and political system of Bugis society.

In his writing (Ruminding et al., 2016:58) This *tudang sipulung* culture is also often done by the Seriti Toraja Congregation Church which aims to maintain peace between its youth. This was done considering that it is important to improve and renew culture as a medium for maintaining contextual peace. From this article we can see that this culture has strong values to participate in resolving conflicts. Then this *tudang sipulung* becomes a very efficient

place to negotiate regarding the conflict that occurs. Of course, in this case it will be led by community figures and leaders who become facilitators in dialogue so that all parties can accept the results of joint decisions. In the *tudang sipulung*, It also has a function as a medium for providing education and outreach to the public regarding political processes, the political rights they have and the urgency of their participation in political life both on a local and national scale so that this can be passed on to the younger generation in order to provide ongoing reinforcement. collective regarding political procedures and actions that are considered effective. Once again, *tudang sipulung* is not just an ordinary traditional gathering, but this culture is an integrated part of the social and political system of Bugis society which of course plays an important role in giving characteristics or shape to a culture's identity and maintaining harmony in society.

If seen from the political context of Bugis society, *Tudang sipulung* has several crucial roles in which various political issues are discussed which of course affect their community. This includes leadership, government policy, and political strategy. Apart from that, political decisions are also often born of this *tudang sipulung* culture like the election of a village head or tribal head. So that this *tudang sipulung* is a forum held to discuss candidates who are considered to have great potential to become the next leader. Then also inside *tudang sipulung* is usually done as a 'tool' to monitor the performance of leaders and public officials and then discuss the results of the public's evaluation of leaders regarding the fulfillment of promises and government accountability for existing policies. In short, *Tudang Sipulung* is capable and efficient as a forum for discussion, decision making, conflict resolution and monitoring of government policies. This is of course a reflection of the importance of a tradition of deliberation and community participation in forming and maintaining political stability in Bugis society.

Society continuously changes at all levels of internal complexity, starting from the macro level, mezo level to the micro level. In today's society there are impacts, traces and duplicates originating from

the past and also the forerunners and capabilities for the future (Sztompka, 2017: 58). There is a transformation in *tudang sipulung* culture becoming a space for open discussion in society shows us the existence of this cultural habituation to current developments and social dynamics which are increasingly complicated. Even though, as previously mentioned, the essence of this culture is formal meetings in traditional houses, current developments have certainly influenced the way people exchange ideas and communicate with each other. Monumentally, social activity is a global phenomenon which has also become feedback from the cultural transformation in social life (Guntoro, 2020:24). In this change, there are several ways in which this culture has transformed into open discussion, including:

- a. The Rise of Social Media Platforms. As we know, currently social media can be accessed by all individuals of all ages. Facebook, X, TikTok and WhatsApp are the applications most frequently used by people today. With the existence of these various applications, people are able to get media to communicate more intensely even though they do not meet directly in a place. Through these applications, people can form discussion online groups which allows for broader contributions without having to be limited by geographical boundaries and circumstances.
- b. Public Meetings and Community Forums. *Tudang sipulung* has now developed into public discussion forums which are usually held by community forums where they can discuss important issues where these discussions are held casually and in public places such as coffee shops.
- c. Local Television and Radio Shows. The existence of programs on various television and radio programs currently which present discussion programs on important issues means that the public can participate and provide their arguments in these discussions. Through this television and radio program, various

individuals from various backgrounds can also participate to provide their views.

- d. Formal Education. Today's schools and educational institutions also provide opportunities for students to always think critically. This has also been stipulated in the curricula of each school. Through formal education, students are given space to discuss openly and are then given certain topics to discuss. Apart from that, in schools there are also extracurricular activities which can accommodate students to express their opinions and aspirations.
- e. *Sipulung* Community Activities. Several Bugis community groups still maintain the *Tudang Sipulung* tradition by holding formal meetings in traditional houses. However, in some cases, these meetings have been turned into open forums where people from outside the community can also participate.

There is a transformation in *tudang sipulung* culture moving towards an open discussion space gives us a reflection of society's response to changing times. People who receive a lot of information tend to have the opportunity to adapt to current developments (Lauren, 2023: 881). Even though currently the discussion model and place of discussion are changing, the values contained within *tudang sipulung* as deliberation and justice remain principles that must be adhered to firmly. We can examine the fundamental values contained in this culture and we can also use them as good examples that the government can follow to continue to maintain public trust. Therefore, the government needs to create responsibility based on local wisdom to protect public policies so that they do not contradict the culture adhered to by the community. There are also those from the anthropological side who see this as a form of adapting society's culture to today's modern times which often demand widespread and more inclusive forms of participation. If we discuss culture, then there is an impression that involves a broad scope. We can certainly understand things like this and are a reality because the scope of culture is the same as human

social interaction (Wahyuni, 2011:206). Through a cultural approach, cultural transformation of *tudang sipulung* we can understand this as an open discussion as a broader component of social interaction, cultural change and adaptation to changing social contexts.

B. Money Politic Phenomenon in the General Election

In our country, Indonesia implements an open proportional electoral system and a district system which then gives various parties the possibility to carry out various irregularities in order to control the votes of the people by giving a certain amount of money or what we know as money politic as part of the election campaign (Qotimah et al., 2020:95). Money politic has become a phenomenon that always appears in the political system. This term refers to the actual use of money to voters or various parties related to this with the aim of obtaining votes or influencing election results. This phenomenon shows us that there is a complex dynamic involving power, money and public participation in the political process. The challenges involving abuse of power are still often a problem faced not only by the political system in Indonesia but also the world political system.

If we look deeper, the practice of money politics is an act that attacks the values of democracy. Even if we look at the conditions in the field directly, money politics continues to emerge and occur during election periods and seems to have become a mandatory requirement for candidates for people's representatives to carry out money politics to obtain the most votes from the public. In conditions like this, the author also found facts on the ground that quite a few people today also feel used to things like this. It's as if they have provided their votes to be bought by people involved in political practices like this. Questions such as "how many envelopes" "what will be given for one vote" and so on. If it is allowed to continue like this, it will not rule out that possibility this money politic will become a culture or tradition that will be found every election season. Of course, if it is left unchecked, it is also possible

that the essential meaning of democracy will disappear.

There are other causes for the this money politic phenomenon cannot be separated from practical political negotiations or exchange relations for mutual benefit or what we know as symbiotic mutualism which cannot be separated from the current low-income situation of society (Liata, 2020: 81). If we refer to the use of exchange theory, we can also see that the widespread phenomenon of money politics cannot be separated from the existence of forms of social interaction. People in situations like this act as social actors where they will consider the advantages and disadvantages they will face in this election. So this money politics then becomes a consideration for the people to determine their choice to vote in the election. The higher the reward they get, the greater the likelihood that this type of behavior will be repeated. Then vice versa, if it gets higher *punishment* what they receive, the smaller the chance that this behavior will be repeated (Fitriani et al., 2019:55).

If viewed from a cultural perspective, We can see this money phenomenon from several points of view that we can observe in the current field facts. *First*, the existence of social power and hierarchy, where money politics is often carried out by individuals who have wealth and various access to strengthen their position in the political and social hierarchical structure. This will of course lead to greater inequality in society. *Second*, the value system that each culture has shapes society in the way they view and treat things. The values contained in society greatly determine the actions or attitudes they choose. Based on these values, norms are then produced that can determine whether something is good or bad (Wahyuni, 2011:207). In some groups of society, money politics will be considered bad behavior, but for other cultures, perhaps this is a normal part of the political process. Therefore, an anthropologist is taught to study the value systems that develop in society.

Third, the existence of social relationships. Social relationships can be formed by interactions that occur between individuals. Social interaction

can not only occur due to direct meetings between individuals but can also occur due to contact between ideas, understandings and cultures (Hafid, 2016: 257). In anthropology, the importance of social relations that occur in social life is emphasized. This money politic then often involves very complex relationships in which personal connections and social dependency are then exploited to gain political power by strengthening this dependency. *Fourth*, power dynamics. Money politic this is often done as an attempt by those with access to financial resources to strengthen and expand their power. This can be related to political support being 'bought' to manipulating election results, of course this dynamic will have a detrimental impact on society.

C. Dynamics of Community Participatory Culture in General Elections

As a means of changing government, holding elections cannot be separated from the participation of the community (Ramadhanil et al., 2015: 4). The participatory paradigm can be interpreted as a form of approach in various fields where participatory roles are given to individuals and groups involved in various processes such as development, research, policy and so on. Of course, this paradigm emphasizes the active participation of various parties involved in decision making.

Kuhn (1962) in his writings (Diamastuti, 2015:62) stated that a paradigm is the result of a combination of studies in which there are concepts, values, techniques and so on. In general, this participatory paradigm considers that it is very important to take into account and listen to various points of view, experience and knowledge from people who are directly involved. Because with this, sometimes we can produce a solution that is sustainable, sustainable and of course has a positive impact. The dynamics of community participation in elections refers to the activeness of the community in its involvement in the general election process. This refers to community activities that influence election results, such as voting, campaigning, monitoring the election process and also community participation in political debates which are always a hot topic.

The active participation of the community in elections is the core of a healthy democratic system. Because with strong community participation, their voices will certainly be heard and the leader who wins the election results can represent the aspirations of the community that have been echoed. The dynamics of public participation in the current elections shows us that there is an evolution in the way society is involved in the political process, especially with the times that are marked by increasingly advanced technology and ever-changing social dynamics.

From what we can observe, the development of technology and social media is able to provide facilities for the public to join in open political discussions. Apart from that, the public also has more open access to monitor the election process and monitor the performance of the elected pairs. With these various conveniences, people are able to be actively involved and have a wider space for participation because they can reach various spaces through cyberspace. Of course, with the role of the younger generation, people's active participation in elections will also become more intense because today's young people have extraordinary creativity so they can make good use of social media. They are also active in channeling their arguments through social media platforms. However, it must be remembered that in every social process there will be conflict resulting from differences of opinion. Therefore, we as a society must of course be wise in making decisions and behaving. It is certainly hoped that this form of active participation will be able to play an important role in changing the dynamics of active participation in the context of modern general elections

CONCLUSION

Even though currently the discussion model and place of discussion are changing, the values contained within *tudang sipulung* such as deliberation and justice remain principles that must be adhered to firmly. Through a cultural approach, cultural transformation of *tudang sipulung* we can understand this as an open discussion as a broader

component of social interaction, cultural change and adaptation to changing social contexts.

If viewed from a cultural perspective, We can see this money politic from several points of view that we can observe in current field facts such as social power and hierarchy, value systems, social relations and power dynamics.

The active participation of the community in elections is the core of a healthy democratic system. Because with strong community participation, their voices will certainly be heard and the leader who wins the election results can represent the aspirations of the community that have been echoed.

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