

## SHAPING FACTORS OF IDENTITY POLITICS IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY IN SINTANG DISTRICT(CASE STUDY AFTER THE 2018 WEST KALIMANTAN GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION OF WEST KALIMANTAN PROVINCE)

*Alif Alfi Syahrin, Karim Suryadi & Siti Komariah*

*Research Scholar, The School of Post Graduate Studies, The Study Program of Sociology Education, Universitas  
Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia*

**Received: 16 May 2019**

**Accepted: 29 May 2019**

**Published: 08 Jun 2019**

### **ABSTRACT**

*Indonesia is a country that has diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, language, and religion. Likewise, in West Kalimantan Province, especially in Sintang District, it is also a different area in terms of ethnicity and religion. The largest ethnic groups in Sintang District are Dayaks, Malays, Javanese, and Chinese. The purpose of this research is to provide insight into the dynamics of identity politics in a multicultural society. The benefit of this research is to explain various kinds of factors underlying the multicultural society in carrying out identity politics. This study uses qualitative research methods in descriptive form. The techniques in this study are observation, interview, and documentation study. The results of this study indicate that the factor of identity similarity in terms of ethnicity forms the Dayak ethnicity and ethnic Malays compete in politics. Identity similarity factor in terms of religion shape the behavior of identity politics in Javanese ethnic groups and the factor of political interwovenness between ethnic Dayaks and ethnic Chinese formed identity politics in the Chinese community.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Identity Politics, Local Leaders Election, Multicultural Communities*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia has a variety of ethnicities, cultures, religions, and languages. This cannot be denied that Indonesia has become one of the countries that have various kinds of diversity. As stated by Kusumohamidjojo, (2000, p. 45) Indonesia consists of a large number of ethnic groups, cultures, religions, and others which are plural (plural) and at the same time heterogeneous various. Likewise with ethnic diversity in Indonesia, as presented by Van Vollenhoven (in Koentjaraningrat, 2002, p. 301) makes the classification of various colors of ethnic groups in the territory of Indonesia based on the system of customary law circles, among others: Aceh, Gayo-Alas and Batak, Nias and Batu, Minangkabau, Mentawai, South Sumatra, Enggano, Melayu, Bangka and Billiton, Kalimantan, Sangir-Talaud, Gorontalo, Toraja, Sulawesi Selatan, Ternate, Ambon Maluku, Southwest Islands, Irian, Timor, Bali and Lombok, Central and East Java, Surakarta and Yogyakarta and West Java.

According to Koentjaraningrat, (2002, pp. 264) ethnic groups are a group of people bound by awareness and identity of cultural unity, whereas consciousness and identity were often (but not always) strengthened by the unity of language as well. Whereas according to Sanderson (2003, p. 355) ethnic groups are used to refer to a group or social category whose difference lies in the criteria of culture, not biological. And according to La Ode, (2012, p. 37) ethnic groups are social groups in a social or cultural system that are considered to have a relationship, both biological relations and relationships between members of a group or tribe (domination or mastery, subordination or submission, friendship, rival and so on) and other characteristics that concern the group as a whole (the size of the group, their inclusion, feelings of confession, friendship, etc.), all of which give characteristics to the group and in relation to other groups.

Likewise, the Province of West Kalimantan has various ethnic groups such as ethnic Dayaks, Malays, Chinese, Javanese, Batak, Sundanese, Bugis, Madurese and so on.

The following are ethnic group data in West Kalimantan in 2016:

**Table 1: Ethnic Group Data Inhabiting the Province of West Kalimantan in 2016**

No	Ethnic	Percentage
1	Dayak	49.91%
2	Malays	16.50%
3	Jawa	8.66%
4	Tionghoa/Chinese	8.17%
5	Madura	6.27%
6	Bugis	3.13%
7	Sunda	1.13%
8	Batak	0.60%
9	Daya	0.52%
10	Banjar	0.33%
11	etc.	1.33%

Source: Central Statistics Agency quoted from Aris Ananta, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, M. Sairi Hasbullah, Nur Budi Handayani, and Agus Pramono (2016).

From these data, it can be explained that the majority ethnic group inhabits the Province of West Kalimantan, namely the Dayak ethnic group with a percentage of 49.91%. Furthermore, Malays ethnic group with a percentage of 16.50%, Javanese ethnic group with a percentage of 8.66%, Chinese ethnic group with a percentage of 8.17%, Madurese ethnic group with a percentage of 6.27%, Bugis ethnic group with a percentage of 3.13%, Sundanese ethnic group with a percentage of 1.13%, Batak ethnic group with a percentage of 0.60% Daya ethnic group with a percentage of 0.52%, Banjare ethnic group with a percentage of 0.33% and other ethnicities with a percentage of 1.33% of the total 12 districts and 2 municipalities in West Kalimantan Province.

Sintang Regency is one of the regencies in West Kalimantan Province. The area is one of the regions that have ethnic diversity such as Dayaks, Malays, Chinese, Javanese ethnic group and so on, thus making the area an area that has ethnic diversity. As stated by Yusriadi (2016, p. 15) in the city of Sintang, various ethnic groups come from other regions in West Kalimantan, from Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi.

In the regional head elections (Pilkada) simultaneously in 2018, there were 17 Provinces, 39 Cities, and 115 Regencies which carried out regional elections simultaneously in Indonesia. One of them, West Kalimantan Province which carried out the election to the Governor and Deputy Governor regions. This is a consequence of regional autonomy

and a democratic system that requires direct implementation — it elections regional heads involving all people who have the right to vote.

The candidates for the 2018 West Kalimantan gubernatorial election represent each of the majority ethnic groups in the Province of West Kalimantan. Candidate pairs compete in the position of governor and vice governor of West Kalimantan, for example, pair number 1 is from Dayak and Malay ethnic groups, pair number 2 is from Dayak ethnic groups, and pair number 3 is from Malay ethnic groups. From various backgrounds, each candidate for Governor and Vice Governor represents a representative from every major ethnic group in West Kalimantan Province.

With the implementation of regional elections in various parts of Indonesia, dynamics in politics such as identity politics cannot be avoided. Regions that have diverse societies in terms of ethnicity and religion are very vulnerable to identity politics. As in West Kalimantan Province, which has a variety of ethnic and religious diversity. Not only in Indonesia, but also in Malaysian ethnic-based political countries (Noh, 2014).

A study conducted by LSI in 2008 (in M. Nawawi, Haslinda B. Anriani, and Ilyas, 2011) in the West Kalimantan Regional Election, ethnic factors appear to play an important role. Voters tend to choose candidates from the same ethnicity. This was felt to be reasonable, due to the bond felt by the voters to elect a Governor and Vice Governor who had ethnic similarities. As revealed by Barter and Cote (2015) in the most recent Indonesian case it clearly shows that local political conflicts are closely related to the increasing number of migrants who are considered by the locals as a threat to them in their search for livelihoods. This is in line with Setiadi and Kolip (2013, p. 90) that if people feel the benefits of diversity, the integration will be created. Conversely, if the community does not feel the benefits of diversity, what will happen is the threat of national disintegration (can be in the form of a desire to separate between regions).

The same thing was expressed by Haboddin, (2007) in fact, many local and national political actors consciously use this issue in power-sharing. In the provinces of Riau, Central Kalimantan, West Kalimantan and Irian Jaya which clearly shows how powerful this issue is handled by political actors when dealing with other political entities. That way, political actors will play ethnic and religious issues to gain votes so that the actors get what they want because ethnic politics must first have an ethnic identity. Ethnic politics is promoted based on ethnic identity, and it is exclusive (Xia, Lee, and Halim, 2018). So that power becomes a thing that has such a significant impact on social life as expressed by Marijan (2015, p. 17) power is a central problem in a country because the state is the largest institutionalization of political society (polity) and has the power authoritative.

The identity theory of Manuel Castells (in Astuti, 2014, p. 16) also reveals that identity politics is an individual's participation and is more determined by one's culture and psychology. This has made it very possible for identity politics to occur in the post-conflict local election in West Kalimantan Province. The occurrence of ethnic competition in taking the position as Governor and Vice Governor of West Kalimantan Province. Likewise, in Sintang District, which has ethnic diversity that inhabits it. So that various types of ethnicities in Sintang Regency tend to give their choices based on ethnic similarity and religious similarity to several types of candidates for the Governor and Vice Governor in the Provincial Election, West Kalimantan. This is as expressed by Political identity to be Maarif (2012, p. 13) in Indonesia, identity politics is more related to issues of ethnicity, religion, ideology and local interests which are generally represented by elites.

Based on the background above, the researchers were interested in conducting research on the factors behind each ethnic group in Sintang District in carrying out identity politics after the election of the Governor and Vice Governor, West Kalimantan Province.

## **METHOD**

Based on the research title, as well as the background of the problem, the researcher used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Using a qualitative method the researcher will describe following the facts in the field to find out the factors behind each ethnic group in Sintang District in carrying out identity politics after the election of the governor and vice governor of the West Kalimantan province. In qualitative research, the best way to understand what is happening is to sink into it and move to the culture or organization that is being studied and experience how it feels to be part of it (Krauss, 2005). Data collection techniques used was observation, interview, and documentation study. The participants in this study were cross-ethnic communities that inhabited the Sintang District area, such as the example of Dayaks, Malays, Javanese, and Chinese ethnic groups. Because the four ethnic groups are the largest ethnic group and have political power in Sintang District. The primary data sources in this study were community leaders and Dayaks, Malays, Javanese, and Chinese ethnic groups. While secondary data sources in this study are various kinds of literature such as regional documents, books, journals and online news that are still related to the underlying factors of each ethnic in Sintang District in carrying out identity politics after the Governor Election and Vice Governor, West Kalimantan Province.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Sintang Regency is an area that has various kinds of ethnicities such as Dayaks, Malays, Javanese, Chinese, and so on. The life of each ethnic group in Sintang District gave birth to various kinds of tribal organizations to maintain and practice the customs and culture of each ethnic group. There are various kinds of tribal organizations in Sintang District, including: Dewan Adat Dayak (DAD), Majelis Adat Budaya Melayu (MABM) Majelis Adat Budaya Tionghoa (MABT), Pusat Paguyuban Warga Jawa (PUSPAWAJA), Flores, Sumba, Timurdan Lor (FLOBAMORA), Kerukunan Keluarga Kawanua (KKK), Wadah Komunikasi Masyarakat Batak (WKMB), Perkumpulan Keluarga Sumatera Barat (KKSBB), Keluarga Kerukunan Sulawesi Selatan (KKSS) and Sunda.

Sintang District has a variety of ethnic groups. However, it is undeniable at the time of the elections that several tribal organizations recommended their people to vote for one of the pairs of Governors and Vice Governors, West Kalimantan Province in 2018.

Based on the research carried out, there are several findings regarding the factors underlying each ethnicity in Sintang District in carrying out identity politics after the Local Leaders Election of the Governor and Vice Governor of West Kalimantan Province, as follows:

### **Dayaks Ethnicity**

For the Dayaks ethnic group, there is a collective desire to be led by Dayaks. Ethnic politics is synonymous with elite politics from ethnic Dayaks (Tansaldy, in Nordholt and Klinken, 2007, p. 370). Because with the existence of leaders from ethnic Dayak backgrounds, it is easier to understand and develop life, especially for Dayak ethnic groups themselves. In the economic life experienced by Dayak ethnic communities, there are many economic inequalities. This is different from the economic life of other ethnic groups, especially such as Malays, Javanese and Chinese ethnic groups. The same is

true of the assumption that the Dayak ethnic community has always felt marginalized and underrated in terms of the social life of the Dayak ethnic community. During Indonesia's New Order, Dayaks felt marginalized, discriminated against and colonized by their own country by being the subject of centralized governance dominated by outsiders (Schiller 2007, p. 66). So that it led to a standard desire in Dayak ethnic communities to prefer the Governor and Vice Governor of the Dayak ethnic group. Resistance identity is a process of forming an identity by social actors who are in a depressed condition with dominance and stereotypes by other parties so as to create resistance and the emergence of identities that are different from those who dominate, with the aim of group survival or group (Castells (2010, p. 8). This is evident when the local elections of 2007, 2012 Dayak ethnic groups united in choosing a candidate for Governor and Vice Governor from the Dayak ethnic background. This is based on the existence of decentralization, which gave birth to regional autonomy to provide opportunities for local sons to lead their regions. According to Buchari, (2014, p. 26) the rise or emergence of identity politics in various regions was triggered by the existence of democratization and decentralization in the context of the implementation of real regional autonomy. Political decentralization is also known as political devolution, focusing on organizations and procedures for increasing citizen participation in choosing political representation and in making public policies; changes in the structure of government through delegation of power and authority to the area of the government unit; power-sharing institutions within the state through federalism, constitutional federation, or autonomous regions and institutions; and procedures that allow freedom of association and organizational civil society participation in public decision making (Hidayat 2017).

### **Malays Ethnicity**

For ethnic Malays, the 2018 Governor and Deputy Governor Election did indeed carry out identity politics to win the candidates for the Governor and Vice Governor of the Malay ethnic group. Because during the two periods of the leadership of the Governor and Vice Governor of the ethnic Dayak and ethnic Chinese backgrounds. Thus giving rise to the desire for the next period in 2018 to change the period of leadership that is from ethnic Malays. Ethnic fractionalization is of particular interest considering that many of the existing studies focus on the importance of "social divisions" from one type or another in explaining fragmentation politics, primarily through psychological mechanisms (Lublin, 2015). By doing various ways, namely to prepare a single pair of governor and deputy governor candidates from the Malay ethnic group so as not to cause a vote split from ethnic Malays and Muslims. The political consequences of the ethnic composition of these networks may be present, and this implication may eventually result in the number of voters (Galardini and Fieldhouse, 2019). In the local elections of 2007, and 2012, candidates from ethnic Malays and Moslems split into several pairs of candidates, resulting in invoices from the ethnic Malay community and the religion of Islam being divided. Likewise, the similarity of religion (Islam) makes the ethnic Malays give more voice to the candidate pairs of Governors and Deputy Governors of ethnic Malays and Muslims. And there were speeches made by one of the political figures who invited reactions from ethnic Malay people who were seen as degrading to the ethnic Malay community.

### **Javanese Ethnicity**

At the time of the 2018 Governor and Deputy Governor of West Kalimantan Province, there was a competition between the Governor and Vice Governor Candidates from ethnic Dayak and ethnic Malay backgrounds. This makes Javanese ethnic groups prefer not to participate too much in the competition so that the creation of a peaceful regional election. However, it is undeniable that the Javanese community is more oriented towards religious equality, namely Islam

in giving its voice to one of the candidates for the Governor and Deputy Vice of the Islamic religion. The case of Surah Al Maidah verse 51 which led to mass mobilization from various regions in the country to come to protest in Jakarta, until the circulation of public opinion 'I am Muslim, I choose Muslim leaders (Sari, 2016). The various types of actions that took place in Jakarta had an influence on the regions regarding the increasingly influential identity politics based on religion.

### Chinese Ethnicity

In the Chinese ethnic community, they did not interfere too much in the 2018 Governor and Vice Governor Election of West Kalimantan Province. This is similar to Javanese ethnic groups, except that the ethnic Chinese recognize identity politics carried out during the election of legislative members because of the notion that legislators who have similar ethnicity, especially ethnic Chinese, pay more attention to the ethnic Chinese community. This is due to the absence of a partner from the Candidate Governor and Vice Governor of the Chinese ethnic group. But it is inevitable that the Governor and Vice Governor of the 2013-2018 period were pairs of ethnic Dayaks and Chinese. So that there is a close relationship between ethnic Dayaks and ethnic Chinese and gave birth to political networks. Political networks are defined as groups with whom people are involved in politics and interpersonal political discussion (Parsons, 2015). This is also reinforced by the nomination of biological children from the governor of the 2013-2018 period who are candidates for Governor Number 2.

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and discussion in the study concluded that the factors underlying each ethnicity in Sintang District in carrying out identity politics are the similarity of identity in terms of ethnicity behind the identity politics when the 2018 Governor and Vice Governor of West Kalimantan Province elections in Sintang District between ethnic Dayaks and ethnic Malays. Whereas in the Javanese ethnic community, they selected the pair of Governor and Deputy Governor of the Province of West Kalimantan based on the similarity of religion. Finally, for the ethnic Chinese community, their political choices are based on political networks that have been built together with ethnic Dayaks.

### REFERENCES

1. Aris Ananta, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, M. Sairi Hasbullah, Nur Budi Handayani, dan Agus Pramono (2016). *Demography of Indonesia's Ethnicity. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies dan BPS – Statistics Indonesia*
2. Barter, Shane Joshua and Isabelle Cote. (2015). "Strife Of The Soil? Unsettling Transmigrant Conflicts In Indonesia". *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Volume, 46, Issue 1, pp. 60-85*
3. Buchari, A. Sri. (2014). *Kebangkitan Etnis Menuju Politik Identitas. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia*
4. Castells, Manuel. (2010). *The Power of Identity, Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd*
5. Galandini, S., Fieldhouse, E., (2019). *Discussants that mobilise: Ethnicity, political discussion networks and voter turnout in Britain, Electoral Studies, Volume 57, February 2019, Pages 163-173*
6. Saloni Arora & Rableen Kaur Rao, *Integrating Leadership, Power and Politics and its Impact on Organization, IMPACT : International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature (IMPACT : IJRHAL), Volume 6, Issue 4, April 2018, Pp 1-6.*

7. Haboddin, Muhtar. (2007). *Menguatnya Politik Identitas di Ranah Lokal. Jurnal Studi Pemerintahan. Vol.3 No.1 Februari 2012*
8. Hidayat, Rachmat. (2017). *Political Devolution: Lessons From a Decentralized Mode of Government in Indonesia. Sage Open. Volume: 7 issue: 1,*
9. Koentjaraningrat. (2002). *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta*
10. Krauss, S.E. (2005). *Research Paradigms and Meaning Making: A Primer. The Qualitative Report, Vol. 10 No. 4 December 2005 758-770*
11. Kusumohamidjojo, B. (2000). *Kebhinnekaan Masyarakat Indonesia: Suatu Problematik Filsafat Kebudayaan. Jakarta: Grasindo*
12. La Ode, M. D. (2012). *Etnis China Indonesia Dalam Politik Indonesia (Politik Etnis Cina Pontianak dan Singkawang di Era Reformasi 1998-2008). Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor*
13. Lublin, D. (2015). *Electoral systems, ethnic heterogeneity and party system fragmentation. British Journal of Political Science, 47, 373–389*
14. M. Nawawi, Haslinda B. Anriani, dan Ilyas. (2011). *Dinamika Etnisitas dan Konflik Politik pada Pemilu Kadal. Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi Dengan Nomor Kontrak: 189/SP2H/PL/DIT.Litabmas/IV/2011, Tanggal 14 April 2011*
15. Maarif, A. Syafii. (2012). *Politik Identitas dan Masa Depan Pluralisme Kita. Jakarta: Democracy Project edisi digital*
16. Marijan, Kacung. (2015). *Sistem Politik Indonesia (Konsolidasi Demokrasi Pasca-Orde Baru). Jakarta: Kharsima Putra Utama*
17. Noh, Abdillah. (2014). *Malaysia 13th General Election: A Short Note On Malaysia's Continuing Battle With Ethnic Politics. Electoral Studies, Volume 34, Pages 266-269*
18. Nordholt, H. S. Klinken, G. V. (2007). *Politik Lokal di Indonesia. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor*
19. Parsons, M. Bryan. (2015). *The Social Identity Politics of Peer Networks. American Politics Research, Vol. 43(4) 680–707*
20. Sanderson, K. Stephen. (2003). *Sosiologi Makro (Sebuah Pendekatan Terhadap Realitas Sosial). Jakarta: Rajagrafindo Persada*
21. Sari, Endang. (2016). *Kebangkitan Politik Identitas Islam Pada Arena Pemilihan Gubernur Jakarta. Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Universitas Hasanuddin. Volume 2 No. 2 Desember 2016*
22. Schiller, A. (2007). *Activism and Identities in an East Kalimantan Dayak Organization. The Journal of Asian Studies 66 (1): 63–95.*
23. Setiadi, M. Elly., Kolip, Usman. (2013). *Pengantar Sosiologi Politik. Jakarta : Kencana Prenada Media Group*

24. Xia, Na, Yok Fee Lee & Adlina Hj. Ab. Halim. (2018). *The Elites' Collective Subjectivities Of The History Of Ethnic Politics In Malaysia*, *Asian Ethnicity*, Volume 20, Pages 168-182