

THE EXISTENCE OF LOCAL KINGS IN MODERN DEMOCRACY: POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN EAST NUSA TENGGARA IN 2024

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Abstract

This paper will explain how the existence of local kings on the island of Timor in modern democracy is related to the strength, power and influence of the king in determining the direction of victory for one of the presidential and vice presidential candidates in the 2024 general election. The analysis will use Steven Lukes's theory of the face of power in looking at the power of kings who do not have formal power and cannot make decisions in the formal realm but have influence and power over the base or the people who mostly live in rural areas. The research method used is a Case Study with a qualitative approach with the aim of being able to more specifically find the impact or influence of local kings in the electability of the candidates competing in 2024. The results of the research show that the existence of local kings on the island of Timor in the presidential and vice presidential elections, especially for modern democracy, does not show the existence and has a significant impact on the security of the candidates. The power and existence of local kings are limited to customary institutions that have a role in socio-cultural life (marriage, death, thanksgiving for crops) and in the realm of local politics, customary institutions do not have the power to influence the political attitudes of the people in modern democracies such as elections. The political choices of the community are not determined by the influence of local kings, but the figure factors and work programs that have been carried out so far have become the consideration of the people in determining political choices. The local king is only a symbol of the power of the past which is now irrelevant to modern democracy in East Nusa Tenggara

Keywords: Existence of Local King, Modern Democracy, Politics, Elections

INTRODUCTION

In the 2019 Presidential and Vice Presidential General Elections, the pair of candidates Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and Kiai Haji Makruf Amin won an absolute victory in East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT) with a percentage of 88.57 percent while Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Salahudin Uno won 11.43 percent. It is the biggest victory compared to the achievements of other provinces other than Papua Province (Widjojo, Elizabeth, Al Rahab, Pamungkas, & Dewi, 2010). Of course, it cannot be seen in ordinary terms, but it intrigues the mind of what and how the biggest victory can be achieved. If tracked in various online and print media, several strategies carried out are to succeed in getting political support from local kings in NTT (Plummer, Rappaport, Hall, & Barocci, 2007). The Alliance of Luirai Wehali Traditional Stakeholders and the kings and shops of the Timor Island, with a total of 30 kings expressed support for the Jokowi Maaruf couple. These kings come from Kupang, Belu, South Central Timor and North Central

Timor Regencies which have been declared in Bipolo village, Sulamu District, Kupang Regency on Tuesday, July 11, 2018.

The kings who signed the statement of support were Dominikus Kloit Tey Seran with the position of Liurai Wehali from Malacca Regency, Yosef Fernandez as Loro Bauho from Belu Regency, Andreas Nai Nurak as Loro Haetimuk from Malacca Regency, Petrus Kim Novak as King Jelinu from Malacca Regency, Anton Bere Mali with the position of Nai Dirun from Belu Regency, Dominikus Nahak Tua Adat Wewiku from Malacca Regency, Hendrikus Leki is also a Traditional Elder from Malacca Regency and Yehseskial Taneo a Traditional Elder from TTS Regency. The traditional elders from TTS Regency are Ibrahim Tamonom as the head of the dat, Daniel Ottu, Mikael Lopo of Meo Kolo Amanatun from TTS, Daniel Maunino, Bertolensi Talan, Yunus Nome, Yulius Nenabu, Sem Ottu, Ruben Asbanum Agustinus Bere from Belu, Aleksander Tefa from TTS and Jose Cardoso from Belu. Still the traditional leaders who signed the statement were Alexander Nabunome from TTS, Nicodemus Nahak from Wehali, Alexander M. Neonbasu from Mei Nai Lopo Biboki, Sem Nope from TTS, Lorenzo Amaunut from Biboki community leader, from TTU, Dominggus Nesi from Semau and Yohanes Bria from Wewiku and Belu, Jalis from TTU. The king of Kupang Nisoni was also present. All traditional elders and local people wear men's and women's traditional clothes and clothing.

In the 2024 presidential election, there was a change in political support from local kings who used to support Jokowi-Ma'aruf which was carried out by the party that won the 2019 Legislative Election, namely PDI Perjuangan which again supported Ganjar Pranowo as the direction of political affiliation, then changed to support Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka (Mahyudin, 2024). Online media sources reported that the change in the direction of support was carried out by 8 Local Kings as in a press conference delivered by the king of Liurai Malacca, Dominikus Kloit Tey Seran to the media had attracted political support. The question is whether the statement of changing attitudes of political support will have an impact on the victory of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran or vice versa, the victory of Ganjar-Mahfud as Jokowi's political affiliate. The various explanations above this study wants to see and test the existence of non-formal power held by kings on the mainland of the island of Timor for the victory of one of the presidential pairs (Ware, Sadeghi-Yekta, Prentki, al Kurdi, & Kabanda, 2024).

One of the theories of power that is quite prominent was proposed by Steven Lukes in his work *Power: A Radical View* (1974). In his book, Lukes proposes a *three-dimensional conception of power* to criticize the *behaviouralist* conception of power, as well as offer a new analysis that he considers more adequate in understanding power. Lukes criticized Robert Dahl's *one-dimensional conception of power*, as well as *Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz's two-dimensional conception of power*, which Lukes called the *two-dimensional conception of power*.

Robert Dahl defines *power* as a well-run attempt by A to order B to do something that B does not even want. According to Lukes, Dahl's analysis of the distribution of political power focuses on "the *behaviour* in making a decision on an issue where there is an observable (subjective) conflict of interest, seen as a policy preference, demonstrated by participation politics". In Dahl's view, power is exercised when A is able to tell B to do things that B does not even want B. However, according to Bachrach and Baratz, power also takes place when A devotes all its energy to creating or strengthening social and political values and institutional practices that limit the realm of the political process towards public consideration of issues that will relatively not undermine A.

Bachrach and Baratz saw that power has two faces: those related to *decision-making* and those that are not related to nondecision-making. A exercises power over B (*power over*) when A's choice is regularly applied in decisions on any important issue regarding the existence of a clear conflict, and when A succeeds in controlling the political agenda through so-called *nondecisions* to prevent issues that have the potential to threaten A's interests.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a case study strategy with a qualitative inductive research approach. Case studies were conducted on Kings on the island of Timor but will focus on Malacca and Kupang. This research strategy and approach was chosen based on several considerations. *First*, this study wants to see the extent of the existence of the king of Timor in modern politics, and second, how the power and influence of the king of Timor in determining the direction of victory for one of the pairs of presidential candidates in 2024. Therefore, this research has the need to obtain information, investigate in depth the processes and relationships that are formed, and provide explanations of complex and invisible situations. Moreover, normatively, this study is a study that prioritizes specificity, holistic, and *natural settings* so that using a case study is the right choice (Yin, 2009).

Data Collection Methods

The method of collecting and collecting data for this study utilizes several techniques as follows. First, *observation*. This technique relies on the presence of researchers in the field to obtain data through direct interaction with informants. All of them are recorded and recorded audio and visual (Denscombe, 2007). Second, *in depth interviews* conducted on informants who are determined *purposively*. The target informants include actors or kings on the mainland of Timor who provide support for certain presidential and vice presidential candidates. Third, *documentary studies*. In addition to field documentation produced directly by researchers, this technique is also needed to collect available sequential data. The scope includes *official statistics, newspapers and magazines (offline and online), records of meetings, letters and memos, website pages* (Denscombe, 2007) and other relevant sources.

A number of these data collection methods are a priority for data collection methods. However, this research is open to the possibility of other data collection techniques that are tailored to the needs and demands in the field.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis of this study uses *an explanation building technique*. This technique assumes that the propositions built in the research plan are juxtaposed with field findings. If there is a discrepancy, the proposition is revised to be in accordance with the field findings (Sarantakos, 1998). To adjust the proposition and field findings, the analysis is carried out through the following stages. First, *data reduction*. This stage can be done by *summarising, coding, and categorising*. For the purpose of accuracy and making it easier for researchers, the data coding will utilize *Nvivo's qualitative software program*. This application helps to code and read interview transcripts that are appropriate to the needs of data analysis and drawing conclusions (Lowndes, Marsh and Stoker, 2018). Second, data organization. Data organization is carried out through *display data* that is grouped or displayed in the form of text, matrices, graphs, diagrams,

charts, and so on. This data organization is intended to see patterns or persistence of data. Third, *interpretation* which is the meaning of data that has been previously organized. The goal is to find patterns, regularities, trends and explanations of the data to then draw conclusions (Sarantakos, 1998).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 2024-2029 presidential and vice presidential elections this time were attended by 3 candidates, Number 1 Anis Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar, the supporting party Nasdem, PKS and PKB. Number 2 Prabowo Subianto-Gibran R.Raka is supported by the Gerindra, Golkar, PAN, Gelora, Democrats, PBB, PSI parties. Number 3 Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD is the party supporting PDIP, PPP, Perindo, Hanura. Interestingly, the 2024 presidential election will be followed by 3 candidates, where candidate number 2 has the largest coalition of political party support. In the last 2019 presidential election, PDIP and Nasdem were a joint coalition supporting Jokowi-Maaruf but in the 2024 election as Political Rivals. The size of the coalition of political parties in the 2nd candidate has a significant impact on the electability of candidates. Based on the predictions of several survey institutions such as the Populi Center on February 7, 2024, the number 2 candidate ranks first with 52.2%, the number 1 candidate gets 22.1% and finally the number 3 candidate with 16.9%. The LSI Denny JA survey agency released the results of the survey of candidate no.2 electability of 52%, candidate no.3 electability of 20.8% and candidate no.1 electability of 18%. This survey was released on February 7 or 1 week explaining Election Day. Meanwhile, foreign survey institutions also enlivened such as Roy Morgan Researce from Australia released the results of a survey conducted in December 2023 that the no.2 candidate with the highest gain of 43% up 13 points from September, the no.3 candidate with 30% electability or down 8% from September and finally the no.1 candidate with 20% electability or down 1% was in third place. From several surveys, it is explained that Prabowo Gibran's candidate always ranks first, while candidates 1 and 3 are relatively balanced in occupying the 2nd and 3rd positions.

Of course, the results of the survey are as a scientific instrument in looking at how political support in the undercurrent, the opportunity for change can still be determined by the strength of local elite forces. Referring to Jokowi's victory in NTT in 2019 with 88.54% of the vote and Prabowo-Sandi in NTB 67.89%, one of the supporting factors is the support of local elites who are members of the local kings throughout NTT who expressed support for Jokowi-Maaruf who then in the 2024 election this time, local kings gave support to Ganjar-Mahfud. The question is whether the strength of the local elite of NTT this time has a significant impact on the electability of Ganjar-Mahfud? or is the Jokowi factor the effect represented by his son Gibran approaching Prabowo.

Based on the results of the presidential and vice presidential elections of the Plenary Meeting of the Recapitulation of the Results of the National Level Vote Count, the Prabowo-Gibran pair outperformed their two competitors by winning 1,798,753 votes. The second position was occupied by the Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud Md pair who got 958,505 votes, while the Anies Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar pair got 153,446 votes. Meanwhile, the number of residents recorded on the Permanent Voter List (DPT) for the 2024 Election in NTT is 4,008,475 people, but those who exercise their voting rights are 2,871,605 people. Next, the number of voters on the Additional Voter List (DPTb) was recorded at 28,269 people, and those registered as the Special Voter List (DPK) amounted to 54,922 people. Overall, the number of voters who exercised their voting rights in NTT was 2,954,796 people. The number of ballots that were declared valid was

2,910,704 votes, and as many as 44,092 votes were declared invalid. For more details, please see table 01, namely:

Table 1. Results of Presidential and Vice Presidential Votes
Province of East Nusa Tenggara Province

Sequence Number	Candidate President-Vice President	Vote Count	Percentage
1	Anies-Muhaimin	153,446	5.27%
2	Prabowo-Gibran	1,798,753	61.80%
3	Ganjar-Mahfud	958,505	32.93%
Sum		2,910,704	100%

Source : KPU NTT 2024

Based on table 01, the number 2 pair Prabowo-Gibran has a percentage of 61.80%, second place is the Ganjar-Mahfud pair with a vote percentage of 32.93% and finally the 3rd place pair Anis-Muhaimin with a percentage of 5.27 percent. Based on the 2019 presidential election, the victory of Jokowi and Maaruf is directly proportional to the victory of the PDIP Party as the supporting party, but in the 2024 election, even though PDIP is the winner of the national election, it is not directly comparable to the victory of the Ganjar and Mahfud pair in the 2024 election. This phenomenon explains that the variable of political parties is not the only factor in the victory of candidates, the factor of local elites is another dimension that is considered. Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) defined the elite as a class that ruled, controlled resources and controlled the masses. Meanwhile, Suzana Keller, the elite is not singular, has a mass background and political maneuverability. Lipset and Solari in School, (Haryanto, 2005:68) the elite as the top position in the most important structures in the economy, government, military apparatus, politics, religion, teaching and free work. The local elite in this study are those who express support for the candidate in the presidential election.

These local elites from the Kings of West Timor expressed their support for the number 3 Presidential Candidate pair for the 2024 Presidential Election, Ganjar-Mahfud. In a press conference, Saturday (2/12/2024) in Kupang, seven Kings were present who expressed their support for the pair of Ganjar Pranowo and Mahfud MD as Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates of the Republic of Indonesia in the Presidential Election on February 14, 2024. They declared themselves to win Ganjar and Mahfud in their respective regions. For example, King Jonatan Banunaek from the Amanantun region, King Amfoang Rony G.J. Manoh expressed support for the pair of Ganjar Pranowo and Vice Presidential Candidate Mr. Mahfud MD. A king must commit to the initial statement that he still supports and makes Ganjar-Mahfud a way to answer the grievances and hopes of the Timorese people. "We are kings if we talk about A, still A. We can't go to B and C, that's the point". We convey the aspirations of the people in Timor directly to Mr. Ganjar and Mr. Mahfud MD," said Raja Roby. The kings of mainland Timor consisted of 8 people who were all united in supporting the pair of Ganjar and Mahfud. On the other

hand, there was an internal conflict between the kings and the committee of activities carried out at the Sotis Hotel in Kupang City. The King of Liurai Malacca, Dominicus Kloit Tey Seran, told the media crew that the eight kings who were present at the time of participating in the activity agreed not to vote for the former Governor of Central Java for 2 terms in the upcoming Presidential Election (Pilpres) in 2024.

Based on the results of research in the field, the results of an interview with the King of Malaka Liurai in Malacca Regency, explained that the one who withdrew support for Ganjar at that time was not himself, acting on behalf of the King of Malacca. This explains that there was an internal conflict during the support and declaration of support for Ganjar at the Sotis Hotel, Kupang City. In addition, the support of the Timorese kings for Ganjar did not run in an organized manner at the lower levels, such as holding meetings with indigenous peoples, mobilizing and mobilizing the masses to support Ganjar, or even the follow-up of meetings held between the kings of Timor. The support given by the kings on behalf of the people has become a paradox in the community because based on the results of interviews with several residents that in the general election the president chooses not because of the king's order but already has a choice according to conscience. This phenomenon explains that the king as a local elite has no existence in the realm of modern democracy. The kings of Timor do not have clear instructions and institutions in appointing Ganjar-Mahfud. Customary institutions that are claimed and withdrawn to the political sphere certainly do not have concrete evidence because based on the results of field findings that customary institutions on the island of Timor only carry out activities that are customary such as in the speech of birth, death, marriage, or a form of gratitude for various sustenance such as abundant harvests and people living away from wrath.

As Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) explained, the elite is defined as a class that rules, controls resources and controls the masses. Meanwhile, Suzana Keller, the elite is not singular, has a mass background and political maneuverability. In this case, the local elite on the island of Timor does not have the relevance of strength in winning Ganjar-Mahfud. Local elites in modern democratic practice of presidential elections cannot control the masses in providing support. This theory is not relevant to the context of elections at the national level, but the power of the local elite has a strong symbolism in the election to the regions and the legislative elections. Furthermore, Lipset and Solari in Schoolr, (Haryanto, 2005:68) the elite as the top position in the most important structure in the economy, government, military apparatus, politics, religion, teaching and free work. The elite here focuses on a former military, namely Prabowo Subianto, who has a strong influence in getting victory on the island of Timor.

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the role of the kings of Timor in providing support to presidential candidates does not have a significant impact. The support given is only limited to the symbolism of the king without the support of the people in the lower current, so it has a weakness that does not give victory to the Ganjar-Mahfud pair. The existence of Timor's kings in modern democracy has not had a significant impact that is capitalized as strong and solid political support

CONCLUSION

The results of the research show that the existence of local kings on the island of Timor in the presidential and vice presidential elections, especially for modern democracy, does not show the existence and has a significant impact on the security of the candidates. The power and existence of local kings are limited to customary

institutions that have a role in socio-cultural life (marriage, death, thanksgiving for crops) and in the realm of local politics, customary institutions do not have the power to influence the political attitudes of the people in modern democracies such as elections. The political choices of the community are not determined by the influence of local kings, but the figure factors and work programs that have been carried out so far have become the consideration of the people in determining political choices. The local king is only a symbol of the power of the past which is now irrelevant to modern democracy in East Nusa Tenggara.

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