

Village democracy and winning strategies based on Power in Javanese culture in Village Head Election in Tanjung Village, Pagu District, Kediri Regency

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Abstract— *This study based on the different understandings about political activities in the villages. This study aims to prove oligarchy in electoral process to elect village leader (headman) in Indonesia is different compare to other elections at the local and national level. By applying qualitative research method and looking at the case of Tanjung village, Pagu District, Kediri Regency. The study shows that all candidates have tried to maximize the benefit of both material resources and non-material power according to Javanese values. However, the use of money and formal institutions as the basic character of oligarchy as indicated by some scholars is not effective in gaining votes in the village head election. On the contrary, the application of non-material power used by the elected headman election candidates proves as more effective to attract more votes. The source of non-material power is parallel with Javanese power derived from mystical energy of 'kesakten', and it works effectively to increase contestants' confidence in embracing the headman election. Various forms of political strategy based on spiritual power are divided into six categories: Slametan ceremony at the village founder's grave, pitou services come from religious leader and dukun, ownership of heirlooms, pulung as a legitimacy of power, and petungan Javanese calender*

Keywords—*Political Strategy, Power Sources, Local Politics, Democracy Village*

I. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to find sources of power in the contestation of village head elections so as to obtain a form of analysis of the resources of the village elite. If money resources have a dominant role in the democratic party in the national election and local election (Pilkada), then how is political democracy in the village? More specifically, the extent to which material-based political strategies in the process of village head elections are simultaneously very effective in gaining the voice of the village community compared to non-material political strategies such as symbols of Javanese power or *kesakten* [1]. After reform 1998, village elites became increasingly interested in running for village head elections and village decision-making. Because the position of village head has a fairly high social status. According to Law No. 6 Year 2014 concerning villages, the implementation of village head elections must be held simultaneously so that Tanjung village which carries out village head elections on Wednesday, 28 December 2016. Tanjung Village which is the location of this study includes villages with Javanese cultural characteristics so that the

people of Tanjung village still hold cultural traditions inherited from their ancestors.

The phenomenon of Tanjung village head election has become the field of practice of high cost democracy which is scattered with money and groceries for the villagers. Oligark have sufficient material capital to finance socialization, campaigns and various efforts to attract support from villagers. After the election, they can master economic resources in the form of rights to land of village assets *bengkok*, *dana desa*, and village officials positions. Although the phenomenon of village politics is rampant the practice of money politics [2]. However, the candidates Tanjung village head, also mobilized magic or used the wisdom of wisdom that they had, or at least kept heirlooms, amulets, shamans, and pilgrimage pilgrimage (*pesarean*) [1][13]. Moreover, they claimed each other could be revelation or *pulung*, as a sign of power and victory in the election of the village head so that the symbol of Javanese power was still influential especially for the residents of Tanjung village. They provide food for spirits is called *slamaten* activities, to honor someone who has died. In fact, all the villagers in one hamlet took time off from work during *bersih desa* activities because the spirits were possessed by spirits.

Candidates for village heads usually use a money politics strategy ranging from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands to be spread to villagers to win the election of the Tanjung village head. However, the candidate village head who gave the most money turned out to be defeated. Because non-incumbent are able to win the election of the village head without spending a lot of material resources so that the villagers look more at the "*laku*" figure in the village head election in Tanjung village. Based on the acknowledgment of the elected village head from Tanjung village, it actually implemented a Javanese power-based strategy, including *pulung*, shamans, heirlooms and *petungan* Javanese calender.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of villages has actually been done a lot, based on previous studies, it seems that the village has become the object of research that has been studied from various perspectives and with different research focuses. In order for the article to have novelty rather than previous research, it can be classified some of the results of research on villages

with various perspective approaches into five categories. First, studies that focus on village and state relations. The relation of power in question is between the village head and the state (Camat and Bupati) in terms of providing Regional Government Budget (APBD), control and coordination. The relation between village and state shows administrative hierarchical relations (coordination) as a means of control to control the village through the provision of infrastructure and financial resources that tend to be transactional [9].

Second, the study focuses on the power relations of the village head and the Village Consultative Body (BPD). Village elites are usually in conflict due to the undemocratic process of forming BPD, which increases the tendency for conflict between village heads and BPD. As executive power, the village head usually has more power than the legislative power of the BPD. However, it turns out that the relationship between the two is not always in a harmonious condition so that the ups and downs of relations to the village with the BPD occur especially regarding the development policies and welfare programs of the villagers [3]. Third, studies focus on shifting village elites. The role of religious groups in village politics began to diminish while entrepreneurial groups began to play a significant role. Changes in village elites related to the influence of ownership of sources of power in village political decision-making and contestation. In the village context, there are formal elite groups of village government with elite non-formal village community leaders [8].

Fourth, studies of local strong man and rural social networks. The local local strong man in the village are village heads, religious leaders, and groups of thugs (jawara and blater). The pattern of interaction between the village head, religious leaders and thugs is very complex at the village level, the power relations between the three village elites are not only based on opportunities to gain personal material benefits, but also on political competition that is fluid, transactional, and mutually beneficial [12].

Fifth, study the focus of the dynamics of village head elections. One mechanism for resolving political tensions between village elites is through the mechanism of village head elections. Since the fall of Soeharto 1998 the participation of village elites competing in village head elections is quite high. This disturbed the family domination of the old village elite political dynasty as the descendant of the village founder's status, because the dynamics of village politics were more fluid with the widespread use of money politics in village head elections. Thus, the majority of candidates village heads come from the village economic elite. In general, candidates for village heads with limited economic resources will look for political investors from business circles. After being elected, the village head became a reliable voter broker (vote getter) during the general election Pemilu and Pilkada. As a formal leader, the village head becomes an effective vote getter. They have the authority to speak on behalf of the villagers, moreover the villagers themselves depend on the village head to get assistance in dealing with government agencies and accessing welfare programs. The political career of the village head can increase with the skills and connections of their campaign with state *supradesa* (district or provincial)

level politicians so that they can occupy higher political careers [2].

In modern democracies there is still the use of symbols of the idea of Javanese power as a strategy to attract political support, especially the village community. Some political contestants from village to national level, who compete in the democratic arena, use instruments related to Javanese symbols of power. For example, they look for pulung power signs, collect heirlooms, go to the *dukun* and go to the ancestors' tombs. this is identical with the perspective of power according to Javanese culture. Power in Javanese culture is different from Western power which is abstract whereas in Javanese society it is understood as concrete. Western power comes from the results of interactions of various groups and interests, this has the consequence that the sources of power are heterogeneous, such as wealth, social status, formal position, organization, weapons, population and so on, but Javanese power looks homogeneous [1][13]. Because the source of heterogeneous power is not limited to accumulation, but on the contrary Javanese culture understands it as something that is fixed because so is the universe. Western thinkers understand power is not automatically valid, while the Javanese concept does not question legitimacy through the recognition of other parties [13].

III. METHOD

This article uses a qualitative approach and takes case studies on village head elections in Tanjung Village, Pagu District, Kediri Regency, East Java Province. The case for the election of the head of the Tanjung village because it represented the village with strong Javanese cultural characters. Descriptive study characteristics are relevant to qualitative research by Denzin (2009) Qualitative methods emphasize processes and meanings that do not examine strictly or have not been measured in terms of quantity, quantity, intensity or frequency, and emphasize the nature of reality that is socially constructed, the close relationship between the researcher and the subject under study [4]. Data collection techniques are using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation [11]. While the chosen research subjects were political actors involved in the election of the village head. The interview strategy was carried out by involving several informants as the main research subjects, namely village head candidates and community leaders involved in village head elections.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This article finds there is an interesting phenomenon, which is an antithesis of a collection of previous studies on local politics. Because in addition to using money politics, based on preliminary information, almost all candidates for village heads contested the election of the Tanjung village head, also using Javanese sources of power that were spiritual powers. Thus, all candidates for village heads mobilize magic and use the knowledge of wisdom that they have, or at least keep heritage, talismans, shamans, and pilgrimage (*pesarean*) [1][5][6][13]. In fact, all village head candidates claim each other for revelation or pulung, as a signal of victory in the village head election. This proves that the Javanese culture-based political strategy is still popular

among candidates Tanjung village heads. Furthermore, the discussion of variations in Javanese power-based strategies in the village head election Tanjung as described above are as follows:

A. Slametan The Tomb of The Village Founder

Tanjung village head candidates believe the implementation of the *slametan* tradition must come before important events such as village head elections, if not according to belief there can be a disaster or chaos [5]. This activity aims to make village head elections run smoothly, and the village community does not have prolonged conflict due to political contestation in the village. Candidates for village leaders are obliged to respect the spirit of the village patron *disa* as the founder of the village so the village head candidate carry out *slametan* in the village ancestral graves. Tanjung village has three *punden* spread in dusun Balekembang and dusun Tanjung. *Slametan* located in the tomb of the founder of the village is identical to Javanese power thinking by Anderson [1][5][6] (Magnis Suzeno 2003, 104). If someone has become a king he will try to continue to enlarge his power. Namely, the king regularly visited temples and places of pilgrimage in his kingdom, especially the tombs of the king first. By visiting them the living king inherited their supernatural power.

The motivation of the village head candidates to do *slametan* activities at the village founder's tomb was to gain the legitimacy of the source of spiritual power in the Javanese tradition. While *slametan* contains the understanding of safety from the possibility of obstacles and avoiding occult disturbances (invisible forces and tend to use mystical power), the appearance of the disturbance may be due to competition from political opponents. The candidates believe the tomb of the founder of the village is not just a place to store bodies, but is a sacred place because there are buried bodies of charismatic people. The body of this person will not be destroyed and maintained by the magical power that is still possessed even though the person has long since died [5].

B. Pitou Services of Kyai and Shamans

Pituo in Javanese means parents, or elderly people who are very honorable. They come from the religious leader *kyai* and the *dukun* shaman groups, who have influence in the village community because they have magic power *kesakten* [1]. Although both have magical powers there are differences between *kyai* and *dukun* in providing spiritual services. *Kyai* always uses prayers and based on Islamic religious beliefs. While the Javanese shaman does not always use the sentence of prayers that are identical to the procedures in Islamic worship. In the contestation of village head elections, they were involved as a spiritual advisory service so that their support could increase the confidence of candidates. Thus, *Pituo* has a strong influence on the people of Tanjung village.

A *pituo* is a group of powerful people, and powerful people must support and be around the authorities if viewed from the perspective of Javanese power [10]. The concept of Javanese power Anderson (1972) about the source of homogeneous power, which assumes that all people have certain powers and are considered to have supernatural powers must be near the ruler or king. Therefore, the spiritual

power possessed by actualized rulers in the form of support for people has the power to strengthen the king's strength [1]. Each candidate for the village head tries to absorb all the magical potential in his area so that they must gather powerful humans and use their services, which consist of shamans and famous *kyai* around him.

C. Ownership of Heirlooms

Javanese sources of power also occur in various heirlooms [10][1]. Candidates keep inheritance items such as; kris, spears, small umbrellas, *wesi aji* (yellow iron plates), and swords have spiritual powers that can add to the aura of power and confidence of a village leader. Heritage objects usually originate from ancestral inheritance or gifts from shamans in exchange for a sum of money. In ancient times when the king won war with the enemy kingdom, then all objects from the losing king would be taken to the king's palace as conquerors. For example, such as heirlooms namely kris, spears, swords, royal umbrellas, wives or concubines, and others. Thus, the kingdom which has lost in a war is not destroyed because of the belief that all of these things have spiritual power. For the king the winner has the spiritual objects that will enlarge his power [6].

In the context of the village, the candidates still considers that the heirlooms have spiritual powers that can make it easier to reach political power and run a business. Heirlooms originating from earlier ancestors are stronger and more powerful because their ownership is not by instant buying from a shaman [6]. They believe that ancestral heirs have magic beyond human reason, especially if their ancestors were former village heads or village founders. Thus, heirlooms are related to things that are supernatural or *adiduniawi* so it is not surprising that the loss of inheritance will be considered as a sign of the decline of power.

D. Pulung As a Sign of Power

According to Javanese ideology *pulung* cannot just appear, but as a gift. That often happens through a kind of spiritual experience; the person who is called who may be meditating on the top of the mountain or in the middle of the forest (*laku tapa, lelana brata*) is suddenly subject to divine revelation, often in the form of a round blue light floating in the sky and descending upon the person who is called (*ndaru, pulung*). People who are so filled with supernatural powers (*pulung got*) also change their faces; without realizing it, his face began to shine (*teja*). *Teja* is visible to the people, so the people know that there is a new leader (Magnis Suzeno 2003, 103) [1][5].

Each candidate claimed to have obtained a power of attorney in the election of the Tanjung village head. They fought each other to stay at the people's house (closest to the place where *pulung* fell) so that there was a commotion between the village head candidates. The incumbent candidate who suffered defeat in the election of the village head, explained his belief about no *pulung* moved from him (if there was no sign of the transfer of power the incumbent should remain in power in the village of Tanjung). According to the Javanese power perspective, the defeat of the incumbent is a failure to concentrate the cosmic power in itself, so a king can lose power if he loses that concentration ability. Signs that his power began to collapse were chaos, rebellions, dissatisfaction in the people,

increasingly rampant moral depravity, and natural disasters and failed harvests (Magnis Suzeno 2003, 107) [5][6]. During the incumbent period of leadership, villagers often complained that it was difficult to meet the village head when there was a need in the village office. One reason is that he is not a real *lurah*, because he is also a businessman who often travels out of town (buying and selling Jakarta cars).

E. *Petungan Javanese Calendar*

Javanese calendar system, *primbon* is a tradition that still survives in the Tanjung village community. *Primbon* books serve as a handle in determining good and bad days according to Javanese culture. Villagers usually still use Javanese calendars in their daily social life. For example, to

determine the time to build a house, to start a business (start farming in the countryside), for a wedding event, and also to find out a person's character based on birthdays and *pasaran (weton)*. According to Geertz, *primbon* was the handle of the Javanese, because ceremonies of circumcisions and marriages - such as the change of place of residence like that - seemed to need to be determined by human will; but here too arbitrary designation must be avoided and a broader ontological order determined by a numerological forecasting system called *petungan* or Javanese count. As in a harmony, the most appropriate relationship is certain, certain, and can be known. Likewise religion, like a harmony, is ultimately a science, no matter how actual practice may be closer to an art. *Petungan* system provides a way to express this relationship and thus adjust one's actions with the system. *Petungan* is a way to avoid a kind of disharmony with the general order of nature which will only bring disadvantage (Gertz 1989, 38-39) [5].

Village communities use *petungan* not only related to individual affairs but also related to village political life, which involves activities related to public interests such as village head elections. All candidates used *petungan* to increase confidence in the village head election. The winner has used the services of experts for the Java *petungan* process. He explained that the time of the election of the village head turned out to be suitable in Javanese terms, namely *weton* the voting day of the village head was the same as the *weton* day when his parents were when they were elected head of Tanjung village on Wednesday *Pahing*.

V. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the configuration of the resources of the contestants' power to win the Tanjung village head election consists of two main components, consisting of material and non-material. Both of these power resources simultaneously influence voters in the election of the Tanjung village head. This study found that the factor of money capital became less dominant in the election of the

village head of Tanjung. Because incumbent candidates who predominantly use material-based winning strategies in the form of money politics or *nuku*, fail to win village head elections. On the other hand, non-incumbent claimed to have no capital for political costs so that he relied more on non-material sources of power identical to the symbols of Javanese power managed to win the election of the Tanjung village head. This study found variations in Javanese culture-based political strategies in Tanjung village head elections divided into five categories: first, the *slametan* ceremony at the tomb of the village founder. Secondly, *pitou* services come from *kiai* and shamans. Third, ownership of heirlooms. Fourth, *pulung* as a sign of power. Five, *petungan* Javanese calendar.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We thank you, to Kementerian Riset Teknologi dan Pendidikan Tinggi Republik Indonesia, Direktorat Riset dan Pengabdian Masyarakat dan Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian Universitas Wijaya Putra and Tanjung village officials who have supported so that this research can be completed.

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