

***Blusukan* Culture and Familism in Local Democracy (Study of Surakarta Mayor Election 2020)**

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ABSTRACT

This study would like to describe the *blusukan* culture as the campaign strategy for Gibran-Teguh and familism strength at Surakarta Mayor Election (Pilwakot) in 2020. *Blusukan*, as a symbol of Javanese identity cultural tradition is defined as a behaviour to go places thoroughly in order to check the condition. Currently, *blusukan* has a political meaning as a candidate's campaign strategy to introduce themselves to the public, convey their vision and mission, and influence people's choices. The *blusukan* phenomenon that has done by Gibran was interesting to study because it uses a new method, that is digital *blusukan* which successfully makes Gibran the Surakarta Mayor in 2020. This study used a qualitative descriptive design. The sampling technique was purposive and snowball sampling. The research data were collected through interviews and documentation, used triangulation for validity. The results showed that this *blusukan* culture has proven effective as the campaign strategy for traditional society using the interpersonal communication *Blusukan* as a campaign strategy is still awaited by the public since they can interact with the candidates in a addition to familism or political dynasties as the main consideration for the traditional voters. The researcher recommends that the *blusukan* tradition is not merely a campaign method before the general election, but it should be returned to its essential meaning, to know the real conditions of society. The political party recruitment process needs to be reformed to cope with the spread of political dynasties and the dynasty of politics.

Keywords: *Blusukan, Familism, Political Dynasty, Mayor Election.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Blusukan is an interpersonal communication pattern as a campaign strategy by Gibran- Teguh, and they won the Surakarta Mayor Election or Pilwakot Surakarta in 2020. The *blusukan* used were different from the previous one because it was done online or well known as a digital *blusukan*. The *blusukan* become a symbol of Javanese cultural identity and had been done by King Pakubowono V. Ethnic identity has a typical symbol of culture, language, organisation and ideology (Gama, Sudardi, Abdullah, and Wijaya, 2019)[8] that must be obeyed by the people of his order so that the king can have direct interaction with people. Etymologically, *blusukan* comes from the Javanese language, from the root word *blusuk* (meaning entrance) and the suffix *-an* (a verb affix) which means entering a place to know something. The term *blusukan* refers to the behaviour of entering and leaving a place, simply recognizing the condition of a place naturally or culturally. *Blusukan* is a term for someone who travels to places where problems have

not been revealed. This activity originated from the habit of the King of Surakarta, King Paku Buwono V, to find out the condition of the community at that time[10].

The *blusukan* strategy carried out during the mayoral election campaign has different objectives from the *blusukan* in the previous erae. Activities carried out before the regional head election, aimed at building trust and closeness to gain sympathy from prospective voters. Through this activity, candidates can communicate interpersonally with the citizen, so that it is expected to increase public trust. This interpersonal communication enables, public to see directly the candidate's profile such as gestures, clothes, speech style, language, attributes and so on.

Pilwakot Surakarta in 2020 followed by two pairs of candidates, those were Gibran Rakabuming Raka - Teguh Prakosa supported by the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP), Partai Solidaritas Indonesia (PSI), Gerakan Indonesia Raya (Gerindra), Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), Golongan

Karya (Golkar), and Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) versus Bagyo Wahyono - Suparjo Fransiskus Xavierius as individual candidates [14]. The six politics party that supported Gibran-Teguh showed the party regeneration that stuck in capturing prospective mayor that would at the same time encouraging the incumbent family become politician or political dynasties.

Mosca explains, each class show tendencies to take place down through the generations, even when political positions open wide, the family ruling would still get the benefits (Dal Bo Dal Bo, & Snyder, 2009). It is what later became the forerunner of political dynasties as a form of reproduction of traditional power because they rely on blood and descent. Political Dynasties is a collective form of elite patronage in the collective form based on linkages in family, ethnicity, and other blood relation more that the point is to bring the monarchy into a democracy at the local level.

Familism phenomenon closely related with the political dynasties phenomenon as the process of directing the power of certain groups (elite) into certain generations. Familism is a hypothesis of the family influence in shaping values, morals, and power orientation so that a monarchy model of power were later created. The basic formation of the familism power as a trend in Indonesian democracy includes three things figure (personalism), clientelism, and tribalism [2]. Those conditions formed a succession of government that was linked to a political dynasty that is by design and by accident. By design, if the familism networking in the government had formed in a long time and have a stronger relationship so that relatives who want to join the government has been designed from the beginning to occupy these positions. By accident, if the succession of government suddenly nominates their relatives to replace their family to maintain their "informal" power[7].

Political culture studies of political dynasties have been carried out from various perspectives. *First*, neopatrimonialism by Haris (2007) that looked at political dynasty as an autonomy excess that makes hijacked democracy by circulation core genealogical relationship, based on kinship relations as well as the outside genealogical line that its interest is power perpetuation. Secondly, political dynasties as a form of political family (*political clan*) [12], that political dynasty emerged as the excess of the feudalism legacy in which still strongly affects not only for economic resources control but also the formation of loyalty networks in society that involve informal figures. *Third*, the study of political dynasties as a form of predatory political practice. Predatory politics is the development of Migdal's (1988) thesis on *local*

strongmen and Sidel (2005) on *local bossism*. This study was carried out by Asako (2010) and McCoy (1994) who analyzed the growth of political dynasties due to business-political collusion at the local level [7].

The birth of a political dynasty (Hee Park, 2004) was also caused by three (3) models of familism: (1) Dynasty of politics that are based purely on blood relationships in the family (consanguinity), and the marital relationship (marriage) with other clans; (2) Quasi-familism. This model was based on the affection and solidarity of family members in the power structure; and (3) Familism. This political dynasty model was based on fulfilling functionalism aspects rather than lineage or blood ties.

Dynasty refers to a word that defines autocracy on the sensitivity ancestors imaging, grandparents, fathers, mothers, siblings, and relatives. In politics, political kinship creates circles of power or the structure of the occupied family, children, and colleagues[9]. The circle of power includes strategic positions in which one-line instruction and also coordination and strategic positions obtained through general elections as Pilkada. A political dynasty is a "political kingdom" in which the elite put his family, his brother and relatives in several important posts either national or local government or the elite forms a strategy of a royal structured network systematically structured. This network moreover will make it easier for certain families or relatives to continue the chain of power[1].

Based on the description above, the research problem formulations are: (1) How is the blusukan culture strategy carried out by the Gibran-Teguh candidate in the 2020 Surakarta Pilwakot; (2) How did the culture of blusukan and familism win the Gibran-Teguh candidate in the 2020 Surakarta Pilwakot. The research urgency: (1) Blusukan as a tradition is close with interpersonal communication patterns between candidates and the community; (2) The high indication of political dynasty creates the urgently needs of political recruitment process reformation by the political party to stop the spread of political dynasty.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative descriptive design [4]. Qualitative research was chosen in order to provide understanding, explanations and theories of behaviour, this kind of research would be able to understand democratization at the local level. The purpose of this approach is to obtain comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information of the studied cases [5], in this case, the culture of *blusukan* and familism in local democracy (study of the 2020 Surakarta Mayor election). This study took

place in Surakarta because of the *blusukan* strategy by candidate number 01 Gibran-Teguh and its familism makes them win the election. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The respondents in this study were selected by purposive method[5], those were citizen who used their voting rights in the 2020 Surakarta Pilwakot. The research data were collected through interviews and documentation. The validity of the collected data was tested using a triangulation [13].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The election for the Surakarta Mayor was held on December 9, 2020, and was held during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the 2020 Pilkada, the General Election Commission (KPU) set general meeting campaign rules that are adjusted to the Covid-19 preventive health protocol. The general meeting is a campaign method that is usually referred to the grand campaign. The rules regarding the grand campaign written in KPU Regulation (PKPU) Number 6 of 2020 concerning Pilkada in Non-Natural Covid-19 Disaster Conditions which was published on July 7, 2020. As Article 64 PKPU 6/2020 states, political parties/pairs of candidates/campaign teams who want to hold a grand campaign, campaign must be carried out through the online media to avoid the spread of Covid-19. This phenomenon is a factor in the digital *blusukan* strategy as a campaign tool applied by the Gibran-Teguh candidate.

The Pilwakot Surakarta was finally won by the Gibran-Teguh candidate by adopting the *blusukan* campaign strategy as carried out by Jokowi in winning the Surakarta Pilwakot and the election for the President of the Republic of Indonesia. Unlike the *blusukan* before, *blusukan* done by Gibran-Teguh was the digital *blusukan* utilizing the virtual box as the online campaign media. The virtual box is a 49-inch monitor screen equipped with a circuit TV type camera using the internet network and a microphone. The Virtual box, then, carried around by the successor to each of the citizen homes to greet and interact with the citizen. On this occasion the citizen can deliver their complaints directly without creating a crowd, as Gibran's slogan in the Javanese language "Pemilune slamet, wargane iso ngliwet" in English "Safe election, citizen meals fulfilled" which means it's a safe election that makes citizen life safely fulfilled. Thus, through the virtual box, the interaction occurs in two directions.

The virtual campaign was done by traditional Javanese believe or in Javanese called *nguri-nguri* Javanese culture, It is shown by Gibran's appearance on Javanese local tradition (in Javanese called *njawani*) clothes called *lurik* as the Javanese typical clothes, using Javanese language in addressing

the citizens, and begging their blessing by doing *sungkem*, as a sign of paying respect to other people in Javanese tradition. For Javanese people, those sets of act portray the appreciation and paying respect called *nguwongke wong cilik* meaning highly respect the common citizen, high. This attitude can also be understood as the attitude of a leader who protects his people.

The victory of Gibran as the candidate for Surakarta mayor was closely associated with political dynasties, it can be seen from his age and his experiences in politics so that the voter's tendency would be based on his popularity and resources that he had as son of the President. This phenomenon can be analysed using Park (2004) opinion, that the political dynasty is caused by one of the familism model political dynasties that were purely based on blood relations within the family (consanguinity). Gibran victory is a proof of political dynasty based on blood relations within the family (*consanguinity*) is an important factor for voters in choosing Gibran as the mayor.

The action of the six political parties supporting the Gibran-Teguh candidate pair can be interpreted as a factor in the growth of a political dynasty with a background of excess autonomy that leads to the hijacking of democracy by genealogical core circulation relationships based on kinship. Besides, Gibran's victory in the Surakarta Pilwakot and Jokowi's son-in-law Bobby Afif Nasution in Medan City became the milestone for Jokowi's political dynasty as a form of political family (political clan). The society point of view that mostly do not question the political dynasties, also show that the legacy of feudalism still has a strong influence in traditional societies, not limited only to the sources of economic power but also forms a loyalties network in society. It is not surprising that finally, it will make things that Migdal (1988) called local strongmen and Sidel (2005) called it local bossism which occurs due to business-political collusion at the local level.

The political parties action to take advantage over popularity and electability of candidates affiliated with a political dynasty also strengthen the Mosca opinions, that each class showing a tendency to take place down through the generations, even when political positions wide open, the rulers family will still get many benefits (Dal Bo et al., 2009). Finally, the political dynasty eliminates the chance to compete, because it would be difficult to beat them up, with the assumption that political dynasties have had wider network and more supports so that it has a bigger chance to win by eliminating the meritocracy value and another alternative choice.

4. CONCLUSION

Blusukan is known as a candidate strategy to introduce themselves to the public, convey their vision and mission, and influence people's choices. The digital form of *blusukan* done by Gibran-Teguh as a candidate, won the 2020 Surakarta Pilwalkot, using a virtual media box. The six political parties together supporting the candidate Gibran-Teguh become one factor contributing to flourishing the political dynasty as the excess of autonomy that leads into hijacked democracy by the circulation of core genealogical relationship, because they are part of the political dynasty based on blood relations (consanguinity). The voter's point of view mostly does not question the political dynasties that could lead to local strongmen and local bossism that occur due to the business-political collusion at the local level. The researcher recommends that the *blusukan* tradition is not merely a campaign method before the general election, but it needs to return to its essential meaning, to know the real conditions of society. In addition, the efforts to reform the recruitment process by political parties is necessary to combat the spread of political dynasties and the dynasty of politics.

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