

## TRADITIONAL TITLES AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN GORONTALO

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### ABSTRACT

Each region has its own peculiarities that refers to the culture of its people. In this diverse culture, there are customs that are maintained as continuous, preserved and practiced in social life. The aims of the research are: (a) to reveal the meaning of adat title in local political communication, (b) to know the meaning of political communication capital in local government in Gorontalo, and (c) to get the pattern of political communication capital in local government in Gorontalo. The research doing by the critical ethnography, which is focus on the discovery, interpretation, and application of local knowledge to practice, rather than on testing hypotheses or outcomes. As a customary area, Gorontalo has a tradition of giving traditional titles (*Pulanga*) to the local son who is considered to have a great contribution to the region. The awarding of traditional titles/returns as a form of homage to new officials to distinguish them from others in society. The preservation of the traditions of the awarding ceremony is a sign that custom exists in Gorontalo society. So far, the awards have not clashed with democracy, although in certain aspects such as the recognition of women's leadership, not yet fully compatible with democracy. This paper examines how customary / traditional titles can be used as political capital in a contestation in Gorontalo for political office positions.

*Key words: gelaradat, modal politik, Gorontalo.*

### INTRODUCTION

The differences of ethnicity, religion, customs and regionalism are characteristic of Indonesian society that still smells Dutch or at least to describe Indonesian society in Dutch era. The plural society according to Furnivall is a society consisting of two or more elements that live alone without the intermingling of one another in political unity (Furnivall 1967: 446-469). According to Koentjaraningrat (1990) ethnicity as a social group or a unity of life that has an interaction system that exists because of the continuity and sense of identity that unites

all its members and has its own leadership system. According Koentjaraningrat, the grouping of various ethnic groups in Indonesia generally done by following the system of customary law circle made by Van Vollenhoven. According to the division, in Indonesia there are 19 regions of ethnic groups, one of which is the ethnic of Gorontalo. In terms of democracy life in Gorontalo, of course not present from the beginning or not yet practicing democracy as it appears at this time. But as a practice and values, some key elements of democracy once colored the "golden period" in history (power) in Gorontalo. Nothing

wrong if we look back for a moment. Between the 17th and 18th centuries Gorontalo achieved a very modern democratic system, when the power structure and political culture were formed on the basis of the supremacy of religion, knowledge and territorial authority. And all this is manifested in a representative (local) agency called *Bantayo Poboide* (representative body). In this study, it will only be explored by Pierre Bourdieu (1986), which distinguishes the three forms of capital, namely economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. According to Bourdieu, the definition of capital is very broad and includes material things (which can have symbolic value), as well as cultural capital (defined as tastes of cultural value and consumption patterns). Cultural capital can cover a wide range of properties, such as art, education, and language forms.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Critical ethnography is a qualitative research methodology that enables the researcher to not only study and understand society, but also to critique and potentially change that society through his or her work, (Cook, 2005). The study arises from a critical ethnographic paradigm, in the traditions of ethnographic inquiry, critical

social theory (Agar, 1999; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000), and community-based action research (LeCompte, Schensul, Weeks, & Singer, 1999; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; Stringer, 1999). Critical ethnography has emancipatory implications and is depicted by Thomas (1993) as:

*a way of applying a subversive world view to the conventional logic of cultural inquiry. It does not stand in opposition to conventional ethnography. Rather, it offers a more direct style of thinking about the relationships among knowledge, society, and political action. The central premise is that one can be both scientific and critical, and that ethnographic description offers a powerful means of critiquing culture and the role of research within it.*

Critique of the cultural scene is embedded within the ethnographic process in this framework (Noblit, Flores, & Murillo, 2004). In critical ethnography focus on the discovery, interpretation, and application of local knowledge to practice, rather than on testing hypotheses or outcomes. Common elements in these traditions include partnership between investigators and participants with respect to planning and interpreting research, and subsequent partnering in the development, implementation, and evaluation of any interventions. Critical ethnography recognizes that culture-as-ideology can lead

to certain misinterpretations of social life. Similarly, a culture that is merely lived out is not always open to critical reflection for insiders. With sufficient respect and sensitivity to the community, you may attempt to explain some of the questions/contradictions left open in the informant's interpretation of things.

The notion of political capital in the social sciences is still being sharpened and the publication of this political capital is far less than the publication of symbolic capital, social capital, cultural capital and economic capital (Economic capital). According to Casey in (Nasir: 2009) political capital as the empowerment of the whole type of capital owned by a political actor or a political institution to produce profitable political action and strengthen the position of political actors or political institutions concerned. Casey further specifies the existence of four political markets that influence the magnitude of political capital owned by a political agent or a political institution. The first political market is elections because elections are the basic instrument for electing leaders in a democratic system, the second political market is the formulation and implementation of public policies. The third political market is the dynamics of

relationships and conflicts between political actors and political institutions in the formulation and implementation of public policies. The fourth political market is the opinion or public opinion of political actors or political institutions.

While symbolic capital or in relation to the dynamics of politics can be understood as the magnitude of legitimacy, reputation, and level of respect obtained by political actors or political institutions due to political acts committed or not done. The awarding of adat titles in the local political context in Gorontalo Province can be considered as a political capital. With the title of adat carried by a local political figure who sits in government and who will nominate in the context of the election of public positions such as regents / mayors, and governors, one can be more confident and more acceptable to society.

## **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

### ***Profile of the informants***

In general, this research will be conducted in Gorontalo Province, especially in Gorontalo City and Gorontalo Regency. The location of the research implementation is in accordance with the agreement with the informant. However, most research sites depend on the location of the workplace or

where the informants work. The location of this research site is the Office of Governor of Gorontalo or the House of Governor and the Provincial Government of Gorontalo Province. Gorontalo Mayor's Office or Gorontalo Mayor's Office. The Office of the Regent of Gorontalo or the Regent's Office of Gorontalo. *Dulohupa* Traditional House and *BandayoPoboide* Traditional House.

To direct this research, the key researcher was determined by 12 people, which refers to the determination of informants in qualitative research, Creswell (1998: 112). The criteria for determining the informants of this research are: *First* the figures who was awarded of the traditional title as who knows and feel how the change of 'status' and responsibility before and after receiving the traditional title; *second*, the customary council is the one who holds a deliberation on the consideration of whether or not a person receives a traditional title, *Third*, customary traditional stakeholders as the executor when giving the traditional title, so it was considered able to explain the symbolic meanings of each customary title procession, the *Four* culturalists and cultural observers were chosen because they were concentrated with the preservation and preservation of local culture in Gorontalo and *Fifth* In addition there were figures who

refused to accept traditional title, was chosen as an informant to be a comparison in the experience and opinions given by other informants.

### **History Of traditional titles in Gorontalo**

The giving of traditional titles to the 'figures' who are considered to have great contributions (*Ilomata*) in Gorontalo, is not known exactly what year started. However, according to *Baate Lo Hundalo* AW Lihu, that this ceremony has existed since Gorontalo still in the form of kingdom. In the documents of traditional ceremonies Gorontalo, was not found when the ceremony began to take place. However, it is explained that during the time of the kingdom of Gorontalo, a king elected through a customary deliberation (*BantayoPobo'ide*) would be inaugurated and crowned (given the title of adat) by Wu'u or Baate as Ta'uwa (chairman) of *BantayoPobo'ide* in A traditional ceremony, (Husnan 2012: 175-200). The inauguration and the coronation and traditional titles at that time because the elected king (*Olongia*) was indeed fully qualified as a king who became a role model in his life, both state, community and religion.

Indigenous events (including traditional titles have not been held since the

Dutch colonial rule that began to dominate the kingdom of Gorontalo in 1736 AD. The policy of the Dutch colonists at that time was to freeze *BantayoPobo'ide* and remove *Olongia* (king). Slowly and appoint a successor, the head of the district consisting of Dutch-educated nobility. After the proclamation of independence, regardless of Dutch and Japanese colonialism, this ceremony of traditional titles began to be re-implemented, precisely after the cultural customs seminar of Gorontalo in 1972. Must It is recognized that traditional titles have undergone adjustments (modifications) to developments that occur in society. This adjustment may be to adjust to developments that occur as a consequence of the life of the state, (Husnan 2012: 175-200). Can explain exactly when the Traditional titles in royal life in Gorontalo. But it is certain that the traditional titling to a character who is considered to have a work has existed since the time of *Linula*, a period of small kingdoms. That is, long before the arrival of Dutch colonization in Gorontalo.

### **Traditional Titles As The Political Capital and Political Communication**

The traditional titles in Gorontalo society can be divided into two types. That is the traditional title which given to

someone who has passed away, which is named *Gara'i*. And second, the customary title called *Pulanga*. *Pulanga* given to the figure who is considered to give great work. The study in this study is the second traditional title. The second type of customary titles, hereinafter referred to as *TombuluwoBohu* or the newly appointed state officials (*mayors / regents*), *Jogugu* (vice regent / deputy mayor) and *WuleaLo Lipu* (sub-district). In the rule, the traditional title is not given to the governor. But along with the development, the governor / vice governor has also received *Pulanga*.

The *Pulanga* given to them will continue to stick until they retire from office.

The main criterion of the great work that was used as a measure in conferring the traditional title was no longer fully enforced. Today, the granting of the traditional political title of *Pulanga* is a form of recognition and respect for customs to officials, regardless of whether or not they have worked. Although a state person who is elected either as regent / mayor may be employed, the customary person concerned may not receive honor / respect with *Tubo* or have the right to sit in the traditional seat (*motuhulooa to huhuloalo bulita*). This is a justifiable reason, even though the newly

elected has been directly awarded custom. By already holding the title home, then someone will get a place different from where the people in general.

Informants also cannot argue that the impression that the title of adat used as a political capital for example in the content in the area. That the traditional title is not significant role such as financial capital and capital of political party, but with certain traditional titles, someone more confident to socialize himself. It is inevitable for a prospective *petahana* to capitalized traditional support in gaining public support. This is certainly difficult to do by those who have not yet received a traditional title / *Pulanga*.

### **Political Transactions**

About the existence of transactions in each award of a custom title to a character or someone is inevitable. In addition to common factors, such as great work and must be Muslim, there are other factors that are not less decisive. That is about the dowry, or money that must be submitted as a sign so. The amount is said to reach hundreds of millions of rupiah. Funds of that size, intended, one of them for the procurement of clothing adat implementers. For newly elected officials, such as

governors, regents, new mayors, such funds may not be a problem. But not so for other or someone who have no position but want to get the traditional title/pulanga.

Informant research is reluctant to justify the existence of the dowry money. But also do not want to argue. He called not a dowry. It is a *sadaqah* whose numbers have been fixed by the ancient elders, who cannot be regarded as gratification let alone regarded as political transactions. The amount according to the informant is only Rp 16,000, up to Rp 96,000. However, the informant did not dismiss, if he received the customary title of a regent/mayor or governor, it is impossible for his *sadaqah* money only for the amount above. As long as it is sincere and not burdensome, it cannot be blamed.

The presence of transactional impression in any consideration of giving customary titles to the local figures cannot be avoided as well as the capacity of indigenous stakeholders not entirely sterile from conflicts of interest. Because, so far the customary transporters, especially those sitting in traditional councils, are generally retired civil servants. The impression, only role-sharing is inevitable. According to informants, this also gave the dilemma for traditional stakeholders to enforce custom

rules to the recipient home, if later found violation.

### **Religion Factor and Gender Bias In Providing traditional Title**

Informant research revealed, in addition to having a real and great work for Gorontalo, awarding the traditional title also has a special criteria formulated by the *baate* or traditional stakeholders. The criteria are the candidates receiving the traditional title and the whole family must be Muslim. This is understandable, because Gorontalo was originally a fairly old Islamic empire in Sulawesi. Not surprisingly, in the slogan of the people of Gorontalo, Adat Bersendi Sya'ra and Sya'ra Bersendi Kitabullah. It means that adat should refer to Al Quran.

Another finding that concerns gender bias. Gender bias is intended as of female lead candidates in local political content. According to informants, the women are considered less fit to lead in Gorontalo, because in Gorontalo custom, women should not lead. Not surprisingly, when the candidate for female governor in elections in unison in 2017, is not received electoral appreciation, which is shown by the low vote. Although there may be other factors that cause so the candidate's fail in election. However, positions in government, women

have a place and role in accordance with the field of expertise.

### **Conclusion**

The awarding of traditional titles in the context of local government in Gorontalo, cannot be separated from the position of customary presence based on the Kitabullah, in the area known as the *Serambi of Medina*. This can be seen from the important point of consideration of customary titles, which is not justified if one member of his family is religious other than moslem. With this logic, then the leadership of women has not been fully accepted. Allegations of political transactions in the conferment of customary titles are inevitable. Increasingly, traditional titles are always festive, impossible without great expenses. Procurement of uniforms for customary councils, adat stakeholders is no small cost incurred. Moreover, if those who accept customary titles are officials. The notion that the higher the position, the greater the cost to be incurred, cannot be avoided.

The reputation of the traditional council becomes questionable, since it is generally filled by retired civil servants. In fact, law enforcement and adat rules are difficult to enforce, as customary

stakeholders are easily co-opted by the governing system in power. Customary councils ultimately only legitimize government policy.

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