

GAME THEORY ANALYSIS OF IDENTITY POLITICAL CONFLICT IN WEST KALIMANTAN

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Abstract

Identity Politics is a new concept in political science, identity politics in Indonesia has occurred a lot in every region. This is related to one of the cases that occurred in Indonesia, especially in West Kalimantan. Local politics in West Kalimantan has shown a very striking ethnic diversity since the end of the New Order government. In explaining and analyzing this case the author uses qualitative research methods with literature study techniques. The results of this research show that since the collapse of the Soeharto government, priorities have changed effectively, such as the establishment of the Dayak Traditional Council or commonly known as (MAD) as an effort to strengthen their ethnic identity, one form of progress in the defense carried out to maintain their culture is that the Dayak tribe community began to embrace Christian beliefs, this case can be analyzed using game theory, namely a zero sum game which explains the defeat and revival of the Dayak tribe community since the introduction of reform and the new order. due to the collapse of the Soeharto government.

Keywords: Decentralization, Identity Politics, Conflict.

Abstrak

Politik Identitas merupakan konsep baru dalam ilmu politik, politik identitas di Indonesia sudah banyak terjadi di setiap daerah, Hal ini berkaitan dengan salah satu kasus yang terjadi di Indonesia khususnya di Kalimantan barat. Politik lokal di Kalimantan Barat menunjukkan beragam etnis yang sangat mencolok sejak berakhirnya pemerintahan orde baru. Dalam menjelaskan dan menganalisis kasus tersebut penulis menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan teknik literature study, dari hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa semenjak keruntuhan pemerintahan Soeharto prioritas telah berbalik secara efektif, seperti didirikannya Majelis Adat Dayak atau yang biasa dikenal dengan sebutan (MAD) sebagai upaya untuk penguatan identitas etnik mereka, salah satu bentuk kemajuan dalam pembelaan yang dilakukan untuk mempertahankan budayanya adalah masyarakat suku Dayak mulai menganut kepercayaan Kristen, kasus ini dapat dianalisis dengan game theory yaitu zero sum game yang menjelaskan kekalahan dan kebangkitan kembali masyarakat suku dayak semenjak masuknya reformasi dan orde baru akibat keruntuhan pemerintahan Soeharto.

Keywords: Desentralisasi, Politik Identitas, Konflik.

INTRODUCTION

Identity Politics is a new concept in political science. It is another name for biopolitics and the politics of difference. Biopolitics is based on the differences that arise from bodily differences. Its application in political science emerged after a symposium at the International Association of Political Scientists meeting in Vienna in 1994.

Agnes Haller defined Identity Politics as a political concept and movement that focuses on difference as a primary political category. Following the failure of the grand narrative, the politics of difference became a new term for identity politics; racism, biofeminism, and ethnic strife took a backseat to the old grand narrative.

New forms of intolerance and violent practices emerged. The concept of identity politics is relevant considering the future political landscape evolving toward diverse politics. Political scientist

Geoff Mulgan argued that the role of ethics and morals must be prioritized. Therefore, as the grand narrative collapses, the major ideologies of political parties diminish in importance.

Klaus Von Beyme, in Muhammad Habibi (2017), analyzes the characteristics of identity movements across several stages of development, from premodern to postmodern. Fundamental divisions between ethnic and national groups gave rise to comprehensive socio-political movements. In this case, ideological mobilization was initiated by leaders. The goal was to seize and seize power from one ruler to another.

In the modern stage, these movements emerged with a conditional approach; divisions required resources to mobilize. A balance of top-down mobilization and bottom-up participation occurred, with the leadership role no longer dominant, and the ultimate goal

was a division of power. This relates to a case in Indonesia, particularly in West Kalimantan. Local politics in West Kalimantan have demonstrated striking ethnic diversity since the end of the New Order government.

Some of these movements have led to conflicts, such as the violence that occurred in 1997 and 1999. Since the mid-1900s, conflict has developed between the two largest ethnic groups, the Dayak and the Malay, over the appointment of officials to strategic positions. Tensions over political interests escalated towards the end of the New Order regime, resulting in mass movements that were sometimes accompanied by violence.

Nevertheless, ethnicity in West Kalimantan also existed peacefully, especially after 2000. However, it could be argued that the inter-ethnic "power-sharing" policy implemented at the district level successfully eliminated the triggers for violence, thus preventing a

recurrence of the conflicts that occurred in 1997 and 1999. This paper describes the emergence of ethnic identity politics in West Kalimantan and questions the extent to which it offers the possibility of civility (besides the more well-known possibility of violence).

The beginning of this paper examines the politics of Dayak and Malay ethnicities before the 1998 reforms. Ethnic politics, in this context, refers to the politics conducted or led by ethnic elites seeking representation in the executive and legislative branches. The first two sections demonstrate that the rise of the Dayak ethnic group in politics after 1998 was not a sudden movement but rather a reaction to oppression that had persisted since the colonial era.

The third section describes how the authoritarian New Order regime stifled local politics and discussions on ethnicity, as well as the unintended implications of these policies. The final section describes

how the 1998 reforms fostered the rise of **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

ethnic politics.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method. Qualitative research focuses on in-depth observation. To facilitate the researcher's research, data collection techniques are required from various data sources. Data collection in this study utilizes a literature study, a method that involves understanding and studying theories from various literature related to the research. Data collection through the literature study method itself involves several references such as newspapers, magazines, articles, films, scripts, and the like. In this paper, the author aims to describe the identity politics conflict that occurred in West Kalimantan Province using literature sources, namely the book "Local Politics in Indonesia" by Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gerry ban Klinken.

The Reform Order and the implementation of Regional Autonomy, which began in 1999, have significantly reshaped the political and social landscape of Indonesia, particularly in regions characterized by strong ethnic diversity such as West Kalimantan Province. The decentralization policies introduced after the collapse of the New Order regime opened wider opportunities for local communities to articulate their cultural identities, political aspirations, and demands for greater representation within regional governance structures. In West Kalimantan, these developments revived long-standing discussions surrounding ethnic identity, territorial representation, and access to political power. Ethnic identity not only re-emerged as a social and cultural marker, but also became an important political instrument influencing local leadership, bureaucratic arrangements, and regional

political alignments. Even prior to the fall of the New Order in 1998, ethnic considerations had already played a role in shaping changes in government administration and patterns of political competition within the province.

In the contemporary context, public discourse regarding the proposed establishment of Kapuas Raya Province

illustrates how ethnic and territorial politics continue to influence regional dynamics in West Kalimantan. The proposed province would consist of several inland regencies, including Sanggau, Sekadau, Sintang, Melawi, and Kapuas Hulu, areas predominantly inhabited by Dayak communities. Supporters of the proposal argue that the formation of a new province would improve administrative effectiveness, accelerate development in interior regions, and strengthen political representation for indigenous Dayak populations who have historically perceived themselves as marginalized within provincial governance centered in Pontianak. The discourse surrounding Kapuas Raya therefore cannot be separated from broader questions of indigenous identity, regional inequality, and the struggle for political recognition in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

At the same time, demographic patterns in West Kalimantan also reflect the enduring consequences of past ethnic conflicts, particularly those involving Dayak and Madurese communities during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Following these conflicts, many Madurese populations relocated or became concentrated in urban and coastal areas, alongside ethnic Chinese communities that have long played important roles in trade and urban economic activities. This spatial and ethnic reconfiguration has contributed to a more visible distinction

between inland and urban populations, during the period between 1777 and reinforcing perceptions of ethnic 1854, conflicts had already occurred territoriality within the province. among Chinese, Malay, and Dayak Consequently, debates surrounding communities, particularly in relation to regional expansion and political trade networks, territorial influence, and representation are often intertwined with political authority within local kingdoms broader concerns over ethnicity, social and colonial structures. These early cohesion, historical memory, and the tensions reflected the complex equitable distribution of political and multicultural composition of West economic resources. Kalimantan, where diverse ethnic groups

In West Kalimantan, conflicts interacted within shifting economic and involving ethnicity, religion, race, and political environments.

inter-group relations—commonly referred to in Indonesia as SARA The anti-Chinese conflict of 1967 marked conflicts—have long been part of the another important turning point in the region’s historical and political landscape. region’s history of ethnic violence. This The roots of these tensions can be traced conflict emerged within the broader back several centuries, indicating that national political upheaval following the communal conflict in the province is not transition to the New Order regime, when merely a contemporary phenomenon but anti-communist campaigns and rather a recurring pattern shaped by suspicions toward ethnic Chinese historical competition, migration, communities intensified throughout political interests, and socio-economic Indonesia. In West Kalimantan, many disparities. Historical records show that Chinese communities became targets of

displacement, discrimination, and economic inequality, and weak conflict resolution mechanisms. Over time, such violence due to accusations of links with communist networks and foreign tensions transformed into large-scale influence. The conflict not only altered ethnic violence, especially between Dayak demographic patterns in the province but and Madurese communities, as well as also deepened ethnic segregation and between Malay and Madurese groups. The distrust among local communities. As a Madurese population, many of whom result, ethnic identity increasingly migrated through government-sponsored became associated with political loyalty, transmigration programs, were security concerns, and competition over frequently perceived by indigenous economic resources. groups as economic competitors and

Furthermore, West Kalimantan has Malay communities often viewed repeatedly experienced violent themselves as marginalized within their communal clashes involving Dayak, own territories, leading to heightened Malay, and Madurese communities, resentment and identity-based particularly during the late twentieth mobilization.

century. Although many of these conflicts These recurring conflicts demonstrate initially emerged from seemingly minor that ethnic relations in West Kalimantan disputes—such as personal altercations, are deeply influenced by historical criminal incidents, or local memory, demographic change, political disagreements—these issues often contestation, and uneven socio-economic escalated rapidly due to accumulated development. The persistence of historical grievances, stereotypes, of

communal tensions also reveals how This social configuration persisted until fragile social integration can become several significant events at the end of when ethnic identities are politicized or colonialism and the independence era. when state institutions fail to address The Dutch government and issues of inequality and representation. missionaries undermined the Dayak

Consequently, understanding the history ethnic identity. During the New Order of ethnic conflict in West Kalimantan is regime, changes occurred that essential for analyzing contemporary contradicted those of the Old Order regional politics, identity formation, and regime. The Dayak ethnic group ongoing efforts toward reconciliation and experienced domination and social cohesion in the province. marginalization, with their traditional

Before and during the colonial period, houses destroyed on the grounds of poor West Kalimantan was frequently torn by sanitation. As a result of this chaos, the inter-Dayak tribal conflicts known as Dayak culture itself was completely "Kayau." At that time, the Dayak, with destroyed.

limited political knowledge, tended to use During the New Order, the Dayak violence against those who invaded their ethnic group experienced colonization by territory and sought to exploit forest their own state. Their rights and resources. However, through Dutch sovereignty were restricted by law, and initiative, the Dayaks finally achieved their traditional territories were often peace at a congress in Tumang Anoi in considered uncompromising under the pretext of land nationalism. This theory, 1894. This congress marked a turning in relation to the Zero Sum Game theory, point in Kalimantan's history, eliminating is a game where the sum of the wins for inter-tribal conflict and coconut cutting.

both parties is zero (Noorida, 2000: 3), meaning that one party will win and the other will lose, resulting in a total of zero.

In this case, nationalism, under the New Order government, attempted to standardize cultural differences in the interests of "national development." After the fall of the Soeharto government, priorities appeared to have effectively reversed. Ideas about national development and modernization have been replaced by ethnic-based conflicts related to unequal development and the marginalization of indigenous peoples.

During this period, the policy of transmigration was also implemented on a large scale, raising concerns among indigenous peoples, particularly the Dayak. During the New Order era, the Dayak ethnic group established the Dayak Customary Council (MAD) as an effort to strengthen their ethnic identity and advocate for their interests. They recognized themselves as Christians,

indigenous people, and the majority, and felt colonized by the Malays, whom they considered Muslims, immigrants, and a minority.

The Dayak community staged demonstrations and advocated for their interests regarding deforestation and plantations. The emergence of this Dayak ethnic political movement stemmed from the treatment of companies and the government, which only paid attention to demands when the group posed a threat to stability.

During the New Order era, Dayak identity politics consolidated due to their systematic marginalization. On the other hand, the Malay ethnic group has regained a strategic or prominent position in government and politics in West Kalimantan. After 1998, significant changes occurred in various aspects of Indonesian life due to the economic crisis, which also impacted the Indonesian political and governmental system. In this

regard, Indonesian nationalism However, since the fall of the Soeharto underwent a shift with the advent of the government, priorities have effectively Reformation and regional autonomy era. reversed, such as the establishment of the

In West Kalimantan itself, the Dayak Customary Council or commonly discourse of "son of the native" (son of the known as (MAD) as an effort to native) became important in regional strengthen their ethnic identity. Overall, head elections. The formation of new the identity politics of the Dayak and provinces and regencies also occurred Malay ethnic groups in West Kalimantan during the Regional Autonomy Order, are influenced by political, social, and which resulted in the presence of economic factors that developed during dominant ethnic groups in each region. the New Order and Post-Reformation periods.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of identity politics in West Kalimantan is the result of the spirit to show high cultural existence, but also involves ethnic segregation and competition that results in violent conflict between the Malay and Dayak ethnic groups, where the Dayak ethnic group itself feels discriminated against by the Malay tribe, as well as the Indonesian government's apparent lack of attention to the Dayak tribe itself, the involvement of SARA conflicts between both parties.

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