

## **KINSHIP POLITICS AND EMBODIMENT CONCEPT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE: TABANAN DISTRICT CASESTUDY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research is a neo-institutionalism analysis study to political dynasty issue in the accordance with the embodiment concept of good governance in Tabanan district. As it is known that after the reformation, Tabanan was led by the same family generation. By focusing on the health service sector, this study will look at to what extent the dynastic politics has an impact on the public policy sector and the realization of good governance. In general, the healthservice policy pursued by the Tabanan Regency government is a non-populist policy. The local government chose to build international hospital rather than providing free health services for the poor. All this time, the study about political dynasty and the effect to the public policy sector in Tabanan is only seen as a mere political problem without looking at the deep state structure, the normative function and culture in it. This study found that there are a conflict between sociological institution, historical institution, and rational choice institution behind the strong dynastic politics as well as the struggles in realizing good governance in Tabanan Regency.

**Keywords:** political dynasty, good governance, neo-institutionalism, public policy, Tabanan district.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In general, good governance is a governing system based on the principles of participation, transparency, consensual, effective, efficient, and accountable (Mardiasmo, 2002:24). Fundamentally, the spirit of decentralized democracy that embodied in the regional autonomy since 2004 is an effort to bring good governance principal in the regime to realization. However, there are obstacles happened in the process, especially under the context of bureaucracy and local policies (Irham, 2015; Firnas and Maesarini, 2011).

The obstacles in good governance realization are not a problem of bureaucracy

coming from a governance vacuum. In the context of decentralization post-reformation, they are still closely related to the regeneration mechanism of political parties and local elections. In Indonesia, political parties are merely a media for politicians that does not have clear orientation of ideology. Consequently, the political fight in elections is oriented only to gain power. This problem caused an emergence of processes of power accumulation, one of which manifests itself in kinship politics. In the context of bureaucratic governance, this monopolitical form of politics affects public policies that are pursued by regional governments (Purwaningsih, 2015).

After reformation, local governments hold the mandate of regional autonomy in which when seen in the bureaucracy context giving them chance and bigger responsibility for regional regents to perform public service functions in their region (Rosser, Wilson, and Sulistyanto, 2011:2). Through Act no. 32 in 2004, local governments are hoped to be the driving force for the acceleration for people's welfare through improving local services and empowerment. The problem of handling essential public services such as primary education and the access to health services which were monopolized by central government are slowly being distributed to local governments.

Power redistribution to local governments are obviously giving positive impact to the effort the acceleration for local people's welfare. But in another hand, local political contestation actually raises problems in the process of democratic decentralization and the implementation of good governance itself. The phenomenon of decentralized politic post-reformation era shows how dark the identity and kinship politic in many regions (Nordholt and Klinken (Ed.), 2007). Kinship politic or political dynasty is a general form that is often found in democratic countries, even on developed countries such as Japan and America (Purwaningsih, 2011:98). But in Indonesian context, political dynasty is still often to be the core of the problem for it reflect the privatization process of political parties that leads to elements of corruption, collusion, nepotism. This problem certainly injures the principles of democracy and the good governance itself (Irham, 2015: 257).

Generally, political dynasty is an endemic phenomenon that appears along with the process of post-reformation decentralization. In many regions in Indonesia, this political dynasty is a form of continuity from the old order that is still alive and is maintained by local identity politics (Nordholt and Klinken (Ed.), 2007). One of the regions in which has strong kinship politic is in Tabanan district, Bali. On 2000-2020, Tabanan is ruled by a regent from the same family group. From 2000-2010, Tabanan was ruled by Governor Eka Wirastuti, who is a biological child of Nyoman Adi Wiryatama. During the regime of Governor Eka Wirastuti, ex regent Nyoman Adi Wiryatama officiated as the

head of Bali's Regional Representatives Council (DPRD) (Rosser and Wilson, 2012: 628).

However, in the context of decentralization democracy post-reformation era, the role of regional heads becomes central in public services policy problem and the attempt of improving local's welfare. Along with Regional Representatives Council (DPRD) as the legislature, regional heads become determiner of the policy-making process in the region. Therefore, talking about how rooted the political dynasty happened in Tabanan, can the governance based on good governance be realized? If so, why does good governance with the practice political dynasty is difficult to be performed? This study will uncover the deep state structure problem behind the struggle to realize good governance in Tabanan with focusing on the networking problem and institutional dynamic related to the government.

## **METHODS AND THEORY**

This chapter will elaborate outlined the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used to dissect the main problems that have been presented in the background. The main theory and approach in this study is neo-institutionalism. The problem in this study is obviously observing the interaction pattern between the actors under an institution which consists of family, political parties, and government. Hence, the political dynasty and good governance problems cannot be seen from merely a political phenomenon.

Neo-institutionalism is a behaviorism approach to understand political behavior through institutions. Different with the old institutional paradigm that sees institution is a reflections of the citizen's political strategy, the neo-institutionalism paradigm sees that an institution has a relative autonomy. In another words, an institution gave meaning in the context where the institution was built. On discovering this problem, March and Olsen (1984) introduces *sociological institution*, *historical institution*, and *rational choice*.

Sociological institution is an order of values, norms and beliefs that live in a community group which then shapes the interpretations and perceptions of the actors towards the existing institutions and situations. Basically, historical institution and sociological institution cannot be separated from one another. However, historical institution emphasized on the emergence of the previous decision, which are ideas and knowledges that cannot be simply eliminated from the structure and culture of a society. These factors encourage the reproduction of values, norms and knowledge. Geertz stated that this relation as a deep structure, which cannot be simply eliminated even there are modernism process or elements penetrated to the society (March and Olsen, 1984).

In contrast from two preceding concepts, rational choice is a form of act that already taking constraints, risks and opportunities for all actions of the actors into consideration. This behavior is no longer affected by normative and cultural functions, but it has used rational calculations to obtain maximum benefits. At this point, rational choice intersects with good governance issue. Good governance is understood as a form or a model of a rational governance or being acknowledge ideal in the middle of the current globalization and neo-liberalism (Prianto, 2011).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Tabanan at Glance**

Tabanan district is one of the regions located in the south of Bali. It is located on the outside of the destination in Bali. Tabanan is located 25 km to the west from Denpasar. To the north Tabanan is bordered by Buleleng Regency, in the east it is bordered by Badung Regency, and to the south by the Indonesian Ocean, and in the west with Jembrana Regency. This region consists of beaches and mountains. Geographically, Tabanan is located between 114° 54' 52" - 115° 12' 57" east longitude and 8° 14' 30" - 8° 30' 07" south latitude. The area of Tabanan is 840 km<sup>2</sup> or about 15% of the total area of the province of Bali (Statistic Indonesia, 2019).

In 2018 the number of populations in Tabanan reached 443,500 people. From that amount, around 19 thousand is the poor. Hence, Tabanan is one of five poor districts in Bali. Different from other province in Bali, the main commodity in Tabanan is agriculture and aquaculture. Tabanan is already known as the breadbasket of Bali. The type of agriculture consists of rice, plantation and horticulture. Meanwhile, this area also has several mainstay tourist destinations, namely Tanah Lot, Ulun Danu Beratan, Bali Botanic Garden, and Jatiluwih. Historically, Tabanan is a political unit that emerged on the rule Majapahit under Arya

Damar or Arya Kenceng as the rulers. After the Gelgel Empire collapsed, Tabanan's position became increasingly solid as one of the empires in Bali, along with eight other kingdoms (Purnawati, 2012: 175). Dutch colonial's expansion ended on late 19<sup>th</sup> century destroyed Tabanan governance. The members of the Tabanan royal family were sent into exile, and from then on, Tabanan was governed directly by the Dutch by appointing Punggawa and Perbekel. In 1929, there was an attempt to restore the governance of Tabanan empire, but it did not go as planned because the most of the member of the royal kingdom are old and passed away on the exile (Robinson, 2005: 46).

The political consequence of this situation is the effect of feudalism was not strong

enough in Tabanan. Thus, in the revolution era, Tabana became one of the bases for republican, different from other regions such as Karangasem, Bangli, Klungkung, and Gianyar, where the castle holds the biggest power to create an anti-republican shaft (Robinson, 2005: 22). This historical background is affecting the political situation in Tabanan. In general, the political influence in Tabanan is not as strong as other region, where the power of castle remains the highest which is still alive politically and sociologically. The regent from the aristocrats had only reigned once at the early independence, which was under Tjokorda Ngurah Gede (1942- 1952). After that, the governor was officiated by common people, I Nyoman Oka (1953-1955), Ida Bagus Puja (1955-1967), I Gusti Made Debot (1967-1973), I Wayan Staat Darmanaba (1973-1979), Soegianto (1979-1989), National Army Brigadier General (Retd) I Ketut Sundria (1989-1994), I Komang Wijana (1994-1999), Nyoman Adi Wiryatama (2000-2010), Eka Wirastuti (2010-2020). This is different from the rest of Bali, where in the new order era, even until now, the majority of the regents in Bali was ruled by the aristocrats (Nordholt, 2007: 513).

## **2. The Awakened Political Dynasty**

In this chapter, the focus of the topic will be about Governor I Nyoman Wiryatama who gained and preserve his power in Tabanan through political dynasty. Therefore, it is important to ask a question on how and why political dynasty became the strategy that was done by Wiryatama. To examine this problem, we need to see from different dimensions that are related, which are politic, structural, and cultural.

In political dimension, Wiryatama's power cannot be detached from Balinese's post-reformation political context where Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) gained massive support. Before the collapse of the New Order authoritarian regime, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Fight (PDI-P) gave supported relatively strong support in Bali. The relative popularity from PDI-P is basically closely related with the socio-economic pressure in the midst of the tourism industry. Other than big investors, the migration of Moslems from Lombok and East Java are controlling the small and medium economic sectors also put pressure on the Balinese. This condition is then awakened the discourse of 'Balinism' and anti-Islamic sentiment. On that note, PDI-P with a secular based became a representation as the identity politic movement in Bali (Nordholt, 2007: 512-513).

In contradicts with Bali in general, Wiryatama does not come from an aristocrat family. He's an ordinary human who built garment and property business in the beginning.

His closeness with opposition political parties in new order era found the momentum where the authoritarian regime fell apart in 1998. Wiryatama had already built connection with PDI in the 1990s. After the attack of PDI's headquarter in 1996, Wiryatama came in order to rebuilt PDI-P which were then made him possible to connect closely with Megawati and other PDI-P central leaders. This network also brought him other connections to civil society organizations like The Tabanan Communication Forum (FORKOT) and significant people in Bali such as Sangjaya, Ketut Suryadi, Oka Ratmadi, and Puspayogya. Beside than having strong political networks, they also had strong property business basis. Through the national and the province PDI-P's elite connections, the economic income from his business, as well as the support from the street through FORKOT networking, Wiryatama was able to gain full support as a candidate for district head in the 1999 local election (Rosser and Wilson, 2012: 625-626).

The populist strategy that relies on improving performance in bureaucratic governance and pro-poor public services was not a strategy that Wiryatama has taken in maintaining his power. He rather built oligarchy power through political machine and consolidating his governance through street civil society organizations, business elites, national politic elites, as well as intimidating potential political opponents. At this point, Wiryatama is a representation on how the elites in new order will conquer in the context of decentralized democracy in the reformation era. In another word, Wiryatama reproduced the value of primordial ties that are communal and kinship, in which are used to achieve political and economic interests. For these reasons, it can be said that structurally, the actors in institutions, either it's the regional heads or parties have not got over from the structure of the old order where patron-client has become a regular connection (Rosser and Wilson, 2012: 625-629).

The communality logic and kinship here are important to understand how Wiryatama built his political dynasty in Tabanan. When the regime ended in 2010, Wiryatama called out his daughter as the candidate for the new regent. Regardless of the challenges from local elite parties, his closeness with national elites smoothen his way to his dynasty politic. In the local election in 2010, Eka Wirastuti was chosen to be the regent. She is also chosen on the next period. For Wiryatama, the most important thing is how his family can continue the political achievement he had through oligarchy. In this note, democratic rational logic does not apply to Wiryatama for he is attached to the normative and cultural values, either it's communality, identity, or the kinship itself (Rossser and Wilson, 2012: 629).

### **3. Good Governance : Sociological-Historical Institution versus Rational Choice**

In the rule under Wiratama's regime, is the policy in the health sector chosen by the Tabanan's local government is to improve the health facility with building international hospital. This policy contradicts Jembrana district who prioritize free health services for the poor. Rosser, Wilson, and Sulistyanto (2012) who had done the study about the bureaucracy in Tabanan shows that fundamentally the international hospital project is a political strategy to achieve benefits on his regime. Rosser, Wilson, and Sulistyanto (2011: 17) emphasized that the hospital mega project was an attempt to build a patron-client relation with the politic elites, businessmen, street mass organization groups, and his own family. Even though it did not get serious investigation from the central government, but it was suspected that the hospital project was laden with the practice of corruption, collusion and nepotism, where the property company is owned by his wife and her political colleagues received a large portion of the tender for the hospital construction project.

In the local lever, the international hospital construction also invited controversy, because it was considered inappropriate, where in Tabanan, the number of poor people is quite significant. Wiryatama stalled that the hospital will be useful for foreign tourists. When in fact, Tabanan is not on top of tourist's destination list. In general, when Wiryatama reigned there were not so much interest for people to invest on the health service for the poor outside of the central government subsidy program. The health insurance promised by Tabanan government is only from the central governance and the practice does not cover every poor in the region (Rosser and Wilson, 2012: 625). This shows that the health service in Tabanan was not based on spirit of the regional autonomy and principles of good governance that prioritize improving services and people's welfare. The management of the hospital construction also indicates the practice of corruption, collusion, and nepotism.

The poor governance also showed through the predicate audit result from The Audit Board (Badan Pengawas Keuangan (BPK)) in 2012. In 2012, BPK gave disclaimer opinion for the finance report from Tabanan's local government. Opinion disclaimer is a predicate given for unacceptable finance report, it does not meet the requirements for fairness (Ristanti, Sinarwati, and Sujana, 2014:3). Tabanan governance's finance reports, especially the ones that are related to the hospital construction showed several issues regarding to the shopping and income transactions. In another words, the finance report does not show there is a common problem on their professionalism. This is also related to the abilities and competencies of the State Civil Apparatus (Aparatur Sipil Negara (ASN)) and the role of regional leaders in the preparation of these financial

reports (Evicahyani and Setiawina, 2015).

It's important to understand why it's difficult to perform good governance under the political dynasty. In the case of Tabanan, the analysis cannot be merely seen through the governance. It is also needed to observe the order value that shaped unprofessional behavior in the governance. In this note, the values of good governance is clear to be contradictory from the values in political dynasty. United Nations Development Programme proclaimed, on how it was quoted by Mardiasmoro (2002:24), that the principles in good governance has to be based on participation, transparency, law supremacy, consensual, equality, efficiency, effectivity, and accountability. These principals encourage governance institutions to act rationally, professionally, and individually. Moreover, in the context of political dynasty, institutions that are related namely head regents, political party, and local governments tend to act normative and primordial. In another words, rational choice institution that becomes the characteristic of good governance a complete opposite with sociological-historical institution which strongly affecting the actors under the regime of political dynasty in Tabanan.

## **CONCLUSION**

In reality, power redistribution and welfare acceleration attempt through local autonomy did not bring the expected results. The local elites who reproduce old values and power order in fact, it becomes a major stumbling block for the attempt to accelerate welfare and to distributed development in the regions. The case of Tabanan shows that decentralized democracy opens opportunities for a new form of oligarchy which threaten the continuity of living in a democratic country. The hospital construction case can be one of the examples on how disordered the governance under the political dynasty regime in Tabanan.

Furthermore, the bureaucracy reformation agenda that has the spirit to modify governance according to the principal of good governance found a dead end if there is no serious eradication of corruption, collusion, and nepotism, especially at the local regions. The case of Tabanan that shows cessation shows that the problems are not only merely in the context of structural bureaucracy. There is a deep structured issue that trapped regent heads, politic parties, as well as the civil apparatus in manifesting rational and professional instance. Thus, in the bureaucracy reformation agenda, major improvement must include the function of norms, culture, and values. Bureaucracy reformation agenda cannot be succeeded if only relying on structural improvements, without upgrading cultural values in one government instance. As how the case of Tabanan shows that the



actors in governmental institutions can still be influenced with sociological-historical institution on the governmental practice.

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