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The Political Behavior of Religious Minority: A Case study of Towani Tolotang in Sidenreng Rappang Indonesia

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Abstract

This article aims to provide an explanation of Towani Tolotang's political behavior. The main problem raised is why this community is active in politics. By using data obtained through observation, interviews, document studies and literature studies as bases for analysis, it is found that Towani Tolotang is active in politics not only because of internal conditions that support their dynamic activities. However, it is also influenced by constitutional guarantees regarding minority rights which is also supported by the attitude of community

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acceptance. The conclusion of this paper confirms that minority groups such as Towani Tolotang have a variety of ways to continue to exist on the one hand by building open communication with the outside world, while they maintain the group's internal solidity on the other side.

Keywords: political behavior, religious minority, local religion, Towani Tolotang.

El comportamiento político de la minoría religiosa: Un estudio de caso de Towani Tolotang en Sidenreng Rappang Indonesia

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo proporcionar una explicación del comportamiento político de Towani Tolotang. El principal problema planteado es por qué esta comunidad es activa en la política. Al utilizar los datos obtenidos a través de la observación, entrevistas, estudios de documentos y estudios de literatura como bases para el análisis, se encuentra que Towani Tolotang es activo en política no solo por las condiciones internas que respaldan sus actividades dinámicas. Sin embargo, también está influenciado por las garantías constitucionales con respecto a los derechos de las minorías, que también está respaldado por la actitud de aceptación de la comunidad. La conclusión de este documento confirma que los grupos minoritarios como Towani Tolotang tienen una variedad de formas de continuar existiendo, por un lado, mediante la construcción de una comunicación abierta con el mundo exterior, mientras que mantienen la solidez interna del grupo en el otro lado.

Palabras clave: comportamiento político, minoría religiosa, religión local, Towani Tolotang.

1. INTRODUCTION

Towani Tolotang is a minority religious group that still exists today. This group is in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia and they live among the majority Muslim groups. Both Towani Tolotang and Muslims are in an inseparable and patterned residential environment based on differences in religious affiliation. Towani Tolotang, in its religious affiliations, include Hinduism. Since its first appearance in 1666, Towani Tolotang has been involved in many ways including conflicts with the majority group (MUDZHAR, 2001). Rejection from the community towards the presence of this group occurred because it was considered to bring different religious teachings from the local population. This issue was resolved and they were allowed to occupy one of the villages south of Sidenreng Rappang at that time. This group also became a victim of the DI/TII (*Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia*) rebellion in South Sulawesi who really wanted an Islamic state established in Indonesia. Even Towani Tolotang, was "forced" to become a Muslim because of the pressure on those who were considered part of the Communists (Indonesian Communist Party) if they remained in their beliefs.

Towani Tolotang has historically been prohibited from carrying out any form of religious activity so that it has been vacant for some time. In fact, Towani Tolotang was the target of da'wah over position as adherents of heretical teachings. In many cases, problems faced by minority groups are found in Indonesia. In the Sunda Wiwitan group, for example, it is still preoccupied with matters of state recognition of

its existence. A bright spot was revealed in 2006 when the Law on Population Administration accommodated the interests of minority groups, including Sunda Wiwitan. Almost the same as Towani Tolotang, the issue of recognition found a bright spot when this community chose Hinduism as its religious affiliation as stipulated in the Decree of the Director General of Guidance for Balinese Hindu and Buddhist Religious No. 2 of 1966. Currently, amid open access especially for politics, Towani Tolotang has begun to find a "new way" to channel her aspirations despite various obstacles including her position as an "other" group because they are non-Muslim (JUBBA et.al 2019).

In 1998, known as the Indonesian Reformation era, there was a fundamental change in the dynamics of state life. Constraints in the New Order era made minority groups who were previously silent, appearing to speak out and even involved in various public affairs including politics. Minority religious groups such as Towani Tolotang, who had no place and only complemented the majority group, began to change attitudes. They began to open up to the majority group which was not only limited to the interests of collaboration in various activities, but also in political affairs. Towani Tolotang, had previously been involved in politics but was still very limited. One of the figures of this group was active in Golongan Karya (Golkar) in the New Order era. Golkar is a political party in which they channel their aspirations. This then continued in the Reformation era marked by the increasing number of Towani Tolotang residents who were involved in politics, including being active in managing political parties and becoming

candidates for the Regional Representative Council member (DPRD) of Sidenreng Rappang Regency, which were distributed into several political parties (BARISAN, 2015; LAWELAI, 2017) who are nationalist (non-religious). This is like the Javanese Kampung Muslim group in Bali who are positioned as a minority who tend to choose an Islamic party as their aspirational path (GEDE, et al, 2014).

This article aims to explain the issue of why Towani Tolotang is active in politics from an outside perspective (outsider). Towani Tolotang's active role in politics is very different from the attitudes of other minority religious groups who choose a passive attitude and tend to follow the wishes of the majority group. The struggle of other groups is still a lot on the issue of state and community recognition of its existence, while Towani Tolotang has shifted to the level of fighting for groups through broader political channels. This article assumes that Towani Tolotang's attitude in politics is supported by three conditions. First, factually demographic, the number of Towani Tolotang residents is relatively large. With this amount, Towani Tolotang can fulfill the sufficient votes in each regional legislative election. Second, culturally, the Bugis community is known by ethnicity who highly values differences and is very solid in supporting common ethnic identity. In this condition, differences in beliefs are often "defeated" by cultural identity equality. This is also supported by Towani Tolotang's excellent internal solidity. Third, structural conditions (state constitution) that guarantee the right of every citizen to channel their aspirations and participate in politics.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Political Behavior

Political behavior has traditionally been defined as activities that have the intent or effect of influencing government actions either directly by influencing the making or implementation of public policies or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make policies (VERBA et al, in BODE, 2017: 2). In political behavior, people will protect their own interests by competing or exchanging interests with one another. Political behavior can also be defined as an individual's manipulation of abnormal behavior for certain interests in the development of a planned system before acting (CHANG, 2006: 324-343). In MARX terms (2019: 319), political behavior is an expression of political attitudes or preferences. In political behavior, society plays a vital role in influencing various types of political behavior and attitudes, especially at the local level (ANDERSON, 2009: 604). Political behavior is a complex interactive process that influences people's political behavior (CHANG, 2014). The perspective of political behavior itself comes from the concept of the problem of negotiation, bargaining, and power (DAYAN, 2012: 470). Political behavior is very easy to find in the current contemporary era. BODE research (2017) reports that political behavior is very easy to find in various places including social media and has become a force that is able to change situations especially those related to thinking behavior on the basis of politics.

2.2. Minority Group

Minority groups, as groups regarded by elites as different and / or inferior based on certain characteristics, are often treated negatively (FADHLI, 2014). Minorities if related to the quantity problem are those whose numbers are less than 50% of the population in an area. Minority status, in general, is given to small groups of people who have a striking difference when compared to larger groups (NASUTION, 2013). These differences can be in the form of racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious identity, political views and even sexual orientation. In general, minorities have difficulty being accepted by the majority group and even by the government where they are domiciled. Meanwhile, in the opinion of Yap Thiam Hien the minority is not determined by the number, but the treatment that determines the status of the minority (FADHLI, 2014). The minority in relation to politics is the impact of the strengthening of identity politics rooted in the primordialism of FADHLI (2014). From this comes the term minority politics that refers to political activities carried out by groups that are under-represented or not represented in political life in an area. Minority political representation will be created if the state, political parties and majority groups can provide space for minority groups. Minority politics itself can only be realized if minority groups truly participate in the world of politics in their domicile (NASUTION, 2013: 316-317). However, it is not uncommon to find an effort by the majority group to hamper the minority's political interests (DIBYESH, 2005) and it is not infrequently done using violence.

2.3. Survival Strategy

Minority groups - whether racial, ethnic, religious, gender, or sexual - in making claims of equality in a modern and democratic country, face the same dilemma about how to assert equality as a universal right of citizenship, and at the same time, preserve and defend peculiarities and differences in group identity (GOLDBERG, 2017: 3). This is included in the political context where minority groups need a strategy to survive in politics. A survival strategy can be interpreted as a method used by a person or group to maintain the existence of a valuable or considered valuable existence, both material and non-material. In a sociological perspective, a survival strategy is usually a choice amid threats that can damage the values of the community at any time (SULAIMAN, 2014: 2). In the view of constructivism, a survival strategy is the ability to survive actors or groups that presuppose their ability to become an agency (active actors) by carrying out various negotiation and resistance strategies. Humans, in this case, are essentially active, creative and manipulative subjects in dealing with existing structures (ISMAIL, 2015: 118), including self-socialization efforts accompanied by more open political communication.

3. METHODOLOGY

This article specifically discusses the reasons Towani Tolotang to be active in politics. This discussion is a continuation of the

discussion about Towani Tolotang which has been done by many experts. The last article on Towani Tolotang was written by TAKKO BANDUNG et.al (2019) from an anthropological perspective. The study emphasizes the development of the Towani Tolotang community from the beginning until the debate about its religious status should be treated equally with followers of other religions. The debate on the religious status of Towani Tolotang concerns the strategy of this community in the context of building state relations on the one hand, and establishing good communication with other religious communities on the other (JUBBA, et.al 2019; RAMSTEDT, 2005). Unyielding spirit is also a characteristic of Towani Tolotang in living her life. The wisdom that has been used as a guideline is *perrinyameng*. In this wisdom, Towani Tolotang places great emphasis on the process of a struggle that begins with something difficult (*perri*) and will end with a success or happiness (*nyameng*) (RUSLI, 2012). The fundamental difference between this discussion and some of the previous studies is the issue of the study focusing on Towani Tolotang's political behavior, which was previously only discussed in a limited manner by only describing the involvement of this community in politics (BARISAN, 2015).

Data analyzed were obtained from observations, interviews, literature studies, and document studies. Observations were made in Amparita, Sidenreng Rappang Regency, where Towani Tolotang is developing well. In this district, Towani Tolotang lives side by side with Muslims, as the majority group. Interviews were limited, given the data available through literature studies were sufficient to answer

the main problem of this paper. As for the literature, it is used literature that is very relevant to the topic of minority studies and literature that specifically discusses the dynamics of Towani Tolotang from the beginning as shown by M. ATHO MUDZHAR (2001) which looks at historical aspects of the study conducted by TAKKO BANDUNG et.al (2019) and HASSE JUBBA et.al (2019) who discussed the future of Towani Tolotang's relationship with Muslims in Amparita. Likewise, several documents were used, including documents on population obtained from the Population and Civil Registry Office (2015, 2017, 2020) and documents in the form of data on candidates for legislative members obtained from the Secretariat of the Regional Representative Council of Sidenreng Rappang and the Election Commission data Regional General Areas 2014-2019 and 2019-2024. Some data is data collected in 2014-2019 in Amparita, the center of Towani Tolotang dynamics. The data is analyzed using a phenomenological perspective that sees the activities of Towani Tolotang as a text that can be interpreted more broadly.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Strategic Condition of the Towani Tolotang Community

Towani Tolotang is the second largest religious community after Muslims in Sukarreng Rappang District. Based on data from the **Civil Registry** Agency of Sidenreng Rappang Regency in 2019, from the population of the district 308.43 people as many as 28,361 people

(9.1%) are Towani Tolotang which is spread across 11 districts. In full, a description of the condition of the population based on religion in Sidenreng Rappang Regency can be seen in Figure 1 below.

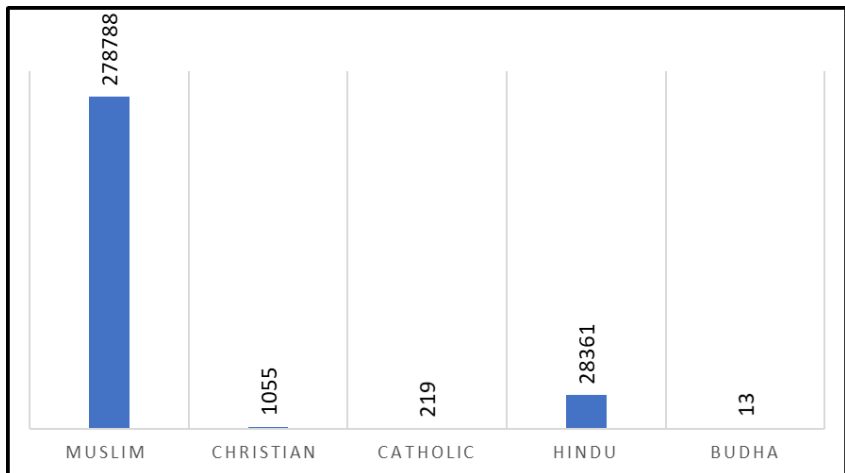


Figure 1: Population Conditions Based on Religion in Sidenreng Rappang Regency

Source: Population and Civil Disability Agency, Sidrap Regency 2019.

In Figure 1 above, the composition of the population based on religion is very apparent that Muslims are the majority group, while Towani Tolotang (Hinduism) is the second largest group. As for adherents of other religions, it has a very small amount.

Related to the number of Towani Tolotang who occupy the second position at the district level, it is natural that this group is active in politics in the current electoral political era even though it does not establish local parties. When looking back at Towani Tolotang's

political stance especially after the Reformation (1999 general election), one of Towani Tolotang's figures, Wa Launga, was elected as a member of the Regional Representative Council (DPRD) of Sidenreng Rappang Regency 1999-2004. The election of Towani Tolotang residents then continued until the general election of legislative members (regions) in 2019-2024. Previously, in the 2014-2019 general election, there were 3 (three) people from Towani Tolotang who were elected to represent different parties. This success was repeated in the 2019-2024 election, when 3 (three) people from Towani Tolotang were elected as members of the Sidenreng Rappang District Representative Council. This condition shows the political activities of this minority group are increasingly active. In fact, in the election of Regent / Deputy Regent of Sidenreng Rappang Regency for the 2013-2018 period, there was one pair who was composed of Muslim-Towani Tolotang, namely Andi Faisal Ranggong-Sunarto, although he only got 14,714 votes.

In Sidenreng Rappang district itself, there are 4 (four) electoral districts (*ED*) in which each region contains candidates for the regional legislature from Towani Tolotang. In detail, information about prospective members from Towani Tolotang can be seen in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Candidates for Regional Legislative Members of Sidenreng Rappang Regency 2014-2019 from Towani Tolotang

N	Name	Voter	Party	Electora
o		s		l

				Districs
1	Ir. Hamza Ismail	55	Gerindra	1
2	Paturusi	1149	Partai Nasdem	1
3	Laeke	72	PKPI	1
4	Silingeng	630	Partai Demokrat	1
5	Abd. Rahman L. S.I.P., M.Si.	397	Demokrat	2
6	Paleppang	1404	Golkar	2
7	Lannae *	1839	Golkar	2
8	B. Edi Slamet *	1795	Golkar	3
9	Lawedding	1128	Golkar	3
10	Lapanca	626	PKPI	3
11	Aziz Laise *	1101	Gerindra	3
12	Siska Ekawati Sunarto	28	Gerindra	3
13	Pasinringi S.H	556	Golkar	3
14	Rusna	4	PKPI	3

Source: Data Reprocessed by The Research Team of KPU Sidenreng Rappang, 2018.

Regarding the condition of the voters from Towani Tolotang can be seen in the following Table 2.

Table 2: Source: Researchers Reprocessed Data, 2019.

No	Keterangan	Number of Voters & Seats				
		Regency	ED 1	ED 2	ED 3	ED 4
1	Total of Voters	224.909	52.526	60.488	55.926	55.969
2	Tolotang Voters	16752	3222	5628	9675	193
3	Seat Distribution	35	8	9	9	9

With the condition of the large number of Towani Tolotang as illustrated in the table and figure above, of the 35 elected members of the Sidenreng Rappang District Representative Council, there were 3 people from this community as marked (*) in Table 2 above. In this case, there were 2 (two) people elected from Golkar Party and 1 (one) person elected from the Gerindra Party in the 2014-2019 period. While in the period 2019-2024, there were 3 (three) people from Towani Tolotang who were elected, Edi Slamet (electoral district 1, Golkar), Paleppang (electoral district 3, Golkar), and Sulaiman (electoral district 4, Perindo).

4.2. Socio-Cultural Conditions of Society: Acceptance of Differences

There are three important things that encourage community acceptance of the existence of Towani Tolotang, including its activities

so far. First, Towani Tolotang's internal solidity. The existence of community role models is an important key how community cohesiveness can be demonstrated. The election of several people as DPRD members from among Towani Tolotang was partly due to his position as a role model figure, who was able to attract the sympathy of citizens strongly. Factors like this become one of the methods of community leaders to maintain their legitimacy (SANJAYA, 2017). This figure is not only internal to Towani Tolotang, but also to the wider community. Edy Slamet, for example, who was elected in the period 2004-2009, 2014-2019, and 2019-2014 was a respected figure. He is often the mediator of the problems faced by the people in his constituency, namely Amparita and its surroundings. This is as confirmed by one of the youth leaders, Nasri, that:

“The figure of B. Edy Slamet often becomes a speaker and a conciliator in a number of problems in the community in his constituency, especially with regard to members of the Towani Tolotang community. B. Edy Slamet's existence in the Sidrap DPRD is a representation of the Towani Tolotang community because of all matters relating to Towani Tolotang, B. Edy Slamet can be a good facilitator in sharing activities involving the Towani Tolotang community” (Interview, June 2018).

This figure also gave birth to a joint commitment among Towani Tolotang to always unite. There is one basic principle that has been held up to this community which is "idi 'tonagaha cedde na idi' tona melo massara-sarang?" (Are we the ones who are clearly a small group and will be separated?) This principle is always reproduced by Towani

Tolotang and passed on to her generation from generation to generation.

Second, Towani Tolotang's external condition is in the form of an attitude of openness and acceptance from the community. This is motivated by ethnic similarities between Towani Tolotang and the majority Muslim groups. Both religious groups are ethnic Bugis. Although Bugis is identified with Islam (PELRAS, 2006) but in the reality of community life, not all Bugis are Muslims. This ethnic similarity is one of the important aspects that supports the existence of Towani Tolotang in Sidenreng Rappang (JUBBA, et al, 2019). In Bugis wisdom, there is a spirit that gives the highest respect for human dignity. Among these wisdoms are sipakatauk (humanizing humans), sipakalebbik (mutual respect), and sipakaingek (mutual reminding). These enthusiasms became the guideline of the life of the Bugis people, especially in relationships so that they were gathered in a forum known as To Ugik (Bugis People). Functionally, the spirit of selfishness is positioned as a binding container that is based on shared identity. In this context, differences in religion or "marginalized" beliefs and equality of religious identity take precedence so that the Towani Tolotang and Muslim entities merge into one container, namely on investigators (fellow Bugis).

Third, the openness of Towani Tolotang. This attitude can be seen in Towani Tolotang's involvement in the Archipelago Indigenous People Alliance (AMAN). This alliance itself contains a variety of local communities that so far have often been discriminated against by both the state and society (religion) regarding the status of their

religious beliefs. For Towani Tolotang, joining an alliance such as AMAN is one of the media to find out the outside world more broadly. Uwa 'Sunarto, one of Towani Tolotang's figures, stated that:

By joining us with the AMAN organization, we can discuss with other indigenous communities to exchange information and oversee policies so as not to threaten the survival of indigenous peoples. (Interview, Amparita, December 2017).

The statement of one of the Towani Tolotang figures above shows that they did not close themselves to the outside world, including information about state policy. This can be understood as a form of efforts to build communication with other parties, including exchanging ideas about various problems encountered. In addition, the openness of Towani Tolotang to the outside world can also be seen from their acceptance of modern technology products despite having certain restrictions such as the use of vehicles, cell phones, and others. It can be said that they are not anti-progress and change amid efforts to maintain their identity.

4.3. Structural Conditions: Constitutional Guarantees for the Rights of Citizens

The rights of every Indonesian citizen are guaranteed by the constitution. This is as regulated in the 1945 Constitution, particularly in Article 27 paragraph 1. In this article it is stated that "All citizens are at the same position in law and government and must uphold the law and government with no exception". Likewise, article 28

paragraph 1 regulates the right of everyone to associate, gather, and express opinions. In line with these several articles, in Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights also expressly regulates the basic rights of citizens which must be respected. Article 34 paragraph 1 states that "every citizen has the right to be elected and to vote in elections based on equal rights through direct, general, free, secret, honest and fair voting in accordance with statutory regulations". In addition, article 25 of Law 12 of 2005 concerning Ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, states that "the Indonesian State recognizes and protects citizens to take part in the implementation of public affairs, the right to vote and be elected, and the right to access to public services".

Some of these regulations clearly place the rights of Indonesian citizens as rights that must be granted. All citizens have the same position in state life, including in politics. In fact, as regulated in Law Number 39 of 2005 concerning Human Rights, human rights can be divided into personal rights, property rights, political rights, right of legal equality, social and cultural rights, and procedural rights. There is a guarantee regarding the rights of every citizen, providing opportunities for all people to be active and act specifically in political affairs (NASUTION, 2013). Indonesian politics after the Reformation entered an era of very egalitarian openness so that anyone could channel their political aspirations. Minority groups gain broad and equal access to other groups in all aspects of life. The political opportunity that was obtained for Towani Tolotang was a tangible manifestation of how appreciation for all groups in Indonesia obtained

a forum, even though it was not the same as other minority religious groups. Because, some religious groups still focus on the recognition of the status of their existence who want to "free" to carry out their teachings. Towani Tolotang himself is one of the safest groups for choosing his religious affiliation to choose Hinduism although it has many practical differences from the teachings of Hinduism.

Making room for Towani Tolotang's politics does not stand alone. In addition to state regulations that support the rights of individuals and groups to practice politics, Towani Tolotang's internal conditions also greatly enable their involvement in practical politics. This attitude can be understood at two different levels. First, Towani Tolotang openly "new competition" openly with other groups, especially with Muslims. This will affect Towani Tolotang's bargaining position on the one hand to become stronger, but it can be a threat on the other side. This political activity can trigger rejection from the community such as when Towani Tolotang first came to Sidenreng Rappang where the rejection of the activities was different from the local community. Second, what Towani Tolotang is currently doing actively in politics is an effort to show that the country's constitution is indeed implemented so that all groups can obtain their rights, especially political rights. This shows that identity politics is a way for groups (minorities) to appear in the political sphere due to various pressures (ADIWILAGA, et al, 2017). Therefore, to get to a better Indonesia, there should be a synergy of balanced relations between minority religious groups and the majority in all its aspects.

5. CONCLUSION

The reason Towani Tolotang was actively involved in politics provided an explanation for the existence of freedom of expression for every citizen both individuals and groups in Indonesia. Minority religious groups involved in political activities are also a form of equal opportunity for everyone to participate in development. This article shows three things related to the reason Towani Tolotang, as a minority group, is active in politics. First, Towani Tolotang in quantity is very possible to be involved in every electoral political event where the number of voters / supporters determines the success. Second, the ethnic similarity between Towani Tolotang and Muslim groups provides space for the formation of relationships that are out of the interests of beliefs (religion). Both groups put forward the cultural equality that they have to avoid conflicts that are motivated by differences in religious identity. Third, the Indonesian constitution guarantees the fulfillment of the rights of every individual to participate in all aspects of life, including politics. Political rights even include the basic rights of citizens which must be granted and protected. Specifically, the article emphasizes that there is a new pattern of relations that exists between Towani Tolotang and the majority (Muslim) group and a more fluid and open country.

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