

Mobilization and Control: Ethnic Political in Local Parliament Members Election in Indonesia

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Abstract

This research aims to describe and analyze the mobilization and control of ethnic ties in politics. Ethnic mobilization is prevalent in the era of Indonesian democracy, specifically at local level, as evidenced by the increasing demands for forming new autonomous regions. Various regions implement restrictions on labor externally and prioritize local ethnicities to become civil servants. These phenomena give rise to paguyuban, showing ethnic communities, and political mobilization. Therefore, this study aimed to discuss the phenomena of ethnic mobilization in Batam City, Indonesia. The city has become an industrial region crowded with local and foreign companies, exhibiting contrasting phenomena, such as industrialization, democracy, and ethnic mobilization. Data was collected by interviewing leaders of the North Sumatra Family Association ethnic community, Chair of the Malay Traditional Institution, East Java Community Association, leaders of political parties and members of local parliament (Golkar Party, PDIP, PKS, PSI). The result showed that ethnic mobilization in Indonesian local political occurs by activating differences through politicians. Paguyubans are controlled by leveraging ties, indebtedness, and money political. It persists due to the inheritance from the Dutch colonial government, decentralization that motivates the diversification of local elites, and the needs of local elites to attain political positions. Furthermore, ethnic political is not a phenomenon unique to new democratic states, necessitating a reevaluation of mobilization theories within nations.

Keywords

ethnic mobilization, social control, ethnic political, Batam, Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

Modernization theory states that as society progresses, kinship ties, religion, and traditions experience a decline, and are replaced by functional relationships, such as work and profession. Even though all aspects of modernization have been fulfilled, these theories have not been proven (Grew, 1977; Clark, 1992). The assertion of Kymlicka (2011) that ethnic solidarity will disappear with the development of modernization and the spread of liberal democratic values is also not supported by evidence. On the contrary, democratic nations are plagued by ethnic and racial conflicts, as evident in Western Europe (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019) and the United States (Issar, 2021). According to modernization theory, the emergence of ethnic and religious sentiments is considered a transitional phenomenon and is not expected to impact formal political. Marxist theory also lacks instruments to predict and manage racial and ethnic issues. Consequently, post-communist countries have experienced severe racial and ethnic conflicts. In Indonesia, democracy and subsequent decentralization have stirred up deep-rooted ethnic and religious sentiments. As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, conflicts have repeatedly occurred between religious groups and ethnicities. The Christian-Muslim conflict in Maluku from 1999 to 2002 claimed 5,032 lives, and Poso-Central Sulawesi resulted in 577 casualties. The conflict between the Madurese and Dayak ethnic groups in Kalimantan from 1996 to 2001 also claimed 400 lives. Before these major events, conflicts between ethnic groups and religious communities occurred in various regions of Indonesia, specifically when the state assumed control over society (Bertrand, 2008).

According to Sandefur and Deloria (2018), cultural values have remarkable resilience against change. This change does not dissolve the entire cultural values of a society as it is faced with the onslaught of technology and mass media. These factors, specifically ethnicity, in local political, were doubted in previous studies. The study of Hadiz (2010) on decentralization denied the

strengthening of ethnic political. It promotes the idea that decentralization becomes a tool for predatory interests, political money, and political thuggery, thereby betraying the Reform. Aspinall (2011) generally disputed the emergence of ethnic political in Indonesia, as predicted by many observers referring to the communal violence that occurred in several regions after the fall of President Soeharto. However, the study acknowledged ethnicity as the center of political in certain regions, specifically those that experienced late industrialization. The result of Choi (2014) in West Kalimantan showed that decentralization was followed by diversification of paths to the elite, but old political styles persisted, including patronage and political money. Based on these explanation, it can be concluded that Indonesian democracy shows a paradoxical face.

The strengthening of ethnic political in Indonesia is evident in the demands to form new autonomous regions. There were 303 autonomous regions in 1999 and this number had increased to 484 by 2008, and there were 514 regencies/ cities in 2023 (Oktaviani and Nailufar, 2023). Almost all new autonomous regions are determined based on cultural or ethnic boundaries. The establishment of these autonomous regions was accompanied by ethnic conflicts, specifically in determining the capital. Some of the reasons that drive ethnic groups to seek political positions, include preserving their culture through local policies, showing the existence of their ethnicity in relation to other groups, and wanting to be the 'masters in their territory.' Ethnic groups with large populations become dominant forces in the formation of provinces, such as the Mandar in West Sulawesi (Mukrimin, 2018).

General theories of democracy showed the importance of ideas and programs in propelling an individual into political position. Society will elect candidates who have programs beneficial to the community and can improve the quality of socio-economic life. Democracy positions society as political marketplace where aspirants offer ideas or programs. Similarly, public choice theory applies economic analysis to politi-

cal. The phenomenon in Batam showed that these factors hardly influence voters, despite candidates presenting ideas and programs. In this era of democracy and decentralization, candidate choices are influenced by money (money political) (Muhtadi, 2019) and patronage relationships (Fossati et al., 2020; Pierskalla & Sacks, 2020).

Ethnicity undoubtedly plays a significant role in local political, including in the industrial region. This phenomenon contradicts modernization, democracy, and public choice theories. In Batam City, the largest industrial region in Indonesia, the attainment of power relies on ethnic sentiments. *Paguyuban* acts as mobilization agents as well as controllers of their members. In the decentralization era, these communal groups are organized more tightly for political interests of the elites. Leaders assist newcomers in result jobs, mobilize members for various purposes, and assist in facing socioeconomic issues. These ethnic groups are used by the elites to gain power. Patronage strategies are used, where economically successful senior arrivals assist newcomers, and the assisted individuals feel indebted and reciprocate with obedience. Furthermore, monthly meetings with various agendas are used to control members. Leaders consistently emphasize the importance of cooperation and obedience to face intense competition in the industrial region.

Analyzing ethnic political in this industrial city can show contradictory political developments. While the democratic process of selecting leaders and the diversification of local political elites have taken place, there is concurrently a reinforcement of communalism and patronage in the industrial region. Consequently, ethnic political is not limited to regions that have been late in industrialization, as suggested by previous studies.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative method because the objectives are achievable only through a qualitative methodology. Data was collected through in-depth interviews

with several informants who qualify as follows (a) *Paguyuban*'s leaders in Batam City, (b) Members of the Regional Representative Council (DPRD), or those who have run for DPRD members. Focused Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted and data analysis was carried out in the following stages (a) examining the authenticity of the data and identifying its suitability for analysis. Data deemed suitable are those confirmed by two or more informants or presented in Focused Group Discussion (FGD) without contradiction from other participants, (b) categorizing data based on themes (mobilization and control), (c) developing themes with a structure derived from informants, (d) narrating the thematic structure and making comparison with previous studies, and (e) drawing conclusions.

Political Mobilization

Political mobilization is the process by which actors encourage group members to participate in political action, either for their benefit or the group. Actors typically persuade individuals with shared cultural identities to join a group, persuade them to vote, protest, or join unions and parties. It is also a collective behavior with a clear goal, where actors have injected their interests. These actors are aware of the strength of the group, evident in the number of members and cultural ties, such as ethnicity, religion, and traditions. According to Klandermans (2016) as mobilization is the mechanism that brings demand and supply of protest together. The demand side of protest is about people and their motives. It concerns the characteristics of a social movement's mobilization potential: its demographic and political composition, the collective identities it comprises, the shared grievances and emotions. The supply side of protest action is about organizations and their appeals. It concerns the characteristics of the movement: its effectiveness in achieving its goals at affordable cost, its leadership, its appeal, its action repertoire, its ideology. Demand and supply do not automatically come together. In the market economy, marketing is employed to make sure that the public is aware of a supply

that might meet its demands. Mobilization brings demand and supply together. It is—so to speak—the marketing mechanism of the movement domain. The study of mobilization concerns such matters as the effectiveness of (persuasive, political mobilization turns sympathizers of a cause into participants in collective action to advance that cause. Actors should actively engage members using various media, capturing their attention and turning them into participants. Meanwhile, Haßler et al. (2023) showed the need for actors, individuals, and institutions to persuade citizens to participate in political. This action requires institutions to unify collective ideas and goals, identify preferences with social or opposing movements, and make efforts to ensure achievement.

Some of the factors include ethnic identity, religion, language, customs, and skin color. One cannot choose to be born as Javanese, Batak, Malay, or Sundanese. To transform these latent strengths into manifest, an actor is needed to activate differences, define threats, and build integration to maintain identity. According to Pulejo (2022), migrants require specific conditions, such as personal relationships, and when accompanied by a common place of origin, ethnic mobilization becomes more effective. Social networks for immigrants also function as social capital (Anggaunitakiranantika, 2021). The motivational strength of mobilization is in the fact that others benefit from the encouraged behavior, and its overall impact is reinforced by the bound of individuals to social network (Rogers, Goldstein and Fox, 2018). This study is often criticized for placing the relationship between actors and groups as unequal and contrary to Weberian rational action. Group members are portrayed as passive, waiting for the orders of actors to move. This phenomenon contradicts contemporary situations, such as technological advancements and information dissemination. Therefore, Klandermans (2016) as mobilization is the mechanism that brings demand and supply of protest together. The demand side of protest is about people and their motives. It concerns the characteristics of a social movement's mobilization poten-

tial: its demographic and political composition, the collective identities it comprises, the shared grievances and emotions. The supply side of protest action is about organizations and their appeals. It concerns the characteristics of the movement: its effectiveness in achieving its goals at affordable cost, its leadership, its appeal, its action repertoire, its ideology. Demand and supply do not automatically come together. In the market economy, marketing is employed to make sure that the public is aware of a supply that might meet its demands. Mobilization brings demand and supply together. It is—so to speak—the marketing mechanism of the movement domain. The study of mobilization concerns such matters as the effectiveness of (persuasive proposed a new method where society is not merely an arena but an interaction between demands, offers, and mobilization. In this case, both actors and groups are equally active, both need to be united in mobilization. As stated by Klandermans (2016) as mobilization is the mechanism that brings demand and supply of protest together. The demand side of protest is about people and their motives. It concerns the characteristics of a social movement's mobilization potential: its demographic and political composition, the collective identities it comprises, the shared grievances and emotions. The supply side of protest action is about organizations and their appeals. It concerns the characteristics of the movement: its effectiveness in achieving its goals at affordable cost, its leadership, its appeal, its action repertoire, its ideology. Demand and supply do not automatically come together. In the market economy, marketing is employed to make sure that the public is aware of a supply that might meet its demands. Mobilization brings demand and supply together. It is—so to speak—the marketing mechanism of the movement domain. The study of mobilization concerns such matters as the effectiveness of (persuasive, demands and offers will remain potential without mobilization process.

Ethnic politics is more appropriately carried out by recognizing their interests

rather than just primordial differences. The common interest of each group is to control resources. Previous studies have examined the relationship between ethnic mobilization and resource competition (Wishman and Butcher, 2022). In this context, ethnic groups rise or are stirred up and view other groups as a threat. However, a different result is shown in this study, where stirring up ethnic sentiment is more of an elite interest in the effort to gain power.

The term *paguyuban* is used more commonly by the Indonesian community than the primary group because it describes personal, harmonious, and peaceful relationships. It is also characterized by *gotong royong* (cooperation), a collective spirit of living together to lighten the burden of each other. Unlike the concept of a primary group, in *paguyuban*, there is a combination of personal relationships with status obligations (Horton and Hunt, 2007). Individuals who join *paguyuban* with high socio-economic status have social obligation to help other members who are in need or facing difficulties without being asked. Such a pattern is similar to a patron-client or patronage relationship. Senior members who have succeeded economically may help find jobs, sometimes assist with temporary accommodation, and provide economic assistance when faced with difficulties. Through regular interactions, senior members who have contributed transform into patrons, and those assisted will become followers. Their relationship is more personal, with ethnicity and regional origin being the main bonds. In a case where the senior members who become patrons have a better economic position than the followers in their places of origin, it will increase their power and influence in society. The quality of this asymmetrical relationship was expressed through exchanges, where gratitude is repaid with loyalty.

Paguyuban has the capacity to transcend religion and social class because of its focus on ethnicity and regional origin. This is why conflicts and social tensions in Batam are more ethnically charged compared to other factors. Contrary to the practices of other

social institutions, *paguyuban* in Batam primarily serves as a helper. The sustainability of this institution is determined by mutually beneficial relationships among the parties. These benefits may not always be material but also include prestige within social structure of the community. In other words, the existence of *paguyuban* can be maintained as long as it benefits the parties.

As a rapidly developing industrial region, Batam attracts job seekers from various regions of Indonesia. Migrants need temporary accommodation, information about job vacancies, and individuals who can assist in obtaining employment. Social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, which are the communication channels for *paguyuban* members, quickly inform about newcomers in need of assistance. The initial assistance often comes from blood relatives, extending further through communication within the *paguyuban*. Help also comes from ordinary members but those raised by the *paguyuban* and occupying executive, legislative, and judicial positions are expected to be at the forefront of providing assistance.

In the city of Batam, there are thirty-two *paguyuban* and the majority were formed before the year 2000 to serve as a means of communication and preserve the culture of their respective regions. The process of searching for employment and accommodation among migrants occurs through primary communication. Consequently, the workforce in a company is dominated by a particular ethnic group. The recruitment pattern is not accomplished openly by inviting many applicants. Managers often ask foremen to search for workers, and they return to their hometowns to bring potential workers. This method is more effective because new workers become seniors responsible for nurturing skills and mentality. In searching for accommodation, seniors provide lodging or provide assistance in renting a house. This method also implies ethnic dominance in specific regions. Strong *paguyuban* organizations run parallel to the number of members, such as the Forum for Communication from East and West Java in Batam. For the sake of mobilization, when Surjo Respatio-

no, a prominent figure in both of these *paguyuban*, contested for mayor in 2015, the two forums merged into Punggowo. Other *paguyuban* in Batam include the Association of Riau Community (KBMR), Sundanese (Papas), West Sumatra Family (IKSB), and North Sumatra (IKSU). Although the Association of Eastern Nusa Tenggara (PK-NTT) in Batam has a few members, it plays a significant role in the underground economy, necessitating its consideration by other *paguyuban* in ethnic mobilization.

Workers in the transportation sector are predominantly from ethnic groups in West Sumatra, while the manufacturing and retail trade are dominated by Javanese, Sundanese, and Chinese descent. The hotel and restaurant industry was primarily staffed by individuals from Sumatra and West Nusa Tenggara ethnic backgrounds. At the same time, security personnel come from Ambon, East Nusa Tenggara, and North Sumatra ethnic groups. The public bureaucracy sector is dominated by Malay Riau, Javanese, Batak, and West Sumatra ethnic groups. The construction sector is predominantly handled by Javanese, the electricity by Javanese and West Sumatra ethnic groups, and communication, finance, and real estate by individuals of Chinese descent. Furthermore, the indigenous Malay Batam ethnic group primarily works as fishermen and resides along the coast. The competition for resources, such as jobs and positions is not prominent despite the oversupply of labor. In 2022, the unemployment rate was ten point seven percent, slightly lower than in 2021 (BPS Kota Batam, 2022). Ethnic conflict between the Batak and Flores (NTT) ethnic groups occurred in 2009, resulting in the death of one individual from Flores. Both ethnic groups dominate security services, safeguarding the assets of entrepreneurs and parking areas. The guarding of shops, supermarkets, and malls is determined through a consensus among the parties.

Previous studies identified ethnic division of labor as an important factor in mobilization. Their arguments revolve around the competitive advantages inherent in ethnic identity, surpassing social class and

occupation. According to Oliver (2017), the structure of ethnic dominance and physical segregation reinforces boundaries and facilitates effective mobilization. In Indonesia, including in industrial regions like Batam, the workforce quality cannot be classified based on ethnic lines. Similarly, skills and work quality between different ethnic groups cannot be differentiated. Education, training, and work experience are more determining factors, causing difficulty in result a competitive advantage for a particular ethnic group. While there is a legacy from historical processes designed by Dutch colonizers, all native Indonesian ethnic groups occupy a lower level (Rochadi, 2021), preventing the formation of ethnic dominance structure. The conditions in Batam are also significantly different from the observations of Lan (2011) on ethnic dominance and discrimination in Indonesia during the decentralization era. An increase was observed in nativism, where civil servants in the region tend to be dominated by ethnic group that is considered indigenous. There is also a tendency for executive officials in various regions to appoint employees from their group or even family members (Weber, 2006; Dettman et al., 2017). Although patrimonialism also occurs in Batam, it includes several ethnic groups, resulting in weak dominance. This is attributed to the historical factors in the formation of Batam, designed as an industrial city with capital-intensive features, which is an alternative to Singapore in the Malacca Strait region. The indigenous population, with limited resources, is marginalized, and around 80 percent consists of migrants. Therefore, these two variables, competitive advantage, and dominance structure, cannot fully explain ethnic mobilization in Batam.

Shin (2015) identified some factors, including poverty, as a key variable for the persistence of patronage and mobilization. Mobilization to vote for the same ethnic representatives, as acknowledged by the informants, is driven by several factors. These include a sense of gratitude, the need to showcase ethnic prestige, as well as safeguard and enhance group resources.

Table 1. Members of Batam City Parliament According to Ethnicity in 2009-2019

Election	Ethnicity (%)						
	Javanese	Batak	Malay	Minang	Palembang	Chinese	Others*
2009	27.3	29.5	11.4	6.8	11.3	6.8	6.8
2014	26.5	25.5	10.6	8.5	8.5	6.8	17.7
2019	18.3	30.6	28.6	8.1	6.1	6.1	2.0

* Others do not have a specific ethnic identity due to mixed marriages.

Inequality, as showed by the Gini ratio in Batam in 2022 at zero point thirty six, suggests a relatively even distribution. However, the poverty rate of five point two percent is significantly below the national rate of none point four percent. Economic concentration in Batam is vested in the hands of the state through Batam Authority and ethnic Chinese community. The prominence of bureaucratic dominance, a key variable in explaining the strength of patronage in regions (Aspinall et al., 2017; Fossati et al., 2020), is relevant examine corruption, job distribution in the executive body, and election of regional heads. The prominent ethnic factor in the regional head election in Batam shows the significance of having Malay candidates, even when they are not native to Batam.

‘The important thing is that you are a Malay, even if you are not from Batam, but if you want to work in another way you can. If the mayor is everyone’s leader, it must be a Malay. This is Malay land - we must be the masters. Malay people are friendly to everyone who comes, we embrace them, we invite them together and they can do anything (This statement was made by Datuk Rahim Pekka, Manager of the Malay Customary Institution, and Pak Makmur, the head of Kampung Tua, in an interview on September 7, 2023).

Mobilization process can be outlined as follows. After the General Election Commission announces legislative nominees, ethnic community leaders compile a list of legislative candidates from their ethnic group, along with their respective political parties and electoral districts. This is followed by the distribution of information through social media, groups such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (X).

The community leaders urge members to prioritize ethnic candidates in selecting legislative representatives at the city, provincial, and national levels, using their native language. Party differences are considered insignificant compared to ensuring ethnic control of parliament, opening opportunities for community members to move vertically following the success of elected community members. Candidates follow up by presenting their track records and promises, largely emphasizing their services in defending ethnic group. Additionally, candidates directly persuade community members by showcasing their reputation as defenders of ethnic group. Meetings are held periodically and facilitated by the candidates. Since the process of securing jobs and housing is facilitated by seniors, they gradually become patrons for smaller groups, which can be based on regions, such as regencies or sub-districts, as well as workplaces. Patrons are important in mobilizing and controlling members, serving as direct controllers for their clients. During the general election campaign, patrons become the target of legislative candidate efforts to gain support and votes.

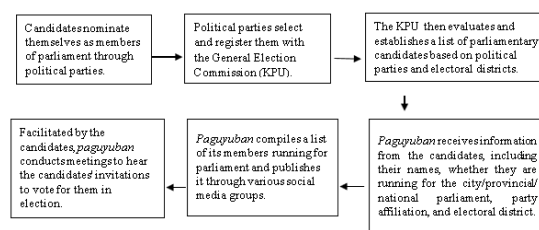


Figure 1. Ethnic Mobilization Process

Candidates engaged in a negotiation with political parties endorsing their candidacy to secure placement in strategically favorable electoral districts. A prominent

consideration is the number of residents from the same region or ethnic group as the candidate. Furthermore, offers are made to secure a lower ballot number, increasing the chances of being elected. The cost of electoral districts and obtaining a lower ballot number varies but ranges between 100 and 200 million rupiahs. Candidates with more resources often hold meetings accompanied by meals and provide money for transportation. The amount of money varies from IDR 50,000 to 100,000 per eligible voter. These candidates dominate meetings to mobilize support, occasionally requesting input from the audience to enhance backing. However, the discussion may not consistently provide detailed insight into the vision, mission, or program of the candidate. This mobilization process follows the three stages outlined by Klandermans and Oegema (1987), namely delivering messages, motivating, and assisting in overcoming obstacles faced by the target to participate. Focused meetings are held in electoral districts, usually covering one or two sub-districts, depending on the population size. In a case where ethnic-based population in the electoral district is sufficient to support a candidate from the same ethnic group, the path to parliament becomes easier. When the number of votes is insufficient, candidates may ask the community leaders to mobilize residents for support.

'We hold meetings to ask for support, the place changes to a cafe, at home, or while traveling to an object. The candidates provide 200 thousand rupiah for one vote. Logistics are often added, for example, instant noodles, rice, and cooking oil', (This information was obtained through an interview with Rini Elfina from the IKSB, Pak Muhandi from the Association of Kampar Regency, and Purwanto from the Association of East Java on September six, 2023, in Batam).

In regions where the economic conditions of the population are weak, money significantly influences election results. The willingness of ethnic Batak candidates to buy votes has increased the number of representatives in Batam city parliament. However,

'Those who are elected generally have a track record of defending society, such as lawyers who defend workers' rights, free victims of human trafficking, defend the rights of street vendors and drivers. So they are also known by people from other tribes, that's why the number of our council is greater than the number of Batak tribes in Batam' (This information was obtained through an interview with Santo Lubis, Chairman of the Indonesian Prosperous Labor Union in Batam, on January six, 2023).

According to proponents of resource mobilization theory, existing informal networks are structural prerequisites for collective action but movement organizations are considered professional mobilization engines. Therefore, behind the work of these engines, various informal networks exist to ensure the success of mobilization efforts. Informal groups often found in Indonesia, such as study teams and rotating savings (*arisan*), play a significant role in building a shared understanding of an issue and helping to overcome problems. Almost every group, specifically those based on residential proximity, such as neighborhood associations, has *arisan* activities. These groups serve as forums for information sharing and also act as insurance when members face economic challenges. *Paguyuban* also organizes *arisan*, aimed at binding members to attend meetings. The closeness among members is also inseparable from the marriage system maintained by ethnic group. On average, endogamous marriage systems have stronger kinship ties compared to the exogamous (Horton and Hunt, 2007), as evident in the Toraja and some Batak ethnic groups.

In the campaign leading up to the vote, candidates build their image through various media, such as banners, posters, radio, television, social media, and charity events. While these media serve as a means of introducing a candidate, they may not necessarily motivate potential voters to cast their ballots. Consistent with the main argument of Granovetter, informal channels are significant for fostering actual participation. *Arisan*, study groups, joint prayers, thanks-

giving events, and family gatherings are essential channels candidates use to convince potential voters to cast their votes. In these forums, exchanging views and ideas can strengthen the motivation of individuals to vote for a candidate even though political may not be formally discussed. As acknowledged by Evi Siagian, Secretary of the Regional Leadership Board of the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) in Batam City,

‘We (the Batak ethnic group) are spread across several political parties. After being named as candidates by the General Election Commission, we contacted Paguyuban to have our names published. But what matters is communication with small groups such as prayer groups, our presence at family events, and our assistance to families who need it’(interview on September seven, 2023, in Batam)

Ethnicity is not the sole consideration for casting votes in parliamentary election. Other factors include personal reputation and financial resources. Voters consider the leadership, financial resources, and material contributions when faced with candidates from the same ethnic group.

‘I’m a native here, born and raised here. But I ran for council twice and lost. When it comes to popular, who don’t know me, who I have never helped. Problems come to me, but the number of votes for me is not much’ (This information was obtained from an interview with Hasan Dani, Chairman of the Khazanah Warisan Cluster in Batam, on September seven, 2023, in Batam).

The track record of the candidate and leadership in the community, as well as their popularity, influence the decision of voters.

‘Even though ethnicity is important to us, without an ‘envelope’ we thought about it first. They will get positions and later receive large salaries and facilities. After that, they don’t necessarily remember us, because money and logistics are important for us. (stated by Susanto, Chairman of Local Youth of Pulau Rempang-Batam on September seven, 2023).

Vote-buying occurs across all ethnic groups and political parties. Candidates who conduct campaigns should prepare

rice, noodles, sugar, and other food items to distribute to potential voters. In campaign or vision-mission socialization events, candidates typically show sample ballots and photos for voters to make their selection. These events are mostly attended by factory, store/restaurant, domestic, and informal sector workers.

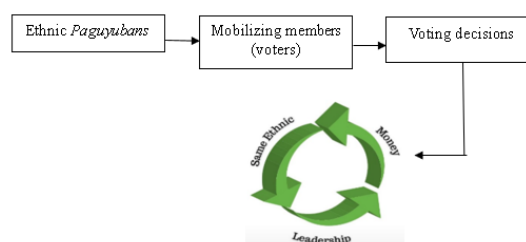


Figure 2. Mobilization and Voter Decision

Social Control

In contrast to previous studies that discussed social control of movements and protests (Ellefsen & Jämte, 2022) governments in many Western democracies have introduced policies and practices to prevent radicalization and violent extremism (PRVE, mass mobilization directly confronted companies or the state, with state apparatus consistently playing a role in regulation. In this study, ethnic mobilization is intended to support ethnic leaders in achieving political positions. Therefore, social control is the effort of elites to maintain support from *paguyuban* members until they vote in parliamentary election. In other words, social control is the effort of *paguyuban* leaders to preserve and maintain the loyalty of members as voters. This understanding is significantly different from Smelser when the importance of control in social movements was first introduced. The theory stated that social control will limit the activities of the movement. Both the government, which is the target of demands, and strategic groups aiming to increase control over resources try to minimize the negative impact of movements or protests. Control occurs at all movement stages, from formation to activating and stirring differences to achieving goals.

The relationship between ethnic lead-

ers and *paguyuban* members is fluid, causing difficulty in implementing social control. Specifically in large cities with high population mobility and diverse, rapidly changing sources of information, control and mobilization become increasingly difficult. A study by Karl Jackson on traditional authority, Islam, and rebellion in West Java, Indonesia, showed that the effectiveness of ethnic, religious, and customary mobilization depends on personal relationships formed through past and present influences as providers, protectors, educators, sources of values, and superior status. Immobile populations, limited mass media consumption, and low levels of education lead to dependence on local leaders for information making the population easily controlled and directed. In industrial societies where social institutions develop rapidly, social control is primarily carried out by state apparatus. The role of informal leaders remains significant when there is an emotional connection with ethnic groups, as in this study. Furthermore, the ability of *paguyuban* leaders to obtain jobs and temporary housing for newcomers becomes a beneficial investment in the future. This pattern influences the concentration of residential regions and employment fields for ethnic groups in Batam City.

Paguyuban leaders use various methods to control members. Group cohesion is effectively maintained through monthly meetings, commonly used for exchanging views on potential job relocations to better places, sharing insights about the situation in their hometowns, and organizing arisan. During these events, some members also offer goods, such as batik clothing, woven fabric, hijabs, and regional specialties. Many buyers choose to pay in installments over two or three months, settled at the next monthly meeting. This system works within paguyuban due to the trust among members. Some theory experts showed three important aspects of social capital for the sustainability of paguyuban and primary groups, namely norms, networks, and trust (Portes, 1998). The monthly meetings occur through a rational arrangement, often preceded by collective prayers or religious discussions.

The average attendance is 20 to 30 people, a small number compared to the total membership but sufficient for maintaining continuity. Previous social movement studies have shown that there is no ethnic mobilization and control directed toward challenging authority (Oliver, 2017).

The addition of resources is also a way to maintain the existence of *paguyuban*. Most workers in Batam prepare to return to their hometowns as the Idul Fitri holiday methods. They typically invite siblings, nieces, or neighbors to work in Batam upon returning from their hometowns. Furthermore, the process of result and securing employment starts with leveraging networks (ethnic) and *paguyuban*, as previously explained. The sponsors of these events include representatives, but the *paguyuban* members also contribute significantly. Social cohesion is also built through assistance to members affected by disasters, such as illness or death. Funds are mobilized from members to alleviate the burdens of those affected by disasters.

Social cohesion is framed within a top-down perspective focusing on the role of political players in controlling *paguyuban*. Durkheim and Parsons introduced the concept of social cohesion, particularly addressing the order of social needs in modern society due to the high division of labor and differentiation processes. From the perspective of structural functionalism, modern societies experiencing social differentiation due to functional specialization require integration to maintain the continuity of society. The interest in social cohesion is related to the crisis of solidarity and bonds in general. Previous studies showed that migrants face challenges, such as adaptation to a new environment and searching for identity (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019). A common step taken is to revive their primary identities, such as ethnicity and religion. In this context, the revival of primary identity is a means of social cohesion and group integration. Both social cohesion and integration are responses to the consequences of structural changes, aimed at preventing conflicts. Social cohesion and integra-

tion can be built, for example, by creating the myth of the 'Pancasila village' (Legowo, Sadewo and Maliki, 2019).

Discussion

Recent developments in democracy demand reconsidering the relationship between ethnicity and political in Indonesia. A decade earlier, religion, particularly Islam also became a mass mobilization agent, impacting societal polarization (Charoters and O'Donohue, 2020; Qodir and Singh, 2023). Social movement experts have long abandoned explanations regarding the sociological aspects of participants in movement mobilization (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987; Klandermans, 2016). However, considering phenomena in Indonesia over the past decade, attention needs to be refocused on the importance of sociological aspects in mobilization. An important idea in ethnic mobilization is organizational proficiency and strategic deployment, where ethnic differences serve as resources to be activated for successful claims. Demands and offers remain potential unless they are united by mobilization process. Therefore, it can be understood that social movement literature cannot ignore mobilization.

In contrast to the resource mobilization theory that emphasizes the importance of formal organization, this study showed the important role of *paguyuban* in mobilization. Accordingly, it does not meet the criteria of formal organizations, such as having articles of association, household budgets, and division of labor. It is also based on empathy, with most relationships built on a personal and traditional basis (Horton and Hunt, 2007). Such characteristics are not fully present in an industrial society, as in this study. Ethnic *paguyubans* in Batam are more of a fluid community, and members have the liberty to join and depart as they please, with no obligations and sanctions. The leaders of *paguyuban* are not elected by members, but based on recognition from the followers. Leaders are appreciated by followers for their services, specifically in result jobs, housing, and, in some cases, promotions. The key to the relationship between

leaders and followers is a sense of gratitude from those who have been helped, reciprocated with obedience. While the societal structure remains open, enabling individuals who excels at receiving recognition to move to another company and improve living conditions, ethnicity continues to exert a significant influence on local political.

Why is ethnic political still dominant in a democratic industrial society? Previous study has overlooked the historical aspect built by the Dutch colonial government that implemented racial political. Structurally, European white society occupied the top level with various privileges, including governing and citizens freely accessing education and healthcare services. The Chinese were deliberately placed at the second level to protect the white race in case of native anger. Meanwhile, the indigenous people were at the lowest level. The government institutions formed by the colonial government were dominated by the Whites and Chinese. Native people filled low administrative positions at the end of the colonial government (Mysbergh, 1957; van Klinken, 2008). The independence of Indonesia in 1945 led to the emergence of regional, religious, and ethnic political parties. Shortly afterward, various ethnic and religious rebellions arose, such as Darul Islam, the Republic of South Moluccas, the Free Aceh Movement, and the Free Papua Movement. General Suharto, who took over power in 1966, led Indonesia with a security method and banned ethnic, religious, regional, class, and racial political. The return of the democratic system in 1999 was welcomed enthusiastically by the citizens, leading to the establishment of political parties. A total of 201 political parties were leading up to the 1999 election with no form of ethnicity, but religious parties reappeared. Based on this explanation, it is evident that the roots of Indonesian political is in racial, ethnic, and religious political. Therefore, ethnic and religious mobilization will continue when there is political opportunity structure for mobilization, as evident in Batam City.

Widespread decentralization since 2001 has contributed to ethnic mobilization

in various regions (Bertrand, 2008; Aspinall, 2011; Mukrimin 2018), and opened up opportunities for diversified local elites (Choi, 2014). The number of potential local elites who take political path for vertical mobility was increased by decentralization. Furthermore, the opening of competition for power prompted candidates to mobilize resources optimally. Mobilization based on ethnicity, religion, or both became a common strategy to garner voter support. Faced with limited resources, the majority echoed ethnocentrism. For example, policies were formulated to restrict ethnic groups outside the region from working in Karawang (Rochadi, Pramanti and Sulaiman, 2019). The provincial government of Papua issued Regional Regulation No. 4 of 2018, mandating at least 60 percent of local civil servants should be indigenous Papuans. Other regions show a similar trend of prioritizing local ethnic groups in recruiting and promoting civil servants. These affirmative policies are implemented with the underlying principle that 'local people should be masters in their region'. Therefore, extensive decentralization policies are interpreted by regions as a moment of resurgence for local residents, who during the Suharto era, felt being commanded by the Javanese. Other ethnic communities respond to strengthening sentiments in local political by mobilizing ethnically to attain political positions in the region. This new generation of power seekers pursues political positions by cultivating support from constituents in local community who now feel empowered to articulate their interests in the era of democracy.

Previous studies mentioned the occurrence of patronage and money accompanying ethnic mobilization. Classical theories of patronage failed to identify the existence of patronage in industrial societies, such as the city of Batam. According to Turner (2015), patronage, a characteristic of feudalism, is believed to decline with the strengthening of education and rationality in society. The phenomenon in Indonesia showed a different trend from other democratic countries, as stated by Webber (2006). A general election system that meets demo-

cratic standards, coexists with the growing corruption at various levels of government, showing patrimonial practices. Officials buy positions by providing various goods and money to voters, and after officially obtaining the position, they negotiate with local governments and capitalists to secure allocations for development projects to recover their campaign expenses. In Batam, money is primarily given to ethnic groups, and when the number of supporters (votes) is insufficient, it is given to other groups. The introduction of direct election has undoubtedly contributed to ethnic mobilization, clientelism, and massive vote buying.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study showed important results about ethnic mobilization and control in new democratic states. First, ethnic bonds at local level were relatively strong in Indonesia. It was also shown by the increasing proposals for forming new autonomous regencies to enhance the existence of local ethnic groups in governance. Second, the process of ethnic mobilization in local parliamentary election was carried out using *paguyubans* funded by politicians and for their benefit. The core of their strength is in the gratitude from followers who have been assisted in obtaining jobs, temporary housing, and, to some extent, careers. Third, various methods were used to control followers, including monthly meetings, joint ventures, study groups, joint prayers, economic assistance, bringing new followers from their places of origin, and fostering ethnic and cultural arts. The formation of social cohesion was not a response to high structural differentiation, as proposed by Durkheim and Parsons, but rather preserves the solidity of ethnic bonds.

The existence of ethnic political, specifically at local level in Indonesian democracy, cannot be separated from the following factors. First, the roots of Indonesian political was in race, ethnicity, and religion, which are post-colonial societies followed by the establishment of religious and regional parties. The occurrence of ethnic and religious

mobilization will continue when there is political opportunity structure for mobilization. Second, the extensive decentralization policy in Indonesia has become an arena for competition among strategic local elites to occupy political positions. The intensity of competition and experiences under authoritarian rule for three decades have empowered local forces to become masters in their regions. Third, the direct election system with tight competition demands candidates to mobilize various resources, forcing collaboration with local financiers. This pattern opens up opportunities for patronage, money political, and corruption that continue to manifest in Indonesia.

Ethnic mobilization for the benefit of politicians in the democratic era is a phenomenon that deviates from conventional expectations. Democracy demands equality, justice, transparency, and the rule of law. This study showed that sociological variables, such as ethnicity, religion, and gender remain important in democracy. Social movement theory experts need to reconsider the importance of ethnicity in democratic countries. The racism that has swept the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic and the 'Black Lives Matter' movement, as well as discrimination against black migrants in Europe, are phenomena that require further investigation. In addition, race and ethnicity are important in mobilization, even in democratic societies, particularly when they become the axis of dominance, network communication structures, and resource mobilization.

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