

# Generosity as Capital to Win: Chinese Ethnic Minority and Social Capital in the Belu Government Head's Election 2015, East Nusa Tenggara

Adeo Mbiri, Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia\*

Laila Kholid Alfirdaus, Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia

## Abstract

This article discusses the modalities of minority ethnic groups' winning the 2015 local government head's election in the District of Belu. There were three candidates in the election. Two were local ethnic group residents, and one candidate was Chinese, generally known to be newcomers (migrants) in Indonesia's social context. Interestingly, the candidate from a minority ethnic group succeeded in winning the election and led the district for the next five years. In addition to the fact that the candidate is from a minority ethnic group, the candidate is not known to be the richest one as compared to the others. This article looks at the three candidates' social, political, and economic modalities, applying qualitative research with interviews and observations as the data collection method. The results reveal that, although economic and political modalities are important, social modalities remain a key factor in gaining community support. Willybrodus Lay, the local Chinese candidate, paired with Ose Luan, won the election even though they were not the wealthiest candidates who have the strongest economic modalities. Lay's well-known generosity, and his good relationships with the greater community and proximity to various social institutions, especially with churches, mosques, and traditional groups, as well as his personality, led him to win the election. He beat another candidate, who was known to be the richest of the three, as well as another one, who was the most popular in the local bureaucracy.

## Keywords:

Regency Government's Head Elections; Minority Ethnic Group; Economic Modalities; Political Modalities; Social Modalities

## INTRODUCTION

The article discusses ethnic affinity, a term that refers to winning minority ethnic groups in elections (van der Zwan, Tolsma & Lubbers, 2020). Using qualitative research, this article traces the modalities that led the candidate to the 2015 local government election's

electoral victory, despite his background as a member of a minority ethnic group. Most studies mention that getting the richest and coming from the native populace (majority ethnic groups) are among the key foundations to win the election (Kristianus, 2016; Snanfi et al., 2018; Aminuddin & Attamimi, 2019). (Kristianus, 2016; Snanfi et al., 2018; Aminuddin & Attamimi, 2019). However, in Belu, it was not the wealthiest candidate nor the native one

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\*Correspondence: Jl. Prof. Sudarto No.13,  
Tembalang, Kec. Tembalang, Kota Semarang, Jawa  
Tengah 50275 Indonesia.  
Email: adeombiri@gmail.com.

that won the election. A Chinese man, widely known as a minority and socially labeled as “newcomers” in Indonesia,<sup>1</sup> gained the competition's highest votes. Tracing this phenomenon is interesting to gain an answer to why this can happen.

Some studies that discuss ethnic affinity mentions that party ideology has a more significant influence on the winning strategy. As van der Zwan, Tolsma & Lubbers (2020) found, most minority ethnic groups affiliated with the leftist wing compete with the candidates from native and majority ethnic groups. In Belu, the candidate is not affiliated with a particular party defined as leftist, but it is himself that has an image as a figure that has close relationships with the grassroots people, religious and traditional leaders.

In order to understand the phenomenon, this paper uses theoretical frameworks from social capital perspectives. Referring to Rudd (2000), the idea of social capital describes modalities for civil society to participate in politics. This can be further traced in the election, where society participates in electing its leaders and representatives. Social capital is the energy that encourages people to come to the ballot box and give support to the candidate that represents their interest. In political research, the idea of social capital can be used to explain the success and failure of

a candidate in political competition, especially using Bourdieu's perspective (1979), which sees social as capital to collect and expse power. Okura (2006) explains social capital as part of human capital that consists of economic, political, and socio-cultural capital, which deeply relates to power and power relations. In the general election, economic capital refers to the wealth of candidates and economic materials given to the other parties' candidates to support their campaigns. Socio-cultural capital includes the social relations that candidates have in the community inbound within the name of tradition, religious belief and other social organizations. Political capital includes political support from parties, while social modalities include relationships and networks that candidates have with society's key elements.

A common assumption related to economic capital in elections is that the candidates with the strongest economic power will win the election (Sahdan & Habodin, 2009; Sinaga et al., 2014). In fact, although economic modalities are important, in the empirical level, they are not the only requirement to win. Based on a case study in the district of Belu in the elections of 2015, candidates from an ethnic minority, i.e., Chinese, successfully won the election, although they were not the wealthiest among the three candidates. The candidate, a

Chinese man, is widely known as having close relations with the church and the religious scholars and traditional (adat) leaders. The candidate is also popular as a generous man. His close relationship with the community and his generosity was the important factors that led him and his vice candidate to victory in the 2015 local government head's election in Belu regency. This article focuses on the winning modalities of the candidates who came from a minority ethnic group. The local government head's election in Belu, East Nusa Tenggara was held on 9 December 2015. There were three candidates in the election, namely Valentinus Pareira and Siprianus Temu, with the tagline "FANS-MU", Willybrodus Lay and Ose Luan with the tagline "SAHABAT" (in Indonesian means good friend), and Venje Abanit and Bona Bowe with the promotional phrase "VENA".

The parties supported the regent and vice-regent candidates as below. PDIP and Nasdem supported Valentinus Pareira and Cyprianus Temu. Willybrodus Lay and Ose Luan were supported by Golkar, PPP, Gerindra, PAN and Demokrat. Finally, Ventje Roman Abanit and Bona Bowe were supported by Hanura, PKB, and PKS. Pareira works as a doctor in a public hospital and was a member of Belu's Development Planning Body. He is a popular bureaucrat in the region and is

counted as one of the most influential Belu government figures. Lay is a local businessman coming from a Chinese family. His business ranges from agriculture to husbandry. Meanwhile, Abanit is a Belu-born businessman who had an education in Java and now has a good career and reputation in the province's beverage business.

In the General Election Commission's plenary session on Thursday, 17 December 2015, the General Election Commission of Belu pronounced Willybrodus Lay and Ose Luan the winners, besting the other candidates. From the result of the recapitulation of 12 districts in Belu in 2015, which had a population of about 204,540 people (roughly 127,217 of these totals are considered "permanent voters" and are included in the DPT (Daftar Pemilih Tetap) or List of Qualified Voters), Willy and Ose obtained 40,907 votes, equal to 47 percent of the valid votes. This is higher than Pareira, who was voted by 36,504 constituents, equaling 42,12% of the votes. On the lowest chart, Abanit voted with 9,255 votes, or 10.68 percent of the voters.

Belu is a district consisting of different tribes, religions, and ethnic groups. Minority communities strongly feel the politics of identity. The majority of the residents in Belu are Catholics and there are four local tribes based on languages, namely Tetun, Bunak,

Kemak, and Dawan. The victory of Willy and Ose Luan is interesting because, as widely known, ethnic Chinese are a minority not only in Belu but also in wider Indonesia. In Belu, the political issue of ethnicity heightened during the election season. Most of the candidates challenging Willybrodus Lay attempted to use ethnic minority issues as campaign material to defeat them. When the election result confirmed the victory of Willybrodus Lay, it then became a surprising victory because it was not expected or predicted, given the other two candidates are known to be native.

In response to that, this article discusses the modalities of the candidate's victory from a minority ethnic group in the local government head election. To be a candidate in these elections, a candidate must have supporting modalities in terms of politics, proximity to the community, and economic modality. In most areas, the election winners are usually from a local ethnic group (Firmansyah, 2010; Ashar, 2014; Adrian, 2014; Kristianus, 2016) or those with the strongest economic modality (Sinaga et al., 2014). On the contrary, in the district of Belu, the candidates considered native and who are also well-respected bureaucrats, as well as those who succeed in business, suffered a defeat in the elections. Based on the explanation above, this research refers to the analysis of the winning

modality of the candidates who were ethnic migrants as well as minorities using social capital theories as to the research framework, with the case study of Willybrodus Lay and Ose Luan in the Belu election, 2015.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the qualitative research method with desk reviews and interviews. Desk reviews were mostly used to trace the information about candidates' modality for the campaign as well as candidates' existing material resources. This information is important to make sure whether the higher the modality, the higher the possibility for the candidate to win, which is, in this research, not the case. Interviews were used to collect information about voters' perspectives on candidates, especially from local leaders.

### *Result and Discussion Minority Ethnic Group, General Elections, and Winning Modalities*

There are not many studies that discuss the dynamic of minorities in political competition. Among the few is Sinaga et al. (2014) explaining the Tionghoa contestation in the 2014 election for a seat on the Regional People's Legislative Assembly (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah/DPRD) in North Sumatra. As Sinaga explained, economic factors determine whether a party will recruit

Chinese figures or not. Usually, the stronger the candidate's economic capital, the more likely they will be recruited by the party. The research of Sinaga confirms the general assumption that the economy is the main modality in election competitions. Strengthening this analysis, Sarumpaet and Nababan (2014) explain that those from the Tionghoa ethnic group tend to have superiority because of their economic holdings.

What Sinaga et al. (2014), Sarumpaet and Nababan (2014) explain makes sense. As a minority community, Chinese people must have multiple strengths to run against opponents from the majority ethnic group in elections. In political situations that require expensive fees, the involvement of the Chinese ethnic group, an ethnic group well-known for strong economic modality, is considered good news for the party. The economic modalities will supply additional energy for the party to compete in the elections.

In addition, the issue of ethnic identity is highly contentious in elections (Kostadinova, 2007). In many instances, political identity even manages to transcend the rationality of voters in determining their options. The experience of Ahok in the Governor election in Jakarta showed us how even a good and satisfying performance of an incumbent candidate can turn into defeat due to ethnic issues that can always be

used as a weapon in elections (Burhani, 2017). Another example is the 2010 Local Leader Election in the district of Pasaman, West Sumatra. The election held in Pasaman involved a competition between candidates that generated ethnic sentiments between the Mandailing Batak and Minang ethnic groups. This can be seen from certain groups' efforts that continued to dwell on ethnic issues, reinforcing primordial sentiments that fostered emotional feelings rather than rational among voters. The same thing happened in the governor election in East Nusa Tenggara, Eastern Indonesia (Nusa Tenggara Timur/NTT). Ethnic sentiments strengthened, ostracizing and casting out minorities rendering them incapable of achieving victory (Negong, 2018).

However, even though economic modalities are important, in most contexts, there are often other factors. Additionally, raising ethnic sentiments in election campaigns to disempower minorities does not always work, either. In a society that appreciates togetherness, candidates' ability to mingle and build closeness with the community also determines victory. In this case, social capital makes an important contribution to support the candidate's winning. While studies from van der Zwan, Tolsma & Lubbers (2020) reveal that ethnic affinity, a term to

describe the winning phenomenon of minority ethnic groups in elections, can happen in candidates that affiliate with left-wing parties. In Belu, the candidate from minority ethnic groups who win the elections is known to have close relations with people at the grassroots level. Party ideology does not determine a candidate's winning opportunity. The candidates themselves contribute to the success and failure in elections, whether they can be accepted or not by the local community.

Dealing with this, thinking and acting strategically is a must for a person or group to achieve their desired goals. Without a strategy, it is impossible to achieve goals. In this case, the necessary strategies cover different aspects of life. Rudianto and Sudjijono (2003) argue that strategy and modalities are important planning for political contests and for minority ethnic groups. Firstly, strategies help to reinforce the candidate's ability to create a presence in the community. At the same time, make a convincing impression that the candidate is the most representative individual for the community. Secondly, it is associated with an increased emotional relationship recognized to influence the public's attitude in determining voters' decisions. Thirdly, a strategy improves or creates an image or impact that can affect the vote's social attitudes. Fourth, a crucial part of the

strategy is to clarify figures and political parties' positions, involving the community's voting attitude. Fifth, strategy and modality become the basis for developing attitudes and community loyalty in determining decisions for choosing. In this case, agreeing with Halim (2014), strategy and modalities are determinant in candidates' victory. Below we discuss a few further types of modalities in the election, consisting of social, economic, and political capital.

Experts differ in their views on the meaning of social capital. However, what Putnam (1995) explains can help describe what is meant by social capital in this research context. According to Putnam (1995; 2000a; 2000b), social capital is the bonding between community members and their relationship with the leader. Social capital is understood as the norm in the community. It is a network and trust among social communities that encourage cooperation to achieve mutual benefits. This argument implies that the candidates who want to compete must have the necessary social capital to build a bond and network in the community (Hermawati, 2002). In addition to Putnam, it is important to see Bourdieu. According to Bourdieu (1985) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), social capital refers to social networks that are owned and instilled by a person, continuously obtained through a

mutually related acknowledgment and reliance that it will simultaneously be provided to supporting members (Hermawati, 2002).

Meanwhile, according to Coleman (1987; 1988), social capital can be an effective sanction and norm, involving a legitimate power relationship from the community, born in social contracts in the community. Related to this, North (1990) explained that social capital also formed institutional and structural relationships to influence government, law, the judicial system, and civil liberties politics. influence government, law, the judicial system, and civil liberties politics.

Looking at the definition of social capital as mentioned above, what we can define as social capital in the context of Belu, as such, refers to local ties between communities organized in institutions as a traditional community, churches, mosques, and so forth. Candidates' involvement in local traditional rites, religious activities, and other social activities is crucial to widening political modalities by strengthening social capital. As a traditional community, Belu people still count important traditions, and therefore, candidates' ability to identify themselves as part of local people is crucial.

Meanwhile, political capital refers to candidates' support from political

parties and other political actors. To be elected as a regent, the political party's support is requisite to be a vehicle to register for candidature in General Elections Commissions (Halim, 2014). When candidates are promoted by the political party organization or the party coalition to play a winning strategy, this is referred to as election contestation. A political party's existence as a vehicle to join the contestation provides a crucial political candidate. Political capital aims to produce political actions that benefit political actors or political institutions in elections, formulate and implement general policies, build relations with political institutions, and form public opinion about political institutions or political actors. Thus, political capital focuses on providing resources to realize an intention to achieve power (Guo & Liu, 2012). In a concrete context, political capital can be seen from political party support, local political elites' support, and local political organizations to win a political contest (Nurhasim, 2005).

Economic capital is a source of funds that can be used as both a means of production and a means of finance. Economic capital is a type of capital that is easy to convert into other forms of modality. It includes production tools (machinery, land, labor), materials (income and goods), and money. All types of modality are easy to use for all purposes and are handed down from

one generation to the next (Halim, 2014). Firmanzah (2010) categorizes the economic capital that appears to be money, which means money's modality to guide the campaign. Each party or politician seeks to convince the public that the party or politician is more concerned, has greater empathy, and understands the nation's problems to encourage people's aspirations.

According to Sahdan and Haboddin (2009), the significance of economic capital arises because the elections' political process requires a very expensive fee. This creates a challenge for local democracy as development in the process. As a result, the candidates who compete are in control of a large economic modality. Expensive elections can be established by three factors: purchasing a political vehicle (political party), campaign costs, and money invested in establishing political roots, which usually occurs at every stage of the local leader elections to persuade voters.

A candidate's political funds are sourced from their personal funds, and they can come from donations or investors (donors), both individually and corporately. Based on usage, political funds are used as expected by the paying party, campaign, and voters. In the current system of elections, it may require substantial financial expenditure. The amount of political

funds from the candidates is very influential in determining their success because the political contest is open, and voters determine the winners. This causes costly election processes because implementing elections is influenced by enormous political costs ranging from preparing for the election to the campaigning process, mass mobilization, and other political expenses. Based on political funds to support candidate modalities, this sometimes becomes the main reason political parties carry wealthy candidates and take advantage of the candidate's modality power.

While some scholars identify the economy as the main machine for a candidate from minority ethnic groups (Sinaga et al., 2014; Chong, 2015), others identify that social capital might equally play a crucial role in winning the elections. Leiter et al. (2018) assert friendship matters in politics. Meanwhile, Cox, Rosenbluth and Thies (1998) argue that social capital is important in elections to mobilize people's turn out to the ballot box. In this case, social networks function as a medium for information dissemination and persuasion for elective purposes.

The case of Belu highlights the idea that the economy is important, but it is not the main thing. For the traditional community, such as those in



Belu, social capital is as important as economic and political capital.

*Local Government Head's Election in Belu and the Winning of Generous Minority Chinese Candidate*

Other candidates were known as the native ethnicity of Belu. However, based on interviews with local people, they lack social capital compared to Willy Lay. Pareira is a senior bureaucrat known to have good performance in public service, especially in health service. However, as a lack of local/traditional leaders' support was not optimal. Most of Pareira's supporters are local bureaucrats. Meanwhile, Venthe Abanit has been uprooted from Belu for too long and migrated to Java. Although being known as a successful businessman in Java, people did not recognize Abanit's portfolio in the community well.

Social networking to local leaders and the community, which then, in this case, became Willy Lay's greatest strength. Willy Lay was known to have close relationships with traditional community leaders. As a minority, his good deeds are seen as a contradiction to the general stereotype of Chinese in Indonesia, which is labelled as exclusive and materialistic. This section will discuss the social modality, political modality, and economic modality of Willy Lay in winning the 2015 local

government head's election of Belu to understand what made Willy Lay successful in winning the competition.

As discussed earlier, social modality is one of the capitals that can be seen as an investment to build a harmonious relationship to gain community trust. Compared with the other candidates, Willybrodus Lay is a candidate from a migrant diaspora group and is Ethnic Chinese, Tionghoa, but Willybrodus Lay could build and maintain social interactions with the other candidates, the people of Belu. This can be seen from his activity when he did not hesitate to visit every event held in the community, such as parties, social activities, or visiting communities struck by calamity.

One of the social activities that are well known is "Geser" (Gerakan Seribu), a community's charity movement of 1 thousand rupiahs through churches. The "Geser" fund is used to build churches and help the community, many of whose members are migrant workers with problems abroad. As is widely known, East Nusa Tenggara is listed as one of the Indonesian provinces with an enormous number of migrant workers. Some of them have not been known to face problems abroad. "Geser", as initiated by Willybrodus Lay, became significant for the community for taking part in resolving real problems in society, and thus, became a positive campaign for

him in the election. As the movement was established long before the elections, it then became a good investment for Lay when he ran for Belu regent in 2015. Tetun, the traditional leader of Belu, said:

*“Geser was initiated by Lay long before he ran for regent election. Geser is organized through churches and is used to build churches as well as to help the community. Lay, of course, is one of the main donators in Geser”.*

In addition to churches, Willy Lay is known to have good relationships with the mosque community. The Chief of the Islamic Community Council (Majelis Umat Islam-MUI) of Belu asserts:

*“We live in harmonious life despite differences in religious belief. Willy Lay is well known as a good person among the Moslem community in*

*Belu. He is open to social interactions, active in social activities, and generous to people. He contributes to many of our programs, including those conducted in mosques. He has a good legacy for the Moslem community”.*

In addition to churches and mosques, Willy Lay is known for his generosity to poor farmers. People are aware that Lay’s kindness is inherited from his father, called “old boss” (Indonesian: Bos Tua).

People remember that his father loved helping farmers by buying their products, even though they did not need them. Some community members in an interview said:

*“Bos Tua loved to help people. Once a week, he visited the village to buy farming products, which helped the people. Willy Lay inherits his father’s business talent and kind-heartedness”.*

**Table 1.** Political Party Support for Candidates of the 2015 Local Regional Election

No	Name of Candidate		Party	Percentage of Party Support by Legislative Seat
	Regent	Vice-Regent		
1	Valentinus Pareira	Cyprianus Temu	PDIP and Nasdem	20
2	Willybrodus Lay	JT Ose Luan	Golkar, PPP, Gerindra, PAN and Demokrat	50
3	Ventje J. Roman Abanit	Bona Bowe	Hanura, PKB and PKS	20

**Source:** General Election Commission District of Belu 2015.

In addition, Willybrodus Lay is the figure of a young entrepreneur who has an effortless lifestyle. Therefore, from his contribution to “Geser”, and the

interactions built in the community, Willybrodus was able to gain trust from the community. They had already been acquainted with both Willybrodus Lay

and Ose Luan as a businessperson and a bureaucrat. The people of Belu knew their professions and competence before they ran for office. Willybrodus Lay was also known as a donor to various worship houses and gave social assistance to the community. Willy's family also had a good reputation in the community, which helped him win the 2015 election.

Willybrodus Lay received additional support, in the form of networking and relationships, from his running mate, Ose Luan, who was a senior bureaucrat in Belu. Before running for deputy chief, Ose Luan was already respected in Belu. He received support from the regional elites, including IMMAPI APDN (Alumnae Organization of Indonesian Domestic Affairs' Academy, and KORPRI (Korps Pegawai Republik Indonesia/Republic of Indonesia Civil Service Employees).

Being from a minority group and fighting for an election is certainly not easy. At the time of the campaign, the opposition denigrated Lay and Luan's team as Chinese and migrants. People from diaspora ethnic groups are deemed to have no obligation or ability to lead Belu. Instead of garnering support for their campaigns, the opponents of Willybrodus Lay lost support because of their offensive statements, especially among Tionghoa and other ethnic groups. Willy Lay used this opportunity

to strengthen communications with the diverse ethnic groups in Belu. Willy Lay increased communication with religious figures and indigenous figures to convince them that even as part of the diaspora, he was committed to building Belu.

From the perspective of social capital, what Willy Lay did became a good investment for him to win the election. This is not found in the other candidates. "Geser" for churches and migrant workers, as well as active charity for worship places and youth organizations, are not found in the other two candidates. Willy Lay has invested much in social activism. Therefore, despite challenges and difficulties as a member of a minority ethnic group, he can still gain trust from the community. Meanwhile, Will Lay's political modalities be gained through his activism in the political party?

The political experience of Willybrodus Lay started when he served as chief of the Democrat party for roughly a decade. He had also been involved in many political party activities since he was young. Previously, Willybrodus Lay had a career with the parties Golkar and PDIP, holding the party treasurer's position. In 2015, Willybrodus Lay received tremendous political party support in the local leader elections in Belu. Compared to other candidates, the

political party support of Willybrodus Lay and J.T. Ose Luan was very large, as shown in table 1.

With the parties' seat numbers in the legislature body having reached 50, the declaration declaring support for Willy Lay's regent candidature had secured political support from a political party. As compared to the other candidates, Willy Lay had the greatest political capital of the three.

Not only from the parties' seats, but Willy Lay also gained political support from the other elites both in Belu and East Nusa Tenggara Province. The coalition of elected political elites from the parties Golkar, PPP, PAN, and Gerindra that supported Will Lay

includes Marten Naibuti, Agustino Pinto, Fransisko Soares, and Manuel Do Karmo. Additionally, Willy Lay and Ose Luan were additionally supported by other powerful political figures, including Agustinus Medah, who once served as chief of Golkar in NTT and was a member of the House of Representatives, and Carles Mesang (faction from Golkar), Farry Francis (faction from Gerindra), as well as Jefry Riwu Koreh (faction from Democrats) in the House of Representatives. These names are important in NTT, especially in Belu, so these voices of support were instrumental in Willy Lay winning the vote.

**Table 2.** Wealth Report of the Candidates for Regent of Belu in 2015

No	Name	Wealth
1	Ventje Jacobus Roman Abanit	Rp. 31,812,615,026
2	Willybrodus Lay	Rp. 8,968,857,866
3	Valentinus Pareira	Rp. 987,009,619

**Source:** General Election Commission District of Belu, 2015.

**Table 3.** Wealth Report of Candidates for Vice-Regent of Belu 2015

No	Name	Wealth
1	Bona Bowe	14,438,418,521
2	Jt Ose Luan	808,576,376
3	Cyprianus Temu	370,037,275

**Source:** General Election Commission District of Belu, 2015.

Finally, dealing with economic modality, we can say that Willy Lay is not the strongest one. He is in the middle as compared to Abanit and Pareira. As a public servant, the local government head has an obligation to explain his wealth and its sources. Candidates for the position have the same obligation, as well. Indeed, this information is much needed by the public as part of their consideration in selecting or rejecting candidates. The LHKPN (National Property Report) can indicate whether or not a person adheres to legal regulations. The top three wealthiest candidates are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

From the table above, we can see that among the candidates for Regent of Belu, Ventje Jakobus Roma Arbanit was the wealthiest candidate, followed by Willybrodus Lay and Valentinus Paraeira. The wealthiest candidate for Vice Regent was Bona Bowe, Abanit's pair, followed by JT Ose Luan, Willy Lay's pair, and Cyprianus Temu, Pareira's pair. As we can see from the table, Lay's wealth is far below Abanit's. In addition, it is also important to have a good amount of campaign funds earned from personal money or voluntary donations. The candidate's fund comparison is explained in table 4.

The campaign fund of Willybrodus Lay included as much as Rp. 700,000,000 from his parents and wife, while as much as Rp. 155,250,000

can be attributed to 61 donors. Ventje Jakobus Roman Abanit funded his campaign from his personal wealth, as much as Rp. 1,108,000,000. He had no donors for his campaign. While the campaign funds for Valentinus Pareira were sourced from 12 donors and amounted to as much as Rp. 525,000,000.

The campaign funds of Willybrodus Lay were used for operational team expenses, transportation, socialization for building a basecamp, and rent for the campaign as needed. Willybrodus used the campaign funds during his campaign period in Belu and events in 12 other districts, 81 villages. Willybrodus Lay went into the communities and met people immediately.

We can see that economic modalities are important in launching a successful campaign, although it is not the only way. It is not necessarily true that the candidate with the most powerful economic modalities will win the political contest. Social modality is no less important to supporting a victory in an election for local leaders. Although Willy Lay was not the richest, his proximity to society and his generosity contributed to his win in Belu.

Ventje Roman Abanit is known as the wealthiest, and while he is originally from Belu, he has been living in Jakarta. As such, Ventje is not very close to society, compared to Willy Lay. Close

relations are important for the people of Belu.

People already knew the real work of Willybrodus Lay in Belu through "Geser" or other social activities. His generosity is known not only during the regent candidature but long before those political things happened. With the economic modalities he had, he helped many people in Belu to realize their dreams through the social programs he made. Willy had also become a symbol of diversity in Belu. He was able to use his economic modality to build networks in society. That is why the community believed that Willybrodus Lay could lead Belu. As a result, Willy's victory in the election was quite significant.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and the discussions that have previously been outlined, we can see that a candidate for a Local Leader's success is not so much about how a candidate strategizes and utilizes their modalities. Willybrodus Lay's modalities were social capital, political capital, and economic capital. With these modalities, he gained community support in the Local Leader Election.

Based on the experience in the 2015 Belu election, social modality was instrumental in the political contestation. In that social modality, the character and

popularity of Willybrodus Lay gained the trust of the community. Willy Lay has been known among the public as a local entrepreneur. Willy was also known for his ability to establish good relations with the people of Belu long before he nominated himself as a candidate for the 2015 Local Leader Election. Thus, the belief the public had in the personal figure of Willy Lay existed before the election. The people of Belu knew Willy as a generous figure who could quickly establish rapport with everyone he met. Willy's social interactions made people more familiar with him and they could see Willy as an individual who empathized with the community.

From the result of this study, we can see that neither the similarity of tribes nor ethnicity affected society's choice. If we see the ethnic composition in Belu where the Chinese are a minority, Willy Lay's victory tells us about the attitude of public openness in Belu. Thus, we can conclude that Willy Lay's victory was not based on primordialism, which emphasizes racial and ethnic immersion, but rather on the relationships and reputation accumulated in his social modality that seemed to influence voters than economic modality and political modality significantly.

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