

Ethnic Cleavages: The Descendant and Clan Sentiment on the Election of Regional Executives (Pemilukada) in Northern Tapanuli, North Sumatera Province

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the phenomenon of ethnicity, namely the existence of ethnic cleavages in the form of strengthening social units through descent and clan sentiments at the moment of election of the regional executive (Pemilukada) in the era of democratic decentralization. This problem was approached using Dunning and Harrison's theory of cross-cutting cleavages and ethnic voting. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with subjects, namely descendants and clans in four districts in the northern Tapanuli. The results of the study show that (i) ethnic cleavages occur because of the utilization and mobilization of social units namely descent and clan groups in the moment of Pemilukada, (ii) the strengthening of descent and clan group sentiments in Pemilukada is the impact of competition and contestation which are packaged as political capital for gain power, and (iii) political actors redefine ethnicity as Tobanese to smaller identities namely descendants and clans in each cultural region. The strengthening of factions in internal ethnicity is a strong indication of cleavages and the game of primordialism in the era of democratic decentralization

Keywords

clan, descendant; ethnic cleavages; local executive election; sentiment

INTRODUCTION

Toba ethnic cleavages occurred in the era of decentralization. This cleavage is related to two things, namely regional division or re-districting and contestation of the Election of Regional Executives (*Pemilihan Umum Kepala Daerah, Pemilukada*). The cleavages cones from ethnic groups to social units, namely clans and clans. These two social units

experienced redefinition in four districts in northern Tapanuli to form awareness of choosing based on the similarity of lineages and clans. The phenomenon of ethnic cleavages portrays ethnopolitics whose forma-

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tion is formed due to competition and the mobilization of actors towards social units to achieve their political objectives (Lewis, 1955; Simmel, 1955; Dahrendorf, 1959; Lipset, 1967; Barth, 1969; Laitin, 1986; Dahl., 1999; Horowitz, 2000; Posner, 2005; Dunning, 2009). Ethnic cleavages in smaller social units reflect the attraction between the dimensions of ethnic identity and political interests in the internal ethnic groups. Although, each individual from the same social category is bound to his collective identity his interests are different. Such a situation is formed due to the awareness of the strata of the social units that are different from other social units (Nordholdt, 2007). This fact has an impact on the competition which leads to efforts to negate each social unit in ethnic groups (Sjaf, 2014). This affirmation is the scope of ethnic politics to form an understanding of ethnic voting (Gosselin, 2008; Hale, 2008). Collective identity upheaval in ethnic social units reflects political conflicts, namely cross-cutting cleavages or the breaking up of social structures that are mutually binding (Gordon, 2015). This cleavage leads to the informal institutions such as descendant groups, and clans that have an impact on individual vote choices (Dunning, 2009; Sjaf, 2014; Gordon, 2015; Gubler, 2016).

North Sumatra Province is an area of Indonesia which shows the most vulgar ethnic cleavages. These cleavages occur in the political, religious and economic arena (Perret, 2010). This fact occurs because of ethnicity (Liddle, 1971; Bruner, 1981). In a smaller scope, ethnic cleavages occur in four cultural areas which are currently 4 regencies in the northern Tapanuli. Ethnic cleavages in these 4 districts are strongly indicated due to the strengthening of descendant and clan group sentiments in the *Pemilukada*. The four regions in the northern Tapanuli are settlements (*bona past*) of the Toba ethnic group consisting of 4 cultural regions namely Silindung, Samosir, Humbang, and Toba. All the people in these four cultural areas claim to be descendants of *Siraja Batak*, the first generation of Batak humans who created by God of the universe (*Debata Mulajadi na Bolon*) on Mount Pusuk Buhit,

in the southwest of Samosir Island (Hutagalung, 1926; Simanjuntak, 2006; Vergouwen, 2008).

The communalism of the people is called the Toba Batak people which are a number of identity attributes that are ascetic, natural or given (Geertz, 1973). This community adheres to patrilineal who base kinship on man. His social interaction was built on the basis of a social organization with a triangle culinary structure (*Dalihan na Tolu*). Intergenerational relations are bound by a system of descendants arranged according to the ties of clans and their branches. This offspring and clan system permeates the marriages of exogamous clans, forms a system of summons, basic customs, and social communication (Simanjuntak, 2006). In other words, hereditary and clan groups are vital for ethnic Toba, both of which inhabit four cultural regions (*bona pasogit*) and in the diaspora (*bona ni ranto*).

In the Dutch colonial era, these four cultural regions were formed as an administrative area, namely *afdeeling Bataklanden* with the capital of Tarutung (Castels, 2001). This area was merged into the Tapanuli Residency with the capital Sibolga which was formed for the first time in 1842. The arrangement of the territory was caused by (i) the steady colonial occupation in Tapanuli, (ii) isolating Islamic forces in the north and south of Tapanuli, and (iii) controlling the Sibolga Bay as a colonial shipping lane. At the beginning of independence, these four cultural regions were combined into one government administration, namely North Tapanuli Regency, based in Tarutung. Since democratic decentralization which reduced the system of centralism in 1998, the four cultural regions were established through redistricting of North Tapanuli district. The four cultural regions in the north of Tapanuli became independent districts: (i) North Tapanuli district with its capital in Tarutung, (ii) Toba Samosir district with its capital in Balige, (iii) Humbanghasundutan district with its capital in Dologulanggul, and (iv) Samosir district with the capital city in Samosir. The redistricting becomes the beginning of the fragmentation of social

units which is reflected through the strengthening of the sentiment of descendants and clan groups (Damanik, 2018).

Fragmentation of social units into contestation spaces in the *Pemilukada* reflects competition among descendants and clans. At the time, the four cultural areas were still integrated into North Tapanuli Regency, the descendants and clan rulers were more dominated by the Silindung region. However, since the *Pemilukada*, the arena of contestation shifted to the descendants and clans. Each group of descendants and clans identified themselves and stated differently from other descendants and clans. Such ethnic fragmentation and internal cleavages are intended to eliminate other candidates in the *Pemilukada*. In addition, as well as a way to monopolize descendants and clans to fill public positions after the election.

In the practice of political interests through *Pemilukada* are conducted by mobilizing the association of descendants and clan groups. The Toba ethnic group has ethnic groups based on hereditary groups (*pomparan ni ompu*) and clan associations (*punguan marga*). The relation between the communities appears tiered pyramidal and cross-cutting. However, the era of *Pemilukada* shows the phenomenon of destabilization and deconstruction of its collective identity as Toba Batak people. Although the mechanism of this tiered and cross-cutting community functions to reduce cultural conflict (Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Murphy, 1957) because of its ability to guarantee ethnic comfort and stability, it is potentially utilized in practical politics (LeVine, 1972). The cross-cutting associations are very important to know the layers of society (Cairns, 1984) and become important concepts in the study of political science (Carter, 2006). Potential cross-cutting associations shape voting behavior according to their social units (Gosselin, 2008; Dunning, 2009; Gubler, 2016).

The fragmentation and ethnic cleavages are manifestations of ethnic sentiments (Gosselin, 2008). This sentiment is a redefinition of identity that is different from other social units (Gubler, 2016). Affirmation of

specific identities on different social units demands recognition to identify themselves (Edewor, 2014; Gordon, 2015). Affirmation is intended to form a new identity that binds the group based on subjective feelings. This subjective feeling reflects the socialism of the social unit within the divided ethnic group (Gordon, 2015). This cleavage of identity is a strategy and tactic of mobilization to counter the dominance of the purpose of mastering resources, power, and status (Kaufman, 2006). This conception can be seen from ethnic expression through social units in ethnic politics which are not only intended to confirm the differences in social units but also to achieve their existence. Self-existence through ethnic cleavages is confirmed in the name of history and a shared commitment to demand collective ideals through *Pemilukada*. This study aims to describe and understand the ethnic cleavages in the form of strengthening descendant and clan sentiments at the momentum of *Pemilukada* in 4 districts in the northern Tapanuli, North Sumatra Province.

METHODS

This study focuses on anthropological questions, namely: is it true that ethnic cleavages in the form of descendant and clan sentiments occur because of *Pemilukada* in the era of decentralization? In order to answer this question, the research is carried out qualitatively (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) with an ethnopolitics approach (Hale, 2008). The analysis of the study was built based on in-depth interviews with the subject namely the community in 4 districts northern Tapanuli. The research subjects were: (i) the management of the descendants of the association, (ii) the management of the clan association, (iii) the regional head candidates, (iv) election institutions such as the General Election Commissions (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum, KPU*) and Election Supervisory Committee (*Panitia Pengawas Pemilihan Umum, Panwaslu*), and (v) the community. Interviews focused on the roles and functions of descendants and clans in the community associated with

regional head elections in 4 districts. The questions presented are not structured but are adjusted to the explanations of the research subjects.

In addition, the vote count recapitulation of the last 3 of *Pemilukada* in the four districts was analyzed to explain voting behavior. Recapitulation of the results of the *Pemilukada* is needed to see the tendency of the distribution of voting rights to candidates for regional heads. The assumption that is built is that the suitability between the results of the interview and the recapitulation of the vote count shows the contribution of descendants and clans in supporting the candidates for local executives. Political events, namely *Pemilukada* are discussions that show the interrelationships of descendant and clan sentiments in the internal ethnic groups. Novelty this study is the basis for understanding the factors that shape the voting behavior as well as the understanding that primordialism is a contemporary political reality in Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The territory profile of northern Tapanuli

The formation of 4 administrative regions in the northern Tapanuli today refers to the historical aspects of the era of Dutch colonialism. In the colonial era, these four regions were formed into 1 district namely *afdeeling Bataklanden* in the Residency of Tapanuli (*residentie Tapanoely*) which is located in Sibolga. *Afdeeling Bataklanden* consists of 5 *onderafdeeling* (sub-district equivalent) namely: Silindung, Toba Plateau, Samosir and Pakpak (Pemdasa, 1994; Castels, 2001). Except for Pakpak which was ethnically different from Toba, it was formed as a separate district in 1964. The regional formation in North Tapanuli District from 1998-2003 referred to the map that was made and determined by the Colonial Government. The map of this cultural area became the spirit of redistricting while at the same time marginalizing the domination of the descendants and clans of Silindung in the north of Tapanuli. The similar of the

desire to split Tapanuli Province from North Sumatra Province is referring to the historical setting of the Tapanuli Residency.

The residence of Tapanuli was formed by the Dutch Governor General based on *Staatsblad* on December 7, 1842. This formation was a suggestion from the Council of Indie (*Raad van Indie*) and was declared domiciled in the bay of Tapanuli namely Sibolga (Pemdasa, 1994). For the first time it was formed, this residency was part of West Sumatra Province (*government van Sumatra Westkust*). The Residency of Tapanuli area consisted of *afdeeling* Singkel, Barus, Sibolga, Angkola, Mandailing, Natal and Nias. With the exception of Nias which was conquered in 1852, all the areas mentioned were conquered and controlled by the Dutch between 1832-1842 (Pemdasa, 1994). In line with the decision of the Governor General No. 12 on January 14, 1879, all inland areas such as Silindung, Humbang, Samosir, Toba and Pakpak must be conquered. Until 1887, except for Pakpak, the entire area was conquered and formed into *afdeeling Bataklanden* in accordance with No. 21 on January 16, 1883. The death of Sisingamangaraja XII in 1907, the Pakpak Dairi was formed as an *onderafdeeling* in *Bataklanden*. Since 1906, five *onderafdeeling* has become a regional unity in *Bataklanden afdeeling* in the residence of Tapanuli. That year, the Residency of Tapanuli was released from the Province of West Sumatra.

The area which is part of the Residency of Tapanuli since 1906 is *afdeeling Bataklanden* in Tarutung, *afdeeling* Sibolga in Sibolga, *afdeeling* Padangsidempuan in Sidempuan and *afdeeling* Nias in Gunungsitoli. Based on the *Staatsblad* no. 496 in 1906 and no. 398 in 1907, a reshuffle was carried out in the *Bataklanden* area which consisted of several *onderafdeeling* namely: Silindung, Toba, Samosir, Dairi, and Barus. However, in 1907, Barus was expelled from *Bataklanden* and merged into the Sibolga district. In 1915, *afdeeling Bataklanden* in the Residency of Tapanuli consisted of *onderafdeeling* namely: i) *onderafdeeling* Silindung covering the area of Tarutung, Pahae, and Pangaribuan, ii) *onderafdeeling* Toba plateau (Humbang)

consisting of Siborong-borong, Doloksanggul, Pakkat and Parmonangan, iii) *onderafdeeling* Toba consists of Balige, Porsea, Lumbanjulu, and Habinsaran, iv) *onderafdeeling* Samosir consists of Pangururan, Ambarita, and Onanrunggu, and v) *onderafdeeling* Pakpaklanden consists of Sidikalang, Salak, and Tigalingga. The territorial structure in the Residency of Tapanuli continued until 1942 (Castels, 2001).

North Sumatra Province was formed on August 14, 1950, through Substitute Government Regulations (*Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang*) No. 5 of 1950 concerning Formation of North Sumatra Province. In Chapter I, article 1 of the Government Regulations is noted that the area covering the Residency of Aceh, East Sumatra and Tapanuli is determined to be North Sumatra Province (Pemdasa, 1994). Since the issuance of Government Regulations, the territory of North Sumatra Province includes Aceh, Tapanuli and East Sumatra. After the dissolution of the State of East Sumatera (*Negara Sumatra Timur*) in 1950 and referring to PP No. 5 of 1950, the area in North Sumatra Province consisted of 16 districts, 2 small cities (*gemeente*) and 2 large cities (*stadsgemeente*) namely: i) Aceh Besar, ii) South Aceh, iii) West Aceh, iv) Central Aceh, v) East Aceh, vi) North Aceh, vii) Aceh Pidie, viii) Langkat, ix) Karo, x) Nias, xi) Simalungun, xii) South Tapanuli, xiii) Central Tapanuli, xiv) North Tapanuli, xv) Labuhanbatu and xvi) Asahan. The two small cities are Tanjung Balai and Tebingtinggi and two large cities are Medan and Pematangsiantar.

The issuance of Emergency Law (*Undang-undang Darurat*) No. 7 of 1956 on November 14, 1956, concerning the Establishment of the Autonomous Region of the Regency in North Sumatra Province, inaugurated 17 regency-level regions (in the former Residency of Tapanuli, Aceh and East Sumatra) in North Sumatra Province. Likewise, the issuance of Emergency Law No. 8 of 1956 on November 14, 1956, concerning the Establishment of the Autonomous Region of a Large City in North Sumatra Province, confirmed 4 large cities namely Me-

dan, Siantar, Sibolga, and Kutaraja (Banda Aceh) in North Sumatra Province. Furthermore, the issuance of Government Regulations (*Peraturan Pemerintah*) No. 4 of 1964 on February 13, 1964, marked the formation of the Dairi Regency which has the right to regulate and manage its own household. Finally, Dairi Regency whose capital is Sidikalang has no longer been in North Tapanuli.

Redistricting of the area northern Tapanuli since 1998 has formed Toba Samosir District through Law (*Undang-undang*) No. 12 of 1998. Furthermore, in 2003 through the establishment of Samosir District (Law No. 36 of 2003) and Humbang Hasundutan District (Law No. 9 of 2003). In the end, the cultural area in northern Tapanuli was formed into 4 administrative districts. Since 2004 there is an elitist desire to form a new province called Tapanuli Province which is separated from North Sumatra Province. This desire experienced obstacles because the demonstration ended in riots in the North Sumatra Provincial Parliament office (*DPRD Provinsi Sumatera Utara*) in 2009. At that time, Aziz Angkat (chairman of the North Sumatra Parliament) died of heart disease.

Redistricting can take the form of legal and formal reasons. Juridical reasons refer to legislation in the form of Law No. 22 of 1999 or Law No. 32 of 2004 concerning Local Government (*Pemerintahan Daerah*), or PP No. 129 of 2000 or Government Regulation No.78 of 2007 concerning Guidelines for Redistricting (*Pedoman Pemekaran Daerah*). The formal reason for redistricting refers to the acceleration of the development and maximization of public services and the improvement of welfare. This reasoning concerns the range of control or managerial reasons. Behind these two reasons, there are other reasons for ethnicity which greatly influence the redistricting of regions in Indonesia. Most of these redistricting are covered in primordial sentiment as a way to expand the territory in the region. In fact, this redistricting politics is in line with the *Pemilukada* which plays ethnic politics in every local politics. Discourses of ethnicity such as Sons of the soil (*Putra Daerah*), the simi-

larity of descendants, clan associations, territorial and others strengthened in the era of Indonesian contemporary politics. This fact is part of the dynamics of local politics that are still ongoing and require clearer arrangements to strengthen the substance of democratization in Indonesia.

Communalism of the Toba ethnic group

The community living north of Tapanuli is a Toba ethnic group. In anthropological literature, this society is recorded as one of the 'Batak' sub-ethnic groups called Toba Batak (Koentjaraningrat, 1984). Indeed, the concept of 'Batak' is a label that originated in Western ethnographic creation in the 15th century AD. This labeling is intended to distinguish the identity of coastal communities and inland society (Hidayat dan Damanik., 2018; Pardede, 1975; Perret, 2010). In other words, the concept of the Batak did not originate from North Sumatra. The latest findings on archeology, linguistics and anthropology research reject the Batak homogenization. Except for the ethnic Toba who are still wearing Batak, the other five ethnic groups namely Mandailing, Simalungun, Pakpak, Karo, and Angkola withdrew from the Batak categorization. Actually, the homogenization of the 'Batak' identity in these 6 ethnic groups is vulnerable to debate because it is considered to be an evasive identity (Damanik, 2018a).

The Toba ethnic group acknowledges the origin of their ancestors from *Siraja Batak* which was created by the god of the creator of the universe (*Debata Mulajadi na Bolon*) on Mount Pusuk Buhit, Samosir (Hutagalung, 1926). Genealogically, *Siraja Batak* is described as having two children namely *Tateabulan* and *Isumbaon*. These two children became *Lontung* and *Sumba* moiety. From these two moieties, an ancestral unit (*parsadaan ni ompu*) was formed in the Toba ethnic. For example, the moiety of Lontung has become ancestral entities such as the moiety Biak-biak, Sariburaja, Limbongmulana, Sagalaraja, and Malauraja. Whereas the Sumba moiety is the ancestral unit of Sorimangaradja and Raja ni

Asiasi. Departing from this ancestral unit, clan associations were formed such as the Situmorang clan from the Lontung ancestors. Lontung is a descendant of Biak-biak from Tateabulan, the son of *Siraja Batak*. However, this genealogy is divided into descendants based on moiety, ancestors, great-grandparents, ancestors, and grandmothers. Each of these moiety reflects clan associations or branches of the equal clan.

The formation of the ancestral community was carried out with lineages to *Siraja Batak* as the origin of Batak people. The hereditary group looks tiered which starts from *Siraja Batak*, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and so on. Each descendant lineage is bound by a homogeneous clan or equalized sub-clan. Each group forms institutions in the form of social units such as the community which separated but still refer to inter-generational links to *Siraja Batak*. Every association formed looks tiered starting from the largest to the smallest. Often members in this association are members who know closely, know each other, rarely know anyone who doesn't know them at all. There were dozens or even hundreds of groups (*parsadaan*) such as *Pomparan* Tateabulan, *Naiambaton*, *Naimarata*, *Siopat Pisoran*, *Sonak Malela*, *Nairasaon*, and others. There are also clan unions such as clan associations (*punguan marga*) such as *United Borbor (Borbor Marsada)*, *Toga Sinaga*, *Purba*, *Malau*, *Sagala*, and others.

Every member of the lineage community and clan has awareness and loyalty. This association serves to find out the position and social role of *Dalihan Na Tolu*, terms of address, the relationship of customs and social communication. It is not surprising that a Situmorang clan, for example, has a layered role, namely members of the community of the Situmorang clan, members of the Lontung ancestral community, members of the association of Biak-biak ancestors or members of the Tateabulan community. The administrators of descent and clan groups tend to consist of figures who are assigned because of social status, roles, and positions such as employment, education, success stories, or wealth. They can only work in go-

vernment, military, lawyers, businessmen, politicians, and others who represent the achievement of social philosophy, namely: (i) wealth (*hamoraon*), (ii) honor (*hasangapon*), and (iii) having the child (*hagabeon*).

The Toba ethnic group is more reflected by its social units, namely descendants and clans. This descent and clan group shows the patriarchal distinctiveness which has up to now 22 generations calculated from their ancestors, *Siraja Batak*. Every ethnic member is usually provided with knowledge of genealogy (*tarombo*), positioning between descendants, clans, terms of address, as well as the position of customs. Each member of this association is more loyal to the descendants and clans than the Toba ethnic union. This association not only serves to maintain the emotion and solidarity of hereditary and clan groups but transforms into other social activities such as providing scholarships for underprivileged members, health checks and treatment, cultural attractions and political activities.

These communities are social institutions, namely social units whose role is to maintain the descendants and clans in each of their members. The main core of this association reflects communalism which demands awareness, loyalty, and obedience to its clan or ancestral unit. Every Toba ethnic individual is required to have layered awareness and loyalty in accordance with the levels of the communities where the individual is. This layered community mechanism is the core of cross-cutting affiliation (Nasikun, 1991). Even though the cross-cutting concept is positive in order to bridge cultural conflicts, it is also potential to lead to the realm of practical politics such as *Pemilukada*. In this arena, cross-cutting is redefined, confirmed and understood to obtain and master the existing social opportunities.

The cross-cutting ties are very important to know their level and social position (Cairns, 1984) and become one of the important concepts in the study of political science (Carter, 2006). In other words, this offspring and clan unity are one of the social capital in practical politics such as *Pemilukada*. Ethnic divisions occur because of the

ideological differences that occur because of general elections. To a certain extent, this ethnic division reflects primordialism sentiment (Gandjar, 2017). The sentiment is closely related to feelings in the form of attitudes, emotions, and opinions that are subjective. In general, the sentiment is a binary position of opinion assumed such as: for or against, like or dislike or good or bad and others. This sentiment can be seen from two phenomena, namely: (i) semantic orientation, and (ii) the existence of polarization. Sentiment refers to the dislike of others formed from irrationality or incoherence.

One of the tendencies in the Toba people is to build a monument as a symbol of their descendants and clans. Each ethnic group who claimed their ancestors in Pusuk Buhit, worked together to build their ancestral monuments. This monument is equipped with hereditary trees and diaspora traces of each descent group and core clan. Then, each group of descendants and clans formed a monument in their location which became their homeland (*bona pasogit*). Activities such as pilgrimage or other cultural social activities are carried out regularly to honor their ancestors. At the moment of the ancestor's warning, thousands of members also attended from various parts of Indonesia. They make ceremonies, remarks, seminars, cultural performances, and social activities. Even though every member of the Toba ethnic group still has emotions and loyalty to the ethnic group, the quality is lower than the descendants and clans. Toba ethnic members are more loyal to their descendants and clans which are represented through social activities rather than being Toba ethnic groups.

Hereditary and clan group communalism does not stop at cultural activities. In the era of democratic decentralization, the community expanded to political activity. At this moment, the descendants and clans get redefinition so that it impacts on fragmentation to cleavages. This cleavage is an attempt to designate the differences with other descendants and clans. At this moment, the identity of the 'Toba people' was reduced to a smaller group of descen-

dants and clans. This cleavage illustrates the cross-cutting affiliation split to form ethnic-based voters. This fact is happening as in Mali as described (Dunning, 2009). Every ethnic group in Mali shows ethnic internal sentiments which eventually cleavages. This cleavage is carried out based on the social unit, namely cousin on the internal ethics of political actors.

Some special characters of the Toba ethnicity can be seen from: i) loyalty to the ethnic group, which always carries the name 'Toba' which is given the name 'Batak' wherever they are. Although adhering to a different religion such as being a Christian, the name 'Batak' is always inherent in him which refers to his ethnoreligious identity. The Christian Toba ethnics always bring along their church wherever they live (Hasselgren, 2008). Therefore, this ethnic group reflects 'Batak blood and the Protestant spirit' (Pedersen, 1975). Homeland is considered a memory of the past that continues to be remembered (Cunningham, 1958; Bruner, 1992; Situmorang, 2004; Pelly, 2013). The next character is ii) the primacy of hereditary and clan groups as a basis for social interaction. They are ethnic who have the ability to memorize genealogies (*martarombo*) that refer to their ancestors to dozens of previous generations. Clans are the basis for forming social relations called '*daliha na tolu*' (Gultom, 1995; Gultom, 1992; Harahap, 1987; Simanjuntak, 2006, 2014). There are at least 150 clans in the Toba ethnic group (Hutagalung, 1926; Vergouwen, 2008), and finally, iii) the strongest patrilineal ethnic group in Indonesia. This ethnic group paid great attention to *hagabeon* (having sons), namely clan heirs to preserve clans (Harahap, 1960; Siahaan, 1964; Simanjuntak, 1978).

The ethnic Toba diaspora (*marserak*) outside the north of Tapanuli has been assessed based on HKBP statistics (Purba, 1998). Migration always uses kinship ties on overseas lands (Castels, 1967). Migration occurs from the age of teens (usually graduating from high school) and returns home after marriage or to care for parents. The initial migration of 'Batak people' to Jakarta was recorded since 1907 and increased

dramatically due to the sponsorship of F. Harahap, a teacher graduated from the Sipholon seminary (Purba, 1998). Large migration took place in the 1930s to the East coast of Sumatra due to plantation factors. Migration continues to increase after the Social Revolution of 1946 to control vacant land (Castels, 2001). After World War, migration flowed to the east coast of Sumatra (Cunningham, 1958) and to Java Island since the 1960s (Reid., 2010). In the colonial era, Toba ethnic migration was supported by the German Zending Mission (RMG) and the Dutch Government. This migration is strongly related to filling in low positions in the offices of the Colonial Government and the Zending Mission (Aritonang, 1977; Hutauruk, 1993). However, the success of the Zending Mission education often leads to a conflict of status and power (Simanjuntak, 2002). Conflict also spread to church institutions. This fact arises because of the meaning of the authority of a leader which is considered as prestige and achievement (Lumbantobing, 1996).

The homeland (*bona pasogit*) in the ethnic Toba since the Reformation was divided into four districts, namely: North Tapanuli, Toba Samosir, Humbanghasundutan, and Samosir. The expansion of the district is closely related to descendant and clan sentiments. Although redistricting was made possible by juridical and formal reasons, it was concealed by substantial reasons, namely clan and descendant sentiments. This fact also reduced the domination of the descendants and Silindung clans as regional heads before being divided. Through the redistricting strategy, each descendant group and clan have the opportunity to develop their cultural attributes. Another fact is that the redistricting agenda broke through to the election of the local executive. Through the mechanism of *Pemilukada*, each clan and descendant have their respective opportunities in the political arena to gain power. Through this opportunity, each member of the clan and descendants can be absorbed as state civil apparatus, regional politicians, regional bureaucrats, or become partners in their respective regions.

The difference in culture area regarding clans and descendants for the Toba ethnic group often strengthened. They tend to identify themselves as 'Silindung people', 'Samosir people' or 'Humbang people' and refuse to be called 'Toba people'. Outside the culture area, each clan and descendant member actually identified himself as a 'Batak people' and not as a Toba people, a Silindung people, a Humbang people or a Samosir people. This fact occurs because of ecological differences that affect the cultural attributes of each social unit. Meanwhile, even though there are differences in the customs and dance, the differences are not fundamental. However, it shows variants of differences as a consequence of environmental differences. From a language perspective, for example, all clans and descendants in the four culture areas do not show differences in language or dialect. The same is true of dance and cultural attributes. So, in terms of descendants, they tend to come from the same ancestors. Except according to mythology, the ethnic Toba ancestors were confirmed to have originated from outside Sumatra which entered from Barus to inhabit the interior (Perret, 2010).

The thickening of the tradition of having a clan (*tradisi bermarga*) for each ethnic Toba is a biological attitude of determinism that appears in urban areas (Panjaitan, 1983). Communities were not only interpreted as a way of caring for kinship but also strengthened because of economic, social and political factors obtained through the association. This explanation contradicts the statement which states that clan associations are not born of biological determinism but rather from traditional embryos surnamed in the homeland (Situmorang, 1983). Both of these explanations are very paradoxical in addressing the growth of various ethnic Toba communities in urban and homeland. If in the 1980s, the descendants and clans community only strengthened in urban areas, then in the era of decentralization it also strengthened in their hometowns. In this era, hereditary communities and urban clans and hometowns are the basis of social interaction. This strengthening

is in line with the growth of democratization in the region so that the conception of transition to get redefinition. The *Dalihan na Tolu* conception or '*Culinary Triangle*' (Strauss, 1969) is not only interpreted as the role of adat but also at the moment of local politics. The conception like 'our people' (*kerabat*) and 'not our people' (*bukan kerabat*) (Bruner, 1981) not only strengthened in urban areas but also in the homeland (*bona pasogit*). In the migration area, this conception is used as a strategy to maintain 'patronage' (*habatahon*) (Bruner, 1961) but now is used as a tool, strategy, and tactic on local politics.

A primordial sentiment is a form of irrationality and inaccuracy of subjective bonds, namely feeling binding since birth (Geertz, 1973). These sentiments include family relations, religion, language and dialect, and social habits. In the Toba ethnic group, this sentiment needs to add descendants and clans because it is crucial to forming relationships and social roles. The politicization of this sentiment was due to structural and political imbalances related to ethnic politics. The same reality occurs in the Philippines that the politicization of sentiments is a product of structural imbalances in socio-political and economic (Taya, 2010). The sentiment politicization has an impact on the inauguration of the organization of the social unit as the responsibility of its social identification. The same thing happened in Nigeria that intensive ethnic cleavage occurred after colonialism. This cleavage is done as a way to fight ethnic domination against minorities (Ayatse, 2013). In Indonesia at the beginning of the New Order, there were separations of society based on a political ideology called political flow (Liddle, 1971).

Ethnicity is the product of inter-ethnic relations of two or more different groups that make contact and confirm residential variations, economic politics, culture and social relations (Bacal, 1991). This reality is an effort to confirm cultural differences that experience specific interpretations to identify themselves (Edewor, 2014). This interpretation forms a new identity in order to

bind the group culture and reflect subjective feelings originating from ethnonationalism. The definition of identity is used as a strategy and tactic, namely a mobilization tool against other cultural identities to control resources, power, and status. The existence of self through the prominence of primordial attributes is reinforced on the name of history and a shared commitment to demand shared ideas through the *Pemilukada*. Ethnic politics is manifested through the discourse of '*Putra Daerah*' which refers to the same descendants and clan associations. Both of these social units, namely descendant and clan, are a confirmation of practical political plans in their communities. This plan is carried out by political actors who fight for positions as regional executives (*Kepala Daerah*).

The politicization of descendant and clan in the northern Tapanuli

The strengthening of hereditary and clan sentiments in the northern Tapanuli is a product of political imbalances before the era of decentralization. The politicization of this sentiment strengthened in three spaces, namely: (i) the cultural arena, namely highlighting the attributes of social units in the ethnic Toba, (ii) the social arena, namely forming the homogeneous clan and clan groups, and (iii) the arena politics, namely seizing political contestation through the *Pemilukada* and also Legislative Elections in

their respective territories. The momentum of decentralization is a means of demanding to redistrict to form a culture area for descendants and clans. Through the redistricting of North Tapanuli, the culture area was confirmed to be an independent district so that it reflected the locality of the descendants and clans. In each of these regions, each lineage group and can have the freedom to develop their political activities.

The redistricting of the area in the northern Tapanuli occurred since 1998 which formed Toba Samosir district (Law no. 12 of 1998). The redistricting continued in 2003 through the establishment of Samosir district (Law No.36 of 2003), and Humbang Hasundutan district (Law No.9 of 2003). In the end, four cultural areas were formally integrated into North Tapanuli district, then now it has been separated again. The area and population in the four districts are shown in Table 1.

The majority of the population in the four districts is ethnic Toba and Protestant. Although there are other religions such as Catholicism, Islam, and *Malim* (the religion of the original Toba Batak) but the numbers are relatively small. This homogeneous demographic composition is not a guarantee of ethnic integrity but is fragmented in smaller social units. The following in Table 2 below is the composition of religion in four districts in the northern Tapanuli.

The four districts in the northern Ta-

Table 1. Areas and populations in the northern Tapanuli

| Districts | Capital City | An Area (Km ²) | Total Populations |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| North Tapanuli | Tarutung | 3.765,00 | 293.399 |
| Toba Samosir | Balige | 2.021,80 | 180.694 |
| Samosir | Pangururan | 1.419,50 | 150.187 |
| Humbanghasundutan | Dolok Sanggul | 2.335,33 | 182.991 |

Source: processed from BPS per district.

Table 2. Composition of religion in the northern Tapanuli.

| Districts | Islam | Protestant | Catholic | Buddhist | Hindu | Malim |
|-------------------|-------|------------|----------|----------|-------|-------|
| North Tapanuli | 4,76 | 90,30 | 4,79 | 0,05 | - | 0,01 |
| Toba Samosir | 6,20 | 85,42 | 6,60 | 0,04 | 0,02 | 1,71 |
| Samosir | 1,01 | 56,90 | 41,69 | - | - | 0,40 |
| Humbanghasundutan | 3,02 | 83,22 | 13,70 | 0,01 | - | 0,05 |

Source: processed from BPS per district.

Table 3. Clans and descendants in the northern Tapanuli

| Culture area | Regions | clans dan descendants |
|--------------|---|---|
| Silindung | Tarutung, Pahae, Sipoholon dan lain-lain | Lumbantobing, Hutagalung, Hutapea, Panggabean, Simanjuntak, Simorangkir, Situ-meang, Simangukalit, Hutabarat, Hutauruk dan lain-lain. |
| Toba | Balige, Porsea, Lumbanjulu, Laguboti, Parsoburan, Sigumpar, dan lain-lain | Sitorus, Marpaung, Panjaitan, dan lain-lain. |
| Samosir | Pulau Samosir dan sekitarnya | Simbolon, Gultom, Gurning, Nainggolan, Ambarita, Sagala, Situmorang, dan lain-lain |
| Humbang | Siborong-borong, Doloksanggul, Pakkat dan Parmonangan | Sihombing, Nababan, Simatupang Siburian, Lumbantoruan dan lain-lain |

panuli are different cultural areas. Each of these differences occurs because of environmental ecological conditions and the contribution of social changes that appear to each of their communities. Each of these cultural regions reflects a typical descendant and clan group. This group is based on one ancestor and the distribution of clans in the form of equal branches. The following in Table 3 shows the distribution of descendants and clans in the intent.

Hereditary groups and clans such as Simbolon, Nainggolan, Situmorang, Ambarita, Sagala, and others are typical in Samosir district, namely the Samosir cultural area. It is different in North Tapanuli district namely the Silindung cultural area which is dominated by descendants and distinctive clans such as Simanjuntak, Hutabarat, Lumbantobing, Hutagalung, Panggabean, and others. In Toba Samosir district namely the Toba cultural area, it was dominated by descendants and clans belonging to Sonakmalela such as Simangunsong, Napitupulu, Marpaung, Pardede or Sitorus, and others. In Humbanghasundutan district, namely the Humbang cultural area consists of descendants and distinctive clans such as Sihombing, Lumbantoruan, Manullang, Banjarnahor, Hutasoit, and others.

This division of cultural territory reflects the origin of domination, the spread of offspring and clans and is the domain of descendants and clans. Referring to the conception above, the Sihombing clan is most likely elected as the regional head in Hum-

banghasundutan district, the Simbolon clan may only be elected in Samosir district, the Lumbantobing clan is more likely to be elected in North Tapanuli district and the Sitorus clan is more likely to be elected in Toba Samosir district. This fact arises because of the existence of their respective cultural areas. In addition, it was also caused by a shift in the arena of contestation to smaller social units, namely descendants and clans.

In fact, the descendant and clan groups became mobilization tools to reject the presence of populations from other culture areas to fight in the *Pemilukada*. Similarly, these clans competed based on the superiority of the clans of the oldest descendants or referred to the most clan populations. In this case, the pragmatism and transactional cannot be avoided to mobilize its members. It is not surprising that during the *Pemilukada*, the executive candidates mobilize their descendants and clans as the basis of their struggle. The mobilization is often carried out through a series of parties by cutting animals, providing assistance to the community, or assistance to houses of worship. This fact exacerbates descendant and clan sentiments in the northern Tapanuli. In table 4 below, it is shown 3 times the results of the last *Pemilukada* in the northern Tapanuli. For the record, the elected executive is a representation of clans and descendants in their respective regions.

The ruling clan in these four districts is

Table 4. Executives clans in 4 district in the northern Tapanuli

| Period | Districts | | | |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|----------|-------------------|
| | Tapanuli Utara | Toba Samosir | Samosir | Humbanghasundutan |
| 2005-2010 | Lumbantobing | Sitorus | Simbolon | Sihombing |
| 2010-2015 | Lumbantobing | Simanjuntak | Simbolon | Sihombing |
| 2015-2020 | Nababan | Siagian | Simbolon | Banjarnahor |

typical of the area. Each clan and hereditary group in each of these districts closed space to other clans and descendants. Even if fellow descendants and clans compete with each other in the same district, the contestation actually increases their fellow political participation. In North Tapanuli district namely the area of Silindung culture area, the clans and dominant groups are Lumbantobing, Hasibuan, Panggabean, Simorangkir, Simanjuntak, and others. The contestation in this region only opens opportunities for the fellow clan and clan groups. Therefore, the majority of the nominations came from the same group. While the descendants and clans such as Simbolon or Sihombing have low electability in North Tapanuli district.

Likewise, the Lumbantobing clan has low electability if it competes in Samosir or Humbanghasundutan district. Since the redistricting of the area in Samosir, the regional heads in this region have shown that the Simbolon clan dominates. Likewise, in Humbanghasundutan where the Sihombing Lumbantobing clan to dominate. The same thing happened in Toba Samosir where the choice of the Siagian clan became regent in the area. While in North Tapanuli, the Lumbantobing and Nababan clans could dominate. This fact reinforces our argument that clan and descendant sentiments in the 4 districts in the northern Tapanuli are very evident in the *Pemilukada*. The strengthening clan and descendant sentiments are inevitable because each region in the northern Tapanuli is fragmented based on clans and descendants. Both are stated differently between one clan and another.

This clan and descendant sentiment seems to have a correlation with political life in the Reformation era. The era of conforming reforms (Marijan, 2011) as a form of check and balances efforts raises another

phenomenon in the form of strengthening clan and descendant politicization. The proximity of candidates formed through hereditary and clan groups is considered capable of gaining sympathy and support because candidates are considered to have become part of the clan members. Such methods or strategies are quite successful because of the energy contained in the hereditary and clan groups, namely: (i) descendant namely ancestral unity (*parsadaan ompu*) and clans (*punguan marga*) more intense than the Toba Batak group members. The descendant and clans groups hold regular meetings every year in the form of customs, social, cultural and religious activities. The unity of descendants and clans are bound by ancestral monuments that were built specifically as a bond between their fellow members. The group unity as Batak people has a low bond compared to the ancestral or clan ties.

This reality has an impact on the loyalty and loyalty that is higher in the offspring and clan groups than the group as the Toba Batak, (ii) descent groups and clans have a very clear organizational structure starting from the lowest level namely village (*Huta*), sub-district and even district. This structure has the desire to stay in government so that it can contribute to the unity of the group. While the organizational structure of the Toba Batak people tends to be blurred and not rooted to the lowest social units, and (iii) the interests of descendants and clans can be implemented at any political moment such as village head elections, legislative elections or executive elections. Whereas the identity as a Toba Batak person can only be relied on at political moments outside the district such as the election of governors, provincial and central legislatures, or the DPD-RI. The descendant and clan sentiments in the four districts in the

northern Tapanuli did not stop until the *Pemilukada*. However, it continues to move primarily to fill public officials such as heads of offices, sub-district heads, village heads or village heads, and even recruitment of regional employees. Each descent and clan group became dominant in its cultural area while having a reluctance to compete outside of other cultural areas.

The local political situation in the era of democratic decentralization in the northern Tapanuli shows the phenomenon of strengthening primordialism sentiments. Primordial sentiment appears in two ways: (i) the strengthening of the descendant and clan systems in order to claim the cultural area as a separate district, and (ii) the mobilization of descendants and clans in practical politics namely the *Pemilukada*. The local political map in the northern Tapanuli shifted from a large scale as an ethnic group to a smaller scale namely a system of descendants and clans. If at first every Toba ethnic group more reflects ethnic unity as Toba Batak people then their ethnicity is now being herded into smaller social units namely descendants and clans. Mutual neglect of hereditary groups and clans has a special purpose namely practical politics. Although until now it has not arrived at destabilizing fellow people, this phenomenon shows that primordial sentiments have the potential to be raised to achieve the goals of political actors.

Primordial sentiment develops in line with the social and cultural environment that surrounds it (Geertz, 1973). The development of politicization of sentiments is in line with the assumption that ethnic boundaries always change in line with the mastery of available resources (Barth, 1969). This sentiment arose because of the explicit interest in the descendants and clans. Loyalty to this social unit becomes the political capital of the actor to mobilize its members to their practical political goals. This fact arises because of two factors, namely: (i) the existence of competition and contestation in an unbalanced political, economic, social and cultural arena, and (ii) the existence of actors who mobilize and generate the spirit of primordialism (Rothschild, 1993). Contestation

requires an opponent and therefore a political motor is needed at the grassroots. Political actors who have an interest in the politics of politics package existing social units into social capital which gives birth to awareness, group loyalty.

Through these two factors, primordialism shifted into a collective awareness on three things: (i) the assumption that primordial bonds are concrete, have coercive solidarity and strength by maintaining emotional and unifying sacrality, (ii) a socio-biological paradigm that sees primordial identity as whole and universal genetic facts, namely human behavior as a representation of cooperation to maximize interests, and (iii) a means of fulfilling material needs or expressing a common interest, namely maintaining socio-political influence and accessibility (Widjodjo, 2007). Rejection of the candidate is expressed through the '*Putra Daerah*' discourse. The politicization of this sentiment has occurred since the candidacy process to the voting. During the campaign process, this activity was often wrapped up in other primordial sentiments in the form of offspring and clan social units. These four cultural regions show more political contestation in their territory by highlighting the similarity of offspring and clans. This phenomenon became the beginning of the gradation of previous collective identity, namely as the Toba Batak people to a smaller identity, namely the descendants and clans.

The novelty of this study shows that ethnic politics fragmented society from larger social units to smaller social units. Identity as a Toba Batak people was divided into social units based on descendant lineage and clans. This split is caused by political, economic, social and cultural contestation. Each lineage group and clan redefine the identity of the group as something different from the others. In the concept of ethnic politics, descendants and clans are considered as concrete units of identity so that they have magical powers spawned solidarity to achieve group interests. The politics of descendants and clans actually have a collaboration that can be used politically. The politics of descendants and clans are a means of

fulfilling material needs and political access. The intended fulfillment and access are economic mastery, resources, employee recruitment and prominence of cultural attributes. This reality is the dynamics of ethnic politics in the context of local politics in the era of democratic decentralization in Indonesia.

The contribution of this study shows that ethnic politics takes place in harmony with ethnic interests in practical politics. Ethnic politics is formed through descendant and clan sentiments in an effort to assert power differences and monopolies. Ethics which are divided into social units namely descendant and clan are products of contestation and competition. The findings of this study reinforce the politicization of primordial sentiments in redistricting (Geertz, 1973) or the existence of changes in communal ethnic identity according to resources and ecology (Barth, 1969). Therefore, this study concludes that ethnic division in the form of politicization of offspring and clans occurs because of competition and actors who mobilize social units to form voting agreements on practical politics (Dunning, 2009). Finally, the ethnic cleavage into the smallest unit of the descendant and clan social units aims to determine the voting behavior in the era of political decentralization. This cleavage was suspected due to an imbalance of economic, social, cultural and political resources in 4 districts in northern Tapanuli.

CONCLUSION

Political decentralization in the four regions in northern Tapanuli reflects the ethnic cleavages. This cleavage is the effect of redefinition as 'Toba Batak' identity to smaller units of descendants and clans. The politicization of the sentiments of the two social units is due to an imbalance of economic, social, cultural and political resources. The momentum of *Pemilukada* is a means of seizing social opportunities that are driven by political actors. An important lesson from the four regions in northern Tapanuli concluded that political decentralization through political instruments, namely the *Pemilu-*

kada still needed a more pluralist democratization effort. The community understanding is not enough to be grown through the instruments of *Pemilukada* namely electability through the most votes mechanism, but also concerning the quality. This problem concerns of *Pemilukada* not only concerning procedural matters but also the substance. Supposedly, *Pemilukada* does not make the community isolated primordially but more educating to a more open society. This is the achievement of the substance of the democratization process expected through local politics in the era of decentralization.

This study concluded three important points, namely first, the ethnic cleavages occurred because of the utilization and mobilization of social units namely descendants and clans in the momentum of the *Pemilukada*. The social units namely descendants and clans, have a central position and are used for mobilization. The loyalty of the members was more conical in these two identities than as a very broad Toba Batak people. The organizational structure of hereditary and clan is very clear from the village, sub-district to district levels. Therefore, the interests of hereditary and clan groups also merge with the *Pemilukada* that regional executives must represent descendants and clans. The second, the strengthening of descent and clan group sentiments in the *Pemilukada* is the impact of competition on contestation which is packaged as political capital to gain power. The contestation in local politics in the Reformation era requires social capital as a tool to achieve practical political power. The descendants and clans are competition tools that point to selfishness between descendants and clans.

The third, political actors redefined ethnicity as the Toba Batak people to a smaller identity in each cultural region. The identity of ethnic groups namely Toba Batak people were obscured and emphasized more on small groups, namely descendants and clans. The collectivity of these smaller groups is more familiar with each other through celebrating customs, religious, social and cultural activities through clan associations or the ancestral origin of the unit

that is carried out every year. The unity of identity as Toba Batak people is very rarely done. Although the political analysis of the flow is considered less relevant as a result of the strengthening of the issue of interest in the *Pemilukada* but the strengthening of factions in ethnic, is a strong indication of ethnic cleavages and the game of primordialism during the *Pemilukada*.

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