Social and Political Climbing, Elite Capture, and Democracy in the Current Indonesian Village

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Abstract: The paper will describe the history of inequality of state-society relations in Indonesia through case studies on current village politics and governance. For decades, during the New Order, the villages became subordinate to the state. The forms of leadership, recruitment, and succession, for example, are regulated by the state through the Village Law No. 5/1979. When the law was changed by the new Village Law No. 22/1999, the villager's participation in village administration was rising, among others through village council or Badan Permusyawaratan Desa. Five years later the Law was amended by the newer Village Law No. 6/2004 which is believed will make village democracy better. Through ethnographic observations, we finds out how the state agenda outlined in the formal rules govern the existing political structure at the village level. Our study in Pabuaran Village, Sukamakmur District, Bogor Regency, West Java, shows the rise of elite capture, elite control, and the dynamics of actors that are often different from the formal regulations. The political situation at the national level and the interconnection of villages with urban areas we consider very instrumental in promoting vertical mobility at the village level.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the early days of and during the New Order characterized by strong state centralism (Rais 1986), the cases of rural democratic and government in Indonesia were frequently discussed by social and political science researchers. The studies showed diverse directions. Some said that there is a tendency to show that democratic practices have been carried out through the traditional order inherent in rural communities (Mattulada 1977, Suparlan (1977).) In contrast, Prijono and Tjiptoherijanto (1983) present a study of 'democracy traditional' village that has been replaced by 'guided democracy.' Another study shows how modern political institutions are responded differently in various regions (Sundhaussen 1991, Husken 1994).

At the end of the New Order period, in the 1990s, Antlöv (2002) studied village democracy from state-society relations. He presents the fact that the village is in a challenging position to practice democracy because of the influential role of the state in exercising control through leaders and community leaders who are recruited as formal leaders. The inauguration of state power over the village through its leaders was carried out through various structural efforts such as "decarbonization" by forcing people to be faithful to Golkar and its subordinate organizations, as well as the militarization of villages by placing an army called by Bintara Pembina Desa (Babinsa). These structural efforts are strengthened through the legitimacy of Law Number 5 the Year 1979 on Village Governance.

When the *Reformasi 1998* took place, many wished for the new arrangement of political life, including in the rural side, to change towards a more democratic phase. Observers believe that the new village legislation will bring the growth of rural democracy. Finally, the enactment of Law No. 6/2014 on Villages, in this paper will be shortly called Village Law, is believed to be able to achieve village democracy because it has provided sufficient norms for the functioning of *Badan Permusyawaratan Desa*, shortly known as BPD, as a democratically elected representative body (Lucas 2016; Antlöv, Wetterbeg, and Dharmawan 2016: 166). Nevertheless, experts caution that romanticism in traditional leadership structures is prone to cause deviations from the basic principles of democracy (Antlöv 2003a: 210; Benda-Beckman 2001; Bräuchler 2010). Another threat to

the village democracy process after the new law is the strengthening of elite capture due to the ineffective control function by BPD. Lucas (2016) saw the monopoly of village officials in the planning and management stages of development projects that should be carried out accountably.

Given the importance of low politics as an indicator of grassroots democracy (Antlöv 2003b: 74), the social dynamics and social mobility of the people in the rural area becomes interesting to note. This paper will describe the movement of rural people as political actors, the emergence of new elites, elite control, and elite capture in a village in Bogor regency, West Java, Indonesia. We believe that various laws on village and village governance have opened up opportunities for diverse actors to play different roles in various situations.

2 METHODS

The research seeks to explain the everyday political practices at the village level using a qualitative approach. This approach would be able to disclose implicit meanings, variations of actors' interpretation, and untold arguments (Have 2004). We conducted ethnographic research, in which the researcher conducted participant observation in the village to explore information about the experiences, feelings and also the expectations of the villagers. This observation was conducted for four months, from March to April, continued August to September 2017. In addition to conducting observations in the village, we also engaged in some discussions at the national level, by approaching the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri), and the Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration (Kemendes PDTT) as two government bodies that have authority to implement the Village Law. The study also comes with data from relevant document studies.

3 RESULTS

3.1 The Studied Village

This study was conducted in Pabuaran Village, Sukamakmur District, Bogor Regency, West Java. Located on the eastern side of the Bogor district, the village is located approximately 40 km from Cibinong, the capital of Bogor Regency. This village is located on the path of the district road that connects Cibinong with Jonggol, Sentul and Cipanas. Based on the Village Profile (2016), Pabuaran Village is inhabited by 11,038 people with the composition of the male population of 5,575 people and the female population of 5,463. They mostly work as farmers; but some also are traders, factory workers, and informal workers in the field of transportation.

The total area of Pabuaran is 2,400 hectares, almost half of it is shifting cultivation area which is 1,101 hectares; then residential areas covering an area of 250 hectares, 655 hectares of rice fields, 300 hectares of forestry, and the rest is the area of roads, ponds, government facilities, educational facilities and facilities of worship.

Pabuaran Village is divided into four hamlets consist of 7 RW and 28 RT. Village head is the highest authority in the village assisted by a village secretary, treasurer, and some managers called Kepala Urusan. Besides, aside from the village administration, there are some institutions legitimized by Village Head's decrees, such as Program Kesejahteraan Keluarga or PKK (family welfare program) and Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat or LPM (Institute for community empowerment). The LPM is given the mandate to manage infrastructure development in the village. The leadership in Pabuaran equipped with a legislative called Badan Permusyawaratan Desa or BPD (village council) consist of representatives from the four hamlets. There some BPD members who are directly elected, but there are others who are chosen by the existed members of BPD.

2.3 Changes in Village Laws an Its Implications

The launching of Village Law in 2014 is considered an essential momentum for better village management. Previously, the village government was regulated by *Undang-Undang Pemerintahan* Daerah or the regional law government, namely UU no. 22/1999 which was later changed into UU no. 32/2014. The impact is that the village has no autonomy but more as an extension of the local government at the *Kabupaten* (region) level. With the enactment of the Village Law, the village gained its autonomy through recognition of the indigenous right and authority at the village level.

As a consequence of the recognition of village autonomy, through the implementation of village laws, villages are encouraged to run more democratic governance. The Village Law mandates the village to organize village meetings, as a place of decision making involving as many people as possible. The

Village Law also mandates the village to establish a BPD as an institution that performs checks and balances functions. Beyond that, the Village Law also gives villagers the right to participate in the direct supervision of the village administration. Thus, in addition to the BPD, actually, checks and balances function can also be done directly by villagers. Kemendes PDTT (2016) calls this village condition a "new village." Below is the comaparison table of old and new style of villages according to the Kemendes PDTT

Table 1: Old and new style of villages

Elements	Old villages	New village
Legal standing	1945 Constitution Article 18 paragraph 7 Law no. 32/2004 and Government regulation No. 72/2005	1945 Constitution Article 18 B paragraph 2 and Article 18 paragraph 7 Law no. 6/2014
Vision	Not clearly stated	The state protects and empowers the village to be strong, advanced, independent and democratic so as to create a strong foundation in implementing governance and development towards a just, prosperous, and prosperous society.
Basic ideas	Decentralization Residuality	Recognition Subsidiarity
Position	Villages as government organizations in the district / city government system (local state government)	As a community government, a mixture of self governing community and local self government.
Delivery of authority and programs	Target: the government sets quantitative targets for building villages.	Mandate: the state gives the mandate of authority, initiative and development.
Political orientation related to place	Location: Village as the project location from above.	Arena: Village as an arena for villagers to organize government, development, empowerment and community.
Position in the development program	As an object of development	As subject of development

Development model	*Government driven development* or *community driven development.*	*Village driven development, with an emphasis on capacity building, ownership of economic assets and revitalization of village culture.*
Political characteristic	Parochial village, and corporate village.	Inclusive Village
Idea of democracy	Democracy does not become a principle and a value, but an instrument. Establish elitist democracy and participation mobilization.	Democracy becomes principle, value, system and governance. Establish inclusive, participatory and participatory democracy.

Source: PATTIRO Training Module 2016

Antlov considers that the enactment of the Village Law is a sign of a better start of the village democracy process. The law has provided the basis for the functioning of BPD as a democratically elected representative body and the direct involvement of villagers (Antlöv et al. 2016: 166). Village's democracy is important because it is one of the mechanisms that enable the sounding of vulnerable and needed voices, a mechanism that allows equal decision-making among citizens, and mechanisms that allow anyone from diverse backgrounds to be actively involve in politics (Antlöv 2003b: 73). Village's democracy is then considered as "grassroots democracy" because it is genuinely a deliberative space at the lowest level of government and is believed to sustain the democracy at the national level (Antlöv 2003b: 74).

2.3 The Case of Pabuaran Village

In practice, the Village Law does not entirely produce a "new village" as envisaged. In Pabuaran, the village consultation mechanism was not implemented, the BPD also did not function properly. Village decisions are made without involving BPD or villagers. In other words, the village government has closed the village democracy arena mandated by the Village Law. Villagers then attempted to create another arena that could be used as a means to engage in checks and balances against village administration. This paper presents a case example of how citizens create channels of aspiration through some persons considered competent to represent their interests. We learned during the research that in fact, they were Ucok and Haji Iding.

Although typically sound like a name of the Batak people, Ucok is an original Pabuaran citizen aged about 40 years. He often criticizes the *Pemerintah Desa* (village government), shortly known as *pemdes* if he finds something that he deems inappropriate. Various cases have been advocated by Ucok. For example, he once managed to dismantle the evasion of financial aids from the Kabupaten of tapioca flour mill by the chairman of the *Gabungan Kelompok Tani* (Association of Farmers Group). These advocations have caused Ucok to be regarded as a problem for *Pemdes* and become an identical figure of resistance to *Pemdes*.

Ucok's critical stance derives from his experience as an NGO activist based in the district capital, where he is then appointed as the subdistrict leader. With the mandate to oversee the government budget, Ucok then actively supervise various development activities conducted in the villages. In Pabuaran, he found that the use of village funds for *betonisasi* (concrete road program) is not transparent. The request for the document of development budget plan to *Pemdes* is not fulfilled. Ucok wants to know the amount of the actual development fund, to be compared with the implementation in the field. He found the concrete road section using an appropriate machine was just a road past the *kampung* (neighborhood) where the village head lived. According to Ucok, this is unfair, and he seeks to stop the *betonisasi*. This effort was foundered because *Pemdes* called police personnel from the sub-district sector to crack down on Ucok.

Unlike Ucok, Haji Iding is a senior figure of about 70 years old. Known for his experience of defending the citizens involved in legal cases, Haji Iding then became the person who was asked for advice on all the problems faced by the citizens. We observed when Haji Iding facilitated the complaints of residents who felt harmed by the *Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*/LPM (Institute for village empowerment) because they were asked to pay Rp 50,000 per household to finance the village road. The LPM Chairman considers it necessary to levy because the costs provided from DPRD at kabupaten level are not sufficient. Haji Iding suspects the LPM Chairman is taking advantage of the development fund. Through the team he formed, Haji Iding conducted an investigation and found that in fact, the funds provided were enough to build the whole village road. Based on this data he then forced the LPM to continue development without collecting any further fees from the citizens, and this effort paid off.

Pemdes is uncomfortable with these criticisms and attempts to counter them. As in the case of Ucok, pemdes invites police personnel to block Ucok's actions. However, in the case of Haji Iding, *Pemdes* understands that Haji Iding is an experienced person in presenting legal cases so that they will not be afraid of confronting the police. Thus *Pemdes* make other efforts such as "black campaign," by continuously tell about the negative side of Haji Iding.

In Pabuaran, the role of village government is mostly run by *Sekretaris Desa/Sekdes* (village secretary) rather than *kepala desa/kades*. It seems that *Kades* prefers to avoid the criticisms, rarely goes to the Village Office, and prefer to have an office at home. Inevitably, this then creates an impression that she does not want to interact with citizens, does not represent the aspirations of citizens, and considered selfish. Residents feel disappointed to have chosen it for her at *Pemilihan Kepala Desa/pilkades* (village election) two years earlier. According to our informants, at first, the residents were also doubtful about her. Approximately 25 years old, she is considered a junior citizen. Moreover, female *kades* is unusual in Pabuaran. She was elected because the villagers consider his father who was a *kades* in the previous period. He did not dare to run again because the case of his fake elementary school's certificate was revealed. At the time of his office, he is very responsive to the villagers' aspirations, especially when it comes to physical infrastructures. Even the villagers considered him as the most successful kadesa when he managed to build a village office.

Not interact closely with the residents, *Kades* more often approached the government offices in the district level. This method is considered useful for obtaining information and access to government aids. According to her, the more villagers get assistance with the programs, the more advantage they will be. She mentioned some of financial assistance that was obtained from the district, among others, free electric installation assistance for underprivileged residents, poor house renovation, and the establishment of some *posyandu* (monthly clinic for children and pregnant women). Her last deal with the district government that will soon be realized is the distribution of clean water to villagers' homes. *Kades* assumes that by these efforts, she still cares about the villagers although she does not always physically present.

2.4 Eligibility and the Emergence of the Elites

In addition to the effort to win and got prize as a goal, political competition requires the eligibility of

personnel (Bailey 1969). Not everyone can be involved in competition, because competition requires certain requirements. Some components that can determine eligibility for example are age - related to seniority, gender, ability or certain qualifications, ownership of resources, etc. In the political arena in Pabuaran eligibility is clearly evident in the Ucok and Haji Iding cases. In this case there is a kind of self-limitation from citizens to not be included in the village political arena because there are limitations on eligibility. They entrust their political aspirations to the two people.

One of our informants said the reason why he did not want to be involved in village development disputes, even though he felt annoyed that he still left a piece of village road that had not been concreted. He did not want to complain to the village government. For him, making a living to meet the needs of everyday life is more important than interfering in village development. He works as a motorcycle taxi everyday. Even though he has a rice field but the field is limited so that the yield is just low. According to him, the economic conditions in Pabuaran are increasingly difficult, the poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer. In this case, he did not have the qualifications, so he did not fit to be involved in development.

Examples of cases related to gender feasibility can be seen in Kiki's story, posyandu cadres who wish to express their aspirations to the village government are related to many things: the establishment of less strategic postal locations, the quarterly salaries that are not liquid, and the village head's lack of attention to the cadres. Unfortunately, Kiki felt it was inappropriate to intervene in the affairs of the village because she felt she was only a subordinate of the village head who was also a woman. Therefore, Kiki prefers to convey her aspirations to the community head with the hope that he will be conveyed to the village head.

In addition to qualifications and gender, seniority can also be used as a reference for someone's eligibility in competing in an arena. The example is the story when Haji Iding was immediately appointed to represent the citizens facing LPM. Haji Iding was appointed by the residents because he was already regarded as senior by the people in Kampung Ciherang Peuntas. In addition to the case of the village road development, the villagers have been accustomed to conveying their problems to Haji Iding.

The development of the Haji Iding qualification has been going on for quite a long time, which was around the 1980s when he was still living in Jakarta.

At that time Haji Iding became a spiritual adviser to the Defense and Security Department. In this position Haji Iding then had the opportunity to interact directly with the army on an officer level. This closeness is used by Haji Iding to explore law: learning court terms and studying the chapters of the book of criminal law. This knowledge was then applied by becoming an unofficial legal adviser to acquaintances who were involved in matters with the police. Gradually the news of his expertise arrived at Pabuaran residents in general and Ciherang Peuntas Village in particular.

Unlike the senior Haji Iding, Ucok is still young. He is only around 40 years old. But Ucok has been trusted by the citizens to solve the problems faced. Similar to Haji Iding, Ucok has a qualification that is considered appropriate to enter the village political arena in Pabuaran. As with Hajj Iding, Ucok's qualifications are also built from experience.

Regarding the qualification development process, Ucok said that at the beginning he entered an NGO where he was trained by his seniors to participate in critical activities, which forced him to engage in debate with state officials. For six months as a volunteer, the Ucok was not accompanied by a member card, ID, or uniform. Not infrequently he received resistance from officials whom he criticized. But this process indirectly made Ucok more skilled in dealing with state officials.

Surviving as a volunteer, Ucok was later confirmed as a permanent member. As a permanent member of Ucok, he was more free to conduct social criticism on several government institutions throughout Bogor Regency, including the village government in Pabuaran. This work is based on the organization's mandate to oversee the implementation of the APBD and move according to the public report. In this position, many cases were handled by Ucok.

The many cases handled by Ucok can be said to be a process for the development of qualifications in the political arena. In Pabuaran, several cases were handled by Ucok. A village officer told us that Ucok had investigated the involvement of the community head who allegedly collected fees from residents who received assistance from the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPBD) due to a cyclone disaster. This case had appeared in a local newspaper report and had also been reported to the police.

Ucok also protested to the Chair of the LPM because he considered the aid fund for the construction of uninhabitable houses was cut. Ucok then reported the Head of LPM to the village head. The LPM chairman was then called by the village head and had to clarify his policy to the public.

4 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Referring to Hartmann (2004), elites can be interpreted as a group of people who emerge from the masses, small in numbers but can be parties who govern or regulate the masses because they usually control some things that are not owned by the masses, namely material, intellectual, and psychological capacities. Etymologically, the elite is derived from French *elire*, which means "to choose". Based on this understanding, it can be said that the elite is the chosen person (Hartmann 2006: 2-19).

In the Pabuaran case, the emergence of the elite is more by consent (with agreement) than coercive. Referring to Hartmann's understanding, actually the elite in Pabuaran were not only Ucok and Haji Iding, but also village heads. The process of the village head being an elite is also through agreements such as Ucok and Haji Iding. The difference is that the village head becomes an elite because he is elected in formal elections called Pilkades, while Ucok and Haji Iding are chosen through informal consensus. Both the village head, Ucok and Haji Iding, were equally given the authority by the masses to regulate, in this case regulating village affairs.

In various studies on community-driven development, including village studies, elites are suspected of taking advantage of the development agenda run by the central government and donors. The actions of the elites were then interpreted as "elite capture" (Dutta 2009). Development funds that should provide benefits to citizens but are captured by the elites.

Bardhan and Mookherjee (2000) said that elite capture is always there despite a democratic and decentralized development process. This phenomenon according to them needs to be overcome by approaching the elites so that the delivery process of development from the center to the regional level can be carried out properly. Mansuri & Rao (2004) suggest that the participation process that accompanies the mechanisms of democracy and decentralization is dominated by local elites who generally have a better level of education. This dominance then led to the management of public resources to only benefit the elite. According to Mansuri and Rao, elite capture is still rather difficult to use as instrument to measure corruption because there are also benevolent capture, although appear less then malevolent capture.

However, Dasgupta and Beard (2007) provide confirmation that elite existence does not always capture, but there are also those who exercise control. If elite capture is the practice of elites in utilizing public resources for their interests, then the elite control is the practice of elites in controlling public resources to remain delivered to citizens who are the target of development. Referring to this study, it seems that the actions of Ucok and Haji Iding showed the phenomenon of elite control rather than elite capture. Ucok and Haji Iding tried to ensure that the development resources provided by the central government were truly felt by the villagers.

The separation of capture elites and control elites as described above is, certainly, only apply to scientific categorization. In practice there is no strict separation between the two. Although at a glance the actions of Haji Iding and Ucok appear to be elite control rather than capture elites, in practice it is not possible that there are attempts from both of them to capture. This cannot be denied because after all the actions of Haji Iding and Ucok in this context are included in political actions that are not free from certain interests or interests. In this thesis, interest or interest is a form of victory that is to be achieved in the political actions of citizens.

Our findings indicate that the channeling of aspirations to specific figures has enabled the emergence of new elites outside of formal figures such as village heads, Sekdes, LPM leaders, and so on. Bailey (1969) states that in order to be able to compete, one must meet specific criteria or eligibility. Some indicators that can be used as a reference for someone eligibility include age, gender, and qualifications.

The games performed by Kades, Haji Iding, and Ucok in the political arena in Pabuaran can be explained by the concept of eligibility. Village heads, although age and gender are not worth playing in the arena, but fulfill formal qualifications as Head of the village in pilkades so that she fulfills eligibility. Ucok, although regarding age and formal qualifications appears not eligible, but concerning qualifications himself has much experience in advocating citizens. Likewise, Haji Iding, although already old, but still able to compete in the arena because of his qualifications as a person who can solve the problems of citizens through informal ways.

Through this study, we can see the process of elites' emerging at the local level. Elites can be interpreted as a group of people emerging from the crowd, but they can be a party that can govern or govern because they usually have privilege. Thus the elite is the chosen person (Hartmann 2006: 2-19). In the case of Pabuaran, the elite's appearance is more by consent than coercive. Their status as an elite through the consent of citizens both formally and informally.

In community-driven development studies, including village studies, the elite is suspected to be taking advantage of development agendas run by governments and donors. The actions of the elites are then interpreted as elite capture (Dutta 2009). Development funds that should benefit citizens are grabbed by the elite. Mansuri & Rao (2004) suggests that the process of participation that accompanies democratic mechanisms and decentralization is dominated by local elites who generally have better levels of education. This dominance then causes the management of public resources to benefit only the elites. According to them, elite capture is somewhat challenging to be considered as a corrupt practice because in elite capture there is benevolent capture in addition to malevolent capture.

However, Dasgupta and Beard (2007) provide an assertion that the existence of the elite does not always do capture, but there is also a control. If the elite capture is a practice in utilizing public resources for their benefit, then the elite control is a practice in controlling public resources to keep delivering to the targeted citizens. Referring to this study, it seems that Ucok and Haji Iding's actions are more of an elite control than elite capture. Both are trying to ensure that the villagers can enjoy the development resources provided by the central government. They control their heads and staff who perform the elite capture. The village apparatus are suspected of taking development funds from the central government and district governments.

The separation of elite capture and elite control as described above is indeed limited to scientific categorization. In practice, there is no strict separation between the two. Although it looks like the elite control, in practice, there is a possibility that Haji Iding and Ucok perform the elite capture. As their actions are filled with political interests, what performed by Haji Iding and Ucok were undeniably an elite capture. The other case, when *kades,* instead of performing as a leader. In other cases, when *kades* do not perform as a leader but a project dealer, she is doing an elite capture. She tries to get the sympathy of villagers by ensuring their village get program assistance from the government. Thus she gets political legitimacy and may benefit from the development program in the village.

5 CONCLUSION

The cases of Pabuaran villagers that we presented are a response to changes in the Village Law and the implications that some of the requirements of the Act

are not working properly. When the control channel gets stuck, the villagers look for other figures and channels to compensate for the behavior of the formal elite. With his experience as an NGO activist, Ucok then became the villager's hope to control the progress of the development program. He entered the higher stratum as an alternative leader in the village and became a balancer of formal leaders. Meanwhile, the senior figure who was originally a religious figure, with experience dealing with various legal cases has caused villagers to place him as the preferred figure to channel their aspirations.

Unlike Mansuri & Rao (2004) which refers to higher education as a character of the elite, the cases in Pabuaran show that the experience of the figures is more important. Education does not always play an important role although it will not always be the case. We also find that the process by which actors enter the political arena in many cases does not mean that they are conducting formal political actions. In the case of Haji Iding and Ucok, they are facilitating the villagers to channel their aspirations; on the other hand, they are like being in opposition that controls the formal elite in the village.

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