

# Uken – Toa's Political Identity and Political Representation in the Pilkada of Central Aceh Aceh Province, Indonesia

Hasan Basri<sup>1</sup>, Muhsin Efendi<sup>2</sup>, Ahcama Surya<sup>3</sup>, Hajar Ashwad<sup>4</sup>, Nanda Zunafriesma<sup>5</sup>.

{hasanbasri@ugp.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, muhsinefendi.fisipol@ugp.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, achmadsurya.ugp@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>,  
hajarashwad@gmail.com<sup>4</sup>, nandazunafriesma@gmail.com<sup>5</sup>}

Universitas Gajah Putih, Indonesia

**Abstract.** This study aims to examine the identity politics and political representation of uken-toa in the pilkada of Aceh Tengah. Research using an ethnographic approach describes values, behavior, beliefs, language, and reality patterns. The results show that identity politics orientation and political representation affect the democratic process in the case of the Pilkada Central Aceh, identity and representation have a significant influence on human life, while ethnicity, politics, religion, and culture are human identities and representations, the process of forming local democracy that caused by identity and representation and cannot be separated from the orientation of identity politics and political representation. The practice of collaborative politics between affiliated political actors representing Belah Uken and political actors representing Belah Toa greatly influenced the victory of the district head and deputy district head elections in every election in central Aceh.

**Keywords:** Political; Identity; Representation; Uken-Toa; Pilkada

## 1 Introduction

The formation of identity using interaction or partial. This has led to the birth of socio-political, socio-economic, social, and socio-cultural changes. Ethnic identity, politics, and religion are three things that continue to cause elements of social change in society. Forming ethnic, political, and religious identity politics will impact social change in society directly or indirectly; even the opposite occurs. Identity politics, directly or indirectly, reality or vaguely, will create significant social changes. Without exception, naming, forming, and using identity will create that social change.

Increasing community participation in the life of the state and nation is channeled in a way that prioritizes the principles of openness and equal rights in a state that adheres to a democratic system. The gayo community in Central Aceh district is part of a unified Indonesian nation. The culture of the gayo community adheres to the philosophical values of gayo customs, which are applied in everyday life. The application of the value system and culture in the gayo community contains religion, science, values, norms, rules, politics, and law, which are used as the basis for behavior in the life of the gayo community.

Pilkada is a democratic party for the people of Central Aceh, especially in the election of regional leaders and their representatives from national political parties and Aceh local

political parties and a combination of national and local or independent political parties that have fulfilled the requirements for their candidacy.

In the contestation competition, the regional head elections in Central Aceh district always involve 2 (two) large groups in the gayo community. When the Pilkada was held in Central Aceh, it became very interesting due to primordialism in competition not referring to ethnicity or religion, but competition between 2 (two) sub-ethnic gayo people as the majority population in Central Aceh. The sub-ethnic gayo community in Central Aceh is more of a clan; it is called split in the gayo language itself. Every election contestation, issues related to division always appear in the gayo community in central Aceh.

## 2 Literature Review

Identity politics in the local sphere was planned to remove local elites from the center of power in enjoying power itself. In the occurrence of an oppositional dichotomy like this, there is an element of intent built by local political actors to beat up opponents and political rivals who are 'immigrant groups' [1],[2]. Identity politics is a political act seeking the distribution of aspirations in influencing control, policies on the distribution of cultural values that are seen as having a high value, so that there are fundamental demands, with self-determination based on primordiality [3],[4].

Identity politics is precisely the occurrence of piracy by a majority group in controlling the dominant power. Using identity politics to achieve powerful results in hardening differences will encourage a clash within community groups. Identity Politics is a theory and concept or political movement that focuses on a difference in a major political categorization [5],[6],[2],[7],[8].

The concept of representation can be interpreted as 'who is not present or presents who is present,' a change in understanding the practice of democratic politics. While political representation in the view of democracy, an institution that is seen as central to the government in its representation is an 'election' or a distinction election. So that election can give birth to political representatives [9],[10],[11],[12],[13],[14].

Uken Toa's identity politics is included in the Associative Processing Politics category, which is depicted in the form of latent conflict and open conflict; this is categorized and polarized, namely habitus Uken and habitus Toa; (1) Habitus Uken: (a) royal, (b) realism, (c) modernism. The forms of political behavior include; motivating, funding, loyal, and inclined to talk backward. (2) Habitus Toa: (a) Pragmatic, (b) Traditional, (c) loyal. The forms of political behavior include (a) communicating always using parables, and images, politeness, and respecting or glorifying people who come and are met in the field, solid cooperation, (b) the implementation of politics prefers figures in people who enter into kinship, (c) faithful in keeping the secrets of the candidates being promoted [15],[16].

The practice of identity-based politics through Belah's sentiments grew and developed, built on momentary political interests. The practice that occurs by popularizing the term Belah (urang-urang in the Gayo Lut community) is part of the political strategy played by the actors. The sentiment of urang is built through a political process and is difficult to eliminate at the democratic level. Because the problem is that this growing divisive sentiment is a political practice built by actors to kill the character of political opponents (political rivalry) in fighting for regional head elections [17],[15]

## **2 Method**

Using an ethnographic approach, this study is one approach in qualitative research; researchers describe and interpret patterns of values, language, behavior, and beliefs in groups that have cultural similarities; Ethnography uses observations of groups and individuals of society in a natural environment. This research emphasizes the formality background. The ethnographic approach to be studied is secondary data which then uses primary data in the field [18],[19],[20].

## **3 Result and Discussion**

### **3.1 Uken and Toa Political Spread Polarization**

The difference between the dialects of the language both between the Gayo Lut, Gayo Deret, Gayo Kalul, and Gayo Serbejadi dialects. However, in substance, the Gayo language is the main language used by the people. Of the four traditional areas, there is one area where there is a clan group, namely Gayo Lut. In daily interactions, the Gayo Lut people are popular with the term *urang-urang*, namely, Uken and Toa, divided into two very broad areas. The terms Uken and Toa are names between local Gayo and immigrant Gayo which in political occasions are always reproduced as a symbolic force in fighting for power. Local Gayo represents people from the Uken area, and Gayo immigrants are people from the Toa area or are referred to as Batak descendants.

### **3.2 Uken-Toa politics in the vortex of Central Aceh Pilkada**

Central Aceh District, the incident regarding group sentiment (*urang-urang*), which was popularized during the regional head election, was full of propaganda in the name of the superiority and glory of actors seeking influence in the lower classes of society. So the propaganda about *urang-urang* in Gayo society is part of the forms of capital owned by actors, which were popularized through identity politics. Propaganda about divided politics (*urang-urang*) is a form of symbolic capital owned by each actor to achieve power because the symbolic capital is in the actor, including the level of influence in society, popularity, etc., blood relations.

The decentralization policy implemented also has implications for local political practices in Central Aceh, particularly the strengthening of local identity, namely the division of Uken and Toa within the gayo community. The local political dynamics that unite the Uken and Toa clans are just a game of political actors. The Uken-Toa identity was created only to kill the personalities of political opponents through the establishment of a region that grows and develops in the Gayo community in Central Aceh. Representatives from each uken toa division were considered the most effective in influencing the community at the village level to elect a candidate for the regional head.

The challenge for political actors in the power struggle only applies to the elite. The practical model uses the propaganda of *urang-urang* (community groups), especially between the Uken clan and the Toa clan in the village community. The form of uken adheres to a centrifugal system and toa, which follows a centrifugal system, so everything is theocratic (based on Islamic teachings), customs, culture, and education based on Islam.

Another phenomenon shows the contestation of political practice and the calculation of the roles played by political actors, down to the district level to the village community; there are two patterns used in economic, religious, and political approaches. First, the economic role carried out by money politics which is given to the support team, political elites, and voters, financing this money politics, is supported by several supporters with business backgrounds, contractors, and people interested in determining regional heads. Second, using a religious approach by visiting worship and religious assistance places.

It is almost the same as the national political elite, to influence voters, political actors provide the needs of the community according to the community group, for example, such as farmer groups, of course, those given in the form of agricultural tools, with great hope that these community groups choose themselves in the pilkada.

Dominant Uken Split actors use economic capital as a political succession strategy. Meanwhile, the actor from Belah Toa dominantly uses economic capital politics through a spiritual approach as a strategy for political battles.

### **3.3 Competition for Identity Economic, Political, and Ethnic Pilkada**

There are five (5) forms of propositions in finding patterns of uken-toa political practice with the form of roles played by political actors at every level, both in the district and in the countryside at every pilkada event in Central Aceh.

First, the political, economic, social, and religious arenas always support the capital at stake. Second, the dominant capital played in the political arena is the political capital and economic capital. Third, the capital at stake in the economic arena is social capital. Fourth, the capital at stake in the religious arena is the economic capital. Fifth, in various arenas, each capital plays a role in supporting the existence of political actors.

However, the political practice of clans (split) seems to be integrated into the social structure of society; if you trace the political practice based on split identity, you can identify it through two phenomena. First, politically, the cik Cik clan is a representation of the people living in the Toa (Hilir) area, adopting a political system based on interests [15]

The interest in question is a cooperation between actors; if they have the same interests, they tend to unite and are prone to splitting between them. The Toa group united based on interests, not according to Belah. Meanwhile, split uken, which represents the people who inhabit the Uken (Hulu) area, adheres to a united family policy because of division. That is if actors who appear based on Belah tend to be affiliated based on Belah where they live and live.

This political practice brings together the political actors of the Uken division and the political actors of the Toa division to accumulate capital as a power base in political contestation at the local level dominantly playing economic, social, political, and symbolic capital. The uken political actors representing the uken division have social and economic capital. Meanwhile, the Toa Political Actors representing the Toa clan tend to dominate political, cultural, and symbolic capital.

Another strength that is no less important is the ownership of social capital, which is directly involved or political actors in uken-toa in various organizations at the district and rural levels filling the highest positions in religious organizations and institutions. The uken-toa political actor played a full role in winning the regional head election contestation.

### **3.4 Public Stereotypes Against Uken Toa Politics in Pilkada**

The other side observed in every Pilkada of Central Aceh is due to several stereotyping factors from the community towards the pair of political actors between uken and toa. In every pilkada in Central Aceh, there are always split uken and split toa candidates, which cause socio-political gaps for immigrants to fight in the pilkada contestation. Theoretically, the stereotype is an assessment of individuals in a group based on the emergence of perceptions of the group in which the individual can be categorized. The stereotype is a journey of thinking that can be carried out intuitively by every human being to simplify something complex that can also help at the stage of making decisions and decisions regularly and quickly.

Of the 6 (six) candidates for regent/deputy regent, two candidates came from uken, and four more came from toa. Some candidates are promoted by national political parties (parnas) and local parties (parlok). Some advance through an independent path. Seeing the unbalanced composition, the winner is 'already certain,' which is from uken. This is because, of course, the votes from the TOA are split and divided, not only to the four candidates but also to the two candidates who have voters in the TOA area.

### **3.5 Political Representation in the Pilkada of Central Aceh**

The occurrence of identity politics in every contestation of the Central Aceh Pilkada, giving rise to a political representation, can color the democratic process itself. Look at what is on social media. You can find out how the various processes of aggregation and articulation of the public interest, which in essence already exist and provide opportunities for various conversations, conversations in society about ethnicity, politics, economics, religion, and culture.

The spread of various behaviors and information carried out by the community related to the uken and split toa clans in the form of information conveyed directly or indirectly will lead to the growth of identity politics campaigns at the local level. Delivering messages that foster competition that hides behind discourses on issues of conflict and discrimination, partiality, injustice to minorities or immigrants who wish to participate in the contestation of the elections for the Central Aceh Region. The strengthening of political representation in the Pilkada of Central Aceh can be seen thoroughly and deeply observed. It can be analyzed who the candidate candidates are and come from which side and who is the supporting party, local and national political parties, and their character and leadership.

Like the pairs of candidates from uken and toa who represent themselves as gayo people who can run the wheels of government and dominate power dominantly.

## **3 Conclusion**

The political contestation event in the Central Aceh Pilkada is inseparable from the orientation of identity politics and political representation. In the election contestation in Central Aceh, Uken-Toa politics always takes part in every pilkada held; Uken Toa's political practice becomes a political instrument for political actors who want to fight in the pilkada; the elite group always uses this split both Uken and Toa.

The orientation towards identity politics and the uken-toa political representation in the Central Aceh Pilkada leads to an economic, political, and ethnic orientation. The identity

politics of split Uken and split Toa brings the dynamics of political competition in society and political actors and political elites. Actors from both sides should avoid this kind of political practice. The Uken-Toa politics impacted the electoral bases of the two groups in terms of development and the position of the structure in the wheels of the Central Aceh district administration.

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