Democracy and Revivalism of Ethnic Group Identity
In the Indonesian Regional Election after Suharto

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Abstract
This paper aims to analyze the phenomena of democracy in terms of local election in the Toraja area related to the existences of the toraja ethnic group as the majority and their indigeneity. It tends not simply as the way to proof the “people rule” as it is only usually known by people in related to the democracy that is legalized by the state regulation. That democracy event is an opportunity for their customary guidance existences that makes this situation as the “legal pluralism” arena. That situation should be viewed as a critical discourse between the general idea of democracy that formalized by the state and the local values. Hence it seems that presences of both laws will influence the Toraja’s form of democracy that shows dynamics of the state formal regulation and the customary law existences.

Keyword(s): Democracy, legal pluralism, Local Election, Toraja Ethnic Group, Custom.

Introduction

In May 1998 when the Second President of Republic of Indonesia proclaimed to resign his position, Indonesia has started its way to be democratic country. After experiencing more than 30 years under the authoritarian and centralize regime, Indonesia began its effort to leave that worst situation and be a new democratic society. Some activities as effort to change the political system in Indonesia are conducted by the ruling government that makes Indonesia’s political system to be very dynamic in terms of democratization of the political system that also impacts to the people live in regions. Within this era, democracy seems to become an obligation to implement as the best way to manage Indonesian people. It makes democracy become the “only game in the city”. Some policies have been released by the government to support their intents to establish the idea of democracy within people lives. At the end it believes that it will make Indonesian people became the democratic society. But that effort seems to trigger unexpected results with the presence of democracy in local people. The intention to provide more opportunity for people’s participation in political field seems to open ways for undemocratic form, especially for some local people’s communities in Indonesia.

In terms of local people, when the idea of democracy came to their lives as the part of government desires, then it seems to be received as a good thing as with what the government’s opinion about it. But some facts from the local people’s experience on democracy become the prominent think to be embodied. Based on that intention, the presence of two policies, the regional autonomy policy and the local election, becomes crucial. Under
the spirit of democratization, it believes that it will be the important path to provide more opportunity and spaces for the people as the important element of democracy.

Consequently, for the community like the indigenous people who have their own rules or requirements to choose their leader, the election will become an event for the two laws, formal law and the customary law. It makes the regional election then occurred as a “legal pluralism” condition due to two fundamental laws meet in the same event for that community that require similar obedience.

The unique experiences from the toraja ethnic group as one of the indigenous people in Indonesia should be viewed as the other indigenous group reacting to the general term of democracy that is institutionalized by the state. Their unique condition even tends to produce some aspects based on their own way that is possibly unsuitable with the general term of democracy.

The Legal Pluralism

The understanding of legal pluralism is close to the two key words “legal” that usually is associated with something that is legally established by a statute or regulation and “plural” that is usually contrasted with a single form or something that varies. Based on that explanation then the legal pluralism defines as a situation in which two or more legal rules interact with each other (Hooker after Lakin 2005). It tends to focus on a particular community that is particularly interested in the transfer law between cultures. Interrelation between laws and cultures are usually associated with the formal law by the state law and the local custom that simultaneously regulate certain community. It means the legal pluralism situation will usually occur in the context of certain community that has particular legal system or norms based on beliefs of common values that mostly as part of their social identity (see e.g Benda-Beckmann 1993).

Griffiths (1986) noted that there are two types of legal pluralism, the weak and the strong. The weak pluralism is when there is a command of different legal institutions against different groups in a particular society through a normative order of a court or legal institution center. It can be seen as “technique of governance” that exists only on state law that means the presence of the non-state law will depend on recognition of the central government. In other hand, the strong pluralism exists in the existence of normative rules; regardless of its origin that exists together and has mutual respect with others in the situation that is unavoidable in the rules of the universe.

Actually, this perspective and approach began in the early 20th century by Eugene Ehrlich's argument about the existence of "lebendes recht" or the law of life. Ehrlich put "lebendes recht" as a legal order that is contrary to the official law of the state. It is found in the communities or groups where laws are made by the social processes. Ehrlich demonstrated distinction with other thinkers that the law of life is a necessity in every society where other thinkers saw it as an intersection of different cultures. Thus, it indicates the important of
people context and the relation in the area (Lakin 2005). It means, the objective context of each community is the important thing for this approach.

Focus to view the context of each community becomes important due to the “social fact of legal pluralism” (sflp). It is based on the reasons that (a) it is not limited to nation states, countries, or society understood as a unit; (b) it extends the concept of the law to include at least some types of non-state law; (c) it adopts the stand point of legal observers that are beyond them, but take into account the point of view of the internals of the citizens, lawmakers, judges and others (Lakin 2005). The “sflp” can be built upon contexts that are anthropological and socio-legal studies based on the understanding of local knowledge, which is an important aspect. It means, legal pluralism’s concern to the interaction among all norms or orders and must be admitted those orders equally. That condition makes the rule of law as managing people’s behavior is no longer seen as something that refers to the formal legal state, uniformity for all persons, exclusive of all other law, and administered by a set of state institutions but also will refer to the context of local values that direct local community behaviours (Lakin 2005). In this sense, all law in the legal pluralism can be define as “law” and must be admitted in equals, especially for the certain people that have other system of laws beside the formal laws.

In the context of Indonesia, some community’s people, such as the indigenous people, usually live with some kinds of laws in the same context (see eg. Tyson 2010; Benda Beckmann 1993). At least there are two laws that are the formal laws and the customary laws. When both laws regulates same object then it makes those people to behave within both of laws. This dualism of law is likely to become crucial condition for indigenous people if there is a fundamental difference in principle of both laws. It then forces people to act properly between the laws as both have consequences for violations of the laws. The formal laws contain some sanctions from the state while the customary laws have some consequences when the people violate it. Therefore, although there is an attempt to generalize the meaning of legal pluralism, however there is an idea that tends to agree that this understanding presupposes the existence of non-state legal conception. It then emphasizes on how people establish themselves as the subject in relation to the existence of the some laws in the social practices, power relations, institutions and political law, formal law, the rule of non-formal normative orders and others. It means that some important things or events within particular community lives will possibly be regulated or related to both laws’ existences. One of the important events as this paper’s concern is the local election as the important thing of democracy presence.

In the Indonesian local election to vote for the regional government head, people become prominent factor through the direct election mechanism. It means that people’s preference to vote for the leader will deeply influence the result. In the context of particular community that has another system of law, such as the customary law beside the formal laws to determine the process, then it will face two laws in the same time. It is because the process to select a leader usually as fundamental event for that communities. Therefore the customary
law usually has its own standard in requirements and process that should be respected by people in that community. As the subject of the both laws it makes people to behave suitable between those two laws, which means the local election will confront two fundamental laws in term to vote for the formal regional leader. It makes the people usually use both of laws based on their interest thru the laws. When they need to fulfil the formal requirements then the formal law will be followed, but when the unique of local context should be fulfilled then the other law will present as the main patron. Therefore the analysis in legal pluralism then will be related to those laws as the reason and patron of people in that democratic event. Result of the event is then believed come from those two laws’ existences.

**The Toraja Ethnic Group**

The toraja ethnic group is one of the famous Indonesian ethnic groups that lives in the Sulawesi Island. They are mostly inhabitant in in the area named *Tana Toraja* or the Toraja area. This area is part of the South Sulawesi province that is separated in two districts, the *Tana Toraja* and the *North Toraja*. Currently, the *Tana Toraja* district is inhabited by 223.306 inhabitants and 220.304 people live in the *North Toraja* district. In aggregate, the population of both until the 2012 was approximately 443.610 people. More than 80% of those people in both areas are the toraja ethnic group.

As an ethnic group, the toraja ethnic group is also well known as famous indigenous people not only in South Sulawesi but also in Indonesia. Their indigeneity is more outward as a combination of myth, origins, legends, and the transfer of memories from the past orally to its present generations. That combination is united in the fundamental values called *aluk to dolo* (the ancestor legacy). Actually, *aluk* is originated from the toraja ethnic group’s old religion that believes in gods. *Aluk* is believed as guidelines for the torajas towards the enlightenment as the phrase *"anna bendan tutungan bia 'tunannang tendanan ma'lana-lana"*, which means *aluk* is “the stand flame torches, where in upright position”. The torches symbolize as the direction to the better and harmony live. In the *Toraja* mythology numbers of torches are 7777777 or in another version amounted of 7777 that implies completeness. The torajas believes *aluk* contains guidelines for all aspect of people’s life because it was created by the gods where they are also believed to live within the rules (Kobong et.al., 1992). It makes *aluk to dolo* or usually called as *aluk* to become complete guidelines for the torajas to live in harmony. *Aluk* contains guidance about what they should do as compulsion as well as the prohibition, therefore *aluk* is considered as a set of norm or laws for the torajas that should be obeyed. Their obediences believe will bring fortune while a violation potentially brings some misfortune in their lifes. Due to *aluk*’s guidelines praticed in many aspects of life then it is usually considered as *ada‘* or in Indonesian language similar with *adat* or custom.

In Indonesia, custom is always associated with a set of social rules, politics, perceptions of fairness, and even habits of individuals (Tyson 2010). Custom also represents a system of government based on oral tradition, antecedents, and customary law, which provides a set of rules in ceremonies for weddings and funerals, homes and crops, or the mechanisms
and land use rights (Hooe 2012). It means, the custom is not only a series of seremonial activities and symbols to indicate identity of particular community but also as a system of life that believes righteousness for the community. Therefore the particular community, such as the toraja ethnic group, still keeps it as part of their existence. It makes the existence of the toraja ethnic group could not be seperated from the aluk itself as part of their social identity (Kobong et.al 1992).

As part of the toraja ethnic group’s identity then some practices of aluk that symbolize the toraja ethnic group’s identity had not fully disappeared during the New Order regime. It was because even the regime tend to restrict ethnicity existence but some ethnic group were still allowed to perform some ethnicities’ rituals and symbols under the term of tourism. In this term, the Toraja land and its ethnicity become one of the famous tourism attractions for the cultural tourism. It makes the Toraja ethnic still had opportunity to keep some activities as the aluk’s implementation in the name of culture tourism. Therefore, during the New Order period the toraja ethnic group still exist with their aluk including as customary law. Consequently, some important regulations based on aluk still exist, including the term of leader’s requirements.

For the toraja ethnic group, the leader is an important and honourable position as it is through some fundamental requirements based on aluk. The important of leader’s position is because it will not only be as a regulator and the guardian of public order but also as the role model for the society. A leader has two functions, which are as acting structuring society and also as a spiritual figure that has the ability to ensure people’s prosperity with guidance on custom. Therefore, the leader must be the appropriate person to the aluk’s requirements. It makes efforts to determine appropriateness of someone to be a leader to must consider the aluk as the Toraja’s important guidelines in their community existence. The requirements are capability, wisely, wealthy, and must be the noble descent.

That all requirements are believed guarantee his prosperity and orderly like the aluk patterns. Therefore those requirements should be owned by a prospective leader in Toraja not only because it will help the leader when he is later appointed as the leader, but also related to the important position of a leader in the social relation with the people, including in variety important activities for the Toraja’s custom events. Based on those requirements, there is one aspect that should be owned by a leader where it is difficult to be owned by most people, which is it must be the noble descent.

As a society that has a social hierarchy system where classify people in some structures based on aluk, the toraja ethnic group is separated in three levels of structure. Since the pre-colonial period, the Toraja’s is divided into three social strata that is aristocrats (nobles), ordinary people (commoners) and slaves, where those statuses are mainly based on the wealthy, age, and occupation (Adams 1997). Even it does not exist as previous time since the colonial period as the slaves had been not exist anymore, but the Toraja’s still can consider their position in that structure and the important of its existence nowadays. That structure then makes the family and kinship to become important relationship’s pattern within the Toraja
people where it is symbolized through the “tongkonan”. Basically tongkonan is a Toraja word meaning “a place to live”. This is a name of the toraja ethnic group’s traditional house as well as the symbol of a group of family that maintains kinship ties for the Toraja people. Presence of tongkonan is associated with justification of specific lineage by associating with existence of particular ancestors in the past (see eg. Waterson 2009). Therefore, tongkonan becomes the center of the Toraja’s social life. Some rituals associated with tongkonan are very important in the spiritual life of the Toraja people. Therefore all family members are required to respect the tongkonan not only as their relationship with their ancestors, but also to all of their family members.

Existences of the structure clearly are still occurred in various social activities, including some indigeneity or custom events that important for the toraja ethnic group. Within those custom events, the toraja ethnic group will be positioned and respected based on their position in the hierarchical system. It is because the position is related to the concept of siri’ (proudness and honours) of each person and their families, therefore this point must be conducted without any mistakes. For example, the noble families will be positioned appropriately in the most honorable position, while the ordinary people will occupy lesser honour position. Since the toraja ethnic group often practices those events, then it actually is the events to confirm the Toraja position in the structures. Consequently the torajas can still consider their positions and its relevancies in their daily live. Due to the aluk still exists as the important guidelines for most of the toraja ethnic group then presence of the hierarchical structures still exists as the requirements of the prospective leader. It makes social position as a noble descendant to be important for a leader candidate because it is not only related to meet the required criteria but also to the level of people’s acceptance of a leader and authority it has.

The compulsion of a leader to be suitable with the aluk’s requirements is related to the Toraja’s beliefs in aluk as the fundamental guidelines where a violation will affect their live. Consequently, existence of aluk seems as privilege provided by the customary laws for the nobles to be the only prospective leader for the Toraja region. It means only the toraja ethnic group will be suitable to be the leader based on what the toraja ethnic group that claims the area as their scared land from their ancestors based on the aluk’s tenets. It also means the requirements for the appropriate leader is based on a set of laws that is believed by the torajas in form of customary laws.

**Regional Autonomy and Local Election effects to the Ethnicity in the Reform era**

During the New Order era, the regime policy tended to reduce the various issues of ethnic identity as important part of the regional people. The regime interpreted ethnic identity’s differences of its culture and tradition just as a unique part but not merely a socio-political system that has fundamental meaning and implications for its people in the region. The diversity was only seen as local fact but did not have a specific meaning broadly as a social and political system that exists and is believed by local people who exist in a state system in Indonesia (Hooe 2012). That was the regime’s systematic effort to depoliticize the
The reality of cultural differences in Indonesia. Consequently, various unique values of some Indonesian communities were denied such as the customary laws as important aspect of some ethnic group communities. In this situation, people’s participation where it’s usually deeply influenced by their locally and unique values was reduced and even tight controlled by the regime. It included attempt to select the leader of regional government who will lead local people’s region.

During the New Order regime, process to select the regional government leader was done by the regional legislature members. Facts that the regime was controlling political system in Indonesia then explain how the process was dominated by the regime interest. Thru control the two important institutions, the *Golkar (political party)* and the military, the regime usually dominated the process. Therefore, all political process was deeply intervened by the ruling regime that made the policy to always be based on the regime’s interest. It confirms how the regime kept control the political life in all regions in Indonesia. It was impossible for the regional government leader to get the position without the regime’s permission through the central government approval, it happened even without involving people’s desire that means there was not significant people’s participation.

When the reform era finally came, there were some fundamental changes as attempt to switch Indonesia to be more democratic country. Indonesia believes entering the transition towards democratic society (Aspinall and Mietzner 2010). In reform era, euphoria of democracy meant opportunity to involve in various socio-political aspects of the state that occurred in most Indonesian people, including in the local people. It makes one important issue within reform to rise people’s participation including in the regional area. Therefore the encouragement to provide some wider opportunity for people to involving in the political fields becomes as crucial thing. That condition then leads some political and administrative authority’s transformations to produce more opportunity room for people to in the decision-making processes (Palmer and Engel 2007). As its effect, many communities that were marginalized previously then received opportunity to return their existence in their areas based on their local values and claimed the area as part of their community existence (Tyson 2010). Within euphoria for freedom and demands for more involving opportunities, the central government then decided to provide two important changes, which are the regional autonomy and change of the local election system. Those two important changes then gave local people opportunity to perform again their various local values as prominent aspect.

In term of regional autonomy, since the beginning of reform era, the state attempts to provide more respect to the local people and it diversities locality. It began by the presence of Law No. 22 year 1999 on the Regional Government system. In 2004, that law was replaced by the Law No. 32 year 2004. This law then continues to regulate the Regional government and regional autonomy until it is also replaced by the law No. 23 year 2014. Those laws are regarding the regional government system, even the laws have been changed a few times but the idea to respect the local people by giving the rights to manage their own area as the autonomy region still continue. It means, every region possibly creates different policies due
to their different in some context and problem based on their objective condition. It is then become important for some local community’s values to return as an important part in the region. As part of locality existence, ethnicity then has opportunity to return as the important objectives condition in the regional people dynamics live. It makes possibility for some important issues, such as ethnicity as the important factor for certain community, to return as important factors in the socio-political field in the region.

Like the regional autonomy, the change of local election mechanism into the direct election has made local people to become the prominent factors in the local political field. Through rights to vote, local people then have an important position to influence who will be the leader in the region. It means, the local people’s preference becomes important basis for the local election’s result to select the regional government head. Since the position as the government head is the key point for all policies in the region, it means people actually can influence the government policies in their region. In this point, ethnicity then becomes as one crucial factor as it is related to many people in particular group where most of them are the voters. It means an ethnic group can be seen as the potential voters within the local election, which it also becomes the valuable resource in political bargaining. By having many potential voters under one social identity then an ethnic group will not only play as the supporter for candidates but also as significant basis for a candidate to win the local election.

Based on those explanations, the two important things, regional autonomy and the change of local election mechanism in the reform era, have provided important ways for the revivalism of ethnicity in the regions. The presence of some formal laws respect the local people and give them more chance and rights to involve in the political fields. It means the local people, including ethnicity as the part of social identity, are considered as important factors for democratization progress in the reform era.

**Local Election as the Legal Pluralism Condition for the Toraja Ethnic Group**

The local election or "pemilihan kepala daerah langsung" (pilkada) of the North Toraja district in 2010 was the first local election held in direct mechanism after it separated from the Tana Toraja district and became the new district in 2008. During the local election, there were two important issues indicated influencing of aluk as the prominent aspect. The issues were related to the appropriate candidate and how to win the rivalry by utilizing the torajas respect to their aluk. As the majority community as well as voters, those two issues were important for the winner.

Actually based on the formal law, as listed in the article No. 58 of the Law No. 12 year 2008, all people have rights as the voter or to be voted as the candidate where they meet all of formal requirements. Generally, the formal requirements include:

- believes in one God; faithfully follow the state ideology and the constitution; occupy at least secondary school and/or equivalent educational level; minimal age is 30 (thirty) years old; Health condition physically and mentally; never been sentenced to imprisonment five (5) years or more; not being deprived of their right to vote under a
court decision, which has obtained permanent legal force; known by the people in the region; submit a list of personal wealth and willing to be announced; does not currently have a mortgage debt; he/she is not bankrupt by a court decision that has obtained permanent legal force; never committed a violation of act; have a Taxpayer Identification Number; submit a complete curriculum vitae; have never served as regional head or deputy head of the region during the two (2) consecutive terms in the same position; not in status as the acting head of the region.

Those formal requirements are for all persons who want to be a candidate either from the political party or through the independent mechanism. All requirements actually make all people to be appropriate as candidate as far as they fit those requirements. As implementation of the spirit of democracy, those legal requirements basically were present as formal guarantee of equality for all people to a candidate in the local election but not a guarantee to be voted. To be voted, candidates should win the voters support by putting themselves as the most desirable candidate, where it asks more things from the candidate besides the formal requirements. Since the voter has their own reasons to vote then the candidates must match with the voter’s reasons. In the creation of the requirements of the candidate’s appropriateness, it should be fit with local context of the toraja region and the toraja ethnic group. That condition opened the gate for return of the toraja ethnic group ethnicity into the political field.

Consequences of involving aluk in the local election was deeply influencing in two important aspect of the local election. Firstly, the candidates were not only must fit to the formal requirements but also the aluk requirements, and candidates then not only should have capability, wisely, and wealthy aspect but also must be a noble descendant. Consequently, only the aristocrat person has opportunity to be candidate. At the same time, the nobility requirement had eliminated the non-noble people opportunity to be the leader. It makes the democratic competition to be utilized by the noble thru their privilege based on the aluk.

Secondly, the candidates should able to influence people by utilizing some important social events that related to the aluk. Generally, there are two kinds of important events for the torajas, the rambu solo (the sadness ceremony) and the rambu tuka (happiness ceremony). The sadness ceremony includes the most famous of Toraja culture event, the funeral event or usually called as the rambu solo. As for the happiness usually it is related to celebrate some happy moments. The important of both events is during the events usually there is a classification for the attendance and their position based on the hierarchical social system of the toraja ethnic group. During the events where usually held in a few days, the noble family and the ordinary people will be placed in different places and receive different treatments related to their honorable in aluk. The noble asked to follow the noble patterns as well as the ordinary people with their particular manners. That situation makes candidate to promote themselves as the appropriate person. By attending the events, the candidate can affirm their social status especially as the noble person related to the social hierarchical system as well as the wealthy person.

Moreover, since the events are usually attended by many people from various areas
around toraja area and even from outside, it is regarded as potential event to meet with many potential voters for the candidates. Importance of these events made all candidates in the North Toraja local election 2010 to always make serious effort to attend the event when they are invited. It became the crucial events during the local election that was utilized by the candidates to get more supports from the people. The toraja people believe the events are not similar with others activities as it is related to aluk’s principles as part of their ethnicity. Besides the events, there were some activities done by the candidates during the local election process as effort to utilize the belief of the torajas to aluk as the fundamental guidelines. It was related to the social interaction based on the family line or kinship based on the tongkonan.

For candidates, the family support has two benefits. First, in the tradition of the toraja, a member of family who intends to do some important thing usually asks for blessing and agreement from his family. Without family permission, the attempt will fail or do not get any goodness. It is strongly associated with the traditional belief that the blessing of family is an essential condition for success. Moreover, the kinship is needed as voters as well as important network to reach as much voters in various areas as well as to approach other noble families to get their support together with their kinship links. The approach should be adapted to the context of the nobility ethics through the proper way based on the aluk’s principles. In this effort, appropriate behavior will be needed based on the aluk’s standards, thus the appropriate people and how their gesture and speech are very crucial. An inappropriate attitude could result rejection from the other families where it will influence the potentiality to get support. It potentially occurs not because the candidate or his family considered as less worthy person to be a leader, but the refusal was more related to their approach where it is consider unsuitable with what should be done with the noble people or families.

Those facts from the local election in the Toraja region showed how aluk as part of the toraja ethnicity’s existence as the prominent factor. The torajas believe that their unique and fundamental values can only be understood by the Toraja people. It shows tendency that a leader in toraja should be someone who has suitability with the toraja’s ethnicity. It ultimately leads the candidate’s attempts to fulfill appropriateness based on what the majority voters accepted as very important requirements.

Those facts confirm that the local election as democratic event was deeply influenced by variety of cultural values as consequences of the ethnicity’s existence. Even actually it is non-political aspect but due to it was as the toraja’s crucial preference to vote then it becomes important. It figures out how the formal where regulated thru the formal laws was deeply influenced by various informal aspects based on the customary laws. It makes the torajas people to behave appropriately within those two laws during the local election. Presence of those laws and why that local election involved those laws are actually related to legitimation of the result and people’s support after election. In context of toraja region, due to majority of inhabitant is the toraja ethnic group, where they also claim the area as their sacred land, a leader should have not only the formal legitimation but also the informal legitimation.

Actually, the formal legitimation indeed will be present when all processes are suitable
with the formal regulation. As far as all formal regulation has been followed during the local election then its result will be formally legitimate. It means the formal legitimation is deeply related to obedience to all formal requirements and process. As the consequences as a part of the Republic of Indonesia’s administrative area, the leader of regional government should be resulted based on the formal regulation. It will associate the leader’s authority to govern the regional government.

In other hands, since the government is in the area where its people have other unique requirements where it will be related their respect to the leader then the leader should be received by people based on their own laws. It means a leader must be suitable with the aluk’s requirements. If it is fulfilled then the leader will get acceptance from the people to lead their sacred land, which means the leader is also legitimate under the customary laws. That condition actually makes the local election event as a process of a candidate to be leader in the toraja area based on both legitimation sources. In this sense, the customary law actually has similar degree with the formal laws for the torajas’ acceptance. Indeed, it is related to how community will accept and comply with the future elected leader that is resulted thru a democratic process, which is regulated by the state laws. Therefore the event provided a unique way as the torajas logical voting behaviour.

Since most of the torajas used those two laws to decide their choice and it seems like a mandatory aspect, then the legitimacy by people to establish democracy in the toraja context will be related to those two laws. It means the democracy progress will usually influence by the existence of customary laws as part of the toraja ethnicity existence in this area. It happens because within the reform era, their existence has been formally guaranteed by the state and the aluk is their part of social identity as a unique community as well as the majority in the region.

Conclusion

The dynamics of the toraja ethnic group related to vote the formal leader for their sacred land thru democratic way tends to produce a unique pattern. The pattern occurs in a legal pluralism situation, where there are two fundamental laws involved in same event, the aluk as customary law and the formal laws. That situation happens because ethnicity returns as the prominent aspect in the political field in the reform era. The revivalism of ethnicity as important aspect for the toraja ethnic group actually meets the internal and external conditions.

Actually, even during the New Order era, the toraja ethnic group also experienced considerable pressure from the state but some important aspects of their ethnicity were never been totally disappeared. Some fundamental aspects of their ethnicity, such as aluk, still existed even in the limited space of their daily live during that era. It means the fundamental source of their ethnicity as social identity still existed as the source of their unity as solid community. Therefore, when the political system changed and the state attempts to respect the local people then their ethnicity revive under the spirit of democracy. Consequently, there are
many ethnic groups in Indonesia, such as the toraja ethnic group, then enjoy that state’s respect to return some important aspects in their region social and political dynamics. One important event that is affected based on the Indonesian changing situation as part of democratization is the changing of the local election system. By using the direct vote mechanism, the local election then gives crucial position to local people to determine who will be the regional head government in their area. It then allows people to use all of their reasons and values to guarantee the elected leader will be suitable with their objective context.

Based on facts from the North Toraja local election 2010, it confirmed that dynamics the election should be seen as a unique community way for the coming of democracy in their live. Although the local election is regulated thru formal laws but the existence of aluk made the torajas to find a suitable way to run between the two laws. It happened due to the local election was not the only the formal event to choose the regional government leader. For the torajas, that event is also as the rivalry arena of the noble families as well as the way to proof the toraja’s honour, therefore it was part of logical pattern when most of the process during the local election was influenced by the the torajas’ belief in aluk. It means presence of the two laws in that event made the local election to become the real pictures of how the toraja ethnic group reacts to the formality of the state as the toraja ethnic group did.

In the end, since a leader is formed thru uniquely way in the legal pluralism condition of the torajas, then they must stand in those two sides. It means the leader is always expected as the formal and informal leader as well. In this situation, a leader will be asked to assure itself suitable with those to guarantee their presence of authority and policy to be successful.
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