

## **SULTAN IN THE HISTORY OF TERNATE 1946-2002**

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### **Abstract**

Politic participation of Ternate sultanate in local and national politic post independence to recent days brings important meaning to this writing. The reoccurrence of past politic entity on that period explained as the wish of Ternate Sultanate to be more accomodated by means of institutional into formal government politic.

Basically, this research is historical research concerning politic activities which is involving Sultanate by using historical method from heuristic to histography methods. This process requires analysis tools by using politics science concept to assist the extend study. The sources used in this research consisted of written and interview sources.

This research conclude that politic participation of Sultanate in Ternate in local and national politic arena has experiencing tide and decrease as the impact of national politic system transformation. During President Soekarno era, Ternate Sultanate has opportunity in national politic field and the top of this opportunity is the appointment of Iskandar Djabir Syah, the 47th Ternate Sultanate, as Minister of Internal Affairs of East Indonesia State (NIT). In President Soeharto government period, the Sultanate elite is experiencing productivity by supporting Golkar Party. That support is able to bring them to manage their political career to become legislative members, academician, bureaucrats, politicians, press, and businessmen. Comes into reformation era, it presents wider space for Ternate Sultanate to express their existency and role. The arise of the 48th Ternate Sultan, Mudafar Syah, on his candidacy as Governor of North Maluku, as sultanate attempts in order to be constantly in its position as the authority holder in local domain, as their possession upon history claim and identity culture.

The advantage of this research is capable to add and complete reference materials in Indonesian history documenting, particularly local history in North Maluku. This writing is expected to be able to give conteplation contribution for Ternate Sultanate elite and regional government in formulating political policies that are able to accomodate wider importance without according to certain ethnic importance.

Keywords: Political History, Ternate Sultanate, National and Local Politic.

### **Background**

This paper investigates the fonomena the return of the Sultan of Ternate in the arena of local politics after the independence of Indonesia in 1945. Before independence the territory of Indonesia, there are approximately 250 local self-governments

(Zelbestuurendelandschappen). Most of the autonomous regions did not left any spots (artifacts). Only a few of them still exists politically such as Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Cirebon Sultanate, the Sultanate of Ternate and even some do some efforts to revive and reestablish through a new partnership under the umbrella of the Alliance of Sultans from the Archipelago.

(AAG Ari Dwipayana, 2004: 8).

The existence Sultanate of Ternate since post independence until now shows that the Sultan of Ternate owns a significant political role in every periodization of local political history in Indonesia. During the reign of Sukarno and Suharto regime, the Sultans of Ternate had always struggled to survive againts treat the crisis of being pressured by the central government. They were able to maintain their position as a central political role model amidst the fast social changes. The endurance of the elites from member of Sultanate does not only limited to how they adapt to environmental changes, but they also have been able to

follow the rhythm of political dynamic by playing an important role in strengthening their influence and determining the direction and motion of these changes.

However, the political participation of Sultan of Ternate at the national level did not always run smoothly. Differences in political ideology made them undergoing certain restrictions. The pressure and difficulties experienced by the previous led the the later Sultan changed the political strategy by turning to support the government in other periods. Political reality show that when the Sukarno were in power, the elite Sultanate of Ternate suffered "political restriction". The Sultan Iskandar Djabir Shah opted to support the establishment of the State of East Indonesia (NIT), initiated by Herbertus J. van Mook in 1946. This support implicated his exile to Jakarta in 1950, for accusing as a federalist leader. However, the delegitimation of the Government of Sukarno did not diminish the political existence of the elite from the sultanate at the local level. The intervention of the central government did not affect the fall of power of elite palace. Culturally, the palace still wins the hearts of the people as the central model of communal life.

The continuity of the political elite of the sultanate remains after the fall of the Sukarno regime. The appearance of Mudafar Shah as a replacement figure of the previous sultan played a new role in politics in North Maluku. His insistence to recover the relationship with the central government was symbolized by his support to support Golkar (government) as his base power. By doing this, he gained political empowerment during Suharto's regime. The fact shows, since his Inauguration as the 48th Sultan of Ternate on November 29, 1976, Mudafar Syah took a political decision to support the Suharto government party (Golkar).

The fall of the New Order regime in 1998 and switched to the Reformation era even opened wider space for the local

political elite, including the Sultanate of Ternate elite to compete locally. The Act No. 22 of 1999 on regional autonomy symbolized the momentum of the rise of elite Sultanate of Ternate, previously dominated by Soeharto's government, to build a power which based on the sultan's historical and cultural identity. The elevation of the power in post-New Order describes how people from the palace play new roles to remain in his position local arena as the most powerfull local people. In this case the emergence of elite from the local palace can be interpreted at least on three points: first, it is defined as the rise of feudal power in the region to strengthen its political position which based on cultural construction of historical and genealogical similarities. Second, the individual rise of the Sultan Mudafar Syah, the Sultan of Ternate exercised the charisma of the palace, and third, the intention of the Sultan can not be separated from the desire of the Sultanate in various regions in Indonesia for more institutionally accommodated into the political stage of a formal power (Maryanto Tryatmoko, 2005: 86).Based on the above background, the main problem focused on this paper is how the political strategy was taken by the Sultan Ternate in maintaining his political existence as the main people in local politics in the period 1946-2002.

### **Sultan of Ternate at Soekarno Era 1945-1966**

Politically, the proclamation of independence of the Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945 is the birth of a unitary state, yet for the Sultanate of Ternate, this momentum is the beginning of the collapse of feudalism institution. During this era, ideological and political upheaval of the nobles (traditional authority) was challenged by nationalist group. The glorious power inhereted by the noble which had confronted with Dutch colonial power during the colonialization again faced another new form of ideological

power which endangered the position the palace. This new form of power swept away the local power and forced the people to show their loyalty only to the state, not to the palace. This new ideological power also separated public services and position according to the modern governance. As a result, the traditional positions was removed and changed into a new system. The Sultan did not directly become the governor of a province or a major of a regency, he has to go through political competition represented by political party. Since then the power is not longer geneologically inhereted but achieved through competition.

Historical fact shows the political participation elite Sultanate of Ternate in the unitary state had started since the beginning of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. This participation was marked by the establishment of the State of East Indonesia (NIT) on December 24, 1946. The establishment of the State of East Indonesia became a political inspiration for Sultan Iskandar Muhammad Jabir Shah (the 47<sup>th</sup> Sultan of Ternate) to participate in the congress as a member of the senate representing the NIT of North Maluku, and by involving in the Malino conference and Denpasar as a member of the senate representing North Maluku as well as one disaigner of the NIT. As a federalist who struggled to figure out a form of a State of East Indonesia both in the Malino conference and in the Denpasar, in 1949, Jabir Iskandar Shah was appointed as a Minister of home affairs in the cabinet NIT J.E. Tatengkeng (27 December 1947-14 March 1950).

Political reality shows that when the Sukarno was in power, the elite of the Sultanate of Ternate faced political limitations. The political decision of Sultan Ternate 47th Djabir Iskandar Shah (1929-1975) in supporting the establishment of the State of East Indonesia (NIT), initiated by Herbertus J.

van Mook in 1946, implicated to his exile to Jakarta in 1950, for being accused as a federalist. His different views from the central governemnet regarding the form and system of new Indonesian government in post-independence Indonesia led him not to support any ruling parties during in thelection in 1955. This decision surely did not give any benefits to them regarding the position because they are forced to confront both their political rivalry and national forces.

The confrontational attitude of Elites from Ternate palaces encouraged the President issued a number of policies to limit their political roles, such as; First, the elimination of kings council (executive body), consisting of the Sultan of Ternate, Tidore and Bacan and Noord Molukken Raat (legislature) which supported federalism in 1950. As a consequence, the sultanate had no longer a formal legal instrument in influencing local government. Their control of the bureaucracy was replaced by majors from regents chosen by Parliament. Second, the elimination of the residency of Ternate and the establishment of the North Maluku regency levels, based on the law. No. 60 1958. Consequently, ruler at level of regency was no longer have to be held by the Sultan and his family but was chosen through elections in the format of modern politics. The third implication is the birth of the Basic Agrarian Law 1960 on restrictions of land ownership or the takeover of land by the state against the autonomous lands.

During the reign of Sukarno, the Sultanate elite encountered political crisis. Their confrontational attitude by refusing to support the Republic of Indonesia (GoI) and the government party (PNI) raises the question why the President did not destroy their political existence in the realm of local politics in Ternate. Did some of the above political policies influence their existence in political struggle in Ternate or otherwise? In fact, although they

experienced political restrictions, culturally this restriction did not give any impact on the decline of the power elite of the empire. This condition was supported by one of the values entrenched in society within Ternate that they uphold the word or the command of Sultan expressed in a local wisdom *gauze jou semboyang Ngom Kage* (where the Sultan is, there we are).

In the culture of Ternate, the sultan is respected and obeyed because it is believed to be inherited greatness and authority that bring peace, justice and well being. This also explains that peace, justice and prosperity are key words that put the noble are so important in the eyes of the people. Social relations are not merely a patron-client, but basically it reflects the cultural characteristics of society that are specific to maintain the relationship between the community and the leadership of the social traditions Ternate. This is reflected in a saying which is still living within the community in Ternate "ino foma Makati nyinga, Doka gosora se bualawa, om doro yes momote, fo magogoru fo madudara" (let us take care each other, like nutmeg and its full, ripe together, fall together, based on love and affection).

### **Sultanate of Ternate in the Suharto government era 1966- 1998**

Entering the New Order era, the national political map underwent fundamental changes. Golkar, Suharto's political vehicle tried to work together with the traditional powers in Indonesia. In this changing political constellation, the Sultanate of Ternate took a political choice by supporting Golkar. Since the Inauguration of the 48th Sultan of Ternate, on 29 November 1976, Mudafar Syah took political decision to support Suharto's government party (Golkar). This support is understood as a strategy for accommodation and surviving amidst amidst the bouyant of power centralized New Order government.

Even before becoming a Sultan, Mudafar Syah had become functionaries of Golkar Party at the beginning of the Soeharto government. This gave him a chance to be a legislator at II level of local government during the elections in 1971. By this support, he had legitimated political power to contribute to the the development of government in running their policies. In this case, by popular is given freedom and opportunity to choose policies offered by political parties in accordance with their political preferences, including choosing those deemed worthy performend those the policies.

Strategies used survavilitas elite Sultanate of Ternate support Golkar memungkinkan awakening mutualistic relationship. The presence of some members of the nobility who occupied structures in the palace and has their influence in the community utilized to support programs of political parties, including providing access to strategic positions in government.

Since the Sultanate of Ternate participated into Golkar Party, at the beginning of the Suharto government, Golkar always always posed as a dominant party and won every election during the New Order era. If in the previous election (1955), Muslim parties dominate the vote like Masjumi (45 percent) and Parkindo (22 percent), in 197, government party, Golkar, turned to win the majority, and islamic party became a dominated one. With the support of the bureaucracy and military networks, Golkar won the most votes in the 1971 elections.

In that period, the elite of the Sultanate did not just rely on what they believe that they are the center of a fad, but also using the strategy to expand and strengthen its power.

In this case there are three survival strategies used by elite empire to rebuild the base power during the Suharto government era. The first strategy is building alliance with the ruling party.

Learning from the failure of political decision, Mudafar Syah took the political decision to support the Suharto government party (Golkar). This strategy had supported him to be a legislators at North Maluku district in 1977, a Golkar member of Parliament from 1982 to 1987, members of the Assembly of Representatives from 1987 to 1992 and chairman of the Golkar DPD II North Maluku district from 1992 to 1998. Through this party, he also was able to be the head of parliament of North Maluku District from 1996 to 1999. This strategy was not taken by the Sultan alone, the same strategy also was played by several elite of the archipelago. Through this party, they organize his political career as a legislative member, academics, bureaucrats, politicians, journalists and businessmen. These roles were never been experienced by elite in the Government of the Sultanate of Sukarno.

Second, in the cultural arena, the elite Sultanate of Ternate has carried some ceremonies to revive ritual in the palace such as Kololi Kie (ritual around the island), Fere Kie (ritual mountain climbing), and Legu Gam (sultan's birthday). These palace rites intend to show the splendor of the sultanate because it has been a source of cultural legitimacy that the palace has a magical power, sacred and a symbol of authority. In the same period, the elite sultanate also expanding kinship network to give an honorary degree to the officials or former officials of both central and local levels. By using of this political kinship, all of the social and political elements officially became part of the relatives of the Sultanate of Ternate. This condition, of course, has logical consequences both economically, politically and culturally. This step is done as a political culture by making the palace as a center carrier, preservation and cultural development center in the land of Ternate.

Third, in the economic arena. To survive economically, in addition to rely on the land owned by the palace, elite sultanate's job orientation was slightly changes. During the period of Soekarno government, they simply absorbed within the government bureaucracy. However, in Soeharto government, besides there were some still opting in state bureaucracy sector, some of them started to go into the non bureaucratic or plunge into the world of business, building relationships with external parties, particularly the business elite with Chinese descendants, Javanese and Bugis Makassar traders, as well as building relationships with the local government. As a result, the palace received funds routinely from the government to cover the household expenses and reservation of the palace buildings.

#### **Elite Sultanate of Ternate in the Reformation Era 1998-2002**

The rise of Sultanate of Ternate in line with the new paradigm of regional autonomy is interesting movement to study. With the regulation of Law No.22 / 1999, the state has given recognition to the Sultanate's original rights, and then has been utilized by the elite of the Sultanate of Ternate to build a base of authority over claims of historical and cultural origins. The effort of Sultan of Ternate Mudafar Syah in the local political arena to revive rituals and ceremonial custom is related the revivalism of feudal symbols as powerful political identities. This is part of strategy as an effort taken to keep the elite institutionally accommodated into the political stage a formal government.

The implementation of decentralization has made local political struggle is interesting to observe. One of the "product" of the reform is the division of many regions in Indonesia into smaller local governments. One of them is the division of Maluku province into many new provinces. North Maluku is one division and become (the 27th province)

under Law No. 46 years 1999. The birth of the Act also seen as an opportunity to realize the aspirations that had hampered due to political centralisation during New Order regime, namely the desire to own a local leader agreed upon by the people. The main reason is that the "sons of the soil" during the period of the Soeharto government never got the chance to lead the region. Governors and Regents always appointed by the Government in the capital, so that their policies were not rooted in local communities.

This historical experience has pushed elite of Sultanate to take part in the "local movement" to demand the North Maluku province separation from the Moluccas. When the central government (the Habibie government) responded by the the enactment of Law No. 46, 1999, the Sultan of Ternate Mudafar Syah did not only became a symbol, but also he intend to pose the the governor position. The resurrection of the Sultanate of Ternate elite post-New Order, according to Gerry van Klinken was based on first, symbolic revival of an entity that was torn down and left devastated at the Old Order and New Order. Since the Old Order to the New Order, the Sultanate of Ternate elite was not an important part in the field of government (executive) either in regency or in province.

The formation of North Maluku Province was in fact followed by the awakening of Ternate Sultanate. One of the implications of this condition is the effort of Sultan Mudafar Syah to reopening royal instruments in order to seek the legitimacy of the role of the Sultan. The competition between those from the elite of non sultanate Ternate and those from non elite did not limit on the struggle for the interests of the new resources, but also on social memory of a glorious past. The severe political interests and differences of interests in contesting the sources of power of local level became

a trigger in a conflict of the ellection of the head of one region in North Maluku.

Of the various problems in the mentioned above, sultan political participation looks so complex since North Maluku expansion into new provinces under Law No. 46/1999. There are some important notes that need to be promoted. First, the resurrection of the Sultanate of Ternate had given serious impacts on local democracy meaning. His participation which should have become one indiation of local democracy in fact has encouraged the widespread of mass mobilization. As a result, the competition was no longer rational to use the feudal forces. This condition eventually worsened democratization at the local level. Rivalry and competition then led to the formation of groups which based on memories of the part, ethnicity and even religion.

Second, by participating in governor candidacy, Sultan of Ternate in North Maluku governor tried all his efforts to empower himself by using his feoudal powers that were previously constrained by the dominance of the New Order government. Although Sultan Mudafar Shah failed in his candidacy for Governor of North Maluku, because it is not backed by the Golkar Party, it did not discourage him to participate in political arena. His disappointment to Golkar Party was expressed by showing his support and participation in National Democratic Party (PDK). PDK succesfully brought him to Jakarta as a member of the house of representative in 2004-2009.

Third, the reform era, the political strategy took the Sultanate of Ternate are more varied. They consist of political parties and of strengthening and expansion of the cultural politics of kinship networks. In addition, he participated in political alliances through palaces Communication Forum in Indonesia (FKKKI).

### **CONCLUSION**

This experiment proved that throughout its history, the Sultanate of Ternate elite had

never lost its political legitimacy at the local level, and even at a certain period and the political context. Both the Sultan were able to play a significant role at the national level. As one of the traditional powers that are still alive since the beginning of independence until today, the existence of elite from Sultanate is supported by custom. This partly gives the Sultan political position as a role model in the center of the heart of community life even though he stayed in the capital which is far away from the local region. The sustainability of Sultanate of Ternate elites shows that their prevailing political role does not only limit to how they adapt to environmental changes, but also they are able to have a decisive influence on the political activities both local and national levels.

As a historical reality, the ability of Sultan to survive in the local politics was influenced by the belief of the people that it is the noble who is geneologically legitimate to rule Ternate. In the modern era, this legitimacy is socialized through various ceremonies conducted by the palace. This continuous socialization in turn generates public believe regarding the advantages and privileges of the nobility. Thus it generates a sense of obedience and inner peace as well as social welfare. As a central role model manifested in the government and bureaucracy in Ternate, the noble occupy important positions in local government structures in the city of Ternate.

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