SOCIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITIES OF THE EX-EAST TIMOR AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE BORDER AREAS OF INDONESIA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR LESTE IN THE DISTRICT OF NORTH CENTRAL TIMOR

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ABSTRACT

The focus of the research to be achieved in this simple study is to reveal the patterns of social interaction that exist between local residents and former East Timorese residents who live around the border area. Meanwhile, the final goal sought is how harmonization exists between communities in strengthening national identity as Indonesian citizens or as citizens of the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste who live in Indonesian territory. The method used is qualitative with a cultural study approach, with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation of local community groups and former East Timorese residents in the border areas of North Central Timor Regency. For data analysis techniques, researchers used interactive model data analysis techniques with data reduction. Based on research results.

Keywords: Interaction Patterns, Ex-East Timor Society, Borders, Cultural Studies

INTRODUCTION

Traces of social interaction patterns that occurred between local communities and the people of former East Timor have a long historical track record starting from the referendum event that occurred in 1999 in East Timor Province (when it was still part of Indonesia) until it became an independent country until now. this (Kolne, 2014). This point was the forerunner to the dichotomy of mingling between local and former East Timorese communities in North Central Timor Regency (Nino, 2018). Discussions related to the borders of Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste which

are often found focus on regional border conflicts, for example, research conducted by (Elpius Kalembang, Yosef Serano Korbaffo, Ronaldus Nurak, 2022), focuses on the role of non-State actors in resolving State boundary disputes Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste contribute to the idea that the contested land dispute has local wisdom nuances because the division of territory emphasizes customary agreements in border areas. This research explores social interactions between local communities living near the border and former East Timorese residents in North Central Timor District. Using a qualitative cultural studies approach, this research investigates various aspects of people's lives such as culture, education, and economics. This research aims to reveal the dynamics of social interactions between the two groups, highlighting the historical and cultural ties that influence their relationship. This examination of border communities and their unique characteristics within the field of cultural studies highlights the dynamics of power, identity, and social cohesion, offering insights for societal change and inclusivity in the face of global challenges. Moving forward, this research will continue to monitor and analyze evolving social interactions over the next five years, with a focus on harmonious relations between former East Timorese residents and local communities, as well as their relations with the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Social interaction is a dynamic relationship that occurs between individuals and groups, which is characterized by the exchange of meanings and symbols. The process of social interaction is essential for communication and contact, which are prerequisites for building social relationships, and plays an important role in shaping the cultural and social fabric of society, as exemplified by the shared heritage of the Atoni Pah Meto people throughout Timor. The study of communities within each country's borders with their own uniqueness is part of the concept of power in cultural studies. The concept of power itself is one of the key concepts in cultural studies which pays special attention to marginalized groups in the context of issues such as class, race, gender, nationality and age group (Barker, 2008). The position of border communities as marginal and marginalized groups is very dynamic because they constantly interact with Indonesian society on the one hand and with the people of neighboring countries on the other (Pannison, 2011). Given this position, it is surprising that social interaction is so fluid and unaffected by state administrative boundaries, especially when communities share the same ethnic affiliation and strong kinship ties. This is based on Bunnett's statement that "Cultural studies refer to all the practices, institutions, and systems of classification in which the values, beliefs, abilities, lifestyles, and habitual forms of behavior of society are embedded" (Barker, 2008). Bennett further explained that the forms of power studied in cultural studies are very diverse, including gender, race, class, colonialism, and others. Cultural studies explores the relationship between forms of power and aims to develop ways of thinking about culture and power that can be utilized by various actors in an effort to bring about change (Held, 1999). Based on some of the foundations above, it is very important for researchers to research "Social Interactions Between the Ex-East Timor Community and Local Communities in the Border Areas of Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste in North Central Timor Regency".

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive research method (Creswell 2014), namely research on cultural approaches in managing the borders of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste which is located in North Central Timor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The informant collection technique used in this case is a cultural approach in managing the borders of the Republic of Indonesia–Democratic Republic of Timor Leste. This research uses a snowball sampling technique, namely a technique of taking initial data sources that are small in number, then expanded because the scope of existing data sources is deemed unable to answer all the topics the researcher wants, so the researcher adds other informants. to strengthen previously existing data. The informants selected included traditional leaders, community leaders, several traditional institutions including traditional leaders and amaf, as well as village governments located around the border area, along with a number of officers, as well as border security officers on duty at the border. This research data is then processed through several stages, namely data reduction by classifying the data obtained, processing it comprehensively to obtain meaningful information, then displaying the data by arranging the data systematically so that it is easy to understand, then verifying the data and finally drawing conclusions.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The similarities in traditions, customs and history as well as the beliefs of the Atoni Meto people show that the presence of national borders does not separate them in carrying out social relations activities with each other. Moreover, their relationship was also influenced by the Atoni Meto intermarrying factor. Ethnic relations in these two countries after the separation of East Timor from the Republic of Indonesia were reproduced through cross-border activities carried out by individuals from the Atoni Meto community.

Cultural methods can help improve border governance, which so far has not been optimal for resolving various local problems. Looking at the reality on the ground regarding Atoni Meto's cultural conditions, especially in the context of strengthening border governance, the diversity of ethnic public property can be used as social capital to complement or strengthen state policies. Strengthening the Role of Traditional Houses and Traditional Rites as Arenas for Ethnic Communication: The previous explanation shows that the governments of Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste must be proactive in building cultural communication patterns based on Atoni Meto. Cultural goals and traditions must be prioritized.

In the Atoni Meto traditional house, residents not only gather to perform rites or various tasks related to the Sublime and the Holy, but also gather to listen to the chief tell them about their responsibilities and rights as a group. The words and advice of tribal

chiefs are highly valued because they always contain various meaningful suggestions about how to live their daily lives in a more appropriate and decent way.

The traditional house unites all members of the tribe, and everyone always attends all meetings there. The traditional house is everything, so all tribal members must sincerely follow what is happening around them. In every traditional house, all tribal members gather, and the ancestors gather with the Divine. When traditional rituals and traditions are carried out around traditional houses, the Atoni Meto ethnic belief shows a close relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm. The traditional house, as a "spiritual capital", becomes a place of unity between heaven and earth because of the harmony between those above and those below, as well as all people from all the winds: north, south, east and west.

Traditional houses are very effective in dealing with problems in border areas by talking about and resolving problems experienced by members of the Atoni Meto community. If this traditional house can function well, the government should be able to use this role to support various government policies, including other development and social policies, which will help accelerate the development of border areas. Traditional houses are always seen socio-anthropologically as special places where customs and traditions function as a way to unite all conflicting residents. This is mainly because of the role of the traditional house as a place that embraces all parties, a place that unites all citizens, including those who are in conflict.

There is a belief among the Atoni Meto ethnic group that every conflict can be resolved by itself if all the residents gather in the traditional house. In traditional houses, tribal heads or traditional elders will use their brilliant abilities to repair harmony that has been damaged by an atmosphere of conflict. The Atoni Meto ethnic community has a number of local wisdoms contained in their social and cultural systems. This local wisdom is then translated into religious beliefs and emotional ties in their transcendental relationship with supernatural powers, conceptions and expressions of life, nature, goals, knowledge, and interpretive frameworks of the world.

Basically, local wisdom has a very strategic capacity to build societal civilization. Traditional rites carried out together during annual cultural events, such as Fuah Pah, Hamis Batar, and Hatama Maus, are culturally sacred moments, but politically they can be used as a momentum to interact and communicate in a dialogical atmosphere full of a sense of solidarity between fellow ethnic group. This traditional rite is social capital and a place for interaction and communication, which if carried out regularly can produce better results.

One of the meanings that must be captured from this event is as follows: (a) strengthening social friendship between ethnic groups which is "one nation, two countries"; (b) creating effective communication between traditional leaders present at the event to strengthen social harmony between them; (c) the opportunity to talk about various problems so as to find effective solutions to their internal problems; and (d) the

opportunity to exchange ideas and information to help (e) The momentum of this tradition can be used to build cultural diplomacy between two countries without formal intervention from the government, even in a political context.

By strengthening social relations between Atoni Meto ethnic groups, several benefits will be created, such as: border security will be guaranteed because both communities will agree to maintain and maintain the security conditions that the state is always concerned about; harmonious cooperation can be built, especially in the fields of education, health, economics (traditional markets, local export opportunities), and other things that can be raised and created by the community itself. The policy of free cross-border travel must support the function of traditional houses and rites as a means of communication for the Atoni Meto ethnic group living in both countries.

From a security and international law perspective, crossing national borders freely without cross-border documents can be considered an unlawful act. However, this policy can be applied in a cultural context because ethnic communities have many of the same social backgrounds, including customs, language, religion and other cultural aspects.

The Atoni Meto ethnic group has established traditional institutions for natural reasons and for political reasons rather than cultural and economic interests. Due to the fact that it consists of only a few close tribes (such as Lake and Kolo), its area is relatively small. On the other hand, official institutions that support the interests of Timorese people include the Atoni Meto ethnic group, such as the Persehatian Orang Timor (POT) and the Atoni Meto Persehatian Communication Forum (FK-PAM). These forums were established for political purposes ahead of legislative elections and regional head elections. The forum has not done other good things, such as supporting the interests of the Atoni Meto ethnic group in various problems, such as poverty and underdevelopment.

The government carried out direct appointments, ignoring the traditional election procedures which should have been carried out according to custom. The state is considered to have destroyed the cultural values respected by the Atoni Meto ethnic community. Therefore, the traces of legitimate descendants, also known as traditional figures, must be studied and re-examined. In this way, traditional institutions can be accepted and gain strong legitimacy in the Atoni Meto indigenous community. The best way to achieve harmonization in border areas is to strengthen local institutions. This society consists of people with the same ethnic Atoni Meto, although they are different in terms of state law.

So the formal strengthening of traditional institutions in each country's location must be mediated. Strengthening traditional institutions is carried out solely to maintain the "aura of harmonization" so that it is not damaged by momentary political interests. Obedience to customary authority which originates from the traditional structures owned by the Atoni Meto ethnic groups is referred to as customary institutions. Practically speaking, countries also have certain systems and practices that Atoni Meto citizens must follow in all their countries. This means that the "customary institutional" systems,

patterns and strategies in question must not interfere with the state institutional systems and patterns that have been formally established and bind all citizens' interests.

Therefore, to ensure that Atoni Meto ethnic citizens interact well among those living in each country, each country must establish laws or practical field guidelines that must be followed. Building a traditional institution is a difficult task because on the one hand it must be under the umbrella of the state, and on the other hand it must encompass the Atoni Meto ethnic people who live throughout the territory of the two countries.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion regarding the border between Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste which formed a regional border conflict, which has a different story line from one to the other. The discussion regarding the borders of Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste focuses on regional border conflicts, emphasizing the role of non-State actors in resolving border disputes between Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste. Traces of social interaction patterns that occurred between local communities and the former East Timor community have a long historical track record starting from the referendum event that occurred in 1999 in East Timor Province (when it was still part of Indonesia) until it became an independent country. This research aims to reveal a pattern of social interaction that occurs between local communities spread around the border area and also residents of former East Timor in North Central Timor Regency. Cultural studies is a qualitative approach with a cultural study strategy, which reveals the social relations of social life, starting from culture, the education system and the economy of society. The approaches and problem solutions offered include increasing and expanding interactions between communities, offering inclusive values and interaction patterns in daily life, implementing and ensuring the existence of community diversity, and increasing knowledge and reflection on the future with increasingly massive global challenges that require unity as a nation.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusions above, the researcher conveys several important points that are able to resolve some of the problems above, namely to the relevant government in North Central Timor Regency to immediately form or perpetuate traditional based communities as the foundation for harmonization of values which in the future will become easier with current developments. This is important to strengthen ties of brotherhood between community groups in border areas.

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