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Dialectics of Democracy in the Framework of Politics Primordialism Local Elections:

A Case Study of the People of West Sumba District and East Sumba District

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Abstract: The momentum of local elections is difficult to separate from primordial politics in the form of local culture in a region. The factors of ethnicity, ethnicity, religion, and cultural practices and rituals have a significant influence on the substance of holding local elections. This article discusses primordial political methods as part of local democracy in traditional Kedde techniques in West Sumba and the Ata (servant)/Maramba (Tuan) culture. A cultural technique has an impact on local elections. The Kedde culture is a space for politicians to gain electoral support. The Ata/Maramba culture threatens political rights and participation due to extreme patron-client relations because it covers all aspects of life, especially local elections of politics. With this reality, local democracy in the regional elections has further reduced the democratic values put forward by David Beetham, namely public control and political equality. This research aims to open the horizons of local democracy in the context of local elections and is expected to contribute to the evaluation of the implementation of local elections. This research shows that aspects of local traditions and culture and the Ata/Maramba tradition are actually used as a means of gaining electoral support, which in reality is contrary to liberal-style democracy. So, it is suggested to change the format of asymmetric local elections based on socio-cultural which can prevent potential violations.

Keywords: primordialism; politics; democracy

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1. Introduction

Local elections are closely related to cultural issues contrary to universal democratic values. Often, issues of ethnicity, ethnicity, and religion enter and are intertwined, thus destroying local elections' quality. Primordial problems become part of the political dynamics of local leaders, which can trigger horizontal conflicts. Local elections as a concrete manifestation of local democracy reflect the conditions and uniqueness of a democratic pattern, which is inversely proportional to western liberal democracy. However, the locality dimension of democracy, from Western scientists' view, is like the symptoms and pathology of the big concept of democracy that has been practiced and has become a barometer of world politics.

This justification is evident when we are shown the endless problems of local elections. It is full of violence, transactional politics, hate speech with ethnic, religious, racial, and intercultural nuances (SARA), political immaturity of candidate pairs in accepting defeat, violations of the neutrality of the State Civil Apparatus and their forms. Other from the heat of political tension in the regional elections in Indonesia. The journey of local elections, which is shrouded in fear of the various problems above, if not managed and prevented, will claim lives due to social conflicts. It is because it involves primordial sentiments, namely race, ethnicity, religion, and ethnicity. This reality must be acknowledged as a big challenge for local democracy advocacy by democracy activists who have struggled for democratization in the regions.

A tragically evident phenomenon was the DKI Jakarta local elections in 2017. The battle between Basuki Tjahaja Purnama vs. Anies Baswedan heated up because of the massive amount of hate speech, hoaxes, and identity politics narratives used to tarnish one of the candidates' political image. This fact has already decorated the public space and provoked negative emotions from those not involved in it. Although technically, the local elections' stages went well, the substance of the elections was reduced to the lowest point.

Pilkada should be the most legitimate contestation institutionalized in such a way as to present the political ideas of each participant without the nuances of ethnic, religious, racial, and intercultural nuances (SARA). This perception has normatively become the mainstay of the universal form of democracy advocated throughout the world. However, this view becomes utopian if you look at the existing cultural realities. Indonesia, which is undoubtedly plurality, shows the opposite fact. The feeling of ethnicity, religious similarity, race, and culture is the strongest electoral preference or can be the initial foundation before choosing another.

Apart from being the main factor, the primordial aspect invites a strong sentiment of in-group identity, which tends to negate other groups who are different. Feelings of affluence turn to negative emotions when insults or insults arise from other groups. It even escalates to violence if specific issues are mobilized due to the defeat of one of the candidate pairs he supports. Candidate pairs act as a representative of the group, which is considered to bring prosperity to the primordial group.

Local elections of DKI Jakarta in 2017 show an expression of the primordial group's diversity with a new, more complex dimension, namely social media. Virtual space is an option due to its free, easy use, and covers all country regions. However, it will limit the use of social media if the area does not yet have or is constrained by an internet/signal network. These problems are a stimulus for elites in creating digital democracy following the development of information technology.

This study tries to parse the primordial politics that often appear in local elections and have deep roots in a region's culture. The form of primordial politics is shown through a cultural tradition that is transformed into a new patronage space due to being exploited by politicians in the regional elections. Local democratic practices that occur in West Sumba and East Sumba districts show that the local elections' customs have implications for implementing regional elections prone to be infiltrated by electoral interests. Even under certain conditions, the right to vote is violated through the power relations shown by the Tuan and Servant culture in East Sumba.

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The province of East Nusa Tenggara is famous for its diversity of ethnicities, religions, customs, cultures, and geographical conditions of the islands. Geographically, East Nusa Tenggara lies among 566 islands with a population of 4.9 million. The people of East Nusa Tenggara consist of sixteen significant ethnicities. With this award, East Nusa Tenggara is a province that represents a small miniature of Indonesia.

This diversity is connected with the politicization of identity (primordial) in the electoral agenda. As well as being their awareness, primordial politics in East Nusa Tenggara is a powerful weapon for elites to gain votes during local elections. The characteristics of East Nusa Tenggara, where the people are very fanatical about cultural and religious customs, make a lot of communities based on traditions and religions in the regions. The community is very dependent on the figure or leader. Politicians can use strong models to gain support. In reviewing primordial politics in East Nusa Tenggara, the author explores several practices seen through the political preferences of the people of East Nusa Tenggara and the cultural roots of primordial politics that justify radical patronage relations.

2. Methods

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Qualitative research is deemed adequate for understanding primordialism's political phenomenon in the East Nusa Tenggara region, especially West Sumba and East Sumba districts. Qualitative research can be defined as research that produces descriptive data about spoken and written words. This definition is in line with the researchers' aims and intentions in this study, who want to see and describe electoral primordialism's political phenomenon through the practices and traditional rites in West and East Sumba.

In collecting the required information data, the authors perform primary and secondary data collection techniques. Primary data results from interviews with traditional leaders and the ranks of the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) for West Sumba and East Sumba Regencies. The data collected is based on information data through documents containing articles, books, the internet, journals, and sources related to this research.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Locality vs. Universality of Democracy

The blueprint for democracy cannot be separated from its orientation towards developed countries such as the United States. It is as if modern democracy is the main face of democracy globally and nationally in Indonesia. This view denies the social reality of society at the local level. Indonesia, which is formed from a history of nationalism in areas which geographically and topographically, down to its human skin color, ethnicity, and color, it undeniable that locality builds the meaning of Indonesianness, which has been promoted throughout the world.

Studies on local politics are indeed colored by unique phenomena that are difficult to juxtapose with democratic values. However, local elements are old traditions of democracy, although the locality is considered undemocratic from the perspective of universal democracy. A new perspective is needed for the variant of democracy by looking further at local phenomena in the regions. Like the jargon, all politics is local put forward by O'Neill and Hymel in 1995, that the local becomes a school of democracy, both the elite and the people (Bayo et al., 2018). The term school emphasizes that local phenomena are not necessarily the primary example but instead become dialectical learning towards the real goals of democracy.

Indonesian local politics is often combined with primordial politics, which is patronage and controlled by local oligarchs. This perception should become a meeting point for serious advocacy of local democracy by academics to promote public

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participation and civilized political contestation. If we are a Joseph Schumpeterian democracy, we will be trapped by an electoral democracy that is very procedural and is limited to a rigid method that must practice formally. If applied to local democracy, it will deadlock this theoretical assumption because it will only be shackled by new cultural-nuanced patronage and clientelism.

Meanwhile, David Beetham formulates democracy as public control over public affairs based on political equality (Bayo et al., 2018). Locality needs to be positioned with David Beetham's democratic concept as a critical advocacy effort to achieve political equality. Primordial politics often appears very difficult to achieve political equality because public and individual controls on public and private affairs are blocked by elements of culture, ethnicity, ethnicity, and religion. The author tries to explain a primordial political practice, which is reflected in the voting behavior and cultural ties of the people of West Sumba and East Sumba.

3.2. Conceptual Review of Primordialism Politics

Azyumardi Azra, in his writing entitled Politics of Primordialism in Kompas Daily, October 11, 2016, revealed the definition of Primordialism as an intrinsic feeling of pride, dedication, and intense emotions in ethnicity, race, religion, language, history, and one's own country of origin. The UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta professor explained two types of Primordialism, namely hard Primordialism and soft Primordialism (Azra, 2016).

Hard Primordialism produces excessive racial and ethnic sentiments/chauvinism, which can develop into religious sectarianism, leading to disintegration. Soft Primordialism is loyalty to race, ethnicity, and religion, accompanied by an awareness of the importance of harmonious relations with other groups. In soft Primordialism, there is a high tolerance climate that results in all different groups' constructive relationships to build a peaceful and conducive atmosphere (Azra, 2016).

In the book Rakyatisme dan Esai-esai Lain by Nugroho (2017), Primordialism politics has an inner reaction that always tries to adapt to its environment. It is manifested from previously sporadic and unorganized actions into an organized movement to move towards a better life. The next reaction is to move, arouse, and arouse the feelings and enthusiasm of many people. Alois A. Nugroho sees primordial politics as capable of actualizing humans' characteristics as social creatures, thus triggering the participation of people from the same group. That person becomes happy, courageous, ready to act, and prepared to share the same view as his primordial group. In that sense, a group of initially hesitant or less militant people became a mass who had a strong or even radical belief in their goals.

Primordial politics accentuates the enthusiasm of the masses, which, to some extent, ignores rationality in humans (Nugroho, 2017). The neglect of rationality in the concept of universal democracy is in stark contrast. Identical to the masses, the practice of primordialism fosters primordial bonds in a network formed through culture and customs passed down from generation to generation. Loyalty to ethnicity and culture is very thickly manifested culturally through customary rites, which are practiced daily. Efforts to achieve ties and gain loyalty provide space for politicians to win political support for local elections. So, ethnicity sentiment and mass mobilization are obtained through habits and customs "infiltrated" by politicians for political purposes. Inner reactions are not always formed naturally but can also develop through mobilization. This phenomenon is shown from the Keddey culture in West Sumba in the next section. This culture indicates that primordial politics are not always formed naturally but can manipulate political interests that sneak into the culture's sacred space.

3.3. East Nusa Tenggara Community Political Preferences

The characteristics of the pluralistic people of East Nusa Tenggara and the strong influence of traditional localities also impact the people's political preferences during

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Partner Name	Ethnicity/Region	Religion
Esthon L. Foenay, M.Si. - Paul Edmundus Tallo, S.Sos., M.Par. (Esthon-Paul Package)	Timor (Kupang City) - Flores (Ngada)	Protestant - Catholic
Drs. Ibrahim Agustinus Medah - Emannuel Melkiades Lakalena, S.Si. (Tunas Package)	Rote - Flores (Ende)	Protestant - Catholic
Drs. Christian Rotok - Ir. Abraham Paul Liyanto (Cristal Package)	Flores (East Manggarai) - Timor (Kupang City)	Catholic - Protestant
Drs. Frans Lebu Raya - Drs. Benny Alexander Litelnoni, S.H., M.Si. (Frenly Package)	Flores (East Flores) - Timor (South Central Timor)	Catholic - Protestant
Dr. Benny Kabur Harman, S.H., M.H. - Willem Nope, S.H. (BKH - Nope Package)	Flores (Manggarai) - Timor (South Central Timor)	Catholic - Protestant

Source: East Nusa Tenggara General Elections Commission

local elections. It has been proven by several studies on the 2013 local elections and the 2019 General Election. Quoting a study from Yoelvan Negong (2018), out of 4 candidate pairs who competed, each candidate pair won in their respective regions.

The Cristal Package won in the Manggarai Raya area (Manggarai, West Manggarai, East Manggarai, where most of the population is Christian-Christian. Esthon Paul won a victory in the city of Kupang, where the population is Protestant Christian. Benny K Harman (BKH)-Nope Package was lost in all districts/cities. It became the second winner in Manggarai Raya (Manggarai, Manggarai Barat, Manggarai Timur), where the majority of the population is Catholic Christian (Yoelvan Negong, 2018).

The study included religious and ethnic variables as independent variables and voting behavior as the dependent variable with 400 respondents from Kupang city residents. After analyzing and testing its reliability and validity using SPSS, it was concluded that ethnic and religious-based identity politics significantly affect voting behavior (Yoelvan Negong, 2018). Subsequent research by Frans Father Tokan entitled "Analysis of Voting Behavior in the Pilkada of Kupang City in 2017" seeks to find behavioral factors in voting for members of Kupang City in the Pilkada of Kupang City with candidate pairs of Yonas Salean and Niko Frans against candidate pairs Jefri Riwu Kore Kore and Herman Man with indicators sociological and psychological factors.

The descriptive survey method and multi-stage random sampling technique found that the citizens of Kupang city's voting behavior tend to have a sociological character by 63.50%. Meanwhile, the reason for choosing psychological was 21%. The two studies above indicate that primordial considerations are a significant factor in the East Nusa Tenggara population (Yoelvan Negong, 2018). The influence of ethnicity, tribe, and religion in the voting behavior of the people of East Nusa Tenggara was also found in a study by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) through research on the Asymmetric local elections in 2014. The influence of religion and ethnicity has a powerful impact on people's voting behavior. Participation mechanisms and political choices based on primordial elements reduce human rationality to elect competent candidates. In a liberal democracy, the part of democracy in choosing is the primary indicator determining whether a society is democratic. Furthermore, we will describe the cultural roots of primordial political practices that form the patronage environment in West Sumba and East Sumba district.

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Figure 1. West Sumba culture

3.4. Cultural Roots of Patronage in Primordialism Politics

3.4.1. Political Culture "Kedde" in West Sumba

The literal meaning of kedde is "wake up," which the people of West Sumba define to elevate a person or family's dignity when holding traditional ceremonies, both death and parties. Kedde culture is known as a habit/way of lightening the burden of someone who is having a party/ceremony. In Sumba region, assessment of the dignity of a person/family for each Traditional Ceremony is the number of Pig and Buffalo animals that will be slaughtered during the ceremony to be eaten together.

Through Kedde, if a person/family lacks an animal to be slaughtered (eaten), then the relative or other family will help bring the animal to be sacrificed. The assistance will become a debt of gratitude and a sense of emotional dependence on the aid provider. It is because the aid provider is considered to have helped save the dignity of the family holding the party. This process provides an entry point for politicians to make primordial ties in their electoral network.

Based on an interview with the Head of the West Sumba General Election Supervisory Agency, the culture of Kedde is often used by candidates for local elections to reap electoral incentives. In the Chairperson of the West Sumba General Election Supervisory Agency, the tradition of Kedde, which is used for political interests, not only ensnares ordinary people but can attract the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) to join political networks in local elections. ASN, which is part of politicians' tradition, will be mobilized to become a success/supporter team for politicians. ASN support can realize through state facilities' use to assist in the campaign process of politicians. Not infrequently, this phenomenon is called Kedde politics by figures in West Sumba.

The political phenomenon of Kedde reflects that local culture is often a channel for elite electoral mobilization for momentary political interests. Local wisdom that should contain guiding moral values for the community has turned into an instrument to gain power. The tradition of Kedde should be interpreted as an effort to help each other sincerely between fellow citizens, is politicized in such a way. Using local practices indicates that the local elections directly helped drag culture into the dark space of democracy. So, it is necessary to evaluate the implementation of local elections directly.

3.4.2. Patron Culture of "Ata-Maramba" Clients in East Sumba

Like West Sumba, the East Sumba district people still adhere to the customs and culture of their ancestral heritage. One of the cultures still preserved in the social caste system or social strata is based on heredity. The caste order includes the first layer, the

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Maramba (aristocrats), who control the political sphere, landlords, and "rule" over the slaves. The second layer is Kabihu (free people), who are ordinary citizens in general. The third or lowest layer is the "ata" group of slaves/servants controlled by their master, namely the Maramba. Their title can recognize Maramba circles to men, namely Umbu or Tamu Umbu, and women, namely Rambu or Tamu Rambu (Solihin, n.d.).

This practice of Lord and Servant has been preserved to this day. The life of a Servant depends entirely on his master. They are employed as domestic servants, garden workers, cloth workers, caretakers of animals for little or no wages. As a result of the ancestral ties formed and passed down from generation to generation, the two's relationship did not become extinct. Maramba, as the Lord, completely entrusted all his business and property to their workers to be managed, such as rice fields, yards, plantations, animals, and cloth crafts. Ownership of servants by his master also raises his social status because the more Servants he "owns," the more his economic ability and social standing (Solihin, n.d.).

Ironically, this practice is legitimized by the local Sumba belief or religion called Marapu. Marapuyang also believes in the ancestors who believe the relationship between servants and the Lord lasts to the afterlife (Solihin, n.d.). Even in ancient times, a servant's loyalty to his master was manifested by self-sacrifice when the master died. Ata's deceased Maramba will be followed by suicide through beheading or buried alive as a form of loyalty to his master. The act done voluntarily to die accompanying his master in the grave (Solihin, n.d.).

Although this practice never happens again, emotionally, the relationship and position between servant and master is maintained. The form of the cultural relations between Tuan and Servant is similar to the concept of a patron-client political culture where Maramba is a patron and Ata is a client. As political patrons, maramba protect the ata through economic and educational facilities. Ata then responded through absolute loyalty, including political support. The scope of patronage between Maramba and Ata, which covers all aspects of life, threatens individual political rights in the electoral process. Ata, as a servant, will be trapped by the political domination of Maramba as the master in choosing a candidate for local leaders.

The orientation of choosing Ata as a client will undoubtedly follow Maramba's political participation, the political patron. This incident is contrary to freedom and the principle of one man one vote in local elections mandated by the constitution. This cultural condition becomes an obstacle to the local level's democratization process because it collides with a culture that is considered to have existed before the state's existence. Religion is a concept of democracy. Even in the matching and updating stages of the 2020 local elections voter list, it was found that a case of an Ata/servant did not have an e-KTP (e-ID card) or other population administration documents. Based on an interview with the Head of the East Sumba General Election Supervisory Agency, it is because Maramba or the master did not allow it. The master's reason is that if the servant has a population document, it is feared that the slave will leave him. This case shows an attempt to unilaterally revoke other citizens' political rights and rights on the grounds of ancestral culture. It has become a custom in East Sumba that all Ata identity documents are always kept and guarded by the maramba.

3.4.3. Maramba's Supremacy Against Ata

The influence of Maramba will eliminate the freedom to choose or because it is obliged to follow the will of Maramba in selecting a particular candidate pair. If Ata refuses to follow Maramba's political choice to select a different pair of candidates, he will experience "punishment" from Maramba. The punishment is in the form of not being provided for, namely, not being given wages such as money and food to violence. This consequence occurred in several cases when Ata was caught talking about different candidate pairs with their maramba choices. One of the issues happened in the Paberi Wai district, where the Ata was not fulfilled just because he talked and talked about a

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candidate pair that was not the choice of Marambanya. The needs for Ata facilitated by Marambanya are very diverse, from daily meals to education at all levels.

Based on an interview with the Head of the Supervisory Committee for the District of Paberiwai, East Sumba, if Ata has a different political orientation from their maramba, he must be prepared for the consequences of being given a living until he experiences violence. After giving "punishment," the two changed the interaction pattern where the Maramba reduced communication with the Atanya so that the Ata could contemplate his mistakes and returned to follow their maramba's wishes. From the case above, the behavior of choosing Ata really depends on his Marambanya, Ata is in an inferior position, which is very difficult to make political choices that are different from his Maramba. According to Marapuata's belief, it can experience "disaster" if it is not in line with their maramba.

The phenomenon above is included in the category of general elections malpractice Manipulation of Vote Choice, namely the manipulation of voter elections, which aims to direct and change voter choices in various manipulative ways. Maramba, based on influence as a patron, dominates the actions and behavior of choosing Ata according to his will to achieve his goals. The manipulation carried out by the maramba is through violent means, both physically and non-physically. Physical violence occurs when Maramba finds out that his servant chooses or supports the local elections candidate pair against his choice. This malpractice also happened before local elections, where there was a population data problem in the form of an e-KTP (e-ID card), which was not owned by or due to the master's intention not to care for it due to fear of losing his servant.

This cultural problem has proven to hinder citizens' right to exercise their right to vote and violates the principle of universal suffrage or universal suffrage, which includes the right to vote and be elected. Universal means that every adult has the same right to vote regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, political understanding, wealth, or status. As also contained in the constitution article 28 D paragraph 1, everyone has the right to recognize, guarantee, protect, and legal certainty that is just and equal treatment before the law. Besides, the general principle in general elections is also violated, which is interpreted as ensuring equal opportunity applies to all citizens without discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, race, class, gender, region, occupation, and social status.

3.4.4. Political Contextualization of Primordialism in Democracy According to David Beetham

The implementation of primordial politics in electoral democracy in East Nusa Tenggara is shown by the people's political preferences that are close to ethnicity and religion. A case study of West Sumba and East Sumba through Kedde culture and Ata/Servant and Maramba/Tuan patron-client relationships showing a radical patronage pattern which is bound culturally and becomes the cultural history of genetic heritage. But it becomes dangerous if these cultural ties negate the political rights of the people. Democracy that is built from an individual's awareness of political policies that are useful for his life must stop due to the domination of perennial/eternal customs and become the individual's psychic consciousness.

Cultural practices in the two regions contradict David Beetham's definition of democracy. The culture of Ata and Maramba explicitly shows that no political equality exists. The unequal power relation reduces the human rights of the servant. Meanwhile, Maramba controls both public and private socio-political affairs (Ata). Thus, the decision-making process is tied back to the primordial bond. Beetham's democratic parameter means that public control is not achieved in the context of Pilkada politics in East Sumba.

The conflict between local democracy, which is intertwined with cultural aspects that are emotionally attached to society, is undoubtedly a polemic compared to liberal democracy. It is not surprising that there are doubts that can practice liberal

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democracy in Western countries' style in the local realm that is identical to each region's culture. The utopian view that liberal democracy can be fused with the local political process may be correct because the concept of modern democracy is often at odds with existing customs.

Expecting a local arena with the above experiences for local elites to learn to be democratic is naive. The cases in West Sumba and East Sumba show a pattern of violent primordialism when tracing Azyumardi Azra's definition as a type of primordialism that relies on strong ethnic sentiments. This sentiment ultimately hampered the democratization process in the local sphere. According to Alois Nugroho, seeing the political concept of primordialism, which refers to mass'ism, is more or less illustrated in the case of West Sumba because the Kedde culture includes a group of people who were intertwined with broad kinship relations. Meanwhile, in the case of East Sumba, the nuances of primordialism refer to individuals.

4. Conclusion

Even though it is overshadowed by pessimism, the spirit of prioritizing voter education strategies must be encouraged with optimism that Pilkada is a form of procedural democracy that provides freedom for every individual to participate. Based on the problems above, a new format for organizing elections is needed that is adjusted to the socio-cultural context of the region as appropriate. Voter rationality is a long process that is imposed not only on voters but by local political elites. Political elites as patrons have a crucial role in changing the face of local politics to become more civilized by prioritizing human rights.

Based on existing research facts, an asymmetrical election format that accommodates people's sovereignty without eliminating the freedom of choice and local culture is needed. Asymmetry refers to individual abilities and the extent to which democratic maturity. Asymmetry can accommodate the level of voter rationality in executing their political choices.

If individuals can consider their political choices rationally, direct local elections can be implemented without dragging local culture and customs into the dark space of democracy. Suppose it was found that there are many uses of traditions as a means of electoral mobilization and the existence of Ata's right to vote that has not been accommodated. In that case, the direct regional election can be changed in format or replaced through elections through the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) while increasing political maturity gradually to all social elements.

The above conditions show the distorted essence of culture due to a few people's electoral political sentiments. A regional election is needed, which also respects local wisdom based on socio-culture. Local democratic parties must be implemented by using the people's political efficacy in local elections, and their implementation must be following democratic principles. The performance of asymmetric local elections in West Sumba and East Sumba's local elections can indirectly close the gap in the politicization of customs and culture to intimidation and violence. At the same time, political education and voting socialization were promoted massively to all indigenous peoples without exception.

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