

Power in Contest, Hegemony in Harmony: Study of The Position of Chinese Associations in North Sumatra Towards Chinese Ethnic Legislative Candidates in the Legislative Elections of North Sumatra in 2019

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Abstract: Awakened by education awareness and longing for identity, the history of the political life of the Chinese elite in this country is very interesting to study. The uniqueness of the role (especially social, cultural, economic, and political) of the Chinese in Indonesia is illustrated in the long journey of the Indonesian nation. It is important to divide the historical roots of Chinese politics in Indonesia into several periods. The determination of this period is based on arguments linking the Chinese political role with the three stages of the struggle of the Indonesian people, namely the pre-nationalism stage (1900-1907), the proto-nationalism stage (1908-1926), and the actual stage of Indonesian nationalism (1927-1942). This study is aimed at examining the interest of ethnic Chinese in entering the world of practical politics, which triggers the author to examine the ideology of ethnic Chinese associations in discourse and socio-political reality in North Sumatra, and to see more clearly and validly the growth of thoughts of ethnic Chinese in North Sumatra about values of political and national development. This study seeks to reveal the power relations between ethnic Chinese associations and the Chinese ethnic community in local political contestations in Sumatra. In the end, this study will be able to find the relationship between the dominance and hegemony by the elite of Chinese associations against the ethnic Chinese and the ideological motives in these power relations.

1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to divide the historical roots of Chinese politics in Indonesia into several periods. The determination of this period is based on arguments linking the Chinese political role with the three stages of the struggle of the Indonesian people, namely the pre-nationalism stage (1900-1907), the proto-nationalism stage (1908-1926), and the actual stage of Indonesian nationalism (1927-1942).

This stage was added again in the post-independence period, namely the Old Order (1945-1966), the New Order regime (1967-1998), and the Reformation era (1998 to date). Most of the published literature notes that the political awareness of this ethnic group was formed through the modern *Tiong Hoa Hwe Kwan* (THHK) association in 1900, earlier than the first national association "Boedi Oetomo" which was founded in 1908 (Liao et. al, 1981).

The presence of various elite Chinese associations in Indonesia at that time was inseparable from the influence of nationalism and modernization that had grown in China since the late 19th century. In the early days there were 3 types of orientation for Chinese ethnic groups in Indonesia, namely:

1. The China-oriented association, represented by THHK in the field of education and culture, *Sin Po* in the field of newspapers, *Siang Hwee* in the field of trade, and *Soe Po Sia* in the political field.
2. The Dutch-educated intellectual group oriented to the Dutch East Indies government represented by the *Chung Hua Hui* (CHH) group.
3. The Indonesian-oriented ethnic Chinese nationalist group. This group was represented by the Chinese Indonesian Party (*Suryadinata*, 1975).

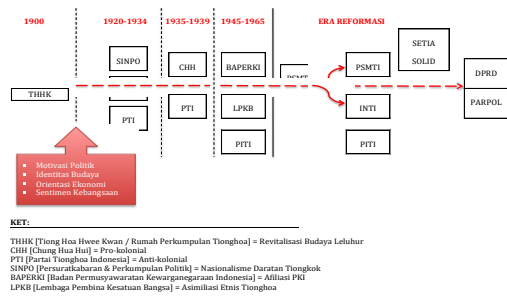


Figure 1: Periodization and orientation of Chinese associations.

The history of the Chinese political role in the country is actually quite long, but the author limits it by looking for the historical roots of Chinese politics in Indonesia during the era of the Indonesian national movement. This choice was made based on arguments linking the Chinese political role with the two stages of the struggle of the Indonesian nation, namely the proto-nationalist stage (1908-1926), and the actual stage of Indonesian nationalism (1927-1942), namely when the concept of a nation state, symbol, flag, and song was adopted. nationality began to emerge.

According to Ufen (2006), ethnic Chinese are trying to get out of the stigma as a neutral group on the political stage. On the other hand, geopolitically, China's influence is getting bigger in Southeast Asia and is expanding at the global level. The same thing also happened to Indonesia, which is the largest country in the Southeast Asia region and has sufficient potential to grow as a "giant" country at the Asia Pacific level. Of course, in the perspective of international relations that are free and active and prioritize the interests of the nation, Indonesia will choose a path that is closer to China.

This closeness can occur if all elements related to the relationship between the two countries can help each other without anything that actually makes each other weak. In Indonesia, which is pluralistic and consists of several ethnicities, relations with the Chinese are the most dynamic, both in terms of historical and political ethnography. In fact, the existing geopolitical challenges are closely related to the ethnic Chinese and their ancestral country, China.

If these two relationships are in harmony, the geopolitical relationship that occurs will be even closer because diplomatic patterns can be formed starting from state to state (Government to Government, company to company (Business to Business) and between people from both (People to People).

This conclusion is reflected in the thoughts of Anwar (2019) and Tanasaldy (2013), in which they

published various scientific works that observed the political movements and activities of the Chinese, including their correlation in the increasingly warm and open China-Indonesia relations. However, Suryadinata (1990) thinks that until now the relations between the two countries have not been as perfect and perfect as imagined because they are still colored by stereotyped views between ethnic groups at the grassroots level.

Table 1: The orientation of Chinese ethnic groups.

Number	Period	Orientation
1	Dutch East Indies Colonial Government	Divided into 3 socio-political orientations, namely: 1. Orientation to China (Sin Po) who believes that the local Chinese are members of the Chinese nation. This group is full-blooded Chinese 2. Orientation to the Colonial Dutch East Indies (Chung Hua Hui) who understand their position as Dutch subjects while continuing their life as Peranakan Chinese 3. Orientation as an Indonesian nation who will join the Chinese Indonesian Party and be a peranakan Chinese
2	Old Order Period	Divided into 2 groups: 1. Orientation to China 2. Orientation to Indonesia but is further divided into two groups, namely: a. Integrationist groups: those who still want their identity as peranakan Chinese b. Assimilationist groups: those who want the fusion of ethnic Chinese into indigenous Indonesian society
3	New Order Period	Most of the Chinese people are conditioned to follow the assimilation policy implemented by the authorities and make ethnic Chinese become discriminated against in the political divide.
4	Reform Era	The ethnic Chinese political spirit re-emerged and formed Chinese political parties, but most of the Peranakan Chinese leaders wanted to take the path of assimilation with indigenous parties and groups with the aim that Chinese identity was still firmly rooted among the Chinese group in general.

Politically, the individual role of Chinese citizens is not that significant, especially when faced with the ups and downs of the relationship between the Indonesian government and the PRC, which causes the political space of the Chinese citizens to be limited to their own organizations which are still traditional in nature and have an economic character. These political aspirations have in many ways been championed by Chinese politicians, both in parliament and non-parliamentary. Chinese politicians in parliament continue to aspire to some of the interests and aspirations of Chinese Indonesian citizens.

Meanwhile, Chinese citizens outside the parliament, most of whom are members of Chinese organizations and communities such as Perhimpunan INTI, PSMTI, PITI, Nabil Foundation, and online communities continue to aspire and protect the interests of Indonesian citizens, especially Chinese citizens.

In general, the ethnic Chinese political elites who are involved as politicians are those who are well-established from an economic perspective, so their orientation in the political arena is not to seek economic resources. The success of ethnic Chinese citizens to be elected as members of the legislature, especially in the DPRD of North Sumatra and Medan

City, still fully expects the support of the elite of the large and dominant Chinese associations, and upholds ancestral cultural values. The association's support for the candidates who advance is generally not determined by the origin of the political party, but rather by the elite's assessment of the candidate's perspective on the concept of "nationalism".

In the context of North Sumatra, the base of support for legislative candidates at any level still depends on the grassroots of the ethnic Chinese. If they fail to get the sympathy and support of the dominant association elite, it is certain that the candidates who compete will fail to qualify as members of the legislature. On the other hand, the support and sympathy from the elite of the association with the same ideology will make it easier for candidates from ethnic Chinese origin to get votes and material facilities as campaign capital to win seats in the DPRD. In Medan, for example, the Chair of the Medan City PSMTI openly stated that PSMTI participated in selecting ethnic Chinese candidates and facilitated them during the campaign ("Medan City PSMTI Ready to Select & Finance Ethnic Chinese Candidates," 2018).

Not only actively contributing to politics and revitalizing ancestral culture, elite Chinese ethnic associations are also a bridge for Chinese investors such as PERPIT, PERMIT and ICBC (Setijadi, 2016b). PSMTI which is affiliated with APINDO has a special relationship with the Association of Indonesian Chinese Companies. ("PSMTI-Apindo in Cooperation with APTI," 2020). Meanwhile, INTI through PERPIT is a group of Indonesian businessmen with a Southeast Asian network that is quite influential in China ("INTI & Perpit Builds Business Communication", 2018).

2 RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Research Framework

Data collection is one of the most important stages in research. Correct data collection techniques will produce data that has high credibility, and vice versa. Therefore, this stage cannot be wrong and must be carried out carefully according to the procedures and characteristics of qualitative research. This is because errors or imperfections in the data collection method will have fatal consequences, namely in the form of non-credible data, so that the research results cannot be accounted for.

The use of the term 'data' is actually borrowing a term commonly used in quantitative research

methods which is usually a table of numbers. However, in qualitative research methods what is meant by data is all information, both oral and written, even in the form of images or photos, that contribute to answering the research problem as stated in the problem formulation or research focus. In qualitative research methods, data is usually collected using several qualitative data collection techniques.

2.2 Research Techniques

2.2.1 Interview

Interview is a process of communication or interaction to collect information by means of question and answer between the researcher and the informant or research subject. With advances in information technology as it is today, interviews can be conducted without face to face, namely through telecommunications media.

Table 2: The orientation of Chinese ethnic groups.

Sources	Amount
Candidates from ethnic Chinese	12
Chairman of PSMTI	1
Chairman of INTI	1
North Sumatran Chinese Figure	9
Chinese Academic / Researcher	2

2.2.2 Observation

In addition to interviews, observation is also one of the most common data collection techniques in qualitative research methods. Observation is essentially an activity using the five senses, including sight, smell, hearing, to obtain the information needed to answer research problems. The results of observations in the form of activities, events, events, objects, certain conditions or atmosphere, and one's emotional feelings.

2.2.3 Documents

Apart from interviews and observations, information can also be obtained through facts stored in the form of letters, diaries, photo archives, meeting results, souvenirs, activity journals and so on. Data in the form of documents like this can be used to explore information that occurred in the past. Researchers need to have theoretical sensitivity to interpret all these documents so that they are not just meaningless items.

2.2.4 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The last method to collect data is through a centralized discussion (Focus Group Discussion), which is an attempt to find the meaning of an issue by a group of people through discussion to avoid being misunderstood by a researcher. To avoid subjective meaning by a researcher, a discussion group was formed consisting of several researchers. With several people studying an issue, it is hoped that a more objective meaning will be obtained.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study seeks to reveal the power relations between ethnic Chinese associations and the Chinese ethnic community in local political contestations in Sumatra. How the power relation hides the agenda of hidden interests by using three analytical tools, namely: Antonio Gramsci's Hegemony Theory, Michel Foucault's Power/Knowledge Relation Theory; and Benedict Anderson's Theory of Imagined Communities. In the end, this study will be able to find the relationship between the dominance and hegemony by the elite of Chinese associations against the ethnic Chinese and the ideological motives in these power relations.

3.1 Chinese

The mention of various terms for ethnic Chinese is explained in Brahma (2018) and Ibrahim (n.d). However, traces of the history of its use, in the early days were written by Justus (1953) and Kroef (1953). The writings of Ling (2016), Lombard & Salmon (1993), and Muntholib (2008) reaffirm the various accounts of the use of the term. In Indonesia, the term "Chinese" itself was used for the first time to be the name of the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* (THKK) association which was founded in 1900. In the organization's documents, the term "Tjina" is also widely used to identify their identity (Anggraeni, 2013).

3.2 Association

Purwosutjipto in Algar (2018) explains that the notion of association is basically divided into two, namely association in a broad sense and association in a narrow sense. An association in a broad sense is an association that does not have a specific personality and cannot be distinguished from other types of association. In an association or association there are

several people who want to achieve a goal in the non-economic field (not for profit) agree to enter into a cooperation whose form and method are laid out in the articles of association or regulations or statutes. The Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) explains the word "association" has many names including: association, association, association, bond, union, unity, union, and others (Andriati (2012).

3.3 Hegemony

The concept of hegemony itself was born and developed in the flow of Marxist thought. Because hegemony as a theory was born from the thinking of the Marxists in Russia in the face of the Russian monarchy. Therefore, almost all debates about hegemony flow in the currents of Marxist thought. The concept of hegemony is positioned to be more neutral in viewing various forms of power relations, both in terms of politics, literature, economy, social and culture. Hegemony is closely related to the concepts of power and ideology, where the three work simultaneously, although they can also be seen separately. Hegemony can also be seen as a two-way practice of two subordinate relations, namely the power of the bourgeois state and the working class. Gramsci's conception of hegemony also refers to the relationship between what he calls "civil society" and "state", both of which exist at the superstructure level, as Marx thought (Hutagalung, 2004).

3.4 Power Relations

Based on the two concepts of hegemony and power, how can one draw a logical and related relation between one another? How can we sew these two concepts into an analysis of the relationship between power and hegemony? Finally, in the next section, the author looks at the relationship between the two concepts, plus the concept of ideology, which in the author's view cannot be separated from hegemony and power. So, in the context of the theory above, this study will describe the power relations that occurred in the Legislative General Elections of the DPRD of North Sumatra and Medan City which were followed by legislative candidates (candidates) from Chinese ethnicity, by looking at Foucault's study approach. In Foucault's view, power relations are not understood in a relationship of ownership as property, acquisition, or privilege that can be held by a small group of people and which can be threatened with extinction (Af, 2012).

3.5 Ideology

The concept of ideology is a scary word to hear and learn during the New Order government, because at that time there was no ideology other than Pancasila. Basically ideology comes from Latin which consists of two words, yaki *ideo* means thought; *logical* means logic, science, knowledge. It can be concluded that ideology is the science of beliefs and ideals (Prasetya, 2011). According to Steger (in Prasetya, 2011) ideology is a system of spreading ideas, beliefs that form a system of values and norms and ideal rules that are accepted as fact and truth by certain groups.

Political ideology deals with the question of who will be the leader? How were they chosen, and by what principles did they lead? This will be related to what kind of leader is worthy to lead the community at large, whether considering the issue of religiosity, social spirit, wealth, academic ability, physical or appearance, ethnicity or ethnicity, male or female. Ideology contains many arguments for persuasion or against (counter) opposing ideas and greatly affects various aspects of human life, starting from economic aspects, education, health, and welfare.

3.6 Power

According to Kebung (2018), the concept of power constructed by Foucault cannot be viewed in black and white or negative and positive terms. Power is not an institution or structure, not a power possessed, but power is a term used to describe complex strategic situations in a group of people. The pattern that develops in every Pileg campaign is mostly done by mobilizing ethnicity-based masses, where the elites of the association measure the fanaticism and loyalty of the legislative candidates through the ideological struggle of the association.

PSMTI is more about integration, CORE is more about assimilation. PSMTI adheres to ethnicity and ancestral traditions with strong roots going back to China, as was the ideology of the CHH association during the Dutch colonial era. The INTI is a Chinese association with strong national principles, by opening membership to indigenous people, as was the ideology of the PTI association during the Dutch colonial era.

In the author's observation, the awareness of the ethnic Chinese also tends to be manipulated. Either through direct domination, namely through the orders and rules of the association, or through hegemony, namely through ideological discourse that is distributed to normalize the perspective of this ethnic group. The goal is to gain electoral benefits in every

election. The ethnic Chinese community eventually continued to experience symbolic violence.

3.7 Imagined Communities

In an association, of course, it cannot be separated from what is called the elite of the association. This elite attitude is also associated with the meaning of nationality that forms and binds them as imagined communities. Imagined Communities are socially constructed communities, imagined by people who see themselves as part of the group. (Anderson, 1983).

Benedict Anderson's concept is to understand the meaning of nationalism in Chinese ethnic groups in Indonesia and the Philippines. Therefore, discussing imagination, according to the author, cannot be separated from the discussion about space. Imagination is something that fills the inner space of man.

4 DISCUSSIONS

The power relations built by the elites of Chinese associations will be seen from various perspectives. How PSMTI and INTI unite perceptions of national identity, and what are the efforts of these two associations in breaking the long conflict of hegemony and ideological power over the ethnic Chinese that has been rooted since the days of the Dutch East Indies. The hegemony and power relations that are constructed with the ideological ties of the association become the theoretical framework used by the author to portray the chain of correlation of the ethnic Chinese citizens with the interests of China as their ancestral country.

Here, according to the author, the problem lies in the public space which has been arranged in such a way that it creates not only physical separation between the two communities, Chinese and non-Chinese, but deeper than that, this separation also encourages the emergence of a "wild" imagination that cannot be verified by each other. This separation then becomes stronger and the walls become thicker when negative prejudices, bitter experiences and wounds that have arisen during the history of the "limited" relationship between the two divided communities become a tool for measuring the whole community.

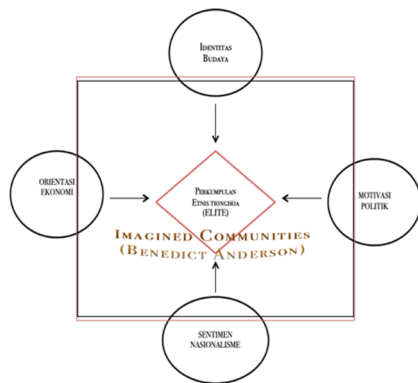


Figure 2: Chinese ethnic identity in the Imagined Communities Theory.

5 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The general history of the Chinese in Indonesia is written in a variety of literatures which most authors find still relying on relevant passages in Suryadinata's (1972) work and as described in Chang (1980) and Somers (1965). McKean & MacKie's (1981) research describes early history in particular, works on historical sources of the Chinese in Indonesia, while Groeneveldt (1960) and Than (1965) write down facts about relations with the local population and also about settlements. Chinese people.

Coppel's research (2003) focuses more on reviewing the ethnic Chinese minority in various periods of arrival and political phases of their life in the archipelago, the authors also have to approach their history in all its richness and complexity. Regarding the diversity of research results on Chinese in the country, Suryadinata (1978) argues that the impetus for a study depends on the background of the author, it can be from his profession, national and ethnic origin, socio-political group, or the era in which he lives.

Studies by indigenous Indonesians who fall into the second group tend to discuss the "problem" of the Chinese which refers to the attitude of the majority towards the Chinese minority. This article can be found in Anwar (2019), Humaizi, et al., (2019) and Widhyharto et al., (2020).

6 CONCLUSIONS

Tracking and tracing the political role of the Chinese in Indonesia is an attempt to uncover various marginalized political issues and discourses. This illustrates that the Chinese people are not what the

public thinks that Chinese is synonymous with the economy. To quote the term Ong Hok Kham, Chinese is synonymous with economic animal. This term will be refuted if the pieces of Chinese political history in Indonesia that are buried in the hustle and bustle of Indonesian history and even discriminated against in the historiographical tradition are researched, reconstructed, and finally understood as an inseparable part of the political journey of the Indonesian nation.

The singularity of the field studied in this proposal is the political reality of Chinese associations in North Sumatra as an attempt to rediscover Chinese political history and relate it to the local political stage, particularly in the Legislative Elections for the DPRD of North Sumatra and Medan City. This, in the author's perspective, requires a strategic and courageous effort considering that the Chinese are known as an exclusive community and are careful with ethnic residents outside of them.

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