

Research Article

The Influence of Ethnic Relations on the Political Orientation of the Simpang Selayang Community in Medan City

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Abstract : This study aims to analyze the influence of ethnic relations on the political orientation of the community in Simpang Selayang Village, Medan City. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques through interviews and documentation. The data analysis techniques applied include data reduction, data presentation, and data verification according to Miles and Huberman. This study focuses on two main problem formulations, namely the influence of ethnic relations on political issues and the influence of ethnic relations on political orientation. The results of the study indicate that ethnic identity plays an important role in determining individual political preferences. Ethnic identity serves as a frame of reference that guides political behavior, including in general elections and other political participation. Solidarity between ethnic groups often strengthens political support for candidates who have the same ethnic affiliation, creating a voting pattern that is strongly influenced by ethnic factors. The research findings also reveal that political issues that are relevant to the local community are influenced by the social and cultural context of each tribe. political programs that emphasize local economic development and preservation of tribal culture tend to get greater support. This suggests that understanding the socio-cultural context of ethnic groups is key to formulating effective and inclusive political policies. This study provides new insights into the dynamics of politics in a multi-ethnic society and emphasizes the importance of inclusive policies that take into account ethnic diversity to promote social harmony and political stability in Simpang Selayang Village.

Keywords: Ethnic Relations, Political Orientation, Crossroads

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon of identity politics has become a significant concern in political discourse both in Indonesia and in the global arena. As stated by Huntington & Ismail (2001) in "The Clash of Civilizations and the Future of World Politics" this phenomenon reflects how identities based on ethnicity, religion, race, and culture become the basis for political action. In Indonesia, this phenomenon is increasingly attracting attention given the existing cultural and ethnic diversity, raising questions about how these identities influence local and national political dynamics.

At the local level, identity politics can influence everything from local elections to local policy decisions. Candidates in elections may emphasize their ethnic identity to attract support from particular groups. At the national level, identity politics can influence party formation, legislation, and even relations between provinces. The key question that arises is how these identities influence policy and political decisions, and how they contribute to social harmony or tension.

In the Indonesian context, identity politics is often closely intertwined with ethnic relations, making this relation a major aspect in the dynamics of identity politics in the country. Ethnic relations are not only the main pattern that influences the direction and form of identity politics, but also play a significant role in determining political choices, campaign strategies, and policy formation. These aspects reflect how ethnic identity becomes the basis for mobilizing support, formulating political agendas, and mediating power relations in a diverse society. As a result, identity politics based on ethnic relations not only shape local and national political maps, but also contribute to broader social dynamics, influencing how individuals and groups interact, collaborate, or even conflict in the political arena.

The influence of identity politics on political life can be seen through the perspective and political choices of society. According to Lipset and Rokkan in Karvonen & Kuhnle (2011), group identity, including ethnicity, is an important factor in the formation of political dividing lines, influencing voter behavior and the formation of political parties. In Indonesia, this phenomenon is often related to the complexity of the relationship between ethnic identity and political decisions in the context of a diverse society.

In conclusion, people's political orientation is influenced by various factors, in which ethnic relations play an important role. Inter-ethnic dynamics, including competition and solidarity, significantly influence individual and group political views. Political ideologies rooted in the values and norms of a particular tribe often guide individuals in choosing candidates that are in line with their ethnic identity. Affiliation with political parties that have a strong support base within a particular tribe also shows how ethnic identity can motivate political choices. Issues related to ethnic rights and interests are determining factors in political orientation, highlighting the importance of social and cultural context in elections. The personality and integrity of candidates in representing ethnic interests are also considered, reflecting voters' desire to support candidates that are in line with their ethnic aspirations. Media and political campaigns that target specific ethnic groups have an impact on voters' perceptions of candidates, demonstrating the influence of political communication tailored to ethnic background. Thus, ethnic relations are a key factor in shaping political orientation, showing how ethnic context influences the dynamics of elections and people's political decisions.

Furthermore, the unique complexity of identity politics in Indonesia, especially given the ethnic and cultural diversity that characterizes the country, is evident in studies of local political dynamics. For example, in Medan City, the kelurahan shows a total population of 16,673 people, with the following detailed ethnic distribution:

Table 1. Composition of Simpang Selayang Population Based on Ethnic Group

No	Ethnicity/Tribe	Amount	Percentage of Total(%)
1	Karo	6.008	36.03%
2	Malay	810	4.85%
3	Java	6,910	41.44%
4	Batak	1,708	10.24%
5	Aceh	248	1.48%
6	Nias	238	1.42%
7	Tamil/India	137	0.82%
8	Banjar	20	0.11%
9	Banten	55	0.32%
10	Minang	244	1.46%
11	Chinese	75	0.44%

12	And others	220	1.31%
	Total	16,673	100.00%

Source: Data from the Village Office (2022).

The ethnic diversity in Simpang Selayang Village reflects the diversity that is typical of Indonesia as a whole. With the majority of the population coming from Javanese and Karo ethnic groups, as well as the presence of various other minority ethnicities, this village is a strong representation of the cultural richness and social diversity in Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

Tribal Relations

Ethnic relations are an important aspect in understanding the social and political dynamics in multiethnic societies. The study of ethnic relations theory includes various perspectives and approaches that explain how ethnic groups interact, how these relations affect social structures, and their consequences for political processes (Horowitz, 2001).

Social Identity Theory Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) states that individuals form their identities based on their social groups. In the context of ethnic relations, individuals may identify more strongly with their ethnic group, which influences their political views. The indicator "Political orientation" covers how ethnic affiliation influences one's political views and preferences for political issues.

- Perception of Political Parties and Candidates According to this theory, perceptions of political parties and candidates can be influenced by ethnic solidarity. Individuals may prefer parties or candidates who they perceive as representing the interests of their ethnic group or who have good relations with the group.
- Political Issues Considered Important Political issues considered important can also be influenced by ethnic relations. Individuals from certain ethnic groups may be more sensitive to issues that directly affect their group, such as policies affecting ethnic rights or discrimination.
- Motivation to Participate Motivation to participate in activism can also be influenced by ethnic ties. Ethnic solidarity and social support within a group can increase an individual's drive to engage in activities aimed at advancing the interests of their group.
- Perception of Activism Perception of activism encompasses how individuals view the role and effectiveness of activism in society. Ethnic relations can influence these views, where individuals may see activism as a way to fight for the rights or interests of their ethnic group.
- Participation in activism is also influenced by social networks and ethnic solidarity. The indicator "Activism orientation" describes how individuals in an ethnic group view and engage in activist activities, and how this is influenced by support and solidarity within their group.

Ethnic Conflict

Ethnic conflict theory, developed by scholars such as Donald Horowitz (2001), explores how ethnic differences can be a source of conflict. This theory emphasizes the role of ethnic identity and intergroup competition for resources,

recognition, and power as factors that trigger conflict. Ethnic conflict is often triggered by a group's perception of injustice, discrimination, or threats to their identity.

Ethnic conflicts often arise from ethnic groups' perceptions of injustice, discrimination, or threats to their identity and existence. When ethnic groups feel that their rights are not recognized or threatened by other groups or by the state, tensions can increase and potentially develop into conflict. Donald Horowitz (2001) explains the factors that trigger conflict, including:

- **Competition over Resources:** Ethnic conflicts are often rooted in competition over access to and control of natural resources, jobs, education, and social services.
- **Recognition and Representation:** Ethnic groups' demands for recognition of their cultural identity, fair political representation, and autonomy can be a source of conflict if not handled properly.
- **Demographic Change:** Changes in the demographic composition of an area, which may be caused by migration or changes in birth rates, can affect the balance of power between groups and trigger tensions.
- **History of Conflict:** A history of past conflict and injustice can leave a legacy of distrust and resentment that contributes to ethnic tensions.

3. Method

Research methods

This research method uses a descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative research method is a research method that aims to understand, describe, and analyze phenomena in depth without involving quantitative measurements. This method focuses more on understanding the context and meaning behind an event or behavior.

"Qualitative research is a deep and oriented research that aims to find out behavior in real situations without any engineering and make a fact understandable." (Morrison, 2012)

The descriptive qualitative research method is suitable for the study "The Influence of Ethnic Relations on the Political Orientation of the Simpang Selayang Urban Village Community in Medan City" because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the complex social and political dynamics and subjective nuances in inter-ethnic relations. This method facilitates detailed exploration of the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of individuals involved in socio-political interactions, which cannot be adequately explained through quantitative methods. In addition, it allows researchers to capture the context and variability in the political orientation of communities influenced by diverse ethnic backgrounds, as well as identify the factors that influence these processes in their natural settings.

Research Location

The research location is the place where the researcher will conduct the research. The location determined by the researcher is based on the location of the problem to be studied. The research location includes the object of research. In this study, the location studied was Simpang Selayang Village, Medan City, North Sumatra

The reason for choosing Simpang Selayang Village as the research location is because Simpang Selayang Village, Medan City, is a good and suitable research location for "The Influence of Ethnic Relations on Community Political Orientation" because of its high diversity, offering a unique opportunity to study inter-ethnic interactions in an urban context. The population of Simpang Selayang Village is 16,673 people. Simpang Selayang Village displays significant ethnic diversity, with the majority of its population coming from the Javanese ethnic group reaching 41.44%, followed by the Karo ethnic group with a percentage of 36.03%. In addition, there are various other minority ethnic groups that contribute to the cultural richness of the area. The ethnic composition in this Village consists of, among others, Malay, Batak, Aceh, Nias, Tamil/India, Banjar, Banten, Minang, Tiong Hoa, and several other groups.

Research Subject

The subjects for this study were 12 people consisting of 1 person from each tribe. Subject selection criteria:

- **Ethnic Diversity** : Selecting individuals from various significant ethnicities in Simpang Selayang Village, such as Javanese, Batak, Chinese, and others, to obtain diverse perspectives.
- **Political Engagement** : Includes individuals with varying levels of political engagement, from ordinary voters to political activists and community leaders.
- **Gender Balance** : Attempt to achieve gender balance in the subject sample to ensure fair representation.
- **Age Range** : Select subjects from different age groups to explore generational differences in political views.

4. Research Result

Simpang Selayang is part of Medan Tuntungan District, which is located in Medan City, the capital of North Sumatra Province. Medan City is one of the big cities in Indonesia with various facilities and infrastructure that support the lives of its residents. Simpang Selayang has very good access to various public facilities. This includes schools, health centers, and traditional markets that are close to residential areas. This ease of access is very important to meet the daily needs of residents and improve their quality of life. Transportation access in Simpang Selayang is also very good. This area is served by a road that connects directly to the center of Medan City, making it easy for residents to work, go to school, or do other activities in the city center. Good transportation infrastructure too.

Simpang Selayang Village, with its ethnic diversity, is a microcosm of the diversity that exists in Indonesia as a whole. Simpang Selayang Village displays significant ethnic diversity, with the majority of its population being Javanese at 41.44%. followed by the Karo ethnic group at 36.03%. In addition, there are various other minority ethnic groups that contribute to the cultural richness of the area. The ethnic composition of this Village consists of, among others, Malay, Batak, Acehnese, Nias, Tamil/Indian, Banjar, Bantinese, Minang, Chinese, and several other groups, reflecting the high heterogeneity of the population. Data from the village office shows a total population of 16,673 people, with a detailed ethnic distribution as follows:

The influence of ethnic relations in Simpang Selayang Village on political issues

Ethnic relations in Simpang Selayang Village, Medan City, have a significant impact in shaping the political preferences and political mobilization of the local community. Solidarity between tribes through local culture and traditions is a strong foundation for active political participation, with each tribe bringing unique values and issues to the political and social processes of their communities.

The influence of ethnic relations on political issues in Simpang Selayang Village can be explained by several underlying factors. First, tribal relations create a strong foundation of solidarity among tribal members. This solidarity is not only limited to cultural and traditional aspects, but also includes moral, emotional, and financial support in everyday life. In a political context, this solidarity is translated into support for candidates or parties that are considered to represent the values and interests of their tribe.

Second, cultural activities carried out by each tribe, such as traditional ceremonies, cultural festivals, and other social activities, strengthen tribal identity and serve as a forum for building political awareness. Discussions on public policy and issues important to the tribe often arise during these events, helping to educate tribal members about relevant political issues and motivating them to become actively involved in the political process.

Third, tribal relations often create extensive social networks at the local level, including economic and political networks. In a political context, these networks can be used to mobilize support in political campaigns, both in the form of material and human support. Tribal members who have important roles or positions in these networks can influence political opinions and decisions at the local level.

Fourth, tribal relations create a sense of collective responsibility for common interests. When tribes face common challenges or problems, such as economic or health problems, tribal solidarity encourages members to seek common solutions, including through political support. This can lead to political mobilization to demand change or support from the government in solving these problems.

The influence of ethnic relations on the political orientation of the community in Simpang Selayang Village

The influence of ethnic relations on the political orientation of the community in Simpang Selayang Village is very reflective of the pattern of social interaction and political preferences that vary among various ethnic groups. The available data shows how ethnic solidarity plays an important role in shaping political choices and community activities.

The Batak tribe, shows strong solidarity in the political context, with a tendency to vote for candidates or parties that are committed to integrity and anti-corruption programs. Their active participation in political activities and campaigns for positive change confirms their commitment to clean infrastructure and policies from corruption.

On the other hand, the Bantenese emphasize solidarity in arts and culture and support for economic and environmental development. Their political preferences tend towards programs that support economic and social welfare, as well as environmental activism to influence public policy.

The Malays, with their tradition of mutual cooperation in cultural celebrations, demonstrate solidarity through social activities relevant to their community. They

tend to support social issues that affect their daily lives and seek to stimulate change through local political activities.

The Javanese, who are also active in gotong royong activities and traditional ceremonies, influence social and political change through participation in local political activism. Their solidarity is seen in their efforts to advance the traditions and values of their community.

Meanwhile, the Karo people prioritize the preservation of culture and the welfare of local communities. Their involvement in customary and community activities strengthens their political identity as guardians of Karo traditions, and they tend to support candidates or parties that promote cultural values and relevant social programs.

The Banjar people show solidarity in difficult situations and support mutual cooperation and awareness campaigns. Their political preferences are seen in their support for policies that strengthen individual rights and build inclusive societies, illustrating their role in influencing local policies that are in line with their ethnic values.

The Minang people, although not involved in formal political activism, remain active in mutual cooperation activities and traditional events. Their concern for local issues and efforts to strengthen Minangkabau cultural values reflect their political identity.

The Nias people, through solidarity in local culture such as traditional dances and traditional festivals, support programs that strengthen the local economy and advocate for the interests of the Nias people. Their political activism contributes to the formulation of policies that support their welfare and cultural identity.

The Chinese ethnic group shows solidarity in the form of financial and moral assistance and support for minority rights and social justice. Political activism. They focus on discussions and social media. Influencing thinking and actions related to minority rights and social justice in society.

The Acehnese, with their solidarity in local culture and support in difficult situations, tend to support policies that pay attention to social welfare and regional autonomy rights. Their political activism focuses on advocating for the rights of the Acehnese people, contributing to social and political change at the local level.

Finally, Tamil/Indians are active in traditional festivals and dances, as well as advocacy for the rights of the Tamil community. Their focus on issues such as minority rights, education, and health influences thinking and actions in society.

In Simpang Selayang Village, the influence of ethnic relations on the political orientation of the community can be understood through several fundamental factors. First, deep cultural identity and tradition play a crucial role in shaping political views. Each tribe has values and traditions that are passed down from generation to generation, which directly influence the way they assess and choose political candidates. These traditions shape political mindsets and preferences that are consistent with their ethnic identity.

5. Conclusion

This study reveals that ethnic relations in Simpang Selayang Village have a significant influence on political preferences and political activism of the local

community. Each tribe shows a unique way of influencing local political dynamics. The Batak tribe tends to support parties or candidates that offer integrity and anti-corruption programs, while the Karo tribe is more inclined to parties that respect Karo values and focus on cultural preservation.

Tribal relations also create strong social networks, which are used to mobilize support in local political campaigns. Internal tribal solidarity includes moral, emotional, and financial support that strengthens political support and participation in political activities. This support can be seen in the form of joint campaigns, fundraising, and active participation in political meetings and gatherings.

The influence of ethnic relations on the political orientation of the community in Simpang Selayang Village is very reflective of the pattern of social interaction and political preferences that vary among various ethnic groups. Ethnic solidarity plays an important role in shaping political choices and community activities, the victory of the elected legislative candidates in Electoral District 5 of the Medan City DPRD can be explained through the close relationship between ethnic identity, tribal solidarity, and local political dynamics. In Simpang Selayang Village, tribe and ethnicity play a crucial role in shaping the political orientation of the community. Tribal solidarity creates strong bonds among tribal members, which are then translated into political support. The legislative candidates who come from the dominant tribes in this area, such as the Karo, Toba Batak, and Mandailing, managed to win the majority of votes because the community felt that they were the best representation of their ethnic interests.

Not only tribal solidarity, but also the close-knit social and economic networks among members of tribal communities provide strong financial and logistical support for legislative candidates' campaigns. Candidates such as Jusup Ginting Suka and Johannes Hutagalung, who come from influential tribes, have succeeded in gaining sympathy because of their involvement in cultural and traditional activities that are important to their communities. These activities not only strengthen political identity, but also become a forum for building political awareness and directing support to candidates who are considered capable of representing the aspirations of the tribe.

Affiliation with major parties such as PDIP, Gerindra, Golkar, and PKS provides structural support that strengthens the position of legislative candidates. With the support of parties that have a strong mass base, legislative candidates are able to utilize wider political networks to gain support. The combination of ethnicity, social networks, representation of local issues, and party affiliation made these legislative candidates successful in winning the election with significant support from the community in Electoral District 5 of Medan City.

In addition, other factors such as religion, candidate quality, and economic and social issues also influence citizens' political preferences. Programs that promise to improve the quality of life often attract voters' attention. Candidates who have programs for infrastructure development and improving health services tend to get greater support.

Overall, ethnic relations and ethnic identity play an important role in shaping social solidarity and political participation in Simpang Selayang Village. Understanding these dynamics can be the basis for formulating policies and programs that support strengthening social relations and inclusive political participation in society. This study shows that ethnic identity and ethnic solidarity are important factors in understanding local political preferences and mobilizing political support in multi-ethnic communities.

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