

## **Bureaucratic Elite Contestation Based on Local Identity to Improve Regional Resources (Study after Nias Regency Expansion)**

Anugerah Tatema Harefa<sup>1\*</sup>, Tadjuddin Noer Effendi<sup>2</sup>, Suharko<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctoral Student, Gajahmada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2,3</sup>Sociology Department, Gajahmada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

### **\*Corresponding author**

*Anugerah Tatema Harefa*

### **Article History**

*Received: 01.09.2018*

*Accepted: 09.09.2018*

*Published: 30.09.2018*

### **DOI:**

10.21276/sjhss.2018.3.9.11



**Abstract:** Although it has been composed of 5 (five) new autonomous regions, but to build the Nias Islands must be done integratively because it is in one region and supported by the similarity of identity, that is a unity as Nias ethnicity. But the fact is showing that the bureaucracy elites are difficult to cooperate, trying to build their own identity based on their territory. The focus of this research is to find out why bureaucracy elites are doing contestation after the teritorial split, what local identities are used and how local identities are used. To explain the phenomenon as the locus of this research, the theoretical concept politics of identity from Giddens were using to explore why the local elite was using politic of identity to control local resources, what interests are behind them all? Under such identity conditions, bureaucracy elites construct an identity for the interests of the elite and put more emphasis on the power aspect to gain political and economic resources. Methodologically, this research is a qualitative research with descriptive approach, so the description of the phenomena seen in Nias Island can be interpreted and better understood. The results of this study showing that, the hidden agenda of the contestation among the bureaucracy elite in the Nias Islands basically is to set up a new power in the new territory. Local identity that is carried out is the result of reconstruction of the elite as as flexible identity of the ethnic community of Nias.

**Keywords:** Contestation, Elite, Bureaucracy, Politic, Local Identity, Split of Territory, Nias.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Identity-based political actions in the realm of regional expansion in Indonesia have been widely discussed in various studies, because it is suspected that as one of the causes of the failure of the newly formed regions to achieve their objectives, this kind of practice is a vehicle for elites to fulfill their passions and his ambition in gaining power [1]. In the beginning regional autonomy was considered as an offer that resolved the problem without problems, but the noble ideals to accelerate the process of increasing the welfare of the community precisely in the context of its implementation gave birth to various problems.

Various studies have been carried out and produce various kinds of studies on issues that accompany the travel of new autonomous regions towards the process of improving community welfare. The results of the study mostly speak of the rise of identity politics by utilizing ethnic, religious and cultural diversity to hold power. This plural and multicultural situation is a soft land for elites to contest power, which in the end forgets the common aspirations as an independent area for mutual interests.

The rise of the practice of identity politics in various cases of regional expansion in Indonesia has become an interesting matter to be studied, although it must be realized also that fanaticism based on certain identities is indeed very vulnerable to occur in the midst of a pluralistic society, both in terms of ethnicity, religion, culture and certain distinctive identities.

But even more interesting especially for writers when the modus operandi by carrying out this identity politics occurs in a homogeneous society, bound in the same ethnic entity. Inkeles and Roger [2] say that it is undeniable that the current era of globalization of ethnic identity, a different and exclusive culture will eventually decline in its role when industrialization and modernization proceed. However, this finding is refuted when Huntington [3] found that in the era of globalization, local cultures that are ethnicity are increasingly strengthened, and strengthening the local culture can be a disaster that breeds unresolved intercultural conflicts. Generally people are suspicious of those who are seen as "not us" and consider it a threat.

Moving on from this issue of identity, the author wants to study the phenomenon that occurred in

Nias Islands, which is an ethnic entity precisely in its development after being divided into 4 Regions of New Autonomy (DOB), raises identity discourse through division between "we" and "us".

It all started when Nias Regency was divided into 4 new autonomous regions, namely South Nias Regency which was the first to be separated to become a stand-alone area, formed in 2003, based on PP. 129/2000, then in 2008 formed at the same time North Nias Regency, West Nias Regency, and Gunungsitoli City, with PP. No. 78/2007.

The irony of the spirit in this tribal bond in the process of its journey experienced a shift marked by the emergence of the meaning between us and us when new territories were formed. The issues of the local son color the journey of the new autonomous regions. In the apparatus placement began to be seen, by borrowing the slogan "Marsipature Hutana Be" which means, "let's build each village". This principle is used as an argument to reduce the turmoil for those who contradict this condition. Emphasis on culture based on regions is increasingly thick. Territorial sentiment surfaced when it was administratively separated. The climax of the difficulty of integrating themselves as a tribal identity was also felt during the April 2014 legislative elections, from the Nias children who nominated themselves to sit as members of the DPR and DPD, they were only able to place 1 person in the DPR seats and none in the DPD, instead, those chosen were from outside the Nias tribe.

The splitting of the tribal spirit into the spirit of this territorial identity certainly denies what is the context of the academic study of the division of Nias Regency that newly formed regions can carry out integrated development with other regions, because of complementary characteristics. Synergy can be produced through the selection of various forms of mutually beneficial cooperation while still taking into account the advantages of each region.

The concept of integrated development is the best way to develop the Nias Islands comprehensively. This has led to the holding of a seminar on the topic "Five One Nias Forward" meaning that the five regions in the Nias Islands are classified as disadvantaged regions, need to unite these five into one living system with five regencies/ cities "[4]. The money equivalent of the Mayor of Gunungsitoli representing the regional heads in the Nias Islands at the time of the declaration of the forum of the head of the Nias Islands region said that "although it consists of five regions, the people in the Nias Islands cannot be separated due to one customary and cultural environment [5]".

But everything seems biased when the concept of integration of Nias island development is ultimately difficult to materialize. Indeed, Nias has never been

turbulent, not a conflict area, although conflicts between villages and villages sometimes occur, the loss of material and human victims also exists, but it never becomes a concern when it does not have a significant influence on the national level. However, for the writer this matter is interesting to study, when the division of Nias Regency was initiated by a common desire to bring public services closer to fulfill the people's welfare, then why in reality these expectations were deadlocked.

Tribal solidity should be the capital to synergize these five autonomous regions because according to Smith [6] that ethnic communities are social groups, whose members share sentiments of common origin, claims to history and common destinies that are unique, have one or more specific characteristics and feel the sentiments of togetherness and solidarity.

Based on this fact the position of identity politics in the realm of the community groups that are in a single entity that is a unity in ethnicity, because in the writer's understanding that basically the identity is produced politically in order to maintain hierarchy, but as if culturally produced. It can be found that there are distinguishing factors in ethnic entities that are mono-ethnic, but as long as the local elites use them as a means to fulfill their passions and ambitions to gain power, the differentiating identities will be a means to be opposed.

But the symptom of the division of ethnic identity that occurred after the division of Nias Regency according to the authors more illustrates the existence of tangible forms of demands for new power. The reality of identity politics shows that identity politics strategies not only involve categories that are pluralistic such as ethnicity but are also found in a more homogeneous society through the resources of local identities. It is also the part of the author's preposition as well as the novelty value of this research, namely that identity political formations not only target differences in ethnicity, religion or certain groups, but also operate in the same ethnic entity to master the resources in regions both political and economic. Differentiating identities will not cause conflict when not utilized by local elites for their interests. Identity politics, which should be a means of struggle for injustice over dominance, changes to the interests of certain elites.

Identity as a subject has freedom that does not have to be attached to its cultural context but on the other hand individuals as subjects also always form part of certain collective identities that possess certain feelings. But this identity building will be disrupted when it is in the realm of identity politics when elites play a role in seizing sources of power from both political and economic aspects.

In the end, the phenomenon that occurred in the Nias community at the moment raised a question mark, it is only natural that division of an identity or just a strategy in controlling the resources in the region, because after all the expressions that appear in the midst of the Nias community have shaped the social structure of society which feels disaggregated in different areas but actually is the same.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Hall and Taylor [7] divide the new institutionalism approach into three groups of theories, namely historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. Historical institutionalism, according to Hall and Taylor [7], is an eclectic approach that considers the factors of ideas, individual behavior, and the influence of structures in political interactions involving institutions. In political studies, in general these factors are studied with different approaches. Factor ideas are generally studied with a normative or deconstructive approach. Individual behavior factors are generally studied with a behavioral (positivism) or rational choice approach. While structural factors are generally studied with the Marxist approach, elite theory, or realism. Scientists who come into contact with historical institutionalism try to think openly of the possibilities of the various factors and not limit their analysis to certain factors. They emphasized that the study of political science should focus more on the history of what happened, what was thought and what was imaged; instead of holding too tightly on the theoretical framework. This is what makes them called "historical" institutionalism because for them "history matters". Changes that occur in an institutionalization process such as policy making, process patterns and results can vary by case, or also called path dependent. Therefore, historical contextual analysis of a process of institutionalization and its impact needs to be done in order to truly understand an event, behavior or political change.

For scientists who come into contact with historical institutionalism, a process of institutionalization can occur from asymmetric power relations. An institution can be formed, operate and develop because of an asymmetrical power relationship. In an asymmetrical power relationship, institutions carry out the function of maintaining the status quo or making changes and building a new balance of power. This is because institutions tend to distribute power unequally to community groups. In this uneven (asymmetrical) power relationship, humans form coalitions and compete between one coalition and another [8].

For rational choice institutionalists, political actors will be more likely to choose institutionalization than institutional vacancies [7, 9]. The presence of institutions provides incentives for cooperation and

exchange (gains from cooperation and gains from exchange) because it avoids political actors from uncertainty resulting from competition and conflict between them. By cooperating and exchanging information, coordination can be established which ensures equilibrium and reduces political transaction costs (political transactional costs). The equilibrium conception here is known as the 'Nash equilibrium', which is a condition where when one actor enjoys better off, no other actor loses (worse off). Therefore, humans tend to choose institutionalization and therefore humans tend to obey institutions as long as equilibrium is maintained. However, on the contrary, if equilibrium is disrupted, in the sense that there is a party being dismissed, the actors will demand a revision of the institution or form a new institution.

The third theory group, namely sociological institutionalism, emphasizes the study of political institutions on aspects of ideas, norms, cultures and identities. According to Hall and Taylor [7], scientists who come into contact with sociological institutionalism hold that political studies must include formal rules, cognitive aspects, and moral frameworks, but also a framework of guidelines for human action. In this perspective, there is an overlap of understanding between institutions and culture. Institutional studies are often viewed differently because they are based on structure and organization, compared to cultural studies based on an understanding of shared values, attitudes and behaviors; in the perspective of sociological institutionalism it is the same as culture. Culture itself is seen as an institution. Herein lies the relevance of the nomenclature 'sociology' which is attached to institutionalism in this perspective, because of the emphasis in this perspective to study the cognitive dimensions of institutions. Institutions are learned from behavioral patterns, symbols, norms that provide guidance for behavior, and identity. This perspective model has similarities with one of the tendencies of studies in sociology, namely social constructivism.

Sociological institutionalism considers that institutions influence individuals, including in terms of their preferences and identities [7]. Contrary to rational choice theory, which says that interest-driven interests drive human political behavior, the sociological institutionalists tend to hold the view that it is precisely institutions that shape individual preferences and identities. This is because in practice not all institutions and organizations are formed to maximize objective or material interests. Many of them are formed based on shared culture or values. In relation to identity, according to this theory, generally institutions are formed with isomorphic status, which is based on similarity of identity, policy preference or position within the structure [10]. Institutions shape preferences and identities because individuals want to behave according to their social environment (the logic of

social appropriateness), not only because of strategic calculations based on economic interests or power.

The intentions and preferences of political actors involved in a process of institutionalization in general can be distinguished in several paradigms. The first paradigm is liberalism or pluralism. The actors who embrace liberalism view freedom and democracy as important [11]. The development of democratic institutions is deemed necessary to be characterized by checks and balances. The dominant group needs this so that the system of government can avoid the domination of a group and abuse of power. The distribution of power between groups and between state institutions is needed in order to create good balance and supervision.

The second paradigm is realism. Political actors who are influenced by realism tend to see the importance of domination of power over other groups. Power is seen as having a structure, where each group has different resources, domains and power range. This paradigm sees each person or group moved to accumulate power if they have the opportunity and strength to do so [11]. Therefore, every actor or group considers that there will always be power competition with other actors or groups, both whose power is symmetrical (equal) and asymmetrical (not equivalent). The power competition process is divided into three stages, namely the control of one party to the other party called Lukes as the first dimension, closing of access by one party to the other party (second dimension), and hegemony (third dimension).

The third paradigm is rationalism. In this view, power is seen as an instrument or tool. Power is used as a tool to maximize utility or fulfillment of interests [11]. The rationalist group strives to institutionalize to ensure that power arrangements can ensure that the group has the opportunity to maximize fulfillment of its interests in a safe and conducive situation. Domination over other groups is not a goal, but superior institutions above all groups are deemed necessary so that all groups can maximize their fulfillment of interests.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The focus of this research is to find out why after the division of Nias Regency there was a contestation of elites in the Nias Islands, thus indicating the phenomenon of the division of the identity of the Nias community based on newly formed regions. At first the reason for the division of Nias Regency was not based on differences in identity but was merely a normative reason for bringing public services closer to accelerating the process of community welfare. But in reality identity competition emerged after the DOB was formed. Reconstructing each identity based on the region raises sentiment towards one region with another region, but apparently behind it there is a hidden intention to gain political and economic power.

Using qualitative methods that emphasize experience as a basic description and to be able to interpret the meaning behind the words and behavior of research subjects, the ethnographic thought discipline becomes the approach used in this study. Through an ethnographic approach the writer can describe, analyze, and interpret a pattern of various cultural groups that are carried out together, both behavior, beliefs and language that develops over time. As described by Creswell [12] that ethnography is: Ethnographic designs are qualitative research procedures for describing, analyzing, and interpreting a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time.

The study itself took place in the Nias Islands, which initially in the Nias Islands had only one autonomous region namely Nias Regency, but after opening the opportunity to form a new autonomous region as a manifestation of the decentralization system, the Nias Regency area was divided into 4 (four) autonomous regions namely, South Nias Regency, North Nias Regency, West Nias Regency and Gunungitoli City. As a consequence of the formation of Gunungsitoli City, Nias Regency, which previously used Gunungsitoli, moved the location of government to Gido Sub-district, 25 Km from Gunungsitoli City. The division of this region has one goal to accelerate the development process in Nias Islands which is considered isolated, so that with the establishment of a new autonomous region, it will bring the range of control of services closer to the community.

The data needed in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data collection is done to obtain preliminary data, namely data relating to the things or motives that underlie the division of regions in the Nias Islands and the political process of the division of Nias Regency. These data are obtained directly from informants involved in the process of initiation of expansion and after new autonomous regions are formed. After the data is obtained, then collecting data to get the meaning behind the contestation of local elites after new autonomous regions are formed.

Subjects and research informants were determined based on the level of knowledge and direct involvement of local actors in the initiation of regional expansion in the Nias Islands. Determination of this informant can be categorized into 3 groups. First, informants who are directly involved in the process of regional expansion or informants who are key figures in the regional expansion preparatory body (BPP). Second, informants who are community leaders who support both material and non-material aspects so that the process of regional expansion can be realized. Third, informants in the form of bureaucrats who run the government in these autonomous regions.



Data collection techniques in this study use in-depth interview and documentation techniques. This interview was conducted directly with the informant. The questions that are presented in general are unstructured and open so that they can bring out the views and opinions of the informants, especially in order to explore the main motives so that Nias Regency needs to be divided, reveal in depth the political process of the division of Nias Regency to the emergence of contestation among local elites that culminate on the difficulty of achieving the real objectives of regional expansion.

Data collection was also carried out through observation. In this activity the author observes the behavior of local elites so that they can understand the context of the overall social situation because they can feel the atmosphere or social situation.

In addition, this study also uses documentation studies that guide this research in the collection of secondary data in the form of documents from all texts, especially data about the potential possessed by each region which is used as a benchmark to be able to form autonomous regions new. The source of this documentation data is obtained from the statistical offices of the respective regions and in official institutions of regional government that are considered to have documents about the division of Nias Regency. The writings in the form of articles in online media are also of significant concern and source for the author, because they are also expressions of the heart of the authors on the phenomena they felt in the Nias Islands after the regional expansion.

In this qualitative research analysis will be carried out starting from the data collection process. Information on data obtained from the beginning of this research activity, starting from the preliminary observation stage to the interview, then directly organized, is compiled and grouped based on type, category of data, and description unit in accordance with the needs and priorities of interpretation or discussion of research results. The use of a combination of primary and secondary data is expected to produce analytical accuracy and depth of interpretation of the problem.

The initial process of data processing begins by describing the contestation between local elites in Nias Islands after the division of Nias Regency. In this context the author describes according to the facts in the field. Then the author records what is known by the informant and adjusts to the existing document study.

In the next stage the authors categorize the data to find out data related to contestation on the political side and contestation on the economic side. Then analyze the relationship between data with one another.

In the end it led the writer to the process of interpretation of the general and overall picture of the local identity-based local elite contestation after the division of Nias Regency.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

After the division of Nias Regency, the battle of new elites surfaced as well as trying to confirm what was revealed from the writing about the history of the formation of West Nias Regency to informants with the initials GH, and revealed thus:

"..... At that time, only those who were educated had the opportunity to sit in the government and most of them came from the area around Gunungsitoli. Indeed there are some from other areas outside the Gunungsitoli area, such as Lahewa, Sirombu and Teluk Dalam, but can be counted on their fingers. The funny thing is, the officials generally have kinship ties, so that it could be in one agency or in many agencies controlled by those who have family relations only. It is true, the people of West Nias really did not get the opportunity at that time, so there is a term for those from the west "iraono khōda" meaning our children. With the formation of these new regions, it opens up opportunities for those who want to occupy positions ... "(Interview Saturday, June 24, 2017).

After the division of regions, there was indeed a massive exodus of bureaucratic elites in the Nias Islands. For those who want to take office, he will choose a position in their respective home regions and will willingly get a recommendation from the regional head or an official who is authorized to do so. For those who do not want to move, it will be difficult to get a position in an area that is not their ancestral territory. Through the concept of "sons of the regions", these elite bureaucrats make arrangements for position formation based on the area of origin. This was stated by another informant with the initials DNH, a civil servant who worked not in his home region, revealed:

"... Indeed, it will be very difficult to get a position if we are not from the area where we work today. Once at a trial in the DPRD (Parlemet), there were two heads of SKPD who were rebuked by a member of the DPRD saying what you are here for, you are from the north, this is not your area, why are you still working here, go back to the north there ... " (Interview, Thursday, June 29, 2017).

The struggle to form a new autonomous region does require sacrifice not only time and energy, but the ability of the material also greatly determines the success of the struggle for pemekaran. Many Nias people are sympathetic to the struggle by donating funds through the division of preparatory bodies for

each region that had been formed previously. All people enthusiastically welcome the coming of pemekaran. For them pemekaran will bring prosperity to the community because development will be more evenly distributed and development funds will be greater than from the center. At least this is what the public knows and hears from the elites who power the regional expansion.

As an example of euphoria about the hope that prosperity can be felt in one event, the author accidentally was in an airport rental car with one of the DPRD members who had just attended a DPR plenary meeting to ratify the division of Nias Regency into three new autonomous regions. During the trip he revealed that in the future Nias would advance, the community can be more prosperous because many civil servants will be accepted. In fact, they have already calculated that the number of scholars in Nias is very sufficient for the needs of new employees in government offices that will be formed. This means that all Nias scholars will be accommodated and become civil servants.

As time went on, what was stated by the DPRD members approached the reality when the new regions opened up the formation of CPNS acceptance, so that many scholars in Nias Islands and from outside the island flocked to take the test in the hope of escaping because it was sons of the soil. But unfortunately almost a third of those who passed the test were those from outside Nias Island, aka not from the Nias Tribe. The story has a story revealing that those from outside of Nias Island are able to pay more with a note later that after a year or two asking to move to another area or in other words moving outside Nias Island. Many Nias people were disappointed and protested about the results received. They ask where are the glorified regional identities of previous elites stating that let's build our own regions.

The division is actually to give a place for those who want to get a position. The easiest way to achieve it is to arouse regional sentiment because it will be very easy to accept and make sense. With the principle of let's build each area. Who else will build the area if not someone who comes from the area itself. At least the informant with the initials KFZ, a bureaucrat who had an important position in the preparatory body for the division of Nias Regency, and knew exactly how the process of pemekaran was itself, revealed that. KFZ describes this:

"..... At that time, in every meeting and socialization about pemekaran it was always emphasized that this was for the welfare of the Nias people in the future. After all, those who enjoy us later. Let's go back to their respective villages and choose what positions are suitable for you. So it's all for the real position. And see who is prosperous now? Well the people who

have that position ... "(Interview Saturday, July 15, 2017)

The phenomenon described by the informant is in line with the opinion expressed by Muhtar Haboddin [4], according to him the first face of identity politics is tangible with the son of the region as happened in West Kalimantan, Riau, Papua and Central Kalimantan, but other faces of identity politics can manifest in the struggle to get fund allocation from the central government. Where the issue of the son of the region accompanied the process of political decentralization.

The welfare problem has become a classic problem in the Nias Islands, which is still being strived for. By using regional isolation as a justification reason so that the welfare of the community is difficult to materialize. However, objective conditions speak differently when basically welfare is still difficult to be owned by ordinary people who do not have any power and power. Those who enjoy welfare are precisely their officials and groups.

The above conditions can illustrate that in fact the contestation among local elites in the Nias Islands is solely for the sake of obtaining sources of power in newly formed regions by carrying out political actions by building territorial sensitivity so that it is considered as a difference in identity, while in reality it is for avoid competition and at the same time accumulate power over politics and economics for the benefit of the local elite themselves and their groups.

The author initiates an explanation of the objective conditions of the Nias people when viewed from the means of interpreting meaning as a unity of ethnicity. This was revealed from a housewife who was written in an online news media "news nias" when feeling how the elites showed the importance of their respective identities, and did not want to work together. This expression is like this:

"... Lady is a blood spilled land on every Ono Niha, both those who now live there, and those (including me) who are wandering elsewhere in the world. Every Ono Niha should have the thoughts, ideals and longings, how to bring the beloved Nias Island to progress. Its citizens can live with prosperity, education literacy, and are skilled in all fields. This is a big project. One or a group of people can't do it. However, it was very disappointing and ridiculous because it turned out that what emerged after President Jokowi's (President of Indonesia) visit to Nias happened was a debate about "I". I have been like this. I did that. The defenders of each of the "I" are also no less fierce in issuing a statement to accentuate his behavior. Even more ridiculous, there were those who brought verses from the scriptures to defend their people. The

question is, how important is this me discussed to the point that we forget, Nias needs to be built soon ... "

The story begins with the debate about who was most successful in bringing President Jokowi to work on Nias Island. Each of the elites from each region claimed to be the most instrumental in persuading Jokowi to come to Nias and promised several projects in Nias, one of which was an increase in electricity that could supply all of Nias Island.

If understood in a simple way, then this is actually not to be debated, but for the elites this is pride and self-esteem because it will be considered as the most meritorious so that electricity is able to drain all of Nias Island and even exceed the quota that should be obtained.

Unlike the case when at another moment the phenomenon as a single ethnicity can be seen when a former Medan District Police Chief who previously served as the Nias Police Chief issued a statement pertaining to the area in the Nias Islands. On one occasion in public, the Kapoltabes issued a statement that for police officers in his line who were still lazing and involved in drugs, they would be transferred to Nias Island. Suddenly this statement received a response from all elements of the Nias community both on Nias Island and in other cities in Indonesia. Without seeing which region, carrying the "COMMUNITY ONO NIHA CARE" together expressed strong protest to the Kapoltabes for his statement. Does the head of the Nias district police say is a place of exile? While the Kapoltabes itself had served in Nias. Finally the Kapoltabes chief (Head of Police Department in District Region) apologized and gave an explanation of what the statement meant.

From this phenomenon, it was seen and illustrated how the Nias community declared itself as strength of an ethnic entity without seeing where their territory came from, if it involved a common interest and did not benefit from any particular event or activity. This movement was not ridden by elites but purely as a protest from the Nias people.

On another occasion, the phenomenon of the use of regional identity as an identity constructed was revealed by one of the informants with the initials DNH who revealed how a useful project for all Nias people must fail due to the difficulty of other autonomous regions in synergizing the application of integrated development. DNH reveals this:

"... There has always been funding assistance from the central government to build an integrated waste processing facility but is centralized in Nias Regency and it is expected that cooperation from all autonomous regions in Nias Islands will jointly contribute to the success of the program. So that later waste management can be done well throughout the Nias Islands. But what happened, other regions did not want to reason for the sake of the Nias Regency alone ... " (Interview, Tuesday, July 18, 2017).

Local identity-based elite contestation in the form of cultural differences after the division of Nias Regency also becomes an interesting thing for the writer when on one side Nias society is a society framed in the same ethnic entity and on the other hand can shift to an identity that carries a cultural identity that different. There is another phenomenon that shows how all-autonomous regions in the Nias Islands can cooperate when dealing with mutual interests and benefits. At the time of organizing the Ya'ahowu party in 2016, each region held it individually with their respective budgets. The Nias community was confused, what kind of cultural party was to be held when everything was the same. So that the holding of the Yaa'howu party in 2016 did not receive an enthusiastic response from the community. Finally, the holding of the Yaahowu Party in 2017 was held together and centered in Gunungsitoli and received financial support from the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia. The mascot of organizing the people's party also experienced a change that had previously written "Ya'ahowu Tanō Niha, Pulau Sejuta Budaya" being "Nias Pulau Impian". Getting criticism from the Nias community with the slogan "Pulau Sejuta Budaya" while the public realized that the Nias community was a homogeneous society in terms of ethnicity caused this change. Changes to the mascot can be seen in the following picture:



**Fig-1: 2017 Ya'ahowu Party Mascot (Before and After)**

Similar events have also occurred at the time of cultural performances from each region in Indonesia. At that time there was a request from the central government to the regional government to send envoys to Jakarta to showcase Nias culture. But there was an inter-elite debate at that time in determining who represented whom. Finally Nias failed to send its envoy. An informant with the initials GLH revealed this:

"... At that time there was a request from the center to display the culture of Nias at an event in Jakarta. Then it was decided that the envoy would be the people from South Nias. But many parties, especially from other regions, opposed this decision. Finally, the Nias Islands did not send their delegates ... "(Interview, Saturday, June 24, 2017).

This situation can be seen in several phenomena that occur about how because of certain interests the elites carry their respective identities according to their desires and benefits. In 2016 the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism held a tourism exhibition in Jakarta. The five autonomous regions in the Nias Islands were invited to take part in the activity by displaying the culture of each region even though what was shown was almost the same and there was no significant difference. Many Nias residents complain about not being put together. Because it is far more beautiful and interesting if the appearance is together. But the stakeholders did not heed the input from the Nias community. It turns out that the investigation has been carried out; this matter is none other than not because of a more profitable budget if separated by each autonomous region. This was revealed from the informant's explanation with the initials KFZ saying:

"... Everything is because there is a contested budget. If the budget is put together, it becomes limited because the personnel and equipment costs are reduced. If one-on-one is more accommodating personnel and equipment so the budget can be large. Well, it is made a cultural performance that is distinguished slightly from the others ... ". (Interview, Saturday 5 August 2017)

Conscious or unconscious the public knows that the culture displayed is basically the same. So at that time many people were less enthusiastic about watching the exhibition carried out by each autonomous region of the Nias Islands because the booths visited displayed the same thing.

The attitude shown by the autonomous regions in the Nias Islands represented by its bureaucratic elites is in line with the instrumentalist theoretical approach that views that identity is more because it is constructed by elites to gain power both politically and economically.

What's interesting about the struggle over the control of economic resources for the welfare of the elite and their groups after the formation of new autonomous regions in the Nias Islands is not for the struggle for natural resources owned, then shifting the elite power that is still in power in the area, but prospering with funds transferred from the center for development in the region, especially from DAU and DAK sources.

These forms of welfare are carried out by struggling to occupy positions in SKPD that are considered wet and have large budgets. To launch the struggle, if the position was occupied by people who were not from their territory then they would go to the regional head or officials who were considered capable of making decisions so that the person could be transferred and not a few who gave money as a sign of gratitude even in the amount the big one when compared with what is called a thank you sign. An informant with the initials DNH revealed this context:

"... It is true that there are some offices that are considered wet and become a land for self-enrichment and are very contested by the elite bureaucrats. Department of public works, Education Agency and Health Service are the top three who become the favorite land. They are willing to pay and shift people there, because surely the capital is behind. In fact there are



already four to five times who have moved the area to get a position on the land. Using kinship and of course by providing a number of funds, the position can be achieved ... "(Interview, Thursday, June 29, 2017).

Indeed, for regions where the condition of local income is minimal due to management and limited natural resources as well as limited human resources which are also not supported by its geographical locus, the only hope to improve and increase the source of income is to become a government employee because it is considered the source of funds is clear and continues to flow to the area without having to have a sense of concern will stop because the state is declared bankrupt. Basically, the Nias community as a door that opened up employment opportunities for local sons who wished to develop their regions even though in reality not all of them had the opportunity felt the policy of regional autonomy through the formation of new autonomous regions.

So for the writer the phenomenon that occurs now in the midst of local people who feel the division of the region considers that democracy is welfare and it relates to the power relations that are determined by how that power is constructed and how the public is able to exercise control to balance the power relations [13].

Contestation involving local elites from each autonomous region in the Nias Islands as a form of battle, which led to power struggles over resources in the region, was increasingly demonstrated by internal conflicts among local elites in the same region.

"..... Until now, at least three regencies and the DPRD often fight, namely South Nias, West Nias and Gunungsitoli City. In fact, there was also an open conflict between the Regent and Deputy Regent; Regent vs. Chairperson of DPRD; Chairman of the DPRD vs. Members of the DPRD; DPRD members vs. DPRD members. The conflict is not far from the matter of interests, personal or group. Not infrequently local government programs are hampered in the DPRD because they do not get support. Usually, it is not only because the program is not feasible, but because the distribution of the project allocation is considered 'unfair'. Understandably, it has become a public secret, not a few of the members of the DPRD or the regional head were previously in the background of a previous entrepreneur / contractor ...".

This writing, which is an expression of the heart of a niece observer, shows that the local inter-elite battle is not only the interrelation of each region, but it is even more felt at the level of fellow elites in the same area and actually creates conflict. This has indicated

that identity politicization through regional sentiment is only a strategy to gain new power on new land. Although in the end the manipulation of the differences will be fragile when the play is the interests of the individual and his own group, it is no longer the interests of the sentiments of the region that were built before.

The phenomenon of conflict between elites in the same region is the next issue of identity battles in the Nias Islands. As mentioned in the previous chapters that the effects of colonialism and the entry of the Nias Islands as part of the Indonesian state after the independence period, some of the social organization structures of the Nias community have been replaced with new forms of governmental organizations in accordance with the prevailing governance laws in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the social ties are still alive and still inherent in the life of the Nias people. The interesting thing about the ethnic identity of the Nias community, it turns out that if traced more deeply, there is a unique when the bond in the structure of the fabanuasa also sometimes becomes a bond that is more closely compared to the strength of the bond as a single tribe. Although for certain things, tribal ties will also get a portion. A GLH informant who said revealed this:

"... The fabanuasa bond has indeed become a close association among the Nias community since a long time ago. Maybe this is because the relations that are formed within Banua are very close, so that if the people migrate out of the area, they will be closer to one of their friends than one clan or tribe ... "(Interview, Saturday, July 8, 2017).

The identity ties that lead to these small groups further reinforce that the ethnic identity of the Nias community experiences dynamics that are very dependent on the situation and conditions faced by the individual or group of individuals. Identity which sometimes shifts from tribal ties to fabanuasa ties then moves again towards regional ties, illustrating that there are certain interests that determine the ebb and flow of an identity, especially the identity of the Nias community.

The difficulty of the Nias community to unite themselves to become bigger was also complained by Nias community leaders Yasonna H Laoly who currently serves as the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia, when highlighting student groups from Nias in several major cities in Indonesia who tend to be less self-interested in the group small groups based on their hometown or clan. Yasonna said this:

"While the trend of Nias students is actually dwarfing themselves in small groups, for example the Gomo Student Association, the Telukdalam Student Association, the West Nias

Student Association and so on. There are even smaller associations, based on the clan. I see this trend is not healthy. They should gather to form one great power, or if they are Christian, they can enter GMKI, if Muslims can join the HMI. Just don't be in a small group because you won't have the power of voice, "

The group of Nias students has become a smaller part of their own experience by the author himself when he started lecturing at UGM. Seeing the increasing number of Nias students studying at UGM through collaboration with their respective local governments, the authors along with several other Nias students took the initiative to summarize Nias students to form student organizations consisting of students from Nias who were currently study at UGM. Finally, a Nias student union was formed, hereinafter referred to as KMN-UGM. But not long after that, students from South Nias also established a South Nias student organization called Kamanisel.

The author tries to find out, why it happened. From some information, it turned out that what was done by students from South Nias was caused by disappointment experienced when the figures they championed did not get a vote during the election of the chairman of KMN-UGM.

The picture of the changing identity of the Nias community from one state to another shows that behind it all there is an interest that is carried out, involving elites even at a small organizational level. Maybe this can also answer what Yasonna complained about the current trend of Nias students who tend to dwarf themselves. This is not because there are desires and ambitions that are not conveyed. So that it forms its own identity to fulfill the desire to be in power.

The dynamics of the contestation from the period before regional autonomy, after regional autonomy and after the division of Nias Regency became 4 (four) new autonomous regions. In two (2) periods prior to the division of Nias Regency, namely in the pre-autonomy and post-regional autonomy periods, local elites contested in seizing political resources. However, after the division of regions, the contestation develops in the struggle for local resources no longer on political resources but also economic resources.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The initial goal of carrying out identity politics is to seek justice for the oppressed through the prominence of certain identities. However, in the corridor of its implementation it has been used as a political action that places the interests of the group as being primarily by overriding the initial purpose of the struggle. This is what is often found in cases of regional expansion, which is used as an arena for fighting elites

by carrying the scent of prosperity but basically becomes a land in seeking political and economic benefits. In the end, the community becomes involved in divided situations and conditions by assuming that they and their groups are different from the others even though they are in an ethnic entity.

The focus of the research on the contestation of local identity-based elites wants to reveal how and why local elites contest using identity politics to control local resources after the division of Nias Regency, which should not be a problem anymore when the struggle for regional expansion has been achieved successfully and is in one the unity of ethnicity. What interests are behind it all? Likewise, the identities of the local Nias community that are considered different from others, and the dynamics of the local elite contestation itself become technical questions for the authors in this study. This research was conducted based on the assumption that the contestation of the local elite after the division of Nias Regency by using identity politics solely by the elite itself was used as a means and resources to gain power (political) and economic interests of the elite and their groups. This is at the same time a novelty value of this research when in general identity politics will always carry ethnicity and religion as the *modus operandi*, but the same thing applies to a homogeneous society in terms of ethnicity. Identity has become a commodity for the elite to achieve their interests.

Based on a review of previous references on regional expansion, it shows that identity politics is one of the strategies used by elites in demanding regional expansion, but in the following conditions it turns out that local elites contested political resources by sharing power or gaining power for the elite. Himself and his group and fight in obtaining economic resources, especially through transfer funds from the central government. The same phenomenon occurred in this study, when local elites contested by building regional sentiments after regional expansion occurred, in order to gain power in the political field and transfer funds from the center in the economic field. What distinguishes the case of the expansion of other regions is when identity politics is carried out because of differences in religion and ethnicity to form new autonomous regions. But in the case of Nias Regency expansion, identity politics was based on differences in local identity in a homogeneous society in terms of ethnicity.

The findings of this study are that the identity of the Nias community has become a dynamic identity, not a natural identity that is a permanent identity, irreversible. Nor is it a discursive identity, which is to form a new identity that is independent of its cultural values and releases its ethnocentrism. But it is an identity created by elites to contest, in an effort to

control the resources in the region, whether political resources through the struggle for positions in government, and the economy through the allocation of central allocation funds to the regions, identity is made as a project (Giddens) to get justification for what has been done by the elite.

The issue of elite fighting in the division of Nias Regency is more due to the struggle for political and economic resources from local elites. As well as refuting what was the initial goal of the division of Nias Regency was to accelerate the development process for the welfare of the community. The attitude of excellent cooperation among local elites from each region when fighting for regional expansion is basically merely a strategy so that the struggle can succeed.

Cultural identity, both in the form of language, traditional houses, mengayau traditions, characters, ceremonies for renewal and legalization of law, greetings, traditions of stone jumping, settlement patterns, death ceremonies, forms of social stratification, colors and symbols, customary marriages, traditional dances and songs are local identities of the Nias community.

Encouraging the immediate expansion of regions is not a standing position of the researchers themselves. So that the final note submitted is a matter of consideration based on existing objective facts, so that it is expected to provide input for policy makers in considering various proposals and reasons for the region to form new autonomous regions.

Elite interests will always color the process of regional expansion. Behind the desire to increase the political participation of the people, in reality the community does not lead to political maturity in democracy. Precisely what happens is the struggle for resources in the area to enrich the elites and their groups. Therefore, it is better for the central government to consider again maintaining the regional pemekaran moratorium until the right formula is obtained so that regional expansion is not due to political interests but solely as a community need.

## REFERENCES

1. Anggoro A. Ponco & Yossihara, Anita, Menanti Pemekaran Berkualitas, Kompas, 30 April 2016
2. Zakso, Amrazi. Identitas Keetnisan dan Relasi Antar Etnis Siswa Daerah Rawan Konflik: Studi Mengenai Kontribusi Lingkungan Keluarga, Sekolah dan Teman Sebaya Terhadap Pembentukan Dinamika Psikologis Identitas Keetnisan dan Relasi Antar Etnis Siswa Sekolah Menengah Atas di Kalimantan Barat, Disertasi (Pendidikan Umum), Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung. 2012.
3. Huntington, Samuel P. Benturan Antar Peradaban dan Masa Depan Politik Dunia, Jakarta, Penerbit Qalam. 1996.
4. Ndraha Talizudu. 2012, [http://www.nias-bangki.com/2012/04/prof-dr-taliziduhu-ndraha-5-pemda-di-nias-harus-bersatu/diakses\\_tgl\\_9\\_Mei\\_2012](http://www.nias-bangki.com/2012/04/prof-dr-taliziduhu-ndraha-5-pemda-di-nias-harus-bersatu/diakses_tgl_9_Mei_2012).
5. Note harapan. Forum Kepala Daerah Sekepulauan Nias Dideklarasikan. 2011 <http://noteharapan.wordpress.com/2011/07/11/forum-kepala-daerah-se-kepulauan-nias-dideklarasikan/>, diakses tanggal 21 September 2014.
6. Oommen TK. Kewarganegaraan, kebangsaan, & etnisitas: mendamaikan persaingan identitas. Kreasi Wacana; 2009.
7. Hall PA, Taylor RC. Political science and the three new institutionalisms. Political studies. 1996 Dec;44(5):936-57.
8. Marsh D, Batters E, Savigny H. Historical institutionalism: beyond Pierson and Skocpol. 2004.
9. Shepsle KA. Rational choice institutionalism. The Oxford handbook of political institutions. 2006:23-38.
10. Leicht KT, Jenkins JC, editors. Handbook of politics: State and society in global perspective. Springer Science & Business Media; 2009 Nov 28.
11. Parsons W. Public policy: pengantar teori dan praktik analisis kebijakan. Kencana. Jakarta. 2005.
12. Creswell JW, Garrett AL. The "movement" of mixed methods research and the role of educators. South African journal of education. 2008;28(3):321-33.
13. Bayo LN, Santoso P, Samadhi WP, editors. Rezim lokal di Indonesia: memaknai ulang demokrasi kita. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia; 2018.