

# *Harajaon: A Model of The Local Democracy System of The Batak Toba Community*

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## **Abstract**

Although as a system of government, Democracy is relatively new, but the values contained in democracy can be found traces in the history of the local Toba Batak community. This can be seen from the harajaon system, a traditional government system that regulates society, just like today's modern social systems. As a system, harajaon at some point accommodates democratic values: expressing opinions in deliberation, sharing of power, etc. Harajaon can be defined as a social system. This study is a qualitative research with in-depth interviews and field observations in four areas of the harajaon. The results of this study indicate that there is a division of power in the Harajaon government system, namely, Harajaon Huta, Harajaon Horja and Harajaon Bius. Then there are differences in harajaon patterns from the four research areas. However, Harajaon is a local government system that is run by the Toba Batak Indigenous People and has a model like today's democracy.

*Keywords: Harajaon, Democracy, Toba Batak.*

## **1. Introduction**

The concept of democracy in Ancient Greece has managed to grow and develop until now. This concept has even become a mainstream pattern of government that is applied in almost all of the world. Francis Fukuyama (2005) in his book *The End of History and The Last Man*, actually writes that in terms of political ideology, the world community has reached a certain point and the ideology of democracy has become the winner. The concept of democracy, which was coined several centuries ago, cannot be denied - although not entirely - has become the aspiration of the world community until the early 21st century. According to Fukuyama, the victory of democratic ideology in this ideological battle has gone through a long dialectical process.

The democratic system adopted and run by various countries based on the understanding of democracy as a guide in the government system. For example, Liberal Democracy, Parliamentary Democracy, Presidential, and so on. However, the concept of democracy can be found in local community groups who independently run the system on the basis of kinship. Indirectly, the concept implemented by the local community characterizes the current modern democratic

system, although it is not explicitly stated about the concept applied within the framework of the traditional system.

The democratic system in North Sumatra has been applied in the history of the local community. The historical description can be found in the Harajaon system. This fact proves that the concept that has just been discovered by the 'west' has actually been applied long before. Even before the Dutch colonial government took control of the Batak lands in 1910. The traditional Toba community, whose religious cosmos already has a government in the form of a kingdom and its government also has a bureaucracy and apparatus that regulates social life and local government (Ulber Silalahi, 2014).

Harajaon in the Toba Batak community can be defined as a pattern of leadership and social systems in the culture of the Toba Batak people. The Harajaon system applies to two levels of social organization of the Toba Batak community, namely the tribe and the village or huta. In addition to relating to the organization of members of the tribe and huta, the harajaon also regulates the area of territory and the pattern and authorization of leadership within a tribe and huta (Vergouwen, 1986).

Ethnic diversity is Indonesia's wealth, so that diversity is important to study as a refinement of scientific knowledge. The local community's philosophy and wisdom have taught us a lot about how to manage good governance. In the Toba Batak community, Harajaon is an interesting local democratic system to study. The system is a local genius in the North Sumatra region. Harajaon as a social system in the Toba Batak community has a pattern and method that is similar to the democracy adopted by the State of Indonesia. This cultural wealth will also enrich the concept and political system of Indonesia.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

The concept of democracy is practiced throughout the world differently from one country to another. Democracy has become a paradigm in the world's language of communication regarding government systems and political systems that are considered ideal. (Jimly Asshiddiqie: 2005) Therefore, according to Ni`matul Huda (2007), it is undeniable that democracy is the best principle and system in the political and constitutional system. In today's modern times, almost all countries claim to be adherents of democracy.

David Held explains that there are three main types or models of democracy (Held, 2004). First, direct democracy or participatory democracy, a system of decision-making on public issues in which citizens are directly involved. This was the "genuine" type of democracy that existed in Ancient Athens. Therefore, Mohammad Nasih called direct democracy the most ancient democracy in world history. Second, liberal democracy or representative democracy, a system of government that includes elected "officials" who carry out the task of representing the interests or views of citizens in a limited area, while still upholding the rule of

law. Third, democracy based on a one-party model (although one might doubt whether this is a form of democracy as well).

Previous research that conducted research on local democracy, one of which referred to the book *Democracy Indigenous, Building a Democracy System for Local Wisdom*, 2014 written by several researchers such as Dr. Bertolomeus Bolong with the title, *Face of Democracy in the Riung Orang Riung Customary power structure*.

Then by, Dr. YUSDANI, *Democracy based on Local Wisdom: A study of the clan governance system in South Sumatra and several other authors*. Research on indigenous democracy shows that Indonesia, which is multiculturalism, has a system that is formed not on the basis of the current modern system but on the basis of a traditional system that was created to regulate social order based on some similarities. Indigenous peoples of an area in several scattered areas have characteristics and different systems that can be called local wisdom of the local community. Researchers see that in North Sumatra, which is located in western Indonesia, there is the Toba Batak Indigenous Community which is interesting to see the system of government applied.

### **3. Method**

In this study of *Harajaon: Model of the Local Democratic System of the Toba Batak Community*, the researcher uses qualitative research methods. This study uses data collection techniques in the form of literature study, in-depth interviews, participatory observation and limited group discussions (FGD). This FGD aims to validate data from the results of in-depth interviews and participatory observations. Thus, this research is expected to find accurate data results. (Koentjaraningrat, 1990). In formulating the problem of *Harajaon: Model of the Local Democratic System of the Toba Batak Community* at the research location, namely Samosir and Bakara, the researcher will use the PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) method by collecting data, information and views of the government, experts/culturalists, traditional leaders, and community leaders collectively. together. It aims to obtain accurate data.

### **4. Result and Discussion**

#### **a. Power Sharing in the Harajaon System**

In an organization or group, the association must have the duties and responsibilities of each to regulate the running of a system. The division of tasks is carried out based on their duties and functions. This applies to large organizations such as countries and small organizations such as communities. Must have supporting elements to run a group system.

John Locke (1632-1704) in his book *Two Treatises on Civil Government* (1690) the conception of the function of state power is divided into three, namely (i) the legislative function; (ii) executives; (iii) federative functions (foreign relations),

each of which is separate from the other. For John Locke, judicial functions are included in executive or government functions. John Locke views the trial as *uittvoering*, which includes the implementation of the law. Then the concept was refined into *Trias Politica* by Montesquieu who is a French philosopher - 1748, where *Trias Politica* comes from the Greek "Tri" which means three, "As" which means axis / center, and "Politica" which means power. The definition of *Trias Politica* is a teaching which has the assumption that state power consists of 3 (three) kinds of power, namely Legislative, Executive and Judicial. The concept of *Trias Politica* is a normative principle that power should not be delegated to the same person to prevent abuse of power by those in power. (Miriam Budiarjo, 2005).

In addition, there is the concept of centralization or decentralization in the government system in regulating an area. Centralization is simply the concentration of power in the central government or the parent in the system. Meanwhile, decentralization is the distribution of authority to each region based on its autonomous region.

This division of power has been implemented in the traditional system. One of them is the traditional Toba Batak system. In the Toba Batak system, it is known as the *Harajaon* / government system. In this system of government, the King as the highest leader has a hierarchy according to his duties and responsibilities its functions, namely *Harajaon Huta*, *Horja* and *Bius*.

#### **b. Harajaon Huta**

*Huta* is a small administrative area consisting of one or more *Lumban* or *Sosor* which is generally founded by an elder based on one clan. The Supreme Leader of *Harajaon Huta* is called *King Huta*. In the *Huta* there is the right to regulate or rule the *Huta* in the Toba Batak community which is essentially a *Hatopan* (shared rights) from the direct patrilineal descendants of the founder of the *Huta*. During the Dutch colonial era, *King Huta* was called *Tunggani Huta* (Elder *Huta*). *Raja Huta* is the owner of a traditional system of government that deals directly with all citizens, guaranteeing the rule of law and the continuity of tradition.

As a political center in the Toba Batak society, *huta* have clear boundaries. *Huta* is a unit of a political system formed by clans and tribal groups, a group formed by kinship and religion. In addition, the *huta* has a characteristic that marks it as a community association, namely its own authority. Therefore, the *huta* is an autonomous *harajaon* (kingdom, government), and is often referred to as a small independent republic. Therefore, each *huta* has the right to enter into an agreement with one or several other *huta*; make cooperation in defense and food affairs.

This is also explained by OP Anju Sihaloho from Parbaba Village "Tunggani *Huta* is one village, for example, how many houses do we have here, brother, bone and *Namboru*. But the one who owns my land but someone occupies it is another clan. In the case of *Bius*, this country consisted of several *Tunggani Huta*. Above *KK*, *Huta*, above *Huta*, *Horja*, above *Horja*, *Bius*. its level".

The characteristics of the village alliance include: (1) having definite boundaries, (2) having land for forest expansion as well as for waters, and (3) managing various "domestic" activities on their own, such as managing ditches or village fences, meeting halls., resolve citizen disputes, lead various ceremonies, transfer residents and the like (Vergouwen, 1986). According to Vergouwen (1986), the duties of the King of Huta are:

1. He assumes the duties of forest management and enforcement of customary law, order and discipline.
2. He oversees the maintenance and walls of the fort; he manages the location of buildings and exercises control over the paddy fields which are included in the huta land.
3. He decides whether the small garden should be freed up for house construction or left alone;
4. He guides the legal behavior of its citizens and accompanies it when citizens advance a lawsuit against another party.
5. He provides guidance in negotiations between residents who want to tie the engagement.
6. He acts as the power to take care of the interests of the forest and his descendants in matters with the outside world.
7. In the past he was also responsible in court.
8. He is the government and the police at the same time, and in the past, near his house there was sometimes a *pasung* available to hold people who disobeyed his orders (violating the law).

### **c. Harajaon Horja**

The Horja is a larger system than the Harajaon huta system but smaller than the Harajaon bius. Harajaon or horja government is an autonomous community or association consisting of several autonomous huta. Harajaon Horja becomes a liaison between Huta - Huta if they have interests between these regions, such as together carry out community activities (traditional ceremonies) and spiritual (religious ceremonies). Each horja is also led by a king called the King of Horja. The horja king is the huta king who is proposed by the huta community to be a confederation of the horja. However, the election of King Horja was not through voting, but through open deliberation.

The King of Horja has the right to declare war or peace, to regulate major works that are related to the interests of the Horja and the interests of the Huta which are part of the Horja and its citizens. He only takes care of other huta's affairs only as an intermediary. But if it involves or involves inter-huta, then the king of horja will provide a solution. In spiritual activities, the king of horja arranges the preparation of the horja santi rea ceremony as a big offering ceremony and brings tonggo-tonggo or ritual prayers.

The role of King Horja is not limited only to outsiders, but also to its own members. If there is a dispute between horja members, at the initiative of the horja, peace efforts are made by holding a meeting at the parftungkoan, called parriaan. The horja regularly hold meetings to discuss matters of common interest and inter-



huta cooperation. The most prominent element in horja affairs is golat or land division (Ulber Silalahi, 2014).

#### **d. Harajaon Bius**

Harajaon Bius is an autonomous group or paguyuban system consisting of several horja. Like any other Harajaon. Harajaon Bius is led by King Bius. In this Harajaon consists of several Kings so that it is called the Anesthesia Council, although one of them is appointed as the leader of the anesthetic king or the leader of the Anesthesia Council which is often called the Doli King. He are worldly leaders. At first this fellowship was formed to carry out the sacrifice ceremony together. However, because there are more and more matters outside of the offering of sacrifices, namely legal matters and worldly matters involving anesthetics, the anesthetics have also become the legal society of the harajaon.

Although called the king of anesthesia, but they are a group of people, namely the king of horja who came from the king of huta. The king of anesthesia is the representative of each king of horja and they are also the king of huta. This means that the king of anesthesia is the privilege of the descendants of the sipungka huta clan or the founder of the huta. Because it is the representative of each horja king who is in a confederation with the anesthetics, the king of anesthesia is a single Council of Anesthesia. This means that the bius is not a unit of kingdom or government under a single authority.

In addition to being the organizer of religious anesthesia ceremonies, the anesthetic king or the Anesthesia Council is also tasked with leading various worldly activities for the welfare of the anesthetic and solving worldly problems. Some of the tasks that must be carried out by the drug king include (Ulber Silalahi, 2004):

1. Carry out and supervise the distribution of land to each clan that is within and is part of the anesthetic.
2. To prosecute a member of the anesthesia group who commits actions that cause harm to others, such as killing, burning, poisoning, raping in another anesthetic or another member of the anesthesia group who does the same thing at the anesthetic they lead.
3. Reconciling disputes that arise in anesthesia, especially disputes between horja, or between huta that cannot be resolved by horja.
4. Implement and preserve patik dohot uhum (rules and laws). for the common good.
5. Regulating the distribution of irrigation water.
6. Set security together
7. Declaring war and peace with.
8. Make an agreement with other anesthetics, for example, in the implementation of the sacrificial ceremony.
9. Choose the leadership of the kings of anesthesia or the silent council and parbaringin

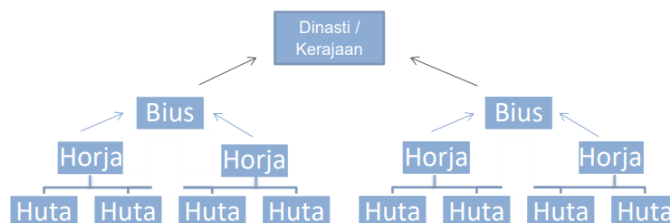
As explained by OP Anju Sihalohe, a traditional figure from Parbaba Village about the Bius King, namely:

“In the past, to plant rice there had to be a Bius King. In the past, there was no religion, the term we saw nature. Like now in July, it was a dry season, meaning that there was only 8 months of rice planting. So this should be inaugurated elder. Now, if he plants a club, it grows because of the drought, right? So our people used to say that God is near. But the delivery method to God is not frivolous. Must be from a sincere conscience. Hands folded pleading to God. Then you want to harvest, not like it's tripe season now. A grain of rice does not fall. We have asked God to give us good rice, so we have to take any that fell.”

Then in the culture the King of Bius has a role like that explained by Marson Sidauruk Traditional leaders from Simanindo Village, namely:

“(The position) is the same, one as Boru, the term is like Pariban, for example there is a child marriage or a married woman who works for that person earlier. Sidauruk, Turnip, Sitio of the same level, the Boru Marga Malau. That's why we have sent invitations to residents and others. [...] If here, one of the four of them is having a party, then the four of them have to make an agreement on the terms, such as what we want to cut. So it was the four traditional events that were decisive. Even though the event, for example, the Gultom clan here, the Simbolon clan was here. So whoever organizes the event here must obey the directions of the four clans. That's who determines the custom, how the traditional event will run later. The term here is that there are many Sihalohe clans. So they have to ask Bius here, Here we are invited. They can make their own rules. Both parties, dies and so on until now.”

In bius there is parbaringin, namely a hierarchical structure as a leader who takes care of ceremonies and rituals that are different from the datu who is seen as a sorcerer, which has a very crucial influence on the socio-political dimension of society. Apart from Parbaringin, there are also other leaders in an anesthetic called Paniaran, namely women leaders in an anesthetic, who have the task of conveying the aspirations of women in anesthesia, or as a form of channeling aspirations for women's representation at the regional level. (Johann Angerler, 2009)



Picture 1. Harajaon Structure

### **9.5 Democracy in the Harajaon of the Toba Batak Indigenous People**

The local government system run by the Toba Batak people when analyzed has democratic values. Although the system applied directly describes how a form of the Kingdom is governed directly by the King. But the government system contains a democratic model. Independently and collectively the Toba Batak people create a system to regulate the order of life. From a political, social, cultural point of view, even the economy. A system formed from the creation of a community based on clan and spiritual similarities. Harajaon became a traditional concept of social system.

Based on the description above, the researcher will not examine democracy in its entirety, but see a system that is run with democratic values. Dynasty/Kingdom In his book David Held Held, D. (2004). *Democracy and Global Order: From Modern Countries to Cosmopolitan Governments*, explains that there are three main types or models of democracy, first, Direct Democracy or participatory democracy, second, liberal democracy or representative democracy and third democracy based on the one-party model. Of the three models, the researcher uses the second concept in analyzing the Harajaon system.

Liberal/representative democracy is a system of government that includes elected “officials” who carry out the task of representing the interests or views of citizens in a limited area, while still upholding the rule of law. (David Held, 2004) Harajaon Huta, Harajaon Horja, and Harajaon Bius each have their own functions and duties by having their own autonomous region. From Harajaon is a representative of the clan in the Huta region who became the King of Huta. Then from several Hutans need a system or management that regulates the relationship between several Hutans formed, namely Harajaon Horja. Harajaon Horja is a representative of a group of several confederated Huta. Continued to the system or community above Horja which includes several Horja and Huta, namely Harajaon Bius. Just like in the Other Harajaon, the Stupid King is the representative of the Horjas. Like a system in modern democracy, the local government system of the Toba Batak Indigenous People indirectly describes the democracy that occurs in a country, such as in Indonesia.

This is reinforced by Robert A. Dahl in the book *Democracy and Its Critics* who explains that representative democracy is a democracy that is made practical for a long period of time and covers a very wide area. Of the three Harajaons, they do not fully implement the concept of democracy. But in terms of power sharing, it is characteristic of the current democratic model. The relationship between the three Harajaons can also be analyzed into a concept that is implemented by Indonesia as a democracy adherent, namely decentralization. Distribution of authority to regions to regulate their territory itself or known as Regional Autonomy. The three Harajaons can be analogized as a country or kingdom where each Harajaon has authority over its territory and has the function to regulate and run the wheels of government for the benefit of its people.



In the concept of power sharing as described earlier, there is Trias Politica, which is divided into 3 divisions, namely, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Functionally, the local government system does not describe the function of the division with its duties. In a local community system such as Harajaon can concluded that there is no full power possessed by the King. Each Harajaon oversees their respective territories. Power is distributed like a trias politica, although indirectly as an effort to control of supporters of a Toba Batak royal system.

## 5. Conclusion

Harajaon is a traditional system of the Toba Batak Indigenous people that has existed since before the entry of Dutch colonialism in 1910. Harajaon which can be defined as a social system shows that before the entry of the western system, namely democracy and also before it was implemented in Indonesia, this system has been run by the local community. Harajaon is a system formed to regulate the order of life on the basis of kinship and spirituality.

The democratic model based on David Held's view, representative democracy implies that the local government system of Harajaon which is applied to the Toba Batak Indigenous Peoples has been adopted before this concept emerged. Although this system existed before the emergence of the concept of modern democracy, this shows that local communities are able to create a life order to organize and manage a community which we can see in the Harajaon of the Toba Batak Indigenous People. Based on the four research sites have different methods and patterns in Harajaon, however the four research sites, Parbaba, Siallagan, Simanindo and Bakkara acknowledge the existence of the Harajaon system which is a government system for the Old Toba Batak Indigenous People. Where the system has a division of power such as, Harazon Bius, Horja, and Huta. Each has authority based on territorial and functional.

But at this time, the concept of Harajaon itself in the government system is no longer like the Old Toba Batak community. With the entry of the democratic system adopted by Indonesia, a constitutional system has been formed that regulates government at the local level, especially the Toba Batak Indigenous People. So that these three Harajaons have reduced their function but are still used in cultural and religious systems.

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