



Kinship as a Social Capital of Semende Ethnic in Winning Legislative Seats in the 2019 Election

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Abstract

In 2019, elections were held concurrently for presidential and vice presidential positions, legislative members, and regional heads. Sixteen political parties participated in the 2019 elections. Within these parties, candidates from the Semende ethnic group contested for membership in the Tanggamus Regency DPRD. The outcome revealed that all 8 winning candidates were of Semende ethnicity. This raises the question of how such a phenomenon occurred, given that the Semende ethnic group constitutes a minority, with only 10% residing in the Pulau Panggung District. What social kinship factors led to their selection?

This study employs a qualitative research approach within a constructivist paradigm, utilizing a phenomenological method. Informants were identified through snowball sampling and subsequently interviewed in-depth. The research findings were analyzed to uncover nuanced meanings pertaining to the research inquiry.

The results indicate that kinship ties and traditional Semende techniques played a significant role in the victory of candidates hailing from familial backgrounds. This contribution served to mitigate the influence of money politics in candidate selection. Despite some candidates leveraging social capital, patronage, and clientelism, primordialism emerged as the determining factor in candidate success. Semende ethnic kinship decisively influenced the victory of both male and female candidates, irrespective of familial ties.

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1. Introduction

The Semende ethnic kinship, known as Jeme Semende, represents a distinctive familial structure within the community. In Semende culture, the family extends beyond the nuclear unit of parents and children to encompass a broader network of relatives connected by blood and marriage. This extended family concept includes descendants of a Puyang (great-grandfather) and all individuals married into this lineage. Such familial arrangements, rooted in traditional wisdom, are integral to Semende society.

Within this familial structure, certain individuals hold specific roles and responsibilities. The Tunggu Tubang, typically the eldest daughter, assumes the role of managing family inheritance for the collective welfare. Meanwhile, the Meraje, often the mother's older or younger brother or grandfather from the mother's line, serves as a guardian and guide for the Tunggu Tubang's children. The Meraje holds a position of reverence and authority within the family, akin to royalty.

This traditional wisdom serves a profound purpose in Semende society, acting as a mechanism to safeguard family food security and prevent asset fragmentation. Unlike inheritance practices in other cultures, which may lead to the division of assets and subsequent impoverishment, Semende inheritance traditions prioritize the preservation and continuity of family resources. Assets are passed down to a single heir, typically the first daughter, with the expectation that they will manage and maintain these resources for future generations. This model emphasizes stewardship over individual ownership, with the AWAT Tubang entrusted to manage family assets while caring for dependent relatives.

These values foster a strong sense of social cohesion among the Semende community, promoting mutual assistance and support without expectation of reciprocity. In times of illness or need, community members rally together to provide medical care and financial assistance, viewing such acts as inherent obligations rather than debts. This collective ethos underscores the superior conduct expected of Semende individuals and serves as a cornerstone of their cultural identity.

Despite the encroachment of modernity and pragmatic values, Semende collectivist principles endure, cherished and preserved across generations. Children are taught the intricacies of Semende family dynamics, regional language, and cultural norms, instilling a deep appreciation for their heritage and guiding principles. These teachings impart not only what is permissible but also the ethical boundaries that govern Semende behavior, ensuring the continuity of their cultural legacy amidst evolving societal dynamics.

The kinship values of the Semende ethnic group are reflected in the language often used in their discourse, exemplified by phrases such as "we are Semende people." This expression signifies a collective consciousness among the Semende community, emphasizing the importance of upholding superior manners and politeness in interactions, particularly within familial contexts. Such adherence to cultural customs underscores their identity and fosters inclusivity rather than exclusivity. Semende hospitality extends not only to close relatives but also to guests from distant backgrounds, reflecting a culture of tolerance and openness that has evolved over time.

Despite residing in an area no longer considered an enclave and experiencing demographic challenges, such as a small population size, the Semende community has managed to maintain its traditional values while adapting to change. This adaptability has been crucial in mitigating communal depression stemming from historical conflicts and marginalization. The transition of formerly protected forest areas into community-managed forests symbolizes this shift towards inclusive development.

The Semende's primary occupation as coffee planters illustrates their commitment to preserving their cultural heritage amidst external pressures. Moreover, the enduring structure of Semende kinship and the traditional wisdom of AWAT Tubang remain integral to their social fabric, albeit undergoing some adaptation. While traditional clientelism persists within Semende social relations, there are noticeable shifts as families seek to leverage resources, such as education, in ways that align with contemporary realities.

In navigating these dynamics, the Semende community employs social capital to forge alliances and strategize for political success while remaining anchored in their cultural traditions. Despite competition and differing interests among candidates, there is a notable absence of conflict in their pursuit of political resources. This harmony reflects a nuanced approach to politics that balances modern strategies with enduring values.

2. Literature Review

Bourdieu (1983) delineated four crucial capitals essential for human existence. Firstly, economic capital encompasses means of production, material wealth, and monetary resources. Secondly,

cultural capital encompasses formal education and familial background. Thirdly, social capital denotes the networks possessed by individuals. Finally, symbolic capital pertains to various forms of status, authority, and legitimacy. Social capital constitutes the resources existing within society, including rules, norms, and values that underpin social interactions among individuals, thus conferring strength and influence in various social contexts.

According to Robert Putnam, as cited in Damsar and Indrayani (2009), social capital manifests through social networks and norms, fostering cooperation and relationships among group members. Francis Fukuyama (2002), as referenced in Harutyunyan and Bagrat (2012), defines social capital as a collection of values and norms that promote reciprocal activities conducted collaboratively based on a foundation of trust. Putnam underscores trust as integral to enhancing cooperation, which, in turn, relies on mutual trust and tolerance for uncertainty. Ausnn Faghothey, in *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice*, posits that goodness is universally desired, striven for, and serves as the ultimate goal of human actions.

Values constitute a pivotal component of culture, with actions deemed valid when aligned with the agreed-upon societal values (Setiadi & Kolip, 2011). Norms, on the other hand, serve to maintain societal order, differing from formal regulations (Setiadi & Kolip, 2011). Fukuyama (1997) characterizes social capital as an array of informal values or norms shared among community members that facilitate cooperation. He further elucidates that norms evolve through habituation and historical processes, guiding individual behavior to serve both personal and communal interests through cooperative efforts.

Fukuyama (2002) delineates networks as groups of individuals sharing informal norms or values beyond those pertinent to market transactions, serving as the foundation for social cohesion and motivating collaborative endeavors to achieve mutual benefits. These networks underscore the importance of social bonds in fostering cooperative behaviors and collective action within communities.

Social, economic, symbolic and economic capital is the political capital needed for candidates in the contest. There are 7 (seven) political capital: first, institutional capital, namely the rules and patterns of relations between individuals who are bound to each other. They work together to achieve one goal. Second, network social capital, namely a person's network relationships to be able to gain a position in a social group. Third, human capital resources, namely the actor's ownership in the form of intellectual abilities or the quality of an actor himself. Fourth, economic capital in the form of potential funds or costs. Fifth, symbolic capital is a symbol that is owned by someone and known by many people. Symbolic capital is closely related to cultural capital. Symbolic capital is a type of resource in achieving symbolic power. Symbolic power is often applied in symbols of power such as positions, luxury cars, offices, prestige, titles, high status, and famous families. Symbolic capital is a form of recognition by a group, either institutionally or non-institutionally. Symbolic capital has the power to construct reality, which is able to lead people to believe, admit and change their views about the reality of a person, group of people, political party, or a nation. The power of symbolic capital is the degree of accumulation of prestige, fame, consecration or honour, and is built on the dialectic of knowledge (awareness) and identification (reconnaissance). Symbolic capital cannot be separated from symbolic power, namely power that makes it possible to obtain support equivalent to that obtained through physical and economic power. Sixth, cultural capital is the level of knowledge that can influence a person's thoughts and ideas. Seventh, moral capital is an important attraction for actors who want to attract hearts (Casey, 2018).

Pierre Bourdieu employs a genetic structuralism approach in his analysis of power strategies. This approach integrates an examination of objective structures with an exploration of the origins of mental structures in biological individuals, which are influenced by social structures. Bourdieu utilizes the concept of habitus to elucidate the mechanisms and strategies of domination that stem from external factors. Additionally, Bourdieu introduces the concept of capital, referring to resources or assets, to elucidate societal control or domination. Accordingly, he identifies four capitals: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic, which intersect in power struggles and domination strategies.

Similarly, social capital theorist and structuration expert Anthony Giddens emphasizes that structures are not external to individuals but rather internal. Individuals possess the autonomy to control structures, which simultaneously constrain and enable their actions. Despite this agency,

individuals cannot fully control the entry of structures into space and time, leading to unintended consequences that impact subsequent actions. Nevertheless, individuals remain intentional agents who can explain and influence their activities, utilizing all available resources to shape the structure. Through their actions, individuals continuously reproduce the conditions that enable their activities, illustrating a dynamic interplay between structure and agency. Human action is depicted as an ongoing process, subject to cognitive, supportive, or disruptive behaviors, as long as rationality informs these actions.

3. Results and Discussion

The Semende ethnic group has been engaged in the political landscape of Indonesia since before its independence, spanning through the Old Order, the New Order, and the Reformation Order. Over time, the Semende community has developed a keen understanding of their political rights, including both voting and standing for election. The right to stand for election encompasses leadership positions at all levels, from president and vice president to regional heads and legislative members at both central and local levels. Meanwhile, the right to vote entails the freedom to choose leaders according to individual preferences.

In the 2019 elections, it was stipulated that voting must adhere to the principles of direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair processes. Direct voting entails making choices directly at the ballot box, while the general principle ensures that all eligible citizens have the right to vote. The secret ballot principle guarantees that individual choices remain confidential. The principle of honesty emphasizes making choices based on personal integrity and conscience, while the principle of fairness ensures that elections are conducted impartially. Adherence to these principles is crucial for ensuring the integrity and quality of elections, both procedurally and substantively.

Since the inception of elections in Indonesia in 1955, there has been ongoing debate regarding the electoral system, particularly between direct and representative systems. Initially, during the New Order era, presidential elections were conducted indirectly, while legislative elections utilized a closed direct system. However, in the reform era, Indonesia transitioned to a direct election system for various leadership positions, including the president and vice president, governors, deputy governors, regents, deputy regents, mayors, and deputy mayors. This shift allowed communities, including the Semende ethnic group, to actively participate in the selection of leaders, fostering a sense of direct involvement compared to the previous indirect methods employed by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). As a result, political enthusiasm surged within the Semende community, as they were empowered to elect leaders at all levels, including the highest positions of president and vice president, as well as legislative representatives and regional heads.

During the New Order era, legislative member elections were conducted directly, but under a closed proportional system where the winning party determined the selected candidates. However, following reforms in the 2009 elections, an open proportional electoral system was adopted. This change sparked political enthusiasm among various groups, including the Semende ethnic community. Under this new system, the winning candidate is determined by the combined votes received by both the political party and the candidate. If a party secures one seat, for instance, the candidate within that party who garners the highest number of votes is elected as a member of the legislature.

Throughout the New Order era until the 2000s, political information was primarily disseminated by government officials such as sub-district heads, police officers, soldiers, and village heads. Additionally, radio broadcasts played a significant role in disseminating election-related developments, with individuals utilizing their free time in the afternoons to discuss these updates. The advancement of communication technology, however, has significantly altered the information landscape for the Semende ethnic group. In 1996 (Handi Mulyaningsih, 1996), political information was obtained from TVRI. Presently, observations indicate that television, including private channels, serves as the primary source of political information. Furthermore, cellphone ownership among the Semende ethnic group is nearly on par with urban areas, with individuals of all demographics utilizing cellphones as a means of communication.

Consequently, during the 2019 presidential election, candidates such as Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf Amin and Prabowo Subianto-Sandiaga Uno were well-understood by the Semende community. They were even familiar with terms like "*cebong*" for the Jokowi-Ma'ruf Amin pair and "*kampret*" for the Prabowo-Sandiaga Uno pair. Political discussions among them were lively, yet they managed to avoid becoming polarized by the differences that emerged during the election. While they acknowledged the polarization present on social media, their responses remained non-emotional. Consequently, following the conclusion of the 2019 election, social interactions within the Semende ethnic community did not show any signs of division.

The political behavior of the Semende ethnic group tends to align with traditional rationality but increasingly incorporates economic rationality. Traditional and community leaders serve as key references in responding to national political dynamics. Meraje, a significant figure within the family structure, plays a pivotal role in decisions regarding presidential and vice-presidential candidates, legislative members, and regional elections. Family members in positions such as Wait Tubang and Anak Belai often defer to Meraje's advice, considering him to possess a deep understanding of politics. Moreover, there is a prevailing belief that Meraje's decisions are unquestionable, and any denial may lead to familial disaster.

The Semende ethnic kinship structure, observed in marriage ceremonies and inheritance distribution, also proven effective in achieving political victories. In the case of the village head election in Gunung Megang village, where the population is ethnically homogeneous, Semende did not engage in identity politics, whether ethnic or religious. Despite the Muslim faith shared by all Semende ethnic groups on Panggung Island, public assessments of candidates are based on broader criteria, such as politeness, religious devotion, and adherence to elders' advice. The preference for leadership candidates is rooted in the well-being of the Semende ethnic group, with voter choices unrelated to ethnic or religious identities. Voters prioritize individuals perceived as virtuous and capable of community and familial care, heeding the council of elders.

Following the reform era, Semende ethnic participation in legislative elections surged. The Semende ethnic group enjoys the freedom to choose from 48 political parties. However, there was no Semende ethnic participation on Panggung Island in the 1999, 2004, and 2009 elections. It was only in the 2014 election that the Semende ethnic group actively participated in the nomination process. This shift can be attributed to the adoption of an open proportional electoral system in 2014, replacing the closed proportional system used previously. Despite the availability of open proportionality in 2009, the Semende ethnic group awaited its implementation. Following an evaluation of the open proportional system's effectiveness in 2014, many Semende ethnic groups became increasingly interested in contesting legislative positions.

Legislative elections in Indonesia from 1955 until the Old Order, New Order, and Reform Order predominantly employed a closed proportional system, which has faced criticism. Although this system simplified voting for the Semende Ethnic by presenting choices through political party symbols, it denied voters the opportunity to select specific candidates. Conversely, political parties, as election participants, must enhance their internal democratic processes to ensure equitable opportunities for the best party cadres aligned with public interests. The convenience of voters and the quality of election participants are paramount, as the essence of elections lies in participation and competition.

Indonesia utilized a closed electoral system in its elections from 1955 to 1999. Despite the landmark reforms in 1998, the electoral system in the 1999 elections remained a limited open proportional system, as stipulated in Article 1 Paragraph 7 of Law no. 3 of 1999 concerning General Elections. However, this system was later invalidated by the Constitutional Court (MK) through decision no. 22-24/PUU-VI/2008. The court's decision was based on the constitutional principle of people's sovereignty outlined in Article 28D paragraph 1 of the 1945 Constitution, highlighting the potential for the limited open proportional system to undermine the voice of the people (Mahardhika, 2017).

Subsequently, a pure open proportional system was implemented in the 2014 elections. According to Article 215 letter a of Law No. 8 of 2012 concerning Elections for DPR Members, DPD, and DPRD, this system mandates that candidates who receive the highest number of votes from the winning

party in their electoral district are elected (Riwanto, 2015). These provisions were a follow-up to regulations implemented in the 2009 elections, as outlined in Law no. 10 of 2008 concerning the Election of Members of the DPR, DPD, and DPRD (Makarim & Fahmi, 2022).

The transition from a closed to an open proportional electoral system ignited political aspirations within the Semende ethnic group to engage in politics. Under the open proportional system, the political party with the most votes in its electoral district earns seats in proportion to its electoral performance. Although similar to the previous system in structure, the open proportional system allows the candidate with the highest number of votes from the winning party to secure a seat. This change offers newfound opportunities for Semende ethnic individuals to actively participate in elections. Unlike the closed system, where party selection determined election outcomes and offered little hope for minority groups like the Semende ethnic group, the open proportional system enables them to compete for votes and potentially win seats.

The shift to an open proportional system has sparked enthusiasm among families to nominate members for district-level legislative positions. These political developments at the national level have inspired the Semende ethnic group, who were previously solely voters, to now aspire to become elected representatives.

Semende Ethnic Kinship and Candidate Victory

The table below shows that the Semende ethnic group dominates the candidacy of the parties that participated in the 2014 elections, even the 2009 and previous elections.

Semende Ethnic Involvement as Candidates in Political Parties.

Party	Number of Candidates	Ethnicity Semende	No Semende
CLA	8	6	2
Gerindra	8	6	2
Hanura	0	0	0
Democrat	6	0	6
UN	0	0	0
PKPI	2	0	2
PPP	6	6	0
PSI	2	0	2
PAN	8	7	1
Create	5	0	5
MCC	7	4	3
Perindo	8	5	3
PDIP	8	5	3
Golkar	8	5	3
Nasdem	8	5	3
Total	84	49	35

Source: Election Application Centre, KPU RI, 2019, and results of interviews with the Chairperson of Bawaslu Tanggamus Regency 2023

The Semende ethnic group is nominating for the PKB, Gerindra, PPP, PAN, PKS, PDIP, Golkar, Nasdem parties. There is a new party where Semende ethnic is a candidate, namely the Perindo Party. However, the Semende ethnic group was not a candidate for the Hanura, Democrat, PBB, PKPI, PSI and Berkarya parties. Thus, the Semende ethnic group has to compete between candidates within internal political parties in the PKB, Gerindra, PPP, PAN, PKS, PDIP, Golkar, Nasdem, Perindo parties. The Semende ethnic group also competes with the Semende ethnic group in the PKB, Gerindra, PPP, PAN, PKS, PDIP, Golkar, Nasdem, Perindo parties. Semende ethnic also compete with non-Semende ethnic in internal parties and other parties.

Results of the Struggle for Control of Political Resources in the 2019 Simultaneous Elections
for the DPR, Lampung Province DPRD and Tanggamus DPRD

Number of Political Party Seats									
No	DPR 2019			DPRD Lampung 2019			DPRD Tanggamus 2019		
			%			%			%
1	PDIP	128	22,26	PDIP	19	22,35	PDIP	12	26,67
2	Golkar	85	14,78	Golkar	10	11,76	Golkar	4	8,89
3	GeHarmony	78	13,57	GeHarmony	11	12,94	GeHarmony	4	8,89
4	Democrat	54	9,39	Democrat	10	11,76	Democrat	0	0,00
5	GDP	58	10,09	GDP	9	10,59	GDP	7	15,56
6	PAN	44	7,65	PAN	7	8,24	PAN	6	13,33
7	PKS	50	8,70	PKS	9	10,59	PKS	4	8,89
8	Nasdem	59	10,26	Nasdem	9	10,59	Nasdem	5	11,11
9	PPP	19	3,30	PPP	1	1,18	PPP	3	6,67
10	Hanura	0	0,00	Hanura	0	0,00	Hanura	0	0,00
11	PBB	0	0,00	PBB	0	0	PBB	0	0
12	Persatuan	0	0,00						
13	Work	0	0,00						
14	PSI	0	0,00						
15	PKPI	0	0,00						
16	Garuda	0	0,00						

Data Source: Lampung Province KPU, processed in 2023

Sixteen political parties participated in the 2019 simultaneous elections, including the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, the Greater Indonesia Movement Party, the Golongan Karya Party, the National Awakening Party, the National Democratic Party, the Prosperous Justice Party, the Democratic Party, the National Mandate Party, the United Development Party, the Indonesian Unity, Berkarya Party, Indonesian Solidarity Party, People's Conscience Party, Crescent Star Party, Garuda Party, and the Justice and Indonesian Unity Party.

The table above displays the distribution of votes obtained by election participants in 2019 for the DPR RI, Provincial DPRD, and Regency/City DPRD as follows:

1. PDIP secured 22.26% of DPR seats.
2. Seven political parties failed to meet the parliamentary threshold and therefore did not secure a seat in the DPR, including the Berkarya Party, Indonesian Solidarity Party, People's Conscience Party, Crescent Star Party, Garuda Party, and the Indonesian Justice and Unity Party.
3. Nine political parties won seats within the range of 10%-20%, including the Golkar Party, Gerindra Party, PKB, and Nasdem Party.
4. Some parties secured DPR seats below 10%.
5. Some parties failed to secure any seats at all. This highlights the disparity in the competition for political resources between large, medium, and small or new parties.

The table also indicates that parties winning DPR seats also secured seats in the Provincial DPRD and Regency/City DPRD. Conversely, parties failing to secure seats in the DPR also failed to secure seats in the Provincial and Regency/City DPRD, particularly in the Tanggamus electoral district.

Elected Candidates for Members of the Tanggamus Regency DPRD for Electoral District 4 2019
based on Ethnicity

No	Political parties	No. Message	Ethnicity	Selected Candidate	Number of Votes
1	National Awakening Party	1	Cement	Zulki with the Cornea	2.823
2	Greater Indonesia Movement Party	3	Cement	Hilman SH	3392
3	PDI Perjuangan	7	Cement	Joni Ansonet	3408
4	PDI Perjuangan	4	Cement	Hi. Basuki Wibowo	2884
5	Work Group Party	8	Cement	Piter Anderson	2039
6	National Democratic Party	7	Cement	Hi. Suhartono	2565
7	United Development Party	1	Cement	Heritage Jaya	2226
8	National Mandate Party	1	Cement	Tedi Kurniawan	2929

Data source: Tanggamus KPU 2022, processed in 2023

Seven political parties successfully competed for the political resources of the Semende ethnic group, namely PKB, Gerindra, PDIP, Golkar, Nasdem, PPP, and PAN. Each of these parties secured one seat, except PDIP, which obtained two seats. Notably, all elected candidates are of Semende ethnicity, indicating the victory of the Semende ethnic group in the struggle for political control. The winning parties encompass both longstanding parties from the New Order era, such as Golkar and PPP, as well as those emerging after the reform, including PKB, Gerindra, PDIP, Nasdem, and PAN. Interestingly, no new parties participating in the 2019 election managed to compete successfully for the political resources of the Semende ethnic group.

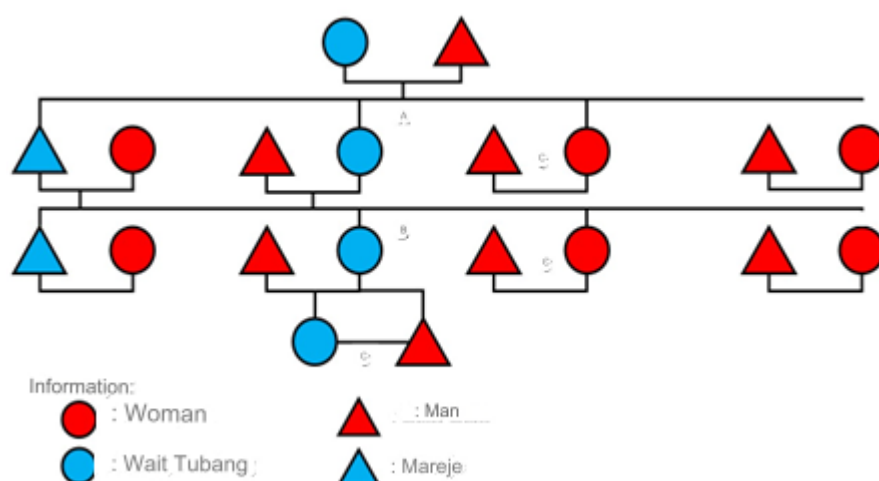


Image of Semende ethnic kinship

Data Source: 2022 research

The image above illustrates the traditional structure of Semende ethnic kinship, with Meraje (blue triangle) occupying a central role. Meraje, the eldest male and older brother of Tunggu Tubang, holds significant authority within the kinship structure. While Meraje may have younger brothers from his mother, custom dictates that rights and obligations are primarily bestowed from the oldest to the youngest, with exceptions made for leadership succession (Cahayo, 2022).

Meraje holds various rights, including determining the waiting body, leading deliberations, serving as a spokesperson or trustee, issuing commands to be obeyed, and enforcing prohibitions. Despite the customary position of Tubang Tubang as the first daughter, decisions regarding her role are reached through deliberation among all members of the jurai, led by Meraje. Deliberations involve clarifying the rights and obligations of the waiting tubang, as well as the authority of Meraje over the waiting area, assisted by Jenang Jurai and Afit Jurai. Meraje retains the right to remind and impose sanctions on waiting tubangs for infractions of customary rules and religious teachings. Additionally, Meraje has the authority to replace dismissed waiting tubangs.

In leading deliberations, Meraje prioritizes respect for diverse opinions, fairness, and non-authoritarianism. As a spokesperson, Meraje officiates traditional wedding ceremonies, receives applications from jurai members, resolves disputes, and leads ceremonies during disasters. Meraje's leadership entails obeying orders and avoiding prohibitions, provided they align with customary rules and religious teachings. Beyond rights, Meraje bears obligations, including protecting, caring for, and controlling their children, administering punishments and sanctions, preserving customs, and overseeing inheritance distribution.

Under this structure, all members of the Semende Ethnicity defer to Meraje. In the realm of politics, candidates who receive traditional support are decided based on specific patterns: Family candidates, even women, garner full support from family and relatives. Support is mobilized under the direction of Umbrella Jurai, which organizes family vertically and relatives horizontally. Notably, the wife's family operates independently of Payung Jurai and Meraje, yet may still support candidates. If multiple candidates emerge from the same family, support is coordinated accordingly, with decisions made by Umbrella Jurai and Meraje serving as the reference for AWAT Tubang and Anak Belai. These decisions are final and non-negotiable. In cases of candidates of different genders, women are typically relegated to second place, as determined by Umbrella Jurai. Furthermore, if a family member and a relative both stand as candidates, family support is directed towards the family candidate, while the relative receives no support, regardless of marital ties or blood relation.

Referring to social capital theory, kinship is social capital. The social capital contained in the Semende ethnic group contains values and norms regarding living arrangements which are believed to be life guidelines. Families within the family live in networks, and these networks are effective in winning candidates. on victory. In the framework of structuration theory, the structure of the Semende ethnic group restrains (enabling) individuals from freely choosing candidates according to individual wishes, even though it frees up the Semende ethnic group to nominate for any party. For the Semende ethnic group, the party is not important because the important thing is that whoever wins must provide benefits to their Semende ethnic relatives.

4. Conclusion

Kinship plays a pivotal role in securing victory for legislative candidates originating from within their families. The established patterns dictated by custom have effectively mitigated conflicts during the competition process. Both candidates and the public adhere to customary regulations as unquestionable provisions.

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