

## Modality of Chinese Crossbreed Politicians in Local Democratization

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### Abstract:

This research aimed at explaining the use of Chinese crossbreed politicians' modality in the electoral political domain. This research uses the concept of modalities. The results showed that the utilization of Chinese crossbreed identity by politicians took place in three areas, namely the general public, the mass base, and political parties. The dualism of identity—the crossbreed between Indonesian Chinese descendants and Timorese—is a result of the giving of clans' identity and intermarriage with local aristocrats, the dominating figures in the economic sector, and the holders of high positions in the elite ranks of political parties. The cross-identities were mobilized and turned out to be quite effective in the election of Chinese crossbreed politicians in the legislative body in the 2019 general election. This is inversely proportional to the Chinese crossbreed politicians women who have local maternal clans. The political practice shown by Chinese crossbreed politicians, on the one hand, strengthens identity politics but on the other hand, strengthens the political representation of minorities in the crossborder area of Indonesia and Timor Leste.

### Keywords:

modality; Chinese crossbreed politicians; Indonesia-Timor Leste border

### Introduction

The reform movement in Indonesia has changed the process of more egalitarian political recruitment. Filling political positions has gone through electoral democracy mechanisms that require free, fair and inclusive elections Gobel (2013: 430) and upholding political equality (Ishiyama, 2013: 443). The freedom and equality of individuals is the essence of democracy (Held, 2007: 23). At the local level, as in the case of Nusa Tenggara Timur as our case study in this paper, political equality gave rise to new political actors, including chinese crossbreed politicians. They transformed themselves into practical politics after being marginalized politically during the Old and New Order regimes. Chinese crossbreed political career in the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste is quite competitive, marked

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by their success in political positions such as members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), the Regent and Deputy Governor of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT). This success is inseparable from the mastery and use of modalities possessed by Chinese crossbreed politicians as their political instruments.

History shows the power of the Old and New Order regimes overriding the values of multiculturalism as a plural nation. The space for Chinese crossbreed in various aspects of socio-economic and political life is very limited, this is confirmed by the birth of Presidential Regulation Number 10 of 1959 and Presidential Instruction Number 14 of 1967 which in Suryadinata (2003: 2) as an effort to change Chinese identity carried out by a state that tends to be repressive and castrate Chinese crossbreed rights. In addition, the political sphere that should be the right of every citizen is an arena that is difficult for Chinese crossbreed to penetrate to occupy public positions. Purdey (2006: 23) in her study stated that racial crimes against the Chinese were inseparable from the doubts of Indonesian natives about Chinese-Indonesian loyalty and economic factors.

All forms of discriminatory policies began to be revoked when entering the era of reform which was marked by the birth of Presidential Instruction No. 26 of 1998 which eliminated the use of native and non-native terms. Two years after that, a policy was issued in the form of Presidential Decree Number 6 of 2000 concerning the revocation of Presidential Instruction Number 14 of 1967. Furthermore, the state also recognized Chinese culture as part of the Indonesian nation which was realized in the form of Presidential Decree Number 19 of 2002 which made the Chinese New Year a national holiday. The commitment of the government in providing protection, certainty and equality in the law for all citizens to live free from racial and ethnic discrimination is confirmed by the birth of Law Number 12 of 2006 concerning Citizenship and Law Number 40 of 2008 concerning the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Ethnicity (Satya & Maftuh, 2016: 12). These regulatory products eventually opened up opportunities for ethnic Chinese to expand their role as citizens not only in the economic and trade realms but as momentum for them to become one of the contestants in electoral politics in various regions in Indonesia.

The involvement of Chinese crossbreed in the political world in West Timor is inseparable from inclusive social life. The acceptance of local ethnic communities towards Chinese crossbreed shows that between them there has been a harmonious interaction that has been going on for generations. Harmonization of socio-cultural life became even tighter when some Chinese crossbreed married with tribes on the island of Timor. Interactions that are intertwined continuously in the view of Lyda Judson Hanifan (1916) in Syahra (2003: 1-22) are able to create friendships, goodwill, and close cooperation between individuals and families in a social group. The form of local people's trust in the Chinese who live in Timor is realized by giving the clan name to

the chinese. In the contemporary context, the choice of marriage to enter and use of local clans has its own advantages for chinese crossbreed domiciled on the island of Timor, in addition to expanding trade networks it also becomes political capital when they participate in contestation in post-reform elections.

The assimilation wrapped by economic interests in contemporary political dynamics in West Timor became a capital for the chinese crossbreed political elite. The similarity of identity as a result of hereditary social construction ultimately helps them to connect with local communities through networking and they have similar values with local communities, this is a resource and can be seen as capital (Field, 2003:224). The evidence of the mixing of chinese crossbreed was shown that in West Timor there were no exclusive chinese villages and there was only one temple in Kupang as the only temple in NTT called the Lay temple (Mengkaka, 2019).

Indeed the process of cultural assimilation carried out by chinese crossbreed in the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste was carried out with a motive to control their sources of trade at that time. They cleverly use the issue of identity as an instrument in electoral politics. The results were quite effective, because some of them succeeded in occupying the political office. The success of the strategy adopted by chinese crossbreed is actually inseparable from the character of the Timorese society which is still traditional, which in electoral politics tends to build political affiliation and choose political actors based on shared identity. The political phenomenon shows that chinese crossbreed are quite successful in reproducing identity and transforming from the social and economic spheres into the political sphere. So far, the chinese crossbreed has power over the economy and trade in the border region of West Timor. Borrowing Casey (2005: 1-24) concept economic control has added to personal wealth which has potential in the political sphere.

This is reinforced by empirical data showing that Chinese crossbreed succeeded in occupying public positions such as deputy governor, regional head and Regional People's Representative Council members. Benny Alexander Litelnoni was once the Deputy Governor of NTT for the period 2013-2018, even in Belu district, the chinese crossbreed was able to become a regent for three consecutive periods, namely on behalf of Joachim Lopez (2004-2014 period) and Willybrodus Lay (2016-2021 period). Chinese crossbreed politicians also succeeded in becoming Regional People's Representative Council members in the districts of Timor Tengah Utara (TTU), Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS), Belu and Malaka during the four election periods of Regional People's Representative Council members. In fact, in the Malaka district in the 2014-2019 period, the number of chinese crossbreed Regional People's Representative Council members reached eight people or 32% of the total members of the Malaka district Regional People's Representative Council, amounting to 25 people. In addition,

chinese crossbreed politicians were also able to become the chairperson of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle and at the same time become the head of the TTU Regional People's Representative Council, as well as in the TTS district there were chinese crossbreed who were members of the Regional People's Representative Council for three consecutive periods and as the Democratic party secretary. Whereas in Belu district there were brothers who were elected to the Regional People's Representative Council in the 2019 elections from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle.

Based on this political phenomenon, a study of the dynamics of Indonesian Chinese crossbreed politics in the electoral political sphere in the four districts located in the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste is important. The reason is, to the best of the author's knowledge, there has not been any political academics who have specifically studied this issue, so this research will contribute to the progress of chinese crossbreed studies in local democratization in the border region. For this reason, this study aims to explain the use of chinese crossbreed politicians in the electoral political sphere in the four districts.

So far the study of chinese crossbreed politicians in Indonesia is relatively limited. Eriyanti (2006: 22-34) in her research focused more on how ethnic chinese in building a national identity in Indonesia, she found that ethnic chinese in the search for positive social identities using the model in the form of social change by shifting traditional orientations to national orientations. The scope of this study is limited to the social dimension, namely how the ethnic chinese fight for their Indonesian identity in the midst of social changes that occur in Indonesia.

Suharyanto (2014: 151-160) found that the 2010 elections in the City of Binjai showed that ethnic chinese had active political participation because of sympathy for one of the candidates who were judged to represent them, this was inversely proportional to the daily social interactions that tend to be exclusive. This study is limited to the forms of ethnic chinese political participation as active voters even though in the social sphere it still tends to be exclusive.

Paramita (2016: 1-17) found that in the 2014 elections in Jakarta candidates for legislative members from ethnic chinese lacked support from ethnic chinese in West Jakarta and North Jakarta because they lacked confidence in their abilities and thought the political world was incompatible with the character of ethnic communities chinese. However, in the 2012 Jakarta governor election, the number of chinese voters reached 100% because at that time the candidates for deputy governor were ethnic chinese who were judged to be able to change the situation to better accommodate the interests of ethnic chinese. This study places the ethnic chinese as voters in the regional head elections and legislative elections in Jakarta.

Juliastutik (2010: 45-58) in his study found a quite interesting phenomenon that in the 2004 election more than 200 ethnic Chinese in Makassar nominated themselves to be legislative candidates but they were merely a means of collecting votes and funds by political parties, whereas in 2009 they not only being a legislative candidate but already playing an active role in political parties. This study has indeed begun to focus on the practical political behavior of ethnic Chinese in the electoral political sphere, but only reviews based on the election periodization.

Based on the mapping in previous studies there are two limitations found, namely; 1) have not put ethnic Chinese as political actors who contest directly in the general election, and 2) only examine the motives and tendencies in determining the political choices of ethnic Chinese. For this reason, this study is important because there has not been a study of ethnic Chinese specifically as a political actor contesting in elections in the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste.

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study strategy in which the researcher conducts a careful investigation of an event, activity or process of a group of individuals (Creswell, 2010: 20). This choice of approach is considered most appropriate in explaining how the political dynamics of Chinese crossbreed legislative candidates in reconstructing modalities as instruments in the 2019 general elections in the districts of Timor Tengah Utara, Timor Tengah Selatan, Belu, and Malaka within the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste. Thus, this study aims to build a specific theory or pattern of knowledge by exploring and understanding the meaning of actors (Creswell, 2010: 4) by presenting informants' views about everyday phenomena as data sources (Yin, R, 2002: 18). For this reason, the concept of modality from Bourdieu (1986) in Casey (2005) which includes economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, symbolic capital and political capital the author uses as an analytical framework.

The author conducted in-depth interviews with Chinese crossbreed politicians using purposive sampling techniques as key informants and the success team as additional informants. The process of data analysis by means of understanding and deepening understanding of the data collected, so that the discussion of this research can not be separated from aspects of the research location, actors, events and processes (Creswell, 2010: 267). Research data processing uses triangulation method by describing, classifying, and linking the interrelationships between phenomena after the data are studied and analyzed, then data reduction is carried out to draw conclusions (Moleong, 2002: 288), things to guarantee reliability, validity, and generability (Creswell, 2010: 284).

## The Process of Obtaining Local Clans

The study of the contemporary political dynamics of Chinese crossbreed in the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste cannot be separated from the historical aspect. Their existence which was originally only engaged in the economic sector supported by ownership of multiple identities can only be understood with a historical perspective because the socio-cultural life of Chinese crossbreed in West Timor is unique and different from the lives of ethnic Chinese in other parts of Indonesia which tend to be exclusive.

Based on Purcell (1987: 52), Chinese ethnic “*peranakan*” in Indonesia generally come from the Hakka, Hainan, Hokkien, Cantonese, Hokchia and Tiochiu tribes, but the history of the entry of Chinese into the island of Timor is not yet known, due to the lack of historical records available. The entry of the Chinese into the island of Timor began with sandalwood trading activities with residents of the island of Timor since the 13th century which was a *prima donna* commodity. Based on historical records, the Han ethnics made Atapupu the first base which then moved inland to look for sandalwood, candles and cows (Mengkaka, 2019). This was confirmed by (Malagina, 2019: 54-71) which stated that in order to gain access to the sandalwood area, the Chinese at that time began to spread throughout Timor.

Subsequently, they married women from the families of Timorese kings with an admission marriage system (*oa'laen / matsao tam / tmafe tam*), which automatically earned them the royal name. The names of Timorese aristocratic family names taken as family last names of Chinese descendants to date include Sally, Samara, Koliatin, Bitin Berek, Taolin, Puai, Halitaek, and Tiwu. In addition, they also took Portuguese names that had a great influence on social life on the island of Timor such as Pareira, Lopez, Da Silva and Da Costa.

In addition to the institution of marriage, the Chinese in Timor also obtained the name of a clan from the king or aristocracy because of the process of giving by the kings in Timor. Based on information from community leaders the process began when there was political turmoil on the island of Timor and some Chinese when it came to facing the kings in Timor asking for protection. To protect them, the kings gave clan names to the Chinese, indirectly they became the royal family and local aristocrats. The status of kings and nobles attached to Chinese crossbreed is still attached to this day and remains obeyed by local people.

The assimilation process occurs because of the social reality that occurs in a series of historical life of Chinese people who interact with the local community that takes place naturally. The good relations that shaped the values of social capital in its journey constituted one of the supports for the Chinese crossbreed to become a hegemonic economic force on the Timor island. This good relationship was

established through trade relations that were pioneered by their ancestors. The average Chinese crossbreed parent has a background in agricultural produce. To ensure the safety and supply of rice, tamarind, cashew, etc., they make use of their social status and communicate in Dawan and Tetun languages. This was done to gain sympathy and facilitate transactions in commodity price negotiations with rural communities. Thus the family relations pattern of Chinese crossbreed politicians engaged in the trade sector has a mutually beneficial relationship with the local community.

Chinese crossbreeds in Timor admit that so far the process of association with the local community did not encounter any significant obstacles because life between Chinese crossbreed and the local community could be said to have been integrated as part of the Timorese people. Even in the use of social language, they are better at Dawan or Tetun and Indonesian than their ancestral language. This is quite reasonable because Mandarin is rarely used. Even within their families and when interacting with fellow Chinese crossbreed, the language Mandarin is relatively rarely used because some of them have not yet mastered Mandarin.

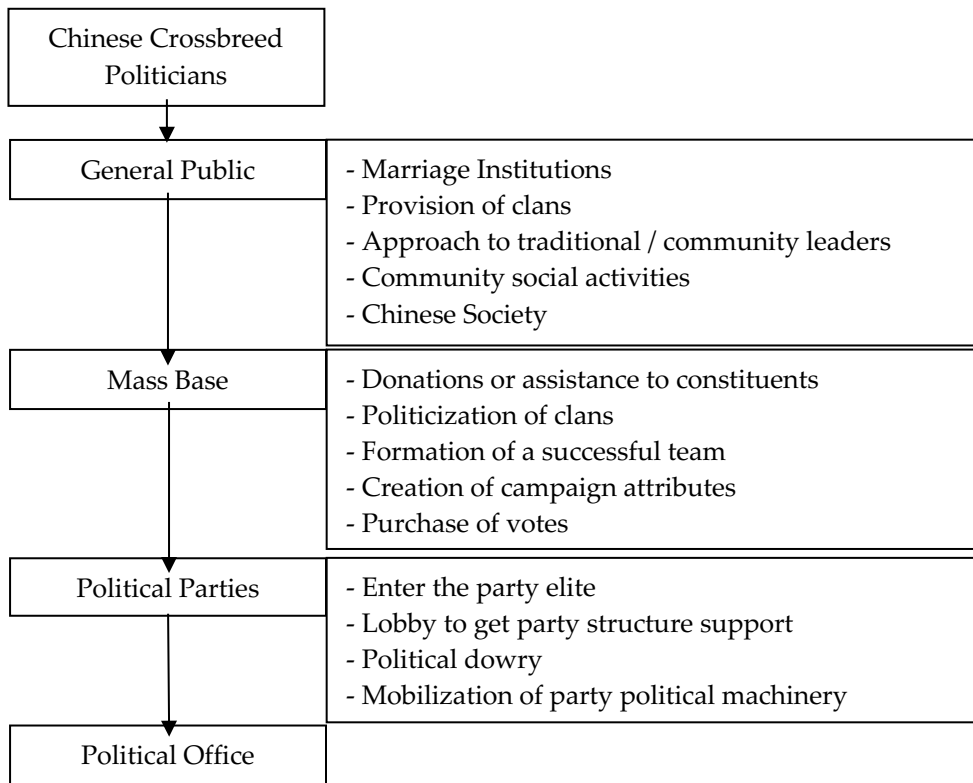
### **Modalities Conversion of Chinese Crossbreed Politicians**

In the course of time, Chinese crossbreed transformed into economic forces that controlled almost all the needs of the people in West Timor. They control trade, construction services, transportation services, fisheries, livestock, plantations, and agriculture. They play an important role in driving the economic wheels of society in West Timor. To maintain its economic hegemony, they continue to adopt the values of local wisdom such as speaking, behaving and acting like Timorese, including consuming betel nut. Betel nut is a symbol to strengthen brotherhood and kinship. Even from the informants confession, they are more familiarly called Timorese than Chinese. This was confirmed by Chinese crossbreed politicians, namely; Benediktus Banamtuan (Democratic Party secretary of Timor Tengah Selatan Regency), Ronaldo Asury (Secretary of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle in Malaka Regency), Marius Boko (Secretary of the People's Conscience Party of Malaka Regency), Fabianus Juang (administrator of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle in Belu Regency), Benedict Manus (official of the Democratic National party Malaka Regency), and H. Frengky Saunoah (chairman of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle in Timor Tengah Utara Regency).

In electoral politics, Chinese crossbreed politicians convert social capital, economic capital, and political capital classified into three regions, namely; general public, mass base, and political parties. The conversion of modality in the political market is getting more massive ahead of the general elections, this shows that the

modality is utilized maximally to support Chinese crossbreed in political work with the aim of winning the legislative election contestation. The modality conversion flowchart is shown in chart I below:

Chart I. Classification of Modalities Conversion of Chinese Crossbreed Politicians



The existence of Chinese crossbreed in the political world is practically not obtained instantly, but through a process that has been going on for generations. This is reinforced by field data showing that in the realm of the general public, their ability to meet the needs and accommodate agricultural and plantation commodities produced by local communities ultimately increases their bargaining position to obtain clan names from the king and local aristocrats. In fact, the name of a clan in Timorese culture is an identity that has always been inherited from generation to generation and has improved the social status of a family. Through the mutual symbiotic interaction between the Chinese people and the local community, the process of giving clans whether through marriage or giving can be said to be running quite smoothly. As such, Chinese crossbreed have a dual identity at the same time, namely an identity as a Chinese person and an identity as a Timorese and a local aristocrat.



As such, Chinese crossbreed benefitted greatly from the existence of two identities attached to them, especially when they exploited them in the realm of electoral politics. To facilitate the mobilization of community support, Chinese “peranakan” politicians easily approached traditional leaders and community leaders. They mobilize community support by utilizing traditional and community leaders as voice collectors. For Timorese who lives in rural areas on average, this strategy was able to contribute to the vote gathering in the general election 2019 . However, for Chinese crossbreed women politicians, this strategy was unable to make a significant contribution. This can be seen in the results of the last general election where Chinese crossbreed female politicians who got the name of the local clan from the maternal line were not elected as legislative members. This is likely due to the local people who are still reluctant to support women politicians, given that the Timorese are strong enough to adopt a patrilineal system.

The social status inherent in Chinese crossbreed politicians has its own consequences. Usually, village officials or local community leaders place the Chinese crossbreed as the first people to get donations when there are socio-cultural activities. For example, when indigenous people want to make improvements to traditional houses, donations made by Chinese crossbreed are quite varied such as; financial, building materials, and livestock for customary purposes.

Interestingly, not all Chinese crossbreed politicians in West Timor became members of the Chinese community. Based on field data, young Chinese crossbreed politicians are reluctant to join the Chinese community because they are considered to be of little benefit. However, they admitted that they had participated in activities held by the Chinese community as in the Chinese New Year and that it was only temporary. In contrast, Chinese crossbreed classified as old become members of the Chinese community. They admit that it is less effective in utilizing the Chinese community as a basis for political support, given that quite a lot of Chinese crossbreed are involved in politics. They only use the family from their father or mother's lineage to get support and to be part of their success team.

In the realm of a mass base, Chinese crossbreed have a strong attachment to their constituents. Chinese peranakan politicians hold the principle that constituents are the votes that must be maintained and cared for, because the pattern of relationships is built on trust. For Benediktus Banamtuan and Ronaldo Asury to maintain that trust must be paid with financial support that is not small. For this reason, financial support is an absolute necessity for ensuring constituent political support. Based on the informant's acknowledgment, to support political costs, it is supported by two financial sources, namely private and public. Private financial resources come from private money obtained from the businesses they occupy, salaries

as Regional People's Representative Assembly members and donations from their families. Private financial resources are mainly used for the purpose of maintaining and strengthening constituents' loyalty by providing personal assistance. Whereas they allocate public financial support from the remuneration fund, which amounts to Rp.800,000.00 per day. While its use is for social assistance such as traditional events, mutual cooperation at the village level, agricultural seed assistance and village infrastructure such as village roads, volleyball courts, village hall improvements aimed at expanding the constituent base. Borrowing the opinion of Fauzi (2007) in (Halim, 2018: 96) the control of production facilities and financial facilities is easily converted into other forms of capital.

For Chinese crossbreed politicians, the world of politics is no different from the business world, both of which are full of keen competition and investments for profit. For this reason, Chinese crossbreed politicians refer to assistance to constituents as a political investment. The hope, when they are able to meet the demands of constituents, the return will be obtained in the form of constituent support by electing them at the general election. Usually, forms of assistance to constituents are always present and provide assistance when the community is in a state of joy and sorrow. For example, when people want to hold a wedding party they attend every family gathering by donating an average of Rp. 500,000.00 per event. Likewise, when people are experiencing grief, without being invited they come to the funeral home by giving donations in the form of money, rice, tents and water tanks. For any activity on the island of Timor, donations in the form of tank water are very valuable, because the condition of the island of Timor is very dry so that water is something that is rare and expensive, because the price of tank water containing 5,000 liters can reach Rp.200,000.00. In addition, constituents sometimes approach Chinese crossbreed politicians with various variants of needs, such as; the cost of school children, the manufacture of graves (tombstones), and if the constituent season is famine usually expect food assistance. Based on the acknowledgment of the informants, if calculated all costs incurred to meet the needs of constituents during one period of becoming a member of the legislature could reach Rp.500,000,000.00. But they realize that being a legislative member at the district level is a people's representative who is in direct contact with their constituents, so there is no reason for them to avoid it.

In addition, to maintain loyalty and as a moral responsibility due to the status of nobility attached to Chinese crossbreed politicians, they in various ways try to meet the various needs of these constituents. In this context, they have also indirectly used identity sentiments as political instruments. As mentioned above, the use of identity sentiments is quite effective in delivering Chinese crossbreed male politicians to

become legislative members and this is inversely proportional to Chinese crossbreed female politicians who failed to be elected as legislators in the 2019 general election.

The author also includes the formation of a successful team, witnesses at the polling station, and making campaign attributes in the realm of constituents with the consideration of the three targets as a mass base. For the success team criteria, there are similarities between Chinese crossbreed politicians, they chose the success team from local figures who had influence in the community and proved loyal. Youth and community leaders who come from the same ethnic group or clan as Chinese crossbreed politicians become the main choice to become a successful team, which on average is 10-20 people. Likewise in making campaign attributes, the informants only focus on printing samples of ballot papers, because they are considered more effective and can be produced on their own with the help of their computer equipment. They do this to explain where their photos are, their serial numbers and political party serial numbers so that people do not experience difficulties when they cast their ballots on their ballots. They learned from experience in the previous period that printing posters or billboards were felt to be less effective and costly. For them, making billboards is considered futile because the people basically already know them. They have the same assumption that in the 2019 general election the biggest problem was confusion at the community level to find candidates for their choice due to a large number of political parties and legislative candidates.

Thus, financial needs can be diverted for other political operational needs such as; the monthly salary of the successful team, the purchase of betel nut, cigarettes, *sopi* (traditional drinks that contain alcohol), vote purchase, and political dowry. The magnitude of the operational costs of the success team is relatively small because on average the members of the success team do not demand salary or transportation costs. To facilitate communication with the community and customary elders, usually the success team always gives betel nut, *sopi* and cigarettes to the community and customary elders as a means of political communication. In local culture, when betel nut and *sopi* have been accepted by traditional elders symbolically, a political contract has been created between traditional elders and Chinese crossbreed politicians. Even according to the recognition of one of the success teams, one of the informants admitted that they had entered into a political contract in writing on the seal with several community leaders, which contained guarantees of vote acquisition as promised by the community leaders. If it turns out the number of votes does not match the target, then the contribution received by the community must be returned to the success team. In addition, based on the recognition of the voters and the success team at the study site, the amount of the purchase of public votes ahead of the election day varied considerably between Rp.200,000 - Rp.350,000.00 per vote. If the average

informant gets 900 votes, the amount of money that must be channeled to purchase votes ranges from Rp.180,000,000.00 - Rp.315,000,000.00. However, for the vote purchase, the informants were reluctant to comment because this was considered to be very sensitive and had the potential to violate general election rules.

Based on mapping on the ground, on average the informants occupied positions in the elite structure of political parties at the local level. Their ability to occupy the position of party elites at the local level is inseparable from their courage in making decisions to enter the political world which is always tinged with high intensity of competition. In addition, they also have advantages in conducting political communication and lobbying, which is a model like this they are used to doing in the realm of marketing. They assume the business world with the political world have similar characteristics, because both of them always present a process of marketing, competition, use of limited resources, and have the risk of losing-win. When they are able to master competition in the business world, they argue that plunging into the world of electoral politics does not require major adjustments. This was conveyed by informants Benediktus Banumtuan, Marius Boko, Ronaldo Asury, and Fabianus Juang who had family backgrounds as local entrepreneurs. They also have a position in the structure of political parties in which Chinese crossbreed politicians are affiliated to strategic positions. The inclusion of Chinese crossbreed politicians in the party elite automatically won the support of party officials in running for legislative membership and in moving the political machinery of political parties to the lowest level.

But they realize that the election of legislators is different from the direct election of regional heads. In legislative elections, candidates for legislative members face internal and external political competition simultaneously. On the one hand, they must compete with candidates for legislative members from other parties, but at the same time, they must also compete with fellow party members who advance in the election of legislators. When facing external competition, they increase cohesiveness by continuing to coordinate to strengthen the performance of the party machine. Meanwhile, in order to avoid conflicts within the party, they build communication between party officials, who subsequently lobby with party officials at the provincial and central levels.

There is something quite interesting, to reduce the campaign costs of the informants in the campaign using the tandem system. They collaborated with candidates for the central legislature by printing calendars and sample ballot papers showing photos of the two legislative candidates. Furthermore, when the campaign of Chinese crossbreed politicians helped to campaign for the candidates for the legislative center to the constituents. The majority of costs required for campaign

operations are borne by candidates for the central legislature. With this system, they are able to reduce considerable political costs.

As for the data regarding political dowry, the author had difficulty obtaining empirical data. This is due to the inability of the informants to provide information related to candidates' legislative contributions to the political parties to which they are affiliated. The information they convey is relatively the same, namely, there are no financial levies by political parties against legislative candidates.

### **The Rise of Chinese Crossbreed in Electoral Politics**

The practice of local democratization in the four districts within the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste is marked by the existence of Chinese crossbreed politicians in the electoral political arena. In the context of representative democracy, the involvement of Chinese crossbreed as contestants in the election of legislative members contributed to the realization of minority representation in formal state politics. Reality during the Old Order and New Order, the political policy was characterized by discriminatory political practices that were not able to accommodate the interests of minorities, especially from the Chinese crossbreed in Indonesia. Thus reform can be said as a milestone for Chinese crossbreed directly involved in the formal politics of statehood. When the opportunity is already open, and at the same time the support of modality possessed by Chinese crossbreed is quite large, then they have a big enough opportunity to win the contestation in the local legislative elections.

The current liberal democratic system provides opportunities for investors to enter politics. a liberal democratic system that requires the creation of popularity will only be realized with the support of a large modality and is owned by Chinese crossbreed politicians. The capital allocation is used for the purposes of obtaining, maintaining and expanding constituents as a mass base. Rationally, mastery of modality by Chinese crossbreed politicians in the view of Birner & Wittmer (2014) allows political actors to accumulate into political capital and use it effectively in electoral politics. In Lukmajati (2016) view, the more candidates invest social, cultural and economic capital in the campaign, the more political capital they will obtain and this is an entry point to seize political power. Thus, although Chinese crossbreed are ethnic minorities, they are a hegemonic economic power and transformed into economic elites in West Timor, coupled with the cultural conditions of traditional Timorese society which are relatively easily mobilized into stimulants for Chinese crossbreed to engage in politics and the results can be said to be quite successful.

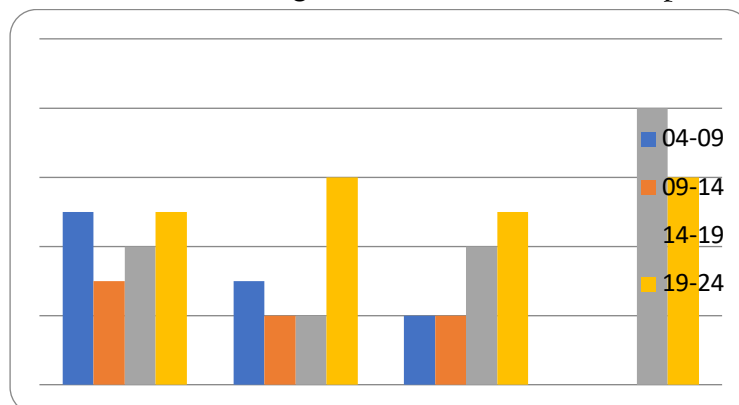
Empirical data shows that Chinese crossbreed politicians have become political elites in the government in which they were able to become legislative members at the

research location during the four post-reform election periods, namely the period 2004-2009, the 2009-2014 period, the 2014-2019 period, and the 2019-2024 period. The data in graph 1 shows that in the 2019-2014 period the number of legislative members in Timor Tengah Selatan district was six. When compared with the overall number of Regional People's Representative Assembly members, 40, Chinese crossbreed politicians who sit as legislators are 15%. This number experienced a significant increase, because in the 2014-2019 period the number of Chinese crossbreed politicians who were members of the Regional People's Representative Assembly was only two people (5%).

Whereas in the Timor Tengah Utara (TTU) district in the 2019 election, the results of the acquisition of Chinese crossbreed seats in the Regional People's Representative Assembly Timor Tengah Utara for the 2019-2024 period were five people or 16.7%. The number of Regional People's Representative Assembly members from the Chinese crossbreed increased when compared to the 2014-2019 period, which amounted to four people or 13.3%. Whereas in Belu district in the last two elections the number of Regional People's Representative Assembly members from the Chinese crossbreed each were four people or 13.3% of the total number of Belu Regional People's Representative Assembly members as many as 30 people.

An interesting phenomenon was found in the results of the 2014-2019 election period in Malaka district, where there were eight Chinese crossbreed who qualified to become Regional People's Representative Assembly members or 32% of the total seats in the Regional People's Representative Assembly Malaka of 25 seats. Whereas in the 2014 election to elect members of the Regional People's Representative Assembly Malaka when it was the first election for Malaka district after separation from Belu district. The number of members of the Regional People's Representative Assembly Malaka for the 2019-2024 period decreased compared to in the 2014-2019 period, which was as many as six people or 24 percent of the total members of the Regional People's Representative Assembly Malaka as many as 25 seats. Thus, if presentable, Chinese crossbreed politicians in Malaka can be said to be quite dominant in the dynamics of local politics in Malaka district, whereas in Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS) districts it tends to below. However, this phenomenon shows that although Chinese crossbreed politicians in the TTS district are less dominant, in the last two election periods there has been a significant increase in the number of legislative members. This is inversely proportional to the acquisition of seats of Regional People's Representative Assembly members from Chinese crossbreed in Malaka district.

Graph I. Fluctuations Regional People’s Representative Asembly Members in TTU, Belu, Malaka, and TTS Regencies Chinese Croobreed per Period



Source: Regional Election Commission TTU, Belu, Malaka, TTS, processed, 2019.  
 Note: the 2009-2014 period is still part of the Belu district.

Apart from the strategy adopted by Chinese crossbreed politicians in winning the 2019 Election, the rise of Chinese crossbreed in the perspective of local democracy can be read in two meanings. First, in an effort to gain political recognition after so long being discriminated against. Second, the democratization at the local level has led to the realization of the issue of political representation descriptively as Pitkin's concept (1967) in Ardi (2014: 308) emphasizes the accommodating political representation of various groups of citizens including Chinese crossbreed groups. Although empirically in local democratization practices are found that tend to be incompatible with the values of the substance of democracy, but this local political policy is worth maintaining because elections in modern society are a means of political education in realizing regional government that is responsible for regional progress (Winengan, 2018: 61-73), and democracy itself in a very plural and dynamic modern society is the single most realistic choice.

The success of Chinese crossbreed politicians as legislators was also supported by their positions in the structure of the political parties to which they were affiliated. Some Chinese crossbreed politicians in West Timor who are political elites of political parties are presented in table I below:

Table I. The Position of Chinese Crossbreed Politicians in the Position of Political Party Structures

No	Name	Position
1	Benediktus Banamtuan	Secretary of the Democratic Party of TTS regency
2	Ronaldo Asury	The Secretary of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle in Malaka regency is currently promoted to the

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		provincial level to become the Chairperson of the Youth and Sports Division
3	H. Frengky Saunoah	Chairperson of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle in TTU regency
4	Marius Boko	Deputy Chairman of Conscience Party in Malaka regency
5	Fabianus Juang	Management of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle in Belu regency
6	Yohanes Juang	Chairman of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle in Belu regency
7	Benediktus Manek	Chairman of Youth Guard of Democratic National in Belu regency
8	Edward Tannur	Chairperson of the National Awakening Party in TTU regency

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*Source:* Primary data processed, 2019

The choice of Chinese crossbreed to get involved in politics by joining political party members is the most appropriate way to fight for their rights as citizens. The rise of Chinese crossbreed in the study site became members of a political party so they have positioned themselves as a liaison between the people (especially Chinese crossbreed) with the authorities or the state. In representation democracy, their membership in political parties will ultimately guarantee the various types of aspirations that come from the people they represent, because in contemporary democracies political parties become the main instrument for gaining control over political institutions Pamungkas (2011: 3) which it is often practiced in hearings that tend to be transactional.

In fact, the success of Chinese crossbreed in the dynamics of local politics today is inseparable from the political strategies they have adopted. The mastery of social capital that provides a dual identity, namely as a Chinese person as well as a Timorese, is the basis for issues that are always raised when contesting in the election of legislative members. This is not surprising, given that ethnic structure is an important variable for local political preferences Rohi (2015: 459) reinforced by the social structure of Timorese society which is still traditional and poorly educated, the issue of ethnic sentiment has an influence in the formation of political preferences of communities in the border region . So that patronage patterns in the form of family and kinship networks. Ethnic ties and customs relations Roh (2015: 457) remain the main choice in determining the 2019 legislative campaign strategy. In order to quickly gain support from the local community, Chinese crossbreed politicians will shift their identity from Chinese to Timorese. However, if they gather in the Chinese crossbreed community some of them still identify themselves as Chinese. If we look closely, borrowing the



concept of Hall (1996) in Lefaan & Nugroho (2012) the boundaries of identity inherent in Chinese crossbreed politicians in Timor are constructivist, and for Reuter in (Gobel, 2013: 233) as instrumentalist views, because for them the identity interpreted as an instrument of mass mobilization to achieve political goals, namely power.

To increase the effectiveness of using social capital, Chinese crossbreed politicians still need financial support to finance various campaign needs. As reviewed in the results of the use of money in a relatively massive campaign in the 2019 legislative elections. The widespread practice of vote buying by successful Chinese ethnic teams or crossbreed politicians is inseparable from the conditions of a relatively poor population, based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (2018) in four the location of the study was that the average income per capita of the community ranged from Rp. 300,000.00 - Rp. 350,000.00 per month. Thus, the mobilization of votes with compensation in the form of a sum of money becomes a temptation that cannot be rejected by the community. Moreover, the amount of money offered can reach Rp.350,000.00 per vote, so it can be imagined if in the household there are two family members who have voting rights then they get compensation in the amount exceeds their income per month.

In addition to cash, money is also converted in the form of betel nut, *sopi* (a traditional drink containing alcohol), and cigarettes. In the local culture of betel nut and *sopi* is a symbol of brotherhood, kinship, and a form of respect for the elder, usually when someone comes with betel nut, the host will not refuse the guest request. Timorese obedience to the king and traditional elders was also used by Chinese crossbreed politicians by approaching them with betel nut and *sopi*. When accepted and continued with eating betel nut and drinking *sopi* together, the political communication established by Chinese crossbreed politicians was successful. The traditional ritual is also a sign of a political contract and a form of support of the traditional elders to the Chinese crossbreed politicians in which later the traditional parents will act as vote getters. This emotional interaction between Chinese crossbreed and local communities in the terms Lawyer and Yon (1993, 1996) in Ritzer & Smart (2011: 535) as relational cohesion is characterized by the formation of local networks as a frame of reference for the similarity of social identities (Leege & W., 2007: 295-296). Thus, local democratization in the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste has a unique characteristic, namely the existence of minorities in electoral politics. Chinese crossbreed benefited greatly from the policy of political decentralization after the reformation and supportive socio-cultural environment, so that with the mobilization of modalities owned by Chinese crossbreed, they were able to become economic elites and some even became political elites at the research sites.

## Conclusion

The socio-cultural life of the Chinese crossbreed in West Timor is inclusive so that they gain status as local aristocrats through a marriage institution with kings and aristocrats and the giving of clans. Cultural acculturation wrapped by economic motives led them to become the dominant economic power in West Timor. In the post-reform political system, the modality and duality of Chinese crossbreed identity become instruments to support political work in electoral politics. The joint use of modality was found to be quite effective in mobilizing local community support to deliver Chinese crossbreed politicians elected to Regional People's Representative Assembly in the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste. However, the use of local clan names from the father line was relatively better in supporting the success of Chinese crossbreed politicians than using the local clan name from the mother line. Thus, Chinese crossbreed not only become economic elites but some of those who are able to read and take advantage of opportunities are able to become political elites.

A liberal democratic system that demands the creation of popularity of political actors and efforts to strengthen constituent loyalty turns out to require considerable financial support. For this reason, Chinese crossbreed politicians adopted a tandem system in which they collaborated with central legislative candidates from the same party, this effort was quite effective in reducing political costs, so that they could allocate economic capital to other operational needs in the 2019 legislative elections.

The phenomenon of using modalities in local post-reform democratization has two implications. First, local conditions that tend to be easily mobilized further strengthen the politicization of ethnic-based identity by Tonghoa crossbreed politicians. Second, at the same time, the participation of Chinese crossbreed in the electoral political sphere also increased the political representation of the substance so that the minority groups were represented in the formal political system in the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste.

Electoral politics which has not yet fully improved the quality of elections leads to strengthening the substance of democracy in the local realm being homework for the improvement of the electoral system. In the realm of statehood, there need to be tighter restrictions on campaign costs and increasingly severe sanctions for politicians who engage in practices of money politics so that political campaigns will later be used as a means to contest programs and political ideas rather than means to share money. While the community sphere needs to be increased welfare and economic independence so that in determining political choices are carried out autonomously and not easily influenced by money politics. Thus, in the future democratization will be better and able to produce qualified political leaders, not merely procedural as a regular five-year activity.

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