



# Shamans and Democracy: An Analysis of the Shaman's Role in the 2019 Village Chief Election in Pasir Putih Village

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**Abstract.** This study aims to analyze the practice of shaman involvement in the village chief election in Pasir Putih Village, Bola Subdistrict, Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi, particularly in the context of the 2019 Village Chief Election. Using an explanatory qualitative approach, this study explores how shamans become part of the election process, influence voters, and their impact on election results as well as the general political culture. The data sources include primary data, obtained from interviews, direct observation, and secondary data, collected from documents. The data obtained were then analyzed through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that shamans play an important role in the election process, providing recommendations, strategies, and spiritual support to candidates for village chief in Pasir Putih Village. Some candidates or their supporters often visit shamans to be given strategic recommendations or guidance believed to increase the chances of victory. They also often hold special ceremonies or rituals, involving the community, to obtain support or blessings from the spiritual world. This practice, although deeply rooted in local culture and history, has posed challenges to the integrity and democracy of the election for village chief. As a recommendation, this study suggests increasing political education for the community, strict regulation and supervision of shaman involvement, and the importance of dialogue between all parties involved in the election

**Keywords:** Political Culture, Election Democracy, Village Chief Election, Political Education

## 1 Introduction

General Elections (Elections) have become one of the most intense arenas of contestation in the political world [1], [2], [3]. In this process, every contestant attempts to influence public opinion through various means, starting from political campaigns where candidates try to influence public opinion by conveying their messages. Campaigns can consist of advertisements, debates, speeches, and various other activities. Candidates will try to demonstrate that they are the best choice to lead and will work for the public

interest, seeking political consultant teams that play an important role in helping candidates formulate their campaign strategies. Political consultants will conduct market research, create campaign messages, and assist in managing the overall campaign, then polish the candidates' self-image by presenting themselves as effective and trustworthy leaders. They will strive to create a positive image in the eyes of the public, and even utilize transactional approaches involving the exchange of benefits between candidates and voters. For example, candidates may promise to meet certain needs of voters in exchange for their support.

In addition to what has been mentioned before, there are aspects of local culture and traditions that also influence political behavior [4], [5], [6], [7]. In South Sulawesi, the local Bugis Makassar culture and traditions play a crucial role in shaping political dynamics [8], [9], [10], [11], [12]. In addition, the phenomenon of belief in mystical powers is often utilized in a political context. This can be seen from the number of village head candidates seeking support and blessings from local shamans, hoping to win the political battle. However, this phenomenon is not limited to local areas. In various large countries, the belief in mystical powers still holds a place [13], [14], [15]. However, in a modern context, this phenomenon often receives criticism [16], [17], [18]. Many argue that in the village chief election process, democratic principles should be used, not belief in mystical powers.

In practice, the village chief election is often still influenced by mystical forces [19], [20], [21]. This is due to various factors, including the high level of public belief in mystical powers, as well as the belief that shamans have the power to influence election results. It should be clarified that the purpose of this study is not to prove the truth of mystical science, but to understand this social phenomenon and how it affects political dynamics in Indonesia. In this context, this research aims to analyze the practice of shaman involvement in the village chief election.

In Pasir Putih Village, Bola Subdistrict, Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi, this phenomenon has become very significant, especially in the context of the 2019 Village Chief Election (Pilkades). The involvement of shamans in the election process has an influence on the election results. It needs to be understood that in this village, belief in mystical powers and shamans has strong roots in the history and culture of the local community. Shamans are viewed as figures who have spiritual power and special knowledge that can be used for various purposes, including in a political context. They are often respected and valued by the local community, and their opinions have a large influence on the community's thoughts and actions.

Realizing that the involvement of shamans in the village chief election process can influence election results and even the overall local political culture, this study aims to explore and understand this phenomenon more deeply. How shamans become part of the village chief election process in Pasir Putih Village, how they influence voters, and what their impact is on election results and general political culture.

## 2 Method

The type of research used is qualitative explanatory with an explanatory research type, aimed at explaining phenomena or answering the questions "why" and "how" a phenomenon occurs. This research was conducted over two months after the proposal seminar, located in Pasir Putih Village, Bola Subdistrict, Wajo Regency. This study is intended to understand the role of shamans in the village head election (pilkades) in the village. The data sources in this study include primary data, obtained from interviews and direct observations at the research location, and secondary data, collected from reports or written documents and obtained from various sources such as journals, newspapers, books, and magazines. The informants in this research were selected through purposive sampling, and involved various individuals such as sub-district heads, village heads, village imams, sub-village heads, shamans, village head candidates, community leaders, youth leaders, and the public. For data collection, observation, interview, and documentation techniques were used. The data obtained was then analyzed through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the data was checked through the triangulation process, which involved comparing data obtained from various sources and techniques, as well as at different times.

## 3 Results and Discussion

The practice of shaman involvement in village head elections in Indonesia is a phenomenon that is still often found [22], [23], [24], [25]. Shamans often have a strong influence in village communities because they are regarded as holders of local wisdom and guardians of customs [26], [27], [28]. This influence is sometimes used by shamans to influence the process of village head elections according to personal or certain group interests. Some shamans do play a positive role in village head elections by playing the role of a mediator to defuse conflicts that occur and strengthen unity among villagers. However, there are also shamans who play roles that are not in line with their duties and responsibilities as guardians of customs and local wisdom. The basis for shaman involvement in the village head elections in Pasir Putih village is due to the belief in supernatural powers.

Observing the practice of shaman involvement in the Pasir Putih village head election is evidence of the existence of traditional authority in village communities. The involvement of shamans shows that the belief in values and customary traditions is still very strong in Pasir Putih village and is an important factor in community decision-making. Where in the Pasir Putih village head election, shamans are involved in the election process. Shamans there are considered to have traditional authority respected by the community and are believed to be able to provide guidance in the village head election, however, the voice of the community remains dominant. Although Shamans have an important role in selecting village heads, including in the election of village heads in Pasir Putih.

However, not all shamans have specific criteria or standards in selecting village heads. Some shamans may choose based on personal considerations, such as trust and familiarity with the candidate village head or family relationships. However, there are also shamans who have more objective criteria, such as the skills and experience of candidates in the field of government and leadership, and a commitment to advancing the village and improving the welfare of the community. In other words, not all shamans have a large influence on the village head election. Some shamans only play a limited role, such as giving prayers or moral support to the village head candidates. However, shamans are still respected and considered to have strong spiritual influence in village communities.

Although shamans are considered to have influence, shamans also face problems or challenges often encountered in the process of village head elections. This can make it difficult for shamans to maintain their neutrality and decide which candidate is better to choose. Some village communities may support one candidate, while others support another candidate. This can complicate the role of shamans in providing advice and views on the candidate considered best to lead the village. Another challenge is when shamans must consider various factors in choosing the right village head candidate. Although these factors are not always easy to assess and consider, making it difficult for shamans in the process of village head elections.

Facing these challenges, it is quite difficult for shamans to face pressure from village communities to choose a particular candidate. This can trap shamans in an ethical dilemma and question their neutrality in the process of village head elections. Therefore, shamans need to face these challenges wisely and maintain their neutrality as fair decision-makers. Some practices of shaman involvement in village head elections often occur, among others, providing shaman services to village head candidates to win the election, holding certain rituals that are considered to bring luck to village head candidates, and spreading false information about other village head candidates.

The involvement of shamans in village head elections can also threaten the integrity and public trust in village head elections that should be conducted democratically and transparently [29]. Therefore, there needs to be a good understanding of the role and responsibility of shamans as guardians of customs and local wisdom, as well as efforts to reduce the practice of shaman involvement in village head elections that are not in accordance with their duties and responsibilities.

In the context of democracy, election decisions based on evidence and active citizen participation are prioritized over shaman predictions or forecasts [30], [31], [32]. Although individual experiences can influence a person's beliefs, as intermediaries, it is important to promote an election process that is fair, transparent, and based on the interests of the community. When someone goes to a shaman outside the village, there is a thank you expression given as a token of appreciation for the shaman's contribution. However, the nominal amount of money given is not predetermined and may vary. This indicates the practice of rewarding shamans as a form of gratitude for the services they provide.

Through intermediaries, a deeper understanding of the role of shamans in the community can be obtained, including their relationship with the masses and how they contribute to meeting the aspirations and needs of the community. Interviews can also help explore the cultural norms and values underlying shaman practices, including the practice of saying thank you in the form of material rewards. However, it is important to remember that the practice of giving rewards to shamans should be seen in the context of the culture and beliefs of the local community. As intermediaries, it is important to maintain an objective attitude and respect the practices and beliefs of the community, while ensuring that all information obtained through interviews is conveyed with integrity and accuracy.

People believe that shamans can receive information or clues through dreams, including information related to the candidate who will win in the election. In addition, the statement also shows the practice of sharing stories or people's experiences about dreams and signs they experience related to the village head candidate. In this context, these stories can influence people's perceptions and beliefs about the candidate and his potential for victory.

Community leaders are usually invited in *musrembang* to convey what is needed by farmers or residents around, such as the construction of posts. In this context, playing an important role in gathering information and community aspirations related to their needs. Through interviews, community leaders can give voice to farmers and residents around who may have specific problems or needs. This allows community leaders to act as intermediaries between the community and the authorities, such as the village government or related institutions, in advocating for these needs.

Someone's belief in the abilities of the shaman Andu that has been proven in various situations. Andu shaman is considered to have a lot of experience and achievements in terms of his words. When the Andu shaman recommends or supports a village head candidate, that belief grows because several village heads who have been helped by him always succeed in winning the election and are able to read votes accurately.

By custom, shamans are considered as figures who provide advice or advice to the village head candidates who come to his house to ask for support. Shamans are considered to have insight and higher courage than the public to talk about things needed by the local community. Although the village head candidate can ask for the support of the shaman, the final decision about the village head election is still determined by the community. In this case, the shaman has a role in conveying the things needed by the community to the elected village head candidate. Shamans are considered to have greater courage to convey the aspirations of the community than the community directly. Customs and shamans play an important role in the process of the village head election. Shamans serve as advisers and intermediaries who can convey community aspirations to village head candidates. However, the final decision is still with the community, and shamans play a role in helping to convey the things needed by the community to the elected village head candidate.

Shamans in the village are considered to have the ability to heal or treat, so they can serve as medical experts or medical shamans in the community [33]. In addition, shamans are also considered as figures who provide advice or advice to the community. In

the context of development planning deliberations (*musrebang*), shamans in the village have a role as spokespersons or representatives of the community. They can convey the needs and aspirations of the community to the parties involved in *musrebang*, for example about the need for farming tools or assistance needed in a hamlet. In addition, shamans in the village can also be mediators in resolving conflicts. Because they are respected and considered to have wisdom, shamans can play an important role in defusing and mediating conflicts between communities. Shamans can provide advice or advice to the parties involved in the conflict to reach a better agreement or understanding.

## 4 Conclusion

The Practice of Shaman Involvement in Village Head Elections is a social phenomenon where candidates for village head or their supporters may visit the shaman to ask for advice, predictions, or spiritual support. The shaman can provide recommendations related to candidates who are believed to have supernatural support or who are expected to have a good fate in the election. Shamans can also provide specific hints or strategies believed to increase a candidate's chances of winning. Furthermore, shamans often hold special ceremonies or rituals that involve the community in the context of the village head elections. These ceremonies can include prayers, the provision of spiritual symbols to the head village candidate, or other spiritual practices. The aim of these ceremonies is to gain support or blessings from the spiritual world for the election. To ensure that the election of the village head is conducted fairly and democratically, it is necessary to enhance political education for the community, providing a deep understanding of democracy, voter rights, and obligations. Regulations and strict supervision need to be applied to the practice of shaman involvement in elections, including determining rules and limitations for shamans, and enforcing sanctions. Lastly, there needs to be a dialogue between all parties involved in the election, including village head candidates, voters, shamans, and election supervisors. This dialogue is crucial to create mutual understanding and resolve conflicts. Further research is needed to understand more about this phenomenon, including how this practice develops and changes over time, how this practice is found in other regions, and how this practice interacts with other factors in society, such as education, economy, and politics.

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