

TRACKING THE ROLE OF LEMBAGA ADAT TANA SAMAWA AS AN INFORMAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTION IN THE LOCAL POLITICAL ARENA IN SUMBAWA

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ABSTRACT. *This study aims to explain how informal democratic institutions, such as aristocracy and customary institutions, interact with formal democratic institutions within the framework of modern state institutions. This study was conducted in the Sumbawa Regency by considering the Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa (Tana Samawa Customary Institution) which is the embodiment of the revitalization of the Sumbawa Sultanate as an informal democratic institution. This study aims to further trace how aristocracy in Sumbawa, represented by Tana Samawa Customary Institution (LATS), plays a role in local democracy. This study uses Helme and Levitsky's analytical framework to examine how informal institutions are positioned relative to formal institutions as seen in four typologies; (1) complementary informal institutions, (2) accommodating informal institutions, (3) competing informal institutions, and (4) substitutive informal institutions. By interviewing Sumbawa LATS administrators, Sumbawa regional leaders, and document studies, this research shows that LATS Sumbawa Regency can complement the role of formal institutions and accommodate formal institutions.*

Keywords; *Informal Democracy, Formal Democracy, Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa (LATS), Sumbawa*

MELACAK PERAN LEMBAGA ADAT TANA SAMAWA (LATS) SEBAGAI INSTITUSI DEMOKRASI INFORMAL DALAM ARENA POLITIK LOKAL DI SUMBAWA

ABSTRAK. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana institusi demokrasi informal, seperti aristokrasi dan lembaga adat, berinteraksi dengan institusi demokrasi formal dalam kerangka institusi negara modern. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Kabupaten Sumbawa dengan mengambil Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa yang merupakan perwujudan dari revitalisasi Kesultanan Sumbawa sebagai lembaga demokrasi informal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menelusuri lebih jauh bagaimana aristokrasi di Sumbawa, yang direpresentasikan oleh Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa (LATS), berperan dalam demokrasi lokal. Studi ini menggunakan kerangka analisis Helme dan Levitsky untuk melihat bagaimana posisi institusi informal dalam relasinya dengan institusi formal yang terlihat dalam empat tipologi; (1) complementary informal institutions, (2) accomodating informal institutions, (3) competing informal institutions, dan (4) substitutive informal institutions. Melalui wawancara dengan pengurus LATS Sumbawa, pimpinan daerah Kabupaten Sumbawa, serta studi dokumen, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa LATS Kabupaten Sumbawa dapat melengkapi peran institusi formal dan relatif akomodatif terhadap institusi formal.

Kata Kunci; Demokrasi Informal, Demokrasi Formal, Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa (LATS), Sumbawa

INTRODUCTION

The global democratic revolution characterized by the transition from authoritarian to democratic systems of government in Southern Europe, Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe was the most important political trend of the late twentieth century (Huntington, 1991). The third wave of democratization in the modern world brought major changes to Indonesia, marked by the collapse of the New Order regime. Consequently, local political activities were stretched while allowing space for the revival of

traditional institutions, such as aristocracy and customary institutions (Permana, 2015). This cannot be separated from the nation-state project (state formation), which also presents new institutions in the community, namely state institutions at the local level and local governments, as a consequence of the principles of decentralization and deconcentration. In fact, in these regions, there has been an informal local institutional order that regulates individuals and society in general (Bayo, et al., 2018). It is not uncommon for the interaction between formal institutions and informal institutions at the local level to lead to the

presence of a 'dual polity', i.e. new institutions introduced by the state with pre-existing 'old' institutions in the community (Lauth, 2012).

This study aims to explain how informal democratic institutions such as aristocracy and customary institutions interact with formal democratic institutions within the framework of modern state institutions. Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa (Tana Samawa Customary Institution), which is an embodiment of the revitalization of the Sumbawa Sultanate as an informal democratic institution in Sumbawa Regency, is the focus of this study. This study is interesting based on the fact that the Sumbawa Sultanate is one of the six kingdoms that once existed on the island of Sumbawa, namely: Bima, Dompu, Papekat, Sanggar, Tambora and Samawa Kingdoms that were established around the 17th century until 1958 (Haris, 2015). However, unlike other kingdoms in Indonesia, where most kings and noble descendants entered formal democratic institutions to become formal political actors through elections to continue their power, the aristocracy in Sumbawa experienced ups and downs. Since the Sultanate of Sumbawa joined the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and Sultan Muhammad Kaharuddin III died in 1975, the journey of aristocracy in Sumbawa has been relatively vacuous because the coronation of the crown prince, Sultan Muhammad Kaharuddin IV, was delayed. The role of the Sumbawa sultanate in the context of local democracy is almost invisible, except in terms of social and cultural roles.

The appointment of Sultan Kaharuddin IV as the Sultan of Sumbawa in 2011 brought new dynamics to the interaction of formal and informal democratic institutions of the Sumbawa sultanate represented by the Tana Samawa Customary Institution (LATS). Several previous studies have shown how complex dynamics are seen by noble groups in various regions in Indonesia in order to maintain aristocratic power through the formal democratic arena by participating in elections. Since 1998, noble groups in Indonesia have tried to become formal democratic actors by competing in national, provincial, and local elections, with mixed results. However, the historical romanticism factor alone is not

enough to win the competition, without the support of economic resources and cohesive internal relations (Kurniadi, 2020). The efforts of aristocratic groups to become formal democratic actors are also seen in Haboddin's study (2009), which found that the aristocracy in Jenepono has a strong position in determining political, economic, and social structures. Thus, the *Karaeng* group in Jenepono took advantage of the political liberalization space in the formal democratic arena to reclaim its power based on strong cultural legitimacy in the midst of society. Meanwhile, the nobility otherwise known as *Kaomu-walaka* in the Sultanate of Buton, Southeast Sulawesi is still involved in the formal democratic space to maintain its power through the romanticism of sultanate history (Mas'ud, 2015). Another study in Pinrang shows how Andi (a Bugis noble title), as the upper strata of Bugis society, has always tried to dominate power in the arena of formal democracy at the local level. Even in the contestation of political actors among Andi, they do not hesitate to contest political positions (Razak, 2014). In Bone, the nobility has been an important actor in the arena of power since the royal period, the Old Order, the New Order, and the Reformation. Even after the reformation, nobility's dominance in the executive has not subsided. At the executive level, both regional head candidates who contested and those elected in the contestation were always from the noble class. Therefore, it is not surprising that their dominance have made them the only political actors in direct regional head elections (Ernawati, 2017).

The revival of traditional power in the Gowa Regency also showed its own dynamics, where the aristocratic group had to deal with the state. The issuance of the Regional Regulation on the Regional Customary Institution (Perda LAD) can be said to be a repetition of history in which the state destroyed traditional rulers to submit to modern state power. Through Perda LAD, the state (local government) delegitimized traditional power in the Gowa Regency (Sastrawati, 2018). In contrast, Permana's study (2015) shows that the rise of aristocracy in Sumbawa, represented by the presence of Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa, has

not been able to play the role of a good intermediary actor in advocating for marginalized groups in the local context. Instead, LATS has become part of the local oligarchy, a global corporation that forges alliances to hijack decentralization agendas at the local level.

Furthermore, Ernawati, et al (2018: 272) shows that *adat* is the backbone of the regime in Toraja. *Tongkonan* and *kombongan*, which form the basis of Tana Toraja's customary power, have been maximized by Toraja elders to become so powerful in the face of formal politics. Although many customary practices have begun to change, custom-based sources of power remain important references for Torajans in terms of viewing power. The existence of both formal and informal sources of power makes Torajans compliant. As part of the Republic of Indonesia, the Toraja region and its people are subject to state laws. At the same time, they retain the values inherent in their social identity as indigenous people. In the formal arena, for example, in policy formulation and development planning processes carried out by the state through local government institutions, the involvement of informal elements that reflect the presence of *adats* is inevitable, for example, with the direct or indirect involvement of traditional leaders. The presence of formal institutions cannot be ignored in social and customary activities, as government officials representing the state cannot be ignored.

Previous studies have shown how aristocracies in various parts of Indonesia gain and maintain their power by participating in formal democratic elections. In contrast to previous studies, this research examines how the aristocracy in Sumbawa, represented by Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa, plays a role in local democracy using Helme and Levitsky's (2004) analytical framework; the question of whether it complements the role of formal institutions, accommodates formal institutions, competes with formal institutions or even replaces the role of formal institutions. The formal democratic actors used in this study are actors who hold formal power, either as regional heads or legislatures. Meanwhile, informal democratic actors are defined as those

who have informal power, such as the Sultan of Sumbawa and the Tana Samawa Customary Institution.

Furthermore, the important role of institutions in the political literature has long been widely accepted. In a democracy, formal and informal institutions can have different patterns of relationship with each other. There are at least three types of relationships between the two types; complementary, substitutive, and conflictual type (Lauth, 2000). Levitsky (2004) defined formal institutions as; organisations that have rules that are openly codified, in the sense that they are established and communicated through channels that are widely accepted as official. By contrast, informal institutions are socially shared rules, usually unwritten, created, communicated, and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels. In simple terms, it can be understood that formal institutions are a set of rules that are formed and organized in a formal government structure. Whereas informal institutions are those which have shared social rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated and enforced outside of formal channels, but can influence political decisions at the local level (Bayo, et al., 2018). In other words, informal democracy is a consensus that emerges at the intersection of the formal and the informal.

Formal and informal institutions establish relationships between them. In practice, the relationship between the two is not always mutually negative. Helme and Levitsky (2006) attempted to identify the positions of informal institutions in relation to formal institutions. The pattern of their relationship will at least give birth to four typologies of informal institutions; (1) complementary informal institutions, (2) accommodating informal institutions, (3) competing informal institutions, and (4) substitutive informal institutions. The four typologies are presented in the following table, and the outcome of their interaction with formal institutions is as follows:

Table 1. A Typology of Informal Institutions

Outcome /Effectiveness	Effective Formal Institutions	Ineffective Formal Institutions
Convergent	Complementary	Substitutive
Divergent	Accommodating	Competing

Source: Adapted from Helme and Levitsky (2006)

The discussion of the relationship between democracy and informal institutions stems from the idea that democracy in countries hit by the third wave of democracy illustrates the phenomenon of flourishing informal institutions in the democratic process (Lauth, 2012). In practice, however, it is important to map out which informal political institutions are "good" and which are "bad" for democracy. In other words, what kinds of informal institutions are compatible with democracy? Therefore, one way to find out is to link informal institutions with the basic idea of legitimacy, namely (1) effectiveness/efficiency to produce political results (output/outcome), and (2) democratic procedures/legitimacy, which is related to the participation process (input). Both of these are closely related to the concept of democracy. This means that the relationship between democracy and informal institutions can be said to be positive if it supports the existence and openness of participation and democratic policy-making channels (Bayo, et al., 2018).

According to Helmke and Levitsky (2004), formal and informal institutions interact in several ways. So far, characterizations of formal-informal institutional relationships have tended to fall into one of two opposing categories. The first camp treats informal institutions as functional or problem-solving institutions, in the sense that they provide solutions to barriers to social interaction and coordination, improving the efficiency or performance of formal institutions. The second camp treats informal institutions as dysfunctional or problem-creating. However, recent research has shown a more complex picture than either camp envisions, with informal institutions sometimes reinforcing or replacing formal institutions that appear less functional. Therefore, it is important to see how these differences play out through the above typology, which is based on two dimensions: the extent to which formal and informal institutional outcomes converge and how effectively the relevant formal institutions operate.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This study contributes to the development of local political studies related to the need to approach democracy from the perspective of informal institutions. An important contribution of this study is that it adds to the treasure of Indonesia's democratic dynamics at the local level. Universal democratic values cannot simply be practiced at the local level, because there are local values that existed long before modern democracy was present. Thus, the perspective that universal democratic values must be practiced, as theorized by liberal thinkers must be reconsidered when dealing with democratic values at the local level. Not all informal institutions reduce the quality of democracy, as Lauth's (2000) study shows. The framework of this research is shown in the figure below:

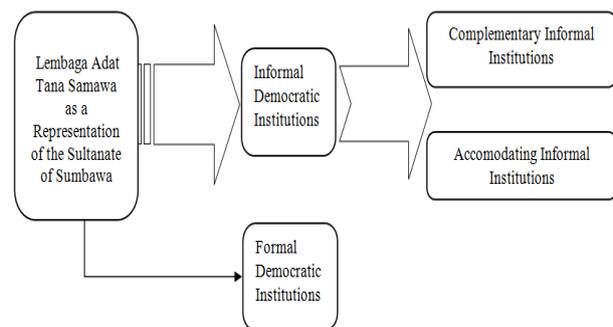


Figure 1. Logical Framework Model

The diagram above explains the position of the LATS, which is understood as an informal democratic institution that interacts with formal democratic institutions (local governments). The result of LATS interaction with formal democratic institutions gave birth to an informal institutional model that complements the role of formal democratic institutions, as proposed by Helmke and Levitsky (2006). Although the outcomes of informal and formal democratic institutions are differ, the existence of informal institutions increases the effectiveness and stability of formal democratic institutions.

METHOD

This study was conducted in the Sumbawa Regency in 2022. This research stems from an initial reading of the aristocracy in Sumbawa, represented by Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa when playing its role in the context of local democracy. From the beginning, Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa was defined as an informal democratic institution that always interacts with formal institutions. The selection of the Sumbawa Regency stems from the rationalization that the existence of aristocracy in Sumbawa, represented by the Tana Samawa Customary Institution, has experienced ups and downs. This study uses a descriptive analysis method to explain Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa in its position as an informal democratic institution. The choice of the qualitative method stems from the fact that this method can help explain complex questions in depth (Hamilton & Finley, 2019).

The flow of this research begins by conducting a literature review of several previous studies related to how the practice of noble groups as informal democratic actors with their cultural power tries to maintain traditional power through the electoral arena in formal democracy. Based on the results of previous studies, the author uses the framework of the relationship between informal democratic institutions and formal democratic institutions to explain how the two interact. The data were collected through interviews. Research informants were selected using the purposive sampling technique.

Data collection techniques through interviews were used to seek oral information related to how the practice of the Tana Samawa Customary Institution, which is a revitalization of the Sumbawa Sultanate aristocracy, can complement the role of formal institutions. The data obtained were then described and analyzed using descriptive techniques with an interactive analysis model. The interactive analysis model was chosen because it can be trusted to maintain the data validity. This model consists of an interrelated flow of activities starting before, during, and after data collection, which ultimately forms an analysis, namely; data

reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Getting to Know Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa (LATS)

The birth and emergence of Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa (Tana Samawa Customary Institution) is, in principle, a form of awareness, will, hope, and collective aspiration of all citizens of Sumbawa Regency to preserve the treasures of *Samawa* culture and civilization. In addition, the existence of *Samawa* culture and civilization is expected to be a source of value for the sustainability of the life order and life of *Tau Tana Samawa* (the Sumbawa people) now and in the future. Related to this, the existence of a customary institution that can maintain and preserve the entire cultural heritage of the past in a civilization is presented. This cannot be separated from the process of transferring generations, which cannot be avoided. Naturally, the older generation, as historical and cultural actors in the past, will be replaced by the younger generation. Therefore, the process of changing generations must also be interpreted as "inheritance and development of noble values of culture and civilization". The inheritance process may fail if it is not done systematically or responsibly (LATS, 2022). The absence of an institution capable of accommodating the aspirations of customary and cultural actors has a serious impact on the existence of civilization. The presence of an institution that is able to maintain and preserve customs and culture will more or less become a fortress for civilization so that it can survive for tens, hundreds, and even thousands of years in the future.

Based on Sumbawa Regency Regional Regulation Number 9 of 2015, the Tana Samawa Customary Institution is a community organization formed to preserve and develop customary and cultural values that have naturally grown and developed in the history of the *Tana Samawa* legal community. LATS is based on Pancasila and upholds the Islamic values of *Adat Barenti ko Syara', Syara' Barenti ko Kitabullah*. Furthermore, LATS is an

indigenous social organization that is familial in nature, not affiliated with any organization, and is open and tolerant. The Sultanate and LATS are not affiliated with any organization, institution or political party. Specifically, LATS aims to preserve and maintain the cultural values of *Tau* and *Tana Samawa* (the Sumbawa people and Sumbawa land), protect and maintain the assets of *Tau* and *Tana Samawa*, customs that have historical value both movable and immovable, and conduct planned, integrated and directed development of *Tau* and *Tana Samawa* culture and customs.

As a community organization, LATS has a vision to encourage the formation of a religious, modern, and democratic *Samawa* community based on the philosophy of *Kerik Salamat Tau ke Tana Samawa, Taket ko Nene', Kangila boat Lenge* (Remembering God and being afraid of doing bad things). The mission of LATS is as follows: to motivate the community to make religious teachings the foundation of thinking, behaving, and acting; to motivate the community to advance in thinking, behaving, and acting based on technological knowledge without abandoning the cultural values and customs of *Tau* and *Tana Samawa*; to motivate the community to respect and appreciate each other in thinking, behaving and acting towards the achievement of worldly and *ukhrawi* salvation and to remind the community to prioritize shame in thinking, behaving, and acting to do things that bring harm to themselves and others.

Procedurally, the LATS and the Sultanate of Sumbawa are integral parts of the Unitary States of the Republic of Indonesia by upholding the values of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, and the Unitary States of the Republic of Indonesia. Furthermore, LATS' relationship with the local government is in the nature of partnership, in the implementation of development, especially those related to the preservation of traditional values, customs, and culture. LATS' relationship with community organizations or other third parties that share the same vision as customary institutions is a partnership. As a community organization in

charge of customary affairs, LATS is the only Customary Institution in *Tana Samawa* which is legal and recognized by the Regional Government, and the Sumbawa people. As such, the LATS is inseparable from the customary values and history of the Sumbawa Sultanate. Nonetheless, the customary and historical values of LATS are still evaluated in accordance with the conditions and developments of the time.

The *Tana Samawa* Customary Institution was established in 1996. However, at that time, there was no legal framework related to the existence of a customary institution. It was only in 2007 that LATS was constitutionally established through Regional Regulation (Perda) of Sumbawa Regency Number 23 of 2007 (Permana, 2015). Subsequently, Local Regulation Number 9/2015 emerged as the last local regulation to explain the purpose of LATS as an institution that aims to preserve the heritage of *Tau* and *Tana Samawa* cultural values. With the spirit that the Sumbawa sultanate's lineage and heritage should be culturally preserved, there was a strong push for Muhammad Abdurrahman Daeng Raja Dewa (Daeng Ewan), who held the title Sultan Muhammad Kaharuddin IV, to be crowned again in order to preserve the heritage of the Sumbawa Sultanate. Along with the coronation of Daeng Ewan, the existence of LATS began to be present and became part of an effort to maintain the customs and culture of *Tau* and *Tana Samawa* in the frame of the Sumbawa Sultanate under the umbrella of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Through Regional Regulation Number 5/2015, it is expected that the people of Sumbawa, which are part of the Indonesian Nation, have values and heritage from their ancestors, therefore, the existence of institutions is very important. Therefore, the existence of LATS in a formal legal manner will provide more space for LATS to nurture *Tau* and *Tana Samawa* towards a religious, modern, and democratic society. Although LATS culturally represents the *Tau* and *Tana Samawa* collectivities, its existence is always guided by Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the

Republic of Indonesia. In addition, LATS, as an informal community institution, carries out all its activities and programs with reference to the basic values of *Tau Samawa: Adat Barenti ko Syara', Syara' Barenti ko Kitabullah*.

The Relationship between LATS as an Informal Democratic Institution and Formal Democratic Institutions

Referring to the Regional Regulation of Sumbawa Regency Number 10 of 2015 which has been mutually agreed between the Regional Government and the LATS, the Regional Government will facilitate all forms of cultural activities carried out by the LATS. Furthermore, in the context of the implementation of cultural arts performances, the standardization of customary values, the improvement of artistic knowledge, the implementation of customary values to the younger generation, and the empowerment, preservation and development of surviving but underdeveloped customs, the local government will also fully support the LATS program. Therefore, to strengthen the implementation of empowerment, preservation and development as well as the protection of customs and customary institutions, the local government is obliged to facilitate the availability of facilities and infrastructure for the activities of customary institutions. For example, in the context of cultural preservation, where the local government will make changes to the form, function and layout of cultural heritage objects of historical value, the LATS must be involved.

Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa played the role of a local government partner. The various activities that have been carried out by LATS so far show how LATS complements formal democratic institutions such as the local government in filling socio-cultural works. Referring to the position of informal institutions in relation to formal institutions, as offered by Helme and Levitsky (2006), the pattern of relations between the two will at least create four typologies of informal institutions; (1) complementary informal institutions, (2) accommodating informal institutions, (3) competing informal institutions, and (4)

substitutive informal institutions, as shown in the following table:

Outcome / Effectiveness	Effective Formal Institutions	Ineffective Formal Institutions
Convergent	Complementary	Substitutive
Divergent	Accommodating	Competing

Source: Adapted from Helme and Levitsky (2006)

Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa as a forum that aims to protect and nurture *Tau* and *Tana Samawa* in order to lead a religious, modern, and democratic society is a cultural representation of Sumbawa society in interacting with formal democratic institutions. According to Aries Zulkarnain, LATS was initially merely a group of traditional leaders and figures who cared about the identity of *Tau Samawa*. Later, it became more institutionalized considering that the need to maintain, preserve, and promote culture required a separate institution that could not be separated from the historical lineage of Sumbawa. Although LATS is not a representation of the Sultan, the Sultan may order the people of Sumbawa to run *adats* activities, but not in a formal context, because there is already a local government. Furthermore, Aries mentioned that the Sultan of Sumbawa only talked about customs. The one who appoints the sultan, from crown prince to sultan so that the sultanate's lineage in *Tana Samawa* is not cut off, is a customary institution. The decree appointing the sultan comes from the customary institution, because LATS is the representative of all sub-districts directly (Aries, Interview June 19, 2022).

Institutionally, LATS will not enter the executive realm. However, in order to maintain culture, the LATS provides signs related to the customs and values believed by the people of Sumbawa, including providing customary advice (*pasatotang adat*) to the Regent, both before and after the inauguration. The Sultan of Sumbawa fully supported the importance of maintaining *adat*, which the LATS then practiced. Although the Sultan of Sumbawa no longer exercised formal power as his

predecessor did before 1950, he fully supported his father Sultan Muhammad Kaharudin III's move to join the Republic of Indonesia in 1950. Consequently, the current Sultan of Sumbawa plays only a role in the arena of custom preservation. As stated by the Sultan of Sumbawa:

"Adat in my opinion is simple. No longer should we consider only the boasting of our lineage in the past to show who we are today. Nobles are not only seen by their descendants, but also by their thoughts. LATS must be filled with Sumbawa people who have the knowledge, ability, sincere work, and willingness to work together to achieve our goal by always remembering the philosophy of the Sumbawa people Ketakit Ko Nene, Kangila Bowat Lenge (Remembering God and being afraid of doing bad things). If we only question our bloodline, we will not go anywhere."

The Sultan of Sumbawa shows that he is an informal leader who highly values formal democratic institutions. For example, he conveyed straightforwardly in explaining the position of the *adat* institution, which was born out of the need to maintain the continuity of ethnic Sumbawa after the Sultanate of Sumbawa joined the Republic of Indonesia in 1950. The *adat* institution is a cultural forum that can be filled by anyone who has full attention to the future of Sumbawa's customs. That is, they do not have to come from noble descendants or descendants of the Sultan of Sumbawa. This is because managing an informal institution, such as a customary institution, requires a figure who is willing to allocate time and energy to take care of cultural work. As stated by the Sultan of Sumbawa:

"LATS is open to anyone from Tau Samawa who wants to be active in adat. I think that being active in customary institutions does not mean that we go back to the past, but it should be realized by the younger generation of Sumbawa that we must be able to think ahead based on truth, justice, and honesty. My task as Sultan in this democratic era is how to nurture all Tau Samawa to think forward to the future, without forgetting our identity as Tau Samawa, who have a life guide to fear God and shame to do bad things (KabarNTB, 2022).

In its relationship with the local government as a formal democratic institution, LATS has been designing programs that focus on strengthening *adats* and culture. One of the highest forums for discussing the LATS work program is the *Musakara Rea*. According to Syukri Rahmat, *Musakara Rea* is a forum for organizational consolidation and a meeting of cultural and religious leaders in Sumbawa to discuss various aspects, ranging from culture to the social life of the people of Sumbawa. In addition, *Musakara Rea* is also a place for arranging work programs and formulating various strategic concepts for preserving, strengthening, and developing Samawa cultural values towards a modern and democratic society. Another goal is how cultural regulations, culture, and customs of Sumbawa are systematically formulated as a foundation for carrying out cultural work (Samotamedia, 2022).

LATS as Complementary Informal Institutions

According to Helmke and Levitsky (2006), complementary informal institutions are informal institutions which coexist with effective formal institutions to implement existing rules. Informal institutions complement and shape actors' behavior in ways that do not violate overarching formal rules or produce substantively different outcomes. They are often seen as enhancing the efficiency or effectiveness of formal institutions. Such institutions "fill in the gaps" either by addressing contingencies not addressed in the formal rules or by facilitating the pursuit of individual goals within the formal institutional framework. Informal institutions often increase their efficiency. Examples include providing norms, procedures, and frameworks that facilitate decision-making and coordination within bureaucracies.

Referring to Helmke and Levitsky's (2006) explanation, LATS also plays a similar role and function although in a different form. If Helmke and Levitsky explain their argument in terms of the interaction between formal institutions and informal institutions in the broader context of executive and legislative

relations, then the LATS in this context plays its function as a partner of formal institutional actors, namely local governments. LATS has power derived from social and cultural norms that have grown and been institutionalized in customary institutions. LATS was closely integrated with the local government. Not only because the human resources in the LATS itself are also part of the local government apparatus, but at the same time the LATS also encourages the strengthening of customs through programs in each department (Interview with Mahmud Abdullah - Sumbawa Regent, June 20, 2022). For example, through the Education and Culture Office, the LATS encourages the local content curriculum in schools within the scope of regional culture, regional customs, regional history, and Sumbawa's unique skills. In addition, Sumbawa Regent Regulation Number 94/2017 also states that people who have potential in the field of Sumbawa's culture and customs can be used as resource persons in learning activities. Thus, LATS and local government have a complementary relationship and LATS strongly supports all government programs.

The tasks carried out so far by LATS have shown how LATS has become a complementary partner of the local government in cultural affairs. This can be seen from the duties of the LATS as stated in article 7 of the LATS bylaws; accommodating and channeling community opinions to be conveyed to the government and resolving disputes concerning the customary law, customs and habits of the community. In addition, it empowers, develops, and preserves the customs and habits of the community in order to empower the community in support of government administration, development implementation, and community development. In addition, LATS also maintains, preserves, and develops *Samawa* cultural values as part of the national culture. Furthermore, LATS is asked to revitalize forgotten and or abandoned customs that are still relevant to the times. It also promotes family relationships, brotherhood, togetherness, harmonization, and strengthening of cooperation between fellow Sumbawa citizens and various ethnic groups in the archipelago. The potential of *Tau Samawa*

contributes to regional development and national development. Finally, it helps in nurturing, empowering, and improving the quality of *Tau* and *Tana Samawa* and all citizens of Sumbawa (LATS, 2022).

LATS as Accommodating Informal Institutions as well as Semi-formal Institutions

Theoretically, Helmke and Levitsky (2006) refer to accommodating informal institutions as informal institutions that combine effective formal institutions and different outcomes. These informal institutions create incentives to behave in ways that alter the substantive effects of formal rules, without directly violating them. Accommodating informal institutions are often created by actors who dislike the outcomes produced by formal rules, but cannot change or openly violate them. As such, they often help reconcile the interests of these actors with the existing formal institutional arrangements. Therefore, while accommodating informal institutions may not increase efficiency, they can increase the stability of formal institutions by dampening demand for change. This means that, formal institutions are relatively strong and only need informal institutions as constructive counterweights.

Referring to Helmke and Levitsky's conceptualization above, LATS in practice always strive to be a constructive partner for the local government. Through the Sultan of Sumbawa, as the main figure representing customary institutions or informal power in Sumbawa, LATS builds balanced communication, both with the local government and with the community. Simultaneously, LATS will also speak out critically if the local government ignores the cultural recommendations of LATS, which are usually born from the *Musakara Rea* forum. This shows how the LATS functions as the guardian and preserver of *Tana Samawa's* customary heritage while acting as an informal institutional actor in collaboration with the local government. According to Aries Zulkarnain, LATS will even provide *pasatotang* (customary advice) to the regent before his inauguration and even when

exercising his power. The regent and his staff will definitely listen because LATS is a representation of all sub-districts in Sumbawa (Aries, Interview June 19, 2022).

However, it is important to note that although Helmke and Levitsky (2006) emphasize accommodative informal democratic institutions as institutions created by actors who do not like the results produced by formal rules, the opposite is true in the practice of interaction between LATS and the Sumbawa local government. The existence of LATS is a product of formal democratic institutions, namely, the local government. In the 2016 *Musakara Rea* of Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa, which was attended by the Sultan of Sumbawa - Dewa Masmawa Sultan Muhammad Kaharuddin IV, for example, dozens of recommendations were made to encourage the local government to pay more attention to the cultural life of the people of Sumbawa. In Sumbawa Regency, for example, the "Saturday Culture" program was launched, which aims to provide a space for expression for students from early childhood to high school. Furthermore, the local government also promoted the *Tana Samawa* regional fashion industry as a form of accommodation for the LATS recommendations in the context of Sumbawa's cultural sustainability. The local government then issued Sumbawa Regent Regulation Number 124 of 2021 concerning the Service Attire of the State Civil Apparatus within the Sumbawa Regency Government. The instruction calls for one day a month for the use of traditional clothing within the government bureaucracy, schools, and profit and non-profit institutions in the region. Thus, the relationship between the two institutions can be said to be a form of institution that accommodates each other's interests in the advancement of regional cultural customs.

As this study identifies a need to modify the theoretical framework proposed by Helmke and Levitsky (2004), it is important to consider the unique context in which LATS operates. LATS is a product of formal democratic institutions, specifically local governments, and has evolved into an informal democratic institution. While LATS interacts with formal democratic institutions, the LATS have also

become semi-informal institutions. The existence of Sultan as the leader of LATS is symbolic in nature and does not hold formal authority. In practical terms, the Sultan's authority is limited to the context of culture and is dependent on the support of the local government. The local government is responsible for maintaining the culture and traditions of the community, and the Sultan's role is to symbolize this cultural leadership.

CONCLUSION

This research has shown that the interaction of Lembaga Adat Tana Samawa, which is an embodiment of the revitalization of the Sumbawa Sultanate as an informal democratic institution with formal democratic institutions in the framework of modern state institutions in the Sumbawa Regency, can complement the role of formal institutions. The results of this study also confirm the typology offered by Helme and Levitsky (2004), especially the typology of complementary informal institutions towards the position of informal democratic institutions towards formal institutions. LATS complement and support the performance of local governments, especially in the context of cultural work.

On the other hand, LATS is also a partner of the local government that actively contributes to and accommodates all socio-cultural potential in the community to be fought for in the context of political policies to the community through partnerships with local governments. In addition, this study seeks to improve upon Helmke and Levitsky's (2006) theoretical framework. It does so by considering the relationship between accommodating informal institutions, as exemplified by LATS, and effective formal institutions. In this context, the study recognizes that the LATS may not necessarily differ from the former, particularly when the informal status of the formal institutions has been compromised through formalization by state decree. Thus, the existence of informal institutions, as demonstrated by the LATS, has contributed to determining the performance of democracy, especially at the local level.

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