

The Politization of Identity Politics in Medan Mayor Election 2020

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Abstract: This article discusses the politicization that occurred in the electoral competition in the 2020 Regional Head Election of Medan City. In the midst of the euphoria of democracy, the post-conflict local election was faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, political polarization occurred in the midst of the people of Medan City. Polarization in electoral politics in Medan City in 2020, which in many aspects is largely determined by media framing and the interaction of actors in social media. Since 2014, the 2017 and 2019 DKI Jakarta post-conflict local elections, Indonesia has experienced the politicization of identity politics to an alarming degree whenever there is an election for executive leadership at the national, provincial and district/city levels. This identity politicization tends to have not received adequate attention in political studies. This paper presents preliminary observations about the politicization of political identity in Medan City. The results of this study found that national issues, such as cases of religious blasphemy, radicalism, became the primacy of candidates as political instruments. This article concludes that identity politics in the 2020 Medan City post-conflict local election takes the form of national issues rather than the identity of the local context. With qualitative research methods using interviews and observation.

1 INTRODUCTION


The Medan City General Election which gave birth to two pairs of candidates Bobby-Aulia and Akhyar-Salman gave a signal to the strengthening of political entities in Medan City. Identity politics in Indonesia has long been an interesting topic of discussion among social scientists. The issue of identity is very influential and becomes the dominant thing in determining people's choices in general elections (elections) in Indonesia, there is a polarization whose priorities are based on ethnicity and religion. Geertz (1963) in his writings on "primordial sentiment" states that the study of identity politics will continue to receive attention, especially with regard to ethnic identity, religion, gender, indigenous peoples (indigenous communities), and local communities (in Buchari), 2014).

Identity politicization is defined as an attempt to use, exploit, or manipulate identity, whether based on religion, ethnicity, gender or adherents of a certain ideology to generate opinion or stigma from the public with the aim of political interests. Identity is then used to achieve certain interests of the group or

individual (Burke, 2003). Democracy provides space for each individual and identity group in order to win the electoral competition. However, the politicization of identity also has the opportunity to weaken democratic values so that it can lead to political instability (Herdiansah, 2017).

Identity politicization also shows an attitude of political priority or special behavior to a group of people who come from a certain region, ethnicity or race. The process of recruiting leaders in the regions tends to be based on primordial parameters, which facilitates the development of regional and tribal spirit (Jumadi and Yaakop, 2013). The politicization of identity based on primordial is not only displayed by candidates for leaders or candidates for regional heads, but for voters it becomes one of the important considerations in the political behavior of voters. When identity politics is manipulated by the interests of the political elite, there are several risks that can threaten the life of democracy. Moreover, in a state of ethnic heterogeneity which is often an obstacle to democratic consolidation (Bimir, 2007).

After the reform of identity politics, they are faced with several problems such as identity crises,

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horizontal conflicts, multicultural conflicts, national disintegration, political instability, violence and crime as symptoms of a multidimensional crisis. The other most crucial thing is the fading of national values and the nation's cultural values. Plurality in the fields of culture, race, ethnicity, religion, language, and resources is a challenge for Indonesia's national identity. If it can be managed properly, then pluralism will bring prosperity and strengthen unity and integrity. However, if it cannot be managed properly, pluralism has the potential to cause national disintegration. One important note relates to the 2020 Medan City post-conflict local election that the issue of primordial identity related to the two major religions has a very strong influence in determining candidate pairs (Negong, 2017). The election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Medan in 2020 which was attended by 2 (two) pairs of candidates, namely Bobby Nasution-Aulia Rahman and Akhyar Nasution-Salman Alfarisi which was won by the Bobby-Aulia pair (Medan KPUD Data, 2020). Bobby-Aulia's victory in 15 (fifteen) sub-districts (Medan Kota, Medan Sunggal, Medan Helvetia, Medan Denai, West Medan, Medan Deli, Medan Tuntungan, Medan Belawan, Medan Amplas, Medan Area, Medan Johor, Medan Marelan, Medan Labuhan, Medan Tembung, Medan Polonia) is very interesting because the previous victories in these 15 sub-districts have always been won by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS).

This shows that there is a degradation of political support in the 2020 Medan City election, in which the candidate for Mayor Bobby Nasution with the surname Nasution, while the political behavior of choosing the people of Medan City is still very much influenced by the issue of primordial identity based on religion and ethnicity. The Bobby-Aulia pair before becoming a candidate for Mayor of Medan determined by the Medan City Regional General Election Commission (KPUD) were young people who had never entered the political arena. Bobby Nasution's presence in the political arena cannot be separated from national issues.

Unwittingly, national issues also affect the contestation of the 2020 Medan City General Election. The influence of national issues such as the Ahok case (Ahok effect) which was developed because it was politicized based on primordial use by politicians in DKI Jakarta as a result gave birth to identity-based primordial sentiments among the people of Medan City. especially religious sentiments, the majority of which are 90% Muslim, Bobby Nasution, who is supported by the PDIP party, which is connoted as a blasphemy party. The rise of

this primordial sentiment since the Ahok issue in the 2017 DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election was used by politicians in the city of Medan to gain victory by using various primordial-based identity issues as a political campaign tool to achieve victory. Research on identity politics in a democratic country in Indonesia has been carried out by many researchers and the academic community. However, research related to the use of identity issues carried out by Bobby-Aulia in an effort to win the 2020 post-conflict local election has not been done much. Based on the foregoing, the authors focus on the research on politicization of politics in the Regional Head General Election of Medan City and the winning team in managing identity issues to strengthen their political discourse, recruitment of community leaders, socialization of political safaris and campaigns as well as identity issues capitalized in planning for the win, namely analyze how the use of identity issues as a winning effort by Bobby-Aulia.

2 METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with primary data obtained from each individual or group / Winning Team or institution that has a role in the victory of candidate Bobby-Aulia in the use of identity issues as an effort to win in the 2020 Medan City election. also supported from secondary data sources such as books, journals, statistical data, mass media reports relevant to research studies, general guidelines, study results from various literatures and previous studies relevant to the research theme to sharpen the credibility of the research. The data obtained were then verified and analyzed by descriptive analysis method. Data verification is carried out through triangulation techniques, namely comparing the data obtained so that they come to the belief that the data obtained are valid.

3 RESULT AND DISSCUSION

The political configuration of the Medan City post-conflict local election is closely related to the composition of the population of Medan City, the majority of whom are Moslems reaching 80% consisting of Catholics amounting to 8%, Protestants 7%, Hindus 3% and Buddhists 2% (BPS City Medan, 2019). Islam is the majority in several sub-districts including Denai District, Johor, Medan City, Medan Helvetia, Medan Baru, Medan Selayang, Medan

Belawan, West Medan, East Medan, Medan Amplas, Medan Marelan, Medan Area, Medan Maimun, Medan Deli, Medan Labuhan, Medan Struggle and Medan Polonia. The picture above shows the geographical conditions of Medan City which affect the sociological conditions and consequently gives rise to political practices in making combinations between regions that represent matters of religious and ethnic ethnicity, especially in the Medan Mayor Election.

The practice of religion-based identity politics is quite common in Medan City which is based on political parties. During the three elections for Mayor of Medan after post-reformation, ethnic and religious factors had a very strong influence in determining candidates at the level of political parties and people's choices. However, religious identity politics and political parties in Medan City, where the majority of the population is Muslim as a basis, are difficult to detect in large-scale political activities such as the Jokowi grand political campaign in Medan on April 10, 2019. Generally, the exploitation of identity politics based on religion and political parties occurs in small-scale and local campaign activities that escape media coverage. The importance of identity in turn encourages political parties to look for candidates for mayor of Medan City without giving up the image of representing the identity of the majority regions such as ethnicity and religion as a way of transformation in various political strategies.

Ethnic combinations such as Batak and Malay and Javanese are associated with the majority religion in Medan, namely Islam. The simultaneous regional elections in 2020 will be held simultaneously on December 9, 2020. The results of the 2020 Medan Mayor Election were won by candidate pair number 2 Bobby-Aulia getting 393,327 votes with a vote percentage of 53.5%. Akhyar-Salman's vote gain was only 46.5% (Medan City KPUD Data, 2020).

4 IDENTITY INSTRUMENTALISM

The results obtained by Bobby-Aulia have shown that the strategies carried out by the candidates, supporting parties, and campaign teams in their efforts to win the 2020 Medan City election were quite successful. Supporting parties such as PDIP, Golkar, NasDem, Golkar, Gerindra, PSI, PAN, PPP and Hanura contributed a lot. These eight parties work together in a joint winning team. The purpose of the merger is to make the program implementation

more focused, in accordance with the strategy of the candidate pair that has been mutually agreed with the Bobby-Aulia Winning Team in an effort to achieve victory.

Based on the results of the research, the Bobby-Aulia candidate pair strategy has two strategies, namely conventional and specific winning planning. The conventional winning planning strategy includes the recruitment of candidate pairs and political socialization, strengthening the vision and mission discourse, forming a winning team and volunteer team as well as the use of mass media and social media in promoting candidate pairs. Meanwhile, the strategy of the candidate pair Bobby-Aulia which made a major contribution was the use of religious identity issues from national issues which were capitalized by the candidate pairs in conducting political socialization and campaigning.

The use of identity issues such as the Ahok case (Ahok effect), the 212 Movement, the issue of the establishment of a Khilafah State, and the issue of the Jakarta Charter. The strategy of this candidate pair became the strength of the candidate pair Bobby-Aulia in achieving victory (Tolo, 2019). In the 2020 Medan Mayor Election, of the two pairs of candidates, geographically Akhyar-Salman is a representation of the City of Medan. Akhyar Nasution as the incumbent and Salman who has a background as a member of the Medan DPRD and was elected as Deputy Chair of the North Sumatra Provincial DPRD from the Electoral District of Medan City. The recruitment of candidate pairs who appear in the 2020 Medan City election in this study does represent a mix of ethnicity and religion. Ethnic combinations such as the Batak and Malay ethnicities which are then combined with religion continue to color the entire process of recruiting candidates for the Mayor of Medan so far after the reform period (Medan KPUD Data, 2020).

The winning team from the PDIP Party said that if the Gerindra party supports the Bobby-Aulia package, the combined number of seats for the coalition parties and will be included in the nomination requirements is at least 79%. Many of these considerations made Aulia Rahman chosen to accompany Bobby Nasution, one of which was based on primordial considerations as a strategy and the main contribution of strategy in an effort to achieve victory from the Medan Malays. The phenomenon of combining candidate pairs based on primordial considerations is part of a winning planning strategy that can still be called identity politics. This is a benchmark for the use of identity politics because the voting community in Medan City still chooses

candidates based on primordial factors. For example, the representation of the candidate pair must be Muslim because the majority of the religion in Medan City is Islam, therefore the image that is built has a representation of the majority Muslim voice.

Automatically has an effect on boosting the electability of the candidate pair's package. And vice versa in North Medan and South Medan. Voters prefer to see figures based on ethnic similarities and that often happened in the previous elections for the Mayor of Medan.

This is as stated by Heriansyah (2020) that the process of recruiting leaders in the regions tends to be based on the parameters of primordialism, which facilitates the spirit of regionalism and ethnicity. Theoretically, the primordial approach suggests that the individual interests of religious members are made to support the interests of the group and leadership to strengthen the religious base as a source of social power. Political socialization of the candidate pair Bobby-Aulia in the form of religious and ethnic approaches when conducting a political safari around the city of Medan, sometimes using the attributes or idioms of the local culture visited.

According to the researcher, political socialization activities that are wrapped in the politicization of identity are a natural thing, happening anywhere because of respect for local culture. The most important thing is not to harm society in general by violating cultural norms or conducting black campaigns against other candidates (Negong, 2017). The use of cultural and religious idioms that the Bobby-Aulia candidate pair accidentally uses has a positive nuance for the common interest between the community and the Bobby-Aulia candidate pair to erode the issue of national sentiment that gives a message of unity in diversity. In the process of selecting regional heads, the politicization of identity cannot be avoided. The most important thing is to be aware that there is a platform that Pancasila and the democratic system are final, compatible with the Indonesian nation, which consists of various ethnicities.

If you violate the law, you are against the state. When a candidate pair accidentally uses symbols of local religion and culture, then the community feels that their values, norms, and cultural symbols are respected and feel proud because the candidate pair who conducts the campaign and socialization is a representation of them (Negong, 2017). Every area in Medan City has a variety of unique dances that are usually used as a pick-up ritual or a symbol of receiving guests. This dance is usually played by several male and female dancers with very typical

Deli Malay movements. This dance is often performed at various events such as welcoming important guests, cultural festivals and performing arts. Likewise, ikat weaving is a cultural artifact that binds people in a strong inner bond of brotherhood. Weaving is not just an inanimate object that doesn't communicate anything.

However, ikat weaving has become a medium of communication for humanity, which is so often involved in intertwining the kinship of the community in general in the city of Medan. Ikat cloth also has an extraordinary dimension of respect for others who usually welcome guests, especially regional or central officials. The use of traditional and cultural idioms that occurred in addition to that, the 2020 Medan Mayor candidate Bobby-Aulia was welcomed by the Deli Malay traditional dance by the community in the form of regional language narratives by representatives of traditional leaders. For example, the Malay King wore oversized clothes to Bobby-Aulia, who had just been named a young Medan Malay figure. Bobby-Aulia was also given a souvenir in the form of a sandalwood statue which is the result of the natural wealth of the area as a symbol of the bond that remains strong and strong as a leader who prioritizes the needs of the community.

In relation to the instrumentalism approach, in the 2020 Medan Mayor election. Actually, the politicization of religion-based identity in Medan City is difficult to detect in large-scale political activities. Generally, the exploitation of religion-based identity politics occurs on a small scale and escapes media coverage. Based on the results of interviews with all the winning teams, especially in the 2020 Medan Mayor election, the winning team acknowledged that the politicization of identity occurs anywhere, intentionally or unintentionally, even though it only uses religious and ethnic attributes or symbols, theoretically politics can also be said to be politicized. identity. This religion-based identity politics in Medan City is used by several parties, especially politicians, to reap their economics and political interests. As stated by Brown (1989) that ethnicity is a form of association used by individuals in pursuing their interests related to economic and political gain.

The phenomenon of the use of identity politics in the form of identity issues based on religion, clan and ethnicity used during the 2020 Medan Mayoral election is a link in the movement carried out in Jakarta in 2016, known as the "212 Movement". The 212 movement was also encouraged by one of the Islamic Defenders Front Organizations (FPI) and they are affiliated with Anis-Sandi. The aim of the 212

Movement is to demand the non-active Governor of DKI Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), to honorably resign from his position as Governor of DKI Jakarta in 2017 (Tolo, 2019). The Ahok effect and the 212 Movement had a significant influence on the electability of the candidate pairs Bobby-Aulia and Akhyar-Salman in Medan City. The Akhyar-Salman campaign was greatly assisted by the strength of the issue of the DKI effect, especially when Akhyar-Salman presented Ustadz Abdul Somad.

In the 2020 Medan Mayor election, religion-based identity politicization is difficult to detect in large-scale political activities. Generally, the exploitation of religion-based identity politics is prominent but occurs on a small scale. The prominent religious factor is not at the domestic/local level in Medan City, but the prominent religious factor is more universal at the national level, namely, overall it alludes to the Muslims of the '212 Movement, the Jakarta Charter, and the Establishment of a Khilafah State'. Based on the results of interviews with all the winning teams, especially in the 2020 Medan City Mayor election, the winning team acknowledged that the politicization of identity occurs anywhere, intentionally or unintentionally, even though it only uses religious and ethnic attributes or symbols, theoretically it can also be said as identity politicization (Tolo, 2019).

5 CONCLUSIONS

Through the perspective of the instrumentalism approach, the Bobby-Aulia winning team saw a good opportunity to increase Bobby-Aulia's electability. Utilization of the management of religious identity issues was involved as a political strategy of victory manipulated by the winning team because of national problems such as the Ahok case (Ahok effect) and the '212 Movement' which had the potential to create national disintegration. This is very influential because the people of Medan City, who are predominantly Muslim and the candidates who are presented at the Medan City election are assumed to be very close to blasphemers and parties supporting religious blasphemers. The politics of religious and ethnic identity in the 2020 Medan Mayor election is not prominent at the domestic/local level in Medan City but is more prominent at the national/universal level. The politicization of religion-based identity and ethnicity at the local identity level did not have a major effect on increasing Akhyar-Salman's electability, only when the combination of candidate pairs recruited based on religious identity according

to the representation of the majority of the people of Medan City, although in the end it was won by the Bobby-Aulia pair.

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