

The Vortex of Identity Politics in Medan City

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to determine the Interethnic Relations and Political Power; Ethnic Identity, Political Culture and Actor Battles; and Relationships of Political Party Actors in the 2020 Medan City Election. Identity politics in the Direct Regional Head Election in Medan. A qualitative approach is used to describe and analyze the issue of identity politics in Medan City based on the issue of nationalism and religious issues. Castells' identity politics theory, as well as the Almond and verbal political culture theory, to be the basis for analyzing the data obtained in the field regarding identity politics, the role of actors / structures and their relationship to the political culture process in the 2020 Pilkada of Medan City. The results of field research found that identity politics provides a large space for the arousal of the actors to strengthen and raise the position of elites and local rulers in Medan City. The role of actors and structures is a challenge for political parties in the regions. The politics of ethnic identity that has developed in Medan City which is based on the spirit of ethnic pragmatism actually encourages ethnicity to become a soft political force with the birth of a harmonious political culture for the creation of a good democratic climate in Medan City.

Keywords:

identity politics; Medan city; regional election

I. Introduction

Democracy in Indonesia itself basically continues to be dynamic with the issue of diversity which often triggers disharmony between groups. Differences based on diversity in Indonesia have recorded history as a major factor in the emergence of conflicts, such as conflicts between religions, between ethnicities, between tribes, etc.

After the New Order, the study of identity politics in Indonesia received special attention. At this time, the nuances of the study of identity politics in Indonesia were more related to issues of ethnicity, religion, ideology and local interests which were generally represented by elites with their respective articulations.

The revival of identity politics in Indonesia, of course, was not solely based on changes in national politics which were initially centralized under the control of the New Order regime and encouraged the birth of regional autonomy and the development of identity politics throughout Indonesia. Sri Astuti Buchari described autonomy and democracy as central issues which colors the world of Indonesian politics. The echoes of change inherent in regional autonomy politics have penetrated various parts of the country, including the province of North Sumatra.

Jeffery Week is about belonging about equality with a number of people and what sets one apart from another. Jeffery Week's opinion emphasizes the importance of identity for each individual or for a group or community (Widayanti, 2009).

Spreading identity politics or biopolitics in Foucault's view is the result of the collapse of the "scientifically planned society" which is a movement with the implementation of objective demographic control. The great potential possessed by the strength of ethnicity at the local level is of course influenced by the national political leadership, so that in order to pass its interests, the issue of ethnicity is seen as having more opportunities. For this reason, the process of cultivating mass support is the main target of elite propaganda, so that the issue of ethnicity is reproduced and played out massively (Suharyanto, A., 2014; Maruapey et.al., 2018; Lubis et.al., 2019)

One of the problems that arise as an implication of the strengthening of the issue of ethnicity is the feeling of certain ethnic sentiments over the power of other ethnicities in a region. As a result, people feel marginalized in the economic or political area - this limited access encourages people to make efforts to consolidate their identity by choosing ethnicity as a vehicle to maintain their existence, this is what happened in Medan City.

In essence, the ethnic political factor coupled with medicine and power sharing is the biggest factor in the widespread issue of the politicization of ethnic identity at any political momentum, especially during the Regional Head Election 2016; Sahputra, 2016; Sahputra, 2018). The struggle for ethnic identity in political momentum always rests on the ethnic or regional background. As is known, the ethnic groups that are said to be dominant in the fight are in the Social Association Organization, namely the Minang Community Consultative Body (BM3), the Piaman Regional Family Association (PKDP), the Saiyo Minang Family Association (IKMS), Aceh Sepakat, Pasundan, the Chinese and Malay Association of Marga Marga Rancak, Horas Bangso Batak, Pujakusuma, etc. They have sufficient human resource readiness and always appear in political contestations in Medan City.

Since the end of the 2019 General Election yesterday, the community feels divided. In fact, the atmosphere that was felt at the time of the 2019 General Election is still present today. So that the political battle in the 2020 Pilkada in Medan City feels hot plus the presence of social associations.

The issue of identity politics surfaced in the 2020 Medan City Elections. It is suspected that the presence of national elites in Medan, namely Ustad Abdul Somad (UAS), Fahri Hamzah, Rocky Gerung, Sandiaga Uno, Ganja Pranowo, Adian Napitupulu and many others.

Therefore, it is interesting to study politically, the ethnic issue occurs in a massive rhythm of celebration that has political nuances. The process of identity politics in the Medan City Pilkada becomes a concrete illustration of the dynamics of ethnicity politics that are continuously being constructed to achieve the political power desired by political actors in every political momentum in Medan City.

In the election procession for the Mayor of Medan, the spirit of identity in the form of ethnicity and religion was strengthened to the surface with the widespread issue of the politicization of ethnic religions. Ethnic and religious issues continue to develop and warm in society. This is proven by the election of Boby Nasution and Aulia Rachman who are considered representatives of the Batak and Minang ethnic groups.

II. Research Methods

For this use a qualitative approach (Moleong, 2017), namely this research does not use calculations but emphasizes the natural character of the data source. This research will be presented in the form of a description by analyzing the issue of identity politics in Medan City based on the issue of nationalism and religious issues.

To study the dynamics of the political identity politics of the struggle for power, the author uses the foundation of the Castells identity politics theory, as well as the Almond and Verba political culture theory, to be the basis for analyzing the data obtained in the field about identity politics, the role of actors / structures and their relationship to political culture processes in the field. Regional elections for Medan City in 2020.

According to Castells (in Buchari, 2014). identity politics is individual participation in social life which is more determined by a person's culture and psychology. Identity is a basic cultural and psychocultural construction process of an individual that provides meaning and purpose in life for that individual, because the formation of identity is a process of internal dialogue and social interaction.

Furthermore, according to Castells (in Munandar, 2013), identity construction uses material structures from history, geography, biology, production and reproduction of institutions, collective memory and personal fantasy, power apparatus, and religious teachings.

III. Discussion

3.1. Interethnic Relations and the Power of Ethnic Identity Politics

Identity politics is an ideology that exists in every ethnicity, its existence is latent and potential and at any time can come to the surface as a dominant political force. Empirically, identity politics is an actualization of political participation that is constructed from the cultural roots of the local community, and undergoes a continuous internalization process in the culture of the community in a fabric of social interaction (Buchari, 2014).

Identity politics is generally focused on the process of finding differences based on certain symbols such as physical conditions, race, gender and so on. However, in practice, identity politics and identity politics are related to one another. Identity politics bases itself on a political identity that is owned, whether in the form of hereditary / ethnicity or from a deliberately shaped background such as educational, economic and cultural backgrounds (Faraidiany et al., 2019; Amin & Sembiring, 2018; Dauly et.al., 2019; Syofian et.al., 2020).

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In line with the aforementioned, Castells (in Munandar, 2013) adds that in a world with a global swirl of wealth, power and imagination, the search for identity, like collective or individual, is the most basic source of the meaning of the Fundamental source of meaning. The search for identity and meaning is not something entirely new, because identity, especially based on religion and ethnicity, has been the root meaning of human life since civilization existed on earth. Today,

however, in a historical period marked by the destructiveness of organizations and the delegitimization of institutions, social movements with great impact and temporary cultural expression have eliminated. In other words, although not the only one, identity is the main source of meaning people are increasingly managing. (Sembiring et.al., 2017).

3.2. Political Culture and Actor Battles

Culture itself is defined as all things related to the human mind or mind, so that it can refer to the mindset of behavior and the physical work of a group of humans. According to Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, the word culture comes from the Latin word Culture (the verb colo, colore) and means to maintain or work on, manage. Over the centuries, in various languages, the original meaning can still be traced. The use of the word culture now shows people's lives in various incarnations (Alisjahbana, 1986).

The development of culture in society is certainly an important study for social and political scientists. In connection with this cultural development, Almond and Verba (1984) argue that although the movement towards technology and organizational rationality has emerged with uniformity throughout the world. However, the problem about the cultural substance of the developing world is its politics. However, the directions for political change are still quite vague. One aspect of the new and visible world political culture is that it will become a political culture in participation. Therefore, if there is a revolution that hits the world, then it can be called a participatory explosion.

According to Almond and Verba (1984), understanding political culture must be more than a concept, especially because it allows to take advantage of conceptual frameworks and approaches to anthropology, sociology and psychology. In other words, thoughts will be enriched by using various anthropological and psychological categories such as socialization, conflict, culture and acculturation. In addition, the ability to understand the birth and transformation of the developing political system is required, when making use of theories and speculations relating to the general phenomena of social structures and processes.

In addition, Almond and Verba (1984) said; the political culture of a nation is the distribution of patterns of specific orientations towards political goals among the peoples of that nation. In connection with what Almond and Verba explained, it can be understood that the occurrence of ethnic identity politics in practice in Medan City shows that the struggle between political actors and elites in the structure to legitimize ethnic issues by encouraging specific orientation patterns to achieve political goals. As a result, contact between ethnic groups in political battles when the PILKADA process immediately started, suddenly surfaced openly. The construction of the spirit of ethnicity in politics in Medan City reached its climax when the regional election immediately became an open battle of interests for actors or people competing in the political arena democratically. This situation opens up space for conflict that is difficult to avoid, and occurs continuously in every political momentum.

Furthermore, Almon and Verba, dividing political culture into three types; namely parochial political culture, subject political culture and participation political culture. Referring to the three political cultures described by Almond and Verba, when it is related to the development of political culture that occurred in Medan City from the 2005 Pilkada to the 2010 Pilkada and until 2020, there has actually been significant friction in the map of politics and governance in Medan City. Initially, the role of the Malay community was so dominant in the political and government structures in Medan City. However, in this era the role of the Mandailing community has a large portion. a shift in the configuration of the local elite has

created a new elite in Medan City and is divided into two major groups, namely the political elite and the bureaucratic elite.

The role of ethnicity is the basis of cultural and political strength in Medan City. It is a necessity that there will be an imbalance in the political culture of ethnic participants, which is a form of culture which encourages cultural cultural dynamics without interference from other parties and in the context of direct regional elections, ethnic-based political processes are more dominant in Medan City.

3.3. Relationships of Political Party Actors in the 2020 Medan City Election

The relationship of political party actors in the 2020 Medan City Election is a natural thing, because the *Pemilukada* is a celebration of political parties in carrying candidates or candidates for public officials in the regional government. As understood, public officials who are promoted are an extension of the hands of the political community, be it a political party, DPRD or national interest groups. Therefore, strengthening the party arena is also very urgent. Stigmatization of political parties as actors who only seize, divide and maintain power.

Depiction of the political reality in Medan City with the behavior of party actors and candidates who were brought up to appear in the Medan City Election Contest. Of course, it describes the condition of a democratic region which is marked by the existence and functioning of political participation in the area. Moreover, a political party is an institution which is a gathering place for people with aspirations, of the same ideology who work, to interact to achieve certain goals. In other words, a political party is an institution that has the function of filtering opinions, unanimity, through a discussion to be able to win regional head elections.

Another assumption is that democracy cannot grow without political parties. However, we also have to admit how imperfect democracy is without political parties. The tight relationship between political parties and democracy lies in the nature and background of the founding of political parties which grow and develop in line with the spirit of freedom and partisanship of popular instincts. So it can be said, political parties are organizations that have continuous activities. This means that his life does not depend on the tenure or life span of the leader. This kind of condition, in contrast to the political reality of Medan City, in general the public thinks that everything that is done certainly has an ethnic tendency and is immediately responded to by various political assumptions.

Theoretically, it can be understood that a political party is a group of people who seek to pursue a position in the government which is jointly linked by their identity or label. Political parties are a place to fight for the aspirations of the people and enforce their mandate and are carried out through a political process, namely the Regional Head Election.

The role of political actors in the Medan City Election is in the arena of political parties. However, political parties do not fight independently. But through a coalition mechanism. Thus the party competition that is taking place is a reflection of the existence of party role competition that characterizes the 2020 Regional Election in Medan City. In line with this, party actors participating in the 2020 Regional Election include the Golongan Karya Party (Golkar), the United Development Party (PPP), Hanura Party, PDIP, Gerindra Party, PAN, PPP, PKB, NASDEM, and PSI which supported the pair Bobby Nasution and Aulia Rachman. Meanwhile, the opponents were Akhyar Nasution and Salman Alfarizi who were promoted by the Democrat Party and PKS.

In the context of the roles of parties and candidates carried out through coalitions, it turns out that party elites still use the power of ethnic actors in producing the idea of ethnicity as a politics characterized by democracy. The main problem is when the strengthening of ethnic politics that is modified by political actors then becomes an issue in the Regional Head Election.

The dynamics of political culture in Medan City since the implementation of the General Election has left a bleak record of democracy. The democratic process, which should have run smoothly, suddenly faded because it was not properly prepared. Thus, the community is always trapped in socio-political conflicts.

In this case, Almond and Verba (1990) emphasize the problem of a country's political culture rather than national character or personality modalities in political socialization. Not developing a person in a general sense. In fact, understanding what Almond and Verba described in the practice of political culture that developed in the city of Medan is a depiction of the bad practice of democracy and political socialization carried out by political actors. Especially those who come from political parties and the bureaucracy in Medan City. This was reflected when the PILKADA process took place, what stood out was the spirit of ethnic groups and party groups without heeding general regionalism. Naturally, it can be said that what is the spirit of the PILKADA in Medan is the spirit of individuals and ethnic groups. Therefore, it feels normal for the journey of democracy in Medan to be stagnant and full of conflicts between political actors.

IV. Conclusion

The politics of ethnic identity in the 2020 Medan Mayor Election is a political reality that is consciously constructed by informal actors and political party structures, as well as government bureaucratic structures to excite ethnic fervor in gaining political support from the community or ethnic groups. The reproduction process of ethnic identity politics that prevailed in the regional elections for Medan City also emerged as a dominant political force. In line with that, the role of informal actors outside the political party structure and bureaucratic structure also moves as if they are an alternative political machine in supporting their existence and the courage to appear as supporters of candidates who are fighting in direct regional elections.

Therefore, the construction of ethnic identity politics which is built by presenting ethnicity as the main political capital in the Medan City Regional Election in essence allows actors to construct ethnicity as an effort to shift the elite power whose political role has been calculated in the Medan City Regional Election. In other words, the presence of ethnic power as a political force slowly displaces the dominant bureaucrats. Therefore, it can be said that ethnic political power is a soft political force because each ethnic group in Medan City has roles and being directly involved in contestation as well as providing democratic dynamics that are open to society.

In addition, the appearance of social associations and community groups in the Medan City Regional Election is a concrete illustration of the weakness of political parties in carrying out their functions as political institutions that are obliged to provide political education to the community.

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