



The Strategy of Political Parties in Wining Legislative Elections in Indonesia: Studies in Dharmasraya District

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Abstract

Political parties are political participation in constitutional democratic in an effort to realize the national ideals of Indonesian people. In a democratic party, electoral activities are an arena to express people's freedom in choosing and selecting their leaders. Therefore political parties as political machinery must have the best strategy in order to understand people's tastes to achieve party victory through legislative elections. This study aims to find out how the strategy of political parties in winning elections for legislative members in Dharmasraya Regency, West Sumatra Province. The study used a qualitative method with a case study approach (case research design study). All data taken through in-depth interviews to 10 informants consisting of administrators of political parties, legislative members, political observers, and the public. The data obtained then analyzed thematically by means of being collected, reduced, presented and closed with conclusions. The results of the study found that there are four strategies carried out by political parties in winning legislative members at the time of the election, namely; first, utilizing the influence of party leaders, secondly, disseminating legislative candidates through print and electronic media, thirdly, procuring self-sufficiency by legislative candidates and fourth, direct socialization of legislative candidates to the public.

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INTRODUCTION

In developing countries such as America and many countries in Europe, competition for votes in elections is considered a good alternative to determine the figure of a political leader who has responsibility for his voters. The figure selection in question includes the legislative candidates that have been determined by political parties in the battle to win the votes (Adams & Merrill, 2008; Buttice & Stone, 2012). However, the conditions and reality of elections in developed countries are slightly different from the election situation in Indonesia (Hyde, 2010). In several election periods in Indonesia the situation was different, where people were apathetic towards the party and its legislative candidates (Fukuoka & Thalang, 2014). The emergence of the community's apathy was caused because in general the party and legislative candidates did not really work for the good and welfare of their people (Cammaerts et al., 2014).

The community's apathy is very unfortunate, because it will result in a decrease in the level of public confidence in the existing political conditions, resulting in a crisis of high confidence by the community which results in ignorance and does not even participate in the election (Cammaerts et al., 2014). According to the authors, the increasing percentage of people who prefer abstentions is very unfavorable for the future journey of Indonesian democracy. According to the author, the current crisis of public trust in leaders is also strongly influenced by the lack of character as a statesman by the country's politicians (Awofeso & Odeyemi, 2014; Whiteley et al., 2016). The low character of the politicians is evidenced by many members of political parties involved in various corruption cases. Because fragile characters easily plunge someone into actions that harm people around them, today's character education is very crucial to be able to educate a whole and complete Indonesian society (Murniyetti et al., 2016). There are even some groups of people who generalize all politicians' behavior and distrust of the party, so that politicians and are responsible for their constituents will be victims of these assumptions (Offe, 2008; Radnitz & Underwood, 2017).

Referring to the theory and study of sociopolitical science, basically political parties have several main functions including as a means of political communication, socialization, recruitment of members and the arrangement of strategies for winning parties in various political events (D'Angelo, 2012; Mudge & Chen, 2014). The concept of political socialization itself contains two important things, namely, matters relating to the process of transmitting values, knowledge, beliefs, political attitudes and political expectations (Jennings et al., 2009; Weaver & Lerman, 2010). Furthermore, it relates to the purpose of pointing to something that is needed in order to be able to participate effectively in the political aspects of the life of the society itself (Djuyandi & Putra, 2015; Jenkins, 2009).

The role of political socialization in a question that can be said as a socialization process of a party to obtain attitudes and orientations towards political phenomena which generally developing in society, or in other words political socialization as an intermediary tool to shape the attitude and political orientation of the community regarding a moderate political phenomenon experienced by a country (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2009; Pop-Eleches & Tucker, 2014; Neundorf et al., 2016). In the process of political socialization, party administrators will convey various party programs through political education by introducing vision and

mission, or at the same time introducing existing figures in the party of the public (Finkel & Smith, 2011; Habashi & Worley, 2009; Kakepaki et al., 2018). Indeed, the existence of this socialization process is expected by the community to get to know the party well and the legislative candidates who will be elected during the general election period (Narendra, 2011; Fuad, 2014).

Based on a number of theories and opinions above, according to the author, it is necessary to conduct a study related to the strategy of a political party to win the hearts of its voters as well as to win its legislative members in a general election (Bawn et al., 2012; Ahmed et al., 2016). In this context of limited time and costs the author only focuses on researching for one electoral district, namely the Regency of Dharmasraya, West Sumatra Province. Reacting to the democratic party of the general election that held on April 9, 2014. Based on data released by the General Election Commission (KPU) of the Republic of Indonesia, at least 15 political parties participating in the election consisting of 12 national parties and 3 local parties (Aceh) participated in the fight for legislative seats at the district or city, provincial and central (national) levels (Ahmed et al., 2016; Supandi, 2018). In detail the 12 national political parties referred to are, the National Democratic Party (NasDem), the National Awakening Party (PKB), the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDP-I), the Golkar Party, the Gerindra Party, the Democratic Party, the Party National Mandate (PAN), United Development Party (PPP), Hanura Party, Crescent Star Party (PBB) and Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (PKPI) (Hariyanti et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, there are three local Aceh parties which also compete, namely the Aceh Peace Party (PDA), the Aceh National Party (PNA) and the Aceh Party (PA). The democratic party fight involved nearly 6,576 legislative candidates of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR-RI), thousands of legislative candidates for the Regional Representative Council of the Republic of Indonesia (DPD-RI), tens of thousands of legislative candidates for the Provincial People's Representatives Council (DPRD) and the House of Representatives District / City Region (DPRD).

In constituent elections in Indonesia, political marketing activities cannot only be seen during the campaign period. Political parties must continuously pay attention to, accommodate and channel the aspirations of the people, where a party and its legislative candidates continue to carry out political campaigns that are long-term in nature and carried out continuously (Esser, 2013). The purpose of political marketing in general is to make voters the subject and not as a political object, making the problems faced by voters the first step in developing work programs offered within the framework of each party's ideology (Bode & Dalrymple, 2016). Political marketing does not guarantee a victory, but provides a tool for how to maintain relations with voters to build trust and subsequently gain voice support (Koc-Michalska et al., 2014).

According to the author because of the importance of the role of administrators and party members in conducting party socialization, party awareness is needed in building collective political awareness in the community (Wang, 2008). In the midst of people's apathy towards the party, parties and political actors do need to work harder than before. Especially in providing understanding to the community that politics is

used to provide good for the community (Walker et al., 2010; Young, 2013). In the implementation of elections, there are several things that must be realized by each party and its legislative candidates. Candidates for the legislature need to understand, master and animate the political platform that their parties are fighting for well, making party figures the political face for each of the socialization of their victory (Rahat, 2009; Pierson, 2017).

Especially for the legislature, it is necessary to seriously form a network in the electoral area. Candidates for the legislature must also make visits and face-to-face meetings with the people in their constituencies, in accordance with the plans arranged based on the map of the situation and conditions that are known and recognized by the legislative candidates. A map of the situation and condition of the electoral district that must be understood by a legislative candidate is not only about the territorial area but also the situation, social, political, cultural and economic conditions of the population in the environment.

Referring to the conduct of general elections in 2014 in the Dharmasraya district of West Sumatra Province. It turned out that the level of voters who gave their voting rights to the general election could be categorized as very high. Based on data released by the 2014 Dharmasraya Regency General Election Commission (KPU), it was explained that in general the percentage of community voting rights in the legislative, presidential and vice presidential elections reached 73.47%. The high percentage indicates that enthusiasm for choosing the community is quite high in Dharmasraya Regency.

Especially in the selection of legislative candidates even the level of community attendance reached 80.95%. For example, for the electoral district I, which includes four sub-districts, namely Pulau Punjung, Sitiung, Timpeh and Sembilan Koto. Of the total number of permanent voters list 57,174, the level of public attendance reached 49,470. Then the second electoral district which covers four sub-districts, namely Koto Baru, Tiumang, Padang Laweh, and Koto Salak Subdistricts, out of the total number of permanent voters list 43,620 voters, 38,552 people attendance rate. Next is Election III which covers three Sub- districts, namely Sungai Rumbai, Koto Besar and Asam Jujuhan Subdistricts, of the total number of permanent voter lists of 36,188, the attendance rate of 29,899 voters.

The high level of community participation in the election of legislative members in Dharmasraya Regency as well as the data the author explained above, is certainly inseparable from the role of the organization within the political party itself. In other words, it can be assumed that all political parties show good performance in socializing, so that they get sympathy and welcome from the community. Even though in its implementation in the midst of the community, the strategies that have been designed by political parties to socialize the party program and the legislative candidates that are promoted still have challenges and obstacles that are not easy.

According to the analysis of the author, basically the ideology of the party can be an attraction for the public in voting in general elections if the ideology of the party is successfully assessed as a means to accommodate the interests of the community itself. Albertazzi et al., (2018); Cinar & Arikani, (2013) Because the ideology of the party that can make the party become strong and will be able to answer the challenges

of an ever changing era. Through elections, political parties should indeed be able to offer alternative policies and the right candidates to manage potential conflicts, and to keep the communication channel open so that the community can always be connected to the political process in a healthy manner. In this case the party as part of the movement of democracy must be able to contribute greatly to the progress of the nation and the interests of the people.

According to [Vergeer et al., \(2013\)](#) in political marketing, there are three political campaign strategies, namely: marketing political products directly to prospective voters (push political marketing), marketing political products through mass media (pull political marketing), and through groups, figures or organizations that influential (political marketing pass). First: political push: this strategy focuses more on issues that are important to electorates and not just selling candidates or parties as commodities. Communication messages from this strategy can be delivered directly by candidates or parties but also through volunteers who come to distribute flyers, flyers, stickers, etc. This volunteer is also in charge of collecting data in the form of electorate perceptions, measuring the influence of the message and recording changes in the attitudes and behavior of the electorate.

This strategy is quite easy to do for local elections. Second: Pull political: most are carried out by parties or candidates. This strategy conveys messages through mass media both electronic, print, outdoor, mobile, and internet. This strategy can convey a message to many audiences but its effectiveness is not measurable. In addition, this strategy requires a lot of costs so that it is only possible to do so by parties and candidates who have a lot of funds. Third: Pass political: in this strategy the message is conveyed through individuals, groups and organizations that have influence. The ways of approaching and lobbying for this strategy need to be adjusted to the types of individuals, groups and organizations. In other words, if these strategies are carried out by political parties in disseminating party programs, they will certainly be able to get sympathy from the prospective voters. Regarding the purpose of the research and conversation in this article, actually it was written also wanted to see and analyze the extent to which a political party carried out political marketing as discussed in the literature review section of this article ([Bonoli, 2010](#); [Sheng et al., 2011](#)).

METHODS

This research was conducted in the District of Dharmasraya, West Sumatra Province. The study used a qualitative method with a case study approach (case research design study). According to [Perveen, \(2016\)](#); [Rahman et al., \(2018\)](#); [Zhang et al., \(2018\)](#) the use of research with a case study approach will be able to help a researcher understand the problems studied in more detail and complex. All data was taken through in-depth interviews (in-depth interviews) to 10 informants consisting of administrators of political parties, legislative members, political observers, and the public. The selection of ten informants was determined using a purposive sampling technique. All interview data are then thematically analyzed by means of being collected, reduced, presented and closed with conclusions ([Rishan et al., 2018](#); [Syafri & Yaumas, 2017](#); [Zulmuqim, 2017](#)).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews with all informants, the overall results of the study found four important themes. The four important themes are related to the strategies carried out by political parties in winning legislative elections. The four themes are first, utilizing the influence of party leaders, second, socialization of legislative candidates through print and electronic media, third, procuring self-sufficiency by legislative candidates and fourth, direct socialization of candidates for the legislature to the public. In order to be seen clearly can be seen in the following figure 1:

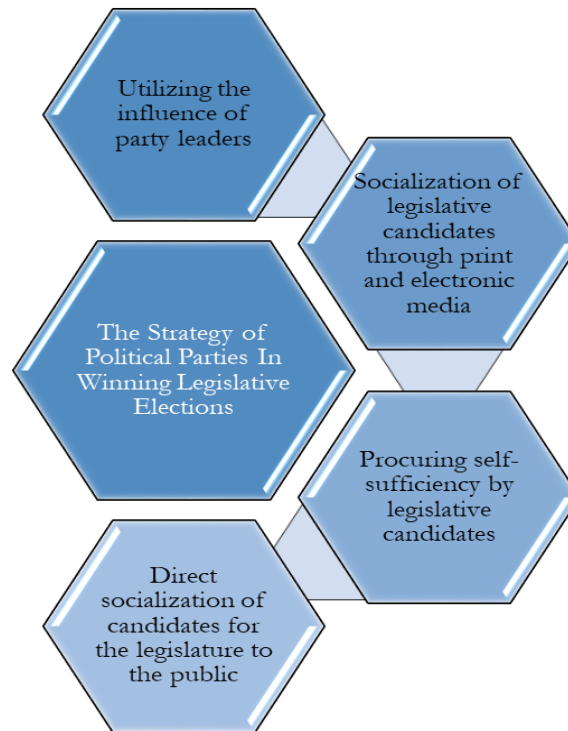


Fig. 1 Strategy of political parties in legislative elections

The first theme is to utilize the influence of party leaders, if referring to democratic party events in various parts of developed countries, it is clear that the influence of political figures or figures within the party will play a major role in achieving the electoral victory that followed (O'Brien, 2015; Somer-Topcu, 2009). Regarding the influence of figures or figures in the victory of general elections in Indonesia, it is in fact indisputable that the presence of a figure or figure sold in the party is one of the attractions for the community in making a good choice to elect candidates for president and vice-presidential candidates (Aji & Dartanto, 2018).

According to Hicks, (2014) it cannot be denied that the influence of figures or figures in a political party is very important in gaining popular votes, this fact is increasingly apparent in every general election in Indonesia after the post-New Order (ORBA). For example, the people voted to support the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) because there was a figure of Megawati Soekarnoputri as the party's Chairperson. The same goes for the National Mandate Party (PAN) with the presence of the professionally known figure of Amien Rais as well as the General Chair of Muhammadiyah as the second largest organization in Indonesia. It is also wrong with the National Awakening Party (PKB), the figure of Gus Dur, known as the kiyai and General Chair of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as the largest Islamic

organization in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the emergence of the Democratic Party with the figure of Susilo Bambang Yudoyono and the Gerindra Party with Prabowo Subianto (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014). In general, people actually see who is behind the party, not just choosing their party. Related to the results of this study, the influence of party figures and figures has indeed been well utilized by the management of political parties in the election of party votes in the election of legislators in Dharmasraya Regency.

The second theme is the dissemination of legislative candidates through print and electronic media. Indeed, if talking about the relationship between the media and the political realm is a dilemma relation (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Parent et al., 2011). This is because the attitude of media coverage is not entirely neutral from political intervention and capital patronage (Kenny & Kenny, 2015). Of course this is something paradoxical since the media is the fourth pillar in democracy after the triaspolitika institution. The media should act as watchdogs in power so that checks and balances are created in the state and society (Al-Faizin et al., 2017; Bereczkei et al., 2010; Makridakis, 2017). Media supervision¹ related to its central function as social correlations guides the public in translating various realities of the hustle and bustle of the life of the nation and state into the consumption of both print and electronic information (Ibelema, 2012; Pradhan, 2010).

So it is not surprising that at present the media is very powerful over public knowledge through framing text and images so that it becomes the main public reference in shaping their opinions on the course of government. Information is the key word that links media relations with politics through the formation of public opinion on the news (Kendall et al., 2021). The preference of voters in elections is not determined by how much the campaign is carried out by the party or the candidacy in question, but how much information they get (Nadeau et al., 2008; Tomz, & Van Houweling, 2009). In this case, the media conducts persuasive politics towards voters through the daily politics approach which is to inform political news as part of people's daily lives effectively and efficiently.

The community basically does not like long reporting, but it is enough to receive instant information that the public gets so that it becomes a value in a shared mindset (Effing et al., 2011; Schoen et al., 2013). So through socialization carried out continuously by the media will shape the values of the affinity and affinity of voters towards candidates and parties in election events. The values received by voters from the media are a form of by product and by design constructed by the media. This means that there is a process of transferring value from the media to voters through the socialization (Lebo et al., 2007).

In relation to the role of the media in winning political parties in Indonesia, according to (Tanuwidjaja, 2010) in general it can be described in four ways, namely first, what is conveyed by the mass media is only preaching what's happening in society, there is no hidden agenda. second, the media cannot determine what is thought but can influence what is thought. third, mass media influences the mind by determining the focus on an event that influences the interpretation of society, fourth, the media has a direct influence on one's attitudes and behavior including political behavior (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008). In other words

the role of the media is not only to reflect reality but to have an influence on reality that includes giving meaning to reality (Agusti et al., 2018).

At present the role of print and electronic media as a media for promoting a product is a necessity. In the field of politics the role of media is one means of political communication in various campaign activities carried out by parties (Enli & Skogerbø, 2020). Various ways and strategies are carried out by political parties through the media to sell profiles of legislative candidates and various programs, even to being able to form a person's political image in the midst of society. Because, print and electronic media are considered effective to boost the popularity, acceptability, and electability of a candidate, while increasing vote acquisition in every legislative election as well as a regional head (Albinsson & Yasanthi Perera, 2012; Robinson & Deshano, 2011; Yasmin et al., 2015). The use of print and electronic media as a means of winning the party in an election competition has been proven to be able to influence the community (Dimitrova et al., 2014).

The third theme is the procurement of self-sufficiency by legislative candidates, procurement of party attributes, politics is an organized effort to influence the decision-making process of potential voters, which is carried out as a means of political education for the community with the aim of educating voters to have awareness in determining political leaders which refers to rational behavior rather than emotional (Asemah et al., 2014; Solis, 2010). In the process of influencing voter behavior, sometimes campaign strategies are carried out through mass gathering or by directly approaching voters (Hughes, 2011). The campaign can also be carried out through intermediary media such as billboards, posters, flags and pamphlets or by using mass media both in print, such as newspapers, magazines, and electronic media such as radio, television and internet media (Strömbäck & van Aelst, 2013).

According to Van Deth et al., (2011) political parties have a function as a means of political socialization which is a process where a person gains views, and values from society. Through this process it is hoped that political parties can help improve national identity and national integration (Jerit, 2013; Karimi & Walter, 2015; Mansbridge, 2009). Various efforts made by political parties began to give a positive image with the social movements of the community, publicizing the fame of the leaders or leaders, even lately the rise of political parties recruiting popular celebrity cadres, making advertisements, songs, banners, also using attributes-other interesting political information attributes to get sympathy from the voters, of course, also sympathy from the beginning voters (Amenta et al., 2010).

The fourth theme is direct socialization of legislative candidates to the community (Greiner et al., 2011). This fourth strategy is the most classic way and is generally done by all legislative candidates who fight in the general election. Because in this way all legislative candidates can directly interact with prospective voters or the community closely (Effing et al., 2011; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Zhu & Chen, 2015). Basically according to the writer, in reaching the voice of the future legislative candidates and constituents, it is necessary to always be aware that the existence and performance of a legislative candidate is not only seasonal (Blackett et al., 2017; Samuels & Zucco, 2014). However, it must work in accordance with the promises that have been made when offering themselves as people's representatives (Putri et al., 2016).

Furthermore, for a long-term plan, if a legislative candidate has been elected as a representative of the people must be able to show performance and continue to strive to maintain and guard the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and realize a prosperous, just and prosperous society. There needs to be awareness of the legislative candidates that in political parties, each legislative candidate has the responsibility and obligation to proceed according to the party's strategic plans, programs and activities in order to achieve results in the form of sufficient votes to obtain parliamentary seats in the center or region.

CONCLUSION

The political marketing approach (political marketing) is a marketing method that is applied in political campaigns. This method has provided a tool (tool) to help communicators design effective campaign programs so as to get a significant vote in the election especially the winning votes for legislative candidates. Therefore, political marketing cannot be seen only during the campaign period. Political parties must continuously pay attention to, accommodate and channel the aspirations of the people, where parties and legislative candidates continue to carry out long-term and continuous political campaigns, because the aim of political marketing in general is to make voters the subject and not as political objects.

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