

Dynamics and Pragmatism in the Recruitment of Regional Head Candidates by the “Keadilan Sejahtera” Party (PKS) in the 2020 Pandeglang Regional Election

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Abstract: *This research seeks to reveal how the recruitment process for regional head candidates is carried out by the “Keadilan Sejahtera” Party (PKS). Especially with the emergence of the incumbent Irna Narulita. A political process that requires the value of pragmatism in nominating regional head candidates is indeed normal, What’s more interesting is that this only happens at the local level, namely in Pandeglang Regency, this research uses two theories as its analytical tools, namely the Political Party Recruitment Theory and the Local Bossism Theory. This research was guided by qualitative methods that were operated through an exploratory analysis approach where data was obtained from observations of related sources. The results of this research found that the recruitment of regional head candidates by PKS in the 2020 Pandeglang regional elections showed a biased recruitment process because they did not find candidates who were deemed worthy of being nominated.*

Keywords: *recruitment; candidates; Regional Head; PKS party,*

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Introduction

Political parties, as one of the pillars of democracy, should be able to produce the best candidates through their recruitment mechanisms so that there is healthy competition with many alternative candidates on offer. However, what happened in the Pandeglang Pilkada was that political parties seemed to group together to support one particular candidate. Even though parties should have clear ideological boundaries to then determine who they support and with whom they form a coalition (Anggraini, 2019).

The 2020 Pandeglang Regency Pilkada has appointed Irna Narulita and Tanto Warsono Arban as elected Regent and Deputy Regent, supported by at least 8 political parties, one of which is PKS. From the start, Irna Tanto was predicted to be the strongest candidate who would compete in the Pandeglang regional elections because many of the other candidates emerged from independent lines and from party lines and only received support from a few parties. This means that the attention of political parties has focused on the Irna Tanto pair. This phenomenon seems to explain that the existence of political parties in Pandeglang Regency has been co-opted by a handful of local elites, which has narrowed contestation and hijacked democracy (Mahadi, 2011).

The regional elections that were held in Pandeglang in 2020 indeed presented an old figure with political power who was considered the most dominant. Plus, the largest number of political parties are

supporting Irna this year, meaning that the political party's alignment with the incumbent is still quite high. At the beginning of 2020, several parties also began to show their support for Irna, such as PDIP, PAN, and PKS, which declared themselves to be supporting Irna in the 2020 regional elections. As reported by Editorial 24.com on 09/03/2020, three political parties, namely PDIP, PAN, and PKS, officially nominated Irna Nurulita as a candidate for Regent of Pandeglang 2020 (Redaksi24.com, 2020). Chairman of the Pandeglang DPD PKS, Tubagus Asep Rafiudin Arif, admitted that his party was supporting the pair Irna-Tanto, again based on the results of studies and surveys conducted by the PKS DPP. This coalition network then became unusual and became a unique phenomenon at the local level when PDIP and PKS, which had never been in a coalition at all, were now in the same carriage (Hertanto, 2013).

Initially, it was predicted that the coalition of parties supporting Irna and Tanto would face candidates from the independent and party lines, but in the end, the independent candidate withdrew because he did not receive enough support. So the Pandeglang Regional Election at that time was attended by two pairs of candidates. Quoted from (suarabanten.id/14/01/2020) So far, based on information from the Pandeglang KPU, there have been three prospective candidates for Regent and Deputy Regent of Pandeglang from the independent route who have asked to create a password and username to submit support data to the candidacy

information system (Silon) (Suarabanten.id, 2020). According to the Head of the Technical Division of KPU Organizers, Pandeglang Ahmadi, there are three pairs of candidates who have submitted data on prospective regent and deputy regent candidates. The three of them are Krisyanto-Hendra Pranova, Maman Faturhman-Bahrul Ulum, and Aap Aptadi-M Rosyid.

Meanwhile, from the Coalition party line, Irna will compete with PKB candidate Thoni Fathoni Mukson. As quoted from kabaranten.com/25/02/2020, he said that, as a PKB cadre, of course he would definitely advance in the Pandeglang regional elections in order to fight for the welfare and prosperity of the community. However, he will advance through the party boat (kabaranten.com, 2020). "I am positive about moving forward, and I hope we continue to be committed to Nasdem and PPP for the progress of Pandeglang," he said. In his statement to the media, he explained that he was certain that he would run in the upcoming regional elections in Pandeglang. Although Thoni's position as regent or deputy will be determined later in accordance with the results of the coalition party agreement, The parties that will form a coalition with PKB to support Thoni are Nasdem and the PPP. Discussions about the direction of the coalition were carried out in Mukercab, which was also attended by Nasdem and the PPP. In its nomination mission, the coalition will call itself the New Regent Coalition.

So researchers will focus on seeing how the recruitment process for regional head candidates by political parties in Pandeglang Regency is carried out by the

Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). The aspects that will be covered in this recruitment are political dynamics at the local level and party pragmatism, considering that in the political arena at the central level at that time, for example, it was almost impossible for PKS and PDIP to unite (Neni Nuraeni, 2019). But interestingly, the coalition between the two blossomed in the Pandeglang regional elections.

Objectively, researchers will dissect this case using a relevant theoretical approach. In this research, we will use political party recruitment theory to explain the recruitment dynamics that occur within PKS and local bias theory to explain how the informal power possessed by the Natakusumah breed is able to influence and soften the party's ideological line. These two theories are considered the most appropriate to use as analysis tools in this case.

In simple terms, according to Norris In (Ilham Anshari, 2019), there are four important things that can be used as a reference in organizing political parties and carrying out the recruitment process, namely:

1. Which candidates can be nominated (candidacy)?
2. Who selects (selectorates)?
3. Where are candidates selected?
4. How are candidates decided?

The concept developed by Norris includes several things that can also influence whether someone can become a political party cadre and take part in the election process, including the element of how high the level of character of someone who will become a political party cadre is.

hinder capitalism and are not a separate part of the state but are those who are facilitated by the state structure. In this concept of bossism, Sidel argues that those who are strong at the local level in practice do not fight for social control with the state, as expressed by the previous theory, namely Migdal's thinking about local strongmen. However, this bossism works within the state structure, where powerful people utilize state facilities to obtain and maintain the resources they have (Sidel, 1999).

Then Sidel also added that local bosses actually emerged as a result of the marriage between the state and the market system. This means that the state plays a role in producing, inviting, and giving birth to local bosses in the dimensions of their social lives. For example, let's take the example of when the Reformation gave birth to new branches of power at the central and regional levels, such as new political parties and regional government administrators (decentralization). The birth of a political party automatically produces political party leaders at the central and regional levels. Likewise with decentralization, which gives broad authority to governors, regents, and mayors to regulate their own regions. Decentralization encourages the birth of regional leaders through inclusive political recruitment.

Local bossism exists at every level; there are bosses who control districts (districts or cities), there are bosses who control provinces, and there are bosses who control the center. The patron-client

networks of "local bosses" are not static and permanent, but dynamic and very fluid. They can change patrons at the central level, change clients at the local level, and change national political party affiliations. The "local bosses" exchange (transactional) voter votes for economic assistance, seeds, irrigation, debt repayment, and other means of exchange. They really understand by providing health assistance, providing employment assistance, and providing legal assistance, so when the day of the general election is held, they turn the assistance they provide into votes and political support.

John Sidel provides a critical account of Joel Migdal's "local strongman" theory. First, the basic nature of the state and the basic nature of society cause "local strongmen" to grow and develop. Second, the rise of "local strongmen" from within the country and from within society. Third, the state structure creates conditions for the rise, survival, and success of "local strongmen." Fourth, the political culture and particular demands of local residents have led to the emergence of "local strongmen." Fifth, the supply of "local strongmen" does not always reflect the demand from the community. Sixth, "local strongmen" do not hinder the development of capitalism and instead facilitate and take advantage of industrial growth and market expansion in their areas of control, Sidel in (Suaib Eka, 2015).

Methods

This article uses qualitative research with an exploratory analysis approach. This method is operated to help

researchers carry out the research process, starting with understanding cases, mapping problems, collecting data, and analyzing them. This type of research essentially guides researchers to explore scientific problems and then analyze them in depth using a certain approach under the theory group used (Creswell, 2014). In other words, this research uses this method by prioritizing in-depth analysis of a case from a determined theoretical perspective.

Results and Discussions

“Keadilan Sejahtera” Party (PKS) Recruitment in the Vortex of Local Pragmatism

From the start, the “Keadilan Sejahtera” Party (PKS) will recruit its cadres for the regional elections in Pandeglang. According to the Chairman of the PKS, DPC Tb. Asep Raifudin, the reason why the PKS ultimately brought on Irna Narulita was for reasons of popularity. According to him, after in-depth consideration and study, it turned out that IRNA's electability was higher than that of the PKS party cadres, who were most likely to advance (kabar6.com, 2020). So based on this information, it clearly shows that electability is an important aspect for the PKS party in determining who they will nominate.

PKS's decision to nominate Irna Narulita shows that in the end, the recruitment process carried out by PKS to obtain regional head candidates from within the party was not successful in producing the name of a strong candidate because the electability of the incumbent

was hampered, so in the end, PKS's political stance was to participate in nominating the incumbent candidate in the upcoming regional elections. In this case, it is clear that there is a contradiction if we rely on party recruitment. As stated by Norris, the first stage that needs to be done is to nominate candidates who can be selected. However, in this context, there do not appear to be any other candidates. But it immediately focused on Irna Narulita. This situation might explain how PKS actually does not carry out a selection of candidates but already has a target candidate, namely the incumbent. This situation was actually raised by Andari in his study, which revealed that PKS often recruits female candidates based on party proximity, so it is not surprising that in several cases the recruits were the wives of PKS cadres themselves (Andari, 2014). However, what is interesting in this case is that Irna was chosen as the candidate promoted by PKS not because of the factor of fulfilling the quota for female candidates but more than that, namely because there was consideration of the strength of the local boss from her family.

If we look at this case from Norris' perspective in Ansari and Fadiyah (2019), regarding the important points that need to be considered in organizing and recruiting political parties, one of these points is how candidates are decided (Norris, 2006), (Banggu, 2023). Irna, as the candidate promoted by PKS, was decided through internal PKS considerations by looking at electability as the main point. Based on internal PKS studies, Irna's electability is the highest. The reason for

Irna's electability is the only foundation, which is why PKS anchored this pair. In plain view, this clearly shows how pragmatic the PKS was at that time in determining the candidates they proposed (Furkon, 2004). This means that in nominating Irna as a candidate for Regional Head of Pandeglang, there was no agenda brought up, either gender issues as a female leader or ideological issues as party identity. This indirectly embodies what Norris said: that at certain times substantial agendas are often overlooked in the political party recruitment process (Pippa Norris, 1995).

Moreover, in this case, it is known that before PKS declared its support for Irna Tanto, there were parties that had already done so, such as PDIP and PAN. Even though we know that at the central level, PKS and PDIP were like water and oil, which were almost impossible to unite. If in the Pandeglang Regional Election, the PKS ideological values have been put aside in the campaign and the central coalition line is no longer used as a reference, then what is very interesting in this research is that the PKS recruitment process in Pandeglang offers different principles to what was stated by Rahat and Hazan that if recruitment is carried out to all citizens and produces candidates outside of their party members, then the recruitment is inclusive and nuanced. However, what happened in Pandeglang in the PKS context actually shows ambiguity because if it is said that PKS recruitment is exclusive, what is happening is that they are producing candidates to be promoted from outside the party, but if it is said to be

inclusive, it is also not correct because the opportunities that Irna has are not open to other people outside PKS.

This matter was conveyed by the chairman of the DPD PKS, who said that Irna was considered close to PKS because Dimiyati, as Irna's husband, was a member of the DPR RI from the PKS faction, so PKS's trust in Irna was also high because of her husband's political role. This narrative increasingly explains that PKS actually did not show an inclusive face in its recruitment because the decision to choose Irna relied solely on the basis of electability and informal closeness between the party and Irna's family. On the other hand, the audience will also be hesitant to say that PKS recruitment is exclusive because it seems as if the recruitment is open so that alternatives emerge from outside their party. This phenomenon has not been explained by Rahat and Hazan in their theory.

Then, in another consideration, the pragmatic side of PKS is increasingly emerging when looking at the situation that occurred in the regional elections this time, where Irna is considered the strongest candidate because in the upcoming regional elections there is no political opponent with more electability than Irna, who is being promoted by a political party. Although this time the regional elections in Pandeglang Regency will be attended by several candidates from the independent route, Irna is still considered the strongest candidate. What is interesting is that previously PKS had carried out a selection and would determine at least three candidates who

would be considered to become candidates for regent of Pandeglang from PKS. This was conveyed by the chairman of the DPD PKS Pandeglang, Asep Rafiudin, to the media. Even though the statement did not mention who the candidates were in the process of being developed by PKS, the process was ongoing, said Asep (redaksi24.com, 2019). In his statement to the media in 2019, the chairman of the PKS Regional Leadership Council (DPD) said he was optimistic that he would increase his cadres in the upcoming regional elections. However, as time goes by and the political constellation changes, PKS is now officially nominating the incumbent Irna Narulita for the upcoming regional elections, so that the recruitment and selection process carried out previously did not produce the regional head candidate that PKS wanted.

This phenomenon provides a unique reference in that it turns out that the recruitment process that occurs in a party may not produce a single candidate for reasons of electability and popularity. Pada Pilkada serentak tahun 2020 kasus yang sama juga banyak ditemukan di beberapa partai lain da daerah lain yang kian menegaskan bahwa posisi partai politik sebagai lembaga ideologis penopang demokrasi perlu ditanyakan ulang (Putra, 2020). So the party's idealism, which is upheld through recruitment, must end in political transactions between parties, as happened with PKS when it finally supported Irna and decided to collaborate with other parties whose ideological and central coalition lines were at odds. In line with this narrative, Mustama and Suranto found

in their study that parties in Indonesia actually only have one orientation, namely how to win elections. Unfortunately, these methods are often pursued with many complicated machinations, so it is not uncommon for conflicts of interest to also occur within the party (Mustama, 2016). This process makes the recruitment process hampered and biased.

In a more striking narrative, the party's decision based solely on electability and popularity will explain another thing, namely the party's pragmatism and the abandonment of ideology. even though the recruitment process has entered an in-depth preparation process. In the PKS case, the recruitment process did not produce a single person among the selected candidates who came from within the party. If we look at this from Norris' perspective, it is clear that the nominated candidates were stopped at the final decision-making stage. In other words, the PKS recruitment process was incomplete, according to Norris.

Moreover, the final results actually produced the same names that were not included in the previous recruitment nominations. Irna Narulita is not a cadre of the party and is also not a person who took part in the selection. However, he was chosen only considering his voting potential and electability, and the political relations attached to that person were able to produce political decisions.

Domination of the Strength of the Natakusumah Ancestry in the Carrying of Irna by PKS

It cannot be denied that Irna Narulita is a figure who comes from a political dynasty in Pandeglang. He also had a fairly central position in the dynasty. This is because the figure who formed the political dynasty in Pandeglang was Dimiyati Natakusumah, who was none other than Irna's husband. If we want to peek at the role of these dynastic powers in influencing Irna's promotion by PKS, we can start with the statement of the chairman of the PKS Pandeglang Regional Leadership Council (DPD), who stated that PKS's trust in Irna was very high and Irna's relationship with PKS was quite close because she was her husband. Irna is a PKS cadre who currently serves as a member of the DPR RI from the PKS faction in the Pandeglang electoral district. This narrative is in line with what Novatus Dono put forward in his study, which explained that big parties in Indonesia often carry out closed recruitment because there are agreements that need to be made with oligarchs and powerful people at both the central and local levels (Dono, 2016).

From these facts, we can see that the political power of the Dimiyati dynasty is quite large and is able to influence the party's decision to nominate Irna Narulita as a candidate for regional head. Being recognized as the strongest person in Pandeglang has great influence and can even influence a party's political decisions, one of which is determining which regional head candidate will be nominated. From these facts, it can be seen

that the political power possessed by the Dimiyati dynasty was even greater than the power possessed by political parties. Sidel (1999) revealed that strong people at the local level who become bosses with great political power are those who are not separated from the state. These people take advantage of the state facilities they have to get what they want. According to Sidel, these people are those who have structural positions in the state, so with these positions they have great political power. Looking at the phenomenon of the Dimiyati political dynasty in Pandeglang from the perspective of Sidel-style bossism, it is clear that the strong boss in this case is Dimiyati Natakusumah (Mendoza, 2016). Power relations like many occur in other regions of Indonesia where the surplus of power in certain groups weakens the bargaining position of parties and leads them into political transactions that are unhealthy for democracy (Fitriyah, 2020).

The interesting aspect of the Pandeglang Pilkada case is actually not the explanation of how Natakusumah was a local boss but about how the formal and informal power of the Natakusumah family influenced party decisions. The narrative conveyed by PKS through its DPD Chairman actually explains what Sidel means by the marriage of market transactions with politics (Robinson, 2004). The reason is that Irna, as the incumbent with the highest electability, has quite strong bargaining power in the eyes of PKS, so that in the end, the dynamics that occurred resulted in Irna being promoted by PKS.

In line with Sidel's thinking, in this case, it is believed that he used the structural facilities he had to gain power and public trust. The reason is that he, who is currently serving as a member of the DPR RI, is increasingly promoting his family members to important political positions at the local and national levels. This can be seen when Dimiyati raises her children in political contestations both in the legislative and executive realms. In fact, the most obvious thing is that when Dimiyati served as Regent of Pandeglang for two terms, he then made his wife the Regent of Pandeglang, and even this time he ran again as the incumbent. Local elites like Dimiyati, who grew up in areas with almost no rivals, will always have a tendency to continue their power relay. Unfortunately, the process taken often ignores democratic processes; in fact, what mostly happens are short-term transactions (Cahyaningtyas, 2018).

Sidel revealed that local bosses actually emerged as a result of the marriage between the state and the market system. This means that the state plays a role in producing, inviting, and giving birth to local bosses in the dimensions of their social lives. In this case, if we look at how Dimiyati emerged as a local boss in Pandeglang, we will find that he emerged because the state provided space for a Dimiyati who had more economic power in Pandeglang to advance as a leader through decentralization and general elections at the regional level. This means that it is in line with Sidel's opinion that the state has a role in producing and giving rise to bosses at the local level.

In another part, Sidel also reveals that the patron-client networks of "local bosses" are not static and permanent but dynamic and very fluid. They can change patrons at the central level, change clients at the local level, and change national political party affiliations. If we look at the case of Irna's expulsion based on Sidel's opinion, we will find that this happened in this case. For example, in the 2015 regional elections, Irna was supported by 11 political parties, and this time she was supported by a different number of political parties. Even Irna, who is a cadre member of the Democratic Party, was not promoted by the party this time. This shows that a local boss is able to change affiliation very quickly at any time. This also happened to Dimiyati, who was previously a PPP cadre but has now jumped to PKS. The ability of local bosses to be able to do this shows that the power of internal political parties is no stronger than the personal power and political dynasty owned by Dimiyati.

Conclusion

The 2020 Pandeglang Regional Election explains a unique phenomenon in party recruitment by PKS. This is because the recruitment process that took place ultimately did not produce a single name to be put forward. However, this actually gave rise to support for Irna Narulita, who did not participate in the recruitment process at all.

The PKS Recruitment Case also explains things that have not been discussed by Rahat and Hazan regarding the inclusiveness and exclusivity of

political party recruitment. The context of Irna's promotion by PKS cannot be said to be inclusive or exclusive because it offers attributes that seem like open recruitment but require family political transactions.

Then, this research found that the political power of the Natakusumah ancestry was much stronger than the power of political parties, so Natakusumah easily influenced party decisions and made the recruitment process carried out by PKS biased and crude.

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