

The Local Political Policies

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The Local Political Policies: The Dynamics of the Political Party Coalition in the Election Contestation of the Governor West Nusa Tenggara Province Indonesia

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Abstract: This paper analyzed political party coalitions in the 2018 West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Governor election. Research methods included in-depth interviews, observations, and review of documents. Analysis of data and information identified choice of political party coalition originated from distribution of political office positions and potential victory of political parties as two major factors in decision making. Analysis revealed in regional election contests consideration in choosing a political party coalition partner prioritizes pragmatic interest rather than the similarity of political party ideology.

1

Keywords: Contestation, political parties, coalition, governor election.

1. INTRODUCTION

Regional head election is a local political event and a symbol of a democratic government (Winengan, 2018). The local political policy outlined in Law No. 10 of 2016 packed in the direct and simultaneous local elections for the third period was held again in several regions in Indonesia on June 27, 2018 (Suryowati, 2017). According to The General Election Commission of the Republic of Indonesia (KPU RI), the number of regions that held local political policy performance in the context of the selection of regional government leadership was recorded as many as 171 regions with details of 17 provinces, 39 cities, and 115 districts. This amount is greater than the direct and simultaneous local elections in the previous period held on 15 February 2017, totaling 101 regions with details of 7 provinces, 18 cities, and 76 for district levels (Prasetya, 2017).

Based on data released by the General Election Commission of the Republic of Indonesia (KPU RI) as an institution given the authority of the state to manage regional elections throughout Indonesia, that at the provincial level, 17 regions that held the 2018 governor election were held directly and simultaneously namely; North Sumatra, Riau, South Sumatera, Lampung, West Java, Central Java, East Java, Bali, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, Maluku, North Maluku, and Papua (KPU RI, 2017).

A warm welcome to the 2018 local democratic party was seen in various regions, including West Nusa Tenggara. Various symbols and attributes of candidate pairs and political parties were exhibited, both by prospective candidates, political parties, as well as sympathizers or volunteer candidates. The strength of candidates for NTB governor election in 2018 was very competitive because several prospective candidates were already started to be 'marketed' by political parties as contestants did not have a too significant difference in electability and popularity (TV 9, 10th August 2017).

In the provisions contained in Article 10 Paragraph, 1 of Law No. 10 of 2016 as a normative foothold in the implementation of direct and simultaneous local elections in 2018, the process of nominating prospective regional heads can be done through two mechanisms, namely through independent channels and proposals of political parties. For the requirements of the independent track, prospective regional head candidates must obtain the support of at least 6.5% to a maximum of 10% of the total permanent voter list. As for the path of political parties, a regional head candidate can be proposed by a political party if it meets the accumulated acquisition of the number of seats in the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) institution of at least 20% of the total number of seats or 25% of votes from the 2014 general election.

In the context of proposing regional head candidates through political parties in the holding of the 2018 governor election in West Nusa Tenggara, based on the results of obtaining seats in the DPRD or accumulating the number of voters in the previous governor election, the capacity of each political party is as follows:

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Table 1: 2014 Political Party Votes in West Nusa Tenggara

No	Political Party Name	Total Voters	Legislative Proportion	%
1	Nasdem	158.002	3	4.62
2	PKS	206.414	5	7.59
3	PKB	199.626	6	9.23
4	PDI-P	216.923	5	7.69
5	Golkar	373.056	11	16.92
6	Gerindra	265.887	8	12.31
7	Demokrat	305.669	8	12.31
8	PAN	195.483	5	7.69
9	PPP	195.648	6	9.23
10	Hanura	207.550	5	7.69
11	PBB	139.710	3	4.62
12	PKPI	69.568	0	0.00

Source: KPUD NTB, 2014.

The configuration of the votes and legislative seats of each political party above shows that no political party can go forward alone in carrying the pair of candidates for governor of West Nusa Tenggara Province in the 2018 regional election period because no one can meet the number requirements of a minimum of seats or voters in the 2014 general election. The implication is that if a political party intends to be involved as an actor in the election contest of the governor of West Nusa Tenggara Province in 2018, then it must form a coalition with other political parties.

Noting the empirical problems faced by political parties in West Nusa Tenggara, this paper intend to examine the various considerations of each political party in choosing its coalition partner. The significance and relevance of this study depart from the reality of the behavior of political parties in Indonesia, where the coalition of political parties has become a culture in local political events and as a consequence of the multiparty political system adopted by Indonesia (Ekawati, 2015).

Although political parties win legislative elections, meet the requirements of the number of votes or legislative seats to carry their candidates, declare themselves as political parties that are 'ideologically' popular, defenders of the underprivileged, democratic Islamic parties, or nationalists, but in fact, in the contestation of regional elections, both at the provincial and district/city level, do not dare to appear alone thus requires the presence of other political parties (Agustino, 2009).

Moreover, the situation that forces the formation of political party coalitions in the electoral arena due to the absence of the strength of political parties who obtain absolute votes when compared with the combination of other parties, there is a push for common goals, perceptions, and ideological closeness, and the existence of multiparty parties in the electoral arena is an indicator of the political pattern of the position of counter-opposition thus it has implications for the formation of political coalitions (Noer *et al.*, 1999: 303).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is designed as field research with the foundation of constructivism thinking that emphasizes empathic ways and dialectical interactions between researchers and research subjects (Birowo, 2004). The operationalization of data collection of this research is guided by qualitative methods. To find out deeply about the structure and rational consideration of political parties in selecting their coalition partners in the 2018 West Nusa Tenggara governor election contestation as a research objective, data collection techniques used are interviews, observation, and documentation. The data that has been collected is then analyzed by following the process flow of the interactive model, namely (a) data condensation, (b) presentation of data, and (c) drawing conclusions or verification (Miles *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, to ensure that the data obtained are valid, a data validity test is performed using data credibility criteria conducted by triangulation and involving colleagues with academic expertise in local political studies.

3. RESULTS

The existence of political parties in the arena of local political policy packed in regional elections which are held routinely every five years has a strategic role, even behind the lack of candidate of regional head candidates from the independent path, the existence of political parties is the main actor in preparing pairs of candidates for head contestants that will become people's choices. However, according to the provisions of Law No. 10 of 2016 as a reference for the implementation of direct and simultaneous local elections in 2018 (Nurhasim, 2018), political parties can independently propose pairs of candidates for regional heads if they meet the accumulation of the number of seats in the DPRD institutions by at least 20% of the total number of DPRD seats in a region or 25 % of votes from the previous year's general election.

The inability of political parties at the level of the Regional Board of West Nusa Tenggara Province to obtain a minimum number of votes and a legislative seat in the 2014 general elections as a requirement to appear alone to propose a pair of candidates for governor at the stage of direct elections of regional heads directly and simultaneously the third period which took place on 27 June 2018 (Suryowati, 2017) forced political parties to build coalitions with other political parties. According to KPUD NTB data, as many as 12 political parties participating in the 2014 general election formed 3 configurations of political party coalitions, namely the Suhaili-Amin, Ahyar-Mori, and Zul-Rohmi coalitions (KPUD NTB, 2018).

If you pay attention to the distribution of the proportion of seats acquired or voters' votes in each political party in the 2014 general election (KPUD NTB, 2014), the configuration of **political party coalitions in the West Nusa Tenggara Governor election** contestation event was not only 3 coalition political parties, but it was 4 up to 5 political party coalitions. The considerations of each political party in determining the choice of coalition partners are as follows:

First, the coalition of Suhaili-Amin. The existence of a coalition of political parties that carry the pair of candidates for governor Suhaili-Amin in the NTB Governor election contest in 2018 consisted of 3 political parties, namely Golkar, Nasdem, and PKB. The idea of Suhaili-Amin coalition was initiated by the Golkar Party. In the 2014 general election, Golkar Party was indeed a party panning for voters and legislative

seats (KPUD NTB, 2014), however, because it did not meet the provisions of Law No. 10 of 2016 to carry out independently the candidate for governor, it required Golkar Party to look for another political party as its coalition partner, and the choice was Nasdem and PKB parties.

According to the Executive Manager of Golkar in NTB (H. Misbach Mulyadi), Golkar Party's interest in Nasdem and PKB was because the two political parties are seen as having similar ideas with Golkar Party (Interview, 12th May 2018). The same thing was stated by the Executive Manager of Nasdem Party DPW Bappilu, that from Nasdem Party, his interest in a coalition with Golkar Party was because ideologically, the two political parties were considered to have similarities. In this coalition of political parties, the pair of candidates for governor carried (Suhaili) is a cadre of political parties, namely the executive manager of DPD Golkar of West Nusa Tenggara Province. While his deputy governor candidate (Amin) is also a cadre of political parties, namely the Executive Manager of DPD Nasdem of West Nusa Tenggara Province.

Furthermore, from PKB party, consideration of building a coalition with the Golkar and Nasdem parties, in addition to having ideological similarities, is also because the pair of candidates promoted by both parties are seen as very promising to win in the **election of the Governor of West Nusa Tenggara Province** in 2018. In PKB Party's view, Suhaili-Amin carried by Golkar Party and Nasdem Party are cadres of each potential party that has a mass base promising to deliver it to victory (Interview, 16th May 2018). The same reason was also conveyed by the Secretary of DPW PKB, that although PKB Party was not given a position as the deputy governor, it remained committed to winning the candidate pair carried by its political party coalition (Interview, 20th June 2018). Based on the explanation above, that Suhaili-Amin **political party coalition** was formed, **in the contestation of the NTB Governor** election in 2018, based on consideration of the distribution of power and the similarity of ideology.

Second, the coalition of Ahyar-Mori. In the 2018 NTB Governor election contest, Ahyar-Mori political party coalition was the fattest coalition, because the coalition members consisted of 7 political parties, namely; Gerindra, PPP, PBB, PDIP, PAN, HANURA, and PKPI. The leader of the coalition in the Ahyar-Mori pair was the Executive Manager of DPD Gerindra of NTB, namely H. Ridwan Hidayat. Taking into account the number of members of the political party coalition,

with full optimism, the coalition was determined to form a joint strength and commitment to victory in the NTB Governor election contest in 2018.

The formation of the coalition of political parties was initiated by the Gerindra Party through the registration mechanism for the candidate pair of Governor of West Nusa Tenggara Province in 2018. Based on the registration results, Gerindra Party appointed the candidate pair Ahyar-Mori as its contestants. Ahyar's existence as a candidate for governor was not an official of a political party, but he happened to be serving as Mayor of Mataram. Unlike Mori as a vice-governor candidate, he was indeed a Gerindra Party cadre. However, because the Gerindra Party did not fulfill the requirements to nominate a candidate for Ahyar-Mori alone, it required him to build coalitions with other political parties.

Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) was the first political party to declare its willingness to build a coalition with the Gerindra Party. According to the Chairman of DPW PPP NTB, the reason for joining with Gerindra Party was because it considered the superiority of the candidate pairs that the Gerindra Party had (Ahyar-Mori), who were considered to have successful political experience in all events, both in the legislative and executive branches, therefore they will provide great opportunities for regional development (Interview, 10th May 2018). The same attitude was also shown by Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), that the reason of the coalition of political parties bearing Ahyar-Mori, was because of its interest in the candidate pair carried, was considered the most ideal as a candidate for governor of West Nusa Tenggara chosen by the community (Interview, 5th June 2018).

The same reason was said by PDIP, Hanura, and PBB. Their interest in joining with Ahyar-Mori team was because of the considerations that the couples were said to be eligible as the prospective governor that must be carried for the sake of the people. In addition to the issue of leadership performance and consideration of the candidate's political track record, the similarity and closeness of ideology is also a reason for the interest of political parties to join the coalition of Ahyar-Mori political parties. Partai Persatuan Pembangunan saw that the candidate pair Ahyar-Mori as a figure born from Nahdhiyin people, who are members of Nahdatul Ulama, is therefore considered to be in harmony with the ideology of Partai Persatuan Pembangunan in developing the West Nusa Tenggara Province (Interview, 10th May 2018).

Third, the coalition of Zul-Rohmi. In the NTB Governor election contest in 2018, this coalition became the least active among other political party coalitions, because it consisted of two coalition members, namely Partai Demokrat and Partai Keadilan Sejahtera. Partai Demokrat was the main initiator of the emergence of Zul-Rohmi coalition, where the position of the candidate for governor was given to PKS cadre, namely Zulkiflimansyah who originated from Sumbawa Island. Whereas the representative candidates were drawn from Partai Demokrat cadres themselves, Sitti Rohmi Jalilah, who was the older brother of TGB Zainul Majdi who at that time served as the Governor of West Nusa Tenggara.

PKS's consideration of accepting the coalition offer from Demokrat was because PKS considered that the bid of the governor candidates from its cadres was quite strategic and Deputy Governor candidate from Demokrat was promising to win, because Sitti Rohmi Jalilah had a very real mass base. After all, it was supported by the Nahdlatul Wathan organization and considered as one of the female candidates with great potential to win women's voices. Whereas Demokrat was interested in proposing PKS because they saw that the cadres promoted by PKS had a good reputation at that time as a member of the Indonesian Parliament. Whereas Sitti Rohmi Jalilah, besides being the Chancellor of Hamzanwadi NW Pancor University, was also the Chairperson of the East Lombok DPRD (Jalilah, 2018).

This PKS-Demokrat cadre duo became one of the couples who had a strong idea because they were born from academics who both had doctorates. Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) declared that the pair of Zulkiefimansyah and Sitti Rohmi Djalilah as candidates for governor and deputy governor candidates in front of hundreds of party officials and cadres in the Regional Office Board of Regional Leadership (DPW) PKS NTB in Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara on Monday, January 1, January 2018. According to the Chairman of DPW PKS NTB, the determination of Zulkiefimansyah and Sitti Rohmi Djalilah had gone through a quite lengthy discussion process. The process of nominating Zul-Rohmi required considerable energy because it saw and considered the aspirations of cadres and the wishes of the people of NTB. However, all PKS management and cadres wanted Demokrat-PKS duo carrying the Zul-Rohmi package to be considered the most ideal to continue the NTB governor's leadership for the next 5 years (Interview, 6th March 2018).

Table 2: Configuration of Political Party Coalition in NTB Governor Election in 2018

No	Political Party Coalition	Governor Candidate Pairs
1	Golkar, Nasdem, and Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa	TGH. Suhaili FT & Muh. Amin
2	Gerindra, Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat, Partai Bulan Bintang, Partai Amanat Nasional, and PKPI	TGH. Ahyar Abduh & Mori Hanafi
3	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera and Demokrat	Dr. H. Zulkiflimansyah & Dr. Hj. Sitti Rohmi Jalilah

Sources: KPUD NTB, 2018.

In line with the statement of the Chairman of DPW PKS NTB, the Deputy Chairperson of Partai Demokrat of NTB, was also very optimistic to win by forming a coalition with PKS, who both carried candidates from their party cadres. In the declaration that took place in Narmada field, PKS and Partai Demokrat said that the duet of Zul-Rohmi was the best figure owned by NTB to continue construction after the term of office of the Governor of NTB, Muhammad Zainul Majdi or familiarly called Tuan Guru Bajang. While some of the reasons Partai Demokrat and PKS formed a coalition in the bond of the candidate pair Zul-Rohmi, among others, because they represented each political party, the proposed candidate pair had integrity, and leadership experience fairly good, so it was considered as the best pair of leaders to continue the development of NTB (Observation, 12th March 2018).

4. DISCUSSION

If we pay attention to the dynamics of the formation of political party coalitions in the contestation of the election of the Governor of West Nusa Tenggara in 2018, pragmatic considerations such as the distribution of political power and the promising chance of victory owned by political parties because the availability of resources of a political party became a more dominant consideration in the process of forming a political party coalition. The configuration of the political party coalition explained that the similarity in the ideology of the political parties did not automatically guarantee the consideration of political parties to choose their coalition partners (Ambardi, 2009).

Parties with ideological closeness such as Golkar, Nasdem, Demokrat, Gerindra preferred to form coalitions with other parties rather than forming a coalition. The same thing was also shown by parties with Islamic ideology such as PKS, PPP, PKB, PAN, PBB (Ekawati, 2015), apparently building coalitions

with political parties that do not have the same ideology. It is in this context that the main objective of forming a political party coalition is as a strategy to win the contestation so as not to place too much importance on the equality of the ideology of the political party (Strom, 1990).

In a multiparty system, a coalition of political parties becomes a necessity, in addition to winning candidate contestants at local and national political performances, as well as to strengthen power in government because political parties winning political contestation can place their human resources to fill public positions (Sartori, 2005: 13). The behavior of political parties shows that the party system leads to polarized pluralism, where ideological differences no longer distance political parties from building coalitions with other political parties and the benefits will facilitate public policymaking at the local level (Imawan, 2001: 4).

The reality of the behavior of political parties shown in the election of the governor of West Nusa Tenggara in 2018 shows that to win the contestation in regional elections, political party coalitions are often varied and mixed, in which the similarity of political party ideology is not a rational consideration for political parties in choosing a partner as his coalition (Nurhasim, 2018).

There are various causes of the emergence of mixed or varied political party coalitions in the contestation of regional elections, including the high costs incurred to win in every regional election event in Indonesia (Sjahrir *et al.*, 2014), the limited funding faced by political parties, and the absence of populist figures owned by political parties, the behavior of electing people who do not see political parties that carry candidates for a regional head, but more because of personal interest in the candidate, and also money politics (Surbekti, 2014), and the strong role of non-political parties network in political contestation to the

value of pragmatism in determining political party coalitions often dominate and get rid of ideals or ideological similarities in political parties (Noor, 2018).

In the definition of the regional head election as a venue for the contestation of the power struggle for regional leadership, as in the election of the governor of West Nusa Tenggara 2018, the existence of various resource limitations owned by each political party as the actual actor behind the regional head candidates to be elected by the people is also the reason for political parties to build coalitions with other political parties. This explains that the formation of a coalition of political parties is one way in the dynamics of politically organized community groups to build strength to defeat other groups (Sabatier, 1993: 98).

The existence of political parties as a means by which the people can express their aspirations and interests through general elections (Imawan, 2001: 3) in the local political stage it has a strategic role in determining the regional head candidates to be elected by the people. Variants in the configuration of political party coalitions are often influenced by the different interests of each political party. The more interests of political parties involved in the coalition network of political parties will enlarge the coalition of political parties that are formed, both in quality and quantity (Suwitri, 211). However, a large number of members of political party coalitions, especially with the conditions that are 'uncontrolled', can cause the building of political party coalitions to become fragile and open space for conflicts of interest between coalition members of political parties (Sabatier, 2007: 181).

Noting the dynamics of the formation of a political party coalition in the election of the governor of West Nusa Tenggara, both in terms of consideration and interests of its coalition, that in forming a political party coalition, the behavior of each other looks to attract attention and convince other political parties by way of bargaining for positions, exchanging resources owned (exchange market for resources). While the long process of forming a coalition of political parties facing the election of governors in West Nusa Tenggara is a mechanism that is common in the political arena, because of bargaining, negotiating and compromising that must be agreed upon the demands of each political party (Sabatier and Smith, 1993).

In the perspective of the Rational Choice Theory, there is a push for a position to consider in the formation of a coalition of political parties in the election of the governor of West Nusa Tenggara Province in

2018, explaining that political parties which constitute an association of political societies (Imawan, 2001: 3), consist of individuals who have the nature of homo economicus, namely humans who have interests that must be satisfied, who always try to maximize the benefits of their respective preferences (Nogroho, 2012). In each course of action, the actor, in this case, a political party, has been able to distinguish the benefits and disadvantages of each choice of action and will choose the action that has the best or most positive balance for himself (Turner, 2012).

The phenomenon of political parties coalition in 2018 NTB Governor Election, according to the Social Arena Metaphor Theory, that the limited resources possessed is a strong reason for political parties to build a coalition to increase their strength in facing their opponents to be able to come out as winners (Renn, 1992). Unlike the case with political party coalitions built for reasons of ideological similarities or limited political capabilities of each political party, if a political party coalition was only built on an exchange of financing capital due to the amount of expenditure in the process of direct election of regional heads, then it can trigger corruption carried out by regional heads (Sjahrir *et al.*, 2014).

Noting the behavior of political party coalitions in governor election event of West Nusa Tenggara Province in 2018, that the existence of political parties in the era of political democracy is still very much needed by regional head candidates to deliver them to gain the power of regional leadership (Budiarjo, 2013). However, according to Huckshom, the orientation of the formation of a coalition of political parties involved in the election of the governor of West Nusa Tenggara Province is still very pragmatic because it is driven by an interest in fighting for power in governing the government (Pamungkas, 2011: 5) therefore the behavior of political parties in selecting coalition partners prioritizes the benefits to be gained and is more likely to win, including material-instrumental nature (Lele, 2016). But the pragmatism behavior shown by political parties in building coalitions as a whole shows the vulnerability of political party coalition systems in Indonesia (Noor, 2018).

The dominance of pragmatic interests which are rational considerations of political parties informing political party coalitions in governor elections in West Nusa Tenggara explains that political party coalitions are not a means to carry out ideological programs and implement policies based on ideology to enable

political parties with ideological proximity to building coalitions (Ambardi, 2009), but the behavior of political party coalitions is office-seeking, namely to maximize power (Strom, 1990) by releasing various ideological and programmatic differences for the viable survival of members of political party coalitions (Ekawati, 2015).

5. CONCLUSION

In the establishment of regional head elections, the existence of political parties has a strategic role, because it has the authority to determine the prospective regional head candidates to be elected by the people in the region and strengthen the legitimacy of elected regional heads. The limited ability of resources faced by political parties, both human, economic, and political resources forced political parties to build coalitions with other political parties. However, the dynamics of forming coalitions of political parties in regional head elections is not a means to carry out ideological programs and implement policies based on ideology, but the rationality of the considerations is pragmatic because it is to maximize the interests of power.

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