



Potential Conflicts in Pilkada in South Sumatra Province Reflection of the 2019 Simultaneous Election for 2024)

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Abstract

This research aims to find out why South Sumatra Province can avoid broad and sharp political conflicts, even though the people of South Sumatra are known for their hard character. Political conflicts in the 2019 simultaneous elections occurred in the districts of Empat Lawang, Musi Rawas, North Musi Rawas, Banyuasin, and East OKU. The potential for high conflict is rioting, as for example happened in Empat Lawang. However, even though there was a riot at the time, it only lasted for a short time, was well controlled, and caused no casualties. This is also the case with other political conflicts, so that it actually places this area as a zero conflict area. This is interesting, considering that the people in this area have a strong character. The research method used is qualitative. Data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews, and FGDs. The findings of this study show that the people of South Sumatra are people whose political culture is rational, pragmatic, patriarchal. In conclusion, the political culture is able to avoid South Sumatra from high political conflict.

Introduction

The implementation of the 2019 Regional Head Elections in South Sumatra did not avoid the emergence of conflict as a result of the elections. In general, the trigger for conflict is the tension between competing candidates and their supporters (Budiatri et al., 2018). Moreover, competition is also caused by excessive supporter orientation (fanaticism) due to family relationships, or large group interests. Referring to the KPU data, South Sumatra in the 2019 Simultaneous Regional Elections was included in the regions with moderate Election Vulnerability Index (IKP), which was at a score of 44.75 (Supriyadi & Purnamasari, 2023). Moderate vulnerability is potential vulnerability that tends to occur easily and needs attention and anticipation (Helwend & Lasaiba, 2022). Although in the moderate IKP category, from the political rights subdimension, several regions in South Sumatra have high vulnerability categories, namely Musi Rawas (90.91%), Muratara (81.82%), Prabumulih (81.82%) and Empatlawang (72.73%). Then in the sub-dimension of the adjudication of election objections, Banyuasin (68.75), Lahat, (68.75), Palembang (68.75) and Muratara (68.75) are included in high vulnerability. Based on several indications of sub-dimensions in IKP 2019 in line with the facts of the 2019 simultaneous election process, among others related to the Dispute over General Election Results (PHPU), South Sumatra is in the top 5 highest national PHPU submissions to the Constitutional Court. These data show that related to conflicts due to regional elections, the vulnerability cannot be taken lightly. Especially considering on the other hand the character of the people of South Sumatra who are temperament, brave, and assertive (Bukman & Lian, 2017).

Hard characters are paralleled by indications of potential, for example, the phenomenon of solving problems by using violence. Elizabeth Fuller Collins in her book *Indonesia betrayed*:

How development fails, says self-esteem is the central value of this society, and this area has a reputation as a violent and dangerous area. The violent character of the people of South Sumatra certainly cannot be generalized, because in fact this community has a helping spirit and maintains unity well. As stated (Gesmi et al., 2018), although our character and character of the South Sumatran people is hard. But we can still be solid and strong. Firmly holding principles in maintaining unity and integrity. This can be seen how they can coexist with any tribe, as evidenced by the life of the transmigration areas in South Sumatra.

The people of South Sumatra, in the contestation of general elections, are categorized as people with high political participation. In the April 17, 2019 election, voter participation reached 84.02%, higher than the national participation of 77.5% (Cahyadi & Hermawan, 2021). This province, based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) released in an annual report entitled "South Sumatra Province in Figures" (2023), has a population of 8,658,767 people. The composition of this population, like other provinces in Indonesia, consists of various different religions and ethnic groups. In the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) data, it is stated that South Sumatra Province is inhabited by the majority of Muslims (94.11%), followed by Protestantism (1.99%), Catholicism (1.23%), Hinduism (0.86%), and Buddhism (1.83%). Regarding ethnicity, there are several major tribes in South Sumatra, such as the Besemah tribe, Ogan tribe, Komering tribe, and Palembang Malay tribe (Dewi et al., 2020). In addition to these tribes, the South Sumatra region is also inhabited by several immigrant tribes, such as Java, Sunda, Bali due to the transmigration program (Nurdiansyah et al., 2023).

South Sumatra society is also identified as a paternalistic society. Paternalistic societies are usually characterized by respect from members of the community to someone who is elder (Fadlilah, 2018). The main character of paternalism is that individual life patterns are determined based on considerations related to overall social aspects carried out by patriarchal power (Yunus, 2022). Referring to what Siagian and Kleinig said, in a paternalistic society, the culture of respecting leaders or elders, respected, becomes a reference for the community to interact daily. This is interesting when contrasted with the character of the people of South Sumatra who are considered hard, temperamental, easily offended, so that the slightest problem has the potential to trigger conflict. Especially if it is associated with political conflicts due to intense competition in the Pilkada. Meanwhile, as is known in fact, this society is able to control its social system. No matter how hard the character of the community is, and the high number of conflict triggers, they are able to maintain their regions in a moderate IKP position, with zero conflict (SUTRISNO, 2019).

Related to this phenomenon, the things that want to be known in this study are, first, why South Sumatra can avoid high political conflict? Second, is the Election Vulnerability Index category moderate in political conflict related to the patrimonial culture of its people?.

Methodology

The method used is qualitative. Through qualitative methods, it is expected that the research findings obtained will be able to describe a situation that is closer to reality in the field. This method allows in-depth exploration of aspects that become the main variables of research, such as, why in South Sumatra, which is known for its tough community culture, but is able to avoid widespread horizontal, even vertical conflicts. Why South Sumatra, in the context of the Election Vulnerability Index, is categorized as moderate, even in some areas tends to be low. Through in-depth interviews with several informants, it is expected to get answers that are also more complete or comprehensive. Data Collection Technique. As already mentioned, in-depth interviews will be conducted in the form of direct interviews with one by one sources who are

considered to know the problem, and interviews/discussions through Focus Group Discussions. The informants in this research were representatives of community groups (community youth groups, party elites, election-observing NGOs in Empat Lawang, Musi Rawas, North Musi Rawas, and East OKU). Referring to this Research Roadmap, this research is currently in the position of social policy evaluation. Previous research has become a reference in examining the contextual political culture of the people of South Sumatra, in relation to the ability of the people of South Sumatra to reduce political conflict, through their paternalistic culture. It is hoped that the findings of this research can predict a strategy that is appropriate to withstand potential conflicts in the 2024 simultaneous elections.

Results and Discussion

Conflict

Conflict is generally defined as a feud, a difference in relations that triggers the other party to be dissatisfied, causing problems. Surbakti (2010) states that conflict contains the notion of "clash", such as differences of opinion, competition, and conflict between individuals and individuals, groups and groups, individuals and groups, and between individuals or groups and the government. Conflict itself etymologically comes from the word *confligere*. Conflict theory is often used to explain various social phenomena, such as: competition, structural inequality, war, revolution, poverty, discrimination, and violence. The main principles of conflict theory are related to the concepts of social inequality, unequal distribution of resources, and conflicts that occur between different socio-economic classes (Wahyudi, 2021). In the context of this research, the conflict analyzed is a political conflict, which is a conflict that occurs due to the impact of political disputes in the 2019 Simultaneous Elections. Political conflict is a form of social conflict, where both have similar characteristics, only what distinguishes social and political conflict is the word politics which carries certain connotations for the term political conflict, namely having a relationship with the state or government, political or government officials, and policies. In the context of this research, political conflict occurs as a result of political disputes between supporters in the context of the regional elections.

In South Sumatra, in the 2019 simultaneous elections, the votes of each party were recorded: Golkar 671 thousand votes, Gerindra 648 thousand votes, Nasdem 641, PDIP: 543, and Democrat: 396 thousand votes. In the 2019 simultaneous elections, conflicts with riots occurred in Empat Lawang due to dissatisfaction with the results of the vote count, which resulted in clashes between masses of supporters of legislative candidates and police officers. More or less the same phenomenon also occurred in North Musi Rawas. Hundreds of supporters of one of the legislative candidates in North Musi Rawas Regency (Muratara) blocked the Sumatera Cross Road (Jalinsum) and burned tires. This was done because they did not accept the vote recapitulation conducted by the KPU of Muratara Regency and demanded a recount. The masses demanded a recount of the votes because they considered that there were many findings of fraud in the 2019 Legislative Elections. In their action, the masses expressed dissatisfaction with the election organizers, starting from PPS, PPK, KPU, and Bawaslu Muratara (CNN, 2019). Regarding the chaos in the vote count, this was confirmed by Heriyanto, one of the North Musi Rawas KPU Commissioners,

"The conflict here actually occurred due to the fanastime of the supporters, where they champion each other's choices. It's understandable that the one they support is their brother, nephew, or uncle. Now, when the vote count is different from what they expected, the masses between supporters provoke each other. Provoke the organizers who cheated, this lah, so lah. So it's noisy."

The chaos in Empat Lawang Regency was even more extreme, as the masses were almost difficult to control, so the apparatus was forced to use force, and one person was killed due to mass clashes. However, the incident occurred in 2018, so that in the 2019 Pilkada, Empat Lawang Regency received a tight escort (Bawaslu Empat Lawang, 2023).

Political Pragmatism

Pragmatism comes from the Greek *pragma* meaning action or practice. *Ism* means doctrine, school, understanding. Thus, pragmatism means teaching, school, understanding, which emphasizes that thought follows action. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, pragmatism means the belief that the truth or value of a teaching (understanding/doctrine/idea/statement) depends on its application for human interests. Meanwhile, pragmatic means practical and useful for the public; prioritizing practicality and usefulness; about/concerned with practical values. Therefore, pragmatism views that the criterion for the truth of a teaching is its usefulness.

In the event of political conflict in Empatlawang, where the community can control itself not to enter into a high escalation of political conflict, namely violent conflict due to the criteria of benefits.

"People have already been elected, people have shaken hands, how come we are still fussing at the bottom, that means at that time. Because yes, people think, people think. Never mind, the one who is finished is finished. Those who lost lost. Those who won and lost have shaken hands. If we lose, please help us, or we win you lose, we still need you too. After the betting is done, it's over, we will go back to the garden, begawi." (Interview with Martin, 2023)".

Similarly, in other regions, such as North Musi Rawas, it is more or less the same opinion. In South Sumatra, the militancy between supporters ended at a time when awareness of economic life was more important.

"Very pragmatic. Lokak culture. If you pull the red thread, why do we (South Sumatra) never have conflicts for things for the benefit of many people, because there is a lokak culture. To this day that culture is still rooted. When we meet people, we say hi, how are you, Lor. Sometimes we don't even ask, there's lokak da. Lokak is synonymous with something that is essentially something that produces. Pragmatic lah. When it's profitable. That's why there are so many movements, eventually when they clash, (stops by itself), apo dio, da katek lokak. There is no benefit." (Interview with Ade Chaniago, 2023).

At the community level, there are at least two factors that determine their political behavior. First, society's rational choice, which has led to a kind of political skepticism and objectivity in evaluating political life. Currently, people can make a personal evaluation or rational choices about the political conditions they face rather than "returning" it to the political flow in their environment. This situation is inevitable given the improvement in the level of education of the Indonesian people and the opening of information networks that present a variety of information about politics. Second, the issue of public welfare in the political context. The classic problem that arises in the world of politics related to economic issues is related to the issue of community independence in politics. For some, this kind of assumption, which mainly uses the 1960s modernization approach, is outdated and no longer relevant. However, to completely eliminate this variable of economic independence from political life is clearly unwise. In fact, in most societies, the tendency for rational choice is potentially eroded by the issue of economic deprivation or self-sufficiency. Of course, there are other factors that should also be taken into account when looking for the causes of the gradation of the role of political ideology in contemporary political life.

The level of political behavior of the community, namely rational choice and interest in welfare, is seen in the political attitudes of the community in Empat Lawang, Musi Rawas, North Musi Rawas, Banyuasin, and East OKU, and the general phenomenon in South Sumatra.

"Self-esteem is more important. They (thick) have their own ego, people don't want to bother with other people's business, with other regions. In South Sumatra, there are many tribes, many baso, sometimes one sub-district, one village, many baso. That centrist ego emerges. When conflicts arise, it's only because of irritation, because they feel unappreciated. Ah all lah, lanjok lanjake lah. So those small issues, that confusion is carried over into the inner atmosphere of politics. Well, where is it done, where is it done in positioning. If it's finished, what about this stuff? That's when the pragmatic tradition starts, for them, self-esteem is more important than these matters. Even if it has to be replaced by converting it to something like that, why waste it, there must be a commensurate replacement. That's why if there is a conflict it doesn't spread to others because each region has its own regional ego. For example, in the Prabu, Basemah, Pagar Alam areas, the people who deal with them don't want to bother. That is Palembang's business, not ours. When there is business in Palembang, they don't want to know, the important thing is that they are not disturbed. As long as their rice pot is not disturbed, they don't make a fuss. It's more a rational matter of the stomach. (Interview with Haekal, 2023).

So the realization that economic matters are more important makes pragmatism a rational choice. This is also reflected in the region's poverty rate, which is in the top ten provinces with the highest poverty rate.



Political culture in a pragmatic society has become a political reality that deserves close attention. Political activities that require community participation will experience a clash when

the community is pragmatic. So that the interest for primacy in Joint Development is not formed, because the rational choice is to prioritize one's own interests first.

"The people of Palembang, if they are happy, they will get fat, they will get a big salary, they will get a big wife, and they will die and go to heaven. The wet sap culture, if they don't feel the benefits, that's it, they just go away quietly, avoiding it, with the excuse that they have something to do. It is difficult to be provoked if it is related to ideas for wider benefits. Identical to something that has a profit and loss nature." (Interview with Ade Chaniago, 2023).

This pragmatism also occurs when people have the view that their leaders or representatives will soon forget about them when they are seated, and they are not useful to voters, for that reason it is better for them to get material compensation or interests in advance than not getting anything at all. This is as conveyed by Cahya Climate (Interview, 2023), the pragmatic part, the impact of money politics in South Sumatra is high. Even 80%, even more, pure and only 20%. Even though they received money, they did not necessarily vote for him. For example, if a candidate wants to get 2000 votes, maybe he has to spread or water 6000 or 8000 people. This means in the context of money politics.

Paternalistic Culture

Paternalism is an ethos that is still inherent in Indonesia, especially in areas where society is still traditional. Paternalism grows because it is influenced by feudal culture that has affected most areas in Indonesia which were originally former royal areas (Carolina, 2020).

"South Sumatra used to have kingdoms, Sriwijaya, then the Palembang Sultanate, and in the interior there were kings in clans. After that it experienced colonization, feudalism. So it is thick with patron culture. Obedience to leaders, figures." (Interview with Zulfikri, 2023).

The concept of paternalism as a political culture is something that is important in every society, whether in traditional, transitional or modern political systems, so it is considered to be a significant aspect in determining the steps of society towards a better economy.

"The tradition of being open to outside cultures already exists. The tradition of acculturation. An open disposition, a disposition to appreciate guests, to appreciate newcomers has been imprinted in our history as a South Sumatran custom that inherited two kingdoms. In Palembang, there are many tribes, cultures, and there are areas in the periphery. Well, specifically for people who enter the mainland, inland, which is not the edge of the Musi River, the basis of life is agriculture. So their character is agrarian. The agricultural character has a conservative character, which is to protect the land, protect nature, anti-revolution. Nowadays, people from the periphery who enter the mainland also have a conservative disposition, anti-revolution, anti-change, so they take care of the land. Take care of other things, we don't want to make a fuss." (Interview with Haekal, 2023).

As a factor that greatly influences a person's political behavior, the study of paternalism cannot be separated from the political culture that grows and develops in the midst of society. How much harmonization can be achieved by the culture of paternalism is a parameter of the political behavior of the community itself. In the context of a culture of paternalism, it is reflected in the opinion expressed by Martin, a member of the Election Supervisory Agency of Empat Lawang Regency who stated,

"Conflict, so at that time Empat Lawang was carrying out, if our language is almsgiving to the people, almsgiving in order to harmonize the two pairs of candidates, these two

supporters. It was initiated by mass organizations, at that time there were from the Mamadiyah Organization, from NU, from the Ulama Council. It was initiated, gathering the figures who were betting at that time, resolved through the people's alms. The alms of the people, like us, the language is ... if you interpret the language of the cak as a kind of peace, so all representatives are invited, that's the alms, in order to avoid conflict that does not expand, chaos. The first thing is that they were initiated by religious leaders, clerical leaders, traditional leaders, mass organization leaders, in order to cool the atmosphere. So the people's alms were attended by the Kapolda, the Pangdam was present, the Governor was also present. So the atmosphere is cool. So it reaches the bottom, so the community also feels, oh yes already." (Interview with Martin, 2023).

The characteristics of Indonesia's parochial political culture (kaula relationship and kaula participants) include the persistence of paternalism and patrimonialism. The growth and development of this political culture is in line with people's perceptions of political objects that rely or subordinate themselves to the output of the ruler.

"The bond, the kinship is still high. When we have direct elections, it means that we have a figure, a figure that we support. Family, nephews, so we are militant. This is my support. This is what causes when there are different opinions, different views, this is mutual, Come on, that means, the language is, if in this day and age there are many who spread hoaxes. There is something bad about each other, that's the same thing, for example, I support so-and-so, I support you. He's bad-mouthing you, I get angry, right? That's what happens. Participation is seen from family ties, in the family who will be the leader." (Interview with Martin, 2023).

In a culture of paternalism, the leader has a place as the most dominant party. The culture of paternalism, is a social norm that provides guidance on how citizens behave in an effort to achieve common goals. On the basis of the culture of nation, people form procedures that must be applied to achieve these goals. Political culture is something that is inherent in every society consisting of a number of individuals living, whether in traditional, transitional or modern political systems (Hasbullah and Wahyono, 2020).

Thus, in the traditional culture of paternalism, there are several factors that are strongly influenced by: a. Strong primordial ties, b. Extended family system, c. Communalistic community life, d. The role of customs that are strongly influenced by primordial ties. The very strong role of customs in social life, e. The possibility of intimate personal relationships between a member of society and other members of society (Buchari, 2019). Patron-client relationships in Indonesia in democracy are felt very strongly during elections, both at the local level (pilkada) and at the national level (elections).

Patronage is also intertwined with pragmatism, patronage comes from material resources, namely the community weighs the aspects of profit and loss to support a political party or a person's figure, while clientelism comes from the aspect of one's power relations which has the following characteristics: patrons (higher social status) network with clients (lower status), face to face and have reciprocal relationships, can vary in content, purpose, and instructions over time.

Indonesia adheres to a patrimonial political culture or clientilism (patron-client relationship pattern), a pattern of power characterized by obedience to traditional leaders not because of the legal-formal authority attached to a structural position, but because of their personality. Thus, even if a conflict occurs, it always ends with nothing happening, because the role of the leader is prioritized by the community.

This is as stated by Heriyanto (2023),

"Our people are generally people who obey their elders or community leaders, they are people who obey the 'leadership', so that if there are community leaders calling for 'already' if you want to be questioned there is Bawaslu, let them take care of it. There is no benefit if you fight. So they dispersed"

Paternalistic implies the political orientation of people who know enough and pay enough attention to political activities in the Pilkada to choose leaders by accentuating emotional/feeling aspects, especially the same ethnic emotional connection with the ethnicity of the candidate pair. So that their political orientation is more due to a strong ethnic affiliation with the candidate pair, both from the cognitive, affective, and evaluative aspects, and the tendency of their political participation is more mobilization based on ethnic sentiment. However, during the conflict, this ethnic sentiment never continued significantly because, in South Sumatra historically there was no ideological basis. There are many languages and cultures in South Sumatra. These language differences also create distance between them. If there is a conflict in one place, it will not immediately spread to the next. In the election tradition, the governor of South Sumatra does not have to be a Palembang person, not even a Palembang person can be the mayor. Anyone can be, an Ogan person can be, a Musi person can be, a Lahat person can be. So primordial ties do not go deep into politics. Tribal issues do not enter into elite feuds, at best only limited to seeking support. If it is to be clashed in a broader series, it does not work. Because of the open tradition, anti-revolution, there are no ideological issues. Personal ego is strong, more about interests for things that benefit themselves.

Conclusion

South Sumatra can avoid the potential for high political conflict due to two things: the pragmatic culture of its people, and the paternalistic culture. These two cultures are reflected in people's daily lives in the form of Lokak culture, which is a rational choice of things that are beneficial for the sustainability of daily life. Historically, South Sumatra was not built on ideological disputes. South Sumatra inherited a paternalistic culture referring to the legacy of the Srivijaya kingdom, the Palembang Sultanate, and traditional leaders (clans). So that the orientation of obedience to patrons or people who are respected gets the main place. They are not easily provoked for things that have no benefit to themselves, very realistic. So that related to the potential conflict of the Election in 2024 there is nothing significant to worry about. South Sumatra will be fine, and will be included in the zero conflict area.

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