The Kalimantan Social Studies Journal, Vol. 5, (2), April 2024: 146-154
ISSN: 2723-1127 (p); 2716-2346 (e)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.20527/kss
Available at online at website: https://ppjp.ulm.ac.id/journals/index.php/kss

Possibility Analysis of Indonesia Clear of Identity Politics

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Article History

Received: 25/07/23 Review: 16/10/24 Revision: 15/01/24 Available Online: 01/04/24

Abstrak

Permasalahan politisasi identitas dalam pemilihan umum di Indonesia perlu diperhatikan dengan serius, karena praktik tersebut memiliki potensi untuk menghasilkan dampak yang bertentangan dengan tujuan demokrasi dan bahkan dapat menyebabkan perpecahan sosial yang mengakibatkan instabilitas politik dan disintegrasi bangsa Indonesia. Dengan memanfaatkan materi ini, masyarakat dapat meningkatkan kecintaannya terhadap tanah air dan berkembang menjadi masyarakat yang menganut pemikiran demokratis untuk kemajuan. Hal ini sejalan dengan tujuan pendidikan politik, yang bertujuan agar masyarakat Indonesia memahami politik sebagai aspek fundamental. Penelitian ini menggunakan deskriptif kualitatif sebagai metode penelitiannya, Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini terdiri dari data primer dan data sekunder. Data primer diperoleh secara langsung didapat dengan pendapat individu atau kelompok tertentu tentang politik identitas, data Sekunder diperoleh dari buku, jurnal, skripsi, dan perpustakaan lainnya. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa setiap pemilihan umum dapat dipastikan adanya politik identitas, Politik identitas tidak akan pernah hilang dari indonesia ataupun negara-negara demokrasi diseluruh dunia, pada dasarnya politik identitas telah terjadi dimana saja bahkan skala yang lebih kecil seperti kabupaten, kota dan provinsi, yang membedakan hanyalah jumlah pemberitaan dari media. Politisasi identitas agama dan etnis minoritas dianggap efektif bagi para kandidat dalam memperoleh dukungan dari masyarakat mayoritas yang memiliki latar belakang agama dan etnis yang Sama. Permasalahan politisasi identitas dalam pemilihan umum di Indonesia perlu diperhatikan dengan serius, karena praktik tersebut memiliki potensi untuk menghasilkan dampak yang bertentangan dengan tujuan demokrasi dan bahkan dapat menyebabkan perpecahan sosial yang mengakibatkan instabilitas politik dan disintegrasi bangsa Indonesia. Oleh karena itu, para kandidat yang terlibat dalam kontestasi politik pada pemilihan umum sebaiknya memiliki kesadaran yang tinggi dan mengutamakan persatuan dan kesatuan bangsa daripada kepentingan politik sesaat.
Kata Kunci: Etnis; Politik identitas; Indonesia; Pemilu.

Abstract

The issue of identity politicization in general elections in Indonesia needs to be taken seriously, as such practices have the potential to generate impacts contrary to the goals of democracy and may even lead to social divisions resulting in political instability and the disintegration of the Indonesian nation. By utilizing this material, society can enhance its love for the homeland and evolve into a community that embraces democratic thinking for progress. This aligns with the goal of political education, which aims to have the Indonesian people understand politics as a fundamental aspect. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, and the data used consists of both primary and secondary data. Primary data is obtained directly through the opinions of specific individuals or groups regarding identity politics, while secondary data is derived from books, journals, theses, and other library materials. The results of this research indicate that identity politics is present in every general election. Identity politics will never disappear from Indonesia or any democratic country worldwide; essentially, identity politics has occurred everywhere, even on a smaller scale such as in districts, cities, and provinces. The only difference lies in the amount of media coverage. The politicization of religious and ethnic minority identities is considered effective for candidates in gaining support from the majority population with the same religious and ethnic backgrounds. The issue of identity politicization in general elections in Indonesia needs to be addressed seriously, as such practices have the potential to produce impacts contrary to the goals of democracy and may even lead to social divisions resulting in political instability and the disintegration of the Indonesian nation. Therefore, candidates involved in

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political contests in general elections should have a high level of awareness and prioritize national unity over short-term political interests.
Keywords: Ethnicity; Identity Politics; Indonesia; Elections.

PRELIMINARY

General elections in Indonesia are held as an implementation of citizens' political rights guaranteed by law which include freedom of expression and assembly. This concept is reflected in Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution which states that "Freedom to associate and gather to express thoughts orally and in writing and so forth is stipulated by law," and it is also regulated in detail in Law Number 12 of 2005 concerning guarantees of civil and political rights. This law includes the right to express opinions, the right to associate, the right to vote and be elected, equal rights before the law and government, the right to justice, and so on.

Since the reform era, Indonesia has held five general elections, namely in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019. One of the main characteristics of elections is the participation of citizens in political life. This participation can take various forms, both in the official form following the path set by the government and in the unofficial form. Political participation has various meanings, in which ordinary citizens participate in making decisions that affect their lives. Political participation also signifies the existence of upheld democratic rights.

(Sahdan Gregorius & Haboddin Muhtar, 2009)Democracy in Indonesia itself continues to be dynamic with the issue of diversity which often triggers disharmony between groups. Differences on the basis of diversity in Indonesia have recorded history as the main factor in the emergence of conflicts, such as conflicts between religions, ethnicities, tribes, etc. These conflicts are increasingly developing not only as conflicts between one identity but have entered a new phase as conflicts between identities. We often encounter this expansion of conflict between identities as part of the process of democratization, which is more precisely described as "wild democracy". "Wild democracy" is not limited to the concept of democracy that should be applied in the life of the state, however, the unlimited freedoms granted by democracy in Indonesia at this time have created riots non-stop, even without hesitation touching the realm of religious group beliefs. Differences of opinion and views across religions are an integral part of today's political issues.

This problem was then exacerbated by the presence of groups claiming nationalism as a philosophy that should be accepted by the Indonesian people to appreciate and respect the differences that had been recognized from the start along with the independence that Indonesia had won. Nationalist groups dominated by various ethnic identities, religions, races, customs, etc have transformed into a solid group in showing firmness regarding the direction of its

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identity politics. This nationalist group, which is dominated by various ethnic identities, religions, races and customs, embodies a solid group in showing firmness regarding the direction of its identity politics.

Ethnicity and religion are parts of identity that are often exploited or politicized by a group of individuals for their own interests. As stated by Huntington, primordial identities are often the main factor in conflicts between civilizations (Abbas et al., 2022; Jumriani et al., 2022; Mutiani et al., 2021). In Indonesia, a country where religion is part of state affairs, religion is often used as a source of power to suppress different groups. The development of identity politics in election competition in Indonesia needs attention since this practice has the potential to produce impacts contrary to democratic goals. In fact, in democratic life, the participation of all social institutions is necessary to achieve an equitable public interest(Troyer, 2005).

The study of identity politics is crucial and needs to be explored by society. This subject delves into how identity politics is evaluated. By engaging with this material, the community can enhance their love for the homeland and evolve into a society that embraces democratic thinking for progress. This aligns with the goal of political education, aiming for Indonesian society to perceive politics as a fundamental aspect, draw lessons from it, and comprehend and execute their roles effectively.

METHOD

This study used descriptive qualitative as its research method. It aims to explore and gain information related to the phenomenon of identity politics. A qualitative approach was used to explore and gain this information with an emphasis on non-experimental research. Qualitative research also aims to gain an understanding of the phenomena experienced by research subjects by using descriptions in the form of words and language. This research was conducted in a natural context and used a variety of scientific methods.

The data utilized in this research comprises both primary and secondary data. Primary data refers to information obtained directly from original sources, without intermediaries. It involves the opinions of specific individuals or groups regarding identity politics, events, or history that align with the research focus (Gunawan, 2014). On the other hand, secondary data sources are derived from books, journals, theses, and other library materials. A literature review is conducted by identifying, evaluating, and analyzing previous research findings on the topic to identify gaps compared to the researcher's findings.

The data search involves using Google Scholar and ebooks from January 2023 to July 2023. The literature search strategy includes searching for publication data on Google Scholar with keywords such as Identity Politics, American Politics, and Global Democracy. The

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researcher then analyzes and evaluates the collected data, searching for similarities and differences using a qualitative approach with deductive reasoning (Bakhrudin All Habsy, 2017)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia is a great nation based on democracy as a form of government with the people as its sovereign holders. Indonesia is not a secular country or based on a particular religion, but a constitutional democracy whose belief is that there are many tribes and religions. In Indonesia, six religions have been recognized and live side by side in society by respecting the values shared by each other. The six religions are Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholic Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Also, there are 714 ethnic groups and 1,001 different regional languages, but according to the 2010 Population Census, there are 1,331 ethnic groups in Indonesia. That category is the code for the name of the tribe, another name/alias of a tribe, the name of the sub-tribe, and even the name of the sub of the subtribe. However, this number may continue to change over time.

It is from these very large ethnic and religious factors that great power is born in democracy. In cultural communication, Indonesian people are a communal society that lives in certain groups. They are united both by the similarity of ethnicity, clan, genealogy, and even myths, as well as being bound by the legal order and customs in which they live. Hence, it is interconnected with its communal identity, namely identity that refers to something general and large-scale, such as gender, religion or belief adhered to, the political system adopted, and national status (Lestari, 2018).

Most Indonesians do not find comfort when they have to be alone, especially when they are in a new or unfamiliar place or environment for quite a long time. Even in Indonesia, most of them are part of a certain group and have a certain circle of friends.

Following are the 3 general characteristics of communal society according to Rhenald Kasali:

1. Having such great curiosity about other people.
2. If there are differences between people, then they will be "formed" to be the same.
3. With the basic principle "seems too respectful of people who are portrayed or considered leaders".

It is this communal identity which influences the psychology of society that a leader must be from their side. The similarity of ethnicity, culture, language, and even religion can be used as an argument considered valid to provide input to the mind that this person is part and representative of them. This also constitutes social capital. (Fukuyama, 2002) defines social capital as a set of shared values or informal norms among members of a group that enables

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cooperation among them. Social capital facilitates collaboration and cooperation among group members through the shared values and norms they possess. This is closely related to the theory of cognitive dissonance in psychology which explains how humans consistently seek to reduce psychological discomfort in various situations. The discomfort is triggered by situations where a person's beliefs clash with new evidence presented to the person. To reduce psychological discomfort, the person must change their thoughts or behavior so that the inner contradictions can be resolved and restore mental balance. Therefore, people continually reduce cognitive dissonance to align their beliefs with their actions, thereby maintaining psychological consistency and reducing the incidence of mental distress.

During the 2017 Jakarta Pilkada, the identity politics of the Muslim community in the DKI Jakarta Regional Head Election was triggered by an incident of blasphemy against religion (Islam) committed by the incumbent candidate, Basuki Cahya Purnama in Kepulauan Seribu (Djuyandi & Azmi., 2017). This case became a catalyst in uniting and at the same time motivating Muslims in Jakarta and outside Jakarta to get involved in a movement to defend the Qur'an and Islam. Further, that incident made the 212 peaceful demonstration movement at Monas a part of the identity political movement of the Muslim community in DKI Jakarta.

The existence of identity politics becomes an extraordinary "capital" and strength in winning political power (particular pairs of candidate leaders). This has been proven by the election of the Anies-Sandi pair who were elected as Governor and Deputy Governor of DKI Jakarta. They could be elected due to the support of the existence of identity political forces that are created naturally or created because of, for example, political Islam or Islamic politics. However, identity politics does not necessarily promise an absolute victory. In the case of DKI Jakarta, the vote acquisition differed by only 889.087 votes from the number of voters out of 5.591.577 votes. When presented, this number is only 16% of the total population of DKI Jakarta (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2017), so identity politics does not guarantee that the candidate is going to win. However, according to (Firmanzah, 2010),economic capital also plays a crucial role in financing campaigns. Politicians strive to convince the public that they are more caring, empathetic, have a deep understanding of the nation's issues, and are dedicated to championing the people's aspirations. Additionally, they invest in financial resources to support their campaign efforts.

This was also implemented by Donald Trump during his campaign to gain a majority vote. Donald Trump, who during his campaign was criticized as a racist, narcissist, megalomaniac and many others, now sits as the number one person in the United States thanks to the identity political movement he used. The cause of the strengthening of identity politics

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which is closely related to the notion of populism is economic inequality and cultural conflict. These two hypotheses are felt to represent all aspects that are the basic foundation of how an identity political movement and populism can strengthen(Padmi & Ningrum, 2022).

The economic disparity that has become the cause of the strengthening of populism and the identity politics movement began with the global financial crisis in 2008-2009. This crisis caused the economies of Western countries to seek a new balance. However, Donald Trump's identity politics can also be defeated by Biden and Harris, who position themselves as the face of multiculturalism and are close to black people and other marginal groups. In appealing to the vote, Biden and Harris designed a work program aimed specifically at ending discrimination based on race.

A similar pattern also occurs when Luhut Binsar Panjaitan was asked during the podcast with Rocky Gerung. When asked if he wanted to serve RI-1, Luhut stated assertively, "We have to know ourselves too. If you're not Javanese, don't go on. This is anthropology. I don't know [if voter preferences change] in 25 years. Forget it, we don't have to push ourselves, it hurts. It's us who hurt us." From this explanation, it is clear that identity politics is also applied by the majority of Indonesian people, where the island of Java is the determinant of votes in presidential elections. Malaysian country also applies a similar pattern, namely only electing Malays as prime ministers.

In the 2019 election, identity politics also colored elections in Indonesia. For example, the polarization between Prabowo and Jokowi in the presidential election showed that there were groups that could be categorized based on religious identity. (Mayrudin & Akbar, 2019)Many Islamic-based parties, such as PKS and PAN, supported Prabowo, while the only Islamic-based parties that supported Jokowi were PKB and PPP. Jokowi's main supporting party, namely PDIP, which represents left-wing secular nationalists, exerted a strong influence in the election contestation with nuances of a certain sect. The sect-identity battle between Islam and secular nationalists is often the focus of political rivalries, especially on social media. During the 2019 presidential election campaign, various black campaigns attacked political opponents by often alluding to the religious and ethnic characteristics of the candidates. For example, there were accusations that Jokowi was born into a family that supported the PKI, was of Chinese descent and anti-Islam, while Prabowo was identified as a military dictator figure who was supported by radical and intolerant Islamic groups.

Nonetheless, identity politics is not always seen as a negative action or contrary to democracy. Identity politics in the form of collective action can also be a legitimate way for socially, economically and politically marginalized groups to pursue their interests when

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institutional channels are not available to them. Hence, it is important to integrate these marginalized groups into the majority rather than further foregrounding the differences between them. Spotlighting differences dominated by narrow identity politics can obscure the meaning of nationalism. Therefore, the solution to consider is to prioritize national identity and values.

CONCLUSION

Every country experiences the phenomenon of identity politics related to issues of ethnicity, religion, ideology and local interests. This phenomenon is generally practiced by elites who represent their interests. There has been a significant increase in identity politics based on religion and ethnicity in the lead-up to the general elections in Indonesia. Candidate supporters form alliances against each other using identities related to the candidate's personal characteristics, and these identities are then adopted by their supporters.

Identity politics will never disappear from Indonesia or democratic countries throughout the world. Identity politics has occurred anywhere even on a smaller scale such as districts, cities and provinces. The only difference is the amount of coverage from the media, whether the media will continuously make a report of it or is not interested in small-scale identity politics. The media will only report on large-scale identity politics, even the media provokes and seems to exaggerate the news.

(Fautanu et al., 2020)Identity politics is important because the voices of the majority of people will be seen as worthy of being fought for and used to gain power. In a democracy, everyone has the right to play whatever role and place themselves in certain parts of society and identity. Everything is legal as long as democracy does not prohibit it. Candidates take advantage of the social, political and economic capital they have by raising religious and ethnic issues to defame their political opponents. Religious and ethnic identity is used only as a tool of temporary political legitimacy for political interests. This identity politics occurs both in regional head elections and presidential elections. The role of candidate figures is considered highly crucial because in elections, as a contested arena, the competition is not primarily between political parties but among candidates. In addition to receiving support from political parties, candidates also need to make concerted efforts to garner support from non-political forces such as religious organizations, youth groups, professional associations, and others. This underscores the importance of candidates reaching beyond political affiliations to secure a broad base of support from various sectors in society(Haryanto, 2005).

Meanwhile, western countries which are the center point of democracy justify identity politics, but this does not necessarily guarantee absolute victory for identity political actors. Everything returns to the way society sees and the way these actors process or refute these

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issues of identity politics. Identity politics will always develop by following the flow of democracy in that country. However, the issue of identity politics in general elections in Indonesia calls for serious attention. This practice has the potential to cause impacts contrary to democratic goals and can even cause social divisions that result in political instability and the disintegration of the Indonesian nation (Mashad Dhuroruddin, 2005).

Identity politics used in the context of elections often utilizes issues of religion, ethnicity and other social identities to gain political support(Frenki, 2021). This strategy aims to mobilize the masses by using identity sentiment as a basis for political support, which in turn can create polarization and conflict among social groups. This has the potential to undermine the diversity and unity of the Indonesian nation which is one of the important pillars in maintaining political stability and national unity. Excessive and irresponsible identity politics can escalate divisions between groups in society, deepen social inequalities, and weaken the foundations of democracy which should be based on justice, equality and inclusiveness.

In a broader context, uncontrolled identity politics can also disrupt the national development process, hinder cross-group cooperation, and hinder the achievement of common goals in advancing the country. The political instability that arises as a result of radical and extreme identity politics can undermine public trust in the political system and state institutions, as well as hinder the formation of policies that are in Favor of the interests of society as a whole.

Therefore, there is a need for awareness of the values of nationalism, love for the homeland, and pride as Indonesians to be integrated into everyday life (Mutiani et al., 2023). In connection with the moral values of nationalism, these are also applied in political education. There should be collective efforts to address excessive and unhealthy politicization of identity in elections. It is essential to promote dialogue, understanding, and tolerance among groups in the political process, while prioritizing inclusive democratic values that respect diversity. Strengthening democratic institutions, such as political parties and independent media, is also necessary to maintain a healthy political process and prevent detrimental practices of identity politicization that could undermine the political stability and unity of Indonesia.

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