



Between Support and Interests: The Role of Pancasila Youth in the Transactional Politics of the Palembang Regional Election

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of Pemuda Pancasila as an interest group within the context of transactional politics in the 2024 Palembang mayoral and vice-mayoral election. The research focuses on how Pemuda Pancasila, as a mass-based organization with an extensive network, strategically contributed to the local political contest, particularly in supporting a specific candidate pair through patron-client dynamics. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews with key figures of Pemuda Pancasila in Palembang, and documentation from both primary and secondary sources. This research uses interest group theory, focusing on non-associational and resource-based indicators to examine the organization's involvement in local political dynamics. The findings reveal that Pemuda Pancasila actively participated in the 2024 Palembang election by supporting the Ratu Dewa–Prima Salam candidate pair. This support was not solely based on material transactions but was also influenced by organizational loyalty, personal relationships, and internal cadre consolidation. Pancasila Youth mobilized supporters, built strategic alliances, and leveraged its structured organization to reinforce its political stance. Moreover, resources such as membership strength, structural networks, and organizational facilities played a crucial role in enhancing the group's bargaining power in the local political arena. In conclusion, Pemuda Pancasila played a strategic role as an interest group in the transactional politics of the 2024 Palembang mayoral election. This role was demonstrated through mobilization efforts, loyalty-based political support, and effective utilization of available resources. The phenomenon reflects how civil society organizations can become influential actors in local political contests, operating within a spectrum of democratic participation and political pragmatism.

INTRODUCTION

The function of interest groups has a more limited scope compared to political parties. According to Giovanni Sartori's definition, a political party is fundamentally a political group that deliberately participates in elections to place its candidates in public office. On the contrary, interest groups are non-governmental actors that operate in society with the aim of influencing government policies, rather than to directly occupy government positions, interest groups are made up of diverse entities, such as professional groups, trade unions, employers' associations, religious organizations, students, think tanks, scholars' associations, and ethnic- or regional-based organizations. Their strength comes from membership, resources, and ethnic or regional based organizations. People, funds, and the networks they have. These groups often play a role as agenda setters, idea spreaders, policy makers, and government policy drivers (Amin, K., Sari, A. K., & Sirozi, M., 2023).

Pancasila Youth is one of the largest community organizations in Indonesia with membership spread across every province and district throughout the country. This organization has existed since the Old Order era and continues to show its existence in Indonesian society, making Pancasila the main ideology. Pancasila Youth is often associated with thuggery behavior, especially because during the New Order period, this

organization was instructed by the government to intimidate and attack opponents and critics of the government so that it makes the image of thugs and not to be forgotten also the politics of thug rations and transactional politics in the Pancasila Youth Organization is inherent to this day both in political contestation and in elements of society (Nuradhwati, 2022).

Law Number 22 of 2007 and 15 of 2011 have established the legal basis for the implementation of direct regional head elections. However, the implementation of this principle has experienced quite significant political dynamics. After going through several revisions of the law, in 2015, the system of direct election of regional heads was officially implemented as a manifestation of the implementation of people's sovereignty at the regional level. Thus, the Regional Elections are now an integral part of the electoral system in Indonesia. Prior to 2014, the election of regional heads (such as Governors, Regents, and Mayors) in Indonesia was carried out indirectly, namely through elections by members of the DPRD (Lasmanto & Imran, n.d.).

Furthermore, when the Covid-19 Pandemic hit, the involvement of the PP in Palembang can be seen through a quick response in humanitarian tasks called the Covid-19 Humanitarian Task Force. The activity is a step chaired by the Pancasila Youth Leader, namely: National Leadership Assembly, KPH. H. Japto Soelistyo Soerjosoemarno and Secretary General H. Arif Rahman under the mandate of President Joko Widodo (Berita Tegas, 2021). The Task Force mechanism carried out is: Vaccination, Blood Donation, Distribution of Hand Sanitizers, Socialization of Handling through Social Media. This is done in order to help the City Government, Regency Government, and Provincial Government. The involvement of Pancasila youth in the city of Palembang has colored various kinds of socio-political conditions there. Therefore, the Democracy Party or in this case the regional elections in the city of Palembang will not be able to abstain the presence of the PP.

The alignment of mass organizations in the democratic party is basically a necessity. In this case, the Chairman of the Palembang City Pancasila Youth Branch Leadership Council, Nursyamsu, stated at the plenary meeting that he supported the Ratu Dewa-Prima Salam (RDPS) couple (Hermansyah, 2024). During the plenary meeting, he stated that approximately 3 thousand Pancasila youth members agreed to support and escort Ratu Dewa-Prima in the 2024 Palembang regional elections. This synergy was actually built not only because it was close to the Palembang regional election contest but also came from Ratu Dewa herself who admitted that she had a close relationship with Pancasila Youth from the 80s and actively participated as a member.

Transactional politics, which is often called exchange or reciprocal politics, although it is often equated with money politics, has a wider scope. It is not only limited to cash giving, but also includes various other forms of rewards aimed at influencing the political preferences of voters. This practice is observed at almost all levels of elections, from the national and regional levels, to the village of candidates or political parties often involved in these transactions in order to obtain the significant vote support needed to win the contest. The goal is to attract voter support to vote for a candidate or political party that provides such a reward. In this context, the relationship between voters and political parties is no longer based on ideological similarities or voluntary support. On the contrary, voter support becomes conditional and commercial in nature, where they demand rewards as a prerequisite for participation such as in campaigns often accompanied by the hope of obtaining money for transportation, clothing, or other material rewards (Indora, V., Suntoro, I., & Nurmalsisa, Y, 201).

The forms of patronage politics are very diverse and often manifest through the unequal and discriminatory distribution of resources. These forms can include direct cash donations, the provision of goods and services to support groups, or even the awarding of government project contracts after patrons have successfully won office. This practice effectively transforms the political dynamics of ideological competition or work programs into a network of loyalty and materialistic rewards. This mechanism creates a political dependency in which clients feel bound to support their patrons, not because of a common vision, but because they have received concrete benefits. Instead, patrons also rely on this network of clients as a base of mobilizable political power. Therefore, patronage politics is not just a fraudulent practice, but also a deep-rooted socio-political structure, which can affect election results and governance as a whole.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research methodology applied by the researcher is explained through the use of words or sentences to describe and describe, in accordance with the opinion of Bogdan and Taylor who stated that the qualitative method is a research approach that produces descriptive data in the form of written and spoken language obtained from individuals and observed behaviors (Moleong, 2007). In the study entitled "The Role of Pancasila Youth as Interest Groups in the 2024 Palembang Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elections", the method or type of research applied is a qualitative method, because most of the data used is in the form of sentences, words, and phrases.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that Pancasila Youth, although it has no affiliation as a formal political organization, has played a very significant role as an influential interest group in the dynamics of the Palembang Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elections in 2024. Their involvement not only highlights the strategic position of this organization in efforts to mobilize the masses and build a broad political network, but also clearly indicates the existence of a political practice of patronage, in which certain candidate pairs act as patrons who provide support, while Pancasila Youth acts as clients who provide a support base, and this mutual relationship ultimately becomes a crucial instrument in shaping political support. securing the specific interests of the group, as well as directly influencing the final outcome of the election.

CONCLUSIONS

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SUGGESTIONS

Pancasila Youth is expected to strengthen transparency in political relations, focus on sustainable socio-community contributions, and political education for members.

For further research, it is recommended to examine a comparative study of the role of CSOs in regional elections, analysis of the long-term impact of patronage politics, deepening aspects of dawn attacks and voter behavior.

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