

## The 2025 Regional Head Elections (*Pilkada*) Phenomenon: Preparation, Candidates, and Political Dynamics in the Election

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**Abstract.** *This study uses qualitative methods to understand the dynamics of political tensions after the 2024 elections in maintaining democratic stability in Indonesia. The type of research chosen is a case study, which allows for in-depth exploration of the specific context and complexity of the post-election political situation. Regional Head Elections (Pilkada) are a means of implementing people's sovereignty in the regions. This is a development in the governance system in Indonesia. In the Indonesian government, one of the principles known is the principle of autonomy, which means that there is freedom for the Regional Government to regulate its own region. Pilkada is a means to elect regional heads and people's representatives in the DPRD, where they are directly elected by the people in their regions. Thus, the legitimacy of the position of Regional Heads and DPRD Members becomes more representative, if this Pilkada is carried out democratically and in accordance with applicable procedures based on laws and regulations. The principles that must be met by election organizers as per the International IDEA standards have also been formulated in the Election Law, stated in Article 3 of Law 7/2017, election organizers in carrying out the election stages must meet the principles of independence, honesty, fairness, law, order, openness, proportionality, professionalism, accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency.*

**Keywords:** *Dynamics; Election; Political; Regional.*

### 1. Introduction

Elections are one of the main pillars of a democratic system, where people are given the opportunity to determine the direction of leadership and policies through a fair and transparent election mechanism. However, in recent decades,

the phenomenon of identity politics and polarization has increasingly emerged as a significant issue in electoral contests in various countries, including Indonesia. Identity politics has become one of the most dominant aspects of political dynamics in various parts of the world, including in Indonesia, especially in the run-up to general elections. In the context of elections, identity politics often triggers deep polarization among people, bringing significant consequences for social stability and democracy. Identity politics refers to the use of certain attributes, such as religion, ethnicity, race, or other social groups, as a basis for mobilizing political support. This phenomenon is often utilized by political actors to strengthen the voter base by exploiting emotional sentiments attached to group identity.

Although this strategy can increase political participation, it also carries serious risks, namely social and political polarization in society. Identity politics is a phenomenon that is increasingly prominent in the context of general elections (*Pemilu*), especially in countries with diverse societies. In Indonesia, identity politics is often used as a strategy by certain groups to gain political support by utilizing identities such as ethnicity, religion, and race. This creates polarization among voters, which can affect social and political dynamics in society. According to Abdillah (2002), identity politics is an effort to embrace similarities based on certain similarities, be it ethnicity, religion, or gender.

Polarization in the context of elections refers to the increasing sharp differences between groups of people who hold different political views. Polarization rooted in identity politics can cause social fragmentation, reduce the quality of political discourse, and exacerbate tensions between groups. In some cases, polarization can even lead to social conflict that threatens political stability and social harmony. Political polarization occurs when society is divided into two or more groups with very different views, values, and interests. In many cases, this polarization is triggered by political narratives that use identity issues to exploit differences between groups. This can increase identity-based vote mobilization but also has the potential to create tension, conflict, and even violence between different groups. Polarization resulting from identity politics can hinder the consolidation of democracy in Indonesia. When group identities are politicized, society tends to be divided into two opposing camps, reducing the possibility of dialogue and cooperation between groups. Identity politics has the potential to be a tool of empowerment for minority groups in Indonesia.

However, if not managed wisely, it also risks causing polarization that is detrimental to social and political stability. Therefore, it is important for all parties to address this issue critically and prioritize dialogue and tolerance in dealing with differences in identity in society. One real example of this phenomenon can be seen in various elections in Indonesia, where political parties and candidates often use identity symbolism to attract support. In the

process, issues based on identity not only shape individual political choices, but also change the way society interacts and understands each other. As a result, distrust and stereotypes between groups can strengthen, which further exacerbates polarization. The study of identity politics and polarization is becoming increasingly relevant, especially in the digital era, where social media plays a significant role in spreading identity-based political narratives. This condition raises critical questions about how democracy can continue to function well amidst the rampant exploitation of identity and high levels of polarization. Therefore, this study aims to explore the dynamics of identity politics and polarization in elections, as well as their impact on democratic stability and social integration. In this article, we will discuss how identity politics affects election outcomes, as well as the role of media and technology in amplifying or mitigating polarization. In addition, we will explore strategies that can be implemented to mitigate the negative impacts of this phenomenon.

Regional Head Elections (*Pilkada*) are a means of implementing people's sovereignty in the regions. This is a development in the system of governance in Indonesia. In the Indonesian government, one of the principles known is the principle of autonomy, which means that there is freedom for the Regional Government to regulate its own region. *Pilkada* is a means to elect regional heads and people's representatives in the DPRD, where they are directly elected by the people in their regions. Thus, the legitimacy of the position of Regional Heads and DPRD Members becomes more representative, if this *Pilkada* is implemented democratically and in accordance with applicable procedures based on laws and regulations.<sup>1</sup>The selection of the regional election system is a long political journey marked by a tug-of-war between the interests of political elites and the will of the public, central and regional interests or even between national and international interests.

In Indonesia, the history of local politics is almost as old as colonial rule, decentralization of power, and government administration itself. Even if we trace it back to the era of the kingdoms that once stood majestically throughout the archipelago, the nobles used local politics to expand their territory and power. So local politics can be said to be nothing new in the history of the formation of the character of the nation and state until now. The history of local politics is divided into several stages, namely:<sup>2</sup>

In the early colonial period before 1903, the Dutch colonial government implemented a very conservative legal regulation in the form of Reglement op het Beleid der Regering van Nederlandsch Indie (Stb 1855/2). The regulation explained the centralization of power in the Dutch East Indies, not the other way

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.kpu.go.id/page/read/4/visi-dan-misi>, accessed on June 25, 2021 at 19.32 WIB

<sup>2</sup>Sudirman, *Dinamika Politik Lokal Dalam Social Capital (Modal Sosial)*, (FISIP Universitas Tadulako; *Jurnal Academica* Vol.04 No. 01 Februari Tahun 2012), h.743

around. In addition to implementing centralization, deconcentration gave power to administrative regions hierarchically, but was only limited to the island of Java. The birth of terms such as *Gewest* which later changed to *Residentie*, *Afdeeling*, *District*, and *Onder-district*, was a sign of the existence of a form of representation of the authority of the Dutch government in the regions in its colonies. Thus, decentralization was actually not something new in Indonesia, because during the Dutch colonial period in 1903, the European elites in the Dutch East Indies were given the authority to establish their own government, but on a limited basis. The Kingdom of the Netherlands issued the *Wethoudende Decentralisatie van het Bestuur in Nederlandsch Indie* (Stb. 1903/329), better known as *Decentralisatiewet 1903*. According to Harry J. Benda, the law created by the colonial nation did not provide any basis for the implementation of regional autonomy. Only large regions received attention in the implementation of regional government in the Dutch East Indies. Furthermore, it can be guessed that the focus of the implementation of regional autonomy was only focused on large provinces and regencies. In 1922, the Law on decentralization was issued, becoming the basis for the birth of new provinces with quite large administrative autonomy. However, Sutherland said that the granting of this autonomy was not intended to provide a way for the growth of local democratization, but as a bulwark against nationalism. The granting of administrative autonomy authority only caused chaos due to the increasingly sharp differences between the colonial aristocrats and the natives in governing the government. In 1931, the communist rebellion in West Java and West Sumatra forced the colonialists to withdraw local autonomy authority to the center (centralization). The characteristics of the colonial government system before independence were as follows: Indirect government, Implementation of double standard rules, Conservative European law for European elites and customary law for natives, development of native elites based on royal lineage as representatives of the colonial government outside Java, Isolation of nationalist movements and Strict control of rural areas and areas outside Java by traditional native elites who were obedient to colonial power.<sup>3</sup>

The Dutch government regime was replaced by the Japanese government. During the Japanese government in Indonesia, 3 (three) laws were issued that regulated the implementation of government called the 3 (three) *osamu sirei* 1942/27, namely Law Number 27 concerning changes to the government system (dated 6-8-2602), Law Number 28 concerning changes to *syuu* (dated 7-8-2602) and Law Number 30 concerning changing the name of the country and the name of the region (dated 1-9-2602). The Japanese government divided the region into residencies called *syuu* and its residents were called *syuutyoo*. After the residencies, there were two regional divisions called *ken* and *si* which were headed by *Kentyoo* and *Sityoo*. At the *kawedana*, assistant and village levels

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<sup>3</sup>Sudirman, *Dinamika Politik Lokal Dalam Social Capital* (Modal Sosial), p.744

were known as Gunson, while the regional heads were called Guntyoo, Sotyoo and Kutyyoo where their appointments were appointed by the Japanese government.<sup>4</sup>

After Indonesia gained its independence in 1945, the Dutch, who were expelled from the Dutch East Indies due to their defeat against Japan, tried to regain their power in Indonesia. All kinds of political pretexts were planned to seize the ambition to reoccupy Indonesia, because the Dutch kingdom still viewed Indonesia as its colony. Under pressure from the international world, the Dutch were forced to fulfill their moral responsibility as former colonizers by helping to design the administrative system of the government of the still very young Indonesian state. At that time, under the supervision of the United Nations, a series of negotiation missions between the Indonesian government and the Dutch government were carried out. Powerful countries, such as England, monitored the progress of the negotiations closely. During the struggle to maintain Indonesian independence, diplomatic negotiations took place between the Indonesian government and the Dutch government. In September 1946, Indonesian representatives began meetings with representatives of the Dutch government in Linggarjati, facilitated by the British government. The Dutch government forced the implementation of a federal state system in Indonesia.<sup>5</sup>

Since independence, provisions regarding regional government have been regulated in a number of laws, namely Law Number 1 of 1945 concerning Regulations on the Position of the Regional National Committee, Law Number 22 of 1948 concerning the Stipulation of Basic Rules regarding Self-Government in regions that have the right to regulate and manage their own households, Law Number 1 of 1957 concerning the Basic Principles of Regional Government, Law Number 18 of 1965 concerning the Basic Principles of Regional Government, Law Number 5 of 1974 concerning the Basic Principles of Regional Government, Law Number 22 of 1999 concerning Regional Government and, Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government.<sup>6</sup>

Based on Law Number 1 of 1945 concerning Regulations concerning the Position of the Regional National Committee, the election of regional heads is carried out by the central government.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, according to Law Number 22 of 1948

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<sup>4</sup>Bungasan Hutapea, *Dinamika Hukum Pemilihan Kepala Daerah di Indonesia*, (Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Sistem Hukum Nasional Badan Pembinaan Hukum Nasional; *Jurnal Rechtsvinding* Volume 4 Nomor 1 April Tahun 2015), p.4-5

<sup>5</sup>Joseph Riwu Kaho, *Prospek Otonomi Daerah di Negara Republik Indonesia*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2001), p.26-27

<sup>6</sup>Suharizal, *Pemilukada : Regulasi, dinamika dan konsep mendatang*, (Jakarta; Rajawali Pers, 2012)

<sup>7</sup>See Law Number 1 of 1945 concerning Regulations on the Position of Regional National Committees 11 See Article 18 of Law Number 22 of 1948 concerning the Stipulation of Basic Regulations concerning Self-Government in regions which have the right to regulate and manage

concerning the Establishment of Basic Regulations concerning Self-Government in regions that have the right to regulate and manage their own households, the Head of the Province is appointed by the President from candidates proposed by the DPRD.<sup>11</sup> The DPRD has the right to propose the dismissal of a regional head to the central government. However, since Law Number 1 of 1957 to Law Number 5 of 1974, the provisions for regional elections have not changed, namely following the provisions as follows:

- (1) The Regional Head is elected by the DPRD;
- (2) The Head of Level I Region is appointed and dismissed by the President;
- (3) The Head of Level II Region is appointed and dismissed by the Minister of Home Affairs and Regional Autonomy, from candidates proposed by the relevant DPRD.<sup>8</sup>

Since then in 1999, Indonesia has recorded history in entering the era of real decentralization. With the birth of Law Number 22 of 1999 concerning Regional Government, decentralization opened up opportunities for local politics to find a way out towards regional independence. One can imagine the euphoric spirit of the sons of the region transferring power from the center to the regions also meant giving them the opportunity to become new "Kings" of the region. President Habibie's strategic steps at that time, in addition to providing freedom of the press, freedom to establish political parties, free elections, and the provision of a referendum for the people of East Timor, which culminated in the release of Indonesia's youngest province to become fully independent. Thus, Law Number 22 of 1999 has provided the basis for a decentralized administrative government that has many weaknesses.<sup>9</sup>

After the reformation, based on Law Number 22 of 1999, regional elections were conducted using an indirect democracy system where the Regional Head and Deputy Regional Head were elected by the DPRD with a strong affirmation of the principle of decentralization. In Law Number 22 of 1999, the DPRD as the Regional Legislative Body has an equal position and is a partner of the Regional Government. The recruitment of Regional Heads is entirely under the authority of the DPRD. Meanwhile, the central government only determines and inaugurates Regional Heads based on the results of elections conducted by the local DPRD. According to Law Number 22 of 1999, the regional government consists of regional heads and regional apparatus. The DPRD is outside the regional government, which functions as a regional government legislative body to oversee the running of government. During this period, regional heads were elected entirely by the DPRD, there was no longer any interference from the

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their own affairs.

<sup>8</sup>Suharizal, *Pemilukada: Regulasi, dinamika dan konsep mendatang*, p.16

<sup>9</sup>Sudirman, *Dinamika Politik Lokal Dalam Social Capital (Modal Sosial)*, p.750



Central Government. This is different from the previous system, namely regional heads were appointed by the President or Minister of Home Affairs, who were proposed or proposed by the DPRD. If we look at the comparison of regional elections during the reformation era and the New Order era, it can be said that regional head elections in the reformation era were more democratic. However, the facts show that the authority of the DPRD and the factions is very strong and results in abuse of authority such as the rampant money politics at the DPRD level.<sup>10</sup>

In principle, Law Number 22 of 1999 seeks to bring regional governments closer to their people and provide greater transparency in order to achieve devolution of power. The role of the central government is limited to being a night watchman because the remaining responsibilities after becoming regional affairs include: national defense and security, foreign policy, fiscal and monetary issues, macroeconomic planning, natural resources, justice, and religion. Regions have the authority to manage public works, education and culture, health care, agriculture, transportation, industry, trade, investment, environmental issues, cooperatives, labor, and land. During the administration of Megawati Soekarnoputri, the problem of decentralization increasingly surfaced with the help of coverage by various media. Problems such as corruption, regional heads who play money politics rather than implementing it for their constituents, then people's representatives who only care about their own "stomachs", forced her government to issue a new "antidote" law, namely Law Number 32 of 2004, each concerning Regional Government and Central and Regional Financial Balance. According to Malley, Megawati's government did not amend the existing law, but instead replaced it completely. However, the changes did not cause much significant turmoil, and were even considered to have no significant obstacles because the first regent election in June 2005 went smoothly. The regional elections elected regional leaders directly, not party symbols like in the past, encouraging people to actively participate in the campaign and come in droves to vote for their chosen candidates in the election booths. The Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono administration was marked by decentralization policies called expansion. Expansion is the name used in the decentralization process that creates new administrative units within previously existing provinces and districts. The term may imitate the redistricting system in the United States, which means the re-formation of districts. The redistricting process in the United States is not at all specific because every election year is almost certain due to changes in population growth rates, urbanization, immigration, and emigration, so that the electoral district map must always be adjusted. Unlike similar processes in African countries, especially Nigeria, expansion is almost always associated with certain political intentions such as control of natural resources, the power of a handful of regional elites, and the opportunity to obtain

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<sup>10</sup>Bungasan Hutapea, *Dinamika Hukum Pemilihan Kepala Daerah di Indonesia*, p.6 41

allocations of financial assistance from the center. When the Constitutional Court approved a judicial review of Law 32 of 2004 on Regional Government in 2008, which allowed independent candidates to compete in regional head elections with political party cadre candidates, local politics seemed inseparable from the political and democratic process in Indonesia. Until now, according to the provisions of the law, regional head candidates could only be nominated by political parties, so that other candidates outside of political parties were not given any opportunity at all to advance in regional elections. This historic moment is very important for opening up space for local community participation in choosing their dream leaders. Political party figures will be forced to pay more attention to the aspirations of the community rather than their personal ambitions and the supporting parties.

However, a long road still needs to be fixed in order to pass independent regional head candidates in the regional elections of each region. The rules of the game and ethical limitations of submitting candidates still clash with the old election pattern that relies on the strength of political party machines and money as a guarantee of candidate victory. As a result, it is very difficult for independent candidates to win regional elections without the presence of supporting political parties. In fact, the opening of space for independent candidates is a learning event for local communities to implement real democracy. In line with its nature, democracy will return to its people too. The community actively participates in the social and political life process of their country as well as in each region where they live. Such a situation will push democracy to the local level. The tug-of-war between the central and local democratization processes and their interaction with democratic systems outside Indonesia, produces dynamics. In addition, decentralization occurs in all corners of the districts and cities in Indonesia, also producing local political dynamics. The strengthening of local politics can be seen from the excitement of the implementation of regional elections which in 2008 took place simultaneously in almost 300 districts and cities including the 33 provinces in Indonesia. One can imagine how much energy, time, and money are involved in the local democracy contest. The next question is how far the benefits of the local democratization process are for political learning for local communities that are not only limited to voicing their interests. But further, involved in every decision-making that will impact their lives.<sup>11</sup>

## **2. Research Methods**

This study uses qualitative methods to understand the dynamics of political tensions after the 2024 election in maintaining democratic stability in Indonesia. The type of research chosen is a case study, which allows for in-depth

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<sup>11</sup>Sudirman, *Dinamika Politik Lokal Dalam Social Capital (Modal Sosial)*, p.751-753



exploration of the specific context and complexity of the post-election political situation. The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data; primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants such as politicians, academics, members of election institutions, and civil society activists, while secondary data came from official documents, media reports, and related literature. Data collection techniques include semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which involve coding data and identifying key themes that emerge.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Preparation of Fighting for Serial Numbers

In the complex world of electoral politics, where first impressions can significantly influence voters' decisions, obtaining a memorable ballot number is a strategic consideration that has the potential to influence voters to choose a candidate. A memorable ballot number not only increases the visibility of the candidate on the ballot but also helps voters easily cast their ballots in support. This section explores the nuances of obtaining a ballot number that is not only logistically advantageous but also politically appealing.<sup>13</sup>

Strategic Considerations in the world of political numerology, where certain numbers are believed to carry positive connotations or cultural significance. In the dynamic electoral political landscape, the selection of legislative candidate serial numbers has strategic importance for legislative candidates, even in the context of an open proportional electoral system, in an open proportional electoral system, all candidates theoretically have an equal chance of being elected, regardless of their vote count. The selection process is based on the total votes received and not on the number sequence on the ballot paper.

In the discussion of the election, a legislative candidate must be familiar with what is meant by a beautiful number. The term "beautiful" is associated with a ballot number that is visually striking or considered to bring good luck. Candidates often compete to get the top ballot number (1-5) because they believe that it will increase their chances of winning.

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<sup>12</sup>Fiantika, F., Wasil, M., Jumiyati, S., Honesti, L., Wahyuni, S., Mouw, E., Mashudi, I., Hasanah, N., Maharani, A., & Ambarwati, K. (2022). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif. Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. In Rake Sarasin (Issue March). Surabaya: PT. Pustaka Pelajar. <https://scholar.google.com/citations>

<sup>13</sup>W. Meliala, "Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Pemilih Dalam Pemilihan Umum Kepala Daerah Dan Penerapan Strategi Bertahan Dan Menyerang Untuk Memenangkan Persaingan", *Jurnal Citizen Education*, Vol.2, No. 2 (Juli, 2020), 19

Although several political parties have determined their own criteria to maintain objectivity and fairness in the distribution of vote numbers, as well as minimizing internal conflicts, the candidate's serial number that they are supporting, such as educational qualifications, duration of party involvement, and the candidate's performance as a party member. However, it is still often found that candidates try to lobby the party in various ways to get the "pretty" serial number in order to further convince themselves of their success in the election.<sup>14</sup>

In an effort to obtain strategically advantageous or “beautiful” vote numbers, legislative candidates can use multifaceted strategies that include efforts at the individual and party levels.

#### 1. Increased Electability:

Increasing electability is a fundamental strategy. Candidates must focus on building a positive public image, interacting with constituents, and addressing key issues. This can be done by, among other things, observing constituents thoroughly, developing targeted policies, and actively participating in community events to gain acceptance from voters.

2. Cultivating Strong Party Affiliation: Building strong relationships with political parties is essential. Parties often prefer candidates who demonstrate loyalty and commitment. This can be done by, among other things, actively participating in party activities, contributing to party initiatives, and demonstrating strong alignment with party values and goals—all of which will likely influence strategic vote allocation.

This can also be interpreted as strengthening the membership network in the party, building connections within the party and the community can open up opportunities for negotiation regarding vote numbers. In addition, this can also be built by interacting with party leaders and influencers, and fostering relationships with community leaders to expand support.

#### Building(track record)

Good Track Record: A good track record distinguishes a candidate from his/her peers. It involves showcasing past accomplishments and contributions such as engaging in community service, participating in legislative or civic activities, and communicating accomplishments effectively through various media channels can quickly build an image in the eyes of the public.

By integrating these strategies, candidates can create a compelling narrative that not only increases their electability but also strengthens their relationship with the party, paving the way for consideration of strategic vote allocation.

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<sup>14</sup><https://www.kompas.id/baca/polhuk/2023/04/18/nomor-urut-cantik-masih-jadi-incaran-bakal-caleg>

## Building Networks and Mobilizing Volunteers

The second aspect that must be prepared before a candidate enters the election arena as a legislative or executive candidate is to build a strong network. A leader should already be aware that the field he enters is a social system platform and cannot be run alone. The strength of the network is not only a vehicle for someone to run for office at the beginning, but it will always be there as someone's term progresses, either at the legislative or executive level.

At the local level, winning support is not only about getting approval from party elites or upper class people, but also reaching the grassroots. Concrete steps and strategic policies are needed to build a solid network directly in the community. Below are things that can be done for someone who is preparing to run for legislative or executive office.

1. **Listening and Understanding the Needs of the Community:** It is important to start a political journey by listening to the voice of the community. A candidate needs to dive into the daily life in the village, understand the real needs, and absorb the aspirations of the people. This approach does not only focus on formal meetings, but also enters daily life through open dialogue, home visits, and attendance at various community activities.
2. **Understand Local Social and Cultural Dynamics:** Each region has unique social and cultural characteristics. Understanding these dynamics is key to forming an authentic network. A candidate needs to adapt to local values, respect customs, and understand the social structure of the community. The initiative to learn and adapt to the environment will speed up the process of acceptance in the eyes of the community.
3. **Active Involvement in Community Empowerment Programs:** Networking at the grassroots level is not just about political campaigns. A candidate must be actively involved in community empowerment programs. Initiatives such as skills training, agricultural development, or social projects that directly benefit the villagers can create emotional bonds and strengthen relationships.
4. **Building Partnerships with Local Figures:** Local figures have great influence at the village level. Building partnerships with them will help win the hearts of the people. A candidate can work with religious figures, community leaders, or traditional leaders. Collaboration with these figures not only opens the door to a wider network but also creates legitimacy in the eyes of the people.
5. **Building Partnerships with Volunteers:** As with local leaders, building partnerships with volunteers is an important step. Candidates need to understand the motivations and aspirations of the individuals who are part of their team. Valuing the contributions of volunteers and providing space for them to grow personally and professionally can create lasting relationships.
6. **Establishment of Rumah Juang as an Operational Base:** Establishing a "rumah juang" can be a unique strategy to strengthen the network. Rumah juang is a

place where successful teams and volunteers gather, discuss, and design strategies. It is not only a campaign headquarters, but also a place where passion, creativity, and dedication come together. Rumah juang creates a shared identity and a collective strength that can be relied on.<sup>15</sup>

7. Empathetic and Inclusive Communication: Mastering the art of communication is a key skill. A candidate needs to speak a language that people can understand, avoiding political rhetoric that is far from everyday reality. Listening skills and showing empathy in communication create strong personal bonds.

8. Leveraging Technology to Identify and Reach the Community: In the digital era, technology has become an effective tool to identify and reach the community. A candidate can utilize social media, websites, or special applications to provide information, listen to input, and establish two-way communication with the community. This approach not only builds networks, but also creates a space for active participation from the community.

9. Focus on Sustainable Development: Sustainable programs and initiatives are a major attraction. A candidate should focus on long-term development plans that provide real benefits to the community. By demonstrating a commitment to sustainable development, a candidate can win long-term support from the community.

10. Be Open to Feedback and Criticism: Imperfection is part of the political journey. A candidate needs to be open to feedback and criticism. Listening to the views of the public, even if they differ, creates an image of transparency and reliability. The initiative to improve and grow from such feedback will increase credibility in the eyes of the public.

11. Empowerment of Women and Vulnerable Groups: Building an inclusive political network that includes the empowerment of women and vulnerable groups. A candidate must design programs that support the empowerment of women, children, and other vulnerable groups. This inclusivity is not just about winning votes, but also about creating an equal and just society.

12. Synergy with Non-Governmental Organizations and NGOs: Collaboration with non-governmental organizations and NGOs can be a driver of success. A candidate can leverage the breadth of these organizations to reach out to people at various levels. This collaboration not only broadens the reach but also creates sustainable relationships.<sup>16</sup>

By applying this holistic strategy, a candidate can build a strong political network that is rooted in the community. These steps involve more than just seeking votes; they create genuine, sustainable relationships and make a positive contribution to the development of the community. This is the real stage for

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<sup>15</sup>Rully, "Strategi Komunikasi Politik Berbasis Relawan Dalam Pemenangan Pemilihan Gubernur", *Jurnal Representamen*, Vol. 7, No. 02 (Oktober, 2021), p. 40.

<sup>16</sup>Idham Arsyad, et al., *Membangun Jaringan Sosial Dan Kemitraan (Jakarta Pusat: Kementerian Desa, Pembangunan Daerah Tertinggal, Dan Transmigrasi Republik Indonesia, 2015)*, p. 14-16.

those who want to dedicate themselves to being true representatives of the aspirations and needs of the community at the local level.

### **3.2. Political Parties Candidates for Election Participants and Requirements for Political Parties to Become Election Participants**

Political parties that can become candidate participants in the election according to Article 6 (1) of PKPU 4/2022, consist of:

- a. Political parties that meet the threshold for obtaining at least 4% (four percent) of the valid votes obtained nationally from the last election;
- b. Political parties that do not meet the threshold of obtaining at least 4% (four percent) of the valid votes obtained nationally from the last election and have representation at the provincial DPRD and district/city DPRD levels;
- c. Political parties that do not meet the threshold of obtaining at least 4% (four percent) of the valid votes obtained nationally from the last election and do not have representation at the provincial DPRD and district/city DPRD levels; and
- d. Political parties that did not participate in the last election.

In the implementation of verification of Political Parties participating in the Election, Political Parties are divided into two groups, namely: a. Political Parties that are determined to be Election participants if they meet the requirements based on the results of the Administrative Verification. Included in this group are Political Parties that meet the threshold for obtaining at least 4% (four percent) of the valid votes obtained nationally from the last Election;

b. Political parties that are determined to be participants in the Election if they meet the requirements based on the results of Administrative Verification and Factual Verification. Included in this group:

- 1) Political parties that do not meet the threshold for obtaining at least 4% (four percent) of the valid votes obtained nationally from the last election and have representation at the provincial DPRD and district/city DPRD levels;
- 2) Political parties that do not meet the threshold for obtaining at least 4% (four percent) of the valid votes obtained nationally from the last election and do not have representation at the provincial DPRD and district/city DPRD levels; and
- 3) Political parties that did not participate in the last election.

Political parties that are candidates for election participants can become election participants after fulfilling the requirements of Article 7 paragraph (1) of PKPU 4/2022, namely:

- a. has the status of a legal entity in accordance with the Law on Political Parties;
- b. have management in all provinces;

- c. Management at the provincial level has management of at least 75% of the number of districts/cities in the province.
- d. management at the district/city level has management of at least 50% of the number of sub-districts in the district/city.
- e. include at least 30% female representation in the management of political parties at the central level;
- f. in the district/city level management has at least 1,000 (one thousand) members or 1/1,000 (one per thousand) of the population proven by ownership of KTA; g. has a Permanent Office for the management of Political Parties at the central, provincial, and district/city levels until the final stage of the Election;
- h. submit the name, symbol and logo of the Political Party to the KPU; and
- i. submit account numbers in the name of Political Parties at the central, provincial and district/city levels.

Fulfillment of the requirements for political party membership as mentioned above, is proven by ownership of a membership card (KTA) and a copy of the e-KTP or KK document for synchronization of membership data.

PKPU 4/2022 emphasizes the inclusion of at least 30% female representation in the management of political parties at the central level by adding the following provisions:

"In addition to including at least 30% (thirty percent) female representation in the management of Political Parties at the central level as referred to in paragraph (1) letter e, Political Parties also pay attention to 30% (thirty percent) female representation in the management of Political Parties at the provincial and district/city levels." (Article 7 (2) of PKPU 4/2022)

Article 8 (1) Documents required for political parties as candidates for election participants include:

- a. The State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia stating that the Political Party is registered as a legal entity issued by the State Printing Office of the Republic of Indonesia;
- b. copies of AD and ART approved by the minister in charge of government affairs in the field of law and human rights;
- c. decision of the Central Level Political Party Leadership regarding the management of the Central Level Political Party which is ratified by the minister who handles government affairs in the field of law and human rights;
- d. decisions of the Central Level Political Party Leadership regarding the management of the Provincial Level Political Party;
- e. decisions of the Political Party Leadership at the central level or in accordance with the Political Party's Articles of Association and Bylaws regarding the management of the Political Party at the district/city level;



f. decisions of the Political Party Leadership at the central level or in accordance with the Political Party's Articles of Association and Bylaws regarding the management of the Political Party at the sub-district level;

g. a statement letter from the Central Political Party Leader made using the MODEL F-LETTER form. POLITICAL PARTY STATEMENT signed by the Central Political Party Leader, stamped with the Political Party stamp and sufficient stamp duty, stating that:

1) data and documents required by political parties as election participants that have been inputted and uploaded via Sipol are correct and complete in accordance with statutory regulations;

2) have the State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia which states that the political party is registered as a legal entity;

3) have a copy of the Articles of Association and Bylaws which have been approved by the minister who handles government affairs in the field of law and human rights;

4) have Political Party management in all provinces, 75% (seventy five percent) of the number of districts/cities in the provincial level management area, and 50% (fifty percent) of the number of sub-districts in the district/city level management area;

5) include at least 30% (thirty percent) female representation in the management of Political Parties at the central level and pay attention to 30% (thirty percent) female representation in the management of Political Parties at the provincial and district/city levels;

6) have at least 1,000 (one thousand) members or 1/1,000 (one per thousand) people of the total population in the management of the Political Party at the district/city level with ownership of KTA and e-KTP or KK members of the Political Party;

7) have a Permanent Office used as a secretariat in carrying out the functions of the Political Party in every management of the Political Party at the central, provincial and district/city levels until the final stages of the Election, proven by a certificate of the Permanent Office of the Political Party management at the central, provincial and district/city levels using the MODEL F-OFFICE.PERMANENT-PARPOL form attached with a recapitulation of the list of Permanent Offices of the Political Party management at the central, provincial and district/city levels;

8) have a certificate of registration of the Political Party as a legal entity containing the name, symbol and logo of the Political Party from the minister who organizes government affairs in the field of law and human rights accompanied by the symbol and logo of the Political Party in color; and

9) submit proof of ownership of an account number in the name of a Political Party at the central, provincial and district/city levels to the KPU;

h. a certificate regarding the Permanent Office of the Political Party management at the central, provincial, and district/city levels using the MODEL

FKANTOR.TETAP-PARPOL form signed by the Leadership of the Political Party at the central level, stamped with the Political Party stamp and sufficient stamp duty, accompanied by a summary of the list of Permanent Offices of the Political Party management at the central, provincial, and district/city levels;

i. proof of membership of a Political Party in the form of a KTA supplemented with an e-KTP or KK, for at least 1,000 (one thousand) people or 1/1,000 (one per thousand) people of the total population in the management of the Political Party at the district/city level;

#### Registration of Political Parties as Candidates for Election Participants

provisions on Preparation for Registration, Political Parties, Announcements and Registration Time, Implementation of Registration, Return of Registration Documents, and Receipt of Registration Documents. This Chapter stipulates that Political Parties as prospective Election participants can submit their registration after submitting data and required documents uploaded via Sipol (Article 18 (1) PKPU 4/2022). Registration is carried out by the legitimate Central Political Party Leadership in accordance with the decision of the Central Political Party Leadership regarding the management of Central Political Parties which is authorized by the minister who organizes government affairs in the field of law and human rights (Article 18 (3) PKPU 4/2022)

Meanwhile, the documents that must be submitted by the Leadership of Political Parties as candidates for the Election include: a. Political Party registration letter;

b. a statement letter from the central level Political Party Leader made using the MODEL F-LETTER. STATEMENT-POLITICAL PARTY form; and c. recapitulation of the number of administrators and members of Political Parties as candidates for the Election using the MODEL F-RECAP form. POLITICAL PARTY REGISTRATION.

A statement letter from the Central Level Political Party Leader made using the MODEL F-LETTER form. STATEMENT-POLITICAL PARTY which must be submitted to the KPU at the time of registration of political parties as candidates for election participants contains a statement that:

a. data and documents required by political parties as candidates for election participants that have been inputted and uploaded via Sipol are correct and complete in accordance with statutory regulations;

b. have the State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia which states that the political party is registered as a legal entity;

c. have a copy of the Articles of Association and Bylaws which have been approved by the minister who handles government affairs in the field of law and human rights;

d. have Political Party management in all provinces, 75% (seventy five percent) of the number of districts/cities in the provincial level management area, and 50%

(fifty percent) of the number of sub-districts in the district/city level management area;

e. include at least 30% (thirty percent) female representation in the management of Political Parties at the central level and pay attention to 30% (thirty percent) female representation in the management of Political Parties at the provincial and district/city levels;

f. have at least 1,000 (one thousand) members or 1/1,000 (one per thousand) people of the total population in the management of the Political Party at the district/city level with ownership of KTA and KTP-el or KK members of the Political Party;

g. have a Permanent Office used as a secretariat in carrying out the functions of the Political Party in every management of the Political Party at the central, provincial, and district/city levels until the final stage of the Election, proven by a certificate of the Permanent Office of the Political Party management at the central, provincial, and district/city levels using the MODEL F-OFFICE form. PERMANENT-POLITICAL PARTY attached with a recapitulation of the list of Permanent Offices of the Political Party management at the central, provincial, and district/city levels;

### **3.3. Dynamics and Implementation of Democratic Elections**

Elections in a democratic country are essentially a political process to embody the principle of people's sovereignty in the administration of government. According to Jimly Asshiddiqie, there are two main things that are important requirements and elements for a democratic country, namely a democratic constitution and respect for human rights and citizen rights.<sup>17</sup>

Jimly Asshiddiqie's opinion is in line with the tendency of democratic countries to accept universal principles and internationally applicable standards in the preparation of the legal framework for elections. The main sources of universal principles and international standards in the preparation of the legal framework for elections include various international and regional declarations and conventions, as well as the UN Declaration and Convention on Human Rights and other legal documents, including:

a. Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948; b. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1960; c. European Convention of 1950 (with its Protocol) for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; d. Document of the 1990 Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE); e. The 1948 American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man; f. The 1969

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<sup>17</sup>Asshiddiqi, J. (2004). *Hukum Tata Negara dan Pilar-Pilar Demokrasi, Serpihan Pemikiran Hukum Media dan HAM*. Konstitusi Press.

American Convention on Human Rights; and g. The 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

As formulated by International IDEA, one of the most important things in building a legal framework for elections is to ensure that there is no double meaning. In addition, the legal framework for elections must cover all stages of the election. "The legal framework must be designed in such a way that it is not ambiguous, understandable and open, and must be able to highlight all elements of the electoral system that are needed to ensure democratic elections."

The creation of the legal framework for elections is part of the electoral cycle or stages of the election. There are 8 stages of the election that apply universally, namely (1) Creation of the legal framework for elections (legal framework) (2) Planning and making budget policies to support election logistics (planning and implementation) (3) Recruitment, training, education, and dissemination of election information (training, education, and election socialization) (4) Voter registration and data collection (voter registration) (5) Planning and implementation of the election campaign (electoral campaign); (6) Voting (election day and counting) (7) Validation of results (verification of results) 8 Stages after the election (postelection).<sup>18</sup>

In addition, there are a number of principles that must be considered by election organizers according to the standards of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), namely; Independence, Impartiality, Integrity, Transparency, Efficiency, Professionalism, Prioritizing service (service-mindedness). Election organizers are required to provide good service and prioritize all parties (parties, candidates, and the community) and prioritize work governance that can be accounted for from a legal aspect.<sup>19</sup>

The principles that must be met by election organizers as per the International IDEA standards have also been formulated in the Election Law, stated in Article 3 of Law 7/2017, election organizers in implementing the election stages must meet the principles of independence, honesty, fairness, law, orderliness, openness, proportionality, professionalism, accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency. International IDEA also notes fifteen election standards accepted by the international community, including; (1) structuring the legal framework (2) election system (3) determination of electoral districts/election units (4) the right to vote and be elected (5) election organizing institutions (6) voter registration and voter lists (7) access to votes for political parties and candidates (8) democratic election campaigns (9) media access and openness of information and freedom of expression (10) campaign funds and campaign financing (11)

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<sup>18</sup>Surbakti, R. & Nugroho, K. (2015). *"Studi tentang Desain Kelembagaan Pemilu yang Efektif"*, Kemitraan bagi Pembaruan Tata Pemerintahan. Jakarta.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

voting 12) vote counting and tabulation (13) the role of political party and candidate representation (14) election observers (15) compliance and enforcement of election law.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

Elections are one of the main pillars of a democratic system, where people are given the opportunity to determine the direction of leadership and policies through a fair and transparent election mechanism. However, in recent decades, the phenomenon of identity politics and polarization has increasingly emerged as a significant issue in electoral contests in various countries, including Indonesia. legislative candidates can use a multifaceted strategy that includes efforts at the individual and party levels. 1. Increasing Electability, 2. Cultivating Strong Party Affiliations, 3. Building Networks and Mobilizing Volunteers. Things that can be done for someone who is preparing to run for legislative or executive office: Listening and Understanding Community Needs, Understanding Local Social and Cultural Dynamics, Active Involvement in Community Empowerment Programs, Building Partnerships with Local Figures, Building Partnerships with Volunteers, Establishing Rumah Juang as an Operational Base, Empathetic and Inclusive Communication, Utilizing Technology to Identify and Reach Communities, Focusing on Sustainable Development, Being Open to Input and Criticism, Empowering Women and Vulnerable Groups, Synergy with Non-Governmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations.

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Law Number 1 of 1945 concerning Regulations on the Position of Regional National Committees 11 See Article 18 of Law Number 22 of 1948 concerning the Stipulation of Basic Regulations concerning Self-Government in regions which have the right to regulate and manage their own affairs.