

Jumping over Fences: Story from Demak Local Election

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Abstract. The article focuses on Mugiyono's act of "jumping over fences" from his endorsing party during his candidacy for the 2020 Demak Election. As a senior PDIP cadre, he switched into the Gerindra and Nasdem coalition. The argument built in this article is that external forces drove the change of the candidate's party. This research was conducted based on a qualitative research approach (case study type). Informants were selected purposively with the snowball technique. Data were collected by interviews and documentation studies, which was through online media news document searches. We found that the external factor, i.e., public support at the beginning of the nomination, particularly the order from religious clerics (dawuh kyai) and funding, was a driving factor for Mugiyono's decision. This study demonstrated that this behavior was not explained by oligarchic theory but also by the institutionalization of political parties.

Keywords: Political Parties, Candidate, Jumping Over Fences, Local Election

1 Introduction

The article focuses on the act of jumping the fence of the PDIP cadre, Mugiyono, in his candidacy for the 2020 Demak Regency Pilkada (local election) in Central Java, Indonesia. The concept of jumping fence refers to the act of someone who leaves his old party to join a new party. Indonesia uses the multiparty system, consisting of the nationalist parties (PDIP, Golkar, Gerindra, Democrat Party, Nasdem) and Islamic parties or Islamic mass-based (PKB, PPP, PAN). The argument built in this study, the external forces drove the jumping the fence act. This case deserves to be raised because the fence-jumping candidate was found in the Pilkada, but the study was less than similar cases in the legislative election.

The Demak Regency Election 2020 was followed by two pairs of candidates. The candidates for regent, Mugiyono and Eisti'anah, came from PDIP cadres when one of them was promoted by a coalition of other parties. PDIP is the largest nationalist party in Indonesia. Mugiyono is an old cadre; he has been a member of PDIP for 21 years and has served as chairman of the DPC (regional party branch) PDIP Demak (2010-2015), while Eisti'anah is a new cadre, she is Deputy Treasurer of the PDIP DPC Demak Regency (2019-present).

Mugiyono is paired with Ali Makhsun, the DPC PKB Demak Syuro Council chairman (2018-2023). PKB is the largest Islamic Party in Demak affiliated with the NU (the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia). The pair received support from several strategic groups, such as the support of the NU clerics of Demak Regency, the support of the village heads [1], the support of the Demak Nahdliyin Women's Movement [2], and the support of members of the BPD (Village Consultative Body) throughout Demak Regency [3]. Meanwhile, Eisti'anah is

coupled with Joko Sutanto, the Board of Supervisor of the Golkar Party Regional Representative Council, Demak Regency, and the incumbent deputy regent.

Both pairs registered so that they were later proposed as potential candidates to the PDIP. The PDIP Recommendations went to the Eisti'anah and Joko Sutanto pair, followed by recommendations from the parties in the coalition, namely the Golkar Party, PPP, Democrat Party, PAN, and PKB.

Unable to get the PDIP recommendation, Mugiyono-Ali Makhsun joined the Gerindra Party and the Nasdem Party. Gerindra Party recommendations were issued for both, but after that, Ali Makhsun resigned. M. Badruddin later replaced him. This pair was officially supported by the Gerindra Party and the Nasdem Party. The Gerindra Party coalition and the Nasdem Party only control 14 seats out of 50 seats in the Demak Local Council. Meanwhile, the coalition of PDIP, Golkar Party, PPP, Democrat Party, PAN, and PKB has 36 seats or 72% of the seats in the council. Having the risk of running for the regional head election by being promoted by another party, Mugiyono was dismissed as a member of the PDIP.

Mugiyono's resistance through a fence-jumping nomination deserves to be studied. This case deserves to be studied because jumping the fence is often carried out by candidates who have failed to be promoted by their party while they are party cadres. The study no longer examines the mechanism of nomination by political parties, which have been widely studied but focuses on the act of jumping the fence in nominations.

The theoretical contribution is that this research will enrich the study of regional elections from the perspective of informality. The previous studies focused more on formal procedures for nomination, such as explaining the mechanism for selecting candidates by political parties. Things that have been widely researched include single nominations [4][5][6], the pragmatism of political parties in nominations [7][8], and internal nomination patterns of political parties [9][10]. The practical contribution is that the results of this study are used as a basis for evaluating political parties in cadre and candidacy.

2 Method

The research deploys a qualitative research approach, case study type. With the snowball technique, informants were selected purposively to target the person who has experience and knowledge of the object of study. Data collection techniques used documentation studies through document searches, online news media, and interview methods with four informants. Data analysis followed Creswell's method [11].

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Demak Head Election

Demak Regency is one of the regencies in Central Java, located on the west side of Semarang City. The area is 89,743 ha, divided into 14 sub-districts and 246 villages. The population of Demak is relatively homogeneous, and the majority are Javanese. The majority of the population is Muslim, and 90% of the community is NU, both culturally and structurally. Demak is also known as the City of Saints (Wali). Demak was the former center of the first Islamic empire in Java [12]. The population of the Demak Regency in 2020 is 1,203,956 people. The sex ratio is 101.96. The productive age population is 69.23%. The pure

participation rate in senior high school is 59.59. The majority of the population is farmers. The poor population is 12.54% [13].

The political map of the Demak Regency underwent a shift. In the 1955 General Election, the NU Party (now abolished) was the strongest party; when the New Order era arrived, it shifted to the Golkar Party. Post-reform PDIP and PKB are the two major political parties in Demak Regency. PDIP won 1999, 2004, and 2019 elections, while PKB won the 2009 and 2014 elections.

The number of seats in the Demak Local Council is 50 seats. PDIP obtained 11 seats as the result of the 2019 general election. Hence, they could independently bring their pairs of candidates because the requirements for nomination were 20% of the local council seats or the equivalent of 10 seats. Successively the remaining seats are divided into the following: PKB has nine seats, Gerindra Party has eight seats, Golkar Party has seven seats, Nasdem Party has six seats, PPP and the Democratic Party each have three seats, and PAN also has three chairs.

The Demak Election 2020 was followed by two pairs of candidates. The two prospective candidates are PDIP cadres who are fighting over the recommendations of the PDIP central office. The candidate pairs have also been active in socializing, including lobbying political parties. The coalition became apparent after the recommendation of the PDIP to Eisti'anah-Joko Sutanto, followed by the recommendation of other parties to form a coalition to join the PDIP, leaving the Gerindra Party and the Nasdem Party.

Mugiyono, although a senior cadre in the PDIP, is not the one who received the recommendation from the PDIP DPP. Likewise, his partner, Ali Makhsun, is a PKB cadre who did not receive his party's recommendation. Mugiyono and Ali Makhsun are close to the Gerindra Party and the Nasdem Party. The Gerindra Party recommendation was issued for this pair, but later on, Ali Makhsun withdrew. As the replacement, Mugiyono took M. Badruddin. One of the considerations has an Islamic traditional scholar background, a composition supported by Islamic clerics. M. Badruddin is not a political party cadre, and he is the son of a deceased influential Islamic cleric in the Demak Regency. The Mugiyono-M. Badruddin pair was promoted by the Gerindra Party coalition and the Nasdem Party.

The candidate pairs Eisti'anah - Joko Sutanto and Mugiyono - M. Badruddin were officially registered with the General Election Commission of Demak Regency by the coalition of their respective supporting parties. However, Joko Sutanto failed because he did not pass the medical test. The supporting coalition replaced Joko Sutanto with Ali Makhsun (see Fig. 1.)

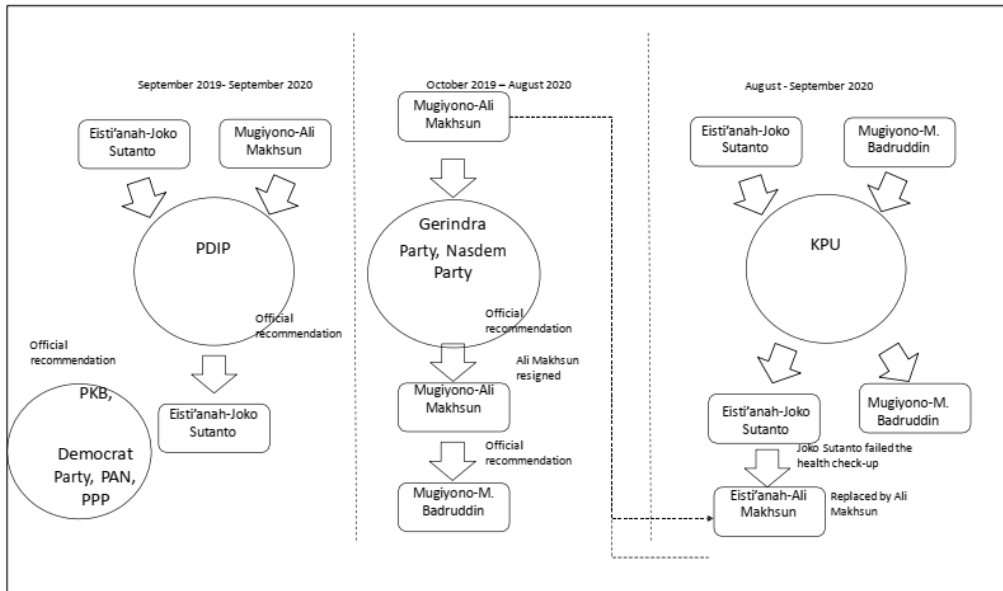


Fig. 1. Dynamics of 2020 Demak Regional Head Election Nomination

The entry of Ali Makhsun had changed the composition of the ideological identities of the candidates. Eistianah-Joko Sutanto both represent nationalist figures, while Mugiyono-M. Badruddin is a combination of nationalist-religious figures. The inclusion of Ali Makhsun also broke the support of the Demak clerics for Mugiyono-Ali Makhsun, which Mugiyono tried to defend by cooperating with M. Barduddin. Ali Makhsun is a figure whom Islamic clerics also blesses. When Ali Makhsun stepped down as Mugiyono's partner, a replacement was also sought from a figure with the same background, intended to maintain the Islamic clerics' mandate. This mandate regarding the candidate for the leader of the Demak Regency is male because it underlies the Demak Islamic clerics' Bahtsul Masail Decree.

“The Demak Islamic clerics’ Bahtsul Masail Decree states that the regent and his deputy must be people who are allowed to give preach... Bahtsul Masail decision strengthens and is under the condition of Demak, which has unique characteristics compared to other regions, As the city of the Saints, Demak must be led by men, both the position of the regent and his deputy [3].

The Demak Regional Head Election 2020 was won by the Eisti'anah - Ali Makhsun pair with a difference of 9.55% of votes. Eisti'anah - Ali Makhsun's vote was 56.89%, while Mugiyono - M. Badruddin's vote was 43.11%.

3.2 The problem of the economic oligarchy and Institutionalization of Political Parties

The nomination of regional head and deputy regional head in the 2020 Demak Regional Head Election was very dynamic, and there was a change in the candidacy of deputy regent in both pairs of candidates in a relatively short time (see Figure 1). These changes further strengthened the pragmatic phenomenon in the nomination of regional head elections. Regional Head Election candidacy showed that it was the work of individual candidates, not the work of

political parties, which institutionally should prepare candidates to be contested in the Regional Head Election and negotiated with coalition partners. In practice, political parties were passively waiting for candidates to register, so they did not have to be cadres. Candidates were also busy lobbying all party officials at the local level, while the final decision rests with the central party. From this, it can be estimated the number of costs borne by the candidate. Since its beginning, the practice of regional head elections nomination does not reflect that the candidates originate from the regeneration process of political parties. In Regional Head Election, the role of political parties is to become the vehicle instead of the institution to produce leader candidates. The 2020 Demak Regional Head Election was indeed able to bring up two PDIP cadres as candidates for regent. It suggests that PDIP is ready with a cadre of potential leaders. However, the transfer of PDIP cadres to other parties shows that their cadres cannot fortify these cadres, even those in the senior category. Mugiyono failed to get a recommendation but still registered himself as a candidate by using another party. Mugiyono reasoned because he had received the mandate from the Islamic clerics.

“In fact, we are requested by the muassis, elderly Islamic cleric, and pledged allegiance at the Mranggen Futuhiyah Islamic boarding school (Indonesian: pondok pesantren) through Jalsa, then the village head, fatayat, muslimat, and so on. And that is the mandate that we must carry out” [14]

Mugiyono - Ali Mahsun were cadres from the two largest parties in Demak Regency and had the support from the strategic groups, namely the Demak Regency Islamic clerics, but their party did not recommend them. The factor of Halim, a local boss in Demak Regency, was able to influence the political map of Demak Regency. This pattern is similar to Sidel [15], who predicts that local bosses will dominate the electoral politics of direct elections in Indonesia, controlled by money. Halim is a principal contractor in Demak Regency, and he is the Head of the Demak Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He is an investor in the Regional Head Election, including the investor in the Regional Head Election outside Demak Regency, and Eisti'anah is his daughter. Traces of Halim can be found in all local elections in Demak Regency [16]. The formation of a large coalition carrying Eisti'anah could not be separated from Halim's significant role. Economic interests also gave rise to new regional head election investors for Mugiyono, and the initial was E. He was working on a Central Java-scale development project, some of which were located in the Demak regency area. E's business friend had a close relationship with the chairman of the Gerindra Party. Halim also had close ties to the Nasdem Party, but in the 2019 elections, his relationship was strained.

The case of jumping the fence illustrates the problem of party institutionalization. At least four variables determine the degree of institutionalization of political parties, namely the degree of systematicity, value identity, decision autonomy, and public image [17][18]. Systematic is the management of party infrastructure and the implementation of party functions and other provisions that have been agreed upon by the party, such as; the identity of values related to the relationship between the party and its base, whether specific ideological values are attached to it; decision autonomy related to the relationship between political parties and external parties, whether there is dependence in decision-making and finance; and public image associated with the ability of a political party to instill a specific impression in the minds of voters. By referring to the size of the institutionalization of political parties - at least from the degree of decision autonomy - it can be concluded that there are problems with the supporting parties.

In his study of the Party Reform Agenda, Fernandes and Okthariza [19] identified several internal party constraints in building internal democracy, namely (1) conflict because, among other things, the internal party policymaking process is not democratic. (2) oligarchic leadership; (3) does not have a fixed funding source while elections in Indonesia are expensive, making political parties dependent on other funding sources outside the party or illegal ones. These three problems illustrate that there are problems in the institutionalization of democracy within political parties. The three problems can explain the nomination process in the Demak Regional Head Election. There are problems in the party's internal democracy and the operation of external factors in the nomination process.

4 Conclusion

The 2020 Demak Regency Regional Head Election was part of the Regional Head Election performance controlled by the political elite; in a direct Regional Head Election, the power of the demos should have been more decisive. The external power of the economic oligarchy played a vital role in the decisions of political parties in the nomination so that the nomination became exclusive. The exclusivity of the nomination and the external forces that influence the party's decision in nomination illustrates the problem in the institutionalization of political parties.

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