

Winning Strategy of Female Village Head Candidates in 2018 and 2020 Pemalang Regency Simultaneous Village Election

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Abstract. This paper intends to see the pattern of the winning strategy of female village head candidates in the 2018 and 2020 Pemalang Regency simultaneous village elections. The fundamental difference also lies in the conditions of implementation that in 2020 was carried out amid the Covid-19 pandemic. One of the interesting things about the results of the Village Election is the victory of the female village head candidate because the number as a candidate is below 20%. One of the village heads elected in the 2018 simultaneous elections was female and defeated another candidate for village head who was the incumbent. In the 2020 simultaneous elections, the election results showed that there was one candidate for the elected female village head out of the 28 villages that carried out the Village Election. Provisional research results showed that the victory of female village head candidates was supported by a strong political network and economic capital.

Keywords: Village Chief, Women, Political Strategy

1 Introduction

The Village Head is the head of a village government organization that is strategically located and has extensive responsibilities. Responsibilities include the affairs of separate work duties and are divided into government agency officials based on the principle of deconcentration and decentralization, while in the village, the responsibility of the service duties is centered on the Village Head. The responsibility of the work's task can be carried out alone by the Village Head or through others. It means that formal leaders, namely village heads, are needed to encourage and motivate the community to participate in development to foster community participation. The Village Head must act as a motivator, communicator and build community organizations to increase community participation in the development process. Therefore, choosing a village head is the first step in determining the village development process's right leader. The issuance of Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages provides different procedures in implementing village head elections. If the initial selection of village heads was conducted with different periods between villages, selecting village heads is held simultaneously in one district [1, pp. 71–77].

The simultaneous selection of village heads (Pilkades) became an interesting phenomenon in rural political studies because democratic parties at the village level became more tumultuous when held simultaneously. One of the elections for village heads (Pilkades) interesting to observe is in Pemalang Regency in 2018. The selection of village heads

(Pilkades) was conducted simultaneously but gradually in 172 villages. The selection of village heads (Pilkades) held simultaneously from September 2 to November 4, 2018, through the *e-voting* system is considered more efficient and easier to do for all social levels who already have an electronic resident identification card (e-KTP). This E-voting system is a new mechanism in the implementation of elections, especially if given the countryside conditions; this system is interesting to see as a form of innovation. The considered successful implementation was held in 2018 and became a reference for the simultaneous implementation of the village head election in 2020 [2].

Simultaneous elections in the Pematang district in 2020 were held in 28 villages from 12 sub-districts. The fundamental difference also lies in the implementation conditions that in 2020 are carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic. One exciting thing about the village head election result is the female village head candidate's victory because the number as a candidate is below 20%. Pamutih Village Ulujami Subdistrict, the village head elected in the 2018 simultaneous elections, is a woman and defeated other village head candidates who are incumbents. In the 2020 general election, the election results showed that one female village head candidate was elected out of the 28 villages that carried out the elections. Therefore, this study intends to look at the strategy of winning female village head candidates in the village head election simultaneously in the 2018 and 2020 Pematang Regency [2]. Based on this background, the writer is interested in describing the pattern of how is the female village head candidates' winning strategy in the village head election simultaneously in 2018 and 2020 Pematang Regency.

2 Method

The study used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is research that seeks and obtains information in depth and breadth from the state of the community in Pematang Regency as one of the efforts to see the strategy used by female village head candidates in the 2018 and 2020 Concurrent Elections so that they are elected as Village Heads through e-voting mechanisms. The method of information retrieval used in this study is *purposive sampling*, i.e., researchers tend to choose informants based on certain considerations, where researchers are more likely to choose informants who are considered to know the problem in-depth and trustworthy [3]. This research will be analyzed with interactive analysis. Miles and Huberman say that data analysis consists of three activities that occur simultaneously: Data Reduction, Data Presentation, and Conclusion withdrawal [4, p. 100].

3 Result and Discussion

The election of village heads is one of the arenas of political competition to choose leaders who are of interest to the community. This condition illustrates that democracy at the village level is an important aspect in determining the success of villages in achieving prosperity in village development. Village head election feels more specific than other elections such as the regional head election, presidential election, and legislative election, and this is due to the closeness and direct relationship between voters and candidates. Therefore, the village head election can be said to be part of a process of political activity to strengthen community participation so that it can encourage the birth of democracy at the village level. The village head or can be in various names in other local places, has interesting dynamics since the pre-

independence era, the independence era, the new order era, the reform era until now with the issuance of Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. The birth of village regulations separate from regional regulations shows that villages can autonomously build village independence and welfare based on village potential and restore village origin rights. This village independence is also supported by changes in village finance arrangements (financial independence), strengthening the process of selecting leaders, and changing the mechanism for selecting village officials. Thus, the election of the village head is not something simple because directly the real work of the village head will be felt by the community, which will ultimately assess the quality of the village head's leadership in the welfare of the community.

Pemalang Regency, which held simultaneous village head elections in 2018 and 2020, had elected village heads, three of them being female village heads. Two villages won the female village head candidate, namely Pamutih Village, Ulujami Sub-district, which Purwati won. Meanwhile, Titik Iswati won Kendalrejo Village, Petarukan Sub-district. In the 2020 village head election, of the 28 villages that held village head election, one village resulted in a village head victory for women, namely Dyah Anggraeni from Bantarbolang Village, Bantarbolang District, who won an absolute vote.

3.1 Political Marketing and Social Capital

The public will consider who will speak on their behalf. Public loyalty is something that political institutions need to achieve. Candidates or candidates need to maintain loyalty and *trust* the public to continue projecting votes to them. These political products are fundamental capital for candidates or candidates that must be created and maintained so that the general public can choose them as representatives of the public. Three strategies that can be mapped in the victory of female village head candidates in the simultaneous Pemalang village head election in 2018 and 2020 are Promotion, Price and Place [5]. In addition, this strategy is also strengthened by strengthening social capital between prospective village heads and the community.

The simultaneous village head election of Pemalang Regency in 2018 was a village head election held using e-voting and attended by 172 villages, and 2 of them were won by female candidates. In the political vortex, women have their own obstacles to be accepted and convince voters. The 2018 and 2020 simultaneous elections implemented different mechanism. Simultaneous elections in 2018 were interesting to follow because they used the e-voting system while the 2020 Village Simultaneous Election were interesting to follow because they were done in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic conditions and were no longer done with the e-voting system. Female candidates have to be able to have a clear vision and mission and have to be able to compete in the culture of a patriarchal society. Women village heads have advantages, including those who understand the development realization that mainstreams gender is friendly to women and cares about children. Women's political participation is currently very much needed in the effort to integrate gender needs in various public policies [6, pp. 1–18]. The victory of the female village head candidate is the same as the victory of political officials who require a series of planned, strategic but also tactical activities, with long-term and short dimensions, to spread political meaning to the voting community. Thus, political marketing is used as an approach or marketing method to help politicians or political parties to be more effective and efficient in building relationships with voters. These relationships are broadly defined, ranging from physical contact during campaigns to indirect communication through mass media [5]. The most obvious difference from village head elections compared to other leader elections is the absence of political parties as candidate support machines. This condition gives an idea that the winning strategy

of female village head candidates rests on candidates, successful teams and voter characteristics. Therefore, at least female candidates in the contestation vortex of village head election must have a stronger promotion, cost and area mapping strategy. In this study, the winning strategy of female village head candidates was also collaborated with the existence of social capital which became a supporting factor of the three strategies. This is done with the assessment that political marketing strategies will not be separated from social capital that has been present as a culture as well as an 'asset' for candidates. Bourdieu defines social capital as the entirety of actual and potential resources associated with the ownership of a fixed network of institutional relationships based on mutual understanding and mutual acknowledgement [7]. Social capital theory is divided into 3 according to Woolcock [8, pp. 151–208], *Bonding Social Capital, Bridging Social Capital, and Linking Social Capital*.

The first strategy is to do a promotion. Much of the literature in political promotion discusses the way political institutions advance their ideas of promotion, party stage, and ideology during political contestation [5]. Promotion is certainly also inseparable from the existence of the product that is the candidate itself who is worthy and has a strong character to promote. Political promotion is done by utilizing a variety of media ranging from top-line political communication to political communication with traditional media. Promotion; similar to other candidates, female village head candidates formulate a vision, mission, and work program under the community's needs. The method used in preparing the vision and mission is to conduct aspirational screening in stages. Promotion is also carried out by establishing personal branding carried out by the success team. The Village Heads of Pamutih, Kendalrejo and Bantarbolang provides personal branding that listens to community complaints and easily socializes. It is also supported by the background of the three of them, who have previous experiences, such as the Bantarbolang Village Head, who had been village officials for 20 years, and the Kendalrejo Village Head, who was inspired by her husband, who previously served as village head for two terms. It shows that the applied promotions took advantage of the relationships and roles of the candidates before running for village head. In other words, the promotion is more by using political communication with interpersonal communication. This condition also shows that there is a bonding social capital based on social background. A fundamental feature of the social capital bonding hypothesis is that many associations expressly identify its potential strength. Hence, the more quantity of individuals of a society, the better the social capital [9].

The second strategy and also acted as the obstacle for the female village head candidates to advance to contest is the cost. Price is inevitably used to collect votes, especially during the campaign period. The costs incurred by female candidates during the nomination stage were not small, and the three elected village heads financed the election process from personal sources of funds, and some were collected from funds from the success teams or their supporters. Through the campaign method, all of which use the "pick up the ball" model or meet directly at community activities, the costs incurred are social donations. The activities that were followed, which also became a promotional event, were in the form of community activities such as *tahlilan*, PKK activities, activities of associations of RT or hamlet residents, and so on. In this activity, the costs that the candidates have personally incurred also manifest their concern for the community. The village head of Kendalrejo Titik Iswati said that the costs he had spent during the nomination period amounted to 400-500 million, with the distribution of costs; in the first period of Rp. 125,000,000, then in the second period, it increased because the candidate's opponent has better financial potential, and if added up, the nominal can reach Rp. 400,000,000 to Rp. 500,000,000. It shows that strong political opponents in terms of the economy are also a problem during the contestation process. This

condition illustrates that Bridging Social Capital also needs to be supported by strong economic capital. Therefore, Price, on the one hand, is a supporting factor in the strategy of winning the village head candidacy, but on the other hand, it is also an obstacle for village head candidates, especially for female village head candidates so that they can contest with their political opponents. Costs incurred in community activities are also carried out to strengthen the relationship between candidates and individuals, and community groups. The connecting social capital helps regulate the winning methodology of the contest candidates because it involves individuals from different meetings [10, p. 87]. That is, that the candidate for village head through the costs incurred at the same time has a wider opportunity in binding voters through various community activities that have taken place both there and the absence of village head elections. The third strategy related to Place is to do voter mapping so that it can make it easier to map the vote in simulating victory. The location is expressly identified by the method of participation and dissemination of messages from candidates to the general public as citizens. The direct election of the village head has a strong bond between the voters and the candidate they choose. Therefore, mapping supporting areas in order to encourage other areas that still have fewer supporters is important. Place, in this strategy; The successful team used a strategy by forming a winning team in each RT or village so that each team representative could provide reports and an overview of the condition of voters in their area. The team formed based on the area then has a post to map out the right approach for each community group. The classification of supporters is mainly done through an approach to village leaders, usually village elders, religious leaders, youth leaders, and women leaders in the village. One of the strategies used by the Success Team was to avoid the presence of more than one candidate from the existing village because they realized that this would create a split in the votes. The support of these leaders and good mapping of the area became one of the determining factors in the process of winning the Bantarbolang Village Head who managed to get 52% of the votes, or more than half of the Permanent Voters List, even the votes of the other four candidates if added up would not be able to outperform the voice of Dyah Anggraeni.

4 Conclusion

The success of female village head candidates to win in the simultaneous Pilkades contestation in Pemalang Regency in 2018 and 2020 cannot be separated from the large role of the success team and the background of candidates who can build good communication with existing community groups. The promotions and social branding carried out are easily accepted by the public regardless of whether the candidate is a woman. It is because the candidate has managed to build a good communication relationship even before running for village head. It means that female village head candidates have the advantage of establishing good relations and creating a good self-image in the community so that people no longer question the woman as a leader in their village. Another thing that cannot be denied is the costs incurred. It is also part of efforts to maintain good relations with the community; activities are visited through social funds or donations to the community. Therefore, the source of funds owned by the candidate can come from personal funds and funds that the success team has collected from supporters who really want the candidate to be elected as village head. Appropriate regional mapping also provides support for the creation of a stronger network. The acts as a means of approaching community leaders who are classified into various groups.

The solid voice of the supporters of these figures also impacted the victory of the female village head candidates to excel and, in the end, be successful in being elected as village heads.

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