

POLITICAL MARKETING AND IMPORTANCE MARKET CONTEXT IN INDONESIA REGIONAL ELECTION: An Analysis on Regional Election of Takalar 2017

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Abstract

The winning of Syamsari Kitta-Achmad Dg Se're (SK-HD) against the incumbent Burhanuddin B - Natsir Ibrahim (Bur-Nojeng) was quite surprising in 2017 Local Election of Takalar Regency. Since the incumbent couple was believed to be in the 'safe seat' during the election. Based on several surveys and supported by many political parties, the incumbent couple was predicted to effortlessly win the election. The final result, however, showed that the new candidate was the winner despite being limitedly supported by merely three political parties. One factor which had seemingly been as the main winning strategy was to maximize the couple's political marketing. This study aims to describe the political marketing strategy undertaken by the winning candidates of SK-HD in the 2017 Takalar local election. Using qualitative research, the results of this study indicate that the winning of SK-HD was based on several aspects. These may include the mixture of the candidate's social, political and economical assets, coupled with the existing socio-political context of Takalar and of South Sulawesi Province, and the marketing strategy which had vividly and thoroughly been executed by their teamwork.

Keywords:

Political Marketing Strategy, Local Election, Takalar Regency

Introduction

Election is one of important pillars for the existence of democracy. Elections are reflection of enactment principles of democracy related to respect equality between all people, including in Indonesia. Democracy implementation in Indonesia including the general election also taking place in the local level. The regional election to vote for the regional governmental heads in Indonesia is a reflection democracy in various regions in Indonesia. It based on the Indonesian constitution, the UUD 1945. In Article 18 Paragraph 4 of the Second Amendment to the constitution stipulates: "*Governors, Regents and Mayors respectively as heads of provincial, district and municipal governments are elected democratically.*" The constitution then legitimated the regional

elections formally. In this point, the constitution basically have been provided opportunity for all Indonesian citizens to compete in position of regional head.

When Indonesia came to the reform era that triggered by the fall of Suharto as Indonesia's president during the New Order since 1966 until 1998, the electoral system in Indonesia experienced fundamental changing. Since 2005, the regional elections have been conducted through a direct election mechanism. After the previous period, the regional head was elected by the legislative members, thru the new mechanism, people became the determinant aspect to determine who will as the regional head. That condition has essentially shifted the domain of determining from exclusively sphere due to involves only a few political elites then growing widely by involving people to vote. One important effect of this shift in electoral mechanisms candidates must able to convince as many as voters to vote them. It necessarily requires ability of candidates and their teams to draw attention and support through appropriate strategies in every electoral process.

In 2017, Indonesia had held simultaneously regional election in several areas. One of region that conducting regional election was the Takalar District in South Sulawesi province. The regional election in Takalar was as the only election took place in the South Sulawesi Province. The contestation has shown interesting phenomenon. The contestation held in this area confront two pairs of candidates. The first pair, Burhanuddin B - Natsir Ibrahim (Bur-Nojeng) is the incumbent candidate. This candidate was challenged by the second pair Syamsari Kitta - Achmad Dg Se're (SK-HD). The results is quite surprising and seems break out many predictions which involved before the election. Surveys before the election resulted that the Bur-Nojeng leads in electability in compare with the challenger. A survey conducted by the *Celebes Research Center* (CRC) which conducted ten days before the voting day, showed Bur-Nojeng still excelled by 61.3% versus 29.8% for SK-HD in electability (Rakyatku News, 2017). The result seems predict incumbent will win easily on this contestation. Moreover, the candidate also supported by majority of Political Parties in Takalar regency were Golkar, PDIP, PAN, Hanura, Gerindra, PBB, PPP, Democrat, and PKPI were as the supporting parties. The condition was inversely to the challenger candidate. The SK-HD only supported by three parties, Nasdem, PKS and PKB. This condition has led optimism of the incumbent to win the elections in 2017 and leads Takalar for the

second periods. After the voting day on February 15, 2017, the election results different fact. The incumbent who was supported by many political party and favored by some surveys had lose. Based on the Regional General Elections Commission *Takalar* (KPUD Takalar, 2017), the challenger, SK-HD, earned 88.113 votes (50.58%), while the incumbent only earned 86,090 votes (49.42%). This figure shows that the contestation was won by very slight difference votes. It was only 2024 votes (1.16%). The win of challenger candidate indicates a shift in voter attitudes that is dived by survey agencies. The important thing that is considered significantly in the SK-HD victory was their succeed to attract people attention and support to this candidate. It seems related to their teamwork strategy and ability to sell the challenger candidate trough appropriate market strategy or good political marketing strategy together with the objective context in *Takalar*.

Marketing Politics and Political Contestation in General Election

Basically, Political Marketing is combination of the science of marketing and application of the political science. Therefore, basically this concept essentially borrows marketing concept of the economics science. Thus marketing in the political context can be understood by looking at the methods of marketing work similarly with the business context. In the business marketing, there are four concepts applied to gain market share. Those are *Product, Price, Promotion, and Place* (4P). A product is assumed could be marketed well and accepted by public by observing and applying right and appropriate strategy for these four things. Based on that, the marketing politics applies the 4P concept of political products that have different characteristics from commercial products as well as look at more large market share (Misra 2015).

In that sense, political marketing assumes that there is a marketable political product that should be sell to the appropriate consumers. Political products in this case possibly political parties or candidates who fought in a market called elections. In that context, People's rights to vote is assumed as the purchasing power to buy right goods based on their needs and interest. It means public acceptance to the offered political product will be realized through voting support in the election.

Actually, as an academic subject, political marketing is relatively new. But its application has existed seemly since the French revolution in 1789 thru the slogan

Liberte, Egalite and Fraternite. In 1830s, a professional advertising practitioner, Charles Barker invented political advertising. Meanwhile, Franklin D Roosevelt launched the *fire side chats* through broadcast media as part of his political marketing (Adman 2004). Those facts becomes a possible way to see the use of marketing aspects in political processes, including elections.

Due to the backgrounds, interests, preferences, and interests of the people tend diversely as buyers in Political Marketing, consequently it needed appropriate strategy in offered the political products. Therefore one of the important things to do is the accuracy in socialization and campaign of candidates and political parties. Thus, the community as buyer will choose the product offered either in the form of figures, political ideas, and vision encapsulated in a distinctive and consistent identity (Firmanzah 2007).

In Indonesia, application of political marketing has been started openly since 1998. This application grew with the political euphoria that occurred in the reform era when many political parties stood and participated in the Indonesia 1999 elections after the fall of Suharto. The changes of electoral system where gives right for people to vote and determine election result directly make political process in elections changed. In this reformation era many parties are emerging. It was reaching 150 parties. But only 48 political parties participated in the 1999 election. At the next general election in 2004, the participated political parties decrease to only 24 participants. This depreciation cannot separated from strategy of each political party to maintain and develop their institution by selling their political product to the public. The number of political parties that seek support from people make the process becomes more complex. Due to that condition, use of political marketing as a winning strategy should be more appropriate to the contextual condition of the buyers. A good political marketing should be directed to precisely target.

According to Firmanzah (2007) marketing concept adapted in the political field can be used to improve efficiency and effectiveness transfer of ideology and programs, from contestant and candidates to people. Through the implementation of appropriate marketing strategies as like as in the business context, both organizations and individuals in politics are believed to gain widely support from people as political product buyers. In the political marketing strategy at least there are three strategies

could be use to effective marketing which are *Push marketing*, *Pull marketing* and *Pass marketing*. Those involved not only within the campaign period but also before.

The push marketing emphasizes that political marketing can be done directly or face to face, this form of political marketing can be seen in the political campaign activities directly conducted by the candidate. The pull marketing is a form of political marketing by using mass media either print or electronic media. In this case both organizations and individuals who are positioned as candidates can use it to market themselves to the public. The last strategy is pass marketing. This latter strategy is concerned with how the delivery of political products involves influential figures or actors within society context. Thus, it can be understood that political marketing will depend on how the strategy implemented appropriately. In addition, other things that is also important to get attention and affected success of political marketing is the condition and the quality of candidates. In the context of political marketing, it is known as the *modality* (owned of important resources). Modality is understood as the things that exist in every candidate or institution that could affect marketing process. Such modalities are; *Political Assets*, *Social Assets*, and *Economical Assets*.

Political Assets in political contestation can be attributed to the support of certain political institutions or political parties in a political contest such as election. In the context of elections as well as regional election, the capital usually manifest in the form of political party supports. As institution that has authority to support candidates in the election process, political parties certainly becomes crucial political capital for contesting candidates. Political asset is related to the giving of power / resources to realize candidate interests of political power (Janoski, et.al. 2005)

Thus, this asset is usually related to one's own power, which can be operated or contribute to the success of its contestation. In a concrete form, political assets often realized through political support of Political Parties and the support of political elites to win elections.

Furthermore, the Social Asset is generally related to the social background of the candidates. It can be observed through education, profession, and personality in society (as religious leaders, customs leader, youth organizations, and so on). This asset is usually closely related to efforts of candidates in maintain relationships and trust of the community by showing image as a good person or institution in accordance with the

ideal preferences of people. In this point, Fukuyama states social capital as capability arising from a common belief in a society or parts of it (Fukuyama as cited in Syahra 2003). It can be institutionalized in the smallest and most basic social group, social asset is different from human asset as far as it can be created and transmitted through cultural mechanisms such as religion, tradition or history. Social asset is the support of candidate figures because his credence so that the trust of the community creates social interaction and the existence of networks.

The last asset is the Economics asset. In the election process including elections, every candidate is always required to prepare and face contestation well including by preparing modalities from the economic side. This asset is usually associated with large financing in financing various activities in each stage of contestation. Understanding economic assets departs from the understanding of objects that have economic value symbolized by money. In an economic perspective, asset can also be an investment that a person gives on the other side, then is exchanged for profit in the form of goods or money with the political services. In campaign activities for example, it usually needed a lot of money to finance activities during the socialization or campaign process and other strategy implementation. The economist have discussed about this assets especially as economic or financial capital. The concept of capital is relatively easy to understand because spending or investing money is part of social daily life of people. Economic assets in form of financial capital is also easy to be measured. Money can be calculated based on amount of money spent to purchase some goods. In that sense, simply, the economic assets in the election process can be understood as the financial capacity possessed by candidates either individual or groups or even based on charity for others to that could be use during the contestation.

Political Marketing Implementation in by The Syamsari Kitta-Achmad Dg Se're (SK-HD) Teamwork.

a. Appropriate Positive Image to be Selling

One important factor that owned by the SK-HD in the Takalar regional elections 2017 is the good image as good people. At the very least, the image is associated to their track record that considered as free of the corruption issues. It was became one crucial aspect of people trusted of this candidate as their social assets. This assets was

fully help the teamwork in marketing these candidates to the public. Their image was made the marketing process was smoothly. There were several ways done by the SK-HD teamwork to selling this this candidate.

The first strategy was the door to door strategy. It was done in order to grab support especially from the grass root community. Thru direct visit to each home, the SK-HD teamwork hopes to get sympathy from the community visited after promote the candidate directly. Since the teamwork was structured comprehensively from the sub-district level to the smaller level of the hamlet, then they can approach as much as people directly in every area. Due to they could monitored properly all people daily life then the marketing team can make the door-to-door marketing efforts effectively based on the local context. Through the process, the candidate image as their social assets was directly referred to the community means as direct selling. It was done by showing the figure of SK-HD as anticorruption candidate means both are good persons. The condition is also fundamentally supported by issues related to their rival candidate BUR-Nojeng, where issued as the corruptor. Thus, the people who visited by the SK-HD marketing team has opportunity to made a comparison between the candidates offered with the opposing directly. It makes people tend to made faster conclusions of support based on differences in this social assets. This condition basically indicates the process of push marketing done by the SK-HD team through direct selling. Through this mechanism, socialization and direct campaign to constituents were done effectively. In addition, the process also demonstrates existence of mechanisms to mapping directly the spread and distribution potential voters. It is especially observed during the process of push marketing. Through observation and analysis of attitude and response of people who visited directly then the teamwork could receive more objective condition of voter tendency.

The door to door strategy was considered as efficient method. It was because the teamwork has comprehensive structure that reaching most area in the Takalar regency. The teamwork where was as the marketer for the candidate is divided into several levels, from village to sub-district level which play different role within interact with the potential voters. It makes easier for the team focus on achieving targets in certain community area as the target market.

Beside the door to door mechanisms, SK-HD's working team also developed candidate marketing methods called person-to-person approach. It done by developing networks from their members. In this mechanism, teamwork approaches individuals who are close to the candidate based on friendship, profession, or residential place. Through these people then the networks developed by asking them to recruit or invite around 10 or more friends to join the network of friendship. Due to friendship networking is very important in the social context then some people who already involved in the network will be easier to be approached to sell the SK-HD as candidate. This strategy is mainly supported by the objective context where SK-HD have good friendships with various parties and form. At the educational background friendship especially the formal education, the candidate at least has a network of alumni from elementary school until the university level. Thus those networks can be maximized to support this candidate in the regional election. Effort to maximize this network was not difficult. It was because the social assets possessed by this candidate makes it easy to attract sympathy of their old friends to support and seek support from other segments of society for their desire to win the regional election. That condition made the SK-HD opportunity to win as much as people votes from various segments.

b. Maximize Social Networks and the Social Media

In effort to sell SK-HD, besides the door to door mechanism, teamwork also made other ways. Another mechanism was the community gatherings. This activity is done in order to create a good relationship between SK-HD as candidate in the regional election with the community. It was important to create emotional relation between the community and the candidate. Activities of this strategy usually done in a certain area or community. Some communities invited to meet and discuss together with the candidate or the teamwork. It also done thru attending some social activities where undertaken by the community in various areas. Through these activities, SK-HD is always presented to show public that this they are close to the people. It hoped create good image in front of community.

One condition was as supporting variable of the mechanism is distributing donations or gives of either goods or money as part of the candidate appreciation to the community. In addition to selling social asset, the candidate, in the same time indicates

strength owned of economical assets. It is important due to a leader usually associated as generous persons and has enough economic resources to support the community life. Therefore, the candidate was not only sold as a good and clean people but also raises image as a generous leader. It was also reinforced by the candidate promised programs that mostly appreciate as appropriate program for most people in Takalar. The succeed to sold this candidate also influenced by their rival condition. The disappointment of many people in Takalar District related to the incumbent achievement during their period was became important objective condition that influence the success story of the SK-HD teamwork.

In addition to utilize the social networks, other efforts made by the teamwork was maximize the social media network. Utilization of social media mainly was done because a lot of voters actively in use social media. A variety of innovative and creative ways are done so that social media users choose SK-HD partners. The effort is done for example by creating Facebook account and Instagram to facilitate the candidate socialization and campaign. The amount of social media users especially face book in Takalar was made this media as potential marketing space. Some activities such as creativity contest to make photos and efforts to bring the image of this candidate continuously as strategy to bring the candidate and people as the voters closer. The voters have known figure of this candidate. As part of a pull marketing strategy, utilization of mass media networks including social media in marketing activities of political products possibly provide significant results. It was use as space of socialization and campaign without conduct direct meetings. With the large number of social media users in Takalar district, the teamwork has opportunity to make pull marketing efforts more effectively and efficiently. The relatively cheaper and efficient method then made it one most efficient methods and one of the most important choices in the election process.

c. Impact of Elites Polarisation in the Province Level

One context that seems have been as supporting factor of political marketing by the SK-HD team was tendency of polarization of some dominant political actor at provincial level. That condition was affect political constellation at the regional level including in the Takalar district. It was mainly related trends shown by the Governor of South Sulawesi province, Syahrul Yasin Limpo (SYL).

As a prominent political figure in various parts of the province, SYL situation as important elites of Golkar as dominant politician party in South Sulawesi seems affect to the Takalar election. Formerly, SYL was as the Golkar chairman at provincial level. It means He was as influence actor in this province. But since He removed from his position in Golkar by one another prominent actor, Nurdin Halid, SYL tends to became rival of Nurdin Halis as well as Golkar in the province. As implication, SYL seems more like to support candidate who became the Golkar's candidate rivals. Due to Golkar, nominate Bur-Nojeng as candidate in Takalar regional election then SYL choose the opposite position. It was seem as gives for the challenger candidate SK-HD. The worse of SYL's relationship with Golkar under Nurdin Halid then becomes an asset could be utilized by this candidate as well as SYL challenge to the Golkar under Nurdin Halid.

This condition also undermined by the situation leading to the gubernatorial elections of South Sulawesi next in 2018. Although SYL is no longer running for the election due to the limitation of two periods under existing regulations (SYL has served 2 periods as governor), but his desire to support his brother Ichsan Yasin Limpo to participate in the election was important reason for his tendency. Moreover, the opposing candidate to be faced by SYL's brother in governor election later in the 2018 is Nurdin Halid, the person who has removed him from its position in Golkar. Thus, the competition between SYL and Nurdin halid then impact in takalar.

During the election in Takalar, internal conflict of Golkar in provincial level later utilized by the Nasdem party as one of supported of SK-HD. The close relationship between the head of Nasdem party in provincial level, Rusdi Masse and SYL was made the utilization effort smoothly. Therefore, SYL regularly made visits in Takalar silently. Various activities conducted SYL in Takalar are often carried out on places owned by the supporters of SK-HD couples. Besides, There were many village area have been visited by SYL where was showed his position between the two contestants.

The valuable situation related to SYL and Golkar relation then exploited by the SK-HD teamwork. During their socialization and campaign, the teamwork always promote to potential voters that SK-HD fully supported by SYL. It made many voters who still admit SYL as important political actor in the area then can influence smoothly.

It actually confirmed that the SK-HD was get gives from the SYL situation in provincial level to succeed their marketing process during the election.

Summary

There a few factors that were support success of the SK-HD to win the elections in Takalar Regency 2017. Their victory seemed influenced by their owned assets in social, politics and economy that successfully utilized by their teamwork. The success story also could not be removed from the situation in Takalar during the election as the objective context. Therefore, the SK-HD success story actually as result of three important aspect that was utilized by their team simultaneously which is possessively of assets, objective social and political context, and strategy done by the team.

That means, success story of the SK-HD with political marketing during the regional election was not only supported by the skills of the marketing team. The quality candidates to be sold as well as the appropriate market context is also needed. Based on the phenomenon of Takalar regional election in 2017, political marketing strategy basically not only talks on the development of marketing methods but also important to place them in the right context for political products or candidates who will be marketed. This is necessary because the attitude of the people to buy the product through the support of regional elections will basically also be influenced by various factors and condition where was owned by the SK-HD.

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