

ABSTRAK

Fenomena calon tunggal dalam Pemilihan Kepala Daerah (Pilkada) merupakan indikasi melemahnya kompetisi demokratis di tingkat lokal, terutama ketika dominasi koalisi partai menutup ruang bagi munculnya kandidat alternatif. Pilkada Kabupaten Serdang Bedagai 2024 menjadi kasus yang relevan karena pasangan Darma Wijaya–Adlin Tambunan ("Dambaan") maju sebagai satu-satunya pasangan calon, didukung 13 dari 14 partai politik. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis strategi politik calon tunggal, faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi kemenangannya, serta implikasinya terhadap kualitas demokrasi dan legitimasi politik daerah. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap tujuh kategori informan mencakup DPRD, LSM, Bawaslu, partai pendukung, partai non-pendukung, Bupati, dan masyarakat, serta dianalisis menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi utama yang diterapkan adalah komunikasi politik berbasis kinerja (*performance-based communication*) dengan tingkat kepuasan masyarakat mencapai 86%, penggalangan dukungan seluruh partai melalui pendekatan inklusif, serta mobilisasi jaringan sosial informal hingga akar rumput. Pasangan Dambaan meraih 91,61% suara sah, unggul di seluruh 17 kecamatan, dengan perolehan tertinggi di Kecamatan Bintang Bayu sebesar 96,9% dan terendah di Kecamatan Tebing Syahbandar sebesar 83,92%. Kemenangan ini ditopang oleh figurisme petahana, kartelisasi koalisi partai, ketimpangan sumber daya politik-ekonomi, serta budaya paternalistik yang mengakar. Meski unggul secara elektoral, tingkat partisipasi pemilih yang hanya mencapai 57,17% mengindikasikan defisit legitimasi substantif yang perlu ditangani melalui reformasi sistem rekrutmen partai dan penyederhanaan mekanisme pencalonan.

Kata Kunci: Calon Tunggal, Strategi Politik Petahana, Koalisi Partai, Demokrasi Lokal, Pilkada 2024

ABSTRACT

The single-candidate phenomenon in Indonesian regional elections (Pilkada) signals a deterioration of democratic competition at the local level, particularly when dominant party coalitions eliminate space for alternative candidacies. The 2024 Serdang Bedagai Regency election presents a compelling case, as the Darma Wijaya–Adlin Tambunan pair ("Dambaan") ran unopposed, backed by 13 of 14 registered political parties. This study examined the political strategies employed by the sole candidate pair; the determinant factors behind their victory, and the implications for local democratic quality and political legitimacy. A descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design was employed; data were collected through in-depth interviews with seven informant categories—including the regional parliament, civil society organizations, the electoral supervisory board (Bawaslu), supporting and non-supporting parties, the regent, and community members—and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. Findings revealed that the dominant strategy was performance-based political communication, supported by an 86% public satisfaction rate, inclusive party coalition building, and extensive informal social network mobilization. The Dambaan pair secured 91.61% of valid votes across all 17 sub-districts, with the highest support in Bintang Bayu (96.9%) and the lowest in Tebing Syahbandar (83.92%). Victory was underpinned by incumbent figurism, party cartelization, political-economic resource asymmetry, and entrenched paternalistic political culture. Despite their dominant electoral margin, voter turnout of only 57.17% indicates a substantive legitimacy deficit, underscoring the need for party recruitment reform and candidacy threshold simplification.

Keywords: *Single Candidate, Incumbent Political Strategy, Party Coalition, Local Democracy, Regional Election 2024*