

Dayah Leaders' Perceptions of the Aceh Local Party's Political Communication Methods (Partai Pas Region Lhokseumawe)

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Abstract

Elections in Indonesia are a political party that is very interesting to study and look forward to because they arise from various aspects and social groups in Indonesia. In Aceh, the intersection between religion and politics is very pronounced, including the Dayah which plays a major role as one of the influential places in Aceh in both fields. It is important to understand how the Dayah leadership views and engages in local parties' political communication methods, which is crucial to understanding the broader socio-political landscape in Aceh. This research investigates the perceptions of Dayah leaders regarding political communication methods used by local Acehnese parties, namely the PAS party in the Lhokseumawe region. Dayah educational institutions which are deeply rooted in Aceh's socio-political landscape also play an important role in shaping public opinion and influencing political dynamics. Through qualitative research methods, this research explores the views of the Dayah leadership and interacts with the political communication strategy of the PAS party in the Lhokseumawe region. This research also highlights the dynamics between religious authority and political involvement in Acehnese society.

I. Introduction

Elections in Indonesia are a political event that is very interesting to study and look forward to, not only in Indonesia but also abroad. High public interest and always-heating political tensions are things that people in Indonesia have become accustomed to after the reform era. Starting from the DPRD to DPR-RI level elections as well as the presidential and vice presidential elections in Indonesia are held periodically and simultaneously. It is important to hold it periodically for several reasons, first, community aspirations which are dynamic and develop from time to time. Second, apart from changing from time to time, people's opinions can also change due to domestic or international factors. Third, changes can also occur due to the increasing number of adults, especially the new generation who have different views from their parents. Fourth, the aim of holding elections periodically and regularly is to ensure succession of state leaders, starting from the executive to the legislative (Asshiddiqie, 2016).

In Aceh, the intersection between religion and politics is very pronounced, including the Dayah which plays a major role as one of the influential places in Aceh in both fields. The PAS party, which is rooted in Islamic principles, has influence in Aceh, including Lhokseumawe. It is important to understand how the Dayah leadership views and engages in local parties' political communication methods, which is crucial to understanding the broader socio-political landscape in Aceh.

After almost 20 years of the Helsinki MOU having been in effect, the emergence of local parties as a result of the MOU provided a breath of fresh air for Aceh's development after the era of military operations in Aceh and after the tsunami. Local Acehneseparties emerged from various backgrounds and different political realms with the aim of enlivening the democratic party taking place in Indonesia. Likewise, the Acehnesefulama figures who founded the local Acehneseparty, namely the PAS Party, by prioritizing Islamic symbols without losing their sense of nationalism towards the region, also inherited the mandate of the fighters in the Veranda of Mecca.

The establishment of the PAS party by ulama is actually nothing new in the Indonesian political arena. As Thohari stated that after the reformation, the era of Islamic politics entered a new phase with the emergence of Islamic intellectuals onto the stage of practical politics and becoming leaders of political parties (D.Z, 2000). It is interesting to see the progress of the PAS party in Aceh's political arena with the various supports provided by ulama and Islamic students who want to see Aceh continue to develop under Islamic law. Because the public has very high trust in the ulama due to their frequent overcoming of society's problems both in terms of social, political, psychological, cultural, and of course religious, making ulama occupy an elite position in the social and political structure of society (Qomar, 2000). So the perception of ulama or Islamic boarding school leaders in this condition is sometimes a very important thing and is awaited by people

who do not know the direction in choosing political contestants who match the community's perspective.

This research aims to fill this gap by examining the perceptions of Dayah leaders towards the PAS party's political communication methods, which explain the complexity of religious and political dynamics in Acehese society.

2. Research Method

Research methods are a study in studying all the rules contained in a research and is a research epistemology which contains how we conduct research (Usman & Akbar, 2014). This research uses qualitative research methods which will produce descriptive data, namely trying to understand and understand an event and its relationship to a group of people in a particular study. Researchers will also conduct research by recording information and events that occur related to the research focus (Sugiyono, 2016, 2022).

Data collection is one of the steps in the scientific method through systematic procedures, accurate facts, and the search for appropriate data, whether obtained directly (primary) or indirectly (secondary) for the purposes of valid analysis and research processes to find the essence, obtain answers and solve the problem of a problem faced by researchers (Ruslan, 2017).

The data sources used in this research are divided into two, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data collected directly from data sources and reprocessed by researchers for use. The primary data used in this research are the results of interviews and observations with the leader of Dayah Madinah Al-Aziziyah Seuneubok Blang Mangat and the chairman of the PAS party in the Lhokseumawe region. Secondary data is data that is collected indirectly through intermediary media or from researchers who are not the processors, but is used in a particular research. Secondary data obtained came from news or articles, reading materials, as well as data from the internet related to the PAS party in the Lhokseumawe region.

3. Results and Discussion

General Overview of Political Communication Perceptions

In the consumer behavior book written by Nugroho, Stanton explains that perception is the meaning that we attribute based on past experiences and stimuli received through the five senses (Setiadi, 2013). However, the process does not just stop, the process continues and the next process is called the perception process (Walgito, 2004). Meanwhile, according to Gibson, perception is a cognitive process used by a person when interpreting and understanding the environment surrounding an object. Therefore, each person has a different understanding of giving meaning to the same

object. The way you see the condition is more important than the situation you are facing (Sumanto, 2014).

Semantically, method is taken from English, namely method, which means way (Echols & Shadily, 2000). In terms of terms, a method is a path followed by someone to achieve a goal, if done in the right way (Bertens, 2005). Meanwhile, communication is the process of conveying thoughts or feelings from one person to another, which can be in the form of ideas, information, opinions, courage, fear, anger, certainty or doubt (Budianto, 2011). So it can be concluded that the communication method is the path that must be taken by someone as a communicator to the person they are talking to with the aim of conveying thoughts and feelings that can be understood and digested well by the person they are talking to.

According to Michael Rush and Philip Althoff, political communication is the process by which political information is passed from each part of the political system to other parts or between social groups and political groups. This process occurs continuously and includes significant patterns of information exchange between individuals and between groups at all levels. The goal to be achieved is to connect political thoughts that emerge in society, both within groups, communities, associations, institutions, or between sectors of community political life and the government. Elements in political communication include political communicators, political messages, political channels or media, political goals or targets and the influence of political communication (Setiawan, 2018).

General description of the PAS Aceh party

1. History of the founding of the PAS party

The Adil Prosperous Party or what is abbreviated as the PAS Aceh party is one of the local Acehnesepolitical parties in Indonesia which was initiated in 2021. The idea of PAS Aceh is one of the results of the recommendations of the *ijtima'* of the Acehnesepolitical Ulama in the Aceh Ulama Gathering event which took place at the Hj Yusriah Building, District Darul Imarah, Aceh Besar on November 10 2021. At this event, there were 16 members formulating recommendations resulting from the recommendations of the *ijtima'* recommendations of Acehnesepolitical ulama, including:

- a. Mr. H. Muhammad Amin Daud (Cot Trueng's father)
- b. Mr. H. Muhammad Yusuf A Wahab (Tu Sop Jeunieb)
- c. Mr. H. Faisal Ali (Abu Sibreh)
- d. Waled Sirajuddin Hanafi (Waled Matangkuli)
- e. Tgk H Rasyidin Ahmad (Waled Nura)
- f. Abi Bukhari Husni Southeast Aceh
- g. Mr. Dr. Muntasir A Kadir (Father of Mun Kuta Gle)
- h. Mr. Dr. Safriadi MA
- i. Abi Hidayat Muhibuddin Waly

j. Mr. Dr. Iskandar Zulkaren

And other ulama figures who were also present recommended several points with the aim of improving politics and government as capital for Aceh's development and prosperity. With Decree Number: W.1-420.AH.11.01-TAHUN 2021 issued by the Aceh Ministry of Law and Human Rights regarding Ratification of Registration as a Legal Entity of the Adil Sejahtera Party, then on February 22 2023 this party was officially declared at the Sultan's tomb complex Malikussaleh, Geudong, District. North Aceh Ocean by Abuya H. Mawardy Waly. Also present at the event were Mr. H. Hasanoel Bashry (Abu Mudi), Tgk. H. Muhammad Yusuf A. Wahab (Tu Sop Jeunieb), Tgk. M. Yusuf Nasir (Abiya Jeunieb), Abu Ishak Lamkawe, Tgk. H. Muhammad Amin Daud (Min Cot Trueng's father), Tgk. H. Abdullah (Abu Tanjong Bungong), Tgk. H. Abu Bakar (Abon Buni), Abati Dahlan Jungka Gajah, Abati Lhok Mon Puteh, Habib Dr. Zainal Abidin Bilfaqih (Chairman of the Malay World Da'wah Bureau of the International Islamic World), General Chairperson of PAS Aceh Tgk. H. Bulqaini (Tu Bulqaini), and Tgk. Muhammad Nur, Chairman of PAS North Aceh.

In the 2024 elections, this Dayah-based party received serial number 22. With the party's big vision of Amar Ma'ruf and Nahi Mungkar in politics so that it can realize an executive to legislative model of government that is fair and favors the people and maintains the existence of religion. Currently, the number of registered members of this party is 9,261 members.

2. The meaning of the PAS Aceh party symbol and logo

a. Green color

The green color on the PAS Aceh symbol is a symbol of prosperity and prosperity. It is also the favorite color of the Prophet Muhammad. Apart from that, green is also the color of clothing for the people of heaven as mentioned in the Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Insan verse 21

b. Eight Star

The Eight Star is the identity of the Muslim community and a symbol of the glory of Islam. Also takes the meaning of the eight heavens. With the aim of the struggle, PAS Aceh wants to lead the people to glory and prosperity in the world and reach heaven in the afterlife.

c. The boat inside the Eight Star

The boat in Bintang Eight is called Saffinatussalamah wannajah and is written in Arabic script and golden in color. This boat shows the parable of PAS as a fighting vehicle. The gold color shows the important goals to be achieved through Rahmatan lil 'alamin' political struggle

d. Jawi Arabic writing

Jawi Arabic or Malay Arabic writing is *فرتي عادل سجهترا أتجيه* means that PAS Aceh as a

political party really cares about the treasures of Islamic civilization inherited from the Acehnese people. PAS Aceh understands that the Arabic-Jawi or Arabic-Malay script created by the ulama in Aceh and developed in the Malay world must be preserved by the Acehnese people.

e. Four Poles on a Boat

These four pillars show the four schools of thought which are the guidelines for carrying out the laws of the Islamic religion in Aceh which have the Ahlusunnah wal Jama'ah belief and the highest pole shows the Syafi'i School which is the school of the majority of Acehnese society. This boat shows that PAS Aceh is a forum for struggle by using the ulama to guide the direction of political struggle

Dayah Leaders' Perceptions of the PAS Party's Political Communication Methods in the Lhokseumawe region

The PAS Aceh Party as a new face in the world of local Acehnese politics is expected to bring new energy and high hopes in changing the stigma of local politics which has seen a decline in interest from the 2014 election until now. In the beginning after peace, local parties had full control of parliamentary seats from district to provincial level. As if they had high hopes for the realization of change in the lives of the people of Aceh after the conflict period had passed, this led to early elections after the MOU was controlled by local parties.

However, the high public interest is not matched by an increase in community welfare even though Aceh receives special autonomy funds from the central government every year. The pace of Aceh's development is not in line with the expectations of the Acehnese people, both in terms of investment which is still minimal and industrial products which do not grow evenly. Coupled with serious cases faced by local party cadres, such as corruption in special autonomy funds and so on, this has caused public trust in local parties to decline.

Seeing this, the Acehnese ulama then took bold steps to bring about change amidst increasingly heated local politics by creating the PAS party. The different political communication methods promoted are also different from other local parties (parlok) and national parties. The leader of Dayah Madinah Al-Aziziyah or better known as Abati Cunda saw this and gave his opinion on the political communication methods developed by the PAS party, especially the Lhokseumawe area.

Each political party has its own way of influencing its voters. The PAS Party is trying to find problems among the public that have been neglected and not well realized by the previous government. The PAS Party in the Lhokseumawe region then provided guidance to the community about these problems and provided solutions in developing Aceh, especially Lhokseumawe, to be better in the future. As stated in the party's vision and mission, the PAS Party seeks to create a government that includes the categories of

Ahlul Imamah (executive) and *Ahlul Ikhtiar* (legislative).

Abati Cunda then saw that the method of political communication that was initially introduced was to build the character of party members. This step is not too difficult because PAS party members, some of whom are ulama who have been active in society for a long time and already have good credibility and appeal in society. This is due to the condition of the Acehnese people who strictly adhere to Islamic law, uphold customs, and maintain the good name of Aceh's spirit as the nanggroë of sharia. So, if there is always a problem that occurs, whether it is a personal or government problem, the people of Aceh ask a lot of questions to religious scholars to find a solution to the problem.

The next communication method is from a social approach. The Lhokseumawe PAS Party appeals to all its cadres to get involved in society, both in social and religious activities. This is done so that administrators can have direct dialogue and collect existing aspirations to be able to take a good role in government. The dialogue that was held brought quite good attention and new enthusiasm after the many disappointments felt after the political cases that occurred. This attitude also makes the voting public an equal element with the members who invite dialogue in finding solutions.

Furthermore, the PAS Lhokseumawe party is targeting the media by spreading the party's messages and activities through social media and mass media such as newspapers and so on. In the midst of society's very high need for social media, all aspects of human life today, especially social, cannot be separated from cellphones. It would be inappropriate if the message conveyed could not be seen on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and other social media because the users of these accounts are not only teenagers or even adults, and all elements of society are also increasingly able to reach this.

PAS Lhokseumawe then embraced the younger generation, especially students in the media field, so that they could provide accurate, credible information, not embellished with sweet promises as a complement, and leading to improvements in all areas. This progress is a manifestation of the authenticity and religious commitment carried out and fostered by party officials, most of whom are Islamic boarding school students who have studied at Islamic boarding schools.

The PAS Party provides hope and new colors by accommodating Islamic students to enter the field of practical politics without eliminating an important element in the lives of the Acehnese people, namely religion. The religion-based politics carried out by the PAS party gave the impression to the people of Aceh that politics should not be separated from religious supervision, in this case the ulama and religion should not be eliminated from political development. So the results obtained are political performance that is healthy, good, upholds Islamic values, and does not damage people's lives.

4. Conclusion

The Acehnes ulama leaders founded the local Acehnes party, namely the PAS Party, by prioritizing Islamic symbols without losing their sense of nationalism towards the region and also inheriting the mandate of the fighters in the Veranda of Mecca country. It is interesting to observe the progress of the PAS party in Aceh's political arena with the various supports provided by ulama and Islamic students who want to see Aceh continue to develop under Islamic law.

The perspective of the Dayah leader, in this case Abati Cunda, on the communication methods of the PAS party in the Lhokseumawe region. Abati Cunda saw that the political communication method that was initially introduced was to build the character of party members. The next step is from a social approach perspective. Then the PAS Lhokseumawe party targeted the media by spreading the party's messages and activities through social media and mass media such as newspapers and so on. PAS Lhokseumawe also embraces the younger generation, especially students in the media sector, so that they can provide information that is accurate, credible, not embellished with sweet promises as a complement, and leads to improvements in all areas.

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