

Political Behavior of Nasdem Party Elites Ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election in Pangkep Regency

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe and analyze the political behavior of the Nasdem Party elite ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election in Pangkep Regency. This research is motivated by the phenomenon of the departure of party cadres that occurred in Pangkajene and Kepulauan (Pangkep) Regency, South Sulawesi. The method used in this article is a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. The results of this study indicate that the elite of the Pangkep Nasdem Party tend to show accommodating political behavior. Although the elite of the Pangkep Nasdem Party tend to only follow formal party instructions, the communication pattern built by the elite of the Pangkep Nasdem Party is inclusive and open, both communication to leaders at the level above them and leaders at the level below them. The elite of the Nasdem Party provide space for its cadres if they have different interests to determine their own choices at their own risk. The elite of the Pangkep Nasdem Party also show less political pragmatism. The nomination of Anies Baswedan as presidential candidate and Muhaimin Iskandar as vice presidential candidate is not based on the lure of positions or seeking positions by the Nasdem Party elites but solely because of the party's decision and the vision and mission carried by the Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidate Pairs.

Keywords: Political Behavior, Elite, Political Parties

INTRODUCTION

Political power in a particular region can be analyzed with various theoretical concepts. One of the frameworks that is used as a reference for analyzing it is the condition of the political behavior of its elites. This condition, according to Firdaus (2012) refers to the political power of an elite that is influenced by ongoing and actual political practices, such as during elections, including the level of political participation and voter behavior. In addition, there is also non-actual behavior, such as the influence of the media that forms opinions in the long term.

The phenomenon of political behavior in general elections, especially at the regional level, can affect the level of voter participation. According to Harahap (2016), three approaches, namely sociological, psychological, and rational approaches, can increase voter participation rates compared to the previous period. However, conflicts within political parties also greatly affect political behavior, especially for the community. The community is confused about making their choice because the public's image of political parties and their elites is increasingly eroded. So that party elites must create a comfortable atmosphere for the community so that "negative public mood" does not develop into apathetic behavior (Iskandar in Armunanto, 2016). Political behavior is indeed separate from the discourse related to political elites. because the existence of political elites cannot be separated from the life of modern society. Dermawan et al. (2021) said

that the behavior of political elites in sociological studies is influenced by the personality structure, social structure, and cultural structure experienced by the lives of these elites.

According to Surbakti as conveyed by Pahlevi et al. (2020), political behavior is an action related to the political decision-making process. Political behavior includes all actions taken with the aim of influencing others in producing policies. Perceptions, attitudes, orientations, and beliefs, as well as other real actions such as voting rights, protests, lobbying, and so on, are an integrated part of political behavior. Pasae (2016) said that in the dynamics of political parties at the local level, "party strongmen" or so-called determining elites will be found, which shows the political reality at many levels of local government. Then it is explained that there are two types of political party elites in the region, namely structural elites and non-structural elites. Structural elites are elite groups responsible for making policy decisions and the direction of the party, consisting of the party's core administrators. Meanwhile, non-structural elites are elite groups that are not included in the core administrators; they only have the status of cadres in the party.

Likewise, in Mills' view as stated by Mawardi (2019), "party strongmen" are important people who are given strategic roles and responsibilities to deal with situations that have greater consequences. According to Soekanto (Dermawan et al., 2021), these party elites are people who have privileges who can influence and play strategic roles in organizations, especially in political parties. Suzane Keller, as stated by Roesandy (2018), said that in political parties there are a number of elites who exist to regulate power and share responsibilities, rights, or rewards; these groups are called political elites.

This research is motivated by the phenomenon of party cadres leaving that occurred in Pangkajene and Kepulauan (Pangkep) Regency, South Sulawesi. Syahban Sammana, a non-structural Nasdem Party elite and Deputy Regent of Pangkep, decided to leave the NasDem Party and is ready to win Prabowo Subianto as Presidential Candidate 2024 (Aldy & Rahma, 2023). Other NasDem Party elites in Pangkep also did not have a problem with Syahban Sammana moving parties; according to him, the NasDem Party would not experience internal dynamics related to the transfer of one of its cadres (Ramadhani, 2023).

However, on another occasion, the NasDem Party became a magnet for cadres from other parties. Syaharuddin from the Gerindra Party and Pattola from the Golkar Party each left their parties and chose to join the party founded by Surya Paloh (Genda, 2023). Party elites from each of these new NasDem Party cadres took quick steps to carry out inter-time replacements (PAW) because both were legislators for the Pangkep DPRD from their respective parties (Ade, 2023). Former Deputy Chairman of the Pangkep DPRD Rizaldi Parumpa, who is also a PPP cadre, chose the NasDem Party to continue to Senayan (Tamrin & Maryadi, 2022). Rizaldi is ready to advance as a candidate for member of the Indonesian House of Representatives for Electoral District 2 (two). The former chairman of the PPP DPC was announced as a NasDem Party cadre directly by one of the NasDem Party elites, Syaharuddin Alrif (Kufung, 2023).

The departure of political party cadres reflects a political step taken by cadres when there are differences of opinion with their party. So that this causes fragmentation within political parties. Armunanto (2016) stated that internal disputes and party divisions can weaken party stability as well as consistency of ideology and programs. The transfer of political party cadres to other political parties is due to the urge to achieve their ambitious goals in politics and is influenced by the opportunities that arise and the conditions within the political party.

This article reviews how the political behavior of the Nasdem Party elites ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election in Pangkep Regency. This study takes a different scope from other studies on elite political behavior that focus on the political behavior of individual elites, community groups, bureaucracies, and religious communities that are not related to the presidential election, such as research conducted by Al Yakin (2013) and Pradana (2020), which reviews elite rationality, traditions, and pragmatic politicians. Studies on elite political behavior related to regional elections were studied by Agung (2013) and Roesandy (2018). Elite political behavior in the field of religious organizations is studied by Nashir (2000), Efendi (2014), Dermawan et al. (2021), and Bonto (2021), as well as studies conducted by Madani (2023). The focus of this study is the political behavior of elites in the Pangkep Nasdem Party ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election.

METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. The researcher uses a qualitative method wherein, in writing, the researcher will describe and explain the political behavior of the Nasdem Party elite and the factors that influence it ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election in Pangkep Regency. Qualitative methods can collect data objectively from what is being studied through in-depth interviews and documentation studies. So that it can provide a picture and explanation of the conditions as they are from the object being studied; in other words, it is carried out in natural conditions (Sugiyono, 2022a). As explained by Sugiyono (2022b), to obtain actual and objective data and information, it is obtained using in-depth interview data collection techniques and documentation studies.

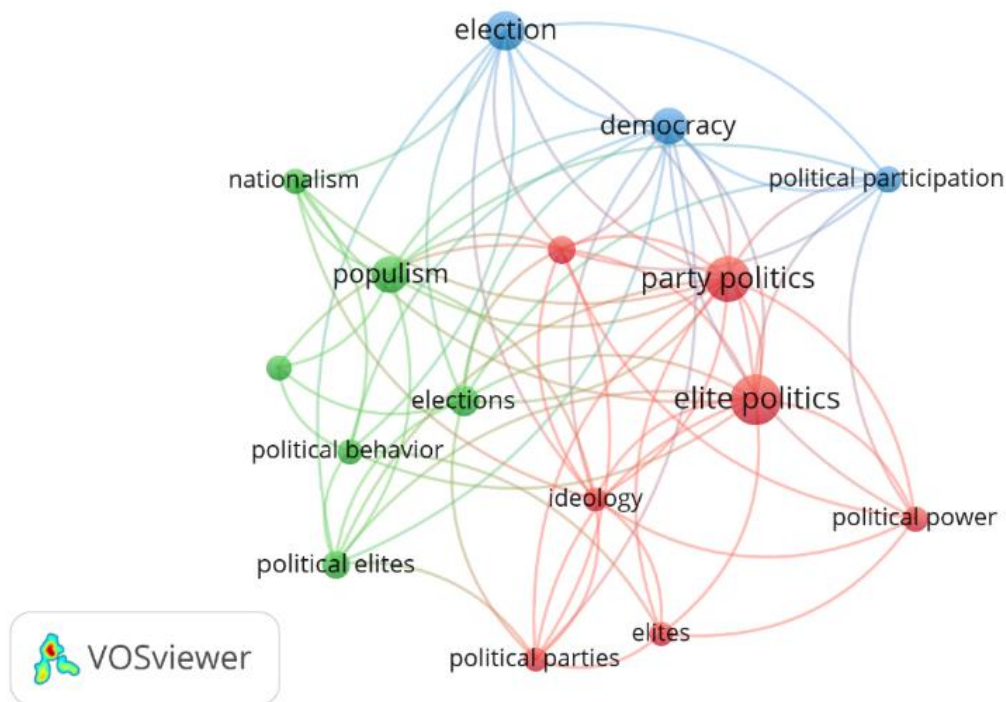
The data analysis technique that researchers use to obtain accurate and objective data in managing data is by using data analysis techniques from the results of informant interviews and literature reviews that have been contextualized by reducing data, then presenting data, and finally drawing conclusions. Then the tools used in this study are Vosviewer and Nvivo 14 software.

HASIL DAN DISKUSI

Placing Previous Research in the Study Map

Research on elite political behavior has existed before. Based on organizations or institutions, it has been conducted by several researchers, namely Dermawan et al. (2021), Bonto (2021), and Madani (2023). Political behavior in this perspective examines political behavior in terms of factors that influence elite political behavior, the influence of Islamic institutions or mass organizations on elite political behavior, and the consequences of elite political behavior on the quality of democracy. Judging from the research methods used, studies on elite political behavior generally use qualitative methods such as those conducted by Al Yakin (2013), Agung (2013), Roesandy (2018), Debora and Sulaiman (2019), and Pradana (2020). There is one study conducted by literature review, namely the study conducted by Elyta (2022). The study mentioned uses qualitative methods to explore more deeply the behavior and factors that influence the decisions of political elites. While one study uses quantitative methods to measure and analyze data statistically related to elite political behavior in parties. However, previous research on elite political behavior mentioned above focused more on the political behavior of individual elites, community groups, bureaucracies, and religious communities that are not related to political parties with the setting approaching the presidential election. Therefore, to fill the existing gap, the researcher chose to discuss the political behavior of the Nasdem Party elite in Pangkajene District, Pangkep Regency, especially related to the 2024 Presidential Election.

Picture 1. Research on Political Behavior 2018-2024



Source: *Vosviewer*

Based on the researcher's search in VOSviewer, there are many studies that discuss political behavior related to elites, especially those related to political parties and general elections. Green cluster (Populism, Nationalism, Political Behavior, Political Elites, Elections) These concepts are related to political behavior influenced by populist movements and nationalism. Populism is often associated with political movements that claim to represent the "will of the people" against "corrupt elites." In the context of elections, political behavior driven by populism can be reflected in voter preferences for candidates who are considered to best represent the interests of ordinary people compared to traditional political elites. Blue cluster (Election, Democracy, Political Participation): This cluster emphasizes the importance of elections and political participation in democracy. Elections are the main mechanism in democracy that allows people to participate in the political process, choose their leaders, and influence the direction of public policy. Political participation here includes various forms of citizen involvement in politics, including voting, campaigning, and political discussion. Red cluster (Elite Politics, Party Politics, Political Power, Ideology): the focus of this cluster is on elite politics and political power. Political behavior at the elite level is often influenced by ideology and party politics. Here, ideology guides decision-making, while political parties regulate how power is distributed and exercised within a country. Elite politics refers to the dynamics among elite groups that have significant influence on political decisions.

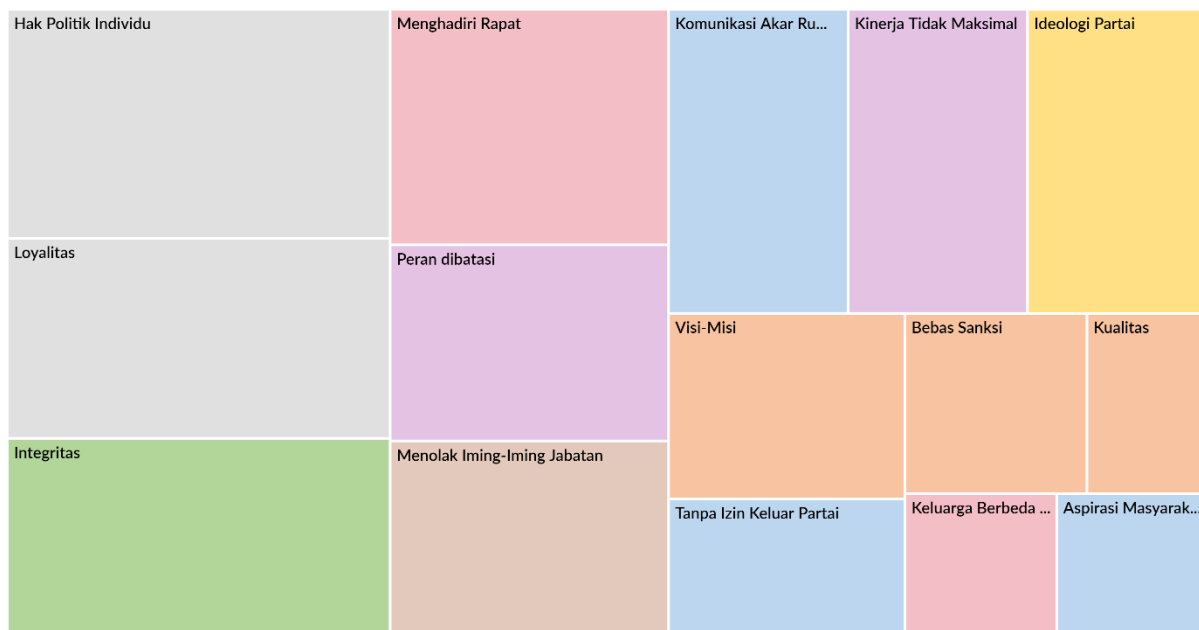
Research on political behavior, if seen in the picture, is located close to research on elections and political elites but still far from research on political parties. This means that there are still few studies on the political behavior of elites within the framework of political parties, and there has been no research that discusses the political behavior of political party elites in the setting of the presidential election. Therefore, this research can be a novelty for the development of studies on the political behavior of party elites in handling elections, especially the presidential election.

Political Behavior of Nasdem Party Elites Ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election in Pangkep Regency

Political behavior carried out by the first party, be it the government (institutions and their roles) or political organizations such as political parties, is responsible for making, implementing, and enforcing political decisions. Different from the second party because the second party tends to be participatory (political participation) and does not have the authority like the first party (Nur et al., 2015). Pasae (2016) said that in the dynamics of political parties at the local level, "party strongmen," or those referred to as the determining elite, will be found, which shows the political reality at many levels of local government. Then it is explained that there are two types of political party elites in the region, namely structural elites and non-structural elites. Structural elites are elite groups that are responsible for making policy decisions and party directions consisting of the party's core administrators. Meanwhile, non-structural elites are elite groups that are not included in the core administrators; they only have the status of cadres in the party.

Researchers refer to Nashir's theory (Nashir, 2000) to analyze the political behavior of the Nasdem Party elite ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election. This theory states that there are three approaches to elite political behavior, namely idealistic, accommodating, and pragmatic. Based on the results of data processing using NVivo 14 software, images/graphs of aspects of the political behavior of the Nasdem Party elite in Pangkep Regency can be displayed in Figure 1 as follows.

Picture. 2 Aspects of Political Behavior of Nasdem Party Elites in Pangkep



Source: Nvivo 14 Political Behavior of Nasdem Party Elites in Pangkep

Based on the data listed in the image above, several aspects are shown by the elite of the Nasdem Party in Pangkep Regency ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election. Based on the results of interviews with Nasdem Party elites, the elite of the Nasdem Party in Pangkep prioritize a person's political rights in determining their own political choices. In addition, the elite of the Nasdem Party in Pangkep emphasizes the importance of loyalty and fidelity by rejecting the lure of positions and being consistent with the party's vision, mission, and ideology even though it is considered not optimal. This lack of maximization is based on the recognition of informants that Anies Baswedan, who is the presidential candidate supported by the Nasdem Party, is not included in many banners or billboards of legislative candidates as part of campaigning for the presidential candidate supported by the party itself. The image above also shows that the elite of the Nasdem Party in Pangkep always attend internal meetings; communication to the grassroots is also carried out by the elite of the Nasdem Party in Pangkep. Cadres and elites are not given sanctions; in other words, cadres and elites are free to choose their own political decisions. However, it is regrettable that there are unethical actions such as not asking for permission from the party internally when leaving the party membership even though the cadre who left the party has good qualities. The last aspect that can be seen in the hierarchy chart image above is the view that party elites who have different party memberships from their closest family are normal and legitimate.

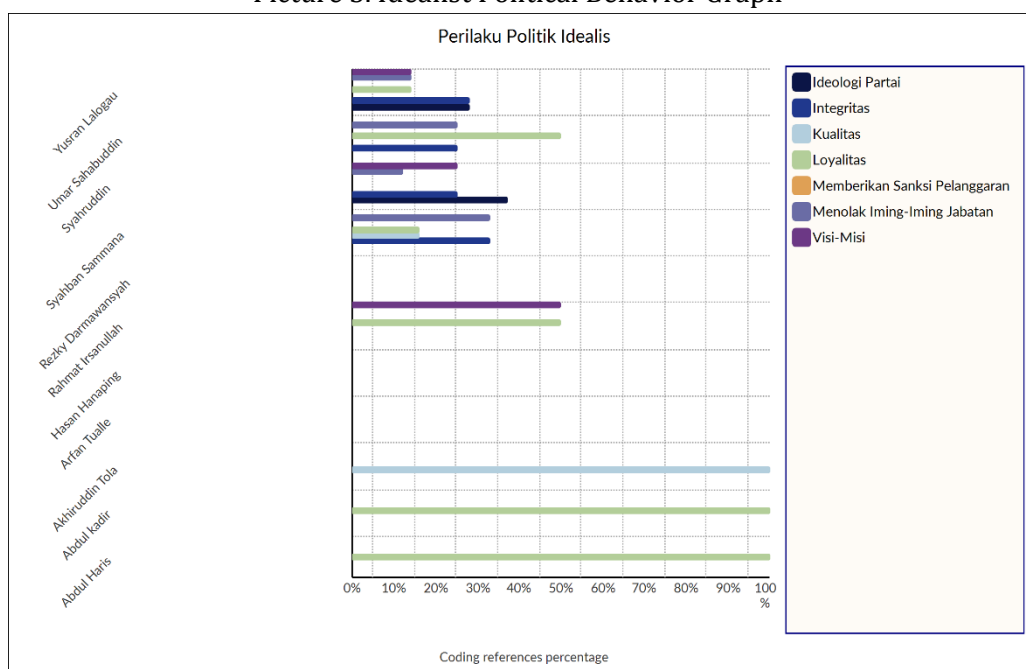
Referring to the processed data results as previously displayed, it is then analyzed by referring to Nashir's theory (2000). This theory states that there are three approaches to elite political behavior, namely idealistic, accommodating, and pragmatic. The researcher also analyzed the political party elite in Pasae (2016), which explained that there are structural party elites and non-structural party elites.

Idealistic Political Behavior

Idealistic political behavior is when elites adhere to their beliefs about what is right and wrong in politics and adhere to moral principles such as justice, freedom, and equality, even if it means sacrificing personal or group interests. Individuals who behave idealistically also reject unethical actions such as corruption, collusion, and nepotism (Nashir in Bonto, 2021).

The results of the Nvivo 14 data processing below show the results regarding the idealistic political behavior of the elites of the Pangkep Nasdem Party.

Picture 3. Idealist Political Behavior Graph



Source: Nvivo 14 Political Behavior of Nasdem Party Elites in Pangkep

The elites in the Pangkep Nasdem Party do not promise positions as a lure to gain support; the Pangkep Nasdem Party and its cadres carry out their duties based on a strong ideology and focus on a vision and mission that aims to bring positive change to society in the 2024 presidential election. On the other hand, in terms of cadre obedience to the party's decision in nominating Anies Baswedan as the 2024 presidential candidate, the Nasdem Party elites emphasize the importance of loyalty and obedience to party decisions in the Pangkep Nasdem Party structure. This obedience is considered a binding obligation for cadres and shows that the decision of the party leadership is seen as a collective decision that must be carried out without protest.

The statements made by the Pangkep Nasdem Party elites reflect Yudhoyono's views on party cadres. According to Yudhoyono (Rahman et al., 2024), cadres are selected people who are qualified and members of the organization who are trained to carry out leadership functions. In addition, they are prepared to hold important jobs both in government and political organizations. Statements from Abdul Kadir and Umar Sahabuddin indicate that Nasdem Party cadres are expected to show full loyalty and obedience to party decisions, without any protest, indicating that they are members of the organization who are trained and disciplined in carrying out party orders. Another similarity with Yudhoyono's theory (Rahman et al., 2024) is that cadres are prepared for important and strategic roles, as seen from the statements of Rahmat Irsanullah and Syahban Sammana. Rahmat emphasized that party decisions are always in line with his personal views, indicating that cadres are not only selected because of their qualities but also because of ideological alignment. Syahban Sammana, despite his role as a vote puller and not being involved in decision-making, still shows obedience to the party, indicating that cadres are valued not only based on their strategic role but also their loyalty and commitment to the party's goals. This is in accordance with the concept that cadres are individuals who are prepared to hold important positions and play a role in realizing the party's vision and mission.

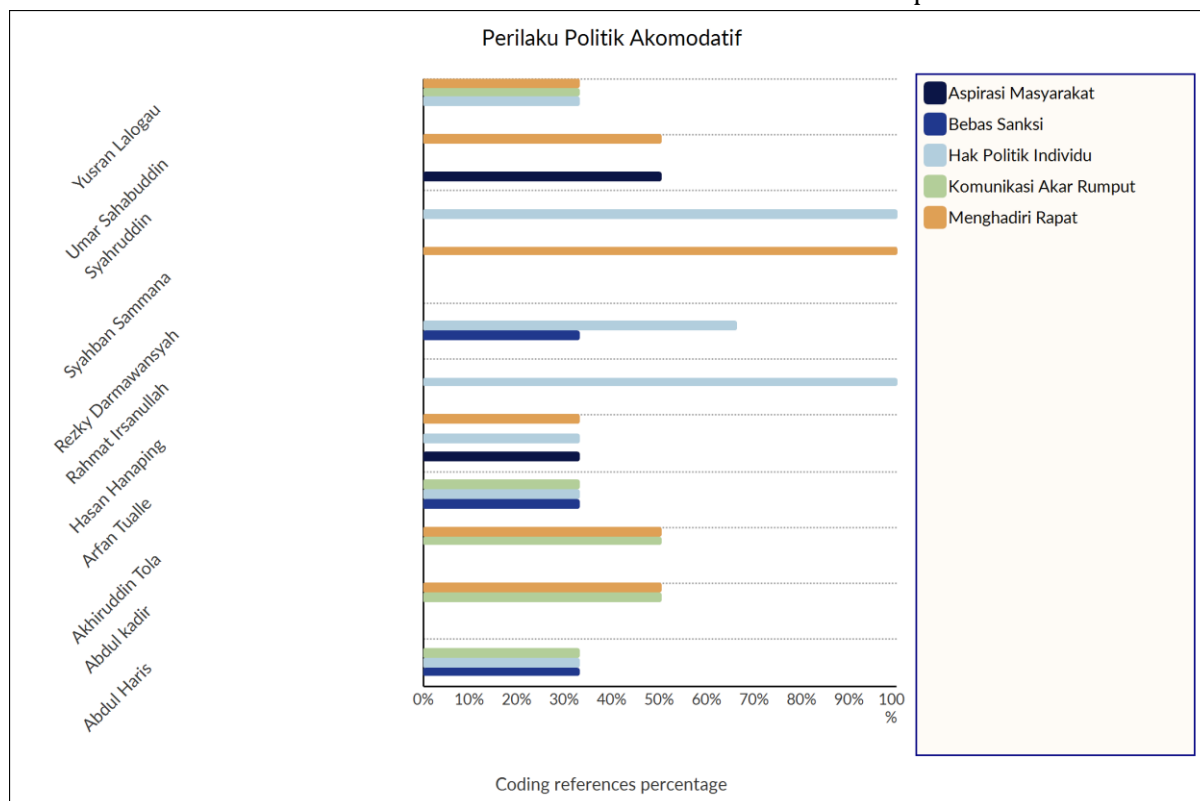
Messing with the data above, there are no sanctions against cadres or elites who have different goals from the party's decision. Although there is a strict sanction mechanism in the party's AD/ART to maintain discipline and integrity, in reality, during the presidential election, no Nasdem Pangkep cadres were given sanctions for dismissal. This shows that in practice, the party prefers a softer approach or that cadres prefer to resign before being sanctioned.

Based on the data and information above, it shows that the elites of the Pangkep Nasdem Party tend to only follow the party's formal instructions. Although they show loyalty to the party, their performance in the field is not optimal in campaigning for the presidential candidate pair Anies Baswedan and vice presidential candidate pair Muhaimin Iskandar. Added to this, there is no firm institutional action by the party in imposing sanctions on party cadres who support different presidential and vice-presidential candidate pairs. The Nasdem Party elite also tends to provide space for their cadres if they have different preferences from what has been determined by the party, especially in the 2024 Presidential Election.

Accommodative Political Behavior

Accommodative political behavior reflects an inclusive attitude, open to various parties with a clear framework for cooperation. People who exhibit accommodative political behavior tend to be more accepting and respectful of the views and interests of others and strive to reach solutions that can meet common needs. They have good communication and negotiation skills and strive to reach agreements with other parties effectively. The main focus of accommodative political behavior is to find solutions that benefit all parties involved, not just paying attention to personal or group interests (Nashir in Bonto, 2021)

Picture. 4 Accommodative Political Behavior Graph



Source: Nvivo 14 Political Behavior of Nasdem Party Elites in Pangkep

The results of NVivo 14 data processing show that the elite of the Pangkep Nasdem Party built a communication pattern within the Nasdem Party hierarchically. Through meetings held at various levels from the regions to the center, the Nasdem Party set a winning strategy down to the grassroots. The Nasdem Party also applies the principle of democracy that is quite proportional in the process of selecting potential presidential candidates. Voices from the lower levels, including branches and sub-branches, are accommodated and asked first to each DPD throughout Indonesia. Then, there is a formal mechanism to convey aspirations from the bottom up in the Nasdem Party structure. The Nasdem Party elite are always present at meetings to convey aspirations both from themselves and from the community. However, being an ordinary cadre or non-structural elite in the Nasdem Party limits the influence of individuals in decision-making. As stated by Syahban Sammana in his interview, when he was in the PDI Perjuangan, where executives who came from cadres were more considered than when he was in the Pangkep Nasdem Party.

Viewed from the concept of Dermawan et al. (2021), the behavior of channeling political aspirations that is purposeful and open can be seen in the mechanism of the Nasdem Party, which provides a meeting forum to convey aspirations from cadres and the community, both formally and from the bottom up within the party structures. However, the structural position still influences how effectively these aspirations are accommodated in decision-making, as experienced by Syahban Sammana, who felt the difference in appreciation for executive cadres between the Nasdem Party and the PDI Perjuangan.

The elites of the Pangkep Nasdem Party also consider that changing parties is part of the normal political dynamics and is the political right of every individual. Thus freeing party members who are no longer in line to leave or change parties and accommodating people who want to join the Pangkep Nasdem Party. This can be driven by personal interests, political strategy, comfort, and suitability with party idealism. The elites of the Pangkep Nasdem Party reflect an open view of the flexibility of party membership while recognizing that there are consequences to the decision.

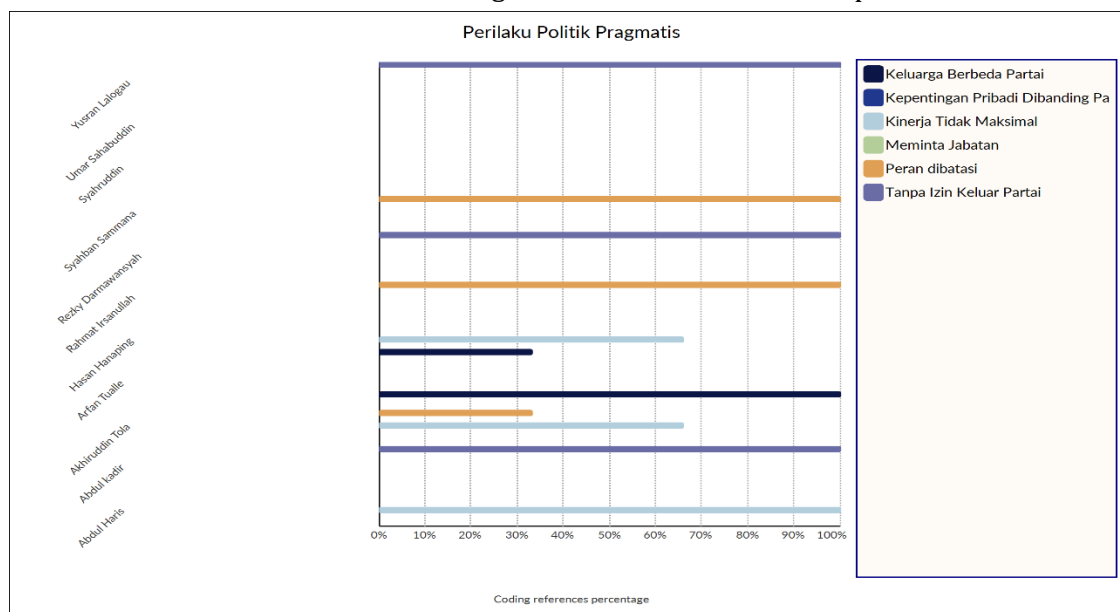
Analyzing the data and information above shows similarities with the theory put forward by Nashir (Nashir, 2000) regarding accommodative political behavior. The elites of the Pangkep Nasdem Party showed openness and inclusiveness in communication, both with party leaders at the levels above and below them and with party cadres. The communication pattern that was built prioritized collaboration and openness in internal meetings to discuss the 2024 election. Although there were non-structural elites who felt that their opinions were less influential, other elites still provided space for cadres to convey their aspirations. In addition, the Pangkep Nasdem Party also accepted new members who were in line with the interests of the party, showing that they prioritize cooperation and collaboration in achieving political goals, in accordance with Nashir's theory, which states that accommodative political behavior seeks to achieve solutions that benefits all parties involved.

Pragmatic Political Behavior

Nashir (2000) revealed that political behavior that mixes with anyone and abandons the ideology that he has called pragmatic political behavior. People who show pragmatic political behavior prioritize what can provide the greatest benefit in a particular political situation without paying too much attention to moral or ethical considerations. Pragmatic people in politics are not loyal to principles, so they are more flexible. They are often willing to compromise with other parties, even if it means abandoning certain principles or political goals. Their main focus is victory without considering moral and ethical principles, and they are usually involved in practices such as corruption and money politics.

The results of the Nvivo 14 data processing below show the results regarding the pragmatic political behavior of the Pangkep Nasdem Party elites.

Picture 5. Pragmatic Political Behavior Graph



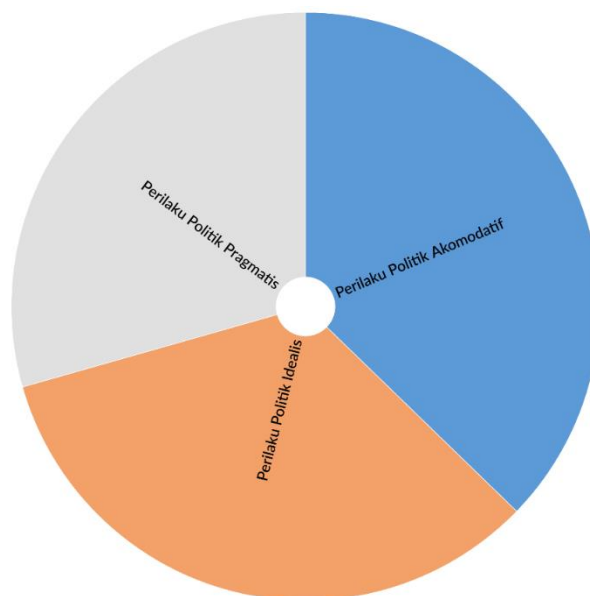
Source: Nvivo 14 Political Behavior of Nasdem Party Elites in Pangkep

The results of the data above can be analyzed that the existence of new cadres who joined the Pangkep Nasdem Party and left the Pangkep Nasdem Party was not based on prioritizing personal interests but because of alignment with the party's idealism. On the other hand, the data above shows that although the party elite shows that each individual has the right to determine their own political preferences, there is dissatisfaction and confusion among the Pangkep Nasdem Party DPD administrators regarding the transfer of party cadres, especially Syahban Sammana from the Nasdem Party to the Gerindra Party. The absence of permission or official communication in this transfer process shows a lack of responsibility and ethics towards the party. Without permission or official communication made by Syahban Sammana to the Pangkep Nasdem Party DPD Administrators, which, according to Kato and Yamamoto, reflects institutional obstacles (Armunanto, 2016). Better political opportunities are easier to achieve in the Gerindra Party compared to the Nasdem Party. Then, the Pangkep Nasdem Party elite do not force the will of their party on other members of their family, even though they are close family, because they respect individual political preferences, but they must first try to follow their party. Recognition of the right of every individual to choose their own political path without coercion reflects the principles of healthy democracy. This view is in accordance with Qoharuddin's theory (2022), which states the importance of respecting differences of opinion to create a more harmonious environment in the family. Both views emphasize the importance of respecting individual political freedom, which is the essence of democracy.

Furthermore, referring to the data above, many Nasdem Party cadres in Pangkep who are running as legislative candidates do not include Anies Baswedan's photo in their campaign materials. This shows that even though they follow the party's decision to support Anies Baswedan, they are not working optimally and are not showing hard work in winning the presidential candidate supported by their party.

Based on data processing using NVivo 14 software, a picture/graph of the tendency of political behavior of the Nasdem Party elite in Pangkep Regency ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election can be displayed in the following image.

Picture. 6 Political Behavior of Nasdem Party Elites Ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election



Source: Nvivo 14 Political Behavior of Nasdem Party Elites in Pangkep

Referring to the information and data above, it is illustrated that the elite of the Pangkep Nasdem Party lack political pragmatism. The nomination of Anies Baswedan as a presidential candidate and Muhaimin Iskandar as a vice presidential candidate is not based on the lure of positions or seeking positions by the Nasdem Party elites but solely because of the party's decision and the vision and mission carried by the Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidate Pairs. The decision of one of the elites of the Pangkep Nasdem Party, namely Syahban Sammana, to leave the Nasdem Party was due to considerations that he wanted to contribute and be useful to the wider community, because if he remained in the Pangkep Nasdem Party, his role would be limited, and he would remain an ordinary cadre who could not provide much influence. The flexible attitude taken by the elites of the Pangkep Nasdem Party towards family members is adjusted to applicable provisions based on each individual being guaranteed by law to be elected and to be elected.

CONCLUSION

The elite of the Nasdem Party in Pangkep tend to only follow the party's formal instructions. Although they show loyalty to the party, their performance in the field is not optimal in campaigning for Presidential Candidate Pair Anies Baswedan and Vice Presidential Candidate Pair Muhaimin Iskandar. Added to this, there is no firm institutional action by the party in imposing sanctions on party cadres who support different presidential and vice presidential candidate pairs. The elite of the Nasdem Party also tend to provide space for their cadres if they have different preferences from what has been determined by the party, especially in the 2024 Presidential Election. The elites of the Nasdem Party in Pangkep show openness and inclusiveness in communication, both with party leaders at the levels above and below them and with party cadres. The communication pattern that is built prioritizes collaboration and openness in internal meetings to discuss the 2024 election. Although there are non-structural elites who feel that their opinions are less influential, other elites still provide space for cadres to convey their aspirations. In addition, the Nasdem Party in Pangkep also accepts new members who are in line with the interests of the party, showing that they prioritize cooperation and collaboration in achieving political goals. The elite of the Nasdem Party in Pangkep show less political pragmatism. The nomination of Anies Baswedan as a presidential candidate and Muhaimin Iskandar as a vice presidential candidate is not based on the lure of positions or seeking positions by the elite of the Nasdem Party but solely because of the party's decision and the vision and mission carried by the presidential and vice presidential candidate pairs. The decision of one of the elites of the Nasdem Party in Pangkep, namely Syahban Sammana, to leave the Nasdem Party was due to considerations that he wanted to contribute and be useful to the wider community, because if he remained in the Nasdem Party in Pangkep, his role would be limited and he would remain an ordinary cadre who could not provide much influence. The flexible attitude taken by the elites of the Nasdem Party in Pangkep towards family members is adjusted to applicable provisions based on each individual being guaranteed by law to be elected and to be elected.

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