Identity Politics in the 2018 Regional Head Elections for the Governor and Deputy Governor of North Sumatra

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Abstract
The election of the Governor and Deputy Governor of North Sumatra Province in 2018 presents a unique practice of identity politics with the complexity of the political system and democratic practices. This research finds the practice of identity politics running in the 2018 Pilgubsu process, where each candidate uses closeness in ethnicity and religiosity in political practice; campaign until the selected work program. In accordance with the characteristics of the data, the research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with the main focus is to explain the factors that led to the emergence of religious identity politics in multicultural societies in North Sumatra through a democratic process. Data collection techniques used observation, literature review and in-depth interviews. The data obtained were analyzed and outlined in the form of field reports. The results of the study illustrate that Governor-elect Edy Rahmayadi explicitly and implicitly acknowledged the use of identity politics in the 2018 Pilgubsu contest; campaign slogans, campaign processes to success teams through various political media. The practice of identity politics in the 2018 Pilgubsu is inseparable from a series of national politics from the post-reform era to direct elections since the era of regional autonomy. The long political dialogue then resulted in political reconfiguration as a movement towards the development of positive political discourse and as part of further political education for the wider community. The reconstruction of the democratic process in the context of direct regional head elections is carried out to minimize the negative impact by political parties and the government on the direct regional head election process.

I. Introduction

Political imagery is formed based on information received, both directly and through political media. Political imagery is one of the effects of political communication in a paradigm or mechanistic perspective, which is generally understood as an inherent impression in the minds of individuals or groups. Nevertheless the image can be different from the real reality or does not reflect the objective reality. The political image as explained by Arifin is related to the formation of public opinion, because basically political public opinion is built through political image (Sutarto et al, 2019).

Identity politics is a politics of grouping and dividing. Identity politics may be more effective at mobilizing voters. However, because this kind of politics requires embracing one group while eliminating another, the difficulty does not lie at the time of the campaign. Those who exploit identity usually find it difficult to rule. Identity battles tend to be brutal and those who are eliminated will find it difficult to recover from the pain after the election (Supriatma, 2019).
Identity politics differentiates sharply between identity politics and identity politics. This difference is seen from political identity as a construction that determines the position of the subject's interests in the ties of a political community, while identity politics refers to the political mechanism for organizing identity, both political identity and social identity as a source and means of politics (Haboddin, 2012: 4).

Political repositioning shows that opportunistic structures of power, capital or economy, culture and kinship or dynasty were used by the Elites to strengthen their political base in the face of the 2014 legislative elections. The combination of elite position and repositioning patterns in South Nias has implications for the way in political recruitment for nominating members legislative (Manao, 2020).

In a political communication process there are elements that cannot be separated from one another. And one of the elements contained in the communication process is the message. The message is the core of the communication object that must be sent from the communicator to the communicant to create the same meaning for each individual involved in the communication process (Riauan et al, 2019).

The reality is that politics is dynamic, not only in choosing friends or foes, but also in ideology and principles. We live in a multicultural country, therefore tolerance or tolerance is needed to underlie the life of a state, because it is the basic foundation of unity itself and acts as a bridge to achieve a healthy political culture.

When religion becomes a political ideology, every action that is taken will be in the name of God, even though in fact the action is very worldly. And for now, in most countries, religion, in my opinion, is not included in the world of politics, but is only limited to being involved in the civil society agenda such as Human rights, freedom, and social justice or it can be said to be the spirit in human life itself. So there is no fusion (merger or fusion) there, or in other words religion and politics go hand in hand / work together.

One important note relates to the direct election of regional heads at the level of North Sumatra Province in 2018, based on data from the North Sumatra Provincial KPU regarding the results of the direct Pilkada in several districts, showing the phenomenon of the politics of religious identity. According to Demogafi records, North Sumatra has a character in certain places where the majority are Muslim, but in other places, the Christian population is more dominant.

The reality of the 2018 election for the Governor and Deputy Governor of North Sumatra with two candidate pairs practicing Identity Politics also divided the North Sumatra region into two parts of a political perspective. This situation was observed through a series of research involvement processes in socio-political activities during the 2018 Governor and Deputy Governor Elections.

II. Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The qualitative approach in the view of Kirk and Miller (1986) is a tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on the process of observing humans both in terms of and within the region. This approach was chosen in this paper because it was able to explore in depth and detail the phenomenon of Ermas' victory in the 2018 PILGUBSU contest.
III. Discussion

Political practices in the North Sumatra region are inseparable, but are related to the national political situation and conditions, this is related to the practice of democratic politics in Indonesia which was formed in historical patron trajectories, in the sense that political events (general elections) are a systematic extension of political arms from the central level to the regional level or vice versa.

The reform process in 1998 brought significant changes to political practice in Indonesia by opening up space for political expression through political party channels and also discourse of the sons of the region that was pushed through the perspective of regional autonomy, where each region was given the freedom to develop a region autonomously from the influence of the central government. The complexity of political change in Indonesia is also suspected to be part of a healthy and competitive democratic practice by incorporating other elements in the political ingredients; cultural, social, religious, gender dimensions and so on.

This section narrates the course of political practice in Indonesia in general, the political process is divided into several parts, namely the 1955 election as the forerunner of early political practice in Indonesia, the election during the New Order era as a centralized representation of power, the reformation election as a turning point in practice. Indonesia, post-reform elections as a practice of Indonesian and regional political reality and direct regional head elections as part of the embodiment of regional autonomy policies.

The election of the Governor and Deputy Governor (PILGUBSU) in 2018 is part of the general election and is also a means of people's sovereignty as well as the embodiment of democracy. The wave of democracy that has hit almost every country in the hemisphere, including Indonesia, has brought changes in Indonesia's political system. Democracy can simply be explained from the people, by the people and for the people, so elections are a necessity in a democratic country. People choose their own leaders through direct elections in both the legislative and executive branches. 2018 is a political year in which 171 Provinces, Regencies / Cities held Regional Head elections, one of which is North Sumatra Province.

The election for the Governor of North Sumatra which was held on 27 June 2018 has been completed and has ordained the pair Edy Rahmayadi and Musa Rajekshah as winners by pocketing 57.41% or a total of 3,234,017 votes and defeating the pair Djarot Saiful Hidayat who is paired with Sihar PH Sitorus who received 42.59% or obtained 2,399,218 votes (KPU, 2018).

Of the two candidates who fought each other in the 2018 North Sumatra governor election, they played their ethnic identities as vote panners at the grassroots. Of course, this is very worrying for the development of democracy because the function of political parties is not functioning properly as accommodation for the interests of the people of North Sumatra. There is an impression that the candidates competing in the gubernatorial election are pursuing associations or associations that are accommodated by various ethnicities (ethnic Batak, Javanese, ethnic Malay, Minangkabau, Aceh, Tamil and Chinese) and religions to become machines for winning votes effective. This can happen considering that there is no dominant ethnicity or religion.

The recapitulation of voting results presented by the KPU, the ethnic identity inherent in each candidate influences the voters to provide an indication that the character possessed by each candidate can be utilized properly. Emotional closeness is well represented by the sentiments of clans (especially for Batak), Malay, Javanese, which appear to have harmonious affiliation among several candidates. For ethnic Batak people consisting of the North Tapanuli Batak, Toba Batak, Karo Batak, Simalungun Batak, Dairi Batak and Nias the
political choices fell on the Djarot and Sihar Sitorus pairs. The figure of a Sihar who has the clan of Sitorus and is Christian is considered to represent another Batak ethnic identity. However, an anomaly occurred for the figure of a Djarot who had a Javanese ethnic identity. The voices of the Javanese ethnicity were not entirely full on Djarot, even the Javanese people preferred the Edy Rahmayadi and Musa Rajekshah pairs. One of the reasons why the Javanese ethnicity has a split voice in Medan is because the Djarot figure does not fully represent the voices of the Javanese ethnic needs in Medan.

On the other hand, the pair Edy Rahmayadi and Musa Rajekshah are fully supported by ethnic Malays as the root of their mass base from Edy Rahmayadi. Ethnic Javanese, Mandailing, Minangkabau, Aceh, Tamil, Aceh, and Arab chose the pair. Arab ethnicity attracted to this couple was none other than the presence of the figure of Musa Rajehkshah who had Arab descent.

The rise of ethnic identity politics in the North Sumatra elections in 2018 shows that local political dynamics are still very difficult to escape from the shadow of primordial ties. This is what Cohen said that ethnicity is a political phenomenon, because ethnicity contains traditional values that have certain characters, and the characteristics possessed by ethnicity can be used as a mechanism of political alignment when there is an interaction between several ethnic identities. Cohen 1996: 83-84).

The issue of local sons is an issue that is no less important in the 2018 North Sumatra regional elections. Just look at the issues raised by the pair Edy Rahmayadi and Musa Rajekshah during a public debate held by the KPUD of North Sumatra Province.

The fall of the New Order regime, the struggle for political identity, religion, ethnic identity and regional sentiment are characteristic of local political dynamics in Indonesia, including in North Sumatra. For North Sumatra Province, it is an open secret if in every political contestation, ethnic identity, religion and issues of local sons are often used as instruments of vote getter. When viewed from the social interaction relationship between the ethnic groups in North Sumatra Province, basically the relationship runs normally. However, it cannot be denied that the level of suspicion among each ethnic group is very high. The effect arising from this suspicion is that the ethnic groups rely on each other's primordial ties as the basis for political movements when dealing with political contestations.

In the political science literature, between the politics of identity and what is a political identity has a different meaning. Political identity is a construction that determines the position of the subject's interests, within the bounds of a political community. Meanwhile, the politics of identity will refer to the political mechanism of organizing identity, both in political identity and social identity which is the source and means of politics (Setyaningrum: 2005).

Donald L Morowitz (1998), as a political expert from Duke University, has defined identity politics as laying out very firm lines to determine who will be included and who will be rejected. The line of determination will certainly appear irreversible. Therefore, the status of both as a member and not a member will appear to be permanent. It is very clear that identity politics as a source and means of politics in the struggle for political power is increasingly seen in contemporary political practice. Especially when the grand democratic party held in Indonesia, namely the General Election, PILGUB and PILKADA.

At the 2018 PILGUBSU which has ended, we of course together can see various sources, both from print and electronic media, and even see firsthand the practice of identity politics itself. Many community leaders and community groups gave their views on the incidents of identity politics in the 2018 Pilgubsu. Secretary of PW Al Jam'iyyatul Wasliyah North Sumatra, Drs. H. Isma Arya Pulungan said that identity politics is a game of the political elite.
Political Identity of Religion is actually a game of Elite Politics. This situation emerged in the 2018 Pilgubsu because of the bias from the 2017 DKI Regional Election which was in the case of blasphemy by one of the candidates for DKI Governor Basuki Tjahya Purnama (Ahok). (Drs. H. Isma Arya Pulungan).

Furthermore, he said that in fact at the time of the Regional Head election in North Sumatra before the 2018 PILGUBSU, the term politics of identity, both ethnicity and religion, was almost said by various regions, especially in North Sumatra, which are known for their heterogeneity.

North Sumatra, from the past, both the Election of Regional Heads during the New Order era to the Reformation period, has never been a Political Identity Religion, only in the 2018 Pilgub the nuances of the Politics of Religious Identity emerged. Apart from the impact of the DKI Pilgub, there are also two pairs of candidates (Edy Rahmayadi / Musa Rajekshah / Muslim-Muslim) and (Djarot Syaiful Hidayat / Sihar Sitorus / Muslim-Christian), so that Islamic voters crystallized choosing the Edy Rahmayadi-Musa Rajekshah pair. In fact, North Sumatra has long been used as a national example in religious life, mutual tolerance, mutual respect, so that North Sumatra, which was built from various tribes and religions, is always in a safe and conducive state.

Regarding identity politics at the 2018 PILGUBSU, the Chairperson of the North Sumatra PW Muhammadiyah, Prof.DR.H. Hasyim Syah Nasution, MA also gave an opinion. He said that identity politics is difficult to eliminate, especially if the identity is related to one's religion or faith. So, what can be done according to this North Sumatra UIN professor is to moderate the meaning of identity more broadly. National identity, religious identity, if narrowed down, there will be rejection, especially if religious understanding is classical (fanatical).

North Sumatra is indeed a very hydrogen region. But if it's a matter of religion, it can't even be ethnic. For example, have there ever been a Regent in an ethnic area where the majority of the area comes from an ethnic minority (Kab Madina, Samosir, Taput, Karo, and Nias). In fact, I witnessed the confession of a Professor from a State University in North Sumatra (Name withheld). He is a Christian, but in the 2013 gubernatorial election he did not choose a Christian candidate for governor, but instead chose Gatot Pujo Nugroho / Tengku Erry Nuradi, because Tengku Erry Nuradi's wife had the surname Sitorus and the professor was surnamed Sitorus. This proves that Identity Politics will still exist.

Therefore, Prof. Hasyim said that the moderation needed in the future is not identity politics in the narrow sense. The meaning of moderation in the context of Islamic education, religious moderation means teaching religion not only to form pious individuals personally, but also to be able to make religious understanding as an instrument to respect the people of other religions. In essence, avoidance of reducing violence and understanding extreme. In the case example, the results of the interview show how religion is inferior to ethnicity, namely the case of Lecturers who choose because of ethnic ties even though they are of different religions.

The same opinion was expressed by Christian community leaders in North Sumatra, Dr.RE. Nainggolan, MM, who stated that the mental viscosity and attitude of the Toba Batak people towards ethnicity and culture is higher than religion. That is why for the Batak people it will be insulted if they are called non-religious rather than having no religion.

In connection with the election for the governor of North Sumatra, this was proven when H Syamsul Arifin won in the 2008 gubernatorial election in several areas around the Lake Toba area. He did not bring up the issue of identity politics but carried his campaign jargon "Friends of All Tribes". Even in a meeting with the Batak people, he introduced himself to having been given the Silaban clan, and the Batak people called him "halak hita"
or "our man". That is why the Batak people will be more closely supported than with a religious belief. However, we cannot make this a reference for responding to the phenomena that occur. If we can see from the other side, we can see that religion is superior to ethnicity.

The results of an interview with one of the leaders of the Djoss campaign team at the 2018 Pilgubsu, namely Jumiran Abdi. He said that the 2018 Pilgub was able to defeat the strength of Javanese ethnicity because of religious issues. Javanese people will also be moved when they talk about religious beliefs. That was what happened so that Javanese voters did not choose the DJOSS pair together because this pair was a rainbow partner (Muslim / Christian).

In the 2018 Pilgub, almost all Javanese Ethnic Organizations such as PUJAKESUMA, PENDAWA and others even joined the campaign to meet the Javanese community in North Sumatra. If the calculation on paper is that the Javanese ethnic population in North Sumatra is around 60 percent, it should be Djoss who won because only Djarot is of Javanese ethnicity from these two pairs of candidates.

For the people of North Sumatra, according to Jumiran, in choosing a leader, they are not fanatical. But when faced with religion, they will be more fanatical than because of ethnicity, including the Javanese in North Sumatra. It is different in Java, about religion, there is no problem, even in one household with a family of different religious beliefs it does not matter. They can live in harmony and peace. It's different in North Sumatra.

Meanwhile, from the opposing party, represented by Ikhwani Ritonga (Deputy Chairperson of the DPRD from the Gerindra Faction), said that identity politics that emerged in the 2018 Pilgub was only part of a political strategy because the pair of two candidates had different religions. This political strategy is not ignorant of non-Muslim voters, but Eramas' mission of "Muslims be ruled, Christians are influenced".

For the Gerinda Party, the first party supported Edy Rahmayadi and Musa Rajeck Shah, and this is a direct order from Gerinda Ketum Prabowo Subianto to have objective and mature considerations. His strong military background, courage, control of North Sumatra because he is a native son of the region and has served in North Sumatra and has broad national insight, became the basis for his election as a candidate for governor.

In the course of time it turned out to be a candidate The Governor of North Sumatra only fought two pairs, and some of them had different identity backgrounds, so the Eramas team used the strategy of winning the identity politics approach, whose ultimate goal was to achieve victory.

One of the Charismatic Ulema of North Sumatra, KH. DR. Amiruddin, MS, stated that the aroma of Identity Politics that occurred in the 2018 Pilgubsu was not permanent. If there is a Political Identity of Religion, it is not based on sentiment with non-Muslim candidates, but only as a winning strategy tool. According to him, the support of Muslims for the Eramas pair is not only due to religious sentiment, but the figure of Edy Rahmayadi has requirements in Islamic leadership. One thing that the Ulama saw was the morals of these two figures, and their devotion to religion. People who are devout and have good character must be loved by the people.

Muslims in North Sumatra are thirsty for such a figure, especially since this couple is committed to building a better Islamic civilization in North Sumatra. For example, developing the Great Mosque, building an Islamic Center, and building other social institutions. Identity politics is fine, identity is flexible, the most important thing is that the leader has good character and strives to improve the welfare of the community.

Identity politics is not a threat, people see it not because of sentiment. In the teachings of Islam all groups must be protected, in politics competition is natural and Djoss also does the same.
The hope of the people of the Eramas couple so that their Vision and Mission can be carried out, especially the first mission, to create a North Sumatra community with dignity in life because they have faith and piety. This is an illustration of Pak Edy Rahmayadi's commitment to protecting the people of North Sumatra in carrying out their worship.

The politics of religious identity that occurred during the Pilgubsu were only influenced by the political atmosphere in the country. The people of North Sumatra and all religious communities have understood the condition of the North Sumatra which is Pevralism. There was no negative impact after the Pilgub, North Sumatra remained conducive, and people of other faiths understood the situation.

The Secretary of the PDIP of North Sumatra, DR Soetarto, MA, gave his view on whether the 2018 Pilgubsu was full of identity politics. From the results of the interview he said that wherever there would be identity politics. However, I see that in North Sumatra the identity politics is not affected, because after the 2018 election, North Sumatra remains dynamic, safe and conducive. The important thing is that Identity Politics should not be campaigning for Black Politics (Black Campaigne). According to him, identity politics in the election for governor is just a political elite game, and he is not worried that identity politics in North Sumatra will cause horizontal conflicts. Even if the community chooses a leader because of the similarity of their religion that cannot be prevented, he hopes that democracy will not prioritize identity, especially if religion will harm the life of democracy.

Identity politics is interpreted as the mobilization of cultural strength and identity that binds certain communities or societies with the aim of negotiating their interests in the midst of a strong, dominant culture originating from outside. One of the fundamental implications of the 1998 Reformasi movement was the emergence of a movement for indigenous peoples in Indonesia demanding the return of their communal rights. This coincides with the regional autonomy policy imposed by the post-Reformation regime in which regional governments are given considerable authority to manage economic and cultural resources. One of the ongoing realities is the efforts to mobilize the cultural uniqueness of the local community identity which is used to negotiate community communal interests.

North Sumatra Governor Edy Rahmayadi:

"As a person who is trusted by the people of North Sumatra, the winner to become the Governor of North Sumatra with a majority victory of over 58 percent, of course I thank God and thank the people who chose me. I realized that the victory happened because it was still inherently primordial in society. Especially the majority of voters who exercise their voting rights (80 percent) choose me because I am Muslim, Malay and my wife is Mandailing. For that I am not satisfied because the victory was based on narrow primordial factors "but that is a learning process for democracy. In the future, slowly the people will understand politics."

Furthermore, he did not deny that he sided with Islam. Edy Rahmayadi explained that he was chosen by the majority of Muslims, because Muslims were the most numerous. If I make a program that is aimed at empowering the Muslim Ummah, that is a natural thing without discriminating against other religions. Besides that, even if I do it, it is part of the frame of worship, therefore building North Sumatra is not only doing its physical development but also with its spirituality. That is what I call a dignified North Sumatra, where the people are diligent at work, live a prosperous and cultured life, as in the MOTTO of North Sumatra Province.

Asked for Edy Rahmayadi's opinion on whether this identity politics will still happen in the future Pilkada, the Governor stated that his prediction would still happen because it returned to the quality of human resources. We only hope that if identity politics emerges, it will cause the nation to tear apart.
References to political and sociological literature, categorize identities into two categories, namely: social identity (religion, class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality) and political identity (nationality and citizenship). Social identity determines the position of individuals in social relations or interactions, while political identity determines the position of individuals in a community through a sense of belonging and at the same time marks the position of other subjects in a sense of otherness. Because identity also concerns anything that makes a group of people different from others, the construction of identity is closely related to the construction of "difference" (difference). Political identity is conceptually different from "political identity" (politics of identity); Political identity is a construction that determines the position of the subject's interests within the ties of a political community, while the definition of identity politics refers to the political mechanism for organizing identity (both political identity and social identity) as a political resource and means.

Meanwhile, in social movement studies, the terminology of identity politics refers to movements that try to defend and fight for the interests of certain groups who are oppressed because of their identity. This arises because the interests of groups and individuals are defined according to categories such as race, ethnicity, religion and gender as well as sexual orientation which cannot even be stated on the basis of class and state. Identity politics is closely related to struggling for rights and recognition of the existence of minority groups.

Identity politics in the 2018 Pilgubsu practice is a form of necessity that cannot be denied, even though in reality the practice of identity politics is a pseudo practice in practical political performances that give every dimension of life a gap to become part of politics. Without realizing it, this has further alienated political practice from a democratic perspective which has become a reference in acting in contestation politics.

The resistance that then emerges from the practice of identity politics is the emergence of ideological, social, political and cultural segregation that causes gaps in people's lives.

The existence and practice of identity politics in the 2018 Pilgubsu contestation is not a temporary concern but a sign of unfinished ideological delivery through practical political realities, so that the goals of democracy and the dissemination of an established understanding of democracy do not work well and are often overhauled by practical political practices that clash with a good democratic perspective.

**IV. Conclusion**

Politics and identity within the scope of the discourse of ethnic and religious entities can be narrated as the context of the reality of life, the existence of the names of ethnic and religious ethnics is recognized by some of its supporting members as a form of expression owned by society. However, in some other societies there is a different and situational view. The difference in ethnic self-designation becomes a flexible and fluid form of ethnic identity. Quoting Agustono (2010: 164) who provides a view that ethnicity is an adaptive thing that can change according to specific interests and times, besides that ethnicity is also not a gift so that it can freely construct identity. Even though, change in ethnic identity still uses ethnic roots and raises them in configurative forms such as ethnic division into private forms; religious dimension.

The process of political moderation and democracy through education is taken over by the wider community, as an effort to disseminate polite political practices and have a broad democratic perspective as an effort to overcome the improper use of identity dimensions in practical political reality.
The ethnic identity, which was originally expected to be a Politico-Cultural force for communal strengthening and empowerment, can no longer be positioned essentially, but is full of negotiations and interests or even conflicts that not only involve actors, but also members of the community, the State regime, and the capital class. An ethnic identity - in this case values, practices and cultural orientation - is not just a hereditary inheritance from our ancestors. More than that, the emergence and development of an identity cannot be separated from various kinds of political and social events that befall certain ethnic members. In fact, the identity attached to a particular community can also grow because of the identification of other communities that position the identified ethnic groups as partially different. Often times, a particular ethnic community does not initially identify itself by a particular name or term, but rather outsiders assign the label. However, it is customary to be labeled and they do not bother, or even feel their own pride, so the members of the community eventually accept and get used to the title. In its development, this identity will certainly dialectic with the conditions of the times, so that it cannot only be understood in an essential manner and has been made from the start. Then the members of the community eventually accept and familiarize themselves with the title. In its development, this identity will certainly dialectic with the conditions of the times, so that it cannot only be understood in an essential way and has been made from the start. Then the members of the community eventually accept and familiarize themselves with the title. In its development, this identity will certainly dialectic with the conditions of the times, so that it cannot only be understood in an essential manner and has been made from the start.

The political reconfiguration in the election for the Governor and Deputy Governor of North Sumatra in 2018 or in the post-reform era offered various forms of political configuration by prioritizing the principle of democratic openness embodied in the form of voting political behavior. The social and cultural dimensions as two side by side have an impact on the election process for the Governor and Deputy Governor of North Sumatra in 2018.

Direct Regional Head Election as part of the distribution of power in regional autonomy provides an opportunity for the emergence of Leaders, in this case the 2018 North Sumatra Leadership package which comes from local human resources and understands the problems faced, ideally this is carried as the root of the spirit for the election of the Head The region directly but it turns out that this also has a negative impact on political choices not to elect a candidate who is not accommodated by the election implementation regulations, so that voters carry out a political reconfiguration strategy by linking the dimensions of social, cultural, and religious identity at the time the Regional Head election takes place. From the point of view of this research, the social and cultural dimensions are not only limited to support for prospective leaders or as part of a prospective leader campaign using social and cultural identity discourses. The social, cultural and religious dimensions are strengthened as a form of discourse of resistance to the continuity of voter political behavior.
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