



Dynamics of Single Candidate in Election of Regional Heads (Case study in Badung Regency, Bali Province)



Ni Wayan Widhiasthini^a

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Abstract

Badung Regency is one of the regions that hold regional head elections in 2020, to elect the Regent and Deputy Regent. The uniqueness of the Election in Badung Regency is that it is only participated by one pair of candidates or a single candidate. This reality is very contradictory to the condition of the Badung Regency as the richest area in Bali, the center of the economy, and tourism has a geographical structure where all areas can be reached by information technology, as well as an urban area which is inhabited by many immigrants. Based on this, the formulation of the problem discussed is how the dynamics of a single candidate in the regional head election in Badung Regency. The focus of the discussion is the stages of the General Election held by the KPU of Badung Regency in the Badung Regency area. Several research results inspire the discussion of this article. The conclusions that can be formulated include, a single candidate campaign is carried out with several adjustments such as the debate between pairs of candidates being changed to a deepening of the vision and mission to provide political education for the community. The socialization carried out by the Badung KPU is quite complicated, they are very aggressively socializing to keep voter participation high. Care is needed in conducting the socialization so that there is no movement of voters, to elect pairs of candidates, or to choose empty columns. The uniqueness of a single pair of candidates in the 2020 elections in the Badung Regency is closely related to the pragmatism of society and elements of political parties, which do not want to involve themselves in practical politics.

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Corresponding author:

Ni Wayan Widhiasthini,
Universitas Pendidikan Nasional, Denpasar, Indonesia.
Email address: widhiasthini74@undiknas.ac.id

^a Universitas Pendidikan Nasional, Denpasar, Indonesia

1 Introduction

In 2020, it is a political year for Indonesia to re-organize regional head elections simultaneously in 270 regions in Indonesia. For the province of Bali, there are six regencies/cities participating in the regional elections simultaneously, including Denpasar City, Badung Regency, Tabanan, Jembrana, Bangli, and Karangasem. The General Election Commission (KPU) in each region has determined pairs of candidates as election participants, on average followed by two pairs of candidates competing for the positions of regent and deputy regent or mayor and deputy mayor. The uniqueness occurs in Badung Regency, which is only followed by one pair of candidates or a single candidate. This is very interesting to observe further, especially if we look at the condition of Badung Regency as the regency that has the highest local revenue in Bali. This regency has even become the main support for development funding in Bali, although it was corrected to 49.06 percent from the previous year, the Badung region's original income remains the highest in Bali. The previous year amounted to 5.3 trillion, currently, the original regional income is 2.6 trillion.

Badung Regency is also an area that has access to the availability of information, all of which are geographically accessible, the population is very heterogeneous and is an area that has large numbers of tourist objects, hotel facilities, restaurants, and various tourism products. Some Balinese people also make this area the center of economic activity. Referring to all of these conditions, it is very unique if this regional election was only followed by one pair of candidates. Badung Regency is an area that has the second largest number of voters in Bali in the 2020 regional elections, after Denpasar City. Quoting the opinion of [Söderlund \(2017\)](#), who examines this phenomenon as a contradictory relationship to an election system that is centered on contestants and the number of voters and is centered on the party. This opinion is very relevant if it is related to the openness of Badung to become a heterogeneous region, has a large number of voters but is not well followed by democratic movements. Based on this uniqueness, this article will discuss the dynamics of a single candidate in the 2020 election in Badung Regency comprehensively from the social, political, and communication aspects of the election participants and election participants, relating it to the ongoing election stages. The formulation of the problem in this article is how the dynamics of the single candidate in the 2020 election in Badung Regency?

The urgency of this article lies in the complexity of the discussion which not only focuses on the political aspects, to contribute thoughts to election participants, election organizers, and stakeholders of the wider community. Provides a multi-perspective understanding so that the phenomenon of a single candidate does not occur in other election administration. The focus of the discussion of this article was carried out in the Badung Regency of Bali, as a region that is participating in the 2020 elections simultaneously ([Berg et al., 2008](#); [Palmer & Whitten, 2000](#)). The determination of Badung Regency as the locus of discussion because first, Badung Regency is the only area that has a single candidate in Bali Province, secondly, it is a major tourist destination that has gone global so that it has become a barometer of democratic success, third, the center of economic activity for all districts (cities) in Bali, fourth, so far political and democratic activities in Badung Regency have been running, followed by several political parties in Badung.

Literature review

Before conducting the discussion, some research results and articles that have relevance to the articles were described and inspire the preparation of the articles. The practice of direct democracy does not only focus on community involvement in elections, [Schecter \(2009\)](#), shows that community involvement can be realized in formulating government regulations. If this is applied optimally, a bottom-up policy formulation process can be realized, there will be emotional involvement between the government, society, and all elements in the State so that it can lead to and refer to high participation in elections. [Schulz-Herzenberg \(2019\)](#), explains that psychological involvement is very strong in voter participation, making the media a means to encourage increased participation. The choice of media in conducting campaigns following the situation is very important. The following research results illustrate the decline in public confidence in the administration of elections and political institutions in the State. [Reinl & Schäfer \(2020\)](#), in their research, found the importance of political representation, to show public support and the legitimacy of a democratic political system. Other research related to the article discusses the sensitivity of local democracy, the vulnerability of voters to shift their choices due to various factors. [Stiers & Dassonneville \(2019\)](#), discusses the instability of voters who can switch party choices, usually starting during a campaign due to their direct involvement in campaign activities. All of these articles discuss democracy and electoral matters, but none of them discuss the holding of elections with one candidate pair participating ([Grofman, 2005](#); [Osborne, 1993](#)).

2 Materials and Methods

The focus of this research is in Badung Regency, Bali Province, Indonesia. The characteristic of this regency which has the largest local revenue in Bali Province makes this regency engaged in the tourism sector. The tourism sector is the main sector in the economy, in addition to other sectors. Data collection was carried out in documentation through writing, secondary data, and other supporting data. The analysis technique used is Netnography which is done online. Observations are also carried out as part of the source and method triangulation process.

3 Results and Discussions

The discussion in this article is carried out from several electoral aspects, such as campaigns, socialization, and the uniqueness of a pair of candidates as eligible participants. Initial data that can be presented, the number of voters for the Badung Regency election in 2020 is 362,950. Voters will use their voting rights at 996 polling stations spread across 62 villages and 6 sub-districts, with a maximum number of voters at each TPS of 300 people. This is following the regulations set out in PKPU (General Election Commission Regulation), that the number of voters per TPS (polling station) is reduced from 800 to 300 to reduce the risk of transmission of the Covid19 virus.

Campaign Dynamics of One Candidate Pair

The campaign is an opportunity provided by the General Election Commission (hereinafter abbreviated as KPU) to pairs of candidates to introduce and convey their vision, mission, and work program to the public. In this simultaneous election in 2020, the campaign period will last for three months from September to December 2020. The ongoing Covid19 pandemic has resulted in the government issuing social restrictions for the community thereby reducing community mobility and eliminating crowds to minimize the spread of the virus. Responding to this, the KPU prohibited pairs of candidates from holding general meetings, social activities such as blood donations, bazaars, sports activities, birthday celebrations, all of which have the potential to cause crowds. So far, this activity has become an icon of campaign implementation, marking the implementation of the campaign. This means that the public and election participants can feel the arrival of the campaign period when there is the mobilization of voters through activities that involve large numbers of people.

More campaigns are shifted to online methods and optimization of the use of social media. [Wilberforce's \(2018\)](#) research, which discusses the various roles and contributions of social media that is very important in the journey of democracy, can explain the strengthening of the use of social media in the election campaign for Badung Regency. Access to communication technologies such as the internet and cell phones is very strong for promoting democratic discourse and increasing participation through social media platforms. In the implementation of the 2020 elections, direct campaigns cannot be carried out optimally and are directed more online. In this condition, the domination of internet usage can be felt. The single candidate pair used various social media platforms in campaigning. The process of conveying information, persuading, convincing, and inviting voters is conveyed through written messages on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media accounts. The campaign team strives to pack the message as attractive as possible, by choosing the image, theme, social environment that is displayed. So that all activities carried out by candidate pairs can be conveyed through these messages, so that a positive image as a politician can be formed.

The role of the media in campaigns is also very important, especially when more campaigns are shifted to digital models. The use of technology has penetrated various sectors, which allows the calculation of financing accurately. [Subawa \(2016\)](#), states that determining the right pricing strategy is very important to maintain and win the competition. This research can be used as a reference for the use of technology in campaigns. The involvement of third parties in the procurement of electoral infrastructure and campaigns in particular mostly came from small-scale entrepreneurs. [Subawa & Mimaki \(2019\)](#) in their research found that micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in various sectors, including the role in procuring campaign props. Based on the author's observations, the community movement to campaign for the existence of empty boxes has not been included on social media. Some Instagram accounts show more activities of candidate pairs, which are carried out by the campaign team and volunteers.

Meanwhile, the debate between candidate pairs in the elections in Badung Regency in 2020 cannot be held. The debate was transferred to the deepening of the vision and mission activities by a team of panels, who came from academics from various fields of science, practitioners, experts in the field of science, and professionals. The panelists asked several questions according to the vision and mission of the candidate pairs, with the aim that the public as voters

could understand the vision and mission in an applicable way. Then the essence of the campaign as a space to promote political education for the community can be fulfilled. Voters can more easily understand the vision, mission and work programs that have been formulated by the pair of candidates and the campaign team. The implementation of the campaign through deepening the vision and mission can be explained by the results of Ann-Kathrian's (2020) research which focuses on direct democracy campaigns, to increase electoral participation among voters through direct democratic reform, and campaigns to create more representative voters. Even though pairs of candidates cannot hold in the form of direct meetings with voters, candidate pairs still have the opportunity to convey directly their plans for the next five years to the public.

Socialization of the 2020 Election in Badung Regency

The duties and functions of the KPU which are inherent as election administrators in every election cycle are to conduct socialization so that voter participation remains high. Socialization activities were continuously carried out during the pre-election, election, and post-election periods (Wang *et al.*, 2012; Bisin & Verdier, 2011). Socialization was carried out to maintain voter memory and awareness of the importance of elections and democracy. In the Election year and at the election stages such as 2020, even before the election on December 9, 2020, the KPU of Badung Regency is increasingly doing socialization activities. The keyword that the KPU wants to aim at is high participation rates. This phenomenon is following the results of research conducted by Katju (2020), which focuses on the performance of the Indian Election Commission termed EC, managing and implementing elections for parliament and state assemblies (provincial level). EC makes efforts to high voter turnout, persuading voters to come to the polls.

The results of this study are closely related to the performance of the General Election Commission (KPU) in Indonesia, including the Badung Regency KPU in its efforts to maintain voter participation in the 2020 elections. Various efforts have been made by the Badung Regency KPU in conducting socialization, starting from the selection of the mascot which became the icon of the Badung election. Socialization with mobile cars, face-to-face socialization to various segments of voters including first-time voters (aged 17 to 21 years), women, disabilities, marginalized community groups, religious leaders from various religions, internet society, family basis, tourism industry players as the main driver of the district's economy Badung. Socialization is also carried out through electronic media such as radio, television, printing media such as newspapers, billboards, billboards, LEDs, and campaigns through social media on their various social media accounts. Also, socialization was carried out by involving Balinese artists, through cultural attractions of the artists conveying important electoral messages. The materials presented included the importance of checking the Final Voters List (abbreviated as DPT), the adaptation of new habits at polling stations (abbreviated as TPS), so that voters did not hesitate to exercise their voting rights.

The KPU of Badung Regency also recruits socialization agents who are expected to help the KPU to convey to the public about the voting day, namely on December 9, 2020, the importance of the election, as well as socialization in every stage. Socialization in each segment of voters must pay attention to their respective uniqueness, which cannot be treated equally. Research conducted by Widhiasthini *et al.* (2020), can be a reference, the importance of paying attention to each segment, and the age of the target group. The socialization material presented included updating the voter lists so that the public would know their existence as voters. The KPU has used a digital application to make it easier for voters to know whether they have registered or not, voters can also find out the location of the TPS as their location in channeling their voting rights.

Quoting the opinion of James & Clark (2020), which explains if TPS is the fulcrum of the democratic process, as a location for voters to exercise their democratic rights, it is also a place for fraud to be carried out so that the implementation of the election irregularities. TPS is a place for democratic practices to take place and to take place directly between voters and election administrators. This condition also occurred in the 2020 election in Badung Regency. The opinion of Toby and Alistair refers to the situation that occurs in the TPS as a venue for voter interaction with election organizers, namely the Voting and Vote Counting Groups (abbreviated as KPPS). TPS is also a place for interaction between voters in channeling their political rights, and a place for democratic practice in the voting booths to take place. Some provisions have been implemented by the KPU of Badung Regency in selecting the location of the TPS, such as the construction of TPS in public facilities (such as schools, community gathering places) instead of private land which can obstruct the community's desire to exercise their voting rights. TPS was also built taking into account the accessibility for people with disabilities who have various disabilities, both sight, hearing, and physical.

The difficulty faced by the KPU of Badung Regency in the socialization process with one pair of candidates is also a challenge in itself. Careful socialization is very necessary, not to suggest that the KPU is doing the handover to elect pairs of candidates. Or lead the voter to select an empty column or box. The risk of ethical violations can threaten the

performance of election administrators at various levels. If this happens, public confidence in the KPU's performance may decrease and result in low voter turnout. Wellman *et al.* (2018), emphasized that citizen trust in elections and political institutions tends to decline, based on fraudulent election administration. In its capacity as an election organizer, the KPU must uphold neutrality and integrity in carrying out its duties to maintain democracy.

The uniqueness of an election with a single candidate pair

Badung Regency as one of the regencies that has a large enough population in Bali, in holding regional head elections in the previous years have always been followed by more than one candidate pair. Likewise, with other districts and cities in Bali, regional head elections have never been attended by only one pair of candidates. So that the phenomenon of a single candidate that occurred in Badung Regency became the attention of various parties. Especially if it is related to geographical conditions, the accessibility of information technology, and the socio-economic conditions of the community which are very heterogeneous and considering that Badung Regency is an urban area that is mostly dominated by immigrants. The results of Sadanandan (2017), which examines the different practices of local democracy in each local government, can reflect the conditions faced by Badung Regency. Anoop stated that there are regions that have a high level of participation due to policies that benefit villagers, such as investment and education. Political stakeholders in Badung Regency see that the incumbent's performance is very optimal in the socio-economic field, this has also contributed to the emergence of a single candidate.

The results of research by Jaca & Torneo (2019), which explain the low participation of Overseas Voting (OV) in Filipino migrant community groups, use Participation Theory in observing public participation in elections. Overseas voters who reside abroad feel the high costs they have to spend than the benefits obtained if they exercise their voting rights. But they remain loyal to the State and its government, this study concludes that the diaspora community has low participation in elections. This research reflects the condition of voters in Badung Regency who are urban communities, many of whom come from outside of Badung Regency. Voters tend not to tie themselves to certain party ideologies, the presence of voters in Badung Regency is more on an effort to prioritize the economic side, namely earning a living. It is on this site that the infrastructure of the Badung people appears to be very prominent, as the main economic driving area in Bali, its people tend not to be involved in practical political activities. This results in low community involvement in becoming members of political parties so that the cadre process for various political parties cannot run ideally.

Likewise, the internal party conditions that tend to elect to re-nominate the incumbent, whose leadership has been tested in the previous five years. The services provided to the community have increased the trust, satisfaction, and loyalty of the community (Widiatmika & Subawa, 2017). This condition led to the occurrence of a single candidate pair in the Badung election in 2020. Citing Tambe (2017), opinion in his article discussing electoral participation in individuals is influenced by political and sociological factors in a democracy such as age, association networks, political affiliation and parties, factors of religiosity, and the existence of trust and satisfaction with the process of democracy. About the 2020 election in Badung Regency, various factors such as satisfaction with the incumbent's performance, political factors, changes in campaign methods, finally became a reference to the uniqueness of the Badung election which only had one pair of candidates.

4 Conclusion

The dynamics of a single candidate in the 2020 elections can be examined in various aspects. First, the implementation of the campaign is shifted more into the online form and optimization of the use of social media by candidate pairs (Widhiasthini, 2020). Campaign activities that were mobilizing voters were eliminated to prevent the spread of the Covid 19 Pandemic, even though these activities marked the campaign period. The campaign has become a means of realizing political education, which is carried out through the deepening of the vision and mission of candidate pairs by a team of panelists, as a substitute for open debate between candidate pairs. Second, the KPU continues to conduct socialization to keep the voter turnout rate high. Socialization was carried out in various segments of voters, using various methods, and the socialization material was also adjusted to the ongoing stage. The risks faced by the ranks of the Badung KPU as election organizers in conducting socialization are very high. They can face violations of the code of ethics if they are proven to lead the way to elect existing candidate pairs. Likewise, if they are proven to lead the voters to choose an empty box. Third, the 2020 election which was followed by one pair of candidates was caused by the pragmatism of the Badung people and also political party stakeholders. Badung people tend not to want to get

involved in practical politics so that the regeneration process within political parties does not materialize. Party officials also prefer to nominate the incumbent, considering the success that has been achieved in the previous period. This reality is very contradictory to the socio-economic conditions of Badung Regency as the richest area in Bali, and also the center of tourism.

Conflict of interest statement

The author declared that she has no competing interests.

Statement of authorship

The author has a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The author has approved the final article.

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