



ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL POLARISATION: THE CHALLENGE OF BUILDING COMMUNITY HARMONISATION IN TONGKO VILLAGE, BAROKO SUB-DISTRICT AFTER THE 2024 ENREKANG DISTRICT REGENT ELECTION

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Submission: 28-12-2024

| Review: 12-03-2026

| Published: 21-03-2026

Keywords :

Election, Political Polarisation, Society, Regent, Enrekang

ABSTRACT

Elections and Political Polarisation: The Challenges of Building Community Harmony in Tongko Village, Baroko Subdistrict after the 2024 Enrekang Regency Regent Election is an interesting issue that is increasingly being discussed by the Tongko village community. It becomes a separate question in the midst of the Tongko village community regarding the challenges of building harmonisation after the election was held. Researchers deliberately chose to examine this issue with the aim of finding out what is the root of the problem why the Regent election in Enrekang Regency this year is very heated, in addition researchers also want to know more deeply what the impact of political polarisation is and how to deal with it after the election takes place. The research method used in this research is research with a qualitative approach. The results of this study found that the root cause of why this year's regent election was so heated was because there were two pairs of candidates who were close relatives. The effects and impacts of political polarisation can create social fragmentation, disrupt daily life, decrease community credibility and have an impact on government. Therefore, among the efforts to rebuild community harmony is to instill and implement the values of Pancasila, instill and implement the harmonious values of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, instill religious values, build dialogue spaces, parties and leaders who play an active role.

Kata kunci :

Pemilu, Polarisasi Politik, Masyarakat, Bupati, Enrekang

ABSTRAK

Pemilu dan Polarisasi Politik: Tantangan Membangun Harmonisasi Masyarakat di Desa Tongko Kecamatan Baroko Pasca Pemilihan Bupati Kabupaten Enrekang Tahun 2024 merupakan isu menarik yang kian hangat diperbincangkan oleh masyarakat desa Tongko. Menjadi pertanyaan tersendiri di tengah-tengah masyarakat desa Tongko mengenai tantangan membangun harmonisasi pasca pemilu itu dilaksanakan. Peneliti



sengaja memilih untuk meneliti permasalahan ini dengan tujuan ingin mengetahui apa yang menjadi akar masalah mengapa pemilihan Bupati di Kabupaten Enrekang tahun ini sangat memanas, di samping itu peneliti juga ingin mengetahui lebih dalam apa dampak dari polarisasi politik dan bagaimana cara untuk menghadapinya pasca pemilu itu berlangsung. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Hasil dari penelitian ini diketahui bahwa yang menjadi akar permasalahan mengapa pemilihan bupati tahun ini sangat memanas karena terdapat dua pasangan calon yang merupakan keluarga dekat sendiri. Efek dan dampak dari polarisasi politik dapat membuat fragmentasi sosial, mengganggu kehidupan sehari-sehari, menurunnya kredibilitas masyarakat dan berdampak pada pemerintahan. Oleh karena itu di antara upaya untuk membangun kembali keharmonisan masyarakat adalah dengan menanamkan dan mengimplementasikan nilai-nilai Pancasila, menanamkan dan mengimplementasikan nilai keharmonisan Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, menanamkan nilai-nilai keagamaan, membangun ruang dialog, serta partai dan pemimpin yang berperan aktif.

A. INTRODUCTION

From the perspective of security and political stability, the implementation of the 2024 General Election, particularly when conducted simultaneously, posed significant challenges and concerns for the sustainability of unity, national integration, and the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). These challenges and concerns arose from several underlying factors. First, Indonesia remained categorized as a country undergoing democratic transition, or at the very least, its democracy had not fully completed the transition process. This condition was especially evident during the conduct of elections, which had often been marked by social friction.¹ Second, Indonesia is one of the most pluralistic and multicultural nations in the world in terms of territory, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture. With such a high level of diversity, differences in ideology, beliefs, perspectives, and supported political candidates have often acted as triggers for division and polarization within society during the course of democratic elections..²

¹ Guillermo O'donnel dan Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transisi Menuju Demokrasi: Rangkaian Kemungkinan dan Ketidakpastian* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1993), h. 6.

² Winarko Sihwidodo, *Meningkatkan Kewaspadaan Nasional Pasca Pemilu Serentak 2024 Guna Menjaga Keutuhan Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Lemhannas RI, 2024), h. 1-2.



Polarization is a term that is frequently encountered in the political sphere. Political polarization refers to the division of society based on differences in political views and support. This condition has resulted in society being divided into two opposing groups with differing perspectives and positions on political issues and policies.³ In political studies, the phenomenon of polarization has not only emerged prior to elections, but has also frequently persisted in the post-election period.⁴ Polarization has threatened social harmony, exacerbated conflicts, and diminished the quality of democracy. Political polarization has led to societal divisions and has had the potential to trigger conflicts that were detrimental to all parties involved.

Therefore, it is important to understand the reality of political polarization and to identify ways to address or at least mitigate its impacts. In the context of elections, polarization has often occurred when two candidates or parties have held differing views. Following the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency, political polarization became increasingly visible within society, particularly among the residents of Tongko Village, Baroko District. Post-election political polarization, which affected social harmony in Tongko Village, was evident as, out of three candidates, two were equally strong—namely the pairs Mitra Fakhruddin–Mahmuddin and Muhammad Yusuf–Andi Tenri Liwang La Tinro. This situation resulted in the emergence of two opposing factions, leading to the appearance of the labels “ramah” and “kawan” among community members.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study, entitled “Elections and Political Polarization: The Challenge of Building Social Harmony in Tongko Village, Baroko District, Following the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency,” employed a qualitative approach. This approach aimed to explore and narratively describe the activities undertaken and their impacts on the lives of the participants.⁵

³ Syifa Rianadiwa, dkk, “Upaya Pencegahan Polarisasi Politik di Tahun Pemilu 2024”, *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora* 4 no. 1 (2024): 170.

⁴ Ibnu Chaerul Mansyur, “Polarisasi Politik di Indonesia 2014-2019: Sebuah Kajian Pustaka, *Jurnal Politik Profetik* 11, no. 1 (2023): h. 10.

⁵ Albi Anggito dan Johan Setiawan, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Sukabumi: CV. Jejak, 2018), h. 7.

⁶ Wahyuni, “Pengembangan Koleksi Jurnas Studi Kasus di Perpustakaan UIN Sunan Kalijaga”, Skripsi (Yogyakarta: Fak. Perpustakaan UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2013), h. 21.



A qualitative approach was also defined as a research approach in which the procedures generated descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words derived from the behaviors or perspectives of the observed participants.⁶ Qualitative research was an essential approach for understanding social phenomena and providing descriptive insights into the individuals being studied. It was employed to describe, interpret, and explain these phenomena.⁷ The focus of qualitative research was to understand and explore participants' perspectives and experiences in order to obtain the necessary information and data.⁸ The references used in this study consisted of journal articles and scholarly works that addressed political polarization in the post-election context.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Concept of Political Polarization

The term polarization, according to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), refers to a process or act of division into two opposing groups, particularly among individuals or groups with differing interests. In other words, polarization denotes the division of society in responding to political issues. Political polarization referred to the fragmentation of society due to differences in political preferences, in which such divisions generated mutual distrust and hostility, ultimately leading to conflict.⁹ Political scientists have distinguished two levels of political polarization, namely elite polarization and mass polarization. Elite polarization has centered on divisions among political elites, such as party officials and elected representatives, whereas mass polarization has focused on the broader public, including voters and society at large.

Political polarization has not only occurred in Indonesia but has also been evident in other countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Political polarization has occurred in various contexts, including general elections, public policy, and socio-cultural issues. During general elections, polarization has frequently emerged and reflected divisions among political parties and their supporters. Differences in perspectives and objectives

⁶ Wahyuni, "Pengembangan Koleksi Jurnas Studi Kasus di Perpustakaan UIN Sunan Kalijaga", Skripsi (Yogyakarta: Fak. Perpustakaan UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2013), h. 21.

⁷ Syamsuddin dan Damaianti, *Metode Penelitian dan Pendekatan Bahasa* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2007), h. 74.

⁸ Skandar, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Jakarta: Gaung Persada, 2009), h. 11.

⁹ Ibnu Chaerul Mansyur, "Polarisasi Politik di Indonesia 2014-2019: Sebuah Kajian Pustaka, *Jurnal Politik Profetik* 11, no. 1 (2023): h. 5.



among political parties have led to intense polarization, in which society has been divided into opposing factions. The causes of political polarization have included political parties, mass media, regional expansion, political contexts, and the ideological orientations of society.

Political polarization in Indonesia has not been a new phenomenon. During the New Order and Reformasi periods, it had subsided. However, it re-emerged in 2014 and continued through 2019. Since then, Indonesia has experienced increasingly concerning levels of political polarization during general elections, including the election of executive leaders at the national, provincial, and district levels. The convergence of populism, identity politics, and misinformation has led to the emergence of sharp polarization.

2. Factors Contributing to Political Polarization in Tongko Village, Baroko District, Following the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency

An initial question that arose was why the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency became highly contentious. Based on information gathered and findings obtained from several informants, at least two fundamental factors were identified as contributing to the intensity of the election:

a. Family Ties

Close familial relationships between two equally strong candidates became one of the main factors contributing to the heightened tensions in the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency. Candidate pair number 1 and candidate pair number 2 were the two प्रमुख contenders who intensified the electoral contest.

“This became a major issue because the two equally strong candidates were cousins, and both originated from Tongko Village, although they no longer resided there. Both of them were also part of my extended family, which made it difficult for me to decide whom to support. I was not alone in this situation, as many others experienced the same dilemma.”¹⁰

A similar statement was expressed by Ustadz Abdurrahman, a religious leader in Tongko Village and an educator at MTs Muhammadiyah Tongko, when he was asked about the factors that triggered the heightened tensions in the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency:

“Prior to the election, these two candidates (candidate pair numbers 1 and 2), who were also cousins, already had an unresolved family conflict that was difficult to reconcile. This was why, when both decided to run as candidates for Regent of Enrekang, the situation

¹⁰ Rahmawati (43), Warga Desa Tongko, Wawancara, Tongko, 16 Desember 2024.



became highly heated. The tension was not limited to the two candidates, but also extended to their campaign teams and the broader community.”¹¹

In addition to creating divisions within family circles, these tensions also extended into the broader community. Strong loyalty and fanaticism toward respective candidates led many community members to overlook the importance of respecting differing political choices. Conflicts between the candidate pairs should not have spread to the public, as the resulting impacts posed significant risks of social fragmentation.

b. Dissatisfaction with Political Office

Candidate number 2 in the 2024 Enrekang Regency Regent Election was perceived as being dissatisfied with the position he had secured after being elected as a member of the South Sulawesi Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) for the 2024–2029 term. Among the nine elected DPRD members for the 2024–2029 period who resigned prior to inauguration, one was Muhammad Yusuf, who chose to run as a candidate in the 2024 Enrekang Regent Election.¹²

“We were actually very disappointed with Haji Ucu (Muhammad Yusuf). He had been granted a position in the South Sulawesi Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), yet before even serving his term, he chose to resign, which was what disappointed us. Moreover, it became even more disappointing when it was known that he stepped down to run as a candidate for Regent, especially since he would be contesting against his own cousin. In our view, he should have first fulfilled his role in the DPRD and allowed his cousin to run for Regent in this election.”¹³

The sense of disappointment among community members, resulting from what was perceived as intense political maneuvering, contributed to the growth of polarization in Tongko Village. These conditions revealed that, in reality, the community was often positioned merely as an object of political contestation in the hands of political elites.

3. Efek Polarisasi dan Dampaknya pada Keharmonisan Masyarakat di Desa Tongko

Following the implementation of the election, social relations within the community did not automatically return to a harmonious state. The election had a significant impact on social cohesion, as communities that were previously united became divided. Conflicts frequently persisted even after the election had concluded. This condition reflected a lack of public awareness that, despite differences in political choices, society remained part of a

¹¹ Abdurrahman (43), Guru MTs Muhammadiyah Tongko, *Wawancara*, Tongko, 15 Desember 2024.

¹² <https://makassar.tribunnews.com/2024/09/10/9-anggota-dprd-sulsel-terpilih-mundur-sebelum-dilantik-tinggalkan-gaji-rp56-juta-per-bulan> (27 Desember 2024).

¹³ Rahmawati (43), Warga Desa Tongko, *Wawancara*, Tongko, 16 Desember 2024.



unified entity with a shared goal, namely the well-being of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

Some members of the community, following the election, maintained harmonious social relations, as they were able to sincerely accept the results and demonstrated greater awareness of the importance of respecting electoral outcomes. Such attitudes contributed to the development of stronger social relationships and positively influenced efforts to build social harmony. However, not all community members respected or accepted the election results. Many individuals were unable to accept the outcomes sincerely, which led them to express dissatisfaction and, in turn, triggered divisions. The inability to accept election results undermined social harmony, as segments of the community rejected outcomes that did not align with their preferred choices.

Political polarization occurred when society became divided into two opposing groups in terms of preferences, choices, perspectives, beliefs, and ideologies, often reflected in a “us versus them” mindset. This condition was driven by the existence of two opposing factions, each demonstrating strong fanaticism toward their respective choices, as well as differences in viewpoints. Political polarization was more likely to emerge when communities or supporters were confronted with particular issues, such as differences in ideology, preferences, and group principles. In such situations, one group tended to perceive the principles and ideologies of the opposing group as incorrect, and vice versa.¹⁴

The impacts of political polarization have been highly detrimental. As understood from the concept of polarization, its occurrence has generated numerous conflicting issues, hostility between opposing groups, and even the potential for violence among groups holding different principles. These conditions have not only harmed community groups but have also adversely affected the quality of democracy in Indonesia. The following are several effects of political polarization and their impacts on social harmony in Tongko Village following the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency:

a. Fragmentasi Sosial

The simultaneous Regent Election held on November 27, 2024, in Enrekang Regency—particularly in Tongko Village, Baroko District—had a significant impact on the local community in the post-election period. The election, which was marked by heightened tensions, affected not only the candidate pairs but also intensified divisions among supporters across various areas of Enrekang Regency.

¹⁴ Syifa Rianadiwa, dkk, “Upaya Pencegahan Polarisasi Politik di Tahun Pemilu 2024”, *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora* 4 no. 1 (2024): 172.



Polarized communities tended to fragment into exclusive groups and reduced interactions with those from opposing sides. This phenomenon was clearly observed in Tongko Village, where community members formed distinct groups and were reluctant to engage with others who held different political preferences.

“In nearly every election in Enrekang Regency, regardless of the type of election, community members have tended to form groups based on their respective political preferences, while those with different choices have often been perceived as opponents by other groups. This condition has not been limited to that aspect alone.”¹⁵

It can be understood that political polarization has had the potential to create divisions within Indonesia. Strong fanaticism among certain supporters has led to conflicts between opposing groups, resulting in elections that were not conducted peacefully but were instead marked by tension. This situation has been characterized by the spread of misinformation, negative stigmatization, and even threats from one group toward another, among other issues.

b. Disruption to Daily Life

Conflicts arising from political polarization have had direct impacts on community life and have led to the deterioration of family relationships. This finding was consistent with the view expressed by Mr. Abdurrahman, a resident of Tongko Village and a religious leader in the community.

“Such conditions within the community were deeply concerning, as individuals living side by side—even within the same family—often no longer interacted or greeted one another. This situation had been observed in almost every election in Enrekang Regency; however, the 2024 Regent Election was marked by particularly intense tensions compared to previous elections.”¹⁶

Social fragmentation resulting from political polarization has not only affected community social life but has also extended into family relationships. Residents of Tongko Village acknowledged that the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency was highly contentious, and its impacts—both before and after the election—were strongly felt within the community.

“The recent Regent Election in Enrekang Regency was indeed highly contentious. However, its impacts were felt more strongly by the residents of Tongko Village this year compared to previous elections. Although earlier elections had also been marked by tensions,

¹⁵ Yusni Nurdin (38), Guru MTs Muhammadiyah Tongko, *Wawancara*, Tongko, 15 Desember 2024.

¹⁶ Abdurrahman (43), Guru MTs Muhammadiyah Tongko, *Wawancara*, Tongko, 15 Desember 2024.



they were not as intense as in this instance. I personally experienced that a neighbor living directly across from my house, who is also a close family member, rarely communicated with me after the election due to differences in political choices.”¹⁷

It remained uncertain how long it would take for the community of Tongko Village to restore harmony following the election; however, it was evident that this year’s situation differed from that of previous elections.

“Typically, such divisions have subsided on their own within one to two months; however, in this instance, it remained uncertain how long they would persist, given the heightened intensity of the election. Moreover, the Regent Election would soon be followed by a village head election, which was likely to further escalate tensions. As a result, individuals who were previously allies could become opponents, and vice versa.”

Division and conflict have constrained the course of social life, as expressed by Mrs. Rahmawati, a resident of Tongko Village who experienced the effects and impacts of political polarization. If such conditions continue to persist within the social fabric, the national aspiration to realize Indonesia as a harmonious pluralistic society will be difficult to achieve.

c. Decline in Community Credibility

Polarized societies have frequently been exposed to public controversies surrounding statements that could be factually verified. During this process, facts and moral courage have gradually lost their significance, as more individuals tended to align themselves with messages from their own groups. Social and political actors, such as journalists, academics, and politicians, were often involved in disseminating partisan narratives or faced increasing social, political, and economic costs. Consequently, voters have lost trust in public institutions, and support for democratic norms has declined.¹⁸ It has become increasingly difficult for individuals to act based on moral principles and objective truth, or to uphold prevailing values, when such actions conflict with partisan interests.

d. Impact on the Government

Polarization has been characterized by the erosion of compromise, consensus, interaction, and tolerance among individuals and political actors across opposing groups. Destructive polarization has often weakened respect for democratic norms, disrupted fundamental legislative processes, undermined the non-partisan nature of the judiciary, and increased public dissatisfaction with political parties. These conditions have exacerbated

¹⁷ Rahmawati (43), Warga Desa Tongko, *Wawancara*, Tongko, 16 Desember 2024

¹⁸ Syifa Rianadiwa, dkk, “Upaya Pencegahan Polarisasi Politik di Tahun Pemilu 2024”, *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora* 4 no. 1 (2024): 173.



intolerance and discrimination, reduced public trust, and heightened the risk of violence within society, thereby potentially leading to democratic backsliding.¹⁹

In cases of harmful political polarization across various countries, the winning side has often excluded the losing side from positions of power or employed strategies to prevent them from becoming future threats. In such situations, the losing side has typically questioned the legitimacy of institutions that allowed the winners to establish dominance, leading to increased public cynicism toward politics. In these contexts, political polarization has frequently been perceived as a self-serving power struggle with little relevance to the broader interests of society.

4. Strategies for Rebuilding Social Harmony in Tongko Village Following the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency

Communities divided as a result of elections have required collective efforts to restore previously established social harmony. Considering the effects and impacts of political polarization described above, this issue has warranted serious attention due to its potential to fragment society. Leaders, community figures, educators, and religious leaders—who have been regarded as influential figures within society—have been expected to provide solutions and guidance to the broader public. If left unaddressed, divisions within the community have had the potential to disrupt social stability and the continuity of communal life.

The following are several strategies that could be implemented to rebuild social harmony in Tongko Village following the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency:

a. Instilling and Implementing the Values of Pancasila

Instilling and implementing the values of Pancasila in public understanding and perspectives could serve as a method to address political polarization in Indonesia, particularly within the community of Tongko Village, Baroko District. Emilia Polanen argued that political polarization functioned as a political instrument that created boundaries between “us” and “them” and was used to monitor groups perceived as opposing the established order. As the philosophical foundation and way of life of the Indonesian state, Pancasila—when its values were effectively implemented within society—could provide solutions and mitigate the adverse effects of political polarization. The values embodied in each principle of Pancasila, regarded as a philosophical foundation, have been believed to represent the most concrete, just, wise, and appropriate norms to serve as the basis of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Pancasila has functioned as the foundation

¹⁹ Syifa Rianadiwa, dkk, “Upaya Pencegahan Polarisasi Politik di Tahun Pemilu 2024”, *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora* 4 no. 1 (2024): 173.



of identity, morality, and national character, as well as a unifying force for the Indonesian nation.

The values embodied in each principle of Pancasila have been manifested as the ideals and objectives of law, serving as concrete formulations to achieve justice, protect the entire nation, and safeguard all Indonesian people. The principles of Pancasila democracy have reflected a culture of freedom characterized by specific features and foundational values. The core principles of democracy can be outlined as follows:

- 1) Democracy has provided protection for human rights (HAM).
- 2) Decision-making has been conducted through deliberation and consensus (*musyawarah mufakat*).
- 3) Judicial institutions have operated independently.
- 4) Political parties have functioned as channels to realize national aspirations and to accommodate public interests.
- 5) Institutions have served as organizers of elections.
- 6) Sovereignty has resided with the people and has been exercised in accordance with the Constitution (Article 1, Paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution).
- 7) A balance between rights and obligations has been maintained.
- 8) Democracy has been implemented responsibly, guided by moral values grounded in religious principles, and has upheld ethical conduct toward oneself, society, and the state.
- 9) National goals and aspirations have been prioritized.
- 10) The government has adhered to the rule of law.²⁰

b. Instilling and Implementing the Harmonious Values of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika

The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) is a diverse nation composed of a wide range of ethnicities, races, religions, and cultures, spanning an extensive territory. In realizing national life, Indonesia is founded upon pillars of nationhood known as the four basic national consensus principles. These four principles are derived from the core values of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945), the NKRI, and the national motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity).²¹

²⁰ Fernando Pratiwi Saifullah, "Model Penanaman Nilai-nilai Pancasila dalam Menghadapi Ancaman Polarisasi Politik Pemilu 2024 di Indonesia", *Prosding Seminar Nasional Program Doktor Ilmu Hukum UMS 2022* 2022, h. 127.

²¹ Maryono, "Impelementasi Nilai Keharmonisan Bhinneka Tunggal Ika: Pembelajaran bagi Pemilu dan Pilkada Serentak 2024," *KNOWLEDGE: Jurnal Inovasi Hasil Penelitian dan Pengembangan* 3 no. 2 (2023): h. 144.



Bhinneka Tunggal Ika represents one of the fundamental national consensus pillars, signifying “unity in diversity,” where differences exist yet remain united. The national values derived from Bhinneka Tunggal Ika include tolerance, mutual cooperation (gotong royong), and social harmony. All of these values must be implemented in practice to ensure their benefits are directly felt in fostering a harmonious society.

c. Instilling Religious Values

The residents of Tongko Village are deeply religious, as evidenced by the numerous mosques built in each hamlet and the active participation of women in religious study groups (majelis ta’lim). Approaching the community through religious guidance and instilling religious values has been a highly positive effort to help restore social harmony in Tongko Village.

“We must raise awareness among the community that God has already determined who would become the Regent of Enrekang in 2024. We do not precede the divine will that has been ordained. If the residents of Tongko Village were to understand this principle, post-election divisions could have been avoided.”²²

This, of course, has not been an easy task for religious leaders (da’i) to convey amidst a community growing increasingly tense. Although the residents of Tongko Village are known for their religiosity, this characteristic has gradually diminished due to the influence of political movements and their doctrines.

“My friend and I were slandered by members of the community, being accused of distributing money on behalf of one of the candidate pairs. This allegation deeply hurt me. I have lived in Tongko Village for many years and was appointed by the regency government as a religious expert in the village, teaching their children. Yet, despite my dedication, I was subjected to an extremely serious and unfounded accusation.”²³

The account provided by Ustadz Abdurrahman above certainly sheds light on the situation, revealing that political elites have often treated the community as mere objects in a political game. This manipulation not only targeted the social fabric, causing divisions, but also extended to religious figures within the community. When religious leaders are slandered, it limits their ability to provide guidance and enlightenment to the public, as people tend to form negative judgments and become reluctant to invite them. Ironically, it is precisely during such times that the community most needs and requires awareness and moral guidance.

d. Establishing a Dialogue Space

²² Abdurrahman (43), Guru MTs Muhammadiyah Tongko, *Wawancara*, Tongko, 15 Desember 2024.

²³ Abdurrahman (43), Guru MTs Muhammadiyah Tongko, *Wawancara*, Tongko, 15 Desember 2024.



Creating a space for dialogue by involving neutral mediators is one way to restore social harmony within the community. Through discussion, differing perspectives can be brought together, allowing the root causes of conflicts to be addressed and enabling participants to share insights and provide mutual guidance.

“Bringing together the two divided groups to discuss the issues that arose following the election represents a positive and, in my view, a more mature approach. This step is necessary to prevent further misunderstandings that could lead to divisions within the community of Tongko Village.”²⁴

Ongoing conflicts that persist without seeking a resolution are difficult to address. Establishing a space for dialogue represents a more mature approach, as emphasized by Mrs. Yusni. If such issues are not resolved through deliberation, their negative effects will continue to spread within the community, and the longer they persist, the harder it will be to achieve reconciliation.

e. Political Parties and Leaders with Active Roles

Menurut Philippe C. Schmitter's, ada tiga aktor penting yang menjadi perantara atas tersalurkan kepentingan masyarakat, yaitu Parpol (the political parties), asosiasi kepentingan (the interest associations) dan yang terakhir gerakan sosial (*the social movements*).²⁵ Fungsi partai politik sendiri dapat dikategorikan menjadi dua, yaitu:

According to Philippe C. Schmitter, there are three key actors that serve as intermediaries in representing public interests: political parties, interest associations, and social movements. The functions of political parties themselves can be categorized into two main areas:

1) Internal Organizational Platform

Political parties, as internal organizational platforms, play a crucial role in developing, providing training, and nurturing cadres to strengthen the party's structure and resilience.

2) Organizational Platform

Political parties, as external organizational platforms, are expected to play a role for the people, the nation, and the state, fostering and maintaining moral and ethical values within society.²⁶

²⁴ Yusni Nurdin (38), Guru MTs Muhammadiyah Tongko, *Wawancara*, Tongko, 15 Desember 2024.

²⁵ Bayu Dwi Anggono, “Telaah Peran Partai Politik untuk Mewujudkan Peraturan Perundang-Undangan yang Berdasarkan Pancasila”, *Jurnal Konstitusi* 16 no. 4 (2019): h. 703-705.

²⁶ Firmazah, *Mengelola Partai Politik* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008), h. 69.



In addition, leaders at various levels must serve as role models in fostering harmonious communication within the community and in embracing all parties. The campaign teams of each candidate pair, as well as the candidates themselves—whether elected or not—should set positive examples for the community, because when their relationships are good, their supporters are likely to follow suit.

Recently, at a wedding event, I encountered my cousin wearing attire supporting a particular candidate pair, and I asked him to change it. Shortly after, I met another relative also wearing clothing representing a different candidate pair, and I asked the same. Both of them were campaign leaders (generals) for their respective candidates. I then brought them together and offered guidance and advice, and, thankfully, they reconciled. As a result of the two campaign leaders making peace, their supporters also followed suit and restored harmony.²⁷

The role of a leader in a community divided after the recent Regent Election, particularly in Enrekang Regency, serves as the most effective tool for fostering peace and harmony. Leaders must not turn a blind eye to such situations; instead, they are expected to take an active role, both as a matter of responsibility and as an obligation that must be upheld.

D. CONCLUSION

1. Polarization refers to the division of society in responding to political issues. Political polarization involved the fragmentation of the community due to differences in political choices, which fostered mutual distrust and animosity, ultimately leading to hostility. Political scientists have distinguished two levels of political polarization: elite polarization and mass polarization. Elite polarization centered on political elites, such as party officials and elected representatives, whereas mass polarization focused on the broader public, including voters and the general population.
2. The factors contributing to political polarization in the community of Tongko Village, Baroko District, following the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency were twofold: the close familial relationship between the two candidate pairs and the perception that candidate number 2 was dissatisfied with his political position. The effects of polarization and its impact on social harmony in Tongko Village included social fragmentation, disruptions to daily life, a decline in community credibility, and repercussions for the government.

²⁷ Abdurrahman (43), Guru MTs Muhammadiyah Tongko, *Wawancara*, Tongko, 15 Desember 2024.



3. Strategies for rebuilding social harmony in Tongko Village following the 2024 Regent Election in Enrekang Regency included instilling and implementing the values of Pancasila, instilling and applying the harmonious values of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, promoting religious values, establishing spaces for dialogue, and ensuring that political parties and leaders played active roles.

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