



Transformation of the Labor Political Movement: Confronting the Injustices of Labor Policy in Indonesia

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Abstract

The injustice of labor policy in Indonesia has marginalized workers in the tripartite negotiation process dominated by the logic of corporatism, reflected in the policies of the Job Creation Law, Government Regulation Number 78 of 2015 regarding wages and several labor rules tend to favor employers and ignore the needs of a decent living for workers. The research aims to analyze the driving factors of resistance, the form of movement transformation, and its political implications. The qualitative descriptive method uses primary data from some government regulations on labor in Indonesia, secondary data from online news (2014–2024), journal articles, and data from relevant institutions related to the labor movement. Based on the theory of resource mobilization and the transformation of the labor movement from street demonstrations to the structural political strategy of the Labor Party's representation, it shows the expansion of influence and connectivity. The study results show that the labor political movement faces severe challenges, such as the dominance of the power of capital owners and fluctuations in support at the electoral level. However, amid these dynamics, the labor movement has succeeded in building a strategic foundation to influence policies and fight for workers' welfare in a more organized and systematic.

Keywords

Transformation; Political Movement; Labor; Policy

Abstrak

Ketidakadilan kebijakan ketenagakerjaan di Indonesia telah meminggirkan buruh dalam proses negosiasi tripartit yang didominasi logika korporatisme, tercermin pada kebijakan UU Cipta Kerja, Peraturan Pemerintah No. 78/2015 tentang pengupahan dan beberapa aturan ketenagakerjaan yang cenderung memihak pengusaha dan mengabaikan kebutuhan hidup layak buruh. Penelitian bertujuan menganalisis faktor pendorong perlawanan, bentuk transformasi gerakan, serta implikasi politiknya. Metode

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deskriptif kualitatif, menggunakan data primer dari beberapa peraturan pemerintah tentang ketenagakerjaan di Indonesia, data sekunder dari berita online (2014-2024), artikel jurnal, dan data dari lembaga terkait yang berhubungan dengan gerakan buruh. Berdasarkan teori mobilisasi sumber daya dan transformasi gerakan buruh dari demonstrasi jalanan menuju strategi politik struktural representasi Partai Buruh, menunjukkan perluasan pengaruh dan konektivitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gerakan politik buruh menghadapi tantangan berat, seperti dominasi kekuatan pemilik modal dan fluktuasi dukungan di aras elektoral. Namun, di tengah dinamika tersebut, gerakan buruh berhasil membangun landasan strategis untuk memengaruhi kebijakan dan memperjuangkan kesejahteraan pekerja secara lebih terorganisir dan sistematis.

Kata Kunci

Transformasi; Gerakan Politik; Buruh; Kebijakan

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Introduction

The inequities inherent in state employment policies have prompted workers to mobilize and fortify their political movements. Recently, workers have been subjected to discrimination and exploitation by the state. These state actions are reflected in an autocratic government operating within a liberal economic framework (Hadiz, 2017; Robet et al., 2023). The development of employment policies has evolved into a corporatist ideology (Wulansari, 2021). This shift is exemplified by implementing the Job Creation regulation, which signifies a diminishing state responsibility to ensure decent work and livelihoods for workers (Komnas-Ham, 2021). This regulation has led to the establishment of low-wage policies. It has undermined workers' bargaining power in advocating for fair wages within the tripartite democracy framework or social dialogue involving workers, employers, and the government. Furthermore, the state has curtailed or entirely abolished numerous protective mechanisms for workers previously mandated by law (Izzati, 2022). Consequently, workers find themselves in the most vulnerable position in the employment relationship between employers and employees.

Research on labor movements to date primarily emphasizes the achievements of workers in advocating for their objectives through collective action, leveraging the mobilization capabilities of labor unions. Firstly, labor unions serve as a powerful advocacy instrument, exerting significant political pressure on corporations to amend wage policies and enhance working conditions at the organizational level (Caraway et al., 2019; Clemens & Strain, 2023b, 2023a; Wood, 2020). Secondly, labor unions represent the most effective platform for consolidation and activism, facili-

tating the identification of shared interests among diverse stakeholders in the execution of business practices (Alcalde-González et al., 2023; Atzeni & Cini, 2023; Johnson et al., 2023). Thirdly, the labor movement's collaboration across various sectors, empowered by labor unions, has expanded the negotiation landscape through the tripartite social dialogue mechanism in shaping wage policies (Brown, 2018; Durocher, 2022; Garrick, 2021; Szabó, 2022). Despite these three focal points, there remains a lack of research dedicated to examining the forms and methods through which the labor political movement evolves, particularly concerning the tools or media employed to challenge injustices in labor policies.

This paper addresses the limitations of prior research, aiming to elucidate the factors, forms, and implications of the labor movement's transformation in its opposition to employment policies. This objective is achieved by responding to three primary questions. First, what employment policies incite worker resistance? This inquiry clarifies the trajectory of current employment policies. Second, how has the labor political movement evolved in opposition to employment policies? This question delves into the forms, motivations, and key players involved in the labor political movement. Third, why do workers amplify the influence of their political movement through electoral politics? This question pertains to the role of public figures in enhancing the connectivity and sustainability of the labor movement at both central and regional levels. The responses to these three questions provide a foundation for comprehensive explanations regarding the labor movement's transformation in its efforts to contest employment policies, thereby serving as a basis for future action plans.

This paper is grounded in the theoretical premise that the transformation of the labor political movement in Indonesia represents a form of resistance, subsequently manifested as an opposition movement (Brink et al., 2023) by oppressed and marginalized groups (Abowitz, 2000) within the framework of a neoliberal economic power structure (Ball & Olmedo, 2023). The emergence of the labor resistance movement can be attributed to three preconditions: alienation, a diminished perception of justice, and a lack of commitment to policy (Factor et al., 2013). Consequently, the labor political movement discussed in this paper can be interpreted as a form of resistance against the prevailing dominance of power (Dousset & Nayral, 2018; Johansson & Vinthagen, 2019) and oppressive policies (Cattaneo & Di Mauro, 2015), through collective actions (Krishnan, 2020; Lelandais, 2014) (Büyük & Bozkurt, 2020). Furthermore, the theory of resource mobilization, as articulated by Chen et al., serves to describe and analyze the organizational methods employed by workers in their efforts to collectively enhance the influence of their political movements, thereby fostering effective governance and political stability as a means to achieve justice in employment policies (Chen & Mason, 2022; Giugni & Grasso, 2016; Wei & Gao, 2018).

Method

This research was conducted within the context of labor movements in Indonesia, examining policies that discriminate against labor rights and the patterns and forms of political movements enacted by workers. The political movement in this study is understood as an effort by workers to resist through collective actions of a political nature. This decision was informed by three factors: (1) a notable scarcity of studies addressing the tendency for resistance among workers due to discriminatory and exploitative labor policies; (2) the necessity for contextual understanding, recognizing that the resistance actions undertaken by workers are efforts to transform the nature of resistance movements against the injustices of labor policies; and (3) the significant and profound political influence associated with the formation and utilization of political parties by workers as instruments for connectivity and the sustainability of their long-term struggle.

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing both primary and secondary data to investigate the policies that motivate workers to engage in political movements, their transformations, and their political implications at both central and regional levels, particularly during elections. Primary data for the study used Law No. 11 of 2020 concerning Job Creation (Omnibus Law), Government Regulation No. 78/2015 regarding wages, Presidential Decree No. 20 of 2018 concerning the employment of foreign workers, Government Regulation instead of Law No.2 of 2022 on Job Creation. Then, secondary data sources comprise excerpts from online news articles obtained through the Google search engine, utilizing the filtering feature for 2014 to 2024 and generating two primary keyword combinations using the Boolean formula. The first combination is "protest OR demands AND wage policy OR Indonesian employment policy." The second is "demonstration OR demo AND workers' demands." The first keyword combination is employed to gather data on employment policies shaped by corporatist logic. At the same time, the second is utilized to analyze the patterns and forms of the labor movement, thereby elucidating the transformation of the movement. Additionally, this study incorporates secondary data sources, including journal articles and information from relevant institutions pertinent to the research focus.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using the methodology outlined (Galuh Larasati et al., 2023), comprising three distinct steps. The first step involves data reduction, which is systematically organized based on the patterns identified from the previously collected information. The second step, data verification, entails thematically summarizing all reduced data through a detailed examination. The third step involves describing the data, which includes presenting narratives or texts from online news sources, policy collections, and data from relevant institutions aligned with the focus of this study. Subsequently, inductive analysis is employed to facilitate the data interpretation process. The interpretation in this study is grounded in examining the factors, forms, and implications of policies affecting the transformation of the labor political movement in opposition to employment

policies in Indonesia. Thus, the analytical techniques utilized in this study enable the formulation of a conclusion.

Discussion

Employment Policy Grounded in Corporatist Principles

Changes in employment policies regarding wages have experienced several phases, transitioning from the New Order era to the post-reform period. These wage policy alterations have significantly influenced workers' welfare in Indonesia. However, since the onset of the government period in 2015, this wage policy has undergone substantial modifications that tend to disadvantage workers (table 1). This shift is evidenced by abandoning the wage calculation mechanism based on the Decent Living Needs (KHL) component employed by the previous administration from 1966 to 2014. The current wage calculation components are based on economic growth and inflation (table 1). Consequently, the rationale behind wage determination policies no longer considers fundamental aspects necessary for human existence, particularly the ability to satisfy basic needs such as clothing, food, and shelter.

Table 1. Formula for Establishing Wage Policy

Period/year	Formula	Component
1966 – 1995	Minimum physical standards	Physical and mental well-being
1995 – 2005	Minimum living standards	Food and non-food items
2006 – 2014	Adequate living requirements	Food and beverages, apparel, and shelter
2015 – 2024	National Economy	National economic expansion and inflation rate

Source: Ministry of Labor, 2024.

The shift in wage policy orientation has led the state to align more closely with the business sector, particularly entrepreneurs and capital owners, rather than the workers themselves. The state's alignment with entrepreneurs is evident in the enactment of Government Regulation No. 78 of 2015 regarding wages aimed at maintaining business competitiveness through low wage levels. Additionally, to attract investment to the country, the government has implemented several employment regulations, including Law Number 11 of 2020 concerning Job Creation, which has resulted in diminished job protections and facilitated the termination of employment (PHK) by companies, thereby potentially restricting the autonomy of labor unions (table 2). Furthermore, the policy established by Government Regulation No. 34 of 2021 has adversely affected job opportunities for local workers due to the increased influx of foreign workers. Ultimately, the introduction of Perpu

No. 2 of 2022 is clear evidence of the state's disregard for ensuring workers' rights to a decent standard of living, as it significantly enhances the dominance of entrepreneurs through this regulatory framework (Table 2).

Table 2. Inequities in Employment Policies

Rule	Policy Foundation	Impact
Government Regulation No. 78 of 2015 regarding Wages	Increase the Provincial Minimum Wage (UMP) with inflation and economic growth, excluding the Decent Living Component (KHL).	Diminished bargaining power of trade unions in wage determination and economic adversity
Presidential Decree No. 20 of 2018 regarding the Employment of Foreign Workers	The process for the entry of foreign workers has been streamlined.	Diminishing employment prospects for residents
Law No. 11 of 2020 concerning Job Creation (Omnibus Law)	Flexibility in employment regulations	Diminishing worker protections, enabling outsourcing mechanisms, severing employment relationships, and curtailing freedom of association.
Government Regulation instead of Law No. 2 of 2022 on Job Creation	Facilitating entrepreneurial prominence in social dialogue (tripartite)	Diminishes protection and job security while promoting outsourcing.

Source: regulasi.go.id, analyzed by researchers.

Implementing employment policies grounded in corporatist logic has engendered injustice for labor groups because the state, which ought to serve as a bastion of hope and a foundation for a decent living for workers, has increasingly aligned itself with corporate interests. Consequently, workers find themselves in a precarious position characterized by insufficient protection, limited opportunities, and diminished bargaining power in their professional endeavors. These conditions have spurred workers to engage in resistance movements against government policies, stemming from a disconnection between workers and the state, a diminished sense of justice, and heightened alienation in the workplace (Factor et al., 2013). Therefore, the labor resistance movement is understood not merely as a minor "power" contending against prevailing dominance but also as an endeavor to forge "ways of life and ways of being" for themselves and their families (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2019).

Furthermore, three primary causes can be discerned from previous data regarding how employment policy conditions in Indonesia have fostered the rise of labor resistance movements. First, the resistance exhibited by workers stems from their low psychological state, a consequence of the poverty they have endured (Lee, 2017), or from their inability to produce, manage, and fulfill their financial obligations for basic living needs (Cattaneo & Di Mauro, 2015). Second, labor resistance serves as a manifestation of neoliberal policies (Pfeffer et al., 2014), which empirically result in low wage practices and perpetuate issues such as inequality, unemployment, inflation, and income stagnation among workers (Lee, 2017; Wulansari, 2021). Third, the pressing need for survival amid challenging economic conditions significantly contributes to the emergence of labor resistance movements (Cattaneo & Di Mauro, 2015).

Labor market-oriented policies often prioritize market productivity while neglecting the needs of workers, including income stability and overall welfare (Kochan & Kimball, 2019). The perspective on labor policies tends to overlook the fundamental aspects of workers' livelihoods, treating them merely as a means to achieve market or corporate objectives. Policies that ostensibly support corporatism under the pretense of empowering and enhancing workers ultimately lead to their weakening and disempowerment. This situation encouraged the creation of a solidarity-based class movement. According to Beverly J Silver (Silver, 2008:3), *the manifestation of exploitation of workers that weakens the bargaining position of workers finally gives rise to a collective desire with the narrative of the class movement in responding to the main issues of labor struggle*. Therefore, a new approach is needed, focusing on political strategy and policy development to support the labor struggle.

Transformation of the Labor Political Movement

The labor political movement from 2014 to 2024 transformed its structure, motivations, and key players (Table 3). During this period, workers engaged in political activism to adapt and shape the trajectory of their political resistance, not solely depending on union power but also leveraging the influence of political parties to affect policy and electoral dynamics.

Table 3. Transformations in the Labor Political Movement 2014-2024

Year	Form	Motivation	Actor
2014	Street Politics	Advocating for a sustainable wage, Elimination of external contracting, The repeal of the Job Creation Law, Opposition to fuel price	A coalition of confederations, federations, and labor organizations across Indonesia.

		increase	
2015- 2019	Political Agreement	Establish collaborative agreements and engage as volunteers for various presidential and vice-presidential candidates.	KSPI, FSPMI, KSPSI, KSBSI (confederation and federation)
		I am becoming a volunteer and a member of the winning team for Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno in the DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election.	Jakarta Labor Coalition (KBJ)
		Expressing endorsement for various presidential and vice-presidential candidates	Three trade union confederations
2020- 2024	Comprehensive and Expansive Political Strategy	Establishment of the Labor Party	Four trade union confederations and fifty national trade union federations
		Becoming an electoral participant, Challenging the Regional Election and Job Creation Laws in the Constitutional Court	Labour Party

Source: Digital News, analyzed by researchers.

The motivation of workers to engage in political movements originated from concerns regarding the fulfillment of basic living needs and working conditions, including the abolition of the outsourcing system, the Job Creation Law, and the establishment of living wages. However, this motivation gradually evolved to encompass broader political issues, such as forming political contracts, declarations of support, and participation in the electoral process, as illustrated in Table 3. The motivation arises from the absence of state policies consistently supporting improvements in workers' livelihoods. Furthermore, the impetus for change within the movement is not solely rooted in its motivations but reflects a transformation in the tools employed for political struggle. Traditionally, this struggle was conducted primarily through labor organizations, such as unions, federations, and confederations. However, there has been a shift towards establishing political parties, which serve as new advocacy instruments. The creation of political parties by labor

groups not only enhances the connectivity of the movement but also ensures its sustainability, even in the face of exploitative and discriminatory labor policies.

The forms of labor political movements can be categorized into three distinct phases. First is street politics, where the movement mobilizes large crowds led by organic intellectuals affiliated with various labor organizations. Second, political contracts, during which labor groups leverage their political influence to garner support and strengthen their position through engagement in electoral politics. Third, a comprehensive political strategy, characterized by the utilization of political party power to exert political pressure aimed at enacting significant constitutional changes, such as contesting the threshold value of political parties in the Pilkada Law and the Job Creation Law at the Constitutional Court. These three conditions have made the labor movement increasingly organized and focused on systemic change through institutional and political party mechanisms, as well as continue striving to advocate for and represent labor issues in Indonesia.

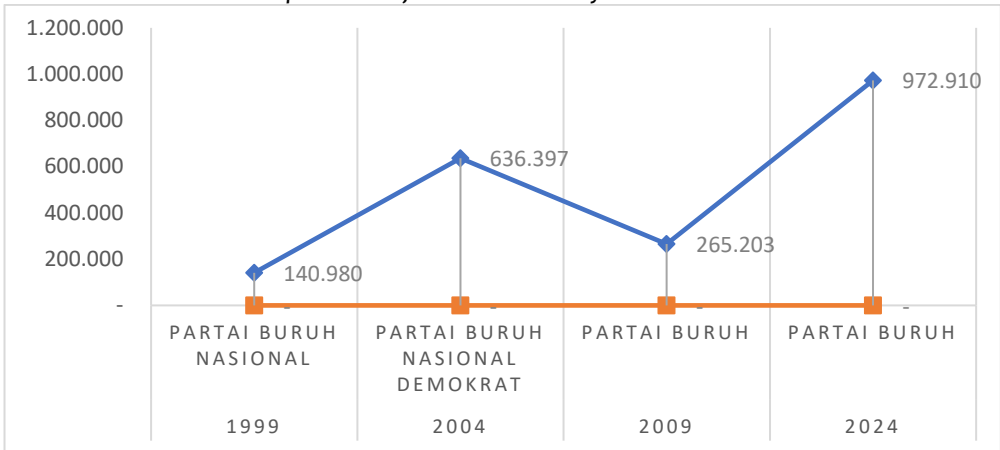
Through the party mechanism, workers have successfully transformed their movement. This transformation is evident not only in expanding workers' political influence but also in formulating political strategies utilizing their available resources. Consequently, political parties empower workers to organize and effectively leverage their resources within political arenas (Hui, 2022). This is crucial, as the success of the labor movement heavily relies on workers' ability to mobilize resources such as capital, mass participation, alliances, and identities to enhance understanding and sustain the political tradition of labor struggles in the future (Manky, 2018). This approach helps prevent the decline of the labor movement due to political apathy (Beaver, 2016). Ideally, the Labor Party should serve as a vehicle for political movements and as an alternative platform for building, disseminating knowledge, and fostering broader perspectives related to the realization of collective awareness, sustainability, and connectivity within the movement among workers (Pham Thi, 2024).

Transformation as a mechanism for change is increasingly evident in supporting the sustainability of contemporary workers' struggles. This methodology underscores sustainability, mainly through structural interactions that promote social change (Heydari Fard, 2024). Consequently, workers' struggles employing the transformation approach are no longer merely symbolic or confined to the streets; they have evolved into more structured and institutionalized movements (Zuhdan, 2014).

Labor Engagement and Strategy in Electoral Politics for 2024

The fluctuations of the labor movement throughout history are mirrored in public support statistics from various general elections spanning 1999 to 2024. The data illustrates a highly variable pattern of vote acquisition (chart 1). This information highlights the challenges faced by parties focused on labor issues, particularly securing representation in parliament.

Chart 1. Vote Acquisition of the Labor Party in the Indonesian Election



Source: Election Commission, 2024.

The fluctuation in the votes for parties representing workers' interests is inextricably linked to the political and economic pressures these parties often encounter. This political dynamic is closely tied to the circumstances and conditions of the workforce, economy, and social issues prevalent during each electoral period. First, the increase in votes during the 2004 election can be attributed to the significant number of workers who lost their jobs following the economic crisis of 1998, which brought labor issues to the forefront of public concern, prompting demands for policy changes to enhance workers' conditions (Faedlulloh, 2019). Second, the decline in support during the subsequent election in 2009 occurred because the Labor Party struggled to establish social networks with other sectors (partaiburuh.or.id, 2023). Third, the resurgence of public support in the 2024 election was driven by workers' perceptions that government policies were increasingly detrimental to their interests, characterized by low wages and inadequate social protection, as illustrated in Table 2.

Consequently, it is important to note that, based on the data presented in Graph 1, one can conclude that as workers' economic and political conditions become increasingly dire, the attention and political support for parties advocating labor issues will also rise. This situation complicates the development of the labor movement, particularly within Indonesia's electoral politics framework. Thus, workers will engage in practical political activities through political parties during the regional head elections 2024. The employed practical political strategy involves endorsing several potential gubernatorial and deputy gubernatorial candidates at the regional level, considering the candidates' political, economic, and social capital strengths being supported (Table 4). Through this approach, workers can expand their political influence, which, in aggregate, can make changes to labor policies (Table 2), which currently tend to be discriminatory, exploitative, and impartial in improving the welfare of workers.

Table 4. Direction of Labor Party Support Concerning Gubernatorial Candidates in the 2024 Regional Head Elections

Province	Candidate	Final Department
Banten	Airin Rachmi Diany Ade Sumardi	Deputy Mayor - Deputy Regent
West Java	Dedi Mulyadi - Erwan Setiawan	Provincial Legislative Assembly - Deputy Regent
East Java	Khofifah Indar Parawansa - Emil Dardak	Incumbent
North Sumatra	Edy Rahmayadi - Hasan Basri Sagala	Incumbent - Bureaucrat
West Sumatra	Epyardi Asda - Ekos Albar	Regent - Vice Mayor
Riau Islands	Muhammad Rudi - Aunur Rafiq	Regent - Mayor
Jambi	Al Haris - Abdullah Sani	Incumbent
Lampung	Rahmat Mirzani Djausal - Jihan Nurlela	Provincial Legislative Assembly - Regional Representative Council of the Republic of Indonesia
Bali	I Wayan Koster - I Nyoman Giri Prasta	Regent - Governor
NTT	Ansy Lema - Jane Suryanto	DPR RI – Legislator
West Kalimantan	Muda Mahendrawan - Jakius Sinyor	Regent - Regent
Central Kalimantan	Abdul Razak - Sri Suwanto	Provincial Legislative Assembly - Bureaucrat
North Kalimantan	Zainal Arifin Paliwang - Ingkong Ala	Incumbent - Deputy Governor
West Sulawesi	Suhardi Duka - Salim S Mengga	Provincial Legislative Assembly - Military
Central Sulawesi	Rudy Mastura - Sulaiman Augusto Hambuako	Incumbent - Armed Forces
North Sulawesi	Elly Engelbert Lasut - Hanny Joost Pajouw	Regent – Provincial Regional Representative Council
Southeast Sulawesi	Lukman Abunawas - Laode Ida	Deputy Governor – Business Leader
South Sulawesi	Danny Pomanto - Azhar Arsyad	Entrepreneur – Statesman
North Maluku	Benny Laos -	Regent - Bureaucrat

	Sarbin Sehe	
<i>Papua</i>	Mathius Fakhiri - Aryoko Rumaropen	Regional Police Chief - Bu- reaucrat
<i>Central Papua</i>	Natalis Tabuni - Titus Natkime	Regent - Businessperson
<i>West Papua</i>	Dominggus Mandacan – Mohammad Lakotani	Governor – Deputy Governor
<i>South Papua</i>	Nikolaus Kondomo - Baidin Kurita	Incumbent - Bureaucrat
<i>Southwest Papua</i>	Joppye Onesimus Wayangkau - Ibrahim Wugaje	Military – Commander

Source: General Election Commission, analyzed by researchers.

Based on the data presented in Table 4, three significant factors elucidate the reasons behind workers' support for candidates. First, in regions with the highest voter populations, such as Banten, East Java, West Java, and North Sumatra, candidates endorsed by workers exhibit both popularity and a strong connection to constituents at both local and national levels, resulting in a considerable probability of victory. Second, the presence of several incumbent candidates reflects the rationality of workers' political choices, as it facilitates their access to capital, social networks, and government bureaucracy in the regions—key sources of strength in navigating electoral contests within Indonesia's political landscape. Third, to garner such extensive support in the regions, it is essential to consider the diversity of each candidate's previous positions, including the governor, regent, deputy regent, members of the DPR-RI, DPD, DPRD, and even military roles, as this strategy aims to leverage figures believed to possess the capability to comprehend and address local issues effectively. These factors indicate that the labor political movement is becoming increasingly sophisticated and adept at adapting to local political dynamics.

Political engagement by workers at the local level demonstrates that the utilization of resources, expressly political parties, mass mobilization, and political identity, exerts a substantial influence on efforts to enhance the position of workers within the regions. Although evidence indicates that the parties advocating for workers' interests in the general elections from 1999 to 2024 have failed to secure labor parties that meet the parliamentary threshold, it is noteworthy that the vote share for labor parties in the 2024 election reflected a significant increase in public support compared to prior elections. This data suggests that the active and pragmatic political involvement of workers, through the strategic use of political parties, constitutes a vital effort to foster electoral growth regarding voter engagement and the connectivity and sustainability of the movement at the local level (Delwit, 2022). Consequently, this political engagement has collectively trans-

formed the nature of the labor struggle from what was once characterized as a street political movement into a profound and expansive political movement.

The comprehensive political strategy workers employ is evident in the selection of gubernatorial candidates, including incumbents, politicians, bureaucrats, and even military figures. This approach is informed by the political landscape in Indonesia, where historical political experiences significantly influence recommendations for future leaders. Consequently, the attributes of leaders elected in previous terms play a crucial role in shaping voters' preferences for candidates in subsequent elections. This aligns with findings from earlier studies, which indicate that the characteristics of leaders elected in 2019 are now favored by political parties in their nomination and recommendation processes, particularly concerning professional backgrounds and prior social status (Galuh Larasati et al., 2023). Thus, the political strategy of workers utilizing political parties can be regarded as a long-term movement strategy initiated by reinforcing institutional connections at the local level through party coalition mechanisms.

Electoral competition, the foundation for gaining power and fortifying democracy, can be interpreted as an alternative mechanism for strengthening the relationship between the labor parties and the workers' struggle. In this context, political parties are understood as instruments of legitimacy for various forms of political expression in society and a mechanism to encourage change (Bailey, 2010). This condition enables the labor movement to consider electoral political strategies as an alternative approach to mass mobilization tactics.

Conclusion

The corporatist framework that informs policy development in Indonesia has fostered exploitative and discriminatory working conditions for employees. Legislation such as the Job Creation Law, Government Regulation Number 78 of 2015 regarding Wages, and various other rules related to employment is considered to favor companies and capital owners more than paying attention to workers' welfare. This can be seen from wage policies, the employment contract system, and the lack of efforts to create decent working conditions for workers. Governments favor employers more, ignore workers' primary needs, and weaken labor bargaining positions in the tripartite system. As a result, workers are increasingly marginalized and alienated, prompting them to resist collectively.

Initially, the labor movement was confined to street demonstrations; however, it has since evolved into a more organized political strategy, exemplified by the establishment of the Labor Party. Between 2014 and 2024, workers harnessed the power of unions and transitioned to employing political parties as instruments of their struggle. This approach encompasses political agreements with electoral candidates, facilitating direct engagement in electoral politics. Such transformation enables workers to shape policy and enhance the movement's sustainability at both central and regional levels.

When connected to institutional and electoral processes, the labor movement encounters significant challenges, including the predominance of capital-driven politics and limited electoral backing. The Labor Party's ability to secure votes in elections remains unpredictable, illustrating the difficulty in garnering sustained public support. Nevertheless, this movement is beginning to exhibit a positive trajectory, particularly when labor issues resonate strongly within the community. The labor strategy of endorsing candidates with substantial social capital and robust relationships with local communities across various regions signifies a notable shift in how workers perceive and engage in their political roles. This indicates that transformation is crucial for establishing equity in future labor policies.

The labor movement's success in Indonesia is significantly contingent upon its capacity to mobilize resources, forge strategic alliances, and cultivate a robust collective consciousness among workers. By employing institutional and electoral strategies, the labor movement has not only succeeded in broadening political space but has also played a pivotal role in fortifying formal democracy in Indonesia. This transformation has engendered new opportunities to advocate for social justice and enhance workers' welfare through a more systematic and sustainable structural approach. By leveraging political power, including forming a labor party, workers are now positioned to influence public policy directly, rendering the labor struggle more focused and results-oriented. The labor struggle has evolved beyond mere symbolic actions, emerging as a tangible and organized political force that demands policy changes in pursuit of their collective interests. This transformative process underscores the significance of establishing connections between regional and national levels, fostering a continuity of movement that is not only potent at the local level but also exerts a substantial impact in advocating for workers' welfare on a national scale. This signifies a new era in the history of the Indonesian labor movement, where strategic, structured efforts with considerable bargaining power in the political and policy arenas characterize the pursuit of justice and equality.

Authors Contribution

Yahdi Qolbi: *Writing – initial draft, Complete article draft.*

Alberto Noviano Patty: *Writing – Conclusion, Abstract.*

Jefri: *Evaluation.*

Hamzah Jamaludin: *Editing.*

Authenticity Statement

We affirm that this article is entirely the original work of the author and is free from any instances of plagiarism. This article has not been previously published and is not currently under submission to another journal.

Biography

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