**Mainstreaming the Issue of Climate Change in the Political Party Agenda of the East Java Provincial DPRD: A Study on the Winning Parties of the Regional Elections**

**Syahirul Alim1,** **Verdy Firmantoro2,** **Angga Sukmara Christian Permadi3**

1Communication Science Department, Universitas Brawijaya

2Communication Science Department, Universitas Brawijaya

3Government Department, Universitas Brawijaya

**Abstract**

This study of the extent to which green ideologies are embedded in political party operational frameworks (case studies: Three main Single Partai Election race winner 2020 East Java Province Indonesia) is a mixed-method study with quantitative and qualitative analyses on understanding the awareness, discourse, and strategies of environmental issues in these politics. Results suggest that within parties sustainability considerations are predominantly reactive, short-term oriented and often instrumentally used. Contrast with the extant literature suggests that those parties more likely to survive electorally are located in regions where voters care most about environmental issues and have fairly distinct party strategies over these same policies. Nevertheless, in the East Java province, mounting public concern over environmental issues has not been used as a strategic tool by political parties. The findings suggest that instead of shallow greening, a transformative change from environmentalism to strategic integration can elevate electoral competitiveness and sustainable development. The findings matter... a lot: The results show that by aligning their strategies with broader sustainability goals and adopting proactive measures for environmental stewardship, regional political parties in East Java can respond not only to short-term electoral pressures; they could even begin resolving some of the key sustainment challenges upon which future electoral success and governance quality would pivot on within its region.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Development, Environmental Communication, Climate Change, Political Party, Elections*

\*)corresponding author

E-mail : [syahirul@ub.ac.id](mailto:syahirul@ub.ac.id)

**Introduction**

The urgency of integrating climate change issues into political agendas is increasingly acknowledged in every corner of the world. However, the intensity of political response, particularly at the regional level in developing countries, seems to be lukewarm. East Java, Indonesia, for example, is one such example where the provincial DPRD serves as a pivotal arena for policy discourse and decision-making. Although recent studies demonstrate an increasing level of political awareness of the phenomenon, comprehensive actions plans are still sparse, with the problem particularly accentuated in the case of regional politics.

The 2020 regional elections demonstrated just that as the winning parties exhibited only a scarce degree of concern with the issue. Concluding from international and national pressures to address environmental challenges, regional political bodies appear to be lagging behind critically. The literature suggests that the environmental issues do not considerably preoccupy the mainstream parties unless sizeable electoral growths of niche green parties or public pressure emerge. This situational evidence calls for the exploration of whether and how the political parties are making climate change a priority on their agendas and thus reflecting it as a critical electoral and governance issue.

The primary research problem is the disjunction between the global urgency of climate change and a limited degree of its representation on the agendas of the key political parties in East Java’s DPRD. Hypotheses assert that the parties lack sufficient knowledge of the issue and prioritize in their political discourse . Such disengagement could undermine the party effectiveness and reorient the voter demographic away from mainstream bodies.

Therefore, a dual approach is required – to train political parties to better know and perceive this problem and subsequently force them to repeatedly return to this issue in their political agenda and strategies. Addressing this issue will involve a combination of educational programs for party members and forced amendment of party statements in favor of environmental sustainability measures when preparing for 2024 elections, when environmental issues will be played even more.

The potential adaptation of parties to address climate change can be influenced by the policy success of niche parties, triggering the mainstream parties to recalculate their issue wildcard from such an imperative and take their cue. At the same time, narrative policy can benefit from successful collaboration between parties that promote climate policies and powerful environmental interest groups. This mechanism is extremely important due to the existence of a significant political identity difference between parties, which can distinguish how sensitively this problem will be treated. Therefore, it would be beneficial for problem sensitivity to understand the political identity of DPRD members in East Java and the priorities of their respective parties. Hence, the parties will prepare issue-carrying strategies.

Finally, it is pertinent to consider the impact of elite polarization on internal party members’ perceptions. As Sohlberg argues, in cases of extreme polarization party elites, particularly at the state level, can unilaterally formulate the largest party’s policy vectors on the issue of climate change. It implies that some of the most viable policy recommendations to address polarization that favor the “punished” voters can only be effectively implemented if the division between the polarized parties is removed. Taufik's 2023 research provides additional evidence that the involvement of elite groups can negatively impact democratic systems. Efforts to address the issue and encourage the emergence of a consensus on the scope and scales of the problem may range from a negotiated settlement to a hybrid of negotiated and confrontational components.

In particular, this dimension of the topic is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state and possible shifts of the East Java political landscape in terms of its reaction to climate change. Reviewing the existing literature, I seem to have filled a significant research gap in assessing climate change from the political perspective of the regional governance bodies in the developing country context. While the issue has become a cornerstone in the scientific discourse and international policy frameworks, its application in the regional political arena displays high variation.

Critical reviews identify the need for such research, although there is a gap in how the scientific theory works out in more task-specific cases. It involves political identity and elite polarization in climate change discourse, furthering creating here (Kenny 2020) as well as Sohlberg 2016 The current literature concentrates predominately on Western democracies, which suggests a gap in our knowledge about the influence of these factors concerning environmental policy-making outside this geographical and institutional context. Examining how political identities and elite attitudes towards climate change in their context mediate policy creation and implementation through a specific lens can shed light on the peculiar case of East Java DPRD.

In order to accelerate the momentum of such change, additional research still needs to be conducted on carbon mitigation at local levels; a detailed understanding of how political parties in East Java perceive and incorporate climate into their agenda (including how they view this while forming a collaborative government); more nuanced analysis around the implications for environmental policy-making from an increasingly polarized politics & identity debates.; further strategies regional political parties might use toward transforming as a green party by the 2024 elections Filling in these gaps serves not only to enrich the academic literature, but also provide useful perspectives for local policymakers and political strategists.

This research strives to better understand political party perspectives in regard to climate change as of now and hopes to discover how the election-winning parties raise them nationally within their agenda so that they could curate a similar narrative towards mitigating or adapting the current related scenario. The study thus specifically attempts to 1) evaluate party knowledge and understanding of environmental issues, the lessons it highlights/ offers them; 2) code and analyze discussion on climate change within a coalition or opposition ahead of general elections in their agenda respectively; even profiling these parties positioning as they transit towards policies that bear resemblance with said green gruel against election outcomes between now till next five years (2024). This study is unique as it fills the lacunae on how regional political parties in a developing country environment respond to global environmental challenges and will help lay down steps political parties could apply at an operational level (tactics) or strategic levels (policy spaces/ acceptance/ collaboration), support change framework due to critical mass of capacity leading spread, sensitizing, influencing outreach mechanisms.

This study was specifically conducted with the nine political parties that won a seat in East Java DPRD after the general election of 2020 as the target population, and it naturally excludes other causal factors of large scope. This focus enables an in-depth analysis of the interaction between regional political economies and global environmental imperatives that is both regionally-specific, and globally relevant. This examination of parties lays the groundwork for future research on how to inject more environmental content into regional politics, by measuring up contemporary perceptions and strategies side-by-side.

The main limitation of this study is the scope and difficulties in researching political entities. For one, it may not encompass the variety of political positions on environmental matters in East Java as a whole because they are confined to only those groups that won during 2020 regional elections. A second limitation could be political sensitivity and dependence on individual party members' willingness to engage openly around these issues that might have affected the quality - both in terms of depth and honesty of data, hence influencing findings.

Further research could consider broadening the analysis to include all other parties within these regions, regardless of whether they won any seats or not to deliver a more holistic view about the political horizons. Longitudinal work might also help illuminate whether the party agendas are changing over time, especially as interests in the environment begin to resonate more distinctly through public and political discourse. Additionally, future research may look into how effective the strategies adopted by political parties in connecting with citizens on environmental issues are - or they could explore higher-level policy implementation and public communication efforts.

**Research Methods**

Utilizing a pragmatic paradigm, the study is carried out by employing a mixed-method research approach to investigate and comprehend indigenous knowledge owned by political parties in Indonesia -in this case: 9 winning political party stand at East Java Province after March-December regional election year 2020. Methodology: The research has been designed following Sequential Explanatory mixed method in order to get an extensive understanding among how the parties think regarding climate change issue.

The research objectives are as follows: (1) measure knowledge and perceptions of climate change by political parties in the East Java DPRD; evaluate discourse on climate change within winners' agendas from the 9 pro-KPU winning parties during 2020 regional elections, Simultaneously examine their strategies to become green party status by 2024. An explanatory sequential design "entails collecting and analyzing quantitative data first, then using the results to help inform what is collected in the second phase" (Bopp & Mikesky, 2009) with attention given to ensure that qualitative analysis supports initial findings from quantitative analysis. Sampling is done by probability sampling, specifically simple random sampling with a sample size of 89 individuals from the population as many as120 Member within 9 political parties in East Java has members who is DPRD.

The data collection consists of closed-ended questionnaires distributed in person and by an online platform which survey ideas, perceptions and knowledge on climate change. This research centred further on qualitative data collection from interviews and document studies to extend the meaning of quantitative findings. The analysis of the qualitative data takes an iterative approach using a model by Miles, Huberman and Saldana where knowledge is condensed to assemble storylines from certain in-depth interviews as well document analyses.

Qualitative research findings are triangulated data sources to ensure accuracy of measurement. The objective of the study is to shed light on political narratives, public communication about climate change and party strategies in emphasizing media awareness for global warming. To sum up, the study uses a mixed -method approach to examine how voters with climate change knowledge mobilize political parties and present strategies of mitigating this global issue in East Java simultaneously (Fig.3) as an explanatory formative design combining quantitative and qualitative data providing insights into political processes from two perspectives for depth analysis.

**Results and Discussion**

The study also investigated efforts made by the three major political parties in East Java to make their green ideologies part of internal and external frameworks for their politics. Based on the model by Randall & Svasand, we analyzed eco-systemness and sub-dimensions within the parties: eco-value infusion (construct), eco-decision autonomy;eco-reification. We therefore find that while all parties exhibit some interest in environmental issues, the extent of this engagement differs between them. Certain parties have more inclusive strategies placing the environment at their heart and within decision-making - others focus on addressing these issues as part of an image-based approach to elections.

This part of the study attempts to explain such green ideologies work within operational frameworks political parties in East Java. According to the research, these parties are largely in an early phase of integrating sustainable practices and environmental concerns into their policy agendas. The report highlights a serious gap between significant regime acknowledgment of environmental importance and the depth of its integration into party Great Books, including substantive policy commitments. This is opportunism (buttressed by the pressure of electoral politics, not dedication to sustainable fields for investments).

By contrast, the broader literature regarding political parties and environmental issues leads to suggest that in East Java these findings are indicative of a relatively nascent stage at which party organizations have actually integrated green ideologies into operating frameworks. Drawing from the literature, it is suggested that parties perform better electorally in highly environmentally aware regions when they have an institutionalized base of environmental support (Abou-Chadi 2014; Meguid 2005). The present strategies in place within East Java suggest that the strategy formulated is one of reaction rather than prevention when it comes to environmental issues, prioritizing short-term gains at election time ahead of future goals which seek long-term sustainability. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in more established democratic contexts, where environmental policies have a far higher profile within parties' strategic planning and public facing activities.

The efforts of the East Java political parties are but a microcosm for what is happening globally - attempts to incorporate environmental issues into party agendas tend to be slow and difficult operations. Studies by Nilsson et al. Both McManus et al. (2020) and Bai (2020) find that in areas where people are more aware of environmental costs, parties pushing for a green-friendly agenda gain higher electoral shares as well. In East Java, where public awareness has increased but political parties have yet to make it a major strategic electoral asset. This is in stark contrast to research on more established democracies, which have rested upon a comprehensive organisational approach where environmental policy becomes intertwined with the strategic planning and public engagement work of political parties (Barros 2017; Hughes 2016).

Therein lies the importance of this study, in that it could inform East Javan political parties to integrate environmental issues more substantively and genuinely into their party agenda. The findings can be used towards designing strategies that not only cater to the immediate aspirations of populace but also serve a more holistic objective of sustainable development. The diligent implementation of good governance principles cultivates a substantial elevation of public trust in governmental performance (Uar 2016) The policy implications are critical, as stronger environmental policies will likely result when the e-gestation and eco-value re-absorption of political parties is better developed. In addition, as the election of parties that actively shift their strategies and operations to encompass real environmental stewardship grows alongside public awareness for a demand for environment accountability. This change could also catalyze a more knowledgeable and involved citizenry, able to demand leadership from their government on environmental results, in turn advancing the overall quality of governance across ASEAN.

The data demonstrates that political party engagement in environmental issues must exceed surface level commitment to a more these issue with an integrated, strategic nature and connection of long-term sustainability goals. Not only will this make them more electorally viable but advance greater sustainable development results. A move toward real envi- ronmental stewardship may also help to generate a better-informed regional electorate which will be able to hold leaders accountable for environmental outcomes79 and hence improve governance quality in the region (Carter 2015).

In addition, a previous article by Hopwood et al. suggested that participants experiencing depersonalisation were less likely to endorse internal attributions and more inclined to support external influences [,]. Such a course of action might offer a more serious, principle-based option for political engagement than hewing to old-party lines (see the discussion by Mitchell et al. 2005) about pursuing sustainable development as both an emergent and longer-term strategy for well-being-and environmental sustainability alike). Implementing policy initially by adhering to environmental integration principles which may align potentially be life-changing strategy for political parties -- in East Java or elsewhere; hence, increasing its relevance as an effective institution against one of the sixteen star problems (Jordan & Lenschow 2010).

**Conclusion**

This article is a critical study of Green Ideological Integration into Operational Political Party Frameworks in East Java, with the three major parties who succeeded in winning Regional elections 2020 as samples. The findings emphasize that the attention devoted to environmental issues has increased in all these parties, but their inclusion into party agendas and strategic behavior can be considered rather short-termed and reactive. This is part of a wider pattern, common in middle- and low-income political systems where immediate electoral imperatives frequently take precedence over long-term sustainability ambitions.

The research findings confirmed that political parties in East Java need to change from reactive and transform into proactive goals on environmental integration. By aligning strategies with long-term sustainability goals while taking an active role in environmental stewardship, parties can strengthen their electoral competitiveness and improve SDG delivery. Such a shift is important if we want to win elections in the short term - but more importantly, long-term governance that can respond as only one with appropriate environmental stewardship fitted for this region will ever be able.

This is followed by the notion that, in East Java, political parties could increase their chanced at winning elections and enhance governance quality if they administered green ideas through a collective strategy filter as argued earlier. As public awareness and calls for institutional accountability concerning environmental issues continue to ramp up, stakeholders that can display a real commitment to the environment will likely only yield dividends. As such, the leadership of East Java needs to not only prioritise environmental conservancy within their operations and strategic planning but must also ensure that conservation is no longer a topic up-for-grabs among political lines, rather than an ingrained principle throughout all layers of governance in the province.

**Acknowledgement**

I would like to thanks to anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and also to my colleagues in Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Brawijaya who have helped me to develop this manuscript’s idea.

**References**

Abou-Chadi, T. (2014). Niche Party Success and Mainstream Party Policy Shifts – How Green and Radical Right Parties Differ in Their Impact. *British Journal of Political Science*, *46*(2), 417–436. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123414000155

Bai, H. (2020). *The Multiple Matching Perspective on Value Versus Identity: Investigating How Political Ideology and Party Identity Contribute to Citizens’ Support for Political Candidates*. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/t7jh9

Barros, A. T. d. (2017). The Internet as Environmental Media: Strategies of Brazilian Political Parties. *Ambiente & Sociedade*, *20*(1), 183–202. https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-4422asoc20150101r1v2012017

Carter, N. (2015). *Green Parties*. 379–384. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-097086-8.93049-6

Hopwood, B., Mellor, M., & O’Brien, G. (2005). Sustainable Development: Mapping Different Approaches. *Sustainable Development*, *13*(1), 38–52. https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.244

Hughes, C. L. (2016). It’s Not Easy (Not) Being Green: Agenda Dissonance of Green Party Press Relations and Newspaper Coverage. *European Journal of Communication*, *31*(6), 625–641. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323116669454

Jordan, A., & Lenschow, A. (2010). Environmental Policy Integration: A State of the Art Review. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, *20*(3), 147–158. https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.539

Kenny, J. (2020). The Role of Political Attention in Moderating the Association Between Political Identities and Anthropogenic Climate Change Belief in Britain. *Political Studies*, *70*(1), 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720928261

Meguid, B. M. (2005). Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success. *American Political Science Review*, *99*(3), 347–359. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055405051701

Nilsson, A., Montgomery, H., Dimdins, G., Sandgren, M., Erlandsson, A., & Taleny, A. (2020). *Beyond “Liberals” and “Conservatives”: Complexity in Ideology, Moral Intuitions, and Worldview Among Swedish Voters*. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/n83t5

Otjes, S., & Rasmussen, A. (2016). The Collaboration Between Interest Groups and Political Parties in Multi-Party Democracies. *Party Politics*, *23*(2), 96–109. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068814568046

Schwörer, J. (2023). Mainstream Parties and Global Warming: What Determines Parties’ Engagement in Climate Protection? *European Journal of Political Research*, *63*(1), 303–325. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12602

Sohlberg, J. (2016). The Effect of Elite Polarization: A Comparative Perspective on How Party Elites Influence Attitudes and Behavior on Climate Change in the European Union. *Sustainability*, *9*(1), 39. https://doi.org/10.3390/su9010039

Taufik, T., Nadzri, M. M., & Hamil, J. H. (2023). Declining democracy: autocratization in Indonesia during the Jokowi years. *Otoritas: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, *13*(2), 333-351. https://doi.org/10.26618/ojip.v12i2.9277

Uar, A. (2016). Pengaruh pelaksanaan prinsip-prinsip good governance terhadap kinerja pelayanan publik pada Badan Pertahanan Nasional (Bpn) Kota Ambon. *Otoritas: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, *6*(1), 1-11.