

Implications of Declining of Political Parties Image Post-Election 2014

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Abstract

In democratic countries, political parties had crucial role as the communication intermediary between people with government. The phenomenon of decline in the image of the political party as the impact of public distrust of the political parties before and after the legislative elections and the presidential elections in 2014 brought several of the implications. It could complicate political democracy within the party itself and also led to the decline in political party image, as well as potentially interfered with the development of culture and the democratization process in Indonesia. Thus the phenomenon certainly required anticipation, both in the form of regulation as well as practical politics. The purpose of this study was to obtain some information of the implications for the declining in the image of political parties after the legislative elections and the presidential elections in 2014. Methods used was using descriptive analysis with qualitative approach and become parts of investigational report. Data were collected from documentation and interview. The results was consist of two aspect: (1) regulation aspect; and (2) the relationship between political party's member with constituent and the voters based on people valuation for with the performance of political parties in carrying out the role and functions of political parties, whether normative or theoretical. In conclusion, the declining of political party image was happen because of their act was usually coming from material needs and power need which made several compromised between parties or its member, not from the party's ideology.

Keywords: democracy; general election; ideology; image of political party

Background

In post reform era, the growth of political parties, in terms of number, had increased very fast compared with new order era. Based on statistic recorded by General Election Commissions, general election on 1999 had been followed by 48 political parties then decreased halved become 24 political parties on 2004. At 2009, there were the increases of political parties which became 38 national political parties and also 3 local parties in Nangroe Aceh Darussalam Province.

Unfortunately, the high fluctuation number of political parties on four times of general election was not going in linear ways with the level of community participation in every general election. Even in the 1999 elections when the voter participation rates were still high, characterized by the low number of abstentions that only 10.21%, but in the next elections, the percentage of abstention continued to increase. On 2004, the abstention in general election were 23.34%, while in first round presidential election was 23.47%, and second round was 24.95%. Then on 2009, the abstention in general election increased 24% higher than 2004, while on presidential election 40%. Based on Tempo News, the abstention become the highest abstention recorded which was 30% (Tempo, April 20th, 2014 and April 27th, 2014). On district head election, the average of abstention was 27.9%.

The phenomenon of the percentage of abstention on legislative in the legislative elections and the presidential election in the 2014 election also increased. Even, reported by several spectators on general election 2014, the image or distrust of society to political parties was the most severe (Kompas, April 24th, 2014). The decline of the image of political parties, as a result of several cases happens, also made especially young voters become apathetic for general elections. In addition, the lack of qualified party cadres had made the number abstention among young voters quite high. The clear example was Indonesian Democratic Party Struggle in the legislative elections in 2014. Based on Andrinof Chaniago, the observer from University of Indonesia, the public was prefer Jokowi for a leader based on personal character than based from the supporting parties. Andrinof also stated that, political parties, which would be standing in elections, needed to improve its image in front of the voters (Kompas, April 28th, 2013).

This phenomenon was not only happen on citizen but also villager as stated by Vice General Secretary of Jenderal Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), Mahfuz Sidik, that there were several symptoms of political apathy which become wider among villagers recently. They assumed that there had been no change inside political party from time to time (<http://politik.news.viva.co.id/news/read/484404-wasekjen-pks--masyarakat-desa-makin-apatik-politik>). So in the end, when viewed from the standpoint of the public, political parties in Indonesia were not able to perform its role effectively, corrupt and insensitive with public's aspirations. The negative image of political parties was more recorded in various polls of non-professional, research, and open discussions. Moreover, post-election came up the idea that government chosen on presidential election should have been

from coalition of people, not from coalition of parties. Based on this, this study was aim to know the reason of the implications of political parties declining influences post legislative and presidential election 2014.

Materials and Methods

The study was using descriptive analysis with qualitative approach and become parts of investigational report. Focuses of study consisted three aspects: (1) the relationship between political parties with voters; (2) the behavior of voters and their preferences in determining their choice at elections; and (3) Predictions on the implications of declining image of political parties for both manifested and latent implications. Data were collected from documentation and interview. For the documentation studies, data were from “Kompas” newspaper, “Tempo” Magazine, and official report from Indonesian General Election Commissions. For Interview, data were collected using depth interview with snow ball sampling on several political party leaders and Malang social and cultural activists which had been chosen purposively. Data processing and analysis were using steps explained by Cresswell (2010).

Results and Discussions

Based on National Survey Institution data, parties became less reliable democratic institution (57.5%) when compared to other institutions such as community organizations (58.5%), press (65.1%), and survey institution (69.3%). Meanwhile, the level of public trust on political party’s integrity was only 42.6% (Republika, July 16th, 2013). the same result was reported by Kompas news which describes that gait of the 6607 legislative candidates, who fought in the arena of legislative elections in 2014, became one of the key determinants of the accumulation of votes a political party. Evidently, voters tend to be based on the figure of candidates rather than supporting political parties (Kompas, April 14th, 2014). This phenomenon was confirmed by recapitulation data of general election result for candidate of DPR RI, DPRD of East Java Province, and DPRD of Malang City in 2014, issued by Regional General Election Commission Malang (Table 1). Based on Table 1, the percentage figure number of votes each political party candidates in every election levels was far surpassed the number of votes obtained by each political party except Gerindra Party.

Table1. Details Data Acquisition And Sound Sound Political Party Candidate House Of Representatives, Parliament of East Java Province, and City Parliament of Malang 2014

Number and Party Name	House of Representatives		Province Stage/%		City Stage/%	
	Stage/%					
1. National Democratic Party (Nasdem)	5,103	29.43	5,455	41.64	4,199	25.91
The number of valid votes for candidates	12,238	70.57	7,645	58.36	12,006	74.09
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	17,341	100	13,100	100	16,205	100
2. National Awakening Party (PKB)	17,525	30.90	20,245	35.83	13,531	26.58
The number of valid votes for candidates	39,196	69.10	36,261	64.17	37,370	73.42
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	56,721	100	56,506	100	50,901	100
3. Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)	7,279	38.10	8,004	37.78	5,544	21.26
The number of valid votes for candidates	11,826	61.90	13,181	62.22	20,538	78.74
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	19,105	100	21,185	100	26,082	100
4. Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P)	44,411	42.44	46,251	40.69	32,348	35.08
The number of valid votes for candidates	60,243	57.56	67,417	59.31	59,869	64.92
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	104,654	100	113,668	100	92,217	100
5. Golkar Party	12,299	37.61	12,429	40.26	8,494	20.99
The number of valid votes for candidates	20,400	62.39	18,442	59.74	31,970	79.01
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	32,699	100	30,871	100	40,464	100
6. Gerindra Party	18,031	41.90	20,492	50.65	12,588	46.28

The number of valid votes for candidates	25,004	58.10	19,967	49.35	27,197	53.72
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	43,035	100	40,459	100	39,785	100
7. Demokratic Party (Demokrat)	12,679	48.87	14,029	47.56	8,735	25.82
The number of valid votes for candidates	13,264	51.13	15,466	52.44	25,101	74.18
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	25,943	100	29,495	100	33,836	100
8. National Mandate Party (PAN)	6,115	30.80	7,001	38.05	4,433	16.32
The number of valid votes for candidates	13,866	69.20	11,399	61.95	22,729	83.68
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	19,981	100	18,400	100	27,162	100
9. United Development Party (PPP)	4,600	26.86	5,046	36.62	3,640	15.64
The number of valid votes for candidates	12,523	73.14	8,733	63.38	19,633	84.36
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	17,123	100	13,779	100	23,273	100
10. Hanura	7,597	34.80	8,243	46.50	5,344	19.08
The number of valid votes for candidates	14,234	65.20	9,483	53.50	22,663	80.92
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	21,831	100	17,726	100	28,007	100
14. Moon Star Party (PBB)	1,582	33.51	1,720	36.99	1,324	19.90
The number of valid votes for candidates	3,139	66.49	2,930	63.01	5,328	80.10
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	4,721	100	4,650	100	6,652	100
15. Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (PKPI)	533	32.52	681	30	506	15.13
The number of valid votes for candidates	1,106	67.48	1,589	70	2,839	84.87
The number of valid votes for party and candidates	1,639	100	2,270	100	3,345	100

Source: processed data from KPUD Malang Municipality, 2014

Based on Ignazi (2014), political parties were trying to change and strengthen their selves with numerous innovations nowadays. Unfortunately, the parties were still in imbalance condition, powerful but yet distrusted. The strong political parties had strong position but yet in legitimacy. This status was defined as the declining influences of political parties by political observer (see: Suara Merdeka Newspaper, August 1th, 2013 and Republika Magazine, July 16th, 2013). This phenomenon was generally due to the response of citizens to the political party appearance dissatisfaction in the government, the management of the party, and the party at the grassroots level. This is the effect of the mismatch between promises, labels ideology, and political speeches with the fact that so-called logical result of excessive pledge during the campaign (Pamungkas, 2010). Further, National Survey Institute released four causes of the decline of public confidence in political parties based on based on the results of the poll in 33 provinces in Indonesia early May 2013 (Republika, July 16th, 2013). First, public had perceived that the many political parties in parliament involved corruption cases recently. Second, people assumed that the existing political parties were less concerned about public interest issues than either individual or parties' issues. Third, the behavior of politicians, whom be considered by public, act pragmatically with ignoring ideology and party platforms as well as put forward money politics and political transaction. Fourth, the behavior of some politicians belonging immoral scandals such as infidelity, polygamy, and drugs.

Nowadays, anti-party sentiment also concerned on public response to the failure of which actually comes from political parties and political elite in performing what they should do. There were many social problems, politics, and economy which difficult to be solved. Commonly, political party leader might be irresponsible or might misuse their access to government resources and privileges in order to corrupt, protect, and other similar activities. In other words, the political elite had been caged with political transaction that bring them into short term political orientation or just meet political lust solely to meet the needs of the material. This elite domination was the reason that drove political practice cartel happen. Politic cartel had born from big coalition between political elite which had been created in order to minimize the loss of the defeated party after

election or inside coalition. Cartel was using incorporation mechanism from elite who had different ideological background (Supriatma, 2009). It could be shown on Red White Coalition (KMP or “Koalisi Merah Putih” in Indonesian Language) which become the majority of parliament and Indonesian Great Coalition (KIH or “Koalisi Indonesia Hebat” in Indonesian Language) which handle the government.

Based on the fact collected by Hambardi (2009) there were 5 characteristics of cartel in Indonesian party system: (1) the loss of party’s ideology as as determinantsof coalition behavior; (2) permissiveness in forming coalition; (3) lack of opposition; (4) general election almost gave no effect on determining party behavior; and (5) the strong tendency of parties to act collectively as a group (see also Kristiadi, 2009). Based on Supriatma (2009), the characteristic of political party will lead into four important consequences in Indonesia as the result. First, Cartel strongly emphasized pragmatism. Radical activists who want to get into the political sphere were forced to adjust to this pragmatic climate. Second, the different line between those who become the government and the opposition were not clear. Both the government and opposition parties became more compromise rather than opposite in the opinion or decision. Third, cartel system was a collusive system which resulting in castration power of the masses. Fourth, political cartel performed extremely ironic for the political forces of society. This results produced relatively docile society that was not much different from the floating mass in the New Order Era. This results, based on Ambardi (2009), the interests of the parties to maintain the collective survival required them to form cartel. This survival was determined by a common interest to maintain a wide range of existing financial resources, especially from the government through rent seeking.

Based on investigation study in three nation, Indonesia, Thailand, and Philippines by Tan (2013), there were several indicator on declining image of political parties.

- *Level of identification with parties (party ID)*, low levels of identification was associated with negative behaviors that lead to low level of trust to party;
- *Undecided voters*, if voters were still undecided, then maybe they could not recognize the difference between the existing parties, therefore they could not determine who should be chosen.
- *Turnout*. This become problematic due to the number of voters might degenerate with various reasons, such as an understanding of the importance of the contest, personal beliefs about the benefits of choosing candidate, and changes in the electoral system.
- *Spoiled votes*. Spoiled voters may express dissatisfaction with the existing political parties, and in a complex electoral system may lead to a lot of spoiled ballots even though voters may not have the intention to protest.
- *Party membership figures*. Numbers of party membership. Numbers of party membership was a way to measure anti-party stance. If the majority were pro-party, they would be more likely to join the party and membership numbers will increase. Contrary, if the anti-party stance was high, it would decrease the amount of support to the party.

Daalder statement which cited Pamungkas (2010) became complements for indicator above that the anti-party sentiment could actually be divided into four attitude. First, the denial of party which was a denial of party legitimacy role. It also determined that the party was saw as a threat to the good society. Second, the selective rejection of party. A fundamental premise of this group was to see certain types as the type of party that 'good' and the other type was 'bad'. Third, the selective rejection of party system. This group saw a particular party system was 'good' but the other party system was 'bad'. Fourth, the redundancy of party which saw anti-party sentiment was the logical consequence of a period in which the party lost its relevance because of the emergence of other political actors in a democracy such as mass media, individuals, interest groups and suppressors. New actors were acting as if it took over the main functions of the party where the party had a role.

Tan (2013) stated that the impact of the declining image of the political party could vary which also depended on the political context. Commonly, the declining in political party image carried the risk of weak political parties and also electoral legitimacy which would contribute to unhealthy institutionalization of the party system. The attempts to break the cycle that was by legislative reform, especially with regard to the formulation of both party’s regulation and new general elections (see Ignazi, 2014). From political party point of view, Pamungkas (2010) stated that in order to avoid the worst possibility from the image of political party, several strategy for empowering political party needed to be thought. First, political parties needed to balance between their political behaviorsof seeking political power with the interests of the people. First, Political parties should be aware that the history of political parties existence was not solely for power but also for the welfare of people. Second, in order to balance these behaviors, a political party needed to have a clear ideological line or bringing ideology back in. the ideology on this context was a guide that would be used to guide the political choices to be taken when a policy should be made. Third, there were needs of political party institutionalization. Institutionalization would make political parties rooted in society, stable in contestation at the general elections, and the organization's internal stability could be more maintained.

Concluding Remarks

Internal and external solutions were needed to address the declining image of political parties. On the internal side, transactional politics and political party oligarchy, which is illegal, was the impact of open proportional system. This situation had major implications on the melting or fading of ideology, thus bonding the constituent political parties became very loose. The implication is that political parties tend to be more fragmented and easier to disintegrate. Moreover, virtue, integrity, and especially altruistic attitude were almost no longer visible. Therefore, political parties should have the courage to change their perspective and quickly rebuild ideal partisan ideology, something far more valuable than power and money. Because, inside spirit of ideology, there were bond between the political parties and their constituents, also contained ideals and ideas of the people state that must be fought. By holding on ideology, politicians would be better act in politics, by upholding the ethics and morals, so it became more beneficial to society. On the external side, in view of the rise of both pragmatic politics and transactional practices in legislative elections which became the implications of open proportional system, it needed to be rethought again to return to the closed proportional system. The practice of transactional politics was also rampant since direct general elections system for regional heads of provincial and district / city. Therefore it was better if only system of local elections in the two tiers of local government had been handed back to parliament according to its level. Indeed, this move rose concerns about the strength of a political party oligarchy if the closed proportional system had been performed at the legislative elections again, as well as the electoral system is not directly applicable to local elections. However, some studies said that enactment open proportional system and the system of direct local elections were more harm than the possibility of oligarchic practices of political parties in the implementation of democracy.

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