

Description of Public Perception of the Function of Political Parties

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Abstract

The existence of political parties is a logical consequence in the life of a state that adheres to a democratic system. The growth and development of the existence of the political party is very dependent on the voters (public choice). The focus of the survey or research aims to describe and at the same time analyze the public's perception as a public choice of the function of political parties and the reasons they convey. So that this research method was carried out by means of a survey with questions submitted through a google form that was made strictly so that respondents could not fill it out repeatedly with the survey area being Bandung Regency, West Bandung Regency, and Bandung City. Furthermore, the questionnaire is delivered or distributed through social media (WhatsApp) a network of friends in a row. The overview of the survey results in general, the public choice gives an important meaning to the functions of political parties that must be carried out by political party actors, even though they have not worked as expected.

Keywords

political parties; functions of political parties; public perception



I. Introduction

The existence of political parties in people's lives is an unofficial political machine as a political infrastructure. However, the existence of these political parties is different from the official political machine (political superstructure), but are interconnected with each other within the framework of a democratic political system or a government system that adheres to a democratic understanding. That is why, the role and function of political parties cannot be separated from the administration of the government. Political parties as a means to provide input, suggestions, criticism and at the same time control over the administration of government.

In the position of political parties, they are democratic institutions, different from state institutions (government). These differences are clear at least in carrying out their respective roles and functions. However, political parties as elements of democracy must be fully involved in developing all aspects or elements inherent in democracy, including the constellation of occupying the circulation of its top leadership.

Indeed, if we briefly look back at the time of the authoritarian New Order, the roles and functions of political parties, are barely audible, because they were hegemoned by an authoritarian system of government, where political parties at that time were not "considered" an important element in the wheels of society government.

Along with the public's will for changes in the socio-political field, the New Order regime was more powerful for three decades, eventually collapsing. With the collapse of the authoritarian regime in Indonesia, then the social and political interest of the community is very exciting, first and foremost marked by the emergence or birth of many political parties.

With the emergence of many political parties, it appears that the socio-political life of the community wants a change in the socio-political order. Political parties that were previously (read: the New Order) were limited, now in the reform era, they appear to be unrestricted. Therefore, the stretching of the community wants the role and function of political parties to actually be realized.

Furthermore, have political parties in this era of political democratization really carried out their roles and functions as expected by the public? At least on the basis of these questions, trying to describe the public opinion or perception of the role and function of political parties today.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 The Essence of Political Parties

To understand the existence of political parties at the implementation level, of course it cannot be separated from the origin and orientation of its existence. The series of historical party journeys in Indonesia have had a significant or important role and function in the struggle for the independence of the Indonesian state, as well as in implementing the principles of democracy in Indonesia. Even the founding fathers and or leaders of the Indonesian independence movement cannot be separated from their hopes for political parties as instruments of strength to break the power of colonialism.

Its crucial role is that political parties have a role in participating in the running of government institutions. Because it is believed that political parties as a forum for organizations to participate in various kinds of life. Organization must have a goal to be achieved by the organizational members (Niati et al., 2021). In the language of Miriam Budiardjo (2008) that political parties are a means for citizens to participate or participate in the process of state management.

Indeed, the development of political parties is considered to be relatively new, especially as the subject of scientific research is still relatively young at the beginning of the 20th century. However, political parties as institutions or political infrastructure institutions, the beginning of their existence is related to the relatively long historical journey in the struggles of life government politics.

Still relatively similar in substance to what Miriam Budiardjo said about the definition of a political party, Ramlan Surbakti (1992) defines that a political party is a group of members of society that is neatly organized and stable, united and motivated by a certain ideology, and who seeks to seek and maintain power. in government through general elections in order to implement alternative public policies that they have compiled.

Meanwhile, the view of Carl J. Freidrich in Miriam Budiardjo (2008) defines a political party as a group of people who are stably organized with the aim of seizing or maintaining control of the government for their party leaders and based on this control, providing party members with benefits that are ideal. as well as material (A political party is a group of human beings, stably organized with the objective of securing or maintaining for its leaders the control of a government, with the further objective of giving to members of the party, through such control ideal and material benefited and advantages).

The purpose of the existence of political parties, if observed from the three definitions given by the political scientists, is, first, the existence of political parties is in the context of struggling to gain political power (position) through constitutional elections (elections); second, the existence of political parties, after gaining political power through elections, consciously tries to maintain their power through the public policies that they

have created, so that theoretically from the public policies that have been born, their programs are based on the interests of the people in managing government.

2.2 Functions of Political Parties

Political parties as instruments of democracy are important in their existence in knitting various aspirations and interests of the community. In carrying out its activities, political parties cannot avoid the reality of the groups in them. In short, that it has become a social fact that factions are a reality that cannot be denied within the body of political parties.

Therefore, the role and function of political parties in knitting the life of the nation, state and society is an undeniable reality in democratic political life. Political parties are one of the elements or instruments of democracy in voicing and fighting for the will of the layers of society.

In this political recruitment, actually in a democratic political system, there is the widest possible opportunity for various levels of society to get involved in the political process, so as to broaden political participation. So, this political recruitment is one way for political parties to select community members or party cadres themselves for importance, whether it is to be nominated as members of parliament (legislature) or also to prepare to become candidates for leaders (eg regional heads, as well as national regional leaders).

Indeed, the functions of political parties are not only those described above, there are also others, but that does not mean that they are not considered crucial. Such as the functions of political parties according to Ramlan Surbakti (1992), namely (1) political socialization, (2) political recruitment, (3) political participation, (4) interest guide, (5) political communication, (6) conflict control, and (7) political control. Only in the interest of this paper, would like to see or photograph the mapping of political functions in the eyes of the public.

III. Research Method

The purpose of this survey of political party functions is to get a picture of public perception (public choice) in understanding the functions of these political parties. This survey was conducted in three areas, namely Bandung Regency, West Bandung Regency, and Bandung City which was carried out during February 2022. The approach used was descriptive qualitative by analyzing the data and arguments submitted by respondents that had been collected.

The technique of collecting data is through a questionnaire made with the google form, which is then distributed to all the people of the three regions through the social media network whatsapp friends. In the google form it is made strictly so that it cannot be filled out many times (read: one time). Thus, each respondent who has filled in completely then submits the questionnaire.

IV. Results and Discussion

Based on the survey results related to the description of public perceptions about the function of political parties, the survey results were recorded through questionnaires that were shared or distributed to all levels of society through social media (whatsapp) from one hand to another using a strict google form for the people in the three regions, namely

Bandung Regency, West Bandung Regency, and Bandung City are recorded as responding to the survey as described below:

4.1 Research Demographics

Based on the survey results, a brief demographic description of the respondents can be described, namely by gender, based on religion, age, education level, profession, and respondent's domicile as can be seen in table 1 below.

Table 1. Gender, Religion, Age, Education, Profession, and Domicile

No	Gender	Percentage (%)
1	Man	45,45
2	Woman	54,54
	Amount	100
No	Religion	Percentage (%)
1	Islam	99,24
2	Non muslim	0,76
	Amount	100
No	Age	Percentage (%)
1	17 – 21 old	84,10
2	22 – 29 old	12,88
3	32 – 47 old	3,03
	Amount	100
No	Education	Percentage (%)
1	Senior High School	54,54
2	Bachelor	37,88
3	Postgraduate (S2)	7,57
	Amount	100
No	profession	Percentage (%)
1	Government employees	0,76
2	Private	21,97
3	Student/not yet working	77,27
	Amount	100
No	Domicile	Percentage (%)
1	Bandung district	53,79
2	West Bandung Regency	37,12
3	Bandung	9,09
	Amount	100

Source: Author Survey Results, February 2022

4.2 An Overview of the Public's Perception of the Function of Political Parties

The people as the support for the life and death of the existence of political parties in the struggle for government life, of course, as a public choice, knowing and understanding the functions of political parties is the key word.

The essence of political parties, as explained above, is nothing but a constitutional struggle to gain power. The role of political parties is the desire to create a political life that is truly more conducive to the occurrence of a democratic political life, so that its existence can actually bring aspirations that come from various levels of society.

The will for political change and reform that was launched by the layers of society, clearly shows his seriousness in the struggle of a transparent and open political life. The criticality of society is nothing but the desire for a democratic political life, and political parties as one of the instruments of democracy are important in voicing the various demands and aspirations of the community, which must then be accommodated and identified for their various aspirations to be channeled and at the same time discussed in various dimensions of state life. , nation, and society in the form of public policies which are further reduced to a program of government activities.

Along with this, the description of the survey results on several functions of political parties, which are related to “political education or socialization”, “bridging the aspirations or demands of the people to the government”, “bringing together various demands of the people's aspirations to create common interests: and also the function of “ carrying out political recruitment” depicts the knowledge and understanding of the layers of society on the functions of political parties, including the various arguments they put forward.

Table 2. Functions of Political Parties

Question	Answers & Percentages			Total
The role of the function of political parties in providing political socialization education to the community	very important (50.76%)	Important (47.73%)	Not important (1.51%)	100%
Political parties perform the function of bridging the aspirations or demands of the people to the government	Connect (57.57%)	Possible (31.06%)	Not connecting (11.36%)	100%
Political parties bring together various demands of people's aspirations to create common interests	meet (56.82%)	Possible (37.88%)	Don't know (5.30%)	100%
Political parties carry out political recruitment	To do (80.30%)	Do not do (5.30%)	Don't know (14.40%)	100%

Source: Author Survey Results, February 2022

a. Education or Political Socialization

Law Number 2 of 2011 that the function of political parties is to carry out political education in the community. Political education is directed as national education to raise the spirit of nationalism, strengthen ideological awareness, and shape the behavior of the nation's citizens in accordance with the nation's ideology

Based on the description in table 7, those who state that it is "very important" for the function of political parties to provide education or political socialization to the community, are in the position of 50.76 percent, while those who state are "important" 47.74%, and there will be 1.51 % stated "not important".

The various reasons, both stating "very important" and "important", even "not important" have the same meaning in giving their reasons related to political education (socialization), in principle, they can be identified and described as can be seen below:

1. Providing knowledge or insight to the community

Political education or socialization, in order to provide knowledge or insight to the community as a means of political education for members and the wider community. So that the existence of political parties is very important, when we look at their current functions and duties, and to better understand the importance of participation in political parties, as well as to provide education for political parties to the community and its

members. However, as explained by the respondent, "most political parties do not carry out their duties and functions properly."

2. Aware of rights and obligations

Political education for members and the wider community is very important in order to become Indonesian citizens who are aware of their rights and obligations in the life of society, nation and state. Political education for the community is mandatory because it can minimize the passive attitude of the community. By providing an understanding of the importance of people's political rights. So political parties must assist the government in providing political education to the community. However, as explained by respondents, in reality Indonesia is far from an ideal political atmosphere, this is due to the lack of a culture of public participation due to the lack of political education itself.

3. Actively participate

Providing education or political socialization to the community is very important to increase public knowledge so that the community can participate and be active, because it is very influential and strong to regulate and supervise the actions of its citizens. So that people clearly understand what the function of political parties is, and reduce the occurrence of abstentions in elections. So that people want to give opinions about the functions and roles of political parties that they know. Furthermore, the respondent also explained, "if (I) see the functions and roles of political parties have not run optimally." In fact, other respondents stated more firmly that in providing education on the socialization of political parties, they only do so when elections are about to be held.

4. Creating a conducive climate for the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation

The existence of political parties serves as a means of political education for members and the wider community, creating a conducive climate for the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation for the welfare of the people, means of political participation of Indonesian citizens, and so on. For this reason, political parties play an important role in society and government. Because our country is a democratic country, it is necessary to have a political role in shaping democratic attitudes among the people so that prosperity is achieved and the creativity of citizens as a basis for political resources, transfer, or transfer of moral values.

In addition to the four identified, there are still respondents who say it is "not important" by 1.51% of education or political sociability. This needs to be a concern for political parties, both individually and as organizers, consistently carrying out the functions of political parties to all levels of society, so that people will understand the existence of these political parties in the dialectic of a country's democratic political life.

Bridging or connecting the aspirations or demands of the people to the government political parties perform the function of bridging the aspirations or demands of the people to the government with a variety of arguments in the 57.57% position, which states "maybe" 31.06%, and "impossible" is in the 11.36% position.

Regarding the function of this political party, the community members give various reasons that can be observed after the results are identified below.

a) Media to convey people's aspirations to the government

It is the duty of political parties as media to convey the aspirations of the people to the government, therefore, political parties are very important to support social education and can convey the aspirations of the little people. As explained by the respondent, "political parties do the best that must have something to do with it (meaning it has something to do with – the author's explanation) to the government and the people. In

addition, not all political parties embody the aspirations or opinions of the people and the community to be submitted to the government. According to the respondent's reasons, "There are still many aspirations or demands of the community or community complaints that have not been implemented until now." Even other responses, giving reasons, "the evidence is that there are still many opinions or aspirations of the people that have not been realized or submitted to the government."

b) Absorb, collect, and channel the aspirations of the people

The existence of political parties in carrying out the function of bridging the aspirations of the people to the government is very important for the progress of the nation because one of its functions is the aspirations or demands of the people to the government in order to create prosperity and welfare for the people and advance the nation itself. Furthermore, political parties link the function of the aspirations or demands of the people to the government because it has become one of the functions of political parties as well, namely absorbing, collecting, and distributing people's political aspirations in formulating and determining state policies.

c) As a means of hearing, and loudspeaker of the people

Political parties in carrying out their functions are often referred to as brokers (intermediaries - the author's explanation) in a clearing house of ideas and it can also be said that political parties for the government act as listening devices and for citizens as loudspeakers. Thus, political parties are very important in order to create an effective government and political participation in the ruling government. At least some of the people's demands have been implemented, although not all of them have been heard by the government. Therefore, it must be able to bring the people's voice, although it is clear that other respondents, the aspirations of the parties do not all reach the community and the demands of the people have never reached the government. Thus, society as the basis of political parties certainly connects political aspirations and people's demands to the government which requires reciprocal communication that requires each other. Political parties are formed by the community and on the other hand political parties must absorb the aspirations of the people for the benefit of all dimensions of nation and state development.

d) Harmonization of state functions with the needs of the people

Political parties play an important role in participating in carrying out the goals and functions of the state function to build a harmonious, safe and prosperous country in meeting all the needs of its people. So, with the existence of political parties (in each region) can connect the community with the government, in that case the community can choose who deserves to be a leader, so that the vision and mission of the leader goes well with what is expected by the community so that there will be no pros and cons. and cons.

e) A tool to facilitate the arrival of people's opinions

The existence of political parties has the function of bridging the aspirations of the people against the government, as a tool for the people to express their opinions to their leaders. So that political parties can be a tool to facilitate the arrival of people's opinions. Political parties with all their roles, ranging from being an intermediary between the community and the government, as a means of political participation, regulating conflicts, to controlling government policies, can carry out their duties properly. This is done to achieve balance in carrying out all political activities in the nation and state.

b. Bringing Together Various Demands of People's Aspirations to Create Common Interests

The function of political parties to bring together various demands of people's aspirations to create common interests is in the position of 56.82%, "maybe" 37.88%, and "don't know" 5.30% with the various arguments they put forward.

From the various understandings of the various layers of society on the function of these political parties, various arguments can be identified, as can be seen below.

1. Bringing together various aspirations for the common good

Aspirations or demands of the layers of society in a democratic political life are indeed very complex, and according to Miriam Budiardjo (2008), many different opinions and aspirations have developed. Miriam Budiardjo continued, the opinions or aspirations of a person or a group will disappear like a voice in the desert, if they are not accommodated and combined with the opinions or aspirations of others who are similar. The task of political parties is to bring together various opinions that come from the community. Therefore, according to one respondent's explanation, people's aspirations are not always the same but differ from the entire community's opinion. The differences in the aspirations of each community group should be related to the similarity in substance in realizing common goals and interests. Thus, the explanation given by other respondents is that political parties bring together various demands of people's aspirations to create common interests because they are related to political communication. Political parties are great intermediaries linking social forces and ideologies with official government institutions and linking them to political action within the wider political community.

2. Facilitating the community in voicing their aspirations

Making the political party trustworthy to convey the aspirations of the people in accordance with the political understanding held by the general public. People's aspirations are certainly very strong, but if they only rely on individuals or groups, their aspirations and demands may differ from one another. Thus, the existence of political parties facilitates the community in voicing their aspirations, in teasing them for the common interest, although according to respondents, the possibility of uncertainty in the expected achievement (occurs) is due to individual interests behind common interests.

3. Develop concepts and ideas together

Society is a strong determining factor or not political parties. Therefore, it is in its place that political parties absorb the aspirations of the community both for the benefit of the community and the party own politics. In the context of nation building, aspirations that develop in society must be an inspiration for political parties in formulating conceptions and ideas of aspirations in society that can be used as political parties as ammunition to support political parties to bring together various demands of people's aspirations to create common interests. Moreover, it is clear from other respondents, because Indonesia is diverse and has many ethnic groups, political parties must be able to connect these tribes.

4. In addition to the arguments that have been identified, it is also necessary to pay attention to political parties in this regard, as representatives of the people, political parties do not reconcile the different aspirations of the people with the aim of creating common interests. In fact, according to another respondent, political parties are only concerned with the interests of their group rather than the interests of the people.

c. Carry out political recruitment

The function of political parties, apart from those described above, is also to carry out political recruitment. The survey results show that the public's understanding of this function is very large, 80.30% do it, 5.30% do not do it, and 14.40% say they don't know. These are all part of the public's understanding of the function of political parties.

Along with an understanding of the function of this political party, the public gave reasons as the results of the identification can be seen below:

1. Organizing the running of the organization

The sustainability of the existence of political parties is nothing but political recruitment (cadres). Because in a political party, party cadres are needed to regulate the running of the political organization. Such as the chairman, vice chairman, and so on. So, many political parties carry out regeneration (in the regions) for the recruitment of political party members.

2. Looking for and inviting people to take an active part in political activities

Political parties carry out the function of political recruitment, to seek and invite people to actively participate in political activities as party members (political recruitment). Thus, political parties contribute to expanding political participation, as well as recruitment such as entry into legislative candidates, and leaders (regional, and national).

3. Prepare (selection) cadres

The role and function of political parties as a means of political recruitment in the context of increasing public political participation is how political parties have a large enough share in terms of: (1) preparing cadres political leaders, (2) conduct a selection of cadres who have prepared, and (3) the struggle for the placement of qualified cadres, dedicated, has high credibility and has the support of people in strategic political positions. Thus, explained the respondent, as a pillar of democracy political parties have the function and role of parties in the politics of this country. Which is useful as a forum for selecting leaders both legislative and executive.

4. Various factors influence political recruitment

It is undeniable, in recruitment, of course, there are many factors that will become candidates (both for legislative and executive). The factor that attracts and raises votes, as according to respondents, is of course the presence of these candidates can increase the votes in each of their candidates in the series of votes for political parties. However, according to other respondents, political parties also do it instantly to raise the prestige of the party, even though they are incompetent. Like several artists who have nominated themselves and have been nominated by several parties, even though they have experience in politics, it is stated that they still do not understand. These factors will have a bad effect if the selection of candidates is only based on their prestige, not their experience and expertise according to the field in which they are nominated. In addition, there are around 19.70% of respondents that political parties do not carry out political recruitment properly. From the arguments that both "do not perform" or "don't know" about this function, the meaning of the substance is the same, indeed, political parties in general have carried out their recruitment functions, but as explained by respondents, some political parties in recruiting are not good. Because they choose people who have the opportunity to get more votes regardless of that person's ability in the world of politics.

4.3 Engage in Government Management

Indeed, the national political life after the fall of the New Order regime has shown its enthusiasm, first and foremost with the establishment of various political parties since the beginning of the reformation until now. In this context, there is a political desire from various levels of society to want national political life to actually run more in the administration of a democratic government. Thus, being the focus of the birth of various political parties (if grouped as national or religious parties), basically political parties are expected to play their functions as expected by society.

The sovereignty of the people in the Indonesian political system is actually very significant because it is enshrined in the constitution of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, that sovereignty is in the hands of the people. The people as the sovereign owner of their true interests must be considered, not otherwise trapped or straddled by the interests of small groups, especially to the point of being marginalized in their political reality.

The existence of political parties that become a forum for various levels of society is vital in carrying out its functions as described previously. The activities of political parties in addition to providing political socialization, connecting the people with the government, bridging various aspirations in creating common interests, and political recruitment to fill government political institutions.

Furthermore, as explained by Charles F. Andrain (1992) that democratic political parties help manage the government. According to Charles F. Andrain (1992) in a parliamentary system, the leaders of the dominant party or parties in the representative council become government ministers. In presidential systems, the leader of the dominant party is usually also the head of government. Whatever the form of government, the ruling party can be equated with the government even if only temporarily.

Indeed, ideally, that the ruling party exists and manages the government, but in the context of Indonesian political dialectic which is based on the values of Pancasila, it seems that there is no political party in Indonesia today (read: reformation era) that controls more than 50 percent. his voice. In other words, with multiple parties in the party system in Indonesia, naturally in the constellation of constitutional power struggles through general elections, no political party gets an absolute majority of votes (absolutely), but only as winners in the general election.

Thus, the construction of power buildings in the management of government is not monopolized or absolutely dominated by the party winning the election, but rather the existence of a coalition of political parties in the parliament, People's Leadership Council of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) as a "symbol" of the government party. Meanwhile, those who do not join the coalition are called political parties as "balancers" to exercise political control over the running of the government.

Political parties that do not join the government coalition, in the democratic dialectic of administering a presidential government system in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, the balancing party is a social fact that does not absolutely "deny" the policies issued by the executive. At a certain level, the balancing party actually collaborates to strengthen policies by participating in agreeing to them. For example, in drafting a bill, starting from the planning process (which is called Prolegnas), formulation, discussion to decision or ratification, the balancing party is involved in coloring the contents of the bill that is being discussed.

Thus, in the Indonesian national political atmosphere, the ruling party (which consists of several coalition parties), is under the management of the government (an) by being given political positions in various government units or institutions. Meanwhile, the

balancing party in the parliament actually has to provide control over the running of the government.

V. Conclusion

The existence of political parties is an essential part of the life of state administration. Its existence along with the role of its function should refer to the realization of a just and prosperous society in accordance with the values contained in Pancasila and the constitution of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Activists (actors) of political parties knit their roles and functions in the process of not seizing power or seek positions of power.

The description of the public choice's perception of the reality of the functions of political parties provides an illustration that the function of political parties between conceptual dialectics and the real reality of its implementation is still a gap. In this perspective, both (public choice and political parties) remind the course of political life of political infrastructure, namely party activists with the public choice are efficient or useful to build an understanding of rights and obligations in the administration of the state.

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