

Implications of the existence of opposition political parties as checks and balances in the implementation of democracy

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Abstract

The opposition plays an important role in monitoring government policies and programs or in fulfilling checks and balances. However, the opposition parties in parliament have always been in the minority along the long road of Indonesian populist democracy. This situation weakens the control function and widens the gap to uphold the will of the people. There are opposition parties which have always been a minority group in parliament which is even worse if the decision-making cannot be resolved by a joint decision. If this happens, the minority opposition forces cannot influence government policies. Consequently, when the votes of the parties in a coalition supporting the government have dominance in determining public policies, this will result in policies that are usually authoritarian in nature.

Keywords

Opposition, Check and Balances, Democracy

INTRODUCTION

The gap in the number of opposition political parties and government coalitions has destabilized democracy in Indonesia (Effendi, 2022; Harahap, 2021). The dwindling number of opposition members weakened the current opposition. This will lead to potential inequality in *check and balances* power in the hands of the government and weakens the quality of democracy in Indonesia. A government that has a lot of coalition support will be difficult to criticize for every policy it takes. Yet this criticism is important for the running of a balanced government. The lack of opposition parties will affect the amount of criticism that comes in for the government. Decreased criticism will make the government become more "above the clouds" when issuing a policy. Because of the assumption that no one can restrict or oppose them because of the weakness of the opposition itself, this is not in line with the existence of opposition parties as part of control over the government.

The existence of political parties is an important tool in the structure of the state (Ismatullah & Nurjanah, 2018). Political parties themselves play a role as determinants of the democratic system and become the mainstay of the political system. It is also worth mentioning the role of political parties as a link between the government and society, because the skills of people who are members of the party can influence the orientation and politics of the country itself (Meyer, 2006). In the Indonesian legal system, political parties are divided into two groups. Namely, the party faction that chooses to become a coalition is as a party that fully supports a government and the party faction that chooses to be the opposition and puts itself not in support of the government. Opposition is an important part of democracy (Dahl, 2008). As an effort to improve the quality of democracy in Indonesia. One of the tasks of the opposition, which is a counterweight to the government. Even free to give criticism and suggestions in the direction of government policy. Thus the ability or role of political parties in influencing political direction, opposition parties place themselves as policy control bodies carried out by the government, both legislative bodies in the central government and in

regional governments. Therefore, it would not be surprising that a large number of members of the public would choose to place their will on the opposition party when policies are seen as not in favor of the interests of the people.

A good democracy requires opposition as a basis and counterweight to the exercise of power. (Dahl, 1966) says that a political system can be called democratic only if there are opposition parties. On the contrary, opposition parties can live on a democratic system. Opposition is living proof of the abstract value of democracy. It can be said that democracy will develop with dynamic thinking from the real work of government and opposition. Opposition in a general sense and is defined as "opposite" or "someone who takes a different attitude from others". In a context in politics, some people translate opposition into informal disagreements or disputes between institutions holding power, while opposition in politics is a form of dispute linked to and guaranteed by the constitution (Noor, 2016). If democracy is interpreted as a means of exercising power based on the will of the people, then the existence of opposition is a natural situation. However, the form of opposition tends to be different in each democratic country, depending on the system of government and party system that prevails.

In a system of government, separation of powers is important in preventing officials from deviation or abuse of power because they are tied to someone in power. Therefore, it is necessary to arrange the division of power in the government. For activities that are mutually accessible to the government as well as limiting excess power between institutions, it must be applied *check and balances*. This is a principle for controlling the government, and is designed to ensure that no more government institutions become too powerful (Harahap, 2021). *Checks and balances* namely the constitutional principle that requires the judiciary, executive, and legislative institutions to be equal and supervise each other. Power in the state is regulated as much as possible, there are limits and even controlled so that there is no abuse of power from the organizing officials in the state or people in state institutions. Mechanism *check and balances* In democracy is a common thing to do, and certainly necessary. This is to be able to stay away from the abuse of power by a person or institution or concentration of power on one person or institution, because the mechanism allows one institution and other institutions to control each other or control and even complement each other.

The political party that loses the election campaign should automatically become the opposition. But in a presidential system with a multi-party system like Indonesia. (Juda, 2010) states that the presidential system is based on the principle of a separation of powers and mechanisms *check and balances* between the executive and parliament. The political relationship between a president and parliament in a presidential system is equal and independent. Indonesian democracy requires a balance both in the government and in parliament in the accumulation of power. In reality, on the contrary, the existing pattern of relations shows a tendency for political cartel relations, that is, between two institutions that are usually mutually beneficial, both covertly and openly, which ultimately makes the exercise of power ineffective.

The opposition is often seen as rebels who overthrow the government, when the main goal is to create control and control in the administration of the state. The role of opposition parties as a balancer and monitor of government policies is needed in democracy. The opposition is tasked with pointing out the weakness of the policy, so that when the policy is implemented, everything that could be a detrimental side effect is suppressed to a minimum (Panuju, 2011).

CRITICAL REVIEW

When a policy A government that cannot be influenced by public participation needs the opposition as a channel of representation Responsibilities in government (Seeberg, 2018), in this case the opposition party will also benefit from public support and to reach the voice of the people (Resnick, 2012). Like two sides on a coin (Pratama, 2015) The opposition party rather than seeking ties of power to the other party, but instead returned together with the former opponent in the candidacy.

In achieving the successful implementation of democracy, it requires space for public political participation (Anggraeni, 2016), the institutionalization of opposition is a constitutional alternative to the aspirations and preferences of key citizens as a channel of conveying opinions to the government. A decline in the number of opposition parties would obviously be a problem for democracy, as there would be little room for a pattern of government surveillance. Then the system *check and balances* just became a collection of masterless poems. Opposition is nothing more than a few marginalized people who come together dramatically in a political struggle, or a collection of marginalized people.

The decline in the number of opposition parties cannot be justified, because in the absence of opposition there is no full democracy, although more moderate theoretical opposition remains difficult to develop (Helms, 2008). The opposition often gets reduction, this is obtained from the government, because it is seen only as mere accusations and criticisms and is considered to have no effect on improving reality.

The reduction of opposition parties can be made by the government if the opposition party constantly maintains the credibility of its position as a counterweight that can present a significant threat to government power in the future. In addition, the forces in the opposition in the exercise of autocratic power always encourage open, harsh and contextual criticism of every movement of the ruler. However, when the forces of the opposition appear in the shadow of a continuum fragmented into small forces, inevitably just like loud noises from the streets, they will not become a serious obstacle that can guarantee the acceleration of *checks and balances*.

In this case, the existence of democratic growth in Indonesia is far from perfect. Because it still leaves enough room for the emergence of political practices that eliminate the essence of democracy itself. The phenomenon of abuse of power has not been effectively controlled because the right counterweight is not strong enough. In such situations, more attention is paid to strengthening the existence of a balanced power of opposition groups, and in principle it is urgent at least to be able to reduce oligarchic practices and the negative aspects they cause.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

a) *Theories About Democracy*

Democracy means government by the people, this thought comes from Greece, where in politics the people have a role to exercise all power in politics. Meanwhile, democracy is seen from etymology, derived from the word "demos" translated people, "cratos" translated power or sovereignty. Demoscratos (democracy), according to language, is a state in its system of government that places sovereignty in the people, decisions produced by the mutual consent of the people become the highest power, meaning in government where it comes from the people, also by the existence of the people, and the results for the people.

In a centralized government, where the government can have absolute power over matters concerning the people. This then becomes an obstacle to realizing a just government.

Because if the government can have absolute power in matters such as, the performance of state duties, legislation or the administration of justice, the possibility of the state government to take arbitrary action against the authority, the greater the government. This is certainly a problem, because there is a tendency to cause injustice and have an impact on society. Therefore, the idea of the theory of separation of powers becomes a starting point for the absence of concentration in state power that can cause arbitrariness, marginalize the people as the first party and holder of sovereignty. The division of power in its implementation makes the existence of legislative, executive, and judicial or known as trias politica.

b) *Check and Balances*

The essence of opposition is the concept of checks and balances. This concept is a continuation of the idea of separation of powers and was first developed in the United States. The essence of this concept is that the branches of power must be able to check and balance each other. This shared control and consideration is expected to ensure that no government holds authority acting only in its own interests.

Checks and balances make the party, whether it comes from parliament or the executive, can check each other and serve as a reminder of the government to heed the will of the people. This balance allows for the formation of resistance to the ruling government. According to Amadigwe (2004), ministers should be responsible for their policies even in parliamentary systems of government, where opposition groups usually criticize the policies under discussion.

In the context of democracy, the roots of opposition are universal. So it can happen in both parliamentary and presidential systems. There is no limit to the fact that certain governance systems offer more opportunities or require resistance than others. Although resistance in the context of checks and balances seems to take the form of an effective parliamentary opposition system, it also exists in presidential government. Therefore, the basic idea of democracy to form an opposition can be used in any system, since the existence of opposition is fundamentally closely related to the existence of democracy.

c) *Opposition to Democracy*

Opposition as a result of the participation of the people for the government. Therefore, the existence of opposition parties is a necessity in democratic life, considering that a democratic government is a government that allows broad public participation. Another issue in democracy that underlies the presence of opposition is the concept of separation of powers. Separation of powers is one of the main differences between democratic and anti-democratic government. For example, in countries with authoritarian governments, unrecognized separation of powers is enforced. The separation of powers according to democratic logic justifies a difference in views and sometimes even contradictions as long as they remain within the corridors of the constitution.

In relation to the sovereignty of nations, opposition finds its meaning. Because, there is no guarantee that the government can fully respect and overturn the sovereignty of the people. History shows that it is not uncommon for governments, in practice, to act on nations and people to deviate from sovereignty itself. That is why it needs forces outside of government that can help ensure that people's sovereignty remains and functions. In this context, the role of parties outside the government or opposition becomes important, especially to ensure that the current government remains on the side of the interests of the people. In other words, the existence of the opposition is closely related to the interests of maintaining the sovereignty of the people. In addition to popular sovereignty, political participation is another democratic basis for the existence of the opposition. Of course,

political participation as a condition for democracy (Pateman, 1970), does not mean participation-driven, but rather stand-alone participation on the basis of individual consciousness. This type of participation opens up opportunities for each citizen to act according to his own consciousness. Finally, this freedom of participation allows the emergence of different attitudes and perspectives, including authority, considering that consciousness is not the same for everyone.

Discussion

a) *The existence of opposition in democracy*

In politics, in democratic life, opposition parties have a primary function. The first is the balance of power. The substantive meaning of Balance can mean having the power to give different thoughts or attitudes outside the government and bring balance so that government officials do not deviate far from the benefit of the people. The importance of this balance is that a democratically elected government can ultimately act against the will of the people.

Opposition can lead to the emergence of many advanced policy options or alternative improvements in government policy. In accordance with the fact that no government is perfect. Even the best-run government still needs indirect support from opposition groups to better understand the aspirations and interests of its people. Therefore, the barrenness of the opposition is the limit of its ability to defend the aspirations of the people, which if maintained over a long period of time can lead to the collapse of the government. Resistance is needed to create more inclusive policies and minimize errors

Opposition as a healthy competition between the political elite and the state. The government will stagnate, even deteriorate, unless there is a counterweight from competent parties who is able to show the public that there are other policies that make more sense than the policies given. The existence of opposition makes the ruling government "aware" that there are other parties who can propose better policies, which can basically "disturb" the positive image of the government in the eyes of the public. Therefore, resistance is needed to improve performance and maintain a good image in the eyes of the public. In this situation, there arises a healthy competition between the government and the opposition on improvements to the future of the country. It is thus clear that the strengthening of opposition is linked to the desire to support policies that favor the interests of the people and avoid the emergence of oligarchy. Opposition is not simply an anti-government stance or of different origins, but an existence that offers criticism and proposals for alternative politics and government. The opposition is the "rational side" as a result of the institutionalization of power control (KAMIL, 2002). In short, a healthy opposition is part of and at the same time a reflection of the existence of a strong democracy.

b) *Democracy with minimal opposition*

In the context of the implementation of democracy, every group of people has the inherent freedom of citizenship to express its opinions, express fundamental criticisms of the government, including control over the articulation of the fulfillment of its duties. own power of those in power at the time. After all, in the life of a democratic state there are always deviations from democratic principles, (Anggraeni & Ramdhani, 2018) For example, when direct elections take place. However, each social group has unlimited opportunities to achieve a decisive position in opposition with a political party outside the shadow of the ruler. If the government reduces opposition under the pretext of the slightest continuity, it has actually violated the constitution and violated human rights. Because democratic principles require that the government only focus on guarantees related to the fulfillment of citizens' human

rights, which cannot be limited except in certain situations. If the government seeks to establish a nuanced atmosphere of articulation as a veiled goal in the power structure and intersperses the reduction of the existence of the opposition with contradictory criticism, in the same situation democracy is nothing more than the notion of external hierarchy to be veiled portrait of oligarchy depicting the failure of state responsibility.

Failure to govern autocratically can have devastating consequences, as it increases the government's ability to reduce opposition deemed uncooperative (Kosterina, 2017) and leaves no opportunity to show an excellent reputation as a defender of various interests of society. Until now, the culture of opposition has not been deeply rooted in Indonesian democracy, which is manifestly demonstrated by the arrogance of the rulers who ignore the legitimacy and decision-making power of opposition parties (Alif, 2019). After independence, the opposition was trapped in an endless jungle of extremism and justified as a source of instability for nearly four decades. The institutionalization of opposition has not changed significantly even in reform times and is considered an unfavorable position (Noor, 2016), although opposition can also be interpreted about the extent of the quality of a country's democracy. The opposition must have a grand strategy to deal with governments that target the opposition's weaknesses (Somer and McCoy, 2019). The strategy of opposition parties has become less effective on how the opposition cannot fully influence the formation of public opinion. Basically, the opposition rarely comes up with extraordinary intellectual ideas directly in public, so the public does not feel more realistic that these ideas can answer precisely public problems such as criticism of the government. The decline of the opposition is seen as collusion, the placement of a former political opponent into government as a result of the non-pragmatic dealings of elected officials. Opposition parties that are given ground by the authorities will suffer a loss of freedom because they must wear the masks the government wants.

c) *Impact of Minority Opposition Parties in Decision-Making*

The opposition acts as a balancing part of government power. The opposition is expected to make efforts to oppose government policies that are not in line with the interests of the people. The presence of the opposition fueled the spirit of democracy in the government. With the role of the opposition as a watchdog and balancer, it certainly prevents the existence of an authoritarian government (Moh Mahfud M. D, 1998).

The presence of opposition is more emphasized and much more effective when done together, as well as when there is a combination of opposition that merges into one. In practice, the opposition group becomes the majority in the sense of controlling the majority of votes or seats in parliament. Even if the position is opposition, if the decision taken ends in a vote, then the opposition party or group still influences the voice of policymaking.

d) *Pseudo-coalition in opposition*

A pseudo-coalition is defined as a form of indirect coalition resulting from several parties pursuing similar goals that are not taken into account. Opposition parties often use these pseudo-coalitions, but it has never been noticed that they actually join forces to oppose the policies of the ruler in a parliamentary context. The focus of this real coalition is on divisions among opposition parties, which are indirectly used against the government. Actually, the term pseudo-coalition is theoretically unknown, but the Indonesian political phenomenon shows the existence of this pseudo-coalition. In essence, a written agreement only materializes when different rules are agreed in the coalition, but the actions and attitudes of opposition parties that do not support the government led to this apparent merger.

Today's popular political policies have parties in parliament competing for the sympathy of those who appear as supporters of the public. It was that policy that triggered the coalition of all opposition parties, because it was clear the opposition's position did not benefit the government. In contrast to the attitude of coalition parties which are completely dilemmatic whether it will be consistent for the coalition or for the people. The public will definitely view this government attitude as an act that does not care about the small people (Yuda, 2008). Therefore, opposition parties formed coalitions to take advantage of the moment where this was used to boost the party's popularity.

The idea of a pseudo-coalition is a result of the deterioration of the Indonesian party, which is expected to further improve the party system. Almost all the consequences of pseudo-coalitions have a negative impact and even tend to damage the party system, this will be a deadly weapon for Indonesia in the party system. It is important to understand and criticize collectively that people are victims of interests and conflicts within the political party elite. Perhaps political parties can use conflict to increase public participation. However, this conflict was used as justification for party mobilization. In fact, there are two main reasons that gave rise to this pseudo-coalition, namely party-elite personal conflicts and popular policies to attract public attention, so that this coalition of pseudo-opposition parties is considered to make the people by siding with them. participate in vote for their party. Another important point is that the attitude of the opposition coalition in Indonesia is still relatively gray. Because from the opposition side, the negative attitude of the participants was not consistent, but only selective.

CONCLUSION

The opposition, as it is intended, is not only opposed to different government stances or policies, but is able to firmly oppose regulating and proposing reasonable political alternatives. Unfortunately, the existence of the opposition in Indonesia is still not solid enough. The role of the opposition is very important, namely to ensure that the current government keeps in mind the interests and political participation of the people, which is related to the support of the people's right to self-determination and the prerequisites for democracy. As already mentioned, the status is based on the concept of *checks and balances*, meaning that the state organizer does not act only in its own interests. *Checks and balances* allow current parties, parliament and the executive to keep an eye on each other and remind the government to obey the will of the people. Regardless of the concept of power-sharing, opposition has significance. It's about what if a ruler had only one view, without balance and critical power.

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