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Electoral System and Party Survival: The Case of Indonesian Democracy 1999-2019

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ABSTRAK

Studi tentang kemampuan bertahan partai memberikan penekanan kuat pada dinamika internal dan kemampuan partai politik untuk beradaptasi untuk mempertahankan dukungan pemilih. Artikel ini berpendapat bahwa perubahan sistem dan undang-undang pemilu, yang diklasifikasikan sebagai faktor eksternal, juga memiliki dampak yang signifikan. Sebagai akibat dari perubahan ini, partai politik baru tidak dapat mendaftar untuk mencalonkan diri untuk dipilih. Perubahan ini juga membuat partai politik kecil dengan sedikit dukungan tidak dapat bertahan di parlemen. Dua temuan signifikan muncul dari studi kasus lima siklus pemilu di Indonesia ini. Pertama, perubahan sistem dan undang-undang pemilu Indonesia banyak dipengaruhi oleh keinginan partai politik besar untuk memperkuat posisinya di arena politik. Dengan menggunakan otoritas legislatif, mereka menaikkan ambang batas parlemen untuk mempersulit partai politik kecil mengirim perwakilan ke parlemen. Kedua, variabel kunci dalam sistem dan undang-undang pemilu seperti besaran distrik, formula konversi kursi, dan ambang batas parlemen tidak memiliki dampak independen terhadap kemampuan bertahan partai. Untuk memberikan dampak tersebut, setidaknya dua variabel harus digabungkan, yaitu besaran distrik dan ambang batas parlemen.

Kata kunci: Pemilu, Partai Politik, Indonesia, Demokrasi, Kemampuan Bertahan Partai, Sistem Pemilu

ABSTRACT

Studies on party survival strongly emphasize the internal dynamics of political parties and their ability to adapt to retain voter support. This article contends that changes in electoral systems and laws, classified as an external factors, also have a significant impact. As a result of these changes, new political parties cannot register to run for office. These changes have also made small political parties with little support unable to survive in parliament. Two significant findings emerge from this case study of Indonesia's five election cycles. First, changes in Indonesia's electoral systems and laws have been heavily influenced by the desire of major political parties to strengthen their positions in the political arena. They raised the parliamentary threshold using their legislative authority to make it more difficult for minor political parties to send representatives to parliament. Second, critical variables in electoral systems and laws such as district magnitude, seat conversion formula, and parliamentary threshold do

not independently impact party survival. As a result, at least two variables must be combined, namely district magnitude and parliamentary threshold.

Keywords: Election, Political Parties, Indonesia, Democracy, Party Survival, Electoral System

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INTRODUCTION

In new democratic countries undergoing a democratic transition, the euphoria of political freedom is common. Two exciting phenomena are interesting to investigate. These phenomena are the ways that political parties organize themselves to strengthen their foothold in the democratic sphere and the influence of electoral law changes on the survival of political parties amid political turbulence. New democracies are typically still experimenting with the designs of their electoral systems to test their effectiveness and suitability with democracy. In such an unstable condition, electoral systems may undergo considerable changes, which could directly impact the more technical domains, such as electoral regulation, implementation model, supervision, and the mechanisms for resolving disputes over vote results.

As a new democracy, Indonesia has a unique experience where its electoral laws have changed in every election cycle. This condition has led to an unstable electoral system whose effectiveness has rarely been measured objectively. The political parties contesting the elections have felt the instability's impact. Five election cycles between 1999 and 2019 resulted in a relatively extreme multiparty system. The changes made through these five cycles could not bring about a multiparty system consisting of 4-6 political parties in parliament. It proves that there were problems in developing the system, which may include logical consistency, the discrepancy between the expected system operation and the system interpretation and details of explanation in the electoral law, and other factors that influenced the system operation electoral law.

Some issues with party legitimacy have arisen, and elections have revealed a contradictory trend. In some ways, Indonesian political parties are powerful. Their positions remain firm but are not widely

trusted (Tan 2006). Indonesian parties are fragmented and dominated by personal charisma. Political celebrities are more effective at winning elections than political elites who form a strong party structure with a high degree of party identification. They tend to remain in the “middle” position (catch-all and match-all), fighting for the same niche as other parties, causing party strategies and policies to be pragmatic and transactional (Aminuddin and Ramadlan 2015). Changes in electoral systems and laws have impacted the party system and, in particular, the longevity of political parties. System changes may strengthen a political party and help it win an election, or they may destroy it by constraining it from winning votes. In this article, we investigate the contribution of district magnitude, legislative seize, seat conversion formula, and parliamentary threshold to party survival. This study investigates elections from 1999 to 2019 as part of Indonesia’s democratic transition and consolidation. Analyzing transition and consolidation processes may bring insights into the mechanisms, influences, and results of the changes in Indonesia’s electoral system.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ITS SURVIVAL

As organizations with the political legitimacy to gain power, political parties have ups and downs in their efforts to win votes in elections. Traditional parties that have survived various electoral system changes and strengths and weaknesses are subject to the political market’s competition mechanism. Theoretically, at least three factors may affect traditional parties’ survivability. The first factor is the aggregate volatility in a party’s vote gains between elections. Since the 1960s, the relationship between voters and political parties has become more unstable (Pedersen 1979). The second factor is the success of new parties in challenging and displacing traditional and older parties (Kitschelt 1988; Poguntke 1987). The last factor is the shift in the patterns and styles of relations between parties and voters, from being structurally neo-corporatist, or characterized by parties’ relations with interest groups, to being characterized by parties’ relations with new social movements and other entities (Lawson, and Merkl 1988).

Traditional parties are still dominant in new democracies as voters still lack a mature understanding of democracy and depend on socio-political factors. Some critical studies have examined several variables in investigating the extent of traditional parties' survivability in established democracies, including changes in electoral systems, rearrangement, or both (Mair 1993). Mair's study proves that old or traditional parties in Western Europe could survive prolonged periods and even dominate mass politics. Three factors affect their survival. For starters, they can gain the support of new voters. Traditional parties can attract new voters with their new appeal. Secondly, social changes do not necessarily lead to political changes since electoral systems do not experience many changes. Third, while electoral system changes result from social changes, old or traditional parties can withstand any potential threat.

Existing studies on party survival define 'party survival' as the ability of a political party to continue its function to nominate candidates, win general elections, and place its representatives in the executive and legislative offices at all government levels (Ishiyama 1999). Differences between party survival in an authoritarian regime and a new democracy are determined by how dominant resources in the country are performed. The ruling party can survive in an authoritarian regime because it can control community networks, use the country's logistical support, and has repressive devices that state apparatuses or authorities can use to force subordination.

There are several cases where new democracies with parties that flourished during the authoritarian era were able to transform themselves and survive in the democratic regime. Parties attributed to authoritarian regimes must transform by adjusting their ideologies to be more moderate, restructuring their organization, and removing factionalism elements that represent the authoritarian regime's political power. Parties that do not transform themselves frequently struggle to adapt and change their organizational behavior (Kitschelt 1989; Levitsky 2003).

Around 70% of the parties founded after the Second World War failed to win parliamentary seats, and 830 political parties in 37 countries found that many parties failed during their debut and were dis-

banded before the fourth term in parliament. A party may make an optimal achievement when it survives. Its survivability is measured not just in one round of the election but across several rounds. Specifically, what is measured is the party's perseverance in maintaining its ability to gain votes (Spoon 2011, 143). Some key variables determining the level of party survival are implementing moderate policies, the ideologies adopted, and participation in the coalition government (Zur 2019).

A study from Robert K. Harmel and John D. Robertson (1985) about 233 new parties in 19 countries in Western Europe and Anglo-America during 1960-1980 shows that structural factors, including electoral systems, do not prevent new parties from emerging. It is because new political parties play a role as a vehicle for the expression of diversity. As a result, the emergence and proclivity to form new parties can be linked to the socio-cultural diversity of the population. The failure of new parties does not always imply their inability to survive. Some new parties bring up new issues and pay attention to specific problems (Harmel and Robertson 1985). Party survival is also influenced by its ability to compete in the elections; and its factionalization in the parliament and the government. How far a party can survive is determined by its ability to establish a representative regime at the operational level and in its legitimate claim (Yanai 1999).

Further explanation is required to account for the survivability of political parties in new democracies and post-Soviet states. Ishiyama and A. Bozóki (2001) explain that party survival in post-communist states depends very much on their strategies to adapt to changes. Following the collapse of communist political systems, political parties in post-communist states have changed their political identities. The ability to do so is related to the party's internal and external factors, including its performance in general elections. Electoral system changes redefine the rules of the game that influence the number of participants contesting political power. Among changes in electoral reform, electoral formula and election thresholds significantly impact the political configuration's competitiveness (Bielasiak 2005). Bianco et al. (2014) study show that parties in new democracies and post-Soviet states must build people's

trust in their ability to make policies, legislative experts, leadership capability, and ability to connect with the community, which in turn, will make their existence relevant.

In the case of Indonesia, the development of the party system has been shaped by historical factors related to the underlying preconditions (e.g., the previous system, actors, and the remaining effects of the authoritarian legacy) of the democratization process. Furthermore, it is influenced by the individual or institutional regimes of the previous period (Aminuddin 2017). Most parties in Indonesia display a weak level of organization, low party discipline, and superficial programs. Major parties in Indonesia have been able to maintain their existence in elections and successfully institutionalize their party system (Tomsa 2014; Ufen 2008; Croissant and Völkel 2012). In the context of survival, the six largest parties in parliament in 1999 (Golkar, PDIP, PPP, PKB, PAN, and PKS) still won seats in 2009, despite the imposition of parliamentary thresholds and the presence of new parties. It is in contrast to the other East Asian countries, such as South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, during their transitions to democracy, in which their traditional parties disappeared after one or two elections.

Most studies on party survival do not discuss how electoral systems and laws impact the survivability of newly established parties and the parties that are legacies of authoritarian regimes. Therefore, it is worth looking at three factors influencing party survival in new democracies. The first factors are transition and democratic consolidation periods, which are critical for party institutionalization and strengthening party organization. The second factor is establishing organizations that support the party and broadening the scope of constituents in the community, which may indicate how far a party goes to maintain its existence. The third is the mobilization and capitalization of state resources by a party when it gains power, which demonstrates how the party finances itself.

This study is based on the premise that changes in electoral systems and laws impact the continuity of political parties' votes in general elections and their success in gaining parliamentary seats. Changes

in electoral systems and laws are often made during the democratic transition phase, influencing the contesting parties' ability to adapt to the newly formed democratic system. To some parties, the impact is detrimental. Furthermore, voters' trust in the performance of parties is still fluctuating. During the democratic transition period, parties' social networks tend to be weak, and their representatives in public office tend to have poor leadership capabilities. These make the stability of vote gains reliant on how far a party manages its cadres, candidates, and leadership model, enabling it to adapt to and take advantage of system changes. This study focuses on the first factor and argues that changes in electoral systems and laws are structurally binding and directly impact the performance of political parties.

THE EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

In new democracies, electoral systems and laws are 'fluid' as new democracies are still experimenting and figuring out the ideal system for strengthening political parties. Electoral systems, in some respects, may become a determinant for political stability. When the German Federal Republic developed its electoral system after the Second World War, there were several crucial phases in the evolution of the party system. In 1950, Germany's party system was highly fractionalized, and the electoral system significantly reduced it. High fractionalization occurred following changes in the post-reunification period in the 1990s, and it could be moderately reduced. The German case demonstrates that an electoral system's durability base can be fragmented (Capoccia 2002).

In established democracies, the electoral system has specific periods in which its effectiveness may be assessed. One example is the implementation of the Single Transferable Vote (STV) in the Republic of Ireland's parliamentary elections since 1922. That election is a significant factor, combined with other variables, for Ireland's weak parliament did not result in a party system with high fragmentation or an unstable government (Gallagher 1986). A more comprehensive study conducted between 1955 and 1985 in 20 Western democratic countries with similar electoral systems found that district magnitude significantly impacts

the degree of proportionality. This variable, however, has only a minor impact on the number of parties running in the elections.

Furthermore, the ballot structure does not affect multipartyism in a single-member district. Politicians' strategic behavior generally insignificantly reduced multipartyism (Lijphart 1990). Therefore, the electoral system determines politician or voter behavior.

The electoral system is considered an exogenous determinant of a party system in which system changes are frequently idiosyncratic, often occurring during episodes of notable political changes. The question is, under what circumstances do an electoral system experience changes? Two underlying variables are institutional change motivation and the instrumental rationality of a party to develop strategies to maximize parliamentary seat gains. Formally, parties with parliamentary seats have the authority to be involved directly in the process of formulating changes in the electoral system. Electoral laws change when there is a coalition of parties where every party wants to gain more seats by changing the rules of the general elections (Benoit 2004). The law often harms small and new parties when the changes contain structural obstacles that make it difficult for small parties to gain votes and for new parties to win parliamentary seats.

A study in Africa refutes Sartori's claim that establishing an electoral system requires good party management. The study's findings also demonstrate that, in a new democracy, the electoral system is critical to party system management (Lindberg 2005). In the post-communist states, particularly Poland and Hungary, a standard pattern shows that the consolidation of political parties runs well due to electoral system incentives. However, it is not the case in Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, it can be inferred that the effects of electoral system types may be influenced by the degree of party institutionalization (Milazzo, Moser, and Scheiner 2011). These diverse findings in several new democracies provide an opportunity to conduct more in-depth research that evaluates more variables, such as political parties' abilities and regime or political conditions, when responding to the electoral system in use.

Differences in electoral systems may affect the number of political parties in the electoral arena. The proportional system will almost always result in more parties in the parliament than other electoral systems. Changes to the electoral law, particularly those related to ballot access, media access, and state subventions, are made periodically by most countries. Political spheres that are more liberal help parties, notably smaller and newer ones, by allowing them better opportunities to implement their strategy. Established parties are at an advantage due to their ability to mobilize resources. This condition creates a cartel-type situation with a twist: nest-feathering and liberalizing electoral laws to benefit all parties, especially those that are more established (Bowler, Carter, and Farrel 2001). In a new democracy, the effects of the electoral system are influenced by three conditions. The first is the political context, which is more fluid, with party volatility between electoral periods. The second is the underdeveloped opinion polls. The third is the still underdeveloped parties, which affect their social groups and result in party programs that are not well defined and weak relationships between the parties and their constituents (Moser and Scheiner 2012, 18). All these conditions should be considered vital variables in how far electoral systems contribute to party survival.

METHODOLOGY

This study investigates the Indonesian case during the democratic period, from 1999 to 2019. In these 20 years, five national elections were held. An investigation of the dynamics of the elections may explain how far parties that attributed to a legacy of an authoritarian regime, the political actors who became the backbone of the parties, and democratic political actors developed their political parties to compete in a general election and survive changes in electoral laws and systems. The Indonesian case can demonstrate how a party system can create a stable government. As a new democratic country with the largest population after India and the United States, the Indonesian case contributes to the analysis of the relationship between party institutionalization and the fluctuation or stability of a party system. It explains how far democracy

could operate effectively and how far the government can influence and have a constructive influence on democratic institutionalization.

In simple terms, party survival may be justified if the party survives four rounds of an election. Discussions about parties that win general elections and gain more votes focus on the key factors that underpin these successes. These discussions do not consider other complicated factors contributing to political parties' capacity and ability to gain parliamentary seats under different conditions. Some factors not covered are the rotation and circulation of party elites in authoritarian-legacy parties, the organizational capacity of new parties to respond to changes in electoral systems and laws, the dynamics of parties' strategies in adapting to internal turbulence, and the widening of ideologies.

This study explains the relationship between electoral systems and laws and party survival by examining general inclination in election results. We conducted our analysis in three steps. The first step was to compile a systematic analysis of changes in electoral systems and laws between 1999 and 2019. This step aims to find out how electoral systems have changed. The second step was to analyze the relationship between the changes in electoral systems and laws and party survival by considering the following indicators: the percentage of political parties gaining parliamentary seats, the difference between votes gained by the same party, and their conversion to be parliamentary seats in different general elections, the parties' position in the executive government, and the makeup of parties in the legislative body. The third step was to explain why a party might survive changes in electoral systems and laws.

Indonesia's bills on general elections from 1999 to 2019 are compiled to identify the differences among the elections in terms of systems, methods of converting votes into parliamentary seats, electoral district sizes, legislative measures, and parliamentary threshold levels. The data on each party's votes and parliamentary seats were retrieved from official data released by the General Elections Commission (KPU). To determine cabinet share, we manually culminated the cabinet members' vitae background and political affiliation. In determining whether a party belonged to the opposition or a member of the coalition of win-

ning parties, we checked the respective parties' official statements. Not all the parties publicly declared whether they joined the coalition or the opposition; therefore, in our analysis, we did not include the parties that did not declare their political standings.

DISCUSSION

Electoral System Changes

The Indonesian electoral system adopts the Proportional Representation (PR) system, with gradual changes over two decades, starting from a closed-list system for the 1999 general election (Table 1). In the 2004 general election, the system was changed to an open-list and Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) PR system. The applied PR system was the open list in the next general elections. Three to twelve seats were consistently selected for every electoral district to determine the district magnitude. However, the number of electoral districts nationally increased. It was also the case with the number of parliamentary members and adding more electoral districts. To convert votes into seats, in the general elections held from 1999 to 2014, the government used a modified Hare Quota formula called the Voters' Divisor (*Bilangan Pembagi Pemilih*, BPP). In the 2019 general election, the government used the Sainte Lague divisor model. Even though the number of parties competing in the general elections was never below 10, the calculation of ENPP (Effective Number of Political Parties (ENPP) shows that the party system in Indonesia can be categorized as extreme multiparty (Aminuddin 2017). One policy that has been very decisive was the enforcement of the parliamentary threshold from the 2009 general election onwards, which started from 2.50%, then increased to 3.50%, and then to 4% in the 2019 general election.

Table 1: Variables of Electoral System

Variables of Electoral System	Election				
	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
Electoral System	PR-Closed Not Elected	PR-open SNTV	PR-open (most votes sequence) SNTV	PR-Open (most votes sequence)	PR-Open (most votes sequence)
District Magnitude	27 electoral districts with 3-12 seats	69 electoral districts with 3-12 seats	77 electoral districts with 3-12 seats	77 electoral districts with 3-12 seats	80 electoral districts with 3-12 seats
Size of Legislature	462+38 *	550	560	560	575
Seat Conversion	Hare Quota	Hare Quota	Hare Quota	Hare Quota	Saint League
Number of parties	48	24	38	12	16
Parliamentary Threshold	-	-	2.50%	3.50%	4%

*462 seats up for election in the House of Representatives, and further 38 seats were reserved for the armed forces

Source: compiled from Act on Indonesian election in <https://jdih.kpu.go.id/undang-undang>. Also adapted from Aminuddin (2017).

One major political issue that is important to note is the domination of big parties in making the electoral law revisions, which had a direct impact on the existence of small parties. Big ruling parties, which dominated the electoral arena with the support of their coalition parties, tended to influence the formulation of electoral rules of the game, despite the intense pressure from civil societies and NGOs that were against the changes to the electoral laws. The 1999 general election was the first held after the collapse of the Suharto authoritarian regime, participating 48 parties under the early closed-list PR system. Parties nominated their candidates to contest the 462 national parliamentary seats. The parliamentary seats include 38 seats for military representatives. The PR system was considered to strengthen the oligarchy in political parties, which reduced the accountability of party cadres who were not very popular.

A substantial change was made in 2004 when the general election adopted the open-list PR in which parties could nominate non-party cadres as electoral candidates. In addition, the number of electoral districts was increased to 69, and every electoral district had three to 12 seats to be contested. The number of national parliamentary seats increased to 550. In the next general election, the number of parliament seats and electoral districts also increased due to the many new

administrative regions at the regency, city, and province levels. Electoral districts were determined according to the borders of administrative regions. The electoral system changed by increasing the parliamentary threshold (PT) to create a more straightforward party system. Thus, it was more difficult for small or new parties to get national parliamentary seats.

Table 2. Constraint Factors to Party Survival in the Indonesian Elections

Factors	Election				
	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
Absolute difference ratio*)	0.20	0.368	2.03	0.237	1.08
Cabinet share	19	23	19	22	21
Party in Parliament	41 % (20 from 48)	66% (16 from 24)	23% (9 from 38)	83% (10 from 12)	56% (9 from 16)
Position in Parliament					
-Ruling	1	1	1	1	1
-Coalition	6	6	7	5	5
-Opposition	0	6	2	3	3

*) party vote percentage (x1) – party seat shares (x2)/x1.

Source: Komisi Pemilihan Umum. 2019. "Hasil Hitung Suara Pemilu Presiden & Wakil Presiden RI 2019" Komisi Pemilihan Umum.

Table 2 depicts the constraints of electoral system changes on party survival. There are at least four constraint factors that can be examined. First, consider the absolute difference ratio. The analysis of this factor seeks to detect changes in the average vote gains of all parties that won parliamentary seats in each general election. The change in the method of converting votes into seats impacted all the parties as it determined whether their seat gains would increase or decrease. The 1999 general election had the lowest difference ratio at 0.20, followed by the 2014 election at 0.237. The highest ratio, 2.03, occurred in the 2009 election. All this proves that the combination of the closed list PR system and the Hare Quota model as applied in the 1999 election had a minimal loss impact on parties.

The second factor is the composition of cabinet seat share. The data show that there were no significant changes. The Indonesian executive government operating under the presidential system always demand strong support from the various political powers in the parliament. Due

to this, an elected president has to allocate more cabinet seats to those representing supporter parties. During the democratic transition period of 1998-2003, when the president was still elected by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the representation of political parties in many parliamentary seats could be seen as part of the compromise of political powers electing a president in parliament. However, after 2004, when the president was elected directly by the citizenry, the representation of parties in the parliament was meant to ensure that the executive government successfully passed various laws.

The third factor was that the number of parties securing parliamentary seats decreased. The number of nine to 10 has been more expected from one election to the most recent. It happened because the implementation of the PT left out new parties that did not have solid figures and a clear constituent base, and the extreme swing of votes among parties could not occur anymore. The 2009 general election became the first election in which the PT was implemented. The election resulted in only nine out of 38 parties sending their representatives to the parliament. In the 2014 election, the number of parties successfully gaining parliamentary seats was 10 out of 12; in the 2019 election, it was nine out of 16. Therefore, the number of gained votes or parliamentary seats decreased, but only two or three parties did not gain over 30% of the seats. The seats were evenly distributed among the parties, with a reasonable gap between them.

Fourth, the positions of the parties, whether they were in the coalition or the opposition, were unclear. However, there were three dominant roles that the parties in parliament could play, namely the roles of the ruling party, coalition party, and opposition party. The ruling party's role was played by the party gaining the most votes in a general election. In the 2004 general election, the Golkar Party gained the most votes, although its presidential candidate did not win. Instead, the Democratic Party's presidential candidate, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, was elected president. This configuration made Golkar the most crucial partner trusted by the president to control the parliament. The coalition party played the role of the parties that had jointly nominated a

presidential candidate and would become partners in the parliament and the government during the president's term in office. However, there were some cases in which a party that did not jointly nominate a presidential candidate might join the coalition in the parliament. The role of the opposition party started to exist following the 2004 general election. The opposition role was not fully opposite since the parties were still open to compromise and negotiating in deliberating bills. The opposition role became more effective after the 2014 general election, in which the losing parties firmly chose to be the opposition parties in the parliament. As a result, they had no representatives in the cabinet.

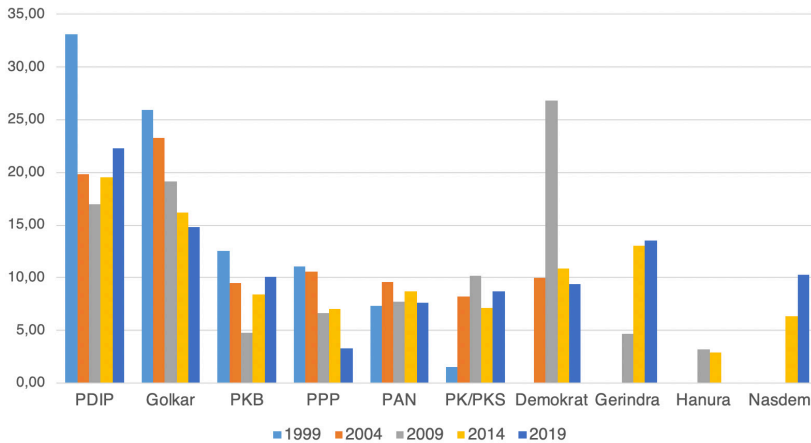
PARTY SURVIVAL IN INDONESIA

In the five general elections since 1999, six parties survived. However, only one party survived in three and four general elections consecutively. Two parties survived in two general elections. The parties that survived in five elections included old parties that had existed since the authoritarian New Order regime, namely PDI, which was later changed to PDIP, the Golkar Party, and PPP. Golkar's vote decreased consistently and consecutively. The three parties founded during the democratic transition period, PKB, PAN, and PK, which later changed its name to PKS, also survived in five elections. These three parties took the Muslim voters, which Golkar and PPP had previously dominated. Other parties experienced a fluctuation in the electoral result. Only PAN was relatively stable (Figure 1).

Parties in Indonesia remain personalistic, with leaders acting as magnets for support. However, Indonesian parties are more institutionalized, and the competition among parties is more stable. Only a few parties have solid social roots and strong networks with civil or religious organizations (Ufen, 2008). For example, the PDIP won the 1999 general election and gained 153 parliamentary seats (33.12 %). One factor contributing to PDIP's win was a perception of Megawati Soekarnoputri as a symbol of resistance against Suharto's regime and the ideological romanticism of the rise of nationalist groups, the legacy of Sukarno—which the New Order regime had oppressed. The ruling party in the

new Order era, Golkar, still had significant support, as shown by the 120 seats they gained (25,97%).

Figure 1: Survived Parties in more than Two General Elections



Source: Badan Pusat Statistik. 2020. "Perolehan Suara dan Kursi DPR Menurut Partai Politik Hasil Pemilu Legislatif 2019."

Despite demands for reform and elimination of previous authoritarian backbone key peoples from power, Golkar, the major party supporting the authoritarian regime, was able to make use of the political infrastructure and resources they had already had for more than 20 years. Dominant parties, before regime change, need to undergo an institutional transformation to improve their adaptive capacity and professionalism related to general elections to respond to changes in the political environment. Golkar carried out such an institutional transformation by branding itself as a new party, not the old one that supported authoritarianism. Although Golkar retains any major Indonesian party's most significant territorial reach, they seek to strengthen their comparative advantage, which stems from their historical role as the New Order regime's electoral vehicle (Tomsa 2018). The party that gained the third most votes, after PDIP and Golkar, was PKB. This party was led by Abdurrahman Wahid and supported by followers of the most prominent Islamic organization in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). The party won 51 parliamentary seats (11.03%).

In the 2004 general election, the number of competing parties decreased by 50%. Twenty-four parties were contesting the election due to the implementation of Law 12/2003 on General Elections, which imposes stricter requirements for party registration. The law allows only parties gaining 2% of the seats in the national parliament or 3% of the provincial or city/regency parliament seats to compete in elections. There were only six parties that met this requirement. The other parties had to merge themselves to form a new party. Of 150 parties registered to KPU approved, only 24 parties. Out of the 24 parties, 11 were contestants of the 1999 general election, and the rest were new parties. All new parties suffered from uneven distribution of their managerial support capacity. Proportionate distribution of support was the bare minimum. Wide networks, sufficient capital to form party management, and solid local patrons to mobilize efforts to attract new members could be afforded by only big parties from the previous regime. Alternatively, new parties with strong national patrons were supported by old elites who had crossed from old parties or new influential.

The vote gained by the Democratic Party, founded by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, a former army general who became a minister in the era of Megawati presidency, in the 2004 election was a surprise. The party gained 55 seats (10%). Meanwhile, the Golkar Party became the winning party with the most votes (21.58%). PKS, in the previous election, also experienced a significant increase. In the 2004 election, the party won 45 seats. This increase was due to PKS's ability to develop grassroots support through Tarbiyah movements and groups. PKS became a party that was independent of central figures to attract support. They relied on networks and effective mobilization of their cadre system.

The 2009 general election had a different arrangement in which the candidates competed not only as political party members but also because of their ability. In the open list PR system, parties could not ensure that their candidates would be elected. The internal competition has gotten tougher after non-party cadre candidates were able to enter the competition considering there were more competing parties

from 24 in 2004 to 38. Almost all the parties that competed in the 2004 general election became contestants in the 2009 election. Meanwhile, the number of new parties was 18. Almost all of them had registered but failed because they could not satisfy the administrative requirements.

Parties that competed in the elections have been classified into three groups. The first group comprises parties that passed the electoral threshold of 2% of the parliamentary seats in the previous election (7 parties). The second group consists of newly established parties that passed the requirements to contest the election (27 parties). The third group comprises parties that did not pass the electoral threshold and did not have seats in the House of Representatives (DPR/the national parliament) but won their lawsuit in the Constitutional Court (*Mahkamah Konstitusi* or MK). In the 2009 general election, the parliamentary threshold of 2.5% started to be implemented. The threshold resulted in only nine parties that secured seats in the parliament.

Interestingly, the Democratic Party became an electoral contestant only twice, but it won the most votes and seats. The party gained 156.7 percent more votes than in the 2004 general election, when it had only 56 seats, to secure 150 seats. The success of the Democratic Party was due to the figure of Yudhoyono and the party's ability to organize religion-based elements and various party organs, which were driven by networks of strong regional figures and civil politicians, excellently coordinated by their central patron. In the following direct presidential election, personal popularity became an essential factor. In the 2009 general election, Islam-based parties gained only 23% of the votes, and figures who represented Islamic organizations were left out (Wanandi 2010; Mujani and Liddle 2010a).

Another intriguing finding is that the number of votes won by Islam-based parties had decreased since the 2004 election when they received 38% of the vote. Although 87% of the Indonesian population are Muslim, four Islam-based parties in the election (PPP, PAN, PKS, and PKB) gained only 30.18% of the votes. Votes that previously had gone to those parties were absorbed well by the Democratic Party, which embraced networks of religious elites. The shift proves that there were

more floating Muslim voters than ideological ones. Observing the vote gained by the Islamic parties for ten years (1999-2009), some scholars argue that most Muslim voters did not regard Islam as a critical factor in their electoral decisions. Religion is only a residual determinant of electoral choice. Other factors, such as preferences over party leaders and evaluations of government performance, offer more compelling explanations (Mujani and Liddle 2010b; Tanuwidjaja 2010; Fossati 2009). For instance, Gerindra and Nasdem could acquire votes in the 2014 and 2019 elections. Generally, parties based on other religions did not have a broad support base. One example is that PDS, the Christian-based party, gained only 1.48% of the votes. Another example is PKDI, a Catholic-based party, which gained only 0.31% of the votes.

The 2014 general election was contested by fewer parties, 11 old parties, and only one new party. The election resulted in 10 parties that were able to send their representatives to the DPR (House of Representatives). The Nasdem Party was the new party that successfully got seats in the DPR when many other parties did not pass the electoral and parliamentary thresholds, which had gotten higher and more challenging. Initially, The Nasdem Party did not emerge directly as a political party. One of its leaders, Surya Paloh, and several other national elites founded a movement called '*Restorasi Indonesia*' (Indonesian Restoration). As a society or mass organization, the movement had civil society power that embraced all groups and was not trapped by sectarian politics. This way, the movement quickly developed networks at the regional levels without significant resistance. After its networks grew robust, the movement transformed into a political party. The transformation resulted in some of its critical networks leaving the organization.

The 2019 general election still implemented the open list PR system. Unlike the previous election, which applied the Hare Quota calculation model, the 2019 election used the Saint League method to convert votes. In the 2019 election, the number of contested seats was expanded to 575. The 575 seats were spread across 80 electoral districts. The number of seats for each electoral district varied between three and 12. PDIP won the most votes, followed by the Gerindra Party, which gained

78 more seats, compared with 73 seats in the previous election. The large number of votes gained by PDIP and Gerindra was significantly influenced by the presidential election, which was held at the same time as the general election. In the presidential election, Joko Widodo was nominated by the PDIP, while Prabowo Subianto was nominated by Gerindra. Because the legislative election was held concurrently with the presidential election, these two parties had an electoral advantage. Intense political polarization in the presidential election gave other parties nominating a presidential candidate an advantage. One such party is Nasdem. The 2019 general election was the second election contested by Nasdem. The party received a significant number of votes in the election, resulting in 59 seats which grew by 69% compared to the previous election.

Given the preceding analysis, the outcome of an electoral system for party survival is part of the external pressures on political party organization. Parties react differently to changes in the electoral system that may benefit or harm them. We discovered compelling evidence that the Indonesian electoral system had a significant impact on the nature of the party system. More parties are produced by permissive rules, such as proportional representation with large district sizes (Hicken and Kuhonta 2011). Election rules that are too permissive will result in party fragmentation, which is associated with higher election volatility. More objective analysis and investigation of the extent to which an electoral system contributes to party survival, however, show that a single variable does not determine the impact of a party's response to survive. This study has proven that party survival is influenced by a combination of two variables. The first variable is the PR system and the votes-to-seat conversion method. In the 1999 general election, the combination of the closed list PR system and the Hare Quota method resulted in more parties getting parliamentary seats, with a tiny absolute difference ratio which resulted in a higher opportunity for parties to survive.

The second variable is district magnitude and the implementation of the parliamentary threshold. This combination shows an effort to simplify the party system. However, it is essential to note that a higher

threshold followed by a higher district magnitude cannot maximize the effort to simplify the party system. This contradiction is explained by Choi (2010), who stated that while the district magnitude and seat winning threshold increased between 1999 and 2009, the number of parties that participated in elections and the number of parties in parliament was also quite large. However, it impacts the decline in the votes of major parties at the district level. The Indonesian cases show that the number of parties in the parliament in the 2009, 2014, and 2019 general elections tended to be stable. However, a simple multiparty system with only four to six parties still could not materialize. The consequence is that, with the Indonesian presidential system, a president who does not have majority support in the parliament may find challenges in proposing bills. A president may also find difficulty in ensuring that their policies run well. Such a condition corresponds with a study that found that in Latin America, the combination of the multiparty and the presidential systems goes against the efforts to create a stable democracy (Mainwaring 1993). However, the effort to simplify the party system has to be followed by reducing the value of the district magnitude.

CONCLUSION

In general, the Indonesian cases show that electoral systems and laws impact party survival, though not as significantly as the impact of each party's internal responses, which have a variety of ways and strategies to adapt to new systems. Despite receiving fewer votes during democratic transition periods, parties from authoritarian regimes such as Golkar and the PPP survived. It was also true of parties founded during the early stages of the democratic transition, such as PKB and PAN, which had a traditional constituency rooted in religious organizations. Other parties that did not have such a strong base did not benefit from the changes in the electoral system. Although they were able to compete in every general election, they did not receive a large number of votes. They could not gain parliamentary seats due to a lack of votes, exacerbated by systemic obstacles. This study, in particular, provides an opportunity to investigate various reciprocal variables between external

pressure through electoral systems and political parties' internal capacity to ensure their survival in every round of the election.

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