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# POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR IN INDONESIA

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## ABSTRACT

Since Indonesian people has entered the 1998 reformation era, public involvement has been encouraged to actively participate in national development, including political development. As an activity in political field, political participation is differentiated into active and passive participation. The political participation involve initiatives to propose public policy, criticism and improvement on policy correction, to pay tax, and to choose government leaders. The passive participation includes activities to comply with the government, to accept and to implement any governmental decisions. In addition to both types of political participation, several groups of community members have been excluded from both active and passive political participation as well; and they refer themselves as the apathetic group or golongan putih/golput (white group/abstention). In their political participation, some citizens have been found to commit violent behavior. Violent behavior is an action that individual or group attempts to influence government's decision by committing physical both on human being and materials. Various concept related to violent behavior in Indonesia has been frequently considered as the New Order's heritage and the weak control of the state during the reformation period. The effectiveness of political education in Indonesia, therefore, should be encouraged to make citizens are able to improve their political participation that is consistent with Pancasila (Five Principle) as the nation's soul and personality bangsa Pancasila.

Keywords: political participation, violent behavior, and political education

## INTRODUCTION

The studies on problems related to political have long been conducted; even since the Ancient Greece days around the fourth century BC. At that time, Aristotle states that humans are political beings (*zoon politicon*). As political entity, human beings will have political inter-dependence, inter-relationship, and mutual influence due to the realization of togetherness will create a medium to achieve the stated goals. In the life as community members and citizens, hence, each individual is always related to politics in the broad sense. Community as a group of individuals have expectations and goals to achieve. To this end, the norms regulating various shared-activities that from time to time should be enforced among the society. The efforts of enforcing these norms require government agencies having the authority or sovereignty to secure that the norms can be complied with. The various elements aforementioned are integrated and related to the politics. Hence, the community living within turns out to be a group of individuals inseparable from political issues.

Basically, politics turn out to be various activities within a political system or state, concerning the process of system's goal setting and objective implementation (Budiardjo, 2003). The goal setting activity becomes a selection process on various alternatives and priorities. Implementation activity concerns with deciding public policies in the form of setting and allocating resources available in the community. Meanwhile, to implement the public policies, a power is required to enforce norms, establish cooperation, and resolve the emerging conflicts and violence. In the political life framework, social interaction among individuals, both vertically or horizontally is found in the community. Some orders are made, and they are complied with by other parties. However, some other decisions are also made, and complied with, or even rejected by others. This shows a great number of behaviors having mutual relationship that institutions and individuals perform.

Political behavior is defined as activities related to the process of political decision-making and implementation (Surbakti, 1999). The interaction of the government and society, among political institutions, and between groups and individuals in the community in order to make, implement and enforce political decisions, basically turns out to be political behavior. Political behavior is a reflection of the political culture in a society full with various characters and various forms of groups with a wide range of behaviors. Political behavior is not determined by a temporary situation; however, it has a general-oriented pattern which is clearly visible as the reflection of a political culture often referred to as political civilization. Political behavior, therefore, develops based on a deep awareness on the political system taking place in a state.

In line with the proposed title, the interesting problems to study involve (1) political participation, (2) violent behavior, and (3) political participation and violent behavior in Indonesia.

## POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In a country with democracy as the ideology, political participation is highly important aspect with political modernization as its character. In countries with its relatively traditional community life and with its political leadership that is determined by the ruling elite class, the citizens' participation in influencing decision-making and affecting the life of the nation is relatively very low and even has tended to be underestimated in political process. Meanwhile, in countries with better implementation of political modernization process, the political participation level of their citizens is likely to improve.

According to Sastroatmojo (2001) modernization may be associated with political and government aspects including the modernization of law, administration development, national ideology, social and political development, political integration, development distribution, and political participation. Budiardjo (2003) states that political participation includes all activities through which an individual performs voluntary participation in electoral process and political leaders, and also have direct or indirect participation in determining government policy. Huntington and Nelson (2001) also confirm that political participation concerns with activities that citizens undertake to be involved in decision-making process to influence decision-making by the government. Such activities is both legally and illegally conducted, and whether it is successful or not.

The definition of political participation as Huntington and Nelson state involve the following: (a) political participation includes activities related to political actions; (b) political participation is carried out by ordinary citizens and not by government officials; (c) political participation activities are intended to influence government decision-making. Such activities can be either induce or suppress the efforts of government officials to cancel the decisions, or to push government provide more attention to their expectations. This kind of political participation includes actions trying to influence government policy, even though it is legally or illegally performed. Therefore, activities such as demonstrations, protests, violence, riots, and even the forms of violence and rebellion to influence government policy may be referred as political participation; (d) political participation also includes all activities designed to influence government's actions regardless its effectiveness and success; (e) political participation is directly carried out by the perpetrator himself or herself, or it is indirectly performed through intermediaries, i.e. those considered with competences to be able to channel their aspirations.

A similar opinion is expressed by Almond (in Mas'od and MacAndrew (1999)) proposing that political participation can be conventional political activities, i.e. the normal form of political participation in a modern democracy. Those included in this kind of conventional political participation involve activities to give vote, political discussions, campaigns, establishing and participating in interest groups, and individual communication with the political and administrative officials. Non-conventional political participation include the petition filing, demonstrations, confrontations, strikes, political violence against properties (mass riot, vandalism, arson, bombing), political violence against humans (kidnapping and assassination), guerrilla warfare, and revolution.

As an activity in political field, political participation is differentiated into active and passive participation. The political participation involve initiatives to propose public policy, alternatives for public policy that government makes, to propose criticism and improvement on policy correction, to pay tax, and to choose government leaders. Passive participation includes activities to comply with the government, to accept and to implement any governmental decisions. In addition to both types of political participation, several groups of community members have been excluded from both active and passive political participation as well; and they refer themselves as the apathetic group or *golongan putih/golput* (white group/abstention).

Milbrarh and Goel (1997) distinguishes political participation into four categories, namely (a) apathy, meaning that those who do not participate and who exclude from the political process, (b) spectator, meaning that those who at least people have given their votes in general election, (c) gladiator, i.e. those who are actively involved in political process, such as party activists, campaign workers, and community activists, and (d) critics, i.e. those involved in non-conventional participation. Besides, political participation may also be categorized based on the number of perpetrators; and hence, there are individual and collective political participation.

Various types of activities included in the political participation as Huntington and Nelson (2001) propose are the activities of performing election, lobbying, organizing, looking for connections, and performing violent behavior. Election activities include giving votes, performing aids for campaigns, working in election, proselytize on behalf of a candidate, or any other actions planned to influence the outcomes of the election process. Lobbying consists of efforts that individuals or groups undertake to contact government officials and political leaders to influence their decisions on issues that affect a number of people. Organizational activities involve participation as a member or officer of organization with the main purpose, i.e. to influence government decision-making. What is meant by establishing connection refers to

individual action addressed to government officials and usually designed to be beneficial for a person or a small group of people. Violence or violent behavior is an act that individual or group attempts to influence government's decision-making by perpetrating physical damages to both humans and properties.

## **VIOLENT BEHAVIOR**

### **Definition of violent behavior**

Violence is one of the most dangerous structural crimes. According to Haryatmoko (2003) violence which is difficult to expose psychological violence used in social and political system. Systematically, this kind of violence is typically applied by authoritarian rulers to deal with their political opponents, to make their opposition weakened, and the like. It is related to violence that state performs or institutionalized violence. It is referred as institutionalized violence because it does not automatically occur; rather, it is supported by social and political building system with legitimacy established by the system of values and ideologies.

In the third world countries, in general, this institutionalized violence results in casualties, such as minority group and oppositions. Those considered as enemies by the state refer to the groups with political view different from that of the ruler's; hence, it will systematically become the victims of this violence. Violence as a means to enforce penalties for the violators of power or social order has undergone shifting in meaning as violence becomes an instrument to sustain power maintenance. Therefore, the violence that should not be made against the ruling, then, will be allowed to do against civilians and against political opponents of the ruling.

In structural violence, there are dialectics between perpetrator and structure. Rulers tend to perform on behalf of the law and the order to legitimize their violent behaviors. While the oppositions can also do violence as the reaction against their disagreement to the policy of the ruler. In addition, there are also groups state that the available system is unfair, and hence, changes should be performed, and violence perpetrated for the sake of change, then, is unavoidable. Actually a violence will begets another violence; hence, when the violence considered as being capable to stop the opponent, but in essence, it just prolongs the emergence of violence as a reaction.

Francois Chirpaz (in Haryatmoko, 2003) defines violence as such a power and with no rule in such a way that hit and both soul and body; it also causes death either by separating human from life or destroying the basis of life. Through suffering or misery they cause, violence appears as a representation of evil that human being suffers from, but it can also conduct on others. Human being can become victim, but at the same time it is also possible that he is also able to carry out violence causing others as victims. Any violence may create another new violence. It means that when an individual performs violence, then he or she will not be escapable from such a violence.

Hitherto, other experts have not shared common opinion on the definition of violence or violent behavior yet. This is understandable because in formulating violent behavior they adopt dissimilar approaches, orientations, and different focus. Lore and Schults (2001) equate the term violence with aggression, i.e. to describe destructive behavior that is difficult to control, behavior harmful for himself and for others ranging from mild- to serious-level violence, including murder, verbal threat, and willing to commit suicide. A similar opinion is expressed by Roark (2003) stating that violent behavior does not only consist of physical actions, but also verbal abuse, psychological, and symbolical violence, or the combination of these aspects. Those considered as verbal abuse are humiliating verbal expressions; psychological violence involve attitudes that do not acknowledge the equality of rights and human rights, while the symbolic violence are in the form of actions causing fear and hostility.

Berkowitz (1999) defines violent behavior as behaviors that may either physically, psychological, and socially harm others. Quite similar definition has been also given by Acher and Brown (Semin & Fiedler in 1996) that violence is a special form of aggressive behavior that tends to be physical attacks which cannot be socially legitimized. Beckmore and Iglitzin as quoted by Roark (2003) provides definition on violent behavior, i.e. specific form of aggressive behavior, which is an action to attack, hurt, or harm another person or certain object, that causes physical, psychological, or mental injuries. Gilligan (1997) asserts that threat frequently requires much more psychical attention than physical violence. Meanwhile, Suryabrata (2000) gives a definition on behavior as an action causing pains, damages, hazards, and other destructive actions that may harm others or themselves. This opinion has been supported by Bushman and Bauneister (1998) which states that violence is behaviors which physically, psychologically, socially put threats or negative impacts on personal integrity, objects, and environments.

### **Theory of Violent Behavior**

Violent behavior can be explained by adopting some theories. According to Allen et al (1997), various theories include (1) social learning theory, (2) instinct theory, (3) personality theory, (4) cognitive theory, and (5) frustration-aggression theory.

#### Social Learning Theory

According to Bandura (in Talib, 2003) the behavior of individuals, in general, is observationally studied through models, i.e. to observe how a new behavior is formed, and then it becomes an important information in guiding the behavior. Most of individual behavior is produced as a result of learning through observation on the behavior that other individuals as model indicate. However, the motivation of individuals to imitate violent behavior displayed by the model will be stronger when the model show his or her fascination, and the violence perpetrated does not cause a negative impact.

Social learning theory is widely applied in assessing violent behavior. Violent behavior is learned through experience and observation. The example of demonstration behavior that is followed by an anarchic action may be a model for the violent behavior of the demonstrators. This social learning theory is also not free from weaknesses in explaining violent behavior. Among the criticisms on this theory, some limitations have been found in explaining violent behavior due to individual differences, including personality factors and differences in learning ability. Hence, not all people who directly witness and experience the violent behavior will also automatically perform violence due to individual differences in facing violent behavior, such as the ability to control himself.

#### Instinct Theory

Suryabrata (2000) proposes that Freud's theory on instincts often invite controversy. This theory asserts that the emergence of violent behavior is due to instinct, i.e. psychological manifestations of a source of inborn inner somatic stimuli; hence, all people have a tendency to perpetrate violence. Previously Freud states that violent behavior is closely related to libido energy when this sexual instinct is restrained; then, violent behavior will emerge. Furthermore, Freud states the dichotomy between positive energy and destructive energy, that are both considered as having basic biologicistic which should be manifested in real behavior. When the destructive energy leads to external party, then it triggers such a violent behavior on others. Meanwhile, when it leads to him-/her-self, it may drive to commit self-harm or even suicidal behavior.

This instinct theory has been criticized by McDougal (in Hewstone et al, 1996) with the argument that it is not true when instinct provides absolute effect on violent behavior. Violent behavior, of course, may be innate; but, the expression of the real behavior is heavily influenced by various non genetic factors. Given human being is a creature of culture, then violent behavior is not only driven by innate factors, but also influenced by environmental factors. Freud provides less attention on this environmental factors.

#### Theories of Personality

Ravinus and Larimer (2003) suggested that personality traits as internal properties related to violent behavior including internal control erosion on quick-tempered attitude. According to Thomas and Chiss (1997) children with disorders of quick-tempered and easily attack behavior tend to develop a pattern of violent behavior in the next age. Therefore, temperament factor that is part of the personality component associated with violent behavior. The role of aggressiveness stability indicates that the individual personality affect the tendency of performing violent behavior.

Megargee as quoted by Baron (1997) suggests one of personality trait, i.e. undercontrolled aggressive personality that violence perpetrator has. Someone belong to undercontrolled aggressive typology has weak internal restraint, so he or she tends to perpetrate violence only caused by less strong stimuli. This suggests that undercontrolled aggressive person tends to commit more serious violence compared to the overcontrolled aggressive ones. The personality variable, hence, has correlation to violent behavior. This theory has a weakness since in explaining violent behavior the external factors are not considered.

#### Cognitive Theory

The basic concept of cognitive theory as proposed by Bordwell (in Talib, 2003) refers to the mental activity that cannot be changed simply in explaining social behavior with real postulates such as perceptions, thoughts, intentions, plans, skills, and feelings. Social cognitive theory emphasizes the importance of reciprocal interaction of individual factors as determinants of violent behavior.

The tendency of violent behavior can be explained by referring to cognitive theory. Knowledge and experiences related to violence, as seeing protests showing violence, watching film on violence and straightly experiencing and perceive behavior associated with violent behavior will provide direct effect on violent behavior.

### Frustration-Aggression Theory

Frustration refers to a situation when a person cannot have something expected at the time the person really needs it. Dollard et al, as Wimbari (1996) cites, believes that each cause of aggressive and violent action can be ultimately traced in its relation to frustration. Frustration becomes one of the aggression and violence determinants. The availability of restraint to achieve the expected goals can cause emotional drive to aggression. Tendency to hurt others due to frustration depends on the satisfaction level expected, the failure to achieve satisfaction, and how often the restraint someone has in achieving his or her goal.

This theory is also not free from criticism when frustration does not always led to aggression and violent behavior. Frustration does not always lead to aggression, and aggression is not always preceded by frustration. Berkowitz (in Thalib, 2003) confirms that frustration triggers preparedness to perpetrate aggressive action since the individual is in the situation of angry due to frustration. Whether someone will perform aggressive action or not depend on the presence of aggressive cues triggering an actual occurrence of aggressive behavior. Therefore, frustration is only one factor influencing aggression and violence behavior in addition to other factors.

### **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VIOLENCE IN INDONESIA BEHAVIOR**

Cribb (2005) proposes that the problem of violence suddenly enter into the analysis agenda of Indonesian political life in the mid-1990s. Previously, researchers considered that the New Order was built on *keberhasilan* (principle-based), anti-communism, strict in facing those with different opinions, and oppressive in encountering rebellions. According to Liddle (1995) violence is one of the three pillars that support the New Order regime in addition to economic performance and ideological manipulation. The New Order exploited violent action to impose its will when the use of phrase to persuade citizens in complying with the rule was failed. Numerous debates emerged on how far the three elements aforementioned, i.e. violence, economic performance, and ideological manipulation were considered as significant to maintain the power of the New Order. In spite of differences in opinion concerning to what extent the New Order depended on violence, in general, there is common ground that violence is balanced with what is required to maintain the power of the New Order.

During the rule of New Order review on politics was less frequently conducted, i.e. the possibility of regime with tendency of becoming authoritarian turns out to contribute to social order since it can reduce violence found in the society. According to Cribb (2005), this is based on two points: (1) since the colonial times there has been opinion stating that that internally the traditional Indonesian society is a peaceful one. The Netherlands also has described Javanese as the most mild people on earth; (2) the development of the idea that the New Order was a social peace power as opposed to the massive atrocity that the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) members committed in 1965. Even at the beginning of the Order New, a slogan appeared that there was no politics, no ideology, and only economic development existed. This was in contrast with the Old Order prioritizing political life. During the Old Order era, an expression stating that *politik sebagai panglima* (politics as the "commander") emerged. It showed that for the sake of political interest all aspects of life of the nation could be subordinated. Meanwhile, the New Order provided more emphasis and focus on economic development to improve its people welfare.

The violent behavior in Indonesia with mechanisms and attempts to resolve the conflict has a long history. Various concepts related to violent behavior, terrible conflicts are frequently regarded as the heritages of the New Order, and the state's weak control during reformation era. However, when it is traced back, such a behavior of power was identified during the colonial period. At that time the perpetrators frequently hired bodyguard groups to intimidate political opponents to conduct demonstrations. Javanese aristocrats also encouraged the establishment of neighborhood security guard groups. During independence era, such a violent behavior was also identified in the Old Order regime and it was culminated during the New Order (Colombijn, 2005).

Riots at football fields, student brawl, fight among community members, mass riots, tribal and religious disputes have been found since the early if 20<sup>th</sup> century (Dick, 2002). Furthermore, violent behavior during general and local elections, particularly during political campaigns and after the defeats of the party or candidate, demonstrations ended with anarchic action, clashes between groups accepting and refusing to a policy, violent behavior during trials both in legislative and judicial institutions, and various other violent events have become a common phenomenon during the reformation era.

According to Klinken (2005), violent behavior in Indonesia even has been flowering when this nation entered reformation era. Even the list of violent behavior in this reformation era turns out to be longer than the previous time. Disputes in East Timor, Papua and Aceh become the conflict against the State

which producing a great number of violent behaviors after the New Order era. In addition, violent behaviors in various areas including (a) Poso, Central Sulawesi (1998-2001), (b) Ambon and South Maluku (1999-2002), (c) West Kalimantan (1999-2001), (d) North Maluku (1999-2001), and Central Kalimantan (2001).

#### Violent behavior in Poso

Unrests and violence in Poso coincided with the political shift in Poso district when the Poso district head said that he would not participate in the next election. Really, both the incumbent and the next candidates were not those who considered religion as the problem; however, the lobby groups of each party gathered supports and eventually brought the religion issue. As other cities in Indonesia, Poso has also many religious organizations, but with weak political infrastructure. These ultimately have served as the outbreak of violent behavior and riots in Poso, Central Sulawesi.

#### Violent Behavior in Ambon

Violence in Ambon showed various similarities with those found in Poso. Perception on the threat and opportunity for people of faith from the control of the State was identified. General election was interpreted as a mobilization that political elites conduct in the life of the state. The schedule of the 1999 general election just started in December 1998, so that shorter time than usual was found. In this very relatively short period, political parties struggled to establish power and gather support. As they previously did, political parties exploited religious organizations to gather support before election period. In seeking support through mass mobilization such unrest and violent behavior exploded in Ambon.

#### Violent behavior in North Maluku

Understanding violent behavior in North Maluku cannot be conducted with no reference on the competition on who would be the governor of new North Maluku province in September 1999. In its course, it took time until October 2002 after the North Maluku led by Acting Governor appointed by Central Government. Hence, the people of North Maluku came into agreement to perform governor election with the candidates coming from their own people. Violent behavior and riots started ahead the governor election and it prolonged under the strict surveillance of the Central Government.

#### Violent behavior in West Kalimantan

Economic development in West Kalimantan had caused increasing perception on the segmentation and marginalization of Dayak community. Trading in rural area was controlled by Chinese ethnicity; agricultural land was taken over by transmigrants and employers from outside area, and a greater number of bureaucratic officials came from other areas. In similar, the expectation of some people to make improvement as the discourse of the New Order regime had not come true yet. Such conditions increasingly marginalized the position of Dayak people and triggered the sentiment of suffering from similar fate strengthening the tribal sentiment. This was evident in the behavior patterns of violence erupted in the early of 1997. The violent behavior and spontaneous riots was conducted to protect the dignity of the Dayaks.

#### Violent behavior in Central Kalimantan

In this episode of political conflict, a process that can be usually identified concerned with the establishment of new political actors. Violent behavior found in Central Kalimantan in February 2001 introduced the actors that were previously unorganized or apolitical in the process of civil conflicts (McAdam et al, 2001). Dayak people who had never viewed as political actors since the modest success of the Dayak Party in elections of 1955, suddenly became the sole perpetrators that were able to expel almost all the Madurese from this region. The Dayak elite mostly lived in Palangkaraya and Sampit developed a slogan that they were masters in their own land and other parties should recognize it through cultural assimilation method. They borrowed a Malay proverb "*dimana bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung*" ("Wherever earth is stepped upon, there is where the sky is held high." to fight against the Madurese migrants considered as not performing cultural assimilation. In bureaucratic term, the slogan was equivalent to a term existing in the Law on Local Government, i.e. "that local officials should have understanding the local people and also should be recognized by the local people". They also stated another term that was narrowly interpreted, i.e. "*putra daerah*" (people from local area) and it was local term of *pribumi* (indigenous people) or *bumiputra* (natives)



## CONCLUSION

Political participation is the participation that citizens carry out in political field. It can be "conventional" and "non-conventional". The conventional refers to the normal form of political participation in a modern democracy. Those included in this kind of conventional political participation involve to give votes, to held political discussions, to perform campaigns, to establish and participate in interest groups, and individual communication with the political and administrative officials. Non-conventional political participation include petition filing, demonstrations, confrontations, strikes, political violences against properties (mass riot, vandalism, arson, bombing), political violences against humans (kidnapping and assassination), guerrilla warfare, and revolution.

The transition into a more democratic life after the New Order era caused deaths and material losses. Violent behavior identified in several areas in Indonesia, particularly has concerned with political transition; hence, increasing political participation of the citizens is consistent with the changes in the political life of the New Order to Reformation Eras. Violent behaviors occurred in Poso and Central Kalimantan, North Maluku and West Kalimantan, can be considered as the forms of political violence; and there are similarities with violent behaviors occurred and accompanying the previous transition period, i.e. the transition from the Old Order to the New Order era, rebellions signifying the beginning of Guided Democracy era, and the 1945 Revolution era to achieve independence, even with its different characteristics.

Violent behavior is a phenomenon that dominates political participation in Indonesia. Almost every time clashes have been identified between those supporting and rejecting government policies; also, demonstrations to express aspirations have also been widespread found and ended with clashes against officers with anarchic action. Even violent behavior also entered the legislative room at central and local levels as well as in the judiciary court room.

When it is associated with philosophy of life of Indonesian people, actually, violent behaviors recently flowering do not have root in the culture of the nation since Indonesian has a personality that is consistent with the values of *Pancasila* (Five Principles). This philosophy of life prioritizes togetherness, congenial spirit, mutual cooperation, mutual assistance, tolerance, *tepo seliro* (reciprocity), warm-hearted, forgiving, deliberation and consensus, unity and integrity, love of the homeland, and tolerance become the personality characteristics that is appropriate and rooted in Indonesian culture.

Increasing political participation of citizens should be sustainably pursued with no violent behavior. Various measures can be conducted by using political education through the family, educational institutions, mass media, peer groups, and political organizations. In addition, reposition and re-functionalization of educational institutions should be carried out. It is not only to be able in playing a role in the development of science, technology, and art, but it is also capable to cultivate cultural values that is consistent with the personality of the Indonesian people.

Political education in Indonesia refers to education aimed at realizing a high political awareness of the citizens; hence, they will be aware of their rights and obligations in the life of the people and of the nation, including awareness to exercise their voting rights in the election based on *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution. To this end, the subjects of *Pancasila* Education, Civics Education, Social Studies Education turn out to be the group of subjects with such a mission.

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