



The Rivalry of Retired Soldier in the 2019 Indonesian Election

Eko Cahyono

Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung, Indonesia
ekekocahyono6632@gmail.com

Kamila Suci Cahyani

Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung, Indonesia
kamilasc36@gmail.com

Muhamad Alvin Fadillah

Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung, Indonesia
muhhamadalvinjr8@gmail.com

Yunita Dwi Alfiani

Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung, Indonesia
yunitaalfiani15@gmail.com

Received: 3 Juli 2022 | Accepted: 11 Agustus 2022 | Published: 30 December 2022

Abstract

The role of retired TNI officers in Indonesian politics is very significant, especially during the New Order era, when they had considerable influence in political and electoral processes. Competition between retired officers can influence election results, as shown by the conflict between the "Red and White" and "Cendana" groups during the 1987 and 1992 elections. In general, however, retired TNI officers still supported the New Order government and did not significantly affect the election results. After the Reformation era, many military retirees entered the world of politics and government, but competition between them became a complex problem. The government and related institutions are trying to address this problem by promoting communication and cooperation among retired military officers and educating them about democratic values and human rights. Many retired generals, such as Suharto, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Wiranto, and Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, have played important roles in Indonesian politics as politicians. However, their involvement in politics can lead to competition and conflict, especially since they are often divided into opposing camps in the political arena.

Keywords: *Rivalry, Retired Soldier, Elections, Politics*

1. INTRODUCTION

Judging from the history of the Indonesian military, the birth, and establishment of the Indonesian military were not part of an effort by civilian political forces. However, the Indonesian Army was born from the lap of the revolution. We quote the words of the Commander-in-Chief, General Soedirman, who said: "The army was formed to liberate Indonesia from the threat of Dutch imperialism and colonialism." As the armed forces, the military leadership at that time not only actively defended the country from the Dutch threat during the first and second invasions of 1948-1949, but effectively took over the government. This involvement continues when the state is faced with rebellion



(subversion). This shows that the Indonesian army is equal to civilian politicians or even higher than civilian political authorities in the context of "loyalty to the state".

It is known that the military is almost everywhere in the world pushing for the consolidation of democracy. The military in Indonesia in its political history apart from its role in the independence process also had an impact on the process of strengthening the obstacles to political power in Indonesia. It has been proven since the Indonesian reform movement in 1998 pushed for a change in the role of the military in politics, in the form of internal military reform in 1999 Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI reform). Through this reform, there was a process of withdrawing military institutions from politics. The most obvious form is the abolition of the dual role of the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI).

The TNI's 39 or 40 years of service as a state power not only serves to maintain the integrity of the country but also is implicitly maximized in political disputes at the local and central levels. It can be interpreted that retired generals are individuals or groups who can be called to democracy through elections or other issues. The political role of the military was so clear and important that it is fair to say that the most striking feature of this period was the dualism of leadership, ie. H. military and politics. The process of independence and post-independence. The participation of retired TNI officials is nothing new, as evidenced by a large number of candidates for Legislative and Executive Members who have TNI/retired backgrounds.

2. METHODS

To describe what retired officers' rivalry is like in the world of politics, this paper uses a case study approach (case study). Operationally, the case study approach conducts an empirical investigation of a phenomenon (or case) in depth and contextually (Yin, 2014, 16). Its main objective is to provide a qualitative explanation of a social phenomenon (case) according to the theoretical propositions formulated (George and Bennet 2005; Gerring 2007). The data collection technique in this study was a literature study. The data collected is in the form of previous research results related to the topic.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Elections in the New Order Era

During the New Order era, general elections were held in 1971, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, and 1997 based on Pancasila. Where all policies taken must be based on the lessons learned from the failures during the Soekarno government, for example, policies that coincided with partyism such as the simplification of political parties and the use of Pancasila to create a good government. To realize stable economic development, the steps taken by the New Order government have led to an authoritarian attitude and have indirectly deviated from Indonesian democracy.

General elections during the new order have been carried out 6 times and general elections have been successfully carried out periodically, namely once every 5 (five) years, except in 1977. The periodic holding of valid general elections is an extraordinary achievement. This can increase the



high level of participation in each general election, where almost 90% of people vote in the general election. However, the periodicity of general elections and the high level of participation have a weakness.

In general, the implementation of general elections during the New Order era can be said that political power is in the hands of the authorities, meaning that the authorities are dominated by the power of Golkar as the winning party in every election during the New Order period. This is because Golkar has always played the role of the majority voice supported by the public, both from the Armed Forces, civil servants, and the self-governing regime, namely Golongan Karya, which always tries to remain the winner in every general election. Elections during the new order were always decorated with clashes between government officials and the people. In the New Order elections, the participation of the people in legitimizing the implementation of general elections was still very low because the state dominated the legitimacy of the implementation of elections assisted by the military. Because of this, fraudulent fraud can occur during elections carried out by 3 forces, namely the bureaucracy, Golkar, and the army where political violence by the authorities is a major problem in society.

The implementation of general elections during the New Order era was not a good tool for counting the people's votes, this was not because the New Order elections were carried out through a process that had been centralized in bureaucratic institutions. Where the bureaucratic institution not only regulates almost the entire election process but can also manipulate the victory for the government's political party, namely the Golongan Karya. In every general election, competition is kept to a minimum, and freedom and diversity of views are not allowed. At that time the general election was more focused on a concept that could create national stability by combining common interests to support national development and emphasized more freedom to narrow the space for differences in society which could lead to division or disintegration.

New Order Era Military

At the beginning of the establishment of the New Order regime, the TNI had played a very important role in a power that, according to some Western political observers, was a military dictatorship. High-ranking military officers, especially in the Army (Army) have held key positions in the cabinet and at the top level of the bureaucracy, and have been awarded 20% of seats in the DPR. The New Order, which was supported by the military, was terrible with national disintegration and political stability which could hinder the government's plan to carry out economic development. At that time the New Order also carried out a broad suppression and restriction of people's direct political participation. National cooperation with various societal forces, as well as various economic and political rules during the New Order era also occurred with the threat and repressive political policies of the military group, which took refuge behind the jargon of national stability and security.

Richard Tante said that during the New Order era, the political actualization of society was suppressed in the shadow of enormous military power, especially through intelligence practices. Within this framework, Tante then mentioned the New Order as a government that ran the model of a "rental military state". As a political army, ABRI has the characteristics popularized by Finer and Janowitz, namely: Where the military systematically develops a very close relationship with the history of the nation's development and the direction of the country's evolution. This is done by



combining the principles of historical rights (birthright principle) and the competency principle. It is with these two basic principles that ABRI/TNI creates its social and political roles.

The principle of historical rights according to ABRI/TNI has always been based on a historical interpretation that the military has played an important role in the history of the formation of the Indonesian nation and has also made enormous sacrifices in forming and maintaining the country. The history of the origins and the initial role of the military has formed a tradition and a set of values. Then the principle of competence is always based on the idea that the military is the best institution owned by the state to defend and achieve a nation's national interests.

The main factor for the military group that can be evaluated during the New Order era was the existence of a discourse about the inability of civilian institutions to manage a country, which was marked by the outbreak of various national crises. From these principles of rights that were combined by ABRI, in the end, ABRI was transformed as a socio-political force that greatly contributed to carrying out the direction and policies of the state. The New Order's military politics was a continuous phase of the political role of the military during the Old Order. As during the Old Order, the military during the New Order continued to do its best to consolidate and strengthen its position and political role in the life of the nation and state. The military during the New Order era wanted to order conditions that were stable and good from a political, ideological, and societal perspective.

Several factors cause the military to play a very important role in the socio-political field. First, the military has a duty as the savior of the country because the military itself is formed as a means of national defense. And have a higher sense of nationalism. However, it is very regrettable that the military monopoly of forces is not always spelled out permanently in the field because it is often misinterpreted by its members. Second, the military also positions itself as the protector of national interests. Third, the military identifies itself as a stabilizer of the state, which can be interpreted if the military takes over political power, it is always accompanied by a statement that the takeover is temporary until stability and public order are fulfilled, and lastly, fourth, the military identifies itself as the protector of public freedoms.

The military in the New Order era positioned itself as the guardian of the integrity of the nation and state, safeguarding the course of development, as well as protecting state security and order, the guardian of the single ideology of Pancasila, and as the dynamics of development. In the New Order era, political actions carried out by the military group were only to develop common interests that could go beyond the interests of the military group and oppose class interests represented by the communist group. This is because ABRI/TNI-AD's main objectives are national stability and national economic development.

Retirement Reality

In the New Order era, rivalries between retired military officers could influence the general election process. At the time, retired military officers often wielded considerable influence in politics and elections, either directly or indirectly. One example of the rivalry of retired military officers in the general elections during the New Order era was the dispute between the "Red and White" and "Cendana" groups. The "Red and White" group was led by former ABRI commander General Try



Sutrisno and consisted of several retired military officers who had little ties to the New Order government. Meanwhile, the "Cendana" group was led by Suharto and supported the New Order government. The rivalry between the two groups mainly occurred in the 1987 and 1992 general elections. The "Red and White" group nominated several candidates in several regions, but they failed to achieve a significant victory. After the 1992 general elections, several retired officers who were members of the "Red and White" group experienced dismissals or demotions by the New Order government. However, despite the rivalry among retired military officers, in general, they continued to support the New Order government and did not significantly influence the election results. The New Order government often used military force to suppress political opposition and ensure victory in general elections. Before the 1999 TNI Reform, the active TNI could have two positions in the government at the same time (*dwifungsi abri*) but after that, the role of the active army in politics had run out. So when members of the TNI want to enter politics, they have to wait for retirement after a service period of around 40 years. After becoming a retired officers, TNI retirees can nominate themselves to become practical politicians (Arsyad et al., 2019)

In Indonesia, during the reform era, rivalry among retired military officers became an important problem. This relates to the military's role in Indonesian politics and governance during the previous decades. After the reform, many retired military officers became involved in politics and government. However, the existence of competition between them becomes a complex problem. This competition is related to differences in background and experience in the military. In addition, the existence of competition for position and power within the government exacerbates the situation and sometimes triggers serious conflicts between them. Nonetheless, the government and related institutions are trying to overcome this problem by increasing communication and cooperation among retired military officers, as well as providing education about democratic values and human rights (Efriza, 2014).

At least it can be analyzed that there are two motives when retired military generals enter the practical political scene, First, as an effort to control the government through the democratic mechanism and second consolidation efforts in upholding democracy itself. One example that is still relatively current in the competition for retired officers in the world of politics is during the 2019 presidential election battle between Jokowi and Prabowo. In 2019, Indonesia held a direct presidential election. This activity, which is held every 5 years, brings together two presidential candidates: Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto, a retired general and chairman of the Gerindra party. Prabowo is a member of the military who is quite respected. With the view that members of the military fit in the seat of government leadership. Prabowo is a strong candidate. On the other hand, Joko Widodo is unique in the Indonesian political scene because he does not come from the military or a party family. Despite that, Joko Widodo's popularity continued to grow rapidly before he was elected president in 2014 due to his political image as a person close to the people. little people (Los, n.d.).

Since the New Order era, the influence of Indonesian National Armed Forces figures has been enormous in determining the decisions that will be taken by the state. Before the 1999 TNI Reform, the active TNI could have two positions in the government at the same time (*dwifungsi abri*) but after that, the role of the active army in politics had run out. So when members of the TNI want to enter politics, they have to wait for retirement after a service period of around 40 years. After becoming a retired officers, TNI retirees can nominate themselves to become practical politicians. There are



countless examples of retired generals who have crossed paths in the Indonesian political scene, mentioning the names of retired officers such as Suharto, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Wiranto, to Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan who played a strong role in running the wheels of government in their respective eras as politicians. practical.

In politics that are close to power, policymakers who regulate production, distribution, and use of resources to achieve the desired goals will always be decorated with differences of opinion, resistance, and conflict, especially in a democratic country like Indonesia (Arsyad et al., 2019). Like two sides of a knife, the plunge of retired officers into the political scene will certainly place them on two different sides, the government or the opposition, Party A or Party B, and other schemes that place each in the position of friend or foe. This situation can be one of the triggers to create conditions of "competition" or "rivalry" between retirees in the national political scene.

At least it can be analyzed that there are two motives when retired military generals enter the practical political scene, First, as an effort to control the government through the democratic mechanism and second consolidation efforts in upholding democracy itself(Arsyad et al., 2019). One example that is still relatively current in the competition for retired officers in the world of politics is during the 2019 presidential election battle between Jokowi and Prabowo. However, what is highlighted in this paper is not one of the candidates who is a retired officer, but the role of the two success teams which involve retired officers in achieving their political goals.

In the table, it can be seen that in the contestation towards RI 1, the influence of the Retired Generals of the TNI still has a major influence in becoming an election-winning strategy. Even though they are retired, retired officers still influence the network of military, logistics, and politics. During the 2019 presidential election, which only had two presidential candidates, the contestation between retired officers who supported each presidential candidate was increasingly visible due to dualism.

Development and Relation to Elections in the New Order Period

In the transfer of power from Soekarno to Suharto, of course, there have been many changes in several sectors, one of the sectors that underwent changes that occurred during the Soeharto era was the role and function of the military. During the Soeharto era, the role and function of the military itself were very privileged. Involve and also involve the military in several series and also activities in both the civil and military spheres. The privilege of the military during the New Order era, which is often referred to by people out there, is the dual function of the military. This dual function of the military became a tool to carry out a period during the New Order era. Another reason why the military is privileged may be due to the background of President Soeharto, who has a background as a retired military officer, and there is also a perception or opinion that only the military is capable of maintaining the security and stability of the Indonesian state (Djaelani, 1995).

President Soeharto's leadership, which put too much emphasis on and also relied on the military on a large scale, certainly had a big impact on social and political life in Indonesia. The impact is very pronounced, namely when the military is very arbitrary to enter into a domain that does not belong to its domain. In the social context, the military group is eager to be involved in processes and activities whose domain is in the wider community. This certainly can have a good impact and can also have a bad impact on the situation and social conditions in a society. Furthermore, in the political



realm, military groups often try to gain absolute or real power through the political sphere. An example that we often see is how a military group wants to dominate the legislative, executive, and judiciary, as well as other institutions. This of course has many impacts, both good and bad impacts too, but if we look at it in depth the military should carry out an obligation by its domain, for example in the military domain. There was no division of power during the New Order era, and the distribution of power or the political trials by structural rules and norms only existed during the Reformation era (Dahlan, 2012).

During the New Order Era, to be precise, in the 1990s many military groups wanted to gain power, examples of military groups that wanted to control that power were the Red and White military groups and also the sandalwood green groups. Many leaders of the red and white military group and the green sandalwood group provoked each other, causing ongoing friction. These frictions lasted until the occurrence of the monetary crisis in 1998. The cause of the monetary crisis in 1998 was when the economy at that time reached a very low point (Mangana & Fitrianiingsih, 2010).

The feud between the two groups, namely the red and white and sandalwood groups, was widely heard in the 1990s. The feud between the two camps was caused by several factors. Internal factors and external factors in the two camps are the cause of the relationship between the two camps being inharmonious. It was this enmity that caused the two camps to jostle each other in any aspect and context. The impact of the internal conflict between the two sides has resulted in their military careers being frozen. The external conflict between the two camps was when the two camps fought over seats of power and killed each other between organizations. Another external factor is that the two camps are at war with each other regarding their political identity (Muhtar, 2012).

The red and white military had a ruler within it, namely General Leonardus Benjamin Moerdani, he was the commander in chief of ABRI and was very feared by the Indonesian people at that time. The figure of Benjamin Moerdani is often mentioned as one of the actors in the 1984 Tanjung Priok incident, and he is also often labeled as someone who is anti-Islam. When Moerdani came to power by bringing the red and white military group as his vehicle, of course, there were many perceptions in society that the green or sandalwood groups were very isolated at that time. This incident had a major impact on the positions of the rulers of the two military groups at that time so many of the military leaders and also rulers at that time was removed from their positions by President Soeharto because according to Suharto this situation could undermine security and stability. Suharto also did not hesitate to immediately remove his position and rank, because it could damage the military image of Suharto himself and could at any time remove Suharto's power as president.

The feud between the two groups, namely the red and white and sandalwood groups, brought their feud to the realm of elections. What we all know is that the elections during the New Order era were not as democratic as they were during the Reform era. Elections during the New Order era, of course, the military had a very large opportunity to rule, because President Soeharto at that time gave the military the greatest possible freedom to be able to carry out activities in the non-military realm. Of course, this was used by the red and white group and also the sandalwood group. The red and white group and the sandalwood group are filled by people who are still active in the military or someone who is retired. The feud in the election between the red and white group and the sandalwood group has certainly been heard by President Soeharto. President Suharto heard about it and responded



casually. Soeharto was initially very pro with a matter related to religion, but gradually Pak Soeharto began to change direction and began to be pro or support the nationalist context (Winarko, 2013).

Suharto, at first liked Islam, but gradually Suharto's liking of Islam began to fade. Many perceptions assume that Suharto's dislike is due to a reason, namely Suharto's background which is more kejawen, and secondly, the ruling group from Sandalwood does not want Islam to become the ruler in the political sphere. The election in 1955, for example, in that election the Islamic party, namely the Masyumi party, received the most votes, namely 85%. Another dislike of Suharto for Islam was because Suharto thought that the Islamic religion contained in these Islamic parties could thwart all of Suharto's plans and wishes in the future. Most of the policies formulated and initiated by Suharto consisted of cornering the Islamic religion or Islamic parties. On the eve of the 1977 election, in his book by Suharto, Suharto once said "Our common enemy is Islam". The remarks put forward by Suharto indicated that Suharto was slowly starting to become anti-Islamic.

4. CONCLUSION

The New Order's power was a military leadership style, the army was even built from the territorial command to the parliament, which then placed ABRI as one of the Legislative Assembly factions. The military has become the dominant and powerful political apparatus, and military power has even been systematized into state institutions in general, both at the center and in the regions. The supremacy of the military in the government of the country then created an extraordinary commotion, and the commotion exploded. In 1997-1998, the peak of the military resistance, this event we know as the reform movement. One of the calls for reform was to remove ABRI's dual role, meaning that the wave of protests wanted ABRI to leave the national political arena and focus on national defense and security. This happened because the military's involvement in politics was seen as an obstacle to the development of a democratic system. The new order was then declared over when President Soeharto officially announced his resignation.

A new chapter called reform begins, and the demand for reform becomes an important task that must be fulfilled by the next government. The government, which was continued by President Habibie, also put pressure on various groups to immediately carry out important government reforms, especially those related to the presence of military personnel in the government. The pros and cons of military depoliticization are endless debates. The army's traumatic participation in camouflage on the political stage looks like a past grudge that is difficult for civil society to forget. However, as the reform period progressed, in 2004 the Legislative Assembly responded to a call to abolish the ABRI dual-duty, which was repeated when it overthrew the New Order government. The answer is in Law Number 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Armed Forces.

REFERENCES

- Dahlan, T. (2012). *Teori dan Hukum Konstitusi*. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Djaelani, A. Q. (1995). *Negara Ideal Menurut Konsepsi Islam*. Surabaya: PT Bina Ilmu.



- Efriza. (2014). Hubungan Sipil Dan Militer Di Era Reformasi. *Jurnal Communitarian*, 2(1), 167–181.
<http://ejurnal.ubk.ac.id/index.php/communitarian/article/download/96/70>.
- Friyanti, F. (2005). Pelaksanaan Pemilihan Umum Dalam Sejarah Nasional Indonesia.
<http://lib.unnes.ac.id/382/1/1092.pdf>, 1-162.
- George, Alexander L. dan Andrew Bennet. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in The Social Sciences*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Hariyanto, E. (2007). Peran Politik Militer (Abri) Orde Baru Terhadap Depolitisasi Politik Islam Indonesia.
<https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/8279/1/EDHY%20HARIYANTO-FSH.pdf>, 1-132.
- Mangana, S., & Fitriyaningsih, W. (2010). *Sejarah Indonesia: Perspektif Lokal dan Global*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak.
- Muhtar, H. (2012). Menguatnya Politik Identitas di Rumah Lokal. *Jurnal Pemerintahan* Volume 03.
- Rikan, K. (2015). Konsep Dwi Fungsi Abri Dan Perannya Di Masa Pemerintahan Orde Baru Tahun 1965-1998. Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta, 1-15.
- Shibghotulloh, D. (2019). Rivalitas Purnawirawan Jenderal Militer Dalam Pemilihan Presiden 2019. *POLITICON: Jurnal Ilmu Politik* Vol.1 No.2 ; Hal.158-175.
- Winarko, E. P. (2013). *Pembelajaran Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Isi, Strategis, dan Penelitian*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Yin. Robert K. 2014. *Case Study Research Design and Methods* 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.