

Building Political Image of Representative Institution at Local Level

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Abstract—Corruption cases that involve the members of Regional House of Representatives (hereinafter DPRD) affect the political image of representative institution at local level. This article offers a new perspective in which competence, public trust, and political will have impacts on DPRD as people’s representative body. The data for this research was obtained from interviews and library research. The result reveals that the members of the DPRD of Malang city are considered sufficiently competent since they are well educated people. However, it is not relevant to the cadre recruitment model and candidacy. Public does not trust the members of the House of Representatives because the principle of democracy is used as a tool for political patronage. Finally, low political will of the members of DPRD is triggered by their tendency to manipulate public fund for their own sake to benefit their own political parties.

Keywords—political image, representative institutions, local level.

I. INTRODUCTION

The existence of the House of Representatives is seen with disdain. Data obtained from the Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs recorded there were 3169 members of DPRD involved in corruption in 2014 [1]. This representative body is known for its dexterity to make law [2]. Moreover, this institution is often linked to hierarchies, red-tape, and complicatedness [3], unresponsiveness, and obscurity [4], unprofessionalism, [5], and complicated bureaucracy [6]. Instead of democratic process at local level, Pandora box of corruption is opened. From this issue, a question is raised: how to build a representative institution at local level free from corruption?

It is unacceptable when democracy is said to have sparked the culture of corruption [7, 8]. Corruption takes place due to a connection between implementation of fiscal decentralisation in a state and corruption per se. Government’s budget planning is associated with corruption [9]. Corruption is heavily influenced by local democracy and political composition at local parliament [10]. Giant coalition in the DPRD will not require great effort just to modify the proportion of budget spent on public sector. Allocating budget into activities held only to make things look formal in public sector instead of allocating it for something more vital like improvement of public services is common to see [11]. Therefore, it is not quite surprising when sectors of education and health are found to be low in quality due to intensive practices of corruption [12].

Mass corruption of regional government budget committed in 2015 and revealed in 2018 has ruined democracy, good governance, political image, and the credibility of representative institution at local level. Political

image is a political asset that leads to political reputation. Political asset is sourced from credibility. This article offers a new perspective showing that political image can be affected by elements of competence, trust, and political will from the members of DPRD.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a descriptive research based on a case study, which is focused more on corruption and other factors affecting political image from the DPRD such as the competence, the level of trust, and political will of the members. The data was taken from interviews with the chairman of DPRD, members 2014-2019, online journalists hunting information on activities running in the DPRD, literature review concerning corruption and parliament study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Three factors were found to have affected political image of the DPRD as a representative institution at local level: competence, level of public trust, and political will, all of which are closely related to the implementation of tasks and main function of the DPRD comprising supervision, budget planning, and legislation.

A. Competence

Based on the findings, the members of DPRD 2014-2019 hold sufficient education degree, and even 45% hold bachelor degree, are intelligent and were involved as activists back in their university years. However, they tend to show changing attitudes in their position as people’s representatives, where they are seen indiscipline, some even skip meeting and seem to fail to understand their role as a representative [13]. During budget planning and formulation of local regulation, public matters are usually transferred to hired consultants. It happens because during candidacy process, candidates were mostly closed and oligarchic. Political parties do not seem to care about competence but do take into account modality and popularity that the candidates have to hold. It can be said that most of those elected are not far from interference of money politics [14].

B. Public Trust

Only little public trust is left for Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) and DPRD. Mulyono argues “I have to admit that public trust is low, members of public are sceptical about the members of parliament.” [15]. Bambang Heri Susanto, a chairman of DPRD of Malang (2019) [16] also shares the same idea: “Bringing dignity for the DPRD back is not easy, 30% trust it, while the rest lies on those who do not have trust in DPRD anymore.” The main factor causing this plummeting trust is mass corruption among

DPRD members. This mass corruption has led to three following characters: First, continuity of political patronage in democracy. Local democracy seems to give an opportunity for old patronage. This phenomenon was once expressed by Van Klinken and Nordholt [17] as changing countinuites. Second, democratic style at local level is often monopolised and dominated by oligarchs who hold dominant power in the process of democracy at local level. Third, Wawan Mas'udi (2017) suggests that figure-based politics or local populism started to appear along with the birth of political elites. Varied democratic styles give a wider room for cases of corruption to take place [18].

C. Political Will

Political will is indicted through tasks and functions of the members of DPRD who have a strong desire to perform their functions that are materialistically beneficial for them. Moreover, they choose to get involved in law making, legislative product making, local regulation making only when those can give them benefit. Even worse, articles of laws are sold. Furthermore in terms of controlling, such a power will only be used as a political tool to scare opponents and ease public matters. Last, budgeting is often performed to support projects that can give personal benefits and give fund for political parties [19].

To build political image, DPRD as a representative institution at local level require four stages: *first*, designing the institution and the system that support the work of parliament, designing an institution like the regulation concerning horizontal accountability of executives and legislatives, accountability of parliament towards constituents, public and for general; *second*, involvement of external parties in the agenda of capacity building, knowledge building, and supporting system in local parliament; *third*, establishing code of conduct from all members of DPRD for corruption-free and responsive members of local parliament who speak for public; *fourth* establishing strong party system including the system of cadre, candidacy for parliament, and supervision over representative members of parliament.

IV. CONCLUSION

To establish a strong local parliament, starting party institution that represents a change in the systems of general elections is required. Secretariat of the DPRD should not be bristled with officials transferred from other departments at local level since it can lower the quality of work performance of the members of DPRD. Moreover, it is essential that movement of civilians keep supervising the government at local level.

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