

Mass Media and the Political Parties in Indonesia In the 2007-2008 Period

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Abstract

The study deals with three issues i.e how the mass media especially print in Indonesia represent political party in the period of 2007-2008 prior to the 2009 general election, what the public think of the performance of political party, and which sources the public access to get information about political parties' performance. The survey and in-depth interview are used in the study focuses in Solo Central Java. The study suggests that the mass media often represent political party negatively and the public tends to think the performance of political party negatively as well. The public mostly get information on politics including political party from the mass media especially television and print media.

Key words: mass media, political party, representation.

Introduction

Up until the middle of 2008, there had been widespread of dissatisfaction on the performance of the political parties in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the next General Election is planned to be conducted in 2009, to elect the members of parliament for the DPD, DPR, DPRD I and DPRD II, as well as to elect the president and the vice president. As a social institution, the mass media—this has been significantly concerned with politics since its emergence—constantly reports, presents analyses, and provides suggestions concerning the latest developments in politics. *KOMPAS* (12 April 2008, p. 1) reported the view of the Executive Director of The Lead Institute Paramadina University, Bima Arya Sugiarto, which argues that while the society is struggling with various problems caused by the price rising, the political parties are too busy with their own internal conflicts and preparations for the 2009 General Election. Furthermore, Sugiarto even states that such condition take place because the political parties are suffered with “social autism” and the parties' elites are “myopic and deaf” to

the problems faced by and the aspirations voiced by the society at large. “The sensitivity of the political parties towards public issues is very poor. Their orientations are leaping too far, leaving the real problems faced by the society; they are too busy with their own agendas,” Sugiarto added.

In its previous report on 2 May 2006 (p. 4), *KOMPAS* presented the result of a polling concerning the political parties' performance. In the report, it was stated that after the 2004 General Election, the dissatisfaction towards the political parties' performance was increasing. The DPR, which comprises of the parties' politicians, was criticized to be ignorant to the interests of the society. In answering the question: *What you think the member of the DPR [2006] is more concern about: the personal, party's or society's interests?* 45,6% of the respondents viewed that the members of DPR have more concern about their personal interests; 41,5% said that the DPR has more concern about the party's interests; and only 9,9% said that the DPR has more concern about the society's interests.

These facts give impressions that on one side the public views that the political parties' performance is disappointing, and on the other side there are efforts by the mass media to amplify the public's concern concerning the issue through various contents, including the news. This phenomenon inspires a more systematic study on the mass media—especially the press—in its relation with the political parties, particularly the representations of the political parties in the media and the public views on the performance of the political parties. Based on the background elaborated above, this study emphasizes the following research questions:

1. How do the mass media—especially the press—portrays the representation of the political parties in Indonesia, particularly during the 2007-2008 period?
2. What are the public assessments on the performance of the political parties in Indonesia?
3. What are the sources of information referred by the public which comprises of their knowledge and assessments on the political parties' performance?

The first question is concerning the media contents, in term of how the political parties tend to be represented in the press, especially the newspapers and news magazines, through various formats, particularly news, opinion essays, and cartoons. The second question is related to the assessments or views of the general public which are traced through a survey, as well as the third question which concern with the information sources referred by the public for their knowledge and assessment toward political parties' performance. The 2007-2008 period was selected for is proximity with the General Election that will be conducted in 2009; the argument is that what take place in this period is judged in some level to have impact on the 2009 General Election.

Literature Reviews Political Party

The political party has been drawing the attention of many researchers (Lapalombara & Anderson, 1992; Strom, 1995; Rudolph Jr., 1996; and Weatherman, 1996). One of the in-teresting definitions of political party is proposed by Schumpeter (1976), which stated that “a party is a group whose members propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for power” (Lapalombara & Anderson, 1992:394). Although the definition seems to be minimalist and simplistic, it gives a realistic picture of the essence of the political party, which is: struggle for power.

It needs to be noted though, in the empirical reality, particularly in the democratic countries, political party has a more complex relationships with the politic education and the development of political culture through the behaviors of the political elites, as well as with the important political functions, including the articulation of interests, government formation, and mass mobilization for various interests.

Studies about political party usually were conducted in the context of democratic society and/or political system. These were taken place especially because democracy—in relation to presence of the political party—is more manifesting its essences through competitions among parties, and not competitions within parties, in the struggle for election of public officials or formulation of public policies. Related to this, there is a notion that the health of the political system is influenced by the success of the political party in connecting the public to political processes; and how well the political parties in providing the candidates to compete for the public offices. This is the reason for the general perception that although the political party has important roles in various political systems, its roles are more distinctive in the democratic political system (Rudolph Jr., 1996:1020).

This notion also explains why the vast studies on the political party that have been

conducted are focused on the roles and performance of the political party—including this study. The roles and functions of the political party are identified in various aspects, which includes the aggregation and articulation of interests, leadership recruitment, government formation, political identity, social integration, and social mobilization (Lapalombara & Anderson, 1992:400-406). The first aspect is concerning the aggregation and articulation of public interests or aspirations, which in wider scope also related to various issues, including participation and supervision on the formulation and implementation of public policies. The second aspect is related to the recruitment function and government formation, which in many ways is also related to the elite circulation in the political supra-structure as well as in the infra-structure.

The government formation function is concerning the way political parties play roles in the government formation at the national level (particularly the election of the president and the vice president), as well as at the regional/local level (governor-vice governor, mayor-vice mayor, and regent-vice regent). The function of political identity is related to the way political party convince the public to vote, how the aspirations are channeled, and how to nurture the sense of belonging. The social integration function is concerning the roles play by political parties in integrating various elements of the society; and the social mobilization function is related to the ability of political parties in rallying the public to participate in various political activities and for various interests.

The Mass Media

There have been many studies concerning the roles played by the mass media in politics and in the effort to develop democracy. Curran (1991:277-278) identified six functions played by the mass media, particularly the press, in the development of democracy, which are: (1) act as a forum for public debates; (2) articulates the public

opinion; (3) forces the government to consider what the public thinks and wants; (4) educates the citizen to obtain adequate information for their decision in the general election; (5) provides the public with political communication channels among various groups with different interests; and (6) supports individuals who confront the abuse of power by the executives [and any other power branch].

Curran's identification emphasizes the possibilities of roles played by the mass media, especially the press, in politics in the context of democracy, which are in line with the functions of the political party. Later on, Curran (1996:103-4) revised his ideas by giving emphasis on three main functions of the mass media (particularly the press) in developing democracy, which are: (1) the function of information; (2) the function of representations; and (3) the function of assistance to reach the common objectives of society.

The function of information points to the task of the press not only to act as a conventional reporter of events, but also to encourage pluralistic understanding (from various perspectives) about the events and issues in the society. This is important in the effort to encourage individuals in the society to interpret their experiences by themselves, and to relate them to the alternate concepts in the society concerning the events and issues, as well as to question the assumptions/ideas held by the dominant groups. It implies the importance of variation of news sources, which in turn will give varied frames of reporting the facts and/or views to the public.

The function of representation concerns with the demand that the mass media can help in creating the conditions where the alternative views and perspectives can be accommodated and valued, even though they came from minority groups. This function is important in democracy because democracy supports the egalitarianism and pluralism. In the practice of democracy, the "majority rule"

needs to be balanced by the “minority rights” (see Grossman & Levin, 1995:787-793).

The third function, assisting the reaching of common objectives of society, refers to the task of the mass media, which is not only to be a conventional “watchdog” (who reports the improper practices in the government and society); but more than that, the mass media is demanded to assist the efforts of reaching “the common objectives of society through agreement or compromise between opposed groups”. This function demands the press and the mass media to extensively promotes and facilitates the democratic political procedures and ethics in order to define the common objectives, and to amplify the aspirations, ideas, and suggestions about various issues; including and especially when the differences are sharpening and there are signs that the conflict is escalated.

Research Method

This research employed the media analysis and survey methods. The media analysis method is a flexible method to examine tendencies in which the media represent certain subjects, in the case of this research: political party. Various newspapers, comprises of *KOMPAS*, *REPUBLIKA*, *JAWA POS*, and *SUARA MERDEKA*, as well as *TEMPO* news magazine are the main data sources for this research, particularly those published in the 2007-2008. The media contents examined in this research are news and cartoons concerning the political party.

The survey method was used to examine the tendencies of the public assessment on the political parties’ performance. The survey involved 150 samples in Solo; the samples were selected using incidental sampling technique. The sampling technique, which is the non-probability sampling technique, has consequences that the results of this research are still hypothetical, therefore need to be tested.

The public assessment on the performance of the political parties is focused

on the function of the political party, such as (a) channeling public aspirations; (b) leadership recruitment; (c) government formation; (d) political identity; (e) mobilization; and (f) social integration. The information sources used by the public in relation to the performance of the political party refers to the elements (agents) which are frequently used by the public, such as mass media, organization, group, neighbor, friend, and family.

Results of Data Analysis

Representation of Political Parties

As elaborated in the previous sections, this research aims to examine how the political parties in Indonesia were represented by or in the mass media, particularly the newspapers and news magazine in the 2007-2008 periods. The data tends to show that the political parties frequently, although not always, were represented in a relatively negative tone in the media. The negative representations include the issues of (a) the tendency of the domination of the big political parties in the political life; (b) the parties’ internal conflicts; and (c) the suspicion of corruptions by the political/party elites.

The Tendency of Domination by Political Parties

The negative representation of political party frequently emerges in various mass media in relation to the domination of political parties, particularly big parties, in the political life. The domination of the big parties are represented in various issues, including the legislative election (DPR, DPD, DPRD) 2009, presidential election, as well as regional/local leader election (Pilkada). A particular news in *JAWAPOS* (14 November 2007, p. 2) entitled “Ambisi Golkar-PDIP Terus Dilawan” (The Ambition of Golkar-PDIP is Continued to be Opposed), for example, emphasized on how the small parties in DPR opposed the proposal from the Golkar and PDI which suggests that the DPR seats

allocation for each election district to be reduced from 3-12 seats to 3-6 seats.

In this particular issue, Golkar and PDIP were accused to be big parties that tries to practice domination. The small parties, which are grouped in the Bintang Reformasi Fraction (FBR), wanted the DPR seats allocation for each election district to be maintained between 3 to 6 seats as the previous election (2004). Ade Nasution, the chairman of FBR, argued that the reduction of the seat allocation “will only close the chance for small and new parties to obtain any seat.” Furthermore, Nasution emphasized that “each party has rights to win and to get he seat, therefore the chance should not be closed.” It is important to be noted that the FBR’s argument was widely supported by other fractions, including Partai Amanat Nasional Fraction (FPAN), Partai Persatuan Pembangunan Fraction (FPPP), Partai Keadilan Sejahtera Fraction (FPKS), and Partai Demokrat Fraction (FPD).

The representation of domination by political party was also emerge in *REPUBLIKA* (26 October 2007, p. 3), which printed a news titled “SBY Dicoba Diganjal dengan Syarat Dukungan Capres” (SBY was Tried to be Tackled using the Conditions for President Candidacy Support). The news emphasized on the efforts by Golkar in proposing new rule for the 2009 election, in which a president candidate may compete if the candidate is supported by minimum 30-35%. If this proposal is agreed, then the incumbent (Susilo Bambang Yudoyono), who is the candidate from Partai Demokrat, will not be able to fulfill the requirement and will not be allowed to compete. The initiative by Golkar can be perceived as an effort by big parties (Golkar and PDIP) to dominate the political life.

Previously, an essay by J. Kristiadi was published in *KOMPAS* on 9 May 2005 (p. 4). Kristiadi discuss the possibility of a direct election for local leadership by the constituent might become a kind of power struggle among political parties to dominate

the local executive. Kristiadi argued that during the Reformation, the political have been “monopolized the power”, while the performance of the political parties is still far away from the demands of the public. “In the local leadership election, the political parties are still decisive in proposing the candidates. The political parties, which should have been a mere instrument in proposing the best candidates for the public, tends to support candidates who are loyal to their superior [political party] more than those candidates from outside of the parties, although those candidates are viewed by the public as have more quality,” he observed. It is important to be noted here that the big parties, particularly Golkar and PDIP, have a better chance to win the competition.

The Parties’ Internal Conflicts

The 2007-2008 periods were still marked with the conflicts between parties’ elites which in some cases were followed by parties’ split. The reports by the mass media concerning this issue produce negative representations of the political parties. The mass media also provided the public with analyses related to the parties’ internal conflicts, which in turn influence the public’s views about political parties’ performance. In other word, the reports and analyses published by the media concerning the internal conflicts which in some cases followed by the parties’ split have nurtured negative portraits of political parties: the political parties were used as vehicles and tools to grasp for power, and the political elites were more oriented towards power and were not seriously in supporting the public aspirations. The Partai Bintang Reformasi (PBR) and Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) were two parties which were facing internal conflicts.

JAWAPOS (9 January 2007, p. 2) reported the internal conflict in the PBR, between Zaenal Ma’arif and Bursah Zarnubi. The conflict had been escalated, and culminated in the shacking of Zaenal Ma’arif by the Dewan Pimpinan Pusat (DPP) PBR on

8 Januari 2007. The causes of the shacking, according to Zarnubi's side, were threefold: (a) a re-commendation from the Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah (DPW) PBR North Sumatera to recall Zaenal Ma'arif; (b) confrontative actions by Zaenal Ma'arif in suing the leadership of PBR (the Chairman Bursah Zarnubi, General Secretary Rusman Ali, dan Vice General Secretary Yusuf Lakaseng) to the South Jakarta State Court; and (c) confrontative actions by Zaenal Ma'arif who was frequently making statements not acknowledging the PBR's leadership. The dismissal was responded by Zaenal Ma'arif in the formation of new PBR's committee. In the new committee, Zaenal Ma'arif acted as the Chairman, and was supported by Fikri Haekal (son of the founder of PBR) as General Secretary, and KH Zainuddin MZ as Chairman of Dewan Syuro of PBR.

Related to internal conflict within the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB), during April 2008 almost every mass media reported the split between Muhaimin Iskandar (Chairman of Dewan Tanfidz DPP PKB) and Abdurrahman Wahid (Chairman of Dewan Syuro DPP PKB). In this conflict, Muhaimin Iskandar was demanded by the Chairman of Dewan Syuro and his supporters to retire from his office. Muhaimin Iskandar declined the demand until the Mukhtar Luar Biasa (MLB-Special General Assembly) was conducted, because he argued that only the MLB can dismiss him. Therefore, each side then conducted their own MLB.

JAWAPOS (22 April 2008, p. 2) reported that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Vice President Jusuf Kalla declined to be present in either MLB, in order to keep distance from the PKB's conflict. In the news lead titled "SBY-Kalla Tolak Hadiri MLB PKB" (SBY-Kalla Declined to be Present in MLB PKB), *JAWAPOS* reported that:

JAKARTA – The Government keeps its distance from the PKB's internal conflict between Abdurrahman Wahid and Muhaimin

Iskandar sides. This can be seen in the declining of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Vice President Jusuf Kalla to be present in the opening and closing of Muhaimin's Mukhtar Luar Biasa (MLB) PKB on the following 2-4 May.

TEMPO (31 March – 6 April 2008, p. 34-35) reported the reasons behind the demand for Muhaimin to step down from the office of the Chairman of Dewan Tanfidz PKB. The news which was titled "Konflik PKB Karena Muhaimin Berkaki Dua" reported the complain of Abdurrahman Wahid towards Muhaimin, as follows:

Gus Dur [nickname of Abdurrahman Wahid] complained about this and that. The most shocking issue was his complain about Muhaimin's actions. This chairman, said Gus Dur, conspired with Lukman Edy, former Vice General Secretary of PKB who is Minister for Development Acceleration for Underdeveloped Regions. Lukman, who had been fired from the party, with Muhaimin were accused to have a plan to dismiss Gus Dur from his position as the Chairman of Dewan Syuro.

The Suspicion of Corruption

The other negative representation of political parties, in this case involved the parties' elites, can be observed in the accusations of corruption by the members of parliament in the national and local level. *KOMPAS* (25 April 2008, p. 4), for instance, reported the corruption trial involving Noor Adenan Razak (Fraksi Reformasi 1999-2004). The defendant was accused of receiving 250 million rupiahs in cash and 1,2 billion in giro bilyet from officers of Badan Pengawas Tenaga Nuklir (Bureau of Nuclear Energy Supervision).

Corruption accusation was also made towards Al Amin Nur Nasution (a member of Komisi IV DPR). He was apprehended by the Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (KPK-Corruption Erradication Commision) in Hotel Ritz Carlton on 9 April 2008. *KOMPAS* (10 April 2008) reported the incident with a title

“Amin Nasution-Azirwan Tersangka Penyuapan” (Amin Nasution-Azirwan are Bribery Suspects), with a sub-title “Sudah diawasi sejak November 2007” (Have been under surveillance since November 2007). *JAWAPOS* on the same day reported the event under the title “KPK Bongkar Suap Rp. 3 M” (KPK Uncovered 3 Billion Rupiahs Bribery) with a sub-title “Al Amin Tertangkap saat Bertransaksi dengan Sekda Bintan” (Al Amin was apprehended during transaction with Bintan’s Regional Secretary), while *SUARA MERDEKA* gave the title “Anggota DPR Tertangkap Basah” (Member of DPR was Caught Red-handed) in its report for this event.

In its news, *KOMPAS* reported that the KPK apprehended the member of Komisi IV DPR Al Amin Nasution and Bintan’s Regional Secretary Azirwan. They were suspects in the case of bribery concerning the alter-function of the 7.3 hectares forest in Bintan, Riau. *JAWAPOS* gave emphasis on the repetition of such scandal by members of DPR, as follow

JAKARTA – Another bribery scandal blow the DPR. This time, the suspect was caught red-handed. Al Amin Nasution, member of Komisi IV DPR, early morning was apprehended by KPK officers when receiving bribe from Azirwan, the Regional Secretary of Bintan Regency, Riau Islands. The bribe was given to smooth the alter-function pro-cess of forest into industrial district and Bintan’s capital.

SUARA MERDEKA, in its news-lead, reported the event as follows:

JAKARTA – The face of the DPR was once again tarnished. Member of Komisi IV DPR from Fraksi PPP Al Amin Nasution was apprehended by KPK. He was apprehended at Hotel Ritz Carlton with four other suspects at 2 am, Wednesday (9/4)

Along with *KOMPAS*, *JAWAPOS* and *SUARA MERDEKA* reported the chronology of the apprehension of Amin Nasution after the news-lead. After the chronology of the event, *KOMPAS* reported various matters

related to the apprehension, including the possibility of deals that had been made, the alter-function of the forest, and the statement of PPP leadership who would not hinder the investigation. Beside the chronology of the event, *JAWAPOS* emphasized the present of a teenager girl during the apprehension; it reported that the girl was Amin’s friend (but there was suspicion that the girl was a prostitute). *SUARA MERDEKA* choose to give emphasis on the statements made by PPP leadership, including the Chairman of Faksi PPP, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin and General Secretary of PPP Chairul Mahfiz. Mahfiz said that Amin was dismissed from his office as the Chairman of DPW PPP Jambi after he was decided as a suspect by KPK, while the status of Amin in DPR will be decided later.

The negative representations of political parties, in relation with the suspicion of corruption, were also emerge in cartoons format. *TEMPO* (16-22 July 2007, p. 18), for exam-ple, portrayed the suspicion of bribery by member of DPR. The cartoon use three symbols: (a) the DPR building with many holes on its roof; (b) a person wearing certain style of clothing—can be interpreted as a government officer—is putting some money into the holes and saying “It used to be only one hole”. The face of the person shows a deep dis-appointment. This cartoon clearly represented how the corruption had plagued the Senayan (DPR building), which can be interpreted as a negative representation of political parties, particularly the parties’ elites. The interpretation was based on the fact that the members of DPR are people recruited by the political parties and they are the parties’ elites.

Another cartoon with similar theme was published by *TEMPO* (20-29 August 2007). The cartoon depicted a person wearing official clothes with a “DPR” label who is drinking from a carton with a symbol of Bank Indonesia on it. The cartoon clearly meant as a critique towards members of DPR, the parties’ elites, who consume the funds from the Bank Indonesia.

Assessment on the Political Parties' Performance

Assessment on the Political Parties' Performance

As discussed, the second aim of this research is to examine how the public assess the political parties' performance. The method employed is the survey on the six aspects of political parties' functions, which include: (a) channeling public aspirations; (b) leadership recruitment; (c) government formation; (d) political identity; (e) mobilization; and (f) social integration. The data of the assessment are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Assessment on the Political Parties' Performance

No	Aspects of Assessment	Freq.	Percent
1.	The function of channeling public's aspirationa.		
	Satisfying (score=3)b.	1834	98150
	More or less satisfying (score=2)c.	12,022	765,3100,0
	Unsatisfying (score=1)Total (N and %)	183498	150
2.	The function of leadership recruitmenta.		
	Satisfying (score=3)b.	2256	72150
	More or less satisfying (score=2)c.	14,737	348,0100,0
	Unsatisfying (score=1)Total (N and %)	225672	150
3.	The function of government formationa.		
	Satisfying (score=3)b.	2365	62150
	More or less satisfying (score=2)c.	15,343	361,4100,0
	Unsatisfying (score=1)Total (N and %)	236562	150
4.	The function of political identitya.		
	Satisfying (score=3)b.	4366	41150
	More or less satisfying (score=2)c.	28,744	027,3100,0
	Unsatisfying (score=1)Total (N and %)	436641	150
5.	The function of mass mobilizationa.		
	Satisfying (score=3)b.		
	More or less satisfying (score=2)c.		
	Unsatisfying (score=1)Total (N and %)		

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20,725,354,0100,0

6. The function of social integrationa.

Satisfying (score=3)b.

More or less satisfying (score=2)c.

Unsatisfying (score=1)Total (N and %)

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19,424,456,2100,0

Source : Survey's data

Table 1 shows that the respondents tend to view the performance of the political parties as unsatisfying. Five of the six functions are views as unsatisfying by the respondents. Concerning the function of channeling public's aspiration, 65,3% of the respondent viewed as unsatisfying; the function of leadership recruitment, 48,0% said it is unsatisfying; on the function of government formation, 62,4% respondents assessed it as unsatisfying; the function of mass mobilization is viewed by 54,0% of respondents as unsatisfying; and finally, concerning the function of social integration, 56,2% respondents said that it is unsatisfying. Only the function of political identity is perceived by the respondents as relatively satisfying: 28,7% respondent are satisfied, 44,0% more or less satisfied, and only 27,3% said that the political parties are unsatisfying in conducting the function. The rank of the assessment (from the lowest score/unsatisfying) of the functions are: channeling the public's aspiration, social integration, mass mobilization, leadership recruitment, government formation, and political identity.

Assessment on the Political Parties' Performance

The third research question of this study is concerning the sources of information used by the respondents for obtaining knowledge and references in order to assess the political parties' performance. The respondents were asked to choose various information sources, including the mass media, organization, group, neighbor, friends, family, and other sources (if any). It is important to be noted here that the respondents may use more than one

information sources therefore the answers of the respondents are not mutually exclusive. The data from this survey is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Source of Knowledge and References

No	Sources	Freq.
	Percent	
1.	Mass media	120
	80,0	
2.	Organization	28
	18,7	
3.	Group	19
	12,7	
4.	Neighbors	27
	18,0	
5.	Family	23
	15,3	
6.	Other sources	15
	10,0	

Source :

Survey's data

Conclusions

Based on the data and the analysis presented in the previous sections, several conclusions are emerged from this research. *Firstly*, the representation of the political parties in Indonesia portrayed by the mass media, particularly the printed media during the 2007-2008 periods, are relatively negative. The negative representations are particularly evident in these issues: (a) the tendency of domination by big political parties in DPR in the political life; (b) internal conflicts within the political parties; and (c) the suspicion of corruption by the political or parties' elites. *Secondly*, at a certain level, the public appreciation on the political parties' performance tends to be low, in the sense that the public views the performance as unsatisfying. The unsatisfying performance of the political parties is mainly concerning the function of channeling public's aspiration. The tendency observed in this research is supporting the result of a polling conducted by *KOMPAS* (10 September 2007), which stated that 79,0% (N = 837) of the respondents agree to the notion that the political parties

are more concern about power than the interests and well-being of the public or society.

Thirdly, this research observed that the mass media is used as sources of knowledge and references on the political parties' performance; 80% of the respondents (N=150) admit that they used the mass media (particularly television and newspaper/magazine) as sources of information concerning the political parties in Indonesia. The implication of this result is that the mass media, particularly television and newspaper/magazine play important role in the nurturing of the public's knowledge and assessment toward politics in general, and political parties' performance in particular.

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