

The Sabotage in The Election Campaign

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Abstract. Campaign problems occur throughout the election from year to year, resulting in unrest in public opinion. Manipulation to sabotage is carried out to bring down legislative opponents of other candidate pairs that cause elections to occur haphazardly and override the correct campaigning provisions under the law. The emergence of sabotage carried out to seek the popular vote during the campaign casts doubt on the existence of clean and safe elections. Parties that should be considered neutral during the campaign until the election show their support for one of the competing legislative candidate pairs, which makes the neutrality of certain parties doubtful during the election. The occurrence of a haphazard campaign can damage the image of the election in the eyes of the public by realizing the view that campaigns and elections are meaningless as long as the ruling party uses its power to create a good image for one candidate as a competitor. Efforts to prevent dirty campaigns can be started by stopping sabotage carried out by supporters or candidates themselves to weaken opponents' voices armed with campaign Education and minimize the spread of false news during the campaign. Law enforcement should be maximized. The rules must be perfected.

Keywords: Campaigns; Election; Sabotage.

1. Introduction

The process of campaigning in general elections should be a fair and accessible competition as the embodiment of democratic values. Democracy combines three competing elements: the restriction of state power, the representation of conflicting or competing interests, and the political participation of mature citizens. We have lived through the rapid disintegration of the last vestiges of

democratic utopia.¹ As an urgent response to the disintegration of democracy, alternative communities modified by the body provide an opportunity to engage in all three Touraine constructs for participatory democracy.²

In elections, there is interference with the campaign, including intentional interference. Elections, as the implementation of democracy, are ideally characterized by freedom and fairness. Freedom means that voters can choose without pressure, intimidation, and coercion. Meanwhile, justice (fairness) means realizing elections to uphold fair game rules and guarantee equal rights for participants.³ Interference with the campaign was carried out by the authorities and the public, some of which showed indications of sabotage. Sabotage is broadly defined, but what differentiates it from other direct actions is that it explicitly recommends destroying property.⁴ Sabotage is an indisputable fact of life.

However, the study of sabotage in politics, especially in campaigns, is minimal. The study of sabotage is more associated with sabotage as a wartime crime, as in Law Number 1 of 2023 concerning the Criminal Law Code⁵ and policy sabotage. The study of sabotage in politics is mainly associated with policy sabotage, which is the deliberate choice of opposition parties to interfere in implementing policies to increase electoral by thwarting or disrupting the implementation of policies so that the incumbent fails to be re-elected.⁶ This policy sabotage is also done to persuade the incumbent to cancel the draft of unpopular policies or postpone popular policies.⁷

Sabotage in political campaigns still receives little attention despite complaints about the sabotage. In the 2024 Indonesian presidential election, many complaints were attributed to campaign sabotage. Two camps of the winning team of presidential candidates complain about the difficulty of getting a bus

¹ Touraine, Alain. (1995). *Democracy: From a Politics of Citizenship to a Politics of Recognition*. Maheu, Louis (ed.) Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action London: Sage.

² Lisiunia A. Romanienko. (2011). *Body Piercing and Identity Construction: A Comparative Perspective—New York*. New Orleans Wrocław.

³ Bawaslu Kota Semarang. (2021). *Cegh, Awasi, Tindak: Pilkada Kota Semarang 2020*. Semarang: Badan Pengawas Pemilu Kota Semarang.

⁴ Rebecca H. Lossin. (2020). *The Point of Destruction: Sabotage, Speech, and Progressive-Era Politics*. Columbia University.

⁵ Heribatus Jaka Triyana. (2023). Analisis Hukum Sabotase dan Tindak Pidana pada Waktu Perang dalam Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 2023 tentang Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum: Area, Cakupan, Orientasi dan Formulasi Kejahatan Perang. *Jurnal Komunikasi Hukum*, 9 (1).

⁶ Hirsch, Alexander V and Jonathan P. Kastellec. (2022). A Theory of Policy Sabotage. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 34 (2).

⁷ Glecweski, German and Christopher Li. (2021). Dynamic Policy Sabotage. *American Journal of Political Science*, 66 (3).

rental to transport the campaign participants. They linked it to sabotage attempts by other campaign teams allegedly supported by the incumbent.⁸

Such indications suggest that sabotage acts are not limited to policy, media, business, or the military but to the democratic process. Sabotage is not only carried out in a situation of war, but it can be in a situation of peace, even in a contest of democratic politics, to weaken or prevent the support or success of another party's campaign. They are focusing on the disclosure of sabotage in the 2024 presidential election campaign. Answer the pattern and method of the sabotage campaign used. The sabotage of the campaign is suspected to have patterns and methods that indicate the existence of deliberate actions by parties who feel underdogs to produce a destructive impact on the success of other parties. The problem is, to what extent is the development of sabotage methods in the campaign to maintain the political image of the candidate pair?

2. Research Methods

In the framework of this study, the method applied is a normative approach, as identified by Peter Mahmud Marzuki. These approaches include several models of research approaches in legal studies, such as legal, case, historical, comparative, and conceptual approaches. In the context of this study, the approach adopted in particular is the approach of legislation.⁹

This normative legal research prioritizes the legislation approach with data sources that include primary legal materials, secondary legal materials, and tertiary legal materials. This approach provides a solid foundation for analyzing legal issues related to acts of sabotage in the 2024 general election campaign. The analysis is qualitative, considering the various legal and contextual aspects involved.

3. Results and Discussion

The term "sabotage" comes from the French word "sabot,"¹⁰ which means wooden shoes. The term sabot was initially associated with dissent by making a disturbing noise by stomping wooden shoes during official speeches. The word sabotage came to be used more broadly in destroying employers' property by workers during a strike. Then, it extended to all deliberate attempts at destruction, mainly through underground movements, to damage or disrupt the

⁸<https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2024/02/01/05150031/saat-kubu-anies-dan-ganjar-kompak-ungkap-dugaan-sabotase-bus-relawan-untuk?page=all>.

⁹ Peter Mahmud Marzuki. (2014). *Penelitian Hukum*. Jakarta : Penerbit Prenadamedia Group.

¹⁰ <https://id.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabotase>

economic and military resources of the enemy.¹¹ Sabotage is the conscious act of undermining another party through subversion, destruction, obstruction, interference, or chaos.¹² Sabotage is the destruction of property or disruption of everyday activities. In wartime, sabotage can be done by cutting off the opponent's logistics lines, destroying bridges the enemy cannot pass, and disrupting communication systems to burn the opponent's Arsenal.

The term sabotage generally occurs or is known in warfare. Saboteurs can be from the military or civilians. They usually sabotage certain activities, reduce the opponent's operating ability, and weaken the opponent's mentality. Therefore, sabotage can contain elements of nerve warfare, an operation to weaken the enemy's mentality and distance public support from the targeted party.¹³ Sabotage has a detrimental and psychological impact on the other party.¹⁴

However, when sabotage is directed at political activities, political sabotage develops. Political sabotage¹⁵ is dangerous and unethical and can damage the democratic process and political stability. This action can be done in various ways, such as weakening the opponent, weakening public confidence in the political system and democracy, and increasing polarization and social tensions. Another goal is to inhibit and delegitimize political opponents. Examples of political sabotage include:¹⁶ first, the cancellation of political activities, such as political campaigns that had obtained permits and had been widely publicized, were suddenly canceled a few hours before the event, and internal meetings of political parties were thwarted on unclear security grounds. Second, The Spread Of False Information,¹⁷ like propaganda,¹⁸ is that fake news is spread through social media, online platforms, and even traditional mass media, as well as deepfakes are used to create manipulated videos that discredit specific candidates or political parties. Third, Cyber Attacks include hacking into websites or internal systems of political parties to steal sensitive data, such as campaign

¹¹Halart, Sophie and Mara Polgovsky Ezcura (eds.). (2016). *Sabotage Art: Politics and Iconoclasm in Contemporary Latin America*. London: I.B. Tauris.

¹² Subhasish M. Chowdhury, dan Oliver Gu"rtler. (2015). Sabotage In Contests: A Survey. *Public Choice*, 164.

¹³<https://www.merdeka.com/jateng/sabotase-adalah-tindakan-perusakan-berikut-ciri-ciri-dan-contohnya-kln.html>

¹⁴ <https://kbbi.web.id/sabotase.html>

¹⁵ <https://perludem.org/2023/11/17/perludem-ungkap-titik-rawan-pelanggaran-netralitas-pemilu-2024/>

¹⁶ <https://perludem.org/2023/06/12/peneliti-perludem-beberkan-empat-hal-yang-berpotensi-merusak-proses-penyelenggaraan-pemilu-2024/>

¹⁷ Indah Sari. "Perbedaan Bentuk Kejahatan yang Dikategorikan Sebagai Cyber Crime dan Cyber Warfare". *Jurnal Sistem Informasi (JSI)*. Universitas Dirgantara Marsekal Suryadarma, 10 (1).

¹⁸ Mariam Fatima Barata. (2019). Strategi Publisitas dan Propaganda Politik (Studi pada Kandidat Presiden & Wakil Presiden, Jokowi-KH. Ma'ruf Amin. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi dan Media*, 23 (2).

strategy or financial information, and the destruction of digital infrastructure to disrupt the operations and communications of political parties. Fourth, money politics and intimidation, such as giving voters money or goods to influence their choices by promising certain rewards if they vote for a particular candidate. Fifth, obstacles to the democratic process include manipulating electoral rules and regulations to benefit certain parties, such as gerrymandering to limit votes. Political sabotage can trigger hostility and hatred between groups, leading to riots and violence. Threatening political stability and national security¹⁹: Systemic and organized political sabotage can weaken the state and endanger national stability.

Types of sabotage include sabotage in mass collection campaigns. Mass collection campaigns can be sabotaged by various parties with various motives, including²⁰ political competitors who oppose candidates and want to weaken other candidates by hindering the concentration of the masses and opposing campaign teams that use dirty tactics to damage the candidate's image. However, this can also be done by certain groups that do not like the candidate or his political agenda or extremist groups that want to create chaos and unrest.

There are ways to prevent and mitigate interference with the security forces to secure the campaign's location and conduct checks and safeguards against the campaign's participants. In addition to education and socialization, such as²¹ providing education to supporters about the importance of maintaining the campaign's conductivity and socializing the campaign's rules and regulations to the participants.

In this presidential election, some events are difficult not to call sabotage. First, the political activities of opponents who have obtained permission are suddenly canceled before the day of implementation, whether it is due to pressure or planned so. It creates chaos and confusion at the canceled party, so the event is likely to fail if it does not get somewhere else in a short time.

Secondly, the mass collection activities of the campaign were hampered because no buses or transportation service providers were willing to be hired, so the masses failed to concentrate. This approach is usually used to prevent large mass concentrations, such as in demonstrations, which are feared to be challenging to control. Sabotage is done by blocking the entrance of the participants so that not all participants can reach the demo location. In campaigns, there is expected to

¹⁹ Abdul Razzaq Matthew Aditya, dkk. (2023). Ancaman Spionase dalam Penggunaan WhatsApp di Bidang Pertahanan Indonesia. *Jurnal Imagine*, 3 (2).

²⁰ <https://amp.kompas.com/nasional/read/2024/02/01/05150031/saat-kubu-anies-dan-ganjar-kompak-ungkap-dugaan-sabotase-bus-relawan-untuk>

²¹ *Op.cit*, Mariam Fatima Barata, *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi dan Media*.

be a mass gathering, but such fundraising efforts sometimes occur and only affect a part of the contestants.²² Many news outlets confirm this in the election of presidential and vice presidential candidates, which befell the couple Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar. Furthermore, it was also experienced by the couple Ganjar Pranowo and Mahfud MD. The National winning team (TPN) of presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD had difficulty ordering a bus to transport volunteers to a grand concert at Gelora Bung Karno (GBK). The TPN stated they had difficulty getting buses and even had a cancellation from the Autobus company (PO-PO bus). This was also confirmed by presidential candidate Number 1, Anies Baswedan, who said his party experienced an impromptu revoked venue permit in several places. Anies Baswedan stated that despite the difficulties, he believes there will be a lesson from the situation. He stressed the importance of carrying out the campaign ethically, kindly, and honestly. Anies hopes that good and correct actions in an ethical way will gain the trust of the public. The TPN Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD is checking and collecting evidence related to the difficulty of ordering the bus. They stated that this would not discourage volunteers and supporters of Ganjar-Mahfud from attending the grand concert. It is important to note that Anies Baswedan's party also experienced a unilateral cancellation regarding booking a bus that would transport his supporters to the grand campaign at The Jakarta International Stadium (JIS). Anies expressed his astonishment at the disruption and assessed it as an obstacle to the democratic process.²³ Third, the campaign of specific candidates whom other party supporters infiltrate. Generally, people present in campaigns are motivated by idealistic, emotional, or pragmatic reasons. Idealistic audiences come because they feel that the election contestant they support represents their views or aspirations. An emotional audience comes because of a particular emotional attachment to the contestant. The pragmatic audience comes for the lure of material rewards. However, now, some participants come to the opposing party's campaign to disrupt the campaign by shouting the name of the opposing party who is campaigning.²⁴ At least this was crowded, for example, when the presidential and vice presidential candidates Number 03, namely Ganjar Pranowo and Mahfud MD, carried out an open campaign that made Cak Lontong, the campaigner for candidate Number 01 became apathetic

²² <https://amp.kompas.com/nasional/read/2024/02/01/05150031/saat-kubu-anies-dan-ganjar-kompak-ungkap-dugaan-sabotase-bus-relawan-untuk>

²³ <https://news.detik.com/pemilu/d-7170090/tpn-sulit-sewa-bus-angkut-pendukung-ke-gbk-anies-ajak-pakai-cara-beretika/amp>

²⁴ <https://mediaindonesia.com/politik-dan-hukum/648111/sabotase-kampanye-akbar-bentuk-kejahatan-pemilu>

because it was attended by people who shouted at other candidates, namely O2 Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka.²⁵

These events are challenging to say to ordinary people. Generally, ordinary people are too lazy to hear about the other party's campaign. If a contestant passes in front of him and he does not like it, he can show his different political choices, but of course, he does not want to go to the other party's campaign. Moreover, coming to the mass concentration of the other party and committing the disorder raised fears of being retaliated against or counterattacked.

Fourth, there is an attempt to cover the opponent's campaign props (APK) with APK belonging to another candidate pair. A lot of circulating information is the installation of billboards deliberately covering billboards pictures of candidates or other candidate pairs. Generally, people with a sense of normality will avoid problems and do not want to disturb other people's Billboards. Baligho destruction was generally done secretly to avoid the knowledge of other parties. However, at this time, the installation of billboards covers the other party's Billboards during the day. This can be expected to be done by those who feel strong and confident because they have support. In Pasuruan, Democratic cadres covered Anies' face.²⁶ This is part of the violation in the context of election campaigns, as stipulated in Article 280 paragraph (1) letter g of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning general elections. The article prohibits election campaign organizers, participants, and teams from damaging or removing campaign props. Violation of this provision may be subject to criminal sanctions, including imprisonment with a maximum duration of 2 years and a maximum fine of IDR24,000,000.00.²⁷

As is known, campaign props refer to all forms or objects that contain a vision and mission, candidate pair programs, symbols, or signs of candidate pair images installed in the campaign framework to invite the public to vote for a particular candidate pair. The provision of campaign props can be done through facilities provided by the Provincial Election Commission (KPU) or the Aceh Independent Election Commission (KIP), or by the KPU / KIP at the district/city level financed through the regional budget, or through funding carried out independently by the candidate pair.²⁸ Several APK violations were committed by candidate pairs

²⁵ <https://www.viva.co.id/amp/trending/1685760-viral-cak-lontong-ngamuk-gegara-warga-acungkan-2-jari-di-kampanye-ganjar-mahfud>

²⁶ <https://www.detik.com/jatim/berita/d-6907707/kader-demokrat-kota-pasuruan-tutup-wajah-anies-di-baliho-dan-dicoret-fake/amp>

²⁷ Article 280 paragraph (1) letter g of Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Election

²⁸ Sidiono. (2019). Kajian Hukum Terhadap Pelanggaran Pemasangan Alat Peraga Kampanye Pemilihan Kepala Daerah dalam Menjamin Kepastian Hukum. *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 3 (2).

during the campaign period, including²⁹ The installation of campaign props outside provided by the General Election Commission (KPU), the distribution of campaign materials outside facilitated by the KPU, and the closure of campaign props for competing candidates are highlights in the implementation of election campaigns in Central Java (Jateng). This event included closing campaign props (APK), including billboards and party flags, which were accompanied by incidents of several individuals committing destructive actions such as crossing out the faces of legislative candidates or damaging billboards owned by other 2024 election participants. This conflict occurs in various areas, including Semarang, Purworejo, Batang, Kebumen, Rembang, and other areas.³⁰ Closing the opponent's APK can be done with various motives and goals, including³¹ weakening the opponent's campaign, reducing the visibility of the opponent's APK, hindering the delivery of campaign messages, and creating the impression that the opposing candidate does not have strong support. In addition, it has increased in popularity. In addition to attracting public attention in an unethical way and demonstrating the candidate's dominance and strength.

Closing your opponent's APK can have various negative impacts, including violation of campaign rules.³² Closing an opponent's APK can be categorized as violating campaign rules. Bawaslu can sanction violators. Forms of sanctions include reprimands, APK downgrades, fines, and damage to public facilities, so additional costs are required to repair damage caused by the closure of the APK.³³

In addition to carrying out the closure of the opponent's APK, the sabotage of the campaign is growing more and more due to various factors, such as the development of campaign sabotage factors, namely, the polarization of hatred. The 2024 presidential election is marked by high political polarization. This can be seen from the rampant debate and hate speech on social media, as well as demonstrations that often lead to riots.³⁴ This polarization created an atmosphere conducive to sabotage, as the opposing sides felt the need to

²⁹ Asnaniah,dkk. (2019). Penegakan Hukum terhadap Pelanggaran Pemasangan Alat Peraga Kampanye pada Pemilihan Gubernur dan Wakil Gubernur Kalimantan Timur Tahun 2018 di Kota Balikpapan. *Jurnal Lex Suprema*, 1(2).

³⁰<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2024/01/30/234812578/kampanye-pemilu-di-jateng-diwarnai-aksi-saling-tutup-alat-peragah>

³¹<https://mediaindonesia.com/politik-dan-hukum/648111/sabotase-kampanye-akbar-bentuk-kejahatan-pemilu>

³²<https://www.liputan6.com/hot/read/5078266/sabotase-adalah-perusakan-ketahui-sasaran-dan-dampaknya>

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴<https://law.ui.ac.id/permasalahan-black-campaign-dalam-pemilihan-umum-wawancara-dengan-wirdyaningsih-s-h-m-h/>

"justify all means" to win the contestation—an example of the spread of hoaxes. Once again, Anies Muhaimin's candidate was hit by this attack. In essence, Surya Paloh, Nasdem Party Chairman, scolded Anies Baswedan³⁵ for the Spread of Hoaxes³⁶ and negative propaganda about the candidate and the opposing campaign team.

Political motives are the main foundation behind the spread of false information³⁷ targeted at general election participants (elections). The purpose is to denigrate the opponent's political party, government, or incumbent, to damage the reputation of political opponents, and to spread news that contains elements of ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group (SARA), as well as the emergence of buzzers³⁸ on social media to bring down a potential opponent's partner. There is another opinion in this regard. Buzzer involvement in the public sphere significantly impacts public perception, inviting confusion among the public in relation to the validity of information, even when the information comes from supposedly credible sources such as credible media.³⁹

4. Conclusion

Political sabotage is dangerous and unethical and can damage the democratic process and political stability. This action can be carried out in various ways, aiming to weaken, inhibit, and delegitimize political opponents. Campaign sabotage by closing the opponent's APK is a serious political problem. It can harm other candidate partners. In the 2024 vice presidential election, many experienced candidate no. 01 and 03. In addition, it can be seen that Indonesian politics is no longer healthy with haphazard campaign activities. Practical prevention efforts are to inform the public that this political sabotage should not be carried out and that severe punishment should be received as stipulated in law no. 7 of 2017 on general elections. Political sabotage is not only about the destruction of the APK, the forced decline of the APK, but also about the

³⁵<https://news.detik.com/pemilu/d-7155772/viral-suara-percakapan-surya-paloh-anies-di-telepon-nasdem-tegaskan-hoax>

³⁶ Aloisius Arizendy Nugraha, dkk. (2022). Cybercrime, Pancasila, and Society: Various Challenges in the Era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. *Journal of Pancasila dan Global Constitutionalism*, 1 (2).

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https://eppid.kominfo.go.id/storage/uploads/2_40_Laporan_Isu_Hoaks_Bulanan_Maret_2019.pdf

³⁸ Abdul Razzaq Matthew Aditya, dkk. (2022). Serangan Hacking Tools sebagai Ancaman Siber dalam Sistem Pertahanan Negara (Studi Kasus: Predator). *Jurnal Program Studi Peperangan Asimetris*, 6 (1).

³⁹ Charisma Dina Wulandari, dkk. (2023). Fenomena Buzzer Di Media Sosial Jelang Pemilu 2024 Dalam Perspektif Komunikasi Politik. *Avant Garde : Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 11 (1).

behavior of irresponsible parties in obstructing other candidates' campaign process because, in essence, Democratic neutrality must be maintained.

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