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Analysis of The Decline In Votes For The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) In The 2024 Legislative Election In Salatiga City

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the causes of the decline in votes for the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Salatiga City. As a large party with a strong mass base in Central Java, especially Salatiga, the results of the 2024 legislative election showed a significant decline in support. This phenomenon is interesting to study further in order to understand the political, social, and cultural factors that influence changes in voter behavior. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews with members of the Salatiga City. Data is also strengthened through documentation and literature studies. The decline in PDIP votes in Salatiga City was influenced by several main factors. First, the political saturation of the community towards PDIP's dominance which was not accompanied by a renewal of communication and cadre strategies. Second, the weak role of local PDIP figures in responding to issues developing in the community, thus affecting the level of public trust in the party. Third, the entry of legislative candidates from other parties who were more adaptive and responsive to the needs of voters, especially among young people and marginal groups. In addition, the emergence of negative perceptions regarding transactional politics and the issue of political dowries also weakened PDIP's image in the eyes of the public. This study also found that the discontinuity between PDIP's national influence through the figure of President Joko Widodo and local dynamics in Salatiga was a weak point that was not optimally utilized by regional cadres. In this context, the party failed to carry out strong internal consolidation and build emotional relationships with voters in a sustainable manner. This study is expected to provide input for strengthening PDIP's political strategy, both structurally and culturally, as well as provide academic contributions to the study of voter behavior and local party dynamics in Indonesia.

Keyword: PDIP, 2024 Legislative Election, Decrease in Votes, Salatiga City

INTRODUCTION

The legislative general election is one of the main pillars in Indonesia's democratic system, which is regularly held to channel the political aspirations of the people through the

election of representatives (Wijaya, 2021). In the 2024 election phenomenon, various national and local political dynamics have influenced voter choice patterns, including in Salatiga City. One interesting phenomenon that emerged in this political contestation is the decline in votes experienced by the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), a political party previously known to have a strong mass base in this region. Salatiga City, as one of the autonomous regions in Central Java Province, has a significant number of potential voters in every general election. In the 2024 election, the Salatiga City General Election Commission (KPU) established the Final Voter List (DPT) at 146,267 people. This number then increased to 149,477 people in the 2024 Regional Head Election (Pilkada), reflecting an addition of 3,210 voters. This increase was influenced by several factors, including first-time voters, new residents, as well as members of the military (TNI) and police (Polri) entering retirement. Voter participation in Salatiga also showed a relatively high figure, with a participation rate reaching 89% in the 2024 election. This data illustrates the high enthusiasm of the Salatiga community in exercising their voting rights, making the city an important barometer in the regional political landscape.

PDIP, as a party with a nationalist ideology, has played an important role in both national and regional political arenas (Merentek et al., 2023). Historically, this party has had a strong track record in Salatiga, both in legislative seat acquisition and executive control. However, in the 2024 Legislative Election, there was a significant decline in the number of votes obtained by PDIP, both quantitatively and in terms of representation percentage. This raises various questions regarding the causes and underlying factors. This vote decline certainly cannot be separated from various interrelated factors, such as changes in voter preferences, the emergence of new parties, the effectiveness of political campaigns, and the internal dynamics of the party itself. In addition, shifts in voter demographics, particularly among the younger generation who tend to be more critical and independent in their choices, also had a significant impact on the election results (Ariandi & Harsasto, 2019). Therefore, it is important to examine this phenomenon more deeply and comprehensively.

One early indication that can be observed is the weakening of the emotional connection between PDIP and its traditional mass base in Salatiga. In recent years, the party has been seen as less capable of conducting cadre consolidation and regeneration optimally, resulting in a gap between the party and its constituents. In addition, local issues that touch on the basic needs of the people such as public services, unemployment, and social welfare have also become considerations in determining the political choices of the community. It cannot be denied that political communication strategies and the leadership style of party elites at the local level also influence public perception. The mismatch between public expectations and the policies offered by the party can lead to a decline in public trust (Abon Ronaldi & Bakti, 2023). On the other hand, the success of competing parties in building a positive image and offering work programs that are more relevant to the needs of the community has become a competitive factor that also drives the shift in votes.

The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) is a major political party with deep historical roots in Indonesia's democratic journey. PDIP emerged as a continuation of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), which was formed during the New Order era through the fusion of several nationalist and Christian parties (Korompis et al., 2022). After experiencing internal conflict in the early 1990s, Megawati Soekarnoputri took over the party leadership and established PDI Perjuangan as a form of resistance against the New Order government's interference in party affairs. PDIP then transformed into a symbol of resistance against authoritarianism and emerged as a major force in the Reform Era. Since the 1998 reform, PDIP has consistently positioned itself as a top-tier party on the national political stage. In the 1999 election, PDIP became the winner with the highest number of votes, reflecting the strong public support for reformist ideas and the symbolism of Megawati as

Soekarno's heir. Although the party experienced ups and downs in several subsequent elections, it managed to maintain its existence as one of the largest and most influential parties in Indonesia, both in the legislature and in executive contests (Nurdiaman et al., 2019).

Throughout its journey, PDIP has not been free from internal conflicts that have colored the party's dynamics. Elite rivalries, cadre development issues, and the challenge of maintaining party ideology have posed ongoing tests. Several events—such as regional leadership conflicts, disagreements between local and central cadres, and the nomination of regional head candidates that conflicted with grassroots aspirations—have caused frictions affecting the party's image and internal cohesion (Prihatmoko & Riyanto, 2023). These issues are important to examine further, especially in local contexts such as Salatiga, where cadre unity is key to electoral success. PDIP's resurgence gained new momentum in 2014 when it successfully brought Joko Widodo (Jokowi) to the presidency of the Republic of Indonesia. Jokowi's simple, populist persona—far removed from the party's old elitism—successfully won the sympathy of the broader public, especially young voters and the middle class (Purnomo & H, 2019). This success was further solidified in the 2019 election, when Jokowi was re-elected for a second term. Jokowi's leadership period brought a new image to PDIP as a modern party capable of endorsing progressive leaders who support development.

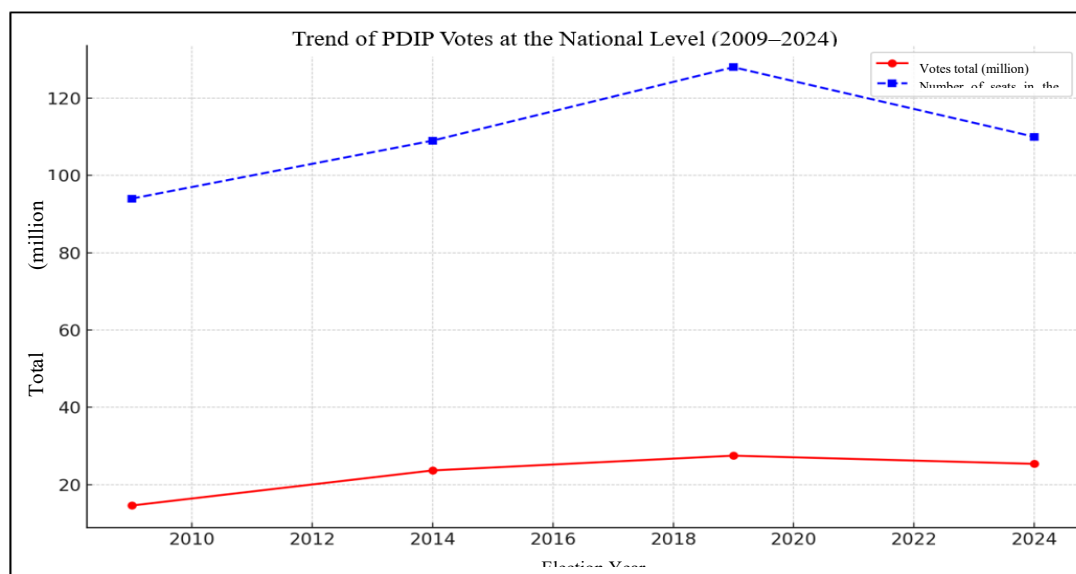
On the other hand, Jokowi's victory also presented unique challenges for PDIP. Although Jokowi is a PDIP cadre, in practice he has not always aligned with the party's maneuvers, particularly in policy-making and political reconciliation. This has created the impression of a gap between executive power and the party's structural leadership. Nevertheless, PDIP continued to reap electoral benefits from Jokowi's popularity, including in the legislative elections, particularly in 2014 and 2019.

Table 1. PDIP Vote Trend at the National Level (2009–2024)

Election Year	Number of Valid Votes for PDIP	National Vote Percentage (%)	Number of Seats in the House of Representatives (DPR RI)	Percentage of DPR RI Seats (%)
2009	14,600,091	14.03%	94 seats	16.8%
2014	23,681,471	18.95%	109 seats	19.46%
2019	27,053,961	19.33%	128 seats	22.24%
2024	25,387,279	16.72%	110 seats	19.13%

Source: Processed data from <https://www.pinterpolitik.com/>

Figure 1. Table of PDIP Vote Trends at the National Level (2009–2024)



However, in the 2024 General Election, when Jokowi was no longer running for president, a major challenge emerged. PDIP had to compete without a strong central figure like Jokowi. Although Ganjar Pranowo was nominated as the presidential candidate, the results of the 2024 Presidential and Legislative Elections showed a significant decline in votes in various regions, including the City of Salatiga. This situation indicates that dependence on Jokowi's figure was not successfully balanced by strengthening the party structure and widespread grassroots cadre regeneration.

1. Political Parties

Political parties are one of the main institutions in modern democratic systems, playing a crucial role as intermediaries between society and the state. According to Budiardjo (2010), a political party is an organization formed voluntarily by a group of citizens with the aim of gaining political power and attaining political positions through constitutional means such as general elections. Political parties serve a primary function as a platform for articulating and aggregating the interests of society, as well as acting as a vehicle for recruiting future leaders to occupy public offices. Through political parties, citizens can channel their political aspirations and participate in public decision-making processes.

In the political system theory developed by Easton (1965), political parties are part of the input subsystem that functions to process the demands and support of the people into the governmental system. Political parties play a role in converting public aspirations and interests into concrete policies through legislative and executive channels. When political parties fail to carry out this function effectively, public dissatisfaction may arise, which in turn impacts the legitimacy of the party itself. In the case of PDIP in Salatiga, the decline in party votes in the legislative elections can be viewed as the party's inability to appropriately respond to the needs and expectations of its constituents.

In addition, Maurice Duverger, in his theory on party organizational structure, stated that the success of a political party is largely determined by how well the party can build a strong grassroots network and maintain a well-organized internal structure. Political parties that fail to maintain communication and consistency with their voter base are vulnerable to losing support in the long term. From a scientific perspective, Schattschneider (1942) emphasized that modern democracy cannot function without political parties. He stated that "modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of political parties," highlighting the central role of parties in a representative democratic system. Political parties act as a bridge between the people's will and state policies, and also serve as a medium for shaping public opinion.

In the context of Indonesia, political parties also carry a strategic role in the post-reform democratic consolidation process, especially in stabilizing the political system and broadening public participation in national development (Tanjung, 2016). Thus, the definition of a political party is not limited to organizations that compete in elections, but also includes educational, representative, and integrative functions in national life. This role becomes crucial to study in the framework of research on declining party votes, as the weakening of party functions can directly affect public trust and lead to a decrease in votes in general elections, as experienced by the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) in the City of Salatiga during the 2024 Legislative Election.

2. Generational Theory

Generational theory is a sociological and psychological approach that seeks to explain differences in behavior, values, and mindsets based on an individual's period of birth. This concept is based on the assumption that the social, economic, and political conditions of a particular era have a significant influence on shaping the character of individuals born and raised during that time (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, each generation is believed to possess a

distinct collective identity, formed by shared historical experiences that set them apart from other generations. One of the key figures in the development of generational theory is Karl Mannheim, a sociologist who introduced the idea that generations are formed through shared historical experiences, not merely chronological age (Sabian Usman, 2009). In his essay *The Problem of Generations*, Mannheim explains that generations are a social construct formed when individuals undergo major events at a specific developmental stage in their lives. Thus, generations should be understood as sociocultural entities, not merely age groups.

Over time, generational theory has been used to classify individuals into several categories, such as Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1980), Millennials or Generation Y (1981–1996), and Generation Z (1997–2012). Each generation has unique characteristics shaped by environmental influences, technology, education, and specific collective experiences. For example, Generation Z has grown up in the digital era and tends to adapt to technology more quickly than previous generations. Understanding generational theory has important implications across various sectors, including education, the workplace, marketing, and politics. In the workplace, for instance, differences in values and expectations between generations can lead to friction but may also provide opportunities for complementary collaboration (Sulistiyowati, 2011). Organizations that can effectively manage generational diversity are better prepared to face modern challenges and achieve competitive advantage.

However, generational theory is not without criticism. Some academics argue that generational classifications oversimplify human complexity and tend to generalize behavior based solely on year of birth. Factors such as local culture, social class, education, and individual life experiences often play a more decisive role than generational affiliation alone (Soerjono Soekanto, 2011). Nevertheless, generational theory remains relevant as a starting framework for understanding social dynamics between age groups in the context of ongoing societal change.

3. Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP)

The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) is a political party born out of the long historical struggle of the Indonesian people, especially in the post-Reformation era (Merentek et al., 2023). PDIP traces its roots to the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), which was formed from a merger of several nationalist and Christian political parties during the New Order period—namely the Indonesian National Party (PNI), the Indonesian Christian Party (Parkindo), the Catholic Party, Murba Party, and IPKI. This merger took place in 1973 as part of the political party simplification initiative launched by the New Order regime. However, over time, PDI operated under restricted political space due to government pressure. Political tensions within PDI reached a peak in 1996 when a leadership dualism emerged between Megawati Soekarnoputri and Soerjadi. The New Order government at that time did not recognize Megawati's leadership and forcibly supported Soerjadi through a controversial Extraordinary Congress. This event triggered the July 27, 1996 riots at the PDI headquarters in Jakarta, later known as "Kudatuli" (July 27 Incident). This moment solidified Megawati's position as a symbol of resistance against the authoritarian New Order regime (Simamora Michael et al., 2024).

Following the 1998 Reformation that toppled Suharto's rule, Megawati and her supporters declared the establishment of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), continuing the spirit of the people's struggle for democracy. PDIP officially registered as an election participant and emerged as a major political force in the 1999 General Election. In that election, PDIP received the most votes and secured 153 seats in the House of Representatives (DPR), making it the first election-winning party in the Reform era. However, Megawati did not immediately become president due to political compromises that

avored Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) as the 4th President of the Republic of Indonesia (Nurdiaman et al., 2019). PDIP's rise continued when Megawati became president in 2001 after Gus Dur was removed from office by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) through a Special Session. Megawati's presidency (2001–2004) was a crucial period in consolidating PDIP's power as a nationalist party based on the ideology of Pancasila and Bung Karno's Trisakti principles. However, in the 2004 General Election, PDIP experienced a significant decline in votes, and Megawati failed to be re-elected, losing to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Despite this, PDIP remained consistent in maintaining its mass base, especially in areas known as strongholds, such as Central Java, Bali, and large parts of East Java. PDIP's resurgence came in the 2014 and 2019 elections, where the party nominated Joko Widodo (Jokowi), former mayor of Solo and governor of Jakarta, as its presidential candidate. Jokowi won two presidential terms with strong support from PDIP, becoming the first president from outside the party elite fully supported by PDIP. Jokowi's victory was a milestone in PDIP's history, signifying the party's success in building a populist image, modern appeal, and a more open political approach (Korompis et al., 2022). Under Jokowi, PDIP also underwent internal reforms in cadre development, digital campaigning, and ideological strengthening through political education at the grassroots level. Nevertheless, internal dynamics continued, especially in facing the contestation of future national leaders in the post-Jokowi era—a major challenge for PDIP in maintaining cohesion and electability.

To this day, PDIP remains a party with a solid organizational structure, militant cadres, and a long history in Indonesian political struggle. However, like any major party, PDIP is not immune to the tests of time, such as leadership regeneration challenges, elite internal conflicts, and declining support in several regions during the 2024 General Election, including the City of Salatiga. Therefore, understanding PDIP's history is essential for interpreting its future direction as a national political force expected to remain the backbone of Indonesia's democracy.

4. General Elections (Pemilu)

General Elections (Pemilu) are a fundamental instrument in modern democratic systems that grant citizens the right to choose their leaders and representatives through a process that is direct, general, free, confidential, honest, and fair (Dian Isfiana et al., 2022). In Indonesia, elections symbolize the sovereignty of the people, as stipulated in Article 1, Paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that "Sovereignty is in the hands of the people and is exercised according to the Constitution." In other words, through elections, the people become the highest authority, capable of choosing and evaluating national leaders and legislative representatives who will represent their interests (Abdullah, 2012). Elections in Indonesia take several forms: Legislative Elections, Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections, and Regional Head Elections (Pilkada). In legislative elections, citizens vote for members of the House of Representatives (DPR), the Regional Representative Council (DPD), and the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). Meanwhile, in executive elections, citizens elect the President and Vice President directly every five years (Achmad, 2015). In Pilkada, the public votes for regional heads such as governors, regents, and mayors.

The entire electoral process is organized by the General Elections Commission (KPU), an independent state institution responsible for the technical implementation and regulation of elections. Over time, elections in Indonesia have faced various dynamics and challenges, both in technical implementation, public participation, and the political integrity of election participants. Among the recurring issues are money politics, black campaigns, and a lack of political education for the public (Tjantje Tjiptabudi, 2014). These issues often result in

democratic processes that do not reflect rational decision-making. Therefore, enhancing political literacy and implementing strict supervision by election monitoring bodies are crucial to upholding the integrity of elections as a healthy democratic mechanism (Nurhidayat, 2016).

Moreover, elections in Indonesia serve as a competitive arena for political parties striving to maintain their existence amidst fluctuating public trust. Often, election results reflect a party's success or failure in managing cadre development, campaign strategies, and building a people-oriented political image (Puspoyo, 2012). For instance, the decline in votes experienced by several major parties during the 2024 General Election in some regions indicates a shift in political preferences among an increasingly dynamic and critical electorate. This phenomenon suggests that public trust is now influenced not merely by a figure's popularity, but also by track records, performance, and proposed programs.

5. Legislative Institutions

The legislative institution is one of the main pillars in a democratic system of governance, with its primary function being the formation of laws (Aswandi, 2015). In Indonesia, the legislative body consists of several levels: the House of Representatives (DPR) at the national level, the Regional Representative Council (DPD) representing regional interests, and the Regional People's Representative Councils (DPRD) at the provincial and city/regency levels (Siswanto Sunarso, 2005). These institutions represent the voice of the people, elected through general elections held every five years. As the people's representatives, legislative bodies play a key role in the system of checks and balances within the government. Constitutionally, the duties and authorities of legislative institutions are stipulated in the 1945 Constitution and elaborated through various statutory regulations. The three main functions of the legislature include legislation (law-making), budgeting, and oversight (Maha Shania Tara Gusmoi et al., 2023). In its legislative function, the body has the authority to draft, discuss, and ratify laws together with the president. In its budgeting role, it discusses and approves the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN) or Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD). Meanwhile, the oversight function enables the legislature to monitor the implementation of laws and the performance of the government.

The presence of the legislative body is crucial in maintaining government accountability and transparency. Through its oversight role, the legislature can demand accountability from the executive regarding various implemented policies (Aman, 2019). It can also form special committees (*pansus*) or working committees (*panja*) to investigate issues deemed critical by the public. Additionally, the legislature has the authority to convey public aspirations through mechanisms such as public hearings and recess visits by council members to their constituencies. However, in practice, the legislature faces several criticisms and challenges, including the low quality of legislation, minimal public involvement in policymaking, and issues surrounding the ethics and integrity of its members (Huda, 2011). Problems such as transactional politics, elite domination within parties, and corruption frequently tarnish the image of the legislative institution. Therefore, institutional reforms, strengthening the role of political parties, and improving the capacity and integrity of legislators are strategic steps toward restoring public trust in the legislative body.

At the regional level, the legislative institution—known as the DPRD—faces its own unique challenges, as it must bridge local interests with national policy. DPRD members are expected to be active representatives who advocate for the needs of their local communities (Tarjono, 2019). Collaboration between the DPRD and regional heads such as mayors or regents is key to producing synergistic and pro-people regional policies. Hence, it is essential for the public to elect representatives who are competent, have integrity, and clearly advocate for public interests. With its strategic functions, the legislature in Indonesia is expected not

only to act as a mere "rubber stamp" for the executive, but to fulfill its duties independently, critically, and constructively. In a healthy democracy, the legislature plays a decisive role in shaping national policies, ensuring good governance, and protecting citizens' rights (Cristina, 2019). Therefore, revitalizing the legislative body is crucial to strengthening substantive democracy in Indonesia.

METHOD

The approach used in this research is the Mixed Method approach. Mixed Method research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches integratively within a single study. The purpose of this approach is to obtain a more comprehensive, in-depth, and balanced picture of the phenomenon being studied. In the context of this research, the mixed method approach is used to gain a broader understanding of the decline in votes for the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Salatiga City, both from the statistical election data side and from the social-political perceptions and dynamics among the community and party elites (Koentjaraningrat, 1997). The main focus, however, is on an in-depth understanding of the data, starting from the stages of reduction, presentation, verification, to drawing conclusions. In this context, the data is analyzed more deeply and contextually. This means that the researcher not only considers numbers or statistics but also tries to understand the meaning behind the data.

The quantitative approach will be used to analyze election results data, such as PDIP's vote acquisition, comparisons between parties, and the permanent voter list (DPT) data in Salatiga City. This statistical analysis will help provide an objective picture related to the numerical decline in votes. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach is conducted by exploring information through in-depth interviews with informants. This information will enrich the researcher's understanding of local political dynamics, internal party conflicts, and public perceptions of PDIP. The use of mixed methods allows the researcher to perform data triangulation, which means comparing and integrating results from quantitative and qualitative approaches to increase the validity and credibility of research findings. Additionally, this approach provides flexibility in understanding the relationship between statistical figures and the socio-political context underlying them. Thus, the mixed method is a relevant and effective approach to comprehensively answer the research problem formulation (Nasution, 2013). Therefore, the qualitative approach in this research emphasizes deep analysis, understanding, and data interpretation as a means to explore a richer and more contextual understanding of the phenomenon being studied. This approach forms the foundation for developing this paper by emphasizing more substantive aspects rather than merely statistical calculations or number-based data (Moleong, 2004:43).

Qualitative research can be conceptualized as an exploratory process based on various methodological research traditions. Its purpose is to gain an in-depth understanding of social or human issues. Within the qualitative research framework, the researcher strives to form a complex and holistic perspective, analyze the meaning in words, document detailed views from sources, and conduct research in a natural environment context (Creswell, 2010). This study views the case study approach as the core method adopted. This approach allows the researcher to thoroughly explore a predetermined issue, following predefined data collection guidelines. The use of a qualitative case study approach in this research aims to gain an in-depth and objective understanding of the research focus.

The focus of the qualitative research in this study is to deeply understand the factors causing the decline in votes for the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Salatiga City. The study does not only highlight electoral aspects but also explores internal party dynamics, public perceptions of PDIP's performance and political communication, and the role of local figures in influencing the political choices of

the community. Through a qualitative approach, this research aims to reveal meanings, experiences, and views of political actors, party cadres, and voters via in-depth interviews and participatory observation, resulting in a deep understanding of the socio-political reality behind the decline in support for PDIP in the area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Internal Factors Causing the Decline in PDIP Votes

The decline in votes for the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) in Salatiga City during the 2024 Legislative Election cannot be separated from various internal factors affecting the party's performance in the eyes of the public. As a major party that has long had a strong voter base, this decline indicates a shift in support due to weak internal consolidation and suboptimal implementation of political strategies at the grassroots level. The party's internal condition reflects PDIP's strength and readiness to respond to the changing local political dynamics.

One major factor under scrutiny is the declining militancy and loyalty of party cadres. PDIP cadres in several areas of Salatiga City are considered less active in political work such as socializing the party's vision and mission, assisting residents, and consolidating traditional voter bases. Cadres, who should be the spearhead of the party in conveying programs and aspirations, have not maximized their roles. This has caused PDIP to lose emotional closeness with its constituents.

Additionally, internal conflicts within the party have become a crucial cause. Rivalries among local elites to gain strategic positions on the legislative candidate list have caused friction that results in divided support within the party. Some cadres feel sidelined and excluded from the candidate selection process, choosing to be passive or even not fully support the party's machinery in the election. Such conflicts create disunity and weaken the party's collective movement on the ground. Below are the interview results with a member of Salatiga's community, Safira:

Interview Table 1: Respondent 1

Question	Respondent's Answer
1. According to you, what is the main internal factor causing the decline in PDIP votes?	<i>One internal factor is the lack of solidarity among cadres at the grassroots level. Some cadres are inactive and do not perform their roles optimally in the community.</i>
2. How do you assess internal communication within PDIP?	<i>Communication between the party structures at the central, regional, and grassroots levels sometimes does not run smoothly. There are still miscommunications causing programs from the top to not be well conveyed to the community.</i>
3. Are PDIP cadres in Salatiga responsive enough to the community's needs?	<i>Not all. Some are active, but many only appear around election time. This causes the community to feel neglected and eventually turn to other parties that are more active throughout the year.</i>
4. How do you evaluate the performance of PDIP legislative members in Salatiga?	<i>Some perform well, but others' results are less visible. The community wants council members who truly work and come directly to the people, not just appear in the media or during campaigns.</i>
5. Are PDIP's work programs considered relevant by the community?	<i>Some programs are good, like education and health assistance, but sometimes they are not implemented consistently. There is an impression that these programs only intensify before elections.</i>
6. How do you assess the	<i>PDIP is known as a pro-people party, but in practice, it sometimes</i>

consistency of PDIP's ideology in Salatiga? *does not reflect that. There is a gap between the ideology promoted and the practice in the field, especially by certain cadres.*

The performance of PDIP representatives during the previous period also reflected public perception. Some PDIP legislative members were seen as less active in absorbing aspirations and not providing significant contributions to regional development. This disappointment directly impacted public trust in PDIP as the political representation of the people in the legislature. The public tends to seek alternatives considered more responsive and aligned with their interests. On the other hand, PDIP was viewed as lacking innovation in campaign strategies. The campaign pattern, which tends to be conventional and repetitive, was considered unable to attract young voters' attention. In the context of Salatiga City, which has a significant number of millennial voters, the lack of digital approaches and fresh narratives caused PDIP to lag behind other parties more adaptive to social media and current issues.

The lack of leadership regeneration also remains an unresolved internal issue. PDIP tends to maintain old figures who have run several times, while potential young cadres are not given space to appear. The absence of new faces makes PDIP appear stagnant and unable to keep up with the changing times demanding renewal and a spirit of change. Weaknesses in managing internal resources also influenced the situation. Lack of cadre training, weak coordination among branch administrators, and inadequate logistical support and regional mapping strategies caused PDIP not to optimally reach all layers of society. This shows that the party's management system still needs comprehensive improvements to compete with other parties that are better organized and more responsive.

Overall, the internal factors causing the decline in PDIP votes in Salatiga include weak cadre militancy, internal conflicts, lack of campaign innovation, declining legislative performance, and minimal leadership regeneration. This condition is an important evaluation for PDIP to conduct structural and cultural improvements within the party. Without internal improvement, PDIP will increasingly struggle to maintain its existence as a major party locally, especially heading toward the next election.

Analysis of External Factors Causing the Decline in PDIP Votes

The decline in PDIP votes in the 2024 Legislative Election in Salatiga was not only triggered by internal party issues but also influenced by several external factors that played a major role in shaping voter preferences. Local political dynamics, changes in voter behavior, and increasingly strong competition among political parties are part of the complex causes behind the decrease in PDIP's vote share. This indicates that the external environment also creates significant pressure on the party's electoral performance. One of the most prominent external factors is the increased strength and appeal of competing political parties. In the 2024 election, several other parties successfully exploited political opportunities to expand their support base, especially among young and rational voters. They came with more innovative campaign strategies, more personalized approaches, and mastery of relevant local issues. This caused a political shift among voters who were previously loyal to PDIP.

Moreover, changing voter mindsets and behaviors also influenced the election results. Voters today are more critical and rational in making choices, not solely based on historical affiliation or emotional closeness to a party. Voters tend to evaluate the track record, competence of legislative candidates, and the effectiveness of offered programs, forcing parties to work harder to prove their performance. PDIP, in this regard, was considered by some not to have provided sufficient innovation to meet new voter expectations. The role of social media and digital technology is also an important external factor influencing political campaign dynamics. New parties and PDIP competitors generally are more adaptive and

aggressive in using digital platforms for campaigning. They use social media to build images, interact directly with voters, and quickly and massively convey programs. Meanwhile, PDIP is seen as still conservative in its digital communication approach, thus losing out in reaching millennial and Gen Z groups that dominate the voter population.

The social and economic environment of Salatiga residents is also an aspect influencing political preferences. Dissatisfaction among some people regarding local economic conditions, limited job opportunities, and rising living costs has generated criticism of the ruling parties. Although not entirely within PDIP's responsibility, as the party supporting the national government, negative perceptions are also attributed to PDIP. As a result, people choose alternatives they believe can bring change.

Table 2 : Interview Results Respondent 2

Question	Respondent's Answer
1. Are there any external factors influencing the decline in PDIP votes in Salatiga?	<i>Yes, one of them is the increasing public trust in new parties that offer a fresh face and a more modern approach that directly addresses local needs.</i>
2. How does social media influence voters' opinions about PDIP?	<i>Social media has a very large influence. Many negative information or criticism of PDIP goes viral and affects public perception, especially among the youth who are very active on social media.</i>
3. Does the central government's performance also impact PDIP's electability in the region?	<i>It has a very strong impact. When there are unpopular central government policies, such as fuel price increases or corruption issues, the public immediately associates them with PDIP as the ruling party.</i>
4. How significant is the influence of other parties' campaigns in lowering PDIP votes?	<i>Quite significant. Other parties often use sensitive national and local issues to criticize PDIP. They are also more aggressive in going to the field and offering fresher and more specific programs for the people of Salatiga.</i>
5. What role do community or religious leaders play in shaping the political choices of residents?	<i>Religious and community leaders have a strong influence, especially in areas that still uphold cultural and religious values. If respected leaders lean toward other parties, the people follow, including avoiding PDIP.</i>
6. Does the level of voter participation also affect PDIP's results?	<i>Yes. Many voters abstain because they are tired of political promises or feel there is no significant change. This certainly affects PDIP's vote count because some of them are passive supporters who no longer vote.</i>

The table explains that the influence of community leaders, religious figures, and local communities is a factor that cannot be ignored. In the context of Salatiga, which has high heterogeneity and strong social traditions, the voices of informal leaders significantly determine the direction of voters' choices. If these leaders are not among PDIP supporters, the potential for a decline in votes will increase. Especially if they actively direct their support to other parties, the domino effect will be strongly felt. The national socio-political situation also creates a coattail effect that sometimes disadvantages PDIP at the regional level. Political tensions at the national level, controversial issues involving party elites, and the rise of anti-government sentiments can trigger reactions at the local level. Some voters decide no longer to support PDIP because they are disappointed with national policies associated with the party. Moreover, the increasingly open election process, with abundant

spaces for dialogue, public debates, and citizen forums, provides voters greater access to information. Other parties take advantage of this space to sharply criticize PDIP, raise unresolved issues, and offer more concrete alternative programs. This triggers a tight competition of ideas and concepts, which PDIP cannot always respond to effectively.

Overall, the external factors causing the decline in PDIP votes in Salatiga include strong political competition, changes in voter behavior, the influence of digital media, socio-economic conditions of the community, and national sentiment toward the government. All these factors are interrelated and reinforce each other, creating serious pressure on PDIP's position in the public eye. To face these challenges, PDIP needs to develop a new approach that is more optimal, adaptive, and based on the real needs of the community in order to regain voter trust in the future.

The Role of Cadres and Local Figures in PDIP's Electoral Dynamics

The role of cadres and local figures is key to maintaining consistent support for PDIP in various regions, including Salatiga. In the electoral dynamics over the past two decades, party cadres have not only acted as implementers of political programs but also as the main link between the party and grassroots communities. The presence of cadres who are active, responsive, and socially close is an important asset for PDIP to maintain its electability, especially in strategic areas like Salatiga, which is known for its dynamic political diversity. Below is the interview result with community figure Fajar Budi:

Table 3 : Interview 3

Question	Respondent's Answer
1. In your opinion, who are the most influential PDIP figures affecting people's choices in Salatiga?	Ganjar Pranowo and Jokowi are very influential, especially because both are known to be close to the people and have many programs that are directly felt by the community.
2. Are local figures like Bambang Patjul well known by the community?	Yes, he is quite well known among the community. He often attends community events and is responsive to the needs of residents.
3. How do PDIP cadres in your area act during campaigns or outside election periods?	Some cadres are active and often involved in neighborhood or social activities, but some only appear near elections. People usually trust cadres who are present outside of campaign times.
4. Do people feel direct benefits from PDIP programs through its cadres or figures?	Some residents feel social assistance or activities like cheap markets organized by PDIP cadres. However, others feel these activities are unevenly distributed or only target certain groups.
5. What is your view on the presence of figures like General Andika Perkasa in PDIP's image?	Andika's presence gives the impression that PDIP is now more open to professional and authoritative figures. This is important so nationalist or military voters can also be attracted to PDIP.
6. What are your hopes for PDIP cadres and local figures going forward?	I hope they will more often go down to the community, not just during elections. There must be a consistent approach so residents feel cared for and not just used as votes every five years.

One of the national figures who has significantly influenced PDIP's image is Joko Widodo (Jokowi). Although he comes from Solo, Jokowi's electoral inspiration reaches Salatiga. His leadership style, which is populist, simple, and focused on infrastructure development and pro-people programs, makes him a central figure who brings fresh air to PDIP's image. This figure is often associated with PDIP's success in regaining public trust,

especially among middle and lower-class voters. Besides Jokowi, Ganjar Pranowo also holds strong influence, especially as the Governor of Central Java for two terms. Ganjar is known for his flexible, firm communication style and closeness to the younger generation. On several occasions, his accommodating approach to criticism and public aspirations has strengthened the community's sympathy towards PDIP. In Salatiga, many Ganjar volunteers actively contribute to social-political activities and strengthen PDIP's local networks.

The name Bambang Patjul is quite well known among Salatiga residents. As a senior PDIP cadre active in the region, his role in advocating community aspirations and directly conveying them to party structures makes him an important bridge in electoral dynamics. Bambang Patjul is known as a figure who diligently goes to the field and oversees various social programs. He is also often a resource person in public discussions related to the party's role and regional development. Meanwhile, General (Ret.) Andika Perkasa, although better known nationally and within military circles, also exerts electoral influence through his affiliation with PDIP on some political occasions. As a figure regarded as firm and professional, Andika Perkasa represents PDIP's openness to figures with non-political backgrounds. In Salatiga, the rational and nationalist voter segment has begun to notice PDIP because of the appearance of figures like Andika who give a reformist and progressive impression.

The role of these figures certainly does not stand alone but is integrated into the collective work of party cadres in the field. Young PDIP cadres in Salatiga are being directed to emulate the examples of these national figures. They have started innovating digital campaigns, social service programs, and public discussion activities to attract the sympathy of young voters. This proves that PDIP's electoral success depends not only on central figures but also on the local cadres' ability to manage and continue strong leadership values.

Moreover, collaboration between national and local figures creates effective synergy. For example, when Ganjar Pranowo makes a working visit to Salatiga, many local cadres use the momentum to consolidate and educate politically. The role of local figures in welcoming and following up on directives from national figures reflects the party's loyalty and structural readiness to meet electoral needs. However, not all cadres are able to play an optimal role. Some cases show cadres who are only active near elections or lack emotional closeness with the community, which ultimately reduces public trust in the party. Therefore, regeneration of cadres with integrity and performance-based qualities is an urgent need to maintain PDIP's electoral support continuity, especially amid increasingly competitive political contests.

Going forward, PDIP in Salatiga needs to more intensively facilitate cadre training, strengthen participatory political communication, and continue to nurture potential local figures. The presence of national figures such as Jokowi, Ganjar, Bambang Patjul, and Andika Perkasa should be an inspiration in building an optimal and responsive local leadership model. The integration of national popularity and local grassroots strength will become a solid foundation in facing upcoming elections. Thus, PDIP's electoral dynamics in Salatiga are largely determined by how cadres and local figures can meet public expectations concretely. The role of grounded figures like Jokowi and Ganjar, combined with regional cadres like Bambang Patjul and alternative national figures such as Andika Perkasa, gives a unique character and driving force to strengthen PDIP's electoral base. Amid tight political competition, the party's success will largely depend on the quality of its cadres and figures.

Evaluation of PDIP's Political Strategy in the 2024 Election

The 2024 Legislative Election becomes an important momentum to evaluate the political strategy of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), especially in Salatiga. As a party that previously dominated votes in this region, the 2024 election results show a significant decline in PDIP's vote share. This pushes for a deep evaluation of the

political strategies applied, both in terms of planning, implementation, and response to voter dynamics.

In general, PDIP's political strategy in Salatiga still relies on conventional approaches emphasizing the strength of party structural networks, old loyalists, and ideological image as a nationalist party. This approach has proven quite effective in previous election periods. However, in the context of the 2024 elections, which are full of changes in voter demographics and information technology development, this approach seems to be losing appeal, especially among younger generations.

In political communication, PDIP is considered less adaptive to digital trends. The party's campaigns are still predominantly conducted face-to-face without strong support from political digital marketing strategies. Meanwhile, political competitors have already utilized social media, podcasts, and other digital platforms to reach millennial and Gen Z voters. As a result, PDIP's communication reach is limited and less relevant to the lifestyle of today's voters.

The strategy of selecting legislative candidates (caleg) also becomes an aspect that needs evaluation. In the 2024 elections, many old cadres were nominated again, although some lack a strong track record in building relationships with constituents. The lack of regeneration of potential young cadres makes PDIP look stagnant and less fresh in the eyes of voters. This weakens the party's competitiveness in attracting new voters looking for energetic and visionary leaders.

Moreover, PDIP also faces challenges in maintaining internal solidarity. Non-transparent candidate selection processes, internal conflicts among cadres, and dissatisfaction at the branch management level contribute to weakening the party's grassroots strength. The consolidation strategy implemented is not optimal, resulting in friction that affects support during campaigns.

Table 4. Analysis of the Evaluation of PDIP's Political Strategy in the 2024 Election in Salatiga City

Political Strategy Aspect	Implementation in Salatiga City	Weaknesses/Issues	Improvement Recommendations
National Figure Approach (Ganjar, Jokowi)	Using Ganjar's image as presidential candidate and Jokowi as a symbol of development success	Unable to attract enough critical young voters or swing voters	Needs to be combined with digital approaches and local issues
Cadre and Party Structural Consolidation	Mobilizing cadres down to the village level for campaigning	Lack of young cadres and weak regeneration of cadres at the branch level	Conduct regular cadre training and recruit potential young cadres
Social and Economic Programs (Cheap market, social assistance)	Delivered before elections and during community activities	Considered temporary and only appearing before elections	Need program continuity outside election periods
Digital Campaign and Social Media	Limited and not optimal, only a few active sympathizer accounts	Outperformed by other parties more aggressive on digital media	Need a creative digital team actively crafting political narratives locally and nationally
Local Political Coalition and Relations	Coalition with local figures and parties on a small scale	Not strong enough to counter solid opposition in some districts	Build long-term strategic coalitions and strengthen inter-party communication

Role of Local Figures (Bambang Patjul, senior cadre)	Used for community and neighborhood approaches	Less able to attract young generation's sympathy	Involve young local figures and creative communities in party activities
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Evaluation of the issues raised in the campaign also shows that PDIP has not been able to build a grounded and contextual narrative aligned with the local needs of the Salatiga community. The nationalism and sustainable development issues raised by the party tend to be too general and do not touch on specific local community problems such as unemployment, MSMEs, food security, and access to education. This results in PDIP's campaign lacking resonance with voters who want real and fast solutions.

Meanwhile, in terms of relations with the community, PDIP tends to rely solely on historical and emotional ties, without efforts to renew communication approaches that are more participatory. In an increasingly open democratic climate, this approach is no longer sufficient. Communities now demand transparency, two-way dialogue, and measurable and evaluable program commitments. PDIP's absence in citizen forums and minimal response to local viral issues become weak points that cannot be ignored. The party also needs to evaluate the structure of the winning team and the effectiveness of the party machinery. Some subdistrict and village level administrators are reported to be passive or lack adequate managerial capacity in mobilizing mass support. The lack of training, facilitation, and motivation from the higher levels causes the party structure at the lower levels to be less productive in carrying out campaign functions

CONCLUSION

From the thesis research study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The conclusion from this study shows that the decline in votes for the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) in the 2024 Legislative Election in Salatiga City cannot be separated from the complex interaction between internal and external factors of the party. Internally, weak cadre consolidation at the grassroots level, lack of leadership regeneration, and a monotonous campaign strategy are the main causes of PDIP's declining appeal among the community. In addition, local cadres who are inactive outside the campaign period create a distance between the party and constituents, thereby lowering public trust in PDIP. Senior cadres such as Bambang Patjul still have influence but lack support from young figures who can reach millennial and Gen Z voters, whose numbers are becoming increasingly significant.
2. Externally, the strengthening of competing parties with more creative digital campaign strategies that are responsive to local issues is a major challenge for PDIP. Disappointment among some communities with social programs deemed uneven, as well as the dominance of national political narratives that are not entirely relevant to local needs, further worsen PDIP's decline in electability. Although PDIP still relies on national figures such as Ganjar Pranowo and Jokowi as main attractions, these strategies have not been effective enough to maintain votes in regions experiencing rapidly changing social and political dynamics. Young voters and rational voters now demand more transparent, participatory, and issue-based political approaches.
3. To restore its electoral glory in Salatiga City, PDIP needs to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the political strategies applied. Measures such as strengthening the role of local cadres sustainably, building more open communication with the community, and adjusting campaign strategies to the development of information technology become very important. In addition, involving young and innovative local figures is also key to rebuilding voter trust and loyalty. If PDIP can carry out structural revitalization and

adaptive strategies, it is not impossible that the party will return as a major political force in Salatiga City in future elections.

Suggestions

From the thesis research study, the following suggestions can be made:

1. Based on the findings and analysis in this study, several strategic recommendations can be proposed for the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) to improve its electoral performance in the future, especially in Salatiga City. First, PDIP needs to conduct ongoing internal consolidation, not only before elections. Party cadres must be actively involved in social community life, both through community activities, public discussions, and tangible work that addresses the needs of residents. Cadre regeneration also needs attention by giving greater space to the younger generation who have communication skills and an understanding of current issues.
 2. Second, PDIP needs to evaluate and update its political communication strategy. The campaign approach that relies heavily on national figures like Jokowi or Ganjar is still relevant but must be combined with local approaches that truly touch on the realities of the community. The maximal use of social media and digital platforms is an absolute necessity to reach increasingly dominant young voters. The party's digital team must be filled by people who understand the dynamics of public opinion in cyberspace and can build narratives that are creative, inspiring, and data-based.
 3. Third, PDIP in Salatiga City needs to strengthen party structures at the village and neighborhood (RW) levels as the frontline of interaction with the community. Routine activities that are educational, social, and economic in nature must become part of the party's work program so that the party's presence is truly felt directly by residents. Through these activities, the party can rebuild trust and loyalty among constituents who may have begun shifting to other parties because they feel not genuinely represented. PDIP's stance on local issues must also be prioritized so that the community feels their aspirations are being fought for.
- Fourth, PDIP is advised to build collaborations with various community elements, including youth organizations, digital communities, and independent figures who have influence in society. Cross-sector collaboration is important so that PDIP does not get trapped in political exclusivity alone but becomes an optimal socio-political movement. Strategically involving figures such as General Andika Perkasa or local figures like Bambang Patjul can broaden the support base and enhance the party's image as a platform for the aspirations of people from various layers. Thus, PDIP can be more adaptive in facing changes in the political landscape in the future

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