

# Political Parties and Political Development in Indonesia

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Political parties are a reflection of a democratic state that is believed to be a condition of modern state life. Without pointing to an interest, it is clear that political parties are channelling interests, the interests of the people and the interests of the authorities. As an institution channelling interests, political parties are used as two-way communication, namely from the top down and also from the bottom up. If it can be implemented well, then the function of political parties as political socialisation, political participation, political communication, articulation of interests, aggregation of interests, and policy making can run well so that the expected political development can be realised. The research method used in this study is a qualitative research method. Through qualitative research, the author has made a complex picture, examined the words, examined the report in detail from the view of the sources, and conducted studies on natural situations. This study aims to find out clearly about the development of political parties in Indonesia, the function of political parties, and political development in the midst of Indonesian society in this modern era. The results showed that political parties in Indonesia were considered to be quite good in carrying out their functions in accordance with the functions of political parties according to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 31 of 2002 and the development of political parties in Indonesia has given a role in controlling conflicts of interest that exist in Indonesian society.

**Key words:** *Political Parties, Political Development, Indonesia.*



## Introduction

Generally a political party anywhere can stimulate the views of people who hear the term with a bad image. Party members are considered fraudsters, talkative people, people who always want power, people who always sell the public interest for their own interests. Although not all of these perceptions are true, several reasons that encourage the emergence of pessimistic and bad views of a political party are based on empirical matters that are true and reasonable. It will be easy for anyone to agree that only during the election campaign (especially in Indonesia) do party people with all their promises approach the community in order to support their party. In such a context, someone likens the relationship between political parties and society like an eclipse. In eclipse phenomena there appear to be two planets meeting each other, but the reality is not, and that too happens only occasionally in a long stretch of time (Haris, 2014:25). This is where the task of political parties is to be able to provide political education to the community, where political parties do not only pay attention to the community at the time of the campaign or before the democratic party; after that it is forgotten and dissolved without any evaluation process. In fact, political parties actually provide a bad example; this is reflected in the election campaign. Political parties should create a mutually beneficial relationship between society and the elite in order to realise the ideals of the nation (Ramlan, 2010:40).

If we look back from the history of the emergence of political parties in Indonesia, with the widespread idea that the people are a factor that need to be taken into account and included in the political process, then political parties have been born spontaneously and developed into a link between the people on the one hand and the government on the other. Political parties are generally considered to be a manifestation of a political system that is already modern or is in the process of modernising itself. Therefore, at this time even in new countries the party has become a political container that is commonly found.

In fact, the condition of the Indonesian people today is still completely underdeveloped and there is an ignorance of politics; therefore to stimulate active political participation of the people in development efforts, there needs to be political education, among others:

1. Making people become politically aware;
2. More creative in social participation in the current era of development;
3. At the same time humanising the Indonesian people to feel more comfortable and prosperous.



## Political Parties

Political parties are one important component in the dynamics of a nation's politics. Political parties are seen as a way for a person or group of individuals to gain power. Arguments like this are familiar to us in various mass media and in various seminars that specifically discuss political parties. In etymology, politics comes from the word “*polis*” (Greek) which means city or city state. Then is derived the words politics which means citizens. In political terms, it is an attempt to achieve or realise ideals or ideology (Inu Kencana, 2009:15). The first person to introduce the word “*politics*” was Aristotle through his observations of “*humans who are essentially political animals*” (Soelistyati, 2006:24). He explained that the nature of social life is actually politics and interaction with each other of two or more people and will certainly involve political relations. In a broad sense everyone is a politician. In this case Aristotle argues that the only way to maximise an individual's ability and to achieve the highest form of social life is through political interaction with others within an institutional framework, designed to resolve social conflicts and to form a collective-state goal. Therefore all people are politicians, although some (state officials) carry out more political activities when compared to others (Haris, 2014:27).

In general, it can be said that a Political Party is an organised group whose members have the same orientation, values and ideals. The purpose of this group is to gain political power and seize political position by constitutional means. According to Carl J. Friedrich, quoted by Miriam Budiardjo, a Political Party is a group of people who are stably organised with the aim of seizing or maintaining control of government for the leadership of their party and based on this control gives party members the benefits that are idiotic and material (Miriam, 2008:30). Sigmund Neumann said that a Political Party is an organisation of political activists who seek to control the power of government and seize popular support on the basis of competition with a group or other groups who have different views (Tulus, 2011:55).

Referring to some definitions of political parties, it can be concluded that political parties are the result of organising a group of people to gain power to carry out the planned program. The following data is about political parties participating in the Indonesia general elections in 2019 (<https://infopemilu.kpu.go.id/pileg2019/verpol/skparpol>):

**Table 1:** Political party of election participants 2019

No.	Names of Political Parties	Acronym	Party Status
1.	National Awakening Party	PKB	National
2.	Great Indonesia Movement Party	GERINDRA	National
3.	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle	PDIP	National
4.	Party of Work Group	GOLKAR	National
5.	NASDEM Party	Nasional Demokrat	National
6.	Indonesian Change Movement Party	GARUDA	National
7.	Party Work	BERKARYA	National
8.	Prosperous Justice Party	PKS	National
9.	Indonesian Unity Party	PERINDO	National
10.	United Development Party	PPP	National
11.	Indonesian Solidarity Party	PSI	National
12.	National Mandate Party	PAN	National
13.	People's Conscience Party	HANURA	National
14.	Democratic Party	PD	National
15.	Aceh Party	PA	Local
16.	SIRA Party	SIRA	Local
17.	Aceh Regional Party	PD Aceh	Local
18.	Nanggroe Aceh Party	PNA	Local
19.	Moon Star Party	PBB	National
20.	Indonesian Justice and Unity Party	PKP	National

**Source:** 2019 Republic of Indonesia Election Commission Online Portal (data processed)

### Political Development

Generally people assume that development is a neutral noun which means that it is a word used to describe processes and efforts to improve economic life, politics, culture, community infrastructure, and so on. With this understanding, “*development*” is aligned with the word “*social change*”. For adherents of this view the concept of development is independent so it requires other information, such as the development of the capitalism model, the construction of the socialism model, or the development of the Indonesian model. In this sense, development theory means very general socio-economic theory. This view is a view that controls almost all levels of society (Dahl, 2001:70). Meanwhile, on the other hand there is a more minority view which departs from the assumption that the word “*development*” itself is



a discourse, an ideology and theory of social change. In this view the concept of development itself is not a neutral word, but rather an ideological and theoretical flow and beliefs and practices regarding social change (Jeffrey, 2019).

When viewed in greater depth from its basic understanding, development is a term used in a variety of contexts, and is often used in certain political and ideological contexts. There are many words that have the same meaning as the word development, for example social change, growth, progress, and modernisation. From these words only social change gives meaning to change in a more positive direction. Therefore, the meaning of development depends on the context of who uses it and for what interests. In the context of political development, national education is always indicated to have two difficult sides. On the one hand, the necessity to carry out national education evenly and sustainably is indeed necessary, at least so that every level of society (especially in developing countries like Indonesia) becomes more politically aware, lawful, and environmentally conscious in the broadest sense. National education has a very vital role in uniting the nation (nation-building) (Firmanzah, 2008:51).

On the other hand, when national education has produced a number of well-educated societies, at the same time the concept of humanity has come to the fore to look for manifestations in daily life. National education which was originally intended for nation building was apparently not sufficiently built on the considerations of formality in academic education but must also be based on the demands of political aspirations caused by academic education (Rahman, 2007:66).

The aim of education and teaching in Indonesia is to form capable human beings and democratic citizens who are responsible for the welfare of the people and the motherland based on the principles of the Pancasila as the ideology of the Indonesian people and the 1945 Constitution (Suryadi, 2007:80). In line with these national education goals, the objectives of political education in Indonesia are (Miriam, 2008:49):

1. Showing the role of individuals or each unique individual as a citizen, by developing the potential and talent abilities as much as possible;
2. To be able to actively participate in the political process to develop the nation and state.

It is still in the context of political development, that national education especially in the higher education sub-sector, whether or not it should be used as a strategic means for the regeneration of national leaders, because from that place the thinker figure of the progress of the nation and state can be expected to emerge, especially in the era of global communication that demands very tight and multidisciplinary competitiveness. Now is not an era that deserves to expect the national leader to come down from the hermitage and call himself a

just king or queen, but it is time to spur open-minded competitive minds to advance the nation and state in the midst of global civilisation that it can no longer be manipulated only by formal power (Yukihiro, 2018).

Political development is not just political change, but the development of political awareness of the community in a sustainable and fair manner (Janne, 2019). This means that if national education must also carry out the mission of political development, then it must also advance all people, raise awareness of their political rights and responsibilities, improve their welfare, and of course must also complete their desires as whole human beings.

### **Research Methods**

The method used in this study is a qualitative research method. The Qualitative Research Model is rooted in the natural setting as wholeness, relying on humans as a research tool, utilising qualitative methods, conducting data analysis inductively, directing its research goals at trying to find theories from the bottom, being descriptive, limiting studies to focus, and having a set of criteria to check the validity the data; the research design is temporary, and the results of the research are agreed by both parties namely the researcher and the research subject (Moleong, 2013:25). By using qualitative research, the author has made a complex picture, examined the words, detailed reports from the view of the sources, and conducted studies on the natural situation.

The analytical method used is qualitative analysis, which is an analytical method that basically uses logical thinking, analysis with logic, by induction, analogy or interpretation, comparison and the like. The method of thinking used is the inductive method, which is from data or facts to a higher level of abstraction, including synthesising and developing theories (if necessary and supporting data) (Creswell, 2010:50). From this analysis conclusions will be drawn in response to existing problems.

### **Research Results and Discussion**

#### ***Political Parties and Political Development in Indonesia***

Many people consider that every country must have a political party. Many people also consider that countries that have political parties are developed countries. Even in some literature it is explained that political parties are part of democratic political development. In fact, many countries do not have political parties, which inevitably have to build democratic politics. On the contrary, in countries that have political parties, even though they appear to have applied democratic political development theory, they actually face a reality that is contrary to democratic values.

Ariansyah, as the organiser of the Moon Star Party (PBB), stated that the main function of political parties is to seek and maintain power to realise programs that are based on the ideology of a nation. The method is used by a political party in a democratic political system to gain power and participate in elections (Interview with Ariansyah as the organizer of the Moon Star Party (PBB)).

Even if political parties now have to be present in the life of republican society, when noble groups are considered to be no more, it does not mean that the benefits of political parties become insignificant (Powell, Barrientos, 2004:90).

Hasni as the Chair of the Moon Star Party (PBB) Branch, stated that the political parties known to the public today are institutions of conflict control that exist within the national political community. Political parties are institutions that must aggregate, articulate the interests that occur in society, including socialising political values that apply to the community concerned (Interview with Hasni as the Chair of the Moon Star Party (PBB)). This is in accordance with the functions of political parties, namely (Pratikno, 2009:65):

1. Political socialisation: is a function as a process through which a person gains an attitude and orientation towards political phenomena that generally prevail in the society in which he is located;
2. Political participation: is a function owned by political parties to encourage people to actively participate in political activities;
3. Political communication: is the function of channelling diverse opinions and aspirations of the community and organising them in such a way that the confusion of opinion in society is reduced.
4. Articulation of Interest: is the function of stating or conveying (articulating) the interests of constituents (the public) to political and government bodies through groups they form together with other people who have the same interests;
5. Aggregation of interests: is the function of a political party that combines all the aspirations that exist in society which are then formulated as a political program and proposed to the legislative body and candidates submitted for government positions to bargain with interest groups, with offering the fulfillment of their interests if the interest group wants to support the candidate;
6. Policy making: is a function held by political parties after political parties have regained and retained power within the government constitutionally.

Whereas the function of political parties according to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 31 of 2002, concerning political parties is as a means ([http://www.dpr.go.id/dokjdih/document/uu/UU\\_2002\\_31.pdf](http://www.dpr.go.id/dokjdih/document/uu/UU_2002_31.pdf)) :

1. Political education for members and the wider community to become Indonesian citizens who are aware of their rights and obligations in the life of society, nation and state;
2. Creating a conducive climate as the glue of national unity and integrity for the welfare of society;
3. Absorbers, collectors and distributors of the political aspirations of the people constitutionally in formulating and determining state policies. Political participation of Indonesian citizens and political recruitment in the process of filling political positions through democratic mechanisms with due regard to gender equality and justice.

If political parties always appear in conflictual situations, this happens because their function is indeed to control conflicts, although often they create new conflicts. Political parties are "political machines" that are needed to carry out the existing political system mechanism. Political parties are the most important part of political engineering (Mansour, 2009:55).

In carrying out its functions, political parties will also be determined by the groups and objectives to be achieved. Rio Gunawan as Chairman of the Indonesian Nasdem Party Branch stated that a revolutionary party would struggle to change the entire organisational structure of government, community culture, and economic system from a condition and if successful it would control every important activity in that society. With a conservative and traditional party, the opposite is true; it is just trying to keep things as they are (Interview with Rio Gunawan as Chairman of the Indonesian Nasdem Party).

This is in accordance with the objectives expected in establishing and developing political parties, namely (Mao, 2010:167):

1. To become a place for self-actualisation for citizens who have a high awareness to participate in political participation;
2. To become a forum for the aggregation of interests;
3. To become a means in an effort to gain and maintain political power;
4. To become a meeting place for people or groups who share the same ideology and interests.

Fery Triatmojo as chairman of the Election Commission of the Bandar Lampung City of Indonesia, stated that political parties are a means of political education that can make changes or political development. Objects of change or political elements that are usually observed by political scientists are political value systems, power structures, strategies for handling public policy problems and the environment (socio-cultural, economic, and technological conditions) and physical (natural resources) that affect and are influenced by the political system (Interview with Fery Triatmojo).

The power structure is the influence of infrastructure and the superstructure in the policy process. The infrastructure in question is the political engine that exists in society that does not have a direct influence in making political decisions of the state, while the political superstructure is the political engine that exists in the state which has a direct influence in making political decisions of the state (Tulus, 2011:80).

Infrastructure power structures include the influence of various social, religious and economic groups in the policy process, and the influence of political parties in integrating conflicting interests into several common policy alternatives. Superstructure power structures include various characteristics of the distribution and exercise of power by government institutions, such as the dimensions of power (level of use of forced and consensus power), distribution of power (level of centralisation of power), and intensity of power (scope of government power and level of infrastructure autonomy from government control) (Interview with Fery Triatmojo).

In general, scientists mention two factors that cause political change, namely conflicts of interest and new ideas or values (Mansour, 2009:70). Some scientists point out conflicts of interest between various groups (classes or associations) as the main causes of political change. In this view, change is the result of interactions of interests that are tightly controlled, even determined by the social position or material conditions of the elite involved. For this materialistic view, ideas or values are only a reflection of interests.

In addition to conflicts of interest, change can also occur due to the emergence of new ideas or values (Robin, Peter, 2019). This view sees ideas and values as independent variables that explain the difference between social systems and processes of change and reproduction. Values not only produce dynamism and progress, but also stagnation in society (Jo Thori, 2020). The community will develop and be dynamic if the need for achievement and success is highly valued by individual community members. Another factor which is also important in causing change, namely the existence of various policies that are intentionally, planned, and organised, are made and implemented by the government.

## **Conclusion**

It can be concluded that political parties can be interpreted as a forum to accommodate the aspirations of the community, channelling the interests of the community and as a tool to gain power. If a political party carries out its functions properly and in accordance with Indonesia's ideology and legislation, it can be ensured that the welfare of society can be achieved. Political development is very much needed for the development of a nation. With



the development of politics, people will understand the functions and roles of political parties in the midst of society.

Political parties are expected to provide meaningful changes for the country, namely positive changes. With a political party, a democratic state is expected to be realised. Although until now there is not a requirement on this earth that requires every country to have a political party, but to eliminate political parties from our national life feels like going back a few centuries.

In other words, no matter how bad the image of political parties in Indonesia, it must be present as an attribute of the modernity of the state; although there are some rich countries without political parties, our nation Indonesia is not willing to make the Republic of Indonesia take place without a political party, because political parties are one reflection of a democratic country.



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