

# Internal Party Reform and Strengthening Young Cadres



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## **General Description**

In this reform era, political parties have become an important institution in every aspect of state development. Political parties are believed to be strategic instruments for the development of Indonesian democracy in the future. Despite the various reactions to the existence of political parties today, all parties agree that democracy will be better if political parties are professional and accountable. This challenge is a tough task that must be shared by all components of the nation where the presence of professional, democratic and accountable political parties is a necessity today.

The party is one of the pillars of democracy. Without a political party, democracy will not be able to work and run. There are at least three reasons why political parties are necessary for democracy to function. First, political parties are the main vehicle for political representation; second, political parties are the main mechanism for government administration; and third, political parties are the main channel for maintaining democratic accountability.

Indonesian political conditions often get a negative stigma due to the actions of individual cadres within the party. It is not surprising that society, especially young people, is increasingly apathetic to political matters. It can be said that political parties often become an arena of domination for elites and other senior cadres in the struggle for status and power within the party. Especially with the ownership of important capitals owned by party elites, it has further sharpened the distinction between them and the party's youth. They are young people who only become part of the power possessed by the party elite. So, it is not surprising that these young people just stay quiet and wait until their generation starts to become an important part of the party.

Political education in parties is still not running efficiently and effectively. Cadres, both young and old, are apparently still reluctant to learn about political education organized by parties. For most of them political education is obtained through their direct experience in the field, especially during the election period, both the legislative and regional head elections. It is actually quite ironic to see the lack of quality level of their political understanding. The event to increase political education through programs organized by



parties, which should be the basis of knowledge for cadres, is considered as mere discourse. Only a handful of cadres (especially those at a young age) are aware that political education programs in the realm of parties are still needed.

The minimal quality of political education is what ultimately plays a role in the relationship between senior and junior cadres. Even though in a party all cadres should have the same equality (except of course when looking at the structural context of positions in the party), in fact there is still a distinction between senior and junior cadres. There is still domination from senior cadres and it can even be a hegemony where young cadres swallow the domination that occurs in the party as a necessity.

This is indicated by the lack of opportunities for young cadres to present or voice their opinions. The struggle for power in political parties actually only revolves around elite circles that try to dominate each other's parties. This is as expressed by Gary W. Cox where the emergence of parties is basically the decision of the political elite to enter as contestants in the election (in Marijan, 2012: 63). This has become commonplace in the Indonesian political party system where party elites and their ranks are relatively senior cadres.



## **Persistent Political Crisis**

In the party mechanism, it can be ensured that all parties have the highest forum for formulating plans and policies during a certain period. This routine agenda often attracts public attention. Frequently, the struggle for the position of chairman of the party is often a concern. In fact, apart from these questions, the agenda for discussing the party's Articles of Association / Bylaws (AD/ART) is no less important. Because it is from this party constitution that the black and white faces of political parties will be determined. No exception if you wish to present the face of a party that is idealized by the public. Therefore, the highest political party forum becomes the right momentum to make changes from internal parties.

In its journey, during the two decades following the Reformation, the party had a positive and negative record. The positive thing is that post-Reform political parties have become increasingly strong as important pillars in the democratization process in Indonesia. In fact, political parties in Indonesia occupy important positions, especially in relation to sources of recruitment for public positions. There is almost no public office that has not gone through the political process in parliament which is the arm of a political party. At this point, there has been a supremacy of political parties in Indonesia.

However, it is not without the question of the existence of political parties during the last two decades. A number of crucial issues arise around our political parties.

*First*, the corrupt practices that are often carried out by activists and cadres of political parties while holding public positions. In fact, not a few general chairmen of political parties have been entangled in this political corruption case.

*Second*, regarding the funding of political parties. The chaotic funding of political parties often triggers corrupt practices by party activists and cadres. The cost of managing political parties, which is not cheap, is the trigger. Not to mention if it is related to the cost of elections every five years, which is also not cheap.

*Third*, the circulation of party leadership is stagnant. The absence of a rule limiting the term of office of the chairperson of a political party has a serious impact on the process of internal



democratization of the party. The general chairperson of a political party can lead the party for multiple terms of office. The extreme impact gave rise to the practice of political party oligarchy.

These three things are anomalous practices during the two decades after the Reformation. On the one hand, political parties are an important pillar in the democratization process that anchors the recruitment of public positions. But on the other hand, many problems stem from political parties. Therefore, changing political parties is a necessity.

### *Change from Within*

Criticism and critical public records of the faces of political parties in Indonesia should be a serious note for political party leaders and activists. Political parties as public bodies should be responsive to issues that cause public anxiety about the messy management of political parties.

It is not impossible political parties reform themselves as a form of response to input and criticism from the public. This response can be pursued by making fundamental changes through changes to the constitution and by-laws of political parties, which are the highest constitution in each political party.

The financial dependence of party cadres in public office has a serious impact, namely the potential for multiplying public funds for party interests. The highest party forum must be able to answer the complicated problem of party funding by formulating rules and systems through amendments to the AD/ART. The aim is clear, so that political party activists are no longer caught up in corrupt practices such as trading influence (trading influence) and bribery of job brokers that have been exposed in various cases involving a number of politicians.

In addition to party funding, party internals must make a breakthrough by making rules limiting the position of chairman of political parties. At least, the position of party chairman is limited to a maximum of two terms. The choice of this limitation stems from the spirit of the constitution in relation to limiting the position of president and vice president for a maximum of two terms.



### *Change from Outside*

Other mechanisms for changing political parties can also be carried out through external doors, namely through political legislation in parliament by presenting political regulations that force political parties to change. The existence of the Political Party Law, including the Election Law, has not substantially been able to present political parties that meet public expectations.

Regulations on political parties since the beginning of reform starting from Law No. 2 of 1999, Law No. 31 of 2002, Law No. 2 of 2008, Law No. 2 of 2011 including Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning Elections, have not answered public expectations about the need for party attendance clean, accountable politics and as a channel for public aspirations.

The DPR and the Government are required to formulate a priority agenda regarding amendments to the Election Law, particularly in relation to political parties in order to include a number of norms to encourage reform of political parties in Indonesia. Regulations regarding the funding of political parties and limiting the terms of office of the chairmen of political parties are important breakthroughs to bring political parties that are accountable, transparent and return political parties to their supposed positions.

This substantial change in the face of political parties is at least to answer a number of facts on the ground that identify the low relationship between voters and the political party they choose. The change in the face of this political party, in the same breath, is expected to become a medium for strengthening democracy in Indonesia.



## **Internal Party Reform, Restoring the Spirit of the Party's Function**

If we look closely, the development of political parties in the reform era has not yet become a public institution that has responsibility or accountability for its voters. During the New Order era, political parties became the political "machines" of the rulers so that they were more focused on maintaining the power of the rulers (status quo). Entering the era of reform, it was as if political parties were shocked by the enormous demands of the people, but this was not accompanied by good institutions. Currently, political parties have not shown accountability to constituents.

Political parties in the reform era were also trapped in an oligarchic form in the strategic decision-making process. The trend so far shows that political party decision-making is closed and only determined by a small group of party elites. The highest decision usually rests with a person or a small group of party elites. The problem of internal mechanisms in decision making is characterized by centralization in decision making. The role of the central board is still dominant, and sometimes it differs from regional aspirations.

Associated with the implementation of party functions (political education function, political recruitment, political communication, articulation and aggregation of interests, as well as conflict resolution functions). the complaint that arises is that the political party has not carried out its function to its full potential. In this context the source of the problem that the functions of the political parties have not been implemented is related to the institutional problems of political parties. At least, there are three problems related to the institutionalization of political parties, namely: ideology and platforms, cohesiveness and conflict management, and recruitment and regeneration.

### a. Ideology dan Platform

Every political party is formed based on the ideology that it wants to promote. This ideology then becomes the identity of the party. To differentiate between one party and another, it can be seen from the ideology adopted by the party concerned. In addition, ideology is also the basis of struggle or ideals that a political party wants to achieve. Ideology is an inseparable part of a political party. It should be attached to the presence of a political party.



Ideology, which is a system of values and norms, is of course still abstract. There needs to be a further explanation. The ideology adopted by a political party needs to be translated into things that are real and felt directly by the community. In this way, it will help the community to understand and understand the ideology, which is abstract in nature, which is adopted by a political party.

In the context of public policy, ideology also plays a role in determining what positions should be determined for parties to encourage or even reject a policy. Meanwhile, in the context of relations with voters, ideology can also be an attraction for voters to determine which party is in accordance with the perspective they believe. In this context, the role of this ideology is believed to be a guide for voters in determining their choice in the ballot box which has become known as ideology identification.

The way to translate the ideology possessed by a political party into real and concrete matters is formulated in the form of a political party platform. The party platform contains general guidelines and an outline of the party's policy direction in its contribution to the problems of the nation and state. The party platform contains important and basic matters that are used as a basic reference for the preparation of things that must be done, such as work programs and political issues.

#### b. Conflict Management and Balance

Conflict is something that is inherent in every society or an organization. No society or organization can escape conflict. Conflicts that occur in the community can be in the form of violence or in the form of non-violence. Violent conflict is conflict that injures or destroys each other from the parties to the conflict. Meanwhile, non-violent conflict is due to differences of opinion and / or ideas. In a democracy, differences in views or opinions are part of the dynamics of democracy itself.

The problem is how the conflict that occurs does not destroy the social system (social disintegration) or damage the cohesiveness (integrity) of the organization. How can the conflicts that occur are not destructive but rather constructive? This is a challenge that must be answered and overcome so that conflicts (differences of opinion) that occur provide energy for the development and progress of an organization. However, the party's ability to





carry out these functions has not been maximally implemented. Instead of a political party acting as an agent of conflict management, the picture that often arises is the internal conflict of the party itself.

In general, conflicts within political parties are not much different from one party to another. Some of the conflicts that have appeared in the mass media include conflicts between factions, conflicts at party congresses (branch, regional, and national), personal conflicts between officials and conflicts between levels of management (vertical), or conflicts between officials at the same or inter-level levels. party wing (horizontal).

Conflict arises as a logical consequence of market law where the “little” power is fought over by the “many” people. To get it, the related parties must compete. In a well-institutionalized party, the competition is regulated in a mechanism that is already institutionalized and legalized as a party statute or statutes / by-laws. With the institutionalized rules of the game whoever wins the competition will be able to gain that power elegantly, without raising any significant objections from the losing party.

### c. Recruitment dan Regeneration

In every organization, members are the main source of support. In political party organizations, the role of members is significant because through these members they will act as spokespersons to voice and disseminate party platforms and programs to the public. In addition, members are a source of regeneration that can give birth to candidates for political party leaders.

To fill the membership, political parties recruit members. A good political party certainly has a good recruitment system. The recruitment system includes a pattern of selection, ranking, and education for its members. Thus, someone will not be able to automatically get membership without going through a selection first.

Apart from recruiting members, a well-institutionalized political party will carry out regeneration and political education for its members on an ongoing basis. The purpose of regeneration and political education is to improve the quality of members so that later they



(members) are able to face the problems and challenges that are always developing in the political life of society, nation and state.

Political regeneration and education are carried out by political parties in order to produce leaders. Therefore, institutionalized political parties will carry out regular political education and leadership training. This education and training are carried out in stages according to the level and scope of each management level. Through this leadership education and training, it is hoped that a quality cadre of party leaders will be born.



## **Conclusion; Young Cadres for A Bright Political Future**

Youths provide benefits for political parties if input into political education in these circles is given intensively because political awareness is high and democracy in the political process will certainly materialize. Political education is important for young people because they are the next generation of voters.

Not participating in the general election process because whoever will be elected will not be able to change this nation for the better, corruption is everywhere and the voting rights used can be said to be in vain. Departing from this opinion, it appears to think again about the importance of political participation in realizing political democracy. It is appropriate for young people to open up political insights so that whatever public opinion they give regarding the political process is not taken for granted.

Look at the other side, because one vote in the general election will determine where this nation will go. Choosing is not easy, but not choosing is not a wise attitude. Youth also have a political role. The task of political parties is to involve young people through organized programs. School education also has an important role in introducing the world of politics among young people. Provision of education about politics is very necessary to provide insight and teaching for the younger generation about politics which is used as a basis that serves to achieve common policy. Education plays a very important role in providing knowledge about the importance of politics and political participation for future generations.

The large role of political parties in filling positions of power needs to be accompanied by efforts to strengthen party conditions. One of the two strengthening of political parties can be through the cadre process and strengthening of the party structure. The increasingly important role of political parties, especially in recruiting or seeking new members and inviting them to participate in the political process. So political recruitment will become a priority to ensure the sustainability and sustainability of parties as well as a way to select new political leaders to sit in the legislative and executive bodies.

Reflecting on the current parliament, the power of young people is still weak, reflected in the data held by the Indonesian Parliamentary Concern Community Forum (Formappi),



explaining that of the 560 legislatures of the Indonesian Parliament for the 2014-2019 period there were only 2.7% of parliament members aged 20-30 years and 14, 5% for board members aged 31-40 years. From this data, it can be estimated that from the age range of 31-40 years, there are still more legislative members aged 35 years and over.

To encourage equality and opportunities for youth, it is necessary to raise the requirements for active membership for 3 (three) years since being registered as a member both in political parties and in political party wing organizations. This criterion is for political parties to properly institutionalize parties, parties to maintain their members, and only party members who have fulfilled the membership period are nominated. This model will avoid hybrid and instant recruitment, which relies on intrinsic or popularity matters alone. A party will become a strong and successful institution if it is able to maintain its members and is able to turn its party members into legislative members and as public officials.

Although it should be noted that age is not the only factor that determines success in government institutions. But at least young people have idealism that is still clean and a burning spirit. To accelerate youth politics in parliament, we can encourage and mobilize the idea of a youth quota in various lines. One of them is determining the quota for young people by determining the age of 20-35 to get a 30% quota both as a political party administrator and a candidate for state administration, exactly the affirmative action for women that is currently in effect.

The realization of a 30% quota for young people will encourage every democratic institution not only to lecture young people to participate in politics but to be responsible for realizing youth political representation. Thus, presenting youth political representation is very important and relevant for the nation's regeneration process. Because young people are stakeholders in the present and in the future. Youth segment party wing organizations should be optimally empowered as a quality cadre and recruitment machine.

One of the efforts to make political parties' function properly needs to be done, among others, through strengthening political party institutions so that they become strong democratic institutions and run optimally. In party institutions, political relations are one way to expand the mass base in terms of human resources. Political party wing organization is an



organization that is formed or owned by a political party that helps the performance and touches all levels of society. The purpose of forming the Party Wing Organization is to implement party policies and to meet strategic needs in order to strengthen the support base of the party, as well as to strengthen the function and role of parties in society.

The number of women and youth in the composition of the Indonesian population is so large, it is understandable that these two segments are used as components of party wing organizations. Because in the context of democracy, losing wins is determined by the number of voters. Youth participate in mobilizing and carrying out the functions of the Political Party. Because they generally have stronger stamina and lighter family burdens compared to the older generation. Thus, youth occupy a strategic position for political parties.

Besides that, there are several initial recommendations that should be considered and undertaken by political parties for the needs of their party's institutional reform and youth inclusion in political parties. This recommendation is the result of discussions with other organizations that also partnering with International Republican Institute to carry out strengthen the function of young cadres and encourage internal party reform.

1. Opening a wider membership recruitment process, including for the younger generation and strengthening the role and position of young cadres through capacity building and involvement in political party substantive matters.
2. Promote a democratic party based on ideology, platform, and code of ethics. It should not be based on personalization or kinship.
3. Strengthening party institutions, particularly through the internalization and implementation of party ideologies, platforms, and programs as well as maximizing research and development functions to promote data-based policies and party social accountability.
4. Improve the governance of party organizations, especially regarding merit and the democratic system, transparent and accountable party financing, develop financial sustainability and conflict resolution.
5. Conducting periodic monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the implementation of party functions.



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