

POLITICAL PARTIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE: ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE POLITICAL ACTORS IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Article History

Received: 01 August 2024

Accepted: 04 August 2024

Published: 22 August 2024

Abstract

In the modern political context, political parties play a crucial role in driving social change and serving as intermediaries between the public and the government. This research aims to explore how political parties confront the challenges of globalization and their role as agents of social change. The methodology employed is a qualitative approach, utilizing secondary data analysis from academic journals, books, and other scholarly sources. The findings reveal that political parties in Indonesia have played a significant role in social transformation, both historically and contemporaneously, such as during the reform era. However, they face internal challenges like leadership issues and corruption, as well as external challenges such as global economic pressures and conservative resistance. Adaptation through policy innovation and building international coalitions are key strategies to address these challenges. This research emphasizes the need for wise management of ideological conflicts to ensure the effectiveness of political parties as agents of change.

Keywords: Globalization, Political Parties, Adaptation

A. INTRODUCTION

In the modern political landscape, political parties play a highly significant role in determining the direction of social change. As entities that represent various group interests within society, political parties have the responsibility to articulate and advocate policies that align with public aspirations. This role is not limited to legislative and executive functions but also includes acting as agents of social change who can influence public opinion and political culture. (Pratama & Wijaya, 2023). Social change is the process of transformation in the structure and functions of society that impacts behavioral patterns, values, and social norms. (Wibowo & Darmawan, 2021). This process is often triggered by political dynamics, where political actors play a key role in either driving or hindering change. In this context, political parties can be seen as instruments that connect the will of the people with government policies, as well as catalysts that guide social change in the desired direction (Suyide, 2023).

In Indonesia, for example, the role of political parties in social change can be traced back to the era of independence. Political parties have served as vehicles for various social movements, ranging from the struggle for independence, political reform, to contemporary issues such as human rights, democracy, and social justice. (Sugitanata et al., 2023). During the Reform era, political parties played a crucial role in driving the shift towards a more democratic political system. The Reform movement that occurred in the late 1990s, led by various elements of society including political parties, succeeded in ending the authoritarian regime and paving the way for a more inclusive democratic era. (Kahpi et al., 2024). However, the role of political parties in social change is not always smooth. Political parties

often face internal and external challenges that can hinder their effectiveness as agents of change. Internal challenges include issues such as leadership problems, corruption, and a lack of representation for marginalized groups within the party structure. Meanwhile, external challenges arise from global political dynamics, economic pressures, and resistance from conservative groups opposed to change. (Lukman Ismail et al., 2024).

In the era of globalization, the role of political parties has become increasingly complex. Globalization brings new challenges in the form of rapid changes in technology, the economy, and international relations, requiring political parties to adapt quickly and effectively. Political parties must respond to these changes with innovative and responsive policies that address public needs. Additionally, they must be able to build broad coalitions and networks, both nationally and internationally, to strengthen their position as key actors in social change. (Lumentut et al., 2023). Political parties play a very important role in social change. They not only serve as intermediaries between the people and the government but also as agents of change capable of directing and influencing social transformation within society. However, their effectiveness as agents of change greatly depends on their ability to overcome various challenges, both internal and external. Therefore, it is essential to continuously evaluate and strengthen the role of political parties in modern society so that they can perform their functions better and more effectively.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Parties

Political parties play a crucial role in countries with democratic governance. They serve as a bridge connecting the governance process with the social dynamics of society. Political parties are essential in maintaining pluralism and ensuring political participation.

According to Risnawan (2017), Political parties are organized groups that are stable and united by a specific ideology, aiming to seek and maintain power in government through elections to implement the public policies they design. Meanwhile, Siregar (2015) states that political parties are organizations that advocate for specific values or ideologies by controlling power structures through participation in elections. In line with this view, Ramadhanti (2018) defines a political party as a group of organized individuals who seek to control the government to implement their programs and place their members in government positions through participation in legitimate government processes or coups.

Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that a political party is a group of organized individuals with the same political or ideological goals, and they pursue their objectives through competition in elections to place their members in public office.

Every political institution, including political parties, has specific functions. Pratama & Wijaya (2023) states that in a democratic country, political parties have several functions, namely:

- a. As a means of political communication, parties serve as a channel for conveying public aspirations and translating them into public policies that address various issues.
- b. As a means of political socialization, parties help individuals develop attitudes and orientations toward political phenomena in society.
- c. As a means of political recruitment, parties select individuals for political activities and government positions through communication media, organizational membership, candidacy for positions, and so on.
- d. As a means of conflict regulation, parties strive to manage and address differences that could lead to conflicts.

Wibowo & Darmawan (2021) adds that political parties have two main roles:

- a. Internal organizational role, which includes training, education, equipping, cadre development, and perpetuating political ideology.

b. External organizational role, which is related to the broader society, the nation, and the state, as well as constitutional, moral, and ethical responsibilities to guide society towards better conditions.

Suyide (2023) divides the functions of political parties into three levels:

1. At the level of society as a whole, political parties function as a general mechanism for managing conflicts within the community.
2. At the level of the political system, political parties function as institutions that formulate public policies.
3. At the level of political life, political parties play a central role in political recruitment for selected candidates for public office.

The author argues that political parties must be active in carrying out their functions, such as political recruitment, political socialization, political participation, and conflict management. If political parties can perform these functions effectively, it will lead to a higher quality democracy and prioritize the well-being of the community.

Political Interaction

Preferences that influence local politics cannot be separated from the role of local elites in responding to, determining, and influencing the recruitment process and political developments at the local level. Varma SP, in his book "Modern Political Theory" (2003), cited by Sugitanata et al. (2023) states that elite theory shows that every society is divided into two major groups:

1. A small group with the ability to control and hold government power.
2. A large mass destined to be led.

Elite theory, which originated in Europe, states that within the ruling class, there is the ruling elite as well as counter-elites who can seize power through mass support if the ruling elite loses its capability.

Soelaeman Soemardi, in his book cited by Kahpi et al. (2024), states that Laswell uses the concept of elites to refer to individuals who dominate society through values they create, such as power, wealth, honor, and knowledge. Those who possess these values are considered elites, while the rest are the masses. Elites control most of these values due to their skills and personal attributes.

Lukman Ismail et al. (2024) states that the political arena is shaped by the presence of four main actors:

1. The state as a public institution.
2. Political society, including political parties.
3. Economic society, which operates based on capital and market logic.
4. Civil society, characterized by voluntary action and independence from state influence.

Using the framework of Tornquist, Linz, Stephan, and Diamond, this study highlights the interactions among actors in two main arenas:

1. Interaction within their own arenas (micropolitics).
2. Interaction among actors in broader arenas (macropolitics), including public competition and public policy making.

Interactions between actors also occur in the political competition arena, where actors in society compete for elected positions. In this competition, politicians and political parties interact and build networks with other actors, such as civil society and economic stakeholders. As a result, regional elections become a field of interaction among actors at the local level.

According to the research Lumentut et al. (2023), The bureaucracy (the state) with its power extending down to the village or sub-district level is used effectively by incumbents to rally support through populist development programs. The bureaucratic network becomes an

effective tool for incumbents to consolidate power, often by leveraging their authority to become relatively popular among the public.

Meanwhile, economic society groups, through the funds held by entrepreneurs or "regional election investors," play a crucial and often decisive role in determining the success of candidates, especially when elites, community leaders, and all stakeholders display high pragmatism and are solely oriented toward power and money.

The role of community organizations (ormas) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) also tends to seek benefits through regional elections, such as by becoming campaign teams. Many ormas are partisan and show their support for specific candidate pairs.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach, aimed at providing an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being investigated. This approach allows the researcher to explore and comprehend the meanings behind the actions, interactions, and roles played by political actors within the context of political parties and social change. The data used in this study consists of secondary data collected through: Academic Journals: Relevant articles from academic journals are used to gain theoretical and empirical perspectives on the role of political parties and political actors in social change. Books: Literature related to political theory, social change, and the role of political actors is analyzed to support the theoretical framework and research findings. Other Academic Sources: Including research reports, dissertations, and publications from reputable research institutions.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Role of Political Parties in Social Change in Indonesia

Contribution of Political Parties to Social Transformation

Political parties in Indonesia play a crucial role in social change, both historically and in contemporary contexts. Since the era of independence, political parties have been vehicles for various social movements. For example:

- a) Era of Independence: Political parties such as the Indonesian National Party (PNI) and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) were key drivers in the struggle against colonialism. They articulated the people's aspirations for independence and played a role in the formation of the independent nation.
- b) Reformasi 1998: The role of political parties was highly significant in the reform process that ended the New Order authoritarian regime and paved the way for a more inclusive democracy. Parties such as the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) and Golkar played important roles in driving political and institutional changes.

Political parties not only serve as channels for conveying public aspirations but also act as agents that influence public opinion and political culture. They play a crucial role in setting political agendas, shaping policies, and directing social change. In the modern context, political parties face various contemporary issues such as human rights, democracy, and social justice. For example, political parties have played a role in promoting the rights of minorities and marginalized groups through legislation and advocacy.

Case Study: The Role of Political Parties in Contemporary Issues

To illustrate the role of political parties in contemporary social change, there are several examples:

- a) Human Rights: Political parties such as PDIP and Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) have advocated for policies that support the protection of human rights. They have played a role in the creation of laws that guarantee basic rights and address human rights violations.
- b) Democracy and Social Justice: Political parties contribute to promoting democratic reforms and ensuring broader political participation. Initiatives such as more transparent

and participatory elections are the result of the pressure and advocacy exerted by political parties.

The research conducted by Wibowo & Darmawan (2021) The research conducted by states that political parties play a crucial role in the sustainability of modern democratic systems and are a fundamental pillar of the national political system. They emphasize the importance of political education as an approach to understanding the phenomenon of political parties and the democratization process in Indonesia. The research found that the political education provided by political parties to their cadres is a process of political socialization aimed at improving the quality of human resources. The relationship between the party platform and the values of Pancasila shows that political education also functions as a means to transform the values and political orientation of cadres towards the ideal system envisioned. The obstacles faced, such as some cadres still perceiving Pancasila as a form of oppression, illustrate the challenges in implementing democratic values and political integration within society.

Additionally, the research Suyide (2023) It states that political parties can serve as a psychological and organizational link between citizens and their government. The research emphasizes that political parties play a role in consolidating and articulating societal demands, as well as recruiting individuals for political and executive positions. However, the research also reveals that political parties often exacerbate divisions within society, which can jeopardize political stability, especially in countries with low national consensus. On the other hand, in the context of authoritarian states, as described by Suyide, political parties, particularly communist parties, have different goals and functions depending on the political situation. In countries where communist parties are in power, they tend to become dominant and restrict competitive freedoms, while in countries where communist parties are not in power, they use various tactics to gain support.

Thus, in this context, the role of political actors in modern society is seen in how they function as agents of social and political change. The research highlights that political parties not only serve as channels for public aspirations but also as drivers and guides of social change through political education and strategies for adapting to political dynamics. In other words, the role of political parties in modern society includes both direct influence on policy and social change, as well as the challenges they face in maintaining political stability and meeting societal demands.

Challenges and Complexity of the Role of Political Parties in the Era of Globalization

Internal Challenges of Political Parties

Political parties face various internal challenges that affect their effectiveness as agents of change:

- a) Leadership Issues: Ineffective or corrupt leadership can undermine the credibility of political parties and hinder their ability to influence social change. Poor leadership often leads to internal fragmentation and conflicts that impede the party's performance.
- b) Corruption: Corruption within political parties can diminish their effectiveness and integrity. Corruption cases can erode public trust in political parties and obstruct their ability to drive constructive change.
- c) Representation: The lack of representation for marginalized groups within the party structure often results in policies that do not reflect the needs and aspirations of all segments of society. This can limit the party's ability to be an effective agent of change.

External Challenges in the Context of Globalization

The era of globalization presents new challenges for political parties:

- a) Global Political Dynamics: Globalization brings rapid changes in technology, economics, and international relations that require political parties to adapt quickly. Political parties

must be able to respond to these changes with innovative policies that are relevant to the needs of society.

- b) **Economic Pressures:** Global economic pressures can influence the economic and social policies proposed by political parties. Resource limitations and the pressure to meet global economic demands may hinder the ability of political parties to implement policies that support social change.
- c) **Resistance from Conservative Groups:** Conservative groups often resist changes that are perceived as threats to traditional values or social stability. Political parties must confront this resistance and find ways to achieve consensus in a diverse society.

Globalization and the Adaptation of Political Parties

To face the challenges of globalization, political parties need to:

- a) **Policy Innovation:** Develop innovative and responsive policies that address technological, economic, and social changes. This includes adapting to global trends such as digitalization and the knowledge-based economy.
- b) **Coalitions and Networks:** Build broad coalitions and networks at both national and international levels to strengthen their position as key actors in social change. This involves collaboration with international actors, global institutions, and civil society organizations.

Overall, although political parties play an important role in social change, they must face and overcome various internal and external challenges. Their ability to adapt to global and local dynamics will determine their effectiveness as agents of change in modern society.

According to Kahpi et al. (2024), In facing the challenges of globalization, political parties need to develop innovative and responsive policies that address technological, economic, and social changes. This research indicates that Islamic political communication, characterized by religious symbols and moral messages, must adapt to the modern era to build political support and legitimacy. This reflects the need for political parties to integrate global trends such as digitalization and the knowledge-based economy into their strategies. The research also reveals that political communication, while positively contributing to strengthening political identity, can trigger social polarization if not managed wisely. Therefore, political parties must be able to adapt their narratives and strategies to address dynamic changes at both the global and local levels.

In addition, researchers Lukman Ismail et al. (2024) It is stated that political parties function as intermediaries between ideologies and social forces with government institutions, and they play a role in linking political actions with society. This study finds that ideological differences in modern society can lead to complex political conflicts. In the context of globalization, these ideological differences can exacerbate the challenges faced by political parties in building international coalitions and networks. Therefore, it is crucial for political parties to understand and manage ideological conflicts through open dialogue and tolerance. The study highlights that although ideological battles can be challenging, they can also contribute to the process of societal transformation if managed effectively.

In this regard, the adaptation of political parties to the challenges of globalization involves policy innovation that is responsive to global changes, as well as wise management of ideological conflicts. Political parties must be able to develop strategies that align with both global and local dynamics to remain effective as agents of change in modern society.

E. CONCLUSION

Political parties in Indonesia play a crucial role in social change, both in historical and contemporary contexts. They have been key drivers of social transformation, from the struggle for independence to the 1998 reform movement. Political parties such as PNI, PKI, PDIP, and Golkar have contributed to policy formation, the promotion of human rights, and

the advancement of democratic reforms. They also serve as channels for the people's aspirations and as agents of social change through political education and advocacy.

However, political parties face both internal and external challenges, particularly in the era of globalization. Internal challenges include leadership issues, corruption, and representation problems that can hinder their effectiveness. Meanwhile, external challenges encompass global political dynamics, economic pressures, and resistance from conservative groups to change. To address these challenges, political parties need to develop innovative policies, build broad coalitions and networks, and wisely manage ideological conflicts. Adapting to both global and local dynamics is key to their effectiveness as agents of change in modern society.

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