

# Presidentialism and political parties in Indonesia : why are all parties not presidentialized?

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**Presidentialism and Political Parties  
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**Abstract**

This paper analyzes whether the “presidentialization of political parties” is occurring in newly democratizing Indonesia, as argued by Samuels and Shugart (2010). In Indonesia not all parties are becoming presidentialized. Parties are presidentialized when they have a solid organizational structure and have the potential to win presidential elections. Parties established by a presidential candidate need not face an incentive incompatibility between their executive and legislative branches, since the party leader is not the “agent” but the “principal”. On the other hand, small and medium-sized parties, which have few prospects of winning presidential elections, are not actively involved in the election process, therefore party organization is not presidentialized. As the local level, where the head of government has been directly elected by the people since 2005 in Indonesia, the presidentialization of political parties has begun to take place.

**Keywords:** presidentialism, political party, election, Indonesia

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# **Presidentialism and Political Parties in Indonesia: Why Are All Parties Not Presidentialized?**

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## **Introduction**

Samuels and Shugart (2010) advanced a theory of how the differences in the executive institution of political systems affect the organization and behavior of political parties. Before their work, the analysis of the relationship between the executive institution and party organization had focused on party discipline. Some studies, such as Linz (1994), pointed out that the discipline of parliament parties is likely to be weakened under a presidential system in which the executive office does not have the power to dissolve the parliament. The president, as the head of the executive, is forced to negotiate with individual members of the parliament from low-disciplined political parties in order to establish laws. Under such negotiations, patronage is a prevalent method to acquire agreement from individual MPs. However, other scholars, such as Cheibub (2007), argue that there are cases, even under the presidential system, where the strong legislative powers of the president or the legislative institution

can strengthen party discipline.<sup>1</sup>

In their study, Samuels and Shugart (2010) systematically show that variation in the executive institution of political systems affects the organization of political parties. Describing the party members (MPs) as the “principals” and the party leaders as the “agents” who are delegated authority to build popular support and pursue policy interests, the two scholars argue that differences in the executive institution affect the principal-agent relationship in a party organization.

Under parliamentarism, party members (the principals) can maintain the accountability of their party leader through his/her selection and deselection. Thus, the executive and legislative elements of parties are fused in parliamentarized parties. Under presidentialism, where elections of the head of the executive and the legislature are independently held, parties delegate strong authority over presidential elections and government administration to their leader (or their candidate in presidential elections). As such, presidentialized parties face difficulty in holding their leader accountable, “separating the executive and legislative elements of government into two independent branches also breaks parties into two separate branches, one in the

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<sup>1</sup> Political parties in Indonesia have rather strong organizational discipline even under the country’s presidential system. This strength can be mainly attributed to the effect of the electoral system. With Indonesia’s proportional representation system, where votes are counted on a party basis, parliamentary members are more likely to be dependent on their own parties. In addition, parliamentary candidates have to obey party policy because the party executive has the authority to draw up the party’s candidate list. Although an open-list system has been in effect since the 2004 parliamentary elections, the central executives of the parties still hold strong power over deciding on party candidates. Furthermore, parliamentary members find it difficult to oppose executive policy because they could be deprived of their party membership as well as parliamentary seats if they went against party rules or transfer to other parties.

legislature and one in the executive” (Samuels & Shugart 2010, 38). In other words, parliamentarism, where the relationship between voters, parties, and the executive is hierarchical, can prevent agency problems, whereas presidentialism, where parties and the executive are separately elected, cannot control problems of adverse selection and moral hazard since parties as the “principal” have neither authority to elect nor dismiss the president as the “agent.”

This logic implies that variations in the executive institution lead to differences in the organizational characteristics of parties, the methods of selecting party leaders, and election strategy. For example, parties under presidentialism select their presidential candidates not from insiders who can skillfully manage party organization, but from outsiders who can nationally appeal to voters. They do not dismiss the president even if he/she neglects the party’s support base or policy preferences. Moreover, since presidential candidates have to appeal to constituencies broader than the party support base, they tend to run election campaigns with their own organizational and financial resources rather than those of the political party. These behavioral patterns show that the separation of powers can be seen both at the constitutional level and at the party organizational level. Samuels and Shugart call this “presidentialization of political parties” (Samuels & Shugart 2010, 6).

This paper discusses whether “presidentialization of political parties,” as argued by Samuel and Shugart, can be seen in Indonesia. After the collapse of Soeharto’s authoritarian regime in 1998, democratic political reform was successively implemented in Indonesia, which introduced a separation-of-power system. Direct presidential elections have been held

every five years since 2004. This paper will analyze the changes in party organization in Indonesia under the newly introduced presidential system.

The study of Indonesian political parties since democratization can be divided into two types, one on the party system and the other on party organization or party functional weakness. The former type focuses mainly on the relationship between social cleavages and the party system, arguing that the Indonesia's party system is relatively stable due to the socio-religious cleavage called "aliran" (Mietzner 2009b; Sherlock 2004; Ufen 2008a; Ufen 2008b).<sup>2</sup> The latter type of studies pay more attention to the weakness of party organization, criticizing their poor performance at representation and accountability (Tan 2006; Tomsa 2010; Ufen 2009). For example, Tomsa argues that even the Golkar party, the ruling party under the Soeharto regime, which is seen as having the strongest party organization, has been plagued by internal factional struggles and revolts by regional chapters (Tomsa 2006; Tomsa 2008). Slater (2004) is critical of party politics in the post-democratization period characterizing it as an elite cartel. This is a similar perspective as the analysis of Robison and Hadiz (2004), who term it oligarchic politics. Case studies on local politics also point out that political parties play only a minor role in decentralized regional governance (see discussion in Section 3 below).

However, only a few studies so far have analyzed the relationship

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<sup>2</sup> There have been controversies among Indonesian scholars about whether socio-religious cleavages or *aliran* are still effective on electoral behavior in the post-democratization era. Liddle and Mujani (2007) argue that the influence of *aliran* has been disappearing from elections since democratization. On the other hand, King (2003), Ananta et al. (2004), Baswedan (2004), and Kawamura and Higashikata (2009) show that the effects of *aliran* can be still seen.

between the executive institution and political parties in democratized Indonesia. Ufen (2006; 2008a) has sought to show that direct presidential elections have influenced party organization, arguing that the rise of presidential parties and presidentialization of parties can be seen since 2004. His concept of a presidential party, however, only means one that is a political machine for a presidential candidate, a concept that is similar to what in this study is called a “personal party”. Presidentialization of parties in Ufen’s analysis also only indicates a phenomenon where presidential candidates appeal directly to the voters and present their populist policies directly through the mass media, since direct presidential elections erode the importance of party organization and ideology. Ufen’s analysis, therefore, only shows that the introduction of direct presidential elections has prompted presidential candidates to build their own parties, and he does not theoretically discuss how presidentialism affects party organization. In short, we should differentiate Ufen’s “presidential parties” from Samuel and Shugart’s “presidentialized parties”.

This study analyzes the relationship between the executive institution and the organization of political parties in Indonesia, a point which has so far attracted little attention. It examines whether Indonesia’s political parties have been presidentialized since democratization because of the implementation of direct presidential elections. Its finding shows that not all political parties have become presidentialized. The most advanced presidentialized party is Golkar, a party that has maintained strong regional chapters and supporting organizations since the Soeharto period. Other parties, however, do not

exhibit any presidentialization. This study argues that two factors determine whether a political party is presidentialized or not: the degree of organizational strength and its chances of winning presidential elections.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section I presents a general overview of Indonesian presidentialism and the party system. Section II analyzes how direct presidential elections have influenced the party organization of two types of political parties, namely, those that are strongly organized and those that are personal parties. The analysis will also demonstrate that the influence of the executive institution on the organization of parties changes in accordance with the chances of winning presidential elections. Section III discusses the influence of the separation of powers on party organization at the regional level and will seek to show that the direct election of regional heads, implemented since 2005, has had a stronger impact on party organization at the local level than at the national level. The final section summarizes the above discussion and from the analysis offers implications about the relationship between the executive institution and political party organization in newly democratizing countries.

## **I. Directly elected President and Party System in Indonesia**

The current presidential system of Indonesia came into being in 2004 as a result of the gradual political institutional reforms following the fall of President Soeharto's authoritarian regime in May 1998. Ever since independence in 1945, except for the nine years of so-called "Parliamentary Democracy" during the

1950s, the president was constitutionally supposed to be elected by the People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*: MPR), the legislative body at the top of the state organs. The president, however, could control the MPR by acquiring the authority to appoint most of its members. Soeharto, who gained power in 1966, succeeded in consolidating the authoritarian regime originally established by Soekarno through his control, with military backing, of the ruling party, Golkar (*Golongan Karya*: the Functional Group). In so doing, Soeharto was elected as the president seven consecutive times and maintain his rule for 32 years (Kawamura 2003).

With the start of democratization in 1998, however, change was imposed on the Indonesian presidential system. The activities of political parties were liberalized while the president's massive powers were eliminated through a succession of constitutional amendments. In October 1999 the MPR elected Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Soekarnoputri as the president and the vice-president respectively in the first ever free election. Then in July 2001 President Abdurrahman Wahid was impeached by the MPR because of severe conflicts between the president and the legislature.

The political turmoil under Abdurrahman Wahid's government aroused the nation's awareness of the need for further institutional reforms to stabilize the position of the president. As a result, the third and fourth constitutional amendments of 2001 and 2002 provided that the president should be elected not by the MPR but directly by the people, and that the impeachment of the president should require the consent of the judiciary so as to prevent undue

influence on the position of the president from partisan interests in parliament.<sup>3</sup>

The first ever direct presidential election was held in 2004. The election system provides for the president's election in the same year as the general election for the House of People's Representatives (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*: DPR) and the House of Local Representatives (*Dewan Perwakilan Daerah*: DPD), which is once every five years.<sup>4</sup> Candidates for president and vice-president have to run as a pair and be backed by a political party (or a coalition of political parties) that has a certain share of parliamentary seats. In the 2004 presidential election, the Presidential Election Law provided that only parties (or coalitions of parties) with more than 20% of the vote in the parliamentary election or 15% of the parliamentary seats could put up a candidate. In the 2009 presidential election, the conditions for putting up candidates were raised to more than 25% of the vote or 20% of parliamentary seats. An independent candidate is not allowed to run for election.

A presidential candidate does not win an election simply by getting a majority of the votes, and he/she needs to fulfill other conditions to win: a candidate in the 2009 presidential election had to win more than 20% of the vote

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<sup>3</sup> For the institutional characteristics of Indonesia's presidentialism, see Kawamura (2013).

<sup>4</sup> The House of Local Representatives (DPD) was created by the third constitutional amendment of 2001, and came into being after the 2004 general election. Under the Suharto regime, the MPR consisted of members of the DPR, the representatives of local governments, and representatives of functional groups. Although membership by the representatives of functional groups was abolished after democratization, the representatives of local governments were reorganized into a single chamber with members being directly elected by the people. The DPD has the authority to propose bills concerning issues of regional autonomy and can participate in the deliberations on such legislation, but it does not have powers of approval. Elections for members of the DPD employ the system of single non-transferable vote in a four-member provincial district with competition among non-partisan candidates.

in more than a half of the provinces. When no candidate acquires a majority vote, the top two candidates proceed to a second round of voting. An incumbent president can be reelected only once.

Thus Indonesia has created two institutional devices to secure political stability. One is an electoral cycle wherein the parliamentary elections are held immediately before the presidential election, and the second is the condition of allowing only relatively large parties the right to put up presidential candidates, which promotes the likelihood that the party of the president will coincide with the majority party in the parliament. Nevertheless, it has been extremely difficult for the Indonesian president to maintain a stable support base in the parliament because of the high number of parties with representatives. The effective number of parliamentary parties was 5.3 after the 1999 elections that took place immediately after democratization. It was 7.1 after the 2004 elections, and 6.2 following the 2009 elections (see Table 1). The share of parliamentary seats won by the leading party in each election was 30.6% for the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*: PDIP) in the 1999 elections, 23.1% for the Golkar Party in the 2004 elections, and 26.4% for the Democrat Party (*Partai Demokrat*: PD) in the 2009 elections, showing that even the leading party has never come close to holding a majority in the parliament.

Table 1 Election Results of the House of People's Representatives (DPR) 1999-2009

	1999 General Elections		2004 General Elections		2009 General Elections	
	% of Votes	% of Seats (Number of Seats)	% of Votes	% of Seats (Number of Seats)	% of Votes	% of Seats (Number of Seats)
Demokrat Party (PD)	---	---	7.5%	10.2% (56)	20.9%	26.4% (148)
Golkar	22.4%	24.0% (120)	21.6%	23.1% (127)	14.5%	18.9% (106)
Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP)	33.7%	30.6% (153)	18.5%	19.8% (109)	14.0%	16.8% (94)
Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)	1.4%	1.4% (7)	7.3%	8.2% (45)	7.9%	10.2% (57)
National Mandate Party (PAN)	7.1%	6.8% (34)	6.4%	9.6% (53)	6.0%	8.2% (46)
United Development Party (PPP)	10.7%	11.6% (58)	8.2%	10.6% (58)	5.3%	6.8% (38)
National Awakening Party (PKB)	12.6%	10.2% (51)	10.6%	9.5% (52)	4.9%	5.0% (28)
Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra)	---	---	---	---	4.5%	4.6% (26)
People's Conscience Party (Hanura)	---	---	---	---	3.8%	3.0% (17)
Others	12.1%	15.4% (77)	17.3%	9.1% (50)	18.3%	0.0% (0)
Total	100	100 (500)	100	100 (550)	100	100 (560)
Effective Number of Parties	5.06	5.31	8.55	7.11	9.59	6.21

Source: Compiled and calculated from various documents of the General Election Committee (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*: KPU).

Note: The percentage of parliamentary seats and the legislative effective number of parties after the 1999 general elections has been calculated with 38 seats of the military/police faction. The military/police faction was abolished totally in October 2004.

The party system in Indonesia, typical of polarized pluralism, has come about as a result of the proportional representation system which was intentionally adopted to reflect the country's multiplicity of ethnic, religious, and regional cleavages. Polarized pluralism has also been caused by the springing up of new parties that seek the support of swing voters. Since democratization, Indonesian voters have lost their party identification, resulting in volatile electoral behavior.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, because the right to put up presidential candidates is restricted to major parties, potential candidates who

<sup>5</sup> Total electoral volatility was 23 in the 2004 general election and 28.7 in the 2009 general election. On the other hand, block (cleavage) volatility between secularism and Islam was only 1.5 in 2004 and 9.5 in 2009. Although swing votes between the socio-religious cleavage increased in 2009, the majority of voters changed their supporting parties within cleavages. According to the author's estimates (Kawamura 2010), voters who swung to a different party within a cleavage accounted for 93.7% of total voters in 2004 and 66.8% in 2009.

lose in the primary election of those major parties tend to establish their own new parties.

Since so many parties win seats and there is no majority party in the parliament, parties have to build coalitions to win the presidential election. In the 2004 presidential election, four out of the five pairs of candidates for president and vice-president were put up by coalitions of parties. The winning Golkar party put up Wiranto paired with Salahuddin Wahid in a coalition with the National Awakening Party (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa: PKB*) and four minor parties. The PDIP, the second largest party, ran with Megawati and Hasyim Muzadi in coalition with the Welfare and Peace Party (*Partai Damai Sejahtera: PDS*), a minor Christian party. The PD in cooperation with two minor parties ran Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Yusuf Kalla as their presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The fourth coalition grouped the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera: PKS*) with the National Mandate Party (*Partai Amanat Nasional: PAN*) and seven other parties in support of Amien Rais and Siswono Yudo Husodo. Only the United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan: PPP*), which had failed in coalitional negotiations, ran its own candidate.

In the 2009 presidential election, the number of candidates decreased to three pairs, both because the threshold of 2.5% of the vote for party representation in the parliamentary prevented small parties from acquiring parliamentary seats and because the condition to putting up presidential candidates was tightened significantly. Still all presidential candidates were put up by coalitions of political parties. The election winner was the PD,

which became the ruling party, in coalition with four Islamic parties who had run Yudhoyono, the incumbent president, paired with Boediono. The second coalition put the Golkar party with the new People's Conscience Party (*Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat*: Hanura) which ran Wiranto with Kall, the incumbent vice-president, as their president and vice president candidate respectively. The third coalition was formed by the PDIP with the new Great Indonesia Movement Party (*Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya*: Gerindra) whose presidential and vice-presidential candidates were Megawati and Prabowo Subianto.

The past two presidential elections saw complicated coalitional negotiations before election campaigning started. While Indonesia's party system is strongly defined by a socio-religious cleavage between secularism and Islam, parties are forced to make coalitions with those from different cleavages in order to maximize their electoral support in presidential elections. Since there is more than one party competing within a cleavage, there is more than one possibility for forming a coalition. Thus, political parties seek any possible combination for a coalition during the two months between the parliamentary elections and the presidential election.

Moreover, before parties negotiate coalitions, fierce power struggles take place within the parties in the course of nominating a presidential candidate. This process shows the organizational characteristics of each party. The next section examines how the direct presidential election affects party organization.

## II. Indonesia's Presidential System and Party Organization

### *A. Organization-based Parties and Figure-based Parties*

The origin of Indonesian political parties can be traced back to the pre-independence period before 1945. During the Parliamentary Democracy period in the 1950s, the four major parties that could mobilize large numbers of supporters bitterly competed for power.<sup>6</sup> But under the authoritarian regime of Soeharto, political parties were weakened by government intervention. The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was totally broken down by the military after the so-called coup attempt by the Thirtieth of September Movement in 1965. In 1973 the Soeharto government forced political parties to merge into two camps, one for Islamic parties which became become the PPP and the other for secular and Christian parties which formed the Indonesian Democratic Party (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia: PDI*). This move was called the "simplification" of parties, and the government prohibited the establishment of other parties. Moreover, these two parties were not permitted to set up regional chapters below the level of the district/city (*kabupaten/kota*), which was the second-tier level of local government, and they were prohibited from carrying out political campaigning at the village level. The activities of each party's central executive were kept under constant government surveillance,

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<sup>6</sup> The four major parties in the 1950s were the Indonesian National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia: PNI*), which was a secular-nationalist party established by Soekarno, the first president, during the struggle for independence; the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), whose support base was in traditionalist Islam; the *Masyumi* which advocated modernist Islam; and the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia: PKI*). These four parties were about equal in strength in the first post-independence election in 1955, each garnering more or less 20% of the vote.

and the election of party heads needed substantial government consent.

While the old political parties were weakened organizationally by government intervention, the Soeharto government built up Golkar as a means to control the legislature. Golkar was composed of civil servant cooperatives, the veteran's association, and other official organizations, enabling it to mobilize support from the village level through its network of civil servants. During the Soeharto period, Golkar strengthened its organizational base as the government's party while other parties saw their organizational structure weakened. Since democratization in 1998, Golkar has maintained its organizational strength (Tomsa 2008). Although civil servants are prohibited by law from joining political parties, Golkar has maintained its strength through its local network among the politico-economic elite.

When party activities were liberalized after democratization, over 200 parties were established. However, the parties that have been able to maintain organizational strength are those that have roots going back to the 1950s. These are the PDIP, established by one of Soekarno's daughters, the Megawati-led opposition group within the PDI, and the PPP with its organizational base set in the Soeharto era. The PKB, which is supported by the NU, Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, and the PAN, supported by *Muhammadiyah*, the second largest Islamic organization, also have succeeded in establishing themselves since both the NU and *Muhammadiyah* have experience in party politics going back to the 1950s.

Of new parties established since democratization, the only party that has successfully set up a strong organizational base is the PKS. It is an Islamist

party that arose from Islamic religious movements on university campuses during the Soeharto period (Hasan 2009). Modeled on the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, young Islamist intellectuals and activists in the PKS made steady effort to strengthen their organizational base, and now the PKS is as strong an organization as the Golkar.

The introduction of direct presidential elections in 2004 prompted the emergence of a new type of political party, the personal party, whose sole aim is to make a leading politician the president. Typical of such a party is the PD, which was established to make Yudhoyono the president. Yudhoyono was one of the top army elite who performed ably in strategic posts in the military. He went into politics when he was appointed a minister in the Abdurrahman Wahid cabinet. In July 2001, when Abdurrahman Wahid was impeached and vice-president Megawati became the new president, he ran unsuccessfully against a party politician in the vice-presidential election in the MPR. Yudhoyono and his supporters recognized the need to have their own party organization to pursue their political objectives. When establishing his new party, he took as his model the *Thai Rak Thai* (TRT) Party of Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra (Setiawan & Nainggolan 2004, 172-174). He did this because he noted that after only three years from its establishment, the TRT successfully secured a majority in parliament in the 2001 Thai general election, making its leader, Thaksin, the prime minister.

The PD performed remarkably well in the 2004 general election, becoming the fourth largest party in the parliament and successfully making Yudhoyono the new president. This result prompted other political figures to set up their

own personal parties. In particular, powerful politicians who are about to lose a primary election in a major party choose to organize their own parties and run in the presidential election. Two personal parties, Hanura and Gerindra, took part in the 2009 general election. Former military commander and defense minister Wiranto established Hanura following his bitter experience in the previous presidential election. In 2004, although he won the Golkar primary to run for president as the party-backed candidate, Wiranto could not get the party's full support because he lacked a strong constituency inside Golkar and he lost in the first-round of the presidential election.<sup>7</sup> Realizing how difficult it would be for him to run as a candidate from an existing party where he did not have a support base, he decided to set up his own party, Hanura. A similar situation faced Prabowo, the former Army Strategic Reserve commander and Soeharto's son-in-law. Seeing little chance to be nominated as the presidential candidate from Golkar, he set up his own party, Gerindra.<sup>8</sup>

The above discussion looked at the two kinds of political parties that have come into existence since the introduction of direct presidential in 2004. In the next section, we will discuss the relationship between differences in party organization and the effects of presidentialism.

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<sup>7</sup> Wiranto tried to run in the 1999 presidential election in the MPR as the Golkar candidate, but he failed to get the party's support.

<sup>8</sup> Prabowo sought Golkar's nomination as presidential candidate for the 2004 election, but he lost in the primary.

### ***B. Party Organization and Presidentialization***

Taking up the question of whether there are any presidentialized political parties in Indonesia, we can logically argue that personal parties, aimed at making a specific politician the president, are not presidentialized because in such a party, the leader him/herself is the “principal”, and the party members are the “agents”. The leader, as the “principal”, delegates to the party members the responsibility of garnering the maximum number of votes and supporting the government if the leader wins the presidency. If party members as the “agents” disobey their party leader as the “principal”, the “principal” can freely replace the “agents”. Since the president elected from a personal party is also the highest leader of his party, the separation of executive and legislative functions never occurs inside party. Thus, the principal-agent problem is irrelevant in a personal party, where there exists an opposite delegation relationship from that of a presidentialized party.

Of the three political leaders (Yudhoyono, Prabowo, Wiranto) who have personal parties that have successfully won seats in the parliament since 2004, Wiranto, who heads Hanura, is the only one who is the formal leader of his party. Gerindra’s Prabowo is not the party chairman, but the chairman of the party’s Advisory Council. Yudhoyono of PD ran in the presidential elections of 2004 and 2009 without holding any formal post in the party. It was not until 2010 that he assumed the post of chairman of the party’s Advisory Council. Nevertheless, there has been no conflict between the PD and the Yudhoyono government. The PD always supports the government and votes for any government-submitted bill as the ruling party in the parliament. The daily

administration of the party is executed by the central executive council, but every important political decision has to be made with Yudhoyono's consent. The situation is the same in Gerindra where Prabowo chairs the Advisory Council. In both parties, the real political leader controls all the activities of the parties as an "adviser". This kind of party structure is quite similar to that of Golkar under the Soeharto regime. Although President Soeharto never touched the daily administration of Golkar, he supervised the party as the chairman of the Supreme Advisory Council and appointed a close aide as the party chairman thereby keeping full control over the whole organization.

Looking at whether the well-organized parties have been presidentialized with the introduction of direct presidential election, the most presidentialized is Golkar. This was strikingly displayed in the 2004 presidential election. In the parliamentary elections that year that preceded the presidential election, the PDIP, winner of the 1999 elections, suffered a huge defeat while Golkar was able to maintain its number of seats thereby regaining its position as the largest party. With the aim of winning the upcoming presidential election, Golkar decided to hold its primary election at its national congress on 20 April to nominate an official candidate. The chairman at that time was Akbar Tanjung, who had become a party member as a student activist during the Soeharto era. Akbar was confident in gaining the party's nomination to run in the presidential election as he could point to his party's achievements in the parliamentary elections. However, he was under suspicion in connection with a corruption case at the National Logistics Board (*Badan Urusan Logistik: Bulog*), and some party members worried that it could affect his popularity. This was one reason

why Golkar did not automatically nominate its chairperson as its official candidate, and instead held a party primary election as done in the United States (Tomsa 2006, 6-12).

Beginning the primary at local chapters from the district/city to provincial level in 2003, the candidates who survived and made it to the national congress in April were Akbar as well as the mass media tycoon Surya Paloh, conglomerate entrepreneur Abrizal Bakrie, Wiranto, and Prabowo. Before the congress, Akbar was expected to be the strongest candidate due to his long-time membership and strong support in the party. However, many regional chapters were unsure of Akbar's popularity. They voted for Wiranto, and Akbar failed to win his party's nomination.

As the Golkar-nominated presidential candidate, Wiranto entered into a coalition with the PKB to get support from Islamic constituencies and selected the NU vice-chairman, Salahuddin Wahid, as his vice-presidential candidate. He set up his own campaign team and tried to take full advantage of Golkar's party organization to mobilize the support of party members. However, Golkar never actively backed Wiranto's election campaign. The party's central executives backed Chairman Akbar and were rather reluctant to support Wiranto's campaign since they worried that if Wiranto won the election, his increased influence in the party would become a serious threat to the existing party elite (Tomsa 2006, 12-17). In the end, Wiranto failed to win the popular vote and was defeated in the first round of the presidential election in July. The dysfunction of the party machine in the election campaign can be seen in the election results: Wiranto got 22.2% of the vote, which was significantly

lower than the 37.2% of the total vote from the six parties that supported Wiranto in the April parliamentary elections.

The presidentialization of the Golkar party appeared in the 2004 presidential election partly because the party introduced a candidate nomination process which reflected the interests of the local chapters. Since the Soeharto era, Golkar had a centralized decision-making structure and hardly ever made final decisions in a bottom-up way. In the 1999 presidential election in the MPR, the incumbent president, Habibie, dropped his candidacy from Golkar because the anti-Habibie faction and Akbar loyalists within the party opposed him, which allowed the MPR to pass a nonconfidence vote (Mietzner 2000). But the power struggle within Golkar at that time was fought by various factions at the central level, indicating no significant change in party organizational structure. Thus, the 2004 presidential election triggered a structural change in the party organization.

When Yudhoyono won the 2004 presidential election, his vice-president was Kalla, who was a Golkar party member but who had given up running in the election as the party's official presidential candidate. Soon after Kall was inaugurated as vice president, Golkar elected him as its new chairman at the party's national congress in December 2004. In the 2009 presidential election, Golkar nominated Kall, who had resigned as Yudhoyono's vice president, as the party's presidential candidate. The voices of the local chapters were again quite influential in this nomination process. After Kall was defeated in the presidential election, the national congress in October 2009 elected Abrizal Bakrie, who argued that Golkar should participate in the Yudhoyono's second

coalitional government. It is assumed that chairman Bakrie will run in the 2014 presidential election as the party's candidate, but depending on the results of the parliamentary elections, demands for a change of candidate could arise from local chapters again. Thus, the introduction of direct presidential elections has prompted Golkar to choose as its chairman not a dyed-in-the wool party member but a popular and financial-rich presidential candidate.

Since Golkar has yet to win a presidential election, we do not know whether a separation of the executive and legislative functions can occur between the president and the party organization. However, in electing as its chairman not an active party member but politically inexperienced entrepreneurs shows that Golkar is making an effort to respond to the institutional change in presidential elections. With the introduction of presidentialism as Indonesia's executive institution, Golkar's party organization has also been presidentialized.

However, Indonesia's other organization-based parties have not been presidentialized. In both long-existing parties (i.e., PDIP and PPP) and newly-established ones (i.e., PKB, PAN, Crescent Star Party [*Partai Bulan Bintang*: PBB], PKS), party members experienced in party operations and in the national legislatures have been elected as their chairpersons.<sup>9</sup> The next section discusses what causes this difference among organization-based parties.

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<sup>9</sup> The only exception was PAN's chairman, Soetrisno Bachir, between 2005 and 2010. As an entrepreneur, Soetrisno was one of PAN's financial supporters since its establishment but was never involved in political activities. Nevertheless, he was strongly recommended for the chairmanship by the former chairman, Amien Rais, who announced his retirement from politics.

### *C. Electoral Strength and Presidentialization of Parties*

Many of the organization-based parties other than Golkar are Islamic parties. These are small or medium-sized parties that have gotten only five to ten percent of the vote in any of the parliamentary elections between 1999 and 2009. The total vote for Islamic parties decreased from 43.9% in the first post-independence election of 1955 to around 30% in the post-democratization elections. Since there is little prospect for the constituencies of the Islamic parties to greatly increase, these parties must compete with each other over their limited constituencies, making it extremely difficult for them to expand their vote. As long as Islamic parties remain small, they have little chance of winning a presidential election. In the 2004 presidential election, for example, candidates nominated by Islamic parties (Amien Rais nominated by the PAN and PKS, and Hamzah Haz by the PPP) suffered a complete defeat. In the 2009 presidential election, Islamic parties abandoned nominating their own candidates and supported the incumbent Yudhoyono.

Thus, it is difficult for small or mid-sized Islamic parties to participate in the presidential elections on their own resources. The most rational electoral strategy for them is to exert leverage over secular parties in coalition negotiations by maximizing the number of seats they can gain in the parliamentary elections and seeking to nominate a vice-presidential candidate from their own parties. Because of the difficult reality they face in running their own presidential candidates, the involvement of Islamic parties in the presidential elections has been limited; and their support of candidates from other parties has been indirect, so for the most part they have not been troubled

by differences of incentives between the presidential candidates they support and their own party organization. This is why Islamic parties are not being presidentialized even under Indonesia's present separation-of-power system.

The PDIP, like Golkar, is a secular organization-based party that has competed in the presidential elections, nominating its chairwoman, Megawati, as its own candidate. Megawati held the office of president between 2001 and 2004. However, unlike Golkar, the PDIP has not been presidentialized. The reason lies in personalized character of the PDIP's organization. Although an organization-based party, the PDIP has maintained party unity by relying upon the charisma of its first president, Soekarno, and his descendants as the symbol of the party. The PDIP has not supposed any party member other than Megawati as its leader. When Megawati retires from politics, her daughter Puan Maharani is expected to succeed to the leadership. Although an organization-based party, the PDIP is also a personal party, and therefore it has not been presidentialized.

### **III. Direct Elections of Local Government Heads and Party Organization**

When Indonesia moved from Soeharto's centralized authoritarian decision-making to the liberalizing effects democratization, the political and economic dissatisfaction that erupted in various regions of the country threatened it with national disintegration. In order to maintain national unity, the central government in 2001 gave the regions a large degree of autonomy.

Local politics have been democratized, and regional government heads are no longer appointed by the central government, but now elected directly by the people. This section examines the effects of the direct electing of regional heads on political parties at the local level.

The revised law on regional administration (Law No. 32/2004) stipulates that Governors (*Gubernur*) at the first-tier local government level (province/*propinsi*) and the heads (*Bupati* and *Wali Kota*) at second-tier local government level (district/*kabupaten* and city/*kota*) are to be elected directly by the people. Only parties (or coalitions of parties) that have over 15% of the seats in the local parliaments or 15% of the vote in local parliamentary elections can nominate candidates. In 2007 the Constitutional Court ruled that an article of the 2004 regional administration law prohibiting an independent candidate from taking part in elections for regional head was unconstitutional. This was corrected in the second-revised law on regional administration (Law No. 12/2008) which allows an independent candidate to participate in the elections provided that he/she can collect a certain number of supporter signatures.<sup>10</sup>

Case studies of regional local head elections (e.g., Vel 2005; Buehler and Tan, 2007; Choi 2007; Mietzner 2009a; Erb and Sulistiyanto, eds., 2009, and etc.) commonly point out the decreased role played by political parties. In local parliaments, where we can see more polarization than in the national parliament, party coalitions have become a necessity to nominate candidates. Yet, many of candidates are not party members, but bureaucrats who have

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<sup>10</sup> Independent candidates have to submit a collection of signatures ranging from 3-6.5% of the total regional population depending on the size of the region's total population.

administrative capabilities and a network with the political and economic elite at the local level, or who are financially rich entrepreneurs.<sup>11</sup> The reasons why party members cannot be nominated as official candidates are that parties simply do not have popular figures within their cadres or that financially weak local chapters depend on non-party figures who can finance a local political campaign (Mietzner 2010).

Golkar offers an example of party politics at the local level. According to Buehler (2009), Golkar lost in 63% of the regional head elections held between 2005 and early 2006. The reason was that powerful politicians in local chapters demanded that they be nominated as official candidates although unpopular among voters. Surprised at these results, the party's central executive council reconsidered its local election strategy. Now the party relies on pre-election public opinion surveys to select as its official candidates those people who can collect the popular vote, whether they are party members or outsiders.

It is difficult to know what has happened in other parties as scholarly studies are still limited. But judging from the various reports on conflicts in the parties between the central executive council and local chapters, it would appear that their situations are similar to that facing Golkar. While local chapters propose the nomination of local powerful party politicians as candidates, the central executive councils in Jakarta invite external figures who have a good chance of winning and large financial resources (Hadiz 2004; Choi

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<sup>11</sup> For example, Rinakit (2005) found that in 90 cases of regional head elections held in 2005, 87% of those elected were already incumbents or were bureaucrats. Mietzner (2010) also reports that in 50 cases of regional head elections held in 2005, 36% of candidates were bureaucrats, 28% entrepreneurs, 22% party members or local legislators, and 8% were veterans.

2007). The conflict between the central executive council and local chapters sometimes leads to the dismissal of local executive council members or a split in the parties in elections.

The examination above indicates that political parties in Indonesia have experienced an organizational transformation since the direct election of regional heads was introduced. At the local level small and mid-sized parties have an opportunity to win election, and they do not necessarily nominate a charismatic leader as a candidate. Thus, the separation-of-power system may have a stronger influence on party organization at local level than it does at the national level.

## **Conclusion**

This article analyzed how the introduction of direct presidential elections after democratization has affected party organization in Indonesia. Presidentialism in Indonesia has not directly caused the presidentialization of political parties. While an organization-based party like Golkar can be described as presidentialized, small and mid-sized parties have not been presidentialized because they seek to maximize the number of votes they can garner in parliamentary elections rather than in presidential elections, and they seek to participate in a coalition government as one of the ruling parties. Personal parties established by powerful politicians cannot logically be presidentialized because the party leader him/herself is the “principal”. The case study of Indonesian presidentialism and political parties implies that the effect of the

executive institution on party organization will be reduced due to the weakness of the party system and party organization in newly democratizing countries. At the same time, however, this study indicates that the separation of powers in the political system seems to affect party organization more strongly at the local level than it does at the national level.

When we analyze the relationship between the executive institution and party organization, especially in newly democratizing countries, it may be necessary to consider the time of institutional consolidation. We may also need to consider the underdevelopment of party organization or the instability of the party system, both of which will affect the relationship between the executive institution and the parties.<sup>12</sup> If the direct electing of the president is introduced into a country where political parties are organizationally underdeveloped, strong politicians are apt to establish their own personal parties in every election. Thus influence of presidentialism on party organization varies among the presently democratizing countries.

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<sup>12</sup> Samuels and Shugart (2011) point out that in third-wave democratization countries, the capacity to recruit a party leader from party cadres is defined by the executive institution, rather than by the regions or the timing of democratization.

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