



Research Paper

## On The Leadership and Management Styles of Members Relationships in Political Parties in Indonesia (Critical Studies)

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Received 03 August, 2015; Accepted 20 August, 2015 © The author(s) 2015. Published with open access at [www.questjournals.org](http://www.questjournals.org)

**ABSTRACT:-** This critical study was conducted on three anonymous political parties in Indonesia to unearth their leadership and management styles. Management literature had illustrated pattern of behaviors used by managers (or party executives in political terminology) with their subordinates (in business, management, and economics terminology) or party activist in political terminology (Biddle and Evenden, 1989). Pattern of behaviors, as in the study of leadership are based on personal differences such as paternalistic, democratic, participative and authoritative. Even though the pattern of behaviors based on personal differences, it can dominate leaders at all level in organizations, including political parties. In Indonesian's political parties, as Munandar (1993) notes these members tend to have collective behavior more than individualistic behavior and accept the inequality power between the disparate managerial positions. Therefore, through this critical study, we intend to give suggestion on improving the relationship between members of political parties in Indonesia as at the moment it is found that even though there is an improvement based on current research or case studies but based on our observation in three anonymous political parties in Indonesian, they were still dominated by authoritative and paternalistic or vertical oriented leadership style.

**Keywords:-** Political Parties, Party Executives Leadership, Party Executive Management Style, Party Activist, Indonesia

### I. INTRODUCTION

As noted by Erigüç, et al. (2014), “in today's new approaches of management, it is generally acknowledged that the key to the success of an organization is human resources. It is impossible for organizations without qualified human resources to provide quality service, to maintain their existence in the context of competition and to adapt novelties in time.” Their remark on this is also have the same significant in an effort to achieve effective and efficient political parties in other developing countries particularly in Indonesia.

Even though Indonesia's political parties can be divided into two broad groups: secular parties and Islamic parties and within these categories, parties espouse a wide variety of ideologies, policy platforms, and leadership models. However as Bulkin (2014) suggested that most formal organizations (particularly political parties) in Indonesia have a long hierarchy and most decisions are made by party executive that includes party leader, party secretary, and party treasurer. Thus even though an individual who either volunteers for, is employed by, or helps to establish and operate a political party (party organizer or also known as the party activist or party worker) still have an authority and responsibility to make works get done and unilaterally make most decisions or technical instructions.

### II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a survey of research in the form of exploratory (explanatory research). Data were collected by observation and direct interview was conducted on three anonymous political parties with anonymous sample from 34 members in anonymous political parties in Indonesia to unearth their leadership and management styles.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

But from the result of our interview with 34 anonymous party executives from three political parties from these different categories of political parties, we found that when party organizer (subordinates in business terms) encounters a problem, they often ask to party executives as decisions are totally in their hand. Subordinates just do what they are told and have no chance to have their own creativity or to convey their opinion about their works and this lead Dessler (1976) to determines this kind of leadership and management style is categorized as authoritarian.

The domination of authoritarian management style in Indonesian political parties is because Indonesia has centralized organizational structures. All political parties are centered in the capital city, Jakarta. Therefore, party executives make decisions and policies in the capital city to be implemented in local areas such as provinces, regents and districts through party organizer. Sethi (2000) notes that these party activists serve as a bridge between the visionary ideals of the top and those who stand in the front line. Party organizer in the local area have no authority to persuade and change the party executives' decisions. As a result, decisions or policies are sometimes misleading or wasteful because the decisions might be different to the facts in the field. For example, party executives decide to provide budgeting for school rehabilitation in a province, however, the province does not need the budget. Party organizers in the province have no authority to cancel the project, so they just do accord to the orders.

One other reason for the authoritarian style used by political parties in Indonesia is because of fear of losing their position. In formal organization, a party executive position means legitimate power. Carpio, et.al. (2001) state the power holder has legitimate right to use influence and that the power receiver has a legitimate obligation to admit the influence. If a party activist loses their position, automatically he or she lose their power. In Indonesia, it means losing his or her prosperity or sources of income for these part become more severe particularly in political parties. Therefore, these party executives strive to influence their party activist in authoritative way to achieve either his or her personal or organizational goals.

The recruitment of military officer to become party executives in political organization is one possible reason authoritarian leadership develops in Indonesian's political parties. Officers from military can become party executives in every government institution after they ask to be released from their military duty from the Government of Indonesia (GOI). And these have impact particularly ignoring the analogy 'the right man on the right place'. In military organization, decisions are made at the top and there is no participation of subordinates. When a person from military become a leader in non-military organization (e.g. political parties), his pattern of behaviors are carried and implemented in the organization. He will be spirited by command chain in military, which illustrates the authoritarian style and he still have influences to direct other military staff to support his activities when elected to become part of the party executives in his/her chosen political parties as what happen now in Bunda Putri controversial case because of her closeness with some military organization (Majalah Detik, 2013).

Apart from the domination of authoritarian management style, paternalism according to our observation and direct interview with anonymous sample from 34 members in anonymous political parties in Indonesia. We found that this is also become the most enigmatic problem that always occurs in Indonesian political parties. Paternalism is connected to patriarchy images through the representation of provider and 'father' figure who takes action and make decision for 'diminutive' individuals or groups in his care and preservation (Collinson and Hearn, 1996). Paternalism also has a link to the conventional sense of father who controls over a family. Similarly in an organization, a paternalistic leader acts as if he were a father who fully protective and responsible in a family.

The word reflected paternalism (or "bapak" in Indonesian term). The father is called "*bapak*" as the leader of the family. "*Bapak*" is not only used in family circumstances but also in Indonesian political parties. The superior, the senior, and the elder in organization are called "*bapak*" (or party executives), which means someone who is responsible for the welfare of his subordinates, someone who make decisions and someone who have authority for the organization. Party activists (the subordinates) just become the followers and give highly respect and obedience to their superior. They will be afraid to rebel because of punishments. Unfortunately, paternalism always seems to be appear become a dominant style and strongly implemented in political parties.

From management point of view, middle managers (or party activist in political terminology) have two functions or positions in organizations. **First**, they subordinates for the senior executives (or party executives). When we look at the relationship, in Indonesia, middle managers show vertical oriented leadership style. They will obey all the party/senior executives' will to be 'a good son' and to get a good position in their career. Middle managers will do whatever decisions taken. There is a well-known analogy for this kind of action in Indonesia "*asal bapak senang*" for making their superior feeling happy. **The second** function of middle managers is to become leaders for their subordinates. In this matter, middle managers function as '*bapak*' or father who is responsible for their subordinates. Besides that, middle managers play role over their everyday jobs; they recognize, classify and transfer existing knowledge, help create new knowledge and champion change (Sethi,

2000).

Governments of Indonesia (GOI) have striven to implement decentralized system in all government organizations through the autonomy system since Indonesian reformation in 1998. However, it is assumed that centralized system has made no improvements in all sectors, even worse. Started in 2000, most of government institutions including political parties have tried to make change in their structure. Senior executives or party executives in the capital city obligate to delegate their authority to rule each region in each province. From the perspectives of management discipline, McGregor et.al (1969) states that each manager should retain responsibility for everything that is occupied to him from above. He can delegate some of his authority, but he cannot delegate his responsible. Middle managers (or party activist) in each region are hoped to determine their own policy to rule their own area and to be facilitator between business affairs and society.

The effort, however, has not shown based on our previous findings in particular with political parties' leadership and management styles due to the complexity of country problems. One possible problem is in leadership matter. Party executives "often" do not show a serious intention of implementing decentralized system. They still being involved in many managerial aspects in the local areas especially finance. Besides that, party activist are not ready for the quick change.

National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), that have been known as Government of Indonesia (GOI) academic institution have taken this responsibilities for improving professional qualification of public service leadership; provides education and training for all level of Government of Indonesia (GOI) official (that have the tendency to become part of political parties in their carrier). These systems have become part of Indonesian public official education and training to face decentralized system and enable them to face global challenges. The education and training even begin before Government of Indonesia (GOI) Official could be promoted to higher echelon or ranks ("spamen" in Indonesian terminology). These education programs according to NIPA (2000) intended to prepare a cadre of future leader that would improve their quality through:

1. Helping their superior in designing the policy, strategy and program of the organization.
2. Helping their superior in designing conceptual ideas in national, regional and international scope.
3. Translating the technical policy into the organization's task and function efficiently and effectively.
4. Designing the working agenda of the units of organizations coordinately.
5. Actuating and developing the spirit of the subordinates in carrying out the organization's task and functions.
6. Developing the work mechanism and facilities to improve the work efficiency and effectiveness.
7. Writing a comprehensive report on task accomplishment.

When we examine the objectives of this program, evidently everyone that have a position as middle managers (or party activist in political parties) in Indonesia still tend to accept authoritative and paternalistic in the future. There are four points (1,2,3 and 7) of the objectives lead to paternalism or vertical oriented and two points (5 and 6) lead to authoritarian. There is no objective, which refers to improve the potential of these subordinates.

It seems that Government of Indonesia (GOI) still tends to maintain transactional leadership in the organization rather than transformational. Bass (2000) states that transformational leader increase the focus of their constituencies about what is important increase concerns for achievement, self-actualization and ideals while transactional leaders addresses the material need of the subordinate. Transformational leaders move subordinates to go over themselves (or self-interest) for the good of their group, organization and country or society as a whole. This is he calls the new leadership paradigm.

Even though there is some new findings from local Indonesian researcher that come from management and political discipline such as Lionardo (2007), Ferbianda (2009) that found severally difficulties when leader wish to adopt transformational leadership and management style even though they realize that it is important to treat their subordinate more flexible and based on transformational leadership.

Nevertheless in recent research from Wicaksono (2012) and case study from Ginting and Daeli (2012), it was found that some government organization including political parties have been more flexible in their leadership and management style to adapt to the current changes in this field even though other finding argued that these is not as easier as it seems particularly since "Local Government in Indonesia have received greater authority since the enactment of local autonomy and fiscal decentralization policy" (Adzani and Martini, 2014). They arguments is based on ever since the enactment of local autonomy and fiscal decentralization policy have been enacted post-Soeharto regime, but "the transparency and the performance of local government accountability still incompetence for doing this responsibility". Adzani and Martini (2014) also found that in general their research shows that political dynasty and local election have negative affect to audit opinion. And on the other hand, human development have positive affect to audit opinion in local government financial statement."

Despite, these never-ending arguments, if Government of Indonesia (GOI) wants to change the leadership and management style, there is a need to change from transactional to transformational or flexible

leadership and management style as found by Wicaksono (2012) and Ginting and Daeli (2012). The rationale for this is because Government of Indonesia (GOI) have close relationships with political parties and thus they need to provide example that by changing the focus of education and training to collaborative relationship between the managers and the led without ignoring the importance of the relationship between the managers and the senior executives. Sogunro (1998) states that in the long run it is hoped that these various training and education should improve the quality of managers (or party executives here would have a trickle-down effect toward:

1. Recognizing and appreciating group members' personality characteristics.
2. Building and strengthening relationship between leaders and group and among group members.
3. Understanding the conditions and situation when the special qualities possessed by particular group.
4. Monitoring and evaluating group activities and performance.

Another role to improve the quality of middle managers is suggested by Sethi (2000). He identifies six critical skills needed to lead effectively from the middle managers (or party activist), e.g. self awareness, bird's eye perspective, emotional competence, advanced communication skills, career management skills and continuous learning. In addition, Ramli (2009) and Sakti and Yandri (2009) suggested that all forms of GOI activities, e.g. all political parties that involved in Indonesian's General Election (election in Indonesian), should strive to be efficient in term of the cost that they use to gain support from the public to choose their delegations in *election* Afkhami & Eisenberg (2012) also have compiled various critical skills and competencies have also appeared and compiled particularly for women that have been involved or have interest to be part of political parties (either as party activists or party executives).

Nevertheless, as this is not the focus in our critical studies, we would not discuss about these further, even though Buhaerah (2014) at the moment making this as one of the key focus in researching about competencies, the affect of networking, person-organization fit, person-job fit for members of political parties particularly those that at the moment have position in *Legislative Assembly* (the most highest legislative institute that represent Indonesian community after election 2014).

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Members' relationship in Indonesian political parties based on this critical study is still dominated by authoritative and paternalistic leadership style. Some reasons for the authoritative style are because traditionally Government of Indonesia (GOI) administers centralized system in managing their relationship with other stakeholders including political parties. Those who in the position as middle managers (party activists in political parties here) fearing to lose their position and this is, worsen by the recruitment of military in Government of Indonesia (GOI) including political parties. And paternalistic style is mostly influenced by cultural behavior. Paradigm changes in the form of decentralized system then it's our hope that would change relationships between members in political parties through better leadership and management style. In addition, continuous training and education for these party executives and party activists in the long run would have a trickle-down effect to provide a wide chance for more positive leadership styles (e.g. transformational leadership or secular leadership) to develop.

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