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Institutionalization of the United Development Party (PPP) in the 2024 General Election

Bayu Septiansyah, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, General Achmad Yani University, Cimahi, Indonesia*

Abstract
This study aims to analyze and describe the institutionalization of the United Development Party (PPP) in the 2024 general election. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the researcher as the research instrument. Data collection techniques used in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. Data sources in this study include primary and secondary data. Meanwhile, data analysis techniques used in this study include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The results of the study indicate that the failure of the United Development Party (PPP) in the 2024 General Election is a consequence of weak party institutionalization, which is reflected in four main dimensions: the degree of systemicity, value identity, party autonomy, and public image. Weak organizational consolidation, poorly managed leadership changes, suboptimal cadre development, and dysfunctional central-regional coordination indicate low internal party stability. On the other hand, the challenge of maintaining the relevance of Islamic ideology amidst increasingly pragmatic changes in voter behavior results in a decline in electoral appeal. Limited autonomy in strategic decision-making, especially in determining national political stances, further weakens the party's position before constituents.

Keywords: Institutionalization; United development party; General election.

INTRODUCTION

Party-based politics was one of the transformative inventions of the early 19th century. Parties were not unknown before that time, of course, but it was not until the 19th century that parties emerged as a major organizational feature in politics in many countries (Katz & Crotty, 2015). The tendency of political party activity is aimed at ensuring that the party remains well-institutionalized. According to Huntington, institutionalization is the process by which an organization's procedures acquire standard and stable values (Sanjaya, 2018; Suryana et al., 2020).

Studies on political party institutions have been carried out quite a lot by social and political scientists in various countries (Bértoa et al., 2024). In Germany, Bolleyer & Ruth (2018) routine and value infusion are identified as two key dimensions of party institutionalization and theorize about the relevant conditions for parties in three key areas: the party system, the state, and society. The situation in Ethiopia is the opposite, showing a bleak picture of the institutionalization of the African political system in general and the party

***Correspondence:**
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, General Achmad Yani University, Cimahi, Indonesia
Email: bayu.septiansyah@lecture.unjani.ac.id

system in particular (Abeje, 2013; Coalition, 2014). The failure to apply the idea of institutionalization to political parties in Thailand stems from a traditionally narrow-minded approach to considering the institutionalization of political parties rather than problems with the idea itself (Satidporn & Thananithichot, 2023; Kim et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, studies on the institutionalization of political parties have also become a concern for several researchers (Chairiyah & Komarudin, 2019; Suryana et al., 2020; Saputri, 2021). Not much different from what happened in America, Germany, the Philippines, Ethiopia and Thailand, in Indonesia itself several institutional studies have attempted to link it to the concept of democracy (Ridha, 2017; Sinaga et al., 2018; Sanjaya, 2018). Rohmah provides a slightly different study, by offering an effort to re-energize the institutional design of political parties in Indonesia (Rohmah, 2023).

Judging from their development, political parties in Indonesia do not yet appear to be public institutions with responsibility or accountability to their voters. During the New Order era, political parties became the political "machines" of the ruling class, more focused on preserving the power of those in power (the status quo). Entering the reform era, political parties seemed shocked by the overwhelming demands of society, while political parties were not yet ready with adequate institutional arrangements (Nasir, 2016). The phenomenon of weak political party institutions in Indonesia has become a serious concern for political scientists in the country (Sinaga *et al.*, 2018).

This research will specifically discuss the institutionalization of the United Development Party in the 2024 general election. Studies on the United Development Party have been quite popular among researchers in Indonesia (Ismail, 2018; Addiansyah, 2019; Sweinstani, 2019; Ariffin, 2019; Giatama & Sodiq, 2015). Previous studies on the United Development Party basically focused on discussing the internal conflicts that occurred (Rizkyansyah, 2020; Hamdanny & Mukhtar, 2021; Harun et al., 2023). However, none of the previous studies above have specifically discussed the institutionalization of the United Development Party, which will be the focus of this research.

The United Development Party is a political party in Indonesia that was officially founded on January 5, 1973, as a result of the political fusion of four Islamic parties, namely the Indonesian Muslim Party, the Islamic Tarbiyah Islamiyah Unity Party, the Indonesian Islamic Association Party, and the Nahdlatul Ulama Party (Ghifari et al., 2017). The presence of the United Development Party on the Indonesian political stage aims to convey Islamic political aspirations (Maarif, 2018; Ariffin, 2019).

Although the United Development Party (PPP) has a long history in Indonesian politics, this does not guarantee continued success in general elections. The 2024 simultaneous general elections proved a difficult experience for the PPP, as for the first time, it failed to send its best candidates to the Indonesian House of Representatives.

Table 1. Political Party Vote Acquisition in the 2019 & 2024 Elections

Party Name	Election Year	Vote Acquisition	Presentase (%)	Number of Seats
Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle	2019	27.053.961	19,33	128
	2024	25.387.278	16,72	110
Golkar Party	2019	17.229.789	12,31	85
	2024	23.208.654	15,29	102
Golkar Party	2019	17.596.839	12,57	78
	2024	20.071.708	13,22	86
NasDem Party	2019	12.661.792	9,05	59
	2024	14.660.516	9,66	69
National Awakening Party	2019	13.570.970	9,69	58
	2024	16.115.655	10,62	68
Demokrat Party	2019	10.876.057	7,77	54
	2024	11.283.160	7,43	44
Prosperous Justice Party	2019	11.493.663	8,21	50
	2024	12.781.353	8,42	53
National Mandate Party	2019	9.572.623	6,84	44
	2024	10.984.003	7,24	48
United Development Party	2019	6.323.147	4,52	19
	2024	5.878.777	3,87	0

Source: Processed research results from 2026

Based on the table above, it can be analyzed that of the nine political parties that qualified for Parliament in the 2019 general election, most experienced an increase in votes and seats in the 2024 general election. The Democrats, although experiencing an increase in votes, decreased in seat acquisition. Meanwhile, the United Development Party experienced a decline in both votes/percentage and vote acquisition, simultaneously causing the United Development Party to fail to qualify for Parliament for the first time because it was unable to reach the 4% parliamentary threshold.

The results of the 2024 general election were historic for the United Development Party, as it was the first time it failed to qualify for Parliament since the 1977 general election. Historically, the United Development Party is the oldest Islamic party, having been established in 1973 and resulting from the merger of Islamic-based parties during the New Order era.

Table 2. PPP Vote Acquisition in the 1977-2024 Elections

Election Year	Number of Votes	Presntasi (%)	Number of Seats
1977	18.743.491	29,29	99
1882	20.871.880	27,78	94
1987	13.701.428	15,96	61
1992	16.624.647	17,00	62
1997	25.340.028	22,43	89
1999	11.329.905	10,71	58
2004	9.248.764	8,15	58
2009	5.533.214	5,32	38
2014	8.157.488	6,53	39
2019	6.323.147	4,52	19
2024	5.878.777	3,87	-

Source: Processed research results from 2026

The United Development Party (PDIP) achieved its highest vote share in its first general election, 1977. In subsequent elections, from 1982 to 2019, it tended to decline. Although it increased in the 1977 election, it continued to decline significantly from the 1999 election after the Reformation to the 2024 election. Nevertheless, the table above shows that since the 1977 election, it was not until the 2024 election that the PDIP failed to secure a seat in Parliament.

The PDIP's failure to return to Parliament in the 2024 election was partly due to the party's weak institutionalization. This weakness was evident, among other things, in the conflicts that emerged leading up to the election. In fact, internal conflict in the general election began long before the 2024 election began, when Suharso Monoarfa was suddenly removed from his position as chairman and replaced by acting chairman Mardiono (nasional.kompas.com). The peak of the conflict within the general election was the difference in attitude of several party elites with the party's decision to support the Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidate Pair (Ganjar-Mafud) in the 2024 Election.

METHODS

This research on the institutionalization of the United Development Party in the 2024 General Election will utilize qualitative research. Qualitative research is a process for understanding human or social phenomena by creating a comprehensive and complex picture that can be presented verbally, reporting detailed insights obtained from informant sources, and conducted in a natural setting (Creswell, 2018; Somantri, 2005). The selection of this qualitative method is based on the consideration that information related to the institutionalization of the United Development Party in the 2024 General Election would be more appropriate if it came directly from the individuals involved, both party administrators and non-administrators (Moleong, 2007; Zaini et al., 2023). The research instrument or tool used by this study is the researcher herself. Data collection techniques used in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. Data

sources in this study include primary and secondary data. Meanwhile, data analysis techniques used in this study include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the discussion section regarding the institutionalization of the United Development Party in the 2024 legislative elections, it will be divided into four sub-discussions by referring to the indicators of institutionalization theory put forward by Randall & Svasand (2002), which include: Degree of systemicity, Value identity, Party autonomy, and Public image.

Degree of Systematicity

Systematicity is focused on how the party carries out and implements its internal tasks by following the regulations agreed upon in the Articles of Association/Bylaws (Randall & Svasand, 2002d). Regarding systematics, it's closely related to the Articles of Association (AD/ART), organizational structure, and member involvement. A political party's AD/ART plays a vital role in establishing and maintaining a clear and systematic organizational system. Structurally, the AD encompasses the party's basic principles, such as its vision, mission, and upheld values. The ART outlines detailed technical and operational rules for managing the party's day-to-day activities (Sajian et al., 2023).

The results of the study show that non-Muslim legislative candidates can be elected despite the requirement in the Articles of Association and Bylaws (AD/ART) that states that party members must be Muslim, indicating a dynamic in the process of institutionalizing political parties. Traditionally, AD/ART is a binding guideline for every party member in carrying out their political activities. However, the flexibility found in accepting non-Muslim legislative candidates who still agree with the contents of the AD/ART indicates a more pragmatic alignment of values, namely acceptance of beliefs and agreement on common goals, even if they do not fully align with the party's initial ideology. referring to the theory of institutionalization of political parties proposed by Randall and Svasand (2002). According to this theory, the institutionalization of political parties includes two main dimensions: adaptation to social change and internalization of ideological values within the party structure.

In this context, the party's flexibility in accepting non-Muslim legislative candidates can be understood as an adaptive strategy to ensure its survival amidst a more inclusive and diverse political landscape. Randall and Svasand explain that a well-institutionalized party will develop systems that allow it to adapt to changes in society, including changes to party members who were previously more rigidly based on ideology. This adjustment, while perhaps deviating from the party's core values, reflects an effort to strengthen the party's appeal to various social groups and increase its chances of winning elections.

The United Development Party (PPP) underwent a leadership regeneration, with Suharso Manoerfa replaced by Mardiono ahead of the 2024 elections. The change in leadership of the PPP from Suharso Monoarfa to

Muhammad Mardiono occurred through the National Working Conference (Mukernas) held on September 4-5, 2022, in Serang, Banten (Wahyu, 2022). This decision was taken by the daily management of the PPP's Central Leadership Council and attended by the chairmen and secretaries of 27 Regional Leadership Councils throughout Indonesia.

This leadership transition was essentially carried out to maintain solidarity and coordination within the party, considering that Suharso Monoarfa also served as Minister of National Development Planning, necessitating a clear division of duties (Basyari, 2022). The appointment of Muhammad Mardiono, who at that time served as Chairman of the United Development Party's Advisory Council and a member of the Presidential Advisory Council, as Acting Chairman of the United Development Party aimed to fill the vacant position and bring new energy to the party.

Research findings also indicate that leadership changes within a party can create uncertainty that disrupts the smooth operation of the party and leads to shifts in policy direction, decision-making, and relationships between party elements. This can impact internal party consolidation, which in turn affects its performance and effectiveness in facing election challenges. In this context, the theory of political party institutionalization proposed by Randall & Svasand (2002) provides a deeper understanding. According to this theory, a well-institutionalized political party must not only rely on ideological agreement but also have a strong and stable structure to carry out its functions in the long term.

Unplanned or poorly managed leadership changes can cause organizational dysfunction, leading to a loss of alignment in the party's goals and activities. Randal and Svasand emphasize that in a well-institutionalized political party, the process of leadership regeneration and strengthening the organizational structure must be systematically managed to ensure the organization's sustainability and resilience in the face of external and internal dynamics. Poorly managed leadership changes will reduce party effectiveness and undermine cohesion among party cadres, ultimately impacting electoral performance and the ability to respond to emerging political issues. However, the United Development Party (PPP) faced challenges with its leadership changes.

While reliance on regional cultural bases provides advantages in gaining local support, without effective management at the central level, the party struggles to coordinate and integrate this support into concrete political outcomes, particularly in vote conversion. This indicates a dysfunction within the party's institutional structure that can hinder the party's effectiveness in achieving its goals.

The United Development Party's wing organizations, such as the GPK and AMK, despite their formal structure, have been unable to maximize their support, particularly in some regions. This poses challenges in strengthening the political support necessary to win elections, despite the existence of structures designed to achieve this. This

ineffectiveness can be caused by various factors, ranging from weak coordination, lack of motivation or capability of members, to dysfunctional relations between the central and regional levels within the party.

In the lead-up to the legislative elections, the United Development Party's cadre development and political education process stalled due to a change in leadership. Consequently, in the lead-up to the elections, the United Development Party no longer conducted a significant cadre recruitment process. The existing recruitment process focused more on transferring responsibilities or assigning tasks, rather than forming and developing new cadres as expected.

The cadre development process, which ideally involves early training and formation of cadres, was hampered by the change in leadership, which resulted in a transition of responsibilities that was more administrative in nature, rather than systematic and sustainable human resource development. This has resulted in the absence of significant cadre recruitment in the run-up to the general election, which in turn has the potential to reduce the party's readiness to face increasingly fierce political competition.

Based on the research findings, the systemic aspect of the party emphasizes the importance of stability and good coordination between the central and regional governments. The party's organizational structure, which essentially regulates the division of tasks, authority, and responsibilities, must ensure that every element within the party functions in a coordinated and effective manner. Suboptimal management at the central level, as found in the United Development Party (PPP), indicates a lack of coordination and communication between the central and regional governments. This leads to the party's inability to convert support from its cultural base in the regions into an effective voice at the national level. Furthermore, a well-institutionalized party organizational structure must ensure that each element within the organization plays a clear role in achieving common goals. The failure of wing organizations such as the GPK and AMK, despite having formal structures, to optimally fulfill their roles, reflects weaknesses in the implementation of these institutional structures. This dysfunction can be seen as an indicator that the socialization and internalization of party values have not been optimal, as well as problems in resource distribution, inter-unit coordination, and poor communication between the central and regional governments.

Value Identity

Value identity, according to Randall & Svasand, refers to a concept that describes the main components of the character and beliefs held by a political party, which underlie the party's ideology and values (Randal & Svasand, 2002d). Party ideology is a set of values, beliefs and basic principles that form the basis of a party's political thinking and actions in achieving its goals (Awang *et al.*, 2024). This ideology functions as a guideline for determining the direction of policy and political strategy that will be taken by the party, as well as a tool to differentiate itself from other parties that have different views.

The 2024 elections in Indonesia are predicted to be a turning point for political dynamics, particularly regarding the ideology of political parties that uphold Islamic principles, such as those implemented by the United Development Party (PPP). Changes in voter mindsets occurring with the changing generation of voters are a crucial factor influencing the direction of support for political parties. Younger voters, who grew up in the digital and globalized era, tend to have a broader understanding of social and political pluralism. In this context, while the PPP maintains Islamic ideology as the foundation of its political struggle, it must be able to adapt its ideological narrative to remain relevant to current developments and appeal to younger voters who may hold more moderate or progressive views.

The research findings indicate that the United Development Party (PPP) faces challenges in maintaining its ideological relevance amidst changing attitudes and expectations among voters who prioritize practical solutions to everyday problems, such as the economy, social welfare, and public policies with more immediate benefits. Although the party's Islamic ideology remains the foundation of its struggle, voters are now more inclined to support parties that can offer more pragmatic and contextual policies, rather than simply following an ideology that may not directly address their real needs.

The United Development Party faces a dilemma between maintaining its core ideology, based on Islamic values, and the need to adapt to the pragmatic demands of voters who are more focused on immediate results and policies oriented toward solving socio-economic problems. The ideological offering, which is merely understandable but insufficient to attract votes, illustrates that the internalization of ideological values within the party structure has not been matched by the ability to respond to the changing needs of increasingly pragmatic voters.

Increasingly pragmatic voters tend to prioritize values that can have a direct impact on their lives. Therefore, to gain significant support, political parties need to translate their ideological values into relevant and applicable policies. In this context, the values held by a party, such as those embodied in the ideology of the United Development Party (PPP), must be translated concretely through policies that not only reflect the party's core beliefs. The values of the United Development Party are essentially the 5 services and 6 struggles, which consistently serve as guidelines for its leadership at both the national and regional levels.

Research findings indicate that although the PPP continues to prioritize Islamic values as the primary foundation of its struggle, in reality, these values are not always consistently applied in political practice, which is often influenced by pragmatic needs, including in gaining voter support. The biggest challenge for the party is how to maintain the internalization of these values in every aspect of its policies and strategies, given that political dynamics often force parties to make decisions that are more oriented towards short-term results and practical needs, sometimes neglecting these ideal values.

Based on the findings above, it can be generally explained that the United Development Party faces a major challenge in balancing between upholding Islamic ideological values and adapting to the pragmatic demands of voters who prioritize policies that can have a direct impact on their lives. The decline in consistency in implementing ideological values indicates that the internalization of these values within the party's organizational structure has not been fully effective. In this regard, the United Development Party's values, which prioritize 5 services and 6 struggles, must be translated into every policy proposed by the party, both at the central and regional levels, in order to maintain its ideological relevance while simultaneously meeting the pragmatic demands of voters.

Party Autonomy

Decisional autonomy is a crucial dimension in the institutionalization of political parties, particularly in the context of the party's relationship with external forces such as state actors, political elites, and coalition partners. Randall & Svasand (2002) explain that decisional autonomy refers to the extent to which a party can make strategic decisions independently without experiencing pressure or intervention from external parties.

The study's findings indicate that the United Development Party's decision to support Ganjar-Mafud was more influenced by external political interests than by decisions made independently based on internal party considerations. This suggests that decision-making within the United Development Party is less autonomous and more influenced by external pressures, particularly from political coalitions formed at the national level.

The United Development Party's decision to support Ganjar-Mafud illustrates the party's weak autonomy in strategic decision-making. When the direction of support is largely determined by external dynamics, particularly pressure from the national coalition, this indicates that the party is not yet fully capable of independently carrying out its deliberative function. Support for Ganjar Pranowo is more influenced by temporary political considerations and less reflective of the party's ideological position. This decision demonstrates that the United Development Party prioritizes the influence of the political coalition, which is more influenced by external pressure, over acting independently in accordance with the party's platform and principles (Kusuma, 2023).

Fichter's (2019) study, "Party Systems and Political Fragmentation," also highlights that many political parties in Indonesia face difficulties maintaining their political autonomy amidst pressure from larger coalitions, which often influence their strategic decisions. Therefore, while the United Development Party's decision to support Ganjar-Mafud can be seen as a pragmatic step in navigating the national political landscape, it reflects the challenges of maintaining the party's independence and ideological identity amidst increasingly dominant coalition politics.

Despite this, the United Development Party continues to strive to maintain autonomy in political decision-making, despite its coalition structure

demanding compromise. The internal deliberation process, involving various party elements, demonstrates the existence of a deliberative mechanism that is maintained, ensuring that strategic decisions are not entirely determined by external pressures. Essentially, political parties in Indonesia, including the United Development Party, often face challenges in maintaining their autonomy within the context of pragmatic coalitions. However, the United Development Party demonstrates steadfastness in maintaining control over strategic decisions, despite external considerations influencing its position.

The research also shows the limitations of the United Development Party in fully exercising its autonomy in strategic decision-making. This is because the direction of political support, including coalition positioning and presidential nominations, is determined more by external dynamics than by independent internal processes. Therefore, although the United Development Party strives to maintain autonomy in decision-making, in reality, many major decisions, particularly those related to coalitions and political support, cannot be made completely independently.

Public Image

Public image is a crucial dimension in the external institutionalization of political parties. According to Randall and Svasand (2002), this aspect is referred to as public image, namely the existence and recognition of a party in public perception, which is determined by the party's ability to produce symbols, messages, and narratives that are recognized and accepted by the wider community. Parties that successfully establish a positive public image are recognized not only through their symbols and names but also through their closeness to public issues, their dynamism in responding to current developments, and their openness to the aspirations of the new generation.

Research findings indicate that a major challenge facing the United Development Party (PPP) is how to maintain this image amidst increasingly pragmatic political competition. According to them, although the PPP has attempted to convey a more inclusive message, the uncertainty and rapid changes in the political constellation make it difficult to consistently maintain its image.

This situation highlights the dilemma faced by the United Development Party (PPP) in maintaining its image as a moderate Islamic party amidst an increasingly pragmatic and dynamic political reality. Efforts to build an inclusive image face obstacles when the party's narrative fails to keep pace with the rapid changes in the national political landscape. Therefore, despite the United Development Party's efforts to build a more inclusive and moderate image, the constantly changing political landscape makes maintaining this image increasingly challenging.

Research findings also indicate that the United Development Party has failed to articulate progressive Islamic values to young voters. The Party focuses too much on a conservative ideological narrative and is not sufficiently responsive to issues relevant to young voters, such as education, unemployment, and social

equality. The party also faces a political communication gap in reaching young voters. This excessive focus on a conservative ideological narrative makes the party appear less adaptable to evolving social dynamics, particularly issues of primary concern to young people, such as access to education, employment, and social justice.

The United Development Party (PPP) needs to transform its communication methods with the public, particularly through the use of social media, to attract the attention of the younger generation and renew its image in the eyes of more modern voters. Changing the PPP's campaign messages to be more relevant to the social and economic conditions facing today's society is crucial. In the contemporary political context, social media is a primary means of reaching young voters, who are digital natives and tend to be responsive to current issues relevant to their daily lives. Therefore, transforming communication methods and updating campaign messages are key for the PPP in attracting young voters and renewing its image in the eyes of a more modern society.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the United Development Party's failure in the 2024 General Election is a consequence of weak party institutionalization, reflected in four main dimensions: degree of systemicity, value identity, party autonomy, and public image. Weak organizational consolidation, poorly managed leadership changes, suboptimal cadre development, and dysfunctional central-regional coordination indicate low internal party stability. On the other hand, the challenge of maintaining the relevance of Islamic ideology amid increasingly pragmatic changes in voter behavior has resulted in a decline in electoral appeal. Limited autonomy in strategic decision-making, particularly in determining national political stances, further weakens the party's position among constituents. This condition is exacerbated by a public image that is less adaptive to the dynamics of the younger generation and the development of digital political communication, resulting in the United Development Party failing to meet the parliamentary threshold and losing representation in the People's Representative Council of the Republic of Indonesia for the first time since 1977.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the United Development Party undertake comprehensive institutional reform by strengthening a stable, consistent, and coordinated organizational system between the central and regional levels, as well as revitalizing the cadre development process and ongoing political education. The United Development Party also needs to reactualize Islamic ideology by translating it into programs and policies that are contextual, solution-oriented, and relevant to the socio-economic needs of society, especially the younger generation. Furthermore, efforts should be made to strengthen the party's autonomy in strategic decision-making so that the party does not simply submit to pressure from political coalitions. In terms of political communication, the United Development Party is advised to

transform its campaign strategy by utilizing digital media creatively, inclusively, and adaptively to rebuild a public image that is modern, progressive, and responsive to contemporary political dynamics.

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