Changing Patterns of Factionalism in Indonesia: From Principle to Patronage

Fionna, Ulla; Tomsa, Dirk

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Ulla Fionna[1] and Dirk Tomsa[2]

Abstract
Party politics in Indonesia's current democratic regime takes place within the parameters of a heavily fragmented multi-party system. Factionalism exists in most parties, but the influence of factions on internal party dynamics is only weak to moderate. Where factions exist, they are usually driven by clientelism and patronage rather than the representation of social cleavages, ideological differences, or regional affiliations, although traces of programmatically infused factionalism do persist in some parties. The intensity of factional conflicts in Indonesia's young democracy has varied significantly over time and across different parties. While temporal variations are mostly related to changing institutional incentive structures, disparities between individual parties can be attributed to different organisational histories and structures as well as divergent levels of rootedness in social cleavage structures. It is noteworthy that several Indonesian parties have relatively deep roots in society and, in some cases, close links to long-established civil society organisations that preceded party formation. Given these constraints on more severe factionalism, damaging effects on governance have been fairly limited. The most debilitating effects of factionalism have been felt within the parties themselves, whereas government effectiveness and coalition formation has, ironically, sometimes benefitted from factional disputes.

Keywords
Indonesia, parties, elections, democracy, factions

[1] Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore
[2] La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia

Corresponding author:
Dirk Tomsa, Department of Politics, Media and Philosophy, La Trobe University, Victoria 3086, Australia.
Email: d.tomsa@latrobe.edu.au

Introduction

Factionalism is widespread in the party systems of Southeast Asia, especially where parties lack well-developed organisational infrastructures and programmatic values that could glue members tightly to a party. In Indonesia, factions do exist in most parties, but their influence is limited because political parties have established themselves as important building blocks in the political system. Persistent shortcomings such as pervasive corruption and oligarchic elitism notwithstanding, practically all Indonesian parties today have comprehensive institutional infrastructures with branch offices across the archipelago and at least some parties possess relatively deep roots in society that have helped them to articulate and represent the interests of certain segments of society. While these factors have worked against the emergence of localised factions or clans like in Thailand or Philippines, Indonesia does share another key characteristic with its neighbours, namely the central prominence of patronage as a dominant feature of political life. Accordingly, patronage interests also dominate the arena of party politics, so where factionalism within parties exists, it tends to be driven by clientelistic networks, rent-seeking, and the quest for patronage rather than ideological or programmatic differences within parties.

In the formative years of the current party system, which emerged in the aftermath of the fall of Suharto in 1998, factional disputes often prompted defections and the establishment of new parties, but since 2009, the Indonesian party system has become increasingly stable, even though heavy fragmentation persists. As institutional hurdles for the formation of new parties have been tightened continuously over the last few years, parties are now under greater pressure to solve factional disputes internally. Some parties have been more successful in handling this challenge than others, thereby exposing subtle differences not only in the nature of factionalism between individual parties but also in the parties' ability to accommodate different interests within one organisation.

This article distinguishes between programmatic and clientelistic or patronage-driven factionalism and locates the roots of these types of factionalism in a mix of historical legacies and institutional developments after the beginning of democratisation in 1998. It argues that even though traces of programmatically infused factionalism still persist in some parties, the dominant variant of factionalism in Indonesia today is clientelistic. Intra-party conflicts between warring factions occur primarily over access to patronage, not policy. But patterns of factionalism are not static. Instead, the article argues that factionalism in Indonesia as well as its impact on broader political dynamics has undergone some notable changes in recent years, primarily in response to changing institutional incentive structures and the related emergence of new party types. Indeed, to what extent factional conflicts disrupt party unity or impact on broader governance issues depends to a large extent on the party type. In strongly personalistic parties, leaders usually have the means to clamp down on factional squabbling, whereas in the more internally competitive parties, leadership disputes can have significant consequences including splits, defections, and dismissals.

Structurally, the article begins with a succinct overview of the evolution of Indonesia's party system and a brief introduction to Indonesia's main parties. The article distinguishes between six core parties that have successfully competed in all post-Suharto

elections and three newer parties that were only formed after the 1999 election. After outlining the dominant patterns of factionalism in these parties, the second half of the article then turns to the main factors that account for the peculiar pattern of party factionalism prevalent in Indonesia today. The first two of these factors are historical legacies inherited from the preceding authoritarian regime and the short era of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s, namely a prominent and still politicised social cleavage structure and a deeply entrenched culture of patronage politics. The third factor that has shaped patterns of factionalism in Indonesia is the institutional framework that underpins the party system. Consisting of a set of party and election laws, this framework has undergone frequent changes since 1999, resulting in an altered incentive structure for factions and parties. The article concludes with some remarks about the implications of factionalism for party coherence, party system institutionalisation, and coalition politics in Indonesia.

Evolution of the Indonesian Party System

Indonesia has had four distinct party systems since its independence in 1945. Each of these systems had its origins in a critical juncture that altered not only the nature of the party system but also the entire regime structure for years to come. The very first Indonesian party system emerged in the aftermath of Indonesia's independence struggle and was shaped strongly by the country's dominant social cleavage structure of secular nationalism versus political Islam (Feith, 1962; Geertz, 1960). The four biggest parties at the time – the Indonesian National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*, PNI), the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI), and the two Islamic parties Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Masyumi – all represented specific streams (*aliran*) in this cleavage structure. In the 1955 election, these four parties won more than three quarters of the votes. The secular-nationalist PNI won the election with 22.3 per cent, followed by the Islamist Masyumi Party with 20.9 per cent. Meanwhile, the traditionalist Islamic NU secured 18.4 per cent, while the PKI achieved 16.4 per cent. However, many small parties also managed to win seats in the 1955 parliament, creating a party system that was both polarised and fragmented.

Factional divisions within the parties of the 1950s often had an ideological dimension, but clientelistic networks and the quest for patronage also shaped internal party dynamics. Cabinet formation and public policy were difficult under these circumstances, especially because the party system lacked a strong coherent centrist party that could offset the centrifugal pressure from the left and right (Mietzner, 2008: 435). Following the end of parliamentary democracy in the late 1950s, political parties were sidelined as pressure from the army and the revolutionary fervour of Sukarno's Guided Democracy (1959–1965) resulted in the disbandment of parliament and the marginalisation of all parties except the PKI (Lev, 1966).

The rise of the PKI was short-lived though. In 1965, an abortive coup attempt triggered mass killings and the complete annihilation of communism (Kammen and McGregor, 2012; Roosa, 2006), eventually resulting in the formation of the so-called New Order regime. The new President Suharto banned the PKI and subjected other political parties to authoritarian state control. While elections were reintroduced in 1971,

only three parties were allowed to compete from 1977 onwards, namely, the quasi-state party Golkar (*Golongan Karya*, Functional Groups) and two newly established toothless opposition parties, the United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, PPP) and the Indonesian Democratic Party (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*, PDI). Since both PPP and PDI were agglomerations of pre-existing parties from the 1950s, factionalism was rife in these parties throughout the New Order.

Like the two opposition parties, Golkar too was internally divided. The military and the bureaucracy formed the two most powerful pillars of Golkar but the party, which in official regime parlance was not a party at all, also accommodated a plethora of other groups and interests (Reeve, 1985). During the New Order, Golkar enjoyed undisputed electoral hegemony in Indonesia as the two opposition parties were strictly limited in their access to financial, material, and human resources. Golkar, on the other hand, not only had the full backing of the president himself but could also bank on assistance from the military, the bureaucracy, and the big business community. With this extraordinary support, Golkar's organisational infrastructure was quickly developed to reach down to the most remote villages of the sprawling archipelago. Unsurprisingly, the party won all six New Order elections by a large margin, securing an average vote share of 67.5 per cent (Haris, 2004).

The New Order came to an end in May 1998 when President Suharto resigned in the face of a severe financial crisis and massive student protests. His successor, interim President B.J. Habibie, almost immediately lifted restrictions on party formation, thereby paving the way for the emergence of Indonesia's contemporary party system, which boasts a mix of old parties, new parties with old roots, and completely new parties. Like the 1955 system, it is heavily fragmented, and social cleavages have once again re-emerged as an important factor influencing the shape of the system. Significantly, a discernible core of six parties that have won seats in all elections since 1999 has manifested itself at the heart of the party system (Tomsa, 2010). In addition to these six, many other parties have come and gone over the years, and in the most recent election in 2019, a total of nine parties won seats in parliament (see Table 1).

Table 1. Parliamentary Election Results, Major Parties Only, 1999–2019 (in per cent).

Party	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (PDIP)	33.74	18.53	14.03	18.95	19.33
Partai Golkar	22.44	21.58	14.45	14.75	12.31
Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB)	12.61	10.57	4.94	9.04	9.69
Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)	10.71	8.15	5.32	6.53	4.52
Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN)	7.12	6.44	6.01	7.59	6.84
Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)	1.36[a]	7.34	7.88	6.79	8.21
Partai Demokrat (PD)	–	7.45	20.85	10.19	7.77
Gerindra	–	–	4.46	11.81	12.57
Nasdem	–	–	–	6.72	9.05

Source: Indonesian Election Commission (www.kpu.go.id).
[a]In 1999, PKS competed under the name PK (*Partai Keadilan*, Justice Party).

The distinction between the core parties that have successfully competed in all democratic elections since 1999 and those that only started to participate in elections in 2004 or afterwards is not only useful because these two clusters of parties differ in their organisational lifespans and structures but also because they display somewhat different patterns of factionalism. Factions are defined here as loosely organised groupings within larger organisations that compete with each other for power advantages (Beller and Belloni, 1978: 419). They can range from relatively coherent programmatic "factions of principle" (Sartori, 1976) that pursue clearly defined policy goals to more fluid, often clientelistic "factions of patronage" (Zucherman, 1979) that gather around powerful patrons in the hope of securing access to lucrative patronage resources. While clientelistic factions tend to be weakly organised and in most cases short-lived, programmatic factions or identity-driven factions who lay claim to representing the interests of certain social or regional groups within a larger organisation are often more institutionalised. In some cases, they possess not only their own organisational procedures but also publicly known names and symbols (Beller and Belloni, 1978: 427–430).

In the scholarly literature, the effects of factionalism on party politics in emerging democracies are often described as negative. Especially, clientelistic factionalism tends to weaken prospects for party institutionalisation as it undermines organisational coherence (Janda, 1980; Panebianco, 1988). Factionalism can also cause or exacerbate volatility in party systems, which in turn can have negative implications for coalition-building and cabinet formation. In more established democracies like Australia, India, Italy, or Japan, by contrast, political stability has prevailed for long periods of time even in the face of severe factionalism within the largest parties (Bettcher, 2005). Indeed, where patterns of factionalism are cooperative rather than overly competitive or even degenerative (Boucek, 2009), factions can actually help a party aggregate and represent societal interests, as long as the host party tolerates the existence of these factions and integrates them into its overarching organisational structure. Significantly, patterns of interaction between individual factions as well as between factions and the host party can change over time, for example, in response to changing institutional incentive structures such as amendments to electoral or party laws.

The Core of Indonesia's Party System: Enduring Cleavage Structures and Traces of Principles

In Indonesia today, clientelistic factionalism is the most common type of factionalism, but remnants of factions of principle can also still be found in some of the core parties, especially those whose organisational roots date back to the 1950s. The longevity of the core parties highlights the significance of historical legacies for the formation of party systems in new democracies. Compared to the many other parties that have come and gone over the last five elections, the six core parties all had a head start at the time of the critical juncture in 1998 because they could utilise pre-existing networks and structures based on parties, mass organisations, and social movements that had already been in existence for many years. However, while they used this advantage to establish themselves as strong contenders in the new

democratic party system, they also inherited significant organisational baggage including peculiar leadership structures and factional divisions derived from their organisational trajectories before democratisation.

To begin with, the National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN) and the National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, PKB) were both established in 1999, but the historical roots of these parties date much further back because they are inextricably linked to the Islamic mass organisations Muhammadiyah and NU, which were established in 1912 and 1926, respectively. Muhammadiyah and NU are the organisational expressions of a long-running schism in Indonesian Islam between modernists and traditionalists, and the long history of politicising this divide still reverberates today. Back in the 1950s, NU had acted as a political party while Muhammadiyah was the backbone of Masyumi which was later banned by Sukarno. During the New Order, NU and Muhammadiyah withdrew from formal party politics and the cleavage went into "hibernation" (Ufen, 2013: 44), but when Suharto resigned in 1998, it was almost instantly revived as both Muhammadiyah and NU urged their respective leaders to establish their own new parties. The result was the formation of PAN and PKB.

By establishing themselves as the electoral vehicles for huge mass organisations, PAN and PKB inherited a solid base of loyal followers, but they also inherited the internal frictions inherent in these organisations. To a large extent, these frictions revolved around clientelistic networks and access to leadership posts, but they also had a more programmatic dimension, especially in the early days of party formation after the fall of Suharto. Some religious leaders from NU, for example, questioned whether direct involvement in party politics was actually desirable for a social organisation that was primarily engaged in religious education (Mietzner, 2009: 253–254). In PAN, meanwhile, a bitter feud unfolded between proponents of a more pluralistic orientation for the party and others who preferred a straightforward Islamic identity (Tomsa, 2008: 163). Following the formal establishment of the two parties, these conflicts ebbed and flowed, often compounded by personal rivalries between competing clientelistic networks. As consecutive party leaders struggled to reconcile religious ideals and political opportunism, both PAN and PKB became increasingly alienated from their mass organisations, losing votes as a result of the factional skirmishes. It was not before the 2014 election that the two parties turned their electoral tides, and especially in the case of PKB, this has been attributed largely to their regenerated proximity to NU (Arifianto, 2015: 67–68). In 2019, PKB further consolidated its position after an unusually ideological campaign that aimed to sharpen NU's profile as a bastion of moderate Islam in Indonesia.

Another Islamic party that has experienced programmatically infused factionalism is the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS). In contrast to the other two parties discussed above, however, PKS has no linkages to pluralist mass organisations and does not fit easily into the categories of traditionalist and modernist Islam. Instead, it emerged out of a relatively small, mostly campus-based social movement, the tarbiyah movement, which was only set up in Indonesia in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Machmudi, 2008). Largely clandestine during the New Order due to its more radical Islamist orientation, the tarbiyah movement initially pursued the goal of turning

Indonesia into an Islamic state based on Sharia law. After the fall of Suharto, movement leaders created a political party to struggle for this objective, but poor results in the 1999 election convinced the party leadership that a more moderate party appearance was necessary to woo voters. When election results did indeed improve in 2004 under a slightly changed name – PKS had run as PK in the 1999 election – and a more moderate platform, the strategy soon developed its own dynamic, fostering the emergence of two distinct factions who struggled over the future direction of the party. While an openly pragmatic faction sought to entrench the party in mainstream power politics, religious idealists urged the party to stick to its roots in Islamist ideology (Tomsa, 2012a: 492). Between 2004 and 2014, the pragmatists held the upper hand in this struggle, but stagnant election results and the religious polarisation that unfolded around the 2017 gubernatorial election in Jakarta have recently prompted a resurgence of the idealist faction within PKS. Nevertheless, ideological moderation and behavioural moderation have clearly left their mark on PKS and arguably transformed the party from an Islamist party to a conservative Islamic party (Tomsa, 2019).

The cases of PAN, PKB, and PKS show that where linkages with affiliated social organisations have imbued a party with a relatively distinct sociopolitical identity, directional changes instigated by party leaderships are prone to internal challenges and potential discontent at the grassroots. More specifically, since all three of these parties are Islamic parties, the factional divisions that emerged carried a distinctly religious undertone; engagement in mainstream politics was simply deemed morally wrong by certain sections within these parties. Significantly, the last of the Islamic core parties, the PPP, has not experienced a comparable pattern of factionalism, which is in large part due to the fact that it has no close linkages to a mass organisations, even though many of its functionaries are also active in NU and Muhammadiyah. Established during the New Order as an attempt to tame Islamic political activism by forcibly merging traditionalist and modernist Islamic groups into one party, PPP has, for most of its existence, been largely preoccupied with tackling the internal divisions created by its very foundation. Factionalism in PPP, in other words, also has a vaguely programmatic dimension, but rather than pitching political pragmatists against religious idealists, this factionalism is primarily a fight for party-internal supremacy and access to patronage, fought by factions that can only be loosely defined as traditionalist and modernist.

Like PPP, the other New Order opposition party PDI also entered the reform era on the back of divisive regime interventions by the Suharto regime. Created in 1973 through a regime-enforced merger of secular and Christian opposition parties, the PDI represented the other side of Indonesia's main religious cleavage and was envisaged by Suharto to be the counterbalance to the Islamic PPP. Unlike PPP, however, where the influence of modernists and traditionalists was relatively even, the PDI was from the day of its creation dominated by one faction that was much stronger than the party's other constituent elements. Led by members of the old PNI from the 1950s, this faction primarily sought to uphold the legacy of Sukarno, including nationalism, secularism, and religious pluralism (Mietzner, 2012: 514).

But when in 1993 Sukarno's daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri took over the party leadership, the New Order regime regarded this symbolic move as a threat and it quickly

removed her from the post (Aspinall, 2005: 182–191). The ensuing feud between Megawati and a small band of Suharto loyalists inside the PDI quickly superseded pre-existing divisions, eventually leading to the establishment of the Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan, PDIP) as a new yet effectively old party after the fall of Suharto. While the Suharto-endorsed PDI faction swiftly disappeared in oblivion, Megawati's PDIP became the strongest party in the first post-Suharto election. In subsequent years, Megawati cemented her dominance over the party, sparking discontent among those who had hoped to turn PDIP into a more egalitarian party. But the party matriarch ruthlessly marginalised all internal opposition and soon there were no more factions within PDIP that had the capacity to challenge the leader (Mietzner, 2012: 520).

Megawati's grip on internal party matters is unique among the core parties. Arguably, her dominant position in the party is only rivalled by that of the oligarchs and former army generals who now control the new personalistic parties that emerged after the first post-Suharto election. But unlike these newer parties, whose long-term survival seems rather precariously linked to the political fate of their leaders, PDIP and the other core parties still possess obvious linkages with certain core constituencies that go beyond the lure of charismatic leaders. While the 2004 and 2009 elections provided some evidence of a dealignment process in which voters lost their attachment to these parties (Ufen, 2008), the 2014 and 2019 elections saw a resurgence of the core parties, indicating that the loyalties of voters within the established constituencies remain reasonably intact despite low party identification figures in most public opinion surveys (Fossati, 2016).

Golkar and the New Crop of Personalistic Parties: Patronage, Clientelism, and Oligarchic Capture

Somewhat surprisingly, even Golkar has been able to build such an established core constituency, even though it is not rooted in a clearly delineated social milieu like the other core parties. Indeed, rather than laying claim to represent the interests of a particular cleavage-based community, Golkar is linked to its support base by its reputation as a "natural government party" (Tomsa, 2012b) that can reliably provide patronage to its members and supporters. Reflecting this linkage structure, the dominant pattern of factionalism in Golkar is also clientelistic and opportunistic, driven by the constant quest for new patronage resources. The origins of this particular form of factionalism can be traced back to the early New Order days when Golkar was transformed from an obscure assemblage of so-called functional groups into a quasi-state party that accommodated a plethora of different interests. Divisions between and among these interest groups were deliberately fostered by Suharto in order to prevent the emergence of independent power centres within the party. Today, the party is still characterised by the existence of various factions that are linked to eminent party figures, especially former chairmen like Akbar Tanjung, Jusuf Kalla, and Aburizal Bakrie (Nurjaman, 2018).

The centrality of patronage is often regarded as one of the main pathologies of Indonesia's post-authoritarian regime. The roots of the current patronage democracy, however, can be traced deep into the past. Ever since the first Indonesian party system

came into being in the 1950s, political parties have used their access to state resources as a means to reward members and supporters with jobs, contracts, and material incentives (Feith, 1962). However, it was not before the institutionalisation of the New Order regime in the 1970s and 1980s that political and economic power became so closely intertwined that patronage would become a quintessential characteristic of Indonesian politics (Robison and Hadiz, 2004). Directed from the top of a highly centralised state apparatus, corruption, collusion, and nepotism soon permeated all sectors of the political system including the state-controlled party system. Patronage became both the glue that tied clientelistic networks together and the force that pulled these networks apart.

In 1997/1998, public frustration with these shady practices was a key motivating factor behind the mass student protests that helped oust President Suharto. But when Suharto resigned, the protracted nature of the ensuing democratic transition set Indonesia on a very peculiar post-authoritarian trajectory (Malley, 2000), which allowed many influential powerbrokers from the New Order era to retain control over key political institutions, including many political parties. While accommodating these spoilers during the transition helped safeguard Indonesia's territorial integrity in the post-Suharto era, it also paved the way for patronage and corruption to remain as central features of Indonesian politics in the new democratic era (Aspinall, 2010). The collective embodiment of this patronage democracy has become known simply as "the oligarchy," a somewhat amorphous assemblage of old regime elites and new upstarts including business tycoons, bureaucrats, and politicians who quickly captured the new democratic institutions and continued the New Order practice of fusing the bases of economic and political power (Robison and Hadiz, 2004).

Although the extent to which these oligarchs dictate the process of interest articulation in contemporary Indonesia is contested (Ford and Pepinsky, 2014), there can be little doubt that oligarchs have enormous influence over Indonesian parties today. Parties like Golkar, PAN, or the National Democrats (Nasdem) are or were at some point led by some of Indonesia's richest men, while in other parties like the Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat, PD) or Gerindra, oligarchs have held important positions in central leadership boards or the often equally powerful advisory councils. Moreover, beneath the top layer of the super-rich, most parties also harbour large numbers of entrepreneurs and entrenched bureaucrats who are seeking political office primarily for self-enrichment. All in all, the influx of these oligarchs and entrepreneurs has gone hand in hand with a massive commercialisation of electoral politics, which in turn has had negative implications for accountability and representation.

Driven by the constant need to replenish limited patronage resources, Indonesian parties have often resorted to cartel-like behaviour, sharing rather than competing for power (Slater, 2004). Oversized rainbow coalitions are the most obvious manifestation of this "promiscuous powersharing" (Slater and Simmons, 2013), but behind the veneer of these collusive cabinet structures, there is often intense infighting within individual parties over access to the top powerholders and the patronage resources they control. At times, these internal struggles pitch members of parliament against cabinet members of the same party (Sherlock, 2010). But by far the most intense factional battles over patronage are fought during leadership contests, at least in those parties where the

chairmanship is actually a contested position. Somewhat ironically perhaps, Golkar has emerged as one of the most internally competitive parties in the current party system, and no single Golkar chairman has yet managed to complete more than one term. As a matter of fact, most leadership battles since 1998 were bitterly contested between competing clientelistic networks and, significantly, they were all won by the candidate who was deemed to be more capable of delivering much-desired cabinet representation or other means of state patronage (Tomsa, 2012b). Similar dynamics could be observed during leadership contests in PPP, PAN, and PKB.

Meanwhile, in the newer personalistic parties where the top job is not up for grabs and powerful leaders run their parties largely unopposed, factional disputes follow a similar logic but are confined to the second tier in the party hierarchy. In fact, it might be an exaggeration to describe the personalised cliques within these parties as factions at all as they have virtually no organisational characteristics. But small cliques of party members do gather routinely around higher ranked party functionaries who are believed to be able to elicit favouritism from the party leader, for example, when it comes to legislative candidature selection, appointments in the party organisation, and other patronage opportunities.

An interesting outlier in this party group though is PD. Not only was it the first of the personalistic parties to be successful at the ballot box, but its long-time de facto leader, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, was also unusually detached from the party. In fact, it was only in 2013, in the wake of a massive corruption scandal that engulfed some top PD politicians, that Yudhoyono became chairman of his party. Previously, he had left the position open for competition, but this had led to deep rifts and corruption allegations within the party as competing networks were trying to position themselves as potential successors for the day Yudhoyono would leave the party (Honna, 2012). The 2010 congress in particular was reportedly tainted by criminal activities. Anas Urbaningrum was elected as party chairman at that congress, but he was soon afterwards found guilty of corruption in relation to the infamous Hambalang corruption case which also brought down several other high-ranking PD leaders (Butt and Lindsey, 2018: 290).

Party and Election Laws: How Institutions Have Shaped Factional Dynamics

If historical and socio-economic factors have played an important role in shaping the forms of factionalism prevalent in Indonesia today, institutional factors have also had a strong influence on how factions and parties interact with one another. The most significant institutions that have affected factional politics in Indonesia are the party and election laws which have undergone numerous modifications since 1999. Initially, restrictions on party formation were relatively lax, making it easy for factions within existing parties to create splinters and spin-offs. Indeed, all core parties except PKS experienced such defections of splinter groups in the early years of the transition. However, more recent legislation has created higher barriers for establishing new parties, resulting in less splinters and more intense internal party factionalism. At the same time,

the introduction of direct presidential elections in 2004 also altered the incentive structure for the formation of new parties. This section will examine the combined effects of these institutional changes and trace their impact on the nature and scope of factionalism in Indonesia.

The euphoria that came with the 1998 reform movement demanded a complete overhaul of the New Order's restrictive party and election laws, but the drafting process for the laws involved many considerations. On the one hand, the laws needed to incorporate the varying interests of the three parties represented in parliament at the time of the transition – Golkar, PPP, and PDI. On the other hand, they also needed to reflect the reform demands expressed on the streets outside parliament. When the new laws were eventually passed in January 1999, they represented a mix of New Order elements and democratic reforms (King, 2003). Among the key features of the new laws were significantly greater freedoms for the establishment of new parties and the retention of the closed-list proportional representation (PR) system that had already been used during the New Order.

The adoption of the new laws opened the floodgates for aspiring politicians to establish their own political vehicles, setting in motion a process of party system fragmentation which was soon to become one of the key features of the Indonesian party system (Tomsa, 2010). As the new law required only fifty people as the minimum to found a new party, the option was easy and attractive, especially compared to relying on the unpredictability of furthering a political career in a major party. Moreover, parliamentary representation was beckoning even with a miniscule share of the vote as the election laws featured only a poorly designed electoral threshold which, rather than banning parties that failed to reach the threshold from gaining seats in parliament, only banned these parties from contesting the next election under the same name. As a result of this rather hastily formulated regulatory framework, a multitude of new parties was formed in the run-up to the 1999 election. Forty-eight parties eventually contested the poll and even though the lion's share of the vote was divided between just five parties, a total of twenty parties won at least one seat in parliament.

In response to the election result, lawmakers sought to put in place new measures to control the number of parties and put pressure on factions to remain within their host parties rather than establish new organisations. First, the electoral threshold was increased. If in 1999 parties had needed at least 2 per cent of votes to be eligible to compete again in the 2004 elections, this requirement was increased to 3 per cent for those wanting to compete again in the 2009 elections. However, these changes were not very effective in bringing the number of parties down because parties that failed to reach the threshold could still simply change their names ahead of the next elections. It was not before the 2009 election that the threshold regulation was finally revised to make it an effective parliamentary threshold. Subsequent election laws passed in 2012 and 2017 also stipulated that any party that fails to pass the threshold (which was raised to 3.5 per cent in 2012 and then 4 per cent in 2017) will not be eligible for seats in parliament.

The second hurdle consisted of new organisational requirements for the parties. Back in 1999, the secession of East Timor as well as ongoing rebellions in Aceh and Papua had

ignited fears of greater national instability, which was reflected in efforts to reduce the possibility of regional or ethnic parties that could form a base for communal conflicts (Hillman, 2012: 421). As such, the 1999 Election Law had already required parties to have established branches in half of all provinces and half of the districts and munici- palities in each of these. Although fears of secessionism subsided in later years, the prerequisites for extensive organisation were subsequently used as an institutional tool to contain the formation of new parties. Over the years, restrictions in both party and election laws became progressively stricter, forcing parties to invest rather heavily in the development of an organisational infrastructure. Mietzner (2013: 65) has summarized the legislative framework for branch organisation as depicted in (Table 2).

Table 2. Organisational Requirements for Parties, 1999–2014.

Election year	Relevant party law	Relevant election law
1999	None	Parties must have regional chapters in 50 per cent of all provinces and 50 per cent of districts/municipalities in the province
2004	Parties must have chapters in 50 per cent of all provinces, 50 per cent of districts/municipalities in the province, and 25 per cent of sub-districts in the districts/municipalities	Parties must have chapters in two-thirds of all provinces and two-thirds of districts/municipalities in the province
2009	Parties must have chapters in 60 per cent of all provinces, 50 per cent of districts/municipalities in the province, and 25 per cent of sub-districts in the districts/municipalities	Parties must have chapters in two-thirds of all provinces and two thirds of districts/municipalities in the province
2014	Parties must have chapters in 100 per cent of all provinces, 75 per cent of districts/municipalities in the province, and 50 per cent of sub-districts in the districts/municipalities	Parties must have chapters in 100 per cent of all provinces, 75 per cent of districts/municipalities in the province, and 50 per cent of sub-districts in the districts/municipalities

While the abovementioned measures were intended to rein in party system frag- mentation and strengthen especially the larger parties, other institutional changes had the simultaneous effect of weakening rather than strengthening the parties. Three changes in particular shifted the focus of electoral competition from parties to personalities. First, the introduction of direct presidential elections in 2004 created an electoral system heavily focused on individuals. As votes in these elections are cast directly for candi- dates yet parties retained the prerogative to nominate these candidates, there are sig- nificant incentives for ambitious individuals to create their own electoral vehicles. At the

same time, however, the tighter electoral and party laws also represented enormous constraints that ensured that only wealthy oligarchs would have the means to do so. As such, only two new competitive parties emerged ahead of the 2009 elections: Hanura and Gerindra, founded by the two former New Order generals Wiranto and Prabowo Subianto. As further evidence of the difficulties in creating a new party, there was only one new party in 2014, the National Democratic Party (Nasdem) led by media tycoon Surya Paloh. In 2019, four new parties successfully registered with the General Election Commission, but none of them won enough votes in the national election to pass the 4 per cent threshold (Kumparan, 2019).

Second, the extension of direct executive elections to the subnational level in 2005 further exacerbated the personalisation of electoral competition. While independent candidates were, in contrast to the national level, allowed to run for provincial governor, mayor, or district head, the administrative requirements for independents were so arduous that the overwhelming majority of candidates continued to seek a nomination through a party. Many of these candidates, however, have come from outside established party structures, banking primarily on popularity, private wealth, or prior experience in government (Erb and Sulistiyanto, 2009). In doing so, they often disrupted pre-existing clientelistic networks and triggered new factional disputes within local party chapters. These disputes have been particularly tense in cases where local party leaders sought but failed to secure a nomination from their party at the expense of an outsider.

Second, the switch from a closed-list PR system to a partially and eventually fully open-list system as a result of a Constitutional Court ruling in 2008 also weakened the position of parties vis-à-vis the candidates. As the open-list system means that a candidates' victory is solely based on the number of votes, competition and rivalry between candidates became fierce, particularly among those from the same party. Parties were also often unable or unwilling to support individual candidates in their campaigns, turning much of the campaign into competition between individuals with no effective links to the parties that nominated them. A significant side effect of this development was that vote buying and other illicit campaign tactics by individual candidates increased exponentially (Aspinall and Sukmajati, 2016).

The main effect of all these institutional changes on factionalism has been that factions are now more and more driven to fight out their differences within the organisational confines of existing parties. If in the early days of democratisation factional divisions often resulted in defections and formation of new parties, the tightened regulations have made this option less attractive for many second-tier party cadres. Members of losing parties in factional battles are now limited in their choices, confined largely to either staying put or joining one of the few new parties that were founded by wealthy oligarchs in recent years. For those who stay on, access to the patronage chain may be blocked for a while, but in some cases, parties have actually sought to accommodate those who had lost out in a factional dispute, for example, by expanding leadership boards and creating new positions such as deputy chairmen or heads of internal party departments (Mietzner, 2013: 119). However, as the next section will show, these strategies did not always work smoothly.

Implications for Party Coherence and Party System Stability

Although the combined trends of fragmentation and personalisation of electoral politics have progressively weakened the position of political parties in the system, parties continue to exercise control over key tenets of Indonesian politics. Most importantly, perhaps, parties are still the gatekeepers that shape the trajectory of political careers because they retain the near-exclusive right to nominate individuals for political office (independent candidates are only allowed in local executive elections). Central leadership boards, often dominated by strong leaders, hold a firm grip over personnel decisions including candidate selection processes ahead of legislative and executive elections. One prominent recent example was the 2019 presidential election, where incumbent President Jokowi had to succumb to the power of party leaders in the selection of his vice-presidential running mate. While Jokowi favoured the former chief justice of the Constitutional Court, Mahfud MD, party bosses from his coalition like PDIP's Megawati and PKB's Muhaimin Iskandar imposed the chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Ma'ruf Amin, on him (Erwanti, 2019; Tehusijarana, 2018).

Moreover, parties also have the right to recall members of their parliamentary caucuses if the latter are deemed to have violated party instructions (Ziegenhain, 2015: 101). Taken together, the prominence of the parties in the political system and the centralised organisational infrastructures have, by and large, helped to contain the potential for overly excessive factionalism. Nevertheless, factionalism has left its mark on Indonesian party politics, in at least two key areas: first, it has damaged the internal coherence of individual parties, and second, it has affected party system stability and the durability of coalitions.

To begin with, factionalism has severely disrupted party coherence and, in some cases, temporarily paralyzed the functionality of individual parties. Although attempts to accommodate losing factions through power-sharing have at times been successful, a cursory investigation of a few recent cases of leadership splits reveals that many parties still lack effective internal dispute resolution capacity. Overall, patterns of factionalism in Indonesia are often highly competitive, making internal party management difficult (Boucek, 2009: 470). For example, the NU-affiliated PKB has faced a number of bitter leadership splits in its history, but none more debilitating than that between former president and long-time party leader Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) and his nephew Muhaimin Iskandar in the run-up to the 2009 election. As both sides repeatedly claimed to be the legitimate leaders, the party proved incapable of resolving the split. Instead, it had to rely on outside interference in the form of court rulings and instructions by the General Election Commission to at least be able to field candidates for the 2009 election. As a result of the split, the party recorded its worst ever result in that election. It was only after Wahid passed away in December 2009 that the party eventually rallied behind Muhaimin. Since then, he has proven successful in restoring party unity, largely by appealing to the NU supporters to reaffirm their strong emotional attachment to the party.

Apart from PKB, two other parties suffered similarly disruptive episodes of internal friction in recent years. Golkar, for example, was temporarily paralyzed after the 2014 elections when rival leaders Aburizal Bakrie and Agung Laksono fell out over Bakrie's

decision to back Prabowo during and after the 2014 presidential election (Fionna, 2016). While Bakrie was an avid Prabowo supporter, Laksono had declared his support for Jokowi. After two national congresses organised by each of the leaders and other internal measures had failed to reconcile the two camps, the conflicting factions eventually decided to follow an order by the Supreme Court and organised an Extraordinary Congress. Under pressure from President Jokowi, the congress resulted in the election of Setya Novanto as new chairman, another deeply entrenched oligarch with good connections to Jokowi's right-hand man Luhut Panjaitan (Mietzner, 2016: 221). Novanto, however, was soon implicated in a massive corruption scandal and eventually sentenced to fifteen years in jail, necessitating yet another potentially contentious leadership succession. In the end, both Bakrie and Laksono, as well as the influential former chairman Jusuf Kalla, all threw their support behind the rather unassuming Airlangga Hartarto as new Golkar chairman. His election in December 2017 was seen as an attempt to put factional disputes behind and unite behind a widely accepted figure (Zulfikar, 2017), but Golkar's poor election result in 2019 immediately prompted calls to replace Hartarto as soon as possible (Ihsanuddin, 2019).

Similar with Golkar, the 2014 election also left a divide in PPP. Initially, former chairman Suryadharma Ali's support for presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto had created tension within the party, particularly among those who claimed that Suryadharma's initiative did not represent the party. Consequently, Romahurmuziy (Romy) then emerged as leader of a new faction which challenged Suryadharma and his loyalist Djan Faridz. When Suryadharma was subsequently arrested in a graft case, various meetings and congresses were organised to reconcile the two sides, but to no avail. Although Romy's side claimed the rightful leadership as declared by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, Djan's faction remained defiant and in turn claimed victory at the Supreme Court in late 2015. But the government refused to recognise this result, leading to yet another congress in February 2016 in which Romy was eventually unanimously elected as new chairman (Mietzner, 2016: 223). But the parallels with Golkar do not end there. Just like Setya Novanto, Romy too soon found himself arrested by the Corruption Eradication Commission, leaving PPP once again in need of a new leader.

The three cases revealed not only significant organisational shortcomings within three of Indonesia's core parties, but they also demonstrated that after the initial flurry of frequent defections and new party formations had subsided, warring factions in more recent conflicts will often do whatever it takes to remain within their "home" parties. But as factions are increasingly determined to battle it out internally, they threaten internal coherence and risk significant damage for the party. In 2009, PKB came close to being disqualified from the legislative election while the Golkar dispute in 2015/2016 threatened to derail the party's preparation for the 2016 local elections. Significantly, the same kind of leadership disputes also often occur in local chapters, especially in the run-up to local executive elections when two or more rival faction leaders seek the nomination from the same party. Such party disunity can seriously damage a party's preparation for elections and may deter candidates with high electability from choosing the party, while other parties may not want to align themselves in coalitions with parties struggling with internal splits.

More broadly, the persistence of factionalism has impacted on the formal institutionalisation of individual parties and the party system. Especially, in the early years of the transition, factionalism contributed directly to volatility and party system fragmentation as there were few constraints to establish new parties. With the subsequent tightening of party and electoral laws, however, the balance between incentives and constraints has shifted rather drastically and, as a consequence, the number of parties at last seems to be stabilising. Provided these parties will find more effective mechanisms to deal with internal disputes, this trend should make it easier for the party system to institutionalise over time, as the established parties would reveal more regular patterns of competition (Mainwaring and Torcal, 2005: 4).

Whether such regularity and predictability will also extend to coalition formation, and durability, however, remains to be seen. Up until now, factionalism has chiefly induced fragility in coalitions, as was evident for example in Golkar's decision to leave the Prabowo-led opposition coalition after the 2014 election and join the government coalition once Setya Novanto was elected as chairman. But while the impact of factionalism on parties has been mainly negative, governance in Indonesia's presidential system more broadly has hardly been affected. If anything, presidents have benefitted from party factionalism as the factions' desire for patronage has made it easier for presidents to lure parties into government coalitions. This was most obvious in the recent factional battles in Golkar and PPP. Both parties were so severely weakened as a result of internal infighting that they became easy targets for President Jokowi's attempts to coerce them into supporting the government (Mietzner, 2016). Thus, as long as the pursuit of patronage remains the driving force behind both factional dynamics and coalition formation, parties will continue to suffer from competitive factionalism, but broader political stability in Indonesia's party system is unlikely to be badly affected by the parties' internal problems.

Concluding Remarks

Factionalism has been present in the current Indonesian party system since its inception in 1998/1999. But its defining features and levels of intensity have changed over time as programmatic divisions have lost much of their relevance and patronage became the driving force of party politics. Today, factions are, by and large, clientelistic alliances that are only kept together by a common desire to improve their access to patronage resources. Remnants of programmatic factionalism can basically only be found in PKS, whereas all other parties that initially experienced tensions over programmatic directions have either overcome their factional divisions (like PDIP) or lost much of their programmatic identity (like PAN).

Changes have also occurred in the behavioural patterns of factions. If in the early years of the transition factional splits within parties regularly resulted in defections and formations of new parties, more recently, conflicts between factions have often been transferred to the courts, with both sides trying their utmost to remain in the host party. In some cases, losing factions have been accommodated in subsequent reconciliation gestures, but in others, hostilities were so severe that no side was prepared to accept defeat. The main reason behind the decrease in turncoatism has been the changed

institutional framework that has made it increasingly difficult and expensive to establish new parties. The few that have successfully emerged in recent years are mostly personalistic parties led by wealthy oligarchs with ambitions to become president.

Factionalism in these personalistic parties has rarely been observed, as their leaders are trying hard to preserve unity through the dispensation of patronage. Instead, factionalism has remained most persistent in some of the core parties, especially those that had already inherited splits and infighting from the pre-democratic era. Golkar and PPP, in particular, have been largely unable to shed the ghosts from their New Order past when factional divisions were deliberately fostered in these parties by the Suharto regime. Upon entering the democratic era, these two parties struggled to find authoritative leaders who could unite the diverging interests inherent in the parties. To complicate matters further, both parties not only lack strong leadership but also a value-based identity that could act as glue to tie competing factions more forcefully together (Fionna, 2013). The third party to be heavily affected by factionalism is PKB. Unlike Golkar and PPP, this party entered the democratic era with both a strong leader and a strong value-based identity. But factionalism soon spread because party founder and long-time leader Abdurrahman Wahid alienated many of his former followers through his erratic leadership style.

Significantly, the case of PKB provides valuable insights about the pitfalls of personalistic leadership. Although factionalism in such parties is often suppressed as long as the dominant leader reigns supreme, the potential for damaging power struggles between would-be successors is immense. PD experienced this first hand when party patron Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono allowed open competition for the position of party chairman in 2005 and 2010. Other dominant leaders like Megawati Sukarnoputri (PDIP), Prabowo Subianto (Gerindra), and Surya Paloh (Nasdem) have maintained a tighter grip so far and shut down all challenges to their authority. Sooner or later, however, these parties will also face the succession question, and the potential for ugly factional battles over the top leadership positions in these parties is therefore substantial. What is increasingly unlikely though is that losing factions in these future battles will simply defect and form their own parties as the evolution of Indonesia's party and election laws has led to a regulatory framework which makes it exceedingly difficult for new parties to establish themselves in the party system.

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Author biographies

Ulla Fionna was, at the time of writing, a fellow at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.

Dirk Tomsa is an associate professor in the Department of Politics, Media and Philosophy at La Trobe University, Melbourne. At the time of writing he was a Visiting Senior Fellow at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.