

## TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN POLITICAL PARTIES LIFE, IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL DEMOCRACY

Dave Akbarshah Fikarno<sup>a\*)</sup>

<sup>a)</sup>Universitas Pertahanan Republik Indonesia, Bogor, Indonesia

<sup>\*)</sup>Corresponding Author: davelaksonodpr@gmail.com

Article history: received 04 May 2021; revised 18 May 2021; accepted 06 June 2021

**Abstract.** This research is based on the finding of KPK data, during 2004 - 2020 there were 257 corruption cases involving political elites and party leaders as well as regional heads, as well as 297 corruption cases involving private parties. The involvement of the private sector as perpetrators of corruption is due to their interests related to licensing. From this data, a common thread can be drawn, it turns out that many leaders are transactional among political parties and this needs to be reformed to become transformational leaders. The purpose of this research is to want to see problems and problems theoretically, then describe the problems that arise in a description so that later a qualitative conclusion is drawn. The research that he conducted found that there is a strong impression that political parties in the country are still led by transactional leaders rather than transformational ones. Political parties have not succeeded in carrying out their political functions and roles optimally, both related to political education, political communication, political recruitment, political aggregation and articulation, to party involvement in resolving conflicts in society. digital democracy, social media, conversational media, to face-to-face deliberation, have been replaced by smart phone devices that remove barriers, as well as distance between citizens, this makes moving faster and more efficient, low-cost, and able to reach a wide area. The rise of primordial and primordial issues based on ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group (SARA), in the context of digital democracy must be anticipated and treated as a natural thing.

**Keywords:** transformational leadership; political parties; digital democracy.

### I. INTRODUCTION

In a democratic country like Indonesia, the presence of political parties is very needed. Political parties are the fourth pillar of democracy and have special functions and roles, such as conducting political education for citizens, conducting political communication, conducting political recruitment, carrying out political aggregation and articulation, and participating in resolving conflicts in society [1]. Apart from that, the parties acts as a communicator between citizens and the government through their presence in parliament. In Indonesia, the presence of the parties has started since the Dutch colonial era, the Japanese occupation, post-independence, the New Orde era, until the current reform era. Therefore, political parties throughout their history have never been absent in their participation in building a sovereign, united NKRI based on the ideology of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia [2].

In the current reform era, the development of internet-based digital technology has spread to all corners of the country, and has also colored the life of democracy in the country [3]. As a result, the political landscape has also changed compared to two decades ago. Back in the New Orde era, for example, almost all political aspirations were managed by political parties [4]. But now, through digital revolutions such as FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Tik-Tok, the public can directly participate in expressing their aspirations without having to go through political parties. So that the role of the party seems to be

taken over by citizens or netizens. Through the development of digital technology, political parties need to anticipate towards the era of Internet-based digital democracy. This is a necessity that is difficult to avoid, if political parties want to exist in the future [5].

Under such circumstances, [6] ever said that "Indonesia now needs transformational leaders, not transactional leaders. Currently in this country, creative, innovative leadership is needed, and become agents of change, not leaders who only do things because they are based on formal rules and or bureaucratic authority." If we look more closely, until now there are still many of our leaders in the country who are transactional. In addition to transformational leaders, now also needed leaders with integrity, that is the harmony between words and actions. In other languages, borrowing John F Kennedy words in [7] the famous, "A leader should not ask about what he will get from the country, but ask what he can give for the country." That is the main characteristic of transformative leaders who have integrity, and needed to lead political parties, in today's digital democracy era.

#### Main Problem

Based on the facts on the fields as well as public opinion, many party leaders are entangled in corruption and law violations. Starting from members of the DPR, regional heads, ministers, and even party leaders [8]. According to KPK data, during 2004 - 2020 there were 257 corruption cases involving political elites and political parties leaders as

well as regional heads, as well as 297 corruption cases involving private parties. The involvement of the private sector as perpetrators of corruption is due to their interests related to licensing. From these data, a common thread can be drawn, it turns out that many leaders are transactional among political parties and this needs to be reformed to become transformational leaders [9]. The question is how will the fate of political parties in the future as the fourth pillar of democracy if the leaders are not transformative, but transactional? This question is important to ask because a country whose leader is transactional or corrupt, sooner or later will have problems like what happened in China under Chiang Kai Shek (1928-1943), in the Philippines under President Marcos (1986), and in Indonesia under President Suharto (1998). Thus, the leadership of transformative political parties is non-negotiable. Especially in today's internet-based digital era, political parties must keep up with technological developments so they don't get run over by the progress of the times [10].

Therefore, research on digital democracy in political science explains more clearly and explicit how this digital technology affects the democratic process itself [11]. Such as political mobilization, campaign strategy, polarization of political opinion, political recruitment, to political contestation governance channels, and governance government have changed significantly. In short, digital democracy is starting to dominate at the political level in the country, including in political parties. Therefore, if the political parties does not adapt to the digital revolution, including the transformative leadership, it will undoubtedly be out of date [12]. Moreover, the recent development of the digital revolution has significantly affected the life of democracy in the country. This is a sign that the political landscape will continue to change and political parties must also change with the changing times.

#### Thought Foundation

Paper writing entitled "*Transformative Leaders in Political Parties, in the era of Digital Democracy*" it is theoretical-descriptive. This means that want to see problems and issues theoretically, then describe the problems that arise in a description so that later a qualitative conclusion is drawn [13]. The question is what is transformational leadership? And, what are the characteristics of this transformative leader? Transformational leadership is a leadership style that is applied by a visionary and creative leader, or a far-sighted leader to advance his organization. So that effective and efficient means, or mode, or media will be realized in carrying out a work program or their activities. There are two aspects of vision related to transformational leadership, namely the visionary role and the implementation role. This means that a visionary leader, in addition to having the ability to build an organization [14], also has the ability to describe that vision in a series of activities that are an effort to achieve that vision. From this understanding, it can be emphasized that a transformative and visionary leader is a leadership pattern applied by a leader who has insight and foresight and seeks to develop his organization not for the

present, but for the future. This transformational leader can inspire enthusiasm for his members by using motivation to make changes so that the members of the organization he leads can progress and develop. Transformative leaders are usually able to learn and correct mistakes in the past, and are ready to face challenges or obstacles in the present, by prioritizing visionary leadership values, courageous, honest, willing to listen to others, inspiring, and broad-minded, making them suitable to lead an organization. political party or organization in the future [6].

Meanwhile, political parties in Indonesian politics, it will be easy to understand political parties by first understanding the definition or boundaries of what a political party is? There are three theories that try to explain the origin of political parties. **First**, the institutional theory that sees the relationship between parliament and political parties. **Second**, the historical situation theory which sees the birth of the parties as a political system to overcome the crisis caused by changes in society at large. **Third**, the theory of growth that sees political parties as a product of socio-economic modernization.

Meanwhile, according to Law No. 2 of 2008 concerning Political Parties, Article 1 (paragraph 1) states; "Political parties are organizations that are national in nature and formed by a group of Indonesian citizens voluntarily on the basis of the same will and ideals to fight for and defend the political interests of members, society, nation and state, and maintain the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. .

From an institutional perspective, it can be said that political parties are a link between the people and the government, or political parties are a bridge between the community and the government, as well as resolving conflicts in society. In the context of digital democracy, parties do not spread hoaxes, hate speech, slander, and undermine the public to make trouble or make noise.

In the study of social sciences, especially political studies which were generally studied until the late 1990s, it was a legacy of the 3.0 industrial revolution which had taken place about two centuries ago. It is rarely realized that the more advanced, faster, and more powerful industrial revolution 4.0 is underway entering the 21st century. The internet-based 4.0 industrial revolution is believed to change and give birth to theory and practice in political life, both in the global region and in the country. For some people, there are those who are aware and literate of internet technology, but also many do not understand these fundamental changes, in modern human civilization now. This wave of change can simply be referred to as the digital revolution, which sooner or later will affect political life in the country towards the era of digital democracy. This phenomenon is marked by the massive presence of the internet in society [15]. We are starting to feel this all-digital phenomenon in the current reform era, and is now a daily thing in human life in Indonesia.

From this brief description, a firm line can be drawn how the internet-based digital revolution is very influential

on political life in the country, especially in the current era of digital democracy. This digital democracy can be interpreted as a new era in the history of human civilization as well as the future of political civilization in Indonesia. The sense of city democracy and the harsh clash of political polarization in the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections have divided the people in the country and the consequences are very much felt. Therefore, political democracy in the country is now entering a new phrase as well as entering a tough test for the maturity of political elites, party elites, community leaders, and the public in democracy. This city-sense democracy actually marks an internet-based digital democracy that presence has begun to displace conventional political life, or analog technology. One of the characteristics and signs of the presence of digital democracy is that it is measurable, fast-paced, and low-cost. In addition, there is a tendency to change from institutional to personal or from dominant state institutions balanced by personal power (nitizen). So that the battle of ideas, thoughts and political ideas, as well as the pros and cons of public policies began to shift in the digital space or cyberspace. That is the meaning of internet-based digital democracy which has become a daily basis in human life in the world and in Indonesia is no exception.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

From the description above, a firm line can be drawn that it turns out that many internal leaders in political parties are still transactional and this needs to be reformed in order to turn into transformational ones in the current era of digital democracy. The question is why political parties during the current reform era seem weak and do not take sides with the people, so that in various surveys political parties are at their lowest point. There are several assumptions or answers as follows:

First, The ideology of political parties is less operational and tends to be utopian, so that it is not only difficult to identify the pattern and direction of public policies who fought for, but also difficult to distinguish between one political parties and another. As an example, political parties campaign on issues of corruption, poverty, ignorance, or unemployment, so it is difficult to distinguish between nationalist parties and religious parties.

Second, Internally, the party organization is not managed democratically, so it is more of a management organization framed by a formal organization than an organization that lives as a party organization. Apart from that, the party elites are still not ready to accept the differences of opinion that arise within the party. Who stayed at the top often find it difficult to accept differences of opinion with those at the bottom. Therefore, if there is a difference of opinion, the settlement is often given harsh sanctions up to dismissal. As a result, party cadres are educated to be obedient or cowardly.

Third, Externally, political parties lack a clear pattern of responsibility to the public. Political parties are usually busy ahead of elections or party celebrations, after which

they take a long break. Just stretched back ahead of the General Election, Presidential Election, or Pilkada. All of these phenomena have been going on since the early elections of reform until now.

Fourth, Through its role as political aggregation and articulation, political parties have the ability to communicate and two sided socializations, namely from the constituents to the government and from the government to the constituents. The two-sided role is substantively very noble because it can provide solutions to various problems faced by the government, as well as a form of party responsibility as part of the political infrastructure. All of this has not been seen either in parliament or outside parliament. Then the political parties as an important part of the pillars of democracy, emphasized that "democracy is listening to the voice of the people and at the same time implementing it. Therefore, any problems that arise in society need to be resolved through deliberation and dialogue. Therefore, parties through their cadres who become members of the DPR are expected to not only convey criticism, but also offer solutions to the government. In short, the party must contribute to solving problems that arise in society. That's what people in all corners of the country have been waiting for.

Fifth, Parties leaders tend to only pursue position and power. Or the party is only used as a tool of power. Because of that, as mentioned above, many party leaders are transactional rather than transformational, meaning they don't have a vision for the future compared to those who are creative and have future innovations. These are all clear portraits of our party system, at this present moment.

Sixth, Political parties since the reformation until now tend to be more bureaucratic in themselves. Which means, all public officials and state administrators both in the central government, regional heads, to members of parliament are all determined by political parties. As a result, the elite and party leaders are less creative and visionary, or have not become agents of change but only do something because based on formal rules or bureaucratic authority, which Prof. Purnomo Yusgiantoro is called a transactional leader, not a transformative one. This is a tough challenge going forward.

In addition to the above problems, political parties have not yet had a system in themselves, which is indicated by the role of party leaders who still tend to be transactional rather than transformational. In addition, political parties in the current reform era have not carried out their substantive roles and functions optimally, such as; political education, political communication, political recruitment, political aggregation and articulation, and resolving conflicts in society. All of this has not been carried out optimally by political parties. As a result, the party is still sitting in an ivory tower and far from the public, except during the election campaign to persuade the public to support it.

For this reason, delaying internal party reforms in the current era of digital democracy means allowing democracy to setback. The tasks of parties, including the mass media, as well as civil society, need to consolidate themselves through reforms within political parties. The goal is that the party's

performance changes significantly in the era of digital democracy. With transformative internal party leadership, elections, presidential elections, and regional head elections as part of the democratic system in Indonesia can provide certainty that political parties mandated by people's sovereignty actually have quality and institutional performance as party organizations, not interest organizations that pretend to be political parties, whose leaders are transactional. All of this needs to be properly and correctly prepared to build a digital democratic system within the party based on transformative leadership.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on all the descriptions above, the question that remains is what lessons can be learned from this digital democracy. There are some things that need to be underlined. The development of digital technology that affects the life of democracy, is that the political landscape has now changed. As an example, political aspirations have always been managed by political parties. But through the digital revolution, such as hijacking the role of parties and representatives of the people. Citizens or netizens, can directly convey their aspirations or thoughts via Social Media 24 hours everyday. Of course, a model like this is difficult for us to imagine in the political life of a conventional democracy half a century ago.

In addition, there is a tendency to change from institutional to personal or state institutions balanced by personal power. The battle of concepts, thoughts, and ideas, as well as the pros and cons of public policies will take place in the digital space and in cyberspace. Like studying from home, working from home, praying at home for the past 16 months due to the impact of the corona pandemic. In addition, there is less critical voice from the political elite and parties leaders regarding government policies that are not pro-people. Including the issue of moving the new National Capital to East Kalimantan, there is no criticism from party leaders.

Then in the digital space and its relation to politics, it has now become a pressure that has quite high bargaining power. Governments and parliaments are sometimes overwhelmed by the power of newcomers, namely, digital democracy. For this reason, parties need to respond and anticipate this digital democracy trend. And what needs to be considered again is not to let this digital democracy deconstruct political parties so that parties lose their substantial role as a channel for people's aspirations. This needs attention for party elites and political elites now and in the future.

Beyond all that, it can also be said that political costs are expected to be reduced and cheaper following the shift of activities to the digital realm (cyber world). Thus, political costs, which have been suspected to be very expensive in political life in the country, are likely to be cheaper in the future. This will significantly affect the reduction of political decay in the form of corruption by party leaders which in the

last two decades have been rampant in the country. Of course, so that democracy does not get out of line, the role and function of parties in education and political communication needs to be campaigned more loudly. The problem is, it's not the party's institution that is wrong, but the human aspect that needs to be addressed so that in the future it becomes more prospective. That's where the role of transformative party leaders is important in the era of digital democracy.

### IV. CONCLUSION

In closing the paper entitled "Transformative Leaders in Political Parties, in the Era of Digital Democracy", the following can be concluded. First, There is a strong impression that political parties in Indonesia are still led by transactional leaders rather than transformational ones. It is evident that many political party leaders are still involved in corruption. Almost all parties in the DPR have party elites who are involved in corruption, both at the central and in the regions, from ministers, DPR members, party chairmen, to regional heads. This indicates that political parties are still led by transactional leaders, not yet transformational. Second, Political parties have not succeeded in carrying out their political functions and roles optimally, both related to political education, political communication, political recruitment, political aggregation and articulation, to party involvement in resolving conflicts in society. Because of that, it takes a touch of transformational party leadership, who has a vision for the future, and is able to become an agent of change in today's digital democracy era. Third, In the past, when the majority of Indonesians still lived in rural areas, direct democracy or village-style democracy could work. Namely, democracy that is thick with face to face, direct deliberation, consolidation meetings to direct interaction between citizens. Now in digital democracy, social media, conversational media, to face-to-face consultations, have been replaced by smart phones which remove barriers and distances between citizens. In addition, in the era of digital democracy, political life will move more quickly and efficiently, at low cost, and can reach a wide area. All of that will change the face of contestation politics in the future. For that, we need a transformative leadership model. Fourth, The rise of primordial and primordialism based on ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group (SARA), in the context of digital democracy must be anticipated and treated as a natural thing. Therefore the ITE Law and other legal instruments, as well as law enforcement must be able to anticipate this change. SARA-related issues will always appear over and over again because the internet and digital devices are media and channels that are very open in real time. Like the characteristics of urban people, digital democracy will always be busy, jammed, and sometimes noisy, and real times never sleeps.

To be honest, as a recommendation in this paper, there is still a need for a transformative leadership model in political parties in the current era of digital democracy. Why? Because transformative leaders have insight and



foresight and seek to develop the organization not for the present, but for the future. This transformational leader can inspire enthusiasm for his members by using motivation to make changes so that the members of the organization he leads can progress and develop. Transformative leaders are usually able to learn and correct mistakes in the past, and are ready to face challenges in the present, by prioritizing leadership values that are visionary, courageous, honest, willing to listen to others, inspiring, and broad-minded, making them suitable to lead a party organization. or political organization. If I may take an example as a role model, perhaps President Jokowi can be used as an ideal transformative leader model. Very honest, simple, innovative, and able to be an agent of change going forward. The proof is about the price of petrol or cement for example, the prices in Java and outside Java have always been different, especially in Papua and several other areas. But since the president Jokowi, the price of petrol can be the same throughout the country. This is the role model of an ideal transformative leader in a political party in the current era of digital democracy.

In addition, political parties need to continue to improve themselves so that they can carry out their political functions and roles more optimally. Many citizens think that political parties have not succeeded in carrying out their political functions and roles properly and correctly, both those related to political education, political communication, political recruitment, to political aggregation and articulation. Everything needs to be fixed so that the party has a good performance in the eyes of the public Last but not least, in this era of digital democracy, the role of political party behavior must change according to the times. If political parties are not willing to change, their supporters will leave in the future. And it is very influential on political contestation, both legislative elections, presidential elections, to regional head elections. In addition, political parties in the future must be led by transformative leaders, not transactional leaders who only rely on the principle of temporary gain and easily forget their supporters. There are still many leaders and elites of political parties who are transactional both at the center and in the regions. In the future, all of that must be addressed little by little so that over time it will become better in the eyes of the public.

## REFERENCES

- [1] E. Komara, "Sistem Politik Indonesia Era Reformasi," *Sist. Polit. Indones. Era Reformasi*, 2015.
- [2] I. Iswadi, "Studi Gerakan Ideologi Partai Politik Pada Pemilu 2019," *Polit. J. Huk. Tata Negara dan Polit. Islam*, 2020.
- [3] J. Simarmata *et al.*, *Teknologi Informasi: Aplikasi dan Penerapannya*. 2020.
- [4] A. Said, "Filsafat Politik Al-Farabi," *Indones. J. Islam. Theol. Philos.*, 2019.
- [5] P. Nemitz, "Constitutional democracy and technology in the age of artificial intelligence," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*. 2018.
- [6] Y. Budiharto and K. Koentjoro, "Gaya Kepemimpinan, Kohesivitas Kelompok, dan Komitmen Pada Partai Politik," *Psikologika J. Pemikir. dan Penelit. Psikol.*, 2004.
- [7] D. MacChia, D. Lippi, R. Bianucci, and S. Donell, "President John F Kennedy's medical history: Coeliac disease and autoimmune polyglandular syndrome type 2," *Postgraduate Medical Journal*. 2020.
- [8] T. Imansyah, "Regulasi Partai Politik Dalam Mewujudkan Penguatan Peran Dan Fungsi Kelembagaan Partai Politik," *J. Rechts Vinding Media Pemb. Huk. Nas.*, 2012.
- [9] Fitri Wahyuni and Binti Maunah, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Southeast Asian J. Islam. Educ. Manag.*, 2021.
- [10] I. C. Hermawan, "Implementasi Pendidikan Politik Pada Partai Politik Di Indonesia," *J. Pendidik. Polit. Huk. dan Kewarganegaraan*, 2020.
- [11] R. D. Susanto and Irwansyah, "Media Sosial, Demokrasi, dan Penyampaian Pendapat Politik Milenial Di Era Pasca-Reformasi," *LONTAR J. Ilmu Komun.*, 2021.
- [12] J. Nugroho, "Pergeseran Paradigma Hukum Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Air Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Pengakuan Kelembagaan Lokal Berdasarkan Prinsip Keadilan (Perspektif Sejarah Hukum)," *Transparansi Huk.*, 2020.
- [13] I. Bastian and O. Idrus, "Paradigma Baru Manajemen Pendidikan," *Modul Univ. Terbuka*, 2019.
- [14] Y. Suchyadi, "Relationship between Work Motivation and Organizational Culture in Enhancing Professional Attitudes of Pakuan University Lecturers," *JHSS (Journal Humanit. Soc. Stud.*, vol. 01, no. 01, pp. 41–45, 2017.
- [15] Y. Suchyadi, N. Safitri, and O. Sunardi, "The Use Of Multimedia As An Effort To Improve Elementary Teacher Education Study Program College Students' Comprehension Ability And Creative Thinking Skills In Following Science Study Courses," *JHSS (Journal Humanit. Soc. Stud.*, vol. 04, no. 02, pp. 201–205, 2020.