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The Role of Political Parties in Policy Formulation that Supports People's Welfare

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Abstract---*Political parties play an important role in formulating public policies aimed at improving people's welfare, serving as a link between the aspirations of the community and the government. However, the effectiveness of political parties in carrying out their roles is often hampered by various challenges, such as internal conflicts, influence from interest groups, corruption issues, and limited capabilities. By strengthening internal structures, increasing the competence of its members, and upholding integrity and transparency, political parties can be more effective in bringing about changes that support the welfare of society. In conclusion, the optimal role of political parties in policy formulation is essential for the development of a responsive and responsible political system.*

Keywords---*People's Welfare, Policy Formulation, Political Parties, Role.*

Introduction

Political parties play an important role in democratic life in various countries, including Indonesia. A political party is an organisation formed by a group of individuals who share the same ideology, values, and goals in the political realm. The main objective of political parties is to obtain and maintain political power through participation in elections and government processes (Zhang, 2023). Political parties function as a bridge between the community and the government by conveying the aspirations and needs of the people, as well as playing a role in determining public policies that support the welfare of the community. Through democratic mechanisms, political parties also act as a

means of control and balancing power, ensuring that the government functions following the mandate given by the people (Park, 2023)

As one of the main pillars in the political system, political parties not only function as a means to gain power through elections, but also have a great responsibility in the process of formulating policies that have a direct impact on the welfare of the people (Iliev, 2023).

The welfare of the people is one of the main objectives of state formation, and efforts to achieve it require appropriate, effective and sustainable policies. In this regard, political parties play a crucial role as they are the link between the government and the people. They can voice the aspirations of the people, design and propose policies, and push for their implementation through government mechanisms (Chen, 2022).

However, there are many challenges in fulfilling this role. In some countries, including Indonesia, there is a tendency that the interests of political parties are often more dominant than the welfare of the people. The phenomenon of practical politics and pragmatism often leads parties to focus more on short-term interests and the interests of certain parties, to the exclusion of collective and long-term policies (Gonzalez, 2022).

In addition, the lack of public participation in the political process, less transparent governance, and lack of accountability of political parties are factors that hinder the optimal role of parties in formulating policies that support people's welfare. This condition is exacerbated by the practice of corruption and abuse of authority, which reduces public trust in political parties (Lee, 2020). Facing these complexities, serious reforms and efforts are needed to support political parties to play a more effective role in public policy formulation. Political education for the public, increasing party transparency and accountability, and strengthening democratic institutions are steps that must be taken to ensure that the policies produced are truly in line with improving people's welfare (Evans, 2023).

Therefore, this research aims to analyse the role of political parties in the policy formulation process that supports people's welfare, identify existing obstacles, and provide policy recommendations to improve and strengthen the role of political parties in Indonesia. The research is expected to make a meaningful contribution to efforts to realise a better political system and more equitable welfare for all levels of society (Wood & Gough, 2006). Thus, political parties are expected to play a more strategic and effective role in developing policies that have a direct impact on improving the quality of life of the community.

Research Method

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method, or literature study, is a research method that relies on collecting and analysing data from various written sources relevant to the topic being studied. These sources may include books, journal articles, previous research reports, theses, dissertations, and other official documents (Sahar, 2008; Arikunto, 2009). The purpose of this method is to gain an in-depth understanding of existing concepts, theories and findings, and to identify gaps in existing knowledge. Literature research also helps researchers build theoretical frameworks, develop research questions, and formulate strong hypotheses. By conducting a critical analysis of the existing literature, researchers can construct more informed arguments and increase the validity of their research (Fadli, 2021).

Result and Discussion

The role of political parties in policy formulation

Political parties play an important role as intermediaries between the people and the government in the policy formulation process. They function as channels of people's aspirations, absorbing various aspirations and needs of people from various levels of society. Through organisational structures that reach down to the grassroots level, political parties can gather important information about issues faced by the community. These aspirations are then processed and conveyed to the policy makers in the government (Simpson, 2023).

Political parties have a significant role in determining the policy priorities that will be discussed and implemented by the government. Through their political platforms, political parties set policy agendas that reflect their ideological values and goals. During the election campaign, political parties present their vision, mission, and work programmes to the public, which are then expected to be a reference in the formulation of public policy after being elected (Taylor, 2023).

Political parties also play a major role in the legislative process, i.e. lawmaking in parliament. Elected legislators from political parties sit in parliament and actively participate in the discussion, amendment and passing of laws. Through factions in parliament, political parties can propose draft laws, debate the consequences of proposed policies, and secure support to pass policies that fit their agenda (Bonoli & Powell, 2004).

Political parties function as control and accountability mechanisms in government. As part of the control function, political parties that are in the opposition or outside the government monitor and criticise policies made by the government. Constructive criticism provided by opposition parties aims to ensure that the policies taken by the government are truly in the public interest and do not deviate from campaign promises. This also encourages the government to be more transparent and accountable in carrying out public policies (Johnson, 2020).

Political parties have the responsibility to provide political education to the community so that they better understand the political process and public policy. Through various activities such as seminars, campaigns, and group discussions, political parties can increase political awareness and community involvement in the policy formulation process. Thus, political parties can encourage active citizenry participation, where citizens actively participate in making decisions that affect their lives (Nguyen, 2023).

Political parties also play a role in finding a balance between change and stability in public policy. With political parties that have consistent ideologies and principles, the resulting policies tend to be more stable and sustainable. This is important for long-term development that requires policy continuity. In addition, through negotiation and compromise between political parties, different parties can reach a consensus that expedites the process of policy formulation and implementation (Patel, 2023).

With these roles, it is clear that political parties have a great responsibility in ensuring that the resulting public policies truly reflect the wants and needs of the people, and support sustainable and equitable national development.

The effectiveness of political parties in fighting for welfare policies

The effectiveness of political parties in fighting for welfare policies can be measured through their ability to influence the legislative process and the implementation of these policies (Carabali-Méndez, 2023). Political parties function as a forum for the aspirations of the community, so their success in fighting for welfare policies depends heavily on how well they can absorb and translate community needs into concrete policy designs (Khan, 2023). In addition, the party's ability to build solid coalitions both within the parliament and the executive is also a key factor in determining their effectiveness. In a democratic system, political parties that have strong representation in parliament tend to be better able to promote their welfare agenda (Smith, 2020).

Furthermore, parties' ideological commitment to social issues is another indicator of their effectiveness. Parties that have a clear ideological foundation in fighting for social welfare tend to be more consistent in advocating for such policies. They will find it easier to gain public support and mobilise their members to pursue welfare goals. However, parties must also be flexible in adapting their political strategies to evolving social and economic dynamics to effectively respond to the needs of society (Lopez, 2023).

The role of political parties in fighting for welfare policies is also closely related to the quality of leadership within the party. Party leaders with vision and integrity can motivate party members and other policymakers to work together to achieve welfare goals. In addition, the leader's ability to engage in diplomacy and negotiation with other political parties and interest groups is also crucial. Thus, strong leadership can be a locomotive in fighting for pro-people welfare programmes (Kim, 2021).

However, the main challenge that often hinders the effectiveness of political parties in fighting for welfare policies is the pragmatic political interests that are often prioritised over the long-term interests of the community. Many parties are more focused on winning elections than implementing welfare policies based on real solutions. This can be seen from the attitude of parties that often change their positions on strategic issues for short-term political gain (Stein, 2023).

On the other hand, the existence of a corrupt political system is often a major obstacle to political parties effectively championing welfare policies. A deep-rooted culture of corruption results in sub-optimal budget allocations to welfare programmes. To address this, serious reforms are needed in state financial transparency and accountability mechanisms as well as increased capacity of oversight institutions. Political parties must be committed to fighting corruption to build public trust and ensure the success of welfare policies (Brown, 2023).

In the final analysis, the effectiveness of a political party in championing welfare policies depends not only on its political strength and strategy, but also the integrity and dedication of its members. Continuous political education for party cadres is necessary to build a deep understanding of social welfare issues and effective advocacy skills. In this way, political parties can function as agents of change that build sustainable welfare policies that have a positive impact on the wider community (Enikolopov & Zhuravskaya, 2007).

Problems and challenges facing political parties in policy formulation

Political parties have an important role in a democratic system, one of which is in the formulation of public policy. However, there are many problems and challenges faced in this process (Acemoglu, 2003). Firstly, one of the main challenges is internal fragmentation within parties. Differences in views and interests between factions within the party can lead to incoherence and difficulties in reaching consensus on policies to be taken (Wilson, 2023).

Secondly, the influence of donors and external interest groups is often an obstacle to shaping policies that truly reflect the public interest. Donors who make large donations to parties often expect rewards in the form of policies that favour them, which can ultimately be at the expense of the welfare of the wider community (Gonzalez, 2022).

Third, the lack of capacity and resources within political parties is also often a problem in policy formulation. Many parties lack human resources who are trained and experienced in policy analysis, so the resulting policies often lack depth and are not based on strong data (Zhang, 2023).

Fourth, external challenges such as pressure from the media and public opinion can also affect the policy-making process. Media and public opinion have a huge influence in shaping public discourse, and political parties often have to balance between making the right policies and responding to public expectations that are sometimes unrealistic or based on inaccurate information (Park, 2023).

Fifth, political dynamics and changing alliances in parliament also affect parties' ability to formulate policies. In a multipolar legislative system, political parties often have to compromise with other parties to gain support, something that is not always easy to do, and often sacrifices important policy aspects to reach an agreement (Iliev, 2023).

Sixth, corruption and dirty political practices are also significant challenges. Corruption within political parties can result in policies that are no longer based on the interests of the people, but for the benefit of certain individuals or groups within the party. This undermines public trust in political parties and the political process as a whole, and hinders the creation of effective and equitable public policies (Chen, 2022).

In facing these challenges, political parties need to strengthen internal structures, increase the capacity of human resources, and uphold integrity and transparency in order to produce better policies and be able to answer the needs of the community.

Conclusion

Political parties have a crucial role in democracy, one of which is in the formulation of policies that support the welfare of the people. They are intermediaries between the government and the community, articulating the interests and needs of the people in the form of concrete policies. Through representation mechanisms, political parties have the responsibility to ensure that the people's voices are heard and taken into account in the policy-making process.

However, to ensure policies that are in line with people's welfare interests, political parties face various challenges, such as internal fragmentation, influence from external donors and interest groups, and pressure from the media and public opinion. In addition, the lack of capacity and resources within parties, political dynamics and alliances in parliament, and corrupt practices are also significant obstacles. Overcoming these challenges requires efforts to strengthen internal party structures, increase human resource capacity, and commitment to integrity and transparency.

Thus, political parties play an essential role in shaping policies that support the welfare of the people, but their effectiveness depends on their ability to manage the various challenges that exist. By strengthening internal mechanisms, improving the competence of their members, and maintaining integrity, political parties can better produce public policies that benefit the wider community, and ultimately increase public trust in the political system.

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