



Requirements for Political Party Participants and Political Party Institutionalization

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Abstract:

Political parties in Indonesia are required to fulfill several legal and organizational conditions that serve as benchmarks for their institutionalization and eligibility to participate in elections. This qualitative study explores how these requirements influence the institutionalization process of political parties by examining legal documents, government regulations, academic literature, reports, and media sources. The findings reveal that although the regulatory framework governing political parties has evolved significantly since the first post-reform elections, the current set of requirements still contains several weaknesses in promoting genuine institutional development. Many of the existing regulations remain administrative in nature and fail to address deeper issues such as internal democracy, party autonomy, and societal engagement. Consequently, the institutionalization of political parties in Indonesia remains superficial, often dominated by elite interests and weak public participation. This study suggests that a comprehensive evaluation of these requirements is necessary to align them with efforts that strengthen democratic values, practices, and culture. Enhancing the quality of party institutionalization is essential to ensure that political parties function as democratic and accountable institutions that support Indonesia's democratic consolidation.

Keywords:

democracy; institutionalization of political parties; requirements for political parties participating in elections.

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Introduction

Political parties occupy a central position in modern constitutional democracies because they function as the primary vehicles for political representation, leadership recruitment, interest aggregation, and governmental accountability.¹ In Indonesia, this constitutional role is explicitly recognized in the 1945 Constitution, which places political parties at the core of electoral competition for executive and legislative offices. Candidates for the presidency, vice-presidency, and the House of Representatives must be nominated through political parties, making parties indispensable intermediaries between citizens and the state. In addition, the Political Parties Law of 2008 as amended 2011, assigns political parties' broader democratic functions, including political education, articulation of public aspirations, citizen

¹ Rustam H.S. Akili and Willya Achmad, "The Role of Political Parties in the Implementation of Democratic General Elections in the Indonesian State Administration System," *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 11, no. 4 (August 2023): e551, <https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v11i4.551>; Athiyatul Mufidah and Abdullah Syarofi, "Hubungan Antara Demokrasi Partai Politik Dalam Pemilihan Umum Di Indonesia," *The Republic : Journal of Constitutional Law* 2, no. 1 (April 2024): 35–51, <https://doi.org/10.55352/htn.v2i1.868>.

participation, leadership recruitment, and the development of political ethics and democratic culture.² In this sense, the quality of democracy is closely connected to the quality of political party institutionalization.³

However, the normative expectations surrounding political parties are not always reflected in political reality. In the New Order era, political parties largely functioned as instruments of the ruling regime to preserve the political status quo.⁴ Although the reformation period opened electoral competition and expanded civil liberties, it did not automatically produce mature party institutionalization or well-institutionalized political parties.⁵ Despite more than two decades of democratic reform, many Indonesian political parties continue to face structural and organizational weaknesses. Existing studies have highlighted persistent problems such as oligarchic control, personalized leadership, weak cadre regeneration, limited internal democracy, transactional politics, and low levels of public trust.⁶ Rather than functioning as programmatic and socially rooted institutions, many parties continue to operate as elite-centered electoral vehicles that become highly visible only during election periods. This condition suggests that Indonesia has achieved electoral regularity without necessarily achieving mature party institutionalization.⁷

To address these weaknesses, the Indonesian legal framework has progressively imposed administrative and organizational requirements on political parties. The Political Parties Law of 2008 as amended 2011, regulates the formation, legal status, functions, and internal organization of political parties, while the Election Law as 2017 as amended by 2023, establishes the requirements for parties seeking to participate in elections. These requirements include legal entity status, territorial organizational coverage, verified membership, permanent offices, campaign finance reporting, and women's representation quotas. In principle, such regulations are intended to ensure that only serious, organized, and socially supported parties are allowed to compete in elections. However, whether these requirements strengthen substantive institutionalization or merely produce administrative conformity remains contestable.⁸ This article is therefore limited to examining how statutory requirements affect political party institutionalization, rather than discussing all dimensions of party politics in Indonesia.

Previous studies on political party institutionalization in Indonesia can be classified into four broad strands. First, system-level studies examine the structure and evolution of Indonesia's post-reformation multiparty system. Tomsa (2014) emphasizes the persistence of party system fragmentation, including its subnational dimensions, while Fossati (2020) shows

² Gunawan Arifin et al., "Enhancing The Role Of Political Parties In Advancing Political Education As A Foundation For Democracy," *Fiat Justisia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 19, no. 1 (March 2025): 73–92, <https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v19n01.4026>.

³ Jimly Asshiddiqie, "Partai Politik Dan Pemilihan Umum Sebagai Instrumen Demokrasi," *Jurnal Konsultasi* 3, no. 4 (2006): 6–27.

⁴ Jacqui Baker, "Reformasi Reversal: Structural Drivers of Democratic Decline In Jokowi's Middle-Income Indonesia," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 59, no. 3 (September 2023): 341–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00074918.2023.2286020>.

⁵ Muhammad Bahrul Ulum, "Indonesian Democracy and Political Parties After Twenty Years of Reformation: A Contextual Analysis," *Indonesia Law Review* 10, no. 1 (April 2020): 29–43, <https://doi.org/10.15742/ilrev.v10n1.577>.

⁶ Afif Juniar, "Redesain Demokrasi Internal Partai Politik: Upaya Mencegah Oligarki Dan Korupsi Partai Politik," *Jurnal Politikom Indonesiana* 6, no. 1 (June 2021): 17–39, <https://doi.org/10.35706/jpi.v6i1.4796>; Roni Sulistyanto Luhukay, "Revitalizing The Regeneration System Of Political Parties In Building Pancasila Democracy," *Jurnal Legalitas* 17, no. 1 (May 2024): 81–97, <https://doi.org/10.33756/jelta.v17i1.24897>.

⁷ NFN Efriza, "Eksistensi Partai Politik Dalam Persepsi Publik [The Existence of The Political Parties in Public Perception]," *Jurnal Politica Dinamika Masalah Politik Dalam Negeri Dan Hubungan Internasional* 10, no. 1 (May 2019): 17–38, <https://doi.org/10.22212/jp.v10i1.1314>.

⁸ Daniel Zuchron and Dian Permata, "Penetapan Partai Politik Peserta Pemilu 2014 Dan 2019; Kajian Pengawasan Pemilu," *Jurnal Bawaslu DKI Jakarta*, 2018.

how successive electoral reforms have reshaped partisan alignments and patterns of competition.⁹ Although these works are important for explaining the dynamics of inter-party competition, they pay limited attention to the internal organizational maturity of parties as democratic institutions.¹⁰ Second, organization-centered studies focus on the internal weaknesses of political parties, particularly oligarchic domination, leadership personalization, and weak cadre regeneration. Juniar (2021) argues that internal party democracy remains fragile because authority is concentrated in party elites and decision-making processes are insufficiently accountable. Similarly, Luhukay (2024) underlines the importance of regeneration systems for sustaining democratic leadership renewal.¹¹ Third, sociological studies highlight the relationship between political parties and society. Efriza (2019) finds that public perceptions of political parties remain weak, especially regarding their representative, educational, and accountability functions. In a more specific context, Budiatri (2022) shows that party institutionalization is closely linked to social embeddedness and parties' ability to cultivate durable ties with constituencies.¹² These findings suggest that party institutionalization must also be assessed in terms of legitimacy, trust, and societal rootedness rather than through legal status. Fourth, legal and electoral studies analyze the regulatory framework governing party competition, including verification mechanisms, electoral thresholds, campaign finance rules, and gender quotas. Farida, Setiawan, and Asmaria (2021) discuss broader developments in party systems during the reformation era, while Hariri (2025) and Dahlerup (2003) provide insight into thresholds and representation design. However, these studies generally evaluate regulation in terms of electoral fairness, constitutional design, or representational outcomes, rather than as a factor shaping the substantive institutionalization of political parties.¹³

Although the literature offers valuable insights, two important gaps remain. First, studies on party weakness and electoral regulation often develop separately, with limited efforts to connect both issues within a unified analytical framework. Second, little attention has been given to whether increasingly complex administrative requirements may generate only documentary compliance while leaving unresolved substantive problems such as weak internal democracy, limited autonomy, ideological incoherence, and shallow societal rootedness.¹⁴ This article addresses those gaps through the concept of pseudo-institutionalization, namely a condition in which political parties appear institutionally compliant by satisfying documentary and procedural requirements, yet remain weak in

⁹ Dirk Tomsa, "Party System Fragmentation in Indonesia: The Subnational Dimension," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 14, no. 2 (August 2014): 249–78, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1598240800008924>.

¹⁰ Vicky Randall and Lars Svåsand, "Party Institutionalization in New Democracies," *Party Politics* 8, no. 1 (January 2002): 5–29, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068802008001001>.

¹¹ Juniar, "Redesain Demokrasi Internal Partai Politik: Upaya Mencegah Oligarki Dan Korupsi Partai Politik."

¹² Aisah Putri Budiatri, "The Impact of Local Parties on Party System Institutionalisation in Post-Conflict Aceh," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 41, no. 1 (April 2022): 34–58, <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034211029035>.

¹³ Ida Farida, Refly Setiawan, and Asmaria Asmaria, "Political Parties and Party Systems in the Reform Era in Indonesia," *Comparative Politics Russia* 12, no. 4 (2021): 157–62, <https://doi.org/10.24411/2221-3279-2021-10047>; Achmad Hariri, "Implications Of The Abolition Of The Presidential Threshold For The Realization Of Substantial Democracy," *Lambung Mangkurat Law Journal* 10, no. 1 (2025): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.59066/jmi.v2i2.401.7>.

¹⁴ Steven Levitsky, "Institutionalization and Peronism," *Party Politics* 4, no. 1 (January 1998): 77–92, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068898004001004>.

substantive dimensions of democratic development.¹⁵ The novelty of this study, therefore, lies in repositioning electoral requirements not merely as neutral administrative filters, but as regulatory instruments that may simultaneously produce formal order while inhibiting democratic maturity.

Based on that framework, this article addresses two research questions. First, to what extent do Indonesia's electoral administrative requirements foster administrative compliance rather than substantive political party institutionalization? Second, how should the legal framework be redesigned to strengthen democratic, autonomous, and socially rooted political parties? Accordingly, this study aims to critically evaluate the current regulatory model and formulate recommendations for a more substantive approach to the institutionalization of political party in Indonesia.

Method

This study employs normative legal research to examine the relationship between electoral administrative requirements and the institutionalization of political parties in Indonesia.¹⁶ Normative legal research is appropriate because the main object of analysis is the legal framework governing political parties and electoral participation, particularly the extent to which existing regulations support substantive democratic development.¹⁷ The study applies three approaches. First, the statutory approach is used to analyze relevant legislation, including the Political Parties Law of 2008 as amended 2011, and the Election Law of 2017 as amended by 2023, together with related implementing regulations. Second, the conceptual approach is used to examine theories of political party institutionalization, especially the framework developed by Weissenbach, as well as broader scholarship on internal party democracy, party autonomy, and democratic consolidation.¹⁸ Third, a limited-case approach is employed by referring to selected decisions, official reports, and publicly available precedents relevant to party verification, electoral regulation, and party governance.¹⁹

The legal materials used in this study consist of primary and secondary materials. Primary legal materials include statutes, regulations, and relevant official decisions. Secondary materials include books, peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, survey findings, and credible academic commentaries concerning Indonesian democracy, political parties, and electoral governance.²⁰ These materials were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research questions and their contribution to understanding both the formal and substantive dimensions of party institutionalization. Data were analyzed qualitatively

¹⁵ Kristina Weissenbach, *Political Parties and Party Types - Conceptual Approaches to the Institutionalization of Political Parties in Transitional States: The Case of the Philippines* (Philippines: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2010).

¹⁶ Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum*, 13th ed. (Jakarta: Kencana, 2017); Soerjono Soekanto and Sri Mamudji, *Penelitian Hukum Normatif Suatu Tinjauan Singkat* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2001).

¹⁷ Johny Ibrahim, *Teori Dan Metodologi Penelitian Hukum Normatif* (Malang: Bayumedia Publishing, 2007); Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum*.

¹⁸ Ken Gladdish, "Political Parties: Organisation and Power," *International Affairs* 65, no. 3 (1989): 535-36, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2621746>.

¹⁹ Gideon Rahat and Ofer Kenig, *From Party Politics to Personalized Politics?: Party Change and Political Personalization in Democracies*, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198808008.001.0001>; Weissenbach, *Political Parties and Party Types - Conceptual Approaches to the Institutionalization of Political Parties in Transitional States: The Case of the Philippines*; Juniar, "Redesain Demokrasi Internal Partai Politik: Upaya Mencegah Oligarki Dan Korupsi Partai Politik."

²⁰ Soekanto and Mamudji, *Penelitian Hukum Normatif Suatu Tinjauan Singkat*; Ulum, "Indonesian Democracy and Political Parties After Twenty Years of Reformation: A Contextual Analysis."

through statutory interpretation, conceptual comparison, and evaluative legal reasoning.²¹ The analysis was conducted by comparing the formal administrative requirements imposed by law with the substantive indicators of party institutionalization, such as internal democracy, autonomy, ideological coherence, cadre regeneration, and societal rootedness. Through this method, the study assesses whether the current regulatory model promotes genuine institutional development or merely produces pseudo-institutionalization.

Discussion

1. Electoral Administrative Requirements and Substantive Party Institutionalization in Indonesia.

The Indonesia's post-reformation electoral framework reflects a continuous effort to balance democratic openness with institutional order. The first democratic election in 1999 was designed in a highly inclusive manner after decades of authoritarian restrictions, allowing broad political participation and the rapid emergence of numerous parties. While this openness was normatively important for democratic transition, it also generated a highly fragmented party landscape that complicated coalition building, legislative coordination, and executive stability. In response, legislators gradually introduced stricter participation requirements in subsequent elections to ensure that only parties with sufficient organizational capacity, minimum social support, and administrative readiness could compete at the national level.²² This trajectory shows that electoral regulation in Indonesia has never been static; it has evolved as an instrument for managing the tension between inclusivity and governability.

Over time, these requirements expanded beyond party identity and legal recognition to include territorial organizational coverage, verified membership, permanent offices, campaign finance reporting, and women's representation quotas. For example, later the electoral laws required party management structures across all provinces, at least 75 percent of regencies/cities, and 50 percent of sub-districts, in addition to documentary proof of membership and permanent offices.²³ Such escalation indicates a deliberate policy shift: political parties were no longer viewed merely as contestants in elections, but as organizations expected to maintain permanent institutional infrastructures throughout the electoral cycle. In formal terms, this represents an attempt to transform parties from temporary electoral vehicles into durable democratic institutions.

From the perspective of political party institutionalization, however, the effectiveness of these requirements should not be assessed solely by their formal existence. Their deeper significance depends on whether they strengthen substantive dimensions such as internal democracy, autonomy, programmatic coherence, and societal rootedness.²⁴ A party may

²¹ Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum*; Soekanto and Mamudji, *Penelitian Hukum Normatif Suatu Tinjauan Singkat*.

²² Diego Fossati, "Electoral Reform and Partisan Dealignment in Indonesia," *International Political Science Review* 41, no. 3 (June 2020): 349-64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512119826389>.

²³ Zuchron and Permata, "Penetapan Partai Politik Peserta Pemilu 2014 Dan 2019; Kajian Pengawasan Pemilu."

²⁴ Weissenbach, *Political Parties and Party Types - Conceptual Approaches to the Institutionalization of Political Parties in Transitional States: The Case of the Philippines*.

possess offices, documents, and verified administrators, yet still remain internally oligarchic, socially detached, and ideologically weak. Therefore, the central question is not whether regulation exists, but what type of institutionalization that regulation actually produces.

The strongest contribution of the current framework lies in the organizational dimension. Requirements concerning management structures at national and subnational levels, permanent offices, and formal legal status encourage parties to establish visible bureaucratic infrastructures throughout the country. In a geographically vast archipelagic state with strong decentralization dynamics, such obligations are designed to prevent political parties from operating only in major urban centers or appearing only during election campaigns.²⁵ By requiring territorial presence, the law attempts to ensure continuity, nationwide reach, and a minimum level of organizational seriousness. Campaign finance reporting obligations also contribute to procedural accountability by creating a legal basis for monitoring campaign funds, auditing donations, and tracing formal financial transactions.²⁶

Nevertheless, a stronger formal organization does not necessarily translate into stronger roots in society.²⁷ This weakness can be observed from the gap between the number of voters and the number of formal party members. Although political parties are expected to cultivate durable linkages with citizens, formal membership remains limited.

Table 1. Comparison of the Number of Voters and Members of Political Parties in the 2019 Election

Year	Voters	Members of Political Parties	Ratio
2019	192,866,254	7,267,240	3.8%

Source: Ghafur²⁸

Table 1 shows that only 3.8 percent of registered voters were formally affiliated with political parties. In a large electoral democracy, such a low ratio suggests that party membership is not functioning as a mass channel of participation. Instead, membership requirements may encourage nominal recruitment conducted primarily for verification purposes. Names can be collected to satisfy legal thresholds without creating ideological commitment, sustained activism, or long-term citizen engagement. As a result, administrative compliance may create the appearance of societal rootedness while masking weak social incorporation.²⁹ Recent developments after the 2024 election further reinforce this conclusion. In the 2024 legislative election, only eight political parties secured seats in the national House of Representatives (DPR), while other contestants failed to pass the 4 percent parliamentary threshold. This demonstrates that Indonesia’s electoral framework has become increasingly effective in limiting parliamentary fragmentation and simplifying the party system. Yet a smaller number of parliamentary parties should not automatically be equated with stronger institutional quality. Electoral survival measures competitiveness under legal

²⁵ Siwage Dharma Negara and Francis E. Hutchinson, “The Impact of Indonesia’s Decentralization Reforms Two Decades On: Introduction,” *Southeast Asian Economies* 38, no. 3 (2021): 289–95, <https://doi.org/10.1355/ae38-3a>.

²⁶ Hariri, “Implications Of The Abolition Of The Presidential Threshold For The Realization Of Substantial Democracy.”

²⁷ Susan E. Scarrow, “Political Parties and Democracy in Theoretical and Practical Perspectives: Implementing Intra-Party Democracy,” *Political Parties and Democracy in Theoretical and Practical Perspectives*, 2005, 7–15.

²⁸ Jamaludin Ghafur, “Diskusi Aktual | Verifikasi Parpol Pasca Putusan MK: Langkah Mundur Institusionalisasi Parpol?,” Pusat Studi Hukum Konstitusi Fakultas Hukum Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAFoNV7yyVo>.

²⁹ Budiatri, “The Impact of Local Parties on Party System Institutionalisation in Post-Conflict Aceh.”

rules, whereas institutionalization also requires internal democracy, public legitimacy, stable membership linkages, and coherent organizational development. A party system may become simpler in numerical terms while remaining weak in democratic substance.³⁰ Public legitimacy also remains fragile. Electoral participation requirements have not automatically improved citizens' perceptions of political parties as representative institutions. This is reflected in the consistently low public assessment of core party functions.

Table 2. Public Assessment on the Functions of Political Parties

No.	Function of Political Parties	Assessment Period		
		1999-2004	2004-2009	2009-2019
1.	Community aspiration channel	15.5	23.0	13.7
2.	Government performance controller	17.5	31.7	18.9
3.	Member cadre	17.9	23.3	12.9
4.	Political education	18.3	24.7	18.3
5.	Placement of qualified representatives in the House of Representatives	14.6	25.1	14.6

Source: Ghafur³¹

Table 2 indicates that many citizens do not perceive political parties as effective channels for representation, cadre development, political education, or governmental oversight. Importantly, the scores remain relatively low across different periods rather than improving consistently over time. This suggests a structural legitimacy deficit rather than a temporary decline in popularity. If parties successfully fulfilled their democratic functions, public evaluations would be expected to improve alongside repeated elections and democratic consolidation. The persistence of low scores indicates that procedural electoral continuity has not been matched by substantive institutional trust.³² The limitations of the current framework become clearer when electoral requirements are compared with broader dimensions of party institutionalization. Existing regulations mainly emphasize organization and formal presence, while several substantive dimensions remain weakly regulated or entirely unaddressed.

Table 3. Comparison of the Number of Voters and Members of Political Parties in the 2019 Election

Requirement	Dimensions of Institutionalization	Condition
Has management throughout Indonesia. Has management in 75% of the districts/cities in each province. Has management in 50% of sub-districts in each district/city Has a permanent office at the center, provinces, and districts/cities until the end of the election. Involving at least 30% of women representation in the management of political parties at the central level.	Organization	Not all political parties can fulfill it. For example, PDIP does not have management in all sub-districts and has less than 30% women in its management.

³⁰ Fossati, "Electoral Reform and Partisan Dealignment in Indonesia."

³¹ Ghafur, "Diskusi Aktual | Verifikasi Parpol Pasca Putusan MK: Langkah Mundur Institusionalisasi Parpol?"

³² Efriza, "Eksistensi Partai Politik Dalam Persepsi Publik [The Existence of The Political Parties in Public Perception]."

Have at least 1,000 members, or 1/1,000 of the total population, in each management with a Membership Card.	Roots in society	Public interest in joining political parties is still low.
	There are no requirements for political parties to participate in the election under the Autonomy dimension.	
	There are no requirements for political parties to participate in the election that are related to the dimension of internal party democracy.	
	There are no program-related requirements for political parties to participate in the election.	
	There are no coherence-related requirements for political parties to participate in the election.	
	There are no requirements for political parties to participate in the election regarding regional or international integration.	

Source: Author's

Table 3 demonstrates a clear regulatory imbalance. The law heavily regulates what is easiest to verify administratively, offices, numbers, territorial coverage, documents, and formal representation quotas, but provides limited enforceable standards for what is normatively most important in democratic party life. There are a few mechanisms concerning transparent leadership selection, participatory policy formulation, merit-based candidate nomination, ideological consistency, or insulation from oligarchic capture. Consequently, parties may satisfy formal legal requirements while remaining internally centralized, highly personalized, and weakly accountable to members.³³

Gender inclusion presents a similar pattern. The requirement of at least thirty percent women's representation in party management and candidate nomination reflects an important constitutional and democratic commitment to inclusion. It has also increased the visibility of women in electoral politics and compelled parties to recruit more female candidates. However, post-2024 outcomes show that women continue to occupy only around one-fifth of parliamentary seats. This suggests that compliance at the nomination stage has advanced faster than substantive empowerment in candidate placement, campaign support, resource allocation, and access to strategic decision-making within parties. Formal quotas are therefore necessary but insufficient without internal leadership development and organizational transformation.³⁴ Coalition politics after the 2024 election also illustrate the limits of measuring institutionalization through stability alone. The alignment of most

³³ Juniar, "Redesain Demokrasi Internal Partai Politik: Upaya Mencegah Oligarki Dan Korupsi Partai Politik"; Rahat and Kenig, *From Party Politics to Personalized Politics?*; Weissenbach, *Political Parties and Party Types - Conceptual Approaches to the Institutionalization of Political Parties in Transitional States: The Case of the Philippines*.

³⁴ Joni Lovenduski, "The Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection: Some Reflections," *Government and Opposition* 51, no. 3 (July 2016): 513-28, <https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2016.7>; Mona Lena Krook, "Electoral Gender Quotas," *Comparative Political Studies* 47, no. 9 (August 2014): 1268-93, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414013495359>.

parliamentary parties with the governing coalition may contribute to executive governability and legislative efficiency. However, when too many parties converge into a single governing bloc, opposition oversight can weaken, ideological differences become blurred, and electoral competition risks become less meaningful. Stability is valuable in a presidential system, but stability without accountability may produce procedural order without substantive pluralism. In such conditions, parties function as vehicles of access to power rather than as differentiated representatives of competing policy visions.³⁵

Taken together, these findings show that Indonesia's electoral administrative requirements have only partially contributed to the institutionalization of political party. They are relatively effective at promoting formal organization, legal recognition, procedural readiness, and numerical simplification of the party system, but far less effective in strengthening internal democracy, autonomy, societal rootedness, gender empowerment, and programmatic development. The result is a pattern best described as pseudo-institutionalization: political parties appear institutionally mature because they comply with documentary and regulatory standards, yet remain substantively fragile in core democratic dimensions.³⁶ Accordingly, the answer to the first research question is conditional rather than absolute. Indonesia's electoral requirements do foster certain aspects of institutionalization, especially those related to organizational form and administrative order. However, to a considerable extent, they still privilege compliance over democratic substance. Without broader reforms that address the internal and sociological foundations of party life, administrative regulation remains insufficient to produce genuinely institutionalized political parties.

2. Redesigning the Legal Framework for Democratic, Autonomous, and Socially Rooted Political Parties.

The findings in the previous section demonstrate that Indonesia's current electoral framework has been more successful at producing administrative compliance than at fostering substantive political party institutionalization. Existing regulations have improved documentary order, territorial presence, and procedural verification, but they have not sufficiently addressed deeper democratic dimensions such as internal accountability, autonomy, meaningful social rootedness, and programmatic development.³⁷ Accordingly, future reform should not merely add new administrative requirements but fundamentally reorient the purpose of regulation: from controlling access to elections to strengthening the democratic quality of political parties themselves.

A useful way to conceptualize this redesign is to distinguish between a gatekeeping model and a developmental model of regulation. The gatekeeping model focuses on screening who may participate in elections through documentary and organizational thresholds. By

³⁵ Hariri, "Implications Of The Abolition Of The Presidential Threshold For The Realization Of Substantial Democracy."

³⁶ John Carey, "Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations," *Political Science Quarterly* 113, no. 4 (December 1998): 725-26, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2658267>; Weissenbach, *Political Parties and Party Types - Conceptual Approaches to the Institutionalization of Political Parties in Transitional States: The Case of the Philippines*.

³⁷ Weissenbach, *Political Parties and Party Types - Conceptual Approaches to the Institutionalization of Political Parties in Transitional States: The Case of the Philippines*; Carey, "Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations."

contrast, the developmental model focuses on improving how parties function as representative institutions over time. Indonesia's legal framework has largely emphasized the first model. The next stage of reform should incorporate the second.³⁸

The first area of reform concerns internal party democracy. Political parties occupy a constitutionally privileged position because they control access to candidacy for legislative and executive office. Yet the law provides only limited enforceable standards regarding how internal leaders are selected, how policy decisions are made, or how candidates are nominated. This creates space for elite domination, dynastic succession, transactional candidacies, and opaque decision-making. A redesigned framework should therefore require periodic and transparent internal elections, minimum procedural guarantees for members, internal dispute resolution mechanisms, and public reporting on leadership selection processes. Regulatory oversight need not interfere with parties' freedom of association, but it should ensure that organizations claiming democratic legitimacy operate according to minimum democratic standards.³⁹

The second area concerns party autonomy and political finance. Many parties remain dependent on wealthy patrons, business networks, or access to state resources rather than sustainable membership-based support. Such dependence weakens accountability because party leaders become more responsive to financiers than to citizens or ordinary members. Legal reform should therefore strengthen transparent public funding, tighten disclosure of private donations, improve auditing mechanisms, and create incentives for small-donor participation or membership contributions. Financial redesign is essential because democratic autonomy cannot be achieved where organizational survival depends primarily on oligarchic sponsorship.⁴⁰

The third area concerns roots in society. Current rules emphasize numerical membership thresholds, yet formal membership figures do not necessarily reflect real citizen engagement. In practice, membership lists may be compiled only to satisfy verification requirements and may not indicate active participation. For that reason, future regulation should gradually shift from a purely membership-based model toward a broader constituent-based model. Parties should be encouraged to demonstrate continuous engagement through civic education, local consultation forums, policy outreach, community service activities, or verifiable participation networks. Such an approach would better measure whether parties are genuinely embedded in society rather than merely compliant on paper.⁴¹

The fourth area concerns programmatic coherence and ideological responsibility. One of the recurring weaknesses of Indonesian party politics is the limited differentiation among parties, many of which adopt broad centrist positions and shift alliances pragmatically. When parties are weakly programmatic, elections risk becoming contests of personality, patronage,

³⁸ Erik S. Herron, "Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 1 (March 2005): 192–93, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592705560146>.

³⁹ Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁴⁰ Adrianus Hendrawan, Ward Berenschot, and Edward Aspinall, "Parties as Pay-off Seekers: Pre-Electoral Coalitions in a Patronage Democracy," *Electoral Studies* 69 (February 2021): 102238, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2020.102238>; Efriza, "Eksistensi Partai Politik Dalam Persepsi Publik [The Existence of The Political Parties in Public Perception]."

⁴¹ Budiatri, "The Impact of Local Parties on Party System Institutionalisation in Post-Conflict Aceh."

and short-term coalition bargaining rather than competition among policy alternatives. Regulation should not dictate ideology, but it can require clearer policy platforms, more accessible manifestos, periodic program reporting, and stronger transparency regarding coalition commitments. These measures would help voters evaluate parties based on substantive policy choices rather than symbolic branding alone.⁴²

The fifth area concerns gender inclusion and leadership development. The thirty percent quota for women in party management and candidate nomination remains normatively significant and should be maintained. However, quota rules should be complemented by substantive measures such as leadership training, mentoring systems, fair candidate placement, campaign support, and internal anti-discrimination procedures. Without these supporting mechanisms, numerical inclusion may continue without equal influence in party decision-making. Inclusive institutionalization requires not only presence but meaningful participation in strategic leadership roles.⁴³

The sixth area concerns accountability and enforcement. Even well-designed rules remain symbolic if enforcement is weak or selective. Accordingly, electoral management bodies and relevant supervisory institutions should be equipped with clearer authority, transparent benchmarks, and proportionate sanctions. Enforcement mechanisms may include warnings, corrective orders, temporary administrative penalties, financial sanctions, or publication of compliance reports. The objective should not be punitive formalism, but credible incentives for continuous institutional improvement.⁴⁴

Table 4. Proposed Legal Redesign for Political Party Institutionalization in Indonesia

Dimension	Current Limitation	Proposed Reform
Internal Democracy	No enforceable standards for leadership selection and candidate nomination	Mandatory internal elections, transparent nominations, and member procedural rights
Autonomy	Dependence on wealthy patrons and elite financing	Donation disclosure, public funding reform, and stronger audits
Roots in Society	Membership lists are used as formal indicators only	Constituent engagement indicators, civic outreach, and participatory forums
Programmatic Development	Weak ideological differentiation and manifesto discipline	Mandatory manifesto publication, periodic program reporting
Gender Inclusion	Quota is often limited to formal compliance	Leadership pipeline, fair placement rules, campaign support
Accountability and Enforcement	Weak or inconsistent compliance supervision	Graduated sanctions, compliance audits, and publication of reports

Source: Author's

Table 4 shows that the main challenge is not the absence of regulation per se, but the imbalance between formal entry requirements and substantive institutional standards. Future reform should therefore redirect legal attention from static verification toward continuous

⁴² Fossati, "Electoral Reform and Partisan Dealignment in Indonesia."

⁴³ Drude Dahlerup, "Comparative Studies of Electoral Gender Quotas," in *The Implementation of Quotas: Latin American Experiences. International IDEA Workshop*, 2003; Athiyyatul Mufidah and Abdullah Syarofi, "Hubungan Antara Demokrasi Partai Politik Dalam Pemilihan Umum Di Indonesia."

⁴⁴ Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum*; Soekanto and Mamudji, *Penelitian Hukum Normatif Suatu Tinjauan Singkat*.

organizational development.⁴⁵ These reform directions suggest that future legal redesign must move beyond a narrow gatekeeping model. Electoral regulation should no longer focus exclusively on who may enter elections, but also on how parties function before, during, and after elections. In other words, the law must treat political parties not merely as contestants, but as permanent democratic institutions whose internal quality directly affects the quality of the constitutional order.⁴⁶ From a broader democratic perspective, strengthening party institutionalization is essential for Indonesia's long-term democratic consolidation. Well-institutionalized parties can aggregate interests, recruit capable leaders, structure political competition, and provide accountability between elections. By contrast, weakly institutionalized parties tend to personalize power, reproduce oligarchy, and disconnect citizens from representative institutions. Therefore, redesigning the legal framework for political parties is not merely a technical legislative exercise; it is a constitutional imperative for sustaining democratic governance in Indonesia.⁴⁷

Accordingly, the answer to the second research question is that Indonesia requires a qualitative redesign of electoral law, one that integrates internal democracy, financial autonomy, social rootedness, programmatic accountability, inclusion, and credible enforcement into the regulatory framework. Only through such a shift can electoral regulation move from producing pseudo-institutionalization toward fostering genuinely democratic, autonomous, and socially rooted political parties.⁴⁸

Conclusion

This study finds that the institutionalization of political parties in Indonesia remains an unfinished project within the broader process of democratic consolidation. Although the legal framework governing political parties and electoral participation has become increasingly comprehensive, through requirements relating to legal status, territorial organization, membership verification, permanent offices, campaign finance reporting, and women's representation, these measures have been more successful at producing administrative compliance than at achieving substantive democratic institutionalization. In practice, increasingly burdensome administrative requirements tend to privilege parties with greater financial resources, entrenched elite networks, and stronger access to patronage. As a consequence, regulatory competition is often easier to satisfy for established actors than for genuinely programmatic or citizen-based organizations. This creates structural incentives for dependence on oligarchic sponsors and resourceful elites, which in turn weakens party autonomy and narrows internal democratic contestation.

Accordingly, the answer to the first research question is that Indonesia's electoral administrative requirements only partially contribute to political party institutionalization. They are relatively effective in promoting formal organization, legal recognition, and electoral

⁴⁵ Weissenbach, *Political Parties and Party Types - Conceptual Approaches to the Institutionalization of Political Parties in Transitional States: The Case of the Philippines*.

⁴⁶ Asshiddiqie, "Partai Politik Dan Pemilihan Umum Sebagai Instrumen Demokrasi."

⁴⁷ Ulum, "Indonesian Democracy and Political Parties After Twenty Years of Reformation: A Contextual Analysis"; Efriza, "Eksistensi Partai Politik Dalam Persepsi Publik [The Existence of The Political Parties in Public Perception]."

⁴⁸ Weissenbach, *Political Parties and Party Types - Conceptual Approaches to the Institutionalization of Political Parties in Transitional States: The Case of the Philippines*; Juniar, "Redesain Demokrasi Internal Partai Politik: Upaya Mencegah Oligarki Dan Korupsi Partai Politik."

simplification, yet significantly less effective in strengthening internal democracy, autonomy, programmatic coherence, gender empowerment, and durable party-society linkages. Persistent problems, such as oligarchic domination, personalized leadership, weak cadre regeneration, low public trust, and shallow societal rootedness, demonstrate a continuing gap between the formal existence of parties and their democratic function as channels of representation and citizen participation. This condition is conceptualized in this article as pseudo-institutionalization, namely a situation in which parties appear institutionally mature because they satisfy documentary and procedural standards, while remaining substantively fragile in core democratic dimensions.

The answer to the second research question is that Indonesia requires a qualitative redesign of its legal framework for political parties. Future reform should shift regulatory emphasis from gatekeeping mechanisms toward developmental institutionalization. This includes enforcing minimum standards for internal party democracy, strengthening transparent and sustainable political finance, encouraging constituent-based engagement rather than merely numerical membership, improving policy platform accountability, deepening women's leadership participation beyond formal quotas, and establishing credible monitoring and sanctions mechanisms. Such reforms would align electoral law not only with procedural fairness, but also with the long-term democratic development of representative institutions.

This study has several limitations. First, as normative legal research, it primarily analyzes statutory design, institutional theory, and available secondary materials rather than conducting extensive fieldwork within political parties. Second, the study focuses on national-level regulatory arrangements and therefore does not fully capture variation across regions, local party branches, or specific party organizations. Third, the concept of pseudo-institutionalization developed in this article remains analytical and would benefit from future empirical testing through interviews, comparative case studies, survey research, or longitudinal organizational analysis. The main contribution of this study lies in repositioning electoral regulation not merely as a neutral administrative filter, but as a constitutional instrument that can either inhibit or foster democratic party development. For Indonesia, the quality of democracy will depend not only on the regular conduct of elections, but also on whether political parties evolve into democratic, autonomous, programmatic, and socially rooted institutions.⁴⁹ Without such transformation, electoral democracy risks remaining procedurally stable while substantively fragile.

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⁴⁹ Mainwaring and Scully, *Building Democratic Institutions*, 1–34; Peter Mair, *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 51–79.

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