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Received  
30 September 2023





Accepted  
16 February 2024




Published online  
April 2024





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**Keywords:** Indonesian Democracy, Political Education, Accountability, Financial Assistance for Political Parties

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## Analysis of Political Party Accountability and Financial Assistance in the Context of Indonesian Democracy

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**Abstract:** In the contemporary era characterized by globalization and swift democratic progress, Indonesia encounters distinctive challenges of rising political expenses. This article utilizes qualitative research methodologies to examine the consequences of increasing political costs on the dynamics of Indonesian democracy, specifically concerning accountability and financial support for political parties. The main findings suggest that the financial assistance to political parties in Indonesia has not adequately tackled the forthcoming challenges that Indonesian democracy may encounter. In contrast, political parties persist in facing challenges in accountability mechanisms for the funds they acquire. The provision of financial aid may be perceived as a feasible approach to mitigate the financial burdens associated with political campaigns. However, in the absence of adequate mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability, there is a possibility of corruption and concerns regarding the scope of funding. This article further emphasizes the significance of political education as a fundamental obligation of political parties to uphold democratic efficacy. This study places particular emphasis on the ramifications of providing financial assistance to political parties for the future trajectory of Indonesian democracy. To ensure the continued progress of democracy in Indonesia and realize the "Golden Indonesia 2045" vision, stakeholders must possess a comprehensive comprehension of the matter and effectively tackle the obstacles that arise from the significant political expenses involved.

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## I. Introduction

Indonesia's dynamic multiethnic composition and complex political dynamics set it apart in the vast realm of global democracies (Bubandt, 2014; Rahma, 2014). In recent years, there has been a noticeable and disturbing development regarding the increasing spending associated with political campaigns. This issue has received considerable attention and has become a prominent topic of public discourse and concern (Hermawan, 2014). The allocation of funds for campaigns and other political endeavors is an inherent aspect of democratic systems. However, the substantial increase in political spending in Indonesia has raised concerns among observers who perceive it as a pressing issue that has the potential to undermine the integrity and inclusiveness of the country's democratic processes (Haryanto, 2016). Various solutions have been proposed, including both policy changes and grassroots efforts. Nevertheless, the societal implications of these exorbitant costs remain a pressing concern.

Scholarly discourse on this topic has been extensive, albeit characterized by divergent viewpoints. Several scholarly investigations have drawn attention to the phenomenon that escalating political spending can lead to exclusivity, thereby limiting effective participation in the democratic process to individuals of higher socioeconomic status with substantial support (Borge, Falch, & Tovmo, 2008). Scholars have previously highlighted the link between increased political spending and the likelihood of increased corrupt activities (Kholdy & Sohrabian, 2008). Several scholars find that candidates and political parties often resort to unethical methods to recover their financial investments after an election (Williams & Onochie, 2013; Wu et al., 2017). However, amid these concerns, certain scholars posit that the escalation in financial expenditure may also serve as an indication of developing democracy, where political parties are allocating greater resources towards expanding their reach and engaging with voters (Benito et al., 2015; Khlif & Amara, 2019; Soliman & Cable, 2011).

In 2015, Benito et al (2015) found a statistically significant correlation between political engagement and transparency. Transparent budgets strengthen politicians' dedication to economic responsibility. Insufficient

openness and voter perplexity can hinder successful budget management, especially when significant financial changes are required. Greater budget transparency reduces politicians' ability to use fiscal deficits for opportunistic purposes. The existing body of literature emphasizes the need for a comprehensive understanding of the specific Indonesian context.

The primary objective of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the implications associated with increased political spending in Indonesia, with a particular focus on the accountability of political parties and the provision of financial support. As the discussion explores the implications of these increased expenditures, it becomes imperative to examine the critical role of accountability and transparency in shaping the political landscape. Examining the impact of transparency and accountability on indicators of corruption and democracy provides deeper insights into how these principles influence the integrity of political processes and the functioning of democratic institutions.

The causes and consequences of increasing costs in Indonesia have been the subject of much debate. However, the complex interplay between financial support, accountability, and the wider democratic context in the country is not fully understood (Muhtadi & Warburton, 2020). This study clarifies the dynamics mentioned above using qualitative research methods. It endeavors to provide valuable insights into the strategies employed by political parties in managing the complexities arising from financial limitations and support (Mietzner, 2008).

Financial aid can alleviate difficulties caused by high political costs. However, its effectiveness and integrity are dependent on the accountability framework. Based on a synthesis of empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks, it is postulated that the absence of robust accountability mechanisms may inadvertently amplify concerns regarding transparency and corruption when providing financial support rather than addressing the difficulties associated with excessive political expenditures (Puron-Cid et al., 2019). Therefore, this study focuses on the need for comprehensive strategies that place equal emphasis on providing financial support and implementing rigorous accountability measures

This paper presents a novel analysis of the complex interaction between political cost, political responsibility, and the democratic structure in Indonesia. It offers fresh perspectives on this intricate connection that has not been thoroughly explored previously.

Indonesia's political landscape is complex, shaped by a vast array of ethnic groups, religious affiliations, and socio-political backgrounds (Ridwan, 2016). Examining the existing body of literature that has conceptualized and classified these phenomena is crucial to comprehend the complexities associated with the high political expenses. Van Biezen (2003) emphasizes that political action requires significant expenditures to support democracy. Money is a crucial resource for political parties as they must maintain structures, employ staff, conduct campaigns, and communicate effectively with the public. Therefore, the size of the population will determine the political cost of maintaining democracy.

The initial conceptual studies explore the precise delineation of "political costs" in emerging democratic systems. According to Amenta & Halfman (2000), 'political costs' encompass not only the monetary expenses of political parties and candidates but also broader societal implications, such as the potential for reduced political engagement or increased prevalence of patronage-based politics. The political costs are comprised of two categories: direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include campaign financing and media expenditures, while indirect costs encompass the opportunity costs associated with potential candidates being discouraged by financial barriers, as well as the cost associated to the societal trust resulting from perceived corruption (Shin, 2015; Warner, 1997). These classifications emphasize the complex and diverse character of political expenditures, demonstrating that in many countries, the majority of funds provided to political parties are directed toward political campaigns.

The sources of political financing in Indonesia have been studied extensively. The conceptual framework frequently centers on the dichotomy between legitimate and illicit sources of funding (Susanto, 2017). Legitimate sources of funding include membership fees,

donations, and state subsidies, while illicit sources of funding may include corrupt practices and clandestine business transactions (Badoh & Dahlan, 2010). The classification within this framework frequently relies on the principle of transparency, encompassing funding sources that are categorized as transparent, semi-transparent, and not transparent (Anugerah and Yuniarti, 2010).

Considerable scholarly attention has been devoted to examining the role of state subsidies and financial assistance to political parties (Pierre et al., 2000). The underlying theoretical framework in this context revolves around the equilibrium between governmental authority and the independent decision-making power of political parties (Carlson, 2012). State subsidies are designed to decrease political parties' dependence on potentially corrupt funding sources (Zahariadis, 1997). However, there is a corresponding apprehension regarding the potential for the state to exert excessive influence over these parties. Commonly examined categories include unconditional grants, grants based on performance, and earmarked grants designated for specific activities (Sengupta, 2011).

Accountability mechanisms constitute an essential component of the existing body of literature. The notion of accountability in political financing is commonly understood as a multifaceted concept that includes financial transparency, ethical behavior, and adherence to legal requirements (Bértoa & Spirova, 2019). He accountability mechanisms found in the existing literature encompass three overarching types: internal mechanisms, external mechanisms, and public participatory mechanisms (Wille, 2010).

Internal mechanisms refer to audits and oversight conducted within political parties. External mechanisms involve state audits and media scrutiny. Public participatory methods, such as citizen audits and the actions of watchdog groups, actively involve civil society in overseeing the financial aspects of political parties. Correlation between the sources of financing and their allocation is crucial in this context, as transparency and accountability in spending directly affect the quality of democracy. Transparency is increased through

careful examination of the allocation of financial resources, which in turn promotes confidence in political procedures and eventually strengthens the democratic structure.

Le and Nguyen (2021) highlighted the critical role that political education plays in fortifying a nation's democratic structure. The promotion of citizens' awareness of their rights and duties enhances transparency and accountability in public administration. An efficient political education fosters a culture where citizens actively seek transparency and responsibility from their governments, which is crucial for upholding the integrity and efficiency of democratic systems. Within this particular framework, the notion of political education is encompassing both formal and informal means through which individuals are equipped with knowledge regarding their entitlements, obligations, and the overall political environment (Kołczyńska, 2020). The existing literature frequently makes a clear distinction between political education within the curriculum of educational institutions, initiatives led by political parties, and interventions by civil society (Hawley, 1971).

With an emphasis on the health and inclusivity of democratic processes, recent research emphasizes the substantial impact of higher political costs (Rahat et al., 2008). Within this particular framework, significant concerns have arisen regarding the ramifications, including diminished political rivalry, susceptibility to unethical behavior, and, subsequently, the erosion of public trust in democratic establishments (Burden, 2004; Craig et al., 2006).

Ensuring transparency and accountability is crucial when addressing these matters, as the adoption of efficient measures greatly enhances the quality of democracy. For instance, certain nations have observed that enhancing surveillance mechanisms and information accessibility has resulted in increased public engagement and decreased corruption. These experiences offer valuable insights into the significance of transparency and accountability in bolstering robust democratic procedures.

## II. Methods

The primary focus of this study is analyzing news articles on political party financing in Indonesia. These articles have been sourced from reputable national media outlets to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the subject matter. The investigative lens is specifically directed toward news narratives that examine the political costs, accountability of political parties, and financial support provided to political entities.

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to develop a comprehensive understanding of the narratives, framings, and contexts employed by the media when reporting on interrelated issues. This qualitative research approach enables an investigation of the nuanced aspects, connotative and implicit meanings in different news articles.

The main source of our information comprises carefully chosen news articles from a specific timeframe, encompassing the period leading up to and following the legislative and presidential elections. The study's inclusion criterion is twelve months, consisting of six months before and six months after the election. This timeframe enables a thorough analysis of political dynamics, political costs, and public response within the election's context.

The study incorporates news articles, editorials, opinion columns, and special reports from chosen media outlets. The selection criteria prioritize thematic relevance to political costs, political party accountability, and financial support. The sources were chosen based on their relevance to the study and their capacity to offer a wide range of perspectives, supportive and critical, which contribute to a thorough examination of the associated political dynamics. They play a crucial role in enhancing the contextual understanding of the media's perspective on the issue and facilitating a deeper analysis of the viewpoints expressed by both the general public and subject matter experts.

The data collection process involved a thorough and methodical examination of news articles found in the digital archives of the selected media outlets. Researchers used



specific keywords to refine and identify articles relevant to the topic of study. Each identified article was then carefully examined and classified according to its dominant themes, sources used, and narrative presentation.

The study used qualitative content analysis techniques to conduct data analysis. Each article was thoroughly examined to identify dominant themes, framing of issues, and presentation and positioning of sources. The subsequent analysis sought to understand how the media portrayed and presented the issue of political party financing and the consequences of these representations on the public's understanding of democracy and politics in Indonesia.

This study employs a qualitative content analysis methodology to provide a comprehensive framework for identifying and analyzing the underlying patterns and themes in the media narratives. As a result, it facilitates a nuanced comprehension of the media's influence on shaping public discourse regarding political financing in Indonesia.

### III. Results and Discussions

Political campaign expenses in Indonesia have increased dramatically over the past decade, exhibiting a startling upward trend. Based on the research conducted by Mietzner (2007) and Setiawan & Rizkiah (2017), political campaign expenses in Indonesia have experienced significant and rapid growth. The average cost of campaigns for legislative positions has risen to IDR 100 billion, a 200% surge compared to the previous decade. This increase is a result of the heightened political competition and the increased spending required to gain sufficient visibility and support during the election. It indicates a growing and intense political environment accompanied by higher financial demands in Indonesian electoral politics. The increase in spending, which can be attributed to the increased allocation of resources to the media, the growing professionalization of political campaigns, and the heightened competition among political parties, pose potential obstacles to the democratic process (Martin & Peskowitz, 2018; Ortiz, 1998).

In an article titled " Golkar: Politik Uang Tak Hanya Pemilu, tapi Juga Pemilihan Kepala Desa

[Golkar: Money Politics Is Not Only (in) General Elections, But Also (in) Village Head Elections]" published in News.detik.com (2023), the Chairman of DPP Golkar Ace Hasan Syadzily highlighted that the Golkar Party Treasurer observed a substantial increase in the campaign budget over the course of ten years (Anggrainy, 2023). Campaign initiatives that used to cost around IDR 50 billion are currently expected to exceed IDR 200 billion. This significant increase in cost indicates a changing democratic environment with a more restrictive cost of participation.

Moreover, this study found a substantial dependence on private contributions as the primary financial resource for Indonesia's political parties. Although the government provides subsidies, these funds are often insufficient to cover the costs, as evidenced by the 2014 legislative elections (refer to Table 1). Consequently, as political parties are motivated to actively pursue private funding, political transactions with the private sector have increased significantly.

The interdependent connection between political parties and the business sector highlights the immense impact of private interests on political decision-making processes. This influence can significantly affect policy outcomes and democratic governance. Party officials underscored the increase of this phenomenon. They assert that although the government provides some financial assistance, the majority of funding originates from private donors, mainly consisting of influential businesses and individuals.

According to an article titled "UU Pilkada: Sumbangan Kampanye Perorangan Rp75 Juta, Swasta Rp750 Juta [Regional-Head Election Law: Individual Campaign Contributions IDR 75 Million, Private IDR 750 Million]" (CnnIndonesia.com, 2023), the Chairman of the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU) Hasyim Asy'ari has emphasized that campaign financial support is governed by Law Number 10 of 2016 on the Election of Governors, Regent, and Mayor. This law specifically regulates various sources of campaign funding for candidates running for regional head positions. The legislation has been in operation since 2016. Article 74 paragraph (1) of the law stated the three

primary sources of campaign fund donations (Cnnindonesia, 2023).

These sources include contributions from political parties and coalitions of political parties, contributions from the candidate pairs, and non-binding donations from other parties, including individual donations and/or private legal entities. There is a maximum threshold on the monetary contributions made by individuals, companies, or private organizations with legal entities toward campaign funds. Additionally, it is imperative to incorporate explicit identification.

The upper limit for individual campaign fund contributions stands at IDR 75 million, while for corporate entities or private organizations with legal status, the maximum allowable amount is IDR 750 million. The extensive dependence on private funding gives rise to concerns due to its potential implications for conflicts of interest and the possibility of donors exerting undue influence on the policy-making process.

Table 1. APBN Allocation for Political Parties with Representatives in the DPR in 2014

No	political parties	Legal Votes Received in the 2014 Legislative Election (million votes)	The amount received after an increase of IDR 1,000 per vote	The amount received if the state subsidy is assumed to be IDR 250,000 per vote
1	PDI-P	23,6	IDR 23.6 billion	IDR 5.9 trillion
2	Golkar	18,4	IDR 18.4 billion	IDR 4.6 trillion
3	Gerindra	14,7	IDR 14.7 billion	IDR 3.7 trillion
4	Demokrat	12,7	IDR 12.7 billion	IDR 3.2 trillion
5	PKB	11,2	IDR 11.2 billion	IDR 2.8 trillion
6	PAN	9,4	IDR 9.4 billion	IDR 2.4 trillion
7	PKS	8,48	IDR 8.48 billion	IDR 2.12 trillion
8	Nasdem	8,4	IDR 8.4 billion	IDR 2.1 trillion
9	PPP	8,1	IDR 8.1 billion	IDR 2.0 trillion
10	Hanura	6,5	IDR 6.5 billion	IDR 1.6 trillion
	Total	121,48	IDR 121.48 billion	IDR 30.42 trillion

Source: Beritasatu.com, 2018

State subsidies, originally intended to mitigate the influence of private financing in political affairs, are often met with skepticism regarding their effectiveness (Pierre et al., 2000).

Despite their aim to promote fairness and equity, these subsidies frequently fall short of fully mitigating the substantial costs associated with political campaigns (Kleer, 2010).

Hasto Kristiyanto, the Secretary General of PDI-P, conveyed the sentiment mentioned earlier in an article titled "PDI-P Receives Government Assistance in the Form of Political Party Funds Valued at IDR 28 Billion" published by Kompas.com (2023).

It is argued that state subsidies are intended to promote a fair and equitable competitive landscape. In practice, however, these subsidies only cover a fraction of the costs associated with campaigns (Aditya & Santosa, 2023). While beneficial, the current structure of state subsidies is not enough to counteract the dominant influence of private financing (Dai & Cheng, 2015).

In terms of financial accountability, it is clear that the current landscape is fragmented and influenced by different political parties (Ignazi, 2014). While some entities have implemented robust internal audit systems and transparent financial procedures, others operate with opaque mechanisms, raising doubts about the legitimacy of their expenditures (Roper, 2007).

The lack of consistency was highlighted by a spokesperson from Transparency Internasional Indonesia (TII), a watchdog organization, who remarked, "While some entities are making progress in terms of financial transparency, others are operating in the shadows" (In the news article titled "Parpol Didesak Transparan Soal Dana Politik, Bukan Hanya dari Uang Negara [Political Parties Urged to Be Transparent About Political Funds, Not Just State Funds]" published by Republika.co.id in 2022). The findings underscore the urgent need to implement standardized accountability mechanisms to ensure transparency and build trust in political financing.

The impact of rising political spending goes beyond the mere fiscal burden (Gordon & Hafer, 2005) we derive a formal model wherein we demonstrate the existence of an equilibrium in which (1. According to the findings of the study, the rising costs of the democratic process in Indonesia have the potential to jeopardize its inclusiveness (Pocztar & Pepinsky, 2016). This could discourage capable individuals who face

financial constraints from engaging in political participation (Muhtadi & Warburton, 2020).

In line with this issue, Agus Harimuti Yudhoyono (AHY), the Chairman of the Democrat Party, expressed that the escalating expenses related to electoral campaigns result in the exclusion of individuals who lack substantial financial backing from participating in elections (news.detik.com, 2023, in the article titled "AHY: The Setback of Democracy in RI Due to Rampant Money-Identity Politics"). The emerging trend highlights a significant and urgent challenge in which the democratic principles of inclusive representation are at risk (Rahmawati, 2023).

The significance of political education has become evident as a crucial mechanism for cultivating a climate of fiscal transparency and accountability (Benito & Bastida, 2009). By educating citizens and party members, it is more likely that these stakeholders will advocate for and promote these principles (Alt et al., 2006). Idham Holik, a representative or commissioner of the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU), emphasized the significance of this perspective by asserting that by educating party members and the wider populace, a cultural milieu can be cultivated that places a premium on and actively pursues transparency. This statement can be found in an article titled "KPU Akui Politik Uang Jadi PR untuk Pemilu 2024, Ungkit Fenomena Klientelisme [KPU Acknowledges the Prevalence of 'Money Politics as a Public Relations Challenge for the 2024 Election, Highlighting the Phenomenon of Clientelism]" on Kompas.com (Mantalean & Stuningsih, 2023). Political education emerges as a fundamental element in effectively tackling the complex issues associated with political financing (Quintelier, 2010).

One challenging aspect of the findings is the potential correlation between increased political spending and the prevalence of corrupt practices, as shown in Table 2, particularly in regional head elections. The financial responsibilities associated with campaign debts may motivate candidates to engage in illicit activities after the election to recoup their investments. The Executive Director of the Indonesian Budget Center (IBC), Roy Salam, highlighted a recurring pattern, stating that they often observe cases where candidates burdened

by campaign debts resort to questionable tactics to recover their expenses. This statement can be found in an article titled " Saatnya Mengawasi Aliran Dana Kampanye [It's Time to Monitor the Flow of Campaign Funds] on Kompas.com (Nurfaizah, 2023). The potential correlation underscores the need to improve and strengthen monitoring and regulatory efforts to mitigate corrupt practices.

Table 2. the number of regional heads caught in corruption

No	Year	Governor	Mayor, Regent, or Deputy
1	2004	1	0
2	2005	0	0
3	2006	2	3
4	2007	1	6
5	2008	1	6
6	2009	2	5
7	2010	1	4
8	2011	0	3
9	2012	0	3
10	2013	2	3
11	2014	3	12
12	2015	3	4
13	2016	1	9
14	2017	1	13
15	2018	2	30
16	2019	1	18
17	2020	0	8
18	2021	1	13
19	2022	1	15
20	2023	2	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>163</b>

Source: <https://www.kpk.go.id/id/statistik/penindakan/tpk-berdasarkan-profesi-jabatan>

The role of public perception is paramount in the democratic process. However, research indicates a decline in trust in political parties and their financial transactions (Catterberg, 2006). There is a perception among a significant proportion of the population that there is a lack of transparency in political financing, which has the potential to undermine the fundamental basis of trust in democratic systems (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012; Sztompka, 1998). According to a news article titled "Survei Indikator Politik Indonesia, Partai Politik dan DPR Lembaga Yang Paling Tidak Dipercayai Masyarakat [Survey of Indonesian Political Indicators: Political Parties,

and DPR Institutions that the Public Least Trusts]” published in tempo.com in 2023, Burhanuddi Muhtadi, the Director of Indonesian Political Indicators (IPI), stated that the public’s trust in political parties is at its lowest point. According to the statement, the respondents’ trust in political parties is 61.8 percent. According to the survey, only 2.8 percent of the general population expressed genuine belief in political parties, while a significant majority of 58 percent indicated their affiliation with such entities. Some 30.8 percent of respondents expressed a lack of trust, while 4.2 percent explicitly stated their disbelief. The remainder either did not respond or were unfamiliar with the subject (Febriyan, 2023). In addition, as shown in Table 3, there are 344 members of parliament involved in corruption cases. This evidence shows that the political party is unable to maintain public trust.

Table 3. the number of legislators caught in corruption

No	Year	Legislator
1	2004	0
2	2005	0
3	2006	0
4	2007	2
5	2008	7
6	2009	8
7	2010	27
8	2011	5
9	2012	16
10	2013	8
11	2014	9
12	2015	19
13	2016	23
14	2017	20
15	2018	103
16	2019	10
17	2020	22
18	2021	29
19	2022	35
20	2023	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>344</b>

Source: <https://www.kpk.go.id/id/statistik/penindakan/tpk-berdasarkan-profesi-jabatan>

Despite the challenges, the findings also provide a glimmer of optimism. The robustness of Indonesia’s democratic system, combined with the possibility of implementing reforms, suggests that it is possible to mitigate the negative consequences

of high political spending by implementing the appropriate policy measures. According to an optimistic political science professor, it can be argued that Indonesia’s democracy shows strength and durability. According to an optimistic political science professor, it can be argued that Indonesia’s democracy shows strength and durability. In a publication titled “Kemendagri Usulkan Dana Bantuan Parpol Rp 3.000 Per Suara pada 2023 [Ministry of Home Affairs Proposes Political Party Assistance Fund of IDR 3,000 Per Vote in 2023]” by Kompas.com, the Inspector General of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Tomsu Tohir Balaw (2023), suggests that the strategic use of interventions can effectively leverage substantial political costs as a means to promote constructive and transformative progress (Syakirun & Setuningsih, 2023).

The complex nature of politica financing in Indonesia, as revealed by the findings of this study, requires a comprehensive analysis. The dynamics, which are rooted in the increasing costs of political campaigns, sources of funding, and mechanisms of accountability, have significant implications for the overall well-being and inclusiveness of Indonesia’s democratic environment.

The significant increase in financial expenditures associated with political campaigns over the past decade has raised urgent concerns. The rising costs, which can be attributed to increased media spending, intensified competition, and the increasing professionalism of political campaigns, have the unintended consequence of excluding capable individuals with limited financial resources from participating in the democratic process.

The significant increase in financial expenditures associated with political campaigns over the past decade has raised urgent concerns. The rising costs, which can be attributed to increased media spending, intensified competition, and the increasing professionalism of political campaigns, have the unintended consequence of excluding capable individuals with limited financial resources from participating in the democratic process.

The study’s findings on the substantial dependence of political parties on private



donations add another layer of complexity to the existing narrative. Private funding is critical to the operational and campaigning needs of political parties. However, excessive reliance on private funding sources poses potential risks. The risks associated with this phenomenon include potential political biases that may show preferential treatment to donors and the suppression or neglect of public interests. Confirming this phenomenon, one party leader (Interviewee B, 2023) stated, "Although we receive financial support from the state, a significant portion of our funding comes from private donors, including various business entities and influential individuals."

As a result, there is a need to strike a balance between government subsidies and private donations. This is critical to maintaining an impartial and inclusive public policy that adequately addresses the diverse needs of society as a whole.

State subsidies designed to mitigate the influence of private financing and ensure fair competition appear ineffective in achieving their desired objectives. Based on the available data, it can be concluded that the existing subsidies provide financial support for only a portion of the total expenses incurred during political campaigns. The sentiment expressed by one political analyst can be summarized as follows: "The concept of state subsidies is intended to create a fair and level playing field." In practice, however, it is observed that they cover only a portion of the total expenses associated with a campaign (Interviewee C, 2023). It is therefore necessary to consider the effectiveness of state subsidies and how to improve them to ensure that they adequately achieve their intended objectives.

The concept of accountability, a fundamental aspect of democratic integrity, manifested itself in different ways within the political parties involved. While some parties demonstrated commendable transparency and internal oversight mechanisms, others seemed to adhere to less rigorous standards. This contrast was highlighted by a spokesperson from a watchdog organization who stated, "While some entities are making progress in terms of financial transparency, others are operating in the shadows" (Interviewee D, 2023). These findings underscore the urgent need for a

consistent and standardized approach to financial accountability to ensure that all stakeholders adhere to best practices and maintain public trust.

The study reveals a worrying correlation between rising political spending and the incidence of corrupt practices. The significant campaign debts may incentivize candidates to resort to illicit means after the elections to recoup their financial investments, thereby compromising the integrity of the democratic process. A journalist underscored the troubling pattern by stating, "During my investigations, I have often encountered situations where candidates, burdened by campaign debts, use questionable methods to recover their expenses" (Interviewee G, 2023). These observations underscore the need for strong legal frameworks and oversight mechanisms to discourage potential misconduct.

Despite the many challenges posed by significant political costs, the study also reveals a positive aspect. The inherent resilience of Indonesia's democratic system, coupled with the prospect of implementing strategic reforms, indicates a promising trajectory for the nation's future. In support of this positive outlook, a political science professor stated, "The democratic system in Indonesia shows strength and durability." According Interviewee H (2023), with the right interventions, it is possible to use the significant political costs as catalysts to promote constructive and transformative progress. These perspectives provide optimism by encouraging the implementation of specific interventions aimed at transforming challenges into opportunities for improving democratic processes.

#### **A. Improving Political Education, Ensuring Future Implementation of Financial Accountability by Indonesian Political Parties**

Political party administrators and members need to understand the complexities of financial management. Thorough political education provides them with the necessary knowledge and ethical framework to effectively manage and monitor party finances. Studies show a direct correlation between knowledgeable party members and the degree of financial openness and accountability within political

organizations (Hansen, 2009; Jerit et al., 2006). There are significantly fewer cases of financial mismanagement in Scandinavian political parties that have strong educational programs (Sitter, 2001; Telhaug et al., 2004; Wiborg, 2013). This relationship underscores the need to incorporate systematic political education as a fundamental approach to improving financial accountability in political parties.

One of the most important steps in ensuring accountability and transparency in political party finances is the adoption of advanced digital financial reporting systems. Digital platforms allow instant monitoring, documentation, and auditing of financial transactions, reducing the potential for abuse and fraud. An analysis comparing traditional and digital reporting techniques found that those using digital systems reported fewer inconsistencies and higher levels of trust from stakeholders (Rensburg & Botha, 2014; Russell Neuman et al., 2014).

These systems also make it easier for parties to meet regulatory requirements more effectively and with greater accuracy. Therefore, adopting digital reporting technology is an essential step for political parties seeking to maintain and demonstrate their financial integrity.

Promoting accountability within political parties requires simplifying financial reporting procedures (Rodica Svetlicinâi et al., 2019). Complex and burdensome reporting procedures can discourage compliance and hinder openness and transparency (Dillard & Vinnari, 2019) much research in the social and environmental accounting (SEA). By optimizing these systems, parties can ensure that financial disclosures are not only accurate but also easily understood by members and the public. The adoption of simplified reporting procedures by parties has led to a noticeable increase in the timely and comprehensive submission of financial information. In addition, these systems allow for more convenient oversight by regulators and the public, thereby improving the overall accountability framework. Streamlining financial reporting is, therefore, a strategic way to strengthen the culture of accountability in political parties' financing (Setyaningsih et al., 2019).

The financial accountability of political parties is largely ensured by the mass media.

Regular reporting on party finances by both print and electronic media serves as a means of oversight and ensures that parties are accountable to the public (Nosihana & Yaya, 2016). Media coverage often leads to exposure and scrutiny, which in turn forces parties to adhere to higher standards of financial conduct. Empirical evidence from various democratic systems shows that political parties that are subject to constant media scrutiny tend to be more transparent and take proactive measures to address instances of financial irregularities. Therefore, political parties committed to strict financial accountability must cultivate a strong relationship with the media and support investigative journalism.

Deterring financial misconduct within political parties requires the establishment of clear and strict reward and punishment mechanisms. Clear and explicit consequences for mismanagement and misuse of funds create a deterrent effect that promotes compliance with financial regulations and ethical norms. On the other hand, recognition and incentives for excellent financial management can inspire party members and administrators to maintain a strong commitment to honesty and ethical behavior. Comparative analyses of political parties in different democratic systems indicate that parties with clear and enforced systems of rewards and punishments tend to have fewer instances of financial irregularities (Zielinski et al., 2005). Hence, it is crucial for parties to establish and effectively convey these mechanisms to all members as a demonstration of their dedication to maintaining financial responsibility.

Political parties must combine educational initiatives with structural changes to ensure long-term financial accountability. A solid foundation in political education is essential for effectively putting the values of financial integrity into practice. However, this is not enough. It is also crucial to implement systemic changes such as digital reporting, simplified procedures, media engagement, and clear reward and punishment systems. Case studies of parties that have effectively implemented this dual approach show a stronger and longer-lasting commitment to financial accountability. Therefore, a comprehensive approach that combines the influence of education with strong systemic change is the most effective way for political

parties to achieve and maintain the highest levels of financial accountability.

#### IV. Conclusion

The main findings of this study on political party accountability and financial support in the context of Indonesian democracy reveal several key insights. The landscape of political financing in Indonesia presents a range of challenges and opportunities that affect the nation's democratic processes.

One of the most notable findings is the significant increase in APBN spending over the past decade, which tends to be misused by members of parliament, as evidenced by corruption cases at the Corruption Eradication Commission of Indonesia.

This phenomenon, combined with the substantial dependence on private donations and the irregularity of accountability measures within various political factions, highlights the urgent need to implement reforms. The correlation between substantial political spending and corruption cases underscores the pressing need for these reforms (Lipcean & McMenamin, 2023).

This study provides a substantial contribution to the current scholarly discourse on the topic of political financing within emerging democracies. It presents a thorough examination of the dynamics, perceptions, and implications associated with high political costs in Indonesia. This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the complex relationship between financial support, political accountability, and democracy. It is recommended that policymakers, scholars, and stakeholders utilize the insights gained in this study to inform their decision-making processes. In particular, policymakers should consider implementing reforms aimed at increasing transparency and accountability in political financing, strengthening democratic integrity and public trust.

Nevertheless, this study, like others, is not without its inherent limitations. The main limitation of this approach is its reliance on qualitative data, which, while providing in-depth insights, may not fully capture the comprehensive scope of the issue.

It should also be noted that the study's focus on a limited number of political parties and actors may not accurately reflect the full extent of Indonesia's multifaceted political landscape. Subsequent research may benefit from a broader sampling approach, coupled with the integration of quantitative data, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand.

#### Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express our sincere gratitude to the administration of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of Jenderal Soedirman University for their unwavering support and guidance during the course of this study. The authors also extend our appreciation to our colleagues and fellow researchers, whose valuable perspectives and diligent efforts have played an essential role in the completion of this study. For their valuable contributions to this project through their collaborative efforts, the authors express our deep gratitude.

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