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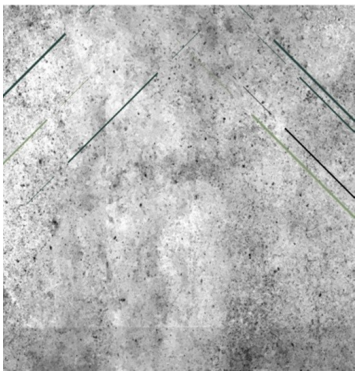
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Institutionalization of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province in the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the institutionalization of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province in the context of the 2024 simultaneous regional elections. The research employs a qualitative method with case study approach. The findings reveal that the institutionalization of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province during the 2024 simultaneous elections demonstrates a complex dynamic. From the systemness indicator, the party possesses a solid organizational network down to the grassroots level, yet remains fragile in decision-making procedures due to elite dominance and competing interests. In terms of autonomy, the Regional Leadership Council (DPD I or II) has limitations in maneuvering political decisions due to the influence of central party elites and internal power relations. Meanwhile, value infusion indicates that the loyalty of cadres, leaders, and sympathizers is preserved through the party's symbols, historical legacy, and reputation. Regarding reification, Golkar Jambi's electoral victories strengthen public perceptions of the party as legitimate, established, and relevant in local political contests. Thus, the consolidation of party institutionalization at the local level faces its most significant challenges in decision-making autonomy. Nevertheless, the strength of its organizational system, internal loyalty, and positive public image collectively ensure the party's resilience and electoral strength.

Keywords: Political Parties; Party Institutionalization; Golkar Party; Jambi Province; Regional Election

Introduction

This study examines the electoral performance of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province during the 2024 simultaneous regional head elections (Pilkada). The party secured victories for its endorsed candidate pairs in eight out of eleven regencies/cities that held elections. In addition, candidates supported by Golkar also won the Jambi Governor and Deputy Governor elections (Purwa, 2024).

The pairs supported by Golkar are as follows: Jambi Governor election: Al Haris-Abdullah Sani, Jambi City: Maulana-Diza, West Tanjung Jabung Regency: Ustad Anwar Sadat-Katamso, East Tanjung Jabung Regency: Dillah-Muslimin, Sarolangun Regency: Hurmin-Gerry, Tebo Regency: Agus-Nazar, Batanghari Regency: Fadhil-Bakhtiar, and Bungo Regency: Dedy-Dayat. With these eight victories, the Golkar Party of Jambi Province successfully surpassed the national target of 60% set by the Central Leadership Council (DPP), achieving 72% of the total electoral districts (Jambiupdate.co, 2024). Furthermore, this result is also the highest achieved compared to other parties in Jambi Province that participated in the 2024 simultaneous regional elections (Jambilink.id, 2024).

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Interestingly, the positive results achieved by the Golkar Party in Jambi Province were obtained amidst ongoing internal conflict. This internal conflict arose during the process of determining the candidates to be nominated by the Golkar Party in Jambi Province for the Governor election, the Jambi City Mayor election, and the Sarolangun Regent election. In the gubernatorial election, the Golkar Party's Central Executive Board (DPP) leaned toward supporting its own cadre, Saniatul, who is running as the deputy candidate for Romi Hariyanto. However, on the other hand, within the Golkar Party's Regional Executive Board (DPD I) in Jambi Province, there were maneuvers and a desire to nominate Haris-Sani. In fact, several high-ranking officials of Golkar in Jambi Province openly declared their support for Haris-Sani (Kumar, 2024).

A nearly similar situation also occurred with support for the Jambi mayoral election. The head of the DPD II Golkar Party in Jambi City, Budi Setiawan, was not nominated because the DPD I Golkar Party officials in Jambi Province maneuvered to shift their support to another candidate, namely Maulana-Diza (Kumar, 2024). Meanwhile, in Sarolangun, the chairman of the Jambi Province Golkar Party's DPD I, Cek Endra, suddenly dismissed the chairman of the Sarolangun Regency Golkar Party's DPD II, Tontawi Jauhari, just before the party's recommendation for the Sarolangun regional election was issued. The dismissal of Tontawi Jauhari is rife with potential conflicts of interest within the party. This is because the son of Cek Endra also plans to run in the Sarolangun Regional Head Election. Meanwhile, Tontawi, who has strong support in Sarolangun, will also run in the election (Kumar, 2024).

Based on this explanation, an interesting gap emerges: despite the Golkar Party in Jambi Province experiencing internal conflict dynamics in the process of nominating candidates for the 2024 Regional Head Election, the party still managed to be the most successful compared to other parties and exceeded the target set by the DPP. Therefore, it is interesting to discuss these dynamics from the perspective of party institutionalization. Party institutionalization can be conceptualized as a process of strengthening both internally and externally, in terms of actions, culture, and attitudes, with the goal of achieving organizational stability to impact the acquisition of political interests (Randall & Svåsand, 2002). Political parties that do not properly organize their institutional systems will face difficulties in participating in political contests (Subekti et al., 2025). Therefore, this study formulates the question: how is the institutional consolidation of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province in the face of the 2024 simultaneous regional elections?

Several previous studies have examined political party institutionalization from various perspectives, but most have concentrated on the national level. Ekawati, (2016) analyzed the institutionalization of the National Awakening Party (PKB) following the 2009 general election, emphasizing how organizational consolidation influenced the party's post-election development. Similarly, Rachmayani & Warganegara, (2023) examined the institutionalization process of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), highlighting the role of organizational adaptation and leadership in maintaining party stability. More recently, Subekti et al., (2025) employed the party institutionalization framework to explain the United Development Party's (PPP) failure to secure parliamentary representation in the 2024 legislative election, demonstrating that weak institutionalization reduced the party's electoral competitiveness.

Other studies have focused on specific dimensions of party institutionalization. Noor, (2015) argued that PKB's inability to institutionalize shared values undermined its organizational cohesion because the party lacked a strong ideological commitment and allowed external actors to influence the formation and dissemination of its collective identity. Likewise, Hasibuan et al., (2024) examined the institutionalization of the Democratic Party during Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono's leadership (2020–2022), emphasizing organizational restructuring and leadership consolidation as key factors in strengthening the party's institutional capacity.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that existing scholarship has primarily explored party institutionalization from the perspective of national leadership, organizational consolidation, ideology, and electoral performance. While they provide important insights into how institutionalization affects party stability and competitiveness, they pay limited attention to how institutionalization operates at the subnational level, where party organizations interact with local political dy-

namics, candidate selection, and regional electoral competition. Consequently, the mechanisms through which local party institutionalization contributes to electoral success remain insufficiently understood.

This study addresses that gap by examining the institutionalization of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province in the context of the 2024 simultaneous regional elections. This research investigates how institutionalization is manifested within a provincial party organization and how its organizational practices, leadership, and internal governance contribute to local electoral outcomes. By shifting the analytical focus from the national to the provincial level, this study extends the literature on political party institutionalization and provides empirical evidence on the importance of local organizational dynamics in shaping electoral success.

In fact, local-level leadership also has considerable authority to manage its own affairs under the principle of organizational decentralization, including cadre development and political recruitment, with the aim of electoral contests in its region to gain executive and legislative power (Deschouwer, 2006). Therefore, at the local level, it is also required to improve both internally and externally within the framework of party institutionalization in order to continue achieving maximum results in every political contest it participates in (Karsayuda, 2016). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the institutionalization of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province in the context of the 2024 simultaneous regional elections.

The concept of political party institutionalization has evolved through different theoretical perspectives. This study positions the institutionalization framework developed by Randall & Svåsand, (2002) as a middle-range theory functioning as the primary analytical framework, while the contributions of Basedau & Stroh, (2008) and Ezrow, (2011) are employed to enrich the conceptual understanding of party institutionalization. This positioning is important because the objective of the study is not to develop a new theory of party institutionalization, but to apply an established theoretical framework to explain the organizational dynamics of Golkar Party institutionalization in Jambi Province in the 2024 elections.

Basedau & Stroh, (2008) conceptualize party institutionalization as a process of organizational development and consolidation that promotes internal and external stability while strengthening organizational values. Likewise, Ezrow, (2011) extends this perspective by emphasizing several institutional dimensions, including party autonomy, organizational coherence, societal roots, organizational complexity, adaptability, and legitimacy. These perspectives provide a broader conceptual foundation regarding how political parties evolve into stable and enduring organizations.

Nevertheless, this research adopts the framework proposed by Randall & Svåsand, (2002) as its principal analytical lens because it offers operational dimensions that are particularly suitable for examining the organizational process of party institutionalization at the subnational level. Randall and Svåsand conceptualize party institutionalization as the process through which political parties become stable in their organizational behavior, internal norms, and relationships with society. Their framework consists of four interrelated dimensions: systemness, value infusion, decisional autonomy, and reification.

Systemness refers to the extent to which party activities are governed by established organizational rules, formal procedures, and institutional mechanisms, including those stipulated in the party constitution (AD/ART), particularly in decision-making and conflict resolution. Value infusion concerns the extent to which the party is rooted in a coherent ideological identity, possesses a recognizable social base, and fosters members' commitment to the party's long-term goals. Decisional autonomy examines the degree to which political parties remain independent from external actors, including state authorities, business interests, financiers, mass organizations, and dominant party elites. Institutionalized parties are expected to formulate strategic decisions based on organizational interests rather than external intervention or elite domination (Randall & Svåsand, 2002). Finally, reification refers to the extent to which political parties become socially recognized as legitimate and enduring institutions. A highly institutionalized party is able to cultivate a positive public image, strengthen constituent loyalty, and become embedded in citizens' political perceptions, thereby influencing political behavior and electoral support (Randall & Svåsand, 2002).

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Accordingly, these four dimensions constitute the analytical framework of this study. This research employs the Randall and Svåsand framework to analyze how organizational rules, ideological commitment, decision-making autonomy, and public legitimacy collectively shape the institutionalization of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province in the 2024 simultaneous regional elections.

Method

This research uses a qualitative method Creswell & Creswell, (2017) with case study approach (Flyvbjerg, 2011). focusing on the Golkar Party in Jambi Province in the context of the 2024 simultaneous regional head elections (Pilkada). The case of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province is chosen due to its notable electoral outcomes, making it a relevant and information-rich case for analyzing how institutionalization operates in practice. This research uses primary data sources, which are data obtained and collected directly by the researcher from their original source. Additionally, this research also utilizes secondary data, which is data that has been previously collected by others and can be used for other research. Therefore, Data were collected through in-depth interviews and document analysis. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, as this study required participants who possessed direct knowledge and organizational experience regarding the institutionalization process of the Golkar Party in the 2024 simultaneous regional elections. The inclusion criteria comprised party officials who: (1) occupied strategic organizational positions at the provincial or district/city level, (2) were actively involved in organizational decision -making and party management, and (3) had participated in the party's organizational activities during the 2024 electoral cycle. Based on these criteria, the study involved administrators of the Golkar Party at the Provincial Executive Board (DPD I) of Jambi Province and District/City Executive Boards (DPD II), including Jambi City, Sarolangun Regency, Sungai Penuh City, Merangin Regency, and Tebo Regency. These locations were purposively selected to represent different organizational and electoral contexts of the Golkar Party across Jambi Province.

The primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide developed from the institutionalization framework of Randall and Svåsand (2002). The interview questions explored four analytical dimensions: systemness, value infusion, decisional autonomy, and reification enabling flexibility for probing while ensuring consistency across interviews. Field notes and audio recordings were used to capture interview data comprehensively. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, interview data were triangulated with documentary evidence, including party organizational documents, official reports, party regulations (AD/ART), internal publications, credible local online news sources (e.g., jambione.com, jambiekspres.com, tribunjambi.com, jambilink.id, jambisatu.id and jambiupdate.co), as well as relevant scholarly literature. Documentary evidence was used to verify factual information, organizational events, and institutional developments identified during the interviews.

Data analysis in this study was conducted through an iterative process involving data reduction, categorization, and interpretation. Data obtained from interviews and document analysis were first organized and coded based on key themes related to party institutionalization, particularly systemness, autonomy, value infusion and coherences. The coded data were then systematically compared across sources to identify patterns and ensure consistency. To enhance validity, the study employed data triangulation by cross-checking interview findings with relevant documents and previous studies. Finally, the analyzed data were interpreted in light of the theoretical framework to explain how institutionalization processes shaped the Golkar Party's performance in the 2024 simultaneous regional head elections (Pilkada) in Jambi Province.

Results

Systemness

Systemness has two main dimensions: first, the vertical and horizontal interconnectedness of organizational networks, and second, procedural consistency in decision-making. The Golkar Party in Jambi Province has a relatively solid organizational structure that is deeply rooted down to the local level. Based on the official documents of the Golkar Party's Articles of Association (2019) and the DPP Decree on the DPD I Management of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province (2020–2025), it is evident that Golkar has established management structures from the provincial level down to the district/city, sub-district, and village/urban village levels. Documentation data shows that all 11 districts/cities in Jambi have active DPD II management, complete with a full roster of functionaries and party wing organizations. In an interview with the Secretary of the DPD I Golkar Party of Jambi Province, it was emphasized:

> "Golkar's organizational network is already very well-established. We have management in almost all sub-districts. Our traditional base remains intact, especially in the Sarolangun, Batanghari, and Bungo regions. That's what allows us to remain united despite internal political dynamics (interview on June 12, 2025)."

Documentation of the verification results from the Jambi Provincial KPU also shows that the Golkar Party is one of the parties with complete leadership down to the sub-district level, which is an administrative requirement for a party to be able to participate in the election (KPU Jambi, 2022). This condition shows that Golkar Jambi meets the systemness aspect in terms of the existence and solidity of its organizational structure. Organizational solidity is also evident in the mechanisms for mobilizing support. In the 2024 simultaneous regional elections, Golkar was able to mobilize party resources in eight districts/cities, which they ultimately won. According to one of the administrators of the DPD II Golkar Party in Tebo Regency:

> "We in the local area are waiting for instructions from DPD I. As soon as a candidate is decided, the machine will start immediately. The district and village coordinators immediately took action. That's the strength of Golkar that's difficult to match (interview on June 18, 2025).

This indicates that the organization's network cohesion remains sufficiently strong to sustain coordination, mobilization, and support consolidation, even amid elite-level friction. However, this structural resilience is not matched by procedural consistency, particularly in the candidate selection process. Field findings reveal that formal mechanisms are frequently bypassed and replaced by interventions from party elites at the DPP, DPD I, and DPD II levels. A notable example occurred during the 2024 Jambi gubernatorial election, where interviews with DPD I officials indicated that the DPP initially recommended Saniatul Uluan as a vice-gubernatorial candidate to accompany Romi Hariyanto. However, most of the DPD I Jambi executives are actually pushing for the Al Haris–Abdullah Sani pair. This creates a conflict of interests that leads to political maneuvering:

> "Actually, the DPP has given strong signals for Saniatul. But most of the DPD I executives feel it's more realistic to support Haris-Sani. Finally, many executives have directly declared their support, even tho there has been no official party decision yet." This is indeed a bit outside the mechanism, but we consider it a strategic step (interview on June 14, 2025)."

A similar situation also occurred in the Jambi mayoral election. The head of the Golkar Party's DPD II in Jambi City, Budi Setiawan, was initially mentioned as the candidate who would be nominated. However, the decision changed suddenly after the DPD I pushed for the Maulana-Diza pair (Khusnizar, 2024). This indicates a weak nomination mechanism that should have been formal screening and selection. The sharpest conflict occurred in Sarolangun Regency.

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The head of Golkar's DPD I in Jambi, Cek Endra, dismissed the head of DPD II in Sarolangun, Tontawi Jauhari, just before the party's recommendation for the local elections. The decision was made suddenly without going through any organizational evaluation mechanism (Jambisatu.id, 2024). An interview with one of the Golkar Sarolangun administrators confirmed:

> "The dismissal of Mr. Tontawi is clearly politically motivated. He has a strong base in Sarolangun and intends to run. But because of the interests of the elite family in the DPD I, he was removed. So this decision wasn't the result of party mechanisms, but elite maneuvering (interview on July 30, 2025). "

The weaknesses in the procedural mechanisms of candidacy, as demonstrated by this research, confirm that systemness is not always synonymous with democratic institutional consolidation. Thus, the fact that the DPP, DPD I, and DPD II often disregard standard mechanisms in candidate selection indicates an oligarchic pattern within the party, which in turn has the potential to weaken the overall institutionalization of the organization.

Autonomy

In the 2024 Jambi gubernatorial election, the Golkar Party's central executive initially directed support to the Romi Hariyanto–Saniatul Lativa pair, considering Romi's closeness to the central structure and Saniatul's position as a member of the Indonesian House of Representatives from the Golkar faction. However, the Golkar I Regional Executive Board of Jambi made a different maneuver by signaling strong support for the Al Haris–Abdullah Sani pair, which was ultimately confirmed in the official recommendation before candidate registration. As one party official noted, the DPP "was more inclined toward Romi–Saniatul," while the local cadre base favored Haris–Sani. This divergence prompted the regional leadership to pursue a compromise, reflecting how grassroots preferences can reshape outcomes despite pressure from the center.

Documentation from the DPD I plenary meeting (Consolidation Meeting Minutes, June 23, 2024) indicates a heated debate regarding the direction of support. Some DPD II managers from East Tanjung Jabung and Muaro Jambi rejected the DPP's dominance because it was considered to not understand the local electoral context. This shift in support direction indicates room for maneuver for DPD I, but simultaneously confirms the strong internal pressure and negotiations among the elites. Meanwhile, a similar dynamic occurred in the 2024 Jambi mayoral election. Initially, Budi Setiawan, a local Golkar cadre serving as the Chairman of the DPD II of Jambi City, emerged as a strong figure with grassroots support. However, this support shifted when the Golkar DPD I of Jambi, with the blessing of the DPP, instead recommended the Maulana-Diza pair. A DPD II official from Jambi City revealed in an interview:

> "We were actually solid in supporting Pak Budi, because he is an internal cadre. But the instructions from the province were very clear: it had to be Maulana–Diza. Finally, although it was difficult, we followed that decision (interview on July 7, 2025).

Documentation of the Golkar Party's Central Executive Board recommendation letter number B-349/GOLKAR/VII/2024 shows that the official decision to support the Maulana-Diza pair came out only two weeks after Budi Setiawan's internal declaration. This indicates the dominance of the central-provincial elite in negating the aspirations of local cadres. The dynamics of Golkar Jambi's autonomy are also reflected in the 2024 Sarolangun Regency Head Election case. In the initial screening process, several names of Golkar cadres, such as Tantowi Jauhari, emerged as strong candidates with broad support among party structures and grassroots members. However, as the aspirations of the Chairman of the Golkar DPD I Jambi, Cek Endra, strengthened, the direction of the party's support changed significantly. Cek Endra is pushing for his own son's candidacy, who is then projected to be a candidate for Sarolangun district head. Consequently, the name of Tantowi Jauhari, who was initially seriously considered in the internal candidate pool, was sidelined. In an interview, one of the DPD II Golkar Sarolangun administrators stated:

> "Initially, we had already communicated that Mr. Tantowi had a great chance. But after receiving direction from the DPD I Chairman, we automatically had to adjust. It's impossible to have a different attitude from the provincial leaders, especially when it's his own family being pushed. (Interview, July 30, 2025)".

Documentation of the internal Golkar Sarolangun plenary meeting results (August 2024) also shows differences in opinion between the management supporting Tantowi and the management leaning toward the candidate supported by DPD I. However, in the end, the decision remained aligned with the provincial leadership. Based on the findings above, it can be explained that the autonomy indicator of the Golkar Party in Jambi during the 2024 simultaneous regional elections shows contradictory dynamics. There is room for independence: for example, in the Jambi gubernatorial election, the DPD I successfully pushed for the Haris-Sani pair even tho the DPP initially favored Romi-Saniatul. However, intervention remains limited: in the Jambi mayoral election and the Sarolangun district head election, the aspirations of local cadres were unable to withstand pressure from both provincial and central elites. Theoretically, this condition indicates that Golkar Jambi's autonomy is partial: regional parties have bargaining power in negotiations, but this independence is not entirely free, as it is always under the shadow of internal elite dominance and central directives.

Value Infusion

In this context, the stronger the value infusion, the higher the party's resilience to internal conflicts and external political dynamics. Research findings indicate that the Golkar Party in Jambi has a relatively stable cadre loyalty base, despite internal conflicts during the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections candidate selection process. This can be seen from the results of an interview with one of the administrators of the DPD II Golkar Tanjung Jabung Barat, who stated: although conflicts over candidate selection occurred, cadres at the grassroots level remained active, emphasizing that Golkar is "not merely about individual figures, but about its historical legacy." This reflects the party's enduring organizational identity, rooted in its long-standing presence since the New Order period (Interview, June 23, 2025).

This statement shows that cadres at the district/city level remain committed to the party's identity, even when there are differences in opinion at the elite level. Party documentation shows that Golkar's attributes, such as the color yellow, the banyan tree symbol, and the slogan "Golkar Wins, People Prosper," are still consistently maintained in various campaign activities. This is evident in the campaign agenda for the Jambi gubernatorial election (Field Documentation, November 2024), where the Golkar mass remained present with uniform attributes even tho the nominated candidate was initially debated within the party. Despite internal dynamics such as the DPP's intervention in the Jambi gubernatorial election or conflicts in the Sarolangun district head election, Golkar's vote remained stable. Based on data from the Jambi Provincial KPU, Golkar remains one of the parties with the highest vote count in several districts/cities, even when the candidate they support is not a popular local figure. This confirms that party identity is a determining factor in voting behavior, not solely the candidate's figure. A Golkar sympathizer in Batanghari Regency said:

> "I chose Golkar not because of who the candidate is, but because I believe this party has been proven for a long time. If there's an elite problem, that's their business. For us, what's important is that Golkar remains (interview on July 5, 2025). "

This statement strengthens the evidence that value infusion works as a mechanism to maintain the stability of the support base, even tho elite conflicts often arise.

Reification

The reification indicator refers to the extent to which political parties are recognized as legitimate actors in the political system, by the public, other political actors, and state institutions.

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In Jambi, the Golkar Party exhibits a fairly high degree of reification. This is reflected in several aspects: Consistent involvement in electoral contests. Golkar consistently fields candidates in almost all regional elections in Jambi, including gubernatorial and regency/city elections. For example, in the 2020 and 2024 Jambi gubernatorial elections, Golkar was one of the coalition-determining parties. Documentation from the Jambi Provincial KPU (2024) notes that Golkar also supported candidates in 9 out of 11 regencies/cities. Recognition from other parties. An interview with the Chairman of the Tebo PAN Regional Executive Board revealed:

> "When we talk about coalitions in Jambi, we can't ignore Golkar. They are always considered key players, both by the ruling party and the opposition (Interview, August 15, 2025)". This confirms Golkar's position as a legitimate partner in the coalition. Social legitimacy at the grassroots level. A community leader in Muaro Jambi stated: "Golkar is already like a part of the political history here. Despite the above problems, grassroots people still consider Golkar a major party and worthy of following (Interview, August 10, 2025)".

Participation in the formal structures of government. Many Golkar cadres hold important positions, both as regional heads and DPRD leaders. Documentation from the Jambi Provincial DPRD in 2024 shows that Golkar holds the position of Deputy Speaker of the DPRD, which provides significant influence in the legislative and oversight processes.

Discussion

This research found that the aspect of systemness in the strong organizational network allows the Golkar Party of Jambi to continue performing coordination, mobilization, and support consolidation functions despite elite-level friction. However, behind the strong organizational structure, there are serious weaknesses in procedural aspects, especially in the candidate selection decision-making mechanism. In the theory of systemness, a party's internal procedures become an important element in ensuring the long-term stability of the organization. This is consistent with the findings of Basedau & Stroh (2008) which state that parties in developing countries often have extensive networks of structural power, but are procedurally and normatively fragile.

The weaknesses in the procedural mechanisms of candidacy, as demonstrated by this research, confirm that systemness is not always synonymous with democratic institutional consolidation. Panebianco, (1988) emphasizes that the sustainability of a party organization is largely determined by the level of internal procedural institutionalization, particularly in terms of decision-making. When formal procedures are bypassed and replaced with elite maneuvers, the result is a pattern of elite capture, where short-term stability may be maintained but risks creating long-term fragmentation. This phenomenon is reinforced by the findings of (Slater, 2010) who studied parties in Southeast Asia, that the dominance of the central elite in decision-making often triggers delegitimization at the local level because participatory mechanisms are ignored. Thus, the fact that the DPP, DPD I, and DPD II often disregard standard mechanisms in candidate selection indicates an oligarchic pattern within the party, which in turn has the potential to weaken the overall institutionalization of the organization.

If linked to previous research in Indonesia, this phenomenon is also consistent with the study Mietzner (2007) on the democratization of political parties in Indonesia. He found that although political parties had a broad and seemingly strong organizational structure at various levels, the candidate selection mechanisms were often transactional and determined by the central elite. This creates tension between the organizational and procedural dimensions of systemness. Another study by Ufen (2008b) on political parties in Indonesia also mentions that although parties can survive with a solid organizational network, the weakness of procedural institutionalization makes them vulnerable to internal conflict and elite fragmentation. Thus, the findings of this study reaffirm that in the case of parties in Indonesia, systemness is more supported by the strength of organizational networks than by procedural consistency. Thus, the analysis of systemness

indicators shows that Golkar Jambi faces serious challenges in institutionalizing internal procedures, even tho the party remains organizationally solid. This aligns with Randall & Svåsand, (2002) theory that party institutionalization is not only measured by the existence of structures, but also by the consistency of procedures in maintaining internal party stability.

Then, the autonomy indicator in the institutionalization of the Golkar Party in Jambi during the 2024 simultaneous regional elections shows that the party's independence at the local level is limited to a space for negotiation, not full control. The shift in support direction in gubernatorial, mayoral, and regency elections more accurately reflects elite intervention and structural pressure than the outcome of independent decisions by local cadres. Thus, Golkar Jambi's autonomy is limited: it is always under the control of the central and provincial elites. This illustrates what Randall & Svåsand, (2002) call "limited autonomy," which is when local parties appear to have independence but are fundamentally subject to strong hierarchical structures. The implication of this limited autonomy is that local cadre development is hindered – because candidates from internal cadres (e.g., Budi Setiawan in the mayoral election) could be sidelined by elite decisions. Then, internal fragmentation increased – there was dissatisfaction at the DPD II level, as they felt their aspirations were being ignored.

Panebianco, (1988) also emphasized that parties with low levels of institutionalization tend to be dominated by a central elite (dominant coalition) that monopolizes strategic decision-making, making local autonomy more of a limited negotiation space than full authority. In the context of Golkar, despite formal mechanisms such as plenary meetings and regional recommendations, the candidate selection and political support process ultimately remain controlled by the calculations of the central elite. This finding aligns with research Mietzner, (2007), which shows that Indonesian political parties generally face tension between local aspirations and national elite interests, particularly in the process of nominating regional heads. According to him, the nomination mechanism often does not reflect the sovereignty of local cadres, but rather the result of elite compromises determined by electability factors, political alliances, and financial considerations. The same thing was also found by Ufen, (2008a), who stated that in Indonesia's multiparty system, parties often fail to strike a balance between regional autonomy and central control, resulting in a pattern of dualistic autonomy: regions may have influence on certain issues, but they remain subject to central directives in final decisions.

This partial autonomy has also been identified in research Slater, (2010) on political parties in Southeast Asia. He argues that many parties in the region operate under the logic of "autonomy within constraint," where regional elites are given room to negotiate, but the boundaries are determined by the need for national party stability. In the case of Golkar Jambi, the space for independence in the gubernatorial election can be interpreted as a strategic compromise from the center, which is willing to provide room for negotiation to maintain internal solidarity. However, in mayoral and regency elections, central control becomes stronger because the political battle is considered crucial for the party's strategic interests nationally.

Additionally, the findings of this study confirm the view Basedau & Stroh, (2008), that party institutionalization in developing countries is often asymmetrical: some dimensions, such as organizational networks (systemness), may appear strong, but the autonomy dimension is often reduced by elite centralization. In Golkar Jambi's practice, regional autonomy has never been fully independent, as strategic decisions are still influenced by external factors such as directives from the DPP or the political interests of the national coalition. In other words, the bargaining power of the regions is more temporary and situational, not deeply rooted institutionally.

Thus, value infusion in Golkar Jambi has proven to function as an institutional adhesive mechanism. The party's symbols, history, and reputation create affective loyalty that maintains support stability. Internal elite conflicts, such as the Sarolangun regency election case or the differences in support in the Jambi gubernatorial election, did not significantly impact the electoral base. This reinforces the findings of Randall & Svåsand, (2002) that the higher the level of value infusion, the greater the party's resilience to internal conflict. In the case of Golkar Jambi, value infusion even became one of the main factors in the party's success in maintaining support in the

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2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections. Previous research supports this finding. Research by Ambardi, (2009) explains that traditional loyalty to major parties like Golkar is not solely due to patronage distribution, but also because of historical identities that are already ingrained in society. This is different from new parties, which are more vulnerable to losing their support base when their elites are divided. Additionally, Slater, (2010) in his study of authoritarianism and the legacy of hegemonic parties in Southeast Asia, showed that parties with a long history like Golkar have "residual legitimacy" that keeps them relevant even after authoritarian regimes collapse.

Then, reification indicator, Golkar Jambi's electoral victory reinforces public perception that the party remains legitimate, established, and relevant in local political contests. According to Randall & Svåsand, (2002), reification is formed through a long process when parties are not only considered political organizations, but also as permanent institutions within the system. In Jambi, the reification of Golkar is evident in three dimensions: the historical dimension. As the legacy party of the New Order, Golkar carries a historical reputation that makes it difficult to sideline in the local political arena. This aligns with the thesis Ambardi, (2009) that old parties in Indonesia possess a "residue of power" that provides ongoing legitimacy. Institutional dimension. The presence of Golkar cadres in the DPRD, regional bureaucracy, and even in regional head positions has led to Golkar being recognized as a legitimate part of the formal political mechanism. Compared to new parties, Golkar is more established in placing its cadres within the power structure. Dimensions of public perception. Grassroots and communities still see Golkar as a party that "must be present" in every contest. This is different from new parties like Perindo, whose public legitimacy is still in the process of being established. Research Ufen, (2018) shows that parties with long historical roots have symbolic legitimacy that makes it easier for them to maintain a role in the political system, even when facing internal conflict. This phenomenon aligns with the conditions of Golkar Jambi.

The results of this study indicate that the reification indicator within the Golkar Party in Jambi remains strong despite internal dynamics and elite conflicts. Public recognition, other parties, and state institutions prove that Golkar is still considered a major political actor. In line with the theory of Randall & Svåsand, (2002), the institutional legitimacy built thru through history, cadre networks, and party symbols makes Golkar relatively stable in the face of local political challenges. In other words, reification has become one of the pillars that maintains Golkar Jambi's position as an established party in Indonesia's multi-party system, particularly in the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections.

This finding aligns with the study Basedau & Stroh, (2008) which emphasizes that party institutionalization has more complex dimensions than just internal organizational strength. Public perception and recognition from other parties and state institutions are often more decisive in maintaining a party's survival in a multiparty system. Golkar, as one of the oldest parties in Indonesia, has experienced various phases of political crisis since the Reformasi, but has always managed to survive and negotiate its role in both the local and national political arenas. This indicates institutional resilience strengthened by reification.

Several previous studies support this finding. Research by Slater, (2010) shows that Golkar has a high capacity for adaptation in the face of political regime change, primarily due to its strong bureaucratic and patronage networks. Meanwhile, Ambardi, (2009) in a study on party cartelization asserts that Golkar's legitimacy is maintained not only through its historical roots but also through its integration into a political system that demands inter-party collaboration. At the local level, research Buehler, (2012) found that established parties like Golkar often find it easier to maintain their position due to institutional recognition, even when their cadre development or internal cohesion faces problems.

Similar conditions were also observed in studies on the 2020 Simultaneous Regional Elections in several areas, where established parties tended to retain important positions despite the emergence of new parties with more aggressive campaign strategies Mietzner, (2020). This shows that reification is an important dimension that allows old parties to maintain their political relevance. In the case of the Golkar Party in Jambi, the historical and symbolic legitimacy inherent in

the party makes the public, candidates, and even political opponents continue to see Golkar as the kingmaker in.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the institutionalization of the Golkar Party in Jambi Province during the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections demonstrates uneven institutional development across the four dimensions of Randall and Svåsand's framework. In terms of systemness, the party maintains a strong organizational structure extending to the grassroots level; however, institutional procedures remain vulnerable to elite intervention and competing interests among the DPP, DPD I, and DPD II, particularly in candidate selection and strategic decision-making. Regarding decision-making autonomy, the Regional Leadership Council (DPD I or II) has limitations in maneuvering political decisions due to the influence of central party elites and internal power relations. Conversely, value infusion remains relatively strong, as cadres, party officials, and supporters continue to identify with Golkar's organizational history, symbols, and political reputation despite elite conflicts. Likewise, reification is reinforced by the party's electoral success, strengthening public perceptions of Golkar as a legitimate and enduring political institution in Jambi. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on party institutionalization by demonstrating that the four dimensions proposed by Randall and Svåsand do not necessarily develop symmetrically at the subnational level. Electoral success and organizational cohesion may coexist with limited decisional autonomy, suggesting that strong institutionalization in one dimension does not automatically indicate institutional maturity across all dimensions. This finding extends the application of the institutionalization framework by highlighting the importance of analysing the interaction among its dimensions rather than assuming a linear institutionalization process. Empirically, this research provides evidence from the Golkar Party in Jambi Province in the 2024 simultaneous regional elections, illustrating how the interaction between central party authority and local organizational structures shapes institutionalization in Indonesia's decentralized political system.

This research has limitations, as it focuses solely on the context of the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections in Jambi. Therefore, generalizing the findings to other regions or legislative elections still requires caution. For future research, it is recommended to expand the data scope by including more respondents from various organizational levels, including grassroots supporters, and to use a comparative approach across regions to enrich the analysis of political party institutionalization in Indonesia.

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