

THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION OF CANDIDATION: Study of Golkar in Jambi City Mayoral Election 2024

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Abstract: This study examines the Golkar Party's decision to nominate the Maulana-Diza pair over internal cadre, Budi Setiawan, for the 2024 Jambi City Mayoral Election using Mazmanian and Sabatier's policy implementation theory. The study highlights that candidate nomination serves as an internal party policy and that technical feasibility, strategic planning, and contextual responsiveness are necessary for its successful implementation. The study found that three primary factors influenced Golkar's choice: (1) The problem's substantive aspects, like Maulana-Diza's broader political coalition, increased electability, and preparedness for logistics; (2) The policy's goals' coherence and clarity, as demonstrated by Golkar's determination to maintain electoral dominance and internal cohesion; and (3) The political and socioeconomic background, including civil society involvement and post-pandemic recovery requirements. One crucial litmus test of Golkar's institutional development is the internal conflict arising from Budi Setiawan's exclusion. The party's ability to manage dissent, realign local loyalty, and preserve organisational unity demonstrates its capacity for successful policy implementation. According to the study's findings, political party nomination

strategies guided by well-defined objectives, administrative readiness, and alignment with public needs are associated with effective public policy implementation. It demonstrates the effectiveness of policy implementation theory in evaluating internal party decision-making processes within democratic electoral systems.

Keywords: Policy Implementation, Party, Local Election, Candidacy, Electability

Abstrak: Studi ini meneliti keputusan Partai Golkar untuk mencalonkan pasangan Maulana-Diza daripada kader internal, Budi Setiawan, untuk Pemilihan Walikota Kota Jambi 2024 menggunakan teori implementasi kebijakan Mazmanian dan Sabatier. Studi ini menyoroti bagaimana pencalonan kandidat berfungsi sebagai bentuk kebijakan internal partai dan bagaimana kelayakan teknis, perencanaan strategis, dan responsivitas kontekstual diperlukan untuk keberhasilan implementasinya. Studi ini menemukan bahwa tiga faktor utama memengaruhi pilihan Golkar: (1) Aspek substantif masalah, seperti koalisi politik Maulana-Diza yang lebih luas, peningkatan elektabilitas, dan kesiapan logistik; (2) Koherensi dan kejelasan tujuan kebijakan, sebagaimana ditunjukkan oleh tekad Golkar untuk mempertahankan dominasi elektoral dan kohesi internal; dan (3) Latar belakang politik dan sosial ekonomi, termasuk keterlibatan masyarakat sipil dan kebutuhan pemulihan pasca-pandemi. Salah satu ujian penting bagi perkembangan kelembagaan Golkar adalah konflik internal yang disebabkan oleh pengecualian Budi Setiawan. Kemampuan partai untuk mengelola perbedaan pendapat, menyelaraskan kembali loyalitas lokal, dan menjaga persatuan organisasi menunjukkan kapasitasnya untuk implementasi kebijakan yang sukses. Menurut temuan penelitian, strategi nominasi partai politik yang dimotivasi oleh tujuan yang jelas, kesiapan administratif, dan keselarasan dengan kebutuhan publik menunjukkan implementasi kebijakan publik yang efektif. Hal ini menunjukkan betapa efektifnya teori implementasi kebijakan dalam mengevaluasi proses pengambilan keputusan internal partai dalam sistem pemilihan demokratis.

Kata Kunci: Implementasi Kebijakan, Partai, Pemilihan Lokal, Pencalonan, Elektabilitas

Introduction

As is well known, Indonesia has changed since the 1998 reforms were implemented. A new era of political transparency and institutional reform was ushered in by Indonesia's 1998 transition from authoritarianism to democracy, marked by the overthrow of Suharto's New Order regime. The endeavor to democratize national and subnational electoral processes has been a central aspect of this shift. Despite

being freer than their predecessors, the early post-reform elections were marked by disarray, uneven legal systems, and pervasive clientelism.¹ Reforms were aimed at institutionalizing free, fair, and accountable elections as the nation progressed toward greater democratization. The implementation of simultaneous regional elections stands out among the numerous reforms as a crucial reorganization of Indonesia's subnational political structure.

¹ Edward Aspinall and Marcus Mietzner, *Problems of Democratisation in Indonesia: Elections, Institutions*

and Society (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2010), p. 10.

Simultaneous elections were intended to reduce election expenses, expedite electoral calendars, and lessen political instability and vote-buying that frequently accompanied staggered elections.² These reforms, primarily enshrined in Law No. 8 of 2015 and its subsequent amendments, required that national elections for governors, mayors, and regents be held on a single schedule. By 2027, the ultimate goal is to align the local and national election cycles.³ Political parties' operations will be significantly affected by this structural shift, particularly with respect to candidate selection. Parties must coordinate efforts across multiple administrative regions, mobilize substantial resources, and make strategic nominations when contesting various positions simultaneously. Candidacy is elevated from a routine bureaucratic task to a high-stakes political process influenced by institutional constraints, local interests, and national calculations in this complex environment. The gatekeepers of electoral candidacies in any representative democracy are political parties. They are responsible for selecting candidates for political office, thereby shaping the pool of potential leaders. The application process is strictly governed by law in Indonesia. Only political parties or coalitions that reach a minimum number of seats are permitted to nominate candidates in local elections, as stipulated by Law No. 10 of 2016 and Law No. 7 of 2017. Although there are more stringent requirements, like higher signature requirements and verification

hurdles, independent candidates are still permitted to run.⁴

The legal framework does not specify how internal party mechanisms should operate, even though it requires party participation in the candidacy process. This ambiguity enables significant variation and frequent opacity in the process of making candidacy decisions. National party executives (DPP) have the authority to finalize candidate nominations in most Indonesian parties.

Which often lack significant input from local branches.⁵ As a result, there have been charges of oligarchic tendencies within parties, marginalization of grassroots voices, and top-down control.

Furthermore, candidacy becomes a focal point of political bargaining and patronage distribution, as it determines access to public office and, consequently, to state resources. Party leaders may use running for office as a means of rewarding supporters, pacifying coalition partners, or pressuring candidates into making financial promises. This dynamic erodes meritocratic hiring practices and strengthens money politics.⁶ There were several reasons behind the move to simultaneous regional elections, including:

1. Efficiency. Conducting simultaneous elections reduces costs and simplifies logistics. It enables more strategic resource allocation by oversight bodies (Bawaslu) and election commissions (KPU).
2. Cohesion of Governance: It is anticipated that coordinating elections will bring national and regional governments' policy agendas into

² Stephen Sherlock, *Consolidating Democracy in Indonesia: The 2015 Regional Elections and Beyond* (ANU Working Paper, Canberra: Australian National University, 2016), p. 15

³ Michael Buehler, *The Politics of Shari'a Law: Islamist Activists and the State in Democratizing Indonesia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁴ Edward Aspinall and Mada Sukmajati, *Electoral Dynamics in Indonesia: Money Politics, Patronage and*

Clientelism at the Grassroots (Singapore: NUS Press, 2016), p. 10.

⁵ Andreas Ufen, "Party Institutionalization in Indonesia: Between Localism and Oligarchy," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 43, no. 3 (2021): 387–412, <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs43-3c>.

⁶ Edward Aspinall and Ward Berenschot, *Democracy for Sale: Elections, Clientelism, and the State in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), p. 20

alignment, promoting more cohesive governance. 3. Mitigation of Political Fatigue: It is assumed that more impactful and fewer elections will result in higher voter engagement. 4. Decrease in Money Politics: Transactional politics and campaign corruption may be less likely to occur if there are fewer elections. 2015 saw the first wave of simultaneous elections, which were followed by waves in 2017, 2018, and 2020. Most regions of Indonesia will hold simultaneous local elections by 2024, and by 2027, the country's national and local electoral calendars will be fully aligned.⁷

Nevertheless, assessments of simultaneous elections have yielded contradictory findings. The objectives of improving candidate quality and reducing money politics have not been fully achieved, despite increased administrative efficiency. The increased competition brought about by larger electoral sizes has encouraged vote-buying, patronage, and elite collusion more broadly. As parties deal with the pressures of both internal power consolidation and electoral success, these dynamics make running for office even more difficult (Haryanto, 2016). Several laws, regulations, and party statutes govern the candidacy process. Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections, Law No. 10 of 2016 (Amendment to Law No. 8 of 2015) on Regional Elections, and KPU Regulations (PKPU) on nomination procedures are essential pieces of legislation. These laws set minimum standards for candidates, including support thresholds, age, education, financial disclosures, and a clean criminal record. For example, parties or coalitions must provide candidates with official endorsement letters (Form B.1-KWK). During

the nomination period, these and other documents must be turned in to the KPU.

In fact, candidacy frequently occurs in a gray area between the legal and institutional domains, where formal requirements intersect with informal agreements, clientelist expectations, and elite preferences. This disparity enables manipulation, jeopardizing the process's integrity and including last-minute candidate switching, forged endorsements, and dual nominations.⁸ The nomination process is now at a standstill due to the party DPP's (national board) centralization of candidacy decisions. Despite having a deeper understanding of local political dynamics, local branches are frequently disregarded or overruled. Oligarchic control is facilitated by this top-down system, in which a small group of party elites selects candidates based on their personal connections, financial contributions, or political allegiance.⁹

In simultaneous elections, this phenomenon is exacerbated as national executives seek to maintain control over a wide range of local contests. Transparent and inclusive candidacy procedures are weakened by a lack of internal democracy within parties, which frequently leads to intra-party strife and public discontent.¹⁰ Money remains a decisive factor when running for office. The party often requires significant financial contributions from potential candidates; this is known as "logistics" or "operational support." These donations usually function as de facto pay-to-play schemes, even though they are formally voluntary. This system strengthens the position of business-politician networks in local governance, favors affluent candidates, and marginalizes

⁷ Marcus Mietzner, "Indonesia's 2019 Elections: Populist Incumbents, Democratic Resilience," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 56, no. 1 (2020): 47-70, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00074918.2020.1732757>.

⁸ Michael Buehler, "Elite Competition and Changing State-Society Relations: Political Parties and Civil Society in Post-New Order Indonesia," *Southeast*

Asia Research 21, no. 2 (2013): 211-226, <https://doi.org/10.5367/sear.2013.0141>.

⁹ Ignatius Haryanto, *Politik Uang dan Dinasti Politik di Pilkada* (Jakarta: Perludem, 2016), p. 25.

¹⁰ Andreas Ufen, *Party Politics in Southeast Asia: Clientelism and Electoral Competition in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2020), p. 30.

grassroots or reformist figures.¹¹ The simultaneous election candidacy process has also reinforced incumbents' dominance and the influence of political dynasties. Those with established name recognition, bureaucratic connections, or familial ties are more likely to be nominated by parties. Dynastic candidates have a significant edge in both nominations and elections due to their disproportionate access to institutional networks and campaign funds.¹² Institutions such as KPU and Bawaslu have limited enforcement capacity despite their legal mandates. They have the authority to review documents and disqualify candidates for procedural infractions. Still, they frequently find it difficult to address more fundamental problems, such as transactional nominations or party transparency. Furthermore, the system's susceptibility to legal conflict and manipulation is evidenced by the frequent deluge of candidacy-related disputes that judicial bodies, such as the Constitutional Court (MK), receive. Globally, there are many ways to select candidates, each with distinct benefits and drawbacks, ranging from closed, elite selection to open primaries. Centralized systems enhance discipline at the expense of representativeness, while more inclusive approaches boost legitimacy but may weaken cohesiveness.¹³ The dominant model in Indonesia is heavily centralized, leaving the system vulnerable to elite capture and legitimacy deficits.¹⁴ Comparative research also demonstrates the importance of party institutionalization in shaping a

candidate's path. Personalism and clientelism frequently triumph over ideology and merit in systems with weak institutionalization.¹⁵ Despite its relative stability, Indonesia's party system is still ideologically and organizationally fragmented, which makes candidacy reform more difficult.¹⁶ The candidacy process is the cornerstone of political representation, electoral competition, and democratic accountability; it is not just a formality. When it is flawed, it results in public disenchantment, ineffective governance, and unrepresentative leadership. On the other hand, open and inclusive candidacies can enhance electoral legitimacy and strengthen democratic principles.¹⁷ The formation and legitimacy of candidacies are explained by several theoretical models, most notably the Public Election Model, the Constitutional Qualification Model, and the Elite Selection Model. These models offer different yet often similar pathways for individuals to enter electoral contests as candidates formally.

1. According to the Elite Selection Model, political elites, frequently found within political parties' internal hierarchies, are the primary decision-makers when choosing candidates. This model emphasizes centralized decision-making, in which party leadership, rather than grassroots involvement, drives nominations. The process of selecting candidates in many political systems remains a "secret garden of politics," in which party elites make their choices based on personal, ideological, or

¹¹ Aspinall and Ward Berenschot, *Democracy*, p.30

¹² Amir Hamid, "Political Dynasties in Indonesia's Local Elections: Pathways and Patterns," *Jurnal Politik* 6, no. 1 (2020): 1-23, <https://doi.org/10.7454/jp.v6i1.1017>.

¹³ Gideon Rahat and Reuven Y. Hazan, "Candidate Selection Methods: An Analytical Framework," *Party Politics* 7, no. 3 (2001): 297-322, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068801007003003>.

¹⁴ Susan E. Scarrow, *Implementing Intra-Party Democracy* (Washington, DC: National Democratic Institute, 2005a), p. 10.

¹⁵ Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 40

¹⁶ Andreas Ufen, "Party Institutionalization in Indonesia: Between Localism and Oligarchy," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 43, no. 3 (2021): 387-412, <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs43-3c>.

¹⁷ Sarah Birch, *Electoral Malpractice* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 50

strategic factors.¹⁸ This type of model is prevalent in systems with weak or purely procedural internal democracy and hierarchical, centralized party structures.¹⁹ Elite selection is frequently criticized for being vulnerable to transactional politics, nepotism, and patronage, which may decrease transparency and accountability.²⁰

2. Legal eligibility is the main factor that determines a candidate's eligibility under the Constitutional Qualification Model. This model holds that anyone who satisfies several predefined constitutional or statutory requirements, including being of legal age, being a citizen, having an education, and having a clean record, is eligible to run for office.²¹ By providing a neutral, uniform framework for electoral participation, this model guarantees formal equality. It does not, however, take into consideration the obstacles presented by social and financial capital or the power dynamics of party nomination procedures. It is a simple model that frequently serves as a safeguard to preserve the honor of public office. For example, Indonesia's Law No. 10/2016 on local elections stipulates that candidates for mayor and governor must be at least 30 years old, have completed at least senior high school, and have no significant criminal records.

3. By stating that the electorate should have the final say in choosing candidates, the Public Election Model emphasizes popular legitimacy. According to this model, the people themselves decide who gets to hold public office through direct elections.²² A large portion of contemporary electoral democracy is based on this model, which aims to empower people and promote accountability. Despite its democratic theoretical foundations, this model has drawbacks. Especially in emerging democracies, direct elections can lead to vote-buying, populism, or celebrity politics.²³ However, it increases public involvement and can counteract elite control over the election process. By enabling citizens to elect mayors and governors directly, Indonesia's 2005 introduction of direct local elections reflects this model and reduces the elite's monopoly on political office.

Policy implementation, a step in the public policy process, is the process by which a developed and decided public policy is put into action and accomplishes its intended objectives.²⁴ There is no assurance that the policies recommended by policymakers will be successfully implemented.²⁵ Numerous factors, both individually and within organizations or groups, affect policy implementation. Program implementation entails policymakers' efforts to persuade

¹⁸ Reuven Y. Hazan and Gideon Rahat, *Democracy Within Parties: Candidate Selection Methods and Their Political Consequences* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 55

¹⁹ Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh, *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988).

²⁰ Agus Budi, *Politik Kandidasi: Membaca Dinamika Pencalonan Kepala Daerah di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2020), p. 45.

²¹ Susan E. Scarrow, *Political Parties and Democracy in Theoretical and Practical Perspectives: Implementing Intra-Party Democracy* (Washington, DC: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 2005b), p. 92.

²² Pippa Norris, "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems," *International Political Science Review* 18, no. 3 (1997): 297–312.

²³ Andreas Ufen, "Political Party and Party System Institutionalization in Southeast Asia: Lessons for Democratic Consolidation in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand," *The Pacific Review* 21, no. 3 (2008): 327–350.

²⁴ Pahrudin HM, *Anatomi Kebijakan Publik* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2023), p.37

²⁵ Pahrudin HM and Citra Darminto, "The Impact of Local Government Policies on People's Welfare in the Regional Autonomy Era: A Case Study of Jambi City, Indonesia," *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences* 42, no. 4 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.34044/j.kjss.2021.42.4.04>.

implementing bureaucrats to provide services and to control the behavior of the target group.²⁶ In this context, several parties have expressed their views on the factors believed to influence the implementation of public policy. Mazmanian and Sabatier's concept of policy implementation was used in this study. One of the most well-known top-down methods in implementation studies is Mazmanian and Sabatier's theory of policy implementation. Their framework, developed in the early 1980s, seeks to identify the key factors that influence the effectiveness of public policy implementation. Their central claim is that the best results from policy implementation occur when the policy objectives are well defined, the causal theory is sound, and the process is organized and managed by those who can enforce adherence.²⁷ On November 27, 2024, the Simultaneous Regional Elections (Pilkada Serentak) were held across Indonesia, including in Jambi Province. The 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections in Jambi Province included the election of the Governor and Deputy Governor of Jambi, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Jambi, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Sungai Penuh, the Regent and Deputy Regent of Batanghari, the Regent and Deputy Regent of Merangin, the Regent and Deputy Regent of Tebo, the Regent and Deputy Regent of Bungo, the Regent and Deputy Regent of Kerinci, the Regent and Deputy Regent of Sarolangun, the Regent and Deputy Regent of Muaro Jambi, the Regent and Deputy Regent of Tanjung Jabung Barat, and the Regent and Deputy Regent of Tanjung Jabung Timur. As with other elections, the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections in Jambi Province were marked by a lengthy process of political party

candidate selection (candidacy). At the regency/municipal level, the 2024 Jambi Mayor and Deputy Mayor Election presents an interesting case for study, particularly in the context of candidate selection by political parties. In this region, two candidate pairs were contesting for the positions of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Jambi: Maulana Diza Hazra Aljosha (Diza) and Haji Abdul Rahman (HAR), and Andi Muhammad Guntur (Guntur).

The National Mandate Party (PAN), Golkar Party, Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), United Development Party (PPP), Democratic Party, Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), Gerindra Party, and National Awakening Party (PKB) were the main political parties supporting candidates in the 2024 Jambi Mayoral Election. Golkar, as the largest party in Jambi City, together with PAN, PKS, the Democratic Party, and PPP, supported the Maulana-Diza pair. At the same time, the Nasdem Party, along with Gerindra and PDI-P, backed the HAR Guntur pair. It is valuable to analyze how the major parties in Jambi City conducted the candidate recruitment (candidacy) process before officially nominating their respective pairs. Support for Maulana-Diza from PAN, PKS, and the Democratic Party was based on the belief that the public highly favored these two figures, had visionary ideas embodied in the "Jambi Bahagia" (Happy Jambi) platform, and were bolstered by survey results that placed them at the top with 69.30 percent approval.²⁸ On the other hand, support for HAR-Guntur from Nasdem, Gerindra, and PDI-P stemmed from their shared desire to bring change and progress to Jambi City. Meanwhile, the candidacy process involving the Golkar-backed candidate pair drew

²⁶ Pahrudin HM, Agus Mustawa, Riant Nugroho, and Abdul Halim, "The Implementation of Pertisun as a Policy Innovation in Absorbing Public Aspirations in Merangin Regency," *Journal of Government and Civil Society* 6, no. 1 (2022): 89–103, <https://doi.org/10.31000/jgcs.v6i1.5474>.

²⁷ Daniel A. Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier, *Implementation and Public Policy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983).

²⁸ <https://www.jambilink.id/post/1389/survei-putin-maulana-diza-pemenang-pilwako-jambi-2024>

significant public attention due to its surprising developments. Initially, the Chairman of Golkar Jambi City, Budi Setiawan, was strongly expected to be nominated as the mayoral candidate. This was evidenced by his extensive promotional campaigns across both outdoor and digital media platforms. The Golkar Party, under which Budi Setiawan served, also conducted intensive surveys, including in Jambi City.²⁹ Carrying the slogan “Kita Bisa” (“We Can”), Budi Setiawan publicly declared his readiness to run in the 2024 Jambi mayoral race through various media channels and grassroots outreach.³⁰ On June 21, 2024, the Golkar Party officially nominated Budi Setiawan to run for the Jambi mayoral election.³¹ Even the PPP, which held several seats in the Jambi City Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), had already expressed its support for the Golkar Chairman's candidacy. With the combined support of 10 seats in the DPRD (from Golkar and PPP), Budi Setiawan had, at that point, met the minimum threshold (9 seats) required to run in the election. But the political landscape changed drastically on August 27, 2024, just three months before the election. Golkar, which had previously endorsed Budi Setiawan and had won the 2024 Jambi City Legislative Election, suddenly switched its allegiance to the Maulana-Diza duo. This effectively ended Budi Setiawan's chances of running for mayor, especially after the PPP stopped supporting him. At the time, he was the Chairman of the Jambi Provincial Sports Committee (KONI). Golkar's candidacy process brings up essential research questions for the 2024 Jambi Mayoral Election. It is important to remember that Budi Setiawan was a Golkar Jambi City chairman and a cadre who had previously been authorized by

the party to run for mayor in the Simultaneous Regional Elections. Maulana, on the other hand, was the Chairman of PAN Jambi City and a former Deputy Mayor of Jambi. This raises the question of whether the Golkar Party's failure to fulfill its internal cadre development function led to its endorsement of a candidate from another party to hold a political post in the Jambi City Government. Given that one of a political party's core responsibilities is to train cadres to prepare members for executive and political positions, this situation is especially noteworthy. By examining both official procedures and unofficial practices that shape outcomes, this study aims to explore how the Golkar Party implements its candidate-selection policies during concurrent regional elections. The study is particularly pertinent in light of the recent polls, during which both internal party dynamics and external political pressures have tested Golkar's institutional capacity to oversee democratic and coherent nomination procedures.

The theoretical gap addressed in this study is that current candidature theories and policy implementation frameworks are unable to explain how political parties make nomination decisions under the structural pressures of simultaneous regional elections. While models such as the Elite Selection Model, Public Election Model, and Constitutional Qualification Model describe general mechanisms of candidate emergence, they do not account for how synchronized electoral cycles intensify resource competition. Similarly, the implementation theory of Mazmanian and Sabatier has not been applied to internal party policies. This leaves the question of how parties implement

²⁹ <https://www.rri.co.id/pilkada-2024/721895/heboh-survey-internal-golkar-perlahan-tapi-pasti-bang-muk-ridwan-tempel-elektabilitas-kandidat-lain>

³⁰ <https://www.lines.id/news/1-23664/gaungkan-slogan-kita-bisa-budi-setiawan-siap-maju-pilwako-jambi-2024/>

³¹ <https://www.detik.com/sumbagsel/berita/d-7392449/ppp-resmi-usung-ketua-koni-jambi-budi-setiawan-di-pilwako>

formal nomination rules amid oligarchic inclinations, money politics, and external coalition pressures. The dramatic departure of Golkar's own cadre, Budi Setiawan, in favor of an outsider, Maulana, highlights this discrepancy by showing how simultaneous elections change party incentives and undermine cadre development rules. By integrating candidacy theory with policy implementation analysis, this study fills the gap. It explains how institutional reforms, internal party dynamics, and informal practices interact to shape candidate selection results in Indonesia. The manuscript makes several new additions to the research on policy implementation and party nomination. First, it expands the policy implementation framework of Mazmanian and Sabatier into the largely unexplored field of intra-party policy execution. It shows how parties operationalize nomination rules under multi-level institutional pressures, a phenomenon that classic implementation studies rarely examine. Second, it presents the idea of simultaneous-election pressure as a structural factor that alters party incentives, accelerates centralization, and shifts the balance between formal procedures and informal bargaining in candidate selection. Third, the study offers an empirical contribution by illustrating how coalition dynamics, cadre marginalization, and elite decision-making interact to subvert accepted candidacy standards using the Golkar Jambi 2024 mayoral contest as a crucial case. Fourth, by putting forth a more comprehensive model that takes into consideration the interplay between legislative requirements, party institutionalization, survey politics, financial capacity, and national-local power relations, factors that are usually examined independently in the literature, now in

publication, it enhances candidacy theory. Lastly, by emphasizing how structural changes intended to strengthen electoral governance may unintentionally reinforce oligarchy and undermine internal cadre development, the manuscript contributes to discussions on party democracy. It offers information pertinent to both Indonesian political studies and comparative party politics.

Method

The research employs a qualitative case study design to provide an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the candidacy policy within the Golkar Party during the 2024 Jambi Mayoral Election. Through this approach, the researcher serves as the primary instrument for exploring the social, political, and institutional dynamics underlying the Golkar Party's candidate-nomination process for the Jambi mayoralty.³² Data were collected through two main techniques: in-depth interviews and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with the administrators of the DPD II Golkar Party in Jambi City, the DPD I Golkar in Jambi Province, the DPP Golkar Party, the Jambi mayoral candidates (Maulana and Budi Setiawan), political observers, and election organizers. The documentation includes an analysis of the party's Articles of Association/Bylaws, recommendation letters, KPU regulations, survey results, and media coverage. This approach enables researchers to examine the relationship between the party's formal structure and the informal political practices that emerge in the local context. The data obtained were analyzed using three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification.³³ This

³² John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007).

³³ Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Analisis Data Kualitatif*, trans. Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press, 1992), originally published 1984.

process was carried out inductively by interpreting patterns and themes that emerged from the field data, drawing on Mazmanian and Sabatier's policy implementation theory. To maintain data validity, this study employed triangulation techniques, which included source triangulation (comparing data from different informants), method triangulation (combining interviews, observations, and documents), and theory triangulation (comparing findings with theories of policy implementation, party organizational politics, and administrative factors). This triangulation ensured that the research findings were credible, consistent, and scientifically accountable in explaining the implementation of Golkar's candidacy policy at the local level.

Results and Discussion

The Implementation of Golkar Candidacy in the Jambi City Mayoral Election

The 2024 Jambi City mayoral election will mark a significant turning point in the local and national political landscapes. Considerable discussion on the internal dynamics of political parties, electoral tactics, and party policy implementation within the framework of local democracy has been sparked by the Golkar Party's (DPP Golkar) central board's decision to nominate the Maulana-Diza pair rather than internal cadre Budi Setiawan. In this regard, Mazmanian and Sabatier's theoretical approach to public policy implementation provides a robust framework for examining the complexity of contributing factors. Mazmanian and Sabatier assert that the substantive nature of the problem, the coherence and clarity of the policy's goals, and the political and social environment in which the policy is implemented significantly affect the quality of its implementation.³⁴ A thorough

examination of how political parties create and implement candidate-nomination policies is enabled by applying this theory to electoral politics. Three main components were highlighted in the framework for policy implementation that Mazmanian and Sabatier proposed: 1. Substantive characteristics of the problem: This refers to the degree of technical and administrative control over the targeted problem, as well as the availability of technology and resources to address it; 2. Implementation decisions: This includes the clarity of policy objectives and the presence of sufficient administrative and legal tools; and 3. Political and socioeconomic context: Consists of social stability, civil society involvement, political backing, and the current economic climate that affects how policies are implemented. These three elements provide the basis for examining Golkar's formulation and implementation of its nomination strategy in the 2024 Jambi mayoral election.

1. Substantive characteristics of the problem

When assessing a nominee's substantive features, electability is a crucial metric. Independent polls conducted before the mayoral election in Jambi consistently placed the Maulana-Diza duo at the top of the voter-preference rankings. According to a Public Trust Institute (PUTIN) survey, Maulana-Diza had a 69.30% electability rate, which was significantly higher than Budi Setiawan's 17%. In the meantime, Maulana leads the field by a wide margin (76.8%) compared to Budi Setiawan (12.8%), according to an Indikator survey. The combination of Diza's professional and administrative experience and Maulana's popularity as the current deputy mayor makes them a well-rounded representation of both expertise and creativity. According to the research informants, Maulana-Diza's support is

³⁴ Daniel A. Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier, *Implementation and Public Policy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983).

contingent on evaluations of their quality, particularly given their high electability. In such circumstances, Golkar is not the only party that backs Maulana-Diza; other parties do as well. Essentially, Maulana-Diza has a far higher chance than any other candidate of winning the 2024 Jambi City Mayoral Election. PAN, PKS, Demokrat, and PKB were among the significant and mid-sized parties that formed the political coalition for the 2024 Jambi election. Golkar made a calculated decision to emphasize electoral stability and victory by joining this coalition. Agreements on development programs, the distribution of logistical support, and grassroots consolidation strengthened this alliance. Maulana-Diza's nomination thus reflects a practical political calculation for electoral and developmental objectives. In terms of campaign infrastructure, Maulana-Diza had a significant edge. Their success team consisted of young activists, local business owners, and community leaders from various districts in Jambi. Before the official campaign period, more than 68 volunteer groups with over 15,000 active members were formed. This administrative and logistical preparedness guaranteed the successful and efficient execution of the campaign. Such technical readiness is a crucial component of effective policy implementation, according to the Mazmanian and Sabatier framework.

2. *The clarity and consistency of policy objectives*

According to Mazmanian and Sabatier, well-defined objectives are necessary for effective policy implementation. Golkar's goal in the mayoral election in Jambi was clear: to win, hold onto local political power, and build a solid cadre for upcoming regional or national elections. Golkar demonstrated "strategic rationality" in electoral politics by aligning its

actions with its strategic goals, supporting an electorally promising pair.³⁵ Internal consolidation must go hand in hand with strategy clarity. Internal conflict was evident in the early opposition of Budi Setiawan's supporters to the Maulana-Diza nomination. Nonetheless, Golkar's central leadership quickly used dialogue and persuasion to quell the unrest. Later, Budi Setiawan formally endorsed the party's nominee and urged his followers to support the nominee. This demonstrates that organizational discipline, essential to policy execution, remains a fundamental strength of Golkar's institutional capacity. Maulana Diza's "Jambi Bahagia" vision included specific recommendations, such as establishing a national-caliber hospital, digitizing public services, and providing neighborhood units (RTs) with IDR 100 million in annual aid. According to the research informants, Golkar's support for Maulana-Diza is based on the programs that are offered in addition to the high electability factor. Maulana Diza's "Jambi Bahagia" (Happy Jambi) is a strong and marketable vision, according to Golkar. For these reasons, Golkar seeks to win, as it did in the last legislative elections in Jambi City. These well-defined initiatives strengthened Golkar's public policy narrative and served as a campaign tool. From an implementation standpoint, the presence of tangible programs indicates that policy creation and local implementation are consistent.

3. *Political and socio-economic context*

The political climate in which the 2024 Jambi mayoral election took place was comparatively stable. The electoral commission operated autonomously and competently, and there were no notable disputes between the parties. This stability

³⁵ Joseph A. Schlesinger, *Political Parties and the Winning of Office* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

facilitated the implementation of the policy. Maulana-Diza's legitimacy was bolstered by support from civil society organizations and by largely favorable media coverage. Public forums perceived the two as capable of advancing development agendas and as dedicated to openness and public involvement. Jambi's economy was still recuperating after COVID-19. People wanted leaders who could boost the growth of the creative economy, create jobs, and improve infrastructure. These expectations were met by Maulana-Diza's policies on RT subsidies, vocational training, and MSME incentives.

According to the research informants, the Maulana-Diza pair is the best possible pairing. Diza is a young man from a distinguished family with a wide range of accomplishments and activities, whereas Maulana represents bureaucrats, businessmen, and senior officials.

As a primary prerequisite for improved development in Jambi City, this combination enables the creation of a favorable sociopolitical environment. According to Mazmanian and Sabatier's framework, these candidate programs and the public needs they align with constitute an external environment that supports effective policy implementation. According to Mazmanian and Sabatier's policy implementation theory, Golkar's nomination of Maulana Diza for the 2024 Jambi mayoral election reflects a methodical, logical process. Measures of electability, coalition support, administrative readiness, and conformity to regional socioeconomic needs provided the basis for the decision. To ensure electoral success, Golkar demonstrated institutional maturity by controlling internal opposition and consolidating power. This study supports the idea that effective implementation of political nomination policy requires not only formal party rules but also the capacity to adapt to changing social dynamics, resolve conflicts, and craft compelling public narratives. The Golkar Party is employing the Elite

Candidacy Model in the 2024 Jambi City Mayoral Election, as explained above. The DPP Golkar Party's decision to support Maulana-Diza underscores this. In fact, Budi Setiawan (cadre) was previously mandated by Golkar to run in the 2024 Jambi City Mayoral Election. Based on the belief that Maulana-Diza had a higher chance of winning than Budi Setiawan and other contenders, the DPP Golkar Party decided to support this pair.

Depending on the analytical lens used, Golkar's decision to nominate Maulana Diza in the 2024 Jambi City mayoral race can be interpreted as either a failure of cadre-building or a successful application of electoral strategy. According to Mazmanian and Sabatier's theory of policy implementation, the decision is an example of practical implementation since the party showed clear goals (winning the election), sensible use of resources (survey-based electability, coalition strength, campaign readiness), organizational discipline (managing internal dissent), and awareness of the political and socioeconomic environment. In this way, Golkar demonstrated institutional capability, flexibility, and elite coordination, consistent with the Elite Selection Model, by translating its strategic policy objectives into tangible action despite the demands of concurrent elections. However, the same choice exposes a structural flaw when viewed through the prism of cadre development and party institutionalization. Golkar implied that short-term electoral calculations take precedence over long-term cadre nurturing, loyalty, and internal meritocracy by marginalizing Budi Setiawan, an internal cadre, local party chairman, and previously mandated candidate. This suggests that political parties have failed to fulfill one of their primary normative duties: training and elevating their own cadres for executive leadership. Incentives for cadre loyalty are weakened, pragmatic, survey-driven politics

are maintained, and oligarchic rule is reinforced when outsider actors with greater electability are relied upon. Golkar's candidacy in Jambi is therefore a paradox: it is both institutionally and electorally sound in the short term, but it poses long-term challenges to internal party democracy and sustainable cadre development. The Golkar case in the 2024 Jambi City mayoral election should not be viewed as an isolated occurrence but rather as an example of a broader trend in Indonesian party politics throughout the post-reform period, particularly in the context of concurrent regional elections. Election viability, coalition compatibility, and survey-based popularity are increasingly prioritized over internal cadre seniority or long-term party allegiance in candidate nomination processes across major parties, including PDI-P, Gerindra, NasDem, PAN, and others. The strong centralization of decision-making authority at the national executive level (DPP), the limited institutionalization of cadre recruitment and promotion mechanisms, and the pragmatic focus on power maintenance rather than ideological consolidation are all structural traits shared by Indonesian political parties. As a result, local party chapters are often subordinate to national-level strategic considerations, even when they are conversant with grassroots dynamics.

The institutional pressures brought about by concurrent regional elections, which shorten nomination deadlines, increase the expense and danger of electoral competition, and force parties to simultaneously coordinate strategies across several regions, exacerbate these dynamics. In this situation, party leaders frequently use technocratic tools such as coalition math, electability polls, and financial preparedness as quick fixes to inform decision-making. This reinforces elite-

driven candidate models and marginalizes merit-based or participatory selection procedures. Therefore, rather than an anomaly, Golkar's choice in Jambi represents a logical yet highly centralized response to structural limitations. The Jambi case's analytical significance stems from its representativeness, which depicts a systemic change in Indonesian party nomination practices where, under recent electoral reforms, short-term electoral success increasingly takes precedence over long-term cadre development and internal party democracy.

The Impact of the Golkar Candidate Mechanism on the 2024 Jambi City Mayor Election

Political parties have faced mounting pressure to nominate candidates in a disciplined manner while preserving their legitimacy at the grassroots level ever since Indonesia implemented simultaneous regional elections.³⁶ Golkar tends to exert strong central control over the nomination process because it is a historically institutionalized and centralized party. Local opposition to this centralization occasionally arises, particularly when it runs counter to the wishes of local cadres and constituents. The Maulana-Diza duo was formally nominated by Golkar's central board (DPP) as the party's candidate for mayor of Jambi at the beginning of 2024. Budi Setiawan, a senior cadre in DPD II Golkar Jambi (the city branch) with strong grassroots support, was marginalized by this decision. In an act of symbolic defiance, a group of Budi's supporters publicly burned party banners and flags in protest against the central decision once it had been made. This kind of symbolic protest reflects what Norris refers to as "intra-party democracy under strain," in which top-down decision-making

³⁶ Marcus Mietzner, *Money, Power, and Ideology: Political Parties in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013).

conflicts with bottom-up candidate aspirations.³⁷ Golkar's internal legitimacy and regional unity were seriously threatened by the burning of party symbols, which underscored a significant break in the local elite's alignment. The central leadership of Golkar responded quickly to the protest. The DPP sent a delegation to Jambi to establish lines of communication rather than enforce disciplinary measures. Budi Setiawan, local stakeholders, and DPD II leaders participated in both public and private consultations. This two-pronged approach, which combined public signaling and backdoor diplomacy, was intended to defuse the situation while maintaining the party's unity.

The theory of party change is that institutionalized parties create internal conflict-adaptation strategies.³⁸ Golkar's response demonstrates such institutional flexibility.³⁹ The party strengthened its internal hierarchy without exacerbating division by engaging with dissenters rather than excluding them. When the party chairman personally approached Budi Setiawan and offered him a strategic position in the Maulana-Diza campaign team, it was a pivotal moment. This action was not only symbolic; it accomplished three goals:⁴⁰ it allowed Budi to avoid conflict without appearing foolish, it protected his political capital within the party system, and it

brought potential opponents into the official campaign machinery.⁴¹ This illustrates how elite party politics employs the "absorption" mechanism, in which co-optation replaces conflict to preserve organizational unity. Golkar prevented rival factions from forming or the possibility of defection by assigning Budi a strategic role, thereby turning personal ambition into institutional utility. Golkar maintained a united public front despite the early upheaval. Local campaign activities continued under the official banner, and there were no concurrent nominations from dissident cadres. This illustrates the institutionalization of the party system, in which parties maintain organizational loyalty and stable inter-elite relationships despite internal conflicts.⁴² Several factors contributed to the party's success in handling this conflict: elite integration tactics, such as role reassignment, were employed; public relations framing emphasized unity and minimized the protests, thereby preventing further media escalation; and central-local negotiation mechanisms were responsive and operational.⁴³ The case also emphasizes the crucial role of informal procedures in party discipline. Although there are official regulations governing the nomination process, policy compliance was guaranteed by unofficial discussions, individual diplomacy, and elite co-optation.⁴⁴ Candidate

³⁷ Pippa Norris, *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³⁸ Robert Harmel and Kenneth Janda, "An Integrated Theory of Party Goals and Party Change," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 6, no. 3 (1994): 259–287, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0951692894006003001>.

³⁹ Muhammad Rikza Muqtada et al., "Fiqh Contestation on Women's Public Leadership in Indonesia and Malaysia: Reproducing Qur'anic and Hadith Interpretations," *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 19, no. 1 (June 2024): 221–48,

⁴⁰ Iqbal Katrino and Yus Afrida, "People's Sovereignty in the System Presidential Threshold in the Perspective Siyasa Al-Syari'yyah," *EL-*

Mashlahah 11, no. 2 (December 2021): 187–204, <https://doi.org/10.23971/ELMA.V11I2.3259>.

⁴¹ Ahmad Arief et al., "Reconstructing the Indonesian Legal System through the Lens of Maslahah Mursalah," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 19, no. 1 (June 2025): 117–32, <https://doi.org/10.24090/MNH.V19I1.7861>.

⁴² Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, *Building Democratic...*

⁴³ Kadar Pamuji et al., "Understanding the Legal Politics of Regional Tax Regulations: Navigating Regional Autonomy in Post-Tax Reform in Indonesia," *Volksgeist: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum Dan Konstitusi*, no. 2 (November 2025): 503–20.

⁴⁴ Anthin Lathifah et al., "Inheritance Law Politics: The Implementation in Muslim-Nonmuslim

nomination is a high-stakes political decision that necessitates careful management of internal dynamics, as demonstrated by Golkar's strategy in Jambi. Parties that rely solely on top-down enforcement risk fragmentation. Instead, Golkar presented an adaptive model that integrated responsive decentralization in conflict resolution with strategic centralization in decision-making. Compared with other semi-democratic or transitional democracies, this strategy is similar to the tactics of ruling parties, in which elite inclusion counterbalances central command.⁴⁵ The disputes that arose in Golkar's Jambi branch during the 2024 mayoral nomination process exemplify the conflicts that occur when candidate selection is centralized. However, Golkar's prompt, calculated, and practical response prevented the dissension from turning into factionalism. The party maintained its external legitimacy and internal unity through strategic co-optation, elite engagement, and symbolic appeasement.⁴⁶ This case demonstrates the crucial role of elite negotiation and organizational adaptability in maintaining party unity amid electoral pressure. Winning the 2024 regional elections is another consequence of this candidacy system. In the 2024 Jambi Mayoral Election, the Maulana-Diza duo won by a wide margin. The Maulana-Diza ticket garnered 192,623 votes, or 73.3% of the total valid votes, according to the official results declared by the Jambi City General Elections Commission (KPU) during the plenary session on December 6, 2024. Their opponents, the HAR-Guntur duo, who received 70,322 votes (26.7%), were soundly defeated. The fact that Maulana-Diza received votes from every polling place (TPS) in the city made this victory even more

noteworthy, as such a result is very uncommon in the area's electoral history.

To understand the dynamics of political party candidacies in Indonesia's decentralized electoral system, this study confirms the applicability of Mazmanian and Sabatier's policy implementation theory. The Golkar Party's choices in the 2024 Jambi City Mayoral Election indicate that policy implementation within political organizations involves a complex interplay between statutory design and non-statutory factors, rather than merely an administrative procedure. Although it limits grassroots engagement, the statute's capacity to govern implementation, as reflected in Golkar's written regulations, centralized hierarchy, and candidate-selection mechanisms, provides procedural clarity. On the other hand, actual results are greatly influenced by non-statutory factors, including elite bargaining, political pragmatism, and sociocultural expectations. The Golkar case illustrates that the successful implementation of a candidacy policy requires adaptive institutional flexibility, in which formal discipline coexists with informal accommodation to maintain organizational stability and electoral competitiveness.

The study shows that, from a broader theoretical perspective, the candidacy process is an essential mechanism for translating party policy into democratic representation. It supports the claim of elite competition theory that institutional cohesion and elite consensus are as crucial to electoral success as candidate skill. Effective candidacy implementation depends on three interrelated factors, as the Maulana-Diza

Families in Southern Thailand," *El-Mashlahah* 15, no. 1 (June 2025): 189–212.

⁴⁵ Steven Levitsky, *Transforming Labor-Based Parties in Latin America: Argentine Peronism in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴⁶ Ali Murtadho Emzaed *et al.*, "Restriction of Islamic Civil Society Participation: Genealogy of Zakat Legal Politics and Its Centralized Management in Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Law* 4, no. 2 (August 2023): 148–71, <https://doi.org/10.24260/JIL.V4I2.1444>.

instance illustrates: (1) the electability issue, (2) the coherence and clarity of the party's goals, and (3) the alignment of policy design with the sociopolitical environment. Coherent policy implementation yields both organizational consolidation and electoral victory, as evidenced by Golkar's methodical yet practical nomination process. By demonstrating that the application of candidate selection policy in Indonesia's hybrid democracy is a test of institutional adaptability, in which formal rationality, elite pragmatism, and contextual responsiveness must converge to sustain democratic legitimacy, this research thus contributes to the literature on candidacies.

Conclusion

Theoretically, this study advances the literature on policy implementation and party candidacies by conceptualizing candidate nomination as an intra-party process of policy implementation. Applying Mazmanian and Sabatier's methodology to the Golkar Party's 2024 Jambi City mayoral campaign, the results indicate that electoral victory or procedural compliance should not be the sole criterion for evaluating effective implementation. Rather, the interplay of substantive problem features (electability and resource availability), the clarity of policy objectives, and the larger political-institutional framework shapes implementation outcomes. By empirically confirming the Elite Candidacy Model's superiority in contexts such as centralized party authority and concurrent elections, the study advances candidacy theory. By demonstrating how electoral system design restructures internal party decision-making and redefines "success" in implementation in pragmatic rather than democratic terms, this research theoretically links two bodies of literature: party politics and policy implementation.

In practice, the results indicate a strategic conundrum that political parties in

contemporary Indonesia must address. Elite-driven, survey-based candidacies may increase electoral competitiveness in the near term, but they also risk undermining internal legitimacy, local party autonomy, and cadre development. The study emphasizes the importance of institutionalizing clearer, more predictable channels for cadre promotion, alongside electoral pragmatism, for party organizations, particularly those with long-standing cadre traditions such as Golkar. According to the research, concurrent regional elections may inadvertently strengthen centralization and oligarchic tendencies within parties, despite their administrative efficiency. These unintended consequences could be mitigated without jeopardizing electoral stability by bolstering internal party democracy through regulatory incentives, greater openness in nomination processes, and greater recognition of regional party structures. By using comparative and multi-level designs, future research should move beyond single-case analysis to examine whether comparable patterns of candidacies emerge across parties, geographic areas, and election cycles. To evaluate the cumulative effects of frequent cadre displacement on party institutionalization, elite circulation, and voter trust, longitudinal studies would be constructive. Political funding, survey organizations, and media dynamics should also be included in future studies as intervening factors in election procedures. The generalizability of these results could be enhanced by comparative cross-national studies in countries with simultaneous or highly centralized electoral systems, thereby contributing to broader discussions of party democracy and policy implementation under modern electoral reforms.

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