

# The Faults of Transactional Political Party in Sumatera Utara Province Indonesia

Muryanto Amin

*Department of Political Science, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia*

**Keywords:** Political Party, Transitional, Democracy, and Political Office

**Abstract:** Political parties in Indonesia are the most important part on consolidating democracy in the diverse local level. The management of issues carried out by political parties faces different challenges, and must comply with democratic principles such as accountability, equality, and justice. If there is an error in managing a political party, it will have a negative impact on the citizens' agreement about the consolidation of democracy. This study selects its data source from key informants based on their knowledge, such as the leaders of political parties, academics, and community leaders. The findings explain that political parties in North Sumatra have not been fully managed to meet the principles of democracy. The pattern of recruitment, regeneration, and assignments in public positions conducted by political parties is still transactional. The recruitment is based on popularity and the ownership of funds. This pattern results in a number of cadres proposed for the public officials who do not have good technical and moral qualifications. The management model of democratic political parties that meets the requirements of accountability, equality, and justice still faces cultural and regulatory obstacles.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The big challenge for political parties in Indonesia nowadays is recruiting cadres and training them to have the ability when placed in political office. The political party's activities have not been carried out properly due to the dependency on the central management in Jakarta and the funding originating from the state. Various studies explain that related to the management of modern political parties there are still many shortcomings, namely the lack of recruitment, regeneration, the placement of the cadres in political office. A research conducted by Amin shows that the majority of political parties do not have structured and systematic regeneration documents, furthermore the financial management are mostly not from the party contributions, instead are non-binding donations from cadres who have served in certain political office. In addition, the legislative election system and regional head elections directly exacerbated the regeneration process, recruitment, and political party finance (Amin, 2017).

The findings of the study explain that the reality of the community has an assumption that all decisions of political parties lie in the policies of the central management and not because of the ability of the

cadres of political parties. As a result of the said political party's policy, the interest of the community to participate is reduced so that the quality of political decisions is far from the hopes of the people to improve their daily lives. Kalua's statement of political parties is the main key in carrying out democratic consolidation so that the principle of representation can be implemented (Kalua, 2011) has not been proven in practice. Although there is also broad agreement that political parties play an important role in the consolidation of democracy, there is little agreement on the types of qualities that a party must possess (Randall & Svasand, 2002). The role of political parties in Indonesia has often been replaced with civil society organizations to improve the quality of democracy in Indonesia. Hadi concludes that civil society groups currently have adequate capacity and are able to have a positive influence on managing state relations and civil society (Hadi, 2010). These groups then become a patron (indirectly) for the growth of new civil society groups, such as the ability in organizational management, funding management, and network capacity with institutions on a national and international level (Gomez & Tonge, 2016). Through the influence and role carried out, democratization in

Indonesia is inseparable from the significant role of the civil society.

The phenomenon of managing undemocratic political parties also occurred in North Sumatra. The lack of government achievements and the rampant corruption cases that occur in North Sumatra are thought strongly as a part of why the function of a political party is not running well. Meanwhile, North Sumatra is the third largest province outside Java and has a history of industrial progress since the colonial period. However, since the reform of the regional head election system in 2004, North Sumatra has very few innovative records of development achievements. In contrast, the corruption incident by the governor and members of the Sumatera Utara Provincial Parliament after the elections of regional heads in 2004. The governor elected in elections in 2008 and in 2013 is convicted of corruption. The members of the Sumatera Utara Provincial Parliament for the 2009-2013 period as many as 57 of the 100 people are decided by the court for committing a criminal act of corruption. The political office is a cadre of political parties who have a very important role in determining democratic public decisions and produce the welfare of the local community. The assumption that causes these events is that political parties have not been managed democratically as development institutions.

The internal system built by political parties has not fully produced measurable democratic performance including recruitment mechanisms, cadre education, as well as the placement of cadres in political office (Bader, 2014). The three types of political party activities will determine the quality of political party products. The low performance of local governments in North Sumatra reflects that political parties have not been managed democratically and modern. This paper will outline the ways in which politicians manage political parties that are very minimal in meeting the democratic requirements in North Sumatra. So that it is expected from the activities of recruitment, regeneration, and placement of cadres in political office carried out democratically so that the consolidation of democracy in North Sumatra will be deepened.

## 2 RESEARCH METHOD

The method used is qualitative and data collection through 1) in-depth interviews with key and additional informants, 2) limited group discussions with elite political parties, academics, government elements, and community representatives, 3)

observations of the activities carried out by political parties. Moreover, secondary data is obtained from political party documents that become a reference in conducting programs. The data obtained were analysed using typology or compile the data acquisition categories, confirmed by triangulation. The analysed data will be compiled in the form of research reports to reach the output of research, namely the management model of modern political parties, lecture modules, and books.

## 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As the strategic role of political parties that have been stated previously, political parties become the instruments to strengthen democracy in the context of the circulation of political power, on the national and local levels. In an effort to carry out the circulation of power, political parties carry out the recruitment process as a mechanism for selecting cadres who will be placed in a certain political office. The political recruitment model carried out by the party is an indicator of measuring democracy. Political recruitment identifies the form of the party, whether it is a program party or just an electoral party or even becomes a cartel party controlled by a handful of elites and entrepreneurs.

According to the context of political recruitment for the legislature in North Sumatra, there are several issues in political parties that have the potential to disrupt the development of democracy. First, the proportional electoral system enshrines the dominance of the oligarchy in the recruitment process. Elite parties in the regions are very powerful in the recruitment process, which determines who will occupy the first or last sequence number. However, the pattern of the elite oligarchy is not democratic but tends to maintain very closed corruption, collusion, and nepotism practices. Even though the electoral system is no longer based on the sequence number, but on the most votes and / or those who get the Voter Divider Number (Voter Divider Numbers/BPP), but the position of the sequence number is very decisive for the community and also the calculation when no one gets the BPP number.

Second, in the recruitment process a good linkage between political parties and the civil society is not built. Civil society is only viewed numerically as a number, not as a constituent that must be respected and fought for. Various community organizations are only placed as an under the bow, a political machine that mobilizes the masses, not as a basis for the struggle of the political parties. Conversely, activists

from community organizations do not see political parties as part of a social movement to influence the policy and control the state, but only as a "political vehicle" to gain power. As a result, the parliamentarians are only oriented to power and wealth. Not a few of Provincial Parliament members ignore the forums or extra-parliamentary participation because they claim that the Provincial Parliament is the most legitimate representative institution and that participation is not regulated in regional laws or regulations

Third, in the recruitment process, political parties often apply the "take away" approach to candidates who are seen as "political machines". This approach tends to ignore the legitimacy aspects, commitment, capacity, as well as the fight. Ex-soldiers and officials are selected not because they have visions, but because they have remnants of the power network. Entrepreneurs are recruited because they had a lot of money and could be used effectively for various purposes ranging from mobilization funds to money politics. Celebrities are chosen because they have many fans. Preachers are also recruited because they have followers of traditional times. Political parties easily take community leaders, intellectuals, or academics on campus who pursue power and want to utilize the party as a way for vertical mobility.

Another problem in the recruitment of political parties in North Sumatra, both for the legislature and executive is the lack of regeneration in the political party. This resulted in the parties often importing cadres who are able to become party leaders without a clear regeneration process. The aim is only related to electoral value, money, and influence. Almost all political parties carry out a figure recruitment program. Figure recruitment is intended to prevent the party from losing voters. A number of political parties in North Sumatra openly recruit leaders and there are also several political parties that do it in private. Figure recruitment is carried out with open and closed models, for example, Hanura makes an announcement for the figure recruitment openly, while PDIP recruits their figures in private. The recruitment process of political parties in North Sumatra does seem to be carried out only as part of the process of implementing the functions of the parties. The measurement used is more focused on one's character as well as financial ability. Political costs are exorbitant in every political activity, both legislative and executive, so it is not surprising for political parties to consider the cadres and figures who have sufficient financial power.

Fourth, the electoral process and recruitment process work in the context of a less educated and

critical "floating mass". So far, the community has not received political education, especially from political parties, resulting in millions of traditional voters who are very vulnerable to mobilization practices. Political parties do not play an adequate role in giving political education to the public. Up until now most of the people of Indonesia are the silent majority, who are calm, apathetic (ignorant), and not critical in facing the political process. As a result, the participatory political culture (civic culture) has not been built. Such conditions certainly do not allow for an open and participatory recruitment process (Dalton & Kuechler, 1990).

Current cadres recruitment carried out by political parties in North Sumatra is also carried out by taking cadres from the wing of the party organization, both men and women, as well as other party wings. This is performed by considering the efficiency of the party's work in recruiting cadres, also related to a more minimal party funding if the recruited cadres come from the existing party wing. In general, the political recruitment system in almost all political parties in North Sumatra, both for the legislature and executive, has not fulfilled the principles of democracy and has not been regulated using modern management. Political parties do not yet have clear and rigid recruitment manuals governing how recruitment is carried out. For some political parties, such as Golkar and PDIP, which own a recruitment and regeneration module, at the stage of its implementation, it is not carried out consistently and with a strong commitment. This is of course very detrimental to the development of democracy on the local level, as well as on a national level.

Since the regional election in 2005, recruitment by political parties for regional head positions tends to be carried out exclusively limited to local elites who are considered to have a high popularity and strong funding. Transactional recruitment also occurs in the recruitment of regional head political positions. There is no exception whether the candidate is a party cadre or not, the transactional process occurs for all candidates, both party cadres and non-cadres. The decision on candidates who carried out in regional head elections are also in the management of the central political parties, this often results in differences of opinion between party managers on a regional level and the central management. However, despite these differences of opinion, the decisions of the central management cannot be contested by the regional administration. This condition resulted in the frequent process of determining the candidates to be carried out by political parties to be determined by

patron-client factors between political elites and businessmen.

When recruiting the legislators on the regional level, both provincial and district/city, it is carried out closely and limited to local political elites. In this process, it is often found that legislative candidates are not the cadres of political parties. Most candidates who are not cadres are figures who have strong funding sources, usually, they are entrepreneurs who are not active in political parties. Besides, there are also figures from other sectors, such as preachers and community leaders who are considered to be able to become vote-getters. Transactional practices also occur in the process of recruiting these legislators. It is not uncommon to find conflicts between cadres of political parties and administrators related to the struggle for the sequence number of legislative candidates. Not infrequently, determining the sequence number also done transactional. The cadres of political parties often do not get the best sequence number due to the transactional process.

Forms of regeneration are influenced by the developed party system and the electoral system. However, whichever the system is, in regeneration, there are two important issues. First, how the efforts made by the organization to increase the ability of both skills and knowledge. Second, is the ability to provide cadres, especially the youth. Regeneration in the political party aims to create cadres of nation-state leaders and the party cadres must also be able to play their role as creators who are able to place the existence of the party in the community.

The cadre system of political parties in Indonesia has different characteristics from one party to another, according to the rules that have been determined by the party. In its implementation, turns out that many parties are unable to implement rigorous and ideological regeneration. This was evidenced by the many party cadres who "jumped" from one party to another when the general election arrived. Political parties in North Sumatra in general, are still constrained with the problem of the absence of a rigid regeneration system and consistent implementation by political parties. Even if the regeneration method documents exist, the problems with the implementation related to party infrastructure on a provincial level are minimal, as well as the constraints on financing issues. The field findings in this study also indicate that the regeneration program carried out by political parties through party schools and party training does not produce maximum output. The activities seemed to be implemented only to fulfill the party's formal program.

Placing cadres in political office or called the candidacy process, as happened in the regional head elections in the district/city of North Sumatra Province, displays a process that precipitated the consolidation of democracy on a local level. The tendency of practices that hinder the democracy occurs like the first, the indications of unreduced money politics or the "surrender of dowry" in candidate in political parties and individual candidates and multiple candidate conflicts occur in several regions. Second, dynastic politics occurs with the characteristic of the emergence of candidates who do not have enough capacity as the candidates for regional heads. Third, the emergence of a single candidate with their main motive is "buying" the party to make it easier to win the most votes.

Observing that the role of political parties in the simultaneous candidacy of the regional election is very urgent and strategic, especially with the failure of independent candidates to gain votes from regional voters, the success of candidates who have the quality and competence is highly dependent on the nomination process by political parties, which is more democratic or putting forward the pragmatism. Pragmatism can be indicated here, first, if political parties make the aspect of popularity and the capital strength of candidates as the main consideration to bring the candidates rather than the quality and competence. Second, if the political parties do the selection and nomination without transparency and close themselves to other aspirations even though the said aspirations come from their own internal cadres.

#### **4 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The majority of political parties do not have structured and systematic documents. The electoral system in the legislature and local election exacerbates the birth of a system of regeneration, recruitment, and placement of cadres in political parties. The end result of the regeneration process of political parties is the availability of cadres of political parties to fill public positions. In this context, the regeneration of political parties is not a stand-alone mechanism. Many variables affect the pattern of political parties carrying out their internal regeneration. The electoral system, party system, and the type or pattern of political parties influence the political parties in managing its regeneration. Therefore, political parties must provide plenty of cadres to fulfill the quota.



The regeneration pattern of political parties will succeed if there is an integrated institutional system. Various issues regarding training institutions, curriculum, teaching materials that are professionally designed, the requirements, target audience that are right on target, the existence of a monitoring and evaluation system, the qualifications of teachers, and sufficient funding. The linkage of recruitment, regeneration, and placement cadres in public positions in the executive and legislative positions is an integral part. The formulation of these three must be carried out consistently and continuously as well as the availability of an adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanism. In addition, giving awards and punishments to cadres who have achievements and violate discipline is an integral part of creating a modern political party. All of that can only be achieved if there is a commitment from the top of the political party leaders.

Removing money politics during the internal process of political parties, such as recruitment, regeneration, political party funding, and transparency in the cadre proposal of political parties for political office has not been carried out properly. So there needs to be an effort to implement consistent rules and sanctions for political parties that do not carry out the political process internally. It needs to be considered so that political parties have adequate and transparent and equitable funding mechanisms to fulfill democratic requirements. The selection and nomination process of candidates by political parties must be required to be transparent and accountable by obtaining direct supervision from voters as the holders of sovereignty. Pre-candidacy activities such as conventions and debate events ahead of nomination not only need to be civilized but need to be included explicitly in the nominating technical regulations.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the Ministry of Research and Higher Education for the provided facilities through the Decentralization Research Competition scheme.

## REFERENCES

Amin, M. 2017. "Recruitment, Certification and Financial Management of Political Party in the Province of North Sumatera, Indonesia". *Atlantis Press*. Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research,

- Volume 136. 2nd *International Conference on Social and Political Development (ICOSOP 2017)*.
- Bader, V. 2014. "Crisis of Political Parties and Representative Democracies: Rethinking Parties in Associational, Experimentalist Governance". *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 17(3), 350–376. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698230.2014.886380>.
- Dalton, R. J., & Kuechler, M. 1990. *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies*. Europe and the International Order. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gomez, R., & Tonge, J. 2016. "New Members as Party Modernizers: The Case of The Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland". *Electoral Studies*, 42, 65–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2016.02.008>.
- Hadi, O., H. 2010. Peran Masyarakat Sipil dalam Proses Demokratisasi. *Makara Seri Sosial Humaniora*, 14(2), 117-129. DOI:10.7454/mssh.v14i2.674.
- Kalua, P. 2011. Forum for Development Studies The Extent of Political Party Institutionalization in Malawi: The Case of United Democratic Front (UDF) and Malawi Congress Party (MCP) The Extent of Political Party Institutionalization in Malawi: The. *Forum for Development Studies*, 38 (February 2015).
- Randall, V., & Svásand, L. 2002. Party Institutionalization in New Democracies. *Party Politics*, 8(1).