

Assessment of the Institutionalization of the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City in the 2024 Election

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ABSTRAK

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This study employs the party institutionalization perspective to examine the increase in the vote share of the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City in the 2024 elections. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 12 informants consisting of party elites, legislative candidates, and grassroots cadres, and complemented by document analysis. The findings of this study explain that the increase in the vote of the Sungai Penuh City Golkar party in the 2024 elections was due to good institutionalization factors as shown by three indicators ranging from roots in society ((the party has a mass base and a strong image in the community), level of organization (organizational tools that consistently work for the benefit of the party at every level of management) and coherence (cohesiveness of party members). However, there is a note on the autonomy indicator (independent in decision-making) that, although the Golkar party has internal rules that uphold autonomy and independence, the practice in the field shows that decisions are still dominated by the party's internal elite in a closed manner. Therefore, while institutionalization appears to have contributed to Golkar's electoral performance in Sungai Penuh City, the findings should be understood as indicative rather than strictly causal, as other contextual and political factors may also have played a role. This study contributes to enriching the literature on party institutionalization at the local level in post-Reformasi Indonesia, particularly in the period leading up to the 2024 elections. Nonetheless, the study has limitations, including its single-case design, the potential bias inherent in elite-based interviews, and the limited generalizability of its findings beyond the specific local context examined.

Introduction

The General Election is a means of implementing people's sovereignty, carried out directly, generally, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Ardiansyah, 2017; Arifani, 2022; Jayus, 2020). The Constitution emphasizes that elections are based on direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair principles (Nurkinan, 2018). Indonesia will hold elections again in 2024,

simultaneously choosing who will become presidential candidates and legislative members, as well as leaders in the highest office and those below (Siregar, 2023). The 2024 general election in Sungai Penuh City was part of the national political process throughout Indonesia. Sungai Penuh City is one of the regions with interesting political dynamics due to the intense competition between various political parties with diverse support bases. This election aims to elect members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) of Sungai Penuh City (Erwin, 2024). In the 2024 general election in Sungai Penuh City, 18 political parties participated, garnering the following number of votes.

Table 1. Political Party Vote Acquisition in the General Election in Sungai Penuh City in 2024

No	Party Name	Total Votes	Number of Seats
1.	Kebangkitan Bangsa Party	1.339	1
2.	Gerindra Party	3.139	2
3.	Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan Party	8.588	3
4.	Golkar Party	12.210	5
5.	Nasdem Party	3.293	2
6.	Buruh Party	0	0
7.	Gelombang Rakyat Indonesia Party	183	0
8.	Keadilan Sejahtera Party	8.185	3
9.	Kebangkitan Nusantara Party	22	0
10.	Hati Nurani Rakyat Party	2.603	1
11.	Garuda Party	0	0
12.	Amanat Nasional Party	6.060	3
13.	Bulan Bintang Party	0	0
14.	Demokrat Party	4.022	2
15.	Solidaritas Indonesia Party	30	0
16.	Perindo Party	534	0
17.	Persatuan Pembangunan Party	7.316	3
18.	Ummat Party	34	0

Source: KPU Kabupaten Tebo, (2025)

Based on Table 1, the Golkar Party's vote remains superior to that of other parties, with 12,210 votes, making the Golkar Party the winning party in the 2024 general election in Sungai Penuh City.

Based on the C1 count and the District Election Committee (PPK) plenary in Sungai Penuh City, the Golkar Party gained significant votes in three electoral districts. For electoral district 1 (Pondok Tinggi, Sungai Penuh, and Sungai Bungkal sub-districts), the Golkar party got 2,519 votes. In Electoral District 2 (coastal hill sub-district, Rawang stretch, and new city), the party bearing the banyan tree symbol secured 6,223 votes. Then, for electoral district 3 (Kumun Debai and Tanah Ampung sub-districts), the Golkar got 3,470 votes (KPU, 2024). Meanwhile, in the 2019 General Election, the Golkar Party's vote was considered the lowest since the reformation. One notable aspect was the lack of seat acquisition, particularly in Sungai Penuh City. This party obtained 3,148 votes and won only one seat in the Election District. One of the candidates from the Golkar party who was elected was Akmal, with 775 votes in the electoral district of Sungai Penuh City (KPU, 2019).

Interestingly, in the 2024 election, the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City achieved a significant vote increase and secured the highest number of seats. This is inversely proportional to the organization of the 2019 elections, where the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City received the lowest number of votes and the fewest seats. Therefore, discussing what the Golkar party in Sungai Penuh City is doing institutionally in preparation for the 2024 election is significant. Several previous studies are relevant to this research. Research from Primadi & Purwaningsih, (2019) explains the institutionalization of the Golkar party in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province after its defeat in the 2017 Gubernatorial election. Then, research from (Angraeni & Rolis, 2024; Sa'ban & Wijaya, 2021; Wibisono et al., 2023) explain the campaign strategy and political communication of the Golkar Party. Meanwhile, research by (Dewangga & Solihah, 2023; Dewi et al., 2023) explained the recruitment process of Golkar Party legislative candidates.

Based on the discussion of previous research, many studies have examined party institutionalization, electoral winning strategies, political campaigns, and political recruitment of the Golkar Party. However, these studies tend to analyze these dimensions separately and predominantly

at the national or provincial level. As a result, they have not fully addressed how party institutionalization operates at the municipal level, nor have they adequately explained how local organizational dynamics shape electoral outcomes in specific city contexts. In particular, institutionalization is often measured through aggregate indicators at the national or provincial scale, which may obscure variations in party organization, cohesion, and decision-making practices at the city level. Consequently, there remains a gap in understanding how institutionalization is constructed, maintained, and contested within local party structures, where political competition is more personalized and organizational resources are more limited.

Therefore, this study positions itself to strengthen the literature on party institutionalization by focusing on the Golkar Party at the local level, namely in Sungai Penuh City. By examining how institutionalization is manifested and practiced in a municipal context, this research seeks to provide a more grounded and context-sensitive understanding of party institutionalization in Indonesia's post-Reformasi local politics. Thus, this research poses the question of how the institutionalization of the Golkar party in Sungai Penuh will enhance its vote acquisition in the 2024 general elections.

Theoretical Framework: Political Parties' Institutionalization

Institutionalizing political parties involves an organizing process and procedure aimed at achieving specific values and stability. A political party can be considered well institutionalized when it has successfully created and internalized its organizational values and achieved internal stability over time. The institutionalization level of each political system can be determined by its ability to adjust, complexity, autonomy, and integration. In addition, institutionalization can be measured by measures of size: self-adjustment, rigidity, complexity, simplicity, autonomy-subordination, and unity-division (Huntington, 2006).

The political parties that do not adequately organize their institutionalization system will have

difficulties participating in political contestation (Subekti et al., 2025). Meanwhile, according to (Basedau & Stroh, 2008) There are four dimensions of party institutionalization, which can be described as follows: First, Roots in society, meaning that this party has stable roots in society. Second, autonomy (independence in making decisions) means the freedom of political parties from outside influences in making every decision and party policy. Third, the level of organization (organizational tools that consistently work for the benefit of the party at every level of management), meaning that the management at the top level and the management at the lower level work for the benefit of the party to raise the party and provide victory in the election. Fourth is coherence (the cohesiveness of party members), meaning the cohesiveness of party members in parliament so that there are no defections from party members and stick to the policies taken.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. The case study in this research is the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City in the 2024 Election. Data collection techniques in this study included in-depth interviews and documentation. This study conducted in-depth interviews with a total of six informants selected through a purposive sampling strategy. The selection was based on specific criteria, namely individuals who possess strategic positions, direct involvement, or substantial knowledge regarding the organizational dynamics and electoral performance of the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City during the 2024 elections. The informants consisted of: (1) the Chairperson of the Regional Leadership Council (DPD II) of the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City, (2) the Main Secretary of the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City, (3) a Member of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Sungai Penuh City from the Golkar Party, (4) the Chairperson of the General Election Commission (KPU) of Sungai Penuh City, (5) a Golkar Party sympathizer at the sub-district level, and (6) a local political observer in Sungai Penuh City. These informants represent party

elites, legislative actors, electoral management officials, grassroots supporters, and external analysts, enabling triangulation of perspectives.

The interviews were conducted between March and July 2024 in Sungai Penuh City, primarily at party offices, government offices, and mutually agreed locations to ensure comfort and confidentiality. Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes and was conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. The interview protocol was explicitly developed based on the four dimensions of party institutionalization proposed by Basedau and Stroh: roots in society, level of organization, coherence, and autonomy so that each dimension was systematically explored across informants. In terms of research ethics, all informants were provided with an explanation regarding the purpose of the study and their role in it prior to the interview. Informed consent was obtained verbally before data collection began. Informants were given the option to remain anonymous, particularly when discussing sensitive issues related to internal decision-making and elite dominance. Where necessary, anonymity was maintained in the presentation of findings to protect confidentiality and minimize potential political risks.

Furthermore, this study utilizes documentation data as supporting material to complement the primary interview findings. The documentary sources include (1) official party documents such as the Articles of Association and Bylaws (AD/ART) of the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City, (2) relevant academic journal articles, and (3) selected reports from credible local online news portals, including *jambiekspres.com* and *jambione.com*. News articles were selected based on specific criteria: relevance to the 2024 election period, direct coverage of Golkar Party activities in Sungai Penuh City, clarity of authorship and publication date, and consistency with other sources. These media reports were used strictly as supplementary contextual data to trace public events and campaign activities, not as primary evidence for establishing causal claims.

This research applies a qualitative thematic analysis approach combined with pattern matching. The analysis process involved several stages. First, all interview transcripts and documents were transcribed and organized. Second, open coding was conducted to identify initial categories emerging from the data. Third, axial coding was employed to connect categories to the four analytical dimensions derived from Basedau and Stroh's framework: roots in society, level of organization, coherence, and autonomy. Finally, selective coding was used to refine the core themes and construct analytical explanations regarding how institutionalization dimensions are manifested at the local level. Pattern matching was then applied to compare empirical findings with the theoretical indicators of party institutionalization. This step allowed the researcher to assess the degree of alignment between theoretical expectations and observed local dynamics, while avoiding overgeneralized causal conclusions.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed. First, data triangulation was conducted by comparing information from party elites, grassroots actors, electoral officials, political observers, official documents, and media reports. Second, member checking was applied selectively by reconfirming key interpretations with several informants to minimize misinterpretation. Third, efforts were made to reduce elite bias by incorporating perspectives beyond party leadership, including sympathizers and independent observers. Despite these efforts, the study acknowledges that reliance on elite interviews may still influence the interpretation of internal party dynamics. Therefore, findings are presented cautiously as context-bound interpretations rather than universally generalizable conclusions.

Result and Discussion

Root on Society

According to Basedau & Stroh, (2008) theory, at least three indicators can determine whether a

party gets a special place in the community's hearts: long-standing political parties, long participation in the political system, and ties to community organizations. A well-managed and developed political party must have stability rooted in society. In other words, political parties must garner sympathy and carve out a unique space in the community's hearts. Earning a special place in the community's heart is not easy; it takes a considerable amount of time and cannot be achieved instantly. Political parties must provide evidence that they have carried out the functions of a political party in addressing societal problems and become a forum for community aspirations. If the functions of political parties are carried out properly, they will receive a positive response from the community (Basedau & Stroh, 2008). In the context of the Golkar party, the three indicators are owned as capital to reach out to the community in organizing elections.

In this context, the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City has had a long history of participating in election events at both local and national levels. The results of an interview with the Chairman of the Regional Representative Council of Sungai Penuh City from the Golkar Party stated that:

"If we talk about Golkar, this Golkar party is the oldest in Indonesia. The oldest party in Indonesia has existed since the era of the new order. new order era, we cannot deny that the strength of the Golkar party from the first In the past, it has indeed shown its existence in the political world"(Interview on December 1, 2024).

Even in the election event in Sungai Penuh City, the Golkar Party played a significant role in shaping its history. This can be seen from the fact that the Golkar Party has consistently won seats in five consecutive elections in Sungai Penuh City. Although the numbers fluctuate, they consistently qualify for parliament. This proves that the consistency of getting seats is directly proportional to the electability of the people of Sungai Penuh for the Golkar party. Likewise, in the 2024 election, even cadres who had passed away were elected chairman of the Sungai Penuh City Regional House of Representatives.

In the party institutionalization literature, the indicator of *roots in society* does not merely refer to historical longevity or repeated electoral participation, but to the degree to which a party maintains stable social support, organizational embeddedness at the grassroots level, linkages with community networks, and voter identification across electoral cycles. Thus, the concept emphasizes sustained societal penetration rather than symbolic seniority.

In the context of the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City, this indicator can be observed through several empirical dimensions. First, Golkar demonstrates relative stability of electoral support across multiple elections. The party has consistently secured seats in five consecutive local legislative elections in Sungai Penuh City. Although the number of seats has fluctuated, its continued parliamentary representation indicates a stable voter base rather than episodic electoral success. This pattern suggests cross-election continuity of support, which is a core element of party roots in society.

Second, organizational embeddedness is reflected in the presence of party structures down to the sub-district and village levels, which function not only during campaign periods but also in maintaining routine political communication with constituents. Interviews with party elites indicate that Golkar's organizational network has been maintained over time, enabling sustained interaction with community leaders and local groups. While the statement emphasizes historical continuity, analytically it reflects how Golkar's long-standing presence contributes to collective memory and symbolic legitimacy among voters. However, the relevance to the *roots* indicator lies not simply in being the "oldest party," but in how this historical legacy is translated into enduring voter identification and sustained community linkages at the local level.

Third, voter identification can be inferred from the party's continued electability in Sungai Penuh City, including in the 2024 election. The fact that Golkar maintained significant electoral performance even in cases where candidates faced extraordinary circumstances illustrates that support is not solely

candidate-centered but partially party-centered. This suggests that segments of the electorate identify with the party label itself, an important dimension of societal rooting.

Therefore, the *roots in society* of the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City are better understood not merely through its historical age or repeated victories, but through (1) the relative stability of electoral support across elections, (2) the sustained functioning of grassroots organizational structures, and (3) indications of party-based voter identification. These elements collectively demonstrate a degree of social embeddedness consistent with the institutionalization framework.

Furthermore, the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City maintains organizational linkages with a community-based religious organization, Al-Hidayah. Al-Hidayah, established in Jakarta on October 5, 1979, is a socio-religious organization rooted in Islamic values and formally based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. In Sungai Penuh City, Al-Hidayah operates actively through routine *majelis taklim* (religious study gatherings), women's religious forums, and social welfare activities.

Field findings indicate that the relationship between the Golkar Party and Al-Hidayah is not limited to incidental cooperation during election periods. Documentation of joint activities throughout 2023–2024 shows recurring collaboration in religious gatherings, community discussions, and social programs. For example, party cadres including the Chairperson of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Sungai Penuh City have periodically attended and delivered lectures at Al-Hidayah's *majelis taklim* events (see Figure 1). According to a sympathizer interviewed at the sub-district level, Golkar representatives are “often present not only during campaigns but also during routine religious gatherings.” This testimony suggests that the linkage is organizationally sustained rather than purely event-driven.

From the perspective of party institutionalization, such linkages may indicate *roots in society* when they reflect stable and routinized interaction between party structures and community organizations. However, it is important to draw a clear analytical boundary between institutionalized societal

embeddedness and short-term electoral mobilization. Collaboration with religious organizations can function as long-term social anchoring if it is embedded in formal party programs, documented in routine activity reports, and conducted beyond campaign cycles. Conversely, if engagement intensifies only near elections or revolves primarily around individual candidates' visibility, it risks being interpreted as candidate-centered strategy or soft clientelism.



Figure 1. Golkar Party Cadres of Sungai Penuh City with Al-Hidayah Religious Organization

A similar analytical caution applies to the party's response to the 2024 flood disaster that affected several sub-districts, including Hamparan Rawang and Tanah Kampung. During this period, the Golkar Party distributed basic necessities such as rice, cooking oil, instant noodles, clean water, and medical supplies (see Figure 2). On the surface, such actions demonstrate social concern and responsiveness to community needs. However, disaster relief can also be interpreted as "charity politics" if it is personalized, temporary, and framed primarily as campaign promotion.

To address this distinction, this study examines whether the flood response was coordinated through formal party structures and collective mechanisms rather than individual candidate initiatives. Interview data and internal coordination records indicate that the aid distribution was organized through the party's local board and involved multiple cadres across sub-district branches. Moreover, similar social assistance activities had been conducted in previous non-electoral contexts, suggesting a pattern of organizational engagement rather than a singular electoral gesture.

Nevertheless, the study acknowledges that in highly competitive local political environments, the boundary between institutionalized community engagement and electoral strategy is not always clear-cut. Therefore, the evidence presented here is interpreted cautiously: collaboration with Al-Hidayah and disaster relief activities are considered indicators of societal linkage only insofar as they are routinized, organizationally coordinated, and sustained beyond immediate electoral incentives. By incorporating documentation and testimonies beyond elite narratives, the analysis seeks to minimize the risk of conflating institutionalization with short-term candidate-centered mobilization.



Figure 2. Golkar Party Candidate goes to the field to review the flood situation and provide assistance

Regional House of Representatives candidates from the Golkar Party directly visited the affected communities, providing moral support and ensuring that the residents' needs were met. By showing a direct presence in the community, the Golkar Party strengthens its image as a Party that cares and is responsive to community problems. The Golkar Party's actions during the flood disaster increased public sympathy. These activities built an emotional connection between the party and the community, creating stronger solidarity. Therefore, the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City successfully fulfilled the variables conveyed by (Basedau & Stroh, 2008). The theory at the root of the society indicator, namely having a long history in politics, strong ties with community organizations, and the image built by legislative candidates in the community, is also good.

Autonomy

Autonomy (independence in making decisions) refers to the freedom of political parties from outside influences in making every decision and formulating party policy. In decision-making, the Golkar party is always guided by the party mechanism that has been formulated together. First, in decision-making, the Golkar party is always based on the rules outlined in the party's articles of association/bylaws, both when making party policy decisions and in political contestation events, such as legislative and regional head elections. Second, the party is always guided by the rules established by the government and election-organizing institutions, such as the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) and the General Election Commission (KPU). Regarding legislative elections, the Regional Leadership Council (DPD) at Level Two has the authority to recruit and select candidates for promotion. Then, the next decision will be made at a higher level.

From the perspective of external autonomy, the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City demonstrates formal independence. Interview data from party leadership indicate that decision-making is guided by the Articles of Association/Bylaws (AD/ART) and internal party regulations. Document analysis

confirms that recruitment procedures, candidate eligibility requirements, and hierarchical approval mechanisms are formally regulated. In addition, party officials emphasized compliance with electoral rules established by the General Election Commission (KPU) and oversight by Bawaslu. There is no empirical evidence suggesting direct intervention by state institutions, external donors, or specific interest groups in determining legislative candidates. In this regard, Golkar at the local level appears institutionally autonomous from external actors.

Within the framework of party institutionalization proposed by Basedau and Stroh, *autonomy* primarily refers to a party's independence from external actors such as the state, donors, business interests, or other organized groups in formulating policies and making strategic decisions. In this sense, autonomy concerns whether party decisions are free from external coercion or dependency. However, autonomy must be analytically distinguished from internal democracy. A party may be autonomous from external actors while simultaneously experiencing domination by a narrow internal elite. Therefore, this analysis differentiates between (1) external autonomy and (2) internal elite concentration of power, which may be described as "autonomy captured by internal elites."

The independence in decision-making is still coloured by the interests of a handful of party elites. Based on the interview statement of the Chairman of the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City, he stated that the candidate recruitment process was conducted in a closed manner. The selection process is carried out internally without opening up registration opportunities widely to avoid conflicts with candidates who are not selected. This contradicts the principle of openness mandated in the bylaws, as the party should provide equal opportunities to all cadres and the public who wish to participate. The decision on who will run as candidates is made directly by the Chairman of the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City, following profiling and tracking, without involving a wider deliberation mechanism.

As a result of this closed recruitment process, candidates from outside the party are joining the Golkar party, specifically two former cadres from the Democratic Party who have been designated as

Temporary Candidates on the List (DCS). However, they changed their direction and became candidates from the Golkar party, namely Mr. Hutri Randa and Mr. Arlis Kasim. The information compiled by Jarijambi.com media explained that before the determination of the Permanent Candidate List (DCT) of Legislative Candidates (Candidates) on November 3, 2023, the political constellation in Sungai Penuh changed. Two Democratic Party candidates included in the DCS chose to resign. After resigning from the Democrats, Arlis Kasim and Hutri Randa joined the Golkar party and were nominated as legislative candidates who would contest the 2024 elections.

The chairman of the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh admitted that several politicians had opened communication to join the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City (Interview, December 29, 2024). The Chairperson of the Democratic Party of Sungai Penuh City, Fajran, confirmed that party cadres had defected to another party, including Arlis Kasim, who held a position on the Democratic Advisory Board, and Hutri Randa, who was the Deputy Treasurer. Two former Democratic Party administrators moved to other parties for political reasons (Putra, 2023). The grassroots cadre at the sub-district level stated that candidate determination “was mostly decided at the top level, and we were informed after the names were finalized.” Similarly, a local political observer noted that recruitment in Sungai Penuh “tends to prioritize electability calculations and negotiation capacity, with decisions concentrated in the hands of the party chair.” These perspectives, combined with documentary evidence of formal procedures, indicate a gap between procedural norms and practical implementation.

The Golkar Party of Sungai City's decision to recruit external figures on a negotiation basis shows a closed approach and is not entirely based on open mechanisms. Fikar Azami, as the Chairman of the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City, played a significant role in determining who would be promoted to legislative candidates. This dominance creates a perception that the decision of the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City during the process of nominating legislative candidates is more centred on leadership rather than a collective process within the party. Electorally, this centralized and relatively

closed recruitment model produces ambivalent consequences. On one hand, elite-controlled selection may reduce factional competition, prevent internal fragmentation, and allow the party to nominate candidates with strong electability prospects. Several informants argued that this approach contributed to organizational cohesion ahead of the 2024 election and helped maintain vote stability. On the other hand, limited inclusiveness risks weakening perceptions of internal fairness, discouraging cadre participation, and potentially undermining long-term institutional consolidation. If cadres perceive decision-making as overly personalized, the party's societal roots and organizational loyalty may gradually erode.

This is not in line with the candidacy selection theory put forward by Rahat, (2009), which explains the nomination process as the procedure for determining who is nominated or selected as a party candidate. First, this process is qualified on two levels: inclusiveness and exclusiveness. In inclusivity, everyone can run as a candidate of colour, not only limited to party members or party administrators, but open to all citizens. In exclusivity, some conditions limit and restrict the right of a person or party cadre member to participate in the selection of candidates, making this recruitment pattern closed and undemocratic.

Typically, the intervention by the party elite may not align with the party's own wishes and desires. The interests of this elite can then align with the interests of the party. The intervention and interference of elite interests in decision-making render the party non-independent. This finding is in line with research from Primadi & Purwaningsih, (2019) This elite involvement is explained by the fact that they are donors to the Golkar party's progress at the local level. Therefore, the Golkar party does not wholly own autonomy in party decision-making. The autonomy of the Golkar party cannot be separated from internal party interventions. The issue of interests and elite domination cannot be eliminated in the party's decision-making process.

Level of Organization

In the theory put forward by Basedau & Stroh (2008), it is explained that the level of organization (organizational tools that consistently work for the benefit of the party at every level of management) means that the management at the top level, to the management at the lower level, works for the benefit of the party to provide victory in the election. In the context of the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City, facing the 2024 elections, there is a sense of solidity at every management level. The opinion from the interview with Mr. H. Arlis Kasim, a member of the Regional People's Leadership Council of Sungai Penuh City from the Golkar Party, stated that:

"This is inseparable from the policy or orders from the Golkar Party Central Leadership Council, which motivates all Golkar Party candidates not only in the city of Sungai Penuh but for all city districts in Jambi province. The most motivating role is mainly attributed to the Golkar Party Central Leadership Council. Then the Provincial Level I Regional Leadership Council and the Chairperson of the Full River City Level II Regional Leadership Council in this case indeed before we carried out the elections in 2024 yesterday in February, all candidates from the Golkar Party were equipped with materials that were very helpful for candidates to participate in motivating and then competing in advancing the Golkar party" (interview on December 2, 2024).

Based on the interview statement it explains that the tiered Golkar Party management structure, starting from the top-level management from the Central Leadership Council to the regional level (I and II), played an essential role in supporting the success of the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City as the winning party in the election with the success of a very significant increase in votes, namely 12,210 votes and won 5 seats. The true form of this solidarity is that the central Golkar Party management debriefs candidates at the provincial and district levels prior to the 2024 elections. This debriefing aims to enhance candidates' ability to communicate effectively with the public and overcome challenges in political competition. Moreover, this event is also an effort to foster chemistry at every level of party management, ensuring that it is viewed as a party consolidation. This is evident from the fact that the event was held on seven occasions (see Table 2).

Table 2. Golkar Party Central Leadership Council Briefing for Legislative Candidates in Jambi Province

No	Date/Year	Participant	Types of briefing	Description
1	November 1, 2023	Golkar Party Legislative Candidate	Motivation and Encouragement	The Central Leadership Council provides strategic direction to increase legislative candidates' fighting spirit, cooperation, synergy and loyalty to the party.
2.	November 5, 2023	Golkar Party Legislative Candidate	Campaign Strategy Development	Provision of strategies for approaching the community, such as outreach according to the characteristics of the electoral district, personal approaches, and social activities to build trust.
3.	November 12, 2023	Golkar Party Legislative Candidate	Mastery of Party Material and Golkar Party Vision-Mission	In-depth understanding of the Golkar Party's vision, mission, work program, platform, and techniques for conveying them clearly to the public.
4.	November 20, 2023	Golkar Party Legislative Candidate	Public Communication Training	Improving public speaking skills, such as lecture techniques, formal speaking, and answering questions from the public or media.
5	November 27 2023	Golkar Party Legislative Candidate	Political Education and Leadership	I learned about ethical and democratic political principles and how to become a leader representing the community's aspirations.
6	December 4, 2023	Golkar Party Legislative Candidate	Strengthening Internal Party Solidarity	Directions to ensure that legislative candidates support each other, work together, and avoid internal competition that could harm the party.
7	December	Golkar Party	Simulation and	Campaign simulations, such as

	10, 2023	Legislative Candidate	Practical Exercises. Strategy Adjustment Based on Electoral District	approaching voters, holding events, and addressing sensitive issues, as well as exercises to handle various situations during the campaign. Specific directions based on electoral district conditions, including local issues, community needs, and relevant strategies to increase campaign effectiveness.
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Source: processed by the author based on interview results (2024)

In addition, management at the sub-district level works intensively in coordination with city management to ensure that all party machines work together for victory in the 2024 election. The Golkar Party management at the sub-district level has a crucial role. This was conveyed by the Sub-district Leadership (PK) of the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City, who has worked hard to mobilize the party machine at the grassroots level to secure Golkar party votes. The Head of the Sungai Penuh Sub-district Leadership, Mustofa Kamal, emphasized that internal consolidation and solid coordination with cadres at the village and sub-district levels are the main strategies for securing party votes.

"We ensure that all cadres at the village and sub-district levels have the same understanding in implementing the winning strategy. Through regular meetings, we discuss local issues and steps that must be taken to gain public sympathy" (interview on December 7, 2024)

Furthermore, the sub-district leaders also build networks at the Neighborhood Association (RT) and Citizens Association (RW) levels to ensure that voters remain solid until voting day. Through this approach, cadres at the lower level are better prepared to convey the Golkar Party's programs and vision to the community. The Sub-district Leaders (PK) function as the party's spearhead in reaching the community at the grassroots level, so that the Sub-district Leaders (PK) become the vanguard in coordinating cadres at the village and sub-district levels, so that the party's strategy can run effectively

Coherences

Coherence can be interpreted as the unity of party members. What this means is the unity of party members in carrying out policies or leadership decisions so that defections do not occur and they remain firm in adhering to the party policies that have been taken (Basedau & Stroh, 2008). In this context, all policies implemented by the Golkar Party in Sungai Penuh City to prepare for the 2024 election begin with the legislative candidates they nominate and the campaign strategies they employ. The opinion from the interview with Mr H. Arlis Kasim, a member of the Regional People's Leadership Council of Sungai Penuh City from the Golkar Party, stated that:

“In facing the 2024 Election, the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City has consolidated 3 to 4 times with all cadres and sympathizers. Consolidation is achieved comprehensively by forming a solid volunteer campaign team, where each legislative candidate has assigned volunteers. This strategy aims to strengthen community support through a systematic approach. The first consolidation process is recruiting volunteer campaign teams committed to winning the Golkar Party. Following that, intensive training is conducted for the campaign team's cadres and volunteers to prepare them for the 2024 Election. They follow the intensive training program that is held. This training encompasses improving communication skills, enhancing political understanding, and developing effective field strategies. The formation of volunteer campaign teams is tasked with rallying support in the community in each region.”(interview on December 2, 2024).

Based on the interview results, it is explained that the efforts made by the Golkar Party management in Sungai Penuh City to consolidate all cadres and sympathizers in preparation for the 2024 election are routine consolidations. This consolidation is also an effort to ensure that the internal party is solid and there is no conflict. In this consolidation, the discussion relates to all preparations ahead of the election, including recruitment for the formation of special teams, such as the Success Team Volunteers, within each respective cadre. In the initial stage of consolidation, the Golkar Party recruited successful team volunteers who were committed to winning the Golkar Party. Each legislative candidate is required to have a solid support team that functions to rally support in various

regions. These volunteers play a crucial role in helping to communicate the legislative candidate's vision, mission, and programs to the public. After the volunteer team for the candidate was formed, the Golkar Party management in Sungai Penuh City held briefings and consolidation.

The Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City launched an intensive training program designed to enhance communication skills, political understanding, and field strategies for its cadres and volunteer teams. This program includes various activities such as campaign simulations and motivational sessions guided by political experts and community leaders. With volunteers and cadres who have the necessary knowledge and skills, the Golkar Party management of Sungai Penuh City hopes to create a solid and effective campaign team for attracting public support (Pratama & Frinaldi, 2024). The opinion of Mr. Jumiral Lestari. S. Ag as the Head of the KPU of Sungai Penuh City, stated that:

"From our perspective as election organizers, the steps taken by the Golkar Party management of Sungai Penuh City are part of a strategy commonly carried out by political parties ahead of elections, namely by consolidating. This shows the seriousness in preparing cadres and successful teams to work effectively in the field. In this case, each legislative candidate is permitted to have a volunteer team that assists in promoting their vision, mission, and programs. A systematic strategy like this certainly has the potential to increase public political participation, as voters will receive more information regarding the programs and visions of the candidates they support. Usually, this consolidation also provides training for cadres and successful teams, because this training is also to improve the skills of cadres and successful teams, and can help cadres better understand the political process." (Interview on December 3, 2024).

The consolidation strategy carried out by the Golkar Party can increase public political participation. With a team of trained volunteers ready to convey campaign messages, voters can more easily understand the vision, mission, and programs of the legislative candidates. This has the potential to increase public participation in the 2024 Election, as voters will receive more comprehensive and transparent information about the legislative candidates they choose. Another opinion states the same thing, namely Mr. Dr. Jafar Ahmad, S. Ag, M.Si as a Political Observer for Sungai Penuh City, Sungai Penuh City, stated that:

"From our observations, the Golkar Party of Sungai Penuh City has shown systematic steps in preparing for the 2024 Election, where there is a consolidation of legislative candidate cadres from the Golkar Party. Before the election, all political parties will hold a consolidation. Let's look at it from a political perspective. This kind of consolidation not only strengthens the internal cohesion of the party, but is also a way to build public trust, including the Golkar Party." (interview on December 12, 2024).

This consolidation not only strengthens the party internally but also helps build public trust. With a solid campaign team and trained volunteers, the Golkar Party can more effectively communicate with the public and convey its political messages clearly and concisely. This can, of course, improve the image of the Golkar Party in the eyes of the public, which can ultimately contribute to victory in the 2024 Election.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the increase in the Golkar Party's vote share in Sungai Penuh City in the 2024 election is associated with relatively strong dimensions of party institutionalization at the local level. Empirically, Golkar demonstrates (1) relative stability of electoral support across consecutive elections, (2) sustained linkages with community organizations and grassroots networks, (3) organizational coordination across sub-district structures (PK), DPD II (city level), DPD I (provincial level), and the central board, and (4) internal coherence among cadres and sympathizers during the electoral period. These elements suggest that the party possesses a degree of societal rootedness, organizational structuring, and cohesion consistent with institutionalization theory.

However, the autonomy dimension presents a more ambivalent picture. While the party appears autonomous from external actors such as state institutions or external interest groups, internal decision-making—particularly in candidate recruitment tends to be centralized within a limited leadership circle. This indicates that the challenge faced by Golkar in Sungai Penuh is not primarily

external dependency, but rather the concentration of authority within internal elites. Such a pattern reflects a tension between strategic electoral pragmatism and internal party democracy.

Therefore, rather than making a deterministic claim that institutionalization directly causes electoral success, this study concludes that certain dimensions of institutionalization especially societal roots, organizational solidity, and coherence are closely related to Golkar's electoral performance in Sungai Penuh City. At the same time, the centralized recruitment model contribute to short-term electoral efficiency by reducing internal conflict, but it also raises questions regarding long-term democratic consolidation within the party.

This study is limited by its single-case design and its focus on one local party organization, which constrains the generalizability of the findings. In addition, although triangulation was conducted, elite perspectives remain relatively dominant in explaining internal decision-making dynamics. Future research could adopt comparative designs across parties to assess whether similar patterns of “externally autonomous but internally centralized” institutionalization are observable elsewhere. Further studies may also integrate campaign strategy analysis and quantitative electoral data to more systematically examine the relationship between institutionalization and vote acquisition.

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