The Exclusiveness of Political Parties and Growing Corruption in Indonesia’s Democracy

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Abstract

The most common definition of corruption is the abuse of public office for private gains. This definition is well formulated by Klitgaard in his elegant equation: Corruption=Monopoly+Discretion–Accountability. In order to improve this formula and make it fit with Indonesian context, Sujatmiko modified it to: Corruption=Monopoly+Discretion–Accountability–Social Control. The addition of ‘Social Control’ to this formula provides a sociological ground into the theoretical approach to corruption. However, the resulted formula still relies on ‘office-based definition of corruption’—a definition that, according to Warren, fits well in the context of administration and bureaucracy, but inadequate to properly understand corruption in a political context. In the case of Indonesian politics, a more ‘political definition’ of corruption is needed, since the emergence of political party as a strong democratic institution provides a fertile domain for corruption to proliferate. Warren’s ‘democratic conception of corruption’ has given a way for this kind of definition. However, in the context of practical politics in post-Soeharto Indonesia’s direct electoral and multiparty system, Warren’s framework needs to be contextualized by examining how the ‘real politics’ works, especially in inter-actors relations centering on political parties’ crucial role in gaining and distributing political power. In this regard, this article shows how the exclusiveness of political parties encourages the proliferation of politically corrupted practices among political actors in Indonesia.

Keyword: corruption; electoral democracy; inclusiveness; post-soeharto Indonesia; political party
INTRODUCTION

In his letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton dated 1887, Lord Acton once said that ‘power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.’ It later becomes a well-known dictum in politics. However, the idea was not invented by Lord Acton himself, nor it was a new one at the time. Many others, especially liberal theoreticians, had had the similar idea that too much power concentrated in one ruler’s hand would multiply the potency of abuse or corruption. This very premise is still relevant today, where democracy has been institutionalized in many countries, including those ‘new democracies’ in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and some parts of Asia. One of its implications is the need to distribute power to several different institutions, each with specific norms, functions, and authorities.

However, it is proven that the establishment of democratic system and institutions doesn’t automatically eliminate corruption. As Mungiu-Pippidi (2013:102) noted, on the one hand, 12 out of 21 countries that have made significant progress in controlling corruption since 1996 are electoral democracies, but on the other hand, 10 out of 27 countries where control of corruption has weakened are also electoral democracies. These figures suggest that the linear relation between the holding of elections and lesser corruption is almost nonexistent; even though the common expectation is that long exposure to democracy would reduce corruption. Although experts and academics have been aware for so long of the persistence of corruption within democracy, Warren (2004) notes that the topic has been absent from democratic theories. He argues that there are missing links between the concept of corruption and democracy. It is precisely this conceptual gap that he tries to bridge with his conceptualization of corruption as ‘duplicitous exclusion’ (Warren 2004; 2006). From the explanations in some of his works, we can resume his definition of corruption as a kind of exclusion where those included in the process of decision making or collective action gaining benefits by doing harm to at least some of those who are excluded from the process.

Warren suggests that the most common definition of corruption, that is ‘the abuse of public office for private gains,’ is well suited to administrative and bureaucratic contexts but is inadequate to identify the corruption within political contexts, especially within democracy. In order to understand corruption in democracy, we need to scrutinize how
it operates in political process, defined as ‘the process of contestation through which common purposes, norms, and rules are created’ (Warren 2004). It is within and through this process that corruption in democracy works; therefore, we can say that democratic institutions have inherent trait that opens possibility for political corruption to occur. In fact, democracy provides a structure that ambivalently enables political corruption as well as necessary measures to resolve it.

As if taking prescription derived from Lord Acton’s dictum, in order to prevent and undermine corruption, the institutionalization of democracy requires the distribution of power. Therefore, as noted by Warren, ‘today’s democracy has evolved into ecologies of complementary and competing institutions and associations,’ where each institution has its own ‘logic of inclusion’ in consolidating and implementing collective actions. Warren identifies at least four main domains that comprise pillars of modern democracy, namely the state, public spheres, civil society, and markets. In accordance with each domain’s logic of inclusion, different logic of exclusion will assume forms and meanings specific to each, so that corruption will also work in different modes in these domains. It implies that the distribution of power in democracy will engender the distribution of corruption.

However, in electoral democracy like Indonesia, where there is a flourishing multiparty system, I argue that ‘democratic corruption’ as coined by Warren is not characterized by the differentiation of corruption alone. There is another trait that characterizes it: the emergence of institution that holds significant role in linking different institutions of power, namely political party. In modern democracy, political party is often perceived as the most corrupted political institution (Ishiyama 2015:35). At least in Indonesia, the Third Biggest Democracy in the world, political party takes the role as a main instrument to fill the niches of power by plotting men in public offices, especially in national and regional executive and legislative bodies. By playing this big role, political party would become a strong institution where political corruption thrives if there is no effective control to them.

This paper aims to discuss democratic corruption carried out through political party’s roles and functions in multiparty democracy of post-Soeharto Indonesia and attempts to suggest potential solution to tackle this problem. I suggest that we need to establish an effective control to political party to make them function well in strengthening democracy and advancing democratic institutionalization. However,
instead of focusing on establishing a watchdog for each democratic institution—therefore, giving way to the classic problem, ‘who will be the watchdog for the watchdog?’—I suggest that effective control should be nurtured inherently by improving institutional inclusiveness, including in political party. This is considering that the very cause of democratic corruption is exclusiveness that tends to be duplicitous and serves only the interests of few elites.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study was conducted using a qualitative method, i.e. desk research. Data used in this study was collected from various sources of literature, especially journal articles, news, and official reports published by government agencies, such as Indonesian Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS) and Corruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi/KPK).

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND DEMOCRACY

In defining corruption, Klitgaard provides an elegant formula: Corruption=Monopoly+Discretion-Accountability (Warren 2004). In order to make it suitable for the context of post-Soeharto Indonesia, Sujatmiko adds a variable to the formula, namely social control, so as to reformulate it to become Corruption=Monopoly+Discretion-Accountability-Social Control (Sujatmiko 2012). By adding social control, he aims to complement Klitgaard’s formula with sociological basis. This addition, in his opinion, seems to be necessary for Indonesia with its democratization which is spearheaded by regional autonomy and decentralization policy. Such sociological basis serves as a mean to direct a greater participation for the public in monitoring public affairs and offices; hence, pushing public offices to be more inclusive in order to prevent corruption. In terms of anti-corruption agenda, it marks some need for social audit.

We can characterize the above conception of corruption as ‘office-based’, a conception which works well in the context of administration and bureaucracy. Regarding to corruption of public officials, this definition helps us in understanding corruption they commit during their active duty. But, it is virtually unsound to help us understand how corruption occurs in the democratic process where they compete for power. For this political context, Warren suggests another conception
that he considers more suitable. In fact, not only offering a more political definition of corruption, Warren attempts to formulate a definition which is suitable for a democratic context. This is what he characterizes as ‘democratic conception of corruption’.

Warren defines corruption as ‘duplicitous exclusion’. According to Warren (2004; 2006), corruption involves unjustifiable exclusion. However, such exclusion alone is not sufficient to properly characterize corruption. At least two other characteristics must complement it: ‘a duplicity condition with regard to the norm of inclusion’ and ‘a benefit/harm condition with regard to the consequences of exclusion’. This means that in corruption, the corrupt both recognizes and violates at the same time the claim to inclusion owned by those who are excluded. The exclusion normally benefits the corrupt and harms at least some of the excluded. As a political problem, we must note that corruption causes some damages to deliberative processes in democratic institutions.

**INDONESIAN DEMOCRACY IN A GLANCE**

As I have mentioned in the introduction, Indonesia entered its latest democracy status in the dawn of twenty first century. For more than three decades it plunged to militaristic authoritarianism under the ruling of General Soeharto and his New Order regime. However, the authoritarian state of Indonesia did not begin with the rise of Soeharto as president. We can also characterize the previous president before Soeharto, Soekarno, as another Indonesian authoritarian ruler, at least in his concluding years when he abolished Indonesian “liberal democracy” by issuing Presidential Decree at July 5, 1959, and appointed himself as long-life president (presiden seumur hidup). In other words, although Indonesia once experienced democracy a long time ago, democracy has never been established in this country until the Reformation movement took place at the end of the twentieth century.

There are plenty of literatures and reports that provide data and analysis about contemporary democracy in Indonesia. For obvious reason, one of governmental agencies, namely Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS), also takes a task to measure the development and dynamics of Indonesian democracy. Its report on the topic is called Indonesian Democracy Index (Indeks Demokrasi Indonesia/IDI), a composite index whose scores are determined by three aspects of democracy: civil liberty, political rights, and democratic institutions.
This index was created for the first time in 2009 and is being updated annually. According to its scoring system, the performance of Indonesian democracy for any given year is classified as ‘bad’, ‘moderate’, or ‘good’. It is ‘bad’ if its score is less than 60%, ‘moderate’ if its score is between 60–80%, and ‘good’ if its score is more than 80%.

From 2009 until 2015, IDI is always situated in ‘moderate’ category, although it has been fluctuating from year to year. During those seven years period, score for the index of civil liberty is always higher than political rights and democratic institutions. It even reaches ‘good’ category, except for 2012 and 2013 when it only reached ‘moderate’ status. Meanwhile, the score of democratic institutions is always situated in ‘moderate’ category. As for political rights, its performance in the first five years of IDI measurement is always ‘bad’ (it scores less than 60%). It is within the last two years, 2014 and 2015, that political rights index made improvement to become ‘moderate’. It even performed better than democratic institutions in 2015 (BPS 2016).

Based on IDI results, we can conclude that civil liberty is the most established aspect of Indonesian democracy since the beginning of its democratization as an aftermath of 1998 Reformation, or at least since 2009 when this index was created. However, data provided by Freedom House shows a different result from that of IDI in some of its details. According to Freedom House, regularly issuing index about freedom in the world, since 2009 the performance of political rights in Indonesia has always been better than civil liberty. It contradicts IDI that shows the contrary. However, in general the two reports captured Indonesian democratization in a similar fashion, showing that Indonesia has a much better democracy than in the past; even relatively better than its contemporaries in Southeast Asia region. Compared to other countries in this region, Indonesia, along with the Philippines, has the best performance of democracy according to Freedom House rating. Both countries score 65 (out of maximum 100), and have the same ‘freedom rating’, that is 3. Other countries in Southeast Asia gain lower scores and only get the status of ‘not free’ (except Malaysia, whose status is ‘partly free’, just like Indonesia and the Philippines). In fact, recently in the region, Indonesia, the Philippines and East Timor are the only electoral democracies.

These two reports, one issued by an Indonesian governmental agency, another by an international organization concerned with democracy all around the globe, illustrate the development of democracy
in Indonesia which can be seen as relatively well. But from year to year, these reports, along with others by several other reputable organizations, keep highlighting an acute problem for Indonesian democracy that is yet to be solved, namely corruption. The long-term effect of this problem is worrisome. There were lesson learned from around the globe about this. Several studies shows that the perception of corruption is inversely proportional to voter turnout—the higher the corruption perceived by voter, the lower the turnout of the election (Bågenholm, Dahlberg, & Solevid 2016: 4–6). Školník’s study (2020) in Colombia also confirm this finding, with addition that the perception of corruption not only leads to low voter turnout, but also to people’s absence in other form of political participations, such as meetings and demonstrations. This, as noted by Warren (2004), will eventually undermine a country’s democracy. In the next section, I will discuss this problem by emphasizing on a certain democratic institution that I consider as the most tangible link that connects the practices of democracy with corruption in Indonesia today, namely political party.

CORRUPTION OF STATE BY POLITICAL PARTY ACTORS

In the last five years, Indonesia’s performance in combating corruption seems to show improvements. According to Corruption Perception Index (CPI) issued annually by Transparency International, Indonesia’s score has been improving from year to year, from 3.0 (equal to 30 in their newest scoring system) in 2011 to 3.2 in 2012, 32 in 2013, 34 in 2014, and keeps showing improvement until it hits 36 in 2015. However, Indonesia’s best rank is only 88 in 2015 (from 168 countries being surveyed). Despite of its improvement, 36 in score or 88 in rank is actually not good enough. It still indicates that corruption number remains high in Indonesia today.

Accordingly, in its reports on freedom in the world, Freedom House emphasizes the effects of corruption to the Indonesian government that makes it unable to show its best performance. Its reports on Indonesia always highlight the fact that ‘corruption remains endemic’ and become a major obstacle for the Indonesian government to perform effectively. For the last three years, Indonesia’s score on the aspect of government functioning is only 6 out of 12 (Freedom House 2014; 2015; 2016). Corruption is undoubtedly an obstacle for delivering good public services and performing effective government functions. But, paradoxically,
an intense anti-corruption movement seems to be a hindrance for accelerating infrastructure development. In 2015 higher officials in the central government stated that anti-corruption enforcement had been discouraging local leaders and officials to perform development due to potential incrimination if there was any mistake or error in the process. This was followed by the government’s initiative to issue a presidential regulation about public officials anti-incrimination, which sparked a controversy and hot debates in the public sphere. Corruption among public officials has been worsened by conflicts and acrimonies between several institutions who share the task and responsibility in the battle against corruption. It is well known that the Police and Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) tend to make rivalry among themselves which eventually peaked in 2015 when a chairman and a deputy of KPK were incriminated and got arrested for offences allegedly committed before their effective duty in KPK.

However, we need to notice that CPI focuses primarily on the corruption of public sector. TI defines corruption as ‘the abuse of public office for private gain’ (Rohwer 2009, 44), thus it relies on a definition which is ‘office-based’ in nature. There is nothing wrong with such definition. So far, it evidently works well and helps in directing a lot of measures to tackle down corruption in many countries. But, as Warren noted, this definition is limited to administrative and bureaucratic context. It is hard to employ this definition to identify corruption in a political context, especially within a democratic system.

Due to TI’s paradigm, the data provided by CPI only depict corrupt practices occurring in the process of administration and governance. Meanwhile, in reality, as in the case of Indonesian democracy, corruption already happens before the course of a new administration, that is during the democratic process of succession through the general election (in national as well as in local level). Especially during campaign period, a huge amount of ‘hot money’ circulates almost without any trace. It is followed by another phase where corruption may take place as well, that is when the new administration (under president-elect or local leader-elect) plots its associates or supporters in several public offices. At least during these two phases of transition from an old administration to a new one, corruption occurs massively. Political parties, of course, play a big role during these phases.

In Indonesia, political party becomes the main instrument to plot people for public offices. A new president certainly has the prerogative
right to decide who will assume certain posts in his/her cabinet or in some public offices. However, it is necessary for the president to secure his/her administration by establishing a political coalition, primarily with political parties that support him/her. Providing some posts in the cabinet and public offices for party cadres is the most common way to build such coalition. Therefore, it is actually not the president alone who decides who will become his/her ‘aids’; he/she needs to satisfy all parties that have supported him/her. This ‘necessary’ exchange, in turn, makes political party a major canal to distribute power within the new administration. It is an institution where many interests meet and negotiate to share the ‘cake’ of the new government. That is why political party can serve as a locus for corruption to grow. It is this kind of corruption which is unidentified by means of office-based conception of corruption. To provide a clearer illustration about corruption of political party, I will dedicate the rest of this section to describe the practices of corruption in state, which is divided into executive, legislative, and judiciary branches. I borrow the explanation mostly from Warren’s account on ‘democratic corruption’ and contextualize it to Indonesia.

Table 1. Corruption suspects and defendants based on position 2011-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Year 2011</th>
<th>Year 2012</th>
<th>Year 2013</th>
<th>Year 2014</th>
<th>Year 2014</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Member of parliament (DPR and DPRD)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chairman of Institutions/Ministry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Governor</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Major/Regent and Their Deputy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Echelon I, II, and III</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Law Enforcer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: KPK Annual Reports 2011-2015
### Table 2. Corruption Based on Type of Cases 2011-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Type of Case</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Procurement</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Licensing</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bribery</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Misuse of funds</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Money laundering</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Obstruction of justice</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Corruption of political party in the legislative branch**

The object of corruption in the legislative branch is representative linkages. A so-called legislative corruption may occur during a legislative election through vote-buying. It is a most common mode of political corruption in the electoral democracy. But legislative corruption does not stop there since it may also occur once the election is over and the new members of legislative body assume their position. In fact, corruption still infects deliberative processes during the law making and legislation in the House of Representative. Legislation processes tend to be closed and exclusive, where drafts are discussed by legislators without academic paper, public discussion, or public examination. This exclusiveness frequently gives way for bribery and illicit political transactions, among the most common modes of corruption in the legislative branch. In this kind of corruption, we can clearly see a corrupt coalition between legislators and business practitioners (market). Legislative corruption is driven primarily by the expensiveness of electoral costs and contributions that must be paid by the members of parliament to their respective parties.

In many surveys, the legislature, either in national or regional level, is often named as one of the most corrupt institutions in Indonesia. It is not hard to see the connection between the massive corruption in legislative bodies and institutionalization of political party, being
the political machine in a multiparty democracy like Indonesia today. Legislators are elected as representative of their constituent as well as representative of their party’s interest. During election, not only they have to ride the political party as the vehicle that brings them to power, they also have to spend a lot of resources in order to win an extremely expensive democratic competition. It is this ‘bloodbath’ competition that forms their need to get compensation by any means once they succeed in assuming position as legislator.

In addition, Reformation not only ended the era of executive domination marking the New Order’s rule, but also demanded power distribution, including to legislative bodies in order to balance the executive ones. It is not surprising, then, if legislature provides some sort of fertile domain for political party’s actors to gain benefits, especially economic and political ones. Among high profile cases of corruption in the legislative branch is the case of Democratic Party lawmaker Angelina Sondakh, who was sentenced in 2013 for receiving bribes related to construction contracts for the Youth and Sports Ministry. This corruption case was part of a larger scandal, in which Democratic Party treasurer Muhammad Nazaruddin was convicted for corruption a year earlier. It is worth to note that all political parties in Indonesian parliament have at least one member or cadre being convicted for corruption. As for today, even the newest party that participated in the national election for the first time in 2014, Nasdem Party, has a cadre who is sent to jail for corruption.

**Corruption of political party in the executive branch**

The mode of inclusion in the executive branch is based on public trust. Government, as the executor of collective decisions, has to be trustworthy in performing its duty to realize collective decisions mandated by the constitution and the people. Corruption occurs when the government betrays that public trust. The most common mode of corruption in the executive is by way of procurement and misuse of public funds. In this mode of corruption, a corrupt coalition between government officials and market actors is also apparent. Government officials who have affiliation with a certain political party are very likely to build a coalition with market actors, also affiliated to the same party, by giving them tenders in procurement or development projects.
Freedom House notes that, in 2014, it was estimated that more than half of 524 local leaders, either in province or city/regency level, have been named corruption suspects. Later, this high figure became one of the reasons used by the central government to justify its claim that intense anti-corruption measures contribute to the rise of public officials’ fear of corruption incrimination in 2015. According to the government, this affected local leaders and made them hesitate to make discretions in order to execute government projects and development programs. But many have denied this reason, especially anti-corruption activists and academics. They argued that the government’s initiative to solve the problem of slow development by issuing public officials anti-incrimination regulation potentially encourages corruption among local leaders and public officials.

Some academics also argued that there was a strong indication that the slow development and low budget absorption for infrastructures and public services were caused by some local leaders’ intention to suspend regional budget spending for political reasons. They tend to spend it as the time for a next local election nears. By doing so, the development programs and public service delivery can be used as political ‘sweetener’ in order to win voters’ sympathy and build public opinion that perceives the incumbent as a benevolent leader. Furthermore, it is most likely that corruption committed by elected local leaders is aimed to compensate their loss during political campaign and to return the contributions of their backers or sponsors.

**Corruption of political party in the judiciary branch**

The mode of inclusion in the judiciary branch involves fairness and equality. This branch’s main task is ensuring the stability and security of a democratic system. Corruption occurs when processes of law enforcement do not reflect fairness and equality. Acute corruption of political party in the judiciary system is strongly indicated by the extent of bribery and gratification involving officials from several law enforcement agencies, including the Supreme Court, attorney office and police. In addition, judicial processes quite frequently tend to exclude the public. The most common mode of corruption in the judiciary branch is bribery. In this mode of corruption, there is a coalition between law enforcers and actors from other fields who are caught in legal problems, including actors from political party.
Judiciary is supposed to be independent from any intervention. But, Freedom House in its 2016 report notes that ‘corruption remains endemic, including in the parliament and the police.’ We can take one major corruption case as an example. In 2013, former Police Inspector General Djoko Susilo was sentenced to 18 years in prison for corruption and money laundering. A newer case was the case of Police Commissioner General Budi Gunawan who was named corruption suspect by KPK just before his nomination as police chief by President Joko Widodo in 2015. This led to a new dispute in already acrimonious relationship between the Police and KPK. As the result, the President had to suspend the chairman and deputy chairman of KPK, Abraham Samad and Bambang Widjojanto, who were accused by the police of alleged crime that they committed before taking positions in KPK. Subsequently, the graft case against Budi Gunawan was dropped.

It is not only the police that is indicated to be plagued by corruption in Indonesian judiciary system. In the end of 2015, some judge and officials in PTUN (State Administration Court) Medan were arrested for their role in the corruption case of North Sumatra’s suspended governor Gatot Pujo Nugroho. A year earlier, the Indonesian public was entertained by the case of the then chairman of the Constitutional Court Akil Mochtar, who was convicted for receiving unlawful gratuity. Lastly, although there was no indication of corruption, Joko Widodo’s decision to appoint H. M. Prasetyo the General Attorney in 2014 was criticized because of potential conflict of interest, considering Prasetyo’s status as a politician of Nasdem Party.

INTERNAL CORRUPTION OF POLITICAL PARTY

We can trace corruption that is originated from political party actors as far as the structure and power relations go within the political party itself. In fact, power relations in political parties are still saturated by oligarchical hierarchy and centralistic decision making. For example, in Indonesian local democracy, political parties tend to implement a sort of centralism in recruiting local leader candidate to compete in a local election. Although the competition is local one, the final decision to determine a candidate is often made by elite circle in the central office. Meanwhile, it is not uncommon that political parties lack of internal cadres with competency to handle the mandate of becoming a local leader, leaving only a few of them who are successful in a local election.
and won it. The results of local election in many regions since 2005 keep showing us that the winner list is dominated by figures coming from outside of political parties, even though endorsed by them. These local leaders-elect usually are bureaucrats, retired armed force/police officers, businessmen, or activists.

There is another phenomenon in which a local leader-elect strengthens his/her alliance with a political party in order to maintain the power they hold for the next period. They make it work by appointing the local leader-elect as a local chairman for this certain party. For the local leader, a strong support resulting from this alliance will help him/her in carrying programs and policies during their office duty. At the same time, political party may gain a lot if their leader is the first person in their region. These external actors ‘naturalized’ by a political party are usually already popular in the society or have a lot of resources—especially economic ones to be contributed to the party’s programs and activities—before being named the local leader candidate by a party.

This phenomenon indicates that political parties’ method is far from systemic, regular and structured in organizing their recruitment and forming their cadres. As it happens, they often have to face obstacles in allocating their cadres in the executive or legislative bodies, since these cadres lack in competency and capability to run public offices. The most favorable move for a political party to ‘cheat’ on this shortcoming is to give their support or endorsement to certain candidates who come from non-party background. These are usually figures who have accumulated experiences and skills from institutions other than political party. In other words, they are human resources who have been raised in other places, be it civil bureaucracy, military, corporate, or even mass organization. It is not surprising then; even though the structure of power has changed fundamentally and is radically different from that of the New Order era, it is still dominated by figures whose background is bureaucrat or armed force/police retirement, just like in the New Order administration.

Ufen (2006) has identified that one characteristic developing among political parties in Indonesia during post-Reformation democratization is the emergence of ‘authoritarian personalism’. We can easily find this characteristic in a local leader when he/she runs his/her internal political mechanism. Two among its forms manifest in the grounds of a party establishment and its decision making mechanism (Ufen 2006:18-
There are several parties which are established as certain figures’ political vehicle to come to power in the first place. Democrat Party serves as a ‘classic’ example as a new party born to support a president candidate. In this case, the candidate was the former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono who successfully won two presidential elections in a row (2004 and 2009). As for an example of the second form, decision making mechanism, which is determined by one or few elites in the central office, we can look at Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan/PDIP). As the chairwoman, Megawati not only dominates the process of decision making within PDIP, she even has prerogative rights that enable her to make vital decisions without consultation to the leadership council (Ufen 2006:20). In addition, in every congress Megawati always emerges as a sole candidate of PDIP chairperson.

It is not uncommon that authoritarian personalism as mentioned before goes hand in hand with the muting of any internal criticism. It is common too for this anti-criticism tendency to work sufficiently well, thanks to the existence of ‘recall’ mechanism in the parliament. This mechanism makes it possible for a party to withdraw cadres from their role as legislator and replace them by others whenever the former are considered ‘disobedient’ or ‘undisciplined’ in playing their role as party functionaries. It is proven that party elites’ tendency of anti-criticism has pushed critical cadres to resign from the party. They often move to another party or even found their own party. With a lack of internal critics, the keys to decision making are held, almost absolutely, by few elites in the central office. It is these keys that they use to make alliances and political transactions with potential local leader candidates. It is logical, then, if the decision to endorse a local leader candidate is determined mostly by transactional political processes that occur in the central office. It surely contradicts the spirit of local election whose aim is to bring local leader nearer to their people; the ‘blessing from the central’ is proven to be the most important factor. In a certain sense, it is a New Order habit still being practiced until today.

That condition shows us that political party, even the big ones like PDIP and Golkar Party, are still struggling with crucial problems in candidate recruitment, even though they should already have established cadre forming mechanism and implemented it. Considerations to endorse internal cadres in a local election are frequently put aside to give way for a political transaction between external candidates and decision
makers in the central office. A lot of parties’ internal cadres must step aside because they lack in resources and proficiency to negotiate with the party’s higher officials. Thus, not only the recruitment process is concealed from public attention, it also becomes inaccessible for internal cadres in lower branches.

The exclusiveness of few elites in decision making, as discussed above, surely brings consequences. One of them is the high factionalism within a political party (Ufen 2006). It is quite common that within a party elites with different political views and beliefs tend to break away and form factions. In some cases, it even leads to the founding of new party that eventually becomes a competitor, either in national or local election. For instance, from Golkar, parties have born, such as Great Indonesia Movement Party (Partai Gerindra) led by former military general Prabowo Subianto, People’s Conscience Party (Partai Hanura) led by former military general Wiranto, National Democrat Party (Partai Nasdem) led by businessman Surya Paloh, and some smaller parties that failed to achieve electoral threshold in the previous election. It is also the case of PPP and PDIP despite the short lived parties these two bred—again, because of failure to achieve electoral threshold either in 2004, 2009, or 2014 election.

The centralism of policy making in political parties, especially when they are about to endorse a certain figure to become the local leader candidate, as I have explained above, can be understood as a duplicitous exclusion as conceptualized by Warren. A trade of interests between external candidates and party elites finally excludes not only their constituents in general but also their aspiring internal cadres. Instead of endorsing their own cadres, party elites often choose to sell their blessing to strong external figures with popularity or important resources, especially economic ones.

According to Mietzner (2007), this party’s tendency to sell a ticket for local election to external actors has been triggered especially by the party’s need for huge operational and political costs. Compared to internal cadres, external actors usually have more resources to meet the party’s needs. However, the political transaction between external candidates and party elites is possible because of the exclusiveness that the latter build by setting aside aspirations from their cadres in lower level.
CONCLUSION

The theoretical framework provided by Warren is arguably useful in identifying and analyzing corruption in a political context. It also works quite well to see the distribution of corruption in a democratic system in which power is not concentrated in a single institution (state), but distributed among several, including those characterized as non-state external institutions. However, this theoretical framework remains a normative one, and does not automatically explain how the distribution of corruption takes place following the distribution of power. By studying corruption of political party as an empirical case study—not only a function in a democratic system according to the normative theory—we can clearly see the process of this distribution. Political party plays a major role as a node for the distribution of power; hence, also for the distribution of corruption in a democratic system. This negative role becomes stronger whenever political party is allowed to grow uncontrollably into an exclusive and centralistic institution. Therefore, what must be done is discharging the political party’s exclusiveness while at the same time improving its inclusiveness. Thus, corruption of political party can be diminished, so that corruption in other fields whose distribution of power affected by it can also be minimized.

REFERENCES


