

Middle Class, WhatsApp, and Political Orientation: The Election of North Sumatera Governor, 2018

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Abstract-The Middle class is a social position that refers to wealth, education, mastery of science, technology, and access to information. This paper discusses the middle-class political orientation and the use of WhatsApp chat groups in the city of Medan in the election of North Sumatra governor in 2018. The middle class has a central position in the development of democratization. This group reflects the rational and objective character of the political process as a check and balance mechanism in an era of political decentralization. WhatsApp chat groups are used to discuss victorious candidates who are considered to have the same vision and mission as the middle class, namely getting the best regime. To explain this case, the public sphere theory is used with qualitative research methods. This paper aims to explain political orientation and the use of WhatsApp chat groups in the middle class in the city of Medan in the election of the governor of North Sumatra. The results showed that the middle class was co-opted on the understanding of political flow or identity politics through the politicization of religion, ethnicity, village, and Freeman. The middle class as an important part of democratization growth failed to represent itself in the North Sumatra governor's election because of the butterfly effect of the gubernatorial election in 2017.

Keywords-Middle Class, WhatsApp, Political Orientation, North Sumatera, Governor Election.

I. INTRODUCTION

Middle-class political orientation in the regions determines the direction and political policy at the national level. This assumption indicates that politics at the national level is political accumulation at the local level. The political goal is common good at the national level [1] reflecting the common good of the local political level. The use of WhatsApp is intended to test the orientation and political participation of the middle class in the gubernatorial election in the digital space. The WhatsApp [2] becomes the "public sphere" which is the space where the audience comes together and is bound by critical and rational debate. WhatsApp's digital public sphere is an important component of the democratization process because of two things: first, the public sphere is a forum accessible to many people so that it has the opportunity in participatory communication, and second, the debate is characterized by rational argumentation. WhatsApp [3] and [4] in digital technology is "mobilized by door-to-door and personal messages" with the exchange of arguments and issues of public interest. The contribution of technology to democracy gives the 'digital

democracy', with digital communication as a tool of democracy.

The city of Medan [5] is the first region in Indonesia which shows political, religious and economic ethnic division. According to writer [6], it occurs because of ethnicity, namely ethnic diversity, culture, religion, habits, history, customs or social system. This fact has an impact on the political orientation of the community. Political orientation based on primordial ties causes democratization to stop on the basis of ethnicity. Political activities such as the election of local executives rely on ethnicity. Political activities are locked up on the basis of religion, ethnicity, clan, nationality, and village. Another specialty of North Sumatra is the influence of freeman political activities.

The city of Medan [7] reflects an 'explosive ethnic mix society'. This society is formed because of ethnic diversity, ideological contrast and class differences that form a complex social environment. There are 16 ethnic groups, 6 religions are recognized by the state and 1 traditional religion. Therefore, this province is known as plural and multi-culture society, but according to writers [8], it does not reflect the existence of a dominant culture. Every ethnic group [9] has the freedom to develop its identity separately. At a certain level, the 'strategic stability of ethnic identity' [10] is a strengthening factor of 'ethnic games' [11] which is to use symbols of ethnicity as political capital. Ethnicity is seen as a 'political instrument'[12]; [13]; [14] or 'strategy' [15]. Therefore, ethnicity [16] is a personal reference, a source of motivation and a social construction that is 'social radar' to understand the social world. This fact is an indication of the formation of political behavior in North Sumatra based on political flow [17].

Three times the election of the governor of North Sumatra Province in the era of decentralization (2008, 2013 and 2018) is still trapped in ethnicity or identity politics. In fact, the 'butterfly effect' of the Jakarta Governor election 2017, feels more dangerous in the North Sumatra governor election 2018. The author [18] has shown the phenomenon of strengthening identity politics in post-Soeharto Indonesia, not least in North Sumatra, like 'native society' (*Putra Daerah*), 'native origin' (*Putra Asli Daerah*), same ethnicity or same religion.

On June 27, 2018, the North Sumatra governor was elected. Two candidates were appointed by the Komisi Pemilihan Umum (General Election Commission) namely *Eramas* (Edy Rahmayadi and Musa Rajekshah) and *Djoss* (Djarot Syaiful Hidayat and Sihar Sitorus). The election in 2018 demands a middle-class political orientation in the city of Medan. Data [19] implies that the middle class aged 25-45 years reaches 675,274 people. This amount is equivalent to 30.54 percent of 2,210,624 population as of January 2017. The growth of the middle class in 2017 has increased by 54.11 percent from 2010 amounting to 365,431 people (17.97 percent) from 2,032,789 population.

By the aspect of education, 15.27 percent or 103,169 people came from higher education (diploma and university) and the remaining 84.72 percent or 572,105 people came from junior and senior high school equivalent. When viewed from the aspect of private asset ownership, 51.02 percent of the 675,274 middle class have private homes, and 100 percent own motorbikes. While 63.34 percent have private cars that are purchased for credit or cash. The entire middle class has at least 1 smart-phone and 1 regular cell-phone. If viewed from the aspect of work, a small part of the middle class is the State Civil Apparatus (15.01 percent), NGO journalists and activists (0.02 percent), as well as private teachers and lecturers (9.03 percent). As much as 36.07 percents are shop and workshop owners, amounting to 53.01 percent are the middle management of private companies and 4.86 percent are home industry owners

The middle class in the city of Medan has not shown the establishment of democracy. Most of the middle class are co-opted on the understanding of political flow (*Politik aliran*). Democracy is understood to strengthen identity politics, namely the politicization of religion, ethnicity, village, and Freeman. Although the middle class is an important part of democratization growth, this group failed to represent itself in the gubernatorial election. Studies [20] about the middle class in the middle towns (provincial towns) show the tragedy of democracy. The middle-class position in the political arena shows that this group enjoys democracy but uses political skills and its patronage network to make the system benefit themselves. This group always ignores the national elite and the poor societies. This paper analyzes the middle-class political orientation and the use of WhatsApp in North Sumatra 2018 gubernatorial elections.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

This research was conducted qualitatively. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews and questionnaires. Before the questionnaire was disseminated, an interview was conducted first about the purpose and confidentiality of the research data. Post-distribution of questionnaires conducted in-depth interviews with 10 informants who were considered to represent the middle class in the city of Medan. In-depth interviews were conducted to study intensively, in detail and in depth about the middle-class political orientation or

disorientation in the 2018 governor election in Medan city.

The selection of informants was done by snowball purposive. A purposive informant is based on the specific objectives of the research, namely the middle class. Snowball is done because the presence of informants is difficult to know so it must be through information from the first informant. The Questionnaire contains 15 questions with 4 answer options available. Each question is the same for each informant. Questions include: i) recent education, ii) employment, iii) business entity owned, iv) position, v) amount of income per month, vi) average expenditure every day, and vii) assessment of the track record of governor candidates, viii) expectations of changes during the leadership of the elected governor, and ix) the most needed factor of the elected governor. The other 6 questions are an extension of each component of the questions above.

A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed in the city of Medan for two weeks (April 1-14, 2018). The questionnaires were distributed to informants with criteria: informants lived and worked in the city of Medan, informants aged between 25-45 years, and were willing to fill out questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to informants who were spending their free time in the afternoon in shopping centers, especially SP, CP, TP and MW foodcourts. The fourth place was chosen because it was considered a relaxed elitist representation in the city of Medan. By the 500 questionnaires distributed, the informants obtained 427 people. Through the process of editing, coding and cleaning data, the final number of informants was 398 people. This number is the middle class analyzed in this study. The analysis is carried out in-depth using descriptive statistics namely presenting data in the form of tables or graphs without generalizing the final conclusions.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. *The middle-class in the city of Medan*

The research subjects namely the middle class in the city of Medan are 398 people. They are middle class aged between 25-45 years, work and settle in Medan, between 8-22 years (proven by identity Card). A small number of them are local migrants from outside North Sumatra, and most are local immigrants in North Sumatra. From the aspect of education, 157 people or 39.44 percent of the informants were junior and senior high school graduates equivalent, the remaining 241 people 60.55 percent were diploma and university graduates (figure 1), see below.

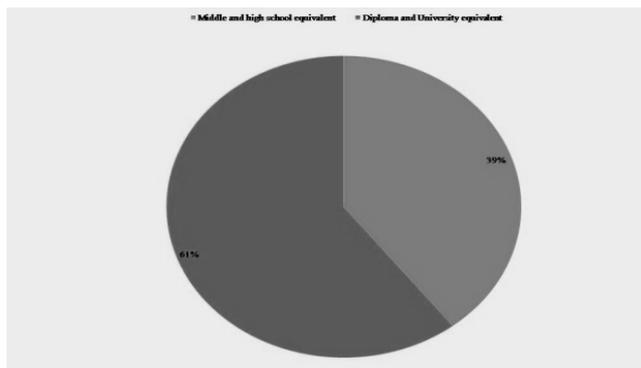


Fig. 1 Percentage of middle-class in the city of Medan based on educational level

Judging from this aspect of education, the middle class is far greater in the level of diploma and university education. They emerged as a middle class in the city of Medan because of high work motivation that was pioneered since their teens. This fact is actually an indicator good enough for economic growth, especially the democratization process at the local level.

From the aspect of jobs, 8.02 percent of the research informants were the State Civil Apparatus, as much as 7 percent were journalists, members of Political Parties and NGO activists, 8.01 percent were private teachers and lecturers, 39.01 percent were shop owners and workshops, 31 percent is a middle management private company and 6.96 percent is the owner of home industry and company (figure 2), see below.

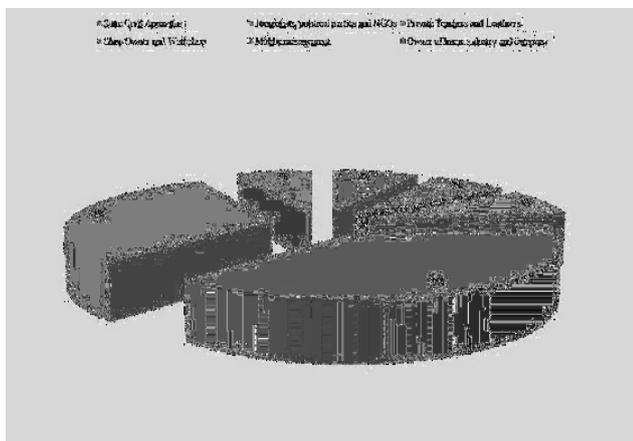


Fig. 2 Research informants based job

From the data above, it is clear that the majority of the middle class in the city of Medan come from middle-class entrepreneurs and middle management. They spend their time reading news online and print at least 1-2 hours per day, especially on time, jobs breaks and evenings. The average print media that is read reaches three media, namely An, Kom, and Tri. Online media that is read reaches five media with various types of information and news such as politics, business, and economy, as well as infrastructure development, shopping, and recreation. This group is the community social class that practices e-commerce the most, uses e-pay, and has several credit cards from various banking companies.

From the aspect of asset ownership, 72.01 percent have private homes, 100 percent own minimum 1 motorbike. While 91.02 percent have private cars. The entire middle class has at least 1 smartphone and 1 regular cellphone (table 1). This data shows that the middle class in Medan city has fulfilled secondary needs and is transitioning to tertiary needs. In principle, the middle class in the city of Medan is already free from absolute needs and precisely penetrates tertiary needs. The vertical mobility of this group is quite high, either because of official visits, work trips or domestic and foreign tours.

TABLE I. PERCENTAGE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS IN MEDAN BASED ON ASSET OWNERSHIP

n	Asset ownership	Percentage (%)
398	Private homes	72,01
	Motorbikes	100
	Car	91,02
	Smartphone and cellphone	100

Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, the city of Medan indicates the growth of the middle class. The years 2017 it increased by 54.11 percent from 2010 amounting to 365,431 people (17.97 percent) from 2,032,789 total population. Nationally, the middle class in the city of Medan contributes 0.91 percent of the 74 million middle class in Indonesia in 2016. See the figure 3 below.

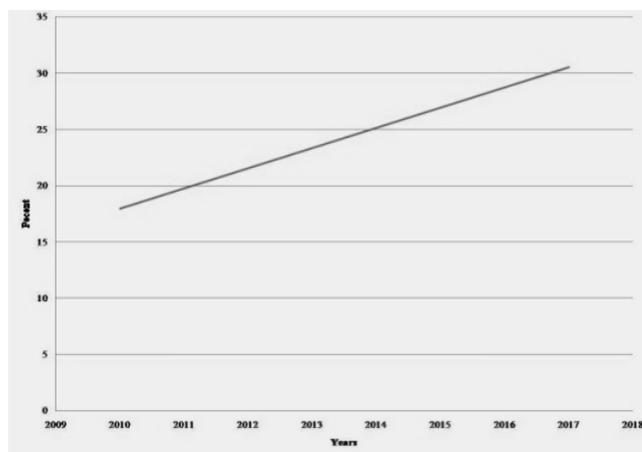


Fig. 3 The middle-class growth in the city of Medan, 2010-2017

In addition, based on data from the General Election Commission of the city of Medan (2018), it is known that there are 1,513,835 Permanent Voter Lists (*Daftar Pemilih Tetap*). By this amount, 44.60 percent is the middle class (table 2). This data shows that the position of the middle class in the city of Medan is very vital, especially in two ways: first economic growth, and second its role in democratization. Especially the middle class in the city of Medan has a positive contribution to the substance and essence of the North Sumatra governor's election.

The comparison of the middle class with the total population and the number of Permanent Voter Lists in years of 2018 are as follows:

TABLE II. PERCENTAGE OF THE MIDDLE-CLASS TO POPULATION AND PERMANENT VOTER LIST

n	components	amount	(%)
675.271	Total population	2.210.624	30.54
	Permanent Voter List	1.513.835	44,60

B. The Middle-class political orientation

In the year 2018 North Sumatra Governor election presents something 'new' as well as 'bad' where money, religion, ethnicity, and free-man become a new political subculture. These factors become very cruel new styles to achieve political power. Religion is politicized as a political force that calls for choosing candidates for 'faith'. This politicization has been seen since March 2018 which was carried out through lectures in religious pulpits or the prominence of scriptural symbols on campaign props. In addition, other models are used down in the congregation, '*halal bi halal*', '*sedekah*' (alms distribution), religious tourism, and rejecting different religious candidates. In the end, the middle class and grassroots became co-opted because of the massive politicization of religion in North Sumatra.

In addition to the politicization of religion, ethnic politicization occurs intensively. Two candidates competing in the 2018 Governor Election play ethnic themes. Djoss candidate reflects Javanese and Toba ethnic cumulation. This candidate hopes for support from the ethnic groups like Angkola, Karo, Pakpak, Simalungun, and Mandailing especially Christians. Eramas candidates reflect the cumulation of Aceh and Pakistan. Eramas candidates claim to be part of Malay ethnicity, Mandailing, and Aceh because of marriage. Judging from the quantity, this ethnic population is minor in North Sumatra. However, the minor ethnic support achieved (if playing ethnic politicization) then victory will be difficult to achieve. Therefore, this candidate pair prefers the politicization of religion as a means of mobilizing voters into the voting booth. Nevertheless, this candidate continues to attempt to politicize ethnicity through the statement of "*Putra Daerah*" (origin natives) and "*Bukan Putra Daerah*" (non-native). The Eramas candidates claim that North Sumatra's origin natives are doubtful. While Djoss candidates are claimed to be non-natives of North Sumatra. Although Sihar Sitorus is the original natives of North Sumatra from the Toba ethnic group, Djarot Syaiful Hidayat is from Blitar, Central Java. This situation has an impact on the invitation to choose from patron Eramas so as not to vote for import leaders. More specifically to Djarot Syaiful Hidayat, a stigma was formed for a failed executive candidate in the 2017 Jakarta Governor Election.

Ethnic and religious politicization spread to most of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN), political figures,

political party bosses and bureaucrats in North Sumatra. They show a political attitude that is not neutral. Through the government stage, they do not hesitate to show a pro attitude towards one candidate. The WhatsApp chat groups are used to judge other candidates. Judgment is done not because of the candidate's superiority, but rather the pro status quo. They oppose the other candidate's tagline: '*SUMUT: Semua Urusan Mudah dan Transparan*' (All Easy and Transparent Affairs) is very paradoxical with '*SUMUT: Semua Urusan Mesti Uang Tunai*' (All Matters for Cash) which is the expression of North Sumatra.

In addition to ethnic and religious factors, another factor in hijacking democracy in North Sumatra is the politicization of *Preman* (Freeman or *Vrijman*). The two Freeman organizations referred to are *Pemuda Pancasila* (Youth Pancasila) and *Masyarakat Pancasila Indonesia, MPI* (Society of Pancasila Indonesia). The control of these two organizations is the breed of the '*Shah Bersaudara*' (Shah Brothers). The parent of MS (vice-governor candidates) is AS based in the Cemara Asri Medan known as the main patron in the PP organization. In the MPI organization are AS siblings like MSS. The concentration of these two organizations is in Langkat, Binjai, Medan, and Deliserdang. When these four regions alone can be controlled, the governor's contestation can be won.

Two weeks before the gubernatorial election, the two organizations intimidated upper and middle-class entrepreneurs in Binjai, Medan and Deli Serdang. In the Medan Industrial Estate (*Kawasan Industri Medan*) in Mabar and Tanjungmorawa, the company bosses encourage employees to choose specific candidates. If not, the company is certainly not safe. The main patron as the godfather of both organizations is the AS. However, it is important to remember that the figure behind the two organizations is Muji, a billionaire and the boss of PT. CAG. This figure has the closeness and control of the AS to secure and smooth business networks in North Sumatra.

Actually, the involvement of Freeman organizations in the gubernatorial elections in Medan did not occur in 2018. The author [21] and [22] showed the involvement of this organization in the election in North Sumatera. At that time, this gangster organization was still outside the power but could affect the governor's victory. In 2018, one of the sons from the PP and MPI organization became an executive candidate in North Sumatra, the vice governor.

The recapitulation of the vote count for the gubernatorial election in the city of Medan shows the victory of Eramas candidates. The total votes obtained by this candidate are 551,641 and Djoss are 357,377 votes. The number of votes entering the Eramas candidate in the city of Medan came from Islamic voters while the vote to enter Djoss came from non-Muslims. However, a large number of Chinese middle classes such as those in Cemara Asri, Malibu Indah, Brayan Kota, and Kesawan

housing did not convey their political aspirations. They prefer non-voting behavior. The ‘bad’ governor contestation in North Sumatra illustrates the failure of the democratization process in the region.

The position of governor is seen and interpreted as a representation of ethnicity and religion. Political parties legitimize this reality without trying to present multi-candidates. The impact is the breakdown of the democratization process because it rejects pluralism. Social media like WhatsApp is used to kill candidate characters through slander, hate speech, persecution including hoaxes. The campaign props are not separated from defamation against other candidates. Intensive use of religious pulpits and the prominence of scriptural symbols refer to the ambitions of power and lack of political education. The ‘butterfly effect’ of the Jakarta governor election in 2017 was more dangerous in North Sumatra. The reality of the gubernatorial election in 2018 is certainly made an impression on the head of each voter and has the potential to damage the plural and multicultural society record.

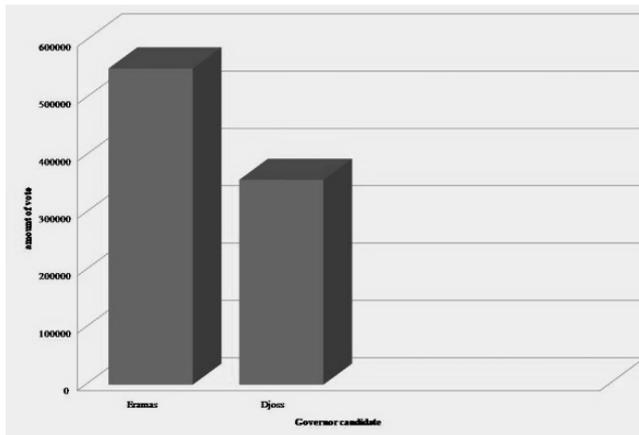


Fig. 4 The vote of acquisition of North Sumatra governor election in the city of Medan

Observing the North Sumatra governor's election process, the middle class in the city of Medan can be divided into four typologies based on their political orientation. *First*, the middle class is open society such as middle class and professional entrepreneurs. Most of the middle class in this typology are middle management private companies. The number of the middle class is the largest of the four middle-class typologies in the city of Medan. They expect government intervention on broad economic opportunities. The community group that has the most relations with the local government because of the images and expectations of future economic resilience and change. For this group, democracy has a direct impact on their personal and business lives. They expect the change in North Sumatra, infrastructure improvements, elimination of illegal levies, urban arrangement, ease of licensing, transparency of government and especially the clean government. For this group, the position of governor is not seen from the primordial attributes attached to him and the elected governor. This group is a reflection of community groups open to change. They used WhatsApp

chat groups across primordial attributes and discuss any future expectations.

Second, the middle class comes from civil servants. This middle class is the status quo pro group. According to [23], the voter politicization of the State Civil Apparatus to win certain parties by means of mono-loyalty. They hope the elected governor is a figure who gives the opportunity to prey on the economic resources of the government through corruption, nepotism, and manipulation. Twice the elected governor in the era of political decentralization in North Sumatra confirmed this assumption. Both were sent to prison for corruption, a number of service heads (*Kepala Dinas*) and legislative members. A similar reality occurred in Medan, two mayors were caught in corruption cases. This middle class wants the elected governor to have in common with the previous government so that positions can be bought. The money politics in North Sumatra is manifested through SUMUT: *Semua Urusan Mesti Uang Tunai* (All Affairs of Cash Payment). Similar facts are not much different in the city of Medan. Based on the research informants, the political orientation of the middle class was split in two according to primordial attributes, especially religion and ethnicity. They are closed WhatsApp chat group for their community only.

Third, the middle class is a black businessman. They are the middle class who grew up with a dirty regime system. This middle class is a community group that is described as ‘bossism’ or ‘local strongman’ behaves ‘predatory political brokers’. The formed political network prioritizes clientelistic towards certain candidates. The power of money, threats, and criminals are treated to mobilize voters. They expect democracy, not for the common good but instead for dirty activities such as managing to park, extorting entrepreneurs, buying and selling land, displacing businessmen are considered opponents, opening forests for business purposes, backing black entrepreneurs and others. This middle-class group is freeman behaves ‘godfather’. At the moment of political decentralization, the opportunities they were involved in local politics were increasingly wide open. The strength of this group lies in its position as a ‘mafia’ to control democracy in the region. In this group, the candidate's primordial identity is not very important. The most important thing is the conspiracy opportunity that can be formed with the elected governor. They used WhatsApp chat group to maintain legitimacy in certain candidates.

Fourth, middle-class patterned. They are a community group from middle-class families who work as civil servants, middle-class entrepreneurs, teachers or lecturers, journalists, NGOs and others and complete higher education (diplomas and universities). However, the way of thinking is still co-opted by primordial attributes, especially religion. This middle class is the group most often politicizing religion and making it a political force. Religious politicization is carried out through social media and networked. This group ignores opportunities for economic change, transparency, or capability. The election for this group is a way of determining and

electing the governor of one religion. The hate, slander, and hoaxes are the theme of WhatsApp discussions among their communities.

The reality of the middle class in the city of Medan failed as a driving force for change. The middle class in the Medan city is fragmented based on political flows, which is an effort to build a middle class according to primordial attributes. The lack of role of the middle class in the city of Medan occurred to: first, the failure of election organizers to spread electoral devices, second, the poor candidacy process for governor elections, third, the massive incitement based on primordial attributes, and fourth, the growing intimidation for most middle class in Medan city. The impact is that the middle class in Medan is unstable. Although the number of middle class in this city is quite large, it is unable to produce significant political change. Although the middle class in the city of Medan has the ability to assess candidates according to the candidate's track record, development program, change agenda, expectations of economic change, welfare expectations and economic expansion and opportunities. However, their orientation is covered by covert policies from local political actors.

Another fact is that the involvement of the middle class in Medan in political organizations is very low. The middle class chooses not to be involved in political organizations because distrust of the organization produces the best regime. Actors of political organizations are opportunistic and liars. They are considered democratic hijackers. The middle class in Medan chooses to focus more on career and peaceful life than participating in politics. The fact is the middle class in Medan [24] that the political orientation of the middle class in Southeast Asia (including Indonesia) is very low. They prefer the election as a means to convey their political aspirations.

The quality of the middle class democracy in North Sumatra [25] shows mafia conspiracy, machinery (political parties) and mobilization to prey on local resources. This kind of political orientation reflects the symptomatic 'gangster democracy' in Southeast Asia [26]. The process of democratization in various regions in Indonesia [27] is the quality of 'democratic patronage'. The behavior of this middle-class cannot escape money politics [28] namely behavior as a predatory political broker [29]. The reality of the middle class in medium-sized cities in Indonesia is explained [30] parallel to the assumptions of Liddle, Pelzer, and Perret in the city of Medan.

The fragmentation of the middle class in the city of Medan occurs because of the view of greater access to state resources. The quality of democracy reflected in the urban middle class as in Medan is colored by clientelistic tensions. Middle-class political orientation in Medan is similar to Thailand [31]; [32] and [33] democratic piracy through political clientelism. The political behavior of the middle class in Medan is like the Philippines, namely bossism [34] because of the power of capital, and

coercion. This political phenomenon resembles a local strongman in Thailand [35].

The learning from the reality of the contestation of the governor of North Sumatra, it seems that political understanding still tends to be sectarian. The middle class in the city of Medan is still stuck with clientelistic and slightly shifted to neo-patrimonial. In fact, the middle class in Medan city is difficult to get out of patron-client networks, anti-liberal, and intimidating. The reality of the middle class in the city of Medan is reminiscent of studies [36] and [37] about political relations in the New Order.

A peculiarity of new practices in North Sumatra is the participation of thugs in the contestation of governors, mayors, and regents. This fact makes the middle class in North Sumatra, especially in Medan, unable to escape the politicization of primordial attributes. As a result, the role of the middle class in the city of Medan does not significantly influence the democratization process in local politics. This fact is unfortunate because of patronage, clientelistic accompanied by intimidation turned out to be able to block the rate of middle class political participation. Departing from the above description, political orientation and the position of the middle class in the city of Medan failed to produce the best regime through gubernatorial elections. However, with all the shortcomings and advantages of political choices after the New Order, it has provided space for the urban middle class to take part in determining its leaders. Although its role is still co-opted, the emergence of the middle class in North Sumatra cannot be separated from the process of political democratization that occurred in Indonesia in the post-New Order era. From a demographic perspective, the emergence of an urban middle class not only serves as a driving force for the economy, productive age or groups that are physically and mentally considered capable of carrying out economic activities that contribute to the nation's economy. However, the middle class greatly contributes to determining the 'common good' of political decentralization after the New Order, namely the motor of economic, social and political change. The involvement of the middle class in the city of Medan in political parties is indeed low. However, they show concern for changing political conditions in a better direction. Their observance of political conditions is seen in contemporary political ornamentation, especially political organizers. The political changes they hoped for would certainly increase the confidence of the middle class in the future.

C. WhatsApp and middle-class politics

Some scholars are political and communication [38]; [39]; [40]; [41]; [42]; [43]; and [44] have tested a new format of political communication in the digital era. Their study referred to the correlation between the function and effectiveness of social media in political activities. According to them, social media can influence views and assessments of political activities. In fact, even every citizen of a country bound by socio-cultural differences

has the potential to be affected when the political activity takes place.

The social media according to [45] has roles such as: *first*, the propaganda tools to gain audience support, *second*, the platforms that are able to connect every situation with individuals anywhere, and *third*, used for policies towards the audience. The contribution of information and communication technology today cannot be avoided. The internet and social media spur discussion, selection, and filtering on political activities from candidacy to regional head elections. In fact, online social media is an instant dissemination of any data that comes from official or unofficial sources.

Since 2014 in Indonesia, Twitter has been replaced by WhatsApp. This change is in line with the use of WhatsApp in the presidential elections namely Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla. At that time, Facebook and especially WhatsApp became the main media for the formation of the victorious candidate Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla. During the presidential candidacy process, WhatsApp was used to discuss slanted news, socialization of political campaign programs, strengthen the solidarity of fellow audiences and form a positive image of Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla. The use of WhatsApp in political activities in 2014 was then replicated and practiced in the regional head elections including in North Sumatra in 2018.

WhatsApp is a cross-platform messaging application that allows exchanging messages using internet data packages. The Use a 3.G and 4.G or Wifi internet connection for all data communications. Through WhatsApp, allows online conversations, sharing files like photos, videos, audio, location, and contacts or sending messages. The WhatsApp application can be connected to e-mail and part or all of the message can be copy and paste. Jan Koum was founded, developed and released in January 2009 in the United States. The WhatsApp application can only work for fellow users who have the WhatsApp application. The application uses a cell-phone number used to interact with fellow users. The WhatsApp application can be done with broadcasts which send messages to many users, or chat groups are sending messages only to fellow community members.

The WhatsApp has a role as a platform to support the Success Team (*tim sukses*) or the Winning Team (*tim pemenangan*) in a broad scope to the audience. The political debates on WhatsApp according to the themes distributed by the Success Team were responded to by various audiences. According to [46] allows users to follow, join and contribute to candidate debates in the digital space. The assessment of candidates from users can be forwarded to other WhatsApp groups or distributed to broadcast. For users who do not have appreciation can leave the WhatsApp group or for users who have an interest in candidates can share their digital experience with other groups. This situation makes WhatsApp very potential in political life, especially to bind users with

other citizens, political actors, and professional journalists.

Middle class position in political life in Indonesia is very important. The middle class is very important because it involves two things: first a fundamental explanation for knowing many aspects of social and political life that have been vaguely associated with abstract Indonesian culture such as the rise of religion, ethnic identity, and village solidarity and a kind of chaotic unification between democracy, corruption and anti-market sentiment, and secondly decentralization is the central agenda of the middle class bureaucracy, namely the minimal role played by marginal people in post-1998 reform.

The middle class in urban areas is the basis for changes in political orientation. This is because the city has become an open place for political agencies. The city also offers an assertive process from the city itself to fight the metropolis, or against the village or against other classes in the city itself. The cities in Indonesia are places where political leaders demand regional autonomy, direct elections and even resistance to global markets. The city of Medan [47] is a '*tanah tak bertuan*' (no man's land) which is the most dynamic element that has a major influence on social and political conditions in Indonesia.

The middle class has a big role in changing the political structure mainly due to education and mastery of information and communication. The change in the political structure is the result of "the best regime" which has a comprehensive national development vision, namely policy and financial transparency, promotion and open career mutations, hopes for economic goodness, resilience to global markets and opportunities for the economy and the world of work to be a hot topic of discussion on middle class group. This situation indicates that the middle class does not speak to its personal interests but precisely to the interests of regional and even global communities.

In addition to an integrated lifestyle with global tastes, the middle class is seen from the awareness of political democracy in a country [48]. The mindset of the middle class is not separate from changes in economic structures that occur at the local and national levels. Middle class political orientation also supports industrialization and the widest possible expansion of trade. The integration of global markets into Indonesia also influences middle-class political orientation. Prior to 2005, Indonesia's middle class was more seen in consumption patterns and lifestyles, commercial advertisements, fashion, lifestyle, entertainment, and social clubs. In addition, the middle class [49] and [50] are supporting structures for consumption and capital expenditure, so since 2005, the middle class has been seen as a major political factor.

Observing the course of the direct election process, the campaign of political ideas is no longer carried out through community mobilization in the open field. In line with the massive use of information and communication technology, the campaign shifted (though not completely)

from the open field of the land world to cyberspace. Therefore, the political campaign process in North Sumatra also operates in two worlds. Tragically, cyberspace is more violent than the land world. The grouping of communities in WhatsApp groups is actually a means of judging other candidates through blasphemy, hate speech, slander or hoaxes. For political actors in the North Sumatera governor election in 2018, it seems that the land world still shows cautious behavior, but on the contrary, the virtual world becomes a wilderness that presents wild animals that prey on each other.

Through cyberspace [51] hatred is sown and humanity becomes bland. This symptom is in line with the view of the social theorists who are called 'post-truth society' namely 'post-fact society' [52]. This reality is dark sides in the political world [53]. The dark sides of politics are distorted presentations, which obscure the fact that the existence of politics is to facilitate the universal well-being of human society. In the broader context, democratic decentralization in North Sumatra through general elections is being mocked. Digital ecosystems in essence [54] are empty spaces that have the potential to enter various motivations, interests, and games. However, for the 'political criminals', instead they use it to destroy democracy's buildings and civilizations for money, power, and chaos that are difficult to avoid. Thus, the democratic order in the present is being plowed. The same situation happened in Moldova [55] that Twitter ripped through democracy in the country. The Twitter revolution was used as a means of promotion and democratization of the hybrid regime, or a combination of elements of the system of political democracy and authoritarianism.

In this studies, the social media like WhatsApp is a hate campaign, slander, and hoax. Through this media, democracy is plowed, mocked and interpreted according to its political interests. Political elites make democracy through the internet and social networks. Character killings, hoaxes, hate speech, and persecution is sent from WhatsApp chat groups. The hoax news is discussed in the WhatsApp group or discussed at internal meetings or coffee shops. The effect is the formation of partial understanding of the 'common good' among grassroots. Therefore, social media networking cannot be relied upon to enrich and strengthen contemporary democracy the election of Governor of North Sumatra 2018. The democratization process of the North Sumatra governor election feels bland so that it cannot be considered as a buffer of national politics. Supposedly, WhatsApp can guarantee the institutional stability of the election as an authentic base of reforms in re-inventing the civic participation in political campaigns. In this way, social networks become instruments for participatory democracy. At this level, social media can be relied upon as political education for the community.

IV. CONCLUSION

Novelty research is the discovery of a sizeable portion of the middle class in Medan. However, his political orientation was co-opted by the mechanism of organizing

elections, political flow, clientelism, and intimidation. As a result, the middle class in Medan as a basis for political change failed to become a political agency. The failure had an impact on not producing "the best regime" political structure. Although the middle class is a social group that appreciates the goodness of politics, some of them prefer to be non-voting behavior. The middle class chooses not to be involved in political organizations because they are considered as democratic hijackers. However, the middle class tries to convey their rational and objective aspirations in the gubernatorial election. However, fragmentation and co-optation because of the politics of flow and intimidation made this middle class unable to get out of the phenomenon that had already become a tradition in North Sumatra.

The WhatsApp on digital technology becomes mobilization by door-to-door and personal messaging. Social media is the new servant for the development of the digital public sphere with the exchange of arguments and issues of public interest. The contribution of technology to democracy gives birth to 'digital democracy', digital communication as a tool of democracy. However, this social media tends to be a tool for character assassins, dissemination of slander, hoaxes and hate speech. Through this media, democracy is plowed, mocked and interpreted according to its political interests. Therefore, social media networking cannot be relied upon to enrich and strengthen contemporary democracy the election of Governor of North Sumatra 2018.

The democratization process of the North Sumatra governor election feels bland so that it cannot be considered as a buffer of national politics. In short, the political orientation of the middle-class in Medan and the use of WhatsApp in the North Sumatra governor election have not succeeded in creating a re-inventing the civic participation. Although social networks become instruments for participatory democracy social media has not been able to become a means of democratization towards more positive political change. As a recommendation from this study, more in-depth research is needed, especially to find out the character of the middle-class in the city of Medan.

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