

## Organizing Simultaneous Democratic Elections in the Dynamics of Popular Sovereignty

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### Abstract (English)

The article aims to explore the practice of organizing democratic elections and the challenges faced in holding simultaneous elections in order to realize the sovereignty of the people. By using legal research and a descriptive qualitative approach, this article concludes that one of the toughest challenges of simultaneous elections in Indonesia was the practice of money politics. This condition was supported by the attitude of the people or voters in Indonesia who tend to be pragmatic. Therefore, an effective strategy for organizing elections as well as strong election law enforcement was needed to realize democratic elections and as an effort to overcome the challenges that arose in these elections. This article contributed to the strengthening of democratic simultaneous elections in Indonesia.

**Keywords; Election, Democracy, Money Politics**

### Abstrak (Bahasa Indonesia)

Artikel bertujuan mengeksplorasi praktik penyelenggaraan pemilu yang demokratis serta tantangan yang dihadapi dalam penyelenggaraan Pemilu serentak guna terwujudnya kedaulatan rakyat yang substantif. Dengan menggunakan jenis penelitian hukum dan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif artikel ini berkesimpulan bahwa salah satu tantangan terberat Pemilu serentak di Indonesia adalah Praktik Politik Uang. Kondisi tersebut didukung sikap masyarakat atau pemilih di Indonesia yang cenderung pragmatis. Oleh sebab itu, strategi penyelenggaraan Pemilu yang efektif sekaligus penegakan hukum pemilu yang kuat diperlukan guna mewujudkan Pemilu yang demokratis dan sebagai upaya mengatasi tantangan-tantangan yang muncul dalam Pemilu tersebut. Artikel ini berkontribusi terhadap penguatan pemilu serentak yang demokratis di Indonesia.

**Kata Kunci; Pemilu; Demokrasi; Politik Uang**



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## PENDAHULUAN

The formation of a state is inseparable from the concept of sovereignty attached to the state. Sovereignty is a very important element of a state. This is because the state is an organization of power and an instrument for achieving common goals. The highest power of the Indonesian State lies with the people with the identity of popular sovereignty. Since the first session of PPKI (Indonesian Independence Preparation Committee) on August 18, 1945, Indonesia has established the 1945 Constitution as the Constitution. The stipulation has an impact on Indonesia's will to

manifest the supremacy of people's sovereignty in the life of the nation and state through the principle of democracy. This can be ascertained, where clearly the 4th paragraph of the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution and Article 1 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution emphasize that sovereignty is in the hands of the people and is exercised according to the Constitution.

The realization of the supremacy of people's sovereignty is by organizing elections. As stated by Affan Ghaffar, elections are one of the absolute requirements for the empirical practice of democracy within the framework of the state.<sup>1</sup> In addition to being a means of practicing the sovereignty of the people, in essence, elections are held with the aim of being a means of changing leadership such as officials of representative institutions in an orderly and peaceful manner. Elections are also a five-year means of changing power and national leadership, where political parties can compete with each other to gain people's sympathy in obtaining political power (legislative, executive) whose legitimacy is legal and constitutional.<sup>2</sup> Indonesia will hold simultaneous national elections on February 14, 2024. Where the Indonesian people will not only elect the President and Vice President but also other legislative members. The President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, through a short video recording at the Seminar of Regular Education Program Batch 63 in Lemhannas RI said that the upcoming 2024 simultaneous elections will be a real test for the Indonesian people in implementing democracy. Furthermore, the President also stated that in producing a quality election, there will be many challenges faced, such as technical problems of election preparation, voter participation problems, transparency problems, and accountable election governance, and the campaign period.<sup>3</sup>

In general, there are several challenges that are likely to color the implementation of elections in Indonesia in 2024, such as campaigns carried out directly or through mass media and social media which are often colored by Identity Politics. As in the 2019 elections, the practice of money politics is likely to dominate in the 2024 elections. This is supported by the attitude of the people or voters in Indonesia who tend to be pragmatic. The practice of Money Politics, also known as Money Politics, is likely to be more visible unlike previous elections, which were mostly carried out in the run-up to voting day or what is popularly called "Fajar Attacks". In the 2024 elections, "vote transactions" with voters are likely to occur in a vulgar manner. It is even possible that transactions will not be done "person to person", but between candidates or success teams with groups or groups of people. Looking at the existing reality, it is inevitable that the holding of democratic elections will be increasingly hampered. Therefore, efforts are needed in the form of strategies to hold democratic elections in an effort to realize people's sovereignty. An effective strategy in organizing elections is also very important in facing the challenges of elections. With an effective strategy, the parties involved in organizing elections can identify and overcome these challenges. In this paper, the author

wants to discuss the challenges faced in organizing elections and the strategies that can be applied in an effort to hold democratic elections in order to realize people's sovereignty. What are the challenges and strategies for organizing democratic elections in the dynamics of popular sovereignty? The author uses a descriptive approach in research related to "forms of election disputes that are a challenge in the implementation of the 2024 General Election and effective strategies that can be applied in organizing elections in order to create democratic elections". According to Jacob Vredenberg, the purpose of descriptive research is to describe complex social reality in such a way.

## **HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN**

### **The Concept of Democratic Elections and Popular Sovereignty**

Elections are essentially the recognition and realization of the political rights of the people and at the same time the delegation of these rights by the people to their representatives to run the government. Elections are considered the symbol as well as the main and first benchmark of democracy.<sup>5</sup> Elections are essentially the recognition and realization of the political rights of the people and at the same time the delegation of these rights by the people to their representatives to run the government. Elections are considered the symbol as well as the main and first benchmark of democracy.<sup>6</sup> As stated in Article 1 paragraph (1) of Law No. 8/2012, General Elections, hereinafter referred to as Elections, are a means of exercising People's Sovereignty which is carried out directly, publicly, 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. According to Ali Moertopo, General Elections are a means available to the people to exercise their sovereignty and are an institution of democracy. He stated that theoretically, general elections are considered to be the earliest stage of a series of democratic state life, so that elections are the driving force of the mechanism of a democratic political system.

In the literature of Political Science, elections, which in Indonesia are called "pemilihan umum", are a means of realizing people's sovereignty with the aim of electing representatives of the people and political leaders from the lowest level to the highest level.<sup>8</sup> Indonesia is a state of law that adheres to democracy, which means that People's Sovereignty is the main reference in running the country. The Constitution mentions the phrase "people's sovereignty" at least three times. First, in the fourth paragraph of the preamble of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (UUD 1945). Secondly, in the fourth precept of Pancasila, and thirdly in Article 1 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution (amended).<sup>9</sup> Sovereignty is the supreme power to determine the law in the state. Sovereignty comes from the English "sovereignty", in French it is called "souverainete", and in Italian it is called "sovrano". whose origin comes from the Latin "superanus" which means the highest

(supreme). Moh. Kusnardi and Harmaily Ibtrahim, argued that in the understanding of popular sovereignty (democracy) the people are considered the owners and holders of supreme power in a country. It is the people who determine the style and manner in which the government is organized. It is the people who determine the goals to be achieved by the state and its government.<sup>10</sup>

Elections as a means of People's Sovereignty must be held democratically by adhering to the provisions underlying the holding of elections. The provisions regarding General Elections or Elections are currently regulated in Law Number 7 of 2017 and its amendment in Government Regulation in Lieu of Law Number 1 of 2022. In addition, the rules underlying the organization of the 2024 General Election in Indonesia include: 1945 Constitution Article 1 paragraph (2) after amendment; and KPU Regulation Number 3 of 2022 concerning the Stages and Schedule of the 2024 Elections. Democratic elections are an effort to maintain democratic values. Democratic elections aim to obtain leaders who gain political legitimacy from the people. To ensure democratic, fair and integrity elections, the implementation of elections must be based on the principles of elections. Regarding the principles of elections, the provisions of Article 2 of Law No. 7/2017 explain that elections are carried out based on the principles of direct, general, free, secret, honest and fair.<sup>11</sup> Elections are an important feature of a political system that meets the standards or criteria to be called democratic. No country can be called democratic if it does not have free, fair and honest elections, which are held regularly to elect representatives of the people or political leaders. It can be said that elections and democracy are like "two sides of one coin" that cannot be separated from one another.

In a Democratic country, general elections are held periodically using a certain election system method. In the current reform era, the electoral system in Indonesia is based on a balanced proportional system. Historically, Indonesia has held twelve elections periodically, namely one in the Soekarno era (1955), six in the Soeharto era (1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992 and 1997), and five in the reform era (1999, 2004,

2009, 2014, 2019), and the thirteenth election will be held on February 14, 2024. In organizing the elections, there are three institutions that carry it out, as mentioned in Law Number 7 of 2017, namely the DKPP, the Election Supervisory Agency and the General Election Commission. In the implementation of General Elections in Indonesia in accordance with Article 3 of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning Elections, there are several electoral principles that must be met and used as guidelines by election organizers, namely independent, honest, fair, legal certainty, orderly, open, proportional, professional, accountable, effective, and efficient. The principles of organizing elections have an important purpose in maintaining integrity, fairness and transparency in the electoral process. It also reflects efforts to create democratic elections.

## **The Challenge of Organizing Democratic Elections in the Dynamics of Popular Sovereignty**

General elections as a means of implementing people's sovereignty are carried out directly, publicly, freely, honestly and fairly by ensuring the principles of representation, accountability and legitimacy in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The dynamics of general elections held in Indonesia are often colored by various challenges that hinder the realization of People's Sovereignty. As can be seen in one of the regencies in Indonesia that will hold the 13th General Election in 2024, South Nias in particular is considered to have classic election challenges and new challenges that can interfere with the success and smooth implementation of the 2024 simultaneous elections and elections and challenges that can injure the process and results of elections that are integrity, honest, fair and clean. The challenges of implementing simultaneous elections in 2024 in South Nias Regency can be classified into 7 categories, namely: 1) Human Resources (HR) of the Election Organizer, 2) Technical Implementation, 3) Political Money 4) Infrastructure and Information Technology, 5) Security, 6) Regulation, and 7) Health.<sup>12</sup> Executive Director of the Center for Political Studies of FISIP University of Indonesia, Hurriyah, said that there are two main problems of elections in Indonesia. The first is the regulatory or procedural sector and the second problem is the substance of the election. Hurriyah also revealed several challenges to electoral democracy today such as the high cost of politics and the practice of Money Politics, the mobilization of identity politics, the disconnection between voters and political parties or candidates, the low accountability of political representation, and the reduction of the role of society only as voters, not demos. The challenges in organizing the upcoming 2024 elections in Indonesia globally can be summarized into several challenges including: the existence of technical problems in the preparation of elections; differences in arrangements in election regulations; problems of voter participation and problems related to DPT (Permanent Voters List); lack of understanding of the importance of voting rights, and the existence of vote forgery; problems of transparency and accountable election governance; the campaign period and the implementation of campaigns that violate election regulations and rules; the emergence of hoax news that influences public opinion and worsens the political atmosphere; identity politics in elections; quick count results that create uncertainty and anxiety in the community; lack of availability and quality of election logistics; and problems related to the practice of Money Politics. From some of these challenges, the author will discuss more about election challenges that arise in almost every election in Indonesia and have become something that is considered like a culture by the Indonesian people, namely the challenge of Money Politic (Money Politics). Money politics is one of the forms of corruption that occurs in the implementation of elections in Indonesia. Based on Daniel Dumke's opinion, so far there is no clear definition that describes Money Politics. Money Politics is used to

explain all practices and criminal acts of corruption in elections. Starting from political corruption to clientelism and from vote buying to fraud.

The term Money Politics is money or material used in influencing certain decisions, in this context money is used as a tool and money is used to influence certain decisions, in this case money is used as a tool to lead, influence and intervene someone in making decisions. Or in other words, an attempt to bribe voters with the lure of giving money or services so that voters' voting preferences can be given to a briber.<sup>14</sup> The practice of Money Politics must be handled and prevented in order to realize elections that can realize People's Sovereignty. Prevention and handling of Money Politics if based on various studies in the world can begin by eliminating the root of the problem, the causes of Money Politics and the conditions that make the rapid development of the practice of Money Politics and technical strategies to solve it. The main factors causing the emergence of Money Politics can be seen from various aspects, both in terms of demographic and socio-economic, voting behavior, political clientelism, monetary and electoral systems.<sup>15</sup> First, from demographic and socio-economic aspects, it shows that education, marginality level, population size, governing party, level of electoral competence affect vote buying. Bratton (2008) in his research states that Money Politics applies to poor and uneducated people, rural residents. Second, the aspect of voting behavior, Money Politics will occur in party participants (defense and opposition) compared to non-parties. This is also in line with the opinion of Cantu (2019), which states that candidates tend to target voters who (1) supported the opposition in the past, (2) live in areas where the opposition has mobilized efforts. When targeting groups of voters with these characteristics, parties identify those who are more likely to sell their votes, by looking at their election choices.

Third, the politics of clientelism, according to William (2005) to fight Money Politics needs to challenge the dynamics of the relationship between clientelism and politics. The actors or actors who benefit most from vote buying in the short term are brokers and the bourgeoisie (financiers) because the flow of capital ultimately depends on the legitimacy of parliamentary democracy. Meanwhile, in the long term it is the elected candidates who benefit. Fourth, the monetary aspect where abnormally high monetary growth in an election month could be an indication of systemic vote buying triggered by the cash demand effect. This allows new ways to suppress money politics by reducing the money supply during election months, for example by increasing the interest rate on deposits or savings, not allowing large cash withdrawals during elections, and not allowing a certain amount of cash, where the central bank is independent of political influence. Fifth, the open proportional system contributes to the rise of Money Politics because candidates are forced to fight among fellow candidates within the same party to pursue personal votes. Money Politics is a differentiation mechanism for a candidate in order to provide more value in the eyes of voters than

internal competitors.

Recommendations for improvements to the handling of Money Politics, as well as the prevention of political dowries in Money Politics, are reviewed through legal regulations, related institutions, the process of election stages, supervision and best practices that have been implemented by foreign countries that are adjusted to the conditions of Indonesia. The process of preventing Money Politics can begin before, during and after the elections are held. Prevention that can be done are:

1. Strengthening the rule of law through criminal and administrative sanctions

Regulations related to money politics and political dowries, namely Law No. 10/2016, and Law No. 1/2015, stipulate that political parties or coalitions of political parties are prohibited from accepting rewards in any form in the process of nominating governors, mayors or regents. The regulations in the Pilkada law not only provide criminal sanctions for people who commit dowries, but also administrative ones. Violators are prohibited from submitting candidates for regional head/deputy head for the next period. Another sanction is the cancellation of the determination of the elected candidate, the inaugurated regional head;

2. Increasing the Capacity and Effectiveness of Government Institutions (Infrastructure and Superstructure)

Increasing the capacity and effectiveness of Government Institutions (Infrastructure and Superstructure) can be done by providing clear, firm and indiscriminate sanctions for perpetrators of Money Politics and political dowries. As well as restoring the role of the press as a media that contains true, accurate and balanced information that is impartial and criticizes every finding of Money Politics and political dowries so that information in the field can be quickly known;

3. Revamping the Election System

Improvements were made by replacing the old electoral system with a mixed electoral system, combining the district and proportional systems;

4. Suppressing the Practice of Clientelism in Elections

The practice of clientelism is one of the triggers for Money Politics, so its existence must be suppressed by increasing economic resources from various sectors, and increasing political education. With good political education, people will be better able to choose leaders with quality and integrity. As well as increasing community participation, because the more people who are involved in the election process, the more difficult it is for those who want to practice clientelism to influence the election results;

5. Monetary Aspects

Solutions from the monetary aspect to suppress Money Politics can be done through

cooperation with Banks. During the campaign month and during the quiet days until the voting takes place, short-term monetary policies are carried out. Short-term monetary can be done by suppressing the growth of money supply, conducting control mechanisms for suspicious transactions and cash withdrawals in certain amounts during elections, where the central bank is independent of political influence.

### **Strategies for Organizing Elections in an Effort to Realize Democratic Elections**

Democratic elections are one of the important pillars in maintaining the stability and sustainability of a country's democratic system. Elections are the right tool to measure and determine the quality and quantity of democracy. Democracy will have a high quality level if the election process is carried out honestly, fairly, transparently and openly and respects the political rights of the people when voting. To realize democratic elections, a good organizing strategy is needed. Here are some strategies that can be done in an effort to realize democratic elections:

1. Election Supervision: In the organization of elections, there is a need for supervision. Supervision of the implementation of elections has an important role for the implementation of democratic elections. Election supervision is an activity of observing, reviewing, examining, and assessing the process of organizing elections in accordance with statutory regulations. Election supervisors in carrying out supervision with 2 two major strategies, namely prevention and prosecution. Prevention is carried out by taking steps and optimal efforts to prevent early potential violations and / or early indications of violations, while prosecution is carried out by following up on findings from election supervisors, as well as reports from the public and then followed up by conducting studies and recommendations to relevant institutions in accordance with statutory regulations.<sup>18</sup>
2. Code of Ethics: Election organizers must comply with a binding code of ethics. The code of ethics of election organizers aims to maintain the independence, integrity and credibility of members of election organizers at all levels by being guided by 12 principles determined by law and regulated in the Joint Regulation of KPU, Bawaslu, DKPP, which Prof. Anna Erliyana categorizes into: 1. the principle of independence and fairness; 2. the principle of legal certainty; 3. the principle of honesty, openness, and accountability; 4. the principle of proportionality; 5. the principle of professionalism, efficiency, and effectiveness; 6. the principle of public interest.
3. Election Law and Legal Certainty: It is important to have clear election laws and legal certainty in the organization of elections. Law enforcement against election violations is an important part of testing the integrity of elections and the implementation of honest and fair elections. Good election laws and legal certainty will provide a strong foundation for the



implementation of democratic elections..20

4. Community Participation: Increasing public participation in election observation is an important strategy in realizing democratic elections. Communities need to be encouraged to be actively involved in the electoral process, both as voters and election observers.<sup>21</sup>
5. Capacity Building: In order for election supervision to be carried out in accordance with the mandate of the law, a strong, independent and solid election supervisory apparatus and institutions are needed. On this basis, election supervisors can take steps to strengthen the national control system in a structured, systematic and integrative technology-based supervisory management..<sup>22</sup>
6. Transparency and Accountability: Transparency and accountability play an important role in the organization of elections. Transparency refers to openness and visibility in the electoral process, while accountability relates to being held accountable for the actions and decisions taken by election administrators. In the context of elections, transparency can cover various aspects, such as transparency in the management of campaign funds, transparency in the candidate selection process, and transparency in vote counting. Meanwhile, accountability in elections means that election organizers must be responsible for carrying out their duties and functions with integrity and honesty and carry out their duties in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. So that election organizers will gain public trust.

In an election, the principle of democracy is important because it prioritizes the voice of the people, who have an interest in electing a leader who has a strong democratic spirit. The principles of democracy encourage the active participation of citizens in the political process, including in elections. Election campaigns provide a platform for candidates or political parties to communicate with voters and encourage them to engage in the electoral process. Election campaigns can be conducted through various methods, such as limited meetings, face-to-face meetings, public distribution of election campaign materials, art performances, music concerts, sports activities, and so on. However, keep in mind that there are rules and restrictions governing election campaigns. As in the General Election Commission Regulation Number 12 of 2009 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of the General Election Campaign for Members of the House of Representatives Abroad, that in article 9 states that:

1. Polite, i.e. using language or sentences that are polite and appropriate for public display;
2. Orderly, i.e. not disturbing the public interest;
3. Educating, i.e. providing useful information and enlightening the election;
4. Wise and civilized, i.e. not attacking individuals, groups, groups or other election

participants;

This is an effort to avoid problems related to democracy, namely the freedom to vote for candidates in general elections. In addition, general elections must be carried out in a democratic manner in order to create an effective and efficient implementation of general elections.

## **PENUTUP**

Indonesia is one of the largest democracies in the world and runs the Pancasila democratic system. The implementation of elections in Indonesia is an effort to realize democracy and as evidence and implementation of popular sovereignty. In Indonesia, the process of organizing elections often experiences challenges which hinder the realization of democratic elections. One of these election challenges is the practice of money politics. As has been explained in the previous discussion, ahead of the upcoming 2024 simultaneous elections, the practice of Money Politics that has occurred in previous elections may still exist and will occur again, even the practice may be more vulgar and blatant. This is supported by the attitude of the people or voters in Indonesia who tend to be pragmatic. Therefore, an efficient and effective strategy for organizing elections is needed to realize democratic elections and as an effort to overcome the challenges that arise in elections.

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