

## Indonesia's Regional Head Elections: Political Dynamics and Problems

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**Abstract:** Up to this point, Indonesian political machinery has experienced cyclical instability dating back to the Orde Lama and Reformasi. Perpolitikan semakin mendekati iklim yang lebih demokratis dalam konteks era reformasi ini. Despite this, Indonesia continues to experience a period of democratic transition. Pemilihan Umum Kepala Daerah (Pemilukada) is the primary tool used by democratic mechanisms to create kepemimpinan in a certain region. After several years in Rezim Orde Baru's environment, where he failed to provide the populace with the opportunity to express their own opinions, Pemilukada was steadfastly adopted as a democratic path in the process of choosing the new head of state. There will be a strong focus on national and local politics in Indonesia starting in the year 2024, known as Pemilu and Pemilukada, respectively. In this article, we will explain how political dynamics operate in the current political climate.

**Abstrak:** Hingga saat ini, mesin politik Indonesia telah mengalami ketidakstabilan siklus sejak Orde Lama dan Reformasi. Perpolitikan semakin mendekati iklim yang lebih demokratis dalam konteks era reformasi ini. Meskipun demikian, Indonesia terus mengalami masa transisi demokrasi. Pemilihan Umum Kepala Daerah (Pemilukada) adalah alat utama yang digunakan oleh mekanisme demokrasi untuk menciptakan kepemimpinan di wilayah tertentu. Setelah beberapa tahun di lingkungan Rezim Orde Baru, di mana ia gagal memberikan kesempatan kepada rakyat untuk mengekspresikan pendapat mereka sendiri, Pemilukada dengan teguh diadopsi sebagai jalan demokratis dalam proses memilih kepala negara baru. Akan ada fokus yang kuat pada politik nasional dan lokal di Indonesia mulai tahun 2024, yang masing-masing dikenal sebagai Pemilu dan Pemilukada. Dalam artikel ini, kami akan menjelaskan bagaimana dinamika politik beroperasi dalam iklim politik saat ini.



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### INTRODUCTION

The established state has a purpose, just like the Indonesian state which has a goal according to paragraph 4 of the 1945 Constitution. Therefore, the goal of improving people's welfare can be said to be a good policy and lead to legal education. Including the Election Law and Pilkada must also lead to the welfare of the people (Saraswati, 2021).

Public welfare and trust in elections depend heavily on the integrity of election organizers who are able to hold transparent and accountable elections with full freedom. An election can be called fair if the organizers and participants of the election not only obey and obey the rules (rule of law) but also ethics (rule of ethics). In fair elections, the basic principle of democracy, political equality, is always upheld. On the

other hand, when elections are deemed unfair, public trust weakens and government legitimacy weakens (Pangestu, 2022).

In the form of a unitary state, Indonesia is divided into regions and these regions are further divided into municipalities and administrative governments that have local governments in which authority is given to free power (decentralization) to regulate and control local governments as autonomous regions (Melfa, 2013).

The 2004 Local Government Law No. 32 details the existence of a system that fills the position of regional head through a direct democratic political process, because the implementation of regional government can be influenced by the dynamics of national political governance. In addition, according to Law number 22 of 2007 concerning the implementation of regional elections is the general election of regional heads referring to article 1 paragraph 4 number 22 of 2007 held by number 15 of 2011 concerning the implementation of elections.

In Indonesia, elections or what is called according to the 1945 Constitution find a democratic party every 5 (five) years. Election activities are an important political agenda and are awaited by all parties, both political actors and the public, who expect a change of leadership involved in the implementation process at all levels of society (Walid, 2022).

From time to time, when assessing the progress of post-conflict regional elections, there is an assumption that the direct election of governors, governors, and mayors is full of various problems that violate democratic principles. Therefore, a process is needed to create linkages between regional elections and strengthen democratic institutions based on the legal system within the framework of norms and principles of implementation. About the

rules of the regional election system (Rinaldo, 2016).

Efforts to improve the governance and authority of election administrators in general as well as strengthening the authority of the KPU from Law No. 1 of 2015 a quo and changes in laws and regulations have resulted in many new provisions that have not been implemented. is in the legal system. Previous invitations, especially those related to the implementation of duties, authorities, and responsibilities of regional head elections (Satriawan, 2016).

The appointment of regional administrators is a process of exercising people's sovereignty. Article 18 (4) of Amendment II of the 1945 Constitution reads as follows: "The Governor, Head of Government and Head of Municipality, as heads of provincial, regency and city administrative regions, shall be formally appointed." This provision is the basis of the constitution. The 1945 Constitution since the ratification of Amendment II of the 1945 Constitution at the MPR session on August 18, 2000 who occupied the position of regional head (Budiono, 2013).

Post-conflict elections always cause many violations, both on the part of election organizers (KPU and Bawaslu) and on the part of voters. Violations committed by election organizers include inaccuracies in the permanent voter list (DPT) and impartiality of election organizers (Riananda, 2014).

The simultaneous regional elections will coincide with the national regional elections in 2024. This is something new and monumental for this country that for the first time in history will be held national elections covering 34 regions and 514 districts/cities, 416 regions and 98 cities respectively, choosing their seats. In this new political moment, this article explains the political

dynamics and electoral problems in Indonesia.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Political Dynamics of Elections**

The political practice in the elections so far has been carried out really a very interesting political and democratic force. Until now, there have been several changes in the holding of regional elections. This national political event is a long step in the journey of Indonesian democracy. It is through this process that Huntington argues that democracy in Indonesia is like a continuous wave, rising and rising. Then we will look back at the democratic journey of the Indonesian regional elections. National political system to create a democratic environment for every citizen in the life of the nation and state. Indonesian national politics transformed into a form of holding general elections which later became known as elections.

In 1957-1958, elections were held simultaneously in many regions in Indonesia, the election of the district / city DPRD (DPRD) and district / regency DPRD. At that time, the Election Law was still in its infancy. Until recently, regional directors were appointed by the DPRD. Although political uncertainty overshadowed the regional elections due to regional conflicts and military problems, it went well. Elections were held in stages between June 1957 and January 1958. The regions where the 1958 DPRD elections were held were West Java, Central Java, East Java, Yogyakarta Special Region, South Sumatra, Riau and Kalimantan. At the same time, the 1958 DPRD (DPRP) elections took place in Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, East Java, and Kalimantan. The result of all local elections was that the PKI was the most successful party.

Regional elections are held according to Article 18 Paragraph 4 of the

Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Regional elections called Pilkada are elections for governors, administrators, or mayors. Pilkada is defined as a political system that runs in a presidential system resulting from every job in the region, because the political position of the regional head is different and the central government is in the middle, which is the most important part of the government. Discussion on the importance of Soccer Democracy as a national identity. Law number 32 of 2004 concerning the election of regional heads article 24 paragraph 5 "Regional heads and deputy regional heads are elected in pairs in their regions.", Article 4 of the 1945 Law, where governors, executive directors and mayors are elected with a democratic system.

Regional elections can be divided into three periods during the reform period. First, in 2005-2008, when local elections remained part of the local government system. At that time, people at the local level of provinces, districts, and cities elected their leaders in local elections. This euphoria was greeted with great enthusiasm. Controversial talks about local elections as a provincial government or as an electoral system began with a Constitutional Court ruling in a case.

Second, the period 2010-2013. Based on the problems faced in the first phase of the regional elections, changes were made, including the entry of regional elections as election organizers. The effect of the change is in principle. One of the important principles is the issuance of Law Number 22 of 2007 concerning Election Administration. It also supports regional elections as one type of general election in Indonesia. Third, the election in 2015.

In 2015, the Government and the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia reached an agreement on amendments to the 2015 Government

Regulation Law in the context of electing Governors and Mayors. Originally planned, three regional elections would be held simultaneously in 2015 and 2018 for regional heads whose terms will end at this time. National elections will then be held simultaneously in 2020. A new agreement has now been reached on the elections and divided into seven groups.

The second round of regional elections will be held in February 2017 for regional heads whose terms will end in the second half of 2016 and for regional heads whose terms will end in 2017. The regional third-round elections will end at the same time. will be held in June 2018. Regional leaders will take office in 2018 and 2019. The fourth round of regional elections will be held in 2020. For 2020, regional heads are the results of the December 2015 general election. The fifth round of regional elections will also take place in 2022, following the results of the regional elections in February 2017 and then 2023 will be the sixth wave of simultaneous regional elections for regional heads, which emerged from the 2018 regional elections. After that, simultaneous regional elections will be held throughout the country in 2027 which are reorganized every five years.

### **Election Problems**

It is undeniable that the emergence of political parties is like a mushroom in the rainy season that forces people to participate in decision-making, which ultimately leads to a series of political interests. The number of parties in Indonesia increased to approximately 300 parties at the beginning of the reform and can be called the winner of the "Guinness Book of Records" as the country with the most parties. It also identifies our society within many of these political parties.

With society fragmented into several political parties, it is possible and almost certain that some candidate or through his

supporting party and his campaign team will try to influence potential voters with certain promises or appeals. In a country still in democratic rule and a financial crisis that seriously affects voters with monetary donations is difficult to avoid, because decision making is not based on "conscience" but rather on the value of winning and losing and more on who makes ends meet.

Meanwhile, no less important issue concerns the heavy workload of election organizers, who must hold elections in the same year with seven types of elections. There are still several potential problems in the simultaneous regional elections in 2024, such as the distribution of election logistics, voter information, overcapacity and workload of KPPS officers, as well as information on the results of the vote count until the final session of the election president. In addition, voters find it difficult to exercise their right to vote because many votes are anticipated. For example, we saw in the 2019 election related to the number of ballots for the general election and presidential election.

Most likely we will also face this, especially in 2024 there will also be regional elections, although the month is different. Regarding the intersection of the stages of the implementation of the 2024 Presidential Election, Legislative Elections and parallel regional elections, it is suspected that it will cause a split in the focus of the organizers. Other potential problems include the spread of fake news and hate speech during election campaigns, such as attacks on other candidates on social media. There is currently talk of shortening the campaign period in order to have stronger consequences and agreements.

In general, the following are often associated with regional elections in Indonesia:

1. Monetary policy: Monetary policy is one of the biggest issues in the Indonesian regional elections. The

reason is, competing candidates often spend money to gain public support and buy votes in elections which results in these elections being riddled with corruption and money politics.

2. Political Violence: The theme of political violence is also often associated with the Indonesian regional elections. This political violence can take the form of intimidation, physical violence or other forms of violence. This problem is very damaging to the democratic process and has an impact on unstable politics.
3. Fierce political competition: Political competition in local elections can be intense, especially in areas that have strong political support for any candidate, which can lead to social polarization, intergroup conflict, and political instability.
4. Device Participation: In addition, the participation of officials in football matches is often associated with Indonesian football matches. Sometimes officials engage in practical politics and are impartial in the performance of their duties. This can undermine democratic processes and exacerbate problems such as monetary policy and political violence.
5. Abuse of Authority: The problem of abuse of officials is also often associated with Indonesian football. Abuse of power can be in the form of destruction of voter information, restrictions on freedom of opinion, or other violations of the law that can harm the democratic process and the right of the people to choose their leaders freely and fairly.

## Conclusion

The welfare and trust of the public in elections depends largely on the integrity of election administrators who are able to hold transparent and accountable elections with full freedom. The political practice in the elections so far has been carried out really a very interesting political and democratic force. Until now there have been several changes in the holding of regional elections. This national political event is a long step in the journey of Indonesian democracy. It is through this process that Huntington argues that democracy in Indonesia is like a continuous wave, rising and rising. Then we will look back at the democratic journey of the Indonesian regional elections.

There are many dynamics and problems in the process of implementing the election itself after the conflict. The Indonesian government is always trying to improve the regulatory order. All this can be used to study public policy. So that people become aware of the importance of democracy, respect opinions and coherence in responding to something.

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