

## **The Existence of Political Costs as a Condition for Advancement in Election Contestation in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

Whenever discussing political events, the thing that does not escape discussion is the cost or cost that must be incurred for political financing. It cannot be denied that every political activity carried out by individuals and political parties cannot be avoided by the political costs accompanying it. The purpose of this research is to find out the existence of political dowries issued in every election contestation in Indonesia, the methods used to win in election contestation, to find out the chances of winning for election contestants with the ability to spend a lot of money and little money. The method used in this research is library research, where secondary data sources are taken from a collection of articles, books, and other readings related to the research. The result of the research is that every contestation in the election cannot be avoided by spending money, because the consequences of every competition (competition) to win the sympathy and support of voters (the people) need the cost of campaign props (stickers, business cards, billboards, etc.), the cost of transportation fuel used to visit voters, the cost of data pulses and so on. This research concludes that it is a necessity for every person who will advance to compete either as a Legislative Candidate, Candidate for Regent/Mayor or Governor and Presidential Candidate, there is financing that must be incurred in the success of his candidacy.

**Keywords:** Political Cost, Money Politic, Election Contestation, PILKADA



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### **INTRODUCTION**

As a country that adheres to the Pancasila democratic system, Indonesia makes Pancasila the basis of the state and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia which is the constitutional foundation of the state. Likewise, the mandate of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia regulates the third amendment to Article 1 paragraph (2) which states that sovereignty is in the hands of the people and implemented according to the Constitution, then in paragraph (3) also states that the Indonesian state is a state of law. As mentioned, all actions taken are based on law. This means that if there is an act or action that is not based on the law, it can be said that an act or action taken violates the law. Violation of the law certainly has consequences for the imposition of legal sanctions, both in the form of basic punishment which includes the death penalty, imprisonment, confinement, fines, and closure as well as additional punishment which includes revocation of certain rights, deprivation of certain goods and announcement of the judge's decision, as regulated in Article 10 of the Criminal Code (James, Lumowa, & Lukito, 2019).

Indonesia as a country based on law and democracy, where in determining the leaders of the state and regions are also representatives of the people in this case both as Regents/ Mayors, Governors, Presidents, and Members of the House of Representatives (Central Level, Regional/ Provincial Level and Regional/ District and City Level). These activities are held in accordance with a predetermined time and schedule and the length of time is 5 (five) years which is then known as the General Election (PEMILU). These political activities have been regulated in Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections. As referred to in Article 1

paragraph 1 that the General Election is a means of popular sovereignty to elect members of the House of Representatives (DPR), Members of the Regional Representatives Council (DPD), President and Vice President, and to elect members of the Regional Representatives Council both Provincial and City/ Regency which is carried out directly, publicly, freely, confidentially, honestly and fairly within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

It is a consequence of every election held that cost is an integral part of the implementation. It is not only the organizers (KPU and BAWASLU) who require large costs starting from the socialization stage to the election process and the determination of elected candidates. But also each PEMILU participant ranging from political parties (parpol) and each Candidate for Legislative Members (CALEG) of the Central Parliament to the Provincial/ City and Regency DPRD, Candidates for Members of the Regional Representative Council (DPD) to Candidates for Regional Heads from the Provincial level to the City and Regency levels and Presidential Candidates (Capres) also require a lot of money in an effort to socialize themselves (personal branding) with the intention of influencing potential voters to vote for them. Not only that, but every time also you meet the community (prospective voters), of course, fuel costs are needed to support the smooth mobility that is not close to just walking to meet citizens as potential voters. In addition, to help the effectiveness in mobilizing the success team (winning team), smooth communication is an essential thing to be intensified. And this of course requires the cost of credit or data packages. In the end, everything can move in a structured and massive manner, one of which is that financial support is something that cannot be negotiated (not free). As for costs incurred, everything returns to each candidate who will compete to manage their respective finances more effectively. There are candidates who do not spend too much in the election to be "elected" but there are also candidates who have to spend quite a lot in order to be "elected". But not a few also, candidates who have spent a large budget in order to win and be elected, but reality says otherwise. As for this research, it discusses the existence of political costs as the main prerequisite for competing in the celebration of the General Election in Indonesia, besides that the researchers will also discuss that not all elected candidates incur large costs in supporting their electability.

In connection with the General Election, every candidate who runs (participates in the election contestation) certainly has the same goal, namely to win. However, how it is done is certainly different from one candidate to another. Some, with limited funds, use strategies by intensifying meetings with the community in the form of door-to-door friendship to involve themselves in every social activity in the community. But there are also those who collect as much funds as possible for the cost of winning, sometimes even things that are contrary to the law until they do to get the cost as they want. One example is the corruption mode carried out by political elites ahead of the 2024 general election. This time, the Regent of Kapuas, Central Kalimantan, Ben Ibrahim S. Bahat and his wife, Ary Egahni, who is a member of the House of Representatives from the Nasdem faction, were involved. The sad thing is that the proceeds of the corruption crimes are expected to be used to fund regional head election campaigns and legislative elections, including the need to pay survey agencies. The corruption case that ensnared the Kapuas Regent and his wife is a real portrait of the high costs that must be prepared by candidates, which encourages a person to commit corrupt acts. In the nomination of regional heads and legislative members, there is a need for complex readiness in various aspects, which certainly requires a lot of money. The Ministry of Home Affairs has conducted research, that in one nomination of a regional head, the costs that must be prepared reach Rp 25 billion to Rp 30 billion. Even the findings of the KPK regarding financing in the nomination

of a regional head can reach Rp 150 billion, while legislative elections, a number of research results conducted later mapped the amount of cost required reaching Rp. 5 billion (Masykurillah, 2023).

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The method used in this research is library research in which the data source comes from secondary data, in this case, the data taken from a collection of scientific articles, books, and other writings that can be accounted for while still referring to the relationship with the research. Library research is a theoretical study, references, and other scientific literature related to culture, values, and norms that develop in the social situation under study (Sugiyono, 2017)

## **RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Existence of Political Costs**

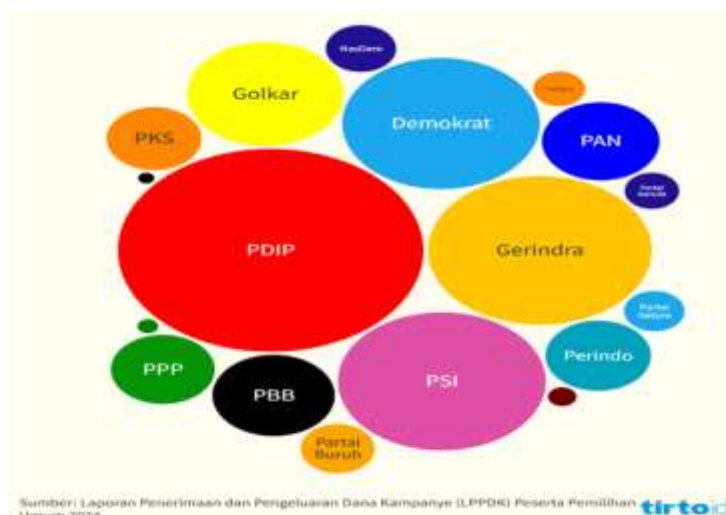
The political system in Indonesia has placed political parties as the main pillars of organizing democracy in Indonesia, meaning there is no democracy without political parties. Political parties are political organizations that live a certain ideology or are formed with a special purpose. In other words, a political party is an organized group whose members have the same orientation and ideals. The purpose of this group is to gain political power and seize political positions by constitutional means to implement their policies (Admin B. S., 2012). In a democratic party (the celebration of electing leaders and representatives of the people once every five years), it is inevitable that there are considerable costs in each implementation. The large budget disbursed by the state in financing the implementation of the general election should be followed by a strong commitment from the organizers and participants of the general election to present a clean and dignified election as the slogan of the KPU, namely presenting a direct, general, free, secret, honest and fair election (LUBER-JURDIL). However, in reality, to present the ambition to sit as the leader of the country or region and the people's representative of the center or region, they are even willing to take actions that violate the rules that have been set. So that something natural, their election is not determined based on their quality and capability but the amount of political funds sourced from personal pockets or from funders. As for the mechanisms that have been regulated regarding the use of campaign funds, as stipulated in the provisions of Article 325 through Article 339 of Law Number 7 Year 2017 concerning General Elections, General Election campaign activities are funded and are the responsibility of General Election Participants. In the context of transparency, political parties must also record campaign fund reports. According to KPU, the Campaign Fund Report consists of 3 types, namely the initial campaign fund report (LADK), the campaign fund donor report (LPSDK), and the campaign fund receipt and expenditure report (LPPDK) (Akbar, 2024).

Comparison data of Political Party Expenditures Based on the First Initial Campaign Fund Report (LADK) and Corrective LADK

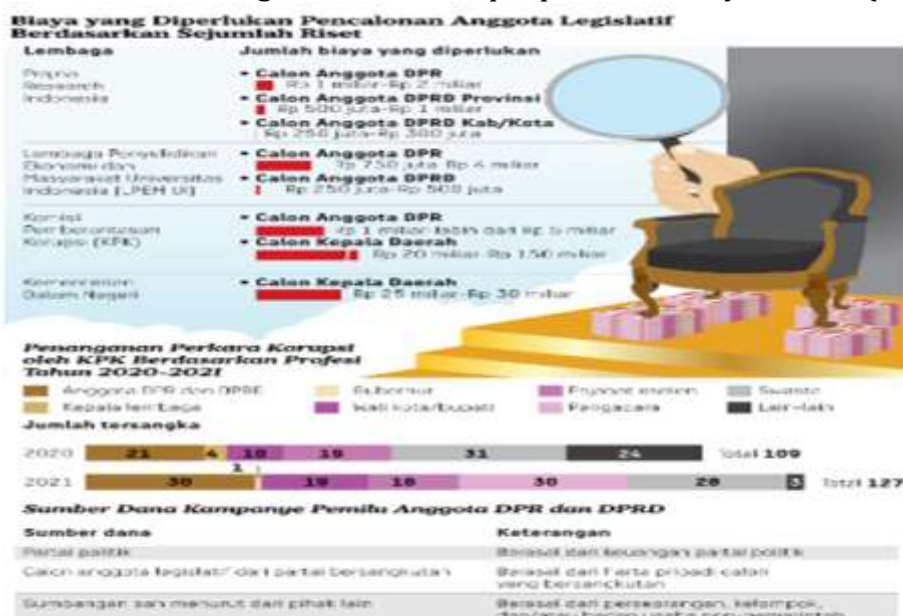
Number	Party Name	Total (Ro)	
		Income	Expenses
1	PDIP	173.397.897.536	173.221.200.996
2	Gerindra	92.842.469.477	92.839.827.847
3	PSI	80.098.501.069	80.096.534.877
4	Demokrat	73.431.679.034	72.273.700.282
5	Golkar	45.236.060.400	45.219.158.648
6	PAN	29.898.500.000	25.618.525.000

7	PBB	27.761.514.659	27.760.541.659
8	PERINDO	20.127.038.739	20.643.301.550
9	PPP	20.127.038.739	20.013.294.563
10	PKS	16.712.497.087	16.703.608.199
11	Partai Buruh	10.155.662.532	10.147.142.349
12	NASDEM	9.321.964.628	9.165.517.417
13	GELORA	6.808.503.797	6.803.612.500
14	Partai Garuda	5.500.000.000	5.497.684.500
15	HANURA	5.032.488.869	5.022.556.574

Source 1: Campaign Fund Receipt and Expenditure Report (LPPDK) of 2024 General Election Participants



It cannot be denied that the cost of politics is indeed expensive, this is reinforced by the number of politicians who are caught in corruption cases because they have to finance their political desires, such as wanting to become representatives of the people, regional heads or state officials. Data from the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) shows that from 2004 to 2022, 343 members of the DPR, DPRD and 178 regional heads were caught in corruption. There were also 310 echelon I, II, III and IV officials who dealt with the KPK. The number of these three professions is the largest of the 1,519 people handled by the KPK (Tommy, 2023)



Source: Kompas media coverage



The purpose of an election is to produce the best leaders or representatives of the people with integrity and responsibility. So as to achieve this goal, the election must be supported by several components including organizers, participants and also processes with integrity. One of them can be seen in the implementation of campaign activities. This campaign stage is used as a means to attract public attention in the hope that the public will vote for them at the polls. PEMILU participants will compete for the support of the most voters. The rules regarding campaigns are very clear, but violations often occur. Ideal democracy becomes less meaningful because the process is fraudulent, unfair and undemocratic as desired (Crisdanty & Wahyulina, 2014).

The PEMILU system in Indonesia is a way to apply and provide the widest possible freedom to every citizen to exercise their right to vote to elect representatives of the people as well as Presidential Candidates and Candidates for Governor, Mayor and Regent who are desired. The nomination system where prospective leaders will be promoted by their supporting political parties while informing the special discourses that will be made for the progress of development if later elected. The purpose of the campaign is so that people can see, know, understand, explore the background of prospective leaders and choose their prospective leaders in accordance with their goals and expectations. The establishment of an open proportional electoral system aims to produce people's representatives and prospective leaders who are accountable and close to their constituents. Likewise, the potential arising from this electoral system is that it can give birth to political corruption due to the expensive political costs of competing in elections (Pratiwi, 2018).

The perception that has been built up so far both for parties competing in general elections and the assumption from the public that to become a candidate, the costs that must be prepared are very large. This thinking is not all right and not all wrong. Because what is unavoidable in competing in the General Election is the use of costs in terms of introducing themselves (branding) and the means used. However, this can be minimized if the person concerned has a high level of popularity in the community. But this does not apply to those with low popularity, so to increase it the person concerned uses props in the form of billboards, banners, stickers, business cards, etc. which of course require costs that are not cheap. In addition, another thing that also determines the cheap and expensive capital to advance as a candidate is the level of media literacy. As (Admin, 2018) argues that the higher the level of media usage in an area, the cheaper the cost of nomination.

In addition, the culture that has been built so far is that if you want to win then (money politics) is a determining factor, which means that everyone who participates in the contestation of PEMILU must have large funds if you want to sit as a people's representative or regional head leader. Since the enactment of direct elections, the assumption that one vote is so valuable makes every candidate competing to raise money even to the point that some sell and pawn valuable assets in order to advance in the contestation of general elections. So what happens, the candidate has succeeded or passed to become a people's representative or leader, so the first thing he thinks about is how to return the capital or costs he has incurred during the campaign. Another case is if a person who sits as a people's representative purely without using money politics, then there is a separate moral burden for those concerned to maintain the trust of the people who have given their trust to fight for the aspirations of those who have supported them in particular and in general moral responsibility as a people's representative.

The dynamics of each election hold many interesting things to be researched. This is especially true with regard to the political costs of each election held every 5 (five) years. The high cost of politics in Indonesia is one of the factors that lead to corruption. As stated by one

of the Deputy Chairpersons of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) Alexander Marwata, to become a member of the House of Representatives (DPR) of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) or even a regional head requires funds of up to billions of rupiah. This phenomenon is not surprising, because the reality is that our political costs are indeed expensive and not free. As an example, regional heads at the second level (Regency / City) in this case as Regent / Mayor must at least provide funds of around Rp. 20 billion to Rp. 30 billion, while for the head of the first level (Province) in this case as Governor, requires funds of more than Rp. 100 billion (Kamil & Prabowo, 2022). In addition, funds to run in general elections for candidates for people's representatives or regional heads do not only come from personal pockets. However, it can also come from income or assistance from other parties, both individuals and institutions, as long as it is still within reasonable limits as regulated in the General Election Commission Regulation (PKPU) Number 18 of 2023 concerning election campaign funds. The maximum amount of campaign fund donations from individuals is 2.5 billion rupiah while the maximum limit of campaign fund donations from groups or companies is 25 billion rupiah (Bintang, 2023) As the saying goes that there is no free lunch, likewise the funders certainly hope to get projects and licenses after the sponsored regional head candidates succeed in occupying their positions or are elected as regional heads. This phenomenon is a scene that often occurs in every celebration of regional head elections, both at the provincial and district/ city levels. If this condition remains, then the term politics of reciprocity will become an obstacle to the realization of the ideals of democracy, namely leaders who work for the people and bring justice and welfare to the people who elect them.

One of the challenges in general elections, including Pilkada, is the phenomenon of money politics, which seems difficult to eliminate in the democratic process. Quoting from what Ari Dwipayana said that one of the factors causing money politics is because democracy has a high cost (Dwipayana & AAGN, 2009). The leadership election system where the existence of votes has a huge influence until it becomes a commodity that gives birth to transactional politics. The process of buying and selling votes with all the *modus operandi* seems to be a common occurrence. One of the reasons why candidates engage in money politics is because they are not ready to compete fairly with other candidates (Syarifudin, 2020). Of course, this cannot be allowed to continue, because if this continues to happen, the ideals of realizing a clean democracy will only be wishful thinking. It takes a joint commitment from organizers, election participants and the community to realize clean and dignified elections. The occurrence of money politics is due to the mutual benefit of each other, in this case the party that needs votes and the people who are willing to sell their votes for a certain nominal amount. If one or both parties have the awareness to respect the democratic process in elegant ways, the practices of money politics can be avoided or prevented

### **Elections in Indonesia**

As a country that adheres to a democratic system, as a consequence of this, Indonesia in determining the leaders and representatives of the people is using the ELECTION instrument as a means. As for the process of governance, it adheres to a democratic political system with several pillars that are prerequisites for the running of a democratic political system, namely the holding of free and periodic elections; the existence of an open, accountable and responsive government; the protection of human rights (HAM); and the development of civil society in society. This means that the organization of free and periodic elections is a prerequisite for a democratic political system because elections are one of the means of popular sovereignty where people can choose their representatives and leaders to run the government (Finaka, 2019).

Elections and local elections as one of the requirements for the realization of democracy in local government should also increasingly reflect the process of democratic maturity. However, the implementation in the field still shows the existence of phenomena that damage the image of the election and the election itself, including money politics, the non-neutrality of the organizing apparatus, fraud in the form of campaign violations and vote inflation, as well as the delivery of political messages that have sectarian nuances that lead to cracking the frame of harmonization between community life. On the other hand, the unpreparedness and immaturity of candidates and their supporters to be grateful for victory and accept defeat, which is often manifested in the form of actions that justify all means, has triggered conflict and mass anarchism in various regions (Admin B. S., 2012).

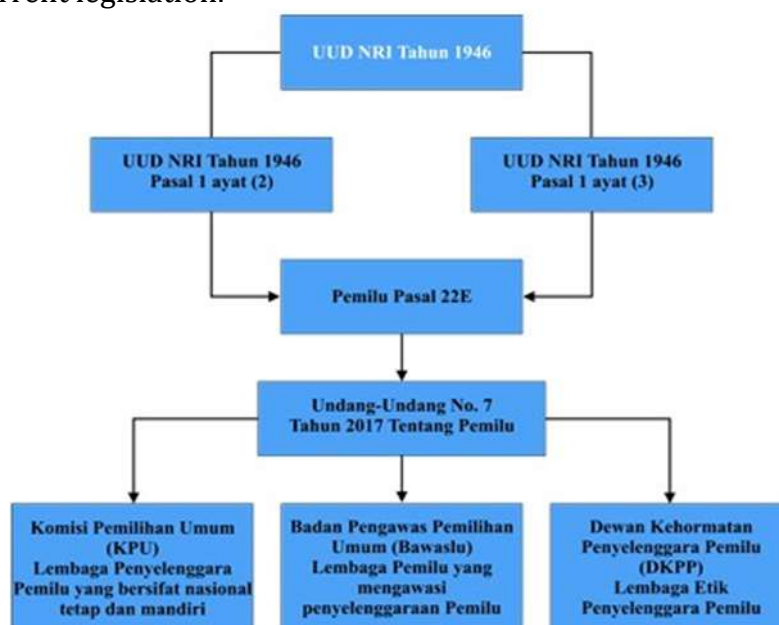
Elections were originally intended to elect members of representative institutions, namely the DPR (House of Representatives), Provincial DPRD, and Regency/City DPRD. After the fourth amendment of the 1945 Constitution in 2002, the election of the president and vice president (Pilpres), which was originally conducted by the MPR, was agreed to be conducted directly by the people and from the people so that the Pilpres was included in the series of elections. The presidential election as part of the elections was held for the first time in the 2004 elections. And in 2007, as stipulated in Law Number 22 of 2007 concerning the implementation of elections, that the Regional Head and Deputy Regional Head Elections (Pilkada or Pemilukada) were also included as part of the election regime. In general, the term election more often refers to legislative and presidential elections that are held every five years. Elections must be carried out periodically, because it has a function as a means of supervision for the people against their representatives. Elections should be conducted periodically, as they serve as a means of supervision for the people over their representatives, including elections for the House of Representatives (House of Representatives), DPD (Regional Representative Council), and DPRD (Regional House of Representatives) of provinces and regencies/cities, elections to elect the president and vice president, elections to elect governors and deputy governors, regents and deputy regents and mayors and deputy mayors. Elections are a 'Transmission of Belt' so that the power that comes from the people can shift into state power and then transform into the authority of the government, in carrying out governance and leading the people. In a country that considers itself a democratic country, elections are mandatory. The general election, which is held every five years, is the time or momentum to show directly and tangibly the government by the people (Hamzah, 2021).

### **The Role of Organizers and Supervisors in Realizing Clean and Democratic Elections**

In Indonesia, the institutionalization of the supervisory function in the election process is the Election Supervisory Agency (BAWASLU). This, as stipulated in Article 1 paragraph (7) of Law No.7/2017 on General Elections that BAWASLU is the organizer of the General Election in addition to the General Election Commission (KPU) and the Honorary Board of Election Organizers (DKPP)), BAWASLU, KPU and DKPP are a unity of the function of organizing the General Election as an election organizing body, BAWASLU is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the General Election (Syam, 2021). The institutional relationship between BAWASLU and KPU can be examined from the relationship between their respective duties and authorities which are inseparable as organizers of the elections. The main function of the KPU is to organize all stages of the general election until the elected state organizers of the legislative and executive institutions, both at the central and regional levels. Regarding the function of BAWASLU, it is to supervise the implementation of the elections in accordance with the Election Law. The institutional nexus between the two occurs in their common

interest to coordinate to ensure that elections can be held in accordance with laws and regulations and to ensure the enforcement of the PEMILU Law. The separation of authority and institutions for the organizers and supervisors of the EMB as expressly and/or clearly stipulated where the supervisor of the EMB is part of the organizer of the EMB so that the supervisory body of the EMB does not have strong authority.

With the rules that contain the separation of supervisory and implementing institutions of the EMB based on the amendment to Article 22E of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the supervisory function carried out by the supervisory institution of the EMB is expected to be more optimal and have coercive power in the decision because it is separated between the organizers and supervisors of the EMB (Law, 2017). Recommendations from the supervisory body of the EMB that are not implemented can be avoided and the implementation of the EMB as a means of popular sovereignty can be guaranteed and maximally realized. The following diagram illustrates the concept of an election organizing body based on current legislation.



The purpose of supervision is to ensure that what is carried out is in accordance with predetermined standards and criteria. Therefore, in supervision, it is necessary to know who is doing and doing what; who is responsible and accountable to whom; who interacts and interacts with whom; what communication patterns apply within the organization; and what information networks are available and can be utilized by members of the organization concerned. The role of the supervisor can be divided into two types based on how it is carried out. The first is preventive supervision, which is structural and specific. The types of dos and don'ts have been regulated beforehand so that they can be prevented; Second, repressive supervision, which is carried out after a decision has legal consequences or certain sanctions are imposed (Manan, 1994).

## CONSLUSIONS

Based on this description, it can be concluded that in every process of implementing general elections (PEMILU), both as candidates for legislative members, regent / mayor candidates and governors and presidential candidates, the use of costs (budgets) from each implementation process cannot be avoided by both the organizers and election participants. The size of political costs is very much determined by how well the person concerned can



manage it. In addition, the culture of money politics and other things that harm clean and democratic elections can be minimized and even eliminated if a joint commitment is built by organizers, participants and the public as voters. As the slogan that is often voiced "ready to win and ready to lose".

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