

# **POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT OF DIRECT ELECTION TOWARDS PUBLIC SERVICE IN INDONESIA**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper will explore and describe the positive and negative impact of the direct election, since the direct election would provide more opportunities for the public to get the Regional Head in terms of accountability. Also this paper will describe how the weakness of the direct election brings impact on public service at large.*

*Decentralization in Indonesia in the perspective of the dynamics of local politics has entered a new phase. The direct general election of regional heads (direct election) has marked the start of the direct democracy era. The success of political democracy at the local level is shown by the ongoing of direct election. It shows that Indonesia has taken place in a democratic and stable political system for decentralized government and the better system of the draw and guard (checks and balances). But on the other hand, the fact remains that the public services are still not maximal because of the high level of corruption that actually increased after the Regional General Election.*

*The Regional Head that is chosen in relation to democracy should encourage the formation of responsive decentralized governance to serve the good public services. The positive impact of direct election is the wide space of democracy for the society, the high level of legitimation for the head region, and the existing of mission and vision for the regional head which will be the basis of regional planning.*

*The positive impact of the direct election is the existing of one man one man vote principle that is the closest to the principles of democracy. This principle cannot be full-filled by the representative system with any model. Direct election give the citizens political rights to get their Regional Head. The weakness of the direct election can be seen from the money politics, elite capture, political fraud, and the leakage of local annual budget because of the weak control over the budgets of regional heads. The important agenda of the democratization is to transform the politic promise of the Regent/Major into the development programs which are implemented systematically and have the scale of priority based on local development planning, and also to keep the development on the right tract without corruption.*  
**Keywords: direct election, public service, positive impact, negative impact of direct election.**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background**

The decentralization in Indonesia in the perspective of the of local politics has entered the new phase. The direct General Election of regional heads (direct election) which is based on the basic UU No. 32/2004 about the Regional Government accompanied by PP No.6/2005 about the Election, Ratification of Appointment and Dismissal of Regional Head and Deputy Head has marked the beginning of direct

democracy era. Both of those basic regulations control the election directly. . The success of political democracy at the local level is shown by the ongoing of direct election. It shows that Indonesia has taken place in a democratic and stable political system for decentralized government and the better system of checks and balances. But on the other hand, the selection of Regional Head (Governor, Regent/Mayor), which took place in many areas today also have many records of fraud and neglects of the society's welfare post the directly election. The practice of money politics, black campaign, buying votes, and fraud in the vote count become the appearance of the direct election which cannot be circumvented.

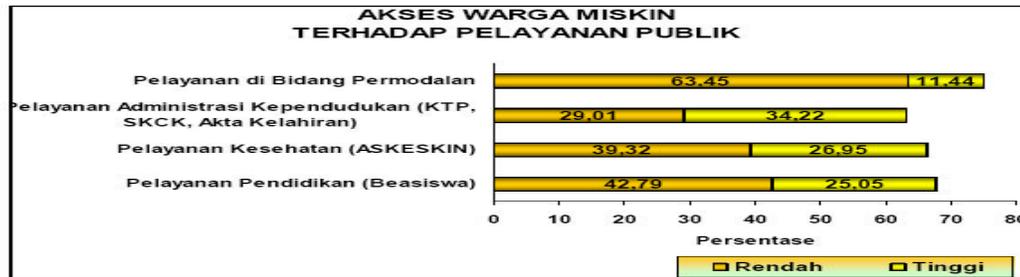
The operation of the direct election also shows how political parties retain hegemony over democracy in the region. Political party (political parties) involve in the nomination process for the regional head pair candidates, then the local people directly elect them based on the principles of the General Election. Victory of the regional head and deputy regional pair may occur because of the political party's machine's fine work. But, whether or not the bearers of political parties have the high capacity and understand the developed local issues in the related area is still become the task post the direct election. And the other issue is the role of the elected regional heads in formulating public policy related to the improvement of the public service's quality.

The fact shows that the public services are still not maximal because of the high corruption level that is actually increased after the General Election in the region. The cases of corruption in Indonesia show that this country was in the chronic condition of corruption. Indonesia Corruption Ranking by Transparency International Indonesia in 2009 announced that the Corruption Ranking Index (CRI) of this country in 2009 is at the position 111 of the 180 countries in the world. Meanwhile at the environment of ASEAN, Indonesia is at the fifth rank out of 10 ASEAN countries which are Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, and Thailand which are in position 1-4, while Vietnam, Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar which are in position 6-10.

Another post-direct election data is derived directly from the findings of the Governance Assessment Survey in 2006 in ten provinces in Indonesia shows that the public perception about the public services is still bad. The more surprising thing is that the majority of respondents said that the cause of business failure in the region is the corrupt bureaucracy (417%), legal certainty over land (33,1%), and regulatory

uncertainty (25,2%). This information clearly shows that the public services in the region is not yet successful to become investment motivator.

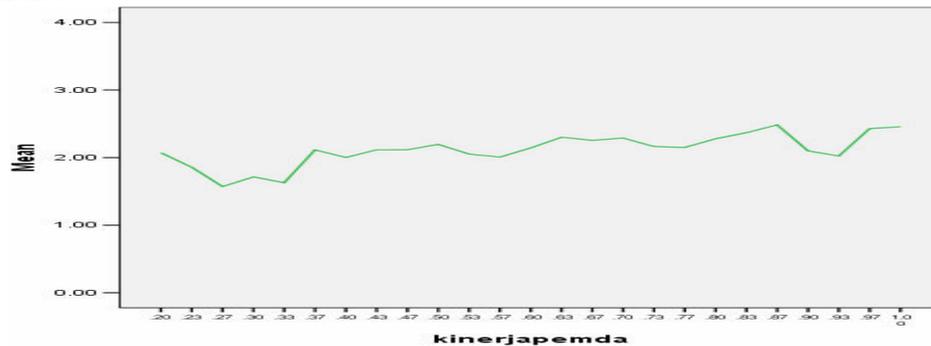
Chart 1. The Poor people accessibility to the Public Service in the Region



Source: *Governance Assessment Survey*, PSKK-UGM, 2006.

Other data that can be seen is the study conducted by the Indonesian Survey Institute in 2007 about the correlation between the performances of local government with regional autonomy which has found that the regional autonomy does not have the good performance yet. It is related to the public evaluation over the local government performance. The public’s positive evaluation about the regional autonomy’s performance depends on whether the government will show the better performance or not. In general, residents feel that there is not much different impact from the regional autonomy and governmental system prior to their lives. The situation after the regional autonomy era is not better. It indicates that the regional autonomy has not achieved the goals which are expected by public. If the performance of the regional autonomy is bad, public will complaint this system. When it is questioned, the recruitment and election system of the regional heads becomes the significant variable.

Chart 2. The correlation between the local government and regional autonomy performance



Source : Lembaga Survey Indonesia , 2007

## **B. Problem Statement**

By looking at those various data, the selection of Regional Head (Governor, Regent/Mayor), which took place in many areas today also have many records of fraud and neglects of the society's welfare post the directly election. The practice of money politics, black campaign, buying votes, and fraud in the vote count become the appearance of the direct election which cannot be circumvented. The operation of the direct election also shows how political parties retain hegemony over democracy in the region. Political party (political parties) involve in the nomination process for the regional head pair candidates, then the local people directly elect them based on the principles of the General Election.

The big challenge in the recruitment of political leadership through the immediate General Election is to minimize the negative impact of money politics which cause the political reciprocation before the election. Another challenge is how to improve the professionalism of the head region. The formulation of the good policy is largely determined by the understanding of the regional head through the process that put the community as the major public policy beneficiaries. The direct election system still contain the possibility for the less capacity Regional Head is chosen.

## **C. Aims**

This paper will explore and describe the positive and negative impact of the direct election, since the direct election would provide more opportunities for the public to get the superior Regional Head in terms of accountability. Also this paper will describe how the weakness of the direct election can be seen bring impact on public service at large.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Hill (20065), democracy has assumed to produce the more participative policy formulation system. It gives the stronger legitimacy through the measures taken. But the democratic process also requires the readiness of the policy makers through the long politic process, to use the negotiation skill and also the willingness to compromise with all stakeholders. It is because the democracy causes the dispersed systems (divergence) rather than centrally one (convergence).

Political configuration in the direct election has all the basic features of a democracy. The free and fair election, freedom of expression and association, right to vote, existence of alternative sources of information, right for all the people to go to the public office, and institution that allow people to control the government as the characteristics of democracy as proposed by Dahl (1971:3) has prevailed in Indonesia. In the direct Regional Head election, there is a possibility for people or constituents to choose the wrong leader. In the immediate General Election, halo effect will be difficult to avoid and sometimes very influential. A candidate of the regional head that has become a public figure and won people's hearts with a powerful campaign team will probably win the election, even though their technical capabilities as a construction manager is not good. But, in terms of accountability, the direct election is unbeatable by other systems. It should be noted that the accountability is also conceptually means the possibility to depose (possibility to vote out).

If constituents have aware of their mistake in choosing a leader, the direct General Election is making possibility for them to choose a new leader that is more responsible. Democratization through the direct election does not guarantee that their choice is always right. But, this kind of election provides a tool for them to correct it. Direct election is not always in line with the increase in economic welfare, but in the long run, it is the only way to improve the people's quality of life due to two main principles, namely the principle of consent and the principle of equality as a citizen (principle of equality). Following the opinion of Bernard Rosen (1982), democracy thought the direct election is the only way to force the government bureaucracy responsible to its people (in Kumorotomo, 2010).

In another study, though the free and fair election has held, and also the political power has shifted to the area, the old political elite was still retained in the political and administrative political at all levels of government (Hadiz and Robison, 2004). There is also a descriptive which concluded that democratization in Indonesia has been "hijacked" by political elites (Priyono et al, 2007). On the other hand, a study implied that there has been an important advance in the system of governance in Indonesia since 1988 and that "although the progress was slow, but a public commitment to democracy remains strong" (McLeod and MacIntyre, 2007).

The regional head as the head of the public service bureaucracy provider are expected to do much for society and achieve many goals simultaneously. But of

course, the bureaucracy cannot function perfectly, as proposed by Franklin (Franklin: 1982), that it can give the good service when:

1. *Process its work at a steady and brisk pace.*
2. *Treat all individuals with whom it deals fairly and equally.*
3. *Hire and retain a staff of qualified professionals who care about the quality of the unit's output.*
4. *Promote individual staff members on the basis of merit and proven worth.*
5. *Maintain records that can be recovered quickly when the need arises.*

From that opinion, it is seen that bureaucracy is able to give the good service if it is in a good working process. Besides that, there must be the fair and balanced working relationship, appreciation to the professionalism, and also the opportunity for the staff to have the higher level of career position. In otherwise, the bad things will come if the opposite condition happens, just like Franklin's opinion below. Bureaucracy will perform poorly on the community service if:

1. *Process its work at an unpredictable and often very slow pace.*
2. *Show favoritism in the treatment of some clients and discriminate against others.*
3. *Hire and retain a staff that shows low interest in professional standards of quality services or programs.*
4. *Promote individuals on the basis of political favoritism or non-professional criteria.*
5. *Create mountains of paper pointlessly and be unable to recover relevant file material in a timely fashion.*

Franklin's opinion was almost similar with the opinion expressed by Dudley (in Wamsley and Wolf: 1996), that in doing the good public service, bureaucracy must “*Open to its clientele, sensitivity to its mission, understanding of its place within the overall system of governance, and responsiveness to public scrutiny*”. It means that in conducting the service bureaucracy, it has to be open to the clients, sensitive to the mission, understand well the scope of the government system, and responsive to the public control.

The chosen Regional Head as the head of the public bureaucracy needs to manifest himself to become a high quality head region, responsive to the change, able to adapt with the environment, and have commitment as the public servant. In relation to democracy, Mutiarin (2010) explained about the importance for the head region to push the decentralized governance. It can be done with “*open opportunities for the local community to strengthen itself and, at the same time, an active and well-organized local community will expect local government to deliver and will hold it*

*accountable for its performance, both in its role as the voting constituency and as citizens acting in other situations concerned about their society. Therefore, it is expected that decentralized governance will be more effective as they reflect genuine local needs and priorities”.*

### **III. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION IMPACT OF DIRECT ELECTION**

The positive impact of the direct election is the existing of *one man one man vote* principle that is the closest to the principles of democracy. This principle cannot be full-filled by the representative system with any model. Direct election would provide more opportunities for the public to get the superior Regional Head in terms of accountability. Since 2005, the changing of the head region, either the Governor or Regent/Mayor, in Indonesia have been carried out directly. At the local level, the election of Regional Head (Governor, Mayor, Regent) is a political direct media of learning to the grass roots (public) while upholding and promoting the moral ethic of democracy (Kumorotomo, 2010). The effect of this election is the society has a vast space in democracy. Beside that, the regional head has the high legitimacy and the vision mission platform that will be the basis of are planning.

However, the phenomenon of the weak public services in regional autonomy cannot also be separated from the direct election policy. The formally calculation of the legal election cost is not absorb the local budget too much. Here is the description of the cost for the direct election from many areas and also a table about the public service budget.

Table 1. Proposed Budget of Direct Election in 4 areas

<b>No.</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Proposed Budget (in Billions Rupiah)</b>
1.	North Sumatera Province	2013	495,4
2.	Bogor City	2013	90
3.	Jakarta Special Province	2012	250
4.	Yogyakarta City*	2011	10,3

Note: \* was done in Sept 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Table 2. Program and related costs Election and General Election in Indonesia  
National Revenue and Expenditure Budget 2009

<b>Program and activity</b>	<b>In thousands Rp</b>
<b>Improving and strengthening Democracy Institution Program.</b>	101.061.476
Facilitation for Community Institution on Political education in local level	25.000.000
Improving Voters Political Education	86.000
Facilitation on General Election 2009	4.448.711
Improving Organization for General Election and Direct election in local level.	62.395.000
Turnover National and Local Legislative Memberand general Election Commission	9.131.765
<b>Improving Apparatus Infrastructure Program</b>	
Preparation to hold General Election	6.274.645
<b>Law Enforcement and Civil Rights Program</b>	20.296.130
Case handling of General and local election conflict	
<b>Improving Quality of Content and Public Communication Communication for central and local authorities</b>	892.501
<b>Facilitation for Political Parties, Executives, Head of Regions, Local Government and Civil Society Organizations.</b>	593.000
<b>Facilitation for Democratic Political Culture</b>	27.360.000
<b>Improving Political education for Citizens</b>	49.750.000
<b>Improving technical regulation on General and Local election</b>	4.866.570
<b>Technical Assistance and Supervisions on Local Election</b>	2.087.56
<b>Data processing and general election information (Central Government)</b>	4.016.131

Source : Indonesia National Revenue and Expenditure Budget 2009

Table 3. Yogyakarta City Government Revenue and Expenditure Budget  
Ceiling for public education and health services in 2011

<b>Basic Services</b>	<b>Budget ceiling</b>
Education Sector	Rp.305.657.704.362,-.
Health Sector	Rp.111.898.213.068-.
Total for education and health sector	<b>Rp. 417,555,917,430,-</b>

Source : Yogyakarta City Government Revenue and Expenditure Budget  
Ceiling 2011

From the table above, it can be seen that the actual costs for the General Election either sourced from National Revenue and Expenditure Budget or local budget is actually not too big when compared with the budget for the basic education and health services. But, something that is not realized by the society is how the budget that supposed to society, then deflected to cover the costs of political candidacy of the head area. In practice, the election makes the expenses that has to be

spend by the head region candidates becomes very expensive. It is because the candidates must pay a fee to the political party, spend money to campaign, and the possibility to buy votes. In the election, the candidates have to deposit the nomination fee to a particular political party to be able participating in the election supported by it.

Analysis of James Manor and Richard Crook in South America and West Africa shows that there is a link between the direct election of regional head and bad governance (in Eko Prasajo: 2009). The negative impact of direct election through the public services and government administration is the high possibilities for the regional heads to get back the cost they have spend during the process of election from Local Revenue And Expenditure Budget as the result of money politics. The cost of effort to attract sympathy, advertisement, and registration cause the high expenses for the candidates. Therefore, to restore the political investment budget through the National Revenue And Expenditure Budget is the easiest way to choose. It is through the resources segmentation such as the provision of goods and services.

Secondly, with the return of the political costs through Local Revenue And Expenditure Budget, it can imagine that the possibility of corruption through this budget is become very open. Third, fiscal policy is designed through the process of policy formulation that tends to be elitist and geared to meet certain political targets. It makes the political orientation on the public services quality become very less.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

A number of regional head elections showed the positive and negative results at the same time. From the positive aspect, it has been quite successful, both in terms of its implementation process, public participation, diversity of participants who joined the election, as well as being seen from the terms of the result of the General Election itself. Regional Head election that have been underway since 2005, has laid the foundations of an important democratic tradition. It is a way to learn about the good politic, great democracy, and also to improve the ability of the society to participate overseeing the entire process of election. Another thing, it is needed to note that the development of democracy in Indonesia is also marked by the direct election of all the regional heads at the provincial and district/ city governemnt in Indonesia. The effects of this kind of election are the society has a vast space; the

head region has a high legitimacy and also vision mission platform that will be the basis of the area planning.

The weakness of direct election is the existing of money politic, elite capture, political fraud, and leakage of budget because of the weak control to the regional heads. Other weakness is the high possibility of the regional heads to make Local Revenue And Expenditure Budget as the means to get their cost back as the result of money politics during the process of election. It cause the public services become far away from the expectation. There is still no guarantee that the chosen regional head is able to translate the vision and mission of the public services. The corruption level in the regions has rising since the direct election held that led the public services became worsened.

The important agenda from democratization is to transform the political promise of the regional heads into the development programs that are implemented systematically and has a scale of priority based on local development planning. The vision and mission of the regional heads that has been translated into the mid-region development plan need to be escorted by all elements of government together with the parliament and civil society in order to have linearity with benefits for the society. The direct election that has resulted the chosen head region should be able to show the success by leading the local development which is oriented to the public services, especially the basic and public services.

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