

## ARTICLE

## Local Elections (Pilkada):

Money Politics and *Cukong* Democracy

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**Abstract:** Local elections (Pilkada) still face problems, both technical and substantive. Efforts to improve have been made several times by revising the law regulating local elections (Pilkada). In the simultaneous local elections in 2020, money politics arose again. The issue of *cukong* democracy practices depicted capital owners' power to finance local leaders candidates to contest local elections (Pilkada). This study explores and structures the problems underlying money politics in local elections (Pilkada), which formulate alternative solutions based on logical reasoning. The exploration and formulation of issues and the preparation of alternative solutions are carried out using strong arguments to ensure the conclusions' plausibility. The practice of money politics can occur in two main areas, namely in the nomination process in the form of political dowries paid by candidates to political parties. In the campaign area, the condition of buying and selling votes carried out by candidates with voters. The practice of political dowry occurs due to the limited alternatives that a person can use to run for regional head elections. The nomination mechanism is much more difficult and costly through individual channels, so paying political dowries to political parties is the easiest and more specific option. The practice of money politics occurs because of voters' mental attitudes who are not rational, and the system of sanctions still supports the way of buying and selling votes. Alternative solutions to money politics in these two areas are compiled by doing a simulative analysis that can eliminate the practice's root causes. Decreasing the threshold for candidate submission by political parties, adopting the maximum point for political party support, reducing the number of voter support requirements for individual candidates, eliminating political dowries in local leader nominations, and simultaneously reducing costs for individual candidates. Adopting criminal sanctions for givers in the practice of buying and selling votes is an alternative solution in preventing the way of buying and selling votes in local elections (Pilkada).

**Keywords:** regional head election (pilkada); money politics; oligarchy of political party

## 1. Introduction

Local elections (Pilkada) cannot be separated from the concept of regional autonomy because it is a consequence and essence of regional autonomy itself (Arif & Maksum, 2017; Suryanto & Hidayat, 2016). As a preferred method of managing state power, regional autonomy is motivated by the community's desire to self-regulate, which is different from people in other places. When the state allows a group of people to mix with themselves, an autonomous region is born with autonomy rights (Hoessein, 1993, p. 43). Granting the right to communities to self-regulate in addition to adjusting regulatory needs to the conditions and aspirations of the local people, also gives freedom to the people to decide how to live together on their own (Do et al., 2016, p. 6; Hoessein, 1993, p. 44). There are two meanings in this context: First, the technical aspect, namely that the people can adjust the arrangements regarding various parts of the management of ordinary life suitable and compatible with local conditions. It will provide technical convenience in implementing government affairs in the area. Second, the democracy aspect, namely the people take sides to discuss and determine the goals to be achieved, decide how to achieve goals, choose how to solve common problems and select the management of their resources (Asshiddiqie, 2012, p. 33). In the aspect of democracy, regional government administrators can directly hear and absorb the people's aspirations and views in the area so that the difference between aspirations and policies made is not too wide. The primary meaning of regional autonomy is the right to regulate. In contrast, the right to administer or implement government technical management is not only an attribute of regional sovereignty because the right to carry out technical control of the government is also attached to deconcentration.

From the essence of regional autonomy mentioned above, there are several main points of concern, namely: First, regional autonomy is the recognition through the constitution or acts of the rights of the community to regulate certain areas of government that are free from interference and intervention from the executive central both in regulation and implementation (Hoessein, 1993, p. 44). The people of the state only regulate the regulation of the government's areas to the local people (autonomous regions) by law, which is then translated into regional rules and local leaders' regulations. Second, the local leaders and the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) are institutions formed to carry out government areas devolved to the regions (Hoessein, 1993, p. 67; Yuwono, 2001, p. 12). The regional government administering institution was born from the local people's power and is responsible to the people of the area. As an institution owned by communities, the local leaders and the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) are not extensions of the state institutions, be it the executive, legislative, or judiciary at the central level. Third, resources such as finance, personnel, equipment, and other resources belong to the communities as a legal entity. Management is separate and does not form part of the resources owned by the state government. Therefore, regulation and management are thoroughly carried out by the regional people through their institution. The management of regional owned resources by power government can only be carried out through law as a manifestation of the state's sovereignty. Fourth, the area is a group of citizens who are recognized and given the right to regulate and administer certain areas of government by themselves, so the power of the people of the area is the original power, which is the result of sharing with the power of communities (Samuels, 2000). The power of the regional people cannot possibly come from the delegation of the authority of state institutions, because if the power of the local people comes from one of the state institutions' command, then the regional people become the subordinates of that institution. No matter how small the number is, the community is still the owner of sovereignty who cannot be under officials at any level. Therefore, the basic meaning of regional autonomy, which is very important, is that the owner of the autonomy is the community who get power from the residual sovereignty with all the attributes of power attached to it.

Based on the idea of the essence of the autonomous region, the local elections (Pilkada) policy was created (Samuels, 2000, p. 11). The regional head is an organ of the autonomous region which serves as an extension of the regional people in managing and running the management of the autonomous regional government. Therefore, the regional head must be elected by the people. Direct local elections (Pilkada) or through representatives are an indicator of regional autonomy. If the regional head elections are not carried out by the community, there is no regional autonomy and autonomous regions. The right to self-regulate and administer governmental affairs that are entrusted to the local people is in fact never directly regulated and administered by the people themselves, but rather is left to their representatives in regional representative institutions and to the local leaders they appoint. Therefore, if the regional heads is not elected by communities, they cannot be called autonomous, because what the local leaders does cannot be called the will of the community, but the will of the party who does it.

The local elections mechanism must ensure the emergence of the best leader according to the will of the people and be carried out efficiently. To get the best regional heads, it can be done by regulating the requirements of the regional heads. Meanwhile, to conduct local elections (Pilkada) efficiently, it is carried out by regulating the procedures and stages of implementing local elections.

Becoming a regional heads is not only about seizing power in government, but also as a means for citizens to participate directly in the highest regional policy making (Abdel-Monem et al., 2016, p. 6; Mohr, 1994, p. 3). The local leaders as the leader of the highest executive government in the region should be held by the best citizens among potential of the nation from all ethnic, religious, racial, class, or professional backgrounds. For this reason, every citizen who has great abilities should be given the widest possible opportunity to offer his ideas and ideas to the people in developing regions.

Local elections (Pilkada) are a "contest" for the nation's best citizens to be elected by the community to become local leaders. The contest should provide opportunities so that more and more potential citizens can offer their abilities. For the people, with the many potential sons of the nation offering their ideas and ideas, the greater the chance to get the best leaders. The opportunity for the birth of the best candidate for local leaders is currently being hampered by a very tough nomination process. Both the process of gaining support as a candidate and the process to be elected at the time of election. The biggest obstacles to the birth of the best candidates for regional heads include:

In order to be appointed as a candidate for regional head, a person must receive support from political parties or support from voters for individual candidates. To get support from political parties, very large funds are needed as "dowries" or operational funds for the implementation of regional head elections that must be deposited with the supporting political parties. Meanwhile, to register as an individual candidate requires the support of a large number of voters, which also requires a large amount of money and a long and complicated process (Dawson, 2020, p. 1).

In order to be elected in a vote, candidates must also attract public sympathy which is not sufficient with the vision, mission and program, but also requires giving, gifts or donations to voters individually or to the community. The political process to be elected in this vote also requires a very large cost (Borda, n.d.; Dawson, 2020, p. 1).

The reality of such local elections has given birth to capitalist democracy and has given birth to fund owners as candidates for local leaders or as *cukong* (investors) for local leaders candidates. The tradition of candidacy and local elections with capitalist democracy has become one of the triggers for the birth of corrupt local leaders that not only harm state finances. It also causes slow progress in local development because elected local leaders generally do not have strong leadership abilities, are not innovative and creative, and tends to prioritize personal interests and political intrigue of reciprocity and as well as profit-seeking politics (Hakim & Jurdi, 2018, p. 2; Winters, 2013). Besides, capital democracy only generates local leaders with considerable

financial strength or local leaders with financial support from investors. (Fang et al., 2018) which is different from democracy based on oligarchy, which is a means for a group of elites to maintain absolute power in government (Aditjondro, 2006; Hakim & Jurdi, 2018; Winters, 2013). As a result, the heads of selected regions' policies can be easily educated by owners of capital who are outside the government. (Delamaide, 2009; Eger, 2006; Fang et al., 2018).

The rearrangement of local elections (Pilkada) policies has been carried out several times to eliminate the practice of election to the regions with high costs. Still, until now, it has not been quite effective. Therefore, problem formulations need to be answered correctly, namely regarding the factors that cause the practice of money politics and the strategies to overcome this.

Based on these problems, several research questions, namely, (1) why money politics and *cukong* democracy occur in the regional head election process? And (2) What strategies are used to overcome money politics and *cukong* democracy? This study aims to find the root causes of money politics and *cukong* democracy in regional head elections and find strategies to overcome the occurrence of money politics and *cukong* democracy in local elections in Indonesia.

## 2. Methods

This study results from thinking on the issues discussed in this article, namely, money politics and *cukong* democracy in Indonesia's local elections. The method used in this article was the logical analysis method. Logical analysis is the drawing of conclusions starting from a particular base of thought used in understanding and discussing the problem to be solved (Heryadi, 2017, p. 2). The data and facts obtained are used to make sense of the relationship between phenomena. The logic analysis is a way to understand a phenomenon by understanding the parts or elements that make up the phenomenon.

In the logical analysis, there are several principles of reasoning in building axioms according to Hidayat that must be adhered to in making statements or conclusions about a phenomenon, namely:

### 1) *The principle of identity*

The principle of identity is consistency in defining a phenomenon. Consistency implies that every defined phenomenon must be a complete picture of the phenomenon itself. Thus, a phenomenon must not change in elements or attributes.

### 2) *The principle of non-contradiction*

The principle of non-contradiction is fundamental in logical analysis. Every phenomenon can't contain opposites at the same time. If something is B, it cannot be A at the same time. This principle must be related to the direction of identity because if something is A, then it cannot be A that is B, thus if it is said that something has the character A, then it cannot have the characteristic B at the same time if that something's identity is intact and do not change.

### 3) *The principle of exclusion*

The principle of exclusion requires that a phenomenon must not have the same characteristic as something else. For example, a boy group is not a girl group. It does not fulfill the principle of exclusion if a group has overlapping characteristics, for example, groups of children and groups of women. It could be that there are girls among the children so that these girls can be included in the children's group but can also be included in the girl's group. The principle of exclusion states that something is A, so it must not be part of anything other than A.

#### 4) *The principle of sufficient reason*

The principle of sufficient reason is based on the belief that everything happens for a cause or an explanation. Something will not change if no cause makes it change. Therefore, every change in something must be known through reasoning what could have caused the change to occur (Hidayat, 2018).

The method of logical analysis in the preparation of this study was carried out by adopting the stages suggested by The Liang Gie through the following stages:

##### 1) *Data Collection*

Data and facts relating to the implementation of regional head elections are simultaneously collected through documentation study techniques in government documents in the local elections and the local Government regulations, books, scientific writings, or other written documents obtained from electronic media. Data relevant to the object of study is used as the basis for conducting logical analysis.

##### 2) *Logical Analysis*

Based on the data or empirical facts that have been collected, the authors carry out a logical analysis based on the principles of logical analysis described above. The author compiles arguments or statements based on logical reasoning based on empiric data and facts that have been collected.

##### 3) *Conclusions*

Logical analysis ends with drawing conclusions in the form of arguments or statements about a problem being studied (Gie, 2000).

### 3. Results and Discussion

Democracy is a system of government that is synonymous with people's sovereignty. Democracy is about the sovereignty of the people themselves. In the concept of democratic governance, the people hold the position of the highest authority. At the policy instrumentation level, these grand principles are translated and implemented through direct elections by the people themselves, including at the local level. As currently held in Indonesia, direct local elections are considered to fulfill the essence of decentralization as a manifestation of the "community's government system." Regardless of whether the local elections (Pilkada) is included in the electoral regime or not, the local elections (Pilkada) remains an integral part of decentralization.

Democracy is an idea that presupposes that power is from, by, and for the people. In a more participatory sense, democracy is even referred to as the concept of power from, by, for, and with the people. It means that power is basically recognized as coming from the people, and because of that, the people determine and give direction and who carry out the life of the state (Asshiddiqie, 2012, p. 32). Etymologically, democracy consists of two words that come from Greek, namely demos, which means people (residents of a place) and cratein or cratos, which means power (sovereignty)".

Democracy must be seen as a political process that opens opportunities for people's political participation to effectively supervise political agendas and decisions (Dahl, 1982, p. 9). Matthew Holden expressed a similar opinion. In a democracy, communities were given the right to make decisions (in the form of public policies) regarding important issues. (Holden, 1975, p., 22). Dahl and Holden's opinion is very relevant to Indonesia's democratization, both at the national and local levels. It provides opportunities for the people's role or political participation to guard the reform plan because people's political involvement is one of the essential benchmarks for assessing whether a political system is democratic, authoritarian, or some other type of political system (Djafar, 2008, p. 14).

In democratic elections, there are two key indicators, namely contestation, and participation. Contestation refers to candidates who compete for the people's mandate and trust in holding a public office. The greater the chance for a competing

candidate to emerge, the higher degree of democracy of a country or region. Contestation is also interpreted as the existence of creative arguments and ideas between candidates in gaining public or voter support. Meanwhile, participation refers to citizens who have the right to vote in voting in general elections or local elections.

Direct local elections (Pilkada) are an implementation of democracy that has developed and flourished in post-reform Indonesia. Regional head elections that give citizens the right to vote to determine their regional leaders are a form of applying the electoral democracy model (electoral democracy). Since the reformation, the general elections in electing the president/vice president and the election of members of the national and local legislative bodies have marked the birth of a new democratic life in Indonesia.

Electoral democracy is a type of democracy that is based on elections, particularly voting in elections. In this context, elections become "a means for the people (with the same political rights as citizens) to elect their political leaders and replace their leaders regularly, meaningful, free, and honest in regular elections." International IDEA on Electoral Integrity believes that "elections are the only instrument for a peaceful and democratic transfer of power with the majority's consent and choice. Therefore, the rights to vote and participate in elections are part of fundamental human rights and democratic principles." (Hussain, n.d.).

Local elections (Pilkada) are the actualization of regional democracy, which is the basis and goal of the regional autonomy policy (Humes, 1959, p. 5). The local election (Pilkada) election in Indonesia contains two perspectives, namely a national perspective and a local perspective. From a national view, local elections have several national interests: first, regional head elections are the key to the continuity of regional autonomy. The implementation of regional autonomy is part of the administration of state government power. Local elections' could see failure as a disruption to state governance, which is democratic and constitutional. Second, regional head elections are part of the regeneration process of the national elite. Through local elections, it was hoped that the nation's best cadres would be selected to become leaders at the national level both in the legislative and national executive bodies. Third, although it was conducted at the local level, regional head elections are a battleground for national political parties. Candidates for regional heads who advance in local elections are generally cadres of national political parties. For national political parties, one way of controlling national politics is to start by controlling local politics.

From a local perspective, local elections contain several interests: First, local elections are a mechanism for local people to obtain leadership according to local needs, values, traditions, and conditions. Through the local election, the community can assess and elect candidates who can be trusted to bring about changes and improvements in their regions' conditions. Second, local elections are a symbol of recognition by the state of the existence of local entities that have the right to organize and manage themselves within the bonds of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The local election reflects the local's independence in managing a life together with its community. Their ability to produce the best leaders who bring them forward and equal to other local entities is a pride in the political, social, and national economic arena. Third, local elections are a channel for the struggle for influence and power between groups, factions, or political currents at the local level. Even though the local community is a small part of the national society, it does not mean that there was no competition in the management of power and the rule of economic resources between tribes, regions, or between groups in the area. With the local elections, the local community groups' interests are given a channel to compete healthily and peacefully. Fourth, local elections are a selection mechanism for local elites. Local elections will screen qualified local cadres to lead their regions.

From a national and a regional perspective, local elections have a critical role. Especially in the implementation of state governance, political recruitment, and the effort to get smart, innovative, creative, clean, and with integrity to bring the region and the nation to achieve shared prosperity. Money politics has become a fascinating topic

since the post-reform era. Every time a local elections law is revised, money politics has always been a topic of discussion, followed by adopting policies to overcome it. However, the policies that have been revised several times are deemed incapable of eradicating the practice of money politics and *cukong* politics in local elections. Money politics has created *cukong* democracy, leading to local leaders' corrupt actions in managing budgets, recruiting officials and employees, managing natural resources, and public services.

In 2018, the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) had arrested 15 regional heads related to corruption cases (Rachman, 2018). Meanwhile, if calculated from 2002 to 2019, the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) has processed 119 local leaders who have tripped over corruption cases (Rachman, 2018). It does not include the Attorney General's Office and the Police's local leaders corruption cases. One of the contributing factors is the large number of regional head election costs born through local leaders candidates' funds. However, corruption can also be caused by other factors and occurs in positions where there is no money politics in holding that position. Many ministers have caught in corruption cases that were not related to political costs in the recruitment process. Another factor contributing to a climate of corruption in governance is governance that is not transparent and has low accountability.

### 3.1. The Roots of Money Politics

*cukong* democracy or capitalist democracy in regional head elections occurs because of the considerable costs incurred by local leaders candidates in the local elections (Pilkada) process. Provision of funds for local elections (Pilkada) is borne by regional head candidates who must be financed from the candidates' funds. When a candidate does not have personal funds, the capital owner (*cukong*) can help fulfill these fund needs. Whether provided by the candidate or *cukong*, election funds' expenditure would encourage corruption if the candidate was elected as local leaders (Eger, 2006, p. 4; Putra, 2017, p. 6).

The need for high costs occurs in two areas in the local election process, namely the candidacy area and the campaign area (Solihah, 2018, p. 11). In the nomination for local leaders, considerable funds were needed to be deposited with political parties to obtain recommendations for support from political parties. Deposits to political parties are usually "stated" in various terms, including political party contributions, political party campaign funds, the candidate winning funds, or other terms to justify these payments. Although using multiple packages, the deposit is a political dowry or the price of a boat that must be paid due to using the political party to be appointed as a candidate for local leaders (Putra, 2017, p. 9).

In the campaign area, considerable funds are required for campaign costs, which are legally justified by laws and regulations, including operational expenses for the winning team, transportation costs and consumption of campaign participants, and other campaign operational costs. Apart from the campaign's official costs, large funds are also needed to "buy voters' votes". Buying voters' votes can be done by making direct individual contributions to voters or by providing goods or funds to specific communities (Meinke, 2008, p. 2).

Former candidate for the regent of Sumenep, East Java, Achmad Yunus, as published in Media Indoensia.Com on September 27, 2020, stated:

*"Yes, political dowry or buying seats for a political party is real. Some range from 100 million 1 chair to 1 billion 1 seat. This is a real practice in Indonesian political parties, "said Yunus when talking with Indonesian Media Journalist Ahmad Mustain, in the Journaliston Duty event, which was broadcast via IG Live @mediaindonesia, Monday night. (21/9)."*

Political dowry also appeared in the confession delivered by the Regent of Jember, Faida, as published on [tribunwow.com](http://tribunwow.com) on 9 September 2020, quoted from the Kompas TV channel. Faida acknowledged that billions of rupiah were needed as a political dowry to get support from political parties to advance in regional head elections. Faida also admits that it would be difficult to run the government when elected as regional head due to the enormous political dowry. The rise in political dowries paid to political parties must be analyzed. The factors are both the cause and the root of the problem. Political dowry will encourage *cukong* democracy that is not healthy in the political system and the administration of regional governments (Ferza & Aulia, 2020, p. 15).

Political dowry or rent that candidates must pay to political parties occurs because: First, there is no other mechanism that is cheaper, more comfortable, and more certain to use as a condition for becoming a candidate for the regional head. Although there are other alternatives through the individual candidate mechanism, this company path mechanism is not an attractive option for regional head candidates because:

- a. The mechanism for individual candidates is considered more difficult and obtaining them is more complicated. Pair candidates must obtain endorsement signatures and photocopies of ID cards from each voter and must be uploaded into the General Election Commission's application.
- b. Due to the large amount of support required for individual candidates, the particular candidate mechanism candidates need funds that are no less large. Bringing in tens of thousands and even millions of voters involves many field workers with high mobilization costs. Besides, a voter support signature also required. It must be given to the voters who are requested for their support.
- c. Suppose there is more than one individual candidate. In that case, field officers may have multiple support that cannot be predicted because of the dishonesty of voters who provide support. If there is various support, then the support submitted to the general election commission is considered invalid. Suppose many of the supports submitted are invalid. In that case, the minimum support requirements are likely not fulfilled so that they fail to become candidates for the regional head. Uncertainty in individual candidates' mechanism is very high due to the many conditions that must be met and the difficulty of controlling the voter support process.

The difficulty of nominating through an individual candidate mechanism has prompted regional head candidates to seek support from political parties (Suryanto & Hidayat, 2016). Although the costs of obtaining political party support are also relatively high, the mechanism used is much simpler with higher certainty. The nomination exchange for the head through a political party follows the law of demand and supply in a market economy. When there is a product monopoly by a single producer or an oligopoly by a limited number of producers, the price becomes prohibitive and is fully controlled by the producer. In a monopoly or oligopoly market, consumers' position is weak because of limited bargaining space, and there is no room for other options.

Second, the high cost of political dowries is due to the ineffectiveness of the current sanctions system. Although sanctions have been formulated to prohibit regional elections for the next period for political parties requesting a political dowry, these sanctions are difficult and even almost impossible to apply because both political parties and candidates who pay political dowries cover up the existence of such political dowries (Solihah, 2018, p. 2). Even if some dare to reveal a political dowry, it is difficult to prove it because the political dowry has been wrapped in various forms that are legally justifiable, such as campaign costs or the operational costs of the party winning team. Although the sanctions for members of political parties who ask for dowries have been regulated in Law Number 10 of 2016 article 187B states:



*“Members of a Political Party or a joint member of a Political Party who intentionally commits an unlawful act to receive compensation in any form in the process of nominating the Governor and Deputy Governor, Regent and Deputy Regent, as well as the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as referred to in Article 47 paragraph (1) shall be punished with criminal imprisonment of at least 36 (thirty six) months and a maximum of 72 (seventy two) months and a fine of at least Rp 300,000,000.00 (three hundred million rupiahs) and a maximum of Rp 1,000,000,000.00 (one billion rupiah).”*

Article 187B of Law No.10 of 2016 has regulated criminal sanctions for individual members of political parties but has not yet touched on political parties acting that accepts political dowries not on behalf and interests of individuals but for and on behalf of political parties so that it has not been included in the provisions stipulated. Therefore, the act of political dispute as a corporation or legal entity must also be regulated and sanctioned for receiving political dowries from candidate pairs.

Meanwhile, the second large need for funds in the campaign area occurred because of the difficulty in supervising candidates' voting buying and selling practices. Although the sanctions against buying and selling votes have been threatened with very heavy sanctions in the form of criminal sanctions and administrative sanctions in the form of cancellation of nominations as regulated in Law Number 10 of 2016, the proof is complicated. Criminal sanctions that have been threatened against bribes and recipients have made it even more challenging to prove. Voters who sell their votes will not divulge the practice of buying and selling these votes for fear of the criminal threat they will receive.

In principle, buying and selling votes is similar to the practice of bribery in corruption. The practice of bribery will always be carried out in a closed space (black box), which is hidden as far as possible by the perpetrator. Both the giver and the recipient both get the benefits or bribe results (symbiosis mutualism). Likewise, with the practice of buying and selling votes in local elections, candidates who pay a benefit in the form of voting support from the recipient, while voters who receive vote-buying and selling money benefit in the form of money. Both parties will mutually hide their behavior. The practice of bribery like this can only be detected through wiretapping or trapping; however, this is difficult to do in direct regional head elections.

### 3.2. Strategies for Preventing the Practice of Money Politics and *cukong* Democracy in Local Elections (Pilkada)

The strategy to prevent money politics and *cukong* democracy in Indonesia's regional elections was formulated based on the issues and problem formulations that have been previously formulated. In both areas, money politics occurs, resulting in considerable costs borne by candidates in the regional head election process. The root of the high-cost problem for submitting local leaders candidates is the absence of a cheaper and easier alternative for candidates to advance in regional head elections. Both individual candidates and political parties both require a large amount of money. Therefore, alternative solutions to overcome this amount of costs in the area for submitting the leaders candidate are:

#### 1) *Threshold requirements*

The nomination threshold requirement for political parties decreases. With this, the amount of voter support for individual candidates is also lowered. The threshold for political parties' nominations can be lowered to 7% of seats or 10% of valid votes. Meanwhile, the requirement for voter support through individual candidates is 7.5% and 2% at the lowest based on the population. For the governor's conditions in a province with a huge population above 30 million, 1% is sufficient.

By lowering the nomination threshold requirements, political parties' monopoly will be reduced because there are plenty of opportunities for candidates. Decreasing

the threshold for nominations through political parties or individual candidates will not interfere with the technical implementation of elections. It will not significantly burden the cost of local elections. It is predicted that the number of candidates for local elections will be more, but not many people are interested in advancing in the contest for local elections. In the future, the local elections contest will drain a lot of energy, cost, energy, and thought. Even though the prices are not too high, political costs such as the winning team's operation, campaign costs, and campaign logistics still require high costs. Even though the nomination requirements have been lowered with an unpredictable chance of winning, not too many people will advance in local elections.

In order to prevent all political parties' support for one candidate, a minimum threshold is imposed as a condition for political parties to be able to nominate a local leaders candidate and a maximum threshold for political party coalitions in selecting local leaders even necessary. There will be many opportunities for other candidate pairs with a maximum threshold for political parties in proposing candidates. There is no domination of specific candidates who collaborate parties to close competition in local elections. The more local leader candidates who advance in local elections, the more choices the people have in exercising their voting rights. For this reason, political party support for one candidate pair which limited to a maximum of 30% of Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) seats. With a maximum support threshold of 30%, there will be at least three pairs of candidates who will advance in each region.

### 2) *Prohibition of transactions*

To prevent transactions between prospective candidates and political parties, it is prohibited from accepting money in any form and for any reason from a political party candidate. Sanctions for political parties that receive money from a prospective candidate are not only prohibited from participating in the local elections in the next election but are made heavier by the dissolution of the political party concerned. The practice of political dowry is a crime that has a negative impact on government practices (Meinke, 2008, p. 5; Solihah, 2018, p. 17). It is not only detrimental to candidates who will advance for local elections, but it will also kill qualified leaders in advancing the nation. A dowry system nomination will give birth to a mentally corrupt leader. The practice of political dowry can be likened to corruption crimes committed by individuals or officials. Therefore, the authority exempt from political parties is not equal to corruption. However, because a political party is not an individual (individual), its members are certainly not a prison but have an arbitrary character in dissolving the violating political party. Ordinary administrative penalties in various forms have long been adopted and practiced. Still, they have not been able to provide a substantial effect on political parties to avoid the practice of political dowry.

### 3) *Candidate Mechanism*

In order to eliminate transactions between party administrators and regional head candidates, the mechanism for determining regional head candidates is carried out through preliminary elections conducted by members of political parties in the regions that will carry out the election. For regent/mayor candidates, the initial election is attended by all political parties concerned. Meanwhile, the initial election is followed by officials from the village, sub-district, and district/city levels for the gubernatorial candidate. The results of the early elections are binding for the political party concerned.

Efforts to reduce costs borne by candidates in local elections are to eliminate the opportunity for money politics to occur in the campaign area in vote-buying and selling. The buying and selling of votes in local elections can come from candidate pairs and success teams' initiatives and come from voters' initiatives or requests. Although this can come from both parties, namely pairs of candidates or voters, the alternative to overcome this is not only seen from the aspect of justice for the perpetrators but also the consideration of how effectively the choice of

countermeasures policies can eliminate the practice of money politics in the campaign area of:

#### 1) *Criminal sanctions for bribery*

There will be concerns that the possibility of being caught in a transaction with a threat of bribery arises. With this fear, vote-buying and selling transactions are expected to disappear or decrease (Chiang & Hsu, 2017).

The primary purpose of the criminal sanctions that are only given to candidate pairs and success teams is to create a fearful effect on the candidate pair and their success team. The practice of buying and selling votes will not be possible if one party does not dare to do so. The main objective of this alternative option is on prevention and not on punishment. Prevention is done through counseling or political education and done through the threat of criminal sanctions. The greater the chance that an act will be exposed as a criminal act, the greater the effort to avoid it. Sanctions that given to the giver will open the opportunity to reveal the action as a crime.

#### 2) *Candidate Cancellation Sanctions*

Candidate Cancellation Sanctions for those proven to have bought and sold votes both before and after voting as regulated in Law Number 10 of 2016 are still in effect. This is necessary to strengthen efforts to prevent candidate pairs from mobilizing their teams to practice vote-buying and selling.

### 4. Conclusion

Money politics and *cukong* democracy in local elections (Pilkada) are a consequence of the large costs borne personally by local election candidates. The political practice of money politics in local elections (Pilkada) is one of the driving forces for the emergence of corrupt practices carried out by local leaders. By analyzing business practice, if the costs incurred as capital are high, then a large amount of revenue is needed to return the money. Costs that must be incurred by the local leaders beyond the legal fees are the political dowry or buying a boat given to the proposing political party, which in practice can be in the form of operational funds, and campaign funds, or other names. For individual candidates, the expenditure for obtaining voter support is also quite large. Collecting voter support signatures is not cheap. Every officer or voters team must be funded and must also fund any voter signature support. No less significant personal expenses for candidates are buying and selling votes to get voter support in voting. The greater the number of voters in an area, the greater the cost demands that candidates must pay for voter support. In practice, vote-buying and selling do not always happen, and not all candidates do. It depends on the candidate's funding ability, the acceptability of conscious voters to the candidates, and the potential opportunities to buy and sell the votes.

Alternative solutions to overcome money politics and *cukong* democracy in local elections must eliminate causes of the emergence of money politics and *cukong* democracy. Every alternative solution must be prepared based on a simulative analysis of money politics practice in local elections (pilkada). The alternative solution is expected to eliminate the causes of money politics by carrying out systemic engineering to close all possible opportunities. Furthermore, it is hoped that can eliminate money politics and *cukong* democracy in local elections.

Creating more space and more comfortable options for regional head candidates to run for local elections is an alternative solution to reducing political dowry due to political party oligarchy. Providing more significant opportunities for the emergence of individual candidates is one of the alternatives that are quite effective in lowering political dowry and, at the same time, reducing the personal burden on local leaders candidates.

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