

## LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN THE ROAD TO 2024 SIMULTANEOUS REGIONAL ELECTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

*The 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections (Pilkada) must basically be able to guarantee and maintain public participation in various considerations for decision-making, campaigns, and public hearings, including in all processes leading up to the implementation of the Simultaneous Regional Elections. Public participation is not just the public giving their right to vote in the General Election/Pilkada, but more than that, Public Participation should ideally be meaningful participation in the planning, process and implementation of the Pilkada. The Research Method Using This research approach uses an analytical approach, namely analyzing cases that occurred in the preparation process for the 2024 Pilkada. The results of the study found that policy makers have not fully seen public participation as a necessity. This is illustrated by the sudden and seemingly rushed policy-making on the Revision of the Pilkada Law. In addition, many candidates offered from the elite are not from local communities who do have a role in development in the local area. This is homework to realize a local democracy that is advanced and considered*

**Keywords:** *Local Democracy; Meaningful Participation; Simultaneous Regional Elections.*

### A. Introduction

The 2024 Simultaneous Regional General Elections (Pilkada) should ideally ensure and sustain community participation in decision-making deliberations, campaigns, and public hearings. This will provide an opportunity for candidates to gain social capital along with the trust of the local community (Koesmoen, J. M., & Hasan, J. A., 2023). The political trust given by the community in Pilkada is for state administrators to carry out policies that are responsive to the needs of the community (S. Suyatno, 2016). [1] Regions in Indonesia need elections with integrity and quality. Referring to values, transparent, accountable and has the character and distinctiveness of the regions so that local democracy is considered. In November 2024, simultaneous regional elections will be held, where the electoral system is not only related to the time of implementation, but also to the objectives put forward by Brian C (Tjenreng, M. B. Z., 2020). Smith and Robert Dahl, namely to create local accountability, political equality, and local responsiveness. This is mainly to see the extent to which people in the regions can determine their own destiny, leaders and government (Yanto, A., & Bariki, Y., 2024). Although the participation rate in the 2024 elections increased compared to the 2019 elections, which was almost 90%, there were still

problems in the process leading up to the simultaneous elections, namely the emergence of many candidates from the national elite (Abustan, A, 2022). Until August 21, 2024, an extraordinary event occurred, namely the revision of the Pilkada Law which was not in accordance with the Constitutional Court Decision. In addition, there is still a dominance of local and national elites in politics that can limit opportunities for new candidates and undermine a healthy local democratic process. Not long ago, there was a political upheaval, namely the revision of the Pilkada Law by the DPR. After the decision of the Constitutional Court (MK), namely Decision Number 60/PUU-XXII/2024 regarding the nomination requirements for regional head candidates. The decision, which was issued on Tuesday (20/8/2024), stated that the threshold requirement for candidacy for regional head candidates of 20 percent of DPRD seats or 25 percent of the valid election votes does not apply (Pratama, I. N., Hadi, A., & Umami, R, 2024). The Constitutional Court decided that Article 40 Paragraph 1 of Law Number 10/2016 on Pilkada is conditionally unconstitutional. Actually, the Constitutional Court stipulated that the requirements for the candidacy of candidates for the election of governors and regents / mayors for political parties (parpol) or a coalition of supporting political parties is sufficient to obtain 6.5 percent to 10 percent in the previous election. The percentage range of votes depends on the number of voters in the DPT (Ismail, N, 2016). In addition, political parties or coalitions of parties that do not have seats in the DPRD may also nominate regional leaders. The Constitutional Court's decision relaxed the standard of political party support and adjusted the standard of nomination at the same time. The decision is progressive, but on August 21, 2024, the House of Representatives (Baleg) suddenly set the agenda for discussing changes to the Pilkada Law on Wednesday (August 21, 2024) or the day after the decision was adopted. has been published (R. P. Efendi Jonaedi, 2022).

The revision of the Pilkada Law made by the House of Representatives has the potential to annul Constitutional Court Decision No. 60/2024 by returning the candidacy requirements to the old rules (H. Chandra SY and S. P. Irawan, 2022). The DPR argued that the revision of the Pilkada Law had been discussed long ago and would adjust the results of the latest Constitutional Court Decision. This triggered public attention, leading to actions across Indonesia. People took to the streets to defend the Constitutional Court's decision and criticize the revision of the Pilkada Law by Baleg. A quick response by the public led to a change in Baleg's decision and finally canceled the ratification of the Revised Pilkada Law (Hayati, N. N, 2021).

## **B. Research Methods**

This research method uses the literature review method. This research approach uses an analytical approach, namely analyzing cases that occur in the preparation process for the 2024 Regional Elections [2] Researchers will make the phenomenon ahead of the 2024 Simultaneous

Regional Elections as an object to be studied and dissected in this research. In the analytical approach, researchers will examine the meaning and concept of local democracy and community participation in overseeing the 2024 simultaneous regional elections (Faishal, M. R., 2024).

### **C. Results and Discussion**

#### **1. The Simultaneous Election Process and the Portrait of Local Democracy**

Schumpeter explains that the democratic method is an institutionalized procedure for political decision-making in which individuals gain power to make political decisions through competition for the most votes in elections. Pilkada held in several regions in post-conflict Indonesia did not always go well, and the implementation process was often disrupted by conflict. Simultaneous elections that will be held on November 27, 2024 are listed in the General Election Commission Regulation (PKPU) Number 2 of 2024 concerning Stages and Schedules for the Election of Governors, Deputy Governors, Regents and Deputy Regents and Mayors and Deputy Mayors (Tasrif, T., 2023). These simultaneous elections will be held in all regions of Indonesia with Regional Heads whose terms of office have expired in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 except for DIY Province which does not elect a Governor and kabupatem in DKI Jakarta which does not need to elect a Regent or Mayor. The total number of regions participating in the simultaneous elections is 37 provinces and 508 regencies/cities (Wahyuni, S., & Adnan, M. F., 2024).

In Pilkada, political parties and candidates will carry out political campaigns. Interestingly, in regional campaigns, each candidate will focus on offers and concepts to fight for the interests of their respective regions. Referring to research conducted in Thailand, Turkey and Morocco, it is known that local politics is enlivened by the roles played by local strongmen, the majority of whom are not from modern political institutions such as political parties, but get social support because of their strengths such as economic and religious capacity [5]. This is a challenge for prospective candidates who will contest the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections, apart from political parties, local communities will also see from cultural closeness to the nominated pair (Abustan, A., 2022).

The local elections will show how local values are clearly portrayed, local candidates are expected to emerge to enliven the simultaneous elections. In local communities, cultural values are still strongly held, for example in the Palembang community, in this case we call the term “wong kito” continues to be applied in various ways and in various situations, on various occasions there are many activities that have indirectly applied local values in the social process (Yanto, A., & Bariki, Y., 2024). The cultural values that continue to be applied will indirectly continue to strengthen the relationship between the indigenous people of Palembang and furthermore will continue to maintain the sacredness of the cultural values of the indigenous people of Palembang.[3]

The provision of support to inter-party candidates in local elections often receives great attention from practitioners and observers of politics at the local level (Samosir, O., & Mali, F. X. (2021). The communication between political parties and candidates when deciding on alliances turns out to be a bit strange. While it is true that the intraparty selection mechanism is procedurally sound, in practice we cannot rule out the possibility that candidates tightly control their finances to secure support from more than one party."[3]

## **2. Meaningful Participation 2024 Simultaneous Election Process with integrity and revive Local Democracy**

The theory of popular sovereignty basically recognizes that the people are the ultimate source of power in the state. (The emergence of this theory was a form of resistance to the many abuses of sovereignty committed by the king, which became the cause of tyranny and suffering of the people. This theory of popular sovereignty eventually became the basic principle and gave birth to the next concept of democracy (S. Fikri, 2018).

In the study of community participation, there must be a fulfillment of meaningful participation, which will be a benchmark for a policy that has been perfectly structured. The Constitutional Court defines meaningful participation as: (1) the public's right to have their opinions heard, (2) the public's right to have their opinions considered, and (3) the public's right to have their opinions explained or answered (Koesmoen, J. M., & Hasan, J. A., 2023).

Lothar Gundling argues that the main reasons for the importance of public participation in policy formation include providing information to the government (administrative information), increasing people's willingness to make decisions, and supporting legal protection (supporting the justice system). protection), democratization of decision-making (democratization of decision-making) (Abustan, A., (2022).

In an ideal democracy, people should have more opportunities to participate in the political process. This means that the entire community is given a very open space to participate in the competition for political positions ranging from local to national levels, subject to the prevailing laws and regulations (Nusantara, B. G, 2017).[3] In reality, due to the phenomenon of national and local political dynasties, people are still influenced by their social status and rights. If democracy means political power, or a government run by the people, of the people, and for the people, then these political dynasties trying to increase political power by encouraging relatives of local leaders to become civil servants creates a form of realism. In this simultaneous election process, to realize a vibrant local democracy and integrity, the community must be heard (Nimah, R, 2024). Ideally, if a decision is to be made, especially for the elections, the community needs to be involved. If there are mistakes and suspicious things, it will trigger a reaction The demonstration

was a response to the DPR's plan to pass the Pilkada Bill (Amir, M, 2020).

#### **D. Conclusion**

The 2024 simultaneous elections should be able to maintain and strengthen community participation in various decision-making processes, campaigns, and dialog with local communities. This provides an opportunity for candidates to gain social support based on the trust and confidence of the local community Faishal, M. R. (2024).. The political trust given by the community in Pilkada is expected to enable state administrators to implement policies that are responsive to the needs of the community. (Suyatno 2016) Regions in Indonesia need elections with integrity and quality. By referring to the values of transparency, accountability, and regional character and distinctiveness, local democracy is increasingly taken into account. Policy makers should be able to consider the interests of the people, especially in terms of democratic parties. This is to maintain the spirit of national and local democracy. Because good policy inputs and good processes will give birth to candidates with integrity from local areas (Faishal, M, 2024).

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