

## ELECTION AND POLITICAL EVIL AMBITION IN INDONESIA'S *REFORMASI* ERA

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### ABSTRACT

Indonesia's politics in the *reformasi* era has been far more dynamic compared to previous regime. People have been enjoying the democratic atmosphere as a result of people struggle that changed political system from authoritarian rule. Direct election for political positions (president/vice president, parliament members, and local leaders) has been practiced in very democratic ways on one hand, but on the hand there is inclination to create political demoralization due to the use of any means to achieve political ends by politicians, government officials and election organizers. Both people and elites in short, tend to be trapped by pragmatism politics. These practices and attitudes are contradictive with *reformasi* struggle values which hoped new political system will be used for the improvement of social political and state-government management. The late realization of consolidated democracy has been always used to explain this phenomenon, but actually the low political willingness of the state actors to be toughly consistent in implementing *reformasi* agenda is a crucial reason. Social economic conditions of many Indonesian, mainly who are poor with their lack political awareness, tend to be exploited by certain political elites to achieve their own interest by disregarding morality and *reformasi* values.

**Keywords:** *reformasi*, election, justification any means, people demoralization.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Since President Soeharto was forced to step down in 1998, Indonesia has entered a reform era (popularly called as '*reformasi*'). Unlike the previous era, notorious for being authoritarian in

character, in this new era the door for freedom is widely opened as the manifestation of the people's will in enjoying the democratic atmosphere is accommodated through the change of the Constitution. The State's officials, mainly the legislators (from local-regional up to national level), and the executive leaders ( president/vice president, governors, district heads and mayors) are no longer promoted or appointed as formerly done in the authoritarian era, but instead are directly elected by the people every five years.

However, in this open era, which has been experienced since last 16 years, the democratic practices don't seem to get better, in that they turn to deteriorate and even tend to create demoralization at people's level. Or, at a certain level, the democracy is still made as a vehicle to satisfy the elites' interests, in which the parties competing in the election tend to make use any means to achieve their targets. Every election in this *reformasi*, starting from the election for Legislators (House of Representatives (DPR), Regional Representative Council (DPD), and Provincial and district Legislative Council (DPRD ), district heads (abbreviated in Bahasa as '*pemilukada*') up to the election for president and vice president have been always filled with tension and conflicts along with a great variety of victims. The deviation has been customarily done by the election committees and/or the election contestants (including the conspiracy between both parties) and the abuse of power by relevant administrators.

The district heads, for example, freely mobilize or dictate their subordinates (lower level officials) to vote for certain political parties, running candidates or figures based on their will. If known to disobey the head of district instruction (who is from political state official), the subordinates will suffer from administrative sanctions such as they will lose their position, or transferred, and alike. What's worse is that such things keep happening and the authorities keep allowing them to take place, which make the society assume that they are part of the political culture. These kinds of practices are what I call as "political evil ambition in general election "in Indonesia's *reformasi* era.

These practices are correspondent to the change of political system which is not consolidated yet, amidst the increasing number of parties who have the interests on the running contestants who (if

elected) are going to be the decision makers or local/national authorities. Hence, it is not surprising if they justify any means to win the battle – a political evil which is unhealthy for the development of society's morality. Let alone, if this deviation of practice is taken for granted, in that the country's administrators keep allowing it to occur. Indonesian society's being paternalistic in character has become the reason for this, in that elites are regarded as patrons whose thoughts and behaviors become their role models or references. This phenomenal inclination is indeed ironical because: (1) the Indonesian society and the country as stated in the constitution highly respects religious values and (2) the reformasi agenda is basically directing all nation's elements to get back on the right track based on the religious values and laws, rejecting or leaving behind all disrespectful practices, such as those that ever lasted for 32 years during President Suharto's regime.

This paper tries to describe various forms of deviation, which tend to be taken for granted, in administering general elections in the reform era. The conspicuous cases in the process of elections for legislators, district heads, and also President and Vice President will be important parts of the subject matter to be analytically described. The data and information used are based on the news collected from mass media, both printed and on-line, which I not only observe but also get directly involved in. I analyze those events using interpretative-phenomenological approach leading to rational subjective construction on the socio-political tendency in Indonesia.

## **II. VARIOUS WAYS IN HUNTING FOR POWER, FIELD FACTS**

Based on the field facts, from one to another elections in this reformasi era (election for legislators, president, vice president and regional/district heads), election contestants adopt various ways to get voters support, or to show to the public as if they get vote support from the people. To certain level, these attempts are regarded as normal but sometimes they have brought negative effects both directly and indirectly, including moral destruction on the people and related parties. All of these things are inseparable parts of the efforts of battling for a political-official seat and power at the country level both national and local level. Below are a number of causes of conflicts including physical fights between supporters of the contestants happening in the processes of election.

### **1. The Mass Mobilization, People Being The Victims**

The election contestants conduct the open campaign to show the strength of their supporting mass, the way of which is done through mass mobilization. The more mass attending the open campaign, the higher the satisfaction degree the contestants get. Behind all this, however, the contestants have to spend much money for the food, and transport fare of the mass attending the campaign, usually amounted to Rp. 50.000 (equal to 5 US dollars) even per person, as not all of them do it on the voluntary basis. In relation to this, there are three categories of mass attending the open campaign. First the ideological mass, who are fanatic supporters of a political party or the running candidates or contestants of the election. The number of this category of mass is relatively small but they are very short-tempered and will be reactive when offended even though for trivial matters. It is not surprising, therefore, for these masses to be involved in fights if there is a certain trigger. Second, paid mass, who have been always mobilized by a kind of mass mobilization agents. This group of mass is not fanatic to the contestants as they are mobilized for a certain pragmatic interest but can turn to be brutal and create chaos when they are not satisfied with the payment as promised. Third the bandwagon mass, who are attending the campaign not for the first two reasons but for interesting music, attractive artists or different kinds of entertainment. They are generally unpaid by the contestants as they come on their own initiative for temporarily recreation atmosphere. When chaos or fights take place, however, they tend to be merely the victims.

Based on the formal data issued by the government in regard to the physical fights occurring, the number of victims or casualties caused by the conflicts during the elections for district heads (popularly known as 'pemilukada') in the reformasi era is quite significant, in that the number of people died has reached 50, excluding the injured caused by physical fights between supporters and other material loss including the destruction of the public facilities (vandalism). The pemilukada conflict in Luwu district, South Celebes, in early April, 2013, which later brought impact on 'the street blocking on the Celebes lane' (though only temporarily done) disturbed the public service along with the flow of products and services for the people in that island. All of these are parts of the uncontrolled emotion of the mass triggered by several factors.

## **2. The Exploitation of The Authorities And Local Bureaucracy**

Often, the political officials and the controlled lower level bureaucracy are not neutral in the campaigns and this usually happens in the local-regional bureaucracy level. If this also happens in the national government level, it can only be read in a discourse level through mass media news. In the local-regionals, the atmosphere is felt indeed, in which the district heads endorsed by political parties have been first in favor of in their own various ways, the contestants or political parties that have become parts of their political vehicle. What's worse is that, as previously mentioned, the bureaucracy is under political parties' control, in which the bureaucracy officials and their subordinates are openly or secretly asked to work for the triumph of certain political parties or figures. This means that the districts, the officials of whom are endorsed by political parties have shown unfairness in political competition.

That kind of tendency is directly known by local society, mainly and most sensitively by political parties or contestants whose political vehicle is different from that of the local authority. The "unhealthy and resistance-colored" relationship between the bureaucracy officials and their subordinates politically directed by their superiors' political interests make the political parties and their supporters angry and feel offended. This conflict potential in turn can sometimes be so suddenly manifested that casualties and loss of materials are inevitable.

## **3. Negative and Smear Campaign**

The election contestants, through their actors, often attack their opponents using tendentious words or sentences, starting from the political party's policies, the concepts that were being offered, up to personal matters of the actors involved. In this 2014 presidential election, for instance, black campaign movement is vigorously done by a party suspected to have come from one of the running candidates side, by publishing a special tabloid (named 'Tabloid

Obor Rakyat'<sup>1</sup>), the contents of which are filled with news cornering the opponent. This is certainly not merely a black campaign but is already categorized as a *smear campaign*.

What's worse is that, again the lay people become the victims, whereas the elites spreading the *negative words* are irresponsible and hard to be touched. This phenomenon is a part of the political immaturity of the elites in this country. Even, at a certain level, it did not only happen among political parties (in legislative election) but also within a party itself. It even gets worse at local level, in that the slices and contiguity among legislative candidates are very thick or thin: on family, friendship, kinship and space based community. The society as constituents, are without realization carried away emotionally based on those slices related to the emotional relationship between the legislative candidate figures and their supporters.

What I am trying to say here is that the political elites are misguided in playing their political roles. They often show violent politics, in that the competition (contest) is regarded as "boxers on the ring". As a matter of fact, the politicians may differ in their ideologies, political parties or missions, but may not display violent situation to the society. Such a thing actually backfires for immature politicians, or if elected will bring negative impact on the people, country and nation.

The politicians fundamentally should display themselves beautifully to the public by showing their various programs and strengths, and elegant behavior and culture. They are basically "marketing themselves to be bought by the people". Those considered decent or proper by the people are the ones who will be elected. The politicians should not display "subjective superiority", but instead ensure themselves as decent and proper actors representing or leading the people.

#### **4. The Non-Neutrality of The Election Organizers**

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<sup>1</sup> 'Obor Rakyat' was a temporary printed tabloid that's suspected as was special printed to make a negative campaign for Joko Widodo on one hand, and positively promoting Prabowo Subianto during the presidential election campaign process. Joko Widodo and Prabowo Sunianto were two figures running for the Indonesian President candidates in 2014 Presidential election (they were competing each other). Obor Rakyat, in that context, although it was not admitted, seems to be on Prabowo's side. But Joko Widodo is still getting fortune because he became the winner as the Indonesian President for 2014-2019.

The election committee and administrators, starting from *KPU (Komisi Pemilihan Umum* or Elections Commission) up to the TPS (Polling Station Committees) are often perceived as “to side with” certain contestants (both political parties and figures). A number of field facts show the truth of the perception. In the legislative election 2009, the siding proof is even considered as a problem of the Constitutional Court (MK) and took the case to the police department of the Republic of Indonesia. The election administrators sometimes get direction and/or are internally directed to escort “the winning and vote security” of certain candidates until the engineering of the gained votes. The vote calculation and recapitulation are engineered by certain contestants in collaboration with the election committee administrators and are strengthened by local authorities siding the contestants. In this context, the term “winning or triumph and vote security” must be paid special attention as it is related to the fate of certain contestants and again Indonesian pragmatism politics, the security of the position can be gained by justifying all means. In other words, certain contestants who actually win the election votes can risk losing them as “ they are insecured “, which is caused by:(1) the inability of the contestants in approaching the election commissioners (including the administrators) and (2) the play made by other contestants who can change the number of votes by using all means. This kind of vulnerability potency in legislative context, of course does not only occur among political parties but also among candidates in the same political party. There are at least three factors driving the election administrators to be trapped in non-neutrality. **First**, there is a certain political commitment with the party persons (through parliament) who giving them the mandate, started from the election of general election commissioners. The actors administering the election feel to have “debt of gratitude” to certain political parties or figures regarded of being in favor of their being elected. **Second**, the presence of an offer considered to be pragmatically and subjectively beneficial from the contestants, not to mention if they are from the ruling regime. The offers can be in the form of:(1) a promise of a public political position after the election<sup>2</sup> and (2) a certain material offer, part of money politics. And **third**, related to local

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<sup>2</sup>The case in which two KPU members, namely Anas Urbaningrum (KPU member in 2003-2008 period) and Andi Nurpati (KPU member in 2008-2013 period) joined PD (Democratic Party) at two different election periods, is mostly suspected to be part of the political conspiracy. The Democrat Party as the ruling political party under the strong control of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, also as the President of the Republic of Indonesia in 2004-2009 and 2009-2014 periods, perhaps used ‘the expertise of these two KPU members’ for his political party’s interest in

authority. The election committee in the district of course have financial and/or other facilities from local authority, which in turn trap them in a political interest or the efforts of making the local authority win the election.

## **5. The Involvement of Mass Media In Supporting The Contestants**

This phenomenon is very conspicuous from one to another election, especially at national level in regard with the legislative and presidential elections. The most striking which is then known by the people is that mass media group is associated with certain contestants. The support map results from the fact that the media owner owns a political party or sides with certain political parties, which directly makes the advertisement. News broadcasts of the media are more frequently focused on the interests of the political party that he/she supports. This map is clearly seen both in the legislative and presidential election of this year, 2014.

At the legislative election of 2014 (April 9)<sup>3</sup>, for instance, with 12 participants, Metro TV and its group clearly promoted NASDEN Party (Partai Nasional Demokrat or Democrat Nationalist Party), because the founder and owner of this political party is Surya Paloh, who is also the owner of Metro TV group. The result is very significant as it comes to the 8<sup>th</sup> rank from 10 political parties in the parliament (DPR/the House of Representatives) entering the Parliamentary Threshold, in spite of its being newly established on July 26, 2011. TVONE and its group, the owner of whom is Aburizal Bakrie, the head of Golkar Party, vigorously campaigned for Golkar party, whereas MNC group openly campaigned Hanura Party-including prospective presidential candidates namely, Wiranto/Haritanoe Sudibio, because the owner of this group is Haritanoe Sudibio. The other political parties such as PKB, PAN, GERINDRA, PDIP, PPP, PKS, PBB, PD, and PKPI, whose officials own none of the mass media campaigned normally based on their financial strength to pay their advertisements on mass media.

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trying to win the election both at the national and local levels. Anas Urbaningrum later was elected to be the Chairman of the Democratic Party, even though was then forced to step down due to his being involved in the corruption case of Hambalang Sport Center project. He is now at the KPK's custody (convict).

<sup>3</sup> The twelve political parties participating in the April 9 legislative election of 2014 are: the National Democratic Party (Nasdem), the National Awakening Party (PKB), the Golkar Party, the United Development Party (PPP), People's Conscience Party (Hanura), National Mandate Party (PAN), Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), Crescent and Star Party (PBB), Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (PKPI), Democratic Party (PD), Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle (PDI-P) and Great Indonesia Movement Party (GERINDRA).

In the presidential election, there was a shift in media support, the direction of which was only divided into two groups due to the KPU's determining only two presidential candidates running for the election. TVONE group and MNC group intensively supported Prabowo Subianto-Hatta Rajasa because Golkar Party (Aburizal Bakrie) and Haritanoe Sudibio (individual support, as he formerly joined Hanura Party) supported the couple endorsed by GERINDRA, PAN, PPP, PKS, GOLKAR, PBB, and (supported afterwards by ) PD.

Whereas the couple Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla gained support from Metro TV group along with Jawa Pos group after Dahlan Iskan, the BUMN (state-owned companies) minister and Jawa Pos group owner came in. Jawa Pos group is a media business group whose network widely spreads throughout Indonesia with local print media including cable TVs.

The involvement of mass media openly siding with certain contestants in political contest is widely known by the society, who are also then picky in choosing what to read and watch. The worst, however, is that the mass media involvement, to some extent, does not give the right political education to the citizens, in which the information presented is sometimes not only subjective but also leads to negative or smear campaign towards the opponent. TVONE, for example, even released news stating that a number of PDIP cadres are contaminated by PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) which made the provoked PDIP cadres and its symphatizers, who could not bear the smear, crowd TVONE Stations and sealed them anarchically – even though they can operate again afterwards.

## **6. Money Politics**

Money politics has become a trend in itself in every election in Indonesia. At the same time, this shows a proof that Indonesian politics in the reform era becomes very expensive, which belongs more to the haves or the wealthy peoples. This money politics is done both directly and indirectly. Based on ICW ( Indonesian Corruption Watch ) research results, 2004, the direct modus is done through : direct money distribution (50,87%), social activities and daily needs distribution (18,42%), infrastructure development (7,89%), religious activities (7,01%), gift rewarding (7,89%), and others (7,93%). Whereas the indirect one is done through special relations done prior to the commencement of the election processes, in that the contestants have first planted services to the constituents. This *indirect vote buying*

might be more money-consuming than the operational cost spent during the election processes.

“*Serangan fajar*” (dawn attack) and “*serangan dhuha*” (dhuha attack) are two terms widely known by both voters and election contestants in Indonesia. “*Serangan fajar*” is a secret visit done early in the morning (dawn) to voters’ vertices, where groups of people have been expecting for material distribution. The term ‘*serangan dhuha*’ is an operational movement to distribute money and daily needs in the morning before the residents head for TPS (polling stations). The method used by the contestants is (usually using the third party) directly visiting prospective voters at their houses, hangout points, and/or on the way to the polling stations (TPS); while secretly offering or giving some money or daily needs with the expectation that these people will vote for the contestants. The actors in local level are or might be from local authorities or bureaucrats siding with the think tank of the election participants. The bureaucrats usually use more persuasive-intimidative approaches and also interfere the election organizers (at TPS or polling stations, PPS in the village, PPK in subdistrict and even KPU in the district). The problem is that the special election organizers’ line starting from TPS (polling stations), PPS (*polling stations coordinator – village level*) dan PPK (*sub district election committee – sub district level*) are partly government apparatus, both civil servants and non structural apparatus at RW and RT levels. Even, violence-flavored intimidation can frequently be done if there are people in their line or wagon, from both politicians and bureaucrats, who have thugs’ character.

This practice of money politics gets higher in degree to influence the voters in Indonesia. The people seem to be more tempted with instant material or money offered by the election contestants without realizing that their rights and votes have been exchanged or pawned with money, and don’t want to know that the money givers, if elected later, can misuse his/her position or power by doing corruption to get a return of the political cost he/she has spent.

The evidence showing that money politics is getting more accepted is shown among others by the results of LSN (National Survey Institution) survey stating that the number of citizens refusing money politics has declined from 60% in 2009 election to only around 30% in 2014

election. This means that voting citizens in Indonesia are getting morally degraded, in that they allow a deviation practice in politics or that they are getting more pragmatic. Some religious leaders too have been seemingly carried away by the influence of money politics and this among others is stated by KH Idris Marzuki, a leader of Islamic Boarding School from Lirboyo, East Java, who allegedly allows money politics (Tempo, March 3, 2009). What is worse is that Prabowo Subianto, a Presidential candidate in 2014, at several occasions during his campaign openly encouraged the citizens to ‘accept the money given by the contestants’ – an anomaly or awkwardness in which a prospective head of the country even encouraged his citizens to undergo a pragmatic politics by exchanging their votes with money.

The political cost spent by the President/Vice President and district head candidates is of course much bigger than that spent by the legislative candidates or individuals (including the member candidate for the Regional Representatives Council of the Republic of Indonesia/DPD RI), let alone for those executive leader candidates who are not political party officials. The problem is that (except for those owning a political party and have fulfilled the requirements to be the candidate couples), especially those who still need a political vehicle or try to fulfill the requirements to be able to run as the candidates, will have to spend much because being confirmed as formal candidates itself is not free of charge. Based on the prevailing regulation, the candidates for district heads must have the support of at least 15% of the number of chairs in DPRD (district Legislative Council) at its own level, or 15% of the total number of population in their voting administrative district for those who would like to run as independent candidates, whereas the President/Vice president couple candidates are required to obtain the political party chair support of the endorsing political parties at least 20% of the total chairs in the House of Representatives (DPR), or at least 25% the total votes in the legislative election. To get the early required support itself is not easy, in that the candidates must do the cross-political elite lobbying which is entirely in the form of transaction or political exchange. The measurement is definitely money. It can be estimated that if they are later elected, they will absolutely search for compensation.

## 7. The Disputed Election Results

The general election administrations in Indonesia in the *reformasi* era are indeed different from those done in President Soeharto's regime. One of the most conspicuous differences is the presence of a lawsuit to the election results, which legally gains its space in MK (Constitutional Court). From 2008 to 2013, MK had received 737 cases of *pemilukada* (district head election) disputes. However, only 55 cases were granted. The rest were rejected, or unaccepted, or withdrawn by the plaintiffs, and also considered deciduous. The existence of an institution which makes a final decision on *pemilukada* dispute has also made a number of politicians, the district head candidates, apply money politics in a more sophisticated way with large amount of money, which also seems to be tempting for some judges of Constitutional Court to trade their decisions to the power hungry politicians. The real and sensational proof is of Akil Muhtar (The Chairman of the Constitutional Court/MK) by KPK (the Corruption Eradication Commission) when he received some amount of money from a political broker expecting him to side with certain district head candidate and was caught red – handed. Akil Muhtar has also revealed about bribes given by a number of district heads to him. At present, the former head of MK is in jail along with some people who bribed him, while some others are still undergoing investigation process.

MK is the product of the *reformasi*, one of whose mandates is to handle the disputes of the election results. Its main task is judicial review on a law and check whether or not it is consistent with the constitution, based on the request of the injured party. Since *pemilukada* was directly administered, the disputes had also been handled by MK, but later through its decision on May 19, 2014, MK handed over the responsibility of handling *pemilukada* disputes to MA (the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia). MK has also dealt with a number of disputes related to three legislative elections in the reform era which has shown an increasing trend. In 2004 election, MK received 273 lawsuits from the contestants ( political parties and legislative candidates ), 41 of which were granted. In 2009 election, the number rose to 828 cases, and only 70 were granted, whereas in 2014 legislative election, the number of lawsuits received by MK was 903, only 23 of which were granted.

On one hand, the big number of political dispute cases claimed to be finally decided by MK indicates the society's awareness to solve a political problem through law administration line, but on the other hand, it shows that there is something wrong in the election administrations in Indonesia. Money politics, the non-neutrality of election organization, and various deviation cases in election administration processes as mentioned above prove the fact that lots of dispute cases ended up at the Constitutional Court (MK). It is worth noting, and this is also admitted by MK judges, that the decision to reject or return the suit request doesn't indicate that there was no election deviation practice in the filed case but it is more due to the limited data and number of witnesses presented by the plaintiffs, and therefore cannot cancel or abort KPU's decision.

## **8. Political Corruption**

High political election cost processes seem to have directly influenced the elected authorities' behaviours to corrupt or abuse his/her power and position. The election disputes solved in MK not only indicate that there are problems in regard with the election administrations but also show that the contestants are not ready to lose in the competition as they have spent much in the election processes, starting from the preparation, facing the campaign period and the campaign itself.

Hence, it is not surprising to know the fact that there was one district head suffering from mental disorder after failing the election. This is experienced by Yuli Nursanto, a Bojonegoro district head candidate in 2008 who suffered from mental disorder and ever walked throughout his village naked. Or, in the cases of the legislative candidates in April 9, 2014 election, in which three legislative candidates who failed to get enough votes to become DPRD members in Tebo District (Jambi province) suffered from mental illness due to acute stress and had to be hospitalized in the local lunatic asylum. Also, similar cases were reported to have been found in other districts.

Many of the politicians who achieved their goals, namely elected through the election, were later involved in legal cases because of position abuse. Formal data show that, ranging from 2005 to 2013, 314 district heads involved in corruption cases (the total number of regency/

municipal, and province heads in Indonesia is 530). Some of them are already in jail and some others are still legally processed.

Also, in this *reformasi* era, a number of House of Representatives (DPR) members and political party officials were involved in legal cases since they were proven to have indulged in corruption and became the country's budget mafias, some of them were put in jail, some are still in jail, and some others are being investigated as suspects and/or witnesses by the investigators. In the year 2011, for example, 11 DPR members were imprisoned because of corruption cases, 24 DPR members were also sent to jail in the year 2012, and 9 DPR members became corruption suspects. Similarly, a number of ministers were involved in corruption, some of whom were already sent to jail and some others have become the suspects and witnesses in KPK. Many people conclude that the corrupt behaviour or power abuse are considered as part of the impact of the high cost election processes.

### III. THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

Sociologically, there are at least four main trends on political crime phenomena which happened during election times, including within the governance during Indonesia's *reformasi* era. **First** of them is regarding the democratic transition and political violence. Political systems change from authoritarian regime into reform regime has caused psycho-political shock in people. If in the New Order (Orba) era leaders' and people's representatives' elections were always decided by a group of elite (President/Vice President by the People's Consultative assembly or MPR, Governor/Mayor by Regional/Local Council or DPRD members, and the members of House of Representatives (DPR) elected through political parties, where people only elected political parties). In the reformasi era, especially since the 2004 Presidential Election was conducted through direct vote, which was followed by regional leaders' election (pemilukada) – also through direct vote since 2006. In the New Order era (Soeharto leadership) political parties were only three and even those were under the control of the authoritarian power, whereas in the reformasi era there were multiple parties although with blurred ideological boundaries.

Such systems change and political atmosphere seems to be accompanied with consolidation agenda on solid regulatory framework of democracy. Political elites are occupied with their own self-interests to 'survive', be it as individuals or as political parties. The political elites' orientation trends also seem to, be it realized or not, have 'trapped' the President or other State Officials, since they too are parts of political beings fighting for their own subjective group interests. On the other hand law enforcers are no more than guardians of various policies, which are products of all such interests-driven politics. Thus, in effect, various electoral regulations, some of which are supposed to be anticipative in their nature towards misuse possibilities and/or conflicts which are prone to instability; seem to have yet to be presented. Or, in other words, due to such inadequacy of regulations, socio-political instability, which is an expression of the fighting elites' political desires fulfillment, within which is making election organizers as parts of the political game, is still unavoidable.

It is such political trend which drives people involved or emotionally driven, which takes form of conflict in its various forms. Violence in political processes hence occur a number of times, whether in the form of dissatisfaction towards acts or policies of State officers or as a form of coercion to others. It is important to remember that Indonesia's democracy, admitted or not, is imported from other democratic nations and Indonesians only have been practicing it after President Soeharto was forcefully overthrown, which even involved clashes between the people and security forces of the power. Therefore, in the context of political violence in Indonesia in post-reform era, it seems to align with what John Schwarmantel stated: *"the imposition of democracy or its construction 'from outside' is in deep tension with democratic idea itself. Much of the violence in contemporary politics stems from its paradoxical association with the democratic idea. Violence and democracy and intertwined since some liberal democratic state use violence and war in order to overthrow authoritarian regimes and install democracy. The violence resistance is stimulated by such democracy-building projects....."* (Schwarmantel, 2011, pp.129-130). The history of regime change in Indonesia from

President Soekarno (the Old Order era) to Soeharto (the New Order –authoritarian regime) and from the New Order to the *reformasi* (democracy) era have always been marked with violence.

As a new system which is imported from outside, democracy needs time and effort to get consolidated. Lessons from the experience of other countries which have been practicing it can be helpful. But apparently even after more than 16 years that we are in the democracy era, not all relevant democracy-related regulations, especially relating to the election organizing, amongst politicians and election organizers. Thus, as long as such democracy consolidation focusing on the two aspects of regulations and related actors have not been finalized, domestic conflict or socio-political instability will keep (re)occurring.

**Secondly** is maturity in politics. There are at least two main phenomena regarding political immaturity in some of the nation's elites, which also create instability. They are namely: (1) unwillingness to accept loss in election (2) low neutrality level of officials and bureaucrats. The officials on bureaucracy level seem to make the political officials as their patrons in power, therefore with various ways transgressing from professional bureaucratic principles. As a result, the bureaucracy officials and others of their ranks are driven along the political interests of the power, getting involved in supporting, as though becoming the shield for certain political mission. Such condition then forces a fight-back reaction from some elites and also some of the people; hence once again instability is unavoidable. It is given that a serious dilemma exists amongst bureaucracy officials, since their fate depends on the political officials in power.

Such phenomena are related to the officials in power and politicians' attitudes. Their power, be it realized or not, has been misused to destroy democratic values, by forcing their will on one part, and committing misuse towards rules and values by taking shelter under the power in hand. The officials who have been misusing their power this way actually have positioned the people or parties outside them as though not having the right

to question the job they are handling. Such condition, according to Pinkney (1993, p.65), is undemocratic behavior facilitated by elected politicians. They only bow down to the subjective interests with pragmatic orientation.

**Third** is political perception which regards power and positions as decisive of everything. Until now, people have been inclined to perceive politics in two contradicting ways. *First*, politics is seen as something bad, moreover if added with the corrupt behavior of its actors or elites, deviant and its look-alikes, including various Machiavellian ways. Thus people within whom, good values are still attached strongly according to religious or inherited cultures (*best legacy-natural wisdom*), are fighting back against the politicians along with the follower gangs, which cause instability. Or, at the same time, between the political elites with each of their own supporters having friction or clash, started by propaganda on public level up to “field” level.

Such perceptual inclination and political attitudes of the people can be theoretically linked and thus called as the consequence that our political world is dominated by pragmatism. To obtain power, in this perspective, politicians do it with various ways; legalizing any kind of way. Politicians with such perspective apparently are also able to drive or influence some people. Generally people culturally have value standard of good and bad. Thus, once again, political instability facing the election basically is a part of cultural clash amongst people: between moralists and pragmatists.

The problem then is, when political battles are won by the pragmatic political faction, then either or all of law products or attitudes or political culture will also follow. Political leaders, the government officials or even the bureaucracy (along with even at the certain levels as well as the security forces and law enforcement bodies including judicial institutions) are suborned with pragmatic values. In the context of Indonesia, whose people are paternalistic, such inclination clearly has negative effect. At least the people would be split and/or will experience a shock or be on a crossroad. Such pressure and

conflict all the time are prone to manifest in the form of horizontal or vertical social clash, which are clear in the processes during and after the election.

This is where it is necessary to ensure that present political parties should have good politicians. According to Chinese philosopher Confucius “*the moral character of leader is wind. The moral character of people who are beneath is grass. When the wind blows, grass bends.*” Confucius continues, “*if your desire is for good, people will be good.*” This, in my perspective, is ‘homework’ or is supposed to be an agenda for all political parties in the nation.

*Secondly*, people perceive political officials and also political parties as the decision makers of all things. Determining the nation’s leaders, controlling the State’s policies through people placed to control bureaucracy – as well as controlling various projects, even to control security forces and judiciaries and to become officials from political parties (e.g. Regional-Local and National Parliament Members or even Ministers) can be literally financially enriching. This is why many people are fanatical towards political parties’ decision makers or towards party as an institution.

Business people are leaning to, getting close, or even providing financial or material supports to some politicians, the controlling political party or that/those predicted to be in power in the near future, including donating financially, as has been proven in some of the past corruption cases, are and will be in process legally by the *KPK (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi* or Corruption Eradication Commission). The bureaucrats also have, on one side supports (by moving their subordinates) to support certain political parties whose people are the existing high ranking officials – even more so in autonomous regions; and on another side rejecting other parties that are not in power. Some of the people also become trapped this way, even more so in a society with patronizing characteristics as described above. In this context, fanaticism level of supports will be regarded as contribution which will bring about compensation in form of

official position, or certain projects (including *good will* of the political party based officials) which can make life financially better off.

Such phenomena in the view of Doran Acemoglu and James A Robinson (2013) is called ‘extractive political institution’; controlling resources from the economy sectors, bureaucracy and people. And when each fights for the resources through political positions via elections, then the frictions would be hard, heated with high tension. This is because the chance to be in power or obtain such positions only exists once in five years. Various ways and resources are utilized to manipulate things. In such a situation, people are provoked by the political elites they support, and conflict becomes unavoidable.

**Fourth**, political world and political positions are regarded not merely ‘exclusive’ positions in the State level and amongst the people, but also as a way to obtain material fortunes. This has also influenced people’s perception which has also been material oriented; hence all things are regarded to be determined by money. Political world and political positions in the end tend to be dominated by those with capital, gaining votes from the people through transactional processes. Thus the new patronizing type is created: that ‘people support rich political officials’. And while continuously supplying materials to people in their electing regions (both in times of campaign processes or after being elected), then such individual has the chance of being elected. People do not care about the source of such money. Religious, education, cultural public figures and/or figures from other strategic groups, experience relative downturn of influence compared to politicians or officials with money. Or, such public figures would only become political instrument of politicians, while also getting money as commissions for such political works in helping the election winning of such related political officials. Such phenomena of ‘legalizing money politics’ by a religious leader in Lirboyo, East Java, as has been described above, is a proof of influence of money which has entered the minds of some public figures.

For regional leaders (e.g. governors, mayors), keeping their political positions for the second period is not difficult. This is because, besides already regarded as a main influential figure, such person also with ease can direct all resources within their hands to be elected for the second time (the position of a region leader is limited only twice). Even if such figure loses in the regional election, then the chance to gain winning through the fight in the Constitutional Court or *MK (MahkamahKonstitusi)* -- which then would be directed to the Supreme Court, is still open, since the money politics transaction can still influence some key judges of such case. On the other hand, while assuming such political positions, heads of regions very effectively utilize their powers to not only return political costs that have been used, but also to increase their wealth. Such big power as region heads in controlling bureaucracy and regional budgets makes it easy to commit various ways to regain *kick back fee* from projects that are managed by their subordinates and people, including by involving their client business people to run the projects in their regions. All those are not yet including the various policies or *good will* related to business of his relations, which are also not free from bribery.

Such corrupt attitudes of some parliament members and cabinet members, who are proven through their legal cases, also are a reflection that political positions literally are used to gain personal or group wealth, where the State's money (which is in fact the people's money and rights) become the object of manipulation. Maybe this is also related to the relations between elected political officials or with strategic positions with political parties for example, where on the one hand having the duty of enlarging the size of their political parties, on another side political parties must also be run with money while the parties' sources of income are unstable since generally only depend on limited donations of some of their members with political positions. As a result, such political officials use all ways to gain money with the purpose besides for themselves, also for their political parties.

This trend impresses us on the theme "Kleptocratic State": a form of political and government corruption where the government exists to increase the personal wealth and

political power of its officials and the ruling class at the expense of the wider population, often with pretense of honest service. This type of government corruption is often achieved by the embezzlement of state funds. Such trend is undeniable, although for its justification it is yet to be studied. But what is for sure is that the high political costs amongst people who have been trapped inside pragmatism of trades of votes during elections, is a beginning of bad political behavior of officials and other state officers in Indonesia.

#### **IV CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Election is the most important instrument in the running of democracy where people as individuals use their rights to determine actors running the country. The people of Indonesia in their four times election in post-reform era have relatively been experiencing such practice of democracy, being involved in voting their heads of government from heads of regions, President, as well as parliament members on the national level (DPR) and regional (DPRD) levels and the Regional Representative Council (DPD). But in such election processes, it is also apparent that not every aspect has given the lesson of the substantive value within them, which is the fair process and the generation of State officials who are 'clean' and responsible for the betterment of governance. But in reality what happens has been process of destroying the values of sincerity, honesty and goodness which have been the cultural inheritance of the people, where the actors involved include some politicians, State officials, and the Election Committees themselves. In such context, deviant actions committed by the election organizers, physical violence that happen through political evil-whispers, verbal violence committed by some politicians in forms of negative campaign and slanders (smear), money politics practices and so on, may become a potential bad picture of democratic practice and may even be regarded as something common.

Financial power seems to be a deciding factor in the democracy experience through election in this *reformasi* era. Politicians and capital owners, or capital owners who are also politicians, including the mass media, have been hugely contributing in changing people's perception towards material pragmatism. Socio-economic conditions of the

people who are still around poverty level become a very good ‘field’ for influence by money politics. The worst is that politicians who are then elected, where the processes involve high costs, quite a few of them become involved in corruption practices. While financially enriching themselves they become re-elected as officials through the next election with pragmatic ways as is usually been done.

Such post-reform democracy practices in Indonesia is what causes perception that within the people who are still poor, real democracy practices still has not been able to be brought upon. If such way of thinking is taken, then the statement that “*democracy is weak and in a serious difficulty in many poor and even some middle-income countries*” (Diamond, 2008, p. 27) seems valid and not only would turn around their perception towards instant pragmatism, but also would have fatal effect of bad governance.

Alas, many observers and experts regard such condition of Indonesia as normal in a state which is still new in democracy; a democratization process which has not yet been consolidated. Such view of course has a valid argument which also has been touched in a part of this paper, as a part of optimistic perspective in viewing the journey of political democracy in Indonesia. But based on facts from the ‘field’ with the continuously increasing tolerance of the people towards bad election practices, including the continuously supporting of the politicians and officials who normalize pragmatism practices, perhaps pessimistic outlook may emanate that democracy is friendly with bad values.

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