

The Pandemic and the Decline of Indonesian Democracy: The Snare of Patronage and Clientelism of Local Democracy

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Abstract

The quality of Indonesia's democracy has decreased, and several findings of democratic institutions indicate a significant reduction that touches aspects of civil liberties and pluralism and the function of government. It is essential to research how far theocratization has taken place in Indonesia during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The method used in this research is qualitative with a meta-theory approach. The results of this study show, first, that democratic sectors, especially in the context of general elections, are still at high risk of corruption. Over the past year, Indonesia has been political corruption that is the mother of all forms of corruption in the state structure that can affect the implementation process and the quality of democracy. Second, requests for political dowries by political parties and corruption by regional heads for campaigning purposes. They resulted in interactions between elites that form patronage and clientelism composed of patrons held by the economic elite with resources. The two factors above are important reasons for estimating the declining quality of Indonesian democracy.

Keywords: Democratic Decline, Patronage, Clientelism, Local Democracy, Indonesia

Introduction

In gratitude, we, as citizens of a country that succeeded in democratizing ourselves with difficulty, are now plagued with worries. Our outstanding achievement—democracy in a very diverse and conflict-prone socio-cultural order is admired by the world—is in stagnation, if not in decline (Mietzner, 2012). The point is that democratization has stopped not because it is truly perfect or complete (Savirani & Tornquist, 2015), but because we do not know and cannot take the necessary steps to promote further democratization (Davidson, 2009).

In Indonesia, this poses a serious challenge not only for political parties or parliament but also for the democratization process as a whole (Lay, 2012). With different labeling, issues around neglect or breaking of political links between democratic institutions (party or parliament) and the people or constituents are raised by many experts as essential explanations for the stagnation, even the occurrence of a setback termed democracy held-back in the development of democracy (Törnquist, 2009). Olle Törnquist, for example, argues that issues around representation or failure to build a political bloc are the root cause of difficulties in building democracy in Indonesia (Törnquist, Webster, & Stokke, 2009).

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report places Indonesia at number 64 out of 167 countries (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021), while the Indonesia Democracy Index report shows a decline in the freedom of opinion index score from 66.17 in 2018 to 64.29 in 2019 (Kemenko Polhukam RI, 2020). The 2021 Democracy Report puts Indonesia at 73 out of

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179 countries in terms of freedom in democracy. In summary, these three democracy reports show a shift in the pattern of Indonesia's democracy, which was initially an electoral democracy, to a "defective democracy." The basic understanding of this shift is that elections do not guarantee to produce leaders who can prosper the people (Alizada et al., 2021).

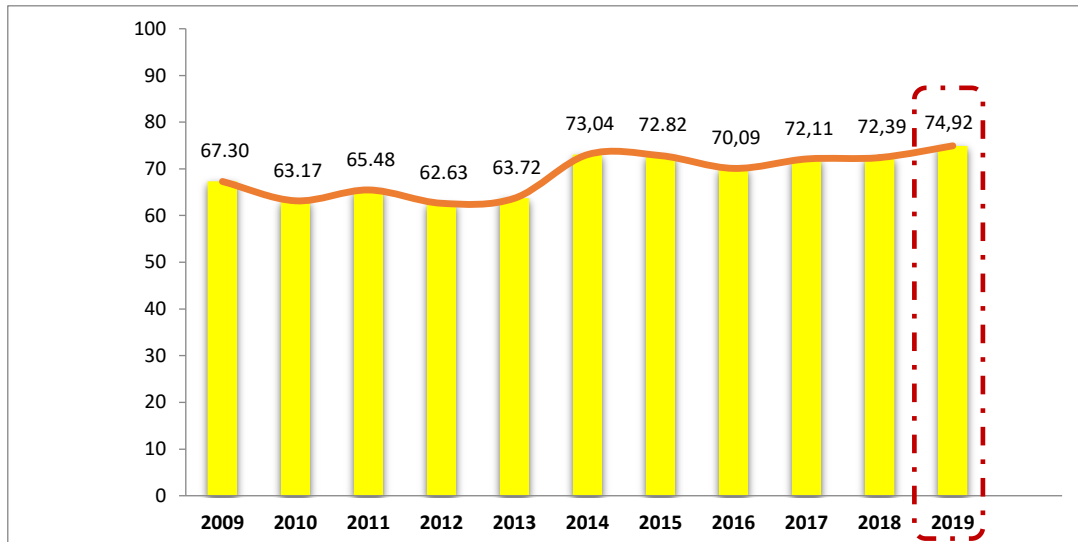


Figure 1 Indonesian Democracy Indexes
Source: Kemenko Polhukam RI (2020)

After conducting a study of three main reports, namely 2020 The EIU, the 2019 Indonesian Democracy Index, and the 2021 Democracy Report, the three reports show that the quality of democracy has shown a significant reduction that not only touches aspects of civil liberties and pluralism but as well as government functions (Kemenko Polhukam RI, 2020). The EIU Report and the Indonesian Democracy Index highlight the decline in freedom of expression and opinion as to the primary basis for the decline in the quality of Indonesia's democracy (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021).

Indonesia has the most victims of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Southeast Asia region. The current condition is increasingly worrying because the spread of the virus is getting higher, while health facilities in several areas are almost collapsing. Amid the pandemic, Indonesia also faces deteriorating conditions for democratic life (Khalyubi, 2021; Setiawan, 2021). This condition is not new because the downward trend in Indonesia's democracy index has continued since 2015. The level of declining civil liberties has become increasingly narrow due to physical and social restrictions imposed by the government (Habibi, 2021b). Democratic channels are not functioning as they were before the pandemic.

Restrictions on every aspect of the government's response to the pandemic have made public participation even more limited to important political decisions during the pandemic. The government is also securitizing the handling of the pandemic, particularly by placing security actors in the structure of handling the pandemic and deploying security actors to support policies for handling COVID-19 in the field. It is essential to research to see how far democratization has taken place in Indonesia during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Literature Review

In the increasingly competitive arena of electoral democracy, clientelistic relationships can occur between political parties and voters and policy-making elites and various interest groups (Hadiz & Robison, 2006; Winters, 2013). Corruption and clientelism are often linked because they lead to political actors who abuse public resources for personal gain, both financially and

politically (Aspinall & Sukmajati, 2015; Habibi, 2020). However, it does not mean that the two are identical or have a causal relationship.

In the context of an increasingly competitive electoral democracy, politicians may organize development programs that benefit their constituents, but this clientelistic practice does not lead to corruption (Kersting & Baldersheim, 2004). On the other hand, corrupt practices such as bribery or gratification do not occur in a clientelistic relationship. Clientelism will lead to political corruption if there is an abuse of authority in allocating and distributing public resources (Hutchcroft, 2014; Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2009). To maintain the legitimacy of power, incumbents also use distributive politics as an instrument to determine who will benefit from the available resources (Habibi et al., 2017; Qodir, 2014).

In that context, the authority to determine the distribution of public resources is vulnerable to political corruption (Corstange, 2018). The link between clientelism and political corruption has begun to shift no longer with small-scale bribery practices but to a more systematic and massive pattern related to the interests of accumulating funds to maintain power (Habibi, 2020; Winters, 2016).

When law enforcement is weak and the bureaucracy is politicized, clientelistic relations can lead to corruption. Clientelism and corruption are intertwined to mobilize funds to obtain resources distributed by political machines, such as political parties, success teams, interest groups, and even volunteer organizations in contemporary political practice. Clientelism is often associated with corruption because clientelism can create a political structure for the growth of corruption (Habibi, 2021a). Clientelism requires that politicians and bureaucrats have discretionary authority in allocating public resources and programs, and the exchange between discretionary authority and public resources takes place without being monitored by the public (Singer, 2009).

Clientelism creates incentives for politicians to resist changes that bring transparency and accountability or strengthen law enforcement. Even politicians tend to weaken various regulatory boundaries in the political system, which will disrupt the sustainability of clientelism practices (Stokes, 2013). An assessment of the bureaucracy that is not based on performance will also impact resource management efficiency, encouraging people to obtain services by giving bribes and kickbacks to facilitate business dealings with the bureaucracy. In the end, clientelism will result in a government system with weak accountability, decision-making is not carried out transparently, and discretionary authority is very high. This condition is also fertile ground for the practice of political corruption. Under these conditions, political actors have an excellent opportunity to hunt for rent because of the community's need to overcome the bureaucratization of the provision of public resources. In addition, weak law enforcement also justifies these deviant behaviors (Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

Patronage can also reduce other campaign expenses by rewarding those who work on behalf of the party (Allen, 2015; Berenschot, 2018; Winters, 2016). When politicians turn to various forms of extortion and bribery to finance patronage and clientelism, new problems in distributive politics arise due to the transactional practice of gaining votes. Voters who have considerable resources, but are reluctant to vote, will choose to provide material support to politicians in return for benefiting from policies or programs made by politicians, including concessions and other subsidies that further benefit the owners of capital (Aspinall, Rohman, Hamdi, Rubaidi, & Triantini, 2017). The theoretical framework discusses the theories used in this article and their relevance to the topic. The theoretical framework can also be an explanation of variables and measurements.

Research Method

This study was conducted using a qualitative method with a meta-theory approach. Such a methodology adopts an understanding of the social theory that defines meta-theory as reflective

monitoring of a current study's goals, processes, and products (Ritzer, 2010). Meta-theory is a normative effort that aims to interpret and provide direction to first-level studies [which produce scientific assumptions about the object of observation] intended to produce meta-theorization from the perspective of the ontology of the social world. In practice, this meta-theory can be done by following an interpretive paradigm, which argues that the purpose of theorizing activities is not to reveal the laws of society but to interpret the meaning of human actions and understand the 'real world' (lifeworld) in which human actors live. Therefore, the keyword is how to try to find answers; what is going on (Ritzer, 2010)?

As an aspect of the study, this study takes the case of the decline of democracy in Indonesia by looking at several indicators, including; First, looking at how corruption and law enforcement against corruption eradication during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on the findings of research conducted (Aspinall, 2013; Hadiz, 2005; Winters, 2016). Political corruption is the parent of all forms of corruption within the state structure that can affect the implementation process and the quality of democracy. Second, political dowry in the form of patronage and clientelism, as discussed in the literature, the role of patronage and clientelism is enormous in the democratic process, so the researcher includes this as an indicator in seeing the decline in a democracy that has occurred in Indonesia. The first stage of this research is to collect reference sources; then, data processing is carried out by comparing the data carried out and analyzing the data collected. Furthermore, this model was adopted from the research model by Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014).

Results and Discussion

Pandemic and Corruption

On January 28, 2021, Transparency International released the 25th Corruption Perception Index (referred to as CPI) survey results. The launch of CPI 2020 was celebrated when the COVID-19 pandemic still engulfed the world situation. All countries face a double crisis, namely health and economic crises simultaneously. Several findings and studies by Transparency International state that corruption damages public services. It also has the potential for handling COVID-19 in the health sector. Countries with high levels of corruption have proven to be very stuttering in dealing with the pandemic. Meanwhile, a relatively free country from corruption must also face economic recession and the possibility of limiting the number of public participations in the democratic space.

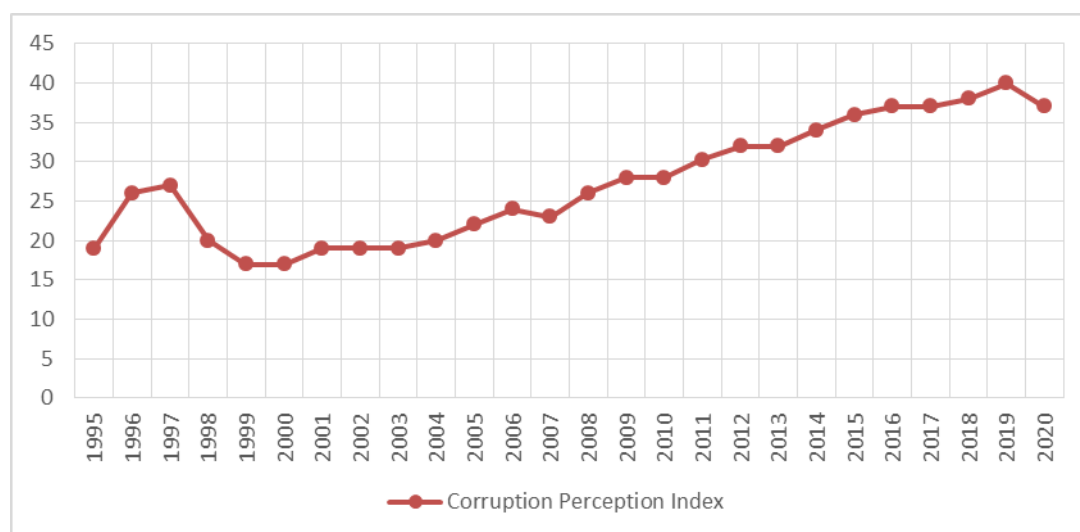


Figure 2 Corruption Perception Index: Indonesia (1995-2020)

Source: Transparency International (2020)

Since the CPI was first launched in 1995, Indonesia has constantly been researched. Indonesia's CPI in 2020 is at a score of 37/100 and is ranked 102 out of 180 countries surveyed. This score is down 3 points from last year's 2019, which was at a score of 40/100. In 2019, Indonesia's CPI score was 40/100, which is the highest achievement in Indonesia's CPI score for the last 25 years. At the launch of the CPI in 2019, Transparency International had "reminded" Indonesia to be more vigilant and continue to be committed to eradicating corruption. With a score of 40 in 2019, the economy and investment are developing promisingly (Transparency International, 2020).

On the other hand, the freedoms of civil society and oversight institutions have been systematically weakened. The independence and effectiveness of Indonesia's anti-corruption commission, the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), has suffered a setback. The KPK is a symbol of progress and modernization in eradicating corruption. However, it lost its independence after a change in the law at the end of 2019 (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi, 2019). Paradoxically, President Widodo's agenda of prioritizing investment and the economy has neglected corruption at the center of attention. Indonesia risks scaring investors and slowing economic progress.

On the other hand, the challenging task of eradicating corruption throughout Indonesia's political system remains a challenge. In particular, eradicating corrupt relations between state officials, civil servants, law enforcement, and business people should prioritize. This view is also in line with structuralist political-economic theory, which believes that political corruption is the mother of all forms of corruption in the state structure (Aspinall, 2013; Hadiz, 2005; Winters, 2016).

Table 1 CPI Breastfeeding Indicators

Indicator	2019	2020
PRS International Country Risk Guide	58	50
IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook	48	43
Global Insight Country Risk Ratings	47	35
World Economic Forum EOS	46	46
Bertelsmann Foundation Transform Index	37	37
Economic Intelligence Unit Country Ratings	37	37
PERC Asia Risk Guide	35	32
Varieties of Democracy	28	26
World Justice Project - Rule of Law Index	21	23

Source: Transparency International (2020)

Nine sources of data/indicators make up the 2020 CPI (see table 1); it appears that most of the indicators have experienced a significant decline. From several indicators that make up the CPI 2020, five data sources have decreased compared to the findings in 2019. Namely, Global Insight fell by 12 points; PRS fell 8 points; IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook fell by 5 points. PERC Asia fell by 3 points, and Varieties of Democracy also fell 2 points last year. Meanwhile, three of the nine indexes stagnated, namely the World Economic Forum EOS, Bertelsmann Transformation Index, and the Economist Intelligence Unit. At the same time, one indicator has increased by two points, namely the World Justice Project - Rule of Law Index. Although this indicator has increased, it cannot affect the 2020 CPI decline in aggregate. Because in the last five years, the WJP-ROL Index has consistently been below the average annual CPI score.

This paper focuses on the discussion of Varieties of Democracy which fell by 2 points. V-Dem is a relatively new indicator. In the last three years, it has been included as one of the indicators

for the GPA/CPI. This indicator is essential because the V-Dem assesses how widespread political corruption occurs in a country experienced by experts and business people.

The corruption index in the V-Dem includes measures of six different types of corruption, including executive, legislative, and judicial corruption. The act also distinguishes corruption in the executive realm, mainly related to bribery and corruption due to embezzlement. Finally, it also distinguishes between corruption in the highest echelons of the executive and the public sector in general.

This setback indicates that the political and democratic sectors, especially in the context of the general election, are still at high risk of corruption over the past year. The characteristics of political clientelism are seen in voters, election workers (party activists, political consultants, success teams), and other actors involved in elections providing support to politicians in exchange for material or personal benefits. In contrast, in political clientelism, politicians win the competition by distributing goods, cash, and various other facilities to gain votes (Berenschot & Aspinall, 2020). So that the eradication of corruption that ignores the political aspect and treats reform (limited to) technical management issues is a wrong view and needs to be changed. Corruption must also be placed in understanding political institutions/institutions' arrangement (Heidenheimer & Johnston, 2007).

On the other hand, governance and political integrity are still significant issues. Marepus Corner's research results on the 'Map of Entrepreneurs in the DPR' revealed that as many as 55 percent or 318 members of the total 575 members of the DPR are entrepreneurs. At least the ratio of people out of ten DPR members is business people. Marepus Corner obtained the findings by analyzing the profiles of members of the DPR for the 2019-2024 period with business owners so that the potential for corruption in the form of conflicts of interest throughout the making of laws will be higher (Aidulsyah et al., 2020).

Freedom House rates Indonesia as a "partly free" country by 2021, reflecting that it has experienced a significant democratic decline due to systematic corruption, widespread discrimination, and rampant persecution practices. (Freedom House, 2021). In line with the findings of The Economist in the Democracy Index, which places Indonesia in the position of "The Flawed Democracy." According to The Economist, Indonesia has experienced a decline in democracy scores. From 6.48 in 2019 to 6.3 in 2020 (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021).

Furthermore, in this pandemic condition, the Indonesian government has made the military a key player in its policies against the COVID-19 pandemic. Several military figures were appointed and held strategic positions in the COVID-19 pandemic response task force, and the armed forces provided crucial support in operating emergency hospitals and securing medical supplies. In recent years, observers have raised concerns about the military's growing influence over civilian governance, and its heavy involvement in the health crisis threatened to accelerate this trend. Meanwhile, restrictions on freedoms of expression and association have worsened over time, pushing the country's scores deeper into the Partly Free range (Freedom House, 2021).

The Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) report for the 2020 period concluded that the threat of corruption was much more significant during a pandemic when compared to everyday life before (Indonesia Corruption Watch, 2020). In addition, the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) also released survey results related to perceptions of corruption, in which 39.6% of respondents assessed that the level of corruption in Indonesia had increased (Astuti, 2020). Then, a new question arises, why does corruption escalate during the pandemic? Simply put, the government spends a large budget to accommodate the complexity of the pandemic problem, from health to the economy. For example, the government has intensified the Social Assistance Program for the People, including the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP), the National Health

Insurance Program (JKN-KIS), the Hopeful Family Program (PKH), the Prosperous Rice Social Assistance (Rastra), and Non-Cash Food Assistance (BNPT) (Fadillah et al., 2021).

This prediction from Transparency International and ICW shows the evidence, starting with the procurement of social assistance for handling COVID-19 in the form of necessities at the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia 2020 with a procurement value Rp. 5.9 Trillion. Juliari, who served as Minister of Social Affairs, asked for an Rp levy. 10,000 for each social assistance food package (Leliana et al., 2021). From this incident, ICW estimated that the state losses reached Rp. 2.7 Trillion (Betresia et al., 2021). This phenomenon is contrary to the contents of the Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 54/HUK/2020 concerning the Implementation of Basic Food Social Assistance and Cash Social Assistance in Handling the Impact of COVID-19, which in essence emphasizes the urgency of providing social assistance to maintain economic stability and avoid the threat of recession economy (Zaking, 2021).

The former Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Edhy Prabowo, was also involved in the lobster seed corruption case during the pandemic. Edhy initiated the crime by issuing Decree Number 53/KEP MEN-KP/2020 concerning the Due Diligence Team for Lobster Cultivation Fisheries Business Licensing. The proceeds from the illegal money received by Edhy related to the determination of the lobster seed export permit, according to the KPK, reached Rp. 9.8 Billion (Betresia et al., 2021). Still, in the same year, the mega corruption scandal of PT Asuransi Jiwasraya also received public attention. In the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) examination, Syahmirwan, as the former Head of the Investment and Finance Division of Jiwasraya for the period 2008-2014, had caused state losses of Rp. 16,807 Trillion (Cahyani & Wardoyo, 2021).

Cimahi's big bribery case, namely Ajay Muhammad Priatna. On November 27, 2020, it was no less surprising. Ajay waKPK arrested Ajaye on suspicion of bribery for hospital permits. He asked for Rp. 3.2 billion to "smooth" the construction permit project for the Kasih Bunda General Hospital in Cimahi City (Betresia et al., 2021). Public anger became more and more volatile after Pinangki's Prosecutor Sirna Malasari committed corruption by receiving a total of US\$ 500,000 from Djoko Soegiarto Tjandra. Prosecutor Pinangki was rewarded for administering the Supreme Court's fatwa through the Attorney General's Office so that Djoko Tjandra was not executed in prison (Cahyani & Wardoyo, 2021). ICW has also researched trends for five years, namely in the first semester of 2016 to 2020; the corruption trend is as follows:

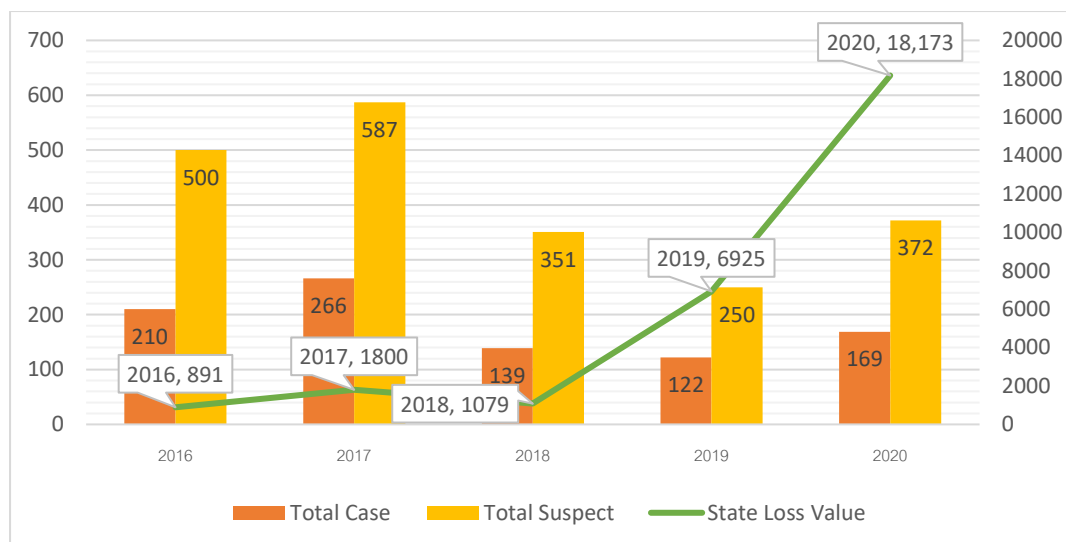


Figure 3 Corruption Cases and State Losses in Indonesia (2016-2020)

Source: Indonesia Corruption Watch (2020)

Moving on from the graph, the number of suspect cases in 2020 is indeed not as much as in 2017. How should it be noted that the value of losses soared significantly and reached its climax in 2020 with an increase of 1700% from 2018? Therefore, the dimensions for assessing corruption are not only regarding the number of cases or suspects, but it is also essential to pay attention to state losses (Indonesia Corruption Watch, 2018). The data shows that the spike in losses due to corruption during the pandemic targets high-ranking officials with big projects. The various cases above validate the existence of a “corruption epidemic” amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Corruption is like a virus that spreads to other humans and is dangerous. The abundance of corruption has damaged government institutions, diminished integrity, and brought the nation's destruction. The imperfection of the state system, which is currently floundering after the pandemic, is the biggest weakness that opens up wider opportunities for corruption. Furthermore, society often has a logical fallacy, which thinks that the more corruption cases, the better. The rampant corruption cases handled indicate that the function of corruption has not been implemented. Therefore, the massive expansion of corruption during the pandemic is a sad portrait of the nation that should be addressed immediately.

Political Dowry Forms of Patronage and Clientelism in the Implementation of Regional Head Elections

Simultaneous local elections for governors, mayors, and regents held in Indonesia still leave a big question mark. From reFromandidates who went through an independent route, incumbent regional head candidates who re-nominated, regional head candidates promoted by political parties to funding regional head candidates (Habibi, 2021a; Habibi & Suswanta, 2019). In fact, through the general election, everyone hopes for the birth of the desired leader according to the people's will, not just the will of political parties.

Chart 3 above explains the interactions between elites that form patronage composed of patrons held by the economic elite with scarce resources in the form of capital. The economic elite controls the other three elites, namely the political elite, social elite, and law enforcement, through capital in three fields, namely economics, regional development, and politics, as shown in the dotted line.

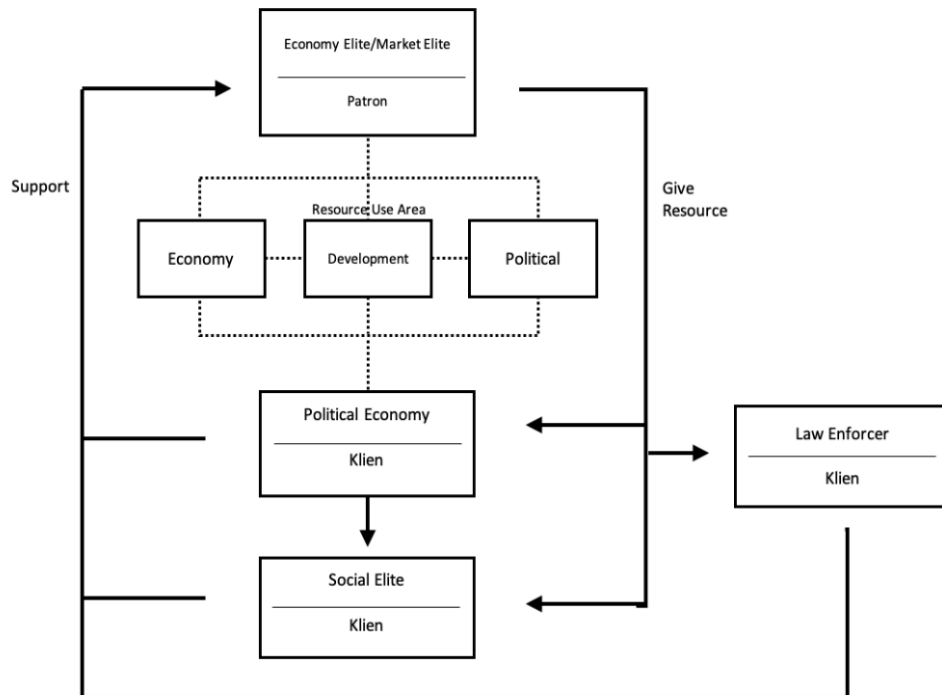


Figure 4 Interaction between Elites Forming Patronage

The first interaction occurs between the economic elite and the political elite. Economic elites who have scarce resources in the form of the capital support elites to prepare for regional head elections, dominate the market and provide personal benefits. Meanwhile, the political elite returns the favor of the economic elite through policy products spawned in politics, economy, and development.

The second interaction involves the economic elite with the social elite. The economic elite here provides personal benefits in the form of the authority to help manage resources at the community level, which certainly provides benefits. On the other hand, the social elite always maintains these resources until they are included in the company of the economic elite. In addition, social elites also influence people's behavior to conform to the political views of the economic elite.

The third is the interaction between the economic elite and the police as law enforcers. The economic elite here tends to benefit personally from the results obtained from plantations. Law enforcement understands this by responding to the form of security guarantees for palm oil companies, both legal and illegal, and guarantees ease in dealing with various entangled cases. Another interaction occurs between the political elite and the social elite. The position of the social elite here is mainly working for the political elite. The social elite carries out the policy of the political elite so that it can be applied to the community. There is also reciprocity here because the political elite also needs the social elite to mobilize the masses to support flows to the economic elite with remuneration in authority given to the social elite for expression.

The 2019 election in Indonesia was enlivened by the Gerindra party's political dowry case where La Nyalla Mattalitti revealed a request for a political dowry of Rp 40 billion, and this condition caught the public's attention that the nomination process did not occur through an agreement between political parties and the candidate to be promoted (Putri, 2018). The agreement that should be in the form of a shared vision between political party administrators and candidates on the issue of political dowry is also not under Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections, which states that every person or institution is prohibited from giving rewards to political parties or political parties combined in any form in the process

of nominating the Governor and Deputy Governor, Regent and Deputy Regent and Mayor and Deputy Mayor (Fadhilurrohman, Syarifuddin, & Etika Khairina, 2021).

This condition makes regional head candidates trapped in patronage where regional head candidates will share profits between politicians and distribute things individually to owners. In order to get political support from them and in return for services, the workers or campaigners have supported them. Regional leaders who will sit in the chair of the regional head cannot escape from political parties because they are held hostage by political dowries and political patronage. Coupled with the pressure obtained from political merchants, even though receiving donations in the form of campaign funds is a material form of a conflict of interest, a conflict of interest is a situation where a state administrator who has power and authority based on laws and regulations has or is suspected of having an interest for the use of their authority to affect the quality and performance that should be (Ayu & Arfiandani, 2021). The results of the Research and Development study of the Ministry of Home Affairs, after this referred to as the Ministry of Home Affairs, show that to become a Mayor/Regent it takes a fee of 20-30 billion, while to become a governor it is around 20-100 billion. The same thing was expressed by Dadang S Mochtar (former Regent of Karawang), that to become Regent on the island of Java, the political costs that must be spent reach Rp. 100 Billion. The cost of becoming a Regional Head is higher when compared to the cost of becoming a council member, which only reaches Rp. 300 million - 6 billion (Wibowo, 2013).

The amount of costs required is not balanced with the capabilities of the candidates for Regional Heads. Based on the LHKPN report, the average total assets of regional head candidates only reached Rp. 6.7 billion. Three people have Rp.0, and 18 others have negative assets (Habibi & Nurmandi, 2021). A gap between the financial capacity of regional head candidates and the costs that must be incurred opens the opportunity for regional head candidates to seek and receive additional funds.

So far, several corruption crimes are motivated by conflicts of interest. The practice of conflicts of interest impacts state losses, injures the values of justice humanity and disrupts the quality of social welfare of the community. In other words, a conflict of interest will potentially harm the nation materially and immaterially and interfere with the achievement of the nation/national ideals.

In 2018 the Corruption Eradication Commission named Kebumen Regent Mohammad Yahya Fuad as a suspect in a bribery case related to project permits at the Education, Youth and Sports Office in Kebumen Regency, Central Java. The KPK suspects that the bribe value, in this case, is Rp. 2.3 billion (Hermawan, 2018). In addition, the KPK also ensnared Yahya's success team with the initials HA (Hojin Anshori) and the Commissioner of PT KAK with the initials KML (Khayub Muhamad Lutfi) as suspects in the same case (Rozie, 2018). It should be suspected that this case is a political clash.

Therefore, the transparency and accountability of the Regional Head Election funding, including obtaining these funds, needs to be regulated. The law has regulated reporting, campaign funds, receiving campaign fund donations, and spending campaign funds. The regulations have also banned dowry costs and restrictions on campaign funds. However, the regulations that have been set are ineffective in the field. The report submitted by the regional head candidate to the Regional KPU cannot represent the actual data.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Three main reports related to the index of democracy in the world, namely 2020 The EIU, the 2019 Indonesian Democracy Index, and the 2021 Democracy Report, show that the quality of Indonesian democracy has shown a significant reduction that not only touches aspects of civil liberties and pluralism but also as well as government functions. The results of this study show: First, Indonesia's CPI in 2020 is at a score of 37/100 and is ranked 102 out of 180 countries

surveyed. This score is down 3 points from 2019, which was at a score of 40/100. This setback indicates that the political and democratic sectors, especially in the context of the general election, are still at high risk of corruption over the past year. Second, political parties and corruption by regional heads for campaigning purposes are requests for political dowries. The interactions between elites that form patronage and clientelism are composed of patrons held by the economic elite with scarce resources in the form of capital which plays a significant role in the decline in the quality of democracy in Indonesia. The two factors above are important reasons for estimating the declining quality of Indonesian democracy.

Recommendations for better democracy include; First, Indonesia must have the courage to reduce the military influence in civilian spaces. Second, be consistent in eradicating corruption. It is especially political corruption because political corruption is the parent of all forms of corruption in the state structure that can affect the implementation process and the quality of democracy. Third, increasing the role of Bawaslu in supervising the running of the democratic process so that control over political dowries causes the relationship between patron and client to be minimized.

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