

The Regional Head Elections (Pilkada) 2020 During Covid-19 Pandemic: A Projection

Hizra Marisal¹, Ade Pornauli², Achmad Indra³ and Alya Aurora⁴

¹ Universitas Abdurrah

^{2,3,4} Universitas Lancang Kuning

hizra.marisa@univrab.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to find out a projection and how the development of elections during COVID-19 pandemic. The regional heads elections is one manifestation of the reform movement in 1998 which wants a change in state administration after being dominated by authoritarianism to become democratic. This election is known to the public as a venue for the election of regional heads who will serve or lead. Covid-19 pandemic is a virus transmission and causes an outbreak over the world including Indonesia. A number of regions contributed to the 2020 elections. The regional head election system in 2020 is the third time held in Indonesia. The ballot is planned to be held simultaneously on September 2020. The total area that will carry out simultaneous regional head elections in 2020 is 270 regions with 9 provinces, 224 districts and 37 cities. The government regulation in lieu of law number 2/2020 on the local election was finally set by President Joko Widodo on May 4th, 2020. The election which originally took place on September 23rd was finally postponed for 3 months, which became on December 2020. This step was criticized because it was considered ignoring COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic; Election 2020; Election Law; Regional Head Elections; Simultaneous Elections

1. Introduction

Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia turned out to have a separate impact on the 2020 the regional head election (Pilkada) which was planned to be held on 23rd September 2020. With the issuance of a decision letter on the results of a working meeting of the House of Representatives Commission with the Ministers, the Indonesian KPU, BAWASLU RI and the Indonesian DKPP regarding postponing the 2020 simultaneous local elections and allocating funds for the simultaneous 2020 unused regional elections for the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic is a good decision regarding delaying the electoral democracy process to save the lives of the citizens who are considered more important.

It is important to note that Indonesia is the 35th country out of 46 countries that have decided to postpone the process of reshuffling political leadership through the electoral mechanism. But there is nothing wrong if we assume that the Pilkada 2020

will continue to be held on 23rd September 2020, and try to analyze the impact that will occur if it continues. If the simultaneous local elections in 2020 will continue to be held during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, then it is likely that there will be a shift in the form of campaigns carried out by the candidates. As we know that during this outbreak many human activities have shifted to being online-based along with the call for work from home (Bai, Jin, Steffen, & Wan, 2020), the form of open campaigns will likely disappear and focus on the form of online meetings or social media campaigns to deliver work programs and ideas the candidates have. Consequently, this addresses the old call for technological intergration of the elections (Hidayat, Putra, Sintiya, Guswanti, & Sihotang, 2020; Panjaitan, 2018).

But the euphoria of the excitement of the elections as a party for democracy will not be felt, because our society today is less interested in abstract politics (each of them)

than politics that can be seen. This is evidenced by the lack of people who are interested in watching public discussions and debates of candidates that are programmatic compared to dangdut (Indonesian folk music) events or futsal competitions held by candidates as one form of open campaign (Lailiyah, Yuliyanto, & Pradhana, 2018; Tsfati & Walter, 2017). On the other hand, with the outbreak of Covid-19, the simultaneous local elections in 2020 will be buried under the issue of the Covid-19 outbreak, so that the public will be more focused on how the community can protect themselves from the Covid-19 outbreak compared to having to think critically about the simultaneous elections of 2020 by learning from previous cases (Kaushik & Goyal, 2019; Yandra, 2017). This will have an impact on the low response of public debate to the candidates' vision and mission so that the theory of ideas towards problems in society will not emerge from the community itself.

2. Research Method

Regarding the election issue which was caused by the strong Covid-19 issue, indirect voter participation will also get affected. If the simultaneous local elections in 2020 remain during an outbreak it will lead to a decrease in voter turnout to attend polling stations because people prefer to avoid crowds rather than having to come to polling stations and meet many people, so this will have an impact on the level of candidate legitimacy if selected later. On the other hand, the budget to implement the simultaneous elections in 2020 amid the plague of Covid-19 will also swell. This is related to strict protocol rules in the process of implementing the simultaneous elections of 2020 during the Covid-19 outbreak from preparation to implementation, organizers must budget funds for the procurement of goods in the form of medical devices such as digital thermometers, hand sanitizers, masks, and even medical personnel in case something unexpected happens.

Postponement of Pilkada 2020 with 3 implementation time options based on various possible progress of the Covid-19 outbreak has become an appropriate plan to avoid these things. Today the community must focus on how to end the Covid-19 outbreak rather than thinking about the simultaneous 2020 election process, which who knows when it will be implemented. Let the authorities regulate this and we as a community must remain at home and help others during the Covid-19 outbreak.

3. Results and Discussion

The General Election Commission officially elects provincial, district, and mayor elections simultaneously to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The decision was stated in Decree Number: 179 / PL.02-Kpt / 01/KPU/III/2020 and Circular Letter Number 8 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of the KPU Decree. This is quoted in *Pikiran Rakyat* from the Antara news agency, in a letter signed by the Indonesian KPU Chairman Arief Budiman on March 21, 2020, discussed and carried out the Simultaneous Local Election 2020 related to the World Health Organization (WHO) related to Covid-19 as a global pandemic. Then, the decision of President Joko Widodo on the spread of Covid-19 as a non-natural national publication, as well as the decision of the Head of the Disaster Management Agency regarding the status of emergency coverage related to outbreaks of diseases caused by the Corona virus in Indonesia. "*In connection with this, in the context of the implementation of the Simultaneous Local Election which will be held on September 23, 2020, it is necessary to stipulate a SE KPU concerning the Postponement of the Staging of the Election of 2020 in the framework of being canceled by Covid-19 in the KPU Environment,*" it stated in the circular.

The Election Leadership Room and the Implementation of the Simultaneous Regional Election 2020 discussed the inauguration and working period of the

voting committee (PPS), verification of the support requirements for individual candidates, the formation of a voter data updating committee (PPDP), and the implementation of matching and research (collect), as well as updating and changing list of candidates chooser.

For Regency and City KPUs who are ready to inaugurate PPS and this area is declared not to have been affected by Covid-19, the inauguration of PPS can continue with the terms of service that will be prepared to start today.

The Covid-19 outbreak had a tremendous impact on social and political life in Indonesia. In social life, for example, the outbreak of Covid-19, whose status is now designated as a national disaster, has changed various ways of social life by applying physical distancing, social distancing, and large-scale social restrictions (PSBB). With this rule, residents are asked to avoid crowds, public places, and forbid events that present large numbers of people. In terms of politics, this highly affected activity from the Covid-19 outbreak was related to the simultaneous local elections held which were originally planned to be held in September 2020. With various considerations, the General Election Commission of the Republic of Indonesia (KPU RI) could not help want to have to do a variety of anticipations, including making the postponement of the election schedule that will be carried out in 270 regions, consisting of 9 provinces, 224 districts, and 37 cities.

Obstacles to the implementation of a series of Pilkada activities, because these stages of Pilkada activities enable mass interaction and contact. The series of activities on the holding of local elections include the inauguration of the voting committee (PPS), verify the terms of support of individual candidates, the establishment of voter data updating officers, updating and compiling voter lists, Campaign Period, Implementation of simultaneous local elections.

Regulation. Regulations that legitimize the postponement of the simultaneous local elections which can be used as a legal basis for the postponement. The drafting of Government Regulation in place of law (PERPPU) must be issued immediately. Because the General Election Commission must make various adjustments to technical matters regarding the working period of the District Election Committee (PPK) and the Voting Committee (PPS), registration of candidate pairs, completion of PTUN / MA decisions, and the campaign period. All of the above needs to be rearranged, especially related to schedules, stages, programs, and budgets.

Budgeting. The implementation of simultaneous local elections requires large costs. While the State budget has been largely diverted for the anticipated use and handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the KPU also requires a PERPU that regulates multi-year budgeting, ensuring budget availability in the first quarter of the 2021 fiscal year.

Technical implementation. The KPU needs to take technical adjustment steps such as reactivating an adhoc body consisting of PPK and PPS, preparing technical guidance materials, organizing technical guidance, inauguration, as well as other technical matters concerning the stages of conducting elections by electronic means. This must be done in addition to reducing direct interaction and avoiding crowds caused by training and technical guidance, the Election Commission must be able to ensure that all stages can proceed with various adjustments.

Infrastructure. Logistics supply must be anticipated to avoid scarcity or lack of Pilkada logistic materials, such as ballot papers, ballot boxes and other logistical needs.

Psychological burden. The holding of the elections during the Covid-19 pandemic caused a psychological burden on the organizers (working parties) in the form of insecurity and anxiety, thus affecting the quality of work. If people work under

worries, fears and worries, they will not work maximally in fulfilling their responsibilities.

4. Conclusion

2020 elections will certainly involve many parties. The number of Potential Voters Population Data (DP4) recorded simultaneously this year is 105,396,460 voters. If you look at the data in the 2015 elections, there are 838 candidate pairs and the number of polling stations (TPS) is 237,790 polling stations. While ad hoc organizers included the District Election Committee (PPK) which totals to 10,337 people, the Voting Committee (PPS) totaling 131,886 people, and the Voting Organizing Group (KPPS) reaching 1,664,530 people.

So, holding simultaneous elections in 270 regions on December 9 this year, is very risky. Because, even at this time, it is not yet certain when the end of the Covid-19 outbreak. There needs to be a mutual agreement between the General Election Commission (KPU), the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu), and the government to create a 2020 Pilkada road map. Whether to continue the stage or start a new stage and when will the stages begin. The road map must then be explained to the public because aspects of voter education also become important to continue to build in an effort to build voter community participation in the midst of the 19th plague. Then, the election organizers and the government also need to collaborate with civil society or in this case election monitoring institutions, active civil society will build collective social solidarity.

KPU presented three voting time options namely 9 December 2020, 17 March 2021, and 29 September 2021 assuming the corona virus outbreak had ended at the end of May. This is in accordance with the determination of the Covid-19 disaster emergency period until 29 May 2020 by the central government. Whichever option is chosen, the

government must ensure that Covid-19's emergency status is over, large-scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) ends, and community activities are not limited to physical distancing. This is accompanied by a curve of cases of corona virus exposure increasingly sloping.

So like it or not, aside from the matter of time, or when the vote is shifted, that is the government's authority. Secondly, it is possible for this election to be held not in conditions of the Covid outbreak ending at 100 percent. But even if the local election is carried out simultaneously, government must continue to appeal to the public to use masks and maintain physical distance as a protocol to prevent the spread of the corona virus. So that when the 2020 elections are still running, but the implementation also guarantees physical distancing. There were additional polling stations from the previous elections in each region.

Then, procure hand sanitizers or hand washing liquids and thermometer guns or body temperature gauges at each polling station. When there are technical changes to the implementation, there is a budget that may increase or decrease. The budget is reduced when bimtek is done online, but the budget is increased when procuring hand sanitizers at polling stations in addition to ink and others. Activities can be carried out while still using the Covid-19 protocol standard including policies to keep distance in line at the polling stations.

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