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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SERIOUS CHALLENGES TO THE 2024 INDONESIAN NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTION FROM THE ASPECT OF ELECTION ORGANIZER BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Election organizers in Indonesia are often seen as obstacles to the growth of democracy. The presence of election administrators has become a serious problem in the development of democracy in Indonesia. In fact, very high hopes are given to the election organizers as a pillar that will determine the growth of Indonesian democracy. The reason is simple: Indonesian democracy has failed in the past, partly because of the role of the election organizers. The New Order became an opaque record for Indonesian democracy when election administrators became an inseparable part of the authoritarian regime. Even in the early days of reform, the election organizers could not be proud of their work and even became one of the sources of the problem itself. So it is not surprising that the election organizers, namely the *Komisi Pemilihan Umum - KPU* (General Elections Commission), were asked to supervise their work by establishing the *Badan Pengawas Pemilu - Bawaslu* (Election Supervisory Body) in 2008. The results achieved did not make the democratization process through general elections better. The poor technical work of election administrators means that election administrators cannot be allowed to work maturely and maturely, but special courts must be prepared for their bad work. The birth of the election ethics body, namely the *Dewan Kehormatan Penyelenggara Pemilu - DKPP* (The Honorary Council of Election Organizers), shows that the election organizers, namely the KPU and Bawaslu, are doing quite badly in building the electoral process. The big concern is the difficulty of holding a dignified general election in the 2024 national simultaneous elections.

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INTRODUCTION

The behavior of election administrators has become a very serious problem in the development of democracy in Indonesia, at least that is the conclusion that can be traced in the last ten years of evaluation of election administrators. Even though it is very possible that Indonesia is the only civilized country in the whole world that tries or decides whether or not the ethical behavior of election organizers is guilty, the process is carried out in a courtroom open to the public, just like the general court for criminal or civil cases since ten years ago. Namely since 2012 (Jimly, 2021). It's not just about the behavior of election organizers that are open to the public for public viewing, the administration of elections in Indonesia is handled by three different institutions, there is only one in the world, namely KPU, Bawaslu and DKPP. In Indonesia, the personal ethical behavior of every election organizer at all levels has become a public affair that is open to the public. The presence of this ethical institution is in order to ensure the implementation of the basic principles of holding general elections in Indonesia which is expressly stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in Article 22E paragraph (1) which reads: "General elections are carried out directly, publicly, freely, secretly, honest and fair every five years".

But it turns out that the attitude of the election organizers in carrying out general elections in Indonesia does not satisfy the citizens. It can be seen from Table 1 that there are very many election organizers who are asked to have their behavior examined according to the code of ethics. Table 2 shows the poor performance of election administrators in terms of the number of election organizers who were reported to have participated in the national elections and simultaneous regional head elections according to their respective times. The data shows that the number of organizers who have complained continues to increase from year to year. The question is whether there has been a change in the behavior of election administrators since DKPP was formed in the ten years since it was formed in 2012.

METHODOLOGY

From the main issues above, this research answers the question: why is the behavior of election administrators being scrutinized so openly in Indonesia? What is the importance of establishing an ethical body for election management if it is associated with strengthening democracy in Indonesia? What are the results of the ethical compliance of election administrators for the ten years since DKPP

was formed in 2012 to 2022? What is the biggest problem with the ethical behavior of election administrators?

Table 1. Complaints to the Code of Ethics against Election Organizers from 12 June 2012 to 31 December 2021

No.	Year	The Number of Complaints
1	2012	99
2	2013	606
3	2014	879
4	2015	478
5	2016	323
6	2017	304
7	2018	521
8	2019	506
9.	2020	454
10.	2021	297
Total		4.467 report files

Data of the DKPP RI, January 8, 2022.

This study will use a qualitative research methodology, namely research that focuses on the strength of data and arguments obtained from the literature and in-depth interviews with a number of parties. The literature that we will use is data taken directly from the ethics decisions issued by the DKPP state institutions in general since 201 and in particular the 2021 Ethics Case Decisions. The decision data will address the most basic problems that have occurred since the establishment of the DKPP. 2012 and how ethical behavior is getting better or worse from year to year. The second source that we use is interviews and views of Indonesian election leaders regarding the ethical behavior of election organizers, including: Supreme Master of Law from the University of Indonesia Jakarta, Jimly Ashiddiqie, who was Chair of the 2012-2017 DKPP; Nur Hidayat Sardini, Chairman of the Election Supervisory Body of the Republic of Indonesia in 2008-2011 who is also a lecturer in Political Science from Diponegoro University, Semarang.

Election organizers are the source of Indonesia's democracy problems: The behavior of election administrators in Indonesia has become a very serious problem, so that before the birth of the DKPP RI Institution, the ethical behavior of election organizers has been tried since October 2010. According to Jimly Ashiddiqie, the trial was carried out by a team of ethics examiners, which was formed for a certain period of time, so that it was temporary (*ad hoc*). In recognition of Nur Hidayat Sardini (2022) as Chairman of the Election Supervisory Body in the early days, his institution submitted many recommendations to the Indonesian KPU for a number of alleged violations of the ethics of election organizers during the period 2008–2012. In practice, only three recommendations were followed up by the KPU, namely on ethical behavior related to a KPU member in a district in South Sumatra Province, a KPU member from the Riau Islands Province, and one of the leaders of the KPU of the Republic of Indonesia. Looking at Table 3, just for the year 2021 alone, the number of election administrators reported to the state ethics agency for having unsatisfactory performance in carrying out elections was 1174. This number is, of course, very large and is really concerning. The strengthening of the existence of DKPP in the second period was reformulated in Law Number 7 of 2017 with the additional authority of DKPP to form regional assemblies in every province throughout Indonesia. Why is it important to have an ethics trial open to the public? In Jimly Ashiddiqie's mind, all allegations of violations of the ethics of election administrators are always related to the political interests of the state and the political rights of citizens (Jimly, 2021). In the era of democracy, election management has become the fourth pillar that supports the strengthening and strengthening of the democratic process. The position and authority possessed by the election organizers are very likely to damage the social fabric of society, which is becoming increasingly complicated and full of social conflicts if the election organizers are not professional and neutral in organizing the general election process.

Public Dissatisfaction with Election Organizers' Behavior: Public discontent with the performance of election administrators very often becomes an arena for social disputes that lead to the destruction and burning of government offices and other public facilities, and not infrequently, citizens lose their lives. Similar upheavals, for example, can be found in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, Palembang City, South Sumatra, most of the areas in Papua and Eastern Indonesia, and a number of other areas. Election organizers are very likely to be tempted by the lure of power, promises of future positions if elected, the possibility of giving money, or close family or organizational relationships (Budhiati, 2021). The effects of such political collusion make it very possible for the election organizers to act unprofessionally and side with one of the pairs of candidates or parties most likely to win the political competition. Whereas in a dignified democracy, all election administrators must place themselves not in one of the competing parties because they are the organizers, referees and breaker of every stage of the election for all election participants to obey. Why is there such a high level of suspicion toward election administrators, as evidenced by the 243 cases decided by the ethics court in 2021, as shown in Table-04? Because in the democratic process in Indonesia, election organizers are directly in touch with determining the circulation of power, especially regarding the election of executive political power at the center and in the regions. It is different from the legislative election, which was participated in by hundreds or even thousands of candidates, so that the hard competition was not felt too much because the number of winners was only a few and the number of losing parties was almost twenty times the number of participants who succeeded in gaining power. In contrast to the election for executive power, which on average is followed by two to four pairs of candidates, even the presidential elections of the Republic of Indonesia in 2014 and 2019 were only followed by the same two presidential candidates during the two direct presidential elections, namely the competition between President Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto.

The impact of the few candidate pairs competing in the executive branch resulted in very tight competition with the fanfare of each supporter. Indonesia's experience in identity politics when holding presidential elections in 2014 and 2019 has caused deep wounds, the effects of which are felt to this day. Black political issues, bad profiles of each candidate's past, character assassination, and the use of negative identity politics in the name of religion and ethnicity have polluted the public sphere throughout the stages of holding the presidential election. In the 2012 ethical incident, during the early days of the birth of the DKPP, leading to the 2014 national elections for the Legislative and President, one of the biggest ethical cases was when all of the Indonesian KPU commissioners were sued by Bawaslu because they considered the Indonesian KPU to be unprofessional and unfair to a number of 18 (eighteen) political parties that deliberately crossed out their participation as election participants. According to Bawaslu, there is one stage that must be given the opportunity to the 18 political parties that the RI KPU did not carry out, namely the implementation of field verification as a final requirement for whether or not a political party is eligible to participate in the 2014 election. In an open trial on Friday, November 11, 2012, it was revealed that the commissioners of the KPU RI had difficulty carrying out their duties, which were deliberately hampered by the secretariat of the KPU RI. At that time, the Commissioner of the Indonesian KPU, Ida Budhiati, said that there had been disobedience and an attempt to boycott the 2014 general election conducted by the General Secretary of the KPU. The secretariat does not carry out its support function optimally in the preparation of the election stage. In its ethics decision on Friday, November 27, 2012, the Ethics Council decided to dismiss four main KPU secretariat officials who were not reported by the complainant. The four people are: the Secretary General of the KPU RI, the Deputy Secretary General of the KPU RI, the Head of the Legal Bureau, and the Deputy Head of the Legal Bureau (Case of the Ethical Code of Election Organizers, Number 23-25-DKPP-PKE/I/2012).

Table 2. Decisions on Ethical Cases for Election Organizers for 2012 to 2021

Number	Year of Case	Number of Cases	Cases Decided	Court Decision (people)						Total (people)
				R	WW	TS	FS	DP	RES	
1	2012	30	30	20	18	0	31	0	3	72
2	2013	141	141	399	133	14	91	0	28	665
3	2014	333	333	627	336	5	188	3	122	1281
4	2015	115	115	282	122	4	42	2	13	465
5	2016	163	163	376	173	3	46	2	10	610
6	2017	140	140	276	135	19	50	8	5	493
7	2018	319	319	522	632	16	101	21	40	1332
8	2019	331	331	808	552	4	77	17	46	1504
9	2020	196	196	452	286	3	41	16	0	798
10	2021	172	172	399	210	3	14	5	11	642
	Jumlah	1940	1940	4161	2597	71	681	74	278	7862 People
		Cases		Reported						

Data of the DKPP RI, January 8, 2022

Description:

R =Rehabilitation WW= Written Warning

TS= Temporary Stop FS = Fixed Stop

DP=Dismissal from Position RES = Resolution

Table 3. Number of Election Organizers reported in 2021

Reported Institution	Number of People
Regency/City KPU	550
Regency/City Bawaslu	362
Provincial Bawaslu	85
Provincial KPU	71
Bawaslu of the Republic of Indonesia	23
KPU of the Republic of Indonesia	4
Election organizers at the sub-district level and below	79
Total	1174 people

Data of the DKPP RI, January 8, 2022.

Table 4. Code of Conduct Case Decisions Throughout 2021

Year of Case	Case Decided	COURT DECISION						Stipulation	Total
		R	WW	TS	FS	DP			
2020	71	188	81	0	13	6	0	288 people (31.2%)	
2021	172	399	210	3	14	5	11	642 people (68.8%)	
Total	243	587	291	3	27	11	11	930 people (100.0%)	

Data of the DKPP RI, January 8, 2022

Description:

R=Rehabilitation WW=Written Warning

TS= Temporary Stop FS=Fixed Stop

DP=Dismissal from Position

Table 5. Comparison of the Decisions on the Code of Ethics for 2012, 2017, and 2021

No	Year of Case	Number of Cases	Court Decision (people)						Total (people)
			R	WW	TS	FS	DP	RES	
1	2012	30	20 (27,8%)	18 (25 %)	0	31 (43,1%)	0	3 (4,2)	72 people (100%)
2	2017	140	276 (56%)	135 (27,4%)	19 (3,9%)	50 (10,1%)	8 (1,6%)	5 (1%)	493 people (100%)
3	2021	172	399 (62,15%)	210 (32,71%)	3 (0,47%)	14 (2,18%)	5 (0,8%)	11 (1,7%)	642 people (100%)
					Dismissed election organizer: 77 orang (15,62%)				
					Dismissed election organizer: 22 orang (3,4%)				

Data of the DKPP RI, January 31, 2022

Table 6. DKPP Code of Ethics Decision in 2021

Year of Case	Number of Cases	Court Decision (people)						TOTAL (People)
		R	WW	TS	FS	DP	RES	
2020	71	188	81	0	13	6	0	288 (30,97%)
2021	172	399	210	3	14	5	11	642 (69%)
Total: 243 cases		587 (63,1%)	291 (31,3%)	3 (0,3%)	27 (2,9%)	11 (1,2%)	11 (1,2%)	930 people (100%)

Data of the DKPP RI, January 31, 2022

In addition, DKPP ordered the Indonesian KPU to carry out a second stage of verification, namely field verification for all political parties, especially those that feel disadvantaged.

Central Level Organizer is very Disappointing: If election organizers were previously most concerned about what happened at the regional level, such as the sub-district and kelurahan/village, serious election violations have recently occurred with central level election organizers. At least three election cases must be taken over by President Joko Widodo against members of the Indonesian KPU. The three cases include: the Case of the Code of Ethics for Election Organizers, Number 01-PKE-DKPP/1/2020 concerning Disrespectful Dismissal as Commissioner of the Indonesian KPU on behalf of Wahyu Setiawan; Case of the Code of Ethics for Election Organizers, Number 123-PKE-DKPP/X/2020 concerning Dismissal from Position as Chair of the Indonesian KPU on behalf of Arief Budiman; and the Case of the Code of Ethics for Election Organizers, Number 317-PKE-DKPP/X/2019 concerning Disrespectful Dismissal as Commissioner of the Indonesian KPU on behalf of Evi Novida Ginting. The 2020 DKPP, which was implemented by President Joko Widodo, permanently dismissed the two KPU RI commissioners (DKPP, 2020). The lawsuit to other institutions, such as to the State Administrative Court (PTUN), is not a DKPP decision, but what is being sued is an administrative determination by another institution (Jimly, 2019). Because it is directly related to the political rights of citizens, the ethical affairs of election organizers must also be open to the public.

The public is very disappointed and complains about the performance of election organizers from the central level to the lowest level, which is certainly one of the sources of difficulties for the growth of democracy in Indonesia. The latest disappointment, of course, is the ethical decision on the dismissal of the Chairman of the KPU RI and two members of the KPU RI. The most disappointing behavior, of course, was caught by a member of the Indonesian KPU, namely Wahyu Setiawan, in a bribery case by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). The Ethics Council did not hesitate to issue a permanent dismissal decision as a KPU commissioner to Wahyu Setiawan as stated in the Case of the Election Organizer Code of Ethics Number 01-PKE-DKPP/1/2020 concerning Disrespectful Dismissal as a Commissioner of the Indonesian KPU. Another KPU commissioner who has been permanently dismissed by the Ethics Council is Evi Novida Ginting in the Case of the Election Organizer Code of Ethics Number 317-PKE-DKPP/X/2019 concerning Disrespectful Dismissal as Commissioner of the Indonesian KPU. Evi was dismissed because she was deemed to have taken an action that harmed one candidate and benefited another candidate in the election whose actions were deemed to be contrary to what was stated in the Decision issued by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia in 2019. In addition to the two commissioners above, the Chairman of the Indonesian KPU on behalf of Arief also received a dismissal, namely the Case of Code of Ethics Number 123-PKE-DKPP/X/2020 concerning Dismissal from the Position of the Chair of the Indonesian KPU. Arief Budiman was dismissed from his position because he was deemed to have abused his position. The three members of the KPU RI who were given the dismissal sanction above are only a small part of the public's disappointment with the behavior of the election organizers. The Bawaslu commissioner at the central level did not escape sanctions for his behavior in supervising the election. Not to mention the behavior of election organizers at the provincial, district, and city levels, even those who are increasingly out of reach, namely election organizers at the sub-district and village levels, which, of course, will be further away so that the implementation of elections cannot be monitored and controlled. Disappointment with the poor performance of election administrators in Indonesia is not a new problem. Its origin is, of course, the holding of elections since the early days of the birth of the authoritarian New Order government, which held six elections (1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, and 1997), which were only formalities. Election organizers throughout Indonesia during the New Order era were required to win the sole power of President Suharto, who was supported by three political machines, namely: the military (ABRI), the bureaucracy, and

the political party (Golkar), must win Suharto's New Order political party. As a result, when the New Order government fell in 1998, Indonesian election administrators were not prepared to act professionally and independently in elections held during the Reformation Era since 1998. From the DKPP decisions, especially throughout 2021, it can be seen that of the 243 cases decided by the DKPP throughout 2021, a total of 71 cases were ethical cases that were reported in 2020 and a total of 172 cases were filed in 2021, as shown in Table-06. There were 930 people examined by the ethics agency throughout 2021, and 63.1% of them received a rehabilitation decision, and 31.3% received a written warning. Meanwhile, permanent dismissals from the commissioner status of election organizers amounted to 2.9%, and dismissals from positions as chairman or person in charge of certain divisions amounted to 1.2%. At which level did the organizers gain the most public suspicion? The biggest problem with organizing elections is at the district or city level. The data shows that the center of the problem of most violations of the code of ethics is in the vortex of the district/city area. *First*, because the regencies/cities are very far from the center of the capital Jakarta, making it difficult to reach electoral process fraud, and second, because the ethical observance of the organizers is not as good as at the provincial and central levels. *Second*, the district/city level is an area that will directly participate in the national simultaneous direct regional head elections in December 2020. *Third*, the limited social scope in regencies or cities allows election organizers to collude against one of the candidates competing in the regional regent or mayoral election. With the three conditions above, election organizers are very likely to be tempted to commit election violations. The data from Table 6 shows that the most central problem areas for violations of the code of ethics are in the districts and cities. Apart from being very far from the center of the capital Jakarta, making it difficult to reach and foster a code of ethics, districts and cities are also the areas that directly deal with the implementation of the code of conduct. So, with the possibility of an invitation to violate the code of ethics and the limited social scope in the district and city area, it is very possible for election organizers to be tempted and collude against one of the candidates competing in the election of the head of the district head or mayor.

The very large center of public dissatisfaction in the district/city area shows that the possibility of political power collusion is very high at this third level. Due to the long distance from the center of power in Jakarta, which is not necessarily reachable by the election organizers from the provincial level due to the geographical situation of Indonesia, which is an archipelago, and inadequate transportation facilities, it is very possible for the election organizers to conspire with one of the most powerful candidates. The possibility of collusion is very high because elections at the local level, especially regional head elections, involve close ties to kinship, ethnicity, local culture, and the same local culture from which the election organizers, competing candidates, and voters all come from. The similarity of culture and blood ties binds strongly in terms of the struggle for political power with each other among the candidates and their respective camps to compete, because in it there is cultural pride in the name of lineage or blood relations. Thus, kinship relations make the election organizers unable to show their professionalism and fairness. Of course, it is very different from the general election process at the central level in Jakarta and at the provincial level because the distance between the election organizers and the competing parties and voters is quite wide, so there is very little possibility of close family relationships and ties. This very serious problem has become a very urgent job for the central and provincial level election organizers to ensure quality selection for the district/city level election organizers to face the regional head elections that will be held in the near future.

Scientific Discoveries: Election organizers are a serious problem in Indonesia's democratic development. The inability of election administrators to act professionally and independently is the most serious challenge for election organizers. Even the election organizers at the central level lately are increasingly dishonoring their existence because they are increasingly acting unprofessionally and have

proven to be partial. In fact, the existence of the central level election organizers should be an example for the lower level election organizers, namely at the provincial, district/city, sub-district, village/kelurahan level, and even to the location of the election organizers at the polling station (TPS) level. Therefore, it is very necessary to uphold the dignity of election organizers through an open ethical examination session for election organizers. The pattern of this trial exactly follows the pattern of the general court. It is a demand for the enforcement of democracy in Indonesia. The courage to break old patterns and habits becomes a stepping stone for improving the quality of an increasingly dignified election administration. The leap from the form of ethical examination, which has been considered taboo, to the form of revealing personal ethical behavior to the public is actually considered to be a demand for Indonesia's democratic development efforts in the future. Many challenges and criticisms were received by DKPP in the early days when the Ethics Council decided to conduct an open ethics examination session. The enforcement of democracy has become a demand for Indonesia since the birth of the Reformation Era in 1998. The form of Indonesian democracy must first start with the general election process. democracy must emphasize the importance of at least three democratic aspects that must always be present in the process and substance of general elections? *First*, a democratic government is under real control of the wider community; it does not become an arbitrary power but is open to input and criticism from the people. *Second*, the existence of free elections as an opportunity for all adult citizens to make their choice, even if the will of a number of citizens is contrary to the choice of the majority of citizens. *Third*, there is a guarantee of democratic rights for all citizens to have different opinions from those intended by the ruling government, including providing alternative solutions other than those decided by the government as its political policy.

It is hoped that the quality of the implementation of Indonesian elections can be better, especially when the election stages have started towards the 2024 Simultaneous National Elections for Presidential Elections, Legislative General Elections, and Regional Head Elections throughout Indonesia. The hope for the better quality of Indonesian democracy will start with the dignified political process carried out by the election organizers. The demands of democracy for Indonesia are shown by the need for more dignified elections. Why do the minds of the election organizers not develop a strong will to hold elections democratically so that strict and harsh sanctions are needed from other institutions and the format of the examination session is open to the public by the national ethical institution? Perhaps the answer is that Indonesia does not have a democratic tradition as understood in the Western world and in America, the country where democracy was born. The seeds of democracy in Indonesia have no roots in the history and traditions of the local cultures of the archipelago in Indonesia. The wave of world democracy and liberalism was sweeping the world at that time, even though in 1945, within Indonesia, more than 300 systems of royal power in local kingdoms still dominated the archipelago. Each local kingdom stands alone, conquests between each other's kingdoms, and expands the territory of their respective kingdoms. Thus, in determining the form of the state government system in 1945, whether to choose the form of democracy or the form of the kingdom, a vote had to be held among the founding fathers of the nation, which was won by the majority choice of democracy.

Follow-up Suggestions: How can we expect much from the character of the election organizers who act unprofessionally and can't stop themselves from taking sides? Therefore, it is very important for the selection process of election organizers at all levels to use the early stages as a stepping stone to find the character of the election organizers. The selection process must be truly professional and prioritize election organizers who are qualified and have a sincere heart to serve. The characteristics of money politics games or promises of whatever name must be avoided, including likes and dislikes, must be discarded. In the next stage, election organizers really need briefing or similar training that is strict and disciplined with program material that is truly understandable by election organizers.

Public intervention such as the media, democracy activists, and educated circles is very important to monitor the performance of election organizers at all levels. The lack of roots of democracy in Indonesia is a reason to understand that the character of the election organizers in Indonesia does not develop a democratic character, but tends to be job seekers and feel themselves as temporary rulers. Of course, this study is not perfect to examine the importance of the existence of ethical institutions for Indonesia to a longer future in the development of democracy. Further studies that are broader and more in-depth are urgently needed regarding the importance of the existence of an ethical body in Indonesia in the effort towards an increasingly democratic country. At the same time, it is interesting to conduct further studies to see the context of the growth of democracy in Southeast Asian countries, which are almost entirely dominated by the local royal system and culture, which is not far from Indonesian local traditions.

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