

## “Empty Box” Democracy: The Phenomenon of Democracy in Indonesia (Case Study of Makassar City, 2018)

Ahmad Sahide<sup>1</sup>; Adi Suryadi<sup>2</sup>; Ahdiana Yuni Lestari<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Master of International relations, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v9i8.3948>

---

### **Abstract**

Democracy is defined as the government of the people where people have the right to give a mandate for someone to lead them. One of the unsure or uncertain part of this system is an election, and it becomes the significant momentum of the people to select the ‘chosen one’ as a leader. In addition, democracy facilitates people to deliver their aspirations and also criticize the government they elect. Indonesia as a state majorly populated by muslims, has implemented direct democracy after the fall of the New Order Era (Soeharto) in 1998. Since then, Indonesians have a chance to choose the president, vice and local government leader precisely in every five years. In 2018, the direct local election of Mayor in Makassar City produced a new phenomenon. During this process, there was only one running candidate which thus faced an “empty box” that won the election by 53% votes, but Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rahmatika Dewi were next by having 46%. Some scholars stated that this phenomenon was the disaster of democracy, however, the authors also indicated it as the real system when people refused the single couple candidates offered by the political party.

**Keywords:** *Democracy; Indonesia; Local-Election; “Empty Box”; Makassar City*

### **Introduction**

Democracy is viewed as the best system existing in the world and better than a Monarchy or authoritarian regime. Generally, it gives the people a chance to participate in politics, also helps in opening opportunity to have sovereignty and the obtainment of their rights. Therefore, democracy is defined as the “*government from the people, by the people, and for the people*” (Ketchum, 2004).

By giving a chance to participate, people are able elect the best candidate to be a leader. One of the elements of the democratic system is the right for everyone to choose and be selected to get a political position in the government (Dahl, 1971). Before the 1998 reformation, Indonesia was a country led by authoritarianism under Soeharto’s leadership for more than three decades (Eklöf, 2003). However, when the students’ movement rose against this system of government in 1998, Soeharto then had no choice but

to step down, and officially declared resignation from the presidency on May 21 of that same year (Haris and Friends, 2019). Following this was the replacement by Vice President BJ. Habibie which began to open the door to this country's democracy by amending the constitution (Chu, 2015).

After the New Order era, Indonesia succeeded in consolidating the political system to become the third-largest democracy globally, following India and the United States. For two decades, Indonesia has successfully demonstrated to the world its success in consolidating and maintaining democratic stability over a long period, not only in Asia but also in a global comparative perspective (Haris and Friends, 2019). Also, this country has later passed five democratic elections (1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019) with four presidents, which are Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), Megawati Soekarno-Putri, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), and then Joko Widodo (Jokowi) (Fuad, 2014).

The proof of Indonesia's success after the Soeharto New Order, has opened the door for anyone to become the President. Then, six years following the reformation, Law No. 32/2004 emernated, which regulates Regional Government. Furthermore, the respective leaders of each area are directly selected by the people through the Election of Regional Heads and the Deputy (Pilkada) (Romli, 2018). With the issuance of this Act, direct democracy is not only to elect the president and vice but also the governor, regent, mayor, or their deputies. After the promulgation of this law, Indonesian political system was enlivened by the local elites to occupy public positions. The first region to hold a direct local election was the District of Kutai Kartanegara in 2005, East Borneo, won by Syaukani (*Ishack Iskandar*, 2005).

The change in the democracy mechanism at the regional level described above is to reduce the weakness of the respective elections through the Local House of Representative (DPRD). Direct elections decrease the practice of money politics by the DPRD members and also increase the role of the broader community in the process of recruiting officials into the position of authority. However, Law No. 32 of 2004 only empowered oligarchic system (government) to make political parties as a 'business area' which closed the space for the emergence of the best figures to contest in direct local elections (Pratikno, 2007).

In response to the shortcomings of the aforementioned law, the Constitutional Court granted its judicial review in the aspect concerning Regional Government (2007). This was performed by issuing the decision of the Court in No. 5 / PUU-V / 2007 where the contents cancel Article 59 paragraph (1) of Law no. 32 of 2004, stating that participants in the election of regional heads and the deputy are pairs of candidates proposed simultaneously by single or combined political parties. According to 5 / PUU-V / 2007, independent contestants are regulated further in Law No. 12 of 2008 concerning the second amendment to No. 32 of 2004 which deals with Regional Government precisely in Article 59 paragraph (1). This states that "participants in the regional head election and the deputy are: a.) candidate pairs proposed by single or combined political parties b.) candidate pairs of individuals supported by many people" (Jamaludin, 2019).

Therefore, after the issuance of Law No. 12 of 2008, the local democratic party dominated the external parties or independent candidates. Then, another interesting phenomenon of political dynamics and democracy in Indonesia is the emergence of the term single candidate or 'empty box' democracy. Michael Ford together with Douglas Ihrke and David M. Konisky together with Michiko Ueda introduced term of "Uncontested Elections" in American case (Ford & Ihrke, 2020 ) and (Konisky & Ueda, 2011). Meanwhile, the phenomenon of single candidate pair is inevitable as stated in Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning the Second Amendment to No. 1 of 2015 about Establishment of Government Regulation in No. 1 of 2014 with regards to the Election of Governors, Regents and Mayors (Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2015). Then, the General Election Commission Regulation (PKPU) No. 11 of 2016 manages the selection of a single candidate in Article 11A. This regulates the ballot papers in terms of voting one pair of contestants containing two columns that consist of one for photos together with names of both candidates, and those that are blank but not pictorial or more popular with the term "empty box" (Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia, 2016).

This phenomenon began since the 2015 simultaneous local elections in which a single candidate or the emergence of 'empty boxes' happened in three regions. They were Tasikmalaya, Blitar, and the North Timor Tengah regency. Then, in the second round in 2017, the number increased to nine regions with a single pair of candidates. In the 2018 elections which was the third, it also increased to 16 pairs fighting for the "empty box" (*Pilkada Kotak Kosong 2018, 2018*).

The election of Candidates for Mayor of Makassar (the capital of South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia) and the Deputy in 2018 presented one contestant against an empty box, and some other regions did the same. In addition, the paired single candidates were Munafri Arifuddin and Andi Rahmatika Dewi. Those two persons that contested in 2018 was not due to the absence of other potential candidates or their power. It happened because Dhany Pomanto which was the incumbent and had high electability, could not go forward. However, the votes of the people preferred to choose empty boxes, as much as 53%, while Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rahmatika Dewi only had 46%. In fact, the defeat of this opponent in the Makassar city elections later became the national spotlight, even internationally, and also raised many questions about Indonesian political system. There is a view implying the phenomenon as a disaster of democracy. It is believed that competition among candidates and parties is to increase voter turnout, improve the quality of representation, and, more generally, serve as a mechanism for holding elected officials accountable to the citizens they represent (Samples, 2006). However, some said that it was the real democracy by understanding that democracy is the voice and sovereignty of the people.

### **Literature Review**

Empty box democracy is the new phenomenon in Indonesian democracy. It began since 2015. However there were the same phenomena found in British and America. In British, there was uncontested seats in General Election 1850-1910 (Lloyd, 1965) and in America there was uncontested election for American school board from 2016 to 2019 (Ford & Ihrke, 2020). Also in political dynamic, the uncontested elections are widespread in the United States, particularly at the state level. Those phenomena won by the uncontested candidates. Konisky and Ueda found that the potential consequence of weak political competition is that poorly performing legislators remain in office. It is the reason why political competition is viewed as the core of representative democracy (Konisky & Ueda, 2011). The latest article reading the uncontested phenomena in American democracy is the article written by Barry C. Burden and Rochelle Snyder entitled Explaining Uncontested Seats in Congress and State Legislatures. Burden and Snyder try to read the trend of the uncontested election in America and they found that the phenomena tend to develop in South of America (Burden & Snyder, 2020).

In Indonesia we found the different cases where the uncontested candidate lost from the empty box vote. There are plenty of books on democracy in respective stores or sales outlets and research results on regional elections in Indonesia. However, studies related to the phenomenon of the victory of the empty box in Makassar are new issues in Indonesia, and only a few of them are discussing this topic.

Cornelis Lay together with Hasrul Hanif, Ridwan, and Noor Rohman wrote an article entitled The Rise of Uncontested Elections in Indonesia: Case Studies of Pati and Jayapura. This article compared the process of the uncontested elections in both city in Indonesia where in one case (Pati) was because the incumbent pair candidate was strong and in another case, Jayapura, was by design of the local elites (LAY et al., 2017)

Lili Romli from *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia/Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI)* wrote about an empty box democracy entitled *Pilkada Langsung, Calon Tunggal, dan Masa Depan Demokrasi Lokal (Direct Local Election, Single Candidate, and the Future of Local Democracy)*. However, the author also discussed more on the phenomenon (which was considered as a national issue) and juridical dynamics of the emergence of a single candidate in democracy in this country. The comment on the empty box in the Makassar election was not specific (Romli, 2018).

Nur Rohim Yunus also wrote about the phenomenon of empty boxes in the article entitled *Saat Kotak Kosong Memenangkan Pilkada* (When the Empty Box Wins the Local Election) in 2018. This only generally considers the empty box winning in several regions including Makassar, in Indonesia. However, the article does not depart from results of scientific research with the depth of analysis and is more referred to as opinion, since it is only two pages (Nur Rohim Yunus, 2018). Senalince Mara, from Universitas Cenderawasih, Papua, has also written about this type of democracy, which took the Direct Local Election 2017 in Jayapura as the case study (Mara, 2018).

The article focusses on Makassar regional election 2018 is the article written by Harianto, Wawan Budi Darmawan, and Muradi entitle *The Winning of Empty Box in the 2018 Makassar Regional Head Election*. This article used qualitative method and focusses in describing the role of the movement of empty box volunteers in behind the Makassar Regional Head Election 2018 (Harianto et al., 2020). So, the article written from Harianto and friends is different from this article. This article focusses in analyzing and debating the quality of the democracy from the case.

Apart from the above results, there are no scientific publications that specifically address democracy analysis and the victory of empty box in the Makassar City elections 2018. This article is different from all the previous works and articles. Therefore, this study becomes critical because of possibility for it to complement, and the authors compared it with the same phenomenon occurring in several cities in Indonesia and the world.

## ***Methodology***

This study used both theoretical review and field research, where in the initial, the author read the articles and news related to the theme of “Empty Box Democracy in Indonesia, mainly focussing on Mayor Election of Makassar 2018.” Other sources in the form of articles, news, book, and audio recording or video were the supporting data to understand more about the result of the direct local election in Makassar City, 2018. Meanwhile, a critical reading approach was used for data processing. In addition, the author also held several forums such as Focus Group Discussion/ FGD to deliberate on this theme as part of an effort to deepen the analysis and enrichment of the views. Besides FGD, another method to increase the information was by direct interviews with relevant parties or experts in this field. We had the opportunity to have interview with Moh. Ramdhan or Dhanny Pomanto in February 2020 to understand deeply about this phenomenon from his perspective. We did interview, also, with success team member from Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rahmatika Dewi. Beside that, we tried to collect information from the common people such as taxi driver and the independent parties such as scholars. The information we found from all aspects we analyze to find out the meaning and conclusion of this phenomenon.

## ***Theoretical Framework***

In analyzing the idea of ‘empty box’ with the Makassar City case study in the 2018 local election, the authors applied the democracy theory.

### **The Definition of Democracy**

Democracy is a political system that results from human engineering particularly, but this word originated from the Greeks. *Demos* implies society, and *kratein* means to regulate (Ketchum, 2004). Then, the understanding of democracy changes into a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. According to some political theorists, philosophical ideas of democracy have existed since ancient Greek times with the presence of a city-state (*polis*) in Athens during the 4th and 5th centuries BC. Being a small state and minimally populated, thus the citizens were able to meet at least forty times a

year to discuss public matters. It became part of the principle of direct democracy carried out in a participatory manner (Ketchum, 2004).

Back then, Athenians did not yet recognize political parties as a channel for the aspirations of the people. However, these parties were generated and later became an essential part (pillar) of democracy along with the rapid development of human beings to ensure impossibility for many citizens to gather in one place to discuss public issues like it was in the 4th to 5th century BC. In Indonesia, for example, where the population is approximately 260 million people, it is not possible to practice democracy as it was in Athens. This condition requires the existence of political parties representing citizens to discuss and express their aspirations (Sahide, 2013).

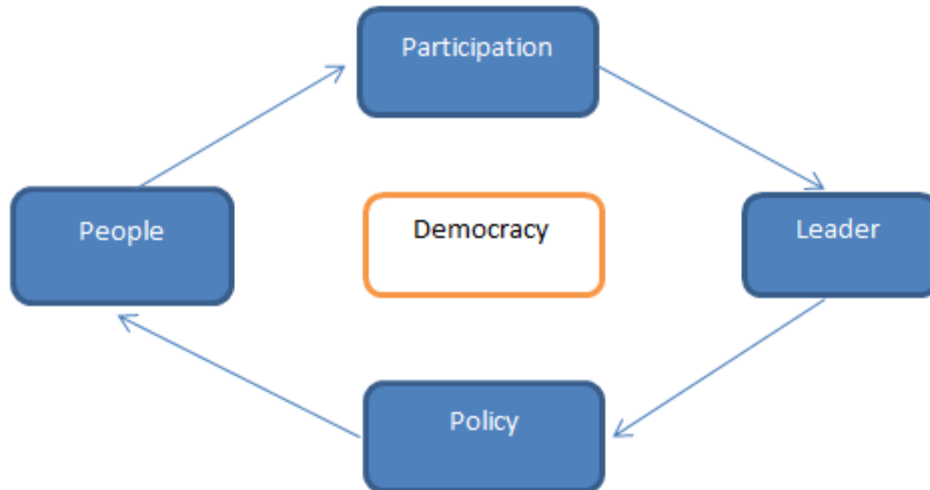
Robert Dahl then developed the theory of democracy by saying that a country should own the eight elements when adopting such system of government. These are as follows:

1. Freedom to form and join organizations (unions and assembly)
2. Freedom of expression (issuing opinions)
3. The right to vote and be elected
4. Relatively open opportunity to occupy public positions
5. The reason for political leaders to compete in getting or giving support
6. Alternative sources of information
7. Free and fair elections
8. Institutionalization of government policy making that refers to or depends on the voice of the people through voting or other similar means (Robert Dahl, 1971).

Therefore, to see a country adopting a democratic system or not, it is enough to observe whether the eight elements mentioned have a fulfillment. It is essential because several countries in the world claim to have been practicing this, but not all or only some of the elements exist there. Russia and Syria declared implementing this type of government, while holding presidential elections in the aftermath of the Arab Spring 2011.

Joseph Schumpeter also has a similar opinion regarding democracy, which was stated to simply mean a political method, and a mechanism to elect respective leaders. Citizens have the opportunity to choose one among those contesting for these positions. In the next election, citizens can replace the previous representative, while the ability to choose among political leaders during this process is known as democracy (Schumpeter, 2003). Barry C. Burden and Rochelle Snyder added that the fundamental requirement of democracy is the existence of contested elections. Election provides voters with the opportunity to express their preferences about the direction of government. To meet this essential standard, elections must exist not only in theory; they must also be contested so that voters actually get to make choices between competing candidates (Burden & Snyder, 2020). Election, said by Andreas Langenohl and Sophie Schmäing, play a crucial role in legitimizing political decisions in both constellations. In this regard, the function of elections can be compared to that in full-fledged democracies (Langenohl & Schmäing, 2019).

From the definitions of democracy stated by Ketchum, Dahl, Schumpeter, Burden and Snyder the essence of this idealism is giving a large enough space for the people to participate in lifting and overseeing the running of the government. Thus, a leader should plan policies aiming at the voters' interests and needs, then, people will have full sovereignty. The simple chart below explains the mechanism.



The “government of the people, by the people, for the people” is the one in which the people participate by selecting a leader that undoubtedly takes their policy. The participation can be in the form of voting or being elected by others and also engage in overseeing the running of the government. This is where the presence of social media (alternative sources of information) is essential in a democratic political climate. These channels will help the people to supervise the chosen leaders to ensure they can adopt policies from their interests. But, when such person does not aim for their benefit, then they can revoke the mandate given in the next democratic recycling. Therefore, someone that wants to be elected or to continue a leadership must prove that the policies taken are for the interests of the people, not for certain groups. Here, we can find out the sovereignty of the people when the estuary of the political agenda is for the welfare of the people.

## Discussion

### Single Candidate Phenomenon

The phenomenon of a single candidate fighting an empty column has started since 2015 to dominate political dynamics of regions with three of them, then the next local elections in 2017 (with nine), and 2018 with sixteen. The election in Makassar, South Sulawesi Province, belongs to one of the 16. In the mayor’s election of Makassar city in June, there was only one couple of candidates which were Munafri Arifuddin and Andi Rahmatika Dewi (Appi-Cicu). Both of them competed against the ‘Empty Box’ that won with 53 % votes, but they received 46 % (*Kotak Kosong Menang Dinilai Bukti Pudarnya Monopoli Parpol*, n.d.). This phenomenon became a new national issue of the jointly direct local election. Some political analysts said that this was the disaster of democracy in Indonesia.



Figure 1. Example of the ‘empty box’ vote letter

## Empty Box Phenomenon Factors

Generally, in a regional head election, there are at least two pairs of candidates competing. However, in Indonesia, there was a condition where the only successfully registered participants for the vote was a couple until the deadline was reached. The case when there are no other pairs of candidates is often because they fail to hold support from political parties and also from the voters. Indeed, to become a contestant, one must meet the conditions set by the legislation. The Law No. 10 of 2016 article 40 requires the acquisition of at least 20% of the total seats of the Regional Representative Council (DPRD) or 25% of the accumulation of valid votes in the election of DPRD members in the area concerned. In addition to directing political parties, Indonesian's laws and regulations also provide opportunities for regional head candidates through individual channels. Requirements that the particular candidates must meet are in the form of support from the people and also belong to the most recent list of elections or previous ones in the area concerned (*Fenomena Calon Tunggal*, 2018).

In the practice of democracy in Indonesia, at least three factors cause the phenomenon of a single candidate in local elections. First, it is often difficult for prospective contestants, both through political parties and individuals, to fulfill the requirements No. 10 of 2016 article 40. Second, an incumbent usually have high electability which therefore figures that anyone with the desire to move forward feel that it is a waste of time and energy. An example case is the Surabaya election in 2018, where Tri Rismaharini contested against an empty box, which happened because this person's electability had results of a credible independent agency survey.

Third, elite games manipulate political dynamics to tackle others that have the potential to win. The engineering here is in the form of specific candidates dominating political parties that have seats in the Regional Representative Council (DPRD). Then, the counterparts do not succeed in getting 20% support from the number of places in the DPRD or 25% of the accumulation of valid votes in the area concerned.

The phenomenon of a single candidate in the recycling of democracy in Makassar of 2018 where Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rahmatika Dewi fought the empty box was because of the factor number three above, and the couple was only in the third place. In several surveys conducted before the election, Moh. Ramdhan or Dhanny Pomanto, had quite a high electability. Based on a survey released by the Celebes Research Center (CRC) on March 20, 2018 (several months before the election), Dhany Pomanto, planned to partner with Indira Mulyasari, and had electability of 71.8 percent. Munafriand Dewi only obtained 18.8 percent. Therefore, supposing there was a fair election in 2018, then it was inevitable that Dhany ought to become the Mayor of Makassar (*Survei Pilwalkot Makassar, Pejabat Unggul | Republika Online*, 2018).

## Manipulating Democracy

Viewing the empty box democracy in Indonesia, at least there are three theories to explain why it happens. First, empty box or single pair candidate because the incumbant candidate is too populer and strong so the other figures see that it will be vein to join the political contest due to the competition to lost. Second, there is no enough political party support from the local House of Representative needed by the pair candidate to be nominated. Third, there is political consolidation by local elites and political parties to manipulate in closing the opportunity for the potential figures attending the local political contest. Discussing the empty box democracy in Makassar City 2018, it was in the third theory.

Seeing the results of the survey above in which Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rahmatika Dewi was not a superior candidate. Still, Dhany Pomanto did not make it, therefore the initially mentioned pair emerged as a single candidate, which presented public questions and indeed is inseperable from elite manipulation of democracy. Based on the results of the interviews, there was a political maneuver conducted by the

Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rahmatika Dewi and team to get rid of Dhany Pomanto from the democratic political contest.

Furthermore, there were two strategies or maneuvers they committed to achieve that. First, Munafri bought up all political parties in the Makassar Regional House of Representative (DPRD) to ensure other candidates did not have the minimum support of 20 percent of the seats. They managed to get ten help from those political parties which were Golkar, Nasdem, Hanura, PAN (national mandate), PBB (Crescent Star), PKPI (Indonesian Justice and Unity), PDIP (Indonesian Democratic), Gerindra, PKS (Prosperous Justice), and PPP (United Development), and secured 43 seats out of the available 50 (Lestari, Ridwan, Iza Rumesten RS, 2018). Even PKS, which initially intended with Syamsu Rizal, eventually also brought Munafri-Andi Rahmatika. These paired candidates were able to do such because they had the power of capital and relations. Munafri is the son-in-law of a popular businessman, Aksa Mahmud, which is one of the rulers (owner of the Bosowa group company) from South Sulawesi involved in national politics as Chairperson of Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (MPR). Besides, Aksa Mahmud is the brother-in-law of M. Jusuf Kalla, Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia 2004-2009, and 2014-2019 (*Fenomena Calon Tunggal*, 2018).

The involvement of these two influential figures succeeded in creating the phenomenon of a single candidate in Makassar, creating election without contestation. In many cases, someone in another district, which thrives in dominating a political party is an incumbent candidate which was even left behind in the context of the city's election. This was because the opponents had successfully bought up their political party's support. The involvement of these figures was not denied when the authors conducted a live interview at the residence of Dhany Pomanto on Wednesday, February 5, 2020.

The second maneuver conducted by the Munafri team was the criminalization of the opponent. When the opportunity to become the Mayor of Makassar Candidate was closed through the path of political parties, Dhany tried to take an independent route and had the confidence to win the election based on the results of the previous survey. However, Dhany failed again due to the criminalization issue. Munafri team requested a disqualification of both their opponent and the nomination of the program run by Dhany as the Mayor of Makassar, regarding the cellphone distribution to the heads of villages throughout the city during the campaign period. Furthermore, Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rahmatika Dewi reported the counterpart to the Makassar's Election Supervisor Committee or Panwaslu. Then, they decided that Dhany Pomanto did not violate campaign rules.



Figure 2. Interview with Dhany Pomanto, candidate who was disqualified in the 2018 regional elections in the city of Makassar

Source: personal documnet, February 5, 2020



Upon the decision of the Panwaslu, Munafri-Andi Rahmatika filed a lawsuit against PT.TUN Makassar. In contrast to the conclusion of the city's election committee, PT. TUN stated that the distribution of mobile phones to the heads of RT / RW in Makassar was considered to have violated the regional head election rules. Afterwards, Makassar's Election Commission (KPU) was requested to cancel Dhany Pomanto-Indira Mulyasari from the competition. This city's KPU subsequently revoked Decree (SK) number 35, which contained the names of two candidates. Then, they issued No. 64, which included the determination of only a pair of Mayor of Makassar and the Deputy in 2018, Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rachmatika Dewi. Thus, the Election only had a single-pair of candidates (*Fenomena Calon Tunggal*, 2018).

The political strategy adopted by Munafri and the team succeeded in getting rid of the political opponents to become a single candidate. Capital and power relations also influenced the pair in removing those they considered to have the potential of defeating them. The only candidate phenomenon in the Makassar City elections was unavoidable, even though it might be reducing the quality of democracy (Tanjung & Saraswati, 2020).

### **The Election Results: Munafri's Failure**

The success of Munafri and the team disqualified the incumbent candidate, Dhany Pomanto-Indira Mulyasari, making them seem like they had won the regional elections of Makassar City in 2018 (Harianto et al., 2020). It happened because they believed that no empty box had defeated a single candidate. However, the results of the people's vote was different. The Makassar society chose 53% of the empty boxes, while Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rahmatika Dewi only gained 46% (Kotak Kosong Menang Dinilai Bukti Pudarnya Monopoli Parpol, 2018). Danny Pomanto was then accused of being behind the empty box victory so he was summoned by the Election Supervisory Agency (*Badan Pengawas Pemilu/Bawaslu*) to clarify the allegation (Herlina, 2018). This phenomenon became an interesting national issue. Some political analysts stated that this was the disaster of democracy in Indonesia.

However, some analysts presented a different opinion, where, Director of Association for General Election and Democracy (Perludem), Titi Anggraini, said that victory of "empty box" was the new phenomenon in Indonesian politics. Furthermore, it was added that people proved where the political elite could not stir their interests which they articulated in a separate manner from the manipulation made by these leaders (*Kotak Kosong Menang Dinilai Bukti Pudarnya Monopoli Parpol*, 2018).

M. Darwis, Lecturer at the Department of International Relations from Hasanuddin University Makassar, said that Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rahmatika Dewi was the coupled forced by the national elite in Indonesia. One of the figures from them has a family relationship with Vice President of the country, in person of M. Jusuf Kalla. M. Darwis said that their electability was very low in front of the society. They realized there was high chances for them to fail supposing there was another paired opponent against them. Therefore, the elites manipulated the democracy to have meant that Munafri Arifuddin-Andi Rahmatika Dewi did not have a competitor in the Mayor Election of Makassar City.

The result of the election proved where people refused the figured 'ordered' by the elite. Saleh Partanoan Daulay, Vice General Secretary of Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), said that the political party need not force anybody to choose their candidate (*Soal Fenomena Kemenangan Kotak Kosong, Ini Kata Saleh | Republika Online*, 2018).

### **Conclusion**

By understanding democracy as the people's voice, the new phenomenon of the winning from "empty box" in the Mayor Election in Makassar City is describable as one of the real system of

democracy in the world. Here, the people's actual voice in understanding the election as a way to find out the best figure to be a leader, is notable. When it happens that the elite of the political party fail to present the 'chosen one' to them, then the people have to vote differently which even happened in Makassar, June 2018. The victory for Moh Ramdhan Pomanto-Fatmawati Rusdi (Dhany-Fatmawati), against Munafri Arifuddin-Abdul Rahman Bando (Munafri-Rahman), in the local election of Makassar city December 2020 proved that the winning of the empty box against the uncontested candidate (Munafri) in 2018 can be seen as the people rebellion toward the manipulation of democracy by the elite. DAVID M. KONISKY and MICHIKO UEDA wrote that uncompetitive elections weaken the mechanism of democratic system but the winning of the empty box in Makassar local election 2018 could be seen as the real of the democracy by understanding that democracy is the voice of the people.

Based on survey 2018, Moh Ramdhan Pomanto-Fatmawati Rusdi had high electability, but Munafri Arifuddin and team (supported by local and national elite) manipulated the proses of the contestation to disqualified Dhany-Fatmawati. By doing that way, Munafri hoped that he could be elected easily as the Mayor of Makassar City in 2018. However, the result of the election said differently. Munafri lost from the empty box. It happened because people having right to vote and knew that Munafri manipulated the democracy proses.

In the 2020 regional head elections in the city of Makassar, Munafri no longer had the political power to manipulate the democratic process. Jusuf Kalla is no longer serving as vice president of Indonesia. So, the winning of the empty box could be seen as the rebellion of the people by democratic way. It was the sovereignty of the people. The result of the local re-election 2020 proved that when there was the fair political contest between Dhany-Fatmawati and Munafri-Rahman where Dhany-Fatmawati were elected by the people. From this case, the elite should have learnt from this phenomenon in order not to manipulate the process of democracy. President Joko Widodo in 2014 said that democracy is to hear the people aspirations.

### **Funding**

In doing this article, the author was given financial support from the Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

### **Notes on Contributor**

Ahmad Sahide is a Lecturer in the Department of International Relations at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He finished his study at Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta. His reseach focuses on Middle East and democracy.

**Adi Suryadi** is the senior lecturer at Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia. His studies focus on local democracy in Indonesia.

**Ahdiana Yuni Lestari** is the lecturer from Law Faculty at Univesitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

### **References**

- Ahmad Sahide. (2013). *Kebebasan dan Moralitas* (2nd ed.). The Phinisi Press.
- Ayu Lestari, Ridwan, Iza Rumesten RS. (2018). FAKTOR PENYEBAB KEHADIRAN CALON TUNGGAL DALAM PEMILIHAN KEPALA DAERAH. *Sumber Cahaya*.

- Burden, B. C., & Snyder, R. (2020). Explaining Uncontested Seats in Congress and State Legislatures. *American Politics Research*, 49(3), 247–258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X20960565>
- Chu, T.-W. (David). (2015). The State Actor in Human-Security Issues: A Study of Cambodia and Indonesia. *Asian International Studies Review*, 16(2), 71–92. <https://doi.org/10.1163/2667078X-01602004>
- Eklöf, S. (2003). *Power and political culture in Suharto's Indonesia: The Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and decline of the new order (1986-98)*. NIAS; Taylor & Francis. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10100081>
- Fenomena Calon Tunggal*. (2018). BAWASLU RI.
- Ford, M., & Ihrke, D. (2020). Uncontested: Electoral competition in American school board elections. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 58(6), 661–675. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-02-2019-0020>
- Fuad, A. B. B. (2014). Political Identity and Election in Indonesian Democracy: A Case Study in Karang Pandan Village – Malang, Indonesia. *Procedia Environmental Sciences*, 20, 477–485. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proenv.2014.03.060>
- Hariato, H., Darmawan, W. B., & Muradi, M. (2020). The Winning of Empty Box in the 2018 Makassar Regional Head Election. *Society*, 8(2), 546–556. <https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v8i2.203>
- Herlina, L. (2018, July 10). *Kotak Kosong Menang, Danny Pomanto Diperiksa Bawaslu Hingga Tengah Malam*. <https://mediaindonesia.com/nusantara/171156/kotak-kosong-menang-danny-pomanto-diperiksa-bawaslu-hingga-tengah-malam>
- Ishack Iskandar: Pilkada Kukar Sukses dan Demokratis*. (2005). <https://www.kutaikartanegara.com/news.php?id=216>
- Jamaludin, T. (2019). Pilkada Langsung: Kisah Sukses dan Problematika. *JPW (Jurnal Politik Walisongo)*, 1(1), 29. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jpw.v1i1.3351>
- Joseph Schumpeter. (2003). *CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY*. the Taylor & Francis e-Library.
- Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia. (2016). *Peraturan Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia nomor 11 Tahun 2016*. Komisi Pemilihan Umum.
- Konisky, D. M., & Ueda, M. (2011). The Effects of Uncontested Elections on Legislator Performance: Uncontested Elections. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 36(2), 199–229. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-9162.2011.00011.x>
- Kotak Kosong Menang Dinilai Bukti Pudarnya Monopoli Parpol*. (n.d.). Retrieved March 21, 2021, from <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20180703201946-32-311220/kotak-kosong-menang-dinilai-bukti-pudarnya-monopoli-parpol>
- Langenohl, A., & Schmäing, S. (2019). Democratic Agnosia: The Reduction of the Political Public Sphere to Elections and Polls in Russia. *Javnost - The Public*, 27(1), 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2020.1675436>
- LAY, C., HANIF, H., RIDWAN, & ROHMAN, N. (2017). The Rise of Uncontested Elections in Indonesia: Case Studies of Pati and Jayapura. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 39(3), 427–448.

- Lloyd, T. (1965). Uncontested Seats in British General Elections, 1852-1910. *The Historical Journal*, 8(2), 260–265.
- Nur Rohim Yunus. (2018). (PDF) *Saat Kotak Kosong Memenangkan Pilkada*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326812416\\_Saat\\_Kotak\\_Kosong\\_Memenangkan\\_Pilkada](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326812416_Saat_Kotak_Kosong_Memenangkan_Pilkada)
- Pilkada Kotak Kosong 2018*. (2018, June 27). Republika Online. <https://republika.co.id/share/payvc8396>
- Pratikno. (2007). Calon Independen, Kualitas Pilkada dan Pelembagaan I Parpol. *JURNAL SOSIAL POLITIK*, 10, 415–440.
- Presiden Republik Indonesia. (2015). *Undang-Undang Nomor 1 tahun 2015*. Kementerian Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia.
- Richard M. Ketchum. (2004). *Pengantar Demokrasi*. Niagara.
- Robert Dahl. (1971). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. Yale University Press.
- Romli, L. (2018). Pilkada Langsung, Calon Tunggal, dan Masa Depan Demokrasi Lokal. *Jurnal Penelitian Politik*, 15(2), 143–160. <https://doi.org/10.14203/jpp.v15i2.757>
- Samples, M. P. M. and J. (2006). The Marketplace of Democracy. *Brookings*. <https://www.brookings.edu/book/the-marketplace-of-democracy/>
- Senalince Mara. (2018). Demokrasi Kotak Kosong (Studi Kasus Pada Pemilukada Kota Jayapura Tahun 2017). *Jurnal Civic Education*, 2.
- Soal Fenomena Kemenangan Kotak Kosong, Ini Kata Saleh | Republika Online*. (2018). <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/pilkada/18/07/01/pb6d15330-soal-fenomena-kemenangan-kotak-kosong-ini-kata-saleh>
- Survei Pilwalkot Makassar, Pejabat Unggul | Republika Online*. (2018). <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/pilkada/18/03/20/p5vvsq365-survei-pilwalkot-makassar-pejabat-unggul>
- Syamsuddin Haris and Friends. (2019). *Menimbang Demokrasi Dua Dekade Reformasi*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Tanjung, M., & Saraswati, R. (2020). CALON TUNGGAL PILKADA KURANGI KUALITAS DEMOKRASI. *Jurnal Yudisial*, 12, 269. <https://doi.org/10.29123/jy.v12i3.319>

## Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).