

# The Democratic Anomaly in 2020 Regional Head Elections (Pilkada) With A Single Candidate in Semarang City

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## Abstract

This research aims to describe the democratic anomaly in the election of a single candidate in the city of Semarang and the deception background factors of the victory of the incumbent in the election of a single candidate in Semarang City in 2020. This study uses a qualitative descriptive design. The research location is in Semarang City. The research focus includes incumbent capabilities in the regional head elections in 2020. The sampling techniques used are purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Research informants encompass the success team of candidate pairs and the people of Semarang City. Research data was collected through interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and documentation study. Data validity was tested using data triangulation and analyzed using interactive qualitative analysis techniques. The study results show that many groups have predicted the existence of a single candidate in the 2020 Semarang City Election. Considering the incumbent's achievements while serving as mayor of Semarang, a single candidate as a democratic anomaly is accepted as a natural thing. Some factors determine the incumbent's victory—first, political capital. The incumbent's ability to bring the City of Semarang to win various awards creates a sense of satisfaction from the public and political parties for his leadership performance while in office. Second, social capital. Incumbents are very popular in Semarang City, so they have high electability. Third, the economic capital. Incumbents benefit more financially, especially when it comes to the issue of campaign costs, to gain support for their victory.

## Keywords:

Capability, Incumbent, Regional Head Election (PILKADA), Single candidate

## INTRODUCTION

The rise of single candidates in the Regional Head Elections (Regional head elections) is allegedly the result of the inability of political parties to nominate pairs of candidates to compete. It is undeniable that modern democracy is dominated by the thoughts of Joseph A. Schumpeter, who explains the democratic method as an institutional arrangement for reaching political decisions where individuals gain power and make decisions through competitive

struggles to get people's votes (Bellamy, 2010).

This phenomenon differs from classical democracy, which is more based on consensus-based decision-making (Issacharoff, 2008). Residents gather to agree on joint action after listening to alternatives and weighing the advantages and disadvantages. James Madison said that classical democracy developed into clashes due to factions and interests, but it was still within reasonable limits and could be recognized and controlled (Schmitter & Karl, 1991).

In the practice of Indonesian democracy, the competition to choose leaders does not always present challengers as an empty

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phenomenon *roof* in the election of village heads before the birth of the Village Law, namely Law Number 6 of 2004 concerning Villages which requires a minimum of 3 (three) candidates for village heads and a maximum of 5 (five) candidates. Thus the rise of a single candidate, which is referred to as an anomaly of democracy, is not new and has only shifted to a broader scope, namely the Regency/City. Several studies have focused on single candidate pairs to the empty box support movement that offers alternative choices (Squire, 1991).

The 2020 Election will be held in 270 regions in Indonesia, covering nine provinces, 224 regencies, and 37 cities, with 28 regencies/cities followed by a single candidate pair (Romli and Efriza, 2021, Safa'at, 2022). The regional head election is interesting not only from the perspective of a single candidate but also from contestants with incumbent status. Eight of the 21 elections in Central Java were won by a single candidate, five of whom were incumbents. The five regions in question cover Semarang City, Sragen, Grobogan, Kebumen, and Boyolali Regencies. The other three incumbent wins over candidate pairs are Klaten, Rembang, and Purbalingga Regencies (KPU Jawa Tengah, 2020). The number of single candidates above shows a significant increase considering that in 2017 Pati Regency was the only and first case in Central Java.

The strength of the incumbent has been a cause for concern of Downs (1957), Dahl (1976), Goldenberg dan Traugott (1984), Keefe dan Ogul (1985), Maisel (1986), Jacobson (1987), dan Squire (1989) explained that incumbents who strongly prevent voters from choosing another candidate (Squire, 1991). In addition, there is a phenomenon of *the wholesale party*, as the study of Cornelis Lay et al. (2017) indicates that there is mutual profit between an incumbent with political parties that show trends of oligarchy and party pragmatism (Schmitter & Karl, 1991). This paper wants to describe the

democratic anomaly in the regional head elections 2020 Semarang City, which is accepted by the people of Semarang City as a natural thing and does not conflict with democratic principles as a novelty.

The incumbent obtained support for a single candidate pair in the 2020 Regional head elections as a form of appreciation for the skills of the incumbent or Mayor of Semarang Hendi Hendrar Prihadi, who was able to excel and win various awards. Among other things, as Head of Innovative Region 2021 for his innovation and breakthrough in building the city of Semarang amid the Covid-19 pandemic (Yulianto, 2021). In other words, a single candidate as an anomaly of democracy cannot be separated from excellent visibility capabilities, experience, organization, and economic resources owned by the incumbent. The issues raised in this research are (1) How democratic anomaly in the election of a single candidate in the city of Semarang in 2020; and (2) What are the factors behind the incumbent's victory in the single candidate Regional head elections in Semarang City in 2020.

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative descriptive design (Bungin, 2015). Qualitative research was chosen because, in addition to providing understanding, explanation, and theory about social behavior, it can also understand democratization at the local level. This approach aims to obtain comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information from the cases studied (Creswell, 2015), namely democratic anomalies in the Regional head elections with a single candidate in Semarang City in 2020. The research was carried out in the city of Semarang, which is holding the 2020 regional election with a single candidate as the only incumbent and won the most votes. The mayoral/deputy mayoral pairs of Semarang, namely Hendi Hendrar Prihadi and Hevearita Gunaryanti, are the mayor and deputy mayor of Semarang 2016-2021. In the

2020 Regional head elections, the PDIP, PKB, Democratic Party, Gerindra Party, Nasdem Party, Golkar Party, PSI, PAN, and PPP will be back. Qualitative research requires focus because focus relates to context. In this study, the context includes place and time, actors or actors, and important events, setting research centered in Semarang City, Central Java Province.

The research focuses on (1) the Implementation of democratic values in regional head elections with a single candidate pair; and (2) The relationship between democracy anomaly and incumbent in the single-candidate regional head election in Semarang City in 2020. In qualitative research, the sampling technique is purposive and *snowball sampling*. Research data was collected through interviews, FGDs, and documentation. In this study, the interviews were conducted in an unstructured or non-standardized manner, namely a free interview in which the researcher did not use interview guidelines that had been arranged systematically and thoroughly but in the form of outlines of research questions according to the research problem. Research informants include incumbent success teams and people with the right to vote. Researchers use a notebook (*field note*) and HP to collect research data and information. The documentation includes the 2020 Central Java KPU vote recapitulation data, journals, articles related to research topics, websites, and the mass media.

The data collected was tested for validity using triangulation (Miles, 1992). Triangulasi ini yang akan dimanfaatkan dalam penelitian ini adalah: (1) The triangulation that will be utilized in this study is (1) data triangulation, by collecting data from time to time and from different people or sources at the research location, namely the success team and the community; and (2) method triangulation, by using different data collection methods concerning the same unit of analysis or research focus. Following the approach used, the

collected data is processed and analyzed using interactive qualitative analysis techniques, where the analysis process follows a cycle, in the sense that the researcher is required to move back and forth during data collection (obtained from the results of interviews and documentation recorded in field notes which consist of two parts, namely the descriptive part and the reflective part). Among reduction activities, presentation in writing, pictures, tables, and graphs can provide an overview of the situation that occurred, inference, and verification (Miles, 1992). The data obtained from the interview results were synchronized with documents originating from the Central Java KPU. After the data was obtained, its validity was tested through FGD. This qualitative data analysis is an ongoing process that requires continuous reflection on the data, asking analytical questions, and writing short notes throughout the research (Creswell, 2015).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Capabilities and Proficiency*

Neo dan Chen (2007) define capability as an organizational attitude, knowledge, skills, and resources used to carry out tasks in a coordinated manner to achieve the expected results. The capability function is to identify current problems, learn experiences from others, and develop policies to achieve effective change (Andara & Muslim, 2019). Furthermore, capability is also interpreted as a collection of specific skills, procedures, and processes by utilizing superior competitive resources (Baker & Sinkula, 2005). In management, a leader's capability becomes one of the determinants of an organization's success in achieving its goals. Ideally, this should also be the primary consideration for the community in selecting leaders through General Elections (Pemilu) and Regional Head Elections (Regional head elections).

During several decades of elections, political parties or coalitions of political parties have tended to vote more nominate candidates who are

electrified but have minimal capabilities, such as celebrities. This statement does not necessarily conclude that celebrities are prohibited from entering the world of politics or do not have the capability because some celebrities have a supportive political and educational background. According to Douglas, in the competition, political parties carry the impression of preferring celebrities with high popularity rather than producing militant political cadres according to their party's ideology. Such pragmatism of political parties is inseparable from society's attitude as consumers of political commodities, which still prioritize popularity, not political capability (Mustika & Arifianto, 2018).

The instant way to get votes by the political parties above has proven to be very effective in gaining victory. However, if allowed to continue, it will harm people's political education and the failure of political parties to carry out their political recruitment function. The presence of candidates from celebrities is often nothing more than vote *getter* without considering the intellect, track record, integrity, and capability in politics. This is, of course, not in line with the function of political parties, which is juridical, namely as a means of political education, as stated by Firmanzah, that the ability or capability of people or candidates is a determining factor for society in choosing political parties or candidates (Wattenberg, 2013). For rational voters, the above matters are the main factors that become a reference for their political choices in general or local elections. Rational voters will assess the performance, track record, and integrity of the candidate or candidates. Rational voters tend to choose candidates considered to positively impact political, economic, social, and cultural developments for the people in their area. In this context, considerations based on religion and ethnicity no longer have a significant influence.

Thus it can be drawn a common thread that candidates' capabilities will

affect their acceptability or electability, especially for rational voters who no longer consider ethnic and religious factors as the main essential elements of their political choices (Gordon and Segura, 1997). The better the capabilities shown by the candidate, the easier it is to influence voter behavior. This capability needs to be transformed into something image or image to get vote support from voters. Therefore, it is necessary to instill a positive image of the candidate because it will help the candidate understand, assess, perceive, and personal identification to decide to vote.

Since there will be no counter-campaign from other candidate pairs in the Semarang City regional head election 2020, since there is only one candidate, this one candidate pair does not need to worry about campaigning. Facts on the ground show that a single candidate is still campaigning because he is aware that in the regional election of Pati Regency, for example, the number of votes in the empty column or empty box reached 25.4%, while the single candidate pair Haryanto and Saiful Arifin by 74.5%. These results provide a lesson to stay alert and be careful not to lose to an empty column because it will be very embarrassing. Therefore, a single candidate pair pays special attention to anticipating this empty box vote.

In addition to displaying the vision and mission, the campaign also displays a positive image of the candidate. The hope is that with a good image, constituents will continue to vote for the candidate, while voters who tend to choose the empty column will choose the candidate. Undeniably, only some have enough attention to the succession of leadership at the local level. Some people have no interest and even ignore the regional head election. For them, regional head election is only a five-year activity that does not have much impact on them. Therefore, the candidate's political campaign must not be only vision and mission but also highlight the candidate's track record and incumbent capabilities to provide information and

influence people's perceptions in voting. This phenomenon differs from people concerned about political developments in their area. The capability of the candidate shown through performance so far will be used as material for evaluation to determine the feasibility of choice and strengthen it to elect candidates for the second term of office.

#### *Single Candidate in a Democratic Perspective*

The spread of a single candidate in the election contestation and Regional Head Elections is interesting analysis material. Regional head elections that include a single candidate winning with the majority can be divided into two categories (Felsenthal and Nurmi, 2018). First, it shows democracy progressing, post-reform moving in a positive direction or towards substantial democracy, which truly embodies the essence of democracy itself, namely from, by, and for the people. The single candidate elected is genuinely what the people want. Second, it shows movement in a negative direction as a form of democratic decline. The above perception arises after observing the development of a single candidate who becomes a trend in some areas. Even with the backing of the majority of the parties with seats in the DPRD, there is a plan to keep the incumbent in office. In other words, it has led to political liberalization by capital owners to carry out wholesale actions for political parties so that they only nominate one pair of candidates.

This, of course, cannot be separated from the phenomena that exist in society. The tendency of the public to vote for a candidate's image is higher than having no image or an empty column. Apart from being caused by habitual factors, the fear of not having a leader if you choose an empty column still colors people's thinking. Of course, this is regrettable because it indicates that the issue of empty columns in the election with a single candidate has not been socialized among the public. The spread of single

candidates in several regions is a complicated phenomenon that cannot be avoided. The issue, though, is the need for all parties to work together to uphold democracy's standards in the face of the rise in single-candidate elections.

Juridically, a single candidate complies with regulations, namely the Constitutional Court Decision Number 100/PUUXIII/2015, concerning the legal reasons for a single candidate in the Regional Head Election. As is well known, the purpose of this Constitutional Court Decision is to fill the legal void regarding the issue of regional head elections, which only raises one pair of candidates until registration with the General Elections Commission (KPU) ends. This condition impacts the Postponement of Regional head elections implementation in several regions due to the non-fulfillment of the requirements for two pairs of candidates as stipulated in Law 8 of 2015 concerning the election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors.

Attempt to break the deadlock on this issue. Then, the Constitutional Court issued Decision Number 100/PUU-XIII/2015 on the judicial review of Law Number 8 of 2015, clearing the way for several regions with a single candidate to continue holding regional elections using ballots with 2 (two) columns, 1 (one) of which contained a photo of the candidate pair and 1 (one) of which was blank and had no pictures. This contrasts with the views of Robert A. Dahl (Manan & IP, 2016), who emphasizes the importance of election elements, namely elected officials through free and fair elections, the right to vote inclusively, and the right to compete for public office.

Elections aim to establish a system of state power that is controlled by the people and has the purpose of regulating the process for a person to be elected as a member of a people's representative body or to become the head of government, a mechanism for displacing or rotating the ruling elites,

political representation, a democratic mechanism for the people to choose trusted representatives who sit in governmental and legislative institutions, and a method of establishing political legitimacy so that political decisions can be made with confidence (Pamungkas, 2011).

The debate over the necessity to present challengers in the Regional head elections contestation becomes urgent if it is related to the competition candidates must go through to obtain political office. Moreover, there is a need to present choices for the community so that they can assess the candidates' vision and mission, which is impossible to fulfill in an election with a single candidate. Empty columns cannot voice the vision and mission because the legal subject does not exist (there are any candidates).

Furthermore Karim (1991) quotes the opinion of Ranney, mentioning the characteristics of democratic elections include: (1) Held regularly; (2) Elections that matter; (3) Freedom to determine candidates; (4) Freedom to know and discuss options; (5) Universal adult suffrage; (6) Equal treatment in voting; (7) Free voter registration; and (8) Correct selection calculation and reporting of results (Tanjung & Saraswati, 2020).

Democracy, according to Lyman Tower Sargent (1987), requires the participation of the populace in decision-making, the existence of equal rights for all citizens, the freedom and independence that are granted, maintained and owned by citizens, the existence of a sufficient representation system, and the existence of an electoral system that ensures adherence to the principle of majority provisions (Sunarso, 2018). Democracy, as a paradox, contains guarantees of freedom and opportunities for competition and conflict, but on the other hand, requires order, stability, and consensus.

In his study of uncontested elections in the House of

*Representatives* in The United States between 1978 and 1984, Squire showed that several variables influenced the likelihood of a single candidate occurring. One of them is the slight possibility of winning against the incumbent. Meanwhile, only a few candidates are interested in running for reasons of personal interest and interest as the only chance to be elected to Congress. The incumbent situation is *uncontested*, not that they will be unchallenged in the next election. A representative facing opponents in every general election is likely to be more accountable to constituents and will work as expected to be re-elected in the next election. Regarding incumbents, it is difficult to challenge being a concern for the democratic process (Squire, 1991).

The term empty box is not found in the Regional head elections Law or the Election Law. This term is used to refer to the opponent of a single candidate. A study by Edward Aspinall and Wawan Mas'udi (2017) explains that there is a tendency for political parties to nominate often candidates from outside their ranks who have the resources to fund their campaigns and are popular at the local level. Hence, they have a chance to win. This is why several political parties choose to jointly carry one candidate pair so that there is only one candidate or single candidate (Aspinall & Mas'Udi, 2017).

#### *Incumbent and the Phenomena of the Single Candidate*

An incumbent is a candidate who served as governor, mayor or deputy governor, or deputy mayor in the previous administration and is running for re-election in the next term (Casas, 2018; Fossati, 2018). This article discusses the mayor or deputy mayor of Semarang City, who later took part in the 2020 Regional head elections. The incumbents are Hendrar Prihadi and Hevearita Gunaryanti Rahayu, who served as Semarang's deputy mayor for the first term from 17 February 2016 to 26 February 2021, respectively, were re-

elected for the term second 26 February to 10 October 2022.

Majority wins for incumbents are common in elections in Indonesia. Sukardi Rinakit said that around 87% of the total regional elections in Indonesia were won by incumbents and local bureaucrats who are generally paired with business people. It is difficult for newcomers to win in regional head elections because of the combined political resources owned by old rulers, bureaucrats, and business people. Apart from funding, other factors that contributed to the victory of local incumbents and bureaucrats were their control over bureaucratic networks, good relations with the military, and lucrative local social networks. Responding to this, the pessimistic camp argues that the hopes for regional head elections to become accelerators of democratic consolidation and good governance have largely not been realized. Most of the funds spent by candidates may only support corrupt practices at the local level, given the small number of regional head salaries compared to the campaign funds they spend. At the same time, elected incumbents and bureaucrats are predicted to only strengthen oligarchic political practices at the local level (Rinakit, 2005).

The practice of oligarchic politics and the phenomenon of a single candidate are closely related, mainly when referring to the role of the political party carrying the candidate. The inability or unwillingness of political parties to submit candidates in regional elections is a form of political party denial of its function, namely leadership selection. Various considerations behind the reasons for not carrying candidates by political parties show the failure of political parties as one of the pillars of democracy. This condition, among others, is triggered by *incumbency advantage* in the form of advantages in visibility, experience, organization, and fundraising capabilities that make it difficult for new candidates to beat him.

*The Personal Branding Strategy of Incumbent*

*Personal branding* is a communication process about personality, abilities, values, skills, behavior, achievements, uniqueness, and how this creates positive perceptions from society. Ultimately, these perceptions can become an identity used by others to remember someone (Srisadono, 2018).

Peter Montoya (2002) describes eight main concepts that become a reference in building something *personal branding* a person, namely: (1) Specialization (*The Law of Specialization*); (2) Leadership (*The Law of Leadership*); (3) Personality (*The Law of Personality*); (4) Difference (*The Law of Distinctiveness*); (6) Unity (*The Law of Unity*); (7) Firmness (*The Law of Persistence*); (8) Good name (*The Law of Goodwill*). A *personal brand* will give better results and last longer if someone behind it is perceived positively (Srisadono, 2018).

*Personal branding* in politics will build the image politics of a political party or candidate. Ideally, political parties or candidates become dominant and control the minds of the people so that they are always remembered and become a reference for the community when faced with a series of political choices (Benoit & Marsh, 2010).

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

*Democratic Anomalies in the Single Candidate Regional head elections in Semarang City in 2020*

Based on Semarang City General Election Commission Decree Number: 1495/PL.02.6-Kpt/3374/KPU-Kot/XII/2020 concerning the Determination of the Vote Count Result Recapitulation for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Semarang 2020, Candidate pair H. Hendrar Prihadi, S.E., M.M, and Ir. Hj. Hevearita Gunaryanti Rahayu, S, Sos won 716,693 votes or around 92%, and the Blank Column was 66,071 votes or 8%.



Diagram 1. Summary of Vote Count Results for the 2020 Semarang Election  
Source: KPU Semarang City

### Translation:

Rekapitulasi Hasil = Result

Based on data in the field, the reasons underlying the people's use of their right to vote are that they have been registered as voters, curiosity, especially for first-time voters, the desire to exercise their right to vote, and the hope that incumbents will be re-elected. The existence of a single candidate for the people of Semarang City in the 2020 Regional head elections is something new. However, this democratic anomaly is accepted, as usual, considering that it is difficult for challengers to compete with incumbents who have had achievements while serving as mayor of Semarang. This capability possessed by the incumbent is the main reason for the absence of a challenging candidate in the 2020 mayoral election. Therefore, in general, the existence of a single candidate is not a problem for the community.

The incumbent's capability is shown by the ability or skill in managing the potential of the City of Semarang so that it has won various awards. Achievements that were successfully made by Hendi-Ita included five new standard regional innovation awards from the central government in 2020,

where the City of Semarang won first place in the City cluster tourism sector. The second place is in the award category for the people's market or traditional market sector. Ranked third in the hotel sector, modern market, and public transportation category. Ranked third is the concept of a new regular order for City clusters. Next grabbed the Cleanest Tourism City Award in Southeast Asia or ASEAN *Clean Tourist City Standard 2020 - 2022*, which will be held in Brunei Darussalam.

The achievements obtained by this incumbent ultimately encouraged the political parties that owned seats in the Semarang City DPRD, namely PDI Perjuangan, Gerindra, Golkar, PKB, Democrats, Nasdem, PSI, PAN, and PKS, to return to support the Hendi-Ita pair in the 2020 regional elections. Meanwhile, the supporting parties are Hanura, PPP, PKPI, PBB, and Berkarya. The support given unanimously to the incumbent pair has resulted in only one pair of candidates in the Regional head elections. This phenomenon breaks the assumption that there is a tendency for political parties, or a combination of political parties solely carry a candidate who is strong electability but minimal



capability. This assumption does not apply in the 2020 Semarang City Regional head elections case. In Firmansyah's opinion, the ability or capability of people or candidates is a determining factor for society in choosing political parties or candidates (Wattenberg, 2013)

The actions taken by the political parties above indeed cannot be claimed as an effort solely to gain victory as a form of party pragmatism in the Regional head elections event, but the results of rational calculations of profit and loss and efforts to get the best leader for Semarang City in the next five years front. Suppose it is associated with the function of political parties, namely the recruitment of cadres. In that case, a single candidate is a democratic anomaly caused by political parties that fail to carry out an internal party cadre.

Regional head elections are a vehicle for the people to elect someone to elect a regional head. Regional head elections directly transforms into a mechanism for replacing or circulating the ruling elite, political representation, a democratic mechanism for the people to choose representatives they can have faith in, a source of political legitimacy so that the authority of the ruling government can be maintained, as well as a tool for the people to learn about politics (Aspinall et. al., 2011; Pamungkas, 2011). The democratic anomaly in the form of a single candidate seems to be a strategy for maintaining power for the incumbent by carrying out wholesale party actions in the DPRD. People who still need to be fully intelligent in politics and have received sufficient political education participate in fostering the emergence of political liberalization by political party elites and capital owners to nominate only one pair of candidates.

The debate on the single candidate phenomenon as an anomaly of democracy associated with the quality of democracy should find a bright spot to answer the problem of democracy in Indonesia. Moreover, the

phenomenon of a single candidate will continue to be present in Regional head elections. The regulation in the form of a Constitutional Court Decision has been recognized as resolving the polemic over the postponement of regional elections in several regions since 2015. However, other efforts are needed to guarantee the emergence of contestations that present more than one candidate as a competition condition that candidates must pass if they want to obtain political office. Providing alternative choices for the community, assessing the candidates' vision and mission, and fulfilling the characteristics of a democratic Regional Head Elections.

The nomination mechanism by the political parties bearing the candidates also needs to be highlighted. At least the absence of competitors in the Regional head elections is alleged to be a form of failure of political parties in carrying out their functions, even though the strength of incumbents influences political parties not to carry other candidates. This is inseparable from the winning, and losing calculations carried out by the bearer party, in this case, the slight possibility of winning. This fact causes political parties to carry no candidates or few candidates, or even no candidates who are interested in running.

The party's reluctance to carry its cadres is also more due to the absence of cadres who can match the incumbent's capabilities. In the end, they form a coalition carrying a single candidate pair who is the incumbent. This is unfavorable for cadres who have high loyalty because political parties prefer candidates outside their party. Political parties are faced with a difficult choice between carrying cadres who are predicted to lose or candidates outside the party who are predicted to win. Reason *performance* of the incumbent's performance which was considered satisfactory, was also a strong reason for the coalition of political parties to bring back the incumbent for a second term in

office. The temporary conclusion to the description above is: *First*, the electability of incumbents that is difficult to penetrate has caused political parties to flock to the same pair of candidates, in this case, incumbents. *Second*, based on profit and loss calculations, incumbents have a more significant potential to win than potential entrants because, in terms of capability, electability, popularity, and network, they are more profitable than nominating candidates who are not incumbents. *Third*, political parties do not have candidates who are considered capable of fighting the incumbent.

The three things above illustrate the tendency towards pragmatism carried out by parties today. When dealing with executive elections, political parties only talk about winning and losing, not ideology or will grass root. This event shows the strengthening of the oligarchy of political parties as indicated by decisions based solely on the issue of winning and losing in the Regional head elections. This means they (political parties) do not want to lose financially, time and energy and prefer to sacrifice the community's interests to have choices. Political parties prefer to make fat coalitions to minimize defeat and show party oligarchy rather than their party ideology.

Most political parties' profit and loss calculations are partially correct, particularly in the regional elections in Semarang City in 2020. The incumbent, Mr. Hendi, is highly electable, capable, and popular, making it difficult for potential new challengers to compete with him, according to numerous surveys conducted by survey institutions locally and nationally. If you look at this phenomenon, the function of political parties needs to be re-evaluated. The reason is that political parties can be considered to have failed to carry out cadre recruitment, so they cannot produce qualified candidates as opponents of incumbents. This has the effect that political parties do not have

capable candidates competing with incumbents.

In the 2020 Semarang City Regional head elections, the incumbent candidate's strength stems from their ability to win over political parties and the local population. In the first period of his term of office, the incumbent proved his best performance as expected, so political parties were reluctant to nominate new candidates, even though this meant that a single candidate would always appear as a form of democratic anomaly. The strength of an incumbent and the sole candidate in the 2020 Semarang City Election is consistent with Squire's findings (1991) regarding the fact that it is challenging to match incumbents for new contestants. Public support for incumbents can be seen from the results vote tally, the single incumbent candidate Hendi-Ita was 91.56 percent or 716,693 votes. His opponent, the empty column, received 8.44 percent or 66,071 votes.

The total number of voters on the Final Voters List (DPT) is 1,174,068 people, and 805,524 voters have the right to vote. The 2020 Regional head elections recorded the highest participation rate, namely 68.62 percent. Regional head elections in 2005 only amounted to 66 percent; in 2010, it was 60 percent, and in 2015 it was 65 percent. This high turnout rate is extraordinary because the Regional head elections was held amid the co-19 pandemic (Purbaya, 2020). When viewed from the number of valid and invalid votes, as many as 782,764 valid votes and 22,760 invalid votes were recorded. Invalid votes include spoiled or not punched by voters, tampered with, and not punched.

#### *The Background Factors of The Incumbent's Victory in the Single Candidate Regional Election in Semarang City in 2020*

The acquisition of a significant number of votes for a single candidate in the 2020 Semarang City Election compared to an empty box shows the incumbent's high capability and electability. The incumbent's capability is

reflected through the policies during his reign, the achievements of development programs, and the financial aspect's readiness, which found momentum in the 2020 Regional head elections. Support from all political parties in the Semarang City DPRD is seen as the pragmatism of political parties not to take the risk of supporting a candidate who has the potential to lose but also proves to be substantial public *truth* (public trust) on the incumbent's performance.

Apart from the conditions above, the existence of this single candidate is also very unfortunate for the community because the community does not have choices. If there is more than one candidate, voters will have the opportunity to be able to compare the vision and mission being carried out. Furthermore, the community can choose the suitability of the vision and mission offered. The existence of this single candidate is alleged to be one of the factors for the low political participation of the people in general elections and local elections, and they even tend to be apathetic. The absence of an alternative also encourages people to go white group (abstentions). 22,760 invalid votes represent this phenomenon as material for evaluation in the upcoming Regional head elections. The acquisition of 66,071 empty squares indicates that some people do not vote for incumbents.

This is in line with the opinion of Lyman Tower Sargent (1987), who explains the importance of involving the community or citizens in making political decisions, especially in the mayoral election in the city of Semarang (Sunarso, 2018). Democracy, as a paradox, contains guarantees of freedom and opportunities for competition and conflict, but on the other hand, requires order, stability, and consensus. In the case of the Regional head elections in Semarang City, the Regional head elections competition offered a choice of candidates and empty columns as a choice for people who did not vote for a

single candidate. From a formal juridical point of view, the implementation of Regional head elections with a single candidate follows regulations. However, in terms of democracy, this is contrary to the views of Robert A. Dahl (Manan & IP, 2016) who emphasizes the importance of the elements of elections, namely officials who are elected through free elections. and fair, the right to vote in an inclusive manner, as well as the right to compete for public office. Robert A. Dahl's view emphasized that there should be more than one candidate, and it would be inappropriate if the candidate were replaced with an empty column or box.

The emergence of a single candidate also provides an evaluation of the performance of political parties, which have so far been considered to have contributed to the non-functioning of political parties. On the other hand, political parties argue that if the party does not have a candidate who can match the capabilities of the incumbent, then there is nothing wrong with jointly carrying a single candidate pair who is the incumbent. The decision taken by this political party is correct as long as the incumbent's performance is considered satisfactory so that he has the opportunity to hold two terms of office.

Another interesting fact related to people's political participation in the 2020 Semarang City Regional head elections is that the average first-time voter still needs to gain sufficient knowledge regarding the mayoral candidate. The decision to vote tends to be influenced by family choices, even being the primary consideration for their right to vote. The limited knowledge and understanding of novice voters have made this segment a target for political parties to be contested at every election or local election. In the 2020 Semarang City Regional head elections, it can be said that political parties carrying a single candidate did not mobilize significant resources to win the

Candidates, because, apart from not facing an opponent, the capabilities of the candidates they carried were complicated for new challengers to match. It is believed that the achievements of incumbents are also the primary consideration for the people in choosing.

As previously stated, the people of Semarang City have predicted the existence of this single candidate. The contest by presenting one pair of candidates has been acceptable to the public so far. This is why there is no turmoil in the community as in other regions, which also carry out regional elections with a single candidate, such as in Pati Regency, which gave rise to the empty box movement. The victory of the Hendi-Ita pair by 92 percent and the empty box by 8 percent shows that the public still wants the incumbent to continue his leadership for the next five years..

The phenomenon of a single candidate as a result of joint actions supporting candidate pairs in several regions confirms the opinion of Edward Aspinal and Wawan Mas'udi (2017) that political parties tend to nominate candidates outside their ranks who have the resources to fund their campaigns and popular at the local level, so it has a chance to win. This is why several political parties choose to jointly carry one candidate pair so that there is only one candidate or single candidate.

For the people, the wholesale party action as above can be accepted by some people, as long as the capabilities of the candidate pair are good. However, some other people think the action is to win as a form of party pragmatism in the Regional head elections event. Public, the city of Semarang does not have a problem with the presence of a single candidate in the 2020 Pilwakot. This shows that there is conformity with the opinion Firmanzah, that the ability or capability of people or candidates is a determining factor for society in choosing political parties or candidates (Handayani, 2014). The people's rational

choice shows that people's awareness is improving, where there has been a desire to participate and participate in making political decisions, in this case choosing political officials in their area.

Thus the factors underlying the incumbent's victory are: *First*, political capital (*political capital*). The incumbent's abilities have succeeded in obtaining various awards so that the public is satisfied with the performance of the incumbent's leadership while in the office while at the same time inviting the support of the supporting political party elite. In 2020 alone, the Semarang City Government bought five new typical regional innovation awards from the central government. Semarang City won first prize in the City cluster tourism sector. As for the award for the people's market or traditional market sector, Semarang City won second place. On the other hand, for the hotel, modern market, and public transportation sectors, the new regular order proposed by the City of Semarang won third place for the City cluster. In the same year, the City of Semarang also received Cleanest Tourist City Award in Southeast Asia won by the City of Semarang in the ASEAN Tourism Forum as the ASEAN Clean Tourist City Standard 2020 - 2022, which was held in Brunei Darussalam.

*Second*, social capital (*social capital*), the incumbent, is viral in Semarang. This is supported by the use of social media <https://laporhendi.semarangkota.go.id/>, which includes: Twitter P3M, Instagram Lapor Hendi, Facebook Lapor Hendi, or if in an emergency, you can call the call center 112. Lapor Hendi or his personal social media account, now via WhatsApp short message with the number 081215000512. Hendi's presence on social media platforms has proven to be able to reach all segments of voters.

*Third*, economic capital (*economic capital*). Because of his electability, apart from the absence of challengers in the 2020 Regional head elections, it can be said that this incumbent will benefit more financially because the campaign

costs are not too much to gain support for his victory.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that the democratic anomaly in the single candidate Regional head elections in Semarang City in 2020 occurred for the first time in the city of Semarang, but looking at the practice of democracy in Indonesia, the competition to elect leaders does not always present challengers as an empty phenomenon *roof* in village head elections. Thus the rise of a single candidate referred to as an anomaly of democracy, is not new and has only shifted to a broader scope, namely the Regency/City. Even this phenomenon is not disputed by most of the people of Semarang City, and it is just that there is hope from the people that in the next election, there will be more than one pair of candidates so that people are given choices as competition to get a political office. Regional head elections contests with a single candidate with the majority winning can be assumed from two sides. The first shows that post-reform democracy is moving in a positive direction towards substantial democracy, which is truly the embodiment of, by, and for the people. This is based on acquiring a major vote in the Regional head elections event. In other words, the single candidate elected does have the capability and electability and is genuinely wanted by the people. Second, it shows movement in a negative direction as a form of democratic decline. *Trend*, a single candidate, can be signaled as a strategy to maintain power for the incumbent with the support of most parties that have seats in the DPRD. A single candidate is more of a form of political liberalization carried out by capital owners to carry out wholesale actions for political parties to allow only one pair of candidates to pass. Democratic anomaly in the election of a single

candidate in the city of Semarang in 2020 because of: *First*, the electability of incumbents that is difficult to penetrate has caused political parties to flock to the same pair of candidates, in this case, incumbents. *Second*, political parties do not have candidates deemed capable of running against incumbents. *Third*, based on profit and loss calculations, incumbents have a more significant potential to win than prospective entrants because, in terms of popularity and network, it is more profitable than carrying out candidates who are not incumbents. The factors that determine the incumbent's victory are: *First*, political capital (*political capital*). *Second*, social capital (*social capital*), the incumbent, is viral in Semarang. *Third*, economic capital (*economic capital*). Because of his electability, apart from the absence of challengers in the 2020 Regional head elections, it can be said that this incumbent will benefit more financially because the campaign costs are not too much in order to gain support for his victory.

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