

POLITICAL EDUCATION FOR THE COMMUNITY IN PREVENTING MONEY POLITICS DURING THE 2024 GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN KERTAHARJA VILLAGE, KRAMAT DISTRICT, TEGAL REGENCY

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to conduct an analysis and understand the implications of money politics practices during the 2024 General Election campaign in Kertaharja Village, Kramat District, Tegal Regency. The research problem is how money politics practices during the 2024 General Election campaign in Kertaharja Village, Kramat District, Tegal Regency affect the community. A qualitative research approach was chosen for this study. Data sources were obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings of this research are as follows: (1) The community receives money, t-shirts, or other forms of goods due to economic needs and limited political literacy. (2) The implications of money politics include not only producing corrupt leaders but also leaders who tend to prioritize their own groups, individuals, or parties, neglecting public aspirations and violating the principles of democratic, fair, and effective and efficient election management. (3) The community considers money politics as something normal during elections, leading to its increasing spread, scale, and organization. To maintain the quality of democracy and prevent degradation, it is important to implement political education and initiatives such as village declarations against money politics. Political education aims to build moral values and individual political orientation, as well as encourage active public participation in the country's political life.

Keywords: *Money Politic, Political Education, General Election*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a highly diverse country, consisting of various ethnicities, races, religions, and more. This diversity is a blessing from God Almighty that should be appreciated. Therefore, the application of the Mostesque concept is very suitable in the procedural election of leaders in Indonesia, specifically the Trias Politica, which consists of three elements that control power, policy, and government oversight: the executive institution as the government implementer, the legislative body responsible for oversight and constitution-making, and the judiciary as the enforcer of the constitution (Fauzi, 2019:).

The democratic concept with sovereignty in the hands of the people through the General Election process upholds the values of local wisdom from each culture and the state ideology of Pancasila. This method is considered fairer and more humane, providing an opportunity for all layers of Indonesian society to choose their leaders or representatives who will create and implement policies. The General Election is a process involving citizen participation in government. In this process, citizens play an active role in determining who will control the government for a specific period. This process exemplifies the principle of popular sovereignty, where the people hold the authority to decide who wields power and governs their society. Sovereignty fundamentally resides with the people, although they delegate some of it to their rulers. Rulers derive legitimacy to govern and exercise authority under the condition that they do not infringe upon the interests of the people who have entrusted them with a portion of their sovereignty (Pahlevi & Amr Robbins, 2020:142).

The General Election, abbreviated as election, is a process in a democratic country where the public directly elects and determines representatives and leaders according to their aspirations or personal choices to represent them in the executive and legislative bodies. The essence of general election is the democratic festivity for all Indonesian people, using the principles of Luber and Jurdil, which are acronyms for direct, general, free, secret, sincere, and equitable. The existence of general election

provides the public with the opportunity to choose and select candidates for leaders or representatives according to their hopes and aspirations. The principles of general election ensure that citizens are not pressured or intimidated in choosing their leaders or representatives according to their preferences. General election is a relevant step for the public to express their love for the country by choosing their leaders through specific political parties (Hidayat, 2020:63-640)

Generally, money politics (political money) practices can involve giving money and goods, such as basic necessities, to voters. In addition, money politics can also include the development of facilities during the campaign period. Such practices can undermine the quality of the democratic system. Valeria Brusco, Marcelo Nazareno, and Susan C. Stokes define that vote-buying through money politics, whether in the form of money or goods, is an action taken by candidates or political parties. In this context, it is clear that money politics involves giving money and goods to voters by political parties or individuals in exchange for their votes (Chandra, 2020:55).

Money politics is a phenomenon that has long been a concern in the context of democracy, especially during the General Election process. This practice not only undermines the integrity of democracy but also negatively impacts the political choices of the public. This research aims to delve into and analyze the impact of money politics on the political choices of the community. In this case, the research background will focus on money politics practices and their influence on the political choices of the community in Kertaharja Village, Kramat District, Tegal Regency.

Kertaharja Village is located in Kramat District, Tegal Regency. During the campaign and the 2024 General Election, there were many instances of money politics. This is usually carried out by giving money or what is referred to by the public as "dawn attacks" and providing goods such as t-shirts, basic necessities, lighters, and cigarettes. The people who receive money or goods are usually recorded first, including their names, Identity Numbers (NIK), and phone numbers, by success teams, political parties, or legislative candidates at the level of DPRD Kabupaten/Kota, DPRD Province, DPR RI, or Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates. This practice clearly violates the Luber and Jurdil principles in the implementation of general election to determine representatives for policy-making in the Kramat, Suradadi, and Warureja electoral districts, as well as the Tegal Regency, Tegal City, and Brebes Regency electoral districts. Based on findings, observations, and interviews with Mr. Tasdik, Mr. Kotarto, Mrs. Mudilah, Mrs. Faizhatul Amalia, Mr. Makmur, Mr. Daryo, Mr. Casmadi, Mr. Suwitno, Mrs. Bawon Taryunah, Mrs. Warningsih, Mrs. Chodijah, and Mr. Ahmad Faizin in Kertaharja Village, Kramat District, Tegal Regency, clear violations of the 2024 election campaign period are evident, namely:

- a. **Money:** The distribution of money has become normalized in the community. The amount of money given by one of the success teams, party cadres, or legislative candidates to the people of Kertaharja Village, Kramat District, Tegal Regency varies greatly, ranging from approximately IDR 25,000 to IDR 50,000.
- b. **Goods:** The practice of money politics during the 2024 General Election campaign, especially in Kertaharja Village, Kramat District, Tegal Regency, involves not only giving money but also providing goods such as t-shirts and basic necessities

In the Republic of Indonesia's Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, Article 280, Paragraph (1), point (j) explicitly states that money politics is prohibited. Therefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing the practice of money politics and its impact on political choices during the 2024 General Election campaign in Kertaharja Village, Kramat District, Tegal Regency. This analysis aims to provide evaluation and awareness for the community, legislative candidates, the Tegal Regency KPU (General Elections Commission), the Tegal Regency BAWASLU (Election Supervisory Board), the government, and other relevant institutions in efforts to uphold fair, honest, relevant, and comprehensive elections. The goal is to produce high-quality, integrity-driven elections that meet the expectations and aspirations of the community down to the grassroots level.

However, it is often overlooked that corruption is frequently rooted in the high political costs required to secure the most votes during campaign periods for legislative and executive elections, usually through bribery practices. Anti-corruption strategies are generally viewed from a policy perspective. Nevertheless, the practice of money politics involving bribery during the election process can lead to the election of corrupt leaders. Money politics is considered a practice that can trigger political corruption and is often referred to as the "mother of all corruption" in Indonesia (Aspinall & Sukmajati, 2015). This practice is a major cause of leaders who prioritize personal and group interests over public welfare. The consequence of money politics is the high political costs incurred during the election process. Candidates elected through bribery and money politics are more likely to focus on recovering their expenses rather than addressing the needs of the people. According to Sarah Brich (2009), political

corruption in elections often occurs through money politics, which can lead to the election of unsuitable winners. Consequently, the resulting government becomes less representative and accountable because the elected politicians may not prioritize public interests, thereby decreasing public trust. Additionally, political corruption can spur corruption in other sectors.

2. METHODOLOGY

The method employed in this research is a qualitative approach, which is aimed at gathering information and facts about phenomena occurring in society. This approach emphasizes a naturalistic perspective and direct field involvement to understand the sociological, empirical, and psychological aspects of the informants. The key elements of this research are the researcher, data collection techniques using triangulation, and the focus on generalization in the research findings. Qualitative research is relatively new and post-positivist, seeking to explore and investigate comprehensively with data in the form of relevant words according to natural or naturalistic situations (Sugiyono, 2013).

The reason for using a qualitative approach in this research is first, because the issue being studied involves delving into and analyzing political education in preventing money politics practices during the 2024 General Election campaign in Kertaharja Village, Kramat District, Tegal Regency. Second, the qualitative approach shows a more exclusive interaction between the researcher and the informants. Through this research, the researcher observes the behavior and psychological and sociological conditions of the informants in the field in a natural and direct manner. Third, the approach used as an instrument in qualitative analysis is the analyst itself, making this analytical technique suitable for this research due to its high adaptability, which allows the researcher to adjust to changing conditions encountered in the analysis.

3. RESULT

3.1. Implications of Money Politics on Public Political Choices During the 2024 General Election Campaign in Kertaharja Village, Kramat District, Tegal Regency

General Elections are an essential element in a democratic state. They are used to select executive or legislative leaders, and are preceded by the registration of legislative or executive candidates, candidate selection, and the campaign period. The campaign is a public forum used to introduce, promote, and review the vision, mission, and ideas of the candidates. Additionally, the campaign serves as a tool for conveying hopes and aspirations to the candidates, which will then be realized once they are in office (Corputty, 2019:111).

Voter behavior involves an individual's decision or determination to vote or not. Woshinsky identifies two variables that determine voter behavior: the first is the objective variable, which includes ethnicity, race, tribe, place of residence, etc. The second variable pertains to subjective aspects related to the voter's personal perspective or viewpoint. Therefore, a voter in a General Election functions as a bridge between life experiences and understanding related to their choices in the election (Woshinsky, 2008:132).

Voter behavior can be classified into three main approaches: the sociological approach, the party-based approach, and the rationality approach (Heywood, 2007:266).

a. Sociological Approach

Voter behavior is determined based on the subjectivity of voters regarding the homogeneity of race, ethnicity, religion, social group, etc. Voters tend to favor candidates from the same group. Therefore, the effectiveness of the campaign is less pronounced because voters have already made their choices based on sociological factors. In the sociological context, voters cannot be separated from affiliations based on region, local culture, religious beliefs, or other sociological factors.

b. Party-Based Approach

Voter behavior is determined based on the political party affiliation they prefer. Voters are more likely to be fanatical about their party rather than critically assessing the candidates.

c. Rationality Approach

In the context of the rationality approach, voter behavior tends to be more selective in choosing their leaders. Thus, voters will be more critical rather than fanatical.

The further impact on society is also characterized by pragmatism and materialism, namely expecting vote-buying or money politics. Society tends to be apathetic towards the government's conditions and more focused on their economic lives. This is because their economic livelihoods are lacking, leading them to vote based on the size of money, goods, or certain facilities received. The practice of money politics is commonly carried out among economically disadvantaged communities, particularly in rural areas (Nurjalaiha, 2022:43).

The practice of money politics begins with community members being recorded by one of the campaign teams of a particular legislative candidate. During the campaign period, these individuals are given money in a gathering organized by the candidate, along with socialization, money, t-shirts, or other goods. Another method involves directly giving money or basic necessities to individuals by a specific campaign team, with varying amounts. This indicates that the intervention of candidates in certain political parties comes in various forms, aimed at coercing the community's political choices through capitalism and pragmatism. Political parties, which are inherently meant to produce dedicated leaders with new ideas and aspirations through mass and structured cadre training, are now used as vehicles for aspiring leaders to gain power through money politics.

Political choice factors indicate that various elements influence voters' decisions in choosing candidates or political parties. These factors include socio-demographic aspects such as age, education, and economic status, which shape political views and voter preferences. For instance, research suggests that higher levels of education are often associated with more progressive political attitudes, while economic background can influence preferences towards specific economic or social policies (Highton, 2012:15).

In addition to socio-demographic factors, psychological factors also play a crucial role in political choice. Personal values, ideologies, and emotional affiliations towards candidates or parties can affect voter decisions. Studies show that voters often choose based on shared values or ideologies with candidates, although these decisions may be influenced by emotions or personal experiences (Gidron & Hall, 2017:50).

Campaign regulations are enshrined in Law No. 7 of 2017, which emphasizes that campaigns are a means to introduce and affirm the vision and mission of candidates. Moreover, campaigns can serve as a medium for the public to understand politics on a national and idealistic level. In the age of technological disruption, campaigns are conducted through social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc., to engage Generation Z and Millennials in learning about candidates (Corputty, 2019:112).

John Stuart Mill argued that the importance of political parties lies in placing leaders in legislative or executive positions who will bring the aspirations and hopes of the community. To be effective and organized, political parties must gather all types of community aspirations, ideologies, and ideas. Political parties play a strategic role as a holistic and comprehensive connection between society and government (Mill, 2005). However, in the current era, political parties are perceived as having less significance in the eyes of the public. They are seen merely as tools for power legacy by certain political elites or oligarchies. This factor leads to a degradation of public trust in political parties. Ideally, political parties should be tools for cadre training, ideological strengthening, and symbols of public hope, but they are eroded by the interests of those with capital, resulting in transactional, pragmatic, and capitalistic policies without regard to the quality and public interests (Kodiyat MS, 2019:2-3).

In Kertaharja Village, some residents are unaware of the impact of money politics, which can damage democratic processes and their own aspirations. The empirical effects of money politics can stifle the voices of the people regarding their hopes, ideas, and suggestions. Moreover, money politics can lead to the election of corrupt and untrustworthy officials. This issue seems not to be fully recognized by the public comprehensively; they focus only on economic needs. The community views money politics as part of the democratic festivity, where candidates distribute money and goods. According to Marsadinda et al. (2023:4-6), direct money politics during campaigns harms the nation, as legislators involved in money politics often use government funds under the guise of personal assistance. This is detrimental to both the public and the state because it involves campaigning and money politics using state budgets. Money politics can be categorized into two types:

- a. **Cash Payments:** This has become a deeply rooted practice in some elections. Providing money or other goods is a tactic used by legislative candidates to win voters' hearts.

- b. **Public Facility Development:** This involves helping to build public facilities such as roads, mosques, prayer rooms, or other community buildings. This is often done using state funds, either as grants or aspirations, which are then attributed to the candidate during the campaign to attract public attention.

Money politics indirectly diminishes the value and spirit of democracy in national and state life. The factors influencing money politics are (Marsadinda et al., 2023:6):

- a. **Poverty:** The majority of those affected by money politics are those living in poverty. This factor leads people to think materialistically and sell their votes for money to meet their needs.
- b. **Lack of Awareness Regarding Money Politics:** Low-quality human resources contribute to the degradation of democracy. The public has minimal knowledge of political education related to nationality, making them easy to exploit for the power interests of political elites.
- c. **Culture:** Money and all forms of gifts are viewed as blessings and sustenance that should be appreciated, which is a common mindset among people.

Constitutionally, money politics is also prohibited in Indonesia. This is stated in Article 84 of Law No. 10 of 2010 and Law No. 32 of 2004, which states that anyone who intentionally gives or promises money to voters in an election contest will be punished with a minimum of 1 month and a maximum of 12 months in prison or a fine of at least Rp.1,000,000 (one million rupiahs) and up to Rp.10,000,000 (ten million rupiahs). These regulations should bind and cover the public to refrain from engaging in money politics, but such practices continue to occur and become entrenched. There needs to be awareness among the public, candidates for legislative and executive positions, and firmness from the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) to take action and enforce the constitution against those practicing money politics, thereby ensuring a fair, honest, relevant, and comprehensive election. This will result in high-quality, integrative elections that align with the hopes and aspirations of the public, including grassroots levels (Wahidah, 2022:19).

Money politics frequently occurs during elections. In summary, money politics causes people to adopt a pragmatic approach to executive or legislative power. Money politics is an unfair method because it can only be used by candidates with substantial capital, leading to collaboration between candidates and capitalists or oligarchs. This often results in corruption within executive or legislative governments. Candidates based on reform, ideas, and innovation are often defeated by those with unlimited financial resources (Sjafrina, 2019:44).

Money politics not only results in corrupt leaders but also leaders who prioritize their own groups, individuals, or parties. This is dangerous because public aspirations will be ignored or deemed worthless. This violates the principles of election administration, which include achieving democratic governance, fair elections, and effective and efficient electoral processes (Atmojo & Pratiwi, 2022:109).

To maintain the quality of democracy and prevent its degradation, there needs to be political education or village movements against money politics. Political education aims to develop moral values and political orientation within individuals. It functions to encourage active public participation as responsible citizens in the political life of the country (Kantaprawira, 2006).

According to Kartono (1996), political socialization and political education have fundamental differences. Political socialization is the process of shaping an individual's political views through social interaction, while political education aims to change and enhance understanding and practice of politics. Political education focuses on instilling ethical values in politics so that people not only understand but also apply political principles in everyday life.

Political education can be conducted proactively and preventive approaches. Preemptive political education is an introductory step taken to prevent the emergence of undesirable issues that may have long-term effects on society or individuals. This effort aims to instill norms of good behavior in political life (Alam, 2018). Such movements and declarations aim to form village teams that provide positive political education to the community, especially regarding vote-buying or money politics. The community is given an understanding of the imbalance in power relations between candidates and voters, which can negatively impact and weaken their position in improving their local situation. Addressing clientelism, vote-buying, and money politics is done through the declaration of a Village Anti-Money Politics, as previously explained. This effort is part of the preemptive approach, involving literacy or political education to help the public understand the meaning of the democratic process and position themselves as good citizens. In this regard, the involvement of election oversight institutions, such as Bawaslu Tegal

Regency, Panwaslu Kramat District, and PKD Kertaharja, along with the encouragement of the Village Government in political education, is essential.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings using qualitative methods and the discussion above, it can be concluded that:

- a. The practice of money politics in Kertaharja Village, such as cash handouts and the development of public facilities using government funds presented as personal donations, has altered the dynamics of the general election. Money politics not only undermines democratic integrity but also disregards the aspirations and hopes of the community. The community, more focused on immediate economic needs, often views money politics as part of the democratic process, even though it potentially produces corrupt and untrustworthy officials. Money politics contributes to the erosion of democratic values and spirit, creating an unfair electoral system. This exacerbates corruption issues and neglects fundamental electoral principles such as democratic governance, justice, and effectiveness.
- b. Political parties, which should function to filter and channel public aspirations and produce quality leaders, often become vehicles for power for political elites through money politics. This reduces public trust in political parties, turning them into tools for personal or group interests.
- c. To address these issues and improve democratic quality, effective political education is crucial. Political education can be conducted through pre-emptive and preventive approaches to build awareness and ethical values among the public. Good political education can reduce money politics practices and strengthen responsible political participation.
- d. Implementing political education and anti-money politics initiatives requires active involvement from various parties, including election oversight bodies (Bawaslu), Panwaslu, PKD, and support from the Village Government. This collaboration is expected to create a more fair, honest, and community-aligned general election.

This conclusion emphasizes that money politics has significant negative effects on the quality of democracy and the integrity of elections. Therefore, efforts to enhance political education and involve all stakeholders are crucial to ensuring clean and fair elections.

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