

## **PRACTICE OF MONEY POLITICS IN THE ELECTION OF LOCAL HEADS: A CASE STUDY OF THE ELECTION IN BANDA ACEH CITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Banda Aceh regional election held on November 27, 2024, raises its own problems because of the four candidates competing, only one candidate is believed not to use illegal methods, aka money politics. The other three candidates were suspected by many of using money politics to gain the majority of votes. The votes achieved by the three candidate pairs in Banda Aceh City were strongly influenced by money or other forms of assistance so as to increase voters' votes for these candidates. This type of research is empirical research or qualitative research where data is obtained from interviews with respondents.

The results showed that the influence of money politics in the Banda Aceh regional elections in 2024 was not significant. Candidates who disburse a lot of budget are not able to influence the community with the large budget prepared. People took the money given by the candidate, but not all of them voted for the candidate who practiced money politics.

The operational form of money politics in the Banda Aceh regional election in 2024 was by giving a sum of money directly or through transfers to voters' accounts on quiet week days and nights. The suggestions from this research are that Pilkada Supervisors (Panwaslih) are recruited not from political party support and money politics perpetrators can be disqualified even though they are not structured, massive and systematic.

**Keywords:** *Money Politics, LOCAL HEADS, Banda Aceh*

## BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The phenomenon of money *politics* in every democratic party is difficult to stem. Basically, the main purpose of prohibiting money politics is to maintain democratic justice, namely so that every person or candidate who contests, in addition to efficiency goals, also prevents corrupt behavior if they are elected in the future. Another goal is to maintain the quality of the democratic party so that there is no act of prioritizing personal and group interests over the public interest. Another goal is to avoid apathy and skepticism towards the election process.<sup>1</sup>

In practice, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between *money politics* and *cost politics* because both provide valuable goods or materials. Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Pilkada / Elections as regulated in Article 187A explains:

"Every person who intentionally commits an unlawful act of promising or giving money or other material as a reward to an Indonesian citizen either directly or indirectly to influence a Voter not to exercise the right to vote, to exercise the right to vote in a certain way so that the vote becomes invalid, to vote for a certain candidate, or not to vote for a certain candidate as referred to in Article 73 paragraph (4) shall be punished with imprisonment.

a minimum of 36 months or a maximum of 72 months and a fine of not less than IDR 200,000,000.00 and not more than IDR 1,000,000,000.00".

In paragraph (2) it is emphasized, "The same punishment is applied to voters who deliberately commit unlawful acts of receiving gifts or promises as referred to in paragraph (1)."

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<sup>1</sup> Aminuddin and Intan Kumalasari, "Money Politics Prohibition in Islam and Prevention in the 2024 Election Party", Dharmawangsa University Journal, Volume 18, Number 3: 643-656 July 2024| ISSN (P): 1829-7463 | ISSN (E): 2716-3083, pp. 645.

Some important things that need to be broken *down* in Article 187A above include:

(a) the perpetrator of money politics is "every person"; (b) intentionally; (c) unlawfully; (d) promising; (e) giving money; (f) other materials; (g) in return; (h) directly or indirectly; (i) to influence Voters. The provision of money or other materials is aimed at:

(a) not to exercise their voting rights; (b) to exercise their voting rights in a certain way so that the votes are invalid; (c) to vote for certain candidates; (d) not to vote for certain candidates. If seen empirically, points c and d often occur in the practice of money politics in every democratic event.

The definition of "every person" is anyone who is a legal subject. Legal subjects are holders of rights and obligations. In elections, the legal subject of *person* is those who have the right to vote, i.e. 17 years old or married. The notion of "intentionally" or *dolus* can be interpreted in three ways:

(1) intentionality in the nature of purpose (intending to achieve the result which is the main reason for the threat; (2) intentionality in the sense of certainty, i.e. the perpetrator with his action does not aim to achieve the result which is the basis of the delict, but he knows very well that the result will certainly follow the action; (3) intentionality in the sense of possibility, which occurs when in the mind of the perpetrator there is only a shadow of a possibility that the relevant result will occur without being intended.

Another element of intentionality is *culpa*, which is an error resulting from a lack of care, so that something accidentally happens.

Then the notion of "against the law" or PMH in criminal law can be interpreted as a prohibition or threat stipulated in the law. In this case, the threat or prohibition is regulated in Article 187A of Law Number 10 Year 2016. Another criminal element in the Pilkada Law is "promising", which is expressing willingness or ability to do something. Another element is "giving money", i.e. giving a certain amount of money to the Voter. Then the meaning of "other materials" is all valuable items, such as prayer mats, basic necessities, *mukena*, and others.

Furthermore, "in return" means wages as a reward for services. Then the definition of "directly or indirectly" is a candidate or success team or volunteer who directly hands over a sum of money or other material.<sup>2</sup>

Money politics in the Banda Aceh regional elections, especially in the lead-up to the November 27 election, was quite pronounced. On the night of the election, the Banda Aceh City Election Supervisor arrested five people suspected of being from one of the candidate teams giving money to voters at a cafe in Banda Aceh City.<sup>3</sup>

According to one of the administrators of the Aceh Civil Coalition of Pilkada Monitors (KSPP), Destika Gilang revealed, money politics that occurred in the Banda Aceh Pilkada in 2024 used a new scheme, the use of transfers through bank accounts and e-money was intensively carried out in addition to giving directly and also in the form of goods.

"The dawn attack at dawn on the day of the election is the trend of the times, the trend is now using electronic money. So the voter whose name has been recorded just comes to the counter and takes the money there, as well as the basic necessities."<sup>4</sup>

In the 2024 Banda Aceh elections, many parties considered that there was massive money politics. This illegal practice was carried out before voting day or on the day of the election.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with M. Yusuf Al-Qardhaw, former Head of the Legal and Enforcement Division of the Banda Aceh City Bawaslu for the 2018-2023 period on January 2, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Teuku Muhammad Valdy Arief, "5 People Occurred OTT Money Politics in Banda Aceh", accessed via: <https://regional.kompas.com> on January 3, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Fitri Juliana, "There is Money Politics in Banda Aceh City Election", accessed via: <https://digdata.id> on January 2, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Based on the description above, it is interesting to conduct research to answer these issues with the formulation of whether money politics in the Banda Aceh regional election in 2024 influenced the constituents to vote and how the operational form of money politics in the Banda Aceh regional election in 2024?

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses empirical research methods or *qualitative research*. Researchers conducted direct interviews with respondents who knew the phenomenon of money politics in the 2024 regional elections in Banda Aceh City. The data that has been obtained from the research results will be processed to be analyzed qualitatively. concept of qualitative method is to explain everything about the topic discussed by producing descriptive analysis data. Descriptive analysis is to pay attention to the problems studied and then compiled, explained and analyzed in accordance with the facts that occur in the field.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The influence and operational forms of money politics in the 2024 Banda Aceh regional election The Banda Aceh municipal elections in 2024 will be held simultaneously throughout Indonesia. The 2024 elections will be held on November 27, 2024. This 2024 election is a simultaneous contestation held in 38 provinces and 416 regencies and 98 cities.<sup>6</sup> Since direct elections were implemented in 2007, the act of money politics carried out by contestants has been difficult to stem. This not only undermines the democratic order, but also produces unqualified regional heads.

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<sup>5</sup> Fitri Juliana, *Loc.Cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Arum Sutrisna Putri, List of Regencies and Cities in Indonesia, accessed via: <https://www.kompas.com> on January 4, 2025.

The Banda Aceh election was followed by four candidates, namely: 1. Illiza Sa'duddin Djamal - Afdhal Khalilullah; 2. Zainal Abidin - Mulia Rahman; 3. Aminullah Usman - Isnaini; and 4. Irwan Djohan - Khairul Amal.

The four candidates above were only one candidate who was not found to have practiced money politics. This is because candidate number 2 (Zainal Abidin - Mulia Rahman) did not have a relative political boarding house.

"From the beginning, the candidate we endorsed and supported had no capital, but because they were good people, I supported them."<sup>7</sup> The same thing was emphasized by the former support team (success team) 02 (Zainal Abidin - Mulia Rahman) that he no longer supported the candidate after seeing that he had no capital to fund the election process.

"Initially, I and hundreds of my members supported candidate 02 from the independent route, but because we had no capital, we switched to another candidate. There is no way that a candidate who does not have capital or political boarding can win, it's a waste of time."<sup>8</sup>

The explanation above shows that political boarding is important in a democratic party to finance the needs and needs of the team during the stages. Political boarding is the main capital in "reviving" the running team of the success team.

"Without political capital to finance the success team, it is hard to win. In my experience as an election organizer, it takes at least 20-30 billion to finance a political contest as a regional head at the district/city level."<sup>9</sup>

Based on the above, it can be concluded that political boarding is inevitable for all contestants in local elections. The number or amount varies depending on the size of the region and the population in that region. Political boarding for

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with a supporter of candidate 02 (initials R) on January 9, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with (initials AM) on January 9, 2025.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with former Panwaslih Pilkada commissioner on January 10, 2025.

financing the running of the success team or the need for operational and printing

campaign props (APK) is not prohibited including transportation costs when there is a campaign.

"There is no prohibition in the Pilkada Law or regulations in PKPU or Perbawaslu if the candidate pairs finance the needs of the success team such as operational costs, printing campaign props including transportation costs if there is a campaign." <sup>10</sup>

Nova Nazwa Ramadhanti, et al explained, "money politics, or what is often referred to as money politics, refers to efforts to influence the behavior of the public or voters through the provision of material rewards, whether in the form of money or goods, owned by individuals or political parties. The purpose of money politics is to gain support or votes in general or regional elections. In practice, money politics is often associated with the practice of bribery or kickbacks, where voters are given material rewards to vote for a particular candidate." <sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, Nova Nazwa Ramadhanti, et al, explained, "On the other hand, *cost politics* refers to all the costs involved in the political process, especially in the context of elections. This includes campaign costs, political advertising, and any other activities that require the expenditure of funds. Cost politics also includes all expenditures associated with efforts to gain the support of voters, such as the installation of banners, advertisements in the mass media, and other socialization activities." <sup>12</sup>

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that money politics or electoral corruption and political costs are different. Money politics is done to influence voters to vote for a particular candidate pair or not to vote for a candidate pair.

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with former Panwaslih Pilkada commissioner on January 10, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> Nova Nazwa Ramadhanti, et al, "Money Politics VS Cost Politics: Choosing Meanings that Look the Same", Alliance Journal - Volume 1, No. 2, March 2024, p. 24. 24.

<sup>12</sup> Nova Nazwa Ramadhanti, et al, *Ibid.*, p. 25.

certain. The practice of money politics does not only occur in Indonesia, where the majority of the population is still uneducated, but in the United States as a champion of democracy, the practice of money politics is also inevitable.

"Regarding this money politics, it actually does not only occur in Indonesia, even in the United States as the champion of democracy-money politics is a reality that is difficult to avoid. When the United States (US) Presidential Election (Pilpres) was held 2 years ago in 2016, a law lecturer at Harvard Law School named Adrian Vermeule even called the US Presidential Election a "Dolartocracy" (Vermeule, 2018: 2). The essence of his writing is that democracy in the US is considered to be acutely ill, because it has been infected by various money politics scandals as electoral corruption. As a result, President Trump's victory was responded coldly and pessimistically by various groups. In essence, it can be said that money politics is a disease of democracy in any country, including in the US."<sup>13</sup>

In the local elections in Banda Aceh City in 2024, the practice of money politics was done openly in plain sight. Success teams distributed money to the community at the homes of regional head candidates, winning posts, and at the homes of members of parliament supporting the candidate pairs.

"I received money in a two-hundred-thousand envelope at the house of a member of the House of Representatives in the Lampriet area of Banda Aceh. It was very crowded when the money was distributed."<sup>14</sup>

The same thing was conveyed by another recipient of money in Gampong Beurawe Banda Aceh that he was given money in an envelope by the success team of one of the candidate pairs at his post witnessed by many people.

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<sup>13</sup> Hariman Satria, "Legal Politics of Money Politics Crime in General Elections in Indonesia", INTEGRITAS Anti-Corruption Journal, 5 (1), 1-14/e-ISSN/p-ISSN: 2615-7977/2477- 118X, pp. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Lampriet residents who received money (initials H) on January 11, 2025.



"My friends and I received two hundred thousand in an envelope behind a shop in Beurawe at the poskonya on a quiet Sunday, one day before voting. Many people saw it, but the Panwas did not prohibit it."<sup>15</sup>

The practice of money politics was also openly carried out at the candidate's house in the Lampaseh area, where thousands of people queued to take the "bribe money" given by the success team and witnessed directly by the candidate in large numbers.

"I took money from about two hundred residents of my village at the candidate's house in Lampaseh. Each of us got two hundred thousand that had been prepared in an envelope in which there was a candidate's picture card."

In Peuniti, Baiturrahman sub-district, in addition to cash, prayer mats and sarongs were also distributed by the winning team of one of the candidates through DPRK members supporting the candidate.

"I received sarongs, prayer mats, and money distributed by the candidate's success team in Gampong Peuniti. The money or assistance was from DPRK members supporting the candidate."<sup>16</sup>

The alleged practice of money politics was also carried out at a cafe in the Gampong Geuce area. The money was distributed by one of the candidate supporters in cash. Each person whose name was listed in the recipient list received Rp. 200,000 (two hundred thousand).

"I received two hundred thousand distributed by women at the cafe in front of the Fakinah hospital in Banda Aceh, two hundred thousand paid in cash. About 30 of us all received the money who had provided ID cards beforehand."

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Beurawe resident wp-recipient of money (initials Y) on January 11th

<sup>16</sup> Interview with the recipient of money, prayer mat, sarong (initials RD) on 11 January 2025.

The practice of money politics was also carried out through direct transfers

to the recipient's account by the success team. Money was also given during the quiet week stage through coordinators in each sub-district in relatively large amounts. The sub-district coordinator is usually a DPRK member from a candidate's supporting party.

"Money is also transferred through the recipient's account, there is also through the sub-district coordinator who is an active DPRK member, which is a large amount to be distributed to supporters of candidate pairs who have submitted ID cards beforehand. Each person on average gets two hundred thousand and there are also one hundred thousand." <sup>17</sup>

The practice of money politics also involves community leaders in a gampong. The money received from the candidate is distributed to the community in the gampong area that has been previously recorded by the supporting team.

"Community leaders such as hamlet or village heads and youth leaders also played a role in Banda Aceh in conducting money politics. Large amounts of money were distributed by community leaders to recipients who gave their ID cards beforehand." <sup>18</sup>

Voters who had received money from a candidate or candidate's success team did not all vote for the candidate who had given them money. They argued that the money they received was a form of bribery to them, while they themselves did not like the candidate.

"I gave my ID card to all the candidates and took all the money, but I did not vote for the person. Of the three candidates who gave money, I chose according to my conscience, I did not vote for all of them." <sup>19</sup>

Similarly, another voter stated that he took money from a particular candidate, but he did not vote for the candidate who gave him the money.

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with the recipient of the money (initials AM) on January 12, 2025.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with a community leader (initials MA) on January 12, 2025.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with community member (initials DR) on January 12, 2025.

"I got one million for five people in my family, but none of us voted for the one who gave money. We voted for other candidates that we liked." <sup>20</sup>

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the practice of money politics really happened in the Banda Aceh regional election in 2024. Money was given by the success team either in cash or in envelopes. Money politics is also carried out through the provision of prayer equipment such as prayer mats, and others.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### 1. Conclusion

The elections in Banda Aceh City in the 2024 elections were marked by the practice of money politics carried out by three candidate pairs. The money given during the quiet week period was partly transferred directly to the recipient's account and partly distributed by the success team. The money given to each person averaged Rp. 200,000 and was put in an envelope accompanied by the candidate's business card. Operational forms of money politics are also carried out by providing prayer equipment, such as prayer mats, sarongs and so on.

Money politics occurred openly at the homes of candidate pairs or their supporting teams and at the posts of the winning team, and some of it was delivered directly to the recipient's house by the success team. Some active members of the DPRK and DPR RI also gave money during the quiet period to voters at their homes. Although the candidates gave out large amounts of money, it did not have a significant effect on gaining votes. The community took the money given by the candidates through their success teams, but not all of them voted for the candidates who practiced money politics.

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with community member (initials Bus) on January 12, 2025.

## 2. Suggestions

The suggestions from this research are that Pilkada Supervisors (Panwaslih) are recruited not from political party support or recommendations from political parties. Candidates involved in money politics can be disqualified even if it is not done in a structured, massive and systematic manner.

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