

# The Implementation of Direct Local Election (Pilkada) and Money Politics Tendencies: The Current Indonesian Case

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## Abstract

Circulating debates concerning the intense influence of direct local elections on money politics remain ongoing among Indonesian scholars. This article demonstrates several aspects indicating the relationship between direct local elections (Pilkada) and money politics. In more specific rhetoric, current practices in money politics tend to occur before and during election days, engaging political actors, voters, and soaring capital. As for the novelty of this article, the findings reveal that the likelihood of money politics would most likely occur within an environment where the existing regulations encourage corruption. Hence, people are less concerned about supporting a fair election, which is inevitably due to the fragile state of law enforcement, exacerbated by the disengagement of political parties.

## Keywords:

Direct Local Election; Money Politics; Political Party

## INTRODUCTION

The The direct local election has been implemented in Indonesia since 2005, based on Law Number 32/2004 concerning Local Government. Specifically, such direct local elections have become one of the transitional aspects of democracy in Indonesia and have made important progress in decentralization. It is argued that local elections provide an opportunity for local people to determine the

appropriate candidate to be a representative local leader (Sulistyanto, 2009). In its mechanism, participants in the elections are the pairs of regional head and deputy regional head. Following Law Number 32/2004, one political party or combined political parties are proposed candidate pairs.

This regulation was amended in 2008 through the enactment of Law Number 12/2008 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 32/2004, by stipulating that the submission of regional head candidate pairs are not only through party channels or party combinations, but can be through

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individual channels fulfilling the requirement of having public support (Lee, 2018). In 2015, the election mechanism was simultaneously performed in several regions within a similar day and month, as stipulated in Law Number 8/2015 concerning Direct Local Elections and its amendment to Law Number 10/2016 concerning local elections.

Direct local elections serve as one of the instruments to implement democracy. According to Cornelis Lay, the election offers the opportunity to facilitate public involvement in negotiating political resources in the region (Lay, 2007). Although the election is considered one of the drivers of democracy's consolidation, it also raises various issues. Several political scholars have observed the linkage between direct local elections and corruption practices as well as money politics. Syarif Hidayat (2009), for instance, asserts that parties, candidates, and voters interact with one another in a transactional political process to secure the nomination process.

Marcus Mietzner (2011), on the other hand, reveals how the political transaction aspects of Indonesian local elections work. Further, Marcus Mietzner adds that the high cost of electoral campaigns leads to parties' and candidates' abandonment of the regulation. In particular, within the

limits of public fund support, illegal funds are allowed to secure the political funding base. Concerning money politics, another study indicates how direct local elections do not address money politics since the recruitment of candidates in many cases depends on political parties' oligarchs, indicating that local elections tend to strengthen political oligarchy (Choi, 2011).

The money politics phenomenon has become a serious problem in Indonesia, both in local and national elections. The study of money politics has long been developed in Indonesia (Bima A. Sugiarto, 2009). Prior relevant studies have also linked money politics with elections (Sjafrina, 2019; Aspinall, 2015; 2019; Muhtadi, 2019) or local elections (Rifai, 2003; Amrullah, 2009; Choi, 2007; Heryanto, 2018; Sukmajati & Disyacitta, 2019). Other studies have devoted the discourse to more specific solutions related to electoral system reform (Riewanto, 2015; Ahsanul Minam, 2018; Burhanuddin Muhtadi, 2018), financial transparency (Prasetyo, 2019), law enforcement/new regulations (Darmawan, 2012; Amsari & Febrinandez, 2019; Riewanto, 2019), or strengthening public awareness (Kurniawan & Hermawan, 2019).

The studies mentioned above indicate several important factors and discuss many aspects related to the problems of elections and corruption.

However, studies emphasizing the correlation between direct local elections and money politics have been limited. Therefore, to fill the gap, this study navigates the correlation of the implementation of indirect elections and money politics by analyzing several factors driving the phenomenon of money politics and corruption practices.

This study also investigates corrective measures to prevent or reduce the practice of money politics in elections. By examining this issue, this study is expected to adequately enrich the study of local elections in Indonesia concerning money politics related to the implementation of local elections. Accordingly, this study investigates the concerning factors or reasons behind the money politics phenomenon and provides solutions to prevent or reduce money politics in the local elections. Various cases of money politics disclose that money politics committed by politicians or political parties occurred before the election and during the election.

#### *Prior To The Election*

The practice of money politics within the campaign preparation process serves as the fuel for regional elections, initially from the candidate nomination for both political parties and individuals. In the political party line, the most frequent circumstance lies in trading vote support

to meet the requirements of 25 percent of the voters' votes or 20 percent of the total seats in DPRD. This practice is often referred to as the payment of political "dowries" or "boat rentals" for political parties to gain and win candidacy support.

Under such conditions, a candidate must pay high political costs in search of the nominating vessel. A relevant study conducted by KPK was devoted to focusing on candidates' behavior in the 2018 simultaneous regional elections, reporting that as many as 20 respondents admitted to giving "dowries" to political parties before advancing to become candidates (Suryasumirat, 2018). Further, Muhtar Haboddin (2008), in his study referring to the Kompas report, noted the mechanism for forging a coalition between parties which required a "dowry" of billions of IDR. Similarly, Ramlan Surbakti in Fitriyah (2013) observed the opportunity for the emergence of money politics in the regional elections identified when a candidate "rents a boat" in the nomination process, secluded behind the scenes.

Claims include several cases, such as the case of direct Pilkada in 2008 at Garut, West Java, in which, according to Wulandari (2014), "Political dowry fees proposed by parties are high, reaching IDR 250 million for one DPRD seat. The

case of Pilkada in 2011 at Riau is also the same. In that area, a candidate who wanted to advance in the Pilkada contestation was obliged to provide "proposal money" with a soaring price set per seat in DPRD alleged to reach IDR 400 million. The amount of the "proposal money" will be even greater if the position of a political party has contributed a large number of seats. Following the presented cases, Ikhsan Achmad's study of the 2013 election for the mayor of Serang, referred to by Bhawono (2018), reported a regional candidate who paid billions of money to get party support.

A similar phenomenon was also found in Pilkada in 2015 at Toba Samosir regency. The candidate pair for Regent and Deputy Regent of Toba Samosir, (Asmadi Lubis and Jisman Hutapea) withdrew from their candidacy because the Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (PKPI) requested a dowry of IDR 1.6 billion.

As a result, they turned to the Gerindra Party and received recommendations at the regional executive level. However, up to the central level, they have demanded a dowry of IDR 2.5 billion (Maulidar, 2015). La Nyalla Mattaliti, as a candidate for governor in the 2018 East Java Province, also indicated such a realm. Before the election, the Gerindra Party demanded he provide IDR. forty

billion to secure the party's support for his candidacy, resulting in disappointment. Previously, Mattaliti claimed that he had already "provided" the Chairman of the Gerindra Party (in East Java) a fantastic amount of IDR. 5.9 billion, before another soaring amount of IDR 70 billion in exchange for a letter of recommendation from Gerindra Party (Lazuardi, 2018).

In another case of Pilkada in 2018, in West Java, Dedi Mulyadi admitted that he had personally requested IDR. 10 billion from the Golkar Party to be a candidate in the 2018 West Java Pilkada. According to Mulyadi, this request was made by someone who claimed to have a close relationship with a prominent figure in the Golkar Party. Mulyadi admitted that he dismissed such a proposal (Anggoro, 2017). Mulyadi explained that this dowry phenomenon is common in his party, happens from time to time, and has been known by the party's Central Board. However, until today, no one dared speak out about this matter. For this reason, Mulyadi took action to disclose his case as part of an attempt to show the existing problem in his party (Winarsih, 2017).

Other political dowry cases occurred in Pilkada and Palangka Raya. It was revealed after one of the prospective candidates (John Krisli) failed to register with the Regional General Election Commission (KPUD),

revealing that he was asked for a certain amount of money by the party promising to guarantee his candidacy for Mayor of Palangka Raya. John, who is also the chairman of DPRD in Kotawaringin Timur regency, further admitted that the Gerindra Party demanded IDR. 350 million per seat. Meanwhile, Gerindra at DPRD in Palangka Raya city has four seats, amounting to IDR 1.4 billion. However, John admitted that he only provided Gerindra for IDR 500 million. The details included IDR 350 million for witnesses and IDR 150 million for party coaching fees. He also provided a sum of money to a branch leader of a party, which unfortunately was without a receipt and based on mutual trust between the giver and receiver (Rajana, 2018).

Likewise, another case also occurred in the Papua Regional Head Election. The alleged practice of political dowry in Oesman Sapta Odang's Hanura Party was again revealed. Yan Mandenas, a cadre from Papua, admitted that he was tasked with paying an amount of IDR. 350 million for one seat in order to advance his candidacy for Mayor of Biak Numfor. In addition, Yan admitted that he had met with Odang regarding the dowry requirements, discouraging Yan's candidacy and joining the Hanura Party under Sarifuddin Sudding (Yulika, 2018). Furthermore, Farouk Sunge,

Deputy Chairperson of the Hanura Party (West Java), admits that he witnessed how the prospective candidate deposited money into his party in order to gain support from his party (Damarjati, 2018).

Furthermore, one of the former candidates for Mayor of Garut, Seli Besi, revealed that the fee requested by some parties was around IDR. 350 million during Pilkada in Garut (Ihsanuddin, 2018). Besi revealed his case in "Mata Najwa", a famous Indonesian television program (21 February 2018). According to Besi, he was asked by the Hanura Party about the amount of money that he would have to pay to get the party's support for his candidacy. According to the Hanura Party, Odang said the money would be used as an operational fee for candidate activities during the campaign, including flags, banners, trips, and other administration fees. Hence, according to Odang, that payment is not banding and not a main prerequisite for the candidate. But Besi denies such an argument (Damarjati, 2018).

Meanwhile, another case was from Pilkada Madiun in 2018, where the parties were offered a price of one seat of IDR. 350 million. Thus, to secure a minimum of 20 seats, a candidate is required to provide IDR. 7 billion (Wegik Prasetyo, 2019, p. 22). The issue of dowry costs was also confirmed by a survey

conducted by KPK, confirming that 20 respondents admitted to paying dowries to political parties ranging from IDR 50 to 500 million per seat, secured from the mutual agreement between the party and the candidate pair for the regional head (Litbang KPK, 2017). The acceptable excuse for such dowry deals with the cost of paying the political party's "hard effort" to get funding for the running of its political organization, one of which is the "boat rental" fee.

On the other hand, party recommendation letters for candidacy support are prone to be traded. The Jawa Pos (2020) describes the trading mechanism of party recommendation letters with certain numbers or offering prices worth billions. The number of bids could double, for example, if the scramble for a recommendation letter gets tougher. Those who offer party recommendations for nomination are often figures who claim to have close links to the party elite or those acting as political brokers.

Political costs are also required for those who advance to become candidates for regional head in the individual nomination. According to Arya Budi et al. (2018), individual candidates in the Madiun city election (2018) are required to pay political costs in exchange for cooking oil. Candidates are obliged to provide IDR. 300 to 500 thousand assuming that 1 "head" in

identity card (KTP) is valued for cooking oil at a price of IDR.7 thousand. Efforts to obtain evidence of this support also allowed candidates to practice trading for support. Likewise, in the 2012 Jakarta Pilkada, the individual candidacy was tinged with allegations of trading support for ID cards. Through the broker's statement, one supporting ID card is valued at around IDR. 5000 to 10,000 (Putri, 2012).

Apart from spending political costs on the nomination process, regional head candidates must also provide other funds for regional election competitions. Campaign finance is one of these funds, which can be quite large. Rinakit, as cited in Marcus Mietzner (2010), observes that the size of the gubernatorial election reaches IDR. 100 billion, while the regent needs to prepare for IDR. 1.8 to 16 billion. The money or capital is allocated, for example, to set up a network of campaign offices, employ a large number of people on the team, fund advertisements, fund consultants, or pay for entertainment events in public campaigns. The numbers required for the campaign costs themselves vary. In Sula Islands, North Maluku Regency, the winner of the local election at that time could spend IDR.5 billion on a campaign with a small contribution from his party. In Gunungkidul Regency, for example, several candidates prepared a campaign

budget of IDR. 700 million to 3 billion (Tempo, 2015).

With a large need for funds, the candidates often have a coalition with entrepreneurs or business people, leading to money politics by expecting that the donors have access to obtaining company permits and protection upon election. One of the notable relationships between candidates and corporations is in the case of money politics in Lampung during the 2014 gubernatorial election. In the study of Dian Permata and Daniel Zuhcron (2018), it is described that the case involved one of the large corporations in Lampung province and candidate for governor Ridho Ficardo. This scheme narrates that the involvement is in the form of influence, in the form of mutual power over money, sugar, and goods. Corporate involvement is evident, among others, in the presence of the campaign leader, who is Ficardo. Likewise, the production goods of related corporations are in the form of sugar as a means of money politics found in several Lampung districts or cities.

#### *Focal Reasons*

The high cost of financing Pilkada encouraging the potential for corruption has been due to the regulations related to the nomination mechanism through parties requiring a threshold for candidacy. Meanwhile, the individual

nomination mechanism requires evidence of a letter of support from the community accompanied by a photocopy of an ID card (KTP). With the requirements of fulfilling the threshold and the existence of support, a candidate is often motivated to practice money politics to gain support and run as a potential candidate.

In the nomination mechanism through parties, not many parties can fulfill the nomination threshold requirements, providing an opportunity for the parties to trade their seats to candidates to meet the requirements. It is inescapable that a party's coalition with other parties is deemed pivotal, involving a certain deal or agreement based on material or financial compensation. In this situation, there is a tendency that relatively large parties gain seats to form the axis of a coalition with small and medium parties. However, it does not come without the risk, as candidates usually pay for "boat rental" fees to the coalition parties. In this case, parties conduct a transaction to meet the percentage of votes or seats to fulfill the nomination threshold requirements (Haris, 2019).

Such high costs in politics often ultimately encourage opportunities for sponsors or oligarchs to provide financial support. The politics of high costs during determining candidates are fulfilled by this group, demanding

generous compensation, which can be paid off when the candidate wins the contest. The role of sponsors is increasingly decisive because regional election regulations, unfortunately, do not provide financial support for campaign activities such as limited meetings, which means candidates fund them. Upon considering such a high number, it is not uncommon for candidates and parties to become dependent on external donations or sponsors, enabling them to raise illegal campaign funds for candidates (Mietzner, 2011).

In addition, the proliferated practice of money politics at the time of determining the coalition was due to the internal tenets of political parties. The first tenet is due to the thick nuances of pragmatism, encouraging the party to trade the seats. In addition, it is accepted for parties to look at certain figures by merely considering the candidate's monetary resources (Mietzner, 2010). In terms of financial considerations, parties obtain "political dowries" in return for their support of the candidacy (Berenschot, 2019a). Thus, regional head elections are limited to those with the financial power and personal power associated with the party oligarchy in the regions (Haris, 2019).

The second tenet is due to weak party financial capability, unable to keep up with politicians who have large

financial capital and are influential in the regional elections (Choi, 2011)—as a result, having popularity and financial capital would allow anyone to be promoted by the party as a candidate for the regional head. According to Aspinall and Berenschot (2019), the political party seems to consider the pragmatic side more than the consideration of ideology and loyalty to the party. In this condition, political parties permit the trading of seats or political dowries for the sake of obtaining economic and political benefits.

In addition, the rise of political dowries is alleged due to the weak existing legal regulations, which never provided a maximum deterrent effect. According to Amsari and Febrinandez (2019), existing legal regulations cannot stop political actors from continuing to practice political dowry. It is proposed that the perpetrators of political dowry be punished by giving a sentence designed to deprive them of their political rights and disengage them from politics. Currently, the regional head candidates worry about administrative sanctions resulting in disqualification as candidates through the mechanism for handling non-criminal administrative violations. As long as the political rights and administrative sanctions are not applied, to the extent that the perpetrators can repeat their actions, this causes the practice of money politics to



flourish in the pre-campaign period, especially during candidacy.

Due to the growing number of sponsors who play a role in political dowry, they are immune to the existing laws. The prevailing law is too oriented towards surface actors (legal-formal), ensnaring the perpetrator without punishing the real offender. Meanwhile, the source of money or the "provider of capital" for money politics activities cannot be disclosed and processed by the law in the election law enforcement system. Hence, law enforcement stops at the perpetrator, while intellectual actors or 'bandar' are unreachable by the law. Apart from it, there is also a tendency for law enforcement to be oriented towards the stability of competition, which tends to be convoluted, and neglects more cooperative efforts.

#### *During The Election*

Money politics is also rampant when it occurs on the D-Day of the election itself. Political costs incurred on the eve of or on election day are accused of being political buying or purchasing votes directly from voters (Fitriyah, 2013). There were many forms of political buying, such as the provision of campaign transportation costs, distribution of groceries or development of worship places, provision of 'dawn attacks', et cetera. The term "dawn attack" refers to trading votes in the form

of distributing cash payments to individual voters ahead of the election during dawn time; this time refers to when Muslim people wake up for dawn prayer. This money is often distributed after the dawn prayer on polling day, although sometimes, this payment also occurs a few days before the polling day (Berenschot, 2019b).

On the day of the election, the campaign workers or the team succeeded in accomplishing their duties in the form of "dawn attacks" by distributing large amounts of money to the voters in the streets and houses. Vote purchases vary in different types of elections and regions. If there is a great number of voters in a particular area, the amount of incurred money for each voter will likely be lower than in an area where there are fewer voters. Vote-buying, or acknowledged as the term "dawn attack," seems to be a common phenomenon during direct elections. In the general scheme, vote-buying is divided into two forms, money and goods. Various reviews and data confirm the cases of vote-buying before the election (day D). For instance, in the 2011 regional elections, the results of interviews by Fitriyah and Alfirdaus through the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) study affirm that the voter price of each voter in Central Java was IDR 10 thousand for the 2011 Pilkada and IDR 25 thousand for the

2015 Pilkada (Alfirdaus, 2018). This study also indicates the role of ordinary people who ask for money, even decide the number. Similarly, in the 2015 Pilkada case, a BBC Indonesia report reveals many residents who received envelopes containing money from one of the candidate pairs in the South Tangerang area (Nirmala, 2015).

Other findings of vote-buying before elections were found in Cianjur regency (West Java), Manggarai regency (East Nusa Tenggara), Bantul regency (Yogyakarta), Ternate city (North Maluku), Purworejo regency (Central Java), Ogan Hilir regency (South Sumatra), Kendari city (Southeast Sulawesi), and Muna regency (Southeast Sulawesi). The Perludem finding, as reported by Nirmala investigation, revealed that the residents of Cia village in Manggarai regency admitted that they received IDR 50 thousand. Meanwhile, the provision of trading or transactions also occurred in Malang regency by distributing sarongs and headscarves within the village meetings.

A similar phenomenon occurred in the 2018 direct elections. The vote-buying case occurred in several regions, such as in the Parepare City of South Sulawesi, indicating the vote-buying from a major candidate of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP Party) distributing IDR. 50 thousand to the public ahead of the election day

(Nawir, 2018). Another vote-buying case was also found in Kudus Regency Pilkada in 2018, dragging the main perpetrator to court, a businessman from Demak Regency (Central Java). He was admitting that he had spent IDR. 10 billion for the 'dawn attack' while supporting the M. Tamzil-Hartopo pair in the election (Suharni, 2018). The money is sealed in an envelope containing IDR. 50,000 and distributed in Demak to avoid the rivals' speculation. Further, the coordinators of the nine sub-districts in Kudus accepted it three days prior to the election, then handed it over to each village head for distribution.

The other type of money politics that occurred at the time of the Pilkada were allocated for witness fees, providing a problem for regional head candidates to prepare their capital for witnesses at all polling stations (TPS) in the regions. However, witnesses must supervise any potential manipulation with other regional head candidate witnesses, especially in the vote recapitulation. As with the interview results with one of the candidates for the regional head, witness fees are the most expensive cost that a candidate pair must incur (LIPI-KPK, 2019b). This finding is confirmed by both the release and the statement, depicting the cost of witnesses in the 2018 East Java regional elections, amounting to IDR 200 billion.

The cost of that amount, among others, serves as the procurement of lunch and transportation for 90 thousand witnesses at around 68 thousand polling stations (Dariyanto, 2018). Following the statement of Bali Governor Wayan Koster, the witness fee during the 2018 Bali gubernatorial election reached an amount of IDR 3 billion (kita indonesia, 2019). Further, the ICW release adds to the data on the high cost of witnesses in the 2018 Pilkada in West Java. Witness fees generally range from IDR 250,000 to 500,000. Upon considering the lowest cost calculation, witness funding in this province, with 75,680 polling stations, a pair of candidates in West Java must provide an amount of IDR 18.92 billion (Indonesian Corruption Watch, 2018).

Witness fees, it is claimed, add to the high political costs of direct regional elections. Witness fees are also regarded as a burden for regional head candidates due to the incurred provision of money. Candidates for regional head are forced to navigate the source of funding in this context, allowing for the possibility of money politics. Since other parties' engagement is required to help finance the witnesses, political transactions are inevitable.

#### *Focal Reasons*

The growing phenomenon of money politics at the time of the election, especially vote-buying, was due to

several factors: the pragmatism of the community, the political parties' pragmatism, and fragile law enforcement. In the context of community pragmatism, in every interview or discussion with parties' members or politicians, people's pragmatism serves as one of the determining factors in the currently rising practice of money politics in each election. Public pragmatism is deemed stronger and complained about by candidates, which is opposed to political behavior prioritizing deep awareness of the ongoing political system or ideology in a country (Mahadi, 2011). The political behaviour of the traditional and pragmatic people still in politics will lead to the rampant emergence of voter apathy in elections.

The apathetic attitudes of voters in Indonesia encourage them to instantly and irrationally choose candidates who benefit them, especially those offering money in stimulant packages, charity assistance, and village development assistance in material form (Choi, 2011). Therefore, transactional politics is inevitable based on simple calculation and short-term thought, and this means that voters only participate in election activities in exchange for money or material compensation.

This proliferated phenomenon in society creates conditions for pragmatism in politics, which ultimately encourages

people to be more dependent on practical and concrete approaches to solve problems or improve themselves. Upon holding such thought, people are less concerned with ideology and are more concerned with results than process. Therefore, political pragmatism serves as a driving factor in the emergence of sceptical voters in each election, including the local elections. Voters with uncertain ideological orientation would typically neglect the work programs or 'platform' offered by the political parties (Hariyani, 2015). In certain aspects, this type of voter emphasizes more on pragmatism due to money politics.

Political pragmatism has been obvious during local elections. According to the interviewees of LIPI-KPK, "Wawancara Nurul Arifin (2019)", pragmatism serves as a problem at the community level, contributing to the high political cost of each local election. Such pragmatism indicates the association of high political costs and political elites at the level of political parties, including people who are increasingly 'liking' the gifts presented by candidates in each moment of the election. An example includes the phenomenon of Eid al-Fitr, where the candidates for local head candidates offer numerous gifts to attract public attention. However, such an impediment arises for the candidates when they are

required to have a large budget for this allocation.

In almost every election, the community's attitude toward 'demanding something' or compensation is unavoidably prominent, with no reluctance in directly demanding this "gift." This phenomenon reveals that the culture of people who are "happy with incentives" or "money-oriented" significantly affects high political funding in each election. While the candidates' social capital is adequate, it could still lower the electability of candidates if they do not distribute the money. Thus, the phenomenon of 'dawn attack' in elections is normally acceptable for people.

One of the causes of pragmatism among society lies in the high level of poverty, recognized by one of the sources of this study. According to this source, poverty causes people to be tempted by money politics (LIPI-KPK, 2019a). In this context, they can bargain the amount of money for a candidate pair through their campaign team. Each transaction is carefully considered, that there should be compensation in exchange for their votes. According to the informant's experience during the campaign, money politics is not popular in more prosperous areas.

The explanation from the informant was confirmed by Andhika's study (2017) when examining the

phenomenon of money politics in local village head elections. In such disadvantageous conditions, including poverty, low economic level, and low quality of human resources, money politics acts as a blessing without further thought. People will continue to be trapped in poverty if the elected leader does not make the significant changes he campaigned for during his candidacy. Those elected will certainly be devoted to the "capital return" that comes from several government projects and village funds, which will require spending a lot of money. At the same time, the rest of the community will be exploited unknowingly and continuously by their leader.

The rise of money politics also signifies the permissive attitude of the public towards money politics, confirmed by a survey of voter behaviour ahead of the direct election. The Surabaya Survey Centre (SSC), for example, conducted a two-week voter behaviour survey in 38 regencies and cities ahead of the election for the East Java Regional Election on June 27 2018. One of the expected portraits of voter behaviour is how they face money politics or "dawn attacks" before voting. As a result, only 0.9 percent of respondents stated that they would not accept the "dawn attack" because they did not agree with money politics. Meanwhile, approximately 99.1 percent

of respondents are cooperative with the "dawn attack" for various reasons (Faizal, 2018). The results of this survey indicate that people in East Java are cooperative in accepting the practice of money politics. Pilkada contestation serves as a profitable arena for the community due to certainty upon obtaining money during voting ("dawn attack"). Typically, people are willing to accept the money without considering that this behaviour is categorized as accepting "bribes" or money politics.

Meanwhile, the findings from Founding Fathers House (2017) as cited by Robi Kurniawan and Dedy Hermawan (2019, p. 33) confirm that in the 2017 Brebes Regional Election, as many as 71 percent of the public admitted to accepting money politics. Meanwhile, the Permata Study (2017) in 5 city regions in DKI Jakarta (2012) indicated that 52.4 per cent of respondents accepted money politics. Whereas, the results of the Syndicated Election and Democracy (SPD) research report that the majority of Indonesians admit that they want to accept money politics (vote buying) during the regional head elections (Pilkada). Of the 440 research participants, 60% stated that they would be willing to sell their voting rights to Pilkada participants for a nominal fee (Farisa, 2020).

Apart from community pragmatism, political party pragmatism

has also contributed to the proliferation of money politics during direct regional elections. Since conducting the candidacy and coalition, the pragmatic attitude of the political parties is apparent through financial considerations in the two processes. Helmi Mahadi's study explains the emergence of such a phenomenon when political parties conduct candidacy recruitment, especially from an external circle of political parties.

One of the determining considerations lies in the incurred political cost. Initial consideration of the decision to recruit a candidate lies on the candidate's electability level, while the next consideration is the financial factor. Logically, financial ability does not determine the consideration of candidacy, but the calculation of victory in Pilkada, involving the high political cost in the form of money (Mahadi, 2011). Therefore, the money factor is instrumental if a candidate seeks support from a party by providing money in various terms such as donations, guidance, and involvement.

Another problem that has led to rampant vote-buying during regional elections lies in the weak law enforcement. These are due to several obstacles: (1) the limitations in dealing with violations and the difficulty of proving them through evidence; and (2) despite the evidence, the handling will

be transferred from Bawaslu to the police and prosecutors. This money politics case falls into the realm of crime, which is no longer under the authority of Bawaslu.

Whereas the law enforcement approach oriented towards the criminal aspect is no longer effective in providing a deterrent effect on money politics for offenders, In the view of the source, current legislative candidates and regional head candidates worry more about administrative sanctions in the form of disqualification as candidates through mechanisms for handling non-criminal administrative violations rather than convictions (Anggraini, 2020). This worry is due to complex mechanisms in meeting the criminal element in terms of money politics, which is complicated and time-consuming.

The difficulty of evidence has also attracted the concern of Bawaslu when facing the problem of vote-buying. As illustrated by the source, even when a perpetrator who commits a "dawn attack" admits to directing the voters to choose a particular candidate but during the investigation, it is difficult to prove such a confession (Interview F, 2020). The candidate pair will deny on the grounds of "character assassination" and deliberately block the continuity of such conviction.

For this reason, evidence is the only instrument to prove vote-buying. Meanwhile, the parties processing this

evidence include the police and prosecutors. With this flow of handling, law enforcement for vote-buying on the D-day becomes complicated and difficult. As a result, law enforcement in the vote-buying case is never complete. Sarah N. Siregar, "Wawancara Dengan F (Initial), Bawaslu, 2020."

Meanwhile, vote-buying is often acknowledged as a political cause rather than a legal case from the public side. As a result, people are reluctant to report when spotting the factual vote, preventing excessive "attention" or political pressure from the parties involved. For example, in an incident in Central Java, the reporter on the alleged vote-buying was reported back and eventually became a convict (Nurdin, 2016), signifying that the legal ecosystem does not provide a sense of security, thus contributing to ineffective citizen participation in law enforcement.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, money politics is an inseparable part of the elections. In contrast, the direct local election has great potential to be the major cause of money politics in Indonesia. Consequently, this phenomenon became an opaque note in Indonesia's political life in the reformation era. Numerous studies reveal that money politics frequently emerges in the pre-election, during, and after the election periods.

This study examines the causes of money politics due to exclusive political party management and weak indoctrination of political parties; regulations that encourage election contestants to engage in money politics; an increasingly pragmatic and permissive society over money politics; and weak law enforcement practices.

Therefore, significant reforms are mandatory within the body of the political party to restore the party's ability to craft policy transparency, control the behavior of its members through continuous regeneration, and maintain the party's morale through financial independence empowerment. In addition, comprehensive political education is instrumental in helping the public understand the nature of elections and participate with integrity. As a final remark, enforcement and improvement in the quality of regulations or laws are deemed important in addressing the gap and legally preventing money politics at an initial stage.

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