

Money Politics Phenomenon in The Village Head Election of Jemanten District, East Lampung Regency, 2023

ABSTRACT

The Head Village Election has arisen as a major source of concern in society, particularly among rural areas. Bribery to secure votes is not uncommon in this setting, as some consider Head of Village elections to be less important. Candidates for Head of Village positions offer money to the community as part of their election campaign, focusing on people who might otherwise not vote. The purpose of this study is to look into the reasons why people accept money from Head of Village candidates. Using a qualitative approach and a Normative Juridical framework, the study focuses on Negeri Jemanten Village people who first refused to participate in the election owing to bribery. The research is based on Alfred Schutz's phenomenological theoretical standpoint. The data suggest that people's propensity to visit polling booths can be impacted by financial incentives, resulting from a lack of understanding about the Head of Village candidates.

Keywords : *Corruption, Head of Village Election, Money Politics.*

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is difficult to prevent and eradicate because behavior is considered normal and beneficial to oneself or others. According to Transparency International, Indonesia ranked 115th out of 180 countries in terms of corruption levels in 2023, with the same score as in 2022, indicating that corruption in Indonesia is still high compared to the global average. The prevalence of corruption in Indonesia appears to have escalated to a concerning level. Our country is always ranked at the top as one of the most corrupt countries (Hartono, Hasan, & Khurniawan, 2022). This fact indicates that the level of corruption in Indonesia is very high. Therefore, concrete efforts are needed to reduce the increasing rate of corruption in the country. Of course,

what you want to do to eradicate corruption requires a process and time that is not short (Hasan, Qunaifi, Andika, Pratama, & Mindari, 2024). For additional information, the term corruption comes from Latin, English, and Dutch and refers to corrupt, rotten, and dishonest actions related to finance (Alfarrizy, Hartono, & Hasan, 2021).

Indonesia adheres to open leadership elections, from presidents to heads of villages (Fauzi & Fauzi, 2021). The community is required to provide voting rights to elect good leadership candidates for the community, even on a small scale; for example, the election of Head of Villages is one of the agendas of the people's democratic party because the community will elect a leader to develop and be responsible for their village (Rohmawati, 2013). The Head of Village election event indicates that there is political activity taking place in the village, and it is not just a struggle for power or competing in a campaign but also involves self-esteem, prestige, and honor, so that they are seen sacrificing many things in this election (Yuningsih & Subekti, 2016). Campaigns play a big role in elections through campaign teams that invite people to choose Head of Village candidates persuasively. At this point, money politics will occur. Although the term 'bribery' is not explicitly codified in the law, the practice of exchanging assistance or incentives between residents and the winning team of the Village Head candidate still continues to occur during the Village Head election. In such cases, the election supervisory body may invoke provisions from the Criminal Code.

In the current order of social life, the law has been used as a tool of justification in achieving the goals of groups of people, groups, and political elites to justify all means to achieve certain goals, including the practice of giving money or other materials that are closely related to efforts to influence voters in the district head general election . (Suparnyo & Aji, 2020). Money politics is considered a practice that injures democracy; in fact, currently, money politics, which often occurs during election periods, seems to be a mandatory requirement for every candidate for office, both at the central and regional levels, to get the most support and votes from the public. This has the potential to cause the reality of money politics to become a culture or tradition in general

elections, thus tarnishing the true meaning and significance of democracy (Fitriani, Karyadi, & Chaniago, 2019).

Unfortunately, the phenomenon of money politics has become deeply rooted in society, even considered commonplace during the political season so that many consider it a tradition (Putri, Arifani, Ratnasari, Auliavia, & Nuriyah, 2020), and society no longer questions the purpose of giving money. Money becomes a promotional medium for village head candidates to the village community (Rozy, Aditya, Febriansyah, Ahmad, & Ilham, 2020). This makes it easier for them to get votes when voting day arrives. Money is a shortcut because village head candidates will get the public's attention quickly and openly.

In some villages, being a village head is something that is highly respected, so they compete to get this position. Currently, many people do not participate enough in taking part in the village head election, which incidentally is still on a small scale. They assume that there are still many who will participate, so they do not participate. Factors that cause people not to want to get involved in the election are that people do not know the proposed candidates and their vision and mission; people prioritize the economy, so they choose to work rather than come to the polling station (Arianto, 2011). People receive more money from the practice of money politics, compared to people who do not receive money (Dewi Ratnasari, 2016). The practice of money politics is also very strong in village communities because this action increases participation in village communities.

In rural communities, the influence of money politics is pronounced, leading to well-established efforts by Head of Village candidates to sway village residents during election periods. This practice, aimed at securing votes, is not novel. In the 2023 Head of Village election in Negeri Jemanten Village, five candidates, including the incumbent Head of Village, participated. The abundance of candidates often confuses voters, dampening their interest in the election process. Consequently, Head of Village candidates seize the opportunity to 'buy' votes from disinterested residents. The success team of the Head of

Village initiates this strategy by providing financial incentives to villagers, thereby influencing their choices in favor of the candidates who offered monetary support. The range of money given to prospective voters ranges from Rp. 100,000 to Rp. 200,000. If the practice of money politics occurs regularly, it can be indicated that sovereignty is no longer in the hands of the people but over "money." (Nuratika, 2017), the impact could even become a new problem in the village. Horizontal conflicts have the potential to arise due to fighting over village community votes, where they provide larger numbers than other candidates (Harianto, Rahardjo, & Baru, 2018). Conflicts can also arise because the team is successful in investigating negative things, which will then become rumors among the village community so that they can bring down other Head of Village candidates.

This research digs deeper into money politics in Head of Village elections. The difference between this research and other research is that this research emphasizes the factors driving society to accept money politics. The use of money politics can also give rise to a phenomenon regarding how much support the election success team has so that they can get the people's votes. Although there are other similar studies, this research uses qualitative methods, which will produce more in-depth data.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a Normative Juridical approach. The data collection technique used was purposive sampling. The research subjects were residents of Negeri Jemanten Village who elected the Head of Village because of the money they received. The data collection technique uses interview techniques to obtain in-depth information from the research subjects. Data sources come from primary and secondary data. This research was studied using Alfred Schutz's phenomenology. According to

Schutz, a person's actions are influenced by their biographical situation, so meaning cannot be separated from this.

The use of phenomenology in research is expected to be able to classify, identify, and compare broader models of action but remain as a phenomenon in the formation of an action (Nindito, 2013). Based on Schutz's thinking, it appears that meaning in society can be formed if social relations occur within society itself. Phenomenology also looks at society based on experiences that occur in society (Wita & Mursal, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Perspective on Public Money Politics

This study concluded after conducting interviews with subjects that they considered money politics as commonplace. Money politics itself is considered a tradition. As stated by one of the informants, "distributing money during elections is commonplace." Even the community sees the "commotion" of the money politics game. They can see who will win—from candidates who spend a lot of money to candidates who do not spend any money at all. The money given is intended to take advantage of the community so that they choose the candidate. Money politics does not always provide money directly. In the field, it was found that village head candidates provided basic necessities and invited the community to eat together. The rise of money politics also underlines the high desire of village head candidates to occupy positions, which some people interpret as a form of sincerity. Some people will feel appreciated if they get money because they consider themselves part of the community. Accepting money politics does not have a negative impact on village head candidates so that the community does not reject it. The existence of money politics will also benefit the community economically. The assumption that all candidates are the same, only wanting a position in the eyes of the community, actually makes the community prefer money because, in the end, all candidates spend money to

compete to "buy" votes. Giving money regardless of age means that the targets set are also different. When viewed from the field, older people come more to vote, and it is easier to show their money. This is because the public does not yet know that money politics or giving money to buy people's votes is actually a form of corruption. People who are accustomed to this tradition consider money politics to be a common thing to do.

2. Lack of Public Interest in Elections

Based on the results of interviews with several subjects, it is known that some people actually do not want to participate in the village head election. This is due to several factors, namely that the community is not familiar with the Village Head candidates and the election is held on a weekday. The less than optimal interest of the community also arises because they consider the village head election to be small-scale, so it is not too important, and they assume that many other people must have voted for them. This apathetic nature is also because the community assumes that the village head election does not have an impact on their lives, so it is considered unimportant. Village Head candidates usually come from residents who have lived in the village for a long time, so some people know the Village Head candidates. Unfortunately, some of the immigrant communities, which are quite large in number, do not interact with the existing community. This is because many immigrant communities are only looking for work in the area. The community is also increasingly unfamiliar with the Village Head candidates because the village hall allows Village Head candidates to come from outside the village area. The fairly large area of Negeri Jemanten Village means that its people come from various backgrounds. Based on the results of the interview, the general election was also held on time. The implementation of the general election on a weekday is one of the reasons people do not exercise their right to vote, especially for those who have fixed working hours. The rational view held by the community is that work is more important than the election of the village head, which will not even have a direct impact on their daily lives. The community also assumes that if they participate in this general election, they must take leave only for things that are considered trivial.

3. Receipt of Money to Increase Participation

Less than optimal community participation in participating in elections is caused by several things. The apathetic nature of choosing a Head of Village makes people reluctant to take part in this election. The existence of money politics to attract participation is also familiar to the public. The community can even choose a Head of Village candidate who gives money if they are deemed to have defaulted. The community considers that choosing a village head candidate who gives money is not negligence. The large number of parties who do this is considered to be more beneficial to society, making money politics last for a long time in society. Because people will be able to observe who contributes the most to get their votes, the community views the money distribution process that each candidate's campaign team does as entertaining. The findings of interviews with participants who at first refused to exercise their right to vote showed that, after receiving payment from the Village Head candidate, they ultimately decided to do so. People who are actually native to the village get the money because they feel uncomfortable, which is commonly referred to as "reluctant." This is evident in societies that are divided among native village residents and immigrants. This occurs because they believe they are turning down good fortune, and their biggest fear is that their families will suffer as a result of their refusal to accept money. When you look at the migrant population, who are there because they need a place to live, you can see that they accept money because they are practical. Many believe that the money might be used to replace the time spent traveling to the polling station. Immigrants must miss work because of times that do not correspond with working hours, which may lead to pay reductions.

4. The Role of the Success Team in the Election of Head of Villages

Village head candidates need a success team because a success team makes it easier for Head of Village candidates to carry out campaigns and elections so that the success team gets several benefits. Communities compete to be appointed to the success team because they receive a commission large

enough to support their families. The success team is also selected based on "big names" circulating in society, so that the more prominent the person, the easier it is for other people to listen to them. The success team is tasked with lobbying the community to get their votes. The success team will also conduct a survey to help prospective heads of villages make their new promises. The role of the success team is very important in terms of giving money to the community because it is impossible for the Head of Village candidate to give money directly, so the success team can act as an intermediary between village residents and the Head of Village candidate. The successful team also looks at which people they can influence without turning to their opponents. A successful team must be able to develop strategies to provide money smoothly, either directly or indirectly. Getting people to vote for one candidate is not difficult, especially in villages that are community groups (*gemeinschaft*). This characteristic makes the villagers closer to each other, and their thoughts are not much different. Success in winning the hearts of the community will be easier if the successful team behaves well in front of the community.

5. View of Money Politics Based on Alfred Schutz's Phenomenological Perspective

According to the data analysis's findings, the 2023 Head of Village election turned into a money politics phenomenon during that time. When linked to the theory employed in this study about Alfred Schutz's phenomenology, a meaning arises in the Head of Village election, allowing money politics to "buy votes" from the community. The phenomenon of money politics is a reflection of the reality that exists in society, according to people's experiences with it. From Alfred's point of view, people will take action if provoked. In actuality, this occurs; people go to the polls because they are offered money, even if they had previously refused to go. This also applies for determining a successful team. Many people desire to be a successful team because of the benefits they will receive. The election of heads of villages is a societal practice that occurs when a political period changes. This money politics has become vibrant in order to enliven the Head of Village election; others argue that it has made political conflicts even more fascinating. The general public can

watch and reap additional benefits. Giving money to the community is frequently regarded positively by the community as honoring the community and compensating for community participation. What emerges is that money politics encourages citizen participation in the electoral process. According to Alfred Schutz's phenomenological philosophy, efforts to understand society must involve multiple points of view, and in order to understand society, a person must be a member of that society.

CONCLUSION

The Head of Village election, which is one of the people's democratic parties, includes the practice of money politics. For a candidate, becoming Head of Village means more than just controlling a seat of government; it means bringing a name, self-esteem, and honor. Obtaining this post also requires significant community support. According to this study, the success team also had a significant impact on the selection of the Head of Village. The more visible the successful team members are, the easier the task of "winning the hearts" of the community will become. The success team is heavily involved in distributing money to the community, and in doing so, the success team indirectly buys the community's vote for Head of Village. Traditions that are strongly ingrained in society have resulted in the phenomenon that not contributing money to the community is seen as unusual and less joyous. Money politics can even take the form of fundamental necessities like food. According to this research, anti-corruption education should be pushed in society. If this negative habit is followed every election cycle, it will become progressively difficult to eliminate bad customs from society. In fact, another negative effect that will occur is that the younger generation will copy terrible traditions since they believe money politics is not a bad thing.

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