

# Political Literacy And Money Politics In Indonesia

## *The Phenomena of Money Politics in Jakarta's Local Election on 2017*

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**Abstract-** General election is one of the indicators of democratization alongside the other values of democracy. Beside presidential election, the general local election was also held in Indonesia under the Law No. 32/2004 of Local Government. Adding to that, the government also composed the Law No.22/2007 about the implementation of the general election. The increasing number of civic participation in the local election can be seen from the comparison between the number of voters in 2012 election and the 2017 election. Despite the higher public engagement, money politics has been a prominent phenomenon in several election at the district level. Election Monitoring Institution (or in Indonesia known as *Bawaslu*) found that there are 600 cases of money politics from 101 districts in Indonesia, including the one happened in Jakarta. Regarding these matters, Edward Aspinall used the concept of patronage and clientelism which observe the significant benefits within political elite to distribute something in the form of money or other things to their constituent to get political support. Clientelism encompasses the reciprocal, hierarchical, the repetitional aspects. The society tends to think in a pragmatic way in addressing this issue. During the 2017 local election in Jakarta, the solution that was used to solve money politic issue was by continuously improving the political literacy for the society, especially for the political elites. Receiving money, things or services from the elite that would be exchanged by political right of constituent will break the high values of democratization.

**Keywords-** Jakarta's local election 2017, money politics, political behavior, political literacy.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The atmosphere of democratization that we have felt in Indonesia for about nineteen years has affected the social, political, economic and even religious aspect of our life. In term of social and political life, we can experience the freedom of speech which let us express our opinion and participate in the public sphere. The general election as one of the indicators of democracy has allowed Indonesian vote for their desired candidate and attend the political forum. Beside general election, Indonesia also has the local elections the aim is to find some excellent candidate to be the leader at their respected region and people have the right to cast a vote which is ruled by the Law No.32/2004 about Local Government.

The numbers of political participation in 2017 local election were increased compared to the 2012 election. This increasing number was stated by Indikator Politik Indonesia, which further explained that there are 80.16 percents of voters in 2017 and 64 percents of voters in 2012. [1] Local election is not only about the high political participation, but also the effort to make the election free from the practice of money politics.

There is no exact definition of money politics, even in the law of Local Election. But, Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW) quoted what Bumke said, that there are three types of money politics; vote buying, vote broker, and political corruption. Vote buying can be defined as the exchange of goods, services or money with a vote in the election. [2] Meanwhile, Edward Aspinall used the concept of patronage and clientelism to describe money politics. Patronage means dividing benefit among politicians to distribute something individually toward constituent, worker or campaigner, to get political support from them. Then, patronage is like giving cash, goods, and other economics benefits that distributed by politicians, including the benefit that belongs to an individual or other communities. [3]

Bawaslu (Election Monitoring Institution) found out that in 2017 Indonesia's Local Election, there are 600 cases of money politics. These cases spread out in 101 districts that held a local election, including Jakarta. Many cases indicated as part of money politics in Jakarta's provincial election. Head of Bawaslu found 53 packages of "sembako" (bundle of necessities) on April 2017 in central Jakarta. The packages consist of rice, sugar, and cooking oil. There were also packages that include two bags of coffee powder and books which talked about how to choose a leader. This practices spread out in several districts, such as Menteng, Kampung Bali, Petamburan, Kebon Kacang, and Kebon Melati. Meanwhile, in East Jakarta, at an area named Ciracas, 59 packages of *sembako* consisted of instant noodle, cooking oil, and sugar were distributed to the voters. Authority also found 845 packages of *sembako* containing instant noodle, cooking oil, and sugar were handed out in Cakung. In Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta, 355 packages of *sembako* were ready to be spread out. Also, in West Jakarta, there are three cases of money politics; three truck of *sembako* were found in Kalideres, while another truck was found in Jati Pulo, and lastly at Kebon Jeruk there were 100 packages of *sembako*

distributed to the society. Similar cases were also found in South Jakarta, in the are such as Kalibata and Kalideres. [4]

The phenomena of money politics in Jakarta's local election shows that the political awareness of society needs to be developed. These practices break norms and rules of the democracy, which is done by not only the people but also the elites. According to this phenomenon, there are two questions expected to be answered in this paper. **First**, why money politics still occur in Jakarta's Local Election in 2017? **Second**, how can the political literacy minimize the practice of money politics?

## II. POLITICAL BEHAVIOR AND POLITICAL LITERACY CONCEPT

In this paper, I use the political behavior approach and the concept of political literacy. There are three approaches to find out the constituents' political behavior. The first is sociology approach. In this term, the voter will vote some candidates based on social class, religion, ethnicity, region, and language. The voter will vote a candidate that has the same platform with them. Secondly, physic approach is when the constituent cast their vote when they are interested in the same values or political bond to a particular political party or the political elite in that party. Thirdly, rational choice approach which stated that constituent would vote if they see that candidate can fulfill their basic need, such as the need related to economic life. [5]

Bernard Crick in the *Essays on Citizenship* stated that political literacy is "a compound of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, to be developed together, each one conditioning the other two." [6] The basis of political literacy is the practical understanding of concepts that described from daily life. Political literacy is not only political knowledge but also the way to make society being active in public life and push them to participate actively, either formally or voluntarily. Bernard also said that there is some knowledge that has to be kept in mind in making a literate society. Those are, 1) basic information, about who lead and hold power, where is the money coming from, how institution play a role in the society; 2) how to involve actively by using knowledge and understanding the issue; 3) how to predict the effective way on the issue's solving; 4) how to recognize how good the objectivity of policy that have reached and fix issues; 5) how to understand other people opinion and their justification on their action.

The practice of money politics that happened in Jakarta's local election, show us that the political knowledge of society need to be improved as well as the existing regulation. Law No.10/2016 about Local Election do not regulate strictly about money politics. Rules indicate the punishment for conducting money politics, but do not give a comprehensive understanding of the definition of money politics.

In Article 187 A verse 1, it is stated that *"Each people who are considerably promising or giving cash or any other material as remuneration to Indonesian society, direct or indirectly to influence constituent to use and not to use their*

*right to vote specifically and make it illegal, choose or not to choose specific candidate, may get criminal penalty".*[7]

People have to understand that giving or receiving money from candidates to vote them in the election is breaking the norm of democracy. Beside Law No.10/2016, General Election Commission (or in Indonesia known as KPU) also has set of rules, for instance, Rule No. 12/2016 about the political campaign, which mentions that a candidate who has been proven to do money politics, can be disqualified from the election. Meanwhile, the political party member, volunteer, campaign team can also be threatened by criminal sanction. Above all, societies do not only need to be informed about the rules but also should be given good understanding that money politics will give harmful impact to the implementation of democratization. As for its methodology, this paper combines literature review and qualitative approach to answer the research question.

## III. ANALYSIS ON MONEY POLITICS

According to ICW's surveillance, there is a developing concept of money politics. The target is not only constituents but also the committee of the election. The object includes manipulating the list of constituent and result of the election. The form of money politics as described by Aspinall, occur in Jakarta's local election. In fact, money politics does involve not only cash but also another form of goods and facilities. For instance, one of the candidates that did the campaign in Bangka, South Jakarta, facilitate societies with an ambulance, which at that was needed by that community. This aid then attract people to vote him/her in the election.

Related to this matters in Jakarta's local election, and the questions stated above, some points that can be considered as the reasons for existing practice of money politics.

**First**, recruitment function of the political party is weak. There are four functions of a political party, and one of it is the recruitment function. This function is necessary, as we can see the quality of democracy from this function. If a party has an excellent candidate, the democratic order will also be excellent. The recruitment process still relies more heavily on money and popularity rather than on the candidate's achievement. Hence, this practice itself can be categorized as a form of money politics. According to this recruitment function, the political party's ideology has to be clear. A clear ideology will affect the policy of the party. Geertz in Firmanzah stated that political ideology is the "maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective consciousness". From the sociological perspective, political ideology can be seen as social reality visualization that also awake social awareness. The political issues that influence the plan of a political party have to be a realistic problem that faced by society. Hence, it can awake public's awareness on the fundamental problem faced by the state. [8] In term of this issue, a political party can also show its awareness by choosing a proper candidate and erase the practices of money politics.

**Second**, political literacy needs to be developed. Many people distrust the election candidates. Therefore, a candidate often uses a certain amount of money for the sake of getting the attention and trust from the voters. By this action, the voters feel that they are indebted to the elites. Therefore, they have to choose the candidate in the election. Money politics had a close relationship with the degree of poverty in society. According to the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), the numbers of poverty until March 2016 reach out 28.01 million people or 10.86 percents from the total population of Indonesian people. [9] This condition forces some people to receive the money from a candidate without thinking about the impact of that practices. The practice of money politics in Jakarta's local election reflected rational choice approach in term of political behavior. People tend to vote a candidate if she/he can help social and economic needs. As stated by Saiful Mujani, Liddle and Kuskridho in their books entitled *Kuasa Rakyat*, both constituent and candidate need to have more precise idea about how to avoid money politics.

**Third**, a very little access to government's transparency that relates to the information of financial supporter of the candidates in the election. This kind of openness can be put into an official policy of the government and will help the state to promote a campaign against the practices of money politics.

#### IV. POLITICAL LITERACY AS PROBLEM SOLVING

So, how can the political literacy minimize the practices of money politics? Bernard prefers to use the term 'political literacy' rather than 'political education'. It is because political education can be seen as an instrument, which works toward something that is implemented as the political object. Thus, political education tends to serve as an instrument or a tool. Meanwhile, political literacy is an effort that needs a long process which aims to give the spirit and knowledge of creating a good political culture. It needs a long time to realized good politics, including giving a good understanding about money politics in it. Political literacy is a way to solve or minimize the practice of money politics. Several things that stated by Bernard can be seen in the phenomena of politics in society.

**First**, in term of minimized the practice of money politics, societies have to have a basic information about money politics, the people involved in it, whether there is a collaboration between elite and a candidate, and also seeing the quality of Indonesia's institutions. For instance, the quality of parliament member, whether or not they were chosen

because of the practice of money politics in the campaign that they did in the past.

**Second**, society has to be involved actively, knowing the definition of money politics and understand well the impact of money politics if it still exists in several region or district. When societies understand the effects, they will think twice to receive the money or other goods from a candidate.

**Third**, when the societies know about the definition and the impact of money politics toward democracy through political literacy, they can further think about how to anticipate or solve the problems of money politics.

**Fourth**, the people can assess government's policy which set the scheme of sanction on money politics that will happen in the campaign of local election in 2017.

**Fifth**, without political literacy, it is possible that voters consider money politics as something reasonable. Especially due to the poverty or the existing culture. There is also a popular idea in the society which says "if someone did money politics, take the money and do not vote for him/her." But, as the literate society, we have to consciously believe that it cannot be justified and it will break the norm of democracy.

In the end, political literacy is believed to be an effective way to minimize the practice of money politics. The solution of this money politics in 2017 Jakarta's local election is by continuously improving the political literacy for its people. In the term of political literacy, political elites should be the main actor who understands the impact of money politics toward democracy.

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