



# Democracy Challenges in Lampung Province: Young Voter and Religious Approach in Eradication of Vote Buying

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**Abstract.** Money politics has given rise to unhealthy competition for election participants and has been identified as a cause of increasing corruption. In Indonesia, more specifically in Lampung Province, money politics has always colored the election of regional heads, both governors, regents, and mayors. Serious efforts are needed to prevent the occurrence of money politics against young voters in order to ensure the continuity of democracy in Lampung Province. This qualitative research examines the religious approach as an option to prevent money politics for young voters. Primary data was collected by using in-depth interviews with young voters with religious backgrounds. As a result, a religious approach in preventing money politics can be applied to young voters. The argument is that young voters accept money politics more on the belief that money politics does not conflict with religious teachings and most do not know religious laws about money politics. However, young voters will reject money politics if religion forbids it. It can be identified that young voters have minimal literacy about money politics originating from religion. Thus, the future of democracy in Lampung province will be even more difficult because in addition to young voters who have more opportunities to become voters in the regional head election, they are permissive to money politics, the religious approach that has been carried out by stakeholders through various programs needs to be evaluated.

**Keywords:** Challenges of Democracy · Lampung Province · Young Voters · Money Politics

## 1 Introduction

Democracy is a political system that currently occupies the highest position as a system that is accepted by almost all people in the world because it is considered a way out for resolving disputes over social and political relations. Democracy is able to bridge the interests of society and the state, society with society, and the state with other countries in the world [1]. However, as a system, democracy cannot be separated from its shortcomings. The quality of democracy through free and competitive elections [2] has left

problems. Elections that are the general norm in democracy and have been carried out by more than 90 percent of countries around the world [3] are of poor quality due to clientalism electoral, money politics.

Money politics or vote buying can undermine accountability in a representative political system in a democratic system. If the phenomenon of money politics is allowed to continue for a long time, voters will choose the candidate proposed in the election even though it has poor quality. In a more extreme context, elections can fall into brutal competition where participants use various means to win [4].

In Indonesia, money politics occurs in every election, such as the election of the People's Representative Council, Regional Representative Council, as well as the President and Vice President, as well as the Regional Head Election (Pilkada) to elect governors and deputy governors, regents and deputy regents, or mayors and deputy mayors. Elections since 1999 and thousands of elections have been colored by vote buying. Clientalism electoral process is the main cause of the low quality of democracy in Indonesia [5].

Money politics in the implementation of elections has given rise to unhealthy competition among election participants. In addition, it also causes corruption because money politics has caused an increase in political capital or caused an increase in the cost of winning in every election [6]. Alkotsar stated that corruption carried out by high-ranking officials or what is called political corruption has a more dangerous impact because it is carried out by exploiting the political power of the perpetrators and is intended to enrich themselves, maintain power and status [7]. As a result, a corrupt parliament will produce bad laws, the president will run a corrupt government, and the regional head will manage the government in the region corruptly. In the end, the people are not in control of democracy, and furthermore do not have sovereignty in politics [8].

In Lampung Province Money politics is one of the problems in every general election [9]. The giving of materials and money often occurs in every election [10]. Both elections to elect governors and deputy governors, regents and deputy regents, as well as mayors and deputy mayors. This includes the implementation of elections to elect members of the legislature. For example, in the 2019 election, there were reports of the occurrence of money politics in two regencies and one municipality. Pilkada\_Simultaneously in 2020 it was much more concrete, at the trial of the Election administration violation which was Structured, Systematic, and Massive, the Lampung Province Bawaslu disqualified one of the pairs of candidates for mayor and deputy mayor with the most votes because it was proven to have committed a money politics violation, even though the decision was annulled at the Supreme Court level [12].

The phenomenon of money politics that is increasingly massive and always occurs on the routine agenda of democracy has created concerns about the future of democracy in Indonesia, more specifically in Lampung Province. Moreover, the younger generation who will determine the future of democracy is permissive towards money politics [13]. Various approaches are needed in preventing money politics in order to overcome money politics which will damage democratic life.

Several studies on the prevention of money politics have been carried out and produced several recommendations. Cahyadi in his research concludes that in addition to the legal approach that has been carried out, it is necessary to raise local wisdom originating from various regions in Indonesia [14]. Pahlevi and Amrurrobi put forward the so-called

pre-emptive and preventive efforts. Pre-emptive is meant to make people aware to reject money politics which can be done by making a declaration. The preventive effort is public awareness that is carried out by participating in overseeing the occurrence of money politics as well as opening complaint posts in each village [15]. The study conducted by Nail prevention through regulation has been good, it's just that more intensive socialization and counseling is needed and views the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) as a basis for preventing money politics [16].

The rise of money politics demands that it be resolved immediately for the sake of democracy in Lampung Province. This paper tries to offer the concept of preventing money politics through a religious approach. This research academically proposes a problem formulation of how to approach Can religion be used in overcoming money politics in Lampung Province? It is hoped that through this research an overview of the potential of religious teachings in taking the role of preventing money politics is obtained because it is assumed that there are still many people who do not know religious law in relation to money politics.

## 2 Research Methods

Using qualitative methods, this study took data through interviews with young voters in Lampung Province with a range of 50 people aged 18 to 40 years. Resource persons came from various districts/cities such as Bandar Lampung City as many as 3 people, Metro City as many as 6 people, Pesawaran 1 person, Tanggamus 2 people, Pringsewu 1 person, West Coast 14 people, West Lampung 3 people, Waykanan 4 people, Mesuji 1 person, Tulang Bawang 3 people, Tulang Bawang Barat 5 people, Central Lampung 5 people, East Lampung 1 person, South Lampung 1 person. Because it is a qualitative study, the data were analyzed inductively [17] to provide an overview of young voters and money politics in Lampung Province and the religious approach as an option to prevent money politics for young voters.

## 3 Discussion

### A. *Young Voters and Money Politics in Lampung Province*

Young voters are voters whose ages range from 17 years to 40 years, or who were born between 1982 and 2005. In the 2019 General Election, the young generation aged 20 to 40 years who are included in the Permanent Voters List (DPT) totaled 103,752,226 souls [18]. It is estimated that in the 2024 election, young voters will reach 60 percent of the total number of voters [19].

Such a large number will greatly determine the quality of democracy in Indonesia. As is known, quality elections are influenced by free and competitive elections [20]. Meanwhile, the factors that can affect freedom and fair competition that often surround the implementation of the General Election include money politics. With the power of money, election participants can buy votes and win the election even though they do not have the competence to manage the government or carry out their duties as public

officials. On the other hand, election participants who have experience and ability are eroded and lost in the general election. Finally, many public officials whose victories are supported by financial power and carry out money politics, are ensnared in political corruption.

Public officials such as governors, deputy governors, regents, deputy regents, and mayors and deputy mayors continue to increase in number who deal with the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). Based on KPK records, there were 22 governors and 148 regents/mayors who were prosecuted from 2004 to January 2022. Meanwhile, according to the records of Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) the number of regional heads arrested for corruption has reached 253 [21]. Money politics has become a poison in democracy [22]. Voters from the low to high income segment accept money politics, as well as voters with higher education qualifications to low education permissive to giving money or goods from interested candidates [23].

In Lampung Province in terms of money politics, it is not much different from other areas that are prone to money politics. One of the factors of the existence of money politics in Lampung Province is that the people still want to accept money politics. Pilkada participants will continue to give money or other materials because there are still people who receive it. Plus, similar incidents occurred from Election to Election and Pilkada to Pilkada. For example, the politics of money in the form of giving sugar to the public took place in the 2014 Pilkada. The Election Organizers Honorary Council (DKPP) through a trial with case number 25/DKPP-PKE-III/2014 found the fact that in Lampung Province there was money politics called the term "sugar politics" because of the large amount of sugar distributed to the public [24]. In 2018 the election of the governor and deputy governor of Lampung in 2018 there were 50,000 rupiah notes distributed to the public to vote for certain candidates [25].

A year later, in the 2019 Election, several reports reached the Lampung Province Bawaslu regarding the discovery of envelopes containing money and cooking oil distributed by the successful team of legislative candidates from various parties. Both parties claiming to be nationalists and parties with religious ideology [26]. Money politics also surrounds the simultaneous regional elections which will be held on December 9, 2020. The case of alleged violations of money politics in 2020 occurred in a structured, systematic, and massive manner, until it was tried by the Lampung Province Bawaslu and was declared proven. The pair of candidates for mayor and deputy mayor of Bandar Lampung, one of them of those who were reported in the case were disqualified as candidates. Even though at the trial at the Supreme Court the Bawaslu decision was annulled and the candidate pair for mayor and deputy mayor of Bandar Lampung who had previously been excluded from the candidacy, was determined as a candidate, and automatically won the Pilkada because they received the most votes.

Previously, the implementation of the election in Lampung Province in the 2019 election was predicted to be colored by money politics. In the 2019 Election Vulnerability Indicators published by Bawaslu in a socio-political context in which there is also a sub-dimension of money politics Lampung Province is included in the area that has a level of vulnerability that must be watched out for [27]. Then in its implementation, it was proven that there were many envelopes in the 2019 general election containing money [26]. Likewise, Lampung Province on paper based on the 2020 Simultaneous Election

Vulnerability Index, the Regency/City holding the Pilkada is still surrounded by issues of giving money, services, or goods to voters during the campaign and calm periods. As a [28] result, some of them became the Reported Party at the trial for administrative violations of a TSM nature, such as what happened in Bandar Lampung.

Then what about young voters in Lampung Province? This study interviewed 50 (fifty) young voters ranging in age from 18 to 40 years. The speakers are spread over several areas which include Bandar Lampung as many as 3 people, Metro City as many as 6 people, Pesawaran 1 person, Tanggamus 2 people, Pringsewu 1 person, West Coast 14 people, West Lampung 3 people, Waykanan 4 people, Mesuji 1 person, Tulang Bawang 3 people, Tulang Bawang Barat 5 people, Central Lampung 5 people, East Lampung 1 person, South Lampung 1 person.

Of the 50 resource persons/informants interviewed, 11 people or around 22 percent who were asked for their opinion on money politics stated that they would accept gifts of money and goods from election participants/elections at the upcoming democratic party. The permissiveness of interviewed young voters towards money politics is due to several reasons. Included in this research is the receipt of money, materials and services. Young voters who stated that they would receive money or goods from election participants and regional head elections had several reasons that underlie them in deciding to accept money politics, namely:

First, because they do not know the prohibition of money politics [29]. This reason became the most widely used by informants. They accept money because it is not based on knowledge of the laws of money politics. Both state law and religious law. There are still many people who are indifferent about money politics. It is not surprising that people do not know how the law of money politics is, even regarding the purpose of money politics, there are still people who do not know it [30].

Second, still accept even though they know it is prohibited [31]. This reason is concerned with the material and does not heed the existence of legal norms, both religious legal norms and positive legal norms. Although highly educated (bachelor), the need for money has turned a blind eye to legal problems that may be faced. This finding further strengthens that the factor of higher education or young voters with higher education does not guarantee to reject money politics [32].

Third, money politics or giving money from participants in the General Election and Regional Head Election is alms [33]. This reason is different from the first reason although at some point it has similarities. The similarity, for example, lies in their ignorance of religious law and state law that accepts money politics as a prohibition. The difference side is that if the first reason is because they don't know anything at all and make a decision to accept money politics, the second reason is that they don't know religious law and state law but believe money politics as alms and decide to accept it. This habit arose as a result of the large number of election contestants and participants Pilkada conducts money politics in the form of giving money or materials to the community wrapped in social activities [34]. As in the Pandemic period leading up to the 2020 Pilkada, many incumbent candidates who distributed social assistance included their identities in the aid packages which, according to Bawaslu members, could be criminalized and totally unjustified [35].

Fourth, religion does not regulate money politics. One of the informants expressed his opinion that religion does not regulate money politics [36]. Literally this opinion can be understood because there is no term money politics in the holy books of various religions in Indonesia. In this context, because the informant is a religious person, there is no term money politics in his holy book. However, when referring to the research conducted by Zen (2015), money politics is equated with bribery, the law of which is haram. Both the people who are the recipients and the campaign team or the candidate's success team who give it get sin [37]. Money politics is prohibited in religious law and legislation because it has a very broad (negative) impact on people's lives and the economy [38].

The five young voters received money if there was no obligation or contract to choose the giver. The reason was emphasized on the absence of conditions to choose a candidate pair after receiving money or goods. If the success team or the campaign team requires selecting a certain candidate after giving him money, it will be rejected [39]. The problem is that there are many motives for money politics so that prospective voters accept and choose candidates who are promoted or promoted by the success team and the campaign team without mentioning the necessity to vote after receiving the money/goods. Such practices are common, such as placing a card with a specific pair being promoted in an envelope containing money or a plastic bag containing basic necessities without an invitation to vote. It can also be in a non-coercive expression but has been widely known by prospective voters to choose that particular candidate and the goods/money are handed over by the success team of a particular pair.

Sixth, Take the money do not choose the candidate [40]. Young voters realize that money politics is something that is prohibited, both in religious law and in existing laws and regulations. However, they still take the money because they believe that between receiving money and choosing a candidate who gives money, it is different from receiving money and not choosing a candidate. In a sense, accepting money and choosing a candidate is considered a mistake, on the other hand accepting the money but not choosing the giver is a step that is considered appropriate. Young voters think that taking the money and not choosing the giver is a form of teaching the person concerned [41].

#### *B. Religious Approach in Preventing Money Politics in Lampung Province*

Religion is one of the options to prevent money politics from happening in Indonesia, especially in Lampung Province. Religion is expected to be a strong bulwark in resisting the attacks of money politics from politicians that will undermine democracy. Through religious observance, one can do something or not do something consciously and without coercion, not because it is supervised by parties such as Bawaslu in the context of money politics. If a teenager has a concept in his mind about religious teachings and then believes in its truth, it will bring his mind to a better direction [42]. This is supported by a survey conducted by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC), who found that as many as 84 percent of people consider religion in making decisions, because Indonesian people in general state that religion is important in their lives [43]. Likewise, if the concept of money politics that is prohibited in religion is conveyed and then believed by teenagers, then money politics will disappear.

Some of the attitudes of young voters in Lampung Province towards money politics are indeed permissive. As many as 11 out of 50 young voters who became informants stated that they would accept money, goods, or services provided by the success team and the campaign team in the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Head Elections and 2024 General Elections. Young voters in their attitude of accepting money related to religious law are divided into three namely: first, have never heard of religious teachings regarding the prohibition of money politics and will reject money politics if religious teachings forbid it [44]. This group of young voters believes that religious teachings are very important, including influencing the decision to receive money. So far, because of their ignorance of the religious prohibition, the sources received all kinds of gifts from candidates and campaign teams. This finding complements the conclusion of research conducted by Pahlevi and Amrurrobi which states that many people have understood that money politics is the same as bribery which is prohibited by religion and moreover it will have a negative impact on policy making that is detrimental to society [45].

The second group is that they have never heard of a religious prohibition and will continue to accept money politics even though religious teachings forbid It [46]. This group can be identified as young voters who do not care about religious teachings, especially regarding the giving of money or materials from candidates or campaign teams. The young voters' answer that they will remain permissive towards money politics has closed the space for religious teachings to change their perceptions and actions towards money politics. His openness to money politics is not caused by factors such as poverty or low education as found in previous research [47]. However, it is more about taking advantage of the opportunity to obtain money or goods as an inseparable part of the activities of the fast-paced democracy.

Third, have listened to religious prohibitions and will continue to accept money politics [48]. This group has similarities as well as differences with the second group. The point of similarities is that they will continue to accept money politics, while the difference lies in their knowledge of religious teachings regarding money politics. The second group did not know, while the third group knew about the religious law regarding money politics.

When examined as a whole, the majority of informants who reject money politics have something to do with their knowledge of religion which prohibits them from accepting money politics. As many as 26 interviewees stated that they had listened to lectures or knew about the prohibition of religion on money politics from various media. Consistently these sources will reject money politics because of religious teachings that have prohibited it. Among them there are those who believe that money politics will reduce the blessing of wealth and cause misery in life.

However, it is also important to pay attention to young voters who have never received a lecture or gained any knowledge of religious teachings that prohibit money politics. Eleven out of 50 interviewees admitted that they did not know about the prohibition of religion on money politics. However, when asked about their attitude towards money politics, if they knew that religion had prohibited it, they would reject it. This also confirms that so far the religious approach that has been carried out has not touched the younger generation. Although on the other hand there is still a positive side because

they still reject money politics due to knowledge of money politics from knowledge of politics and law—sanctions for recipients of money politics.

## 4 Conclusion

Based on the exposure and analysis carried out, it can be concluded that the relationship between young voters and money politics is quite dynamic. Young voters who are still permissive towards money politics are caused by one of them, the lack of knowledge about religious teachings, especially about money politics. This study strengthens the findings of SMRC which states that Indonesian people are religious and consider religion in making decisions. However, in Lampung Province the future of democracy is still at stake because there are still young voters who have a pragmatic view in dealing with money politics, such as being permissive even though religion forbids it. However, using a religious approach as a prevention strategy against money politics needs attention and needs to be implemented immediately. There are still many young voters who do not know religious teachings about money politics, and the reason they reject money politics so far is due to a lack of knowledge about politics and the law regarding the impact and consequences of money politics. punishment for the perpetrators of money politics—the giver and the receiver.

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