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Money Politics vs. Political Cost; Enforcing and Honest Democracy

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Abstract

Elections require costs, because there are a number of expenses to succeed during the campaign, this is what is referred to as political costs. In addition to political costs, a phenomenon arises in the current democratic system in Indonesia, prevalently called by money politics. There were many cases of campaign violations that used money politics to get as many votes as possible. The purpose of writing this article is to explain the political costs and money politics in the process of democracy in Indonesia especially in the electoral district of South Sumatra 1. In addition, the study wanted to describe how persuasive political communication can be a strategy for low cost campaign but still effective to gain a lot of votes. This is a qualitative using the case study method. The subject of this study was the elected legislators during the period of 2014-2019 with a significant vote acquisition in their electoral district of South Sumatra 1. The results of the study showed that not all electoral participants practiced money politics, evidently there were successful candidates for the South Sumatra electoral district 1 without money politics, even only with low to moderate costs of politics. The legislative candidate for the South Sumatra electoral district 1 in his campaign carried out persuasive political communication as a campaign strategy. The candidates apply two main strategies; direct communication towards constituents and using an opinion leader (Opinion Leader). The communication patterns applied are face to face with constituents, as well as using mass media.

Keywords: Money Politic, Cost Politic, Democracy, Campaign

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the Problem

Elections are a way of political participation for all citizens and an absolute prerequisite for a country that adopts a democratic system. Citizens' political participation is a major foundation for the creation of a democratic climate. (Verba, Scholzman and Brad, 1995). Elections are a means for a country to show that there is a democratic process in choosing members of the board and president. In Indonesia, democracy is represented by people's representatives in the parliament building, this parliament officially called by the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia or commonly abbreviated to the DPR RI.

Referring to Surbakti (1992: 181) elections are defined as the mechanism of selecting and delegating or handing over sovereignty to people or parties that are trusted. While the notion of elections as stated in Law Number 8 of 2012 article 1 paragraph (1) is a means of exercising people's sovereignty in The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The purpose of the

General Election according to Prihatmoko (2003: 19) is: "First, as a mechanism for selecting government leaders and alternative public policies. Second, the election as a transfer of conflicts of interest from the community to the people's of representative bodies through elected representatives or parties that win seats so that community integration is guaranteed. And thirdly, elections as a tools of mobilization, or gathering popular support for the state and government by participating in the political process ".

Some people assume that joining political contestation is something that requires a very large cost. So it is common notion in the community that when a legislative candidate wins the election, the statement that emerges is "if you have money, you are the winner." In contrast, if someone is not elected, the statement will appear differently, but still has the same intention "what a pity, you must've spent a lot of money for the election." This seems to indicate that the nomination and victory in the election is solely about money. It might not a mistake entirely if such assumption arises in the minds of the people. Because winning the election requires a budget, and it is common called by political cost. These political costs are used during the campaign process, such as making campaign facilities in the form printed media such as posters, banners, etc. Also a face-to-face campaign to audiences which certainly requires transportation and accommodation costs.

It is interesting to see from one of the electoral districts in South Sumatera that has quite complete election dynamics. The South Sumatra electoral district is inseparable from areas where many violations have been reported. Some violations that are widely discussed by the media are vote markup, administration, and abuse of authority by the election organizers. This is certainly related to the ability of certain parties to "sacrifice" more and extra effort to win the election. In addition to the negative problems, the South Sumatra electoral district also presented a number of elected candidates with positive achievements during the election. Its success in several ways, namely the ability to identify environmental problems in the electoral district, offering solutions as stimulus campaigns, low-cost campaigns and far from the practice of money politics and intimidation. As one of the elected candidates for 2014-2019 electoral district Sumsel 1 said, the campaign can be carried out at a cost that is not so big, as long as using the appropriate approach.

Based on the trends of the election winners, ideology becomes the main message element which become a factor in voter behavior. But in overall, of course, in winning elections, political parties must be able to win the sympathy of the voters by accommodationg their wishes. Voters' hope for a political party is in the form of the party's purpose of struggle, goals and actions taken by the party in addressing daily developments and issues. Parties must be able to design programs that have a common vision with their voters. The party's program design and actions must reflect the wishes of the voting community.

Indeed it must be recognized on some parties that there are blemishes in democracy, so it is often interpreted that democracy creates wealthy leaders who can buy votes. The researchers wanted to respon to this challenge through this research. It is hoped that this research will reveal clearly how the precise persuasive approach of candidates and appropriate legislative members in gaining voters' votes can influence political preferences of voters. It is hoped that this research can bridge the gap of previous research and change the paradigm of stakeholders in the political world by preparing natural approaches and setting aside unfair money politics practices and tarnishing democracy.

This is also a concern of many parties both from within and outside the country as written by the following reuter:

"Indonesia - the world's third-largest democracy - has some of the worst money politics in Southeast Asia, according to researchers. Handouts of cash and gifts, anti-graft advocates and politicians say, lead to rampant corruption in its national legislature as successful candidates recoup their election expenses, and more, once elected" (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-election-corruption/pushing-the-envelope-money-politics-mars-indonesian-poll-idUSKCN1RN06T>)

1.2 The Objective of research

The purpose of writing this article is to explain the money politics and the political costs in Indonesia's democratization process, specifically in the electoral district of South Sumatra 1. In addition, this study also wants to illustrate how persuasive political communication can be a strategy in campaigning with low political costs but succeeding in gathering large number of voters.

The South Sumatra electoral district 1 was chosen because of a number of elected legislative candidates from the region did not have huge political costs. They did not practice money politics but succeeded in gaining the most votes and qualifying to become a member of the council. It is hoped that this case can have a positive impact on candidates and voters to have a healthy democracy by choosing someone based on their vision and mission and not just because they give money.

1.3 Describe Relevant Scholarship

Communication Campaigns as a Form of Persuasive Communication

Communication campaign is a process of individual or group communication activities carried out in an institutionalized and aims to create a certain effect or impact. The following are some definitions of communication campaigns: (Venus, 2004: 7). 1. Rogers and Storey (1987) define the Campaign as "a series of planned communication actions with the aim of creating a certain effect on a large number of audiences that are carried out sustainably over a certain period of time."

Political campaigns prioritize the communication process between candidates (candidates) and constituents. Sympathetic communication or persuasive communication is the most effective type of communication specifically in politics to influence the audiences. Persuasive communication refers to Soemirat's statement, (2012: 5.35) that the main purpose of persuasive communication is to influence others by changing the beliefs, values or nature of the target. Thus, the content of persuasive messages seeks to conditioning, strengthening or make changes to target responses. Therefore, there are three persuasive goals, that is (a) helping responses, (b) reinforcing responses, and (c) changing responses.

Every form of communication has obstacles, so does persuasive communication. In order to run the persuasive communication effectively between the candidates and their constituents to, the communicator or persuader or the candidate must have positive credibility in the eyes of his constituents. Persuaders should have a positive self-image.

Political Communication Process

Political communication is basically a part of communication. The process also refers to the communication process components. Harold Laswell formulates components in the communication process, it is known as the Lasswell formula; "Who says what to whom in which channel with what effect," based on this formula, the components in the communication process are; Communicators, Messages, Communicators, Media, Effects.

What distinguishes political communication from other communication is seen from the actors involved in the communication process and the message delivered. Actors in political communication are;

1. Political communicators consist of individuals, groups, institutions or countries
2. Political messages such as campaigns, propaganda
3. Political communication, covers the small scope of society and the general public

From the explanation that has been described, it can be concluded that the process of political communication is the process of delivering political messages relating to power, government, and government policy by political

actors to the communicant through the media or channels of political communication so that it causes certain effects and feedback from the communicant.

Cost of Politics and Money Politics

Political cost or cost of politics and money politics is a term that often appears in democratic parties in any country including Indonesia. These two terms have different meanings. Political costs in an election campaign are clearly needed, an activity including a campaign requires costs, such as the cost of making banners, posters, advertisements, and others. This includes travel costs from one region to another. Whereas money politics is buying people's votes by giving a certain amount of money to voters. The contextual understanding of these two terms must be distinguished to avoid misconception of using these two terms.

"Money politics can literally be interpreted as an exchange in a simple economic sense, it may have meaning in different cultural contexts, but the commercialization of this aspiration refers to the offer of particular profit to the voters by selling their votes according to market ideas where the process exchange also becomes a political conception that money becomes a facility of change (Ahmad, 2015: 3)."

"Political costs (cost of politics) is the price that must be incurred for politics such as purchasing campaign attributes, ordering party flags, shirts, or success team uniforms, etc. (Ariani, 2018: 137)".

Money politics emerged for the first time in Indonesia during the elections period in 2004 where the direct elections were started. According to experts there are several reasons that causes money politics in legislative elections as summarized by Taufiq (in Hariyani, 2014: 179), as follows;

- a. Open Proportional System. This system is considered the most ideal, can create a climate of competition among fellow candidates in one party, and is considered more democratic.
- b. Political de-idealization. Thohari (2014) reviews the origins of the shift of ideological politics to non-ideological politics oriented to problem solving and pragmatism.
- c. Mental materialism & consumerism is getting stronger. According to Firmanzah (2008), money politics occurs because all elements involved in political affairs consider material importance. Both voters and contestants emphasize the material aspects, so everything must be cashed in and made into objects.
- d. Lack of communication between political parties and the constituents. Asrinaldi (2014) argues that the rise of money politics is caused by the misslead pattern of communication between political parties and the community; political communication began to bustle and rush only during the moment of campaign period some months before the election. After the election, the people were left behind and there was no communication at all, it because people became allergic and think that the ideas and ideology of political parties not more than a camouflage. As a result, transactional relations (votes equal to money) are the only approaches used by the community.
- e. Politicians use money to mobilize support.
- f. Poor regulation of political party financial management. In Indonesia, the regulation of campaign funds is stated in the Law No. 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government. The Law contains restrictions on election fund contributions. However, according to Badoh (2010), the arrangements are unclear and easily misused.
- g. The election is perceived as a celebration.
- h. Permissive attitude of the public towards money politics. The fertility of money politics is inseparable from the perspective of voters who are permissive of money politics

(Quoted from the Scientific Journal of Communication | MEANING Vol. 6 no. 2, August 2015-January 2016)

When we see from the voter's point of view, if it refers to an explanation of the behavior of the voters in general, it can be divided into two orientations at once, that is; (1) orientation of the 'policy-problem-solving' and (2)

orientation of the 'ideology.' When voters appraise evaluate a political party or a contestant in terms of 'policy-problem solving,' the most important thing for them is the extent to which the contestants are able to offer a work program for a solution to an existing problem.

2. Method

The research use a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is used in research when someone tries to interpret reality and tries to build a theory based on what is experienced. The qualitative approach emphasizes the meaning, reasoning, definition of a particular situation (in certain contexts), more researching matters relating to daily life. A qualitative approach, moreover, places more importance on the process than the final result; therefore the sequence of activities can vary depending on the condition and the number of symptoms found. The purpose of research is usually related to things that are practical.

To examine the problem to be more specific, the qualitative approach used by researchers refers more to the type of case study research. Case Study is a series of scientific activities carried out intensively, in detail and in-depth about a program, event, and activity, both at the individual level, a group of people, institutions, or organizations to gain in-depth knowledge about the event (Rahardjo 2017: 5). The researchers use the types of descriptive case study, in this type of case study all conclusions will be described with a description that is associated with theory and findings.

The subjects of this study were elected legislators in the 2014-2019 period with a significant vote acquisition in the electoral district (dapil) of South Sumatra 1, with the use of minimum/ low (effective and efficient) campaign funds, as well as attractive persuasion communication.

3. Finding

From the explanation of the candidates who became informants in this study, all are agreed that cost of operation for campaigning is a must, the costs incurred depend on the needs and strategies of each. All informants in this study agreed not to use money politics. Money politics is a democratic flaws. A persuasive approach using social and cultural capital is more effective than distributing money to constituents.

*"Do not just rely on money politics, but rather promote clean democracy, such as ideas, missions and visions rather than 'promises for sale' and distribute money to the public"*¹

That is how Erza explained his opinion on money politics in campaigning. In line with Erza, Junaidi as the othe candidates argues as follows:

*"I approached my constituents persuasively. I don't want to play money, at the most I give gimmicks according to the needs of the people who are my target voters. And I don't want direct money instead, I don't practice politics that relies on cash."*²

The types of voters according to Firmanzah quoted by Hariyani (Journal of Meaning of 2016) can be divided into;

- Rational Voters. Having a characteristic which is not too much concerned about the ideology of a party or a contestant.
- Critical Voters. This type of voter will always analyze the links between the party's value system (ideology) and the policies that will be made.
- Traditional Voters. Voters of this category have a very high ideological orientation and don't really see the policies of a political party or a contestant as something important in decision making.
- Skeptical Voters. Skeptical voters are voters who do not have a high enough ideological orientation with a political party or contestant.

¹ Interview with informan, Ezra.

² Interview with informan, Junaidi.

Based on these categories, if we relate to the case study of voters in South Sumatra, there is a distribution of all categories. Voter characteristics are the main concern of candidates in conducting outreach and communicating with constituents. What's interesting is that based on interviews with constituents in the city of Palembang, a description of the constituents' perceptions and opinions about money politics was obtained.

Voters in Palembang do not care about the candidate handing out cash during campaigns or dawn attacks. For them, they will receive the money given, but choosing candidates is another thing, they only choose in accordance with their expectations.

*"People are smart now, bro, it is not easy to be lured in with money, if the candidates are factually proven and have good performance, capable of fighting for the interests of small people, we will definitely choose them."*³

Another opinions of other informants from the mothers group are as follows;

*"Our residence was once visited by the candidate's 'success team' in the previous legislative election, they distributed groceries and cash and given for free. However, the candidate did not win in our region."*⁴

The people's opinion in the city of Palembang shows that money politics is no longer popular. The Palembangness people in urban areas are quite smart and educated to distinguish between good candidates who can meet the expectations of the community and those who don't. Likewise the people in the village or in the countryside, on average they already have a certain party ideology, the people here are in the category of traditional voters, they vote for their party, candidate figures are not a priority. If in certain regions the ideology is PDIP, then it is certain that candidates from this party is the winner, as well as in other regions that have cultural closeness to ideology and religion.

Opinion from the expert of political communication regarding money politics in the campaign according to Umaimah Wahid, said that:

*"It is undeniable that until now there are still parties who are conducting campaigns with money politics. Although some of our society is no longer easily seduced by money or goods. it may still be effective in some areas, but in general money politics has had no effect on the voters' choices"*⁵

Furthermore, Umaimah explained about the phenomenon of politicians in Indonesia who were still using unsportsmanlike methods in winning votes. In addition, to negative campaign money politics also still often occurs. For this reason Umaimah suggested the need for political education for all groups. Political education is not only for the community, it is important that political education is given to legislative candidates and the success team.

The public is even more aware of and understand if they are used as tools for the political interests of power. Communities in the regions have become even smarter with negative campaign practices. In fact, politicians or the candidates who still continue to do money politics, they underestimate their constituents intentionally. The candidates must know the constituents in depth so that the political costs incurred are not in vain. Political costs can be use in proper way and wisely.

4. Discussion

Successful Candidates With Low Political Costs.

Successful candidates intensively use more direct persuasive communication strategies, and the media set as supporting tools only. It can be said that the success of a legislative candidate does not need a large cost, the use

³ Interview with Fajrul, a Palembang resident who works as a security guard at a restaurant.

⁴ Interview with the group of mothers in Musholla, the Palembang City Mall,

⁵ Interview with political expert, Umaimah Wahid at C'Now Café on Monday, February 18, 2019 at 13:00.

of media both mass media and media certainly requires a substantial additional cost. One way to reduce the cost of political and campaigning done by successful candidates is through direct communication that is done very intensively. Psychologically the community feels more appreciated by direct meeting in person. Communication can go both ways so that the public will know more in advance about the candidates which they will choose later.

Direct campaigns as well as by using media need to pay attention to the message to be conveyed. Based on the analysis and research findings of candidates who managed to package the messages based on the issues that are developing in their area. Differences in social issues are a concern in conveying messages containing the candidates' programs. Like Mardiansyah for example, he focuses on land acquisition cases, how the system is, the applicable law, and so on. The message he delivered at the same time educated people who did not know about it. Another case with Sujarwoto and Budiarto Masrul, they pack messages about health and family welfare, because their constituents are housewives.

The message in the campaign really needs to be considered, understanding messages and strategies during political campaigns is a very important area because the purpose of campaign messages is to help candidates distinguish themselves from the other candidates.

The differences in content of messages and media used by each successful and unsuccessful legislative candidate is a characteristic of each. The differences make it easier for constituents to determine their choices during the election because this is the way where the constituents understand the vision and mission of each candidate.

5. Conclusion

Basically, a democratic party certainly requires costs, in legislative candidates campaign also incur costs, this is what is referred to as political costs. Political costs are legal and reasonable in an election event. In contrast to money politics, is buying people's votes by giving a certain amount of money to voters, this is illegal and violates rules in the democratic system.

Conclusions from the results of this study:

1. All candidates agreed that there is a need for political costs to launch the campaign process. Not all election participants carry out money politics; this is evidenced and proven fact through this research. There are candidates for South Sumatra electoral district 1 who managed to succeed without any money politics, even with only low to moderate political costs.
2. Legislative candidates for the Electoral District of South Sumatra 1 in their campaigns carry out persuasive political communication as a campaign strategy. The candidates applied two main strategies; first of all, directly communicating with constituents and second of all, by using an opinion leader. The direct communication pattern is used by face to face with constituents, as well as using mass media.
3. The message in the campaign is an important issue that gives rise to positive perceptions of the voters or constituents, this perception continues to be built by the persuader so that it sticks to the minds of the people who was persuaded. If trust has arisen in the target community, then it can be ascertained that the community has been persuaded, whose hope will also be to elect candidates who were carried out during the general election.

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