
Uncovering Young Voters' Participation in Money Politics in General Elections

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ABSTRACT: Participating in election activities through voting alone, has captured the slogans in the campaign. However, sometimes public participation is based on money politics during elections. Young voters are alleged to have a considerable contribution in voting. This study aims to identify and analyze the existence of money politics that can encourage participation from young voters in general elections. This research method uses a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. The source of data obtained comes from literature studies, so the data is obtained from reports or information from existing research results. Data analysis of this research uses Context Review, Historical Review, Theoretical Review, Integrative Review, Methodological Review, and Theoretical Review. The results and discussion are that people only hunt for rent by approaching candidates and parties ahead of elections in order to get money politics. Followed by identification and analysis of forms of political participation. The conclusion is that the forms of participation of the younger generation in the form of voting, political discussions, and campaigns still use money politics. But in building and following interest groups and individual communication to political or administrative officials there is no money politics.

KEYWORDS: Participation, Young Voters, General Election, Money Politics

INTRODUCTION

General elections use a healthy democracy based on quality, fairness and transparency to prove political expectations through the selection of leaders to represent the interests of society. Elections are a process that involves public participation to elect leaders and representatives in a democratic manner. It is important to maintain integrity in elections by involving public participation so that the government has a good democracy and is responsive and accountable (Gokma T & Gultom, 2023). Democratic elections have been written in the 1945 Constitution Article 22E Paragraph 1 of the third Amendment concerning general elections conducted in a Luber Jurdil or direct, general, free, secret, honest and fair manner every five years. Elections as a means of popular sovereignty in electing representatives of state institutions that will make public policy. Elections are functionally a space for politics to control accountability and political authority. So it can be said that elections are a mechanism to demand accountability from politicians. The importance of perspective in ensuring that every citizen is able to defend themselves so that their interests can be conveyed through politics. Politics as a forum for sovereignty produces the best politicians to fight for the interests of their people.

Voting during elections is a form of political participation that is more in accordance with the laws that have been applied in the country of Indonesia. The rules regarding participation have been determined in the 2012 Law No.8 Article 247 point one regarding community participation in the form of election socialization, political education to voters, surveys or polls regarding elections, and quick calculations on election results are required to follow the provisions set by the KPU (General Election Commission). Further provisions have been regulated in KPU regulations regarding community participation in organizing elections. The word participation is taken from the English language, namely Participation, which means taking part or participation. Participation is something that is related to a person's participation in an activity or playing a role in it. Participation can be a form of cooperation given to a party if that party is carrying out an activity (Kusmanto, 2014). The freedom of the people to exercise political participation is a measure to express a country's democracy.

Participating in election activities through voting alone, has captured the slogans in the campaign. Where people have assisted in the election, helped to place votes, helped to seek support from candidates, and their actions also influence the outcome of the examination. Elections are essentially participation that is done collectively in a conventional manner (Anggraini, 2019). However, sometimes public participation is based on money politics during elections. According to Sudijono Sastroatmodjo (1995), money politics is an attempt to bribe voters by providing services or money so that the preference of voters' votes can be given to *paslon* (candidate pairs). Money politics becomes a tool to create a voter who is favorable to the candidate who gives the money. The term money politics is used to disguise the word vote buying.

Uncovering Young Voters' Participation in Money Politics in General Elections

The results of the Burhanudin Muhtadi survey (2013), that there is a level of tolerance from voters in the election becomes natural when dealing with money politics. Even people who live in villages are very vulnerable to being targeted by money politics in order to vote for the paslon (candidate pair) that has been offered. Participation in the 2015 simultaneous regional elections was relatively high in Dharmasraya Regency, reaching 72.90%. One of the causes was the discovery of money politics in the 2015 Pilkada in Dharmasraya Regency which could not be avoided. This can be seen from the discovery of individuals from the RT (neighborhood association) who distributed money to the community. The acquisition of the most votes was held by the Sutan Rizka candidate with a total of 83% which was very far from the other candidates, the percentage can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Composition of Community Choices Based on The Candidate Pair Chosen

Pilihan	Persentase
Sutan Rizka Kerajaan / Amrizal	83 %
Adi Gunawan / Jonsosn Putra	14 %
Tidak Memilih	3 %
Jumlah	100 %

Source: Mery Anggraini (2019)

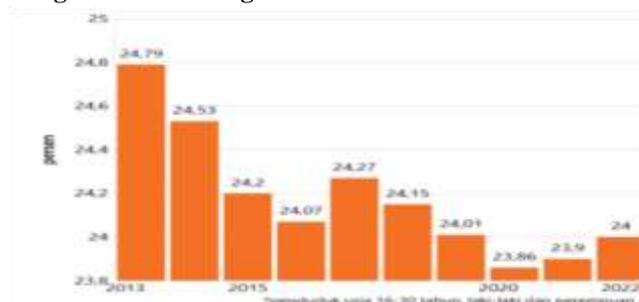
Money politics has certain objectives such as protecting political or business interests and is used to buy the support of political parties or buy their votes to elect these candidates. Political money donations given as funding needs for election candidacy also require a large enough amount. Money politics is realized in the form of distributing envelopes containing money given to its targets. There are envelopes that are distributed with symbols, either in the form of pictures or numbers from political parties or candidates. Through the symbols given to voters, they are considered to have understood to associate political party candidates. Money politics is not only in the form of money but can also be in the form of physical assistance and campaign support for candidates. Food and material benefits provided by the party are considered as compensation given to them in choosing candidates from the party (Erviyanto, 2017).

Party money politics to buy votes from voters has systematically targeted certain groups based on their socioeconomic characteristics. The poor are used as an important source in money politics to cast their votes. The probability of political parties exploiting the material needs of voters who have been given money in exchange for their votes. People who have a small economy and low education are the main targets of politics because it is expected that they will be more responsive if the rewards can be used for their daily needs. The impact of money politics in vote buying can distort the spirit of democratic elections. Democratic elections are supposed to foster relationships between voters and parties on the basis of programs and not on the basis of material exchange. This practice also creates an imbalance between those who have access to shared material resources (the powerful) and those who do not. Democracy should have an equal impact on all individuals on political outcomes but the effects of money politics have a large impact on political outcomes (Chandra & Ghafur, 2020).

The election target has been written in the Regulation of the General Election Commission of the Republic of Indonesia No.10/2018 article 5, that the target of election socialization is novice voters, young voters, the general public, and so on. If voters are viewed from the year of birth, the birth of Generation Z in 1997-2012, Generation Y or Millennials born in 1981-1996, Generation X born in 1967-1980 and 1946-1964 are known as Baby Boomers. In addition, the birth year between 2010-2011 to the present is called Generation Alpha.

In the 2024 elections, 33.60% of the people from the Millennial Generation were registered, 22.85% of the people from Generation Z, and in total, 56.45% of the people were dominated by the Millennial Generation and Generation Z (Muhamad, 2023). Based on databoks (2023), that almost a quarter of the percentage of Indonesia's population in 2013-2022 is youth. The results of the National Socio-Economic Survey of the Central Bureau of Statistics in March 2022, as many as 68.82 million Indonesians fall into the youth category.

Figure 1. Percentage of Youth in Indonesia in 2013-2022



Source: databoks (2023)

Uncovering Young Voters' Participation in Money Politics in General Elections

Young voters aged 17-29 years, some of the young voters are novice voters aged 17-21 years and the first time voting in elections. So it is necessary to increase participation in elections so that novice voters and young voters can understand various things related to elections. Included in the youth generation who still have high curiosity in absorbing and welcoming various information obtained, including information about the political world (Yuliah Sari, 2016). Young voters are alleged to have a considerable contribution in voting because of the support of the younger generation. This happens because anyone who grabs the attention of young people will feel very detrimental to the election target to be achieved. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the existence of money politics that can encourage participation from young voters in general elections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Political Participation

Political participation by the public during general elections is studied in political science as part of the study of political behavior. Political participation is important in aspects of democracy that characterize the modernization of politics. According to Mirian Budiarjo (1982), political participation is defined as the activities of a group or a person who participates in political life through electing state leaders either directly or not to influence public policy. activities of political participation include the act of voting in elections, attending meetings, and establishing relationships with government officials or members of parliament. Thus, the concept of democracy assumes that a country will get a lot of support if it has a lot of participants.

One of the forms of political participation carried out in the activities of the electoral process is conventional political participation. Conventional political participation is a form of political participation that is in accordance with the constitution and rules. Conventional politics is a form of participation that is natural and carried out in modern democratic activities (Saputra, 2017). Forms of conventional political participation according to Mohtar Mas' oed (2011), namely:

- a. Voting is the use of the right to choose someone to represent someone in public activities and the aim is to elect leaders.
- b. Political discussion is part of communication as the main tool for discussing income resources, government authority, and discussing sanctions from the government.
- c. Campaign activities are part of political communication that has been organized and planned to create a certain impact on the general public and is carried out repeatedly within a certain time.
- d. Forming and joining interest groups is the participation of a number of people to achieve the same goal. The achievement of this interest group is to influence political decisions by convincing public officials not to act in accordance with the interests of the group. The power of interest groups often carries out an agenda of raising issues, spreading ideas, and pressuring the government.
- e. Individual communication with political or administrative officials is a conversation from a meeting between one individual and another to discuss, shape, and change one's behavior to find similarities and differences.

2. Money Politics

Money politics is generally used as a way to gain victory in the struggle for power. Meanwhile, political money is only used as access to get the victory. According to Ismawan (1999), money politics is an attempt to influence the behavior of others through rewards in the form of money or other materials in lieu of the votes they cast. It can be said as buying and selling votes in the political process, especially in elections. The journey of money politics is in the form of actions to distribute money, services, and goods and the perpetrators of this distribution are given by candidates, supporters, and their success teams. There are two forms of money politics, namely in the form of money and goods. Money is given in cash to be distributed directly to voters with varying amounts of money from each candidate. Goods are given as money politics in the form of basic necessities, attributes, t-shirts, or souvenirs and others. Therefore, the term money politics is not solely in the form of money but can be in the form of anything given to influence the decision of a person's choice of candidates to be elected. Money politics is carried out by group collectivization through the gathering of groups that will be given development assistance both infrastructure and even in the form of giving promises when the candidate will be elected into office.

Money politics is carried out by the perpetrators themselves in various ways in order to achieve the goals of these candidates to gain support from voters. According to Hastuti et. al (2012), the method of spreading money politics is done through two forms, namely campaigns and dawn attacks. The campaign is a conscious, gradual, and sustainable planning process within a certain time span with the aim of influencing the people who have become the target. Campaigns are carried out by utilizing the provision of money or goods such as basic necessities and attributes. Then the dawn attack is a method carried out before the election with an effort to visit each voter's house (citizen) to vote for certain candidates proposed in the election.

METHODS

This research method uses a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach by investigating the science that describes a person's conscious acceptance, feeling, and knowledge derived from human

Uncovering Young Voters' Participation in Money Politics in General Elections

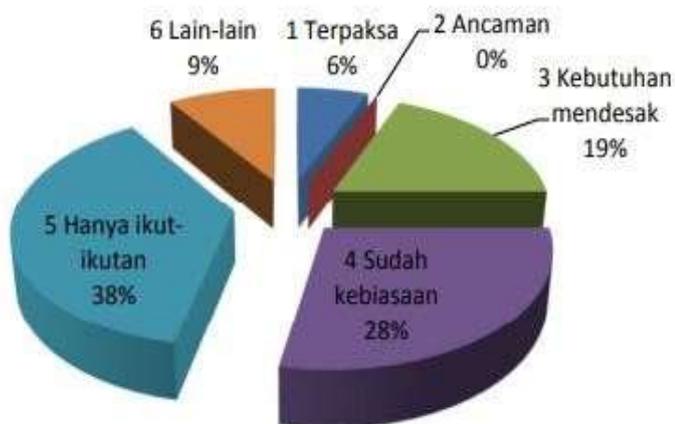
experience (Hadi et al., 2021). This research focuses on identifying and analyzing money politics that can encourage participation from young voters in general elections. The source of data obtained comes from literature studies, so the data is obtained from reports or information from existing research results. Research results can come from books, papers, journals, government documents, policy reports, and newspapers. Data analysis from this study uses Context Review, namely reviewing in general by linking a specific topic of study to knowledge, Historical Review, namely a review by tracking one topic or issue by combining with Theoretical or methodological Review so that one concept can be developed, Integrative Review, namely the author presents by summarizing the situation in the topic to provide criticism and glimpses of support, Methodological Review is reviewing through comparison and evaluating the relative strengths that drive the methodology in the study, and Theoretical Review is a review conducted by the author by presenting several theories or concepts centered on one topic so that they can be compared with concepts or theories on the basis of assumptions and logical consistency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The low level of political participation is allegedly because each party does not have a clear program and platform between one party and another. So the community only hunts for rent by approaching the candidates and parties ahead of the election in order to get money politics. This results in disloyalty, rebellion, and fluctuating support from the parties. Moreover, young voters who can be a force in elections, the high enthusiasm of youth, and the existence of youth who are still vulnerable to being mobilized by political parties. Therefore, the following are conventional forms of political participation that will help identify and analyze the existence of money politics as a driving factor for young voters' participation in elections.

Based on the results of research conducted on the survey report from the Tabalag District General Election Commission officers, it states that the number of participation in voting during the election is dominated by young voters. The age range between 17-26 years reached 55%, which was obtained from observations and interviews. Participation by young voters is based on the reward of money or rewards, referred to as money politics. In addition, the highest percentage of reasons for accepting money or gifts is due to following the crowd (Ismail, 2013). A comparison of the reasons why young voters participate in elections can be seen in the diagram below:

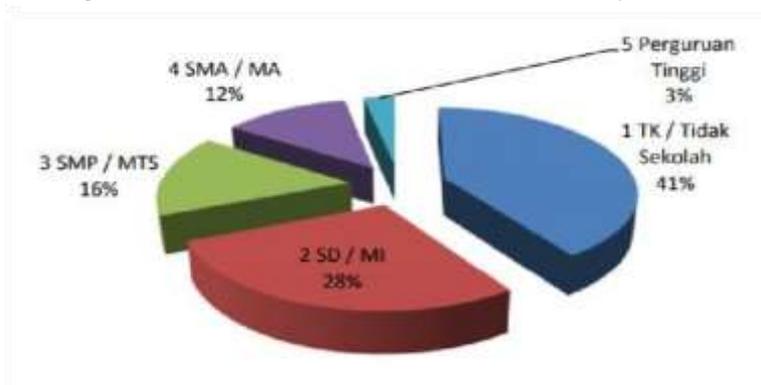
Figure 2. Reasons for Accepting Political Money



Source : Ismail (2013)

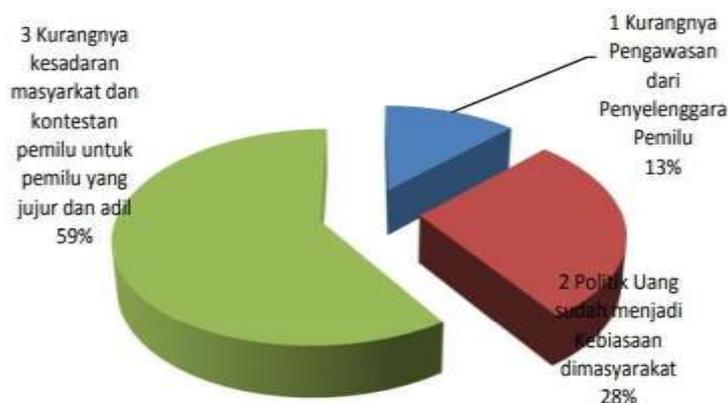
The cause of money politics in Tabalong Regency is due to factors from the level of community education. The level of education affects people's behavior towards money politics as seen from the interview results. In the diagram below, it can be seen that the lower the level of education, the easier it is to be influenced and accept political money in making choices. So that their votes are very easy to obtain as well as the alignment of citizens towards the camps of each candidate pair. Not only because of education, but also because of the lack of awareness of fair and honest elections that make people accept money politics. The following is a diagram of the ease of receiving money politics based on the level of education and the percentage of causes of receiving money politics:

Figure 3. The Effect of Education Level on Money Politics



Source : Ismail (2013)

Figur 4. Causes of Money Politics



Source: Ismail (2013)

In the 2014 general election in Mandau sub-district, there were 4,200 first-time voters in all polling stations. The large number of novice voters in voting for the presidential election was due to a very high sense of enthusiasm. This is due to the novice voters coming to the polling stations to exercise their voting rights in the election (Saputra, 2017).

Based on these three studies, it can be said that, at the time of the election, it was dominated by young voters and the percentage of young voters was quite high in participating in the general election due to money politics. In addition, the lack of awareness of honesty and justice also causes money politics to be easily accepted by the community. In addition, the low level of education will make it very easy for people to participate in general elections through the provision of political money. However, it cannot be denied that there are still people who are certainly still willing to participate without being rewarded by money politics.

1. Political Discussions

The increase in citizen involvement in political discussions found by Price and Cappella in Perangin-angin & Zainal's research (2018), reached 60 citizen groups every month to discuss political issues and presidential campaigns. Participation in discussions conducted by citizens is done online and continued with face to face. Luengo (2006) argues that the virtual world run using the internet gives a positive correlation to political activity. Even young people who are very sophisticated in following digital developments have adopted internet technology as Net Natives. When politics enters the virtual world and there is a development of digital democracy, it will certainly generate interest and political participation from netizens. Based on research by Peranginangin & Zainal (2018), young voters admitted that they had never discussed with their surroundings about politics, even when approaching the election there was no interaction to gather for discussion. This is because young people who are still at the college level, most of them have discussions with organizations in the campus environment.

Based on research from Kusumadinata & Suryatna (2024), that the activities carried out by young voters to participate in political discussions are very high in seeking information through digital media. Even based on the search for money politics, it reached a rank of 90% of other political searches ahead of the election. Apart from, the highest rank of young voters' searches is about peace and Luber Jurdil.

Uncovering Young Voters' Participation in Money Politics in General Elections

Table 2. Activities of Young Voters to Seek Information on Elections

Unit	Rank (%)	Keterangan
Informasi presiden lebih mudah diketahui dibandingkan legislatif	87	Tinggi
Calon legislatif lebih banyak ditemui melalui spanduk/ poster di jalanan	90	Tinggi
Politik uang pasti akan terjadi	98	Tinggi
Pemilu ini akan berlangsung secara damai dan Jurdil Luber	100	Tinggi
Kandidat yang dipilih sepenuhnya memberikan angin perubahan	60	Sedang
Informasi melalui media sosial lebih mudah diketahui mengenai visi dan misi masing-masing calon presiden	90	Tinggi
Poster dan spanduk memberikan efek buruk terhadap pandangan/ daya tarik terhadap lingkungan	87	Tinggi

Source : Kusumadinata & Suryatna (2024)

Based on the studies that have been put forward above, it can be concluded that young voters are very good at digital technology and utilize technology to discuss politics. As a result of the amount of time young voters spend with their digital technology, they reduce their offline activities with the community. However, even so, money politics is still the highest search during elections. Of course, money politics is obtained through participation in the TPS (Polling Station) committee and others.

2. Campaign Activities

Participation in campaign activities carried out by students by socializing and educating fair and democratic elections to the public. Campaigns held can be in the form of education to involve voters in understanding their rights. Campaign activities also do not escape the name money politics, which can be in the form of money, basic necessities, attributes, t-shirts, or souvenirs and others (Amatahir, 2023).

The research explains that when viewed from campaign activities in general, of course, it is very clear that there will be participation from the community, both young and old. In the campaign, of course, there is also money politics. Where this money politics can encourage the participation of the community to be active in participating in these activities.

3. Forming and Joining Interest Groups

The form of political participation of young voters, especially novice voters, is very minimal to form and join interest groups. This happens because the younger generation is not interested in joining political parties. The younger generation is not interested because of their daily busyness and difficulty in dividing their time and they feel inexperienced, so they are reluctant to join them (Maulandari et al., 2020).

Based on research from Pirie & Worcester (1998), it states that the younger generation is politically seen as a group that does not care about politics. Because young people are often disconnected from the communities they participate in, young people are also not interested in the political process or political issues, and tend to have low political trust in political or government institutions. However, through social media, the younger generation will inevitably get involved with political life. The existence of social media is able to persuade users to participate in politics both before and after elections.

The two studies above explain that the younger generation is still difficult in dividing their time to follow interest groups. On the other hand, young people who have enthusiasm for various new things tend to be inconsistent and result in disconnection with the interest groups they follow. Therefore, in the context of forming and joining interest groups, the existence of money politics has not been found.

4. Individual Communication With Political or Administrative Officials

Individual communication by young voters to political or administrative officials is relatively low. This participation occurs for various reasons from an individual. This right occurs because people feel they do not have the confidence to influence public policies made by the government. So there will be individual miss-communication with political officials and administrative officials in making political agreements that have been raised (Febrissya & Irawaty, 2023). This research explains that communication carried out individually to political or administrative officials is still very low so that there is no communication that can be used to find similarities and differences from these communications. Therefore, in the context of individual communication with political or administrative officials, the existence of money politics has not been found.

Uncovering Young Voters' Participation in Money Politics in General Elections

CONCLUSION

The conventional forms of political participation used to analyze and identify the existence of money politics to encourage participation from young voters in general elections have the following results:

- a Young voters participate in elections because of money politics, the reason they want to accept money politics is because they just follow along. The level of education is also a factor in the ease of accepting money politics, the lower the level of education, the easier it is to be influenced in making choices. The lack of awareness of fair and honest elections makes it easy for people to accept money politics. On the other hand, the large number of novice voters in voting is caused by a very high sense of enthusiasm.
- b Young voters utilize technology to discuss politics, but the amount of time spent with their digital technology has resulted in less offline activities with the community. Nonetheless, money politics remains the highest search term on the internet during elections.
- c Campaign activities certainly do not escape the name money politics. This money politics can encourage participation from the community. d Time management of the younger generation is still difficult if used to follow interest groups. They tend to be inconsistent, so in terms of forming and joining interest groups, the existence of money politics has not been found. e Communication made individually to political or administrative officials is still very low. Therefore, the existence of money politics has not been found.

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be said that the forms of participation of the younger generation in the form of voting, political discussions, and campaigns still use money politics. But in building and following interest groups and individual communication to political or administrative officials there is no money politics.

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Uncovering Young Voters' Participation in Money Politics in General Elections

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