

The meaning of money politics for constituents in the legislative election

Lily Yunis

Commissioner of the Election Oversight Committee (*Panwaslu*) Surabaya 2014

Address: Jl. Arief Rachmat Hakim, Surabaya

E-mail: Yunis780@gmail.com

Abstract

Money politics become a culture and habit in every election both legislative and executive level nowadays. Money politics becomes a habit that continues to occur in the legislative elections in a closed proportional system. This study aims to understand the meaning of money politics for voters in Tambaksari and Simokerto subdistricts, Surabaya City, East Java. This research also tries to understand the reason why the constituents accept money politics in the legislative election.

Keywords: legislative election, money politics, election system

Introduction

The political change from the (New) Order to the Reformation in 1998 is expected to have brought changes in the system and political culture from authoritarianism to democracy. In fact, in the reform era there have been political changes from the previous era in Indonesia (Liddle 2013). In the reform era, the democratisation has existed in the political system followed by the existence of press freedom, the enforcement of human right, decentralisation of power to reduced state power.

Another important consequence of the existence of political reform is the change in the presidential and regional head electing system system, in the New Order era, the parliament carried out the election, however it is carry by the people directly nowadays. There is also a huge change in the legislative election system from closed proportional to open proportional (Surbakti 2008, Marijan 2010). In the closed proportional system, the public citizen chase the political party only, therefore the first number of the legislative candidate will automatically became a parliament member. Whilst in the opened proportional system, the constituents have a right to choose the political party as well as the legislative candidates, so that the candidate who got the most votes will become a parliament member in the opened proportional system.

The openness and political reformation is not necessarily made the political quality better, otherwise the political quality become a problem due to the massive one politics in almost every legislative election (see, Hadiz 2011, Aspinall & Sukmajati 2016, Kusman 2015). It is not surprising that the political elite of the New Order, which should have had no influence after the alternation of the era from the New Order to the Reformation, turned out to still be able to win the elections in regional elections and legislative elections (Buehler 2014). One of the reason why these people can win the elections is because they have have abundant financial capital. Through the money capital, the elites can buy voters to gain people's sympathy. The legislative candidates need a huge amount of money due to the high political cost so that they need financial fund from the capital owners such as entrepreneurs, in return, they have to adjust the entrepreneurs interest into their decision making or in their policy (Muharam 2018).

Money politics culture become more internalised in the opened proportional system transition, the competition occurs not only between the political parties but also involving an internal contestation between the candidates from the same party (internal fight). The competition between the candidates from the same party become the most competitive rivalry, as consequences the massive money politics

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occur, especially if the political parties are expected to be able to obtain seats in an electoral district (electoral district). That is why the competition become more competitive between the candidates to win a seat in the parliament as well as the representative of the political party they engaged. The candidates who has modal capital will likely to win the seat through the money politics they have been practiced individually or in group (team).

There is an assumption that the political parties who has not loyal captive constituent are more likely practice money politics. But in fact, even the legitimate and credible political parties also perform money politics. The manifestation of money politics are not only money distribution but also groceries distribution etc. Because of these massive practice, this research form a research question: What is the meaning of money politics for the constituent.

Method

This study uses qualitative approach followed by conducting in-depth interview with 10 informant from Tambaksari region and Simokerto Surabaya, East Java. The informants are the role figure in each regions. This study choose Tambaksari and Simokerto as the research location because both of these area has a lot of voters and the similar characteristic in terms of voters who tend to decide their decision in the last minute of election. It means that those area are quite unpredictable and has a lot of swing voters. This study tries to understand the meaning of money politics for voters. Thus it can be known the reason for voters receiving money politics.

Because this is a qualitative research, that is why the researcher conducted the interview by himself. The researcher conducted a selection of the datas collected, and used only reliable datas to be analysed and reported as a result. The researcher conducted repeat interview to make sure the consistency of the informants.

The Research Result and Discussion

There are some interesting findings from research on the motivation of voters to accept money politics. One of the most important reasons for the reasons for voters wishing to accept money politics is the lack of recognition of candidates. As Asturi said, one of the community leaders in Simokerto subdistrict, because he did not know the candidates who competed in the election, the voters in his place made money politics as a reference in choosing. "because we do not know in depth all the candidates who participated in the 2014 election, we do not have an emotional bond with one of the candidates who fought in the election, so when there are certain candidates to our village, then distribute something, of course it will be easily chosen by residents," Asturi said. "in 2019, if there are no legislative candidates whom we know deeply, then money politics becomes a potential to influence people's political choices," Asturi added.

In this context, it can be said that the emotional closeness of candidates with voters is an important factor for electability to become a member of the DPR / DPRD. With the existence of emotional bonds, allowing people to feel ownership of a candidate, so that the trust arises that the elected candidates will be able to voice their interests. Emotional ties will be easily fostered, if in a long time the candidates have communicated and interacted with voters. In this case, the incumbent will benefit from interacting with voters for a long time before the election. A person can facilitate the programs needed by the community.

Election as a demarcation party will likely shape voters thinking construction. In this case, voters assume that election is people party. According to Winarno, a figure in Tambakrejo subdistrict Simokerto said that in a party everyone involved supposed to be happy, the same case with election, as

a party people wanted to have fun by getting money. Most of the voters use money politics as a part of instrument to make election as a fun thing for people.

With that reason, some of the candidates believe that money politics is needed for the election date. Even though the legislative candidates have performed communication with the voters and actively fulfil their need in the long term, they still believe that they need to perform one politics as well to win the election.

As for Gunawan (Tambaksari subdistrict), the more the candidates need the vote from the voters, the more money politics grow. The level of intense competition between candidates, especially those that occur at level II (distric /city), makes the people increasingly needed, so that money politics becomes difficult to avoid. Moreover, there is an assumption from voters that as members of the DPR/DPRD, it is the occupational profession that gets excessive facilities and income. In this case, according to Evandari (Tambaksari), the people also believed that after being elected members of the DPRD / DPRD they would "forget" their people, thus the people would not hesitate to expect money politics.

For some of the voters, as an aftermath for receiving money politics, the individual has the obligation to choose the candidate who has given them the money. According to Muhdor (Tambaksari), as the manifestation of obligation for the people who has received the money, they have to vote a certain candidate who has given them a "bless". A gift in the election means a deal between the candidate and the voters that they will likely to support each other and the voter will vote for the candidate.

In the recent development, an effort to get a vote money is not only an instrument but also another things and goods can be used to gain people's vote in the election day. Most of political figure do not expect to get those things in the election day. According to Ilyas M (Tambaksari), what people want is that the real contribution of the candidates for the development of their area, for instance the development of local infrastructure, providing business capital, etc. As for M. Noer (Simokerto), a long term contribution from the candidate is more crucial and useful for the people compare to the fresh money or goods for short term period.

Most of the voters put their trust to the candidates who fight for the interest of the constituent in the long term period, not only for the election time. For instance, the voters will have an emotional bonds with the candidate who actively care to the people prosperity, health and education. According to Suwarno (Simokerto), a simple things such as providing aid for the people who get sick, providing ambulance for the people who want to go to the hospital or providing assistance for the school registration will make the candidate gain public trust and will likely to vote him in the election.

According to Karno (Simokerto), the people will fond of money politics, but what actually they need is the candidate care for them in the future long term period. The care shows that the candidate has a commitment to serve for the people interest. In this case according to the Agus Surya (Tambak Sari), the candidates will devote their life to serve the people if the people choose them as their representative in DPR/DPRD, they can ease the people to articulate their interest according to the right and power that they have. According to Ilyas M (Tambaksari), there is a candidate who run for the election twice and he had been chosen by the people every time he runs for the election because the people put their trust on him to be their representative in the parliament.

Conclusion

Drawing from those phenomenon we can conclude several things, in the political context of political liberalisation, money politics can be a determinor and instrument to win the election. Money politics can influence political realm if there is no connection and weak emotional bonding between the voters and the candidates who run for the legislative election.

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In the political liberalisation nowadays, money politics consider as normal things to do for the candidates who run fir the election to get the people sympathy. The candidates never see money politic as an inappropriate thing, but they think that this is a pull factor for the voter so that they choose them. In this context, money politics become a tradition for years.

When money politics is performed massively, it will be harder for the candidates who has a moral integrity, but has lack of modal capital to compete in the election. Money politics can be a barrier for the candidates who has no access to modal capital to get a significant voters.

At the end, politics is determined by materialistic things rather than valuable things. When these material things determine the success in the political realm, political pragmatism will become a culture and habit in the political context. This kind of situation will make the civilised political realm hard to achieve.

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