



The Role of Society in Monitoring Money Politics in Local Elections in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review

Dirga Achmad¹, La Ode Muhammad Taufiq Afoeli², La Ode Muhamad Sulihin³

¹ Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Indonesia. E-mail: dirgaachmad@iainpare.ac.id.

² Universitas Halu Oleo Kendari, Indonesia. E-mail: murthadaaliode@uho.ac.id.

³ Universitas Halu Oleo Kendari, Indonesia. E-mail: imsulihin@uho.ac.id.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the role of society in monitoring money politics during local elections in Indonesia. Through a systematic literature review (SLR), this research synthesizes findings from studies published between 2018 and 2024. The methodology involves a qualitative analysis of existing literature, focusing on community engagement, challenges in law enforcement, and the implications of political education. The main results indicate that societal participation is essential in reducing money politics; however, public awareness is generally low, and the mechanisms for reporting violations are underutilized. The findings highlight the critical role of political education in empowering communities and the potential of digital platforms to facilitate anonymous reporting. The review concludes that while community involvement is vital, it must be supported by legal reforms and stronger enforcement mechanisms to be effective. This research contributes to the broader literature by emphasizing the need for a holistic approach that includes both community engagement and institutional support. Future studies should explore the effectiveness of digital reporting tools, analyze regional differences in community participation, and implement and test specific strategies in field studies to address the limitations of relying on secondary data and the lack of empirical testing of proposed solutions.

1. Introduction

The involvement of society in monitoring money politics during local elections in Indonesia is a crucial aspect of maintaining electoral integrity. Money politics, which involves the distribution of money or goods by candidates to voters in exchange for votes, has long been a persistent issue undermining the democratic process in Indonesia.¹ Despite the existence of legal frameworks, enforcement remains weak, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged regions where such practices are more prevalent.²

¹ Yuna Farhan, "The Politics of Budgeting in Indonesia" (University of Sydney, 2018), <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/18716>.

² Khairunissa Khairunissa, Suharyono Suharyono, and Helwan Kasro, "Law Enforcement Effectiveness Against the Practice of Money Politics on the Implementation of Regional Head Elections in 2018, in Lahat

In this context, community participation in monitoring elections can serve as a powerful tool to detect and report electoral violations, ensuring fairer and more transparent elections.

To regulate and mitigate money politics, several laws and regulations have been enacted. The Indonesian government has implemented Act Number 1 of 2015, which has been amended multiple times, most recently by Act Number 6 of 2020 on Regional Head Elections. This law provides guidelines on conducting fair elections and prohibits candidates from engaging in vote-buying practices. Additionally, Act Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections establishes legal consequences for money politics and outlines the role of electoral supervisory bodies, such as Bawaslu, in monitoring and enforcing election laws. Furthermore, Act Number 10 of 2016 strengthens penalties for electoral fraud, including money politics, to ensure fair democratic processes. However, despite these legal provisions, enforcement remains a significant challenge due to institutional limitations and lack of public engagement.

Recent studies indicate that the challenges in mitigating money politics stem from deeply rooted political patronage systems.³ While laws prohibiting money politics are in place, enforcement mechanisms are often insufficient due to lack of resources and inadequate community participation. Weak institutional frameworks further allow violations to persist without substantial repercussions.⁴ This raises concerns about the credibility of election outcomes and the overall democratic process in Indonesia. Moreover, Simatupang and Subekhan emphasize that money political culture has been ingrained in Indonesian elections, affecting the sustainability of democracy.⁵ The exchange of money for votes is often normalized in certain regions, further complicating efforts to eradicate this practice.

In addition, the role of the Constitutional Court in resolving disputes related to money politics is critical. Constitutional Court in Indonesia decisions regarding electoral fraud and money politics serve as a legal precedent in shaping electoral governance. However, limitations in enforcement still present a major obstacle, as local authorities and supervisory institutions struggle to implement these rulings effectively.⁶

Political education has been identified as a key component in empowering voters to resist money politics. Studies show that low levels of political awareness contribute to voters'

District (Case Study of Judgment Number: 238/Pid.Sus/2018/PN.Lht)," *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review* 7, No. 4 (2024): p. 33–36.

³ Mohammad Hidayatullah et al., "Political Broker Giving Money and Intimidating in Regional Head Elections in Indonesia," *Jurnal Studi Sosial dan Politik* 6, No. 2 (2022): p. 177–190.

⁴ Lidwina Yosieva and Riska Andi Fitriono, "Problematisasi Penanganan Politik Uang Pada Pemilihan Oleh Sentra GAKKUMDU Kabupaten Kendal," *PLEDOI (Jurnal Hukum dan Keadilan)* 3, No. 1 (2024): p. 68–76.

⁵ Jonasmer Simatupang and Muhammad Subekhan, "The Influence of Money Political Culture in Elections on the Sustainability of Indonesian Democracy," *Law Research Review Quarterly* 4, No. 4 (2018): p. 1297–1312.

⁶ Guasman Tatawu, "Hakekat Hukum Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi Terhadap Sengketa Pemilihan Kepala Daerah (Pilkada)," *Halu Oleo Law Review* 1, No. 2 (March 14, 2018): p. 144, <https://ojs.uho.ac.id/index.php/holrev/article/view/3639>.

acceptance of money politics as a norm.⁷ Efforts to enhance public understanding of the long-term consequences of money politics could significantly alter voter behavior.⁸ In addition, the advancement of digital reporting mechanisms presents a new opportunity to strengthen public participation in election monitoring.⁹

This study aims to synthesize recent findings on the role of society in monitoring money politics during local elections in Indonesia. By analyzing trends from 2018 to 2024, this systematic literature review provides insights into existing gaps and offers recommendations for strengthening electoral integrity through community involvement and institutional reforms.

2. Method

This systematic literature review (SLR) evaluates and analyzes peer-reviewed articles published between 2018 and 2024 that focus on money politics in Indonesia's local elections and the role of community involvement in monitoring electoral integrity. The inclusion criteria for the review include studies that specifically address the involvement of communities in monitoring money politics, the challenges in the implementation of monitoring systems, and the impact of community engagement on electoral outcomes. Studies that did not focus on Indonesian local elections or those that lacked empirical evidence were excluded.

The literature search was conducted using academic databases such as Google Scholar and Scopus. Keywords such as "money politics," "local elections," "community monitoring," and "election integrity" were used to retrieve relevant studies. The selected articles were then reviewed and analyzed to identify recurring themes, gaps in the research, and potential solutions to the issues highlighted in the literature.

3. Result and Discussion

The societal role in monitoring money politics during local elections in Indonesia presents both opportunities and challenges. The findings from this systematic review highlight several key themes, revealing the complexities surrounding community involvement in combating money politics. The results emphasize that while the community's participation is crucial, various obstacles hinder its effectiveness, including weak legal frameworks, low public awareness, and limited access to reporting mechanisms.

⁷ Ratih Listyana Chandra, "Local Governments' Head Election in Indonesia: A Proposal for Asymmetric Model," *Jurnal Kajian Pembaruan Hukum* 3, No. 1 (2023).

⁸ Munadi, Yessi Mayasanti, and Deni Irawan, "Money Politics Islamic Economic Perspective In The 2020 Sambas Regency Regional Elections," *Southeast Asia Journal of Graduate of Islamic Business And Economics* 2, No. 1 (2023): p. 14–25.

⁹ Aris Septiono et al., "Construction of Indonesian Criminal Law Policy on the Crime of Money Politics in General Election," *Russian Law Journal* 11, No. 2 (March 31, 2023), <https://www.russianlawjournal.org/index.php/journal/article/view/522>.

3.1. Public Perception of Money Politics and Its Impact on Voter Participation

Following main headings should be provided in the manuscript while preparing. The separation between main headings, sub-headings and sub-sub headings should be numbered in the manuscript with following example:

Public perception plays a crucial role in perpetuating money politics, particularly in regions where socioeconomic conditions are poor. In these areas, voters often view money politics as a pragmatic means of benefiting from elections. The challenge in reshaping this perception lies in the deeply ingrained cultural and historical roots of money politics.¹⁰ Historically, patron-client relationships have dominated the political landscape, especially in rural areas where access to resources and public goods is mediated by political elites. Thus, money politics is not just seen as an electoral violation but as an expected norm in the exchange between politicians and constituents. the electorate's perception of money politics as acceptable behavior is a barrier to implementing reforms aimed at ensuring electoral integrity.¹¹

Additionally, while Umam highlight the low public awareness regarding the long-term effects of money politics, this lack of awareness is also a reflection of the broader failure of political education.¹² When voters prioritize short-term material benefits over democratic principles, it highlights a fundamental gap in civic engagement. This gap underscores the urgent need for public education campaigns that not only inform citizens about their voting rights but also foster a culture of democratic integrity. Without such interventions, voters may continue to engage in corrupt practices, perpetuating a cycle of unethical electoral behavior that undermines the credibility of elections and weakens democratic institutions.

3.2. Weak Legal Framework and Challenges in Law Enforcement

Indonesia has established a comprehensive legal framework to combat money politics in local elections, aiming to uphold democratic integrity and ensure fair electoral processes. Key legislative measures include Act Number 1 of 2015, amended by Act Number 6 of 2020 on Regional Head Elections (UU Pilkada), which outlines the conduct of elections and explicitly prohibits vote-buying practices. Additionally, Act Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections (UU Pemilu) delineates sanctions for electoral fraud and assigns oversight responsibilities to bodies like the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu). Further reinforcing these efforts, Act Number 10 of 2016 imposes stringent penalties for those engaging in money politics, including substantial fines and imprisonment.

¹⁰ Ken M.P. Setiawan and Dirk Tomsa, *Politics in Contemporary Indonesia: Institutional Change, Policy Challenges and Democratic Decline* (London: Routledge, 2022).

¹¹ Yetty Sembiring and Afif Syarifudin Yahya, "Election Integrity and Governance Challenges: Unravelling the Links between Voter Intimidation, Electoral Violence, Fraudulent Practices, and the Political Costs They Create in Indonesia," *Public Service and Governance Journal* 5, No. 2 (2024): p. 204–214.

¹² Ahmad Khoirul Umam, "Understanding the Influence of Vested Interests on Politics of Anti-Corruption in Indonesia," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 29, No. 3 (2021): p. 255–273.

Indonesia's legal framework for addressing money politics, though robust on paper, remains ineffective in practice due to weak enforcement. The gap between the written law and its implementation is stark, and this is a common issue in developing democracies where institutional capacity to enforce electoral regulations is limited.¹³ Law enforcement bodies, such as Bawaslu, are severely under-resourced and lack the manpower and technological capabilities to monitor elections comprehensively. This lack of capacity allows candidates engaging in money politics to operate with impunity, knowing that the risk of prosecution is minimal. Furthermore, the legal penalties for engaging in money politics, are often too lenient to serve as effective deterrents.

Despite this robust legal architecture, the practical enforcement of these laws faces significant challenges. Agencies such as Bawaslu are often under-resourced, lacking sufficient personnel and technological tools to effectively monitor and address violations across Indonesia's vast and diverse regions. This resource deficit hampers their capacity to conduct comprehensive surveillance, particularly in remote areas where money politics is prevalent. Consequently, perpetrators operate with a sense of impunity, aware that the likelihood of facing legal repercussions is minimal.¹⁴ Moreover, as highlighted by Suryaningsi, the existing legal penalties are frequently perceived as too lenient, failing to serve as effective deterrents against such illicit practices.

The persistence of money politics not only undermines the democratic process but also erodes public trust in electoral institutions. Addressing this issue necessitates a multifaceted approach:

1. **Strengthening Enforcement Mechanisms:** Enhancing the operational capacity of supervisory bodies like Bawaslu through increased funding, advanced training, and the integration of modern technology to enable more effective monitoring and enforcement.
2. **Public Awareness and Education:** Implementing comprehensive political education programs to inform citizens about the detrimental effects of money politics, thereby fostering a culture of integrity and active participation in safeguarding electoral fairness.
3. **Community Engagement:** Encouraging local communities to take an active role in monitoring elections and reporting violations, which can be facilitated through accessible and secure reporting channels.

By addressing both the systemic enforcement gaps and promoting societal vigilance, Indonesia can make significant strides toward eradicating money politics and bolstering the credibility of its electoral processes.

¹³ Bagus Teguh Santoso, Ahmad Munir, and Anisa Kurniatul Azizah, "The Use of Gijzeling Against Individuals Disobeying Court Orders Qualifying as Contempt of Court," *Halu Oleo Law Review* 8, No. 2 (2024): p. 139–167.

¹⁴ Suryaningsi Suryaningsi and Novita Amelia Putri, "Against The Practice of Money Politics: An Analysis of The Potential For Bribery Prevention In The Conduct of Elections," *Journal of Mujaddid Nusantara* 1, No. 2 (2024): p. 78–86.

Strengthening the legal framework to combat money politics necessitates not only the imposition of stricter penalties but also the enhancement of institutional capacities within law enforcement agencies.¹⁵ Theoretical perspectives on governance and anti-corruption emphasize that effective legal reforms must be accompanied by robust enforcement mechanisms to deter corrupt practices.¹⁶ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlights that governance reforms should avoid excessive legislation and instead focus on building broad-based institutional capacities, ensuring that law enforcement agencies are adequately resourced and trained to detect and prosecute corruption effectively.¹⁷

Moreover, the complexity of reporting mechanisms can deter citizen participation in exposing money politics. Simplifying these processes is crucial to encourage public involvement. The UNODC notes that public participation should not be a mere formality but an integral part of governance, where citizens are actively engaged in long-term anti-corruption efforts.¹⁸

Without such comprehensive reforms—encompassing legal, institutional, and procedural enhancements—the persistence of money politics is likely to continue, undermining public trust in the electoral process and the legitimacy of elected officials.

3.3. Community Involvement in Election Monitoring

Community involvement in election monitoring is a vital component of efforts to curb money politics. However, as Munadi suggest, the effectiveness of community monitoring is contingent on several factors, including the availability of reporting mechanisms and the public's willingness to engage.¹⁹ In many cases, citizens are hesitant to report violations due to fears of retaliation or a lack of trust in the authorities. This reluctance to participate in monitoring efforts diminishes the impact that communities can have on reducing money politics. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to develop secure and anonymous reporting systems that protect whistleblowers and ensure that reports are handled transparently.

Moreover, increasing public engagement in election monitoring requires building trust between communities and electoral authorities. By fostering a collaborative relationship, electoral bodies can encourage more proactive participation from citizens, who can then

¹⁵ Raihan Hafiz Ramadhan and Aidul Fitriada Azhari, "Strengthening Election Regulations: Saving Democracy from The Threat of Political Money in Indonesia," *Proceeding International Conference Restructuring and Transforming Law 2*, No. 1 (2023): p. 302–309.

¹⁶ Kevin E Davis, "Anti-Corruption Law and Systemic Corruption: The Role of Direct Responses," *Revista Direito GV* 17, No. 2 (2021).

¹⁷ Ileana Citaristi, "United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime—UNODC," in *The Europa Directory of International Organizations 2022* (London: Routledge, 2022), p.248–252.

¹⁸ Hanna Ouahmane, "Rule of Law, Corruption and Development, An Analysis of Western Approaches in Central Asia" (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto;University of Helsinki;Helsingfors universitet, 2023), 64, urn:NBN:fi:hulib-202308293649.

¹⁹ Munadi, Yessi Mayasanti, and Deni Irawan, "Money Politics Islamic Economic Perspective In The 2020 Sambas Regency Regional Elections."

act as the first line of defense against electoral fraud. In this regard, digital platforms can play a critical role in bridging the gap between citizens and authorities, making it easier for individuals to report violations and for authorities to respond promptly.

3.4. The Role of Political Education in Empowering Communities

Political education has the potential to transform voters from passive participants into active defenders of democracy. According to Danang, effective political education programs can help voters understand their rights, the value of their vote, and the harmful consequences of money politics on the broader political system.²⁰ By focusing on long-term civic responsibility rather than short-term material gains, political education programs can shift voter behavior towards more ethical practices. Additionally, these programs can empower voters to hold politicians accountable by providing them with the knowledge and tools needed to monitor and report electoral violations.

To be truly impactful, political education initiatives must be sustained and inclusive, reaching marginalized and rural populations where money politics is most prevalent. One-time campaigns are unlikely to change entrenched behaviors, but ongoing education that is integrated into schools, community organizations, and even through social media can create a lasting impact. These initiatives should also encourage voter participation in election monitoring, reinforcing the idea that citizens have a duty to protect the integrity of the electoral process.

3.5. Barriers to Effective Community Participation

Despite the potential for community involvement to curb money politics, significant barriers limit its effectiveness. Identify two primary obstacles: a lack of accessible reporting mechanisms and fear of retaliation. These barriers are exacerbated in rural areas, where institutional presence is weaker and political elites often wield significant influence over local communities.²¹ The absence of secure and anonymous reporting systems discourages citizens from coming forward, even when they witness clear violations. Moreover, the lack of transparency in how reports are handled further diminishes public trust in the electoral process.²²

To overcome these barriers, it is essential to establish clear and accessible reporting mechanisms that protect the anonymity of whistleblowers. This could involve the creation of hotlines, digital platforms, or mobile applications that allow citizens to report violations without fear of repercussions. Strengthening these systems would not only encourage

²⁰ Danang Sa'adawisna and Bayu Karunia Putra, "Political Education to Increase Beginner Voter Participation in the 2019 General Elections," *Awang Long Law Review* 5, No. 2 (2023): p. 419–431.

²¹ Kalijunjung Hasibuan and Muhamad Romdoni, "The Impact of the Legal Framework and Reporting Mechanisms in Eradicating Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in Indonesia," *The Easta Journal Law and Human Rights* 2, No. 01 (2023): p. 9–16.

²² Sarah Sunn Bush and Lauren Prather, *Monitors and Meddlers: How Foreign Actors Influence Local Trust in Elections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/9781009204262/type/book>.

more citizens to participate in monitoring efforts but also help to build public trust in the integrity of the electoral process. In addition, electoral authorities must ensure that reported violations are acted upon transparently, with clear communication about the outcomes of investigations.

3.6. Technological Innovations in Monitoring Elections

The use of technology in election monitoring has the potential to revolutionize the way money politics is detected and reported. Ross argues that mobile applications and other digital platforms can provide citizens with secure and anonymous channels for reporting electoral violations.²³ These platforms can also facilitate real-time reporting, enabling authorities to respond more quickly and effectively to incidents of money politics. In addition to improving the speed and efficiency of monitoring efforts, digital platforms can also broaden the scope of participation, allowing citizens in remote areas to engage in election monitoring.

The integration of technology into election monitoring can also help to bridge the gap between citizens and law enforcement agencies. By providing a direct link between voters and electoral authorities, digital platforms can enhance the transparency and accountability of the monitoring process. However, the success of these platforms depends on widespread access to technology and public trust in the system. Ensuring that these platforms are user-friendly and secure is critical to encouraging greater participation from citizens.

3.7. Social Solidarity and Collective Action

Social solidarity within communities can play a pivotal role in reducing the prevalence of money politics. When communities come together to oppose corrupt electoral practices, they can create significant social pressure on candidates to maintain ethical standards. That grassroots movements and civil society organizations are particularly effective in mobilizing collective action against money politics.²⁴ By fostering a sense of collective responsibility, these movements can create an environment where money politics is socially unacceptable, thus reducing its prevalence.

Collective action can also serve as a powerful deterrent to candidates who may be considering engaging in money politics. When candidates know that they are being monitored by an active and engaged community, they are less likely to engage in corrupt practices for fear of public backlash. Building strong community networks and supporting grassroots initiatives can therefore be a crucial strategy in combating money politics at the local level.

²³ Muhlis Hafel, "Digital Transformation in Politics and Governance in Indonesia: Opportunities and Challenges in the Era of Technological Disruption," *Society* 11, No. 2 (2023): p. 742–757.

²⁴ Haryanto et al., "Does Institutional Activism Strengthen Democracy? A Case Study of Agrarian and AntiCorruption Movements in Indonesia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 45, No. 1 (2023): p. 82–110.

3.8. The Need for Comprehensive Legal Reforms

The findings from this review underscore the need for comprehensive legal reforms to support community involvement in monitoring elections. While laws prohibiting money politics exist, Azhari highlight that these laws are not sufficiently robust to deter violators effectively.²⁵ Penalties for engaging in money politics are often too lenient, allowing candidates to view fines or minor sanctions as the cost of doing business. To address this issue, the government must implement stricter regulations and enhance enforcement mechanisms to ensure that money politics is effectively discouraged.

In addition to legal reforms, it is essential to increase public participation through educational and technological initiatives. Combining stronger legal frameworks with active community involvement can create a more comprehensive approach to reducing money politics. Future research should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of these reforms and exploring innovative solutions to strengthen electoral integrity.

4. Conclusion

This systematic review highlights the critical role of community involvement in mitigating money politics during local elections in Indonesia. The findings suggest that while legal frameworks exist to combat money politics, their enforcement remains inadequate due to insufficient resources and weak institutional capacity. Public perception of money politics as an accepted norm, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas, further complicates efforts to eradicate these practices. Education programs aimed at increasing political awareness and empowering communities to reject and report corrupt practices are essential for long-term behavioral change. Moreover, technological innovations present a promising solution to the barriers faced in traditional election monitoring. Digital platforms that facilitate anonymous and secure reporting can enhance public participation, particularly in regions where fear of retaliation or distrust in authorities hinders community engagement. However, these efforts must be supported by comprehensive legal reforms that strengthen penalties for electoral violations and improve the transparency and accountability of election supervisory bodies. Overall, a multifaceted approach is required to address the complex challenges of money politics in Indonesia. This approach should include stronger legal frameworks, community empowerment through education, and the integration of technology to support monitoring efforts. Future research should focus on the implementation and evaluation of these strategies, particularly in diverse regional contexts, to ensure that they effectively contribute to cleaner, more transparent, and fairer elections in Indonesia.

²⁵ Ramadhan and Azhari, "Strengthening Election Regulations: Saving Democracy from The Threat of Political Money in Indonesia."

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