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## **The Influence of Money Politics on Publics Participation in The 2024 Regional Election**

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### **Abstract**

Regional Head Elections (Pilkada) are one manifestation of democratic governance in Indonesia, providing the public with the opportunity to elect their regional leaders directly. However, the practice of money politics continues to threaten the integrity of elections, including in Banda Aceh City. This research is motivated by the high Human Development Index and education level in Banda Aceh, which have not been fully effective in suppressing money politics during the 2024 Pilkada. The objective of this study is to analyze the influence of money politics on community participation in the 2024 Pilkada in Banda Aceh City. This research employs Edward Aspinal's theory of money politics and the theory of political participation as its conceptual foundation. The research uses a quantitative approach, employing a survey method via the distribution of questionnaires to 322 respondents selected using the Slovin formula. The collected data were analyzed using validity and reliability tests, simple linear regression, and t-tests. The results indicate that money politics influences community participation, though its contribution is relatively small, with an  $R^2$  of 35%. This finding suggests that money politics still affects voting behavior, even as some members of the community have begun to show greater political awareness. Based on the results, this study emphasizes the need for election organizers and supervisory bodies to strengthen political education. It encourages political parties to conduct more ethical, transparent, and accountable campaigns, thereby further improving the quality of democracy at the local level.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Money politics, Political participation, Regional head elections



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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

General elections are a fundamental institution that serves as a means of conveying the people's democratic rights. The existence of general elections has been recognized by countries that adhere to the principle of popular sovereignty. The core issue of general elections is rooted in two fundamental issues that are always debated in state life: the doctrine of popular sovereignty and the concept of democracy. Democracy is the concrete manifestation of popular sovereignty, while general elections reflect that democracy itself. Election participants can be individuals or political parties, but political parties remain the primary actors in electoral contests(Budiarjo, 2008) (Pamungkas, 2009).

Rapid societal development, with its large population, broad geographic distribution, and ever-expanding range of activities, has led to an increasingly diverse and complex range of problems faced by the people. This situation makes it difficult to achieve



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the ideal democratic process directly through deliberation or discussion involving all citizens. Today, the 'political method' has become dominant in democratic theory, making elections the most crucial indicator of a country's level of democracy. In fact, according to Prezeworski and his colleagues, democracy can be defined as a regime that holds general elections to fill government positions. Dahl also stated that two of the six important characteristics of political institutions in large-scale democracies are closely related to elections: democratically elected officials and free, fair, and regular elections (Pamungkas, 2009)

In the Indonesian context, regional head elections (Pilkada) are an implementation of direct democracy that gives local people the right to elect their leaders directly. Pilkada aligns with the regional autonomy system, which grants regions the freedom to regulate and manage local government. In Pilkada, eligible residents have the right to elect a regional head and deputy regional head as a single package. Therefore, Pilkada is a crucial instrument in implementing the principle of popular sovereignty at the regional level Republik Indonesia (UU Nomor 10, 2016)

Public political participation is a key element in the democratic process. Ramlan Surbakti divides political participation into two categories: active participation and passive participation. Active participation includes proposing policies, offering criticism and suggestions, paying taxes, and electing leaders, while passive participation includes obeying the government, such as accepting and implementing decisions. This level of participation significantly determines the legitimacy and quality of democracy in a government system (Surbakti, 2024).

Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning Elections stipulates that the General Elections Commission (KPU) is a national, permanent, and independent body responsible for organizing elections. The KPU is tasked with conducting elections professionally and free of any party influence, with a working area covering all of Indonesia. The presence of a general secretariat, as a supporter of the KPU's duties, also plays a crucial role in improving the quality of election administration by upholding integrity and accountability (UU Nomor 7, 2017)

However, in the implementation of democracy and elections, the phenomenon of money politics has become a serious problem that threatens the integrity and quality of democracy, not only in Indonesia but also in many other democratic countries. Money politics is the practice of using money to influence election results, public policies, and political decisions, thereby undermining the democratic process and creating political inequality (Surbakti, 2024). Money politics not only involves elements of bribery but also creates voting behavior that is not based on rational considerations or the goodness of decisions, but rather on material gain. The main dimensions of this practice are political



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ambition and financial capital, which make money the primary material force in the struggle for political power (Mawardi & Jufri, 2021).

Banda Aceh City, as the capital of Aceh Province, has excellent potential to improve its people's quality of life through high-quality political participation. In the context of the 2024 regional elections, public participation in Banda Aceh is a crucial determinant of a transparent and accountable democratic process. According to a 2023 report by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Banda Aceh City, the city's Human Development Index (HDI) reached 88.32, a very high figure compared to Aceh Province's HDI (74.7) and the national average (74.39). In theory, this high HDI should lead to increased political awareness among the public, enabling voters to be critical and rational, and reject transactional political practices (BPS Kota Banda Aceh, 2023).

However, what actually occurred was a paradox. Despite relatively high levels of education and access to information among the people of Banda Aceh, the practice of money politics persisted among some candidates in various electoral contests. This phenomenon demonstrates that high levels of human development do not always directly impact the quality of public political awareness. Factors such as a culture of patronage, pragmatic economic interests, and weak law enforcement and election oversight still provide room for money politics to flourish (ANTARA News, 2023)

Data from the (BPS Kota Banda Aceh, 2023) also shows a literacy rate of 98.5% and 97.3% of residents have completed junior high school or equivalent education, indicators that strengthen the potential for good political participation. However, the practice of money politics in the 2024 Banda Aceh Pilkada, especially by candidate pair number 01, Illiza-Afdhal, has raised serious suspicions regarding the distribution of money to voters. The case of an individual caught red-handed distributing money at a coffee shop in Gampong Geuceu Iniem on November 26, 2024, and reported to the Banda Aceh City Election Supervisory Committee (Panwaslih), indicates a serious violation. Unfortunately, the report is considered inadequately followed up in accordance with applicable regulations (Aceh Journal National Network, 2025).

Furthermore, the hearing at the Election Organizers' Honorary Council (DKPP) in July 2025, which revealed the disappearance of Rp18 million in cash evidence, strongly indicates the weakness of oversight and transparency systems in handling vote-buying cases. This not only tarnishes the election supervisory institution but also demonstrates that integrity issues are inherent not only to election participants but also to democratic organizers (AJNN, 2025).

The civil coalition of election observers stated that Banda Aceh is experiencing a money politics crisis ahead of the 2024 regional elections. The practice of voter data



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manipulation, the provision of merchandise vouchers, and partisan ASN support are standard practices that undermine the principles of neutrality and fairness of the democratic process. This situation violates Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning ASN, which emphasizes that ASN must remain neutral in all political processes (InfoPublik, 2023). However, KIP data from Banda Aceh City shows that voter participation in the 2024 regional elections reached 64.5%, up from 63% in the 2017 regional elections. This data shows that the majority of voters exercised their voting rights from the permanent voter list (DPT) of more than 172 thousand residents (Antara News, 2024). This high level of public participation is considered a positive indicator of democracy's implementation and a determinant of the legitimacy of the government formed.

However, the relationship between political participation and the practice of money politics is dual. On the one hand, money politics can increase voter turnout through material incentives. However, it undermines the quality of public participation by reducing voting decisions to economic commodities devoid of rational consideration. This condition also breeds distrust in the democratic system, so that the people's votes are seen as having little value and are easily manipulated by those with greater financial capital.

The socioeconomic conditions of the people of Banda Aceh, although relatively good compared to other regions in Aceh, remain a factor in the vulnerability of money politics practices. Public perceptions of money politics vary, from those who consider it normal to those who view it as a serious threat to a healthy democracy. Therefore, research on the influence of money politics on public participation in the 2024 Banda Aceh regional elections is crucial for sharpening academic understanding and providing policy recommendations that can strengthen the integrity of democracy at the local level.

## **2. METHOD**

This study uses a descriptive, quantitative approach to examine the influence of money politics on public participation in the 2024 regional elections in Banda Aceh. This approach aims to collect and analyze numerical data to explain the relationship between the variables studied, namely the influence of money politics (variable X) and public participation in the 2024 regional elections in Banda Aceh (variable Y). The instrument used was a questionnaire, and data were collected through a survey without intervention on the variables (Sugiyono, 2018). The population in this study was the community registered on the Permanent Voters List (DPT) in Banda Aceh City.

Therefore, the population used in this study was 169,146. Sampling was conducted using a non-probability sampling technique, in which each element of the population does not have an equal chance of being selected. Using the Slovin formula and



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a 5.6% error rate, a sample size of 322 respondents was obtained. The sample consisted of 148 men and 172 women. Respondents were evenly distributed across nine sub-districts in Banda Aceh City (Siregar, 2017)(Sugiyono, 2018). Descriptive statistical analysis was used to process the data. Calculations were performed to obtain frequencies, percentages, averages (means), and standard deviations to determine data distribution and trends. This method provides a general overview of the influence of money politics on public participation in the 2024 regional elections in Banda Aceh, numerically and systematically (Ghozali, 2018).

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The research results show that the majority of Banda Aceh residents agreed that they had received money politics during the 2024 regional elections. From the descriptive analysis: 32% of respondents agreed that they had received money from legislative candidates or political parties during the campaign period; 24% stated they were neutral; The remainder either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Statements related to the influence of money politics on public participation also showed a significant impact. Around 32% stated that political promises influenced them, while 24% remained neutral. However, when asked whether voting is the primary means of participating in the political process, responses were more varied: 4% disagreed that social media campaigns significantly influenced their decision to vote for a presidential candidate; 79% agreed; and 6% were neutral.

These results demonstrate that while money politics is often considered a factor fueling apathy and diminishing the quality of democracy, the reality on the ground demonstrates varying levels of participation influenced by socioeconomic factors, education, and public political awareness. The high level of public participation in money politics, widespread among the general public in Banda Aceh, significantly influences the decision-making process for selecting candidates or legislative pairs.

According to the theory, money politics is the practice of political actors giving cash, goods, services, and other economic benefits (such as projects or job creation). This includes benefits for individuals (such as cash in envelopes) and for community groups (such as building a new soccer field for young people). The analysis of the statement "*I have received money from legislative candidates or political parties during the campaign period*" indicates that some segments of society carry out money politics in regional head election campaigns. A significant percentage of respondents who agreed with this statement (32%) indicated that money politics remains a fairly real and deeply rooted phenomenon in the democratic process. This indicates the need for stricter oversight, increased voter awareness, and effective law enforcement to minimize this practice.



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The results of the statement "*Money from legislative candidates or political parties influences my voting decision.*" Thirty percent of respondents stated "Agree" to the statement that money from legislative candidates or political parties influences their voting decision. 21% of respondents were neutral, while 30% stated "Disagree." Furthermore, the analysis of the statement "*I have received goods (such as necessities, clothing, or other items) from legislative candidates or political parties during the campaign period*" indicates that the practice of giving campaign goods remains common and has a significant impact on money politics. The number of respondents who acknowledged receiving such goods indicates that, in addition to cash, consumer goods are also an instrument used by legislative candidates or political parties to influence voters.

The analysis of the statement "*Giving goods from legislative candidates or political parties influences my voting decisions*" showed that respondents disagreed that giving goods influenced their voting decisions. This shows that most people tend to vote independently, though some acknowledge that receiving goods influences their political preferences.

The percentage who reject the influence of material incentives on voting decisions reflects a relatively high level of awareness among respondents of the importance of voting based on rational considerations rather than solely on material incentives. Furthermore, the results of the analysis of the statement "*I always use my voting rights in every election I participate in*," 79% stated "Agree" to the statement that they always use their voting rights in every election they participate in. respondents have high awareness and commitment in using their voting rights in every election, which is an important indicator of active political participation.

The analysis of the statement "*I feel that voting is the main tool for participating in the political process*" also showed that 79% of respondents agreed. This finding clarifies that voting is the most effective means for people to fulfill their political obligations and roles. Meanwhile, based on the results of the statement "*I actively attend rallies or political meetings in my community,*" 37% of respondents agreed.

The high percentage of respondents who attended community political meetings may reflect their awareness of the importance of local-level democratic involvement. However, the presence of a group of respondents who were neutral or refused to participate actively indicates that there are still obstacles or factors that reduce community involvement in community political activities, such as distrust, lack of information, or limited time and resources.



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Then, based on the analysis of the statement "*I feel it is important to participate in public meetings as part of political participation*", 19% of respondents are neutral, indicating possible doubts or uncertainty about the role of public meetings in their political participation.

This finding underscores the need for greater understanding and education about the importance of active involvement in various forms of political participation, including attending public meetings. Furthermore, the results for the statement "*I am a member of a certain political party or political group*" indicate that 44% of respondents are neutral, suggesting ambivalence or uncertainty about their membership in a particular political party or group. Meanwhile, almost half of the respondents (97%) disagreed with joining a political party or group, indicating low interest or awareness of direct involvement in formal political structures.

Table 1. Coefficient of Determination

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Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.194 <sup>a</sup>	.038	.035	6.92389

a. Predictors: (Constant), Money Politics

b. Dependent Variable: Public Participation

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*Source: Primary data processed by researchers (2025)*

The results of the statement "*My membership in a political party helps me understand political issues better*" indicate that membership in a political party does not automatically improve political insight for all members. Factors such as limited access to information, the quality of internal party communication, or a lack of political training may contribute to the low effectiveness of membership in deepening understanding of political issues.

Furthermore, some respondents' skepticism about the benefits of political party membership may reflect criticism of the culture of political parties that are less open or responsive to their members' needs. Furthermore, the analysis of the statement "*I have contacted government officials to convey aspirations or complaints*" shows that 30% of respondents disagreed that they had ever contacted government officials to do so. In comparison, only 24% admitted doing so. This finding indicates that the majority of the



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public has not actively utilized official channels to convey opinions or complaints to the government.

This situation could indicate obstacles to political participation through formal communication channels, possibly due to distrust of government officials, difficulty in accessing information, or a lack of public awareness regarding the mechanisms for conveying aspirations. Furthermore, the neutral stance of 13% of respondents also indicated uncertainty or doubt regarding their experiences in the process. Finally, analysis of the statement "*I feel that communicating with members of parliament is an effective way to contribute to political decision-making*" showed that 30% of respondents responded positively.

This finding indicates that almost half of the public considers communicating with members of parliament an effective way to participate directly in the political decision-making process. This attitude reflects an awareness of the importance of citizen participation in influencing policy through representative channels. On the other hand, 16% of respondents doubted the effectiveness of communication with members of parliament, and 15% were neutral. This indicates dissatisfaction or skepticism regarding the performance of people's representatives in accommodating public aspirations, which may stem from experiences of a lack of responsiveness or accessibility from members of parliament.

Overall, the results of this analysis indicate that money politics is a phenomenon, with some respondents admitting to having received money or goods from legislative candidates or political parties during the campaign period. Approximately 36–39% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had received campaign money and goods. However, a significant proportion disagreed, indicating diverse experiences and public perceptions of this phenomenon.

Furthermore, approximately 35% of respondents stated that giving money influenced their voting decisions, while the majority rejected the influence of giving goods in determining political choices. These findings indicate that money politics still influences voter behavior, although it is not entirely a primary factor in decision-making. Public awareness of the importance of political participation, primarily through voting, is relatively high. However, the practice of money politics remains a serious challenge that affects the quality of democracy at the voter level.

Active participation in other forms, such as party membership, attending public meetings, and direct communication with officials, still needs to be improved for democracy to run more effectively and inclusively. Therefore, efforts to educate political



voters, provide transparency, and strengthen access to participation are crucial in improving the quality of democracy and the integrity of the political process.

Table 2. T-Test

<i>Model</i>		<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standar dized Coeffici ents</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Err or</i>	<i>Beta</i>		
1	( <i>Consta nt</i> )	21.830	1.177		18.549	.000
	<i>Religiusi tas</i>	.340	.096	.194	3.533	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Agresivitas						

Source: SPSS's Data 2025

Based on the research conducted and analyzed using several statistical tests, the validity test indicates that the calculated r value is greater and positive compared to the r table. With degrees of freedom (df) = 322 – 2 = 320 and a significance level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.05 in a one-sided test, the r table value is 0.799. Therefore, it can be concluded that all indicators in variable X (money politics) and variable Y (public participation) are declared valid. This means the research instrument accurately measures the influence of money politics on public participation in the 2024 Pilkada in Banda Aceh City. These results indicate acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha), so it can be concluded that money politics influences public participation in the 2024 Pilkada in Banda Aceh City.



Table 3. Validity Test Results

Statement	r count	r table	Remarks
X1	0,83341511	0,109	Valid
X2	0,862775998	0,109	Valid
X3	0,836241145	0,109	Valid
X4	0,840197813	0,109	Valid
Y1	0,223419494	0,109	Valid
Y2	0,333055867	0,109	Valid
Y3	0,820901599	0,109	Valid
Y4	0,82998116	0,109	Valid
Y5	0,806436824	0,109	Valid
Y6	0,824981937	0,109	Valid
Y7	0,786521928	0,109	Valid
Y8	0,798761286	0,109	Valid

Source : SPSS's Data 2025

In the context of Edward Aspinall's theory of money politics, the results of this study reinforce the view that money politics refers to the use of money in politics. This term is also used to describe the practice of buying votes in political party congresses, including political corruption. Money politics itself is also used to describe practices that refer to the distribution of money (cash and goods) from prospective candidates to voters during general elections. The findings indicate that money politics practices not only influence voter preferences but also shape the complex dynamics of political participation, underscoring the importance of analyzing them to understand patterns of political participation and their implications for the quality of democracy in the modern era (Aspinall & Sukmajati, 2015).

However, this influence does not necessarily reflect good quality political participation. Although quantitatively, the level of public participation in exercising their right to vote is high, qualitatively, this participation still faces challenges. The practice of money politics can encourage pseudo-participation, in which voting decisions are not fully grounded in rational considerations, political awareness, or an understanding of the candidate's vision and programs. Furthermore, money politics also tends to undermine non-voting forms of political participation, such as active public involvement in political



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discussions, election monitoring, and participation in the ongoing democratic process. Thus, despite the apparent high level of voter participation, the quality of democracy remains threatened by the dominance of money politics.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of statistical tests and discussions regarding the influence of money politics on public participation in the 2024 regional elections in Banda Aceh City, the following conclusions can be drawn. Based on the research, the validity test indicates that all indicators for variables X and Y are valid. The results indicate that the influence of money politics on public participation in the 2024 regional elections in Banda Aceh City supports Edward Aspinal's money politics theory, which emphasizes that money politics itself is also used to illustrate practices related to the distribution of money. The analysis also shows that the influence of money politics on public participation in the 2024 regional elections in Banda Aceh City is quite significant (79% Agree, 6% Disagree, and 4% Neutral). These results also support the theory and concept of political participation, which defines it as the active involvement of individuals or groups in political activities, such as voting in general elections, attending public meetings, joining political parties, and interacting with officials. It is hoped that the Banda Aceh Election Supervisory Agency (Panwaslih) will continue to strengthen its oversight capacity at the sub-district and village levels by involving trained ad hoc supervisors who understand the increasingly diverse modes of vote buying, including the distribution of e-money or basic food aid. Furthermore, it is hoped that the Banda Aceh Panwaslih will intensify its outreach program on the dangers of vote buying, not only in the lead-up to election day, but also on an ongoing basis. Education should target strategic groups such as first-time voters, community leaders, and local communities.

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