

## Money Politics, Patronage, and Clientelism in the 2024 General Election: Dynamics of Political Behavior of the Community in Kartagenah Tengah Village, Pamekasan Regency

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### Abstract

*The existence of relationship between patrons (those in power) and clients creates a reciprocal dynamic involving the provision of “rewards” during general elections, thereby fostering a culture of vote-buying within the community—including the community of Kertagenah Tengah Village during the 2024 general election. This study aims to examine the political dynamics as well as the practices of patronage, clientelism, and vote-buying in the village in question. Furthermore, the research employed a qualitative approach using primary data sources, including residents of Kertagenah Tengah Village in Pamekasan Regency, the Village Head and village officials of Kertagenah Tengah, as well as members of the Pamekasan Regency Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu); secondary data was drawn from books, laws, and other sources. The results of this study indicate that the relationship between patrons and clients takes the form of personal gifts, services, and activities provided to the community, as well as vote-buying. Second, this relationship between patrons and clients gives rise to the practice of money politics, in which clients cast their votes as a form of reciprocity and gratitude toward patrons who have provided them with resources. Third, the existence of patronage, clientelism, and money politics is caused by a lack of political awareness among the public, low legal awareness, and economic hardship.*

*Keyword: Money Politics, Patronase and Klientelisme, General Elections*

### Abstrak

Adanya relasi antara patron (pemilik kekuasaan) dan klien, membentuk sebuah hubungan timbal balik berupa pemberian “imbalan” pada pemilihan umum sehingga menciptakan budaya politik uang yang ada di masyarakat

termasuk pada masyarakat di Desa Kertagenah Tengah pada pemilihan umum tahun 2024. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dinamika politik serta praktik patronase, klientalisme, dan politik uang di desa yang bersangkutan. Selain itu pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan yakni pendekatan kualitatif dengan sumber data primer yang melibatkan dari Masyarakat Desa Kertagenah Tengah Kabupaten Pamekasan, Kepala Desa dan Perangkat Desa Kertagenah Tengah serta anggota Bawaslu Kabupaten Pamekasan, juga data sekunder berasal dari buku, Undang-Undang, dan lain-lain. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa bentuk hubungan antara patron dan klien yakni dengan cara pemberian-pemberian pribadi, pelayanan dan aktivitas kepada masyarakat, dan pembelian suara. Kedua, dengan adanya relasi antara patron dan klien ini menimbulkan praktek money politik, dimana klien akan memberikan suaranya sebagai bentuk timbal balik dan balas budi kepada patron yang telah memberikan sumber daya kepada klien. Ketiga, bahwa adanya patronase, klientalisme, dan *money politics* disebabkan karena faktor kurangnya wawasan politik masyarakat, rendahnya kesadaran hukum, serta kesulitan ekonomi.

Kata Kunci : Money Politics, Patronase dan Klientelisme, Pemilihan Umum

### **A. Introduction**

With Indonesia being established as a country of law that adopts a democratic system, all existing powers must be based on the state constitution. When democracy is upheld, everything is done by the people, from the people, and for the people. The concept of supreme sovereignty places the highest power in the hands of the people. Elections are one form of public political participation in a democratic state, and integrity and fairness in their implementation reflect the quality of the democracy itself. Democracy in Indonesia is considered one of the best among other democratic countries. Indonesian society upholds values of harmony, respect, and tolerance in practicing democracy. Maintaining tolerance and mutual respect supports human rights guaranteed by the Constitution and Law Number 39 of 1999 on Human Rights.<sup>1</sup>

Pemilu In the context of democracy, freedom means the right given by the government to the people to choose leaders who are competent and able to carry out their duties well. The real form of this freedom can be seen in the election process, which includes the presidential and vice-presidential elections, parliamentary elections, and regional head elections held every five years, where citizens participate in direct voting according to the regulations

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<sup>1</sup> Undang-undang Nomor 39 Tahun 1999 Tentang Hak Asasi Manusia

set out in Law Number 7 of 2017 on Elections.<sup>2</sup> Elections are one of the indicators for measuring the quality of democracy in a country, besides freedoms like freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion, as well as equality before the law. Elections serve as a democratic tool to build a system of state power that comes from the will of the people, so the power that is formed truly reflects the people's aspirations, is carried out by the people, and ultimately returns to the people through a system of deliberation and representation. Essentially, elections are a recognition and realization of political rights.<sup>3</sup> Based on Law Number 7 of 2017 Article 1<sup>4</sup>, General elections, or just elections, are a way for people to exercise their power by choosing members of the House of Representatives and the Regional Representative Council. In Indonesia, elections are held directly, openly, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly, based on the 1945 Constitution.

The principle used in elections in Indonesia is LUBER, which stands for Direct, General, Free, and Secret, and has been applied since the New Order era. During the Reform Era, the term Jurdil emerged, referring to the principle of Honest and Fair.<sup>5</sup> Elections are a form of democratic event that signal a change of leaders, a government transition, and a new era for the ruling regime. Because of this, politicians or elites naturally compete and are ambitious to gain parliamentary seats, so various methods are used, including pragmatic practices that actually undermine the essence of election integrity itself. Patronage is one form of strategy applied by involving a relationship between a patron and a client. A patron is an individual who has power, resources, influence, as well as greater wealth or economic capability, creating a reciprocal relationship with the client, who will later repay through loyalty and support after receiving the benefits promised by the patron.<sup>6</sup>

In the relationship between patrons and clients during elections, it doesn't always have to be negative if there's a balance of mutual benefit—for example, when the patron, who holds power, provides education to the community about the importance of fair and honest political participation.

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<sup>2</sup> Anjelina Sitinjak and others, 'Analisis Yuridis Politik Hukum Terhadap Praktek Kejahatan Money Politic Pada Pemilihan Umum Di Indonesia', *Ilmu Hukum*, 1.3 (2024), hlm. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Jihan Amalia Syahidah, *Hukum Pemilu dan Sistem Kepartaian Di Indonesia*, (Pamekasan : Duta Media Publishing, 2021), hlm. 81.

<sup>4</sup> Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 7 Tahun 2017 Tentang Pemilihan Umum

<sup>5</sup> Abdul Hakam Sholahuddin. *Hukum Pemilu*, (Banten : PT Sada Kurnia Pustaka, 2023), hlm.10.

<sup>6</sup> Mochdar Soleman and others, 'Hubungan Patron-Klien Dalam Rekrutmen Calon Anggota Legislatif Partai Gerindra Kota Tidore Kepulauan Tahun 2014 Program Studi Sosiologi , Universitas Nasional', 7.2 (2022), hlm. 347.

However, based on observations and interviews in Kertagena Village, this patron-client relationship actually has a negative impact, leading to the emergence of Money Politics. Money politics, known as Money Politics, is an organized effort to influence the community or voters by offering material incentives or wealth, whether from individuals or political parties, in order to gain support in political competitions.<sup>7</sup> The main concept of money politics involves giving goods, cash, services, or other economic benefits to voters or certain groups. It's often done with a hidden agenda, where even though it's claimed to be for the public good, it's actually meant for the benefit of a person, group, or particular political party.<sup>8</sup> Patronage, clientelism, and money politics are quite interesting to study in depth when looking at relationships, especially since previous research and literature show that patronage, clientelism, and money politics often happen, particularly in rural communities, because resources and power are only controlled by a small number of individuals.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying something similar by taking a similar sample, specifically in a village located in Pamekasan Regency, precisely in Kartagena Tengah Village. In that village, there are indications of transactional political activities marked by the relationship between patrons and clients, which leads to money politics in the 2024 elections.

## **B. Research Methods**

Based on the context and focus of the study, this research is a qualitative study with a sociological approach. The data sources used in this study are primary and secondary data sources. Primary data is obtained directly from informants through interviews and observation, while secondary data is obtained from documents, laws and regulations, books, journals, as well as other relevant sources. Data collection techniques are carried out through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The collected data is then analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. Later, the research results are reported and validated by testing data validity using source triangulation and technique triangulation, which is done by comparing data obtained from various information sources and comparing interview results.

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<sup>7</sup> Nova Nazwa Ramadhanti and others, 'Money Politics VS Cost Politics: Memilih Makna Yang Terlihat Sama', *Aliansi: Jurnal Hukum, Pendidikan Dan Sosial Humaniora*, 1.2 (2024), hlm. 30.

<sup>8</sup> Imawan Sugiharto. *Politik Uang dan Permasalahan Penegakan Hukumnya*, (Pekalongan : PT. Nasya Expanding Manajement, 2021), hlm. 17.

<sup>9</sup> Saiful Asra and Fiandy Mauliansyah, 'Money Politic Sebagai Representasi Budaya Patron-Client Dalam Pemilu: Perspektif Sosiologi Politik', *Jurnal Society : Pengamat Perubahan Sosial*, 4.2 (2024), hlm. 97.

### **C. Discussion and Research Results**

#### **Money Politics, Patronage, and Clientelism Practices in Kertagena Tengah Village in the 2024 Election**

Based on research conducted specifically in Kertagena Tengah Village, Pamekasan Regency, in 2024-2025, involving several informants, including the residents of Kertagena Tengah Village, Bawaslu members, and one of the village officials in Kertagena Tengah Village. Through interview sessions as well as field observations, the findings show that the form of the relationship between patrons and clients in the 2024 general elections in Kertagena Tengah Village was carried out through an awareness of each other's positions. This relationship is a series of ways for patrons to maintain the legitimacy of political actors, which of course will provide benefits, whether material or non-material, for those who play a role as the 'link' in the relationship between patrons and clients.<sup>10</sup> As for the patron-client relationship in the elections in Kertagena Tengah Village, Pamekasan Regency, it is illustrated in the diagram below:

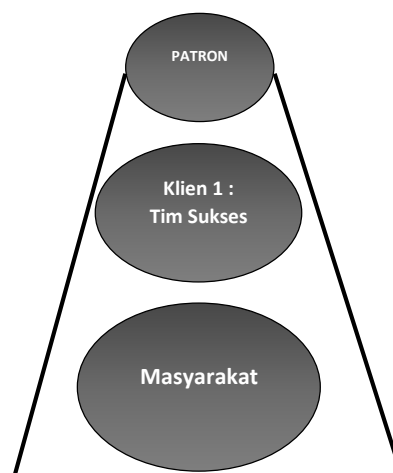


Figure 1 Client-Patron Relationship

The image above is a simple schematic that can explain how the relationship between a patron and clients actually works, where it is very dynamic and flexible. The patron, who owns power and resources, can have a relationship with the campaign team but can also interact directly with the community in their electoral area without any restrictions, which is how the relationship described above comes about. Patronage and clientelism are two contexts that are closely related to each other. Patronage is a form of activity involving giving money, services, or goods from a figure with dominant resources, like a politician, to campaign workers, individual voters, or

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<sup>10</sup> Irfandi Setiawan, Ibrahim, and Ranto, 'Patronase dan Klientalisme Politik (Studi Pada Masyarakat Daerah Pemilihan I, Kabupaten Bangka Di Pemilihan Legislatif 2019)', *BULLET: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu*, 1.6 (2022), hlm. 1255.

employees, with the expectation that they will offer political support in return. Meanwhile, clientelism refers to a network or relationship that describes a form of cooperation where someone delegates their vote to another group.<sup>11</sup> A political relationship is called a form of clientelism, characterized by the trait where the benefits given by politicians to voters come with certain conditions that the voters must meet, or because the voters contribute their votes in an election to the politician who provides them with benefits.<sup>12</sup> The pattern of relationships in patronage activities, according to James C. Scott's patron-client theory, is understood as a special instrumental relationship, where the party with dominant power and a higher position, whether socially or economically—the patron—uses their influence or resources to offer promises of services or other forms of incentives to the inferior party based on their status and social class. Their role is as the client, with the understanding that in return, the client will later provide personal services or support to the patron.<sup>13</sup> This means it applies when politicians, as patrons, provide protection or benefits to citizens based on their contribution to the politician's political ambitions.<sup>14</sup> Over time, the concept of patronage and clientelism in explaining the identification of patron-client relationships is not only based on the hierarchical relationship between the two parties anymore, but also emphasizes the form of commitment in exchanging benefits.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, if we look at the 2024 elections in Kertagena Tengah village, Pamekasan Regency, the indications of patronage activities that occur, when reflected upon according to James Scott's opinion, can be divided into two: Loyalty relationships, where the relationship between the patron and the campaign team is very significant in building a relationship between the patron and the clients, followed by loyalty and compliance within the dynamics of the agreed cooperation.<sup>16</sup> A reciprocal relationship is marked by

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<sup>11</sup> Rekha Adji Pratama, 'Patronase, Klientalisme Dan Tahta Putra Mahkota Pada Pilkada Kota Kendari Tahun 2017', *Jurnal Wacana Politik*, 2.1 (2017), hlm. 44.

<sup>12</sup> Ward Berenschot and Edward Aspinall, 'How Clientelism Varies: Comparing Patronage Democracies', *Democratization*, 27.1 (2020), hlm. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Irvan Ansyari, Priyatno Harsastro, and Fitriyah, 'Article Analisis Patron Klien Terhadap Kemenangan Partai Golkar Kabupaten Tanah Datar Sejak Reformasi Irvan Ansyari\* Priyatno Harsastro', *Indonesian Journal of Religion and Society*, 01.01 (2019), hlm. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Kerem Yildirim and Herbert Kitschelt, 'Analytical Perspectives on Varieties of Clientelism', *Democratization*, 27.1 (2020), hlm. 43.

<sup>15</sup> Miquel Pellicer and others, 'Clientelism from the Client's Perspective: A Meta-Analysis of Ethnographic Literature', *Perspectives on Politics*, 20.3 (2022), hlm. 931.

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Ridho Hidayatullah, 'Relasi Politik Patron-Klien Dalam Pemilihan Kepala Daerah ( Pilkada ) Kota Cirebon Tahun 2024 Di Kawasan Pesantren', *Journal of Religion and Social Tranformation*, 3.1 (2024), hlm. 63.

a mutually beneficial bond between a patron and a client.<sup>17</sup> The practice of giving money or services from the campaign team (client 1) to the public (client 2) is considered a way to catch the attention of client 2. The campaign team carefully thinks about strategies and ways so that what the patron gives through the campaign team becomes an attraction in itself. The clients feel indebted and will return the favor by voting during elections. Patrons also meet with clients at various events, like during elections. This is what the patron-client theory explains, that they have a more flexible cluster pattern. This mutually beneficial pattern is intended to be realized in a scheme as mentioned earlier, where clients benefit by receiving incentives in the form of money or goods and services from patrons, while patrons themselves can also benefit if they manage to gain a lot of support from the joint commitments with clients on a large scale, thus strengthening their chances of winning in elections.

**The Relationship Between Money Politics, Patronage, and Clientelism in Shaping the Political Behavior of the Kertagena Tengah Village Community in the 2024 Election**

Money politics has a significant impact on people's political behavior, meaning that the presence of money politics can actually lead to voters losing their rationality. Instead of making choices based on candidates' visions and missions, including the programs offered by election participants, it turns into a kind of transaction or exchange of commitments when one party wants to win. For that reason, incentives are deployed so that people make their choices based on money and material things.<sup>18</sup> Besides that, although not absolutely, money politics can also be said to be driven by the potential presence of patronage, with various benefits in more general forms, not just money, which could also include public services, important positions, social assistance, or other forms of benefits.<sup>19</sup> In the patronage mechanism, it naturally also involves a relationship or connection between the parties involved in transactional political activities in such a way, which is known as clientelism, a term for the hierarchical dynamic scheme between a patron and a client.

The relationship between a patron and a client, when looking at the 2024 elections in Kertagena Tengah Village, can be described as forming a

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<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Ridho Hidayatullah. 'Relasi Politik Patron-Klien Dalam Pemilihan Kepala Daerah ( Pilkada ) Kota Cirebon Tahun 2024 Di Kawasan Pesantren', hlm. 63

<sup>18</sup> Heru Permana Putra, 'Pengaruh Politik Uang (Money Politics) Terhadap Pilihan Masyarakat Dalam Pilkada Tahun 2024 Di Kota Padang', *JISIP UNJA (Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Ilmu Politik Universitas Jambi)*, 9 (2025), hlm. 111.

<sup>19</sup> Elva Imeldatur Rohmah, 'Praktik Patronase Dalam Pemilu Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Kredibilitas Demokrasi Di Indonesia', *Staatsrecht: Jurnal Hukum Kenegaraan Dan Politik Islam*, 3.1 (2025), hlm. 111.

pattern of 'mutual benefit and interdependence,' where both have sides that complement each other. The patron has resources, while the client has votes. Based on interview and observation results, the form of the relationship between patron and client involves giving money, goods, or infrastructure from the patron to the client. The patron, who at the time was running as a leadership candidate, needed votes from the client, so the patron prepared a 'reward' for the client. Likewise, the client, as a way of saying thanks and reciprocating, would then give their vote to the patron. The second form is providing service and activity support to the community from the patron to the client, where in this case the patron becomes the hero in providing support for community services and activities in Kertagena Tengah Village. In return, the client will give assistance to the patron during the elections. The third form is vote buying, where in this case the patron gives something, like money or goods, to the client so that they vote for them in the upcoming elections. Usually, the patron does not get directly involved but is represented by a campaign team or client 1, who is considered closer and more familiar with the 'field' than the patron themselves. This is done so that all layers of society understand and vote for the patron in the election process.<sup>20</sup>

In the 2024 general election in Kertagena Tengah Village, it was found that there is actually a strong relationship between the patron, client 1, which is the campaign team, and client 2, which is the community. The nature of the relationship between these three parties has been analyzed in a previous article. With this relationship forming a pattern of 'mutual need and mutual dependence,' money politics practices emerged, such as giving money, goods, or infrastructure, providing services to the community, and buying votes.

According to an interview with one of the informants, Mrs. AFD, she stated that money politics takes the form of giving envelopes containing a certain amount of cash. The campaign team of one of the candidates visited Mrs. AFD, her family, and her neighbors with the intention of influencing their choices in the election. At that time, the team directly asked Mrs. AFD to vote for the candidate they mentioned. It wasn't just limited to Mrs. AFD and her surroundings; this practice also spread to other communities, where envelopes containing money were distributed systematically to secure as many votes as possible on election day. Similarly, Mrs. IA stated that she and her family experienced the same thing. They were offered money with the

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<sup>20</sup> Edward Aspinall and Mada Sukmajati, *Patronase Dan Klientelisme Dalam Politik Elektoral Di Indonesia, Politik Uang Di Indonesia: Patronase Dan Klientelisme Pada Pemilu Legislatif 2014*, (Yogyakarta : Penerbit Polgov 2015), hlm. 35.

intention of getting them to vote for a certain candidate. This shows that vote-buying practices don't just happen on a small scale but spread across different layers of society in the same pattern, namely giving money in exchange for votes in the election.

Mrs. IA, who is a resident of Kertagena Tengah Village, revealed that they also received an envelope containing a sum of money from the campaign team of one of the candidates. Interestingly, the money wasn't handed over openly as a form of vote-buying; instead, it was presented in a more subtle way. The campaign team called it "transport money" to get to the polling station (TPS). With this more subtle approach, the practice of vote-buying is seemingly wrapped up as logistical assistance, even though the main goal is still to influence voters' choices. This shows that vote-buying strategies in the community aren't always done directly, but are often camouflaged to make them more acceptable to the public.

Interviews with people in Kertagena Tengah Village also revealed that money politics is still quite rampant and has become a common phenomenon in every election. Many residents admitted to having experienced or directly witnessed this practice, where giving rewards is part of a political strategy to gain votes. One of the most common forms of money politics is handing out envelopes with cash to voters, usually given directly just before election day. Apart from that, there are also other types of gifts, like basic food supplies and household necessities such as rice, cooking oil, sugar, or other staple items, which are distributed with the intent to influence people's political choices. Not only that, some residents also admitted that they often received social promises from candidates, like plans to pave roads, fix drains, build public facilities, or other social aid promised if they were elected.

A social promise like that, when looked at more closely in the context of patronage, actually shows that patronage is a form of social practice carried out with the intention and purpose of reducing or producing power for the elites. Candidates, who are generally political actors or prominent figures in society, will use their primordial status, group solidarity, networks or relationships, even personal closeness, to gain support. They have strong resources, including economic aspects; a political figure running as a candidate in an election can mobilize the resources they have for development projects or social assistance. In addition, there is also symbolic capital in the form of social status, traditional titles, religiosity, or moral image, which can make it

easier to gain legitimacy from the public.<sup>21</sup> This symbolic capital of course becomes one of the elements just as important as economic capital. Because when a figure becomes popular enough in society, social bonds between that figure and other community members can be established more easily. That's why practices like money politics, patronage, and clientelism generally involve patrons who have a strong background or base in the community to gain mass trust from individuals, while also relying on group closeness and community solidarity. In other words, the social structure in society also becomes an instrument in boosting the effectiveness of money politics.<sup>22</sup>

### **Factors Leading to the Practice of Money Politics, Patronage, and Clientelism Among the People of Central Kartagena Village in the 2024 Election**

Culturally, the people of Kertagena Tengah Village still hold tightly to the values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and helping each other, especially among the common folk. This tradition has become an inseparable part of their social life, where a sense of solidarity and community is still highly valued. However, in the context of elections, these cultural values are often exploited by certain parties for political purposes through the practice of money politics, as a result of the negative patron-client relationships. Many people, especially those who are older or don't really understand political dynamics in depth, tend to see giving money, basic food supplies, or other forms of aid not as part of a transactional political strategy, but as a sign of care and goodwill from the patron or their campaign team. As a result, they feel a moral obligation or a kind of "debt of gratitude" to the people giving those rewards and feel compelled to vote for the candidate.

Most of the people in Kertagena Tengah Village admit that they have experienced or received money politics practices in every election, provided by either patrons, clients, or campaign teams. This is supported by statements from residents and village officials in previous interviews, where they mentioned that money politics has become a recurring habit every time elections are held, especially during the ones that happen every five years. In

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<sup>21</sup> Mangihut Siregar, Novita Dwi Indriani, 'Budaya Patronase Di Indonesia : Tinjauan Medan Politik Dan Modal Sosial Dalam Teori Praktik Sosial Bourdieu', *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Ilmu Sosial, Politik dan Humaniora*, 5.3 (2026), hlm. 177

<sup>22</sup> Rendra Syah Putra, Reni Apriani, and Ainur Ropik, 'Dampak Politik Uang Dalam Kesadaran Memilih Masyarakat Pada Pemilihan Kepala Daerah: Studi Kasus Desa Prabumulih Ii, Kecamatan Muara Lakitan, Kabupaten Musi Rawas Tahun 2024', *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum*, 3.5 (2025), hlm. 6546.

reality, politicians running in elections do intentionally distribute money to certain communities to achieve favorable electoral outcomes..<sup>23</sup>

This transactional political tradition seems to be deeply rooted in society, so in every election, giving money or other forms of assistance is no longer seen as a violation, but rather as something 'normal' or even 'expected' by some voters. Masyarakat cenderung menerima imbalan tersebut tanpa mempertimbangkan dampak jangka panjangnya terhadap kualitas demokrasi dan pemerintahan. In that situation, it certainly strengthens the hypothesis that the main reason why transactional politics still exists in society is due to low economic capacity or income, seeing the reality that poor people do tend to accept money or incentives from clientelist activities.<sup>24</sup> Besides that, it's also driven by the lack of political education, and the public's low awareness and understanding regarding election integrity.<sup>25</sup> Basically, money politics reflects the socio-political situation of society, as previously mentioned regarding the imbalance of power relations between people in a subordinate position and political figures who are ambitious to win in elections. Factors like low political awareness and inadequate understanding of money politics create gaps that political elites can exploit to influence or manipulate public trust. Such imbalanced relations have been used to gather votes and secure victories in election contests.<sup>26</sup>

Realizing the negative relationship between patrons, client 1 or campaign teams, and the community or client 2 that leads to Money Politics practices, from the start the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) has urged the public to immediately report if they find any indications of money politics in the elections. Public participation is very important because if we only rely on Bawaslu's monitoring results, it's almost impossible for such cases to be directly uncovered. This is because money politics is often carried out in a closed, systematic manner, and is hard to detect through regular oversight.

In the process of enforcing election laws, any suspected violation cannot be immediately declared a violation without a thorough and legally-based review. Every report or finding of a suspected election violation must be carefully examined, both in terms of facts, evidence, and the legal aspects that

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<sup>23</sup> Sergiu Gherghina and Miroslav Nemčok, 'Political Parties, State Resources and Electoral Clientelism', *Political Parties and Electoral Clientelism*, 2023, hlm. 9.

<sup>24</sup> Ward Berenschot, 'The Political Economy of Clientelism: A Comparative Study of Indonesia's Patronage Democracy', *Comparative Political Studies*, 51.12 (2018), hlm. 1563.

<sup>25</sup> Hendra Yasin and Jurisman Kadji, 'Politik Uang Dalam Pilkada 2024 Kabupaten Jayapura: Antara Legitimasi Sosial Dan Perilaku Memilih', *Politica: Jurnal Hukum Tata Negara Dan Politik Islam*, 11.2 (2025), hlm. 249.

<sup>26</sup> Erifendi Churniawan, 'Dinamika Money Politics Di Masyarakat: Perspektif Relasi Kuasa', *Ahmad Dahlan Legal Perspective*, 4.2 (2024), hlm. 96.

govern it. Before taking further action, Bawaslu has the responsibility to ensure that there is sufficient valid evidence and a strong legal basis to establish an event as an election violation. This process is not only aimed at ensuring accuracy in enforcing rules, but also at making sure that every decision taken remains based on the principles of justice, transparency, and legal certainty.

Referring to Law No. 7 of 2017 on general elections. The practice of money politics is already prohibited, but public awareness in Kertagena Tengah Village is still relatively low. It was found that, up to now, there have been no official reports from the community regarding alleged money politics in the village. The negative reciprocal relationship between patrons and clients leads to elections being used as a platform for making promises, buying votes, and offering incentives, resulting This shows that even though Law Number 7 of 2017 on Elections has clearly regulated the ban on money politics, its implementation still hasn't been effective at the local level.<sup>27</sup>

If people continue to normalize practices like money politics, patronage, and clientelism, this can lead to a pathological cycle in the democratic system itself. This means that people will get used to political relationships based on material or incentive rewards, rather than rational, programmatic reasons. As a result, this could weaken efforts to build a healthy, idea-based, and critical political culture. In the end, elections that should literally be a celebration of democracy for the people end up feeling fake, as they turn into a platform for transactional politics between the public and elites, without really paying attention to the goal of building a democratic, fair, and transparent political system.<sup>28</sup>

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that first, the relationship between the patron, client 1 which is the campaign team, and client 2 which is the community is carried out through the provision of money, goods, or infrastructure from the patron to the clients, support of services and activities to the community, and vote buying. The pattern used is based on the principle of 'mutual benefit and interdependence'. Second, there is a relationship between patrons and clients with money politics that appears in the regional head elections in Kertagenah Tengah Village. With the provision

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<sup>27</sup> Veliktus Jebarus, et al., 'Peran Bawaslu Dalam Meningkatkan Partisipasi Masyarakat dalam Pengawasan Pemilu dan Pilkada 2024 di Kabupaten Manggarai Barat', *Jurnal Riset Multidisiplin Edukasi*, 2.10 (2025), hlm. 285.

<sup>28</sup> Dulce Reika and others, 'Politik Uang Dan Dana Kampanye Pada Pemilu Legislatif Indonesia 2019: Ancaman Dan Dampak Politik Uang Terhadap Keterwakilan Demokratis', *Indonesian Journal of Social Development*, 3.3 (2026), hlm. 10.

of money, goods, or infrastructure, support for services and activities, as well as vote buying, it leads to money politics practices where clients end up voting for patrons as a way of showing gratitude because the patrons have provided resources to the clients. Third, the practices of patronage, clientelism, and money politics are driven by several factors, including the public's limited political awareness, economic difficulties, and low legal awareness.

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