



READING THE ELECTION FROM A SUPERVISORY PERSPECTIVE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE ROLE OF BAWASLU IN HANDLING MONEY POLITICS IN GORONTALO CITY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of elections from a supervisory perspective, focusing on the role of the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) in addressing money politics practices in Gorontalo City. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, using data collection techniques such as interviews, documentation, and direct observation of monitoring and violation-handling processes. The results show that although Gorontalo City Bawaslu operates under a strong legal foundation—namely Law Number 7 of 2017 and Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perpu) Number 1 of 2022—its implementation still faces numerous challenges on the ground. Out of 11 reported cases of alleged money politics, only 7 were successfully registered, while the rest could not be pursued legally. Four of these were categorized as serious violations, involving administrative, ethical, and criminal offenses. The main obstacles faced by Bawaslu include low public participation in reporting, limited access to the reporting system, insufficient supervisory capacity at lower levels, and weak law enforcement. Nevertheless, Bawaslu has taken several improvement initiatives, such as the Anti-Money Politics Village program and the use of social media for participatory supervision. The study concludes that the performance of Gorontalo City Bawaslu in handling money politics remains suboptimal and calls for comprehensive reforms in terms of resources, transparency, and strengthened collaboration with the public and law enforcement institutions to ensure clean, fair, and democratic elections.

Keywords: Election Supervision, Money Politics, Bawaslu Performance

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dinamika pemilu dari perspektif pengawasan, dengan fokus pada peran Badan Pengawas Pemilu (Bawaslu) dalam menangani praktik politik uang di Kota Gorontalo. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, dokumentasi, dan observasi langsung terhadap proses pengawasan serta penanganan pelanggaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun Bawaslu Kota Gorontalo telah memiliki dasar hukum yang kuat, yakni Undang-Undang Nomor 7 Tahun 2017 dan Perpu Nomor 1 Tahun 2022, implementasinya di lapangan masih menghadapi berbagai kendala. Dari 11 dugaan pelanggaran politik uang yang diidentifikasi, hanya 7 yang berhasil didaftarkan, sementara sisanya tidak dapat ditindak secara hukum. Empat di antaranya tergolong dalam kategori berat yang mencakup pelanggaran administratif, etik, dan pidana. Kendala utama yang dihadapi Bawaslu antara lain rendahnya partisipasi masyarakat dalam pelaporan, terbatasnya akses terhadap sistem pelaporan, kurangnya kapasitas pengawasan di tingkat bawah, dan lemahnya penegakan hukum. Meskipun demikian, Bawaslu telah melakukan beberapa



inisiatif perbaikan seperti program Desa Anti Politik Uang dan pemanfaatan media sosial untuk pengawasan partisipatif. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa kinerja Bawaslu Kota Gorontalo dalam menangani praktik politik uang masih belum optimal dan memerlukan reformasi yang menyeluruh, baik dari segi sumber daya, transparansi, maupun penguatan kolaborasi dengan masyarakat dan aparat penegak hukum demi terwujudnya pemilu yang bersih, jujur, dan demokratis.

Kata Kunci: Pengawasan Pemilu, Praktik Politik Uang, Kinerja Bawaslu

I. INTRODUCTION

Admittedly, democracy has been a concept that has inspired systems of government around the world since ancient times, with significant early examples dating back to Ancient Athens, where Athenians had the right to elect officials and take part in the decision-making process. Nonetheless, restrictions on political rights against certain groups, such as women and slaves, were common throughout the history of democracy, including in Ancient Roman culture and the republican system in Venice. The American and French revolutions then provided a major impetus to the development of modern democracy, fighting for individual rights and broader political participation. Since then, democracy has evolved and adapted in many countries around the world, undergoing constant changes in efforts to expand public participation and strengthen democratic institutions (Ramadhani et al., 2022).

On the other hand, the reflection of democracy in the United States has its roots in the American Revolution in the 18th century, which resulted in the U.S. Constitution in 1787. The constitution establishes a framework for the federal government consisting of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial, and guarantees the basic rights of individuals. This system also introduces the concept of electing representatives through general elections. Although initially limited to land-rights whites, suffrage in the U.S. has evolved over time, including the expansion of voting rights to women (through the 19th Amendment) and to people from minority groups (through various civil rights laws). The United States uses a presidential system in which the president is elected separately from the legislature (Wuisang & Abiyoso, 2022).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, Indonesia's democracy and electoral system are characterized by a complex interplay between historical evolutions, constitutional mandates, and contemporary challenges. The democratic framework is designed to ensure public participation, transparency, and accountability, which are essential for sustainable national development and social stability. The philosophy of Pancasila, especially its four principles, underlies the Indonesian democratic system. It emphasizes deliberation and representation, in line with the electoral mechanism to uphold the sovereignty of the people. This philosophy

fosters unity and cooperation among citizens for the common good (Jekson Saragih & Yakobus Ndano, 2024).

Since 1955, Indonesia's electoral system has undergone various changes to adapt to the evolving political landscape. Elections serve a variety of roles, including legitimizing rulers, forming political representatives, and providing political education. General elections (elections) are a crucial element in a country's democratic system. Democratic elections must ensure equal opportunities for all candidates and ensure that voters can make decisions freely without pressure from certain parties. It must also be admitted that even though the election has been held, there are still many findings regarding election violations in Indonesia, especially those carried out by the political parties themselves. This violation can undermine the basic values of true politics and democracy. For example, challenges such as money politics remain, affecting the integrity of the democratic process. This is due to the lack of emphasis on the intellectual qualities and personal character of a political candidate, so that their financial factors become the main determinants or standards of victory in elections (Yusuf et al., 2024) ; (Nurjulaiha et al., 2022; Pangestu et al., 2021).

The practice of money politics poses a serious threat to the integrity of the democratic process with the potential to undermine the principles of equality, justice, and freedom in elections. Money politics is defined as the act of rewarding individuals or groups (voters) as part of the practice of buying and selling votes in political competition. In the sub-district of Dumbo Raya in the 2024 election, money politics is a major concern because of its ability to disrupt the balance of democracy and affect the performance of the election organizing institution, which in this case is Bawaslu. The Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) is an institution that has the main responsibility for supervising the implementation of general elections throughout Indonesia. His duties include supervision of all stages of elections, starting from the election of members of the DPR, DPD, DPRD, president and vice president, to regional heads. Bawaslu itself is a permanently established body, with its members serving for five (5) years since being inaugurated. Its function is important in maintaining the honesty of the election and ensuring that the process runs fairly without political interference of money. However, to ensure that these goals are achieved, it is necessary to evaluate the performance of Bawaslu in handling money politics (Nabilah et al., 2022); (Hardin, 2022).

Based on Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning Elections, Bawaslu has a great capacity in addition to supervisors, Bawaslu also plays a role in executing judges who decide cases. Bawaslu not only provides advice, but also has the authority to resolve cases. Examining the

effective performance of the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) is something that requires more in-depth research. Although supervisory institutions such as Bawaslu at the Provincial, Regency/City, District, and Urban District/Village levels are widespread, the practice of money politics is still very common. The existence of the authority of Bawaslu in supervising the implementation of general elections also seems to still show quite a worrying condition. This argument is based on the aspect of election violations that occurred in Gorontalo City, which indicates that Bawaslu is still not optimal in carrying out its own functions. As data from observational data shows that election violations committed by political parties in Gorontalo City vary in form and frequency. Of the four types of violations recorded, money politics cases occupied the highest number with 7 cases, showing that the practice of political bribery is still a significant problem in the city's electoral process. Violations related to the destruction of campaign props (APK) for legislative candidates were recorded in 2 cases, while 1 case was found in campaign obstruction and disenfranchisement of voting (Indasari et al., 2022).

This data indicates that despite the wide variety of violations, the main issue that dominates the election in Gorontalo City is money politics, which has the potential to undermine the integrity of local democracy. Based on the above findings, it is clear that election violations, especially money politics, are still a serious challenge in maintaining the fairness and transparency of the democratic process in Gorontalo City. This underscores the urgency of further research to identify the root causes of these violations, understand their impact on the quality of democracy, and formulate effective solutions to minimize future violations. This research is important to strengthen the integrity of elections and increase clean and fair political participation.

II. THEORETICAL STUDY

General Elections and Principles of General Elections

Larry Diamond, (2003) Elections are the main markers of a democratic country. No country claims to be democratic without holding elections, despite the fact that it is authoritarian. Regarding Schumpeter's argument about democracy as a 'political method', elections are the most important element in measuring a country's democracy. Przeworski and his colleagues even defined democracy as "simply a regime that holds elections to fill government positions," provided there is real competition, an opposition that has a chance of winning, and executive and legislative positions that are filled through elections (Source: The Ultimate Source, 2009). Elections are a manifestation of the development of human intellect

and wisdom, which arise from the evolution of thought. A concrete example of the application of the leader election system in Ancient Greece is often considered the beginning of elections. Although the concept is not yet completely identical to modern elections, the process of electing leaders in Ancient Greece is recognized as having met the basic criteria of elections by involving direct participation in determining the sovereignty of the people. (Saihu et al., 2015). Elections function as an instrument to elect public officials in the legislative and executive sectors through political channels (Husein, 2014).

Elections are competitions to fill political positions in government based on official choices from qualified citizens. Participants in elections can be individuals or political parties, but the main ones are political parties. Political parties propose candidates in elections to be chosen by the people. (Scott, 2009). Furthermore, Samuddin, (2013) Elections are a system to elect political officials and give them legitimacy to exercise power. Another definition describes elections as the process by which voters elect candidates or candidates to represent them in the state legislature. There is also a view that elections are a method in which all or part of the people elect the leaders they elect (in, Surya et al., 2023). For this reason, elections are considered a very important ritual in various global political systems. According to Manuel Kaisiepo, this process not only gives legitimacy to the existing power grab, but also becomes a source of support and legitimacy that the new regime expects. For the regime in power, elections serve as a tool to maintain the status quo, where the legitimacy and survival of the regime are at stake, rather than an abstract democratic idealism. (in, Maria & Marendra, 2020). Furthermore, Paimin Napitupulu described that elections are a political mechanism in which the people collectively elect their leaders to represent and govern the government (in, Maria & Marendra, 2020).

Zennis Helen, (2020) Elections as an important part of the electoral democracy process which is held regularly every five years, must be regulated through legislation. For the 2019 simultaneous elections, the regulations are regulated by Law No. 7 of 2017. This reflects a codification that combines various previous laws and regulations, such as Law No. 42 of 2008 concerning the General Election of the President and Vice President, Law No. 15 of 2011 concerning General Election Organizers, and Law No. 8 of 2012 concerning the General Election of Members of the DPR, DPD, and DPRD, into one in Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, which is also known as the five-box simultaneous election.(in, Asy'Ari, 2021). Roy. C Macrldis who writes about *"Contemprorary Politics and Ideologies: Movements and Regimes"* quoted in the writings of Eepi Saifulla Fatah, (1997) in

(Puspitasari, 2004) that there are eight conditions to realize democratic elections. Among the conditions that must be met to realize democratic elections must meet these requirements include the recognition of universal suffrage, freedom to form a shelter for various political aspirations of the people, the existence of a democratic political recruitment mechanism for candidates for people's representatives, freedom for voters to discuss and determine their choices, the presence of an independent election committee or committee, freedom for each contestant to compete healthily, as well as bureaucratic neutrality. All of these elements are interrelated and are an important foundation in ensuring the implementation of fair, open, and representative elections.

According to Harris G. Warren (1992:15), elections are an opportunity for citizens to elect government officials and decide what they want the government to do. And in making that decision, the citizens determine what exactly they want to have. Meanwhile, according to A. Sudiharto, elections are an important means of democracy and are a real manifestation of the people's participation in state life. (in, Pontoh, 2022). Furthermore, according to Law Number 7 of 2017, elections are an expression of the sovereignty of the people in Indonesia, allowing them to elect their representatives directly, publicly, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly. In addition, the people also play an active role in providing input, proposals, and objective criticism to the government, as well as supervising the running of the government through various mechanisms such as people's representative institutions, mass media, and demonstrations in accordance with the rule of law (in, Maria & Marendra, 2020).

In terms of the principles of the election explicitly, there are two important aspects in the management of general elections in order to become democratic, namely the integrity of the election (*Electoral Integrity*) and election principles such as honesty, fairness, directness, public, free, and confidential. Electoral integrity is an international agreement and standard that governs elections that are conducted democratically, which is related to inclusivity. The second aspect is the basic principles of elections that become the normative umbrella when elections are held in Indonesia, namely Direct, General, Free, Secret, Honest, and Fair (Luber Jurdil). Direct means that voters must vote in person without being represented, General means that all eligible citizens can exercise their right to vote without exception, Free means that voters can exercise their rights without coercion, Secret means that the voter's choice is unknown to others, and Honest means that all parties must conduct the election honestly (Surya et al., 2023). The principle in the implementation of the election may seem simple, but it actually plays an important role in the process. The foundation is more than just a vision

and mission, or principles and motto; it is the core of the implementation of the election itself. The principle also determines the quality of the implementation of the election and the extent to which the integrity of the organizers is at stake. Although the principle does not guarantee the absolute success of the election, it is an important indicator whether the election will run democratically. (Fatayati, 2017).

Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections stipulates that the implementation of elections must be based on the principles of direct, public, free, confidential, honest, and fair (LUBER JURDIL), as stated in Article 2. Direct principle means that voters cast their votes directly without intermediaries; generally affirms that all eligible citizens have the right to vote and be elected without discrimination; free to guarantee the freedom of voters to make choices without pressure or coercion; secrecy guarantees that the choice of the voter will not be known to any party; honestly requires all parties involved in the election to act according to the rules with integrity; and fair means that every election participant gets equal treatment and is free from fraud. These six principles are the main foundation in ensuring that elections are democratic, dignified, and reflect the will of the people.

This principle, when elaborated with the view According to Affan Gaffar, (2006) shows that ideally the principle should reflect democratic values. As his view, it is an absolute requirement for the empirical implementation of democracy in a country. First, accountability, where every office holder elected by the people must be able to account for his policies. Second, the rotation of power, which ensures that the opportunity for the change of power is carried out in an orderly and peaceful manner. Third, open political recruitment, to allow the rotation of power. Fourth, elections are held regularly, where every adult citizen has the right to vote and be elected without coercion and is free to participate in the entire election process. Finally, enjoy basic rights such as freedom of opinion, assembly, association, and the enjoyment of a free press, all of which must be guaranteed in a democratic country. (in, Fatayati, 2017).

Election Supervisory Board (Bawaslu)

The implementation of elections is regulated in accordance with Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections. According to the law, the Election Organizer refers to the institution responsible for organizing the Election. This institution consists of the General Election Commission, the Election Supervisory Agency, and the Honorary Council of Election Organizers who work together in the function of organizing elections. The main

function of the Election Implementation is to organize the process of electing members of the House of Representatives, the Regional Representative Council, the President and Vice President, as well as the direct election of members of the Regional House of Representatives by the people. In this regard, election organizers in Indonesia consist of three main institutions, namely the General Election Commission (KPU), the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), and the Honorary Council of Election Organizers (DKPP), each of which has a strategic role in ensuring the implementation of democratic elections with integrity.

The KPU is an independent national institution in charge of organizing elections, with a structure that includes the Central KPU, Provincial KPU, and Regency/City KPU which is hierarchical and permanent, with a five-year term of office. Bawaslu functions to supervise the running of elections at all levels, from Bawaslu RI to Election Supervisors at the village and foreign levels, with a mixed structure between permanent and ad hoc, to ensure that each stage of the election is free from violations. Meanwhile, the DKPP plays a role in dealing with violations of the code of ethics of election organizers, consisting of seven members representing elements of the KPU, Bawaslu, DPR, and the government, and is formed a maximum of two months after the inauguration of KPU and Bawaslu members. These three institutions work synergistically to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in the electoral process, while strengthening government legitimacy, political stability, and democratic values in Indonesia (Government of Indonesia, 2022).

Based on the position, duties, authorities, and obligations of the election supervisory body in article 89 paragraph 4 states that Bawaslu, Provincial Bawaslu, and Regency/City Bawaslu are permanent election organizing institutions. Furthermore, the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) is a body that has the task and principal of supervising the stages of holding elections, which include the election of members of the DPR, DPD, DPRD, Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections, as well as the election of Regional Heads and Deputy Regional Heads. Bawaslu is a permanent body, with a term of service of its members of 5 (five) years, calculated from the pronunciation of the oath/promise of office. In article 22 E paragraph (5) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia which reads: "General elections are held by a General Election Commission that is national, permanent and independent" This means that Bawaslu or Panwaslu is an institution formed before the first stage of the election, namely at the stage of voter registration which begins and is dissolved after the candidate elected in the election has been inaugurated. Election supervisory institutions are typical of Indonesia, where Panwaslu is formed to supervise the

implementation of election stages, receive complaints, and handle cases of administrative violations and election criminal violations (Purba, 2021).

Bawaslu is an election organizing institution that is authorized to receive reports and follow up on alleged violations of the implementation of laws and regulations governing elections, inspect, review, and decide on violations of election administration, as well as examine, review, and decide on violations of money politics (Josviranto, 2021). Furthermore, the Duties, Authorities, and Obligations of Election Supervisors based on the mandate of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, the duties, authorities, and obligations of the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) include various important aspects in maintaining the quality and integrity of elections. In Article 93, Bawaslu is tasked with compiling supervision standards, preventing and taking action against violations and disputes in the election process, supervising all stages of elections from planning to determining results, preventing the practice of money politics, maintaining the neutrality of state apparatus and defense-security institutions, and following up on alleged ethical violations and election crimes.

Bawaslu's authority includes receiving and following up on reports of violations, deciding administrative and political violations of money, resolving process disputes, providing recommendations on the non-neutrality of the apparatus, taking over the duties of lower-level supervisors if necessary, to establishing and fostering supervisory structures at the provincial, district/city, and foreign levels. The obligations of Bawaslu include being fair, providing guidance, submitting supervisory reports to the President and the House of Representatives, and supervising the continuous updating of voter data. With this broad scope of duties, authorities, and obligations, Bawaslu has a central role in ensuring that elections run democratically, honestly, fairly, and in accordance with laws and regulations.(General, 2021).

Money Political

Money politics, or money politics, in Indonesian can be defined as bribery. The meaning of bribery according to the great Indonesian dictionary is bribes. Money politics itself involves exchanging money with political positions, policies, or decisions that it recognizes in the name of the interests of the people, when in fact it is for the interests of individuals, groups, or certain parties. In addition, money politics also includes efforts to influence others, or society, by providing material rewards. In the context of politics and power, this can be interpreted as the practice of buying and selling votes in the political

process, as well as the act of distributing money, whether personal or party, to influence the votes of voters (Awaludin, 2021:96). In sociology, this term money politics is usually called venality. According to Ignas Kleden, this term refers to a condition in which money is used to pay for something that should not be bought with money by its very nature (Hariyanto, 2021). In general, political practice is a very influential resource in influencing the public to choose political leaders candidates. Resources such as a candidate's intellectual intelligence, while supposed to be an indicator of eligibility for a candidate to be elected, are often overlooked in the face of the financial magnetism that is the key determinant of victory in the General Election (Hawing & Hartaman, 2021).

While Bumke (in Chandra & Ghafur, 2020) Adding in general categorizes money politics in three dimensions, namely, vote buying, vote brokers, and political corruption. Vote buying is the exchange of goods, services, or money with votes in a general election and the person who represents the candidate/party to buy votes is a vote broker. Meanwhile, political corruption is any form of bribery to politicians in order to obtain favorable policies or other benefits. Money politics has a detrimental impact because it can degrade the dignity of the people. In addition, money politics is also a trap that has the potential to trap people during one period of leadership. This is because leaders who lack dedication to the people tend to fail to provide good service, are unable to realize the promised agenda of change, and may not be able to implement the vision and mission that have been expressed during the election process or campaign (Febrianto et al., 2020). The practice of money politics in elections not only violates the principles of democracy, but also overrides the ethical and moral values that should be an integral part of democracy. Therefore, the main consequence of this problem is the lack of honesty and justice, which should be the basic principles in a democratic system.

In Article 280 paragraph (1) of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections regarding the implementers, participants, and campaign teams, it is prohibited to promise or give money or other materials to election campaign participants, as stipulated in letter j. This law expressly prohibits the practice of money politics, even just promising is considered a violation. Sanctions for money politics violators are regulated in Article 523 of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections as follows:

- 1) Any implementer, participant, and/or election campaign team who deliberately promises or gives money or other materials in return to election campaign participants directly or indirectly as referred to in Article 280 paragraph (1) letter j, shall be sentenced to a

maximum of 2 (two) years in prison and a maximum fine of Rp. 24,000,000.00 (twenty-four million rupiah).

- 2) Any executor, participant, and/or election campaign team who deliberately promises or gives monetary or other material rewards to voters directly or indirectly as referred to in Article 278 paragraph (2), shall be sentenced to a maximum of 4 (four) years in prison and a maximum fine of Rp. 48,000,000.00 (forty-eight million rupiah).
- 3) Any person who intentionally promises or gives money or other materials to voters on voting day not to exercise their right to vote or vote for certain election participants, shall be sentenced to a maximum of 3 (three) years in prison and a maximum fine of Rp. 36,000,000.00 (thirty-six million rupiah). (Afina, 2020:1)

Based on some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that money politics is a bribery that involves exchanging money to obtain political positions or policies, often for personal or party interests, including in an attempt to influence voters in material exchange. This practice is detrimental because it degrades the dignity of the people and has the potential to enslave them for a period of leadership. In addition to violating the principles of democracy, money politics also ignores ethics and morality, resulting in a lack of honesty and justice that should be the basic principles of a democratic system. Although Article 523 of Law Number 7 of 2017 affirms sanctions for violators involved in the practice of money politics.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type, which aims to deeply understand the role and performance of Bawaslu in handling the practice of money politics in the 2024 Election in Gorontalo City. The research was carried out for four months, from April to October 2024, focusing on two main aspects: the effectiveness of the handling of money politics cases by Bawaslu and the identification of obstacles that affect the implementation of the supervisory function. The primary data source was obtained through in-depth interviews with members of the Gorontalo City Bawaslu, the local community, and other relevant stakeholders. Meanwhile, secondary data is collected from official documents such as reports of election violations, laws and regulations, and publications from Bawaslu and related institutions. Data collection techniques include direct observation of election surveillance activities, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. All data were systematically analyzed using source triangulation techniques to increase the validity and validity of the findings. This approach allows researchers to thoroughly explore the dynamics

of the field and gain a contextual understanding of the challenges of overseeing the practice of money politics. Thus, this study not only illustrates the reality of Bawaslu's performance in the local context, but also provides important insights related to supervisory strategies that can be developed in the future to strengthen election integrity in Indonesia.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

Bawaslu's Performance in Handling Cases of Election Violations in Gorontalo City

The results of the findings on the handling of violations that occurred in Gorontalo City, this data provides important insights into the conditions of ongoing election violations. This report recorded a total of 11 identified cases, of which there were 8 cases that were not registered. This shows that there are significant challenges in the reporting and supervision process, which can be caused by various factors, including a lack of public awareness of the importance of reporting violations and potential obstacles in the existing registration system. Of the 11 cases identified, as many as 7 cases were successfully registered. This reflects the efforts made by the authorities to improve the report registration system. However, these results also raise questions about the effectiveness of the approach used to drive better reporting. A more intensive communication strategy may be needed to increase public participation in reporting violations.

Of the 11 cases altogether, 4 of them were considered serious violations, which showed a potential adverse impact on the integrity of the electoral process. These serious violations can be as diverse as bribery to abuse of authority, which can lead to injustice in political competition. On the other hand, the 7 cases that were not considered violations affirmed the importance of a clear understanding of the definition and criteria of violations in the context of elections, so that violations can be identified and dealt with more effectively. More deeply, the analysis of the handling results showed that there were 3 administrative cases, which were usually related to procedural violations, as well as 1 case that violated the code of ethics. This reflects the importance of implementing a code of ethics in election oversight and shows that despite efforts to maintain integrity, there are still loopholes that can be exploited. In addition, 3 cases were categorized as criminal offenses, which suggests that there are more serious issues that require legal attention.

Departing from this analysis, it can be concluded that although there is a system in place to deal with election violations, challenges remain in terms of oversight and reporting. This report shows that increased public awareness, training for supervisory officers, and improvements in registration procedures are needed to strengthen the integrity of elections in

Gorontalo City. In addition, strict law enforcement against criminal offenses must be strengthened to provide a deterrent effect and prevent the recurrence of violations in the future. Overall, this report not only describes the current situation but also provides important recommendations for improving the election supervision system, with the ultimate goal of creating more transparent, fair, and accountable elections in Gorontalo City.

An analysis of Bawaslu's performance in handling *political money* cases during the 2024 General Election in Gorontalo City shows that there are significant challenges in supervision and law enforcement. One important aspect that is seen is the gap in the reporting system, where there are still many violations that go unreported. This reflects the need to increase public awareness of the importance of reporting violations, as well as the provision of more accessible channels for reporting. On the other hand, although some cases were successfully registered, many of the violations identified were classified as serious. This shows that the existing preventive measures are not fully effective, so Bawaslu needs to evaluate and strengthen their supervision methods. More active involvement in direct observation of campaign activities and the distribution of political materials is essential for early detection of violations.

The wide variety of types of violations handled also indicates the need for a comprehensive approach that can appropriately address each category of violations. Bawaslu must prepare a competent and trained team in handling various forms of violations to ensure a quick and effective response. Furthermore, the success of Bawaslu is not only measured by the number of cases handled, but also by the effectiveness of the actions taken after cases are reported. Transparency in handling cases and communicating results to the public has a great effect on public trust. Increasing public participation in supervision, providing education about their rights and obligations, and involving them in the election monitoring process can strengthen the legitimacy of Bawaslu as an independent supervisory institution. Overall, even though Bawaslu has made efforts in handling political money, there are still many challenges that must be overcome. Improving the supervision system, public education, and stricter law enforcement are important steps to improve Bawaslu's performance in dealing with election violations in the future, so as to create fairer and more transparent elections.

Explicitly, the case of money politics also shows that there are findings in several areas of Gorontalo City in 2014 as stated by the Chairman of the Gorontalo City Bawaslu showing that the phenomenon of *money politics* still occurs, especially during campaign times like this. Although the performance of Bawaslu has essentially been supported by Law Number 7

of 2017, which establishes a legal framework that aims to improve the integrity of elections in Indonesia. However, enforcement of electoral crimes remains inadequate, requiring improvements to ensure a fair democratic system. Ineffective performance by Bawaslu, Indonesia's election supervisory body, in handling *money politics* can have significant consequences for the country's political and economic landscape. The role of Bawaslu is very important in maintaining the integrity of elections by preventing money politics, which can damage the democratic process and cause unfair election results. If Bawaslu fails in its task, the impact could be widespread, affecting the government, public trust, and economic stability. (Daniel Balubun & Santiago, 2023; Muharram et al., 2023)

Legal certainty is essential to prevent anarchism and uphold justice, showing that while the law provides a basis, its effectiveness in preventing electoral violations depends on strict enforcement and adherence to procedural law. Thus, the legal impact is limited without a robust mechanism for accountability and compliance. There are several ways that can be done to improve the performance of Bawaslu in handling election violations in Gorontalo City. First, public awareness will be increased through an information campaign targeting the importance of reporting violations, with educational materials disseminated through social media and seminars. Furthermore, evaluation and improvement of the reporting system will be carried out to make it more accessible to the public, including the development of digital platforms to facilitate reporting. In addition, routine training for Bawaslu officers will be held to strengthen competence in supervising various types of violations, especially money politics. It is also important to build partnerships with civil society organizations and the media to strengthen election oversight.

In addition, transparency and communication of the results of handling violations to the public will be improved to build trust, with periodic reports that inform the performance of Bawaslu. Finally, a monitoring and evaluation system will be implemented to assess the effectiveness of the actions taken, and cooperation with law enforcement will be enhanced to ensure strict sanctions for violators. Through these steps, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to creating fairer and more transparent elections in Gorontalo City. This kind of thing in some particular studies can strengthen the dignity of democracy itself (Sahi et al., 2024).

Money Politics, General Election Supervisory Agency and Regulation of Election Violations According to Law Number 7 of 2017.

The theory and definition of money politics covers the intersection of monetary systems and political processes, highlighting how money functions as a medium of exchange and a tool of political influence. The politics of money is deeply rooted in the institutional and hierarchical nature of money, which is shaped by political forces and the dynamics of social power. This concept is explored through a variety of lenses, including the institutionalization of social power, the influence of money in the electoral process, and the historical evolution of the monetary system. Money is understood as an institutionalized social force, shaped by political processes that create a hierarchical system. It encapsulates the collective productive potential in a tradable form, which arises from social antagonism. This theory states that the value of money derives from its political and institutional contexts, which vary across different economies of scale. This framework allows for an analysis of how money systems function, their innate hierarchies, and the promises they realize, ultimately linking the nature of money to broader social and political dynamics (Kapadia, 2023).

In his book, "*Money in Politics*", (Weschle, 2022) exploring the interconnectedness of various forms of capital in politics, including self-enrichment by politicians, campaign spending for re-election, and lucrative employment after leaving office, proposes that these elements should be analyzed within a single framework. Meanwhile, according to , the practice of (Janeko & Uzliah Wahidah, 2024) *Money Politics in elections* is an effort to influence voters through material rewards, such as money and basic necessities, with the aim of attracting public sympathy to vote for certain parties ahead of the general election. Money politics involves influencing voters through material incentives, essentially equivalent to buying votes during an election. This practice includes distributing cash or essential items to garner public support for political parties. Both Islamic law and positive law consider money politics forbidden; however, Islamic law categorizes it as *risywah* (bribery), while positive law considers it a violation of election regulations (Al Hashas, 2024).

In Indonesia itself, the issue of money politics is a reflection of a significant problem in the democratic process, where the exchange of votes for money, goods, or services has become a common practice during elections. This phenomenon is characterized as a form of electoral corruption that undermines the integrity of democratic elections. In the country, money politics is also often known as the "dawn attack," which poses a significant threat to the democratic process in Indonesia, especially during elections. It highlights the detrimental

effects of money politics on people's culture and the importance of addressing this issue to preserve democracy. (Harahap et al., 2023) In addition, what is meant by the Election Supervisory Agency in Indonesia is an independent institution that is responsible for supervising the implementation of general elections to ensure that elections are held democratically. Its role is crucial in improving the quality of elections, which are intrinsically linked to the quality of democracy. Through the Participatory Supervision Program, Bawaslu aims to increase public involvement in elections, ensuring a fair and transparent process. By utilizing public education and technology, Bawaslu seeks to foster greater public awareness and trust in the electoral system, which ultimately contributes to the integrity of elections and the democratic process. (Latifah et al., 2023) (Satria & Rahman, 2023)

It is undeniable that Bawaslu plays an important role in ensuring the integrity of Indonesia's electoral process by monitoring and addressing election violations through a comprehensive legal framework and practical fieldwork. It evaluates and enforces compliance with election laws, conducts field observations, and investigates cases of abuse, particularly money politics, during elections. In addition, Bawaslu faces various challenges involving issues of campaign fairness, civil servant neutrality, and integrity of voter data. Bawaslu struggles to ensure transparency in the arrangement of campaign funds, which is very important to maintain fairness in political campaigns. Lack of transparency and unequal access to resources can undermine democratic processes (Amin & Ester Hayatulah, 2024) . The spread of false or misleading information during the campaign further complicates the task of maintaining a fair election environment. In addition, there is a persistent issue of non-neutrality among civil servants during the election. It undermines the principles of direct, public, free, secret, honest, and fair elections. (Asmorojati & Harianja, 2024)

For this reason, Bawaslu has the authority to carry out socialization efforts to educate the public, establish an Anti-Money Political Village, and be involved in participatory supervision by involving community members in monitoring election activities. Despite facing challenges such as limited human resources and low public participation, Bawaslu leveraged social media to increase its reach and encourage reporting of violations, thereby promoting transparency and accountability in the election process. In the end, his efforts are very important to uphold democratic principles and increase public trust in the electoral system. Reconstructing that, elections in Indonesia are a critical democratic process that has developed significantly since its inception in 1955. These elections are designed to uphold the principle of people's sovereignty, ensure the legitimacy of the ruler and the formation of

political representatives. However, the 2024 election is marked by several challenges, including political dynasties, electoral fraud, and national protest movements, which are interconnected phenomena affecting the electoral landscape (Fadhilah, 2024). (Hidayat, 2024). Indonesia's electoral system is based on direct and representative methods, governed by the 1945 Constitution and subsequent amendments. Several changes have taken place, including the implementation of the open list system in 2004, and regulated by Law No. 7 of 2017, which emphasizes fair and honest elections (Saputra et al., 2024; Suhariyanto, 2024). In Article 280 paragraph (1) of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections regarding the implementers, participants, and campaign teams, it is prohibited to promise or give money or other materials to election campaign participants, as stipulated in letter j. This law expressly prohibits the practice of money politics, even just promising is considered a violation. Sanctions for violators of money politics are regulated in Article 523 of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections as follows: (a) Every implementer, participant, and/or election campaign team who deliberately promises or gives money or other materials in return to the participants of the election campaign directly or indirectly as referred to in Article 280 paragraph (1) letter j, sentenced to a maximum of 2 (two) years in prison and a maximum fine of Rp. 24,000,000.00 (twenty-four million rupiah); (b) Any implementer, participant, and/or election campaign team who deliberately promises or gives monetary or other material rewards to voters directly or indirectly as intended in Article 278 paragraph (2), shall be sentenced to a maximum of 4 (four) years in prison and a maximum fine of Rp. 48,000,000.00 (forty-eight million rupiah); (c) Any person who intentionally on the day of voting promises or gives money or other materials to voters not to exercise their right to vote or to vote for a particular election participant, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a maximum of 3 (three) years and a maximum fine of Rp. 36,000,000.00 (thirty-six million rupiah). In substance, Law Number 7 of 2017 outlines the main provisions regarding election violations, including the responsibility of Bawaslu to receive, investigate, assess, and decide on these violations. Administrative sanctions for violators include procedural remedies, written warnings, and possible exclusion from certain stages of elections. The law emphasizes the need for a democratic electoral process, ensuring that violations are addressed to maintain the integrity of elections. (Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perpu) Number 1 of 2022 concerning Amendments to Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, 2022) (Rumbia et al., 2024)

V. CONCLUSION

Money politics, which refers to the practice of influencing election results through the distribution of money or other material incentives to voters, is a serious threat to electoral integrity and the quality of democracy. This research shows that the Gorontalo City Bawaslu plays a strategic role in supervising and handling the practice of money politics in the 2024 election, although it still faces various significant challenges. The findings of the study revealed that of the number of alleged violations that emerged, only some were successfully registered legally, while other serious violations were not followed up optimally due to the limitations of the reporting system, low community participation, and weak law enforcement. This condition emphasizes the importance of increasing public awareness in reporting violations and providing an easily accessible and reliable reporting channel. On the other hand, the effectiveness of Bawaslu's supervision also needs to be improved through a more active and preventive approach, such as direct observation during the campaign and the distribution of political materials. The variety of types of violations that occur requires a more adaptive and responsive handling method. In addition, this study also highlights the existence of gaps in the legal framework, especially related to the practice of money politics that take place outside the campaign period, which cannot be fully reached by existing regulations. Therefore, comprehensive legal reform is needed so that all forms of money politics can be prevented and acted upon effectively, so that the implementation of elections truly reflects the principles of honesty, justice, and substantive democracy

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