

Political Corruption: Rise of Social Aid Politicization by Government in Grassroots Campaign 2024 Elections

Daffa Ladro Kusworo¹, Titi Anggraini²

¹ Faculty Law, Indonesia University, Indonesia. E-mail: daffa.ladro@ni.ac.id

¹ Faculty Law, Indonesia University, Indonesia. E-mail: titi.anggraini@ni.ac.id

Abstract: The cruciality of 2024 General Election is inseparable from complex shift in democratic landscape as a structural-economic direction of state life. Competition between pairs candidates through their respective electoral political strategies is main focus of the community, one of which is Social Assistance (Bansos) which is often target of electoral commodities at grassroots base. President through his track record is also indicated by politicization Social Assistance by going to several regions to provide indirect support during the 2024 Election, as well as several ministers who further strengthen the indication of political corruption. This research uses a normative method that refers to conceptualization of political corruption and Law 7 of 2017 concerning Elections. The results showed that the identification of political corruption during the election period begins by looking at the policy formulation process which is often manipulated and looking for gray areas, such as the Election Law limiting Bawaslu to only take action against Paslon participants or teams who have registered with the KPU, and the absence of restrictions on the provision of Social Assistance. The discovery of the track record of politicization of social assistance by the government should be suspected during the campaign period ahead of the 2024 Election vote and become an evaluative tool for the government, both from the distribution method to the prohibition in certain moments. We can no longer prevent practices that have occurred, so what is expected is an ideal improvement recommendation for future elections.

Keywords: campaign; election; political corruption; social assistance.

1. Introduction

The crucial 2024 General Election is inseparable from efforts to realize substantive democracy to be felt by the people who determine the direction of the nation's philosophy, either strengthening the social order through political integrity or simply ignoring the main principles of democratic values. The constitutional rights of citizens that are upheld are realized in elections held periodically, choosing one of the 3 (three) pairs of presidential and vice presidential candidates. The intense competition for victory is inseparable from various issues concerning the integrity of the government in maintaining neutrality in the midst of turmoil, one of which is Social Assistance (Bansos) which is often targeted as an electoral commodity at the grassroots level.¹ The politicization of social assistance is literally qualified as political corruption based on Lord Acton's view, where the relationship between corruption and power always goes hand in hand. The relevance is conceptualized in a behavioral approach that reflects the ambition of the ruler in the dominant legitimacy, the reflection is that the higher the power, the greater the potential for corruption. In practice, political decisions will be manipulated through policies that benefit political elites, the form is sometimes biased whether it is for themselves or their groups with ethically deviant procedures.²

¹ Inge Amundsen, *Political Corruption: An Introduction to the Issues* (Norway: Chr. Michelsen Institute, 1999).

² Arnold J Heidenheimer and Michael Johnston, *Political Corruption: Concepts and Contexts* (New jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2011), I.

Dynamic events in the political wheel are rooted in political corruption, developing to involve someone who occupies a high-level position in state administration. Starting from Government Regulation Number 53 of 2023 by not requiring the mayor not to resign if he becomes a candidate for President and/ or Vice President, as well as Article 299 of Law Number 27 of 2017 which also accommodates the president to be directly involved in the campaign of certain candidate pairs. If it is represented in Lord Acton's paradigm, then this kind of legal product is the result of political corruption that is fragmented not only on status or wealth, but the practice of smoothing the politicization of social assistance as an effort to maintain legitimacy in an unusual way, namely the President's support for his son who is running for office. Generally, political corruption originates from actors who are nominated as candidates related to close relations with the authorities, for example, the president, ministers, or governors and mayors, together legalizing political financing as a financial contribution that is illegal in plain sight, but has actually gained validity in the gray legal space.

The controversial distribution of social assistance ahead of the 2024 election is considered to be increasingly politically affiliated in a number of regions, especially its misuse aimed at strengthening and/or maintaining the voter base among the grassroots. For example, social assistance in Central Java by the government found images of certain candidate pairs, namely on rice distributed to residents weighing 10 kilograms.

Some people indicated that there was favoritism towards one of the candidate pairs to boost electability. This kind of action is a manifestation of "political corruption" over the preference of political interests distributed in rice aid and Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), as if fulfilling the principle of accountability to overcome the impact of El Nino, but instead there is a hidden intention to smooth the path of power.³ Justification for legitimacy is increasingly evident from ministers who joined Prabowo Subianto's winning team in distributing social assistance during the campaign, plus President Joko Widodo's political movements that explicitly gave support without prior leave. Social assistance as the foundation of the state's existence in the social protection scheme is an effort to fulfill the welfare of the poor, so it cannot be justified all actions of state administrators to distribute social assistance that take advantage of this public momentum.⁴

The easiest way to avoid the politicization of social assistance is to separate the campaign from his duties in the public service sector by President Jokowi and related ministers. The separation is carried out through leave during the campaign period until before voting to avoid the practice of involvement in policies related to large masses, and minimize the orientation of misuse of social assistance to increase the electability of certain candidate pairs. The track record of providing social assistance in the 2024 elections was actually intended as a form of anticipation by the Minister of Finance in the face of El Nino and the priority of saving the domestic economy, namely the distribution of social assistance in the form of BLT and rice at the end of the year.

El Nino itself is known to cause many crop failures by farmers resulting in a drastic increase in rice prices, it is hoped that social assistance can increase the purchasing power of the community, especially the middle to lower class. However, due to the unending phenomenon, the government rolled out social assistance again in the second period until December with an additional budget of Rp 2.67 trillion. At the same time, the government has also prepared Rp 7.52 trillion for BLT which will be distributed to 18.8 million families,

³ Michael Johnston, *Political Corruption: Readings in Comparative Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2017).

⁴ Mark Philp, "Conceptualizing Political Corruption," in *Political Corruption* (London: Routledge, 2017), 41–

with each of them amounting to Rp 400,000 thousand for 2 (two) months. It was felt that it was not enough, the social assistance periodization continued for January-March 2024. The program that was started with good intentions by the government was slowly veiled by politicization movements by those who joined the winning team of candidate number 2, such as Airlangga Hartarto and Zulkifli Hasan, who served as Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs and Minister of Trade respectively.

Support was then clarified by one of the statements from Zulkifli Hasan, who also served as chairman of the National Mandate Party (PAN) during a campaign in Kendal, Central Java on December 26, 2023, he emphasized that the BLT provided was nothing but a gift from Jokowi, which was represented to maintain closeness among the grassroots (Projo) supporters of Jokowi, who were originally from the PDIP to boost electability. Inevitably, President Jokowi was also involved in distributing social assistance in the form of 10 kg of rice in Yogyakarta, precisely at the Bulog Pajangan Warehouse in Bantul Regency for Beneficiary Families (KPM) on January 30, 2024.⁵

This kind of assistance also occurred in two adjacent areas, namely Gunungkidul and Sleman regencies. President Jokowi was also indicated to have followed the pattern of Ganjar's campaign movements in several regions, although it was eventually blamed on the coincidence of routine visits prepared in advance. However, the politicization of social assistance that has been intensified in such a way clearly has an influence on Prabowo's electability, as the LSI survey in 2023 showed that Candidate Pair 02 received the majority of support among the grassroots with a percentage of 44.9 percent, very incomparable to Ganjar Pranowo, who at that time dropped to 26.7 percent.⁶

The intensity of President Jokowi's visit in providing social assistance during the campaign period, and the ministers who openly took sides raised a number of questions regarding the neutrality of the government. This regional affirmative policy through the provision of BLT and rice is in fact in an inappropriate momentum, certainly having a significant influence on the community in the psychological realm, to finally make their choice for a particular presidential / vice presidential candidate on February 14, 2024.⁷ The politicization of social assistance in a legal perspective is clearly a form of abuse of authority by the government, which takes advantage of the momentum of the father and son family relationship through regional visits and the provision of social assistance accompanied by the inclusion of images of candidate pairs, or in any case related to partisan attributes.⁸

Actions that are considered out of the legal corridor are carried out in deliberate ways, so that they clearly violate Article 547 of Law 7 of 2017 concerning Elections, which benefits or harms one of the participants in the struggle for votes among the grassroots. Thus, this legal phenomenon needs to be conceptualized carefully in the concept of political corruption initiated by Lord Acton through an institutional and behavioral approach that is relevant to power, so that a middle way can be found to close the potential for politicization of social assistance through upstream policy strategies and optimization of the authority of supervising institutions. The ideas that are conceptualized into a big projection for the 2029

⁵ Sigit Kurniawan, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/ekonomi/20240130124306-532-1056123/jokowi-bagikan-bansos-beras-bulog-di-bantul-ini-premium>, accessed 21 November 2024.

⁶ Wisang Seto Pangaribowo, <https://yogyakarta.kompas.com/read/2024/08/28/155512978/kunjungan-ke-yogyakarta-presiden-jokowi-bagi-bagi-bansos>, accessed 21 November 2024.

⁷ Charles Funderburk, *Political Corruption in Comparative Perspective: Sources, Status and Prospects* (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁸ Donatella Della Porta, *Corrupt Exchanges: Actors, Resources, and Mechanisms of Political Corruption* (London: Routledge, 2017).

Election are certainly expected to be able to reduce the practices of politicizing policies through programs that do not aim to win the hearts of voters at the grassroots.

2. Method

This research uses a normative method that refers to laws and regulations and the conceptualization of political corruption in analyzing the phenomenon of politicization of social assistance by the President and/ or ministers ahead of the 2024 General Election vote, the implications arising from legal aspects in the campaigning restrictions of a President and/ or Minister as qualified by Law 7 of 2017 concerning Elections. This research is accompanied by literature studies in the form of books, journals, and other literature that support the results of the research, which will later be able to find the leading ideas as part of the prescriptive approach.⁹ The research analysis refers to a qualitative descriptive approach, which describes the legal phenomena that occur and then concludes from a special approach.¹⁰

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Legal Dynamics of Social Aid Politicization in the Grassroots Campaign of the 2024 Election at the Normative Perspective

The complexity of democracy, which is outlined in the relationship between political integrity and social welfare, is in fact an urgency to build a social order, of course, to strengthen our position as citizens through the fulfillment of human rights principles in a democratic framework. An existing condition that needs attention is the shifting political landscape that degrades the quality of democracy ahead of the vote. Sadly, the intriguing conditions seem to open the veil of fraud in order to boost electability through methods that are structured in such a way from policy formulation, to intervening in the campaign period through the politicization of the Social Assistance (Bansos) program.¹¹ Political corruption that is rooted in a structured manner in Indonesia's socio-economic programs is evidence of low integrity, showing points of vulnerability that can be exploited for the benefit of certain Candidate Pairs. In this case, there is a table that conceptualizes how political corruption works in the 2024 elections:

Table 1. The Concept of Political Corruption Globally

Type	Concepts Political Corruption		
General Framework	Political Corruption		
Fokus Konseptual	Corruption in Elections		Corruption in Policy Formulation
Mechanism	Corrupt Campaign	Election fraud	Prohibited Political Funding
Specialty Practices	1. Campaign law violations	1. Ballot stuffing	1. Forbidden contribution 2. Corrupt lobbying

⁹ Fauzi Rachman, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Penerbit Lakeisha, 2022), p. 17.

¹⁰ Zainuddin Ali, *Metode Penelitian Hukum*, ed. by Leni Wulandari (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2021), p. 7.

¹¹ Butt Simon, "Judicial Reasoning and Review in the Indonesian Supreme Court," *Asian Journal of Law and Society* 6, no. 1 (2019).

	2. Deceptive campaign tactics 3. Vote purchase	2. Impersonation 3. Reporting error	3. Corrupt conflict of interest
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Source: European Commission Research 2019

Based on European Commission research, identifying political corruption during the election period begins with looking at the policy formulation process which is often manipulated. Usually this kind of controversy is found in the legislative and executive institutions, for example, Government Regulation Number 53 of 2023 which does not require several positions in the executive realm to resign, making it vulnerable to abuse of authority to take advantage of momentum through election fraud.¹² This continues with the corrupt campaign process and massive fraud in several regions. Dishonest and unfair campaign tactics that seem to be justified by the government are carried out in ways that violate systematic election law, leading to influencing the number of ballots for the relevant candidate pair during voting.¹³

The dimension of political corruption clearly has an illegitimate influence on the voting process of the 2024 General Election, as Lord Acton's statement inspired by Machiavelli's thought that even the best individuals can have their integrity undermined because of political ambition, humans are never in absolute satisfaction even for themselves. President is actually allowed within the corridors of the law to participate in campaigning in favor of certain Paslon as stated in Article 299 of Law 7 No. 2017 concerning Elections. However, this provision alone is not the right answer, because the focus of attention on participation is related to "how should" a President be able to campaign through special conditions that should be met. Several norms have actually clarified such requirements, becoming a specific legal framework for the President to be allowed to campaign.

In terms of actions that can be justified, the President must have a clear status whether as a member of a political party or not so that it becomes a benchmark for his legitimacy to carry out the campaign. If it turns out to be affiliated with and/or appointed as a winning team by a political party in the nomination of a President/Vice President candidate, then a President is entitled to carry out a campaign without any other conditions.¹⁴ On the other hand, if he/she is not a member of a political party or a candidate for President/Vice President, then he/she will only be able to carry out the campaign if he/she has registered with the General Elections Commission (KPU) as an organizer or member of the campaign team. This issue is justified in Article 169 of the Election Law, which contains a classification of election campaign implementers consisting of administrators or a combination of political parties, proposers, individuals, and those appointed as organizing organizations. The mechanism is that the President/Vice President candidates who form a campaign team must then register with the KPU.

The above provisions apply to a President who is not a candidate for President/Vice President. The mechanism is by interpreting textually between Article 299 of the Election Law with Article 269 and Article 272. Thus, if the President wants to exercise his rights in carrying out the campaign of a particular candidate, he must not only comply with the

¹² Laode Muhammad Syarif and Faisal Faisal, "Addressing the Root of Political Corruption in Indonesia," *Integritas: Jurnal Antikorupsi* 5, no. 2 (2019): 191–98.

¹³ Simon Butt, *Corruption and Law in Indonesia* (London: Routledge, 2017).

¹⁴ Paul Heywood, "Political Corruption: Problems and Perspectives," *Political Studies* 45, no. 3 (1997): 417–35.

provisions contained in Article 299 of the Election Law, but also the contents in the provisions of Article 269 and Article 272 of the Election Law.¹⁵

The philosophical aspect that we can reflect on is that the personification of state officials is to have strong legitimacy over power, so that their status must be clear in order to carry out a legitimate campaign in the legal world. The logic is that decision-making based on obligation alone is still at high risk of being politicized, especially when during the campaign period which can openly take sides, then the most obvious impact is the percentage of voting results for certain candidate pairs. Thus, the effort to prevent arbitrary legitimacy is through a control mechanism through policies to minimize all forms of abuse of power, namely emphasizing its status as part of the winning team of certain Paslon validated by the KPU.

Although the consequence is the risk of his reputation in facing social sanctions through ridicule for his lack of integrity. Likewise, indications from various parties through suspicion of any actions that contain political maneuvers, which can benefit and harm certain candidate pairs. In line with policies related to leave for state officials, Ministers, Governors or Regents/Mayors can also be granted campaign leave rights in accordance with the Election Law. The specification of the validity of rights at the normative level can be given as long as their status is as a candidate, or as an executor or campaign team. This means that we seem to be given a very clear view not to deny any state official through the methods regulated in the legislation, including President Jokowi himself when he wants to exercise his right to campaign. This clarity of status is very important, considering that the President and/or Minister as state officials are also attached to all the attributes of state power and facilities that are vulnerable to abuse. The relevance of status and authority increasingly has an impact on how the President and/or Minister address state facilities for campaign purposes.¹⁶

Referring to Article 304 of the Elections that state officials are prohibited from using facilities derived from the financing of the State Budget (APBN), which includes official vehicles, houses, buildings, and others derived from the financing of the State Budget (APBN). So we should return to the issue, whether Bansos which is then distributed during the campaign ahead of voting becomes a form of unlawful action. So it is fitting that the use of facilities at the wrong moment needs to be our common concern, related to the extent of demarcation limits that must be applied to state officials when campaigning.

The clearest dividing line between permissible and impermissible actions is the President's inherent status, as a campaign team or not. In relation to the boundaries set, the President must also take leave during the campaign. If the public indicates that there are efforts to cheat, then leave will be the context for his separation from power. On the other hand, if the President's status is not clear, then the space for abuse of the use of state facilities is wide open, for example, state officials can argue that they do not have the status of a campaign team or are carrying out a campaign when distributing social assistance, while easily saying that their activities are state duties to cope with the impact of El Nino. This kind of problem is nothing but a form of legal smuggling during the election period, so that the existence of the organization is no longer in the corridor of Article 22E paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution to be honest and fair.

The President may be charged with a violation of the prohibition of giving money or goods to campaign participants based on Article 521 of the Election Law. Furthermore, it

¹⁵ Article 299 of Law Number 7 Year 2017 on General Elections

¹⁶ Chandan Kumar Jha, "Condoning Corruption: Who Votes for Corrupt Political Parties?," *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 215 (2023): 74–88, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2023.08.026>.

can then be examined in Article 547 of the Election Law regarding the criminal penalty. The act of providing social assistance actually has consequences for political violations in the form of providing goods that accommodate the needs of the community. The articles above can be clearly proven by looking at the indicators of actions that have an impact on the massive profits and losses experienced by the relevant candidate pairs.¹⁷

The provision of social assistance is actually a legitimate action as long as the decision is clear, not in the orientation of benefiting or harming certain Paslon-Paslon in the electoral process. The prohibition in question is actually a policy or program issued in carrying out duties and authorities during the campaign period. Although it is often interpreted as biased to determine the proportion of gains and losses through concrete actions or policies for certain election participants, including participants in the Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections. However, indications leading to forms of fraud can actually be seen in political nuances through a massive modus operandi used to maintain the grassroots in several regions to win certain Paslon in the 2024 Election.

3.2 Track Record of Social Aid Politicization in Various Strategy

The cultured nuances of social assistance politicization have long been rooted in the body of political parties, especially for politicians who are running for election. Shortcuts that are not properly obtained do not represent the voice of the community in the ideals and ideas of the nation's progress, but only take advantage of the low index of educational and economic qualifications of the community with the gimmick of social assistance. The tendency of political corruption behavior by exploiting the general public becomes the basis of political commodities that are aligned every time an election takes place. For example, by looking at the extent to which the intensification of social assistance through President Jokowi's visits with ministers affiliated with the winning team, either directly or indirectly, has been scheduled as a strategy to boost electability.

Although in fact it is not emphasized that the provision is intended for a particular candidate, the political maneuvers and policies formed indicate suspicion, or without any frills, social assistance can influence the way people think to give preferences that lead to one candidate. Recipients of Bansos will easily depend on a sense of political reciprocity to vote for them even though they are fully aware. The politicization of Bansos actually began with the policies that accompanied it, starting on November 6, 2023 when the announcement of the names joining the Prabowo-Gibran Election Campaign Team (TKN), found two ministers who were still in active status, namely the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto and the Minister of Trade, Zulkifli Hasan and related deputy ministers.

A few weeks later, on November 21, 2023, Jokowi issued PP No. 53 of 2023, which provides options for several positions including ministers and mayors who do not have to resign from their positions when running as candidates for President and/or Vice President in the 2024 elections. The next day President Jokowi during a visit and distributed social assistance to residents in Biak Numfor, Papua stated that the extension of the time for providing social assistance until March 2024 was to maintain price stability that would be affected by El Nino. Along with the extension of the social assistance period, Sri Mulyani as Minister of Finance regarding the allocation of social assistance in the 2024 State Budget (APBN) shows that there is a significant increase of 20.5 trillion from the previous year's realization which only amounted to 476.3 trillion, so that the calculation of the social

¹⁷ Mark Philp, "Defining Political Corruption," *Political Studies* 45, no. 3 (1997): 436–62.

assistance budget is said to be almost 500 trillion. This social assistance is then targeted at recipients totaling 18.8 million with a distribution of 200 thousand per month starting from January to March.

However, the BLT called food risk mitigation is scheduled for February, and will be given directly for 3 months totaling 600 thousand. Problems become more apparent when the program is actually implemented in conjunction with the 2024 General Election voting, so a number of questions and suspicions arise about the vulnerability of social assistance politicization during its distribution. Looking at the narrative put forward by Zulkifli Hasan as Minister of Trade during the TKN 02 campaign, that Jokowi gave social assistance and BLT to the community, as well as Airlangga Hartanto who required residents to thank Jokowi for the social assistance that had been given. Statements that are infiltrated with hidden intentions to make social assistance a campaign tool are inevitable, until other candidates urge the postponement of social assistance to be given until the 2024 election process is complete. Some things that should be suspected as an effort to politicize social assistance have been summarized by the author in several phenomena found during the campaign until the vote, both in the form of policies and actions of the government itself, including the following:

3.2.1 Politicization of Social Assistance by the President

The President since November 28, 2023 was found to have given social assistance several times, which was at an inappropriate time during the campaign period by each candidate. The activity was organized through official visits to several regions, one of which was when visiting Kesesi District, Pekalongan, Central Java. He distributed cash assistance to each farmer in the amount of 1.2 million along with staple food packages. It also continued on December 27, 2023 by distributing El Nino BLT to the surrounding community at the Genteng Post Office, Banyuwangi, East Java.

Then during a visit to East Nusa Tenggara in order to conduct a review of national strategic projects, the President also gave Bulog rice, or government reserve rice to beneficiary families. On Monday, January 29, 2024 Joko Widodo also distributed Government Rice Reserve (CBP) social assistance together with Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X and Regent of Sleman, Kustini Sri Purnomo in the Sleman area, Yogyakarta Special Region. Later Jokowi also distributed social assistance in Grobogan, Central Java in the form of the Smart Indonesia Program in the form of monetary assistance of Rp 8 million for farmers who experienced crop failure. The provision of social assistance in several regions has in fact become a controversial act, some actions that should not be done by the President during the campaign period show indications of favoring candidate pairs, especially his son who is also a candidate for vice president of a certain serial number. The attitude that should be taken is to refrain from intervening in the provision of social assistance which is in a gray area with a vulnerability to being politicized.

3.2.2 Minister's Politicization of Social Assistance

Minister of Trade and Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartanto and Zulkifli Hasan often mention President Jokowi's name during social assistance events, for example during Airlangga Hartanto's visit to West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) who distributed social assistance in the form of 10 kilograms of rice to several areas such as Kuta Village, Pujut District, Central Lombok Regency and Mandalika Village, Lombok. During his visit, he also asked the community to thank the President, which is none other than the

program carried by Mr. Jokowi. Similarly, Zulkifli Hasan attended the Prabowo-Gibran campaign in Kendal, Central Java.

In several excerpts of his speech that went viral on social media and were broadcast by television stations, he stated that the social assistance distributed was given by none other than President Jokowi. This statement also campaigned for his Party which is also in coalition with the relevant Paslon. He also rejected the proposal to postpone the distribution of Social Assistance until the end of the 2024 Election period, according to him Social Assistance is a commodity that can meet the needs of the community in the midst of an uncertain El Nino situation. Zulkifli Hasan was also recently found to have violated administrative procedures regarding the 2024 elections through a panel hearing by the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu). He was proven to have misused his leave for personal interests, namely campaigning in several regions.

The reason for applying for leave was originally intended for personal purposes at several times, namely January 11, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, and 31, 2024 and February 5-7, 2024. However, the Bawaslu team in its report actually found Zulkifli Hasan attending campaigns held in several regions, such as the time span of January 23-24, he campaigned in two different places, namely at Dekai Sejahtera Field, Yakuhimo, Mountainous Papua Province and GOR Anugrah, Makassar City, South Sulawesi. Nearly two days after campaigning, Zulkifli Hasan was also found attending a campaign agenda at Kedung Jaya field, Cirebon Regency, West Java. Such use of leave can be justified, as long as the campaign attended during the election period does not use state facilities. However, the findings in the field were quite the opposite, he violated Article 281 paragraph 1 of the Election Law due to misuse of facilities in his position as minister and exercising leave under state responsibility.¹⁸

3.3 The Effect of Providing Social Assistance on the Electability of Candidate Pairs Related to Grassroot Areas

The contestation of the 2024 General Election, which was followed by 3 (three) pairs of candidates, together mobilized all resources and strength to achieve victory. There are several political terms that can describe this phenomenon, patronage, political dynasty, and pork barrel politics. Substantially, they have the same meaning, namely to use resources including power to achieve victory, or even just to maintain their own power. The activities that many politicians are fond of lead to political corruption, using public funds with the aim of gaining proper support by the wider community.¹⁹

The support obtained through the actions of certain Paslon is a natural thing, how the central government budget allocation is channeled for certain interests in the form of Social Assistance (Bansos) and Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) policies as a political strategy to win the hearts of voters and strengthen the grassroots base. Such as the phenomenon of visits by the President and/or ministers to several regions in West Java, Central Java, East Java, and other regions that are the largest vote barns, militancy moves in favor of President Jokowi assisted by Projo or Bolo ne Mas organizations on behalf of Gibran supporters. Grassroots in some areas are strongly encouraged to shift to vote for certain candidates with related social assistance programs. Starting from a survey conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in December 2023, it was noted that the Ganjar Pranowo

¹⁸ Fajar Rahmanto, "Politik Anggaran: Alokasi Dana Bansos Pra-Pemilihan Presiden 2019 Di Indonesia Sebagai Alat Meningkatkan Elektabilitas," *Jurnal Wacana Politik* 6, no. 1 (2021).

¹⁹ Zuly Qodir, "Politik Uang Dalam Pemilu-Pemilukada 2014: Modus Dan Resolusinya," *Jurnal Ilmiah Administrasi Pemerintahan Daerah* 8, no. 2 (2016).

and Mahfud MD pair obtained a percentage of 43.5% in the Central Java and Yogyakarta areas, while the Prabowo and Gibran pair was slightly behind at 36.5%.

The survey was then linked to the Kompas R & D Survey which in December 2023 stated that there were 40.3% indecisive voters from the lower middle class and 40% for people from the lower class, and the rest were still undecided for the upcoming presidential election. Such data statistics are obtained as an initial basis for carrying out political maneuvers by convincing voters who are in confusion about choosing one of the Paslon, or strengthening the grassroots. Policies that are veiled to take advantage of power, one of which is illustrated by the Social Aid program that is targeted as if it is for poor people affected by El Nino. The tendency to shift the votes of PDIP cadres who should support Ganjar-Mahfud MD can be seen in several areas that are their grassroots base, for example, the author has explained that Sleman, Pekalongan, Banyuwangi, and Kendal are focused on intensively distributing social assistance by the government. There are even indications that President Jokowi is tracking Ganjar's campaign. It was proven that when Ganjar had just visited an area to campaign in Papua on November 20-21, the President also went directly to the area the next day.

Then on December 1, Ganjar visited a number of points in East Nusa Tenggara. Three days later, Jokowi also visited the area. But actually, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of social assistance to boost electability. Aisah Putri Budiatri as a Researcher at the Political Research Center of the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) said that this kind of practice cannot be seen in real terms, but from a psychological point of view it can affect undecided voters or undecided voters who significantly affect public choices.

3.4 Ideal Social Assistance Policy Formulation in Future Election Projections

The author admits that since the beginning, the design of political governance in realizing democracy has become increasingly problematic because it is too oriented towards the form of development of the election of related institutions, and ignores the system and cultural order that needs to be addressed. For example, the integrity and responsibility that must be questioned by the post-election organizing elites regarding how to protect themselves from forms of political corruption. Regardless of the costs incurred, the government should not be caught up in the vortex of political programs, or politicized, resulting in poor governance. Simply put, the government has yet to embrace internal reforms as a manifestation of democracy, political governance by a corrupt government will overstep the principle of checks and balances through powers that appear to facilitate the institutionalization of corruption, but simultaneously abuse powers that should be directed towards the public. Thus, no matter how high the fighting spirit of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) to eradicate corruption, it will never succeed as long as the government as the root of political organization does not design what it should. The politicization of social assistance that has occurred some time ago has drawn our attention together, how efforts need to be presented by the government in the projection of future elections is to form policies and optimize the right institutions, through these ways we can minimize the politicization of social assistance.

3.4.1 Social Assistance Distribution Through Post Offices/Banks and Adaptation of the US Model

The distribution of social assistance through post offices or banks is an efficient idea proposed by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) so that the process goes

through data integration to the community, which has previously been validated with the latest data so that it is hoped that the provision of social assistance is right on target. Logically, this strategy is a pre-emptive effort against practices that indicate the politicization of social assistance or other forms of political corruption because the provision is not made directly and is not used for certain political interests. The provision of social assistance through the post office will be distributed according to the latest Ministry of Social Affairs data which is not in the form of goods, but is money as an effectiveness in its distribution to prevent conflicts of interest during the election process.²⁰

Other alternative efforts can also be made by delaying the distribution of social assistance during the campaign period until the election vote. As stated by the former Chairperson of Bawaslu 2017-2022 in the situation 1.5 months before the 2024 Election voting, he emphasized that the postponement of the provision of social assistance is very important to prevent misuse for the benefit of electoral politics. Moreover, all contestants also have the potential to abuse social assistance, both from the APBN and APBD. Distribution methods through post offices or banks are also applied by the United States which are far more effective through accurate data collection with a registration system that has been integrated with mapped population data, the process is that the community is asked to register with the government website provided.

The mechanism is that social assistance will be given through checks which can later be disbursed at banks or non-bank financial institutions (credit unions), after which the people who receive the checks will cash the assistance safely. The distribution through checks will certainly be much safer and more structured to see the extent to which the recipient needs the social assistance in the form of money.²¹ For example, the US has disbursed social assistance for each targeted population of US \$ 1,200 and evaluatively the distribution is actually more equitable than conventional methods. The essence of digital distribution is the accuracy of government data for recipients so that the distribution is realized much more evenly, as well as providing convenience for verifying who can receive assistance. The US itself uses single data or what is termed as Social Security Number (SSN), which is population data connected to the government to be used as data for health services, banking accounts, social assistance recipients, etc.²²

Adapting the US model as an effort to overcome election disruption must be done immediately, given the complexity of digital surveillance due to data updates that will always be improved as a guarantee of effectiveness and right target for the community.²³ Indonesia can start by integrating electronic ID cards first so that in the future the government can easily map poverty data in an area. Thus, population data will be more useful to streamline the implementation of government programs.

3.4.2 Optimizing Supervision Through Inter-Agency Synergy

Apart from policies, institutional optimization efforts also need to be made. Bawaslu has actually taken a stand in the form of a direct appeal to the President not to violate the

²⁰ Armando Barrientos and Claudio Santibáñez, “New Forms of Social Assistance and the Evolution of Social Protection in Latin America,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 41, no. 1 (2009): 1–26.

²¹ Peter Lloyd-Sherlock, “Doing a Bit More for the Poor? Social Assistance in Latin America,” *Journal of Social Policy* 37, no. 4 (2008): 621–39.

²² Matthew L Layton and Amy Erica Smith, “Incorporating Marginal Citizens and Voters: The Conditional Electoral Effects of Targeted Social Assistance in Latin America,” *Comparative Political Studies* 48, no. 7 (2015): 854–81.

²³ Margaret Weir and Jessica Schirmer, “America’s Two Worlds of Welfare: Subnational Institutions and Social Assistance in Metropolitan America,” *Perspectives on Politics* 16, no. 2 (2018): 380–99.

applicable corridors.²⁴ Although it was not directly emphasized regarding the social assistance provided, Bawaslu still appealed to all elements of the government, whether the President or other State Officials, not to take actions that actually violate the 2024 Election rules by involving themselves and abusing power to harm and benefit certain candidate pairs.²⁵

This appeal actually shows how weak the action taken by Bawaslu is, as stated by Egi Primayogha as the Coordinator of the Political Corruption Division of Indonesia Corruption Watch, that in responding to the presence of Bansos politicization in a number of regions, Bawaslu should be able to optimize the role of the Integrated Law Enforcement Center (Gakkumdu) which includes members of Bawaslu, the police, and the prosecutor's office with each task being to identify actions that contain elements of election crimes by collecting related evidence. Titi Anggaini is also in line with the indecisiveness of Baaslu, which is responsible as a supervisor to ensure honest and fair elections. At least Bawaslu can prevent this kind of practice by massively disseminating the prohibition of politicization of social assistance to the public, that social assistance should not be involved in the affairs of certain Paslon. The provision of social assistance through unlawful means should be processed as the mechanism for its allocation in Article 547 of the Election Law which benefits and harms one of the candidate pairs.²⁶

In addition, there needs to be a comprehensive study in terms of state funding so that the implementation of social assistance upholds accountability and transparency. KPK together with the KPU and Bawaslu will conduct a review of funding at the central and regional scales that lead to planning and budgeting, so that the prevention of political corruption can be reduced in the continuity of elections.²⁷ KPK also invited the public to immediately report indications of deviant actions by the government objectively to the KPK's Public Reports and Complaints Service (PLPM). Thus, in the future, KPK and Bawaslu can optimize law enforcement through synergy with the community to oversee Social Assistance, as the direction of the nation towards substantive democracy. The need for joint commitment will form the integrity that produces a truly democratic election process.²⁸

3.5 Comparison of Legal Provisions and Cases of Politicization of Social Assistance in Nigeria

Currently, there is no overarching social protection policy that provides details of social assistance in Nigeria. The National Planning Commission (NPC) led the development of the first social protection strategy in 2004, which was largely never implemented. Nonetheless, the document provided inspiration for current social assistance practice. A Social Protection Advisory Group comprising representatives from NAPEP, NPC and the World Bank developed the document. NPC is currently also leading the development of the first national policy on social protection. A validation workshop for the draft national policy on social

²⁴ Robi Cahyadi and Dedy Hermawan, "Strategi Sosial Pencegahan Politik Uang Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Antikorupsi Integritas KPK RI* 5, no. 1 (2019): 29–41.

²⁵ Lalu Sopan Tirta Kusuma et al., "Peran Badan Pengawas Pemilihan Umum Dalam Penegakan Hukum Pemilu (Studi Penanganan Pelanggaran Pemilu Pada Sentra Gakkumdu Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat)," *Jurnal Ulul Albab* 23, no. 2 (2020): 110–16.

²⁶ Muhammad Junaidi, "Tindak Pidana Pemilu Dan Pilkada Oleh Sentra Penegakan Hukum Terpadu," *Jurnal Ius Constituendum* 5, no. 2 (2020).

²⁷ Parlin Azhar Harahap, Gomgom T P Siregar, and Syawal Amry Siregar, "Peran Kepolisian Daerah Sumatera Utara (Polda-Su) Dalam Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Tindak Pidana Pemilihan Umum," *Jurnal Retentum* 2, no. 1 (2021): 90–98.

²⁸ Munandar Nugraha Nugraha, "Bawaslu Dan Penegakan Hukum Pemilu," *AL WASATH Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 1, no. 2 (2020): 117–26.

protection was held on February 18, 2014 in Abuja. The essence of the draft is to provide a framework for addressing the challenges of sustainability, coordination, and performance measurement. This is because social protection programs remain fragmented with each country running its own initiatives. Social protection strategies follow a risk management approach "involving policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability".

The amended Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Nigeria, 1999) under 'Basic Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy' provides the foundations for social protection in the country. The constitution states that the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a country based on the principles of democracy and social justice. The security and welfare of the people shall be the goal of the government. Article 17 3(f) states that the State shall ensure that "children, young persons and the elderly are protected from any exploitation, from moral and material neglect," while (g) requires the state to ensure that "provision is made for public assistance in cases of deserving or other conditions of need." Other social objectives of the State that relate to social protection under the constitution include:

1. Providing decent and adequate housing and food, a reasonable national minimum living wage, old age and pension benefits, unemployment or sickness benefits, and the welfare of the disabled.
2. Ensuring fair and humane working conditions, adequate medical and health facilities for all, equal pay for equal work, and promotion of family life (see articles 16 and 17 of the 1999 Constitution). These provisions are consistent with the AU Social Protection Framework.

However, these provisions are not legally enforceable. That is, no one can take the State to court for failing to provide these services or claim them as his or her right. Previous governments argued that there was insufficient funding to implement them. Nonetheless, there are horizontal and vertical dimensions to the coverage of social protection programs in Nigeria. There are three types of programs led by the federal government: COPE-CCT which is targeted at households in certain social categories; health fee waivers for pregnant women and children under five; and the Community-Based Health Insurance Scheme which was redesigned in 2011 as the previous scheme suffered from design problems. Some states handle social protection issues through their social welfare ministries: COPECCT, Subsidy Reinvestment Program (SURE-P), various programs for the elderly, and employment programs, among others. Other social assistance programs are implemented on an ad hoc basis by government ministries, departments and agencies at the state level, and some are funded by international donors.

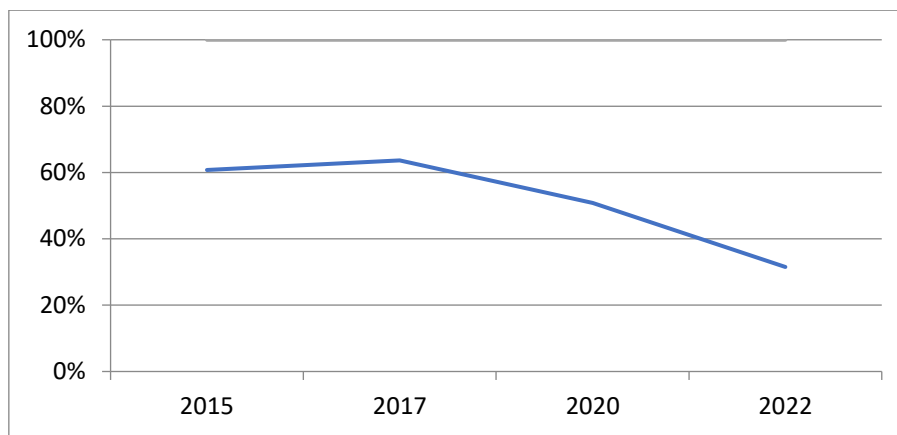
In the development of Nigeria's fragile and conflict-ridden northeast region, social assistance delivery has evolved from a near absence of systematic and organized approaches to promising efforts to coordinate and deliver services to the most vulnerable populations in the region. After more than a decade of interventions by national and international actors, the complex humanitarian situation remains protracted and volatile, making social assistance an urgent priority.

The Global Humanitarian Overview 2023 states that at least 8.3 million people in the northeastern regions of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe will require humanitarian assistance by 2023. The number of people experiencing food insecurity in lean seasons is expected to increase to 4.4 million in 2023 from 4.1 million in 2022. The humanitarian situation was further exacerbated by the impact of last year's severe floods which caused more damage to already suffering communities.

Social protection became a major policy focus for the Nigerian government under President Mohammadu Buhari in 2015. The administration inherited a protracted crisis in northeast Nigeria that reached its peak in 2014/2015, during which more than two hundred girls were abducted by Boko Haram. The crisis led to massive displacement, which saw tens of thousands of people killed, property damaged, and their basic needs such as water, food, and shelter disrupted. People were forced to move to areas that might be safe either as internally displaced persons in communities or camps in Nigeria or as refugees in neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, estimates that more than 2.4 million people have been displaced with more than 7 million at risk of hunger.

The resulting complex humanitarian situation far exceeded the Nigerian Government's national capacity to cope, leading to a huge surge of global humanitarian interventions in northeast Nigeria. For the affected population to survive, social assistance is the only means by which they can access the basic necessities of daily life, and possibly hope for the future. Delivering aid to the most vulnerable people is challenging at the best of times, as they live in hard-to-reach areas. This was complicated by the interaction between national and international actors during the crisis. However, the government used it to politicize social assistance ahead of the election.

Grafik 1. Public Trust of the Electoral Commission in Nigeria



Source: Afrobarometer Nigeria

The majority of Nigerians believe that elections are the best method of choosing their leaders, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey. However, ahead of the presidential election in February, less than a quarter of citizens say they trust the National Electoral Commission. The majority of survey respondents said that more political parties are needed to give voters a real choice and that once the election is over, the losing side should accept defeat and work with the government to help the country move forward. While most citizens believe that the last national election in 2019 was generally free and fair, public trust in the KPU as the institution responsible for ensuring free and fair elections is on the decline. Nigerian people want competitive elections but don't trust the electoral commission

In specific term, there is no provision in any law requiring the out-going government to render social assistance to any candidate contesting for elective position. Although, the government through the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is required to monitor political parties' spending during elections (sections 222-229 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as altered)). Experience has shown that most incumbent governments often have favoured candidates that will succeed them. In an attempt to persuade the electorates, governments funds had previously been utilized to fund

electioneering campaigns in Nigeria. A cursory review of the cases of *Olisa Métu & Ors. v. Federal Republic of Nigeria & Ors.* (2017) 11 NWLR (Pt. 1575) at page 157, Col. Muhammad Sambo Dasuki SC/617/2016 among others are clear indications of social assistance by the government to support electability of People Democratic Party's candidates during 2015 general elections.

This is not peculiar to PDP alone, the government of All Progressives Congress (APC) have also done or rendered all forms of social assistance to their candidates in all the elections since coming to power. The accused persons in the above cases were government officials, but deployed state's fund for electioneering campaigns. This is peculiar to factually all state governments in Nigeria, and it is indeed a recurring decimal as same thing was experienced in 2019 and 2023 general elections. The cumulative effect of this social assistance is that electorates were unable to make the right decisions on better candidates that would develop the country but were influenced by money given to them by government officials.

4. Conclusion

The rampant politicization of social assistance by the President and/or the Minister is indirectly a form of political corruption that uses public funds to be allocated to interests related to winning one of the Paslon in the 2024 Election. Starting from the policy aspect of not requiring Presidential and / or Vice Presidential Candidates to resign from certain positions as stipulated in PP No. 53 of 2023, to the President distributing social assistance to several areas that are the basis for winning the grassroots. There is no doubt that several related ministers have further strengthened indications of the politicization of social assistance through narratives while campaigning with the winning team, and participating in distributing social assistance to beneficiaries. Of course, electoral political strategies accompanied by arbitrary legitimacy have the effect of benefiting certain Candidate Pairs, while harming other Paslon.

A joint commitment between the government and the community is actually needed as a form of effort to overcome the problem as a projection in the future, both in terms of policies to channel social assistance through post offices or banks as proposed by the KPK and adaptation of the model in the United States, as well as institutional optimization through synergy between the KPK together with the KPU and Bawaslu. Forms of prevention must be carried out by giving appeals to review the election funds used, to the involvement of the community to reveal indications of the practice of politicization of social assistance in order to realize substantive democracy in the upcoming elections.

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