JOURNAL OF POLITICS, GOVERNANCE, AND ADMINISTRATION (JPGA)
Volume 2, Issue 1, May 2026
10.69548/jpga.v2i1.56.2026

Money Politics and Political Corruption in Indonesia: A Structured Literature Review and the Electoral Corruption Cycle Framework

Kevin Jeremia Pakpahan
Universitas Malikussaleh, Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia
Corresponding author: kevin.230220034@mhs.unimal.ac.id

Abstract

Money politics and political corruption are interconnected problems in Indonesia's electoral democracy. However, existing studies often examine electoral mobilization and post-election abuses of power separately, leaving the relationship between these phenomena insufficiently integrated. This study aims to: (1) synthesize findings on the relationship between money politics and political corruption in Indonesia; (2) identify the institutional and political factors that enable this relationship to recur; and (3) develop a conceptual framework for the Electoral Corruption Cycle. The study employed a structured literature review informed by systematic review principles and guided by the transparency principles of PRISMA 2020. Nine journal articles published between 2018 and 2025 and available as of December 30, 2025, were included in the thematic synthesis. The analysis generated five themes: structural drivers of political corruption, money politics and electoral mobilization, post-election abuses of power, impacts on democratic quality, and prevention strategies. The findings indicate that high electoral costs, a lack of transparency in political financing, patronage relations, weak oversight, and limited law enforcement may create a risk pathway linking material-based electoral mobilization to the misuse of public authority. This relationship is conditional rather than automatic and is shaped by funding sources, dependence on donors, party organization, and institutional accountability. The study proposes the Electoral Corruption Cycle as an integrative conceptual framework consisting of four phases: political capital accumulation, material distribution, resource recovery and the fulfillment of political obligations, and cycle reproduction. This framework provides an exploratory model for examining the connections among pre-electoral, electoral, post-electoral, and subsequent electoral phases.

Keywords: *Money Politics; Political Corruption; Political Financing; Electoral Corruption Cycle; Structured Literature Review*

A. Introduction

Money politics remains one of the fundamental problems in Indonesia's electoral democracy. This practice refers to candidates or political networks providing money, goods, services, or other material benefits to voters to secure electoral support. Money politics does not occur only through vote buying, but also through the distribution of assistance, social activities, voter mobilization, patronage, and the use of local support networks. Marcella et al. (2025), for example, show that support mobilization in the 2024 Legislative Election in Lhokseumawe City involved a combination of economic capital, social activities, material assistance, and social and religious networks. In Indonesia, these practices are often embedded in personalized networks linking candidates, brokers, community leaders, and voters, making clientelistic exchange an integral feature of grassroots electoral competition (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019). These findings indicate that material distribution in electoral competition does not always operate as a direct transaction, but may be embedded in previously established social and political relationships.

The persistence of such practices reveals a paradox within Indonesian democracy. Elections, which are normatively designed as mechanisms of accountability and public control, may instead generate incentive structures that support the reproduction of political corruption. One factor frequently associated with this condition is the high cost of electoral competition, particularly under the open-list proportional representation system. Under this system, candidates compete not only against candidates from other political parties but also against fellow candidates from the same party. Such intra-party competition may increase the need for personal financing, dependence on donors, and the use of material distribution strategies to obtain votes (Pratiwi, 2018). Dharayanti et al. (2024) also show that high electoral costs may create pressure on elected candidates to recover the resources spent during the nomination and campaign processes.

The relationship between electoral financing and the abuse of power does not always develop directly or uniformly. Campaign funding sources, the degree of dependence on donors, the strength of oversight, law-enforcement capacity, political party structures, and opportunities for the misuse of office may shape how this relationship develops after elections. Therefore, money politics and political corruption should not be understood merely as individual deviations, but should instead be situated within the interaction among electoral rules, political financing, patronage networks, voter behavior, and public governance.

Studies on money politics, clientelism, political corruption, state capture, and political budget cycles have developed within the literature on Indonesian politics and governance. However, these studies generally place each phenomenon within a distinct analytical focus. Research on money politics tends to examine candidate strategies, voter mobilization, material distribution, and the role of support networks during elections. In contrast, studies on political corruption tend to focus on the abuse of authority, budgetary corruption, the granting of concessions, patronage appointments, and policy capture after political actors obtain public office. This separation has meant that the relationship between the electoral and governmental phases has not always been explained as an integrated sequence of mechanisms.

Another limitation lies in the tendency of some studies to explain corruption primarily through the lack of integrity, opportunism, or moral weakness of public officials. Although this approach remains important, it does not fully explain how political financing, electoral competition, relationships with donors, weak oversight, and patronage culture may create incentives that allow corruption to recur. The state capture perspective suggests that the abuse of power may extend beyond individual actions when economic and political interests are able to influence institutions, regulations, and public decisions (Sitorus, 2011). Meanwhile, studies on political budget cycles demonstrate that public resources may be shaped by the interest of maintaining support in subsequent electoral contests (Syam & Afdal, 2025).

Given these conditions, a synthesis is needed to connect findings on the accumulation of political capital, the distribution of material benefits to voters, the use of authority after elections, and the utilization of political resources in subsequent contests. This article addresses this gap through a structured literature review informed by systematic review principles, covering studies on electoral costs, money politics, electoral mobilization, political corruption, electoral oversight, and the reproduction of power in the Indonesian context. Unlike studies that treat the electoral and post-electoral phases separately, this study views them as parts of an interconnected process. It does not assume that every instance of money politics automatically results in post-election corruption, but instead synthesizes the conditions and mechanisms that may increase the risk of such a relationship.

This study aims to: (1) synthesize findings from the literature on the relationship between money politics and political corruption in Indonesia; (2) identify the institutional and political factors that enable this relationship to be reproduced; and (3) develop a conceptual framework of the Electoral Corruption Cycle that explains the connections among political capital accumulation, material distribution, resource recovery and the fulfillment of political obligations, and the reproduction of power. Based on these objectives, the study addresses three research questions: (1) how does the literature on Indonesia explain the relationship between money politics and political corruption; (2) what factors support the recurrence of political corruption in electoral democracy; and (3) how can these findings be synthesized into a conceptual framework of the Electoral Corruption Cycle?

B. Literature Review

Political Corruption from a Theoretical Perspective

Political corruption refers to the misuse of public authority by elected or appointed officials for the benefit of particular individuals, groups, or political networks (Sitorus, 2011). Unlike administrative corruption, which generally occurs at the policy implementation level, political corruption concerns the use of power to influence policymaking, budget allocation, public appointments, licensing, and the distribution of public resources. In an electoral democracy, political corruption should not be understood solely as misconduct occurring after an actor assumes office, but also as a phenomenon that may be connected to candidate nomination, campaign financing, electoral competition, and candidates’ dependence on political donors.

Principal–agent theory provides one framework for explaining the emergence of corruption in democratic systems. In this relationship, voters act as principals who delegate authority to elected officials as agents. However, information asymmetry, limited oversight, and weak accountability mechanisms may allow officials to use public mandates in ways that are inconsistent with voters’ interests. Corruption may emerge when agents possess the opportunity, authority, and incentives to behave opportunistically, while perceiving the risks of exposure and sanction as lower than the potential benefits. This perspective helps explain why weak oversight and law enforcement can create opportunities for the abuse of power. Principal–agent theory

10.69548/jpga.v2i1.56.2026

therefore explains corruption through the interaction of information asymmetry, divergent interests, inadequate monitoring, and weak accountability between citizens and public officials (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016).

Nevertheless, the principal–agent approach is not fully sufficient to explain corruption that has become systemic and involves broad networks of actors. Under such conditions, corruption does not arise solely from the misconduct of an individual agent, but also from informal norms, political dependencies, and institutional structures that allow multiple actors to benefit from the same practices. Political corruption may therefore develop from individual misconduct into a collective mechanism sustained by relationships among public officials, political parties, donors, bureaucrats, business actors, and patronage networks.

The state capture perspective complements this explanation by conceptualizing corruption as the domination of state institutions, regulations, and policies by particular economic and political interests. Sitorus (2011) explains that state capture occurs when interested actors not only violate existing rules but also influence the formulation of rules and public decisions to benefit their networks. In an electoral context, the risk of state capture may arise when financial support received by candidates creates obligations to provide policy concessions, access to public budgets, licenses, government projects, or political protection after they are elected. Political financing may therefore serve as one link between electoral competition and the abuse of power during the governing phase.

Money Politics, Patronage, and Electoral Clientelism

Money politics generally refers to the use of money, goods, services, or other material benefits to influence voters' political choices and behavior. In this study, money politics is understood as the use of material resources by candidates or support networks to obtain, strengthen, or maintain electoral support. Marcella et al. (2025) show that support mobilization in the 2024 Legislative Election in Lhokseumawe City involved a combination of economic capital, material assistance, social activities, and the use of social and religious networks. However, money politics must be distinguished from patronage and clientelism to clarify the boundaries of the analysis. Money politics may take the form of direct transactions shortly before voting, whereas patronage encompasses a broader distribution of resources, such as assistance, projects, employment, access to services, or particular benefits allocated for political purposes. Clientelism refers to a more enduring and personalized exchange relationship supported by reciprocal obligations among patrons, brokers, and clients. Clientelistic distribution commonly relies on brokers who connect political actors with targeted voters, facilitate the allocation of material benefits, and help political organizations manage uncertainty regarding voter compliance (Stokes et al., 2013).

Money politics may be practiced through cash payments, the distribution of basic necessities, transportation to polling stations, assistance to community groups, or voter mobilization through political brokers. Brokers are important because candidates do not always interact directly with voters. In Indonesia, brokers operate through localized social networks, but their intermediary position also creates uncertainty because candidates

Volume 2, Issue 1, May 2026
10.69548/jpga.v2i1.56.2026

cannot always ensure that distributed resources are delivered as intended or converted into electoral support (Aspinall, 2014). Political intermediaries identify target groups, distribute resources, communicate candidates' commitments, and monitor political support at the local level. In Indonesia, electoral mobilization networks may involve campaign teams, community leaders, socio-religious organizations, and local actors with close ties to voter groups. In Aceh, religious authorities and dayah networks also remain influential in electoral mobilization, although their political influence varies according to local relationships, institutional positions, and changing voter considerations (Rahma et al., 2024). Marcella et al. (2025) demonstrate that the distribution of material assistance does not always occur as an isolated transaction, but may be combined with social activities, personal standing, and pre-existing community networks.

Clientelistic relationships are shaped not only by candidate strategies but also by the social and institutional conditions that influence voter responses. Political preferences may also be transmitted through family relationships and everyday socialization. In Aceh, family affiliations, religious values, and parental influence have been found to shape first-time voters' political orientations and, in some cases, constrain their capacity for independent evaluation (Faisal et al., 2025). Limited access to resources, low trust in institutions, weak programmatic identification with political parties, and expectations of receiving immediate benefits may increase acceptance of material exchanges. Money politics therefore cannot be explained merely as an irrational choice by voters. Such practices may develop as a form of political exchange when programmatic benefits are perceived as uncertain, whereas material benefits can be received immediately. Fadillah et al. (2025) also show that limited political literacy, inadequate political education, and the influence of information from social environments and the media may affect voters' ability to evaluate candidates and electoral processes critically. Although their study does not directly examine money politics, its findings are relevant to understanding conditions that may increase voter vulnerability to non-programmatic political mobilization.

The open-list proportional representation system is also frequently associated with rising electoral competition costs. Pratiwi (2018) explains that under this system, candidates compete not only against candidates from other political parties but also against candidates from the same party. Intra-party competition may encourage campaign personalization and increase candidates' need to build support networks independently. Where programmatic differentiation among candidates is limited, material distribution may be used to build recognition, loyalty, and electoral support. However, this relationship is not automatic, because the intensity of money politics is also influenced by party organizational strength, constituency characteristics, oversight capacity, and local network structures.

Research on vote buying in Indonesia further indicates that intense candidate-centered competition encourages individual candidates to rely on personal networks and targeted material inducements, particularly when party organizations provide limited electoral support (Muhtadi, 2019).

Political Financing and the Electoral Corruption Cycle

Political financing is an important element in explaining the relationship between the electoral arena and the use of power after elections. Candidates require resources to finance nomination, campaigning, mobilization, polling-station witnesses, political communication, and the maintenance of support networks. When these financing needs exceed candidates' personal capacity and formal party support, candidates may depend on personal wealth, political donors, business actors, or patronage networks. Such dependence may generate material or political obligations that must be fulfilled after office is obtained.

Dharayanti et al. (2024) identify high electoral costs as a condition that may increase the risk of sustained corruption. High expenditure does not in itself prove that every candidate will engage in corruption. However, pressure to recover campaign costs, reward donor support, maintain coalitions, and prepare financing for future contests may create incentives for the abuse of authority. Under conditions of weak oversight and transparency, the recovery of political resources may occur through project allocation, budget manipulation, the granting of concessions, licensing bribery, loyalty-based appointments, or the diversion of public resources to support networks. Primasari et al. (2025) show that the relationship between politics and corruption may emerge through abuses of authority, unaccountable budget management, gratification, and nepotistic practices.

The concept of the political budget cycle explains one form of relationship between the exercise of power and electoral interests. Syam and Afdal (2025) show that incumbent officials may alter patterns of public expenditure or budget use before elections to increase political support. Electorally oriented budgeting demonstrates that the relationship between elections and corruption does not move only from the electoral phase to the governing phase, but may also move back from power to the next contest. Resources obtained or controlled during a term in office may be used to maintain patronage networks, build popularity, and support the reproduction of power.

This relationship is also influenced by institutional capacity and the consistency of law enforcement. Izwan Aiman et al. (2025) emphasize that the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts depends on the capacity of government institutions and law-enforcement bodies to undertake prevention, oversight, and prosecution. In the electoral context, Hendra and Sariyulis (2025) show that the improper application of law and weak accountability among election administrators may reduce public trust in the integrity of the electoral process. These findings indicate that the quality of oversight may either strengthen or disrupt the relationship between electoral interests and the abuse of power.

From these perspectives, the relationship between money politics and political corruption can be understood as a sequence involving at least four mechanisms. First, political capital is accumulated through personal resources, political parties, donors, and patronage networks. Second, these resources are converted into mobilization strategies and material distribution during the electoral phase. Third, post-election access and authority are used to fulfill political obligations, recover expenditures, or maintain

10.69548/jpga.v2i1.56.2026

support networks. Fourth, the resources of power are reused to finance and win subsequent electoral contests.

This framework does not assume that all instances of money politics necessarily lead to political corruption. The relationships among phases are influenced by financing sources, the degree of dependence on donors, oversight capacity, opportunities for the misuse of office, the strength of law enforcement, political competition, and public accountability. Accordingly, the Electoral Corruption Cycle is positioned in this study as an integrative conceptual framework that brings together findings on political financing, clientelism, money politics, state capture, and political budget cycles. The framework is used to examine the conditions and mechanisms through which corruption may be produced and reproduced across the pre-electoral, electoral, and post-electoral phases.

C. Methods

This study employed a structured literature review informed by systematic review principles to identify and synthesize research on the relationship between money politics and political corruption in Indonesia. The review process referred to the transparency principles of PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021), while the data were synthesized through thematic analysis by adapting the stages proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This methodological designation was adopted because the available records enabled the identification, selection, and thematic synthesis of the included studies, but did not provide sufficient documentation to reconstruct a complete quantitative PRISMA flow or a fully reproducible systematic search.

Relevant literature was identified through searches of scholarly journal platforms, institutional repositories, and reference lists of related publications. The review also used backward reference tracing to identify theoretical and contextual sources relevant to electoral financing, money politics, clientelism, political corruption, and electoral governance in Indonesia. Because a complete database-by-database search log was unavailable, the review does not claim exhaustive coverage of the literature.

The review was guided by three research questions: (1) how does the literature on Indonesia explain the relationship between money politics and political corruption; (2) what institutional and political factors support the recurrence of corruption in electoral democracy; and (3) how can these findings be synthesized into a conceptual framework of the Electoral Corruption Cycle?

The review was limited to journal articles available up to December 30, 2025. Articles were selected according to four inclusion criteria: (1) publication in a scholarly journal; (2) availability in Indonesian or English; (3) substantive discussion of Indonesia; and (4) relevance to money politics, electoral costs, clientelism, political corruption, electoral oversight, political budget cycles, or prevention strategies. Sources were excluded if they were books, book chapters, reports, presentations, news articles, opinion pieces, or non-journal publications. Methodological and theoretical sources were retained to support the research design and interpretation, but were not counted as studies included in the synthesis. Additional theoretical and contextual references were used to support conceptual clarification and the interpretation of the findings. These sources were not

Volume 2, Issue 1, May 2026
10.69548/jpga.v2i1.56.2026

treated as included studies and were not incorporated into the thematic coding or synthesis.

Based on the application of these inclusion criteria to the sources available and verifiable for the review, nine journal articles were selected for thematic synthesis. These articles addressed the open-list proportional representation system and political corruption, electoral corruption prevention, electoral costs, material-based campaign mobilization, political literacy, electoral oversight, institutional capacity for combating corruption, the relationship between politics and corruption, and political budget cycles. The characteristics of the analyzed articles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Articles Included in the Synthesis

No.	Author(s) and year	Main focus	Contribution to the synthesis
1	Pratiwi (2018)	Open-list proportional representation and political corruption	Intra-party competition and electoral costs
2	Dairani (2023)	Electoral corruption prevention	Electoral oversight and reform
3	Dharayanti et al. (2024)	Electoral costs and sustained corruption	Political financing as a risk factor
4	Fadillah et al. (2025)	Political literacy among young voters	Political education and voter capacity
5	Hendra and Sariyulis (2025)	Electoral oversight and law enforcement	Accountability and public trust
6	Izwan Aiman et al. (2025)	The government's role in combating corruption	Institutional capacity and law enforcement
7	Marcella et al. (2025)	Legislative candidate mobilization strategies	Economic capital, material assistance, and social networks
8	Primasari et al. (2025)	The relationship between politics and corruption	Forms and impacts of political corruption
9	Syam and Afdal (2025)	Political budget cycles	The use of public budgets within electoral cycles

Source: Authors' analysis, 2025.

Data from the nine articles were extracted using a structured analytical matrix covering the authors and publication year, research objectives, research approach, study context, key concepts, findings, and relevance to the research questions. The extraction process was conducted to ensure that each theme could be traced back to the supporting sources.

The relevance of each included article was also classified as direct, moderate, or contextual. Directly relevant studies explicitly addressed electoral costs, money politics, political corruption, or political budget cycles. Moderately relevant studies examined

10.69548/jpga.v2i1.56.2026

institutional oversight, corruption prevention, or material-based electoral mobilization. Contextually relevant studies contributed evidence concerning voter capacity, political literacy, electoral accountability, or institutional conditions related to the research questions.

Data analysis was conducted through six stages adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006): (1) repeatedly reading the articles to understand their focus and findings; (2) assigning initial codes to relevant information; (3) grouping codes with similar meanings; (4) reviewing the consistency of the themes with the source articles; (5) defining and naming the themes; and (6) developing a narrative synthesis.

The coding process combined deductive and inductive approaches. The deductive approach used electoral costs, clientelism, state capture, political financing, and political budget cycles as the initial conceptual framework. The inductive approach was used to identify additional patterns emerging from the articles, including political literacy, oversight capacity, electoral-administration accountability, and mobilization through social networks. A single article could support more than one theme when its findings addressed multiple dimensions of the study.

The analysis produced five main themes: (1) structural factors of political corruption; (2) money politics and electoral mobilization; (3) post-election political corruption; (4) impacts on democratic quality; and (5) prevention strategies. The relationships among these themes were then synthesized to construct the conceptual framework of the Electoral Corruption Cycle. The framework was developed as an integrative conceptual model based on patterns identified across the nine articles and was not intended to establish a causal relationship applicable to all cases of electoral corruption in Indonesia. Accordingly, the review should be interpreted as a structured and transparent synthesis of the selected literature rather than as an exhaustive systematic mapping of all publications on electoral corruption in Indonesia.

D. Results and Discussion

Thematic Mapping of the Literature

Based on the analysis of nine journal articles that met the inclusion criteria, five main themes were identified, linking political financing, electoral mobilization, the abuse of power, impacts on democracy, and prevention strategies. A single article could support more than one theme because several studies addressed multiple dimensions of electoral corruption. Therefore, the thematic distribution does not represent mutually exclusive groupings of articles.

Table 2. Distribution of Themes in the Analyzed Literature

Theme	Subthemes or main findings	Supporting articles
Structural factors of political corruption	Political costs, intra-party competition, weak oversight, and institutional capacity	Pratiwi (2018); Dharayanti et al. (2024); Izwan Aiman et al. (2025); Primasari et al. (2025)

Money politics and electoral mobilization	Distribution of assistance, use of economic capital, social networks, and voter mobilization	Dairani (2023); Marcella et al. (2025)
Post-election political corruption	Budgetary corruption, abuse of authority, and political budget cycles	Primasari et al. (2025); Syam and Afdal (2025)
Impacts on democratic quality	Weakening accountability, public trust, and voter capacity	Fadillah et al. (2025); Hendra and Sariyulis (2025); Primasari et al. (2025)
Prevention strategies	Political financing reform, stronger oversight, law enforcement, and political literacy	Dairani (2023); Fadillah et al. (2025); Hendra and Sariyulis (2025); Izwan Aiman et al. (2025); Syam and Afdal (2025)

Source: Authors' analysis, 2025.

The literature synthesis indicates that money politics and political corruption are not always treated as entirely separate phenomena. Several studies suggest a sequence of relationships beginning with high political financing requirements, the use of material resources in electoral competition, the emergence of obligations to donors or support networks, and the risk of abusing authority after candidates obtain public office. However, this relationship is not automatic, as it is influenced by funding sources, the strength of oversight, party structures, opportunities for the misuse of office, and the effectiveness of law enforcement.

These findings demonstrate that political corruption cannot be adequately explained solely as individual misconduct. A more comprehensive perspective must consider the incentive structures created by electoral systems, political financing governance, patronage relations, and government accountability. Therefore, prevention strategies that focus only on enforcement after corruption has occurred may fail to address factors that emerge during the nomination and campaign phases.

Structural Factors of Political Corruption

The analyzed literature identifies political costs as one of the factors most frequently associated with the risk of political corruption. Dharayanti et al. (2024) show that high financing requirements during nomination and campaigning may increase candidates' dependence on personal wealth, political donors, or patronage networks. Such dependence may create pressure to maintain support, fulfill obligations to financial backers, or recover resources spent during electoral competition.

High political costs do not in themselves prove that elected candidates will engage in corruption. However, when campaign financing is non-transparent, oversight is weak, and opportunities for the misuse of authority remain open, the need to recover resources

10.69548/jpga.v2i1.56.2026

may develop into an incentive for opportunistic behavior. From a principal–agent perspective, this condition reflects information asymmetry and weak accountability mechanisms that allow public officials to deviate from voters' mandates.

Another factor is limited oversight and law enforcement. Izwan Aiman et al. (2025) emphasize that the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts is determined not only by the number of cases processed, but also by institutional capacity, certainty of enforcement, and the ability to create a deterrent effect. When the likelihood of detection and sanction is perceived as low, public authority becomes more susceptible to misuse for personal interests or the benefit of political networks.

Patronage and reciprocal relationships among candidates, support networks, and voter groups are also important factors. Marcella et al. (2025) show that electoral support may be mobilized through a combination of material assistance, social activities, religious networks, personal standing, and candidates' proximity to communities. These findings indicate that material benefits are not always distributed as isolated transactions, but may be embedded in pre-existing social relations and political networks.

Another structural factor concerns the open-list proportional representation system. Pratiwi (2018) explains that competition under this system occurs not only between political parties but also among candidates from the same party. Intra-party competition may encourage campaign personalization and increase candidates' need to build support networks independently. Where programmatic differentiation is limited, material distribution may be used as a strategy to distinguish one candidate from another. Nevertheless, the intensity of money politics remains influenced by party organization, constituency characteristics, oversight capacity, and the configuration of local networks.

Money Politics in the Electoral Context

The literature shows that money politics is not limited to cash payments shortly before voting. Its practices may include distributing basic necessities, providing economic assistance, financing social activities, and delivering benefits through support networks. Marcella et al. (2025) found that female legislative candidates from the National Awakening Party in Lhokseumawe City combined persuasive and material approaches through social activities, women's religious organizational networks, economic assistance, and the use of social, cultural, and economic capital.

These findings demonstrate that material distribution may be combined with social proximity and community networks in voter mobilization. Therefore, practices based on material resources do not always operate as direct transactions between candidates and voters, but may function through support networks with established social relationships with target groups.

Dairani (2023) shows that simultaneous general and regional elections increase the need for mobilization and campaign financing across different levels of competition. The number of offices contested and the extensive networks that must be maintained may increase pressure on candidates to secure funding and employ strategies that provide direct benefits to voters. However, Marcella et al. (2025) also show that material

Volume 2, Issue 1, May 2026
10.69548/jpga.v2i1.56.2026

strategies do not operate independently, but interact with social capital, personal standing, religious networks, and candidates' relationships with communities.

Voters' acceptance of material benefits also cannot be understood solely as an indication of low political awareness. Where program implementation is perceived as uncertain, trust in political parties is weak, and access to resources is limited, immediate benefits may appear more concrete than programmatic promises. Such conditions may reinforce clientelistic relationships and impede the development of program-based electoral competition.

Post-Election Political Corruption

The relationship between money politics and political corruption is the main analytical focus of this study. The literature synthesis indicates that campaign expenditure and dependence on financial backers may create political obligations after candidates obtain public office. These obligations may be fulfilled through access to government projects, licenses, policies, public budgets, procurement of goods and services, or the appointment of particular individuals to public positions.

The state capture perspective helps explain situations in which political and economic interests influence not only policy implementation but also the formation of rules and public decisions. Sitorus (2011) explains that state capture occurs when particular actors are able to direct institutions and regulations to protect or expand their interests. In an electoral context, such conditions may arise when financial support for candidates is followed by demands for concessions after those candidates are elected.

The concept of the political budget cycle also demonstrates a two-way relationship between the governing arena and the electoral arena. Syam and Afdal (2025) identify that budget management may be influenced by the political calendar, particularly when incumbent officials use expenditure policies to increase support before elections. These findings indicate that the resources of power may be used not only to recover previous political costs but also to retain office and finance subsequent electoral competition.

Primasari et al. (2025) identify various forms of political corruption, including budget manipulation, unaccountable procurement, licensing bribery, gratification, and nepotism in public appointments. Although not all these forms are necessarily directly related to money politics, they demonstrate opportunities for public officials to use public authority to secure economic and political benefits.

Accordingly, the relationship between money politics and post-election corruption should be understood as a conditional mechanism. Campaign costs constitute one risk factor, but the abuse of power also depends on access to state resources, weak oversight, proximity to business actors, party control, and the capacity of society to demand accountability.

Impacts on Democratic Quality

The cycle of money politics and the abuse of power may affect the quality of representation, accountability, and public trust. Primasari et al. (2025) show that political corruption may shift the orientation of public office from serving the public interest toward serving personal interests and political networks. Candidates' dependence on donors or support networks may also create conflicts between fulfilling public interests and repaying political support.

In the context of election administration, Hendra and Sariyulis (2025) show that the improper application of law and weak accountability among election administrators may reduce public trust in the integrity and fairness of electoral processes. Although their study does not directly examine money politics, its findings emphasize the importance of legal certainty and institutional accountability in maintaining democratic legitimacy.

From the voter perspective, Fadillah et al. (2025) found that political literacy among Generation Z in Lhokseumawe City continues to face obstacles, including limited political understanding, inadequate political education, and exposure to hoaxes and misinformation. These conditions may restrict voters' ability to assess candidates, programs, and electoral practices critically. These findings support the importance of political literacy as an element in preventing transactional politics, although the study does not specifically test a direct relationship between political literacy and money politics.

Evidence from Aceh also suggests that young voters are not permanently bound by inherited political affiliations. Increased access to information, peer deliberation, and civic engagement may encourage a shift from identity-based loyalty toward more evaluative assessments of candidates, leadership credibility, and policy programs (Faisal et al., 2025).

Political corruption may also reduce resources that should otherwise be allocated to public services and social welfare. Budget manipulation, unaccountable procurement, and the granting of concessions to particular networks may lower policy quality and weaken the capacity of public institutions. At the same time, the normalization of transactional relationships may encourage voters to assess political representatives according to their ability to distribute material benefits rather than their integrity, programs, or policy competence.

These impacts do not imply that all voters who receive material benefits lose their political autonomy. Voters may continue to make decisions based on various considerations. However, when money politics recurs, it may alter the norms of political competition, restrict opportunities for candidates without substantial financial capital, and reduce trust in democratic institutions.

Prevention Strategies

The literature offers four main approaches to reducing the risk of the electoral corruption cycle. First, the literature highlights the need for electoral governance reform. Pratiwi (2018) and Dairani (2023) emphasize the need to evaluate the consequences of the open-list proportional representation system for intra-party competition and campaign costs. Such evaluation does not necessarily require replacing the system, but should include strengthening party organizations, increasing transparency in nomination mechanisms, limiting campaign expenditure, and improving campaign oversight. Electoral governance reform must also ensure consistency between national electoral regulations and region-specific legal arrangements. In Aceh, regulatory discrepancies concerning candidate nomination and election administration may create legal uncertainty and complicate institutional accountability (Faisal et al., 2024).

Second, the literature emphasizes the need to strengthen oversight and anti-corruption institutions. Izwan Aiman et al. (2025) highlight the importance of institutional capacity, certainty of enforcement, and inter-agency coordination. In the electoral context, greater institutional capacity is also needed to enable oversight bodies and law-enforcement agencies to detect illegal financial flows, the distribution of material benefits, and the misuse of state resources.

Third, political financing reform is necessary. Syam and Afdal (2025) and Dairani (2023) highlight the importance of transparent funding sources, limits on contributions and expenditure, independent audits, and publicly accessible campaign finance reports. Such reforms must cover both political parties and individual candidates because informal financing may take place outside official reports.

Fourth, political education and democratic literacy must be strengthened. Fadillah et al. (2025) found that political literacy among young voters is influenced by family members, relatives, friends, the internet, and social media. Limited political understanding, inadequate political education, and exposure to hoaxes and misinformation remain significant challenges. Political education should therefore improve voters' ability to verify information, understand electoral processes, assess candidates' track records, and distinguish political programs from mobilization based on immediate material benefits.

These four approaches must be implemented in an integrated manner. Law enforcement without political financing reform will not reduce candidates' dependence on non-transparent funding sources. Conversely, financing transparency without effective oversight and sanctions will also be insufficient to prevent violations. Prevention must address incentive structures from nomination and campaigning to the use of authority and preparation for subsequent electoral contests.

The Conceptual Framework of the Electoral Corruption Cycle

Based on the relationships among the themes, this study develops the Electoral Corruption Cycle as an integrative conceptual framework explaining the connections among the pre-electoral, electoral, post-electoral, and power reproduction phases. This framework does not assume that every candidate who incurs high political costs or uses money politics will necessarily engage in corruption. Instead, it illustrates a risk pathway that may emerge when financing requirements, political dependence, opportunities for the misuse of authority, and weak accountability interact.

The Electoral Corruption Cycle consists of four phases:

1. Political capital accumulation or the pre-electoral phase. Candidates mobilize resources from personal wealth, political parties, political donors, business actors, and patronage networks. Such support may create explicit or implicit material and political obligations.

Volume 2, Issue 1, May 2026
10.69548/jpga.v2i1.56.2026

2. Material distribution or the electoral phase. Some of these resources are converted into campaign activities, network mobilization, patronage, vote buying, and other forms of material distribution to obtain electoral support.
3. Resource recovery and the fulfillment of obligations or the post-electoral phase. Once elected, public officials may face pressure to recover campaign expenditures, repay donor support, maintain coalitions, or finance political networks. Under conditions of weak oversight, such pressure may increase the risk of misusing budgetary authority, licenses, procurement, policies, and public appointments.
4. Cycle reproduction. Economic, political, and institutional resources obtained while in office may be used to maintain networks, build support, and finance subsequent electoral contests. This process may reinforce patronage expectations and reproduce patterns of political financing and material distribution.

The relationships among these phases are influenced by campaign funding sources, the degree of dependence on donors, the strength of party organizations, the effectiveness of oversight, certainty of law enforcement, budget transparency, political competition, the role of civil society, and media independence. These factors may either reinforce or disrupt the relationship between electoral expenditure and political corruption.

The contribution of the Electoral Corruption Cycle framework lies in integrating the patterns identified across the selected literature on political financing, clientelism, money politics, state capture, and political budget cycles. The framework is not intended as an empirically established causal theory, but as an exploratory conceptual model that may serve as a foundation for future empirical research.

The implication is that anti-corruption efforts cannot focus solely on enforcement after the abuse of power has occurred. Interventions must also address candidate nomination, campaign fundraising and reporting, material distribution, oversight of public-resource use, and restrictions on the use of public office for subsequent electoral contests. Preventing electoral corruption therefore requires a cross-phase approach and cannot rely on a single institution or policy instrument.

E. Conclusion

Based on the synthesis of nine journal articles, this study indicates that money politics and political corruption are connected through high electoral competition costs, non-transparent political financing, dependence on donors, patronage relations, and weak oversight and law enforcement. This relationship is not automatic; rather, it forms a risk pathway through which economic resources may be converted into electoral support, while public authority may subsequently be used to fulfill political obligations, maintain support networks or finance subsequent electoral contests.

This study develops the conceptual framework of the Electoral Corruption Cycle, which consists of four phases: political capital accumulation, material distribution, resource recovery and the fulfillment of political obligations, and cycle reproduction. The framework integrates studies on political financing, money politics, clientelism, state capture, and political budget cycles, which have often been discussed separately. Its contribution lies in providing an exploratory conceptual model for explaining the relationship among the pre-electoral, electoral, post-electoral, and subsequent electoral phases, rather than establishing a causal relationship applicable to every case.

The findings emphasize that preventing electoral corruption cannot rely solely on enforcement after the abuse of power has occurred. Reform should include transparency and auditing of campaign financing, limits on contributions and expenditure, stronger political party governance, improved capacity among electoral oversight and anti-corruption institutions, and political education for voters. This structured literature review is limited to nine journal articles published in Indonesian and English between 2018 and 2025 and available up to December 30, 2025. Because complete records for reconstructing a fully reproducible systematic search were unavailable, the study does not claim exhaustive coverage of all relevant publications. Differences in the focus, approaches, and indicators used across the analyzed articles mean that the resulting synthesis is thematic and conceptual rather than quantitative.

Future research should test the Electoral Corruption Cycle framework through longitudinal, quantitative, and comparative studies across Indonesian regions. Such research should trace the relationships among campaign funding sources, material distribution, dependence on donors, the use of authority after elections, and the utilization of political resources for subsequent electoral contests. The roles of social media, digital transfers, and online campaign networks should also be examined to understand the changing forms of money politics in Indonesia's electoral democracy.

References

Aiman, M. I., Faradiis, B. R., & Islam, F. A. A. M. (2025). Analysis of the role of government in eradicating corruption in Indonesia. *SS&H: Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities, 2*(1), 51–65. https://doi.org/10.63232/ssh.v2i1.39

Aspinall, E. (2014). When brokers betray: Clientelism, social networks, and electoral politics in Indonesia. *Critical Asian Studies, 46*(4), 545–570. https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2014.960706

Aspinall, E., & Berenschot, W. (2019). *Democracy for sale: Elections, clientelism, and the state in Indonesia.* Cornell University Press.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Dairani. (2023). Strategi pencegahan tindak pidana korupsi pada pemilu dan pilkada serentak 2024. *HUKMY: Jurnal Hukum, 3*(1), 346–363. https://doi.org/10.35316/hukmy.2023.v3i1.346-363

Dharayanti, D. M. P., Smrti, N. N. E., & Andisana, I. P. G. S. (2024). Dinamika biaya politik yang tinggi dalam politik dan dampaknya terhadap korupsi yang berkelanjutan. *PAMALI: Pattimura Magister Law Review, 4*(3), 266–278. https://doi.org/10.47268/pamali.v4i3.2290

Fadillah, F. H., Muzaffarsyah, T., Abdullah, T., & Zulhilmi. (2025). Literasi politik Generasi Z pada Pemilu Tahun 2024: Studi pemilihan legislatif di Kota Lhokseumawe. *Journal of Politics, Governance, and Administration, 1*(1), 33–42. https://doi.org/10.69548/jpga.v1i1.12.2025

Faisal, N., Abdullah, T., Mulyadi, M., Abubakar, M. bin, & Muzaffarsyah, T. (2025). From identity to evaluation: Political reorientation among Generation Z voters in post-conflict Aceh. *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia, 6*(1), 97–108. https://doi.org/10.22373/jsai.v6i1.7662

Faisal, N., Alfian, Taufik, Muzaffarsyah, T., & Sari Yulis. (2024). The case of candidacy quota of regional legislative candidates and the general election executors in Aceh. *International Journal of Community Care of Humanity, 2*(1), 1–11. https://journal.lsmsharing.com/index.php/ijcch/article/view/93

Faisal, N., Sofyan, H., Syam, H. M., Jamil, T. M., & Yunus, S. (2025). The influence of identity politics within families on first-time voters in Aceh. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun, 13*(3), 2249–2270. https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v13i3.1544

Hendra, H., & Sariyulis, S. (2025). Menguji ketepatan penggunaan konsepsi *impossibility of performance* oleh Komisi Independen Pemilihan Kabupaten Aceh Barat Daya terhadap penolakan pelaksanaan rekomendasi pemungutan suara ulang dalam pelaksanaan pengawasan Pemilu Tahun 2024. *Journal of Politics, Governance, and Administration, 1*(2), 59–68. https://doi.org/10.69548/jpga.v1i2.18.2025

Marcella, Y., Rahman, B., Muzaffarsyah, T., Abubakar, M. B., & Mulyadi. (2025). Strategi calon legislatif perempuan Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa dalam memenangkan pemilihan legislatif tahun 2024 di Kota Lhokseumawe. *Journal of Politics, Governance, and Administration, 1*(2), 80–89. https://doi.org/10.69548/jpga.v1i2.13.2025

Muhtadi, B. (2019). Vote buying in Indonesia: The mechanics of electoral bribery. Palgrave Macmillan.

Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., . . . Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ, 372*, Article n71. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71

Pratiwi, D. A. (2018). Sistem pemilu proporsional daftar terbuka di Indonesia: Melahirkan korupsi politik? *Jurnal Trias Politika, 2*(1). https://doi.org/10.33373/jtp.v2i1.1235

Primasari, D. A., Vigianti, S. A., Hardianti, M., Windriani, R. B., & Pratiwi, R. (2025). Politik dan korupsi: Pasangan tak terpisahkan. *Jurnal Ilmiah Publika, 13*(1), 80–88. https://doi.org/10.33603/publika.v13i1.10179

Rahma, A., Rizwan, M., Muzaffarsyah, T., Faisal, N., & Sarifa. (2024). The divergence of the influence of ulama and dayah in the dynamics of electoral politics in East Aceh Regency. *JUSS (Jurnal Sosial Soedirman), 7*(1), 118–138. https://doi.org/10.20884/juss.v7i1.11663

Rose-Ackerman, S., & Palifka, B. J. (2016). Corruption and government: Causes, consequences, and reform (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Sitorus, L. E. (2011). State capture: Is it a crime? How the world perceived it. *Indonesia Law Review, 1*(2), 46–68. https://doi.org/10.15742/ilrev.v1n2.82

Stokes, S. C., Dunning, T., Nazareno, M., & Brusco, V. (2013). Brokers, voters, and clientelism: The puzzle of distributive politics. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107324909

Syam, A. A., & Afdal, A. A. M. (2025). Political budget cycle in local elections in Indonesia: A systematic review. *Journal of Contemporary Local Politics, 4*(1), 13–28. https://doi.org/10.46507/jclp.v4i1.713