

The Effectiveness of Economic Capital and Campaign Strategies in the 2014 and 2020 Soppeng Regional Head Elections

Arfan Fadillah

Department of Government Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia

Corresponding author: arfan2019a@gmail.com

ABSTRACT - This study analyzes the results of the regional elections in Soppeng in 2014 and 2020. The results show that economic factors such as the amount of money spent on campaigns are not the only determinants of victory. Non-economic factors such as community support and the relevance of candidates' programs to the needs of the community also have a significant influence. The study compared two pairs of candidates and found that the pair that was closer to the community and had a program that was more in line with the community's needs tended to win, even though they had more limited campaign funds. The findings highlight the importance of community-based campaign strategies, strong support from the community, and relevant programs to win over voters. In addition, this study also concludes that there is a need to improve regulations related to the use of campaign funds, political education for voters, and transparency in campaign finance reporting to strengthen democratic integrity.

Keywords: campaign funds; local election, economic capital, campaign

Introduction

Regional Head Elections (Pilkada) in Indonesia are one of the most important forms of political participation in a democratic system. Pilkada gives people the opportunity to elect local leaders, such as regents, mayors, or governors, who are considered capable of bringing change and realising the aspirations of the people. However, in practice, Pilkada is often determined not only by the candidate's vision and mission, but also by various other factors, including the economic capital owned by the candidates (Miriam Budiardjo, 2008).

Economic capital in the political context refers to the financial resources used by candidates to support campaign activities and efforts to win over voters. This capital can be in the form of personal funds, donations from third parties, or legal fundraising according to regulations. The use of economic capital in Pilkada usually includes activities such as advertising in the media, installing campaign attributes, organising public events, and providing social assistance which is often considered a form of money politics (Marijan, 2010)

The political process of local elections is costly. This poses a challenge to the development of local democracy, because the candidates are those with large amounts of money/capital. The high cost of local elections can be caused by 3 (three) factors, namely: regional head candidates who will compete are required to buy political parties as political vehicles, the political campaign model carried out by candidate pairs requires a lot of money, and to persuade voters usually use the practice of money politics (Sahdan and Haboddin, 2009)

Studies on the effect of economic capital on election results have been conducted by many researchers. Economic capital is considered an important factor that can influence election results, because large funds allow candidates to reach more voters and increase their popularity through various campaign strategies. Thus, economic capital is one of the elements that play an important role in determining the success or failure of a candidate in elections, including regional elections (Marijan, 2010)

The 2014 and 2020 Soppeng elections are important examples of the dynamics of local politics in Indonesia, where in 2014 two pairs of candidates with different backgrounds competed for the positions of regent and deputy regent. The two pairs were Ir. H. Lutfi Halide, MP and H. Andi Zulkarnain Soetomo, S.STP., M.Si, and H. A. Kaswadi Razak, SE and Supriansa, SH, MH. The competition between the two reflects differences in strategy, political power, and especially the economic capital presented in their campaigns. Economic capital includes not only direct campaign funds, but also access to other resources that can be used to win votes, such as mass media, political networks, and social programmes (Marijan, 2010)

Meanwhile, in the 2020 Soppeng Pilkada, the political situation changed significantly with only one candidate pair participating in the election. This single candidate pair is Andi Kaswadi Razak as the Regent candidate and Lutfi Halide as the Vice Regent candidate. The presence of this single candidate reflects a different political dynamic, where a coalition of major parties managed to unite their support behind one candidate pair. This single-candidate election presents its own challenges for the democratic process, where voters are faced with the choice to approve or disapprove of the candidate pair (Kholil Pasaribu, 2024)

The use of economic capital in the 2014 and 2020 Soppeng elections is an important issue because the funds owned by each candidate pair play a role in determining the effectiveness of their campaign. Candidates with greater economic capital often have better access to reach out to voters through various strategies, ranging from advertising in the media, organising events, to social activities. This is in line with the findings of research by Aspinall and Sukmajati (2016), which revealed that in many elections in Indonesia, large campaign funds are often used to strengthen the image of candidates, sometimes even involving money politics practices that are difficult to monitor effectively by election organisers.

The phenomenon of money politics is also part of the glaring problems in local elections in various regions, including Soppeng. In studies of local elections in Indonesia, money politics is often used to influence voter preferences, especially among economically vulnerable communities. Barron et al. (2009) show that candidates with large economic capital are able to use their funds to "buy" support or at least influence public perception through massive information dissemination and advertising. This illustrates that candidates with access to strong economic resources have a significant advantage over their less well-off political opponents.

The role of economic capital in the 2014 and 2020 Soppeng elections raises questions about fairness and democracy in elections. With the practice of money politics, the opportunity to create a free and fair electoral process becomes increasingly difficult. Constraints in the enforcement of campaign finance limits also raise concerns about the misuse of economic capital for political gain. The practice of money politics and the unauthorised use of campaign funds can undermine the integrity of democracy and damage public trust in the political process. (Mietzner, 2015)

However, it is important to note that although economic capital plays a large role, voters in Sumenep still take into account other aspects in determining their choices. Voters are not only influenced by campaigns that use large funds but also consider the candidates' track record, vision and credibility. In this case, Kaswadi Razak and Supriansa's efforts to build close relationships with local communities and utilise their political networks proved effective. This shows that a comprehensive strategy that does not only rely on economic capital can be a determinant of victory in Pilkada (Rahman, 2017)

Overall, the 2014 and 2020 Soppeng local elections reflect the complexity of the influence of economic capital on local election outcomes. This research aims to further explore how economic capital was utilised by the two candidate pairs, its impact on voter preferences, and the extent to which economic capital contributed to the victory. Kaswadi Razak and Supriansa.

In addition, this research will also identify obstacles in enforcing campaign finance rules and provide recommendations to improve transparency and fairness in future elections (Chandranegara, I. S., & Umara, N. S., 2020). The study of the influence of economic capital in the political process, especially regional head elections, has been widely discussed in various studies. In general, economic capital is considered to play a significant role in determining election outcomes, especially in the context of local elections in Indonesia, which are often coloured by money politics and the use of massive campaign funds. Previous research reveals that economic capital can be one of the main determinants of candidate success, but not the only factor (Suharto, A., 2018).

In the context of Indonesian elections, money politics has become an integral part of candidates' campaign strategies. Candidates who have access to larger campaign funds tend to utilise economic capital to distribute money, goods or other forms to voters in an effort to win support. The 2014 Soppeng regional election did not escape indications of similar practices, where large funds were used to strengthen the campaign through various media and social activities. Aspinall and Sukmajati emphasise that money politics does not only occur at the campaign stage, but also in administrative processes such as vote counting and financial reporting, which can affect the integrity of the election as a whole (Aspinall and Sukmajati, 2016)

Economic capital gives candidates a strategic advantage in gaining public sympathy, especially through access to the media and extensive campaign networks. They point out that candidates with greater resources have the ability to influence public opinion through adverts, banners and media coverage, ultimately increasing their exposure and popularity. In the case of the 2014 Soppeng regional election, the Kaswadi Razak and Supriansa pair utilised local networks and social power to complement their campaign which, although not as large as its competitors in terms of funds, was able to garner substantial support from the local community. This underscores that while economic capital provides an advantage, campaign strategy and strong social relationships remain important. (Barron et al, 2009)

On the other hand, research by Mietzner (2015) extends the discussion by showing that the success of candidates in local elections is not solely determined by the amount of economic capital. Mietzner highlights that in addition to campaign funds, other factors such as candidate popularity, community involvement, and extensive political networks can have a significant impact on the outcome of elections. In the context of the 2014 Soppeng regional election, the Kaswadi Razak candidate and Supriansa successfully utilised their networks and closeness to the community to achieve victory. Strong support from local community groups, including religious leaders and community leaders, shows that socio-political factors also influence voters' choices (Mietzner, 2015).

Meanwhile, recent research by Sidel (2022) updates the discourse on economic capital and local politics by observing that the practice of money politics has evolved from the mere distribution of cash to more subtle forms, such as the provision of social assistance or public facilities. Sidel highlights that in the context of local elections, candidates often use economic capital to finance long-term community projects or social activities in the hope of building good relations with the community. This approach can also be seen in the 2014 Soppeng regional election, where social

programmes and promises of infrastructure development were part of the campaign strategies of both candidate pairs to attract voters' attention (Sidel, 2022)

In addition, a study conducted by Wahyudi (2020) shows that the influence of economic capital in Pilkada is not always directly proportional to candidate victory. Wahyudi noted that although candidates with large capital have the ability to run more intensive campaigns, some candidates managed to win with less capital thanks to creative and effective campaign strategies. This shows that voters are increasingly critical and do not only consider economic aspects in voting, but also look at the quality of leadership, work programmes, and track records of candidates. In the Soppeng regional head election, this combination of economic capital and non-economic aspects became the main determining factor in determining the final result (Wahyudi, 2020)

Comparing these studies shows that while economic capital plays an important role, its effectiveness depends on how it is utilised in combination with other factors such as political networks, social affinity and appropriate campaign strategies. The 2014 Soppeng regional election demonstrated that economic capital can be a powerful tool in increasing campaign reach, but victory is ultimately determined by a candidate's ability to build strong relationships with voters and utilise available resources effectively. This study will further explore how economic capital was utilised by the two candidates in Soppeng, its impact on voter preferences, and the extent to which it contributed to the election outcome. (Mietzner, 2015).

Addressing the influence of economic capital in the 2014 and 2020 Soppeng elections requires a strategic and comprehensive approach to ensure fairness and integrity in the electoral process. First, there is a need to increase transparency in the management of campaign funds. This can be done through a policy that requires each candidate pair to periodically report the use of campaign funds in detail and accessible to the public. An independent audit system is also needed to review the accuracy of campaign finance reports and identify any suspicious or potentially illegal flows of funds. (Barron, P., et al, 2009)

Second, strengthening regulations related to campaign fund restrictions and third-party donations is a crucial step. Bawaslu and KPU can work together to impose stricter limits on the amount of campaign funds allowed and set strict sanctions for violators. In addition, creating rules prohibiting the excessive use of personal funds in campaigns can prevent inequality between candidates with large and small economic capital, and reduce the risk of money politics that can undermine the democratic process (Totok Hariyono, 2023)

Furthermore, building a system that encourages active public participation in election monitoring is an effective solution to minimise the negative impact of economic capital. By empowering independent monitors and involving community leaders and civil society organisations, the conduct of campaigns can be more closely monitored. This will make candidate pairs think twice before engaging in unethical practices, such as distributing money or goods in an effort to influence voters (Erlina et al., 2023)

Fourth, providing incentives for candidates who have a track record of public service or involvement in social activities to strengthen the competitiveness of candidates who do not have large economic capital. These incentives can take the form of reduced registration administration costs or more equitable support for campaign facilities. With this step, candidates who have potential but do not have large capital still have the same opportunity to compete in the Pilkada (Saleh, 2020).

Finally, improving political education for the public to be more critical and orientated towards the quality of candidates, not just the material appeal offered. Voters who understand the impact of

money politics on the quality of government will be more likely to choose candidates based on their vision, mission and work programmes. This education must be carried out continuously and involve various elements, including schools, youth organisations, and institutions religion, so that people's political awareness is getting stronger (Erlina, Novita Nurdiana, and Imam Mahmud, 2023).

Based on the description above, this study focuses on economic capital as the main aspect in analysing the Soppeng regional elections in 2014 and 2020. This study aims to explore how economic capital influenced campaign strategies, the success of candidate pairs, and their impact on election outcomes. In the 2014 elections, two candidate pairs, namely Ir. H. Lutfi Halide, MP and H. Andi Zulkarnain Soetomo (LHD-AZAS) and H. A. Kaswadi Razak and Supriansa (Akar-Super), showed significant differences in their use of economic capital. Meanwhile, in the 2020 Pilkada, with only one candidate pair running, Andi Kaswadi Razak and Lutfi Halide (Akar-LHD), it is important to analyse how economic capital continues to play a role in shaping public perceptions and voter decisions (Muhammad Ayub Liwang, 2020). This research is expected to provide greater insight into the influence of economic capital on the democratic process at the local level and the implications for future electoral regulation.

Therefore, it is recommended that in the 2024 Soppeng Pilkada battle to build an effective campaign strategy, put forward a vision and work programme that is relevant to the needs of the Soppeng people, and maintain political ethics to create a conducive atmosphere. In addition, increasing community participation through continuous political education and building solid coalitions down to the village level are also important steps. By paying attention to these aspects, it is hoped that the political battle in the 2024 Soppeng Pilkada can run competitively but still uphold the principles of democracy and the interests of the community.

Method

This research uses a descriptive-qualitative approach to analyse the influence of economic capital on the outcome of the 2014 Soppeng regional election. This approach was chosen because it can explore in depth the phenomena that occur, especially related to how economic capital is used by candidate pairs and its impact on voter behaviour. The qualitative method allows this study to understand the dynamics of local politics more comprehensively and see the influence of economic capital not only in the context of the amount of funds, but also campaign strategies and voter mobilisation.

The data used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants, including campaign team members, community leaders, and academics who have an understanding of local politics in Soppeng. Interviews were conducted to reveal the practice of using economic capital in campaigns and people's perceptions of money politics. Meanwhile, secondary data in the form of official reports from the General Election Commission (KPU), campaign documents, survey results, and media publications related to the 2014 Soppeng elections were used to complement and validate the findings from the primary data.

The data collection technique was purposive sampling, which selected informants who were considered to have knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic. Data analysis was conducted using the content analysis method to identify the main themes that emerged from the interviews and documents analysed. The data was then categorised based on themes, such as forms of economic capital use, campaign strategies, and voter responses to money politics.

Data validity is maintained through source triangulation, which compares data from various informants and documents to ensure consistency and correctness of the information obtained. The results of this analysis are expected to provide a clear picture of the influence of economic capital in the 2014 Soppeng regional election and provide recommendations for the improvement of future electoral regulations. This methodology is designed to ensure that this research can reveal the complex relationship between economic capital and election outcomes, and make a meaningful contribution to the study of local politics in Indonesia.

Result and Discussion

The Effect of Economic Capital on the 2014 Soppeng Regional Election

According to Mugiyanto (2021), economic capital is often considered as one of the factors that can influence the outcome of elections, including regional elections. In the context of the 2014 Soppeng regional election, both candidate pairs-Lutfi Halide and Andi Zulkarnain Soetomo (LHD Azas), and Andi Kaswadi Razak and Supriansa Mannahau (Akar Super)-had significant economic capital in the form of personal wealth and campaign funds.

From the data provided, it can be seen that the Akar Super pair has greater total wealth (IDR 26,469,693,841) compared to LHD Azas (IDR 13,185,778,725). However, what is interesting is that the Akar Super pair's campaign fund allocation is much less than the LHD Azas pair. The LHD Azas pair received Rp 2.615 billion in campaign funds and spent Rp 2.671 billion, while Akar Super only received Rp 197 million and spent Rp 196 million. Despite having a larger campaign fund, LHD Azas only received Rp 2.615 billion and spent Rp 196 million. Won 59,101 votes, compared to Akar Super's 80,802 votes. This shows that success in Pilkada is not only determined by the size of campaign funds, but also by the way these funds are used, social networks, campaign strategies, and the strength of the local support base.

The influence of economic capital on the 2020 Soppeng regional head election shows different dynamics compared to 2014, because this year there is only one candidate pair running, namely Andi Kaswadi Razak as a candidate for Regent and Lutfi Halide as a candidate for Deputy Regent. As the incumbent, Andi Kaswadi Razak has an advantage in terms of the economic and political capital that has been built up during his tenure. The support of a coalition of seven major parties-Nasdem, PKB, PPP, Golkar, Gerindra, PDIP, and Demokrat demonstrates the strength of his political capital and significant economic potential (Liwang, 2016)

In the context of a single candidate, the use of campaign funds is more focused on socialising the vision-mission and work programmes, rather than on competing with other candidates. Although there is no direct competition, candidate pairs still need to allocate funds for campaigns and socialisation to ensure high voter participation. In addition, monitoring the practice of money politics remains a concern, as seen from the reports of allegations of money politics that were stopped from being investigated by Gakkumdu Soppeng. Thus, the influence of economic capital in the 2020 Pilkada focused more on how candidate pairs used their resources to mobilise support and convince voters, as well as the importance of other factors such as previous performance and community acceptance of the existing leadership (Indriani, 2020)

Campaign Fund Analysis and Capital Utilisation Strategy

Large campaign funds are not always directly proportional to the results achieved. The 2014 Soppeng regional election provides a clear example of the importance of the effective use of campaign capital. The following table summarises the comparison between the campaign funds used and the results of the vote for each candidate pair :

Table 1. Comparison Between The Campaign Funds Used and The Results of The Vote 2014

Candidate Pair	Campaign Expenditure (IDR)	Number of Votes	Fund/Vote Ratio (IDR/Vote)
Lutfi Halide - Andi Zulkarnain Soetomo (LHD Azas)	2.671.707.500	59.101	45.206
Andi Kaswadi Razak - Supriansa Mannahau (Akar Super)	196.829.709	80.802	2.435

Source: KPUD Soppeng, 2015

From the table above, it can be seen that the LHD Azas pair spent around Rp 45,206 for each vote they obtained, while Akar Super only spent around Rp 2,435 per vote. This data indicates that Akar Super was able to optimise the use of their campaign funds more effectively than LHD Azas, who despite having more funds, did not manage to utilise this capital to gain as many votes as their opponent.

The following graph illustrates the comparison between campaign funds spent and votes for the two pairs of candidates:

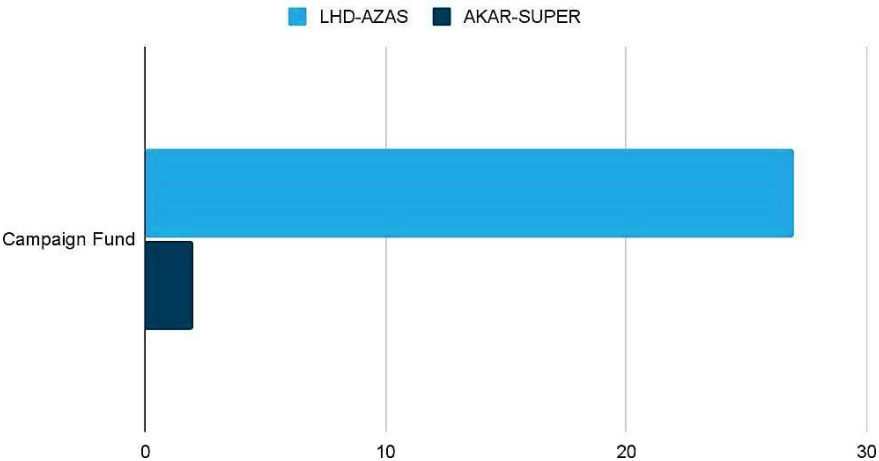


Figure 1. Campaign fund Soppeng Election 2014

Source : Tribun News, 2015

From the figure 1, it can be seen that although the LHD Azas pair spent a much larger amount of campaign funds, they still lost to the Akar Super pair whose campaign expenditure was relatively small. This shows that a cost-effective and effective campaign strategy can produce better results than a well-funded but inefficient campaign.

Then the 2020 Soppeng Pilkada showed a unique dynamic because there was only one candidate pair running, namely Andi Kaswadi Razak as the Regent candidate and Lutfi Halide.

as the candidate for Vice Regent. The pair was supported by a coalition of seven major parties, including Golkar, PDI-P, NasDem, Gerindra, Demokrat, PKB, and PPP, which provided significant political capital. In the absence of direct competition, the focus of campaign spending was more on socialising visions, missions and work programmes than on competition between candidates. The advantage of being an incumbent also gave Andi Kaswadi Razak economic and political capital that had been built up during his tenure, reducing the need to spend on image-building and popularity.

Although there is only one candidate pair, monitoring the use of campaign funds remains important, as evidenced by the reports of alleged money politics that were halted by the Soppeng Gakkumdu investigation. In this context, candidate pairs need to allocate funds to ensure high voter turnout, given that they have to compete against an empty box. In addition, the utilisation of social capital such as political networks and community acceptance of the existing leadership also played an important role in their campaign strategies. Overall, the capital use strategy in the 2020 Soppeng Regional Election focuses more on efficiency and effectiveness in programme socialisation and support mobilisation, leveraging the advantages of being an incumbent and the support of a coalition of major political parties (Marwis, 2011)

Other Determinants of the Election

According to Rahman (2017), in addition to economic capital, several other factors played an important role in influencing the outcome of the 2014 Soppeng regional election, including popularity and social networks, campaign strategies, and programmes and issues. The Andi Kaswadi Razak and Supriansa Mannahau pair had the advantage of popularity and strong local support. As widely recognised public figures in Soppeng, they have built a solid social network and gained support from various elements of the local community. Their influence at the local level makes it easier to mobilise voters with a smaller campaign budget. According to Rahman, M. (2017), social connections and a long-established support base are key in increasing voter turnout and strengthening their political position. On the other hand, although the Lutfi Halide and Andi Zulkarnain Soetomo pair had a larger campaign budget, they did not appear to have as strong a social network as the Akar Super pair. As a result, despite spending more on the campaign, they were unable to mobilise voters with the same level of effectiveness.

Cangara, H. (2009) says that campaign strategy also plays an important role in determining the outcome of Pilkada. The Super Roots pair relied on a community-based campaign approach and direct interaction with voters. They used the campaign method

face-to-face, utilising volunteers, and establishing direct communication with the community. This approach not only saves costs, but also creates a strong emotional connection between candidates and voters, thus building trust and increasing voter loyalty. Meanwhile, the LHD Azas pair tended to rely on more structured and costly campaigns, such as media advertisements and the use of campaign paraphernalia. While this approach can increase the visibility of candidates, it does not necessarily guarantee real support from voters, as proximity and direct communication remain important aspects in winning over people at the local level.

In addition, campaign programmes and issues also play a crucial role. Candidates who are able to offer programmes that are relevant to the needs of the community and provide solutions to pressing issues in the region have a greater chance of winning votes. In the 2014 Soppeng regional

election, the Akar Super pair was more successful in attracting attention by promoting programmes that were considered more in line with the aspirations of the people of Soppeng. They highlighted issues such as local economic empowerment and infrastructure development whose benefits could be directly felt by the community. This approach, which emphasised real and relevant programmes, gave the Akar Super pair an advantage in gaining more support than the LHD Azas pair.

Meanwhile, the case of the 2020 Soppeng regional election shows several other determining factors besides economic capital that contributed to the victory of the Andi Kaswadi Razak and Lutfi Halide (AKAR-LHD) pair. One of the main factors was the support of a large coalition of seven political parties, including Golkar, PDI-P, NasDem, Gerindra, Demokrat, PKB, and PPP, which provided significant political power to the candidate pair. This shows that the consolidation of political party support is still an important element in local political contestation (Liwang, 2020)

The second factor at play is Andi Kaswadi Razak's incumbency advantage. As an incumbent regent, he had built up political and social capital during his tenure, which enabled him to maintain and expand his support base. His experience and performance during his tenure were added values that were difficult for other potential candidates to match, resulting in the absence of other candidates running in this election (Marwis, 2011). According to Ismail (2020), the role of communities and social groups also cannot be ignored in supporting the AKAR-LHD victory. Various communities, such as the automotive community and other small groups, played an active role in mobilising support and support for AKAR-LHD. Maintain stability during the election process, they not only work within the community, but also play a role in attracting mass support outside the group members, as well as overseeing the election to prevent practices that could compromise the integrity of the democratic process.

Comparison with Other Studies

Research on the influence of economic capital in elections shows that although large capital provides advantages in terms of campaign reach and access to mass media, success is not solely determined by the amount of funds owned. Rahman (2017) argues that other factors such as proximity to the community, candidate popularity, and effectiveness in using funds become more crucial aspects in influencing election results. Studies in various regions show that candidates with smaller campaign budgets but strong relationships with the community and relevant programmes are often more successful in gaining support than candidates who rely on large capital but lack attachment to voters (Rahman, 2017)

For example, research on the 2018 West Java regional elections revealed that candidates who have a close relationship with the community, are often involved in social activities, and have a good track record, tend to be more successful in winning elections despite their relatively small campaign capital. In this election, the main competition was between Ridwan Kamil-Uu Ruzhanul Ulum and other pairs such as Deddy Mizwar-Dedi Mulyadi, Sudrajat-Ahmad Syaikh, and TB Hasanuddin-Anton Charliyan. Ridwan Kamil and Uu Ruzhanul Ulum managed to win the 2018 West Java regional election despite having a relatively smaller campaign budget compared to other pairs, especially Deddy Mizwar-Dedi Mulyadi, who had larger campaign funds. Ridwan Kamil's victory was due to a campaign approach that focused more on direct interaction with the public, capitalising on Ridwan's personal popularity as the former Mayor of Bandung, and an effective social media strategy. This case shows that while campaign budgets are important, connecting with the public,

using the right platforms, and effective campaign strategies also play a significant role in winning elections.

This result is in line with what happened in the 2014 Soppeng regional election, where the Andi Kaswadi Razak - Supriansa Mannahau (Akar Super) pair won the contest despite having lower campaign funds than the Lutfi Halide - Andi Zulkarnain Soetomo (LHD Azas) pair. The Akar Super pair relied more on support from local networks and a campaign approach that directly involved the community, such as through meetings, face-to-face meetings and mobilising support from community leaders. These social connections allow them to be more effective in mobilising support in a more cost-effective manner (Marwis, 2011).

In comparison, although the LHD Azas pair allocated more campaign funds, they did not achieve a comparable effect because their campaign strategy focused more on media advertising and expensive campaign paraphernalia. When their campaigns did not involve enough direct interaction with voters or utilise support from local groups, the results were less satisfactory in terms of increasing the number of votes. This shows that large economic capital is not the only determining factor in political contestation, but how it is strategically utilised greatly affects the effectiveness of the campaign. (I Gede Sthitaprajna Virananda et al, 2019)

Then for comparison in the 2020 Soppeng Pilkada, although there was only one candidate pair, Andi Kaswadi Razak and Lutfi Halide (AKAR-LHD), other determinants still played an important role in the election outcome. In contrast to the situation in the previous Pilkada, where the LHD Azas pair allocated larger campaign funds but did not get comparable results due to ineffective campaign strategies, the AKAR-LHD pair managed to utilise the advantage of being the incumbent with a more focused strategy. Andi Kaswadi Razak, as the incumbent regent, had built up strong political capital during his tenure, which allowed them to focus their campaign funds on socialising their vision-mission and work programmes, rather than on expensive media advertising. The support of a coalition of seven major parties also provided significant political power, strengthening their support base in the community. In addition, their success in mobilising local community support showed that direct interaction with voters and the use of social networks were highly influential in campaign effectiveness. This confirms that while economic capital is important, the way funds are utilised and campaign strategies that involve community participation are key to success in political contestation. (Indah Putri Indriani, 2020)

Thus, these studies confirm that in the context of local politics such as Pilkada, candidates who are closer to the community and able to offer programmes that suit the needs of the region have a greater advantage in attracting votes, even with smaller campaign budgets. This provides a lesson that strategies that prioritise active engagement with communities are often more successful than relying on large amounts of capital for formal or non-interactive campaigns.

Analysis of Vote Acquisition and Campaign Fund Effectiveness

The outcome of the 2014 Soppeng regional election has several important implications for future elections, particularly in relation to the influence of economic capital in local political contestation. First, regulations on campaign finance need to be tightened to ensure fairer competition between candidates. This includes clarifying the limits on the amount of funds that can be received from third parties and ensuring transparency in the use of private funds for campaign purposes. Stricter regulations will help minimise the influence of money politics that can undermine the integrity of democracy. (Ernawati Ayu, 2023)

Furthermore, according to Irlan Haerul (2013) political education for the community needs to be improved so that voters can be more critical in evaluating candidates based on work programmes and track records, not just on material appeals such as money politics or economic promises. Adequate political education can encourage more conscious voter participation and can reduce transactional political practices. In addition, transparency in campaign finance reporting should be a priority. Each candidate pair should be required to report sources of campaign funds and expenditures publicly and be audited by the authorities. This transparency is important to prevent misuse of funds and to ensure that all parties play by the rules. The implementation of these measures is expected to improve the quality of democracy and provide more equal opportunities for all candidates in the local election process.

Table 1 shows that the LHD Azas pair spent around Rp 45,206 for each vote obtained, while the Akar Super pair only spent around Rp 2,435 per vote. This significant difference in the ratio of funds per vote suggests that the Akar Super pair was more efficient in their use of campaign funds, successfully mobilising more voters at a lower cost. (Marwis, 2011)

The effectiveness of campaign funds in the 2014 Soppeng regional election can be attributed to several factors. First, the Akar Super pair implemented a low-cost campaign strategy that prioritised a direct approach to the community. This included visits to constituencies, meetings with local leaders, and the use of volunteers to garner support. This approach did not cost much, but it built voter trust and loyalty. In addition, local support and extensive social networks are important social capital for the Akar Super pair. With the support of community leaders and local communities, they managed to garner votes more effectively than the LHD Azas pair, which relied more on mass media campaigns and expensive campaign paraphernalia.

Second, the effectiveness of the campaign programmes offered by the Akar Super pair also played an important role in attracting voters' attention. They raised programmes that were relevant to the needs of the community, such as local economic empowerment and infrastructure development. These programmes are considered more realistic and directly address the problems faced by residents, making them more attractive to voters. In the analysis of the ratio of funds per vote, the LHD Azas pair with a ratio of Rp 45,206 per vote showed inefficiency in the use of funds, while the Akar Super pair with a ratio of Rp 2,435 per vote showed more efficient use of funds.

Overall, the effective use of campaign funds in the 2014 Soppeng regional elections depended not only on the amount of funds available, but also on the strategies used to manage and utilise these funds. The Akar Super pair, which prioritised a direct approach to the community, proved more successful than the LHD Azas pair, which relied more on high-cost campaigns. This suggests that face-to-face and community-based campaigns can create a more personalised relationship between candidates and voters, and reduce reliance on high-cost media. By utilising social capital and local networks, the Akar Super pair achieved significant results despite lower expenditure, reflecting how strategy and effective use of funds can have a direct effect on election outcomes.

Then in the 2020 Soppeng Pilkada, the Andi Kaswadi Razak and Lutfi Halide (AKAR-LHD) pair won a landslide victory against an empty box. This victory shows the very strong support of the Soppeng community for the incumbent pair. Factors that contributed to this success include Andi Kaswadi Razak's positive track record during his tenure as Soppeng Regent in the previous period, as well as the support of a large coalition of seven major political parties.

Table 2. Number Votes of Candidate Pair

Candidate Pair	Number of Votes
Andi Kaswadi Razak - Lutfi Halide	114.251
Empty Column	18.069

Source : Tribun News, 2020

The table above shows that the candidate pair Andi Kaswadi Razak and Lutfi Halide (AKAR- LHD) won a significant victory with 114,251 votes, which is equivalent to 86.3% of the total valid votes. Meanwhile, the empty column received 18,069 votes or 13.7%. This landslide victory reflects the very strong support from the people of Soppeng for the incumbent pair.

Despite only fighting against an empty box, the AKAR-LHD campaign team still carried out an effective campaign strategy to ensure a high level of voter participation. The focus of the campaign was more on socialising the vision-mission and work programmes, rather than on competition between candidates. This allowed for a more efficient use of campaign funds compared to elections with multiple candidates. The advantage of being an incumbent also helps to reduce the need to spend on image building and popularity. (Marwis, 2011)

The role of social and community groups also cannot be overlooked in supporting AKAR-LHD's victory. Various communities, including youth groups and community organisations, played an active role in mobilising support and maintaining stability during the election process. The campaign strategy that combined a direct approach to the community with the utilisation of social media proved effective in reaching various layers of voters. This landslide victory shows that the AKAR-LHD campaign team managed to optimise the use of their resources and campaign strategies, even in the absence of direct competition from other candidates.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Elections

The implications of Soppeng's 2014 election results and provide a number of important insights that can serve as guidelines for the conduct of future elections. Firstly, the need for stricter regulation of campaign finance is crucial. In the context of increasingly complex elections, these stricter regulations should include limits on third-party donations and candidates' use of personal funds. This aims to create fairer and more equitable competition among all candidates. With strict regulations in place, candidates with limited financial resources will not be marginalised by candidates who are able to spend large campaign funds, allowing voters to choose based on the substance of the candidate's programme and track record, not just on the amount of funds spent (Riyanto, 2021)

Furthermore, political education for the community is also a key factor that needs to be considered. Voters must be educated to be more critical in assessing candidates based on their work programmes and track records, not just based on material appeal or money politics. Effective political education can be done through various media, including social campaigns, public discussions, and training on how to evaluate candidates based on the policies they offer. With increased public awareness and understanding, voters are expected to make more rational and responsible decisions in determining the direction of regional leadership. (Erlina, Novita Nurdiana, and Imam Mahmud, 2023)

In addition, increased transparency in campaign finance reporting is also an important step that must be taken to reduce the potential for abuse and corruption in elections. All candidate pairs should be required to report the sources and uses of campaign funds openly and be audited by an independent institution. This transparency will not only build public trust in the electoral process, but also put pressure on candidates to use campaign funds ethically and responsibly. Through a transparent reporting system, voters will find it easier to assess whether candidates have high integrity and are committed to serving the public interest (Riyanto, 2021)

Considering these implications, it is recommended that the EMBs, including the KPU and Bawaslu, as well as other stakeholders, work together to formulate regulations and policies that support better electoral practices. The implementation of these recommendations is expected to create a healthier electoral environment, which in turn will encourage higher public participation and produce more qualified and accountable leaders. Through this approach, it is hoped that elections in the future will not only be an arena for political competition, but also as a platform for democracy and a moment for the community to actively contribute in determining the future of the region and the country.

Conclusion

The results of the 2014 and 2020 Soppeng regional elections provide significant insights into electoral dynamics at the local level, particularly in relation to the influence of economic capital, campaign strategies and the effective use of funds. Analyses of vote acquisition show that the success of candidate pairs is not always in line with the amount of funds spent. The Akar Super pair in the 2014 Soppeng regional election, although with much lower campaign expenditure, was able to gain greater support thanks to their community-based approach, strong social networks, and a deep understanding of the needs of the local community. Then in the 2020 Soppeng Pilkada, the AKAR-LHD pair was able to outperform the empty column with a vote percentage of 86.3%.

This finding underscores the importance of non-economic factors, such as proximity to the people and the ability to deliver relevant programmes. The implications of these election results therefore emphasise the need for stricter regulation of campaign finance to create fairer competition, as well as political education for the public to improve their capacity to judge candidates based on substance rather than material appeal.

Increased transparency in campaign finance reporting is also an important recommendation to build public trust and encourage ethical political practices. By integrating these recommendations, it is hoped that future elections can create a more democratic environment, where voters have the power to determine the direction of better leadership for the region and country. All of these analyses indicate that electoral success is measured not only in financial terms, but also in the quality of interactions between candidates and the public, and the commitment to integrity and transparency in the political process.

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