


Direct Cash Assistance Became the Medium for Vote Buying Practice in Presidential Election

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Direct Cash Assistance which is distributed ahead of general elections in 2009 has been used as a medium of vote buying. Such program was designed for vote-buying, distributed during the election campaign period, and claimed as a good intention from the ruling president who became a presidential candidate to mobilize voters. "Claims toward the cash program is not only expressed by the ruling party's presidential candidate, President Yudhoyono, but also by his political rivals, namely Megawati and Jusuf Kalla," said the lecturer of the UGM Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, in Department of Social Development and Welfare, Drs. Mulyadi Sumarto, M.P.P, in a discussion at the UGM Center for Population and Social Policy Studies with the theme Policy and Clientelism: the Political Meaning of Direct Cash Assistance Program in the 2009 Presidential Election, Thursday (5/1).

What was delivered by Mulyadi is the result of research on the practice of clientelism in the implementation of the cash assistance program and its political meaning in the 2009 election, especially for presidential candidates. This is part of the research on 'welfare regimes, conflict, and clientelism in Indonesia'. According to Mulyadi, the practice of clientelism in the cash assistance program occurred at the national, district/city, and community level. "This study focuses on clientelism at the national level that appears in the form of vote buying using the cash assistance program in the presidential election of 2009," said Mulyadi who is still pursuing his S-3 program at the Australian National University.

On the occasion, Mulyadi also said that all Indonesian presidential candidates in 2009 presidential elections are indicated to have committed clientelism practices in exchange of support from voters and the material provision. Direct cash assistance became a prospective ruler's main weapon to win over of the poor. Meanwhile, the claims submitted by all presidential candidates showed that such program has a very important political significance for them. At that time, along with the issue of oil and food self-sufficiency, the cash assistance program often appeared in various media as a successful poverty alleviation program.



Although all the presidential candidates claimed the program, the political context when they were claiming it and their political positions were different. The vote-buying practice is only attached to the presidential candidate of the ruling party that designs programs to buy votes, to get rid of the political rejection of the program implementation, to distribute the program during the campaign and claim it intensively. "Political mobilization using the cash assistance program creates a bad influence on the character and development of social policy in Indonesia," said Mulyadi.

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