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Money Politics As A Form Of Risywah: Perspective Of The 2012 Munas-Konbes Bahtsul Masail Of Nahdlatul Ulama¹

Putra Kurniawan¹, Fatmah²

^{1,2} Tribakti Islamic University, Lirboyo, Kediri

Corresponding email: putrakurniawan2124@gmail.com



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Abstract:

The practice of money politics in village head elections remains a problem that threatens the quality of democracy and also raises debate from an Islamic legal perspective, as it bears similarities to the concept of risywah (bribery). This study aims to analyze the practice of money politics in village head elections in Indonesia and examine its position as a form of risywah based on the ruling issued by the Bahtsul Masail Diniyyah al-Waqi'iyah commission at the 2012 Musyawarah Nasional (Munas) Alim Ulama and Konferensi Besar (Konbes) Nahdlatul Ulama, held 14–17 September 2012 at Pondok Pesantren Kempek, Cirebon. The study employs a normative legal research method, a conceptual approach, and an explicit literature-selection procedure. Data were obtained through a library study of Islamic legal literature, laws and regulations, the views of the ulama, and the published proceedings of the 2012 Munas-Konbes, and were then analyzed descriptively and analytically. The results, understood as a literature-derived typology rather than original field findings, indicate that money politics in village head elections is described in the literature through various forms of material gifts, such as money, personal assistance, and certain facilities aimed at influencing voter choices. The 2012 Munas-Konbes ruling, read together with subsequent scholarly analysis of its reasoning, emphasized that this practice falls into the category of risywah, prohibited when aimed at securing political support, while distinguishing this from giving intended to help a reform-minded candidate defeat a corrupt one, and addressing not only the giving candidate's liability but also the legal position of the receiving voter. This study concludes that money politics is a form of electoral corruption that not only damages local democracy but also violates sharia values, so that strengthening political education, religious awareness, and effective supervision are needed to prevent this practice.

Keywords: Risywah; Money Politics; 2012 Munas-Konbes Bahtsul Masail; Nahdlatul Ulama.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The election of village heads (Pilkades) is one means of implementing local democracy and plays a strategic role in Indonesia's system of government. Through Pilkades, village communities have the right to elect a leader to manage governance, development, and public services at the village level. The very important position of the village head makes Pilkades a key instrument for realizing democratic, participatory village governance oriented toward the community's interests. In recent years, the government has continued to reform regulations governing Pilkades to create a more orderly, transparent, and accountable electoral process. This change is marked, among other things, by the enactment of Law Number 3 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, which regulates various aspects of village governance, including the election of village heads.

Although regulations continue to be updated, violations in the conduct of Pilkades are still frequently found in various regions of Indonesia. One of the most prominent issues is the practice of money politics. This phenomenon not only occurs in national and regional elections but also at the village level. Money politics is generally carried out by providing money, basic food packages, social assistance, certain facilities, and other material benefits to influence the community's political choices. In practice, such actions are often carried out covertly, making them difficult to prove legally. In some cases, such gifts are even packaged as social assistance, charity, transportation costs, or other forms of compensation that, in substance, still aim to secure political support from the community (Janeko & Wahidah, 2024; Wahid et al., 2024).

The practice of money politics is a serious problem because it contradicts democratic principles that emphasize freedom, honesty, and fairness in the electoral process (Janeko & Wahidah, 2024). A healthy democracy requires voters to make their choices based on the capacity, integrity, and programs of candidate leaders. However, the presence of money politics shifts voters' orientation away from rational considerations toward material considerations. As a result, the democratic process is no longer a means of selecting competent leaders but rather an arena of political transactions between candidates and voters. This condition has the potential to produce leaders who are more oriented toward recouping political capital than toward serving the community.

Various studies show that money politics has a wide-ranging impact on the quality of democracy and governance. In addition to undermining the integrity of the electoral process, this practice can also give rise to corrupt behavior once elected candidates take office. Siregar (2023) explains that money politics can serve as a gateway to corruption, collusion, and nepotism, because candidates who have spent large sums during the election process tend to seek to recoup the capital they have expended. At the village level, this condition can lead to misuse of the village budget, low-quality public services, and a weakening of public trust in village government institutions.

The phenomenon of money politics is also inseparable from the community's social conditions. Economic factors are often one of the main reasons communities accept

gifts from village head candidates. In addition, low levels of political education and a permissive culture toward the practice of giving gifts ahead of elections further reinforce the persistence of money politics. In some rural communities, a candidate giving money or goods is even considered normal and not viewed as a violation. Such a view shows that money politics is not only a legal issue but also a social and cultural issue that has become deeply rooted in community life (Barasah & Hasanah, 2024; Marlina et al., 2024).

From the perspective of positive law, the practice of money politics is fundamentally at odds with the principles of honest and fair elections (Siregar, 2023). Regulations on village governance, as well as various technical rules for implementing Pilkades, affirm the importance of maintaining the integrity of the electoral process to ensure it proceeds democratically. Nevertheless, a purely legal approach is often insufficient to address the systemic practice of money politics. Therefore, another approach is needed that addresses the moral and ethical aspects of society, one of which is through the perspective of Islamic law.

In the study of Islamic law, money politics is often associated with the concept of *risywah*, or bribery. In general, *risywah* is understood as giving something to another party with the aim of obtaining a benefit or influencing that party's decision. Ulama generally agree that *risywah* is a prohibited act because it contradicts the principles of justice and public benefit (*maslahah*). The prohibition of *risywah* is based not only on legal considerations but also on moral considerations, because the practice can damage the social order, give rise to injustice, and erode public trust in public institutions. Therefore, the study of money politics from the perspective of *risywah* is important for understanding the religious dimension of this practice as it has developed in society.

The discussion of money politics from the perspective of Islamic law becomes even more interesting when linked to the specific ruling issued at the 2012 Munas-Konbes of Nahdlatul Ulama. This forum — formally the Musyawarah Nasional Alim Ulama dan Konferensi Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, held 14–17 September 2012 at Pondok Pesantren Khas Kempek, Palimanan, Cirebon — addressed the question of political bribery specifically within the Sidang Komisi Bahtsul Masail Diniyyah al-Waqi'iyah, one of its standing commissions dealing with topical religious-legal questions (Muhajir, 2022; PBNU, 2012). The published proceedings of this session show that money politics, in principle, falls into the category of *risywah* when it is carried out with the aim of influencing the community's political choices.

However, secondary scholarly analysis of the ruling's reasoning indicates that the discussion did not rest on a single, undifferentiated intention-based test: it reportedly distinguished giving intended to help a reform-minded or upright candidate defeat a corrupt one — likened in the ruling's own reasoning to a meritorious struggle (*jihad*) — from straightforward vote-buying, and it addressed not only the candidate's liability as giver but also the legal position of the voter who receives the gift (Muhajir, 2022). This perspective presents a more textured picture than a purely intention-only reading might suggest, and than some other Islamic organizations' more categorical prohibitions of all forms of material giving ahead of an election without regard to purpose and context.

A study of the 2012 Munas-Konbes ruling is relevant because it offers a specific, textured perspective on the relationship between money politics and risywah, addressing both the giver and the recipient. In addition, this view also reflects the dynamics of contemporary Islamic legal thought in responding to the realities of Indonesian politics. Amid the widespread practice of money politics in various political contests, including Pilkades, an analysis of this ruling is important to provide both a normative and an ethical foundation for efforts to prevent and address this practice.

Based on the description above, this study focuses on two main problem formulations. First, how is the practice of money politics in the implementation of village head elections in Indonesia characterized in the existing literature? Second, how does the 2012 Munas-Konbes Bahtsul Masail ruling analyze the practice of money politics as a form of risywah in Pilkades, and what does its reasoning imply for the legal position of both candidates and voters? These problem formulations were chosen because the practice of money politics continues to recur, while studies that specifically engage the primary text and reasoning of the 2012 ruling, rather than only its headline conclusion, remain relatively limited.

In line with these problem formulations, this study aims to examine the forms of money politics practices in Pilkades as described in the literature, the factors that influence them, and to analyze the reasoning of the 2012 Munas-Konbes ruling on this practice as a form of risywah, including its treatment of the voter's position. Through this study, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between money politics and the principles of Islamic law in the context of local democracy in Indonesia can be gained.

This study has academic significance because it seeks to fill a gap in research, which has so far mostly focused on money politics from the perspective of positive law, *fiqh siyasah*, or *maqasid al-syari'ah* in general, or has cited the 2012 Munas-Konbes ruling only for its headline conclusion. Studies that engage directly with the ruling's own reasoning, its cited *maraji'* (classical *fiqh* sources), and its treatment of the recipient's position remain relatively rare. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the development of contemporary Islamic legal studies, particularly in the areas of political ethics, local democracy, and the concept of risywah. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to serve as a reference for the government, Pilkades organizers, religious leaders, and the public in building a cleaner, more honest, and more accountable political culture.

B. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach and a normative (doctrinal) legal research method. The approach used is conceptual, examining the relationship between money politics in village head elections and the concept of risywah in Islamic law. The object of the study includes the practice of money politics in Pilkades in Indonesia, as described in the secondary literature, as well as the reasoning of the 2012 Munas-Konbes Bahtsul Masail ruling on the status of this practice as a form of risywah. The choice of research

object is based on its relevance to the phenomenon of money politics that still frequently occurs in political contests at the village level.

The research data consist of secondary legal materials obtained from various library sources, including books on Islamic law, fiqh texts, academic journals, articles, statutory regulations, and the published official proceedings of the 2012 Munas-Konbes (PBNU, 2012), together with subsequent scholarly analysis of that ruling's reasoning (Muhajir, 2022). Sources were identified through a combination of Google Scholar and institutional repository searches for Indonesian-language academic literature published between 2016 and 2026 using the keywords "politik uang," "risywah," "money politics," "Pilkades," and "Munas-Konbes NU 2012," supplemented by classical and contemporary fiqh references on risywah identified through the same literature and through the bibliography of the 2012 ruling's published proceedings. Sources were included when they directly addressed the concepts of risywah, money politics, Islamic political ethics, or the conduct of village head elections; general political science literature on Indonesian elections that did not engage these concepts was excluded. Data collection was carried out through documentation and literature studies following this procedure.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively and analytically using a prescriptive analysis technique. The analysis was carried out by identifying, classifying, and interpreting relevant legal concepts and the reasoning of the 2012 ruling, and then linking them to the practice of money politics in Pilkades as characterized in the literature. Through this process, the study constructs a legal argument regarding the status of money politics as a form of risywah, based on the reasoning of the 2012 Munas-Konbes Bahtsul Masail ruling, and its implications for political ethics and community life. Because this is a normative, library-based study, the typologies presented in Section C (Tables 1 and 2) are syntheses drawn from the cited secondary literature describing money-politics practice in Indonesia generally, rather than original empirical findings from fieldwork conducted by the present authors; this distinction is maintained throughout the presentation of results.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature reviewed for this study shows that money politics remains a frequently described phenomenon in accounts of village head (Pilkades) elections in Indonesia. Based on the sources analyzed, money politics is carried out in various forms to obtain the community's political support. This practice is not always carried out openly; rather, it is often packaged as gifts regarded as social assistance, as a manifestation of the candidate's concern for the community, or as voluntary giving ahead of the election.

The most common form of money politics described in the literature is the giving of cash to voters. Such giving is usually reported as occurring either directly or through intermediaries with close ties to the community. In some accounts, the distribution of money is carried out shortly before voting day, a practice often known as "dawn attack" (*serangan fajar*). The main purpose of this practice, as described in the cited sources, is

to influence the community's political choice so that they support a particular candidate during the election (Mutolib et al., 2023; Janeko & Wahidah, 2024).

In addition to cash giving, the literature reviewed also describes the practice of giving goods or basic necessities to the community. Such gifts include basic food packages, clothing, household items, assistance for social activities, and assistance for certain community groups. This kind of giving is generally reported to occur well before election day, so it is not always perceived by the community as part of money politics. Nevertheless, the cited sources link such giving to efforts to build political loyalty and gain support during the election (Ruslan, 2025).

Other sources describe money politics as being carried out not only through individual giving but also through assistance to community groups. Such assistance can take the form of support for religious activities, youth organizations, farmer groups, fishermen's groups, or other social activities, often accompanied by efforts to build a positive image of the village head candidate before the community. In some accounts, such assistance serves to expand the network of political support ahead of the implementation of Pilkades.

The literature also describes a form of money politics realized through the provision of certain facilities to the community, such as transportation, refreshments at community events, assistance for the construction of public facilities, or support for activities involving many residents. Although not always given directly to individuals, these facilities are described as serving the same purpose: increasing the candidate's electability and influencing the community's political preferences.

In addition to material forms of giving, the sources reviewed also describe promises of certain benefits if the candidate wins the election, such as economic assistance, job opportunities, priority in development programs, or other benefits. Although not yet realized during the campaign period, such promises are described as part of the political strategy used to obtain community support.

Drawing on this literature, the persistence of money politics can be attributed to various interrelated factors. Economic factors are described as one of the most dominant. The relatively low economic conditions of communities are repeatedly cited as a reason some voters more readily accept gifts from village head candidates, with the assistance provided regarded as an opportunity to obtain economic benefits that are difficult to obtain in daily life.

The level of political education in the community is also identified in the literature as an important factor. Several cited sources report that some members of the community do not yet fully understand the negative impact of money politics on the quality of democracy, such that the giving of money or goods by candidates is often considered normal rather than a violation of democratic electoral principles.

Social and cultural factors are also identified as contributing to the persistence of money politics. In some areas, there is a documented view that village head candidates with the economic means should share their fortune with the community before the election, creating social expectations that encourage candidates to offer various forms of

gifts. Under such conditions, the literature suggests, money politics is not only a political strategy but also part of the social relationship between candidate and community.

The sources reviewed also identify weak oversight as a factor supporting the occurrence of money politics. Although various regulations prohibit the practice, their implementation is often difficult to supervise effectively, and many practices of money politics are carried out covertly, making them difficult to prove legally; low community participation in reporting violations is cited as further increasing the likelihood of the practice occurring (Irawan, 2022; Palilingan et al., 2023).

In the context of Pilkades, the literature indicates that money politics involves not only village head candidates and voters but also other parties that act as intermediaries—community figures, religious leaders, family members, or individuals with influence within a particular community. The presence of such intermediaries is described as making the distribution of assistance or money to the community more effective and harder for supervisory bodies to detect (Widiastanto et al., 2021).

The literature further indicates that money politics has a significant, though uneven, influence on voter behavior: some sources report that voters acknowledge that giving money or goods can influence their choices, while others report that voters accept such giving without changing a political choice already decided upon. This suggests that the effectiveness of money politics in influencing voter behavior is not uniform across all individuals or groups.

The literature also indicates that money politics often creates unhealthy competition among village head candidates, with candidates who have greater economic resources described as having a higher chance of mobilizing political support through various forms of giving, while candidates with good leadership capacity but limited economic resources are described as being in a less favorable competitive position (Iskadrenda & Hiariej, 2024).

From a governance standpoint, the literature indicates that money politics can have various impacts after an election. Village heads elected through money politics are described as facing pressure to recoup election costs, a condition that can increase the risk of abuse of authority, non-transparent budget management, and other practices that contradict the principles of good governance (Siregar, 2023; Hanafi & Sitepu, 2025).

1. Money Politics as a Form of Risywah: The Reasoning of the 2012 Munas-Konbes Bahtsul Masail

The 2012 Musyawarah Nasional Alim Ulama dan Konferensi Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, held 14–17 September 2012 at Pondok Pesantren Khas Kempek, Palimanan, Cirebon, addressed political bribery specifically within its Sidang Komisi Bahtsul Masail Diniyyah al-Waqi'iyah. The published proceedings of this session identify money politics as an issue closely related to the concept of risywah in Islamic law: the giving of money, goods, or other benefits intended to influence the community's political choices falls under the category of prohibited risywah (PBNU, 2012).

Classical treatments of risywah in Islamic jurisprudence describe the prohibition as resting on hadith such as the report that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)

cursed both the giver and the receiver of a bribe (*al-rashi wa al-murtashi*), understood by jurists as establishing liability for both parties to the transaction rather than the giver alone (Abdullah Bin Abdul Muhsin, 2001; Haryono, 2016). Bahtsul masail rulings of this kind characteristically proceed by citing specific passages from named classical fiqh texts (*maraji'*) as the basis for their answer; [author to consult the published proceedings (PBNU, 2012, edited by Khatibul Umam Wiranu and Ulil Abshar Hadrawy) and insert here the specific *maraji'* — kitab titles and page references — cited by the 2012 commission in reaching its answer, so that the paper's central claim rests on the ruling's own textual basis rather than on a general secondary description of it].

The elements of risywah described in Islamic legal literature correspond to the practice of money politics in Pilkadaes as reviewed above. The first element is the presence of a party who gives something in order to obtain a certain benefit. The second element is the presence of a party that receives the gift. The third element is the intention to influence the decision or action of the party receiving the gift. All three elements are found in various forms of money-politics practices described in the literature (Haryono, 2016; Muhammad Ikhsan & Iskandar, 2021).

The 2012 ruling paid particular attention to the aspect of intention in determining the legal status of a gift: where the main purpose of the giving is to obtain political support or influence voters' choices, the act falls into the category of risywah, which is prohibited (*haram*); where a gift is given without any particular political purpose, further assessment of the context and purpose of the giving is required (PBNU, 2012; Masruri, 2024). However, secondary scholarly analysis of the ruling's own reasoning indicates that this intention-based test is more textured than a single giver-side inquiry. Muhajir's (2022) close reading of the published proceedings reports that the ruling distinguished giving intended to help a reform-minded or upright candidate defeat a corrupt incumbent — analogized within the ruling's own reasoning to a meritorious struggle (*jihad*) — from straightforward vote-buying aimed simply at reversing an otherwise correct outcome, and that the ruling addressed the legal position of the recipient voter as well as the giving candidate, including guidance that a voter offered money for their vote should return it rather than either using it or passively retaining it without acting (Muhajir, 2022).

This treatment of the voter's position has direct implications for this study's discussion of political education as a remedy: if the 2012 ruling holds voters accountable for their own role in the transaction and not merely candidates as the sole culpable party, then public education efforts grounded in this ruling should address the ethical and religious responsibility of accepting such gifts, not only the impropriety of offering them. [Author to confirm this reading against the full published proceedings and, where the primary text supports it, expand this paragraph with direct reference to the specific guidance given to voters.]

Based on the overall findings, this study shows that the practice of money politics in Pilkadaes, as characterized in the literature, has characteristics that are consistent with the concept of risywah as understood in the reasoning of the 2012 Munas-Konbes ruling, while that ruling's own nuance — distinguishing purpose-driven support for a reform

candidate from straightforward vote-buying, and addressing the voter's as well as the candidate's position — should inform how broadly the risywah categorization is applied to specific cases. These findings form the basis for further analysis of the implications of money politics for local democracy, Islamic political ethics, and village governance, which will be discussed in the following section.

Table 1. Forms of Money Politics Practices in Village Head Elections, as Synthesized from the Reviewed Literature

No.	Form of Practice	Characteristics	Main Purpose
1	Giving of cash	Carried out directly or through intermediaries, generally shortly before voting	Influencing voters' choices
2	Distribution of food packages	Basic necessities given to the community	Increasing political support
3	Social assistance	Assistance to individuals or community groups	Building image and political loyalty
4	Provision of facilities	Transportation, refreshments, or support for community activities	Attracting voter sympathy
5	Promise of benefits	Promise of jobs, economic assistance, or development programs	Obtaining support during the election

Source: Synthesized by the authors from the secondary literature cited in this section; not derived from original fieldwork by the present authors.

Table 2. Factors Driving the Occurrence of Money Politics in Pilkades, as Synthesized from the Reviewed Literature

No.	Factor	Description
1	Economic factors	Vulnerable community economic conditions encourage acceptance of assistance from candidates
2	Low political education	Lack of understanding of the impact of money politics on democracy

3	Permissive culture	Money politics is regarded as a normal practice in elections
4	Weak oversight	Difficulty detecting and proving practices of money politics
5	Influence of local figures	Presence of intermediaries who help distribute assistance to the community

Source: Synthesized by the authors from the secondary literature cited in this section; not derived from original fieldwork by the present authors.

Table 3. Correspondence Between the Elements of Risywah and the Practice of Money Politics

Element of Risywah in Islamic Law	Practice of Money Politics in Pilkades
Giver (Rasyi)	Village head candidate or success team
Receiver (Murtasyi)	Voters or community groups
Object of the gift	Money, goods, facilities, or certain benefits
Purpose of the gift	Influencing the community's political choices
Expected outcome	Obtaining votes and winning the Pilkades

Source: Constructed by the authors based on the general elements of risywah described in the cited fiqh literature and the 2012 Munas-Konbes ruling.

Table 4. Reasoning of the 2012 Munas-Konbes Bahtsul Masail Ruling on Money Politics

Aspect	Findings
Legal status	Can be categorized as risywah, subject to the nuance below
Basis of assessment	Presence of an intention to influence political choice
Main consideration	Intention (niyyah) and purpose of the gift, including whether it supports a reform-minded candidate against a corrupt one or constitutes straightforward vote-buying
Position of the giver	Prohibited (haram) where the gift is aimed at buying political support

Position of the receiver	Also addressed by the ruling; a voter offered money for their vote is guided to return it rather than retain or use it [author to confirm and detail from the primary source]
Resulting impact	Undermines the fairness and integrity of the election

Source: PBNU (2012); Muhajir (2022).

The research findings show that money politics remains a phenomenon inherent in the conduct of village head elections (Pilkades) in Indonesia, as characterized in the reviewed literature. Various forms of giving — ranging from cash, food packages, and social assistance to promises of certain benefits — show that the democratic process at the village level has not yet been fully freed from transactional practices. This condition shows that the relationship between village head candidates and voters is not always based on rational considerations of a candidate's capacity, integrity, and work program, but is often influenced by the material benefits the community receives.

From a democratic perspective, money politics is a distortion of the principle of freedom of choice. Democracy, in essence, provides the community with the space to elect leaders based on objective, rational considerations. However, when political choice is influenced by material giving, that freedom becomes reduced because political decisions no longer arise entirely from voters' own awareness. Thus, money politics is not only a legal issue but also a matter of democratic ethics that affects the legitimacy of elected leaders.

This finding is consistent with various previous studies showing that money politics is one of the factors causing the low quality of democracy in developing countries. Money politics creates inequality in political competition, because candidates with greater economic resources tend to have a greater chance of obtaining community support. As a result, the electoral process is no longer an arena of competition between ideas and programs but a competition of financial capability. This condition has the potential to hinder the emergence of competent leaders who have limited economic resources (Janeko & Wahidah, 2024; Padilah & Irwansyah, 2023).

Furthermore, the practice of money politics also shows a shift in society's orientation toward the meaning of democracy. In some cases, communities regard gifts from candidates as normal, even considering them part of the tradition ahead of an election. Such normalization shows that money politics is no longer understood as a violation but has become a political culture accepted by part of society (Wahid et al., 2024). Therefore, efforts to eradicate money politics cannot be carried out solely through a legal approach but also require a change in political culture and increased public awareness of the importance of honest and fair elections.

2. Social Factors Sustaining the Practice of Money Politics

The literature reviewed shows that the persistence of money politics is inseparable from social factors that develop within society. Economic factors are among the main reasons this practice persists. Communities in vulnerable economic conditions

tend to more readily accept assistance or gifts from village head candidates because these are seen as providing direct benefits for daily needs (Marlina et al., 2024; Sasabilla & Sardini, 2022).

This phenomenon shows that money politics often exploits the community's economic vulnerability as an instrument for obtaining political support. In this context, voters are not always in a fully free position when determining their political choice. On the contrary, political decisions can be influenced by short-term economic needs that take precedence over considerations of long-term leadership quality (Ridhuan, 2023).

In addition to economic factors, low levels of political education also contribute to the persistence of money politics. Some members of the community do not yet understand that the practice of money politics negatively impacts governance after the election. Many voters see giving money or goods only as a momentary benefit, without considering the consequences that may arise in the future. This condition indicates that improving political literacy is an important step in efforts to reduce money politics at the village level (Ridhuan, 2023; Padilah & Irwansyah, 2023).

A social culture that is permissive toward money politics is also a factor that cannot be ignored. In some communities, gifts from village head candidates are regarded as a form of concern or social propriety. This perception leads the community to see no moral problem with accepting assistance ahead of an election. As a result, the line between sincere social assistance and the practice of money politics becomes increasingly blurred in the community's eyes (Barasah & Hasanah, 2024; Wulandari & Soumena, 2025).

3. Relevance of the Concept of Risywah to the Practice of Money Politics

One important finding of this study is the substantial correspondence between the practice of money politics and the concept of risywah in Islamic law. Terminologically, risywah is understood as giving something to another party with the aim of obtaining a benefit or influencing that party's decision. These elements are clearly evident in the practice of money politics described in the Pilkades literature (Abdullah Bin Abdul Muhsin, 2001; Haryono, 2016).

In the practice of money politics, there is a party that gives something, a party that receives the gift, and a purpose of influencing the community's political choice. This similarity of elements shows that money politics can be analyzed not only as a violation of electoral rules but also as a form of moral and religious deviation. Therefore, the Islamic legal approach offers a broader analytical dimension than a purely positive-law approach.

This finding reinforces the view of the ulama who regard risywah as a prohibited act because it undermines the principle of justice (Mokodompis et al., 2018; Fuad, 2022). In a political context, justice requires that every candidate have an equal opportunity to obtain community support based on their qualities and abilities. When political support is obtained through material giving, that principle of justice is disrupted because the community's choice is no longer based on objective considerations.

From the perspective of Islamic law, the prohibition of risywah aims not only to protect individuals from harmful practices but also to safeguard the public benefit

(masalah) of society as a whole. Therefore, categorizing money politics as risywah shows that its negative impact is felt not only by the individuals directly involved but also by the community that becomes the object of the democratic process (Sa'id Chammadullah et al., 2025; Wery Gusmansyah & Zulkarnain Syapal, 2025).

4. Analysis of the 2012 Munas-Konbes Ruling and Its Nuance

The 2012 Munas-Konbes Bahtsul Masail ruling made an important contribution to understanding the practice of money politics within the context of Indonesian democracy. One prominent aspect of this ruling, as reported both in the published proceedings and in subsequent scholarly analysis, is its emphasis on the element of intention (niyyah) in determining the legal status of a gift, together with its distinction between purpose-driven support for a candidate perceived as upright and straightforward vote-buying, and its explicit attention to the voter's own legal position as recipient (Muhajir, 2022; PBNU, 2012).

This layered approach shows that Islamic law, as reflected in this ruling, not only looks at the outward form of an act but also considers the underlying purpose and the roles of both parties to the transaction. This approach provides room for a more contextual analysis of the various forms of giving that occur in social and political life. Thus, not all gifts given ahead of an election are automatically categorized as risywah in the same way, and the ruling's own reasoning cautions against treating the category as a blunt instrument applied uniformly regardless of purpose or the character of the candidates involved.

Nevertheless, this study's review of the literature indicates that most instances of giving documented in Pilkades practice serve a general purpose of obtaining political support, rather than the more specific purpose of enabling an upright candidate to defeat a documented pattern of corruption. Therefore, in the great majority of the empirical patterns described in the literature, these practices remain closer to the category of risywah than to the narrower exception the ruling's reasoning appears to recognize. This finding shows that the use of terms such as assistance, gift, or charity cannot remove the substance of an act if its main purpose remains to influence the community's political choice through material inducement rather than through demonstrated candidate merit (Muhlisina & Hariani, 2024; Azizah & Arifin, 2024).

The ruling's attention to the voter's position also carries a distinct implication for political education efforts: if voters bear their own religious responsibility for accepting inducements — including, on the reading reported by Muhajir (2022), a recommendation that money offered for a vote be returned rather than kept or spent — then civic and religious education grounded in this ruling should be addressed to voters as well as candidates, reframing the practice as a shared rather than one-sided wrongdoing. This reframing does not diminish the primary responsibility of candidates who initiate the giving, but it does suggest that supervisory and educational strategies focused solely on candidates and success teams address only one side of the transaction the ruling itself identifies.

The views expressed in the 2012 Munas-Konbes ruling also show that Islamic law can respond to modern political phenomena without compromising its core principles. The concept of risywah, originally discussed largely in the context of the judiciary and public administration, remains relevant to explaining the phenomenon of money politics in contemporary democracy. This shows the flexibility of Islamic law in facing ever-changing social and political developments (Mokodompis et al., 2018; Sofiyana Nasution et al., 2025).

Academically, this study contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic legal studies, particularly in the field of political ethics and local democracy. Unlike much previous research that has focused more heavily on aspects of positive law or fiqh siyasah in general, or that has cited the 2012 Munas-Konbes ruling only for its headline conclusion, this study engages more closely with the ruling's own reasoning, including its treatment of the voter's position — a perspective that has relatively rarely been examined in depth.

The research findings show that the concept of risywah is highly relevant to explaining electoral corruption at the local level. Thus, this study broadens the scope of risywah studies from a traditional context toward a modern political context, while showing that the 2012 ruling's own internal nuance resists a purely mechanical application of the risywah label. This contribution is important because it shows that the principles of Islamic law retain strong explanatory power in analyzing contemporary democratic issues without collapsing into an oversimplified blanket prohibition.

Practically, the results of this study indicate that efforts to eradicate money politics require a more comprehensive approach. Law enforcement needs to be accompanied by political education addressed to both candidates and voters, strengthening of religious values, and increased public awareness of the dangers of money politics. Without a change in the community's political culture, the practice of money politics will continue to find room to develop even though various regulations have been put in place.

Therefore, the prevention of money politics is not solely the responsibility of election organizers and law enforcement officials but also involves religious leaders, educational institutions, community organizations, and all elements of society — including voters themselves, consistent with the 2012 ruling's attention to their position. Through such synergy, it is hoped that a more accountable and democratic political culture can be realized, one that is aligned with the principles of justice taught in Islamic law.

D. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the practice of money politics in village head elections (Pilkades), as described in the reviewed literature, takes various forms, such as cash, food packages, social assistance, certain facilities, and promises of benefits aimed at influencing the community's political choices. The literature reviewed indicates that economic factors, low political education, a permissive culture, and weak oversight are the main factors associated with the persistence of this practice. Based on an analysis of

the reasoning of the 2012 Munas-Konbes Bahtsul Masail ruling — formally issued by the Sidang Komisi Bahtsul Masail Diniyyah al-Waqi'iyah at the Musyawarah Nasional Alim Ulama dan Konferensi Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, Pondok Pesantren Kempek, Cirebon, 14–17 September 2012 — money politics aimed at obtaining political support falls into the category of *risywah* (bribery), prohibited under Islamic law because it contradicts the principles of justice, honesty, and trust (*amanah*). This categorization is, however, nuanced by the ruling's own distinction between giving intended to support a reform-minded candidate against a corrupt one and straightforward vote-buying, and by its attention to the legal position of the receiving voter alongside that of the giving candidate. Thus, this study concludes that the practice of money politics in Pilkades, as generally described in the literature, has substantial correspondence with the concept of *risywah* as understood in the reasoning of the 2012 ruling.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the relevance of the concept of *risywah* in explaining electoral corruption in contemporary local democracy, while showing that a specific institutional ruling's reasoning is more textured than its headline conclusion alone suggests. In practical terms, the results of the study affirm the importance of strengthening political education for both candidates and voters, religious awareness, and electoral oversight to prevent money politics. This study is limited to a normative study using library sources and the published proceedings and secondary analysis of the 2012 Munas-Konbes ruling, and therefore does not yet describe the practice of money politics empirically in specific regions, nor does it reproduce the ruling's full *maraji'* (classical source citations) verbatim; the specific classical citations underlying the ruling should be verified directly against the published proceedings before final submission. Future research is therefore recommended to use an empirical approach through field studies of the implementation of Pilkades across various regions, and to undertake a closer textual study of the 2012 ruling's full reasoning and cited sources, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and impact of money politics in society.

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