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Cite this article: Nugroho, M.R. Muhammad. A.S., 2024. Pork Barrel Politics in Supporting the Election of Incumbents. Join: Journal of Social Science Vol.1(3) page 446-460

Keywords:
Politics, Pig Barrel, Incumbent, Election

Author for correspondence:
M. Ridwan Nugroho
e-mail: ridwannugroho1982@gmail.com

Published by:

**GLOBAL SOCIETY
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Pork Barrel Politics in Supporting the Election of Incumbents

¹M. Ridwan Nugroho, ²Adji Suradji Muhammad

^{1,2}Sekolah Tinggi Pembangunan Masyarakat Desa "APMD", Yogyakarta, Indonesia

The main objective of this study is to analyze how the politics of pig barrels is used by incumbents in Indonesia to support their electability. This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. The literature approach was chosen considering that pig barrel politics is a hidden phenomenon that is difficult to prove with the naked eye. Through the library approach, it is possible for researchers to search for a wider range of sources related to the political phenomenon of pig barrels. Thus, the political phenomenon of the pig barrel will involve various dynamics such as social, political, and economic. Data sources include books, scientific journal articles, research reports, and official documents relevant to the topic of pig barrel politics in supporting the election of the incumbent. The results of the study show that pig barrel politics plays a significant role in supporting the election of incumbents in various regions. By leveraging state budgets for strategically targeted infrastructure projects and social programs, incumbents can increase their popularity and political support.

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1. Introduction

Pork barrel politics is a practice in which legislators allocate public funds to local projects in their constituencies with the aim of gaining political support and winning re-election (Smith, 2018). These projects are often in the form of infrastructure construction, such as roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals, or the provision of direct assistance such as scholarships and agricultural subsidies (Jones & Brown, 2019).

Pork barrel politics is very famous in the United States, especially in the late 19th and early 20th century eras. One oft-cited example is the construction of bridges and roads in certain states funded by the federal budget. Members of the US Congress use their influence to get funding allocations for these projects in order to increase their popularity in the constituency (Lee, 2003). In addition, this practice is also seen in military and agricultural budget allocations, where lawmakers seek to secure funding for projects that benefit their constituents (Berry & Fowler, 2021). In Japan, the politics of Pork barrels is known as "zokugiin" or "politics of interest groups." Parliamentarians often form coalitions with bureaucracies to direct public funds to development projects in their constituencies. For example, in the 1990s, there were many examples of the construction of toll roads, bridges, and other public facilities funded by the state budget as an effort to support the electability of parliamentarians from the ruling party (Scheiner, 2006).

In Indonesia, the practice of Pork barrel politics also occurs, although often hidden in the form of regional development projects. A striking example is the use of Village Funds provided by the central government to villages throughout Indonesia. While the initial goal of the Village Fund was to accelerate development at the local level, there are indications that its allocation and use are often influenced by local and national political interests (Tadjoeddin, 2018). In addition, in various regional head elections, incumbent candidates often use development projects as a campaign tool to show their success in leading and gaining political support (Winters, 2013). Research shows that Pork barrel politics has a significant impact on election outcomes. A study by Lazarus (2009) found that budget allocation for local projects can increase the chances of re-election of lawmakers in the US. Similarly, research by Golden and Picci (2008)

in Italy shows that government-funded public projects have a positive correlation with increased political support for incumbents. In Indonesia, research by Aspinall and Sukmajati (2016) found that the distribution of development projects and social assistance by incumbent candidates in regional head elections can influence voter behavior and increase their electability.

An important point of the phenomenon of Pork barrel politics is that while it can increase the electability of incumbents, this practice often leads to the waste of public budgets and corruption. Funds that are supposed to be used for the public interest at large are often channeled to inefficient projects and are only aimed at short-term political interests. Therefore, it is important to implement strict oversight and transparency mechanisms in the allocation and use of public funds (Peters & Welch, 1980).

Pork barrel politics in an international context, refers to the practice of allocating government funds to local projects that often aim to gain political support in a particular constituency (Smith, 2018). In Indonesia, this practice is often used by incumbents as a strategy to maintain and strengthen their electoral base in the context of the next general election (Jones & Brown, 2019). By providing various development projects and direct financial assistance, the incumbent seeks to build a positive image and increase his popularity in the eyes of his constituents (Harris, 2020). Although the phenomenon of Pork barrel politics has been widely discussed in the political literature, research on its effectiveness in supporting the electability of incumbents is still limited. Most studies focus on the negative aspects of Pork barrel politics, such as corruption and budget waste (Kumar & Best, 2017), but few examine their impact on electoral outcomes and campaign strategies used by incumbents. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring how the politics of Pork barrels is used by incumbents in Indonesia to support their electability.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand the political strategies used by incumbents in the context of a developing democracy such as Indonesia. By knowing the effectiveness of Pork barrel politics, we can better understand local political dynamics and their impact on the democratization process (Miller, 2021). In addition, the results of this study can provide insight for policymakers on how to regulate public budget allocation in a more transparent and fair manner (Anderson, 2018).

Various studies have revealed that Pork barrel politics has a significant influence on the results of general elections. A study by Smith (2018) shows that government-funded infrastructure projects in certain constituencies can increase the popularity of incumbents. Another study by Jones & Brown (2019) found that direct cash assistance from the government can increase political support among poor voters. However, these studies are mostly conducted in developed countries, while the Indonesian context which has different political dynamics has not been explored much (Kumar & Best, 2017). This research offers a new contribution by exploring the impact of Pork barrel politics in the context of general elections in Indonesia. Focusing on the strategies used by incumbents at the local level provides a unique perspective that has not been widely discussed in the previous literature (Harris, 2020). In addition, this study also combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive picture of this phenomenon.

The main objective of this study is to analyze how the politics of Pork barrels is used by incumbents in Indonesia to support their electability. The study also aims to identify the factors that affect the effectiveness of this strategy. The benefit of this research is to provide new insights for academics and political practitioners about the practice of Pork barrel politics and its impact on democracy in Indonesia. In addition, this research is expected to help policymakers in designing more transparent and accountable budget policies.

2. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research and literature study. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to delve deeper into the phenomenon of pork barrel politics in the context of supporting the incumbent's electability, which often involves complex social, political, and economic dynamics (Creswell, 2014). The data sources in this study consist of secondary data obtained through literature review. Secondary data sources include books, scientific journal articles, research reports, and official documents relevant to the topic of Pork barrel politics and the electability of incumbents. The journal articles used are taken from various scientific databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and ProQuest to ensure their relevance and credibility (Baden & Major, 2012).

The data collection technique is carried out through a systematic literature review. Researchers used keywords such as "pork barrel politics," "incumbent electability," "public budget allocation," and "local politics" in the data search. This process involves identifying, selecting, and critically analyzing relevant literature. Researchers also triangulated the data by comparing various sources to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected (Bowen, 2009).

The data analysis method used in this study is content analysis. Content analysis involves the process of encoding data based on themes or categories relevant to the research topic. The researcher identified patterns, themes, and trends in the data related to Pork barrel politics and incumbent electability. This approach allows researchers to understand how public budget allocation is used as a political strategy by incumbents (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Data analysis is carried out through several stages. First, the researcher collects data by identifying and collecting relevant literature. Second, the collected data is organized and categorized based on the main theme of the research. Third, the researcher conducted an in-depth analysis of each category to identify the relationship and implications of Pork barrel politics on the electability of incumbents. Finally, the results of the analysis are compiled in a systematic narrative form to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Krippendorff, 2013).

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Definition and Concept of Pork Barrel Politics

Pork barrel politics, or pork barrel politics, refers to the practice of allocating public budgets by legislators or executives to projects that benefit certain constituents with the aim of gaining political support or votes in upcoming elections. This practice is often considered a form of political corruption because it prioritizes the interests of individuals or small groups over the public interest as a whole (Weingast, Shepsle, & Johnsen, 1981). In the context of the election of the incumbent, Pork barrel politics serves as an effective strategy to maintain and expand the political support base. By allocating funds to local projects, incumbents can demonstrate their concern and responsiveness to the needs of their constituents, which in turn increases the chances of re-election (Mayhew, 1974).

Pork barrel politics in international political literature, refers to the practice of allocating government funds to local projects designed to gain political support from certain constituents. The term originated

in the United States and is used to describe legislative efforts to secure federal funding for projects that will benefit their constituencies, with the primary goal of increasing the chances of re-election (Levitt & Snyder, 1997). Pork barrel politics is often associated with inefficient allocation of public resources, where funding decisions are based on political considerations rather than rational economic needs or benefits. Some of the key concepts associated with Pork barrel politics include:

Political Patronage: In this context, Pork barrel politics is used as a patronage tool in which politicians distribute public resources to strengthen political support and loyalty from their constituents (Ferejohn, 1974).

Local Infrastructure Development: Pork barrel projects are often the construction of local infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and other public facilities that provide direct benefits to local communities, but may not be efficient from a national perspective (Weingast, Shepsle, & Johnsen, 1981).

Political Balance: The allocation of hog-of-war funds can also be used to maintain political balance in governing coalitions, where smaller parties or politicians get special projects in return for their support (Cox & McCubbins, 2001).

Studies on the politics of Pork barrels have been carried out a lot, especially in the United States. Levitt and Snyder (1997) found that federal spending on Pork barrel projects could increase the chances of re-election of members of Congress. Research by Ferejohn (1974) shows that Pork barrel politics is used as a patronage tool to mobilize political support. In addition, Weingast, Shepsle, and Johnsen (1981) in their model show how politicians make budget allocation decisions based on political interests rather than economic efficiency. This model explains that Pork barrel decisions often lead to economically inefficient but rational spending from a political perspective.

Recent research shows that Pork barrel politics does not only occur in developed countries such as the United States, but also in developing countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, and India. For example, Fossati (2019) shows that in Indonesia, the allocation of village funds is often influenced by local political considerations and can strengthen the political position of incumbent officials. In addition, Wardhani's (2020) research shows that although Pork barrel politics can accelerate local infrastructure development, this practice is often colored by corruption and lack of transparency. This suggests that while Pork barrel politics can provide short-term benefits, there is an urgent need for policy reforms to ensure a fairer and more efficient allocation of public funds.

Pork barrel politics is a complex phenomenon that involves the allocation of public resources for political gain. While it can provide immediate benefits to local communities, the practice is often associated with injustice, corruption, and economic inefficiency. Therefore, it is important to carry out policy reforms that emphasize transparency, accountability, and fairness in the allocation of public funds to minimize the negative impact of Pork barrel politics.

3.2. Pork Barrel Politics in Various Countries

In the United States, "barrel politics" is often associated with members of Congress allocating federal funds to local projects. This practice has been a part of U.S. politics for decades, where legislators seek to secure funding for projects in their districts in order to gain political support and increase their chances of re-election (Cox & McCubbins, 2001). Pork barrel politics in the US can improve local infrastructure development and provide short-term economic benefits for constituents. However, this practice is also often criticized for causing inefficient and uneven spending, as well as leading to an increase in budget deficits (Levitt & Snyder, 1997). In addition, Pork barrel politics can exacerbate social and economic injustices because projects are often distributed based on political considerations rather than actual needs (Shepsle & Weingast, 1981).

In Japan, the politics of the Pork's barrel is known as "koizumi reforms." This system involves allocating public funds for local development projects by parliamentarians. For many years, this practice has been used as a tool to maintain political stability and support the electability of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmakers (Krauss & Pekkanen, 2011). The practice of Pork barrels in Japan has contributed to significant infrastructure development across the country. However, this has also resulted in an over-reliance on public spending and an increase in the national debt. In addition, this practice is often criticized for ignoring the principles of transparency and accountability, and prioritizing politically profitable projects over those that are actually needed by society (Scheiner, 2006).

In the Philippines, Pork barrel politics is known as the "Priority Development Assistance Fund" (PDAF). These funds are used by members of Congress to fund local development projects that are considered important to their constituents. This practice has been a part of Philippine politics for many years (Eaton, 2002). The Pork barrel politics in the Philippines has enabled the development of local infrastructure and provided economic benefits to constituents. However, this practice is also often associated with corruption and misuse of public funds. A major PDAF-related scandal in 2013 exposed significant misuse of funds by members of Congress, which provoked public protests and prompted policy reforms (Teehankee,

2016).

In India, Pork barrel politics is often carried out through constituency spending schemes, where lawmakers allocate funds for development projects in their constituencies. This practice is used to win local political support and increase the chances of re-election (Lalvani, 2010). The practice of Pork barrels in India can accelerate infrastructure development and provide direct benefits to constituents. However, this also results in inefficient spending and unfairness in the distribution of resources. In addition, this practice is often criticized for its lack of transparency and accountability in the management of public funds (Chhibber & Nooruddin, 2004).

The implementation of Pork barrel politics in various countries shows variations in their methods and impacts on local development and political electability. While this practice can provide direct benefits to constituents through infrastructure development and social assistance programs, it is also often associated with inefficient spending, corruption, and a lack of transparency and accountability. Policy reforms that emphasize the principles of good governance are needed to minimize the negative impact of Pork barrel politics and ensure a fairer and more efficient use of public resources.

3.3. Implementation of Pork Gentong Politics in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the practice of Pork barrel politics has become an inseparable part of local political dynamics. Several studies show that regional budget allocations are often influenced by political considerations, especially ahead of regional head elections or legislative elections (Fossati, 2019). This is reflected in the budget allocation for infrastructure development, social assistance programs, and other projects that directly benefit certain constituents. Case studies in several regions in Indonesia show that incumbents who succeed in allocating budgets on target tend to have a higher chance of being elected. For example, research in Brebes Regency shows that the allocation of village funds for infrastructure projects has increased political support for incumbents in regional head elections (Wardhani, 2020).

Pork barrel politics, otherwise known as "pork barrel politics," has become an integral part of the political landscape in Indonesia. This concept refers to the distribution of public resources by politicians for specific projects in their constituencies to gain political support and votes in elections. In Indonesia, this practice is often seen in the allocation of the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN)

or the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) for infrastructure projects, the construction of public facilities, and social programs that directly benefit local constituents (Fossati, 2019).

According to political distribution theory, politicians tend to allocate funds to the areas that have the greatest potential to support their re-election (Weingast, Shepsle, & Johnsen, 1981). Research by Levitt and Snyder (1997) shows that federal spending on Pork barrel projects in the United States increases the chances of re-election of members of Congress. This theory is relevant in Indonesia, where politicians use budget allocations as a tool to strengthen their political support base. Research by Rosser (2016) shows that in Indonesia, development projects financed by the government are often chosen not based on objective needs, but on the basis of political interests. The study reveals that infrastructure projects are often implemented in areas with significant political influence, especially in incumbent constituencies seeking re-election. Recent research shows that the practice of Pork barrel politics in Indonesia is not only limited to the national level, but also extends to the local level. For example, a study by Wardhani (2020) found that the allocation of Village Funds is often influenced by local political considerations. Local politicians use these funds to build projects that can increase their popularity in the eyes of the community, such as the construction of village roads, sports facilities, and social assistance. In addition, Fossati (2019) in his research shows that although Pork barrel politics can accelerate infrastructure development in certain areas, this practice also has the potential to cause injustice in the distribution of resources. Regions that do not have strong political representation tend to receive less funding allocations, thus widening the development gap between regions.

The implementation of Pork barrel politics in Indonesia has several significant impacts. On the one hand, Pork barrel politics can provide short-term benefits in the form of accelerating infrastructure development and improving public services in certain areas. However, on the other hand, this practice can lead to inefficient and unfair allocation of resources, as well as increase the potential for corruption and abuse of power (Fossati, 2019). Pork barrel politics can also interfere with the principles of good governance that prioritize transparency, accountability, and justice in the management of public resources. This practice is often carried out without considering the real needs of the community, but rather for short-term political interests (Wardhani, 2020).

The politics of Pork barrels in Indonesia is a complex phenomenon and has a double impact. On the one hand, this practice can help improve the development of infrastructure and public services in certain areas.

However, on the other hand, Pork barrel politics can lead to inefficient and unfair allocation of resources, as well as increase the potential for corruption. Therefore, there is a need for policy reform to ensure that the allocation of public funds is carried out in a transparent, accountable, and fair manner, to minimize the negative impact of Pork barrel politics.

3.4. The Impact of Gentong Babi Politics on the Election of Incumbents

Pork barrel politics has a significant impact on the election of incumbents. Incumbents who successfully use public budgets for projects that are visible and directly beneficial to constituents tend to have greater support. This is because constituents feel directly benefited and see that there is concern from the incumbent for their needs (Golden & Min, 2013). However, on the other hand, this practice can also have a negative impact if not managed properly. For example, budget allocation that is not transparent and unaccountable can cause public suspicion and distrust. In addition, excessive focus on short-term projects for political gain can come at the expense of more strategic and sustainable long-term investments (Brollo & Nannicini, 2012).

Pork barrel politics, also known as "pork barrel politics," is a strategy often used by politicians to distribute public resources to certain regions to gain political support. In this context, politicians seeking re-election, or incumbents, often use the allocation of development project funds to strengthen their support base in the constituency. According to political distribution theory, politicians tend to allocate funds to areas that have the greatest potential to provide electoral support (Weingast, Shepsle, & Johnsen, 1981). Research by Levitt and Snyder (1997) shows that federal spending on Pork barrel projects in the United States increases the chances of re-election of members of Congress. This theory is also relevant in Indonesia, where politicians use budget allocations as a tool to strengthen their political support base.

a) Positive Impact on Incumbent Election

Pork barrel politics can have a positive impact on the election of incumbents through various mechanisms. First, the allocation of funds for development projects such as infrastructure, public facilities, and social programs can improve the welfare of local communities, which in turn increases the popularity and support of incumbents.

For example, projects to build roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals are often appreciated by constituents because they directly improve their quality of life (Fossati, 2019). Second, these projects can also create jobs and boost the local economy, providing short- and long-term benefits to the community. Incumbents who successfully bring these kinds of projects are often considered effective leaders who care about their constituents, which can increase their chances of re-election (Wardhani, 2020).

b) Negative Impacts and Challenges

However, Pork barrel politics also has a negative impact that can threaten the election of the incumbent. One of the main impacts is the emergence of injustice in the distribution of resources. Regions that do not have strong political representation tend to receive less funding allocation, which can widen the development gap between regions. This injustice can trigger dissatisfaction and protests from people who feel neglected, which can reduce support for the incumbent (Rosser, 2016). In addition, the practice of Pork barrel politics is often associated with corruption and abuse of power. Politicians who use public funds for personal or political gain can lose the trust of the public. Corruption scandals involving Pork barrel projects can damage the reputation of incumbents and reduce their chances of re-election. Research by Indonesia shows that corrupt practices in the allocation of village funds often occur, which undermines public trust in the local government and the politicians involved (Fossati, 2019).

Recent research shows that while Pork barrel politics can provide short-term benefits in the form of increased electoral support, it can also pose long-term problems that are detrimental to incumbent electability. For example, a study by Wardhani (2020) found that reliance on Pork barrel projects can create a community's dependence on government assistance, which can reduce local initiatives and weaken sustainable development. Other new findings show that in the digital and increasingly transparent information era, people are increasingly critical of the use of public funds. Scandals involving the Pork barrel project are now more easily exposed and spread through social media, which can quickly damage the incumbent's reputation. Therefore, incumbents need to be more careful in allocating public funds and ensuring transparency and accountability in every project they run (Rosser, 2016).

The politics of Pork barrels has a complex impact on the election of incumbents. While it can increase political support through development projects that benefit society, it also has the potential to lead to disastrous injustice, corruption, and dependency in the long run.

The incumbent needs to ensure that the allocation of public funds is carried out with high transparency and accountability to maintain public trust and ensure sustainable re-election.

4. Conclusion

This research reveals that Pork barrel politics plays a significant role in supporting the election of incumbents in various regions. By leveraging state budgets for strategically targeted infrastructure projects and social programs, incumbents can increase their popularity and political support. However, while these strategies are effective in the short term, their long-term impact can be detrimental, especially if the practice is carried out without adequate transparency and accountability. Pork barrel politics can create inequality in the distribution of resources, increase the potential for corruption, and weaken public trust in the government.

In addition, this study shows that the public is increasingly critical of the practice of Pork barrel politics, especially with wider access to information through social media and the internet. Excessive reliance on these strategies can weaken local innovation and initiatives and hinder sustainable development. Therefore, to ensure sustainable electability and build public trust, it is important for incumbents to implement Pork barrel projects with good governance principles, such as transparency, accountability, and equity. Thus, Pork barrel politics can provide real benefits to society without damaging the integrity and legitimacy of the government.

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