

INFORMAL FINANCING OF CANDIDATES: IMPACT OF INFORMAL SOCIAL NETWORK ON CAMPAIGN COST

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Abstract

This article discusses the impact of cultural context and informal social networks on candidate campaign financing in the Malaka Regency regional elections, East Nusa Tenggara Province. This study employs a qualitative approach, incorporating clientelism and candidate financing theories, to examine candidate financing practices in the Malacca Regency elections. The study's main finding is that all candidate pairs in the elections utilized informal networks based on kinship, ethnicity, and organizations as political vehicles. However, these informal networks did not significantly influence campaign funding. The study concludes that the primary component of candidate financing remains dominated by political party machinery, while informal networks do not receive sufficient financing as political machines.

Keywords: *Informal networks, cultural context, campaign costs*

INTRODUCTION

This article examines how informal social networks and kinship impact candidate financing in regional elections. This study examines a relatively new autonomous region, located in the border region between Indonesia and Timor Leste, namely Malaka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. Malaka Regency was established as a new autonomous region based on Law No. 3 of 2013 concerning the establishment of Malaka Regency in East Nusa Tenggara Province, with its capital located in Betun. The law on the Malacca Autonomous Region was passed in a plenary session of the Indonesian House of Representatives on December 14, 2012, concerning the Draft Law on New Autonomous Regions (DOB). As a relatively new autonomous region, Malaka Regency has held 3 (three) general elections, namely the 2014 election, the 2019 election, and the 2024 election, as well as three (3) direct elections for regional head/deputy regional head in 2015, 2020, and 2024. The 2024 Malaka Regency Pilkada is contested by 3 candidate pairs, namely (1) Simon Nahak- Felix Bere Nahak, (2) Stef Bria Seran – Henri Melki Simu, and (3) Louise Lucky Taolin - Eduardus Bere Atok. An overview of the candidates can be seen in the following table.

Table 1.1
Background of the Candidates in the 2024 Malacca Regional Election

No	Candidate Name	Age	Gender	Profession	LHKPN (RP)	Party Support	Ethnicity/Religion	Vote Acquisition	Regional Election Results
1	Dr. Simon Nahak, SH, MH	60	L	Politician	Rp5,154,781,596	PDIP NASDEM , PSI, DEMOCR	Timor (Tetun-Fehan)-Catholic	31,194 (32.87 %)	Lost
	Felix Bere Nahak, S.Pt	47	L	Politician	Rp. 724,419,010.	ATS, GERINDRA	Timor (Tetun-Fehan)/Catholic		

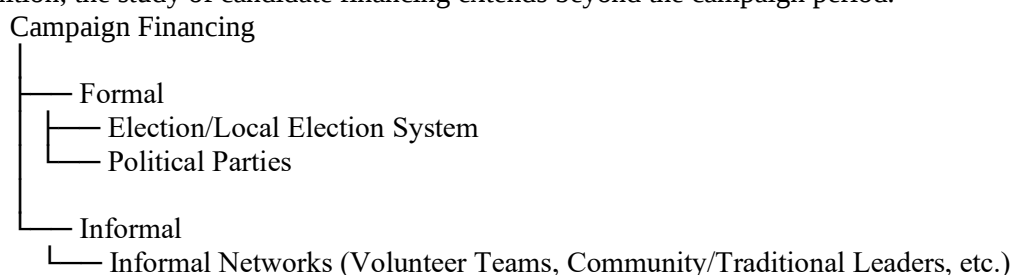
2	Dr. Stefanus Bria Seran, M.PH	67	L	Politician	Rp9,564,343,268	GOLKAR, PERINDO, HANURA	Timor (Tetun-Fehan)/Catholic	36,214 (38.16 %)	Win
	Henri Melki Simu, A.Md	51	L	Politician-Businessman	Rp627,219,954.		Chinese/Protestant		
3	Louise Lucky Taolin	41	L	Politician	Rp832,900,000	PKB PAN	Chinese-Timorese (Dawan-Foho)/Catholic	27,494 (28.97 %)	Lost
	Eduardus Bere Atok, SP	54	L	Bureaucrat	Rp731,134,499		Timor (Tetun-Fehan)/Catholic		

This study is based on the hypothesis that Malaka Regency is a border region with a very unique socio-cultural context. This study is based on two main reasons. First, studies on the local cultural context and regional election politics mostly discuss voter mobilization mechanisms using customary instruments and kinship systems at the local level. Few studies link the relationship between customary and local cultural contexts and campaign funding. Second, almost every candidate forms a campaign team outside the political party machinery with diverse voter segmentation, such as women's and youth networks, student activist groups, traditional leaders, professional communities, and others. These campaign teams outside the political party machinery are commonly referred to as volunteers. However, most studies only examine the impact of these volunteer forums on candidate performance and victory. Very few studies examine whether the presence of such communities can reduce campaign costs or actually burden candidates by requiring greater expenditures. Specifically, this study aims to discuss the local cultural context and informal networks in Malaka Regency and their implications for the political financing of candidates in the 2024 regional head elections in Malaka Regency. This study examines how the candidates for Regent/Deputy Regent in Malacca form and finance informal networks such as traditional leaders namely Loro, Fukun, and Nain as well as other informal networks outside the political party machinery. In the 2024 Malacca regional elections, the mobilization of these informal networks has an impact on candidate financing where regional head candidates must spend money to finance many traditional ceremonies, as well as mobilize traditional leaders for the political interests of the election, and finance many winning team organizations outside the political party machinery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Campaign finance studies have a long and extensive history (e.g., Heidenheimer, 1963). However, most of these studies suffer from both methodological and empirical limitations in explaining variations in campaign spending. Country-level studies argue that the candidate-centered nature of elections and majoritarian electoral systems result in higher campaign spending (Hutchcroft 2019, Samuels 2001, Cox and Thies 1998). Others find that spending is actually higher in proportional electoral systems with party-centered systems (Nassmacher 2009; see also Yadav, 2011). In the context of economic conditions, the campaign finance literature is characterized by general disagreement over whether campaign costs are higher in economically developed countries (La Raja 2008: 9) or in developing countries (Nassmacher 2009: 394) with clientelistic political arenas (Pinto-Duschinsky 2002: 83). Political economy studies of campaign finance have so far largely focused on the policy benefits sought by campaign donors in the US (e.g., Schnakenberg and Turner 2021, Fowler et al. 2020, McMenamin 2013, Alt and Lassen 2003, Flavin 2015). The problematic consequence of this Western-biased literature is that it provides little insight into whether practices prevalent in the global South—such as clientelism, rent-seeking, and political-business collusion—influence campaign finance practices. In Indonesia, studies on campaign finance tend to focus specifically on formal campaign finance regulations and expenditures related to programmatic election campaigns, such as (TV) advertising and social media presence. However, election campaigns involve more than just offering

policy programs to voters; in most countries, they also involve clientelistic strategies, namely the practice of providing personal favors to voters and campaign donors, such as money or gifts, in exchange for their support (see Kitschelt 2000, Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007), which are often the primary drivers of campaign spending. Moreover, because most elections take place in countries with limited regulatory capacity and 'cronicapitalist' economies (Khan 2000, Kang 2002, Hillman 2013, Aligica and Tarko 2014), campaign donations are a common strategy for business actors to gain preferential access to economic opportunities (see Samuels 2001, Boas et al. 2014, Gulzar et al. 2020). The aforementioned studies have focused solely on macro factors such as the electoral system, party system, and district magnitude, and their implications for campaign funding. At a more micro-local level, previous studies have outlined factors such as patronage and clientelism, rent-seeking, oligarchy, and business-political collusion as influencing campaign funding. This study, however, aims to capture a more specific and informal aspect: the local cultural context and the informal social networks established by regional head candidates as their winning mechanisms. In this study, the concept of candidate financing is defined as the financing (formal and informal) managed by election or regional election participants to ensure the success of their candidacy and gain votes in the campaign (Sukmajati & Perdana, et al. 2018). Therefore, this study focuses on how this informal dimension of politics influences campaign spending. To help focus the analysis, this study aims to examine election financing by emphasizing the dimensions of revenue, expenditure, and management. By using this definition, the study of candidate financing extends beyond the campaign period.



RESEARCH METHODS

Based on the main problem under study, this study uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative research has a core characteristic that emphasizes the meaning and context within society. The type of research used is descriptive. Descriptive research is research used to describe the current state of the subject or object of research based on facts occurring in the field, using document studies and field studies. It should be emphasized that the study of candidate financing presents its own methodological and practical challenges. Collecting data on financing is not easy, amidst a political situation that positions financing as a secret garden known only to certain individuals.

In conducting this study, the researchers collected data through three methods: desk study, shadowing, and in-depth interviews. The desk study was conducted by the team by examining documents related to the research topic, such as initial and final campaign finance reports, campaign implementation reports, data and structures of campaign teams/winning teams, and news reports in print and electronic media about the candidate's campaign. Meanwhile, fieldwork was conducted at the research location by shadowing candidate campaign events. This method was used so that researchers could obtain a clear picture of campaign management in the field, and could calculate campaign costs and compare them with official reports to organizers. Meanwhile, in-depth interviews were conducted by interviewing key individuals who clearly understood how the candidate's campaign was organized, financed, and implemented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Informal Networks in the Malaka Regional Election

The informal networks operating in the Malaka regional elections can be divided into three clusters. The first cluster is a cultural network based on tribes, sub-tribes, and clans. This manifests itself in the elections as candidates must expend significant resources on events at traditional houses and fund traditional figures such as Fukun and Nain. The second cluster is women's networks. For example, the incumbent candidate has a women's community network fostered by the Regent's wife, who is the head of the Malaka PKK (Family Welfare Movement) team. This community is called Funan Malaka. Funan Malaka is essentially a group of PKK mothers long fostered by the head of the Malaka Regency PKK team, providing women's empowerment programs. The third, equally important cluster is the student activist network. For example, the incumbent candidate organized a

network of student activists in Malaka through an organization called JAS (Malaka Activist Network). In principle, the informal networks that work in regional elections are not only these three clusters, but this study is limited to an analysis of how these three network groups are organized, mobilized, and financed for the benefit of winning the regional elections. The first cluster consists of cultural networks based on ethnicity, sub-ethnicity, or clan. In Malaka Regency, there are two Timorese sub-ethnicities that frequently contest in regional elections: the Tetun (Fehan) and the Dawan (Foho). Demographically, the Tetun constitute the majority and inhabit the central and urban areas. Meanwhile, the Dawan (Foho) inhabit coastal and mountainous areas, but are insignificant in number.

The Dawan population is mostly concentrated in the sub-districts of Rinhat, Io Kufeu, and Sasitamean, which fall within Electoral District 3 in the election. All other sub-districts are dominated by the Tetun. In the 2024 regional elections, only one candidate pair, Candidate Number 3, Lousie Lucky Taolin and Eduardus Bere Atok, is considered to represent the Foho. The other two candidates are claimed to represent the Fehan. Incumbent candidate Simon Nahak has paid special attention to the welfare of traditional leaders since taking office in Malaka in 2021. Regent SN has a flagship program called the SAKTI program (Food Self-Sufficiency, Customs, Human Resources and Natural Resources Quality, Tolerance and Infrastructure). For the program to empower traditional houses and the welfare of traditional leaders, Regent SN created a policy of providing incentives to traditional leaders in Malaka, namely Liurai, Nain, Loro, and Fukun throughout Malaka Regency with a total of 2,054 traditional leaders, who receive monthly incentives ranging from Rp. 100,000-Rp. 250,000. The source of this funding comes from the Regional Budget (APBD) and Village Budget (APBDes). In the regional elections, this network was organized and mobilized by the SN-FBN candidate pair, although in the end this candidate pair was not elected. However, the allocation of costs to activate this network uses more state resources.

The second cluster is the Malaka Activist Network (JAS). The Jas community is chaired by Gusti Atok, a PMKRI alumni activist. They are well-organized and strongly associated with the vice-regent candidate Felix Bere Nahak, a former PMKRI activist. This forum was designed to bring together Malaka students from various organizations such as PMKRI, GMNI, GMKI, IMMALA, and several Malaka student organizations in Kupang and Kefa. This forum declared its support for the SN-FBN candidate pair. (JAS) held a declaration at Motadikin Beach, Malaka on Wednesday (August 14, 2024). As witnesses from the supporting parties and the people of Malaka, the sons and daughters of Malaka who are currently studying at universities in Kefa and Kupang were present to declare their support and victory for the SN-FBN ticket. This forum held various actions to gain public sympathy, such as blood donations, public discussions, and other social actions in the regional elections. In practice, these activist groups operate sporadically. A group of students and activists in Malaka, led by Gusti Atok, has attempted to support Felix Bere Nahak's campaign sporadically. Meanwhile, Malaka activist groups in Kupang and Kefa have also done the same, albeit with minimal funding. In other words, they have not received sufficient funding from the candidates.

The third cluster is the Malaka women's network or Funan Malaka. In the 2024 regional elections, the Funan Malaka group was chaired by Merry Lorock. In their various political activities, the Funan Malaka team's work was integrated into the Task Force group, which was mostly filled with men, some of whom were affiliated with political party task force teams tasked with maintaining security during the campaign. In the 2024 regional elections, the Declaration of Funan Malaka and the SN-FBN Task Force (Simon Nahak and Felix Bere Nahak) took place at the SN - FBN Weleun Winning House, Bakiruk Village, Malaka Tengah District, Malaka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Tuesday (25/06/2024) at 12:30 WITA. In the declaration, the head of the Funan Malaka Team was seen very enthusiastically campaigning for the SN-FBN candidate pair as a candidate pair who carried the spirit of emancipation that placed women not always in the background and in the kitchen, but women also had the spirit and could be involved in developing the region.

Candidate Spending Profile

Before describing the expenditure profile of the candidates who are the subject of this research, the researcher needs to describe the general situation regarding campaign fund expenditure in the 2024 Malacca regional election. First, in general, the candidates and informants who were interviewed admitted that the costs of the 2024 regional election were more expensive than the 2020 regional election. When compared to the 2020 regional election which was only contested by two (2) candidate pairs, the 2024 Malaka regional election was contested by three (3) candidate pairs, which caused the political configuration to be more complex than the 2020 regional election, especially regarding the nomination tickets by political parties. However, it is very difficult to verify and validate the amount of real expenditure for each campaign financing item.

Second, Compared to previous regional elections, the implementation of the 2024 simultaneous regional elections at the provincial and district levels with non-linear coalitions means that almost all candidate pairs must form their own political machines outside the party machinery. In the case of the candidate shadowed by researchers, Simon Nahak-Felix Bere Nahak, who was supported by the PDI-P, Gerindra, Nasdem, PSI, and Democrat parties had different gubernatorial/vice gubernatorial candidate pairs. At the provincial level, PDI-P supported the candidate pair Yohanis Fransiskus Lema-Jane Natalia Suryanto, while the Gerindra and PSI parties supported the candidate pair Emanuel Melkiades Laka Leka-Johny Asadoma, and the Nasdem party supported the candidate pair Simon Petrus Kamiasi-Andreas Garu. As a result, the Regent/Deputy Regent candidates cannot campaign alongside the gubernatorial candidates, which would significantly reduce campaign costs, especially large-scale campaigns. The resulting consequence is that the SN-FBN candidate pair must form campaign teams outside the political party machinery, such as family teams, task forces, the Funan Malaka team, activist networks (Jas), and even diaspora teams. The structurally bloated campaign team automatically results in ballooning campaign costs for the candidates. In general, the expenditure profile of candidate Simon Nahak-Felix Bere Nahak (SN-FBN) can be described in the following table;

Table 3.1
Expenditure Profile of Candidates Simon Nahak-Felix Bere Nahak in the 2024 Malaka Regional Election

No	Type of Expense	Cost breakdown	Total
1	Political Party Dowry (nomination ticket fee)	Gerindra 1.8 billion; NasDem 1.5 billion, Democrat 1.5 billion, PSI 1.2 billion, PDIP 1 billion	Rp. 7,000,000,000
2	Citizens' meeting (Limited campaign)	Rp. 10,000,000 x 100 points in 127 villages	Rp. 1,000,000,000
3	Organizing Campaign Action (Grand Campaign)	2 Billion X 2 Times Grand Campaign	Rp. 4,000,000,000
4	Vote buying	Cooperative debt repayment @Rp.300,000	Rp. 500,000,000
5	Donations/gifts to the community	Church (Celebration of the month of Mary)	Rp.500,000,000
6	Campaign Organization/Success Team Secretariat	@Rp2,500,000 /day X 4 months	Rp. 300,000,000
7	Campaign Advertisements (Billboards, Stickers, etc.)	APK Fees	Rp. 250,000,000
8	Political Consultant/ Survey	1 survey	Rp. 150,000,000
9	Mass Media/Social Media	Contas journalist and social media team	Rp. 100,000,000
10	Witness Fee + Consumption	@Rp.250,000 X 337 TPS	Rp. 100,000,000
11	Social Assistance for Basic Foodstuffs etc.	Traditional institutions and farmer groups	Rp. 150,000,000
12	Others (Student Mobilization Costs)	@Rp.250,000 /student plus car rental etc.	Rp.500,000,000
Estimated Total Campaign Costs			Rp. 15 billion

Source: Data processed based on interview data from the campaign team, secondary data, and several campaign donors.

Based on the table above, the expenditure profile of the Simon Nahak-Felix Bere Nahak candidates in the 2024 regional elections can be seen to be approximately IDR 15 billion. This amount is quite reasonable when compared to the Malaka General Elections Commission (KPU) Decree No. 556 of 2024 concerning the limitation of campaign spending in the 2024 election to a maximum of IDR 20 billion. However, the researcher must disclaim that no one can truly determine the actual expenditure for each financing item. The amounts for several of the financing components above are the author's estimates based on the information gathered.

The table above at least shows that the largest cost component is the cost of obtaining a candidacy ticket, or what is often referred to as a political dowry. In the 2024 regional elections, the increasing costs or political costs are clearly felt by the competing politicians. There are several explanations for this. First, politicians recognize that the timing of the elections, which is scheduled after the legislative and presidential elections, influences the increase in election costs. Why is this? Because members of the House of Representatives (DPR), who hold nomination tickets from political parties, require candidates for Regent/Deputy Regent to prepare a sum of money sufficient to cover their campaign expenses incurred in the previous legislative elections, commonly referred to as "boat costs." The legislative candidates also have their own winning machines during the legislative elections, which are still quite solid and therefore can be mobilized for the interests of the regional elections, which certainly require "lubrication." The Head of the PDIP DPC for Malaka Regency, Silvester Nahak, acknowledged that the party that most recently supported the SN-FBN candidate pair was the Gerindra Party. Previously, the Gerindra Party was claimed to have granted a decree to the SBS-HMS candidate pair, as the Golkar and Gerindra coalition was quite solid at the provincial and district levels, aligning with Prabowo Subianto's governing coalition. It was alleged that the Simon Nahak-Felix Bere Nahak ticket paid more than the SBS-HMS ticket. In this context, the need to finance simultaneous regional elections at all levels also forces political parties to set substantial fees. In addition to the political dowry costs that cost the largest amount of money, another very large component of expenditure is financing two (2) large campaigns. The first was during the declaration of the SN-FBN pair before registering with the KPU, on August 27, 2024, by gathering more than 20,000 supporters who gathered at his house which happened to have a fairly large area. Next was during the large campaign at Betun Public Field, downtown Malacca City, which was attended by around 20,000 supporters. For these two (2) large campaigns, the costs spent were almost 4 billion rupiah with details for voter transportation costs, sound systems, stage artists, food, and Event Organizer costs that provided door prizes to several lucky voters for answering certain questions.

In addition to these two expenditure components, other relatively smaller expenditure items include limited campaigning at all designated points, with approximately 100 points in 127 villages, with several villages combined into one campaign point. Witness fees are also set at Rp. 250,000 per person at 337 polling stations. Meanwhile, the supporting parties regulate the costs of witnesses for the gubernatorial election, considering the non-linear coalition between the district and province. On the day before the election, the candidate pair mobilized thousands of students from Kupang and Kefa (TTU Regency) to return home and vote in Malacca, each receiving Rp. 250,000. The SN-FBN candidate pair was also supported by the Kontas journalist community, tasked with branding the candidate pair in local media, who were paid an honorarium for each coverage and news report. In general, the expenditure profile above explains that the political dowry component received the largest presentation compared to other cost components. If the political dowry is a reflection of the price of a DPRD member's seat, then the price of a Malaka DPRD member's seat is around Rp. 250,000,000 – Rp. 300,000,000.

The SN-FBN candidate pair had a secretariat team that had been working since before the pair's declaration on August 28, 2024. Thus, this team worked for more than four months until election day, November 27, 2024. Therefore, the secretariat team's costs cannot be calculated from the start of the campaign, as they had been working long before. Meanwhile, regarding vote buying, researchers discovered a unique and interesting method: the candidate pair paid for students' return travel and rented cars to transport them from their hometowns to return to vote in Malacca. Based on the description above, it can be seen that candidate expenditures on informal campaign machinery outside political parties are not significant in percentage terms. There is no specific budget to finance the activities of JAS, Funan Malaka, or traditional leaders. The candidate expenditure profile shows that the majority of campaign funds are allocated to campaign activities driven by political parties. This large percentage indicates that, although informal campaign machinery outside political parties is massively mobilized, the funding allocation is not significant.

Formal vs. Informal Costs

Social Costs (Informal Costs)

In regional elections, candidates don't just spend money during the campaign period, but also well before it begins. As incumbents, the SN-FBN pair is already popular with voters, so they don't need to spend a significant amount of money to boost their popularity. However, as regents, candidates consistently allocate a special budget for non-governmental events, particularly traditional ceremonies, weddings, funerals, and welcoming ceremonies (a sacrament in the Catholic Church).

Almost all politicians also contributed to the Marian month celebration activities in Malaka Regency, which took place from September 1, 2024, and culminated on October 31, 2024. The Marian month celebration by Catholics was marked by a procession or statue procession around 20 parishes in the Malaka Deanery. In addition to spiritual activities, the committee also held a booth for a community craft exhibition, football sports competitions, men's and women's volleyball, mining dance, Bible recitation competitions, Bible quizzes, and Psalm singing. In addition to these competitions, there were also arts competitions including; likurai, bidu, tala, tebe, akabeluk and inter-parish choir competitions. All of these activities were centered in the St. Maria Fatima Betun Parish square. For your information, the chairman of the Malaka Deanery DPD is Petrus Bria Seran, a member of the Malaka DPRD from the Nasdem party, who is also the younger brother of Regent candidate Stef Bria Seran. The celebration of the month of Mary is an opportunity for politicians to show their partiality and benevolence by doing good to the people. For the 2024 Marian month celebration, Regent SN donated Rp. 500,000,000. Politicians' spending in Malacca is mostly spent on two things: tradition and the church. Regent SN has a flagship program during his leadership, known by the acronym SAKTI (Food Self-Sufficiency, Tradition, Human Resources and Natural Resources Quality, Tolerance, and Infrastructure). Tradition is one of Regent SN's main concerns, therefore SN always attends all traditional ceremonies at all traditional houses in Malacca, which is certainly followed by a donation in the form of money for community empowerment and traditional leaders in Malacca. The amount of money varies depending on the needs of each traditional house. Regent SN even created a policy to provide incentives to traditional leaders, namely Nain, Loro, and Fukun.

Candidacy Fees

As the incumbent candidate, the SN-FBN pair is supported by a sizable coalition, a stark contrast to the situation in the 2020 regional elections, when all political parties flocked to support SBS, while only three parties with five seats supported Simon Nahak. As the incumbent candidate in the 2024 regional elections, SN-FBN is supported by a majority of the Malaka Regency DPRD seats, with 15 seats, comprised of PDIP (3 seats), Gerindra (3 seats), Nasdem (3 seats), Demokrat (3 seats), and PSI (3 seats).

"Yes, the term dowry is calculated based on seats... in Malacca, the average price per seat is IDR 500 million..." (NN, One of the successful teams of the SN-FBN candidate pair)

As a PDIP cadre, SN is required to deposit Rp. 1 billion, which is considered the party's "witness fund." According to NN, this fund is a common mechanism within the PDI Perjuangan for all regional head candidates. The funds will then be disbursed as witness funds managed by the party, not only for district elections but also for gubernatorial/deputy gubernatorial elections. Meanwhile, other parties, namely the 4109icer4109Tu and Nasdem, which each have 3 seats, are priced at IDR 1.5 billion, calculated based on the number of seats each party holds. This means that 1 DPRD seat is "valued" at IDR 500,000,000. Meanwhile, the PSI party, which is considered a newcomer in Malaka, is "valued" at IDR 400,000,000. Meanwhile, specifically for tickets from the Gerindra party, which are being contested by candidate pair 01, namely SN-FBN and candidate pair 02, namely SBS-HMS, are priced higher at IDR 600,000,000 per seat. Thus, the SN-FBN candidate pair paid IDR 1.8 billion for 3 Gerindra party seats.

State Resources

As the incumbent candidate, Regent SN has a flagship program popularly known as SAKTI (Food Self-Sufficiency, Customs, Human Resources and Natural Resources Quality, Tolerance, and Infrastructure). Through these programs, Regent SN is building his popularity for the regional elections. Through the SAKTI program, Regent SN has implemented several programs that are quite popular at the grassroots level, such as the 3K program (Gardening, 4109icer4109t, and Pond). The 3K Movement is a program launched by Regent SN so that every village encourages its residents to have gardens for corn, rice and horticultural crops, 4109icer4109t for pets such as chickens and pigs, as well as ponds for fish farming. The goal is to reduce the prevalence of stunting and also meet household consumption needs. Therefore, Regent SN requires all village heads to allocate funds for the 3K program, which is also supported by relevant agencies, particularly agriculture, fisheries, and animal husbandry. Each village in Malaka is required to allocate Rp. 100,000,000 – Rp. 250,000,000 to support the 3K program. Farmer groups in each village received cash assistance and corn seeds, fish seeds, and chickens and pigs, which were considered assistance from Regent Simon Nahak. For these programs, Regent SN successfully received the Indonesia Awards in the Special Recognition of Outstanding Initiative category for the SAKTI Program, received at the Jakarta Concert Hall iNews Tower Jakarta, Thursday (31/8/2023) and the Universal Health Coverage Award 2023, presented by the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia, Ma'ruf Amin at Balai

Sudirman on March 14, 2023. In addition, for the empowerment program of traditional houses and the welfare of traditional leaders, Regent SN made a policy of providing incentives to traditional leaders in Malaka, namely Liurai, Nain, Loro, and Fukun throughout Malaka Regency with a total of 2,054 traditional leaders, who received monthly incentives in the amount of between Rp. 100,000-Rp. 250,000. In the field of infrastructure, there are 3 claims of success of the Regent of Malaka, namely the regional library building, the Regent's office, and the Malaka DPRD office which are claimed to be the results of the struggle of Regent Simon Nahak. During the big campaign in the Betun public field, the campaigners repeatedly emphasized that these buildings are tangible evidence of the results of the struggle of Regent Simon Nahak.

Through the aforementioned programs, Regent SN utilized these programs to build popularity and mobilize support for the regional elections. In the 2024 regional elections, Regent SN's winning team will be heavily reliant on these village heads and traditional leaders. Two days after the SN-FBN campaign at Betun Public Square, SN gathered numerous traditional leaders and village heads at his home for guidance. This came after the SBS-HMS campaign had held a large-scale campaign the day before, drawing a significantly larger crowd than the SN-FBN campaign. The data above demonstrates that the budget allocation for activating the political machinery of traditional leaders is actually based on state resources. This means that Regent SN is maximizing his position as a defender to support traditional leaders through monthly incentives.

Receipt, Management, and Expenditure of Campaign Funds

In relation to budget management, there are two important figures in Simon Nahak's success team - Felix Bere Nahak, namely the head of the Success Team, Benny Chandradinata and Simon Nahak's wife, Mrs. drg. Maria Martina Nahak, M. BioMED. Benny Chandra, a member of the NTT Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) and the chairman of the Gerindra Party branch in Malaka Regency, has a business background and is responsible for collecting funds from many businessmen in Malaka to support the SN-FBN candidate pair, as well as lobbying political parties to support SN-FBN along with compromised seat fees. Meanwhile, Simon Nahak's wife, Mrs. Maria Martina Nahak, is responsible for distributing logistics as needed for all campaign activities. In other words, Benny Chandra plays an external role, while Mrs. Maria Martina plays an internal control function.

One example the researcher observed was the day after the major campaign on November 18, 2024. The researcher was at the headquarters of the SN-FBN campaign team and witnessed public transportation drivers and village coordinators lining up to receive their respective honorariums, which were given by Mrs. Maria Martina. SN's wife also determined the appropriate allocation for each event division and who would distribute the money. For limited campaigns at each location, as well as the campaign team secretariat, all finances were managed by Mrs. Maria. Meanwhile, Benny Chandra was in charge of coordinating major events, particularly the grand declaration and the grand campaign. In its implementation, several financing items were jointly agreed upon by each supporting political party, particularly for the grand campaign on November 18th. The costs of the grand campaign were shared by the supporting political party teams and managed by a special committee, which still placed Benny Chandra and Mrs. Maria Martina in a major role. In practice, Benny Chandra played a role in collecting funds for this grand campaign from many businesspeople who contributed money and goods (e.g., tents, chairs, stages, etc.). *Sound system*, transportation vehicles, etc.). Meanwhile, distribution and allocation for each division remains the responsibility of Mrs. Maria Martina.

CLOSING

Based on the data and analysis presented above, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the Malaka regent/vice regent candidates, particularly the incumbent, continue to mobilize informal networks outside political parties as their winning mechanisms. These include activist networks, the Malaka Funan (Funan Malaka), and traditional leaders. However, informal networks based on youth, church, and traditional organizations did not significantly influence the candidate's financing and the final election results. Candidate expenditure profile data indicates that spending on party tickets accounts for nearly 50% of total campaign funds. The remainder is allocated to major campaign events and social expenses. In terms of campaign funding, candidate SN relied heavily on his campaign team leader, Benny Chandradinata, as the driving force in raising funds from numerous businesspeople. However, researchers were unable to trace the names of the businesspeople who contributed campaign funds, other than Benny Chandra. On the other hand, one of the money-making machines, PT IDK, was difficult to trace during the 2024 regional elections in Malaka, even though the fundraising process had begun long before the election. Several local businesspeople approached PT IDK under the name of Regent SN, and

used the company as an ATM to collect election funds. As the incumbent candidate, Regent SN funded his campaign himself from various sources. In addition to being regent, SN is also an advocate who owns a law firm specializing in tax law. In terms of campaign fund management, SN appears to employ two methods. Internal secretariat matters, such as food, transportation, and limited campaign expenses, as well as daily activities, are managed directly by the candidate's wife, who acts as treasurer. Meanwhile, matters related to funding from political parties and businesspeople are managed by the head of the campaign team, Benny Chandradinata. This division of roles is based not only on the type and method of campaign, but also on the source of the funds received. Meanwhile, regarding campaign expenditures, it can be concluded that spending on purchasing political party tickets accounts for nearly 50% of total campaign funds. The remainder is divided among major campaign events and social expenses. Candidates appear to be circumventing regulations prohibiting the use of money politics. Nearly all candidate pairs are using the "student attack" tactic, which involves financing the return of students living outside the city to vote in Malacca. Other candidates are also using the method of paying off the debts of community cooperatives as a new method, which appears to be political benevolence, but can be interpreted as vote-buying.

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