Electoral Dynamics in Indonesia

Money Politics, Patronage and Clientelism at the Grassroots

Edited by

Edward Aspinall and Mada Sukmajati

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chapter 17

Madiun, East Java: Brokers in Territorial, Social Network and Vote-buying Strategies

Ahmad Zainul Hamdi

This chapter describes election campaigning in two electoral districts in the district (*kabupaten*) of Madiun in East Java. Electoral district I, incorporating the subdistricts of Jiwan, Sawahan and Madiun is known as a strongly *santri* (pious Muslim) area, whereas electoral district III, consisting of the subdistricts of Saradan and Mejayan, is an *abangan* (syncretist) and secular–nationalist area. Despite the differing sociocultural backgrounds, the strategies candidates used in the two electoral districts did not differ significantly. In particular, vote buying—the distribution of cash to individual voters in the days leading to the poll—was widespread in both areas.

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Brokers were a key determinant of whether candidates' vote-buying efforts succeeded. Very few candidates used the party machine to try to get out the vote. Most put greater trust in their own success teams and, even if these involved party activists, their role in the teams did not differ from those of other members. Though candidates structured their teams in varied ways, the lowest stratum of members was always the key when it came to mobilising voter support. These base-level vote brokers are known in Madiun as *kader* (cadres), though the term does not necessarily connote membership in a party. The role of the *kader*

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was vital to vote buying because it was from them that candidates received lists of voters to be targeted, and it was through them that they distributed cash.

In the final analysis, the success of any vote-buying effort greatly depended on the integrity and loyalty of these *kader*. Those who were not linked to the candidate by ideological, party or some other close tie tended to exploit the candidates for economic gain. When vote buying was entrusted to brokers of this sort, the effort could easily fail because the brokers would misappropriate much of the money. But when vote buying was carried out by brokers who were constrained by party loyalty or by loyalty to the candidate or to people close to the candidate, then the money was more likely to make its way to the hands of the voters.

In fact, vote buying tended to be combined with other forms of patronage politics, notably distribution of club goods and pork barrel projects. Club goods here mean donations or gifts that confer collective benefit to members of an association with significant community-level influence. This form of patronage reflects a social network approach to campaigning. Pork barrel projects, by contrast, implies a territorial strategy and geographic targeting, and occurred when candidates were trying to gain the support of voters in a particular locale—typically, a *dusun* (hamlet), RW (neighbourhood) or RT (subneighbourhood). In both of these approaches, too, brokers played a key role.

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Candidates generally had to disguise their attempts to make use of formal social associations, which were mostly prohibited by internal regulations from participating in partisan politics. Thus, candidates tended to use associations by approaching their leaders or prominent figures within them and inviting them to join their success teams. The more open the involvement of a social association in a campaign, the more likely the candidate concerned would reward it with club goods. But if the candidate could only make use of the brokerage role of an association's leader without openly drawing the association itself into the campaign, then the economic and political benefits would likely be enjoyed only by the leader concerned. In contrast, territorial strategies relied on the brokerage roles of informal and formal leaders in the location concerned, with those formal leaders typically consisting of RT and RW heads, *dusun* heads and so on. This territorial strategy,

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and the associated pork barrel spending, was absolutely dependent on the involvement of these influential local actors. When a significant proportion of them in a particular locality rejected an approach by a candidate, it was likely that pork barrel spending would be aborted.

BACKGROUND: THE LOCAL POLITICS OF MADIUN

Madiun is one of the most important urban centres of the western part of East Java, having played an important administrative role since the early 19th century as the chief town of the residency incorporating Ngawi, Magetan, Ponorogo and Pacitan, as well as Madiun itself.[1] These five districts now form part of the westernmost edge of East Java; not far across the border in Central Java is the town of Solo, the old capital of the Mataram kingdom. This geographic proximity, and the fact that the region was part of Mataram, means that culturally the region is now generally seen as being closer to the Mataraman culture associated with the kingdom, rather than to the Arek culture of the capital of East Java, Surabaya, and its surrounds further to the east. The Mataraman culture is agrarian, marked by a strong sense of social distinctions and traditional *kejawen* beliefs, while the Arek culture is more egalitarian and open, with people using a much coarser version of the Javanese language than the more refined language used in Mataraman.

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The city (*kota*) of Madiun is an administrative entity separate to the rural district (*kabupaten*) which is the focus of this study. The district's capital since 2010 (previously, Madiun town still played this role) is Caruban, a small town on the main road between Surabaya and Solo. The district itself, which consists of 15 subdistricts, 198 villages and 8 *kelurahan* (urban precincts) is a typical inland district, with a population of about 770,000. In 2013, 40 per cent of the working

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[1] Wasno, *Misteri Bulan Suro: Studi tentang Konflik antara Perguruan Silat PSH Terate dengan PSH Tunas Muda Winongo di Madiun* [The Mystery of the Month of Suro: A Study of the Conflict between the SH Terate and SH Winongo Silat Schools in Madiun] (Malang: PPS Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, 2004), p. 50.

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population were employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.[2] Some 58 villages are located on the edge of, or inside, forest zones.[3] Education levels are relatively low, and 32 per cent of households are classified as poor.[4]

The population is 99 per cent Muslim, but residents feel that the south of the district tends to be pious, or *santri*, while the north is populated by *abangan*. This supposition is reflected in the figures: the two subdistricts with the largest number of mosques and *musholla*—Dagangan and Kebonsari—are both located in the south.[5] Overall, however, Madiun tends to be seen as an *abangan* heartland.[6] Whereas Islamic parties fare well on the northern coast of East Java, the east and Madura, areas such as Madiun, Bojonegoro and Kediri to the west have historically been dominated by secular-nationalist parties. In Indonesia's first democratic election in 1955, the communist party, PKI, placed first in the residency of Madiun. Like much of Indonesia, Madiun voted strongly for Golkar during the New Order years (1966–1998). In post-*reformasi* Indonesia, between 1999 and 2009 the first-placed party in the district was always PDI-P.

However, in recent years the political dynamics of the district have begun to change, with traditionalist *santri* beginning to attain new dominance. The turning point was the election, in 2008, of Muhtarom as *bupati* or district head. Muhtarom, who has a background in the traditionalist community himself, was nominated by PKB, the major NU-affiliated party. He was re-elected for a second term in 2013, defeating a candidate backed by PDI-P and Golkar. Then, in the 2014 legislative election, for the first time PKB was the first-placed party with 110,000 votes. PDI-P was pushed to second place and Golkar to third, with PKB

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[2] Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Madiun, *Kabupaten Madiun dalam Angka 2014* [Madiun District in Figures 2014] (Madiun: BPS, 2015), p. 92.

[3] Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Madiun, *Kabupaten Madiun dalam Angka 2011* [Madiun District in Figures 2011] (Madiun: BPS, 2012), p. 8.

[4] Ibid., p. 140.

[5] Ibid., p. 160.

[6] For the *santri–abangan* distinction, see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (New York: Free Press, 1960).

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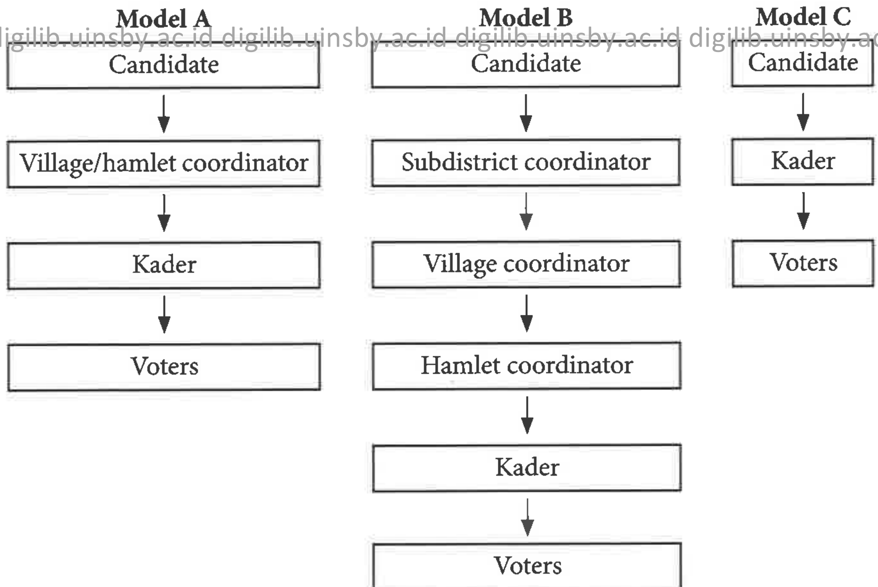
benefitting from holding the *bupati* position, but also from the demise of competitor parties that exclusively vied for the NU vote.

ORGANISING THE CAMPAIGN: TERRITORIAL AND SOCIAL NETWORK STRATEGIES

As in many parts of Indonesia, almost all candidates in Madiun said that they relied more on political machines they had built themselves—success teams—than on party structures. Yet none relied on a truly professional team. Instead, candidates built their teams by relying on family and friendship networks. In the inner circle, the candidate would place people she or he most trusted. Below them were the people charged with seeking votes. At the lowest level were the *kader* whose job it was to market the candidate to community members directly. No candidate had professional means of coordination or monitoring to organise these various layers.

Figure 17.1
Typical Success Team Structures in Madiun District



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Most team structures mirrored the territorial structure of government, with two main variations: model A, a simplified structure which did away with one or two intermediary layers between the candidate and voters, or model B, which was more complete (see Fig. 17.1). At the base level, however, there could be considerable variation: some candidates recruited just a handful of *kader* in each hamlet (*dusun*) whereas some would place them in each RT, with the consequence that there could be a large number in each hamlet. Some candidates allocated their *kader* to individual polling booths rather than to RT. Model C was a cut-down version, in which the candidate interacted directly with the brokers rather than using intermediary layers of coordinators. Candidates using this model tended to be motivated by a desire to save money, though in fact it made them vulnerable to deception because they often had to rely on brokers they lacked close relationships with but were forced to trust, given that they had no mechanism with which to control their brokers.

There was task differentiation within these structures. The higher an individual's position within the hierarchy, the more he or she had to do in terms of coordinating the work of those below them, monitoring them to make sure they were working hard and honestly, and ensuring that target locations were covered. Even so, the basic job of everybody in
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these structures was to chase votes. Every team member was expected to "secure" his or her own family's votes first, and then invite their friends, neighbours and then whoever else they could influence to support the candidate. At the base level, the *kader* were expected on average to bring on board only 5 to 15 votes each, though of course the more the better. We examine how they went about this task—in particular how they distributed cash to voters—in the next section.

These patterns, however, only deal with the territorial organisation of brokers. There was an additional pattern, too, which can be thought of as branching off from the candidate at the apex. This occurred when a candidate also recruited group coordinators (*koordinator kelompok*) charged with mobilising voters from a particular organisation or community group. Often such "recruitment" was highly informal, and the individuals concerned would not be officially enlisted as success team members. Typically, these individuals were prominent community, religious or associational leaders with influence over a particular network.

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Their task was to seek votes from within that network, which might not be confined to one particular village or hamlet. Most candidates supplemented their territorial strategies with attempts to use whatever links they happened to have with social organisations in this way. Importantly, however, their attempts to reach out to such groups were rarely conducted openly or formally.

As an example of such social-network campaigning, consider one PPP candidate in electoral district I.[7] In his success team he personally played the role of coordinator. The team was in turn divided into two groups, each with a very different scope and focus. The first group consisted of PPP officials, and did the work of territorial organisation described above. The second group consisted of individuals who he hoped would garner votes within important social organisations. Specifically, they were:

- Leaders of two large and famous *pencak silat* (traditional martial arts) organisations in Madiun: SH (Setia Hati) Terate and SH Winongo. He chose carefully, drawing in a well-known SH Terate trainer in Sawahan subdistrict, and a senior leader of SH Winongo in Jiwan, knowing that SH Terate members who followed a particular master had the reputation of remaining very loyal to him, whereas SH Winongo members tended to digilib.uinsby.ac.id digilib.uinsby.ac.id digilib.uinsby.ac.id digilib.uinsby.ac.id respect seniority. Most importantly, these two organisations are exceptionally popular in Madiun, with very large followings of young men, as well as some women.
- Activists from Ansor, NU's (male) youth organisation, in both Sawahan and Jiwan subdistricts. As with the *pencak silat* groups, the candidate did not approach the organisation formally, but instead pulled in some influential leaders he knew.
- NU leaders, both individuals occupying formal leadership positions within its structure and influential *kyai*. The candidate explained it was impossible to use the formal structure of the organisation openly, but he knew it was quite practical to draw in its leaders.

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[7] Confidential interview, 26 Mar. 2014.

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- Leaders of Muslimat, NU's organisation for older women. In this regard he was assisted by his wife, who was the treasurer of a subdistrict branch of the organisation.
- Individuals from his personal friendship and family networks. Even though some of them lived outside the electoral district where he was competing, he still viewed them as a useful resource for influencing their own friends and families in the district.

None of these supporters openly used their organisation to support the candidate. This was the general pattern: no matter how much office-holders in a social association supported a candidate, they always avoided working openly through its formal structures. They always wanted to be able to deny accusations that they were abusing their association for political ends, and typically said that they supported the candidate only as an individual—though invariably they would use the network the organisation gave them access to for just that purpose. All this effectively meant, therefore, was that organisations' formal meetings were not used for political campaigning, and they did not issue public statements supporting any candidate.

In the Madiun context, the *silat* schools were especially critical to campaigning efforts. Both have large groups of members and fanatical supporters. Their enmeshment in political life dates back to the 1950s and 1960s, when SH Winongo was close to the PKI and SH Terate to its opponents; through the New Order years, SH Terate remained close to Golkar and the regime, while SH Winongo only began to experience a revival from the 1990s, when the PDI (the predecessor to today's PDI-P) was becoming re-energised as a site of opposition to the regime. SH Terate is still known for having very close relations with local politicians, and its officials admit its involvement in local political affairs. Even so, they typically take pains to ensure that this involvement does not contravene the formal proscription on political partisanship in the organisation's statutes. One SH Terate leader explained:

> The leadership of the organisation says members are free to vote for whoever they choose; there is no special instruction. Except, well, if there is a leader, if there is somebody who asks for help from the central leadership, you know. But then it won't be the general

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> chairperson who sends out the instruction, just certain people, so that nobody thinks the chairperson is siding with any particular party.[8]

Anwar Yadi, a prominent figure from SH Winongo, made a similar point:

> Basically, SH Winongo is not allowed to locate itself under any particular political umbrella or be part of any stream. But when it so happens that there is a people's festival [that is, an election] then indeed there will be some party people who use SH people. But that's quite alright, because it's just the individuals. If you act in the name of the organisation and say that SH Winongo is following one of the parties, that's not allowed.[9]

This is the general pattern through which social organisations get involved in supporting a particular party or candidate, and it is a pattern which sometimes enables different people within the same organisation to back different candidates. Something similar happens, too, with informal organisations, such as *paguyuban* (a broad category of non-formal interest-based associations). One such organisation that was targeted by many candidates was Gapoktan (Gabungan Kelompok Tani, Alliance of Farmers' Groups), an organisation that brought together many of the small farmers' groups that are found at the village level and which are basically self-help groups, typically consisting of 20 to 30 persons, organised to share agricultural tasks, and often being the recipients of government assistance programmes. Candidates tried to approach informal groups like this also via their leaders, but treated those leaders merely as an entry point. Most candidates would then follow up such contacts with gifts of assistance packages such as seedlings and fertiliser, and making "transport money" payments to members at the meetings they held.

Finally, another variation in how candidates organised their networking might be thought of as a strategy of "territorial dominance". The outline of success team structures presented above makes clear that all candidates used a territorial approach in organising their campaigns.

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8 Interview, Sutoyo, 10 Apr. 2014.

9 Interview, Anwar Yadi, 19 Apr. 2014.

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In some cases, candidates took this logic further and tried to completely dominate a particular location, including by denying access to rival candidates and their teams. Many candidates viewed this strategy as particularly effective. They would only try this strategy in an area which they believed represented—or potentially represented—a personal "base".

For this strategy to work, the candidate would work closely with both informal community leaders and formal leaders (such as the village, RW and RT heads) in the location. If they reached a deal to "guarantee" the votes of that location for the candidate, the candidate would then try to "quarantine" it from rivals by targeting it with donations or assistance packages of some sort—typically funds for road repairs or other infrastructure, money for the mosque or *musholla*, or other club goods. The logic was that this assistance—and the endorsement of the community leaders—would win local residents over to the candidate, and that those local leaders would then be reluctant to open access to their community to rival candidates. This strategy would come unstuck, however, if any significant leaders in the community concerned opposed the deal, or had conflicting loyalties.

PATTERNS OF PATRONAGE POLITICS

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In Madiun, virtually all candidates distributed patronage, whether as club goods, pork barrel spending or individual vote buying. Before we examine these one by one, we should make it clear that not all politics was patronage-based. For example, there also were candidates who talked programmatically—in other words, they promised they would work to ensure the local government allocated funds for programmes that would be distributed to entire categories of persons using criteria that were open and transparent, rather than contingent upon votes.[10] For example, one PKB incumbent made much of his past achievements in boosting

[10] Susan C. Stokes, "Pork, by Any Other Name ... Building a Conceptual Scheme of Distributive Politics", paper presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, 3–6 Sept. 2009, p. 10, available at: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1449057.

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funds available for religious bodies in the district, and for increasing district budgetary allocations for emergency infrastructure programmes in villages.[11] Candidates rarely, however, relied on programmatic politics exclusively, but combined it with patronage.

Club goods were distributed by candidates who approached social associations in pursuit of votes from their members. Some candidates were willing to go far in the pursuit of the big organisations. One PDI-P candidate, for example, explained that he had bought land for a *padepokan* (a training centre-cum-office) for a SH Terate branch in Madiun subdistrict, placing a deposit in 2004–05 and only paying it off in 2010.[12] A Gerindra candidate showed his commitment to a group of his supporters from the same organisation by promising that he would pay them Rp 1 million per month for two years if elected.[13]

Pork barrel projects were primarily used by incumbents, who could direct government-funded projects toward particular locations where they believed they had supporters. Nevertheless, I also came across several examples of candidates who privately funded such gifts, ranging from a Gerindra candidate who bought televisions for neighbourhood guard posts or a PDI-P candidate who paid for street lighting and lighting in a village cemetery to a PKB candidate who paid for *musholla* renovations.[14] Candidates who did not use this approach did so either because they could not afford it, or because they did not believe it provided value for money in terms of votes. This brings us back to the point made earlier about strategies of territorial domination: pork barrel spending could be effective if it occurred alongside cooperation from village authorities or other influential community figures. One success team member working for a Gerindra candidate in electoral district II recalled a case in his village:

> People in RT IX asked for 40 sacks of cement and 2 trucks full of sand. So I took [the candidate] there myself. But he asked them: "I

[11] Interview, 21 Mar. 2014.

[12] Interview, 26 Mar. 2014.

[13] Interview, 18 Mar. 2014.

[14] Interviews, 18 Mar. 2014; 26 Mar. 2014; 17 Apr. 2014.

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> want to give you that much but can you guarantee the votes from your polling booth?" There were 275 votes in that booth. He only wanted 100, but the person who he was dealing with there wasn't confident ... so he still has not given any of those donations.[15]

In this case, the deal fell apart not simply because those making the request could not provide the requested guarantee: they could not do so, it turned out, because the RT head was working in the success team of another candidate.

Almost all candidates engaged in vote buying. They were relatively open about this to me as a researcher: almost all explained that they would distribute payments to the people whose names their success teams had collected. The local term for these payments was *sangu*, a Javanese word meaning pocket money, or the food or other supplies taken when going on a trip. Payments ranged from Rp 20,000 to Rp 50,000 per voter, with no significant difference between the two electoral districts. With virtually all candidates engaging in the practice, there were no noticeable differences between candidates from Islamic and nationalist parties, those from large and small parties, or incumbents and first-timers. And though many people claimed that the key to political success was a candidate's personal qualities and reputation, no candidate I came across was so confident that he or she was willing to stake their chances on their personal attributes alone: all tried to lock in their prospect of victory by also distributing *sangu* to voters.

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For example, one PPP candidate in electoral district I explained that he was preparing *sangu* at a rate of Rp 10,000–20,000 for people on the lists his *kader* had supplied (he ended up paying Rp 25,000 a head). Those same *kader* had the job of distributing the cash. When I interviewed him, he was hoping he would be able to enter into a tandem arrangement with a provincial and central candidate so that they could together increase the amounts distributed to each recipient by Rp 10,000.[16] This did not happen, and I met one of his *kader* after election day who confirmed that he had distributed envelopes containing

[15] Confidential interview, 18 Mar. 2014.

[16] Confidential interview, 26 Mar. 2014.

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Rp 25,000, which the candidate raised himself. This was insufficient, and he was defeated by another PPP candidate who distributed Rp 50,000 to each voter. The *kader* attributed the loss to this gap.[17]

A first-time candidate from Gerindra in Madiun III also explained he was preparing *sangu* in the vicinity of Rp 20,000–30,000 per voter, with an additional Rp 10,000 that would be contributed by a provincial Gerindra candidate. This meant his *kader* would be distributing Rp 40,000 per envelope. "You can't get around that here," he said, "no way."[18] The only candidate I interviewed before the poll who said he would not engage in vote buying was a senior PKB candidate in Madiun I—but I later interviewed a *kyai* who acted as one of his brokers who said that he had distributed Rp 30,000 per head on this candidate's behalf.[19]

The brokers gained materially from participating in these networks of distribution. They usually received an envelope containing the standard payment, as well as additional fees when distributing *sangu.* Success team members also typically received payments ranging from Rp 30,000 to Rp 150,000 when attending team coordinating meetings. When they deposited voter lists with team coordinators, they also usually received Rp 25,000 to Rp 50,000. If the candidate was elected, he or she typically gathered all success team members and *kader* and gave them gifts, either goods, cash, or both.

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Vote buying feels like an accepted part of local culture in Madiun. Its roots can be traced to village-head elections, where vote buying has been practised for many years. According to Anwar Soleh Azzarkoni, the head of the district General Election Commission, however, the practice also has cultural roots.[20] Candidates feel inadequate, or embarrassed, if they seek the support of voters without giving something in exchange. This attitude is an extension of local beliefs that it is impolite to visit someone's house, especially if you are seeking their help, without bringing a small gift. Accordingly, candidates who visit their constituents' homes but bring nothing will be labelled as *pelit*—stingy—and, once that label

[17] Confidential interview, 19 Apr. 2014.

[18] Confidential interview, 18 Mar. 2014.

[19] Confidential interview, 17 Apr. 2014.

[20] Interview, Anwar Soleh Azzarkoni, 20 Mar. 2014.

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sticks, it is difficult to gain popular support. It is also accepted practice that when one *sowan*—makes a respectful visit—to a community leader's home, one should bring something.

Accordingly, none of my informants could name a significant local community leader or religious figure who refused to be involved in vote buying. On the contrary, many of them played brokerage roles. For example, one respected *kyai* in the Sawahan subdistrict explained that he personally coordinated the distribution of cash in his area for a PKB candidate. There was no indication at all that this *kyai* was particularly greedy. On the contrary, he did not try to seek government assistance to build his *pesantren*. That he was somewhat reluctant to discuss his role distributing *sangu* was simply because he knew it was illegal. He did not feel any guilt at what he had done because he felt he had not contravened any social norms or committed a sin.[21] I did, however, meet one PKB candidate who believed that it was wrong to give money to voters. However, he still did so after receiving advice from his *kyai* that it was only a minor sin that could be erased by way of reciting the *istighfar* prayer, seeking forgiveness from God. Accordingly, he felt he could carry out vote buying without experiencing a conflict with his conscience.[22]

This tradition can also be used to explain the embarrassment that success team members feel when their candidates are perceived as acting ungenerously, for instance by failing to distribute *sangu*. Take the story of Bejo (not his real name), a success team member from Saradan subdistrict, who was asked by a national DPR candidate to pull together a meeting of people from the area as potential village-level brokers. Bejo is not at all a person who is obsessed with making money. But when the candidate failed to provide money to the people he had invited, Bejo felt humiliated. He understood that the candidate did not want to engage in money politics (he was a rarity), but as a field operator he knew that nobody would want to come to such a meeting if they thought they were not going to receive a payment. Moreover, without providing money, his own credibility as a broker would decline, and he would be the target of mockery:

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[21] Confidential interview, 17 Apr. 2014.

[22] Confidential interview, 7 Apr. 2014.

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> To vote for someone without getting any *sangu*, that's hard here, brother. Someone once sent me an SMS accusing me of running a "*partai tletong*" [cow dung party], when I brought together people from 15 villages to discuss them becoming *kader* ... but then it turned out they only got food, there was no petrol money. So then people turned on me ... I thought there would be envelopes with cash in the snack boxes—even if it was only Rp 10,000 or Rp 20,000 to cover people's petrol. People would salute that. But there was nothing. And just recently he [the candidate] rang me again: "How's it going brother? Are the kids ready?" [I replied:] "What do you mean ready? Ready to do what? These people don't have any trust in you now, sir."[23]

Just as "stingy" candidates could harm the reputation of their team members, so could "generous" candidates assist them. Local social norms view positively rich people who are charitable (*dermawan*), and so it can be a source of prestige to be associated with a candidate who is not only wealthy but also generous in providing donations to communities, social organisations and individual residents.

Of course, it should be stressed that vote buying in Madiun takes place in a context of considerable social inequality. As Nathan Allen explains, "low levels of economic development or sharp levels of economic inequality produce an environment conducive to personalized campaigns based on direct exchange relationships".[24] Candidates in Madiun explicitly targeted poorer voters for vote buying: a payment of Rp 25,000 or Rp 50,000 might not mean much to a middle-class voter, but it would be highly valued by somebody earning Rp 50,000 to Rp 75,000 for a hard day's labour. Many poorer voters I met explained how much they looked forward to receiving *sangu*. Even so, they were often quite cynical about candidates—believing legislators did little that was valuable for them except at election times. They also knew that

[23] Confidential interview, 18 Mar. 2014.

[24] Nathan W. Allen, "Diversity, Patronage, and Parties: Parties and Party System Change in Indonesia", PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2012, p. 147. See also Susan C. Stokes, Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno and Valeria Brusco, *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 152–73.

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candidates needed them for their votes, and believed that they thus had power not only to expect, but also to demand, cash.

Candidates in Madiun seemed trapped in a cycle of vote buying. They all realised that it was all but impossible to win elections without distributing money; even building an effective success team to reach down to voters needed large cash injections. Most candidates agreed that cash payments to voters and fees for success team members were their greatest campaign expenses. Yet few were confident that their vote-buying efforts alone were enough to secure victory. They all knew that their rivals were also preparing to distribute cash: this made it imperative for them to do the same, but it also made the outcome of their own efforts far from certain. Not surprisingly, all candidates believed this situation was unhealthy. They would all prefer, they said, elections without money politics, but none could take the risk of being the first to try. As soon as one candidate buys the vote, the rest follow.

On the other hand, no candidate believed that vote buying was the sole determinant of electoral success: nor could it be, when all candidates took part. With all candidates distributing money, other factors such as a candidate's personal reputation, party affiliation, the support of influential community leaders and links to social networks were often critical. Even so, if other candidates were distributing cash, who could be confident that they could be elected on the strength of such factors alone? This was the fear that gripped candidates, and made them participate in vote buying, no matter how excellent their qualities as a candidate. Vote buying was simply to neutralise the money power of one's rivals.

But there *was* one factor that could make vote buying fail: the brokers. Brokers played the key role in connecting candidates and voters.[25] It was they who knew conditions at the grassroots, including which voters had already made their political choices and who would be amenable to persuasion. This asymmetrical share in the control of knowledge between candidates and brokers provides the latter with

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[25] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*; Edward Aspinall, "When Brokers Betray: Clientelism, Social Networks, and Electoral Politics in Indonesia", *Critical Asian Studies* 46, 4 (2014): 545–70.

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opportunities to gain personal profit. Candidates had to rely on brokers and their superior grassroots knowledge and connections, but this meant brokers could expropriate part of the money or goods they were supposed to pass to voters.

Seen from the outside, the success team structure seems like a site of close collaboration between brokers and candidates. Viewed up close, this harmonious image falls to pieces. The collaboration is shot through with distrust and deceit. A Gerindra candidate in Madiun I put it bluntly: "Candidates have to get ready to be cheated."[26] A PDI-P candidate in the same electoral district expressed his lack of faith in his own success team: "There is no way those kids are just trying to help me honestly and without expecting any reward."[27]

A story of a broker in Saradan subdistrict illustrates the situation. Dwipa (not his real name) has been a youth leader in his village. Whenever an election happens—whether it is a legislative election, a village head election, or a *bupati* or gubernatorial election—he is always part of the action. During the 2014 legislative election he acted as a success team member for six candidates simultaneously: two from Gerindra, one from Hanura, two from PKS and one from Partai Demokrat (the Demokrat candidate was the only one running for a provincial seat; the other five were competing against each other at the district level). As voting day approached, he had Rp 2,800,000 to carry out vote buying for five different candidates. He distributed only about Rp 1 million. In my meetings with him, he repeatedly laughingly referred to the election as a *pesta rakyat*—a people's festival, or party: "Time for the people to party" ("*Saatnya rakyat berpesta*"). By attending various success team meetings for five candidates (one of the Gerindra candidates did not use a success team, but instead had contacted Dwipa directly) he reckoned he had made an additional Rp 1 million in "petrol money" fees. Add the money he skimmed from his vote-buying responsibilities, and he had enough to put down a deposit and pay the first two instalments on a new motorcycle (it was parked in the corner of his front room when I visited him after the election).

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[26] Confidential interview, 26 Mar. 2014.

[27] Ibid.

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Of course, there were also brokers who worked honestly for their candidates. These were typically those who were tied to the candidate through a party or personal relationship. One PDI-P *kader* I met not only did not skim off money from vote buying but he also returned envelopes if he could not locate the recipient: "And if from the 15 [I was targeting] there were some who didn't seem convincing, well, I wouldn't give them the money either. I'd return it. Or I'd find someone else I could give it to."[28]

Overall, then, we can conclude that vote-buying success depended on brokers. With profit-oriented brokers, vote buying often failed, because cash simply did not go beyond their own hands. But in the hands of loyal and honest brokers, it could be successfully conducted.

CONCLUSION

Electoral dynamics in Madiun show that an open-list PR system such as that practised in Indonesia, especially in conditions of social inequality where prominent individuals are expected to show charitable concern for others, can give rise to highly personalised and patronage-based political competition. However, although most candidates in the district stressed their personal connection with voters, in the end they depended on brokers: people who could connect them with voters and ensure that their patronage did not go to waste. If candidates wanted to win over voters from within a certain social network—such as in one of Madiun's famous *pencak silat* schools—then they needed to first win over some of its leaders prior to delivering "donations" to the school. If they wanted to dominate a particular location, they needed to obtain the support of influential local figures, or their pork barrel spending there would be wasted. If they wanted to deliver cash payments to individual voters, they had to distribute it via brokers who knew the recipients personally.

As a result, candidates were at the mercy of brokers. In a climate of general cynicism about elected representatives, not a few brokers

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[28] Confidential interview, 7 Apr. 2014.

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felt it was reasonable to deceive their candidates, work for more than one simultaneously, or keep most of their money for themselves. They often justified such actions by saying they were engaging in rough social justice, redistributing wealth from rich or corrupt politicians—even if the beneficiaries were primarily themselves rather than the poor. In this way, Indonesian democracy has given rise to a new parasitical layer at the heart of the body politic.

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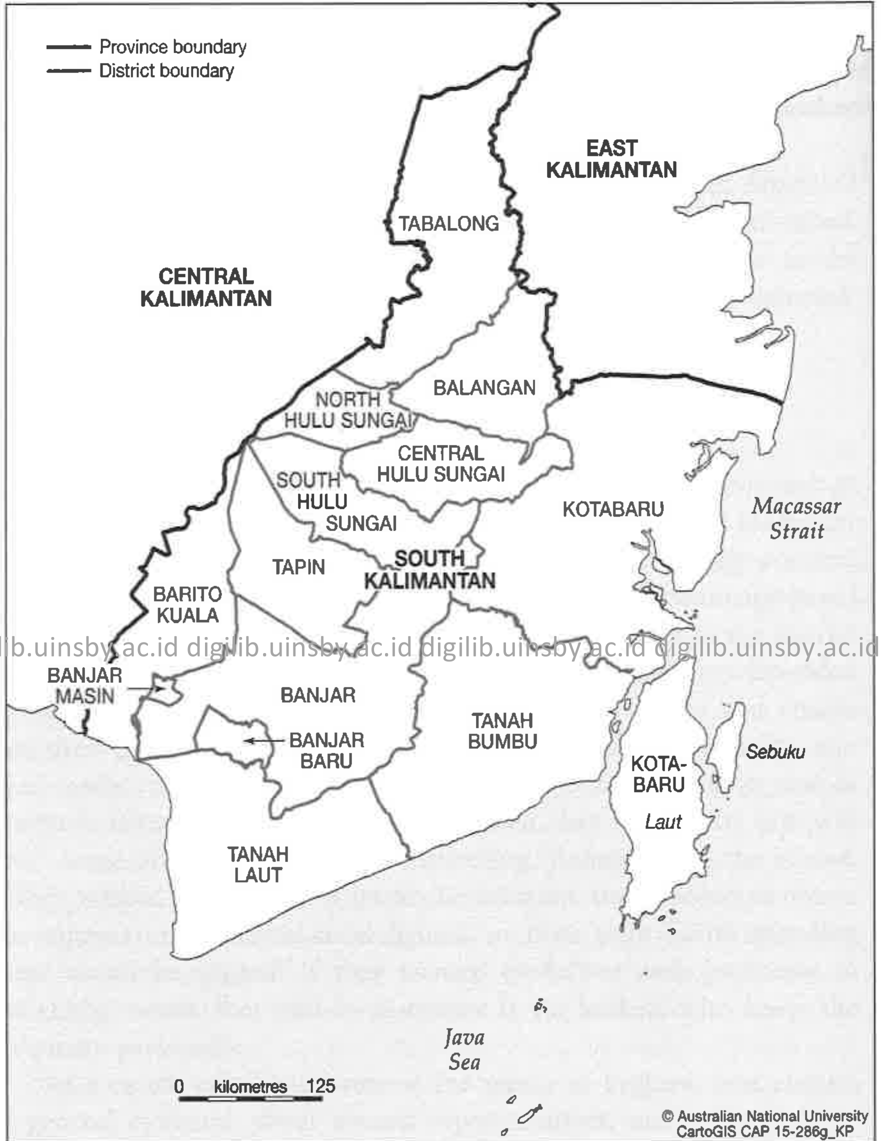
Map of South Kalimantan



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