

# THE *BRONDOT* STRATEGY: ACHIEVING VICTORY WITHOUT VOTE BUYING IN INDONESIA'S LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Rofiq, Nafisah

Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang  
*rofiq@walisongo.ac.id*

## Abstrak

This study employs a qualitative method with a case study approach on village head elections in two villages in Central Java to explore the role of the brondot strategy in democratization. This strategy utilizes rewards, primordial issues, and political clientelism to establish political hegemony, aiding incumbents in winning contests and avoiding significant competition, with hopes of victory without buying votes. Brondot is closely linked to familial political networks, leveraging biological relationships for network tactic control. Family's role in political elections and generational inheritance influences this strategy. The study provides insights into local political position elections without significant expenses, relevant in Indonesia where buying votes is a common practice.

**Keywords:** *brondot, local democracy, vote buying*

## Abstrak

Studi ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan studi kasus pada pemilihan kepala desa di dua desa di Jawa Tengah untuk mengeksplorasi peran strategi brondot dalam demokratisasi. Strategi ini memanfaatkan hadiah, isu primordialisme, dan klienelisme politik untuk membangun hegemoni politik, membantu incumbent memenangkan kontestasi, dan menghindari persaingan besar dengan harapan meraih kemenangan tanpa membeli suara. Brondot terkait erat dengan jaringan politik keluarga, memanfaatkan hubungan biologis untuk kontrol taktik jaringan. Peran keluarga dalam pemilihan politik dan warisan generasi memengaruhi strategi ini. Studi ini memberikan wawasan pada pemilihan posisi politik lokal tanpa perlu mengeluarkan banyak biaya, relevan di Indonesia yang sering kali mengalami praktik membeli suara.

**Kata kunci:** Brondot, Demokrasi Lokal, Pembelian Suara

**Article History:** *Received 16 December 2023, Revised: 20 December 2023, Accepted: 26 December 2023, Available online 30 December 2023*

## Introduction

The fall of the Soeharto regime in 1998 by a mass movement driven by students gave rise to two important agreements, namely democratization and decentralization. Both of these are assurances to prevent a fraudulent general election which is supported by the great power of the military and the entrenched bureaucracy with a very strong grip in the Soeharto era (1966-1998). Apart from that, no less important than the reform agreement is the holding of free, fair, and open general elections with their various dynamics. Elections have been used as an arena to fill key government positions at the national and local levels (Aspinall & Rohman, 2017, pp. 31-52). Authority that was previously centered on the power of the central government has now shifted to district governments with a total of around 500 district governments throughout Indonesia.

Scholars have devoted a lot of attention to understanding the development of democratization and devolution in Indonesia, such as Edward Aspinall and Ward Berenschot. These two academicians have conducted in-depth studies on local democratization in village head elections. Aspinall's study specifically explains how money politics and business elites in rural areas are the main weapons for their continued existence at the helm of power. Meanwhile, Berenschot's study illustrates how the grip of village heads who come from wealthy families can maintain their continuity of power from generation to generation.

Village Law No. 6 of 2014 has expanded decentralization by expanding village autonomy. This law provides a sizable budget for the village. The central government injected 72 trillion rupiah (about \$4.8 billion) into village budgets in 2020 (Sumarto, 2021). The size of the village budget obtained from the central government aims to encourage progress and development of the government at the village level so as to reduce its dependence on the central government. However, the large amount of the budget obtained by the village government actually has an impact on the development of democratization, especially the motivation of

elites to be able to lead villages, in order to be able to manage such a large village budget. As a result, the practice of massive vote buying is carried out by village head candidates to gain political support from the village community.

Therefore, this article uses two research models. First, it examines how democracy transforms village elites and their interactions with the *supravillage* power structure that is a village hegemony with various issues to strengthen the continuity of power from generation to generation. Second, by expanding the study of Indonesia's political transformation, we investigate the impact of democratization on village head elections and identify campaign models used by candidates without vote buying. This empirical field mapping is expected to answer the questions above. The research is conducted in two village head elections in a district in Central Java Province.

After observing the political structure of the village during the Soeharto and reform eras, the research is continued using a case study approach by analyzing what the incumbent candidates have done in the arena of village head election contestation. There is an interesting microcosm of political dynamics. The breakdown of centralized control mechanisms has opened up a space for political contestants who are sometimes unruly in villages. However, as has been widely debated with regard to national, provincial, and district politics, the forces best positioned to take advantage of this new opening are the village elites who are usually monopolized by members of the established families and most of the landowners who have long dominated administrative positions (Berenschot, Capric, & Dhianc, 2021, pp. 126–146). In several cases over generations, these established elites have lost their monopoly on village power. Moreover, in order to maintain their grip on village politics, the elites have had to invest more financial and political resources in the electoral competitions.

The massive practice of vote buying in village head elections is also a concern in this research. Furthermore, village elites,

especially incumbents who come from established families, use the *brondot* strategy for village hegemony with various issues that continue to be developed, both issues related to wealth and the high costs of contestation, as well as issues of family networks originating from descendants with the majority of families. These two issues are then used to intimidate other candidates into discouragement from advancing to compete in the village head election contestation arena. No less important than issues of primordialism are village clientelistic political practices. When rivalries are deemed unable to block various campaign strategies, the incumbent chooses and determines rivalry puppets that come from the same family elements to become competitors in the contestation arena. With a rivalry originating from the same patron client, the practice of vote buying can be avoided. Instead, the candidates provide gifts with various types in large forms, spending Rp60 million (around US\$4,000) with prizes ranging from bicycles, refrigerators, TVs, cellphones, clothing, food, and others.

This article specifically examines the *brondot* strategy in the village head election campaign. The *brondot* strategy prioritizes family political networks and is not limited to families who have financial ability, but biological blood ties that have been going on for a long time with primordial ties to strengthen power to one particular clan so that power does not shift to other clans. They support each other with their financial strength which is “jointly responsible” if needed when the practice of vote buying is carried out by their competitors, but at the same time when there is no rivalry, they make family agreements periodically, in only two periods after which they alternate in rotation with other family members, such as brothers, sisters, children, or even one’s own wife.

Finally, the question of rearranging village democracy, especially regarding changes in the nature of elites and their integration in the established *supravillage* power structures (Ito, 2017, pp. 51–67) can be answered. During the New Order period,

the study of power relations determined that village leaders consolidate privileged positions largely by integrating themselves into state-centered bureaucratic structures and patronage networks. These findings indicate that the strength of the *brondot* in the political structure in the countryside is very decisive. The incumbent closes the space and forces the villagers not to be able to vote for the alternative candidate they want. To keep the villagers willing to go to the polls, the incumbent then works with the village head election committee to give door prizes, so that the residents are willing to come to the polls.

### **Elections With Prizes In Two Villages**

The research was conducted in two villages located in one sub-district in the easternmost northern district of Central Java Province. The researchers stayed for several months to study the elections of village heads simultaneously in 2019. The locations of the two villages studied were not too far away, only about 10 km with different demographic conditions. One village with a population of 3,900 people has different social characteristics with various professions including fishermen, farmers, traders, government officials, and private employees. Meanwhile, one more village with a population of around 1,700 people on average is dominated by residents with the majority working as farmers and the rest are residents who have a profession as traders.

The research was conducted in 2019 and took about three months. Some researchers worked in the field, some conducted data collection and information regarding the village head election process in two villages located in one sub-district, and some also conducted interviews with several key informants and main informants. The key informants were candidates in two villages. In addition, interviews were conducted with the volunteers and their leading advisers, as well as village officials, religious leaders, and other informal leaders, not to mention ordinary citizens. Informal conversations with many residents in the two villages and witnessing important events ranging from the campaign process to voting were also carried out.

The locus of this research was Sendang Mulya Village and Sampung Village. These two villages are located on a coastal plain that stretches along the north coast of Java, in the eastern part of Central Java Province. These villages consist of 13 neighborhood units with a very dense population when viewed from its geographical area, especially Sendang Mulya Village which has an area of around 330 hectares adjacent to Sampung Village which has an area of half that of Sendang Mulya Village and is only about 10 km between the two.

The election of village heads in these two villages coincided with the election of village heads in other villages. In Rembang Regency, village head elections (*pilkades*) were held simultaneously on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019. This Pilkades was attended by 237 villages throughout Rembang Regency. Based on Rembang Regent Regulation Number 24 of 2019 concerning Procedures for Village Head Elections, the 2019 village head elections in Rembang Regency were different from the previous village head elections which were held by several villages only alternately from one village to another.

Meanwhile, in Sarang Sub-district, village head elections were held simultaneously with 19 villages out of a total of 23 villages there. Two villages were considered to have conducted village head elections that were unique compared to other villages. The uniqueness of Sendang Mulyo Village and Sampung Village in holding this village democracy party was enlivened with various kinds of prizes, ranging from bicycles, TVs, refrigerators, washing machines, gas stoves, tapes, fans, and other electronic goods, as well as prizes in the form of fashion items, ranging from clothes, pants, sarongs, shoes, and the like.

This kind of prize democracy is a new breakthrough in political events. The uniqueness of this kind of village democracy event has never been seen before in a people's democracy party. Politics without rivalry and politics without hostility is presented in a family manner in these two villages. These two villages have presented the village head elections as a people's democracy

party, where the village head candidates gave various door prizes with a fantastic number of prizes in the form of bicycles (12 items), refrigerators (6 items), TVs (6 items), stoves (20 items), fans (16 items), and washing machines (6 items). The method of drawing is that voters who come to the voting location are given a kind of coupon card to be drawn after the votes are counted.

Various criticisms were then made by influential village elites. Youths and religious leaders accused the incumbent of electing a village head by distributing prizes as an attempt to deceive the population. They accused it of being a political trick done by an incumbent who had an ambition to become a village head again. The incumbent attempted to close the chance for competitors from other clans. Village power is not surrendered freely to other people who are not from one's own family. Therefore, various efforts were made by the incumbent so that power would not shift to other families. In Sendang Mulya Village, for example, the competitor of Muhamad Rofi'i, one of the incumbent candidates, was Ahmad Shodiq, who was his own nephew. Then in Sampung Village, Slamet Riyadi had to compete with Siti Kunjaimi, his own wife, who also had the status of an incumbent.

The phenomenon of political parties in these two villages raises the question of why in these two villages none of the leaders have the courage to register themselves as a candidate to compete with the village status quo power holders who have led the village many times. What are the factors that trigger the lack of interest from other families to run as candidates for village heads? From the information collected, it is known that the incumbents are difficult to overthrow because they have quite a number of family networks with various professional backgrounds. The incumbent families are considered quite influential and have high solidity among them. In addition, the incumbent families have financial capabilities above the average village population. The family network is referred to with the term *brondot*. The word *brondot* comes from the local Javanese

language which means 'closer to a family community that has been built with strong solidarity because of biological ties'.

The *brondot* phenomenon in these two villages is interesting. When *brondot* is part of the strategy of incumbents who can determine a winning map in a certain place, the number of *brondot* can minimize friction between candidate supporters. *Brondot* solidity is also able to build and collect capital for candidacy costs from the contributions of their relatives so that the expenses for funding village head candidates can be jointly borne by the families who are considered as one unit in the *brondot*. Apart from that, the number of *brondot* becomes a strategy for village head candidates to minimize the opportunity for other candidates. Incumbents in these two villages use the *brondot* strategy to gain power at a low cost. As with the simultaneous election of village heads in Rembang Regency, in studies conducted in the field, it was found that the majority of village head election performances were full of vote buying practices, as only a few areas did not use money politics such as in Pandean Village which is in the middle of the city of Rembang.

The election of the village head with prizes began with the idea of the incumbent village heads when there were no more opponents who were interested in running, they would push puppet candidates from their own relatives to be their opponents in the village head elections. This is a response to Rembang Regent Regulation Number 24 of 2019, namely that every village head election must have at least two village head candidates. This rule has closed the chance for a single candidate to compete against an empty box. If a village only has one pair of candidates, then it cannot be juxtaposed with an empty box. Therefore, every incumbent who feels that he/she is very strong and no other candidate will dare to run against him/her, it is almost certain that these incumbents will encourage candidates from their own families, alias puppet candidates, to compete with them. This candidate is installed to meet the specified requirement. Puppet candidates tend to be passive; they do not work for themselves,



but actually they work for incumbents who promote them as candidates.

These puppet candidates are put forward because there are no candidates outside the incumbent's family. There is an opinion that the incumbent has a large number of *brondot*, so it is very difficult for candidates from other families to beat him/her. In addition, incumbents are still considered to have a good track record for the population and have never made it difficult for all public needs and services desired by their citizens, for example, regarding the processing of KTP (Indonesian identity card), certificates for health service needs, and the behavior of incumbents who have are flawless in the eyes of villagers, so that the incumbents are still considered fit to lead the villages for generations.

In this village head election with prizes, the average incumbent spends around 150 million rupiah or (\$10,000). This number is relatively low compared to village head elections elsewhere. In Rembang Regency, the village head elections cost an average of around 500 million — 1 billion rupiah (\$33,000-\$66,000). With tough competition, these candidates spend a lot of money which is used as daily operational costs starting from open house fees and other costs. The biggest costs for these candidates are used for vote buying purposes.

The researchers also found puppet candidates after obtaining information from residents in Sampung Village. Slamet Riyadi, the former Head of Sampung Village, ran against Siti Kunjaimi, who is none other than his own wife. Riyadi's wife got number 1 as an incumbent candidate. For the 2019 period, supporters, especially voters from close relatives, were instructed to vote for Slamet Riyadi because for Riyadi the third period was the last one. Meanwhile, his wife is predicted to replace him again when Riyadi retires as village head for the third time. Riyadi's wife still has the opportunity for two more periods based on the applicable regulations. Through the Riyadi family's success team, the villagers were directed to choose candidate

number 2, namely the husband. From a total of 1,356 voters, Riyadi had 1,163 votes, while his wife Kunjaimi received 143 votes. The prizes that were given by the two villages and the voting results in the 10 villages are as follows:

**Table 1: Prizes and Percentage of Votes Acquired by Puppet Candidates and Established Family Candidates**

N o.	Villa ge	Num ber of Voter s	Num ber of Voter s who Cam e	Names of the Goods and the Numbe r of Prizes	Numbe r and Percen tage of Puppet Candid ates	Numbe r and Percent age of Votes Acquire d by Establis hed Familie s
1	Senda ng Mulya	2,918	2,609	TV (2), Mounta in Bike (4), Mini Bike (6), Refriger ator (4), Washin g Machin e (4), Gas Stove (8), Electric Fan (12), Umbrell a (20)	256	2,255
2	Samp ung	1,506	1,356	TV (4), Mounta in Bike (12),	143	1,163

				Mini Bike (6), Washing Machine (6) Refrigerator (6), Gas Stove (20), Electric Fan (16), Umbrella (20)		
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Source: 2019 Village Head Election Committee

**Table 2: Background of the Contestants and Incumbent Vote Acquisition**

No.	Village Election	Backgrounds of the <i>Brondot</i> Contestants	Obtaining Contestant Participants	Incumbent Wins/Loses?
1	Sendang Mulyo	Rofi'i the incumbent candidate won in the 2013, 2019 village head election, while Shodiqin is his own nephew	1. AHMAD SHODIQIN (256) 2. MUHAMMAD ROFI'I (2.255)	Won
2	Sampung	Riadi, a trader and husband of Kunjaimi, the incumbent	1. SLAMET RIADI (1.163) 2. SITI KUNJAIMI (143)	Lost, Won, in 2013

		candidate won the 2007 village head election, 2019		
3	Tawang Rejo	Tasripin the incumbent won in 2013, while Umar won in 2007, 2019	1. H. UMAR (787) 2. TASRIPIN (567)	Lost, Won in 2013
4	Baturno	Wasir was the incumbent, while Azizah was the new person of the husband who worked as a trader	1. H.WASIR (427) 2. NUR AZIZAH (510)	Lost
5	Kalipang	Jamil was the incumbent, while Zaman was a trader with a <i>brondot</i> network from an established family	1. JAMIL (1.398) 2. KHOIRUZZAMAN (2.011)	Lost
6	Gunung Mulyo	Cholil was the incumbent, while Alfian was a highly respected religious figure ( <i>santri</i> ) who had an	1. JALALUDDIN (86) 2. MIXE MUS ALFIAN (790) 3. A. CHOLIL (714)	Lost

		extensive <i>brondot</i> network		
7	Banowan	The incumbent, Tasriatun, came from a wealthy family and had an established <i>brondot</i> network	1. TAMRIN (117) 2. KODRIYAH (710) 3. HJ. TASRIATUN (890)	Won
8	Lodan Wetan	Sujito was the incumbent candidate, while Ngibat, the new candidate, won the 2007 village head election	1. SUJITO (509) 2. IRSYATUL NGIBAT (1.302) 3. FAIDUR RIHMAN (537)	Lost
9	Lodan Kulon	Sutiyono was the incumbent candidate, while the new candidate Ghufron won the 2007 village head election	1. SUTIYARNO (1.415) 2. GHUFRON (1.464)	Lost, Ghufron Won 2007, 2019
10	Bajing Madura	Mutakin and Achmad were new candidates, but Achmad had a	1. KHAIRUL MUTAKIN (268) 2. AWALUDDIN ACHMAD (849)	-

		massive <i>brondot</i> network, from several village heads of Achmad's <i>brondot</i> clan to the head of Aini village for generations		
--	--	---	--	--

Source: 2019 Village Head Election Committee

This study did not actually focus on researching vote buying, but in the field it was found that there was the practice of vote buying in simultaneous village head elections in Rembang Regency with extraordinary numbers. The highest amount in village head elections was 1.2 million rupiah (\$80) with a turnout of around 663 votes. According to one of the volunteers who did not want to be named, the fantastic number of buying and selling votes was triggered by the intense competition between each candidate. The candidates no longer considered the numbers. They were not concerned about the money. The most important aspect was about how their relative won the village head election. There were also those that were triggered by large village grants. The candidates already estimated the amount of village fund assistance to be obtained. The large amount of village funds triggered the majority of candidates to be willing to spend that much money to win the village head election contestation.

**Village Clientelism, Networks, And The Brondot Strategy**

Political clientelism is the practice of providing personal favors, jobs, contracts, welfare benefits, money, and the like in exchange for electoral support. The essence of political clientelism in Stokes' view, as cited by Aspinall and Berenschot, is quid pro quo, "something for something", or a "contingent exchange". This practice is usually carried out by politicians by offering benefits in the hope that the recipients will repay them

with political support, or in return for support given by previous voters (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019, p. 2). Village clientelism in a simple sense is often interpreted as a political exchange, in which a village head provides protection in exchange for votes or support from “clients”. In some political science literature, clientelism is work in exchange for votes (Robinson, 2013, pp. 260–291).

Clientelism is a contingency-based particularistic exchange practice. This method of contingent exchange thrives in several autocracies and democracies. It appears in various cultural contexts. Confronted with economic development, clientelism dissipates in some political contexts but adapts and survives in others. Clientelism exists in all countries. The forms needed are very broad and their political functions vary widely, but across time and place.

The clientelistic practice in the two villages studied refers to the way in which the village head distributes public works or special favors in return for electoral support. Most of these political practices revolve around jobs or positions; for example, village officials are elected by the village head, and the village head delegates village work to village elites. In addition, village clientelism became a means of finding work for friends in the village head's circle and for relatives who wished to gain access to various services provided by the village government. Some of the literature does not perfectly explain why the practice of clientelism takes the form of work, although implicitly this practice places more emphasis on the issue of commitment. It is a fact that the reversibility of job offers is part of its political appeal. The recipients cannot be sure that the “clientelistic deal” will be executed as no enforcement mechanism can be put in place.

In particular, the clientelistic practices in the villages that have been studied emphasize social networks between individuals and village elites in determining exchange practices that can be accounted for in a credible manner. In this context, it

is noted that the establishment of a patron-client relationship is not only based on mutual benefit but also to build social networks. Ethnic kinship and closeness are the most frequently used bases for network formation in addition to characterizing the types of inefficiencies produced by clientelistic politics.

In other studies, for example, as conducted by Berenschot, clientelism appears in countries with low productivity, such as in African countries and developing countries, including Indonesia. Due to the effect of working with low aggregate productivity or productivity with an average income level, the level of inequality in a country increases. The motivation of politicians to rule is very strong, while the management of power cannot be maximized so that it has an impact on the country's political instability and the fading of ideological values.

The clientelistic practice in developing countries, especially in Africa, thrives because in Africa the productivity level of the population is very low. It is precisely this clientelistic political practice that causes this country to become poor. As in Africa, Berenschot in his study in Indonesia also found the practice of political clientelism with its various types. Although this practice does not occur massively throughout the island of Java, especially in cities, clientelistic practices have become much more widespread, especially in eastern Indonesia.

In this study, clientelistic practices in two villages are divided into eight forms based on their resources. These eight forms consist of: (1) work contracts in the village, (2) work in the village, (3) village public services, (4) access to social welfare programs, (5) social assistance funds, (6) permits, (7) legal advocacy, and (8) money. This division is based on the definition of clientelism according to Berenschot, namely campaign funds and profits from the village are distributed based on their relationship to electoral support. This division can be a strong reference in seeing the many forms of clientelism which are often only attached to money. However, it should be noted that the definition of clientelism according to Berenschot is not enough to



describe clientelism as a two-way transaction, meaning that the clientelistic practice still focuses on the distribution.

It is this village clientelistic practice that has been practiced by the incumbents in the two villages studied, thus attracting the attention of the villagers to take sides and direct their support to the incumbents. The incumbents in these two villages have succeeded in driving the interest of the population towards an image of support for incumbents who are considered worthy of re-election. In the end, some of the incumbent competitors who intended to run as candidates for village head lacked confidence that they would be able to beat the incumbent in the village head election contestation. The image built by incumbents who have been polished with various positive images as strong candidates has succeeded in silencing the mentality of other residents to compete as candidates in the village head election.

Apart from village clientelism, what is no less important for incumbents is building networks. The network referred to in this study is a collection of certain connections between one group and another group that are joined as a whole regarding one's social behavior. A network is a particular social network of personal networks that are individual or group relations that are normative in nature such as workplaces, organizations, families, and others that provide a space for contradictions between those who are different. Apart from networking, solidarity is also part of the strategy to establish kinship relations, especially solidarity with one's own family. Family links in one house or outside of one house are a form of coalition of households that do not live together but are interrelated which is called *brondot*.

Therefore, a hypothesis called the '*brondot* regime' emerged in village government. This regime was generated by the consolidation of connected families to form village political power. A hypothesis was also developed by Mendras (2003) and Déchaux (2007) of the "new kinship regime". Mendras put forward the idea that a reorganization of kinship had taken place, marked by a decline in living with the family. However, it

does not break the main family chain. On the other hand, the nuclear family still plays an important role. Mendras stressed that the new kinship regime would take place in a sustainable manner with new faces.

In the study of Sociology, *brondot* is not just a biological blood relationship such as siblings, brothers-in-law, or family relationships between mothers and fathers in marriage. However, *brondot* in social practice can also be related to non-biological relationships such as *brondot* in business matters, socio-religious affairs, political affairs, globetrotting, war, and so on. This study found that *brondot* social practices were very prominent in several places that were considered marginal. In contrast, in places that are considered established, such as in metropolitan cities, social practices of *brondot* are usually less prominent. *Brondot* connections are more prominent in remote villages; if the welfare is lower, the level of kinship solidarity will be higher and stronger.

Therefore, the two villages studied were categorized as underdeveloped villages with low levels of welfare for their inhabitants. The average population of these villages work as fishermen and farmers, so that the *brondot* practice can be used to do something. Apart from just creating kinships, the practice of *brondot* can also influence other social practices towards the *brondot* itself. That is, *brondot* can be clarified by integrating fields related to other social fields with the study of kinship. Christian Bromberger, as quoted by Benoit (2006) in his study of Ghilan in Northwest Iran, stated that despite the different demographics and social transformations, the family remains the preferred social space for working together in business matters such as in finding a job and trading. Likewise in this study, it is clear that Rifa'i and Riyadi prefer trading partners who come from their own families, especially their biological relatives, brothers, sisters, nephews, or friends who come from the same village. This then shows that the family framework should not be

underestimated. *Brondot* is always framed in a family structure, both immediate and distant family members.

At this point, family memory is one of the factors controlling *brondot* network tactics. As is the case for the matrimonial strategy described by Bourdieu (1972), to understand the individual, the family plays a role in any kind of movement. Sometimes that movement goes back a generation or two. The practice of the *brondot* strategy of course implies a complex lineage of tactics, confrontations, and alliances to legitimize future tactics. Therefore, each individual is the recipient of the inheritance in which he will be involved. On the other hand, in the event of a failure or strained relationship, the consequences must be evaluated.

In Peter Schorder's study (2009) on political strategy, he divided it into two parts: offensive and defensive strategies. Relationships that are too close if tested by joint initiatives can result in divisions, so the nuclear family makes a community initiation or *brondot* association to be collected every year after Eid al-Fitr. This forum plays a role in reconnecting family ties that were cut off due to different problems. While in the two villages studied, it was found that some residents were incompatible with incumbents who came from relatives of the incumbents themselves. The mismatch stems from their business relationship. Some are caused by the distribution of unfair family inheritance and others. At first, their relationship was fine, but because of the division of business and family inheritance which was considered by one of their families to be unfair, the result was that the relationship between the two of them was not good. Strangely, even though their relationship is not good, their political choice remains with the incumbent because the incumbent is part of their own *brondot*.

In several other studies, *brondot* has been brought into political anthropology through analytical tactics such as the role of *brondot* in contemporary politics both from the aspects of language, economy, culture, and kinship politics. In the previous

discussion on the attention-grabbing *brondot* strategy, Muhammad Rofi'I and Slamet Riyadi were real subjects of the village head election *brondot* strategy study. The two of them have connected the family ties from a very simple family to a family that is quite reckoned with in the eyes of the villagers, especially in the realm of village politics. The *brondot* strategy is peronism that connects kinship ties in the family. Family relations that are loose become very strong because there is a political movement carried out by the incumbent through this strategy. Those who feel part of the *brondot* members are eager to fight for their candidate to be elected as the village head. The *brondot* strategy has also created village institutions as working members who do not see themselves as other people. From time to time, people who work in the village government say that their institution is like a "family" and when they do their jobs they are very serious in completing all the work that is their responsibility.

In the two village government institutions studied, more than 90 percent of the employees are affiliated with the incumbents. Village officials describe themselves, their families, village institutions, and the labor union itself as a family to emphasize how smooth their relationship with the incumbent is to become part of the *brondot*. In addition, the role of the family in village government work goes beyond kinship as family networks are the most widely used means of recruitment for work in the village. It has a long history, especially in the area of village-managed work.

## Conclusion

The *brondot* strategy is a technique used to realize a political ideal. To achieve the intended political goals, in-depth research was conducted on the *brondot* strategy in the village head election campaigns in two villages in the north eastern part of Central Java Province. The researchers also made analyses and conclusions regarding the *brondot* strategy. The *brondot* strategy is a new model for a campaign strategy in village head elections.

This strategy is very effectively designed with various approaches and issues, starting from the design of family solidarity that is connected in several places, integrating the issue of primordialism to village hegemony to village clientelistic practices.

This strategy has advantages and disadvantages from a political science perspective. One of the advantages of this strategy is that it encourages democratic parties to be carried out with a familial feel, and minimizes the chaos resulting from competition between factions that usually occurs in village head election contests. Apart from that, the practice of vote buying which has become a tradition in every village head election can be prevented by offering various door prizes, so that the citizens are still content to carry out the village democracy party. However, the other side of this strategy is not without flaws and weaknesses. The *brondot* strategy has reduced the paths and opportunities for residents to choose their leaders fairly. The residents are faced with two choices, namely choosing a puppet candidate or an incumbent who is not necessarily in accordance with their personal preference.

The *brondot* strategy has contributed to thinking about the development of modern democracy in Indonesia, especially regarding the development of local democracy. Finally, the researchers can conclude that this *brondot* strategy is a "New Strategy Model", although it is still being debated by scholars who are focused on the study of Political Science.

### Daftar Rujukan

- Antlöv, Hans. 2003, "*Village Government and Rural Development in Indonesia: The New Democratic Framework*." Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies 39 (2).
- Aspinall, Edward and Noor Rohman, 2017, *Village head elections in Java: Money politics and brokerage in the remaking of Indonesia's rural elite*, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 48(1), February 2017. 31 © The National

- University of Singapore, doi:10.1017/S0022463416-000461.
- Aspinall, Edward dan Berenschot Ward, 2019, *Demokrasi For Sale*, Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, Jakarta.
- Badan Pusat Statistik, <https://www.bps.go.id>.
- Benoit, Fliche, 2006, *Social practices and mobilisations of kinship: an introduction*, European Journal of Turkish Studies Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey.
- Berenschot, Ward, 2018, *The Political Economy of Clientelism: A Comparative Study of Indonesia's Patronage. Democracy*, Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, The Netherlands.
- Booth, David, and Diana Cammack. *Governance for Development in Africa: Solving Collective Action Problems*. London: Zed Books 2013.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 1972 'Les stratégies matrimoniales dans le système de reproduction', Les Annales ESC 27.
- Choi, Ina, and Yuki Fukuoka. 2015, "Co-Opting Good Governance Reform: The Rise of a Not-SoReformist Leader in Kebumen, Central Java." Asian Journal of Political Science 23, (1).
- Gibson, Edward L, 2005, "Boundary Control: Subnational Authoritarianism in Democratic Countries." World Politics 58 (1) 101–132.
- Gillian P. Hart, 1986, *Power, labor, and livelihood: Processes of change in rural Java* (Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hadiz, Vedi. 2010, *Localising Power in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia: A Southeast Asian Perspective*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hans Antlöv, 2019. 'Village government and rural development in Indonesia : The new democratic framework', Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies 39, 2 (2003).
- Ito, Takeshi, 2017, *Everyday Citizenship in Village Java. In Citizenship and Democratization in Southeast Asia*, edited by Ward Berenschot, Hank Schulte Nordholt, and Laurens Bakker, Leiden: Brill.

- Kenawas, Yoes. 2015. *"The Rise of Political Dynasties in a Democratic Society."* Unpublished Paper.
- Martin, Claude, 2002, *Les solidarités familiales : bon ou mauvais objet sociologique?* Debordeaux, Daniel; Strobel, Pierre (eds), *Les solidarités familiales en questions. Entraide et transmission*, Paris, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.
- McMann, Kelly. 2006, *Economic Autonomy and Democracy: Hybrid Regimes in Russia and Kyrgyzstan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mendras, Henri, 2003 *La seconde révolution française 1965-1984*, Paris, Gallimard.
- Muhtadi, Burhanudin, 2020, *Kuasa Uang ; Politik Uang Dalam Pemilu Pasca Orde Baru*, PT Gramedia, Jakarta.
- Robinson, James A. 2013, *The Political Economy of Clientelism*, Harvard University, Cambridge MA 02138, USA, *Scand. J. of Economics* 115(2).
- Sambodho, Prio. 2019, *"From Clients to Citizens? Democratization and Everyday Citizenship in a West Javanese Village."* PhD dissertation. University of Amsterdam.
- Schröder, Peter, 2009, *Strategi Politik*, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung : Jakarta.
- See, 2004, for example, Sven Cederroth, 'Traditional power and party politics in North Lombok, 1965–1999', in *Elections in Indonesia: The New Order and beyond*, ed. Hans Antlöv and Sven Cederroth (London: Routledge-Curzon).
- Sukarno W. Sumarto, 2021, *Akuntabilitas Dana Desa*, Link : <http://www.bpkp.go.id/jateng/konten/3544>.
- Tusalem, R. F., and Pe-Aguirre, J. J. 2013. The effects of political dynasties on effective democratic governance. *Asian Politics & Policy*, Volume 5, Number 3.
- Ward Berenschot, Wigke Capric and Devy Dhianc, 2021, *A quiet revolution? Village head elections and the democratization of rural Indonesia*, *Critical Asian Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 1, 126–146 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715-2021.1871852>.