

Surviving Election: Corruption and Transformation of Clientelism¹

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Abstract

This article discusses clientelism practice as a political machine to mobilise supports for the candidates of district head who were trapped in a corruption case. This research especially intended to answer the question why the incumbent candidate of district head who had become the suspect of cases of corruption, still got relatively significant votes. Although the incumbent failed to win in the pilkada (the election of the district head), the votes that they got became the reason to uncover the redistribution and infrastructure strategy that was used to muffle the image of the incumbent as a corrupt politician. The findings of this research indicated that supporting political parties used the corruption case as a momentum to change the pattern of clientelism, by transforming the personal loyalty to the party loyalty. The political party institutionally took a role as a patron, so that the personal dependency to the elites decreased, but also was directed to a wider variation of the use of public resources for the sake of mobilising support. By using this strategy, the coalition of political party in “tim sukses” maintained their solidarity as well as redeveloped the patron structure that was weakened by corruption cases. The strategy change used by “tim sukses” in reframing the corruption issues indicated the work of clientelism networking to justify the new construction about corruption cases done by the incumbents, so that the incumbents remained able to get votes although they had been considered as the suspects in those cases.

Keywords: *clientelism; corruption; patronage networking.*

Introduction

This research uncovers the practice of clientelism as a political machine as support mobilisation for the candidates of district head who were entangled in corruption cases. Studies about

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the relationship between corruption and clientelism generally place both in a causality relationship, in which the resources for keeping the clientelism network is from the corruption practices, and in the other way around, the practices of vote buying-selling in clientelistic relationships has encouraged the corruption practices to maintain that transactional practice (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007). Among those factors that are suspected to be the causes of the corruption and clientelism continuity, one of them is the weak institutional design which is, among others indicated by the bad integration of the political system, the strong ethnic disintegration, and the weak economic performance (Keefer, 2005; Muno, 2010).

On a different side, there is one study that tries to understand clientelism not as the cause or result of corruption. Fukuyama (2012) said that the cause of clientelism is different from the corruption. According to him, there is a reciprocal relationship between the politicians and the voters as the form of another accountability, in which the politicians should give something to the voters. Fukuyama's assumption is based on the point of view, which understands clientelism as a form of informal politics which is more influential in determining the political institution, especially through various traditions that have happened for a long time.

In the study about vote buying/selling and reciprocity, Finan and Schechter (2011) mentioned the relationship between money politics and the identification of political parties. Both research findings indicated that political parties targeted their own supports as the object of money politics' beneficiaries; contrarily, the voters who did not have the closeness to the party accepted less offers of money politics. This study indicated that money politics became an instrument to maintain the clientelism network between the parties and their voters.

Clientelism is a term that describes selective distribution of benefits to individuals or particular groups in return for their political supports (Katz and Crotty, 2014). Clientelism is a pattern of personal relationship that illustrates networking used by the

candidates to distribute resources to the voters. The form of this network can be in the form of volunteer teams, “*tim sukses*”, and other supports. The point is that this networking functions as the “vehicle” to distribute various resources to the grassroots voters (Aspinall & Sukmajati, 2015).

Throughout the period of 2010-2015, *Indonesia Corruption Watch* (ICW) listed as many as 183 district heads, either at the province or district level who became the suspects of corruption cases (IWC, 2015). The involvement of the district heads in corruption cases continued in 2016. Throughout 2016, *Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi* (KPK, Corruption Eradication Commission) handled 11 corruption cases that involved district heads. Those cases had different actors and pattern distribution, covering bribery cases, procurement of goods and services, and budgeting. In simultaneous *Pemilihan Kepala Daerah* (*pilkada*, the election of the district head) 2017, as many as 12 candidates of district heads who contested in 11 regions were listed to have kinship relationships with the suspects of corruption cases who were undergoing custody. Nevertheless, the candidates of those district heads remained joining the steps of the holding of *pilkada* because the determination of candidate pairs could not be cancelled, except for the candidates who had a permanent legal status.

The participation of the candidates of the district head who became the suspects of the corruption cases in *pilkada* becomes a more dynamic political competition. Corruption cases have shaken the base of legitimacy of those candidates that is basically developed upon centrally political dynasties and control of resources in the immediate environment of power. When those candidates are caught by KPK, it is not only the primacy of the candidates that weakens but also the resources that become the axis for the distribution of electoral winners are also influenced. On the other hand, the prohibition to back off from *pilkada* causes the position of the political parties supporting the incumbent candidate who are the suspects of corruption cases to be in a dilemma.

Most of the studies about clientelism focus not only on the practices of vote purchasing as the strategy to get voters by giving some amount of money in return (Stokes, 2005). In other studies, the political machine also works by different strategies, among others by activating the passive constituents through *turnout buying*, that is giving a number of rewards to the people who come to the voting place when the voting happens (Nichter, 2008). Those various studies explain the work of clientelism networks in the context of resources distribution from corruption practices. Those studies did not uncover whether the clientelism network still functions when the candidates or the political parties were caught in corruption cases. In regular political situations, it is not difficult to mobilize the clientelism network in order to get supports, especially for the incumbents who have primacy in the mastery and distribution of various political resources. This context is different when the incumbents are involved in corruption cases. In this situation, the capacity of the incumbents to maintain resources is significantly dropped, including maintaining the loyalty of the clients. Is it possible to maintain the loyalty of the clients to remain supporting the patrons whose strengths weaken? If it is, how is this patronage infrastructure directed to gain the power of the patrons back? What resources are used to regain the loyalty?

In this research, clientelism is assumed to be working by following individual factors and a particular context. The political machine focuses on political preference and the tendency of voters which will determine how resources are distributed during the election (Gans-Morse, Mazzuca, & Nichter, 2010). By understanding clientelism as a political machine, various strategies that are used to distribute resources to get voters can be uncovered. A number of researches about clientelism (Scott, 1969; Auyero, 2000; Levitsky, 2003) also uncovered various forms of clientelism covering the continuous relationship in which a supports and rewards exchange happened. In the context of clientelism study, the analysis towards various strategies used by parties in distributing resources is different

from the one conceptualized by Stokes (2005) about *vote buying* or the one by Nichter (2008) about *turnout buying*.

The direct election of district head is expected to deliver a more democratic power relation, in which the public can control the decision-making done by the government. In many studies about the patterns of power relationships, especially in the context of the countries that are undergoing democratisation, the patterns of clientelism are considered as the dominant character that underlies the practice of resource exchange. In this pattern, the relationship is hierarchical, in which the elites become the patrons because they have greater resources than the masses that become their clients. This perspective relies upon the ownership of the resources as the determinant to maintain the clients' dependency upon the patrons. Clientelism practice changes as the response towards the undergoing social and political dynamics. Hopkin (2006b) named such clientelism as the form of "new" clientelism, in which the political party as an organization tends to play a more prominent role as a patron than individuals in it. As the consequence, the elites of political parties are not as autonomous as the common individual patrons in the patterns of old clientelism. The elites of those political parties instead begin to depend on their political parties. This study focuses on the work of clientelism of political parties as a political machine in the election of the mayor of Cimahi in 2017. The result of the vote count placed the candidate pair Ajay Priatna and Ngatiyana as the candidate pair who gained the most votes, while on the other hand, the pair of incumbents Atty Suharti Tochija and Achmad Zulkarnaen were in the lowest position. *Operasi Tangkap Tangan* (OTT, Hand-Catch Operation) done by KPK upon Atty Suharti and her husband, ex-mayor of Cimahi in the previous period changed the political map of Cimahi. The big chance for the incumbent pair to win the election drastically changed, but the result of the vote count indicated that this pair were still able to get 29.04% votes, only 11.51% different from the votes received by the pair Ajay and Ngatiyana. The pair Atty and Azul were even still

able to surpass the winning couple in 1 (one) *kelurahan*, and got the second position in 5 (five) other *kelurahan*, beating the couple number 2, Asep Hadad and Irma Indriyani. Those data became the reason why this research focused on the question why did the candidates of district head implicated in corruption still get significant voter supports?

This study will not discuss corruption cases done by the incumbent candidate in detail. This study instead will uncover what was the reaction of the voters towards those corruption cases, and how far the voters can tolerate the corruption cases done by the incumbent candidate. When the voters become parts of the patronage network of the incumbent candidate, the voters tend to tolerate the corrupt attitude more than the voters who are not parts of the patronage network of the incumbent candidate. The voters can see the corruption cases from the identity point of view, so that when there is identity similarity with the perpetrator of the corruption, the voters tend to be more tolerant towards the perpetrator than those with different identity. This article assumes that the tendency to tolerate corruption is because either personal closeness or identity similarity between the voters and the incumbent candidate becomes the factor that mobilizes the clientelism network to get supports for the incumbent candidate who is involved in corruption.

The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the enrichment of the literature about distributive politics that has existed. The literature studies about this distributive politics lead to the debate about how and to whom a political party will distribute resources, such as development programs or the like. Cox and McCubbins (1986) argue that parties will distribute the resources they own to the voters, while a research done by Lindbeck and Weibull (1987) instead indicated that a party tended to distribute the resources to the voters who had not determined their attitude (swing voters). Another study done by Cox (2009) emphasized that most studies about distributive politics done by a party was limited in the analysis about the efforts done by the party to persuade people

to change their choice, while other strategies, such as mobilization to ensure that people gave their vote tended to be neglected. Starting from these two tendencies, this study intends to show how the context of corruption handling becomes a momentum for transformation of clientelism patterns, which at first focuses on the personal relationship to the clientelism practice by the political party institutionally, by studying how the persuasive strategy and mobilisation are done by the clientelistic party in doing distributive politics to get votes for the candidates they propose.

Patronage, Clientelism, and Political Corruption

There are two assumptions used to explain why the incumbent candidate was exposed to corruption cases still got votes in this study. First, the clientelism network remained working although the power of the incumbent figure weakened. Two, the clientelism network developed through the structure of the party worked by changing the primacy of the incumbent which was at first directed to the figure to the formation of *party-ID*. The corruption cases which weakened the image of the incumbent became the momentum to “grow” the loyalty of the clients towards the political party.

The corruption is generally defined as the form of illegal transaction done by public officials and private actors, in which the parties exchange the resources for the sake of personal interests (Philp, 2007). That general definition covers the vast forms of corruption behaviours, from the abuse of authority to violent behaviour done by the government officials in allocating and distributing resources. On the other side, there are actors outside of the state that use these pathological behaviours for their interests, such as bribery, graft, and such like to get various conveniences contrary to what they should be. This conception will be easier to be implemented in the power context in which there are strict norms that regulate the behaviours of the public officials in their relationship with the community. In the context in which these boundaries are not explicitly stated, the

political corruption practice is more difficult to be identified.

Thompson (1995) differentiates individual corruption and institutional corruption. These differences are based on the benefits received by the public apparatus, services got by the individuals and groups, and the tendency of actions to be taken. Individual corruption is only profitable to that individual, meanwhile the institutional corruption is profitable to the apparatus because of their position in the political system. The transactional relationship in institutional corruption practice is not in the services given which is beyond reason for a particular individual or group, but in the mechanism of the provision of services when there is benefit gained from that provision, for example in the form of vote supports or mass mobilization. The institutional corruption happens when the apparatus provides services through its institution in return for the supports given or other resources given to them. In the long run, the institutional corruption will threaten democracy because it will destroy the work of the provision of services, and also will weaken the legitimacy of the institution itself.

The classification of political corruption practices into individual and institutional adds to the conceptual understanding of political corruption although it is still not easy to identify those practices factually. Corruption practice is more often analysed from law and economic perspectives, in which the norms that become the guide for the proper behaviour can be compared with the deviant behaviour. In power relationships, corruption practice is not easy to be identified because the power relationship basically involves the influence of an exchange relationship, so that the use of various resources to get power is considered normal. Political corruption is in a grey area, and it is common that political leaders who are corrupt still get public support because they are considered able to distribute resources directly to the people and it is better than going through slow bureaucracy (Manzetti & Wilson, 2007).

In relationship with the election, the public supports to the leaders who are corrupt indicate the work of clientelism (Manzetti

& Wilson, 2007). In the middle of the weakening of government institutions, clientelism becomes the alternative for the public to access various resources and to take the benefit of public services available. Clientelism is defined as an informal relationship among actors who have asymmetrical socio-economic power, in which a patron is in a higher position because he controls the types of resources needed by the clients. This relationship brings the domination and exploitation that perpetuates the position of the political leaders. Clientelism also needs reciprocity in the form of self-management and mutually beneficial exchange. Political corruption does not only result in clientelism practice but also perpetuates the domination in power relationships between a patron and the clients.

Political clientelism can be reduced by government institutions that have a strong and good checks and balances system. On the contrary if the state weakens, the clientelism will thrive in the government institutions. In this condition, the government's existence depends upon the clients because those clients have the ability to redistribute the resources and to provide the commodities needed by the public (Manzetti & Wilson, 2007). To maintain the work of that clientelism network, the ineffective government condition and the complex and corrupt bureaucracy are needed so that the clientelistic network will easily defeat the ruling government. The politicians who practice clientelistic tend to maintain institutional errors so that they are able to approach poor voters and to get votes in the next election.

The corrupt government can maintain their votes by manipulating the government institutions for the sake of the benefits of their clientelistic network. In this context, the distribution of public goods through development programs is replaced by the clientelistic machine that distributes those goods based on private exchange. How far the corrupt government can maintain their support from the people depends on their ability to maintain their clientelism network and patronage relationship pattern.

Another study about supports towards the corrupt politicians

revealed that public attitude which tended to be tolerant towards corruption also became the cause why corrupt politicians still got supports in the election. Chang and Kerr (2009) assumed that the tolerance towards political corruption was based on the public perception towards corruption itself. According to them, the perception towards corruption indicated how far the public trusted that a particular politician figure got involved in corruption practice. Corruption tolerance, on the other hand, indicated the tendency of the people to forgive the involvement of the political actors in the corruption. The effect of the corruption might depend on how far the voters tolerate or even sympathise with the corrupt actors. The individuals or particular groups who become the beneficiaries or who are conceptualised as the *patronage insiders*, tend to have high levels of tolerance towards the corrupt actions done by the politicians because they get more benefits from the corruption practice itself.

The public conception about what is considered to be corrupt does not necessarily limit their availability to tolerate those corrupt behaviours. This is determined by a number of factors at the micro level that influence individual evaluation towards political corruption, such as access to the information about corruption (Bratton *et al.*, 2005), experiences with corruption (Miller, 2006; Seligson, 2002), and social norms (Heidenheimer & Johnston, 2007). Generally, voters show their normative rejection towards political corruption because of the loss resulting in a lack of the welfare fulfilment. Nevertheless, the negative impact of the corruption might be neutralized when the voters get the benefits (expected benefits) from the corrupt politicians' behaviour (Chang & Kerr, 2009). One of those possibilities is when the voters get the benefits especially because they are included in clientelistic networks. In this condition, the patronage beneficiaries tend to have a bipolar trust system towards political corruption: On the one hand, they might feel that the corruption level is higher because of their low access towards information about the patronage transaction; on the other hand, they might consider corruption is more acceptable because

they directly get the benefit from the special access that they get.

The inclusion in clientelistic networks can encourage the development of norms that determine the assessment towards corruption. When the reciprocity practices that become the habits in the community become the norms and are generalized in all their relationship aspects with the patrons, they feel they are obliged to support the patrons although the patrons break the laws. This especially happens in reciprocity norms, which are based on the exchange of material benefits to get votes. Yet, these norms reveal the mechanisms that are slightly different, in which the public attitude towards the incumbent becomes permanent and even has bigger influence in their tolerance towards political corruption.

People who are in the clientelism network and have developed their loyalty to their patron will tend to let this bonding influence their way of cognitive information processing. As a result, they might have lower perception about the involvement of the government in corruption because they do not want to get information that harms their patron. This logic is parallel with the theory that shows how someone's emotional bonding can influence how they process political information, especially the information that contradicts with their previous knowledge (Zaller, 1992). On the contrary, people who are outside of clientelism networks will consider that the corruption level of the government is higher than the people inside because their less affective bounding to the incumbent makes them tend to receive information that relates the government with corruption more.

The conceptual framework from Chang and Kerr (2009) can be used to analyse how emotional bonding is developed and strengthened in clientelistic networks. This indicates that patronage bonding is not only developed based on resources exchange but also from information given about the patron and how the information is used to create the perception of the clients about their patron figure. Clientelism and corruption are like two sides of the coin from the same distributive politics, that is the community are subjected to

the ruler when they get material benefits, but question and curse their leaders when their benefits are given to other people, especially political elites (Bratton, 2007). This point of view indicates that either people who are in or outside the clientelism network consider patronage as a form of corruption, but their tolerance level towards this matter is different, depending on their access towards the benefits of the patronage.

The patronage is reflected in the use of public resources through the direct and particular exchange pattern between the clients and the politicians. The politicians are able to identify their clients individually and get involved in an exchange relationship pattern, in which the politicians provide goods or services to be exchanged in the form of supports. Typically, the patronage in this political party is hidden in formal goals and most of them do not violate the legal form. However, the clients who get services and public goods are not aware that they might get various goods and services without having relationship with those politicians. Usually, the relationship with a political party is considered important because the clients realize how difficult it is to get the goods or services from the bureaucracy which is not effective and not responsive.

In political patronage, the relations between the patrons and the clients are more dualistic and reflect an asymmetrical and reciprocal political exchange, a relationship which is indicated by giving economic and political resources from the patrons who usually have personal power, and usually are interested in getting loyalty and political supports from the beneficiaries. This pattern of political exchange is known as the form of clientelism in political aspects. Political clientelism, in a very basic understanding, is illustrated as the distribution of benefits that are selected for individuals or groups which are clearly identified, which are going to be exchanged with political supports from the beneficiaries (Hopkins, 2006a). This general definition can be interpreted in many ways and widely because every form of political exchange can be included in this concept. Hopkin (2006a) then elaborates

these general characteristics in clientelism relationship patterns as the form of personal exchange and they are usually characterized by the existence of a number of obligations and even the existence of an imbalanced power relationship among the parties involved. This relationship is indicated by the activities in which the patrons provide resources for the clients in the form of basic facilities, so that reciprocal relationship patterns with the clients can be created by the activities that reflect the loyalty of the clients. In an exchange relationship, both parties involved in goods and services provision and share the mutual benefits are in a relatively voluntary condition so that clientelism actions cannot be found in a total authoritarian political system or slavery and supremacy relationship model. The patrons exchange the resources (jobs and protection) with clients' votes, supports, and loyalty. Nevertheless, that relationship pattern is not balanced because the patrons have various resources while the clients transform that relationship vertically, which later requires the existence of superiority to the other in such relationships (Erawan, 2008).

Theoretically, as explained by James Scott (in Erawan, 2008), clientelism activities will be present and become stronger because of the following: *first*, the resources need to be managed and controlled by a particular group in the community. The forms of those resources are usually in the form of economic allocations, such as land or jobs, benefits or uncertainty that resulted from organizational power manipulation. *Second*, the patrons are so strong to ask or require the existence of "services" in return that can be provided by the clients. *Third*, the clients as a whole will be able to be restrained to get the access towards resources that are controlled by the patrons. This condition happens because the clients fail to formulate their public needs and fail to manage themselves in achieving their public needs. *Four*, public allocation ethics that are effectively implemented are absent. Public ethics become a mechanism or system in which public resources are allocated and exchanged based on universal criteria compared with the personal or private criteria.

Clientelism is generally defined as informal relationships between actors who enjoy the benefits of the imbalance in socio-economic relationships, in which the patrons are in the higher position as the determiners in allocating and distributing resources, while the clients give their loyalty in return for the “generosity” of the patrons. This relationship pattern becomes the system that maintains domination and exploitation in power relationships (Kitschelt, 2000). Clientelism also brings up a reciprocity character in the form of one sided exchanges that are mutually beneficial for the parties involved, for example the client will get jobs, contract, permission, cash money, etc. in return for their loyalty, including the votes given when the patrons compete in political elections. As a political practice, clientelism is based on informal and personal norms. In modern power practice, clientelism is also developed by the political party machine that is more anonymous (Kitschelt, 2000). Weingrod (1968) emphasises the use of the term clientelism to explain a new patronage pattern which focuses on the role of the political party figure more than a strong personal figure. This phenomenon is then known by the term *clientela* or *political party directed patronage*.

Clientelism practice is especially found in political settings in which the availability of the resources tends to be limited and controlled by a group of elites, so that people are willing to exchange their votes for various facilities to fulfil their needs (Manzetti & Wilson, 2007). In relationship with political parties, a number of studies indicate that clientelism networks which are widely organized take a part in the winning of the political leader candidate. Medina and Stokes (2002) explain how an incumbent who is successful in monopolizing the control of political and economic resources tends to be able to maintain their power position more. Wantchekon (2003) also finds that the incumbent who campaigns through clientelism networks is considered to be more credible than those who campaign openly. The effectivity of clientelism networks gets stronger when most of the people are in

poverty, so that the direct exchange between the politicians and the votes becomes the alternative in fulfilling the needs of the people (Brusco, Nazareno, & Stokes, 2004; Stokes, 2005; Kitschelt, 2000). Another study relates the clientelism with the weakening of the government institutions (Shefter, 1977). Clientelism replaces the role of government institutions in distributing resources, and therefore it brings up the *rent seeking* behaviour of the clients to get more benefits from the weak government institutions.

The studies above put clientelism in the context of personal relationships in which the actors' figures or image is what that dominates the power relationship. In the concept of new "clientelism", the power of the patrons is determined by their affiliation towards a political party (Hopkin, 2006b). Resources distribution in the "new" clientelism is done by the members of a political party, which gets authorisation to do that from the higher leader in the hierarchy of the political party. This "new" clientelism then tends to be more bureaucratic and does not need to be more personalised although the personal contact between the representatives of the political parties with the individual votes still exists. The form of this "new" clientelism is parallel with the social cohesion and formalisation of a chain of command so that it is sometimes considered as one of the ways that indicates the existence of the institutionalisation of the political party (Hopkin, 2006b).

Research Methods

This study implemented a qualitative approach to understand the clientelism relationship deeply. By focusing on this power relationship, it was expected that the findings of this research could uncover how the clientelism network worked in reforming the figure of an incumbent candidate and changed the loyalty of the clients which was at first based on the personal figure to the party's figure. To fulfil this need, the data gathering was done by deep interviews with a number of key informants who were continuously and

actively involved during the candidacy and campaign of the 2017 mayoral election. Those key informants consisted of the member of “*tim sukses*” and the political party officials who proposed the incumbent candidate.

Deep interviews with the informants were aimed to get information about the basic reasons of shifting the campaign strategy after the incumbent candidate was caught by KPK, how the “*tim sukses*” considered this case, and how the “*tim sukses*” deconstructed that corruption case to become a political momentum to strengthen the identity of the party.

In addition to the deep interviews, the data were also gained from observations in “*tim sukses*” and party meetings to get visual images towards the process and interaction of the actors in determining the strategies to win the success for the incumbent candidate. The observations were also used as an instrument to check the validity of the interviews’ results.

Political Context of Cimahi

Cimahi is one of the autonomous cities that was formed through the transition process from an administrative to an autonomous city. Since it was formed in 2001, Cimahi only has three *kecamatan* (sub-districts), namely North Cimahi, Central Cimahi, and South Cimahi. The geographical location of Cimahi, which is directly adjacent with Bandung as the capital city of West Java Province, and is passed by toll lane to Jakarta, Padalarang, and Cileunyi making Cimahi have a high level of mobility. On the other side, Cimahi also becomes the location in which there are a large number of military institutions, such as *Pusat Pendidikan Artileri Medan* (Pusdik Armed), *Pusat Pendidikan Pengetahuan Militer Umum* (Pusdikpengmilum), *Pusat Pendidikan Polisi Militer*, *Pusat Pendidikan Jasmani* (Pusdikjas), *Pusat Pendidikan Peralatan* (Pusdikpal), *Pusat Pendidikan Pembekalan Angkutan* (Pusdikbekang), and *Pusat Pendidikan Perhubungan dan Sekolah Pelatih Infanteri Pusat*

Pendidikan Infanteri (SPI Pusdikif). In addition, in Cimahi there are also a number of army headquarters, namely *Brigif 15/Kujang II*, *Pussenarhanud Kodiklatad*, *Pussenarmed Kodiklatad*, *Kiban Yonzipur 3/Macan Kumbang*, *Kodim 0609 Bandung-Cimahi*, *Yonarmed 4/105 Parahyangan*, *Tepbek Cimahi*, *Koramil Cimahi*, *Rumkit II Kesdam III/Siliwangi* and *Kesdim Cimahi*.

The political dynamics of Cimahi are relatively stable with the tendency of votes going to big parties. Based on KPU data (2014), in legislative election 2014, PDI-P got 7 chairs (44,918 votes), Partai Gerindra 6 chairs (32,262 votes), PKS 5 chairs (27,527 votes), PPP 5 chairs (26,935 votes), Partai Demokrat 5 chairs (25,529 votes), Partai Golkar 4 chairs (30,461 votes), Partai Hanura 4 chairs (26,957 votes), Partai Nasdem 4 chairs (21,051 votes), PAN 3 chairs (16,956 votes), and PKB 2 chairs (17,012 votes). Two political parties did not get any chairs, namely PBB who got 9,439 votes and PKPI who got 2,480. This composition also became the base of the formation of political party coalition in *pilkada* (*Pemilihan Kepala Daerah*, the election of the head of the districts) 2017.

In the interview with the chair of Tim Gabungan Pasangan Calon Atty and Azul (personal communication, January 10, 2017), the coalition of party supporters had begun to be assessed since the beginning of candidacy. As the party which proposed the incumbent, Golkar was in the position which was benefitted because of the primacy of the Atty figure, either in her position as the incumbent or her closeness with Itoc Tochija as the previous mayor of Cimahi. At the beginning of the candidacy, the effort to win the candidate was focused on the selection of the pair of candidates for deputy mayor that could strengthen the primacy of the incumbent, but on the other side did not go beyond the figure of the incumbent herself (personal communication with W, Vice Head of DPD Partai Golkar Cimahi, January 17, 2017). From the interview with the officials of Partai Golkar, it was found that the Itoc Tochija figure took an important role in determining the pair of the candidates of deputy mayor. The Azul figure was finally selected as the candidate of deputy mayor

with various considerations, among others that Azul had been the city government expert staff, had good academic background, and had track records in a number of community organizations to build a support base. The determination of the pair of the deputy mayor then underlined the formation of a coalition of party supporters. Finally, in *pilkada* 2017, 3 (three) coalitions were formed, namely Golkar, Nasdem, and PKS which brought the couple Atty Suharti and Achmad Zulkarnain; the coalition of Demokrat and Gerindra brought Asep Hadad and Irma Indriyani; and coalition of PKP, PP, Hanura, PAN and PDIP brought Ajay Priatna and Ngatiyana. The couples that competed were also from different backgrounds; they were bureaucrats, politicians, academicians, business people, and *puanawirawan* (retired) TNI.

In addition to the political strengths presented by the parties which got chairs in DPRD, the political machine in Cimahi government could not be separated from the work of the family of Tochija who became the mayor of Cimahi since 2002 until 2012. In the case of the election of the mayor in Cimahi that became the locus of this study, the figure of the incumbent got the benefits that were not only from the position as the official who was in the government, but also from the personal background. In addition, becoming the wife of the ex-mayor in the previous period (Itoc Tochija), the incumbent (Atty Suharti) is also a child of an important figure in West Java. In the previous leadership period (2012-2017), Atty Suharti was nominated by PPP, Partai Golkar, PKB, and PBB. The pair of the deputy mayor in the first period was a politician from Partai Golkar, while Atty herself was the PP cadre. In the nomination period of 2017, Atty moved to Golkar and the pair was selected from the politicians of PKS. This couple was supported by Golkar, PKS, and Nasdem.

The change of the configuration of the supporter parties and the selection of the pair from the different party was suspected to be the result of the failure of the family of Tochija to get a number of important political positions in the legislative election in 2014. Itoc

Tochija (the husband of Atty Suharti and the ex of Cimahi mayor from 2017-2012) was not successful to be selected as the member of DPR RI from PPP, while both their children were not successful to get the chairs in DPRD West Java and DPRD Cimahi. These “failures” caused Itoch Tochija and all the family members to move from PPP to Golkar, and in his position as the head of DPD Golkar Cimahi, Itoch then nominated his wife as the mayor of Cimahi in the competition of *pilkada* in 2017. The big role played by Itoch Tochija in re-nominating Atty Suharti indicated that the chance for the benefit of the incumbent could be constructed by the political actors outside of the incumbent herself.

In the Mayor Election in 2017, the votes distribution received by the three candidates were not much different. The couple of Atty and Achmad Zulkarnain got 29.04% votes, the couple of Asep Hadad and Irma Indriyani got 30.41%, and the couple of the winner, that were Ajay M. Priatna and Ngatiyana got 40.55%. Although only getting the third rank in all the votes the incumbent couple still became the highest in Pasirkaliki, North Cimahi. In addition to getting the most votes in one *kelurahan*, the incumbent couple were also in the second rank in 4 out of 15 *kelurahan*, namely Cipageran (North Cimahi), Baros (Central Cimahi), and Cibeber and Melong (South Cimahi).

The corruption case that overrides the incumbent could not be separated from the dynasty of political practice that so far happened in Cimahi. Since 2002, the family of Itoch Tochija had dominated government and bureaucracy sectors, and also the political sector through their political party. The strength of the power network that was developed through this political dynasty then became the entrance for the other candidates to fight against the incumbent couple. Before the case of OTT KPK, the political dynasty issues had attracted the attention of the votes from the grassroots’ level who for decades had known the figure of Itoch and Atty as the mayor of Cimahi. During their governance, the family of Tochija dominated the network of government bureaucracy structure down to the RT/

RW level and by using the PKK network (personal communication with W, Vice DPD Partai Golkar Cimahi, in Cimahi, 17 January 2017). Even from the strength of this PKK network a new community emerged called *Barisan Perempuan Pendukung Itoc* (BPPI) which existed at each RW. In each RW, this community had at least 7 members, so that the total members were about 1000 people. This community network then became the political infrastructure that strengthened the position of the incumbent. The dynastic political issue was instead strengthening when KPK did OTT towards the couple Itoc and Atty. This moment was used by the other candidates to rock the popularity and electability of the incumbent couple.

Clientelism Structure in “*Tim Sukses*” of Political Party Coalition

The incumbent couple Atty Suharti and Achmad Zulkarnain were nominated by the coalition of Golkar, Nasdem and PKS. In the interview with the coordinator of “*tim sukses*” in each “*partai pengusung*,” it was uncovered that the process of finding candidates for the deputy of mayor that would be paired with Atty Suharti happened through an informal process. The vice of DPD Nasdem Cimahi explained that the choice to pair with PKS began from the intention of Itoc and Atty Tochija in considering that PKS had a strong base of people in Cimahi (personal communication with P, Vice Head of DPD Nasdem Cimahi, in Cimahi, January 28, 2017). Since 2009, PKS always became the second in votes in legislative election in Cimahi, even in 2014, the votes of PKS significantly increased.

Based on that consideration, DPD Golkar Cimahi which at that time was led by Itoc Tochija held a meeting with PKS to ask the names of the people that would be paired with Atty Suharti as the vice mayor. PKS gave three names, and then one name was chosen by Atty Suharti. This mechanism indicated the strong role of Itoc and Atty Tochija in determining the candidate who would be paired with her.

The figure of Achmad Zulkarnain who was selected as the candidate pair of vice mayor was not a “new” person for Atty Suharti. Achmad Zulkarnain, although he is from PKS, had even become the expert staff of PKS in DPRD West Java province and the member of DPRD in Cimahi (2004-2014), so that he had his own people. The political career of Achmad Zulkarnain began since Partai Keadilan (PK) was founded in 1998. He was appointed as the DPD General Secretary of Partai Keadilan (PK) Bandung until Cimahi became autonomous, and separated from Bandung in June 2001. Because of his experience in the previous core structure of a party, in June 10, 2001 after *Deklarasi Partai Keadilan (PK)* in Cimahi, Achmad Zulkarnain was appointed as the Chair of DPD Partai Keadilan, which then changed into *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)*. Under his leadership, PKS was successful in becoming a significant political strength by bringing 8 “*duta dakwah*” (da’wah ambassadors) in DPRD (20% out of 40 members of DPRD Cimahi). Achmad Zulkarnain led PKS in Cimahi until the first *Musyawarah Daerah (MUSDA)* in April 2006. In MUSDA 1, Achmad Zulkarnain was entrusted to become the head of *Majelis Pertimbangan Daerah (MPD)* until second MUSDA in November 2010. In current party stewardship, he is entrusted as the *Deputi Pemenangan Pemilukada DPW PKS West Java*.

Personally, Achmad Zulkarnain was imaged as a young intellectual and a *kiai* (spiritual leader). This image was considered to be able to complete the image of Atty as the representation of a mother who was close with her people. The image as the *kiai* was needed to get voters from religious people. With the votes achievement of PKS in Cimahi, Achmad Zulkarnain was not only supported by his personal potential, but also from the huge number of people who supported PKS in Cimahi.

With the potential owned by the two, the couple of Atty Suharti and Achmad Zulkarnain became strong candidates who were predicted to win in the *pilkada* Cimahi. Although it was formally supported by Golkar, the figure that was dominant in determining

the candidate of vice mayor for Atty was her husband, Itoch Tochija who had 2 (two) strategic positions in DPD Golkar Cimahi, they were the head of DPD and the vice of *Bidang Komunikasi dan Informasi* (Communication and Information Section) of DPD Golkar Cimahi. This indicated that the figure or image dominated the party structure in candidate pair candidacy.

The next step done by the party coalition that supported Atty and Achmad Zulkarnain formed “*tim sukses*” consisting of all supporting party and volunteer elements. Each party had the winning coordinator whose responsibility was to mobilize supports from party people. The “*tim sukses*” coalition itself had a different coordinator and structure, whose responsibility was to create a winning strategy that would be done by the winning coordinator in each party. In this step, the clientelism network in the structure of the party functioned as the instrument of the winning of the candidate pair.

In addition to the structure of the party, “*tim sukses*” also coordinated the volunteer team consisting of sympathisers of the candidate pair who were not the members of the party. This volunteer team had the responsibility to capture supports from vote candidates who were at the grassroots level by creating knots of volunteer nodes at RW. These volunteer knots would move to prepare the community groups who would be visited by the couple candidate for campaigning. The success of Itoch Tochija family who dominated for more than 15 years was strengthened by the patronage network down to the RT/RW level. By using community empowerment programs funded by APBD Cimahi, both Itoch and Atty developed individual close relationships with various communities, especially women’s community through PKK and Pos Yandu, as well as groups of “*pengajian*”. As part of the government structure at local levels, the managers of RT and RW in Cimahi also became part of the patronage network developed by Itoch and Atty through development program distributions. For local people, both were considered as good figures because they had

included the community in running the government programs, or in the language delivered by one of the informants, the community cadres were thankful to Atty because they had been given activities through development programs held in their areas.

The Work of Clientelism Network in Deconstructing Corruption Issues

After the corruption case struck the incumbent, the impact felt by this incumbent was the decrease of logistic capacity as the decline in the resources of the funding of the campaign; moreover, OTT KPK directly caught both central figures who became the source of logistics, so that automatically the communication to both was distracted. The decrease of logistics capacity was then by “*tim sukses*” called “*tsunami politik*” because it gave significant effect towards the smooth running of the campaign process. In addition to the decrease of logistics support, since Atty Suharti being caught caused her not able to campaign. Achmad Zulkarnain should go by himself during the campaign period. The party remained giving support to the candidate pair although she had got involved in the OTT KPK case. This was the consequence of the political party support and the rules of UU Pilkada which prohibits the candidate to resign. The “*tim sukses*” coalition admitted that there had been significant decrease towards the popularity of Atty so that the campaign strategy change was needed so that the couple Atty-Azul could get votes and even could win *pilkada*.

The change of the situation then encouraged the “*tim sukses*” coalition to reformulate the winning strategy. “*Tim sukses*” which at first emphasized the winning strategy on the primacy of the incumbent, namely the working achievement during the previous period, was not able to be used anymore because the corruption case faced by Atty recently was not able to be separated from the previous government. Campaigning by bringing the working achievement issues would instead give negative impact towards the electability of the couple Atty Suharti and Achmad Zulkarnain.

In the interview with the coordinators of “*Tim Strategi Pemenangan Gabungan Partai*,” the coordination meetings of the party then agreed to the change of the campaign strategy by placing Atty as the victim in the corruption case done by her husband. This strategy was in fact risky because it allowed public opinion so far that Atty was only “*boneka*” (playtoy) for Itoch Tochija who was in fact the thinker of the government implementation in Cimahi. Nevertheless, this strategy made Atty as the “victim” of the corruption case remained used during campaign period to get public sympathy, especially from women voters and PKK organizations at the community level who so far became the sympathisers of Atty Suharti.

By bringing this strategy, “*tim gabungan*” manipulated the meaning of the corruption case that entangled the incumbent, so that the figure of the incumbent remained to be able to be imaged as the figure who “was not guilty.” This imagining was important to be maintained so that “*tim sukses*” remained able to maintain the loyalty of the sympathisers of Atty, including reminding the sympathisers about the good deeds that had been done by Atty as a Cimahi person. By using this strategy, the “*tim sukses*” tried to give a comparative meaning towards the corruption issues entangling the incumbent.

This new meaning was socialised to the community in the visits done by Achmad Zulkarnain in each RW cluster. In those visits, in addition to socialising himself, Achmad Zulkarnain developed dialogues with the community to explain corruption cases from the perspective developed by “*tim sukses*”. Even, in some campaign chances in “*pengajian*” women groups, “*doa bersama*” (pray gathering) for the solution of corruption case experienced by Atty was often held.

Since exposed by OTT KPK, it could not be avoided that the logistic support for the couple Atty and Azul drastically decreased. The biggest impact felt by “*tim sukses*” who directly worked at the grassroots level because the funding for the campaign decreased

while the needs to remain mobilising the votes after OTT became more important. Almost a week since the case of OTT, “*tim sukses*” did not dare enough to campaign to the community because they were ashamed, while the time for open campaigns was only about a month before the voting. Losing the time of one week made “*tim sukses*” coalition change the campaign strategy by shifting the attention of the votes to Achmad Zulkarnain. By bringing out this figure, the party strategy shifted from emphasizing the primacy of the incumbent figure to trying to get the loyalty of the cadres by using party people networks. However, it was not easy to get supports for Achmad Zulkarnain from the loyalists of Atty Suharti. This indicated that although the party elites had merged, the people did not automatically follow it. The biggest challenge from the change of this strategy was consolidating support from loyalists’ networks at the mass level who had high militancy to support their patron regardless of what was happening.

The effort to maintain the loyalists’ network at the mass level was done by “*tim sukses*” coalition by doing deep communication with the network at the mass level. In this consolidation process—as it was defined by “*tim sukses*” coalition—the team would visit the community in each RW and offered programs proposed by the couple of the incumbent candidate. Then at that time they took note of the identity and contact number of the people who were visited. These data became the materials to continue communicating in order to maintain the support of the people. In these visits, either “*tim sukses*” or candidates did the personal approach by reminding what had been given by the incumbent during her governance. In this process, the loyalty of the clients was re-grown by the memory about the gifts they had got during the governance of the incumbent.

In addition to depending on the positive image of Achmad Zulkarnain, “*tim sukses*” also mobilised the party cadres and community networks, such as PKK cadres, Pos Yandu cadres, and *Barisan Perempuan Pendukung Itoc* (BPPI), at a mass level to do *direct selling* campaign. This type of campaign was done so that

it could reach RT/RW widely, which was impossible to be done by depending on the formal campaign schedule. This *direct selling* campaign started with the delivery of the programs personally to the people. It was then followed up with communication through Short Message Service (SMS) regularly so that the people remained loyal giving their votes to the couple Atty and Achmad Zulkarnain.

The campaign message delivered through the cadres and community networks was not only about the programs and the success of the incumbent during her governance, but also about the corruption case entangling the incumbent. As part of the efforts to redevelop the trust in the incumbent, the image of the incumbent was reconstructed as the “victim” of the corruption case done by her husband. In addition to reconstructing the image of the incumbent as the “victim”, the cadres and community networks also became the institution to channel the campaign funding. By involving the cadres and community networks during the direct campaign to the people, there was a strong reason to channel the funds to the brokers and clients at a mass level. Although the funding was still one of the resources to maintain supports, by using those funds as the incentive for the cadres and community who helped the campaign, “*tim sukses*” also tried to develop *party-ID*. This effort was done to muffle the possibility of votes shifting to the other couple candidates, including anticipating money as political offers to get votes (Muhtadi, 2013).

The strategy of corruption meaning-making combined with the work of clientelism networks at grassroots’ level was proven to make Atty and Achmad Zulkarnain get supports beyond the other couples in 5 (five) *kelurahan* out of 15 *kelurahan* in Cimahi, which were Cipageran and Pasirkaliki (North Cimahi), Baros (Central Cimahi), as well as Cibeber and Melong (South Cimahi). Those five areas were the areas in and around the central offices of the government or *Kantor Pemerintah Kota Cimahi*.

Closing

The findings of this study indicated that patronage networks remained working as a political machine, so that the candidate who was exposed with corruption remained able to get significant votes. However, the work of this patronage network was not optimal because the resource supports, especially money, drastically decreased as a result of the corruption case entangling the incumbent. When money support decreased, the personal bonding was instead strengthened because the party through “*tim sukses*” coalition tried to rebuild *party-ID*. This effort became an alternative when the primacy of the incumbent could not be relied upon as the vote mobilization machine. It is interesting that the effort to develop *party-ID* was done by using the patronage networks developed by the incumbent figure. This pattern indicated that in this context, the formation of *party-ID* did not become the part of the party institutionalisation, but instead became the party strategy to maintain clientelistic power relations.

The clientelistic relation pattern was still able to be maintained although the patron lost the resources because the pattern of the relationship changed to be more transactional. On the one side, this shift led to the decrease of the dependency on personal relationships with elite figures, and on the contrary, the domination of the resources became more scattered. This condition would create more patrons and opened the competition spaces among patrons so that the clients had higher bargaining power. However, on the other hand, the shift of clientelistic patterns also presented political parties as a patron so that the clientelistic pattern became more institutionalised. Instead of directing the political party institutionalisation, the “new” clientelism also led to the variation of the use of public resources for the sake of mobilising public supports. Therefore, the shift of relations in the “new” clientelism should be balanced with the widening competition among patrons so that the domination of resources can become more widespread.

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