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Anut Grubyuk in the Voting Process: The Neglected Explanation of Javanese Voters (Preliminary Findings)

Wawan Sobari*

The “Javanese factor” is a strategic consideration in Indonesian electoral politics, as the Javanese are Indonesia’s most numerous inhabitants. However, seminal masterpieces such as those by Geertz (1960) and Gaffar (1992) apply only a limited and individual-based voting approach in their efforts to explain Javanese voting behavior. Recent qualitative case studies explore *anut grubyuk* (fitting in) as a unique form of grouped rural Javanese voting behavior, rooted in the Javanese communal philosophy of life and hierarchical values. A study in four selected villages in Blitar and Trenggalek Regencies in East Java argues that individual Javanese voters adjust their voting decisions based on the major preference in their neighborhood, in keeping with the communal spirit of living in harmony as well as to avoid conflict and respect neighborly relationships. This article presents a preliminary assessment of *anut grubyuk* as group-oriented voting among the Javanese, a topic that has been relatively absent in academic discussion. Beyond cultural explanations, recent illiberal democratic practices have made *anut grubyuk* vulnerable to manipulation, since certain community leaders or brokers exploit Javanese communality in return for both individual and communal short-term benefits from candidates. Instead of helping with the growth of liberal democracy, *anut grubyuk* potentially supports patronage-driven democracy, in which small numbers of elites use patronage for influential control over electoral processes.

Keywords: Javanese, group-oriented voting, democracy, Indonesia

Introduction

The Javanese are ranked as the most numerous ethnic group in Indonesia. The 2010 national census reported that they amounted to 40.22 percent of the national population (92,217,022 people), with 48.72 percent of them living in rural areas (Na’im and Syaputra 2011, 28). This numerical majority is one of the reasons for scholarly studies to examine

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the Javanese as a political entity.¹⁾

However, the number of published scholarly works on Javanese voters is not commensurate with the dominance of this population. Clifford Geertz (1960), in his pioneering masterpiece *The Religion of Java*, introduced the *aliran* (streams) approach that attempted to map Javanese electoral orientations. The approach is founded on Javanese socio-religious norms that contribute to the Javanese people's worldview (religious beliefs, ethical preference, and political ideologies) and yields three main cultural types: *abangan*, *santri*, and *priyayi* (*ibid.*, 4–5). Geertz explains this well-known trichotomic nature of Javanese society as follows:

Abangan, representing a stress on the animistic aspects of the overall Javanese syncretism and broadly related to the peasant element in the population; *santri*, representing a stress on the Islamic aspects of syncretism and generally related to the trading element (and to certain elements in the peasantry as well); and *priyayi*, stressing the Hinduist aspects and related to the bureaucratic element. (*ibid.*, 6)

In the postcolonial period, these socio-religious groups changed their positions from religious to political (*ibid.*, 363).

Afan Gaffar (1992) deployed Geertz's Javanese cultural types to study Javanese voting behavior for a political party. This quantitative research succeeded in revealing some explanatory variables of Javanese voters, especially in rural Java. The general

1) Even though Javanese are large in number, scholarly works on them rarely consider their significance in Indonesian electoral politics. Exceptions are Hill and Shiraishi (2007), who mention Javanese domination of the state (that is, the domination of mainly Javanese army officers), and Woodward (2011), who holds the view that Javanese occupy a position of "first among equals" with two visible attributes—being the largest ethnic community and having always been politically dominant. Meanwhile, Liddle and Mujani (2007) found that in the 2004 legislative election, ethnicity had little impact on voting. In the 2004 presidential election also, ethnicity had no impact. The strength of Javanese as an ethnic identity can only explain the lower probability of votes for Partai Golkar (Functional Group) relative to other parties; in other words, Golkar is a non-Javanese party. Recent explanations by pollsters found that in the 2014 presidential election the ethnic background of presidential and vice-presidential candidates was not a dominant consideration. Poltrack Institute's polling of Indonesian voters found that only 27 percent of voters voted for the Javanese presidential candidate and 23 percent for the Javanese vice presidential candidate (December 2013). In January 2014, Poltrack found slight changes—21.18 percent and 25.10 percent respectively. In contrast, the Indonesia Survey Circle (LSI) found that among the two most numerous ethnic groups (Javanese and Sundanese) the presidential pair of Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla were preferred by Javanese voters (47.6 percent in June 2014 and 52.18 percent in July 2014) and the presidential pair of Prabowo Subianto-Hatta Rajasa were preferred by the Sundanese (51.6 percent in June 2014 and 61.4 percent in July 2014). In particular, LSI revealed that Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla were more influential among voters in Central and East Java, where the Javanese formed the majority. These data minimally show the relevance of Javanese as an object of electoral studies in the country.

conclusion was that norms and values, which were transferred via political socialization, contributed to the creation of partisan choices among Javanese villagers. Gaffar concluded that voters' preferences are shaped by their interaction with leaders. Voters attached to formal leaders (village officials and their assistants and the heads of hamlets) vote for the government party (Golongan Karya, Golkar). In contrast, voters affiliated with informal leaders, especially religious leaders, vote for the Islamic party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP).²⁾ Consequently, the influence of socio-religious orientation shows a clear pattern of *abangan* voters attached to formal leaders voting for Golkar and *santri* affiliated with religious leaders voting for PPP (*ibid.*, 193–194).

It is important to note that Gaffar's research was conducted in the context of a hegemonic party system and authoritarian government. It is fair to say that contemporary Indonesian politics is very different. Indonesia has implemented open political competition or regular and fair elections since 1999. Freedom House classified Indonesia as a free country in terms of electoral democracy (Puddington 2013, 15).³⁾

Some scholars working in the Javanese or Indonesian context are involved in academic debate over Geertz's crucial work. Kahn expands Geertz's argument that *aliran* does not merely inform citizens' political affiliations with parties. In the Indonesian context, *aliran* is an ideological element, along with ethnicity and patron-clientage (Kahn 1978, 120). Meanwhile, R. William Liddle observes that Indonesia is very diverse in political values, beliefs, and attitudes. The uniform dynamic of Islam between 1960 and 90 and *abanganism*'s existence indicate the continuing diversity (Liddle 1996, 631).

However, Robert Hefner (1987, 550) reveals that the politics of the New Order had oppressed political Islam but Islam as a religion expanded in Java due to state facilities and policy support for education. Similarly, Bambang Pranowo argues over the *santri-abangan* dichotomy, indicating that the New Order "floating mass" policy at the village level meant people were not segregated by political affiliation. Consequently, the Javanese villagers' preference for following Islam replaced the *santri-abangan* segregation among them (Bambang Pranowo 1994, 18). Through an intensive study in rural Banyuwangi, East Java, A. Beatty revises Geertz's *aliran* by making the opposite argument that political and social tensions are able to shape, stimulate, and mute religious expression. In other words, relations of power affect religious expression

2) Golkar is an acronym for Golongan Karya, or Functional Group. PPP is an acronym for Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, or the United Development Party.

3) However, Freedom House downgraded the country's freedom status from "free" in 2013 to "partly free" in 2014. The house considered that the adoption of the new social organization law (UU Ormas) had undermined Indonesia's civil liberties.

(Beatty 2004, 6, 239).

In the post-Soeharto era, the debates are likely to refute this *aliran* approach. Anies Baswedan (2004) states that political Islam remains relevant to explain voters' alignment. The emergence of Islam-friendly parties that have evolved out of Islamist aspirations has attracted electoral support in both legislative and presidential elections (*ibid.*, 689–690). Nevertheless, changes in formal institutional arrangements and the outcomes of socio-economic change have reduced the significance of *aliran* and resulted in a modified *aliran* or dealignment of political parties (Ufen 2008, 20–34). Furthermore, R. William Liddle and Saiful Mujani (2007) refute *aliran* with academic evidence of national opinion surveys following parliamentary elections in 1999 and 2004 and the two-round presidential election in 2004. Religious orientation is no longer as influential on voting behavior as leadership and party identification (*ibid.*, 851). The scholars echo similar findings following parliamentary and presidential elections in 2009 (Mujani and Liddle 2010, 39).

Meanwhile, contemporary political facts demonstrate that the era of authoritarian government in Indonesia ended in 1998, when people power forced President Soeharto, who had run the country for 32 years, to resign from office. Soon after entering the new era, the country ran a more competitive election in 1999 in which 48 political parties contested. Five years later, Indonesia ran the first direct presidential election. It was followed by the first year of direct elections for local government heads (regent/mayor/governor) (*pilkada*) ever in 201 regions and seven provinces throughout 2005. Of the 201 regions, 36 are located in Central and East Java Provinces and the Special Region of Yogyakarta, where Javanese have lived for centuries.

These growing democratic contests have encouraged the interest of many academics and NGOs, which have established pollsters for both academic and commercial interests (Mietzner 2009, 117). However, this mushrooming of pollsters has not been followed by sufficient studies on Javanese voters. Pollsters merely capture Indonesian voters' preferences, mainly approaching the legislative and presidential elections of 2004, 2009, and 2014. Some more academic and seminal studies in the post-Soeharto period have dealt specifically with Indonesian voters, such as those by D. King (2003), Baswedan (2004), the Asia Foundation (2003), Liddle and Mujani (2007), and Mujani and Liddle (2010).

Published studies on *pilkada* in Java are, in fact, specifically non-voter oriented. They are mostly focused on *pilkada* dynamics and the political survival of local leaders. Three articles in M. Erb and P. Sulistiyanto's *Deepening Democracy in Indonesia? Direct Election for Local Leaders (Pilkada)* (2009) by Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, J. Schiller, and Tri Ratnawati are based on fieldwork conducted in the regencies of Bantul, Jepara, and

Kebumen, where Javanese culture is very influential.⁴⁾ Also, the current and well-respected literature on *pilkada* discovers factors behind the victories of three Muslim women *bupati* (regents) in Java. The women deployed Islam, gender, and social networks to gain office in three regions. In particular, Islamic ideas provided a strong religious foundation for their campaigns in *pilkada* (Dewi 2015). Although these studies on *pilkada* in Java are worth mentioning, they do not give any insight into voters' logic.

In addition to the lack of concern for Javanese voting studies, Indonesian and non-Indonesian scholars have approached Javanese voters through a limited perspective, which is based mainly on an individual voting behavior model. Both Geertz (1960) and Gaffar (1992) apply the social cleavage structure as an analytical base for individual Javanese voting behavior. Some contemporary studies on Javanese voting behavior in the post-Soeharto era, specifically during *pilkada*, focus on similar voting concerns, such as the study by Susilo Utomo (2008) on the victory of Bibit Waluyo and Rustriningsih in Central Java's gubernatorial election in 2008. Wawan Sobari and M. Faishal Aminuddin (2010) studied personal image and popularity as determining factors in the 2010 *pilkada* in Malang Regency, East Java. Lastly, a quantitative survey in Semarang Municipality examined the influence of the candidates' image, party identification level, and campaign effectiveness on the Javanese in voting for governor and deputy governor in the 2008 East Java gubernatorial *pilkada* (Wicaksono 2009, 129–130). These studies' contradictory results fail to provide a conclusive explanation for Javanese voter behavior. This raises the question: What other original explanation is there that can enrich studies on Javanese voters, particularly with regard to their group-oriented voting behavior rooted in Javanese culture and current electoral politics?

This study seeks to enrich the literature on Javanese voters. With respect to Geertz's *aliran*, this study sees the importance of Javanese communal norms, rather than religion, in explaining voting orientation. Also, it presents a preliminary assessment of *anut grubyuk* (fitting in) as a group-oriented voting preference among the Javanese, a topic that has been relatively absent in academic discussion. Moreover, it extends the explanation that *anut grubyuk* is part of electoral manipulation by local and neighborhood elites.

4) In the *pilkada*, the significance of ethnicity varies in different regions. LSI (2008) found that the ethnic background of candidates and the proportion of dominant ethnic groups in the provincial population resulted in different *pilkada* results in the three provinces. In the 2007 gubernatorial *pilkada* in West Kalimantan, voters tended to vote for candidates with a similar ethnic identity. However, in the 2007 gubernatorial *pilkada* in South Sulawesi and Bangka Belitung, voters accepted candidates with a different ethnic identity. Although ethnicity is not a dominant factor referred to by voters, it is relevant to explain the *pilkada* result.

The last concern should not be ignored, since several studies reveal that Indonesian liberal democracy is susceptible to unfair practices in competitive elections. Violence, money politics, and alleged political kidnappings are not appropriate for the country's infant liberal democracy (Robison and Hadiz 2004, 256). These practices subsequently lead to illiberal forms of democracy (Hadiz and Robison 2005, 231).

In the 2014 legislative election, blatant patronage—mainly extensive vote buying among candidates, brokers, and voters—was an embarrassment to Indonesia's democracy. Patronage has worsened the party system in Indonesia, which has become less programmatic and more fragile (Aspinall 2014, 109). *Anut grubyuk* is allegedly an electoral manipulation that can be indirectly related with these illiberal practices of democracy. This article, thus, contributes by providing a non-cultural explanation of this group-oriented voting phenomenon among the Javanese.

As its main focus, this study proposes a group-oriented explanation of voting behavior revealed in the 2010 *pilkada* in two rural regions in East Java. It provides a distinctive explanation of Javanese voting behavior by asserting the practice of *anut grubyuk* among rural Javanese. The analysis sheds light on a logical link between *anut grubyuk* in voting and the Javanese philosophy of life, and between socio-political dynamics pertaining to *pilkada* and their effect on the country's democracy. The arguments in this paper do not interpret *anut grubyuk* as an exclusively cultural Javanese reality, as the study evaluates the involvement of group leaders or brokers who are on a political drive as well.

Political scientists have analyzed this group-oriented voting. Carole Uhlaner (1989) proposes the importance of groups for a rational turnout. She argues that “individuals do not behave *atomistically* within the political sphere but rather are joined with others in groups with shared interests.” Group leaders transact policy positions or options with candidates, and voters under the coordination of group leaders are rewarded for voting or penalized for abstaining (*ibid.*, 419). In other words, individuals intelligently adjust their ballot to conform with those of their neighbors to gain certain communal benefits. Using similar language, A. Glazer, B. Grofman, and G. Owen (1998, 29) reveal that racial backlash and support for candidates representing the median voter can shape grouped voting. In a similar vein, Timothy Feddersen (2004, 100) views voters as ethical agents, in a group-based ethical voter model, who are directed by their beliefs to be ethically obliged to behave in accordance with the group's interest after reviewing the possible outcomes that would occur and the positive payoff that would be received. Nonetheless, voters do not blindly follow the norms of the group; they also consider the centrality of the issue to the group (Smith *et al.* 2005, 167).

To clearly explicate the preceding arguments, the next section briefly describes the case study design to analyze *anut grubyuk* among rural Javanese voters. The following

section explores the practice of *anut grubyuk* and develops arguments beyond this grouped voting practice, from the point of view of both the dominant Javanese culture and the rational motives of voters and group leaders. Finally, the availability of some recent studies on Indonesian electoral politics and democracy, including *pilkada*, provides a basis for serious concern that this Javanese grouped voting can be captured in patronage-driven political realities.

The Case Study

This study is centered on the incumbents' political survival and failure in the new and emerging local democracy in Indonesia, mainly in *pilkada* at the regional level. The study was conducted in four rural and urban regions: Blitar and Trenggalek Regencies (rural regions) and Probolinggo and Madiun Municipalities (urban regions). However, the analysis focuses only on the two rural regions, where the practice of *anut grubyuk* in voting took place in the 2010 *pilkada*: Blitar and Trenggalek Regencies.

This study applies qualitative research principles with interpretivism as its paradigm (Creswell 2009, 18). It utilizes the case study as a research method, involving "an exploration of event, activity and process of one or more individuals" (Stake, in Creswell 2009, 13). To gather qualitative data, the study utilized semi-structured interviews with voters who cast their vote in the *pilkada*. The analysis is focused on 8 of 31 selected participants in three villages (Tempur, Kerjo, and Laksono) who argued for *anut grubyuk* in voting.

Several criteria were identified before selecting Blitar and Trenggalek Regencies as the research sites. First, the regions had to have incumbents running for re-election. Next, the incumbents had to have occupied the post for five years. Finally, the degree of the incumbents' success or failure had to reach a minimum of winning or losing by 50 percent. This figure represents absolute winning or failure on the part of incumbents as well as challengers. Also, it indicates the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of incumbency. There were 18 regions conducting *pilkada* in 2010 in East Java, of which 15 were in rural regions. There were only five incumbents in the rural regions running for the second *pilkada* in 2010. Three of the five failed to maintain their post in the 2010 *pilkada*.

Blitar Regency, one of the most populous regions in East Java, is located in the southern part of the province. According to the 2010 population census, the regency had 1,116,010 people living in an area of 1,588.79 km². The population density was 702 per km², and the regency contributed 2.98 percent of the province's population. Blitar is categorized as a Mataraman area since the major and indigenous population is Javanese

(Rozuli 2011, 96).⁵⁾ Meanwhile, Trenggalek is one of the regencies located in the southern coastal area of East Java. It covers an area of 1,261.40 km², two-thirds of which is mountainous land. According to the 2010 national population census, Trenggalek's inhabitants amounted to 674,521: 334,769 males and 339,752 females (Indonesia, Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Trenggalek 2010, 6). The population lives in 14 districts and 157 villages. The majority of the population is Muslim, accounting for 99.25 percent of the regency's inhabitants (Indonesia, Badan Pusat Statistik Jawa Timur 2010, 22). Overall, according to the 2010 national population census, Javanese comprised 81.1 percent of the 37,476,757 inhabitants in East Java (Na'im and Syaputra 2011, 38).

Both Blitar's and Trenggalek's cultural features are categorized as Java Mataraman in the East Java Regional Division of Culture (Sutarto and Sudikan 2008). In other words, in the regional division of Javanese culture, these regencies are included in Mancanagari or "outer region." Mancanagari's culture is similar to the central Javanese court culture of Yogyakarta and Surakarta, with syncretism in religious life, unifying elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. The folk culture and art of Blitar and Trenggalek are also similar to those of the two centers of Javanese culture (Koentjaraningrat 1985, 21–22).

The first *pilkada* in Blitar Regency took place in 2005. The official ballots counted on December 4, 2005 showed that the duo of Herry Noegroho and Arif Fuadi had won the *pilkada* by 42.18 percent of votes. Five years later, the two ran separately in the *pilkada*. Herry urged a former senior bureaucrat, Rijanto, to run with him. In turn, Arif urged a local legislator, Heri Romadhon, to challenge the incumbent. In the 2010 race, held on November 9, the incumbent Herry Noegroho survived in office with 59.7 percent of votes.

The *pilkada* in Trenggalek Regency turned out to be a unique race for democratic contenders, as it was a battle between two incumbents. In the first *pilkada* in 2005, the incumbent Soeharto⁶⁾ (2005–10) defeated the former incumbent Mulyadi WR (2000–05). In the second *pilkada* in 2010, the incumbent Soeharto was defeated by the former incumbent Mulyadi WR. In the *pilkada* held on June 2, 2010, Soeharto faced Mulyadi WR and the deputy regent as well as his running mate in the 2005 *pilkada*, Mahsun Ismail. Soeharto garnered the fewest votes, only 22.4 percent (71,818). Mulyadi WR won the

5) A survey conducted by the Blitar Development Planning Board in cooperation with Airlangga University in 2009 presented the ethnic distribution of respondents, chosen randomly: 99.8 percent of the 1,000 identified themselves as being Javanese. Based on this survey, one could say that almost the entire Blitar population is Javanese.

6) The incumbent bears exactly the same name as the former Indonesian President Soeharto. The name Soeharto in this article refers primarily to the former regent of Trenggalek (2005–10).

race by gaining 174,656 ballots (54.4 percent) (Indonesia, Komisi Pemilihan Umum Kabupaten Trenggalek 2010, 79).

Trenggalek Regency was selected to represent a rural region with a failed incumbent. It met all the criteria: the incumbent running for the second *pilkada*, the incumbent having occupied office for five years prior to the 2010 *pilkada*, and the degree of the challenger's victory being above 50 percent. Blitar and Jember Regencies met all the criteria for a district with a successful incumbent. Finally, Blitar was preferred as a case study site because of the incumbent's more impressive victory compared to the one in Jember.

To interview voters, two districts were selected based on the criterion of their distance to the center of government of Blitar and Trenggalek Regencies. In Blitar Regency, Srengat District was selected as it met the criterion of a district that was close to the center. The other one was Wonotirto District, representing the opposite criterion to the former. In Trenggalek Regency, Trenggalek District was selected to represent a district situated close to the center. Meanwhile, Watulimo District denoted the opposite district to Trenggalek District. Due to the limitations of this study in gaining official data of the 2010 *pilkada* results, one village in each district was chosen, based on a limited assessment through a brief discussion with local government officers.⁷⁾ The assessment was based on an assumption of villages where the incumbent gained votes that exceeded or fell short of the district's average vote. Then, the study selected one village in each district: Tempur (pseudonym) in Srengat District, Kerjo (pseudonym) in Wonotirto District, Joyo (pseudonym) in Trenggalek District, and Laksono (pseudonym) in Watulimo District.

According to the voter list issued by the Blitar Election Commission, Tempur village had 4,957 eligible voters: 2,472 male and 2,485 female. These voters were distributed among nine polling stations (Tempat Pemungutan Suara). On Election Day (November 9, 2010), voting participation in this village reached 58.2 percent—that is, only 2,885 voters exercised their right to vote in the *pilkada*. Of the nine polling stations, the station where the incumbent gained the highest number of votes compared to the rival was identified. Polling station number 7 was then chosen as the location for the interviews. The incumbent in that station gained 75.3 percent of the 352 votes. In-depth interviews were conducted with six female and five male voters from various

7) I obtained the data on *pilkada* results from the Blitar and Trenggalek Election Commissions after gaining a research permit from the regencies. Consequently, I did not use these data for selecting villages where I would conduct interviews with voters; but I did use the data for selecting the specific location in each village (neighborhood) for the interviews.

social backgrounds.

In the 2010 *pilkada*, Kerjo village had 3,340 eligible voters: 1,651 male and 1,689 female. According to the *pilkada* results issued by the Blitar Election Commission, 39 percent of voters were absent. In contrast with Tempur village, in Kerjo village the incumbent Herry Noegroho ran a tough race with the challenger. At the final count, the incumbent gained 51.13 percent of votes. Among the seven polling stations in the village, polling station number 4 was chosen—this was where Herry had gained the most votes (98.4 percent)—to conduct in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted with five female and five male voters. The interviewees included farmers, traders, the head of the hamlet, and the leader of a farmer group.

In Trenggalek District, Joyo village was chosen as the location to conduct in-depth interviews. The village had 5,449 eligible voters: 2,612 male and 2,837 female. The number of absentees in the *pilkada* amounted to 1,559 (28.6 percent). Nevertheless, the incumbent gained the highest number of votes in the village, 1,557. Mahsun Ismail (the challenger) gained 915 votes and Mulyadi (the winning challenger) 1,288. In this location, six male and four female voters were interviewed on September 12–13, 2012. In Watulimo District, one of the 12 villages, Laksono, was chosen for conducting in-depth interviews with voters. According to the 2010 *pilkada* results issued by the Trenggalek Election Commission, Laksono was ranked third among the villages in Watulimo District where the incumbent experienced a crushing defeat in the *pilkada*. Laksono village had 5,601 eligible voters: 2,774 male and 2,827 female. The incumbent obtained 29.46 percent of votes (1,089), whereas Mulyadi won the poll in the village by gaining 59.3 percent of votes (2,192). The number of absentees was 32.4 percent (1,815). In-depth interviews were conducted in the area of polling station number 8, where the incumbent experienced the most crushing defeat among the 20 polling stations. In this polling station the incumbent gained 39 votes (13.2 percent), Mahsun Ismail obtained 41 votes (13.9 percent), and Mulyadi won the race by obtaining 215 votes (72.9 percent). The number of absentees in this polling station was 190 (38.15 percent). In this area, seven male and three female voters were interviewed.

Anut Grubyuk: Communal Spirit or Rational Pragmatism in Voting?

To facilitate the best description of Javanese communal life, the discussion begins with the valuable Javanese advice of *rukun agawe santosa* (harmonious living in peace and security). It reflects an ideal Javanese type of neighborhood life, where people live in harmony with their neighbors. Javanese people believe that their neighbors are more

valuable than relatives living far away. Close neighbors are always available to help, unlike faraway relatives. Accordingly, Javanese feel a need to live in harmony with their neighbors and avoid arrogance. From a Javanese communal perspective, a person's worth can be judged through others' esteem for them in the three vital events of the life cycle: birth, death, and marriage. Neighbors come to a respected Javanese person to congratulate or deliver condolences on these three important occasions (Hardjowirogo 1984, 5). This old Javanese belief reflects one of the main pillars of Javanese communal life, living in harmony (*rukun*).

This communal value exists also in political life, particularly in direct elections of local leaders (*pilkada*). The case study in Blitar and Trenggalek revealed communal-driven voting behavior among rural Javanese, whether to vote or not vote for incumbents in their re-election bid. The Javanese phrase "*anut grubyuk*" was mentioned by voters as one of the reasons for voting the way they did. The literal meaning of the phrase is "fitting in" or using the neighborhood's preference as a basis for individual preference. In the context of *pilkada*, *anut grubyuk* is an individual decision and action that adjusts to the major preference in the neighborhood, whether to vote or not for certain candidates.

The argument of *anut grubyuk* in voting is revealed in voters' explanations for their preferences. Three participants in two rural neighborhoods in Blitar did not take individual stands in voting for the incumbent; in other words, they just followed the major preference in their neighborhood.

In Tempur village in Blitar, a female farmer delivered a simple answer for why she voted for the incumbent in the 2010 *pilkada*. She said:

Katanya orang-orang banyak yang milih nomor dua. Ikut-ikut sama teman-teman (I hear that many people voted for candidate number two [Herry-Rijanto]. I just followed my friends [neighbors]).⁸⁾

A housewife-cum-chicken farmer gave similar reasons for voting for the incumbent in the *pilkada*:

Semuanya tidak kenal, cuma ikut-ikutan warga yang lain. Asal milih saja karena tidak tahu (I do not know all [the candidates]; I just follow the others. I just vote because I do not know).⁹⁾

In Kerjo village in southern Blitar, another female farmer reiterated that she just followed the communal preference in her neighborhood. She said clearly in polite Javanese:

8) Interview conducted on July 4, 2012.

9) Interview conducted on July 4, 2012.

Namung Nyoblos nomer kalih, soale katah sing nyoblos sing niku. Nggih kirangan, nyoblos, nggih nyoblos (I voted for number two [candidate] as many others were voting for him. I don't know, voted, yes I voted).¹⁰⁾

In Trenggalek, the case study discovered that voters performed *anut grubyuk* by not voting for the incumbent in the 2010 *pilkada*. A trader-cum-farmer in Laksono village conveyed a simple reason for not voting for the incumbent. He said in polite Javanese:

Nggih mboten nopo-nopo sedoyo sae, sami sedoyo, sae dadhos milih niki mawon, nggih ngoten (Well, there is not any reason, they all are good, all [the candidates] are similar. It is good to vote for him [Mulyadi], that is it).

He continued that he had voted for the winning challenger (Mulyadi):

Insy Allah Pak Mul, namung manut grubyuk, namung manut konco-konco. Dukho ketokne, nopo himbauan (God willing [I voted for] Mr. Mul [Mulyadi], just fitting in, just following friends. I am not sure, it seems like an appeal).¹¹⁾

Two other voters gave similar reasons. They based their decision to not vote for the incumbent on the majority opinion in the neighborhood. A female voter admitted that she had voted for the winning challenger because Mulyadi's victory team had distributed free *yasinan* uniforms for all *yasinan* group members in her hamlet. She argued that there was no mobilization of support for the winning challenger.¹²⁾ In fact, she adjusted her ballot based on the majority of her fellow neighbors' votes.

Interestingly, "fitting in" was also given as a reason for voting for the incumbent. Two female participants said that they voted for the incumbent in order to follow their friends in the neighborhood. In Javanese, they said the reason was "*manut wong-wong*." The literal meaning of these words is "following people or matching other people's decisions." A female participant added in Indonesian:

Ya, saya ini cuma orang kecil, cuma ikut-ikutan. Saya tidak tahu cuma ikut-ikutan saja (Yes, I am only a little person, just following. I do not know, just following [others]).¹³⁾

10) Interview conducted on July 5, 2012.

11) Interview conducted on September 18, 2012.

12) Interview conducted on September 18, 2012. The *yasinan* group is a communal male or female religious group at the neighborhood level. The main activity of this group is attending weekly meetings and reciting the *yasin* epistle in the Koran. This group does not perform religious activities only; it also acts as a social medium or meeting point for male or female villagers to discuss issues and developments that are considered important for the community. In Blitar and Trenggalek Regencies, *yasinan* activity is usually conducted every Thursday evening for males and on other days for females.

13) Interview conducted on September 18, 2012.

In a focus group interview conducted on September 29, 2012 in Trenggalek, one participant—an NGO activist and former local legislator—confirmed the phenomenon of fitting in. The participant used the Javanese term “*anut grubyuk*.” The literal meaning of this term is “following the majority or going anywhere others go.” From the interview, *anut grubyuk* was understood as the practice of fitting in. Individuals’ voting decisions for the incumbent were not the result of their own assessments of the candidates. Rather, individuals based their decisions on the mainstream opinion of their neighborhood.

Another explanation for the practice of *anut grubyuk* in voting can be found in cultural aspects of the Javanese philosophy of life. These include assumptions, ideas, and mental attitudes and form a foundation as well as give meaning to every single Javanese person’s attitude to life (Gauthama 2003, 11). Javanese culture has two principal dimensions that influence everyday life: communality and hierarchy (Mulder 1978, 58). Relevant to the research findings is the nature of human relationships in the Javanese philosophy of life, namely, *rukun* (harmony). This represents the predominant value of communality. Javanese require the principles of *rukun* in human relationships at the household and community levels. They are taught to prioritize harmony rather than conflict. Javanese society demands the avoidance of behavior that can lead to conflict (*ibid.*, 57–59; Handayani and Novianto 2004, 67–68). The spirit of togetherness, leading to similar preferences between individual voters and the majority of voters in Tempur and Kerjo villages in Blitar and Laksono village in Trenggalek, may be explained by the principle of *rukun*. Individual voters adjusted their preferences to the majority preference in order to achieve harmony.

However, the implementation of *rukun* does not tolerate coercion. Javanese culture allows individuality, as it accepts that every individual has different problems, rights, and interests. To support individual freedom in voting, a hamlet head in Kerjo village clearly explained, “I did not direct my people [in the hamlet]. They also think by themselves, vote individually.”¹⁴ Still, individuality must align with the principle of *rukun*. The adjustment of individual preference to the majority preference in the neighborhood is understood as an individual voter’s effort to achieve harmony in society as well as to gain collective benefits from local government policies credited to the incumbent.¹⁵

Another possible explanation for voting adjustments by individuals is their limitations in gathering adequate information to support their voting decisions. Adjustment is

14) Interview conducted on July 5, 2012.

15) This assumption is based on fieldwork in Kerjo village. The incumbent has a close connection with the neighborhood and has disbursed many development benefits, particularly the construction of roads and ponds for farming, the disbursement of a micro revolving fund program (*simpan pinjam*), and seed distribution to farmers groups.

an efficient manner or a short cut to support decisions. Indeed, the application of the *rukun* principle to explain the practice of individual voting adjustment is also reasonable. The individual voter considers the benefits that can be gained from communal facilities promised by the incumbent. Hence, adjusting individual voting preferences to the majority preference is a contribution to collective choice. Voter adjustment is understandable in both possible explanations. First, an individual voter expects to gain benefits from collective voting decisions, as promised by the incumbent. Second, an individual voter can overcome their limitations in gaining adequate information to support their individual voting decision.

The other principal value is *hormat* or *aji* (respect), representing the value of hierarchy. The traditional Javanese view is that “all social relationships are hierarchically ordered, and on the moral imperative to maintain and express this mode of social order as a good in itself” (Geertz 1961). In any social behavior, respect is manifested in many different contexts: toward government officials, in school, in relationships among neighbors, among others (*ibid.*, 147).

In order to better understand *anut grubyuk*, one needs to refer to the Javanese conception of the relationship between the individual and society at the neighborhood level. Because the phenomenon of *anut grubyuk* appears particularly at the neighborhood level, it is useful to refer to the Javanese philosophy guiding relationships among people in a neighborhood. In addition to the Javanese advice of “*rukun agawe santosa*,” there is a proverb stating “*sing sapa ora seneng tetanggan kalebu wong kang ora becik*” (whoever is not a lot like his or her neighbor is not a good person) (Rachmatullah 2011, 80). Javanese live under concomitant or coexistent norms in relating to their neighbors. Individuals as well as families strive to live in harmony with their neighbors. In the wider context of relationships between the individual and society, N. Mulder (1992) refers to a Javanese perspective on the relationship between man, world, and cosmos emphasized as one of the core ideas of communal relationships among the Javanese, namely, the concept of the unity of existence. In terms of individual and societal relationships, the appropriate explanation of this concept is that people should accept and respect order and inevitability; adapt themselves to its requirements; and fulfill the obligations required of the place where they live so as to achieve good order in communal relationships (*rukun*). In order to maintain a *rukun* relationship, a person should suppress his or her individual will, emotions, and self-interest (*ibid.*, 143–145).

This ideal of living in harmony elucidates the Javanese cultural context in which *anut grubyuk* is situated. As a member of a community, an individual intentionally respects communal opinion when voting for a candidate in a *pilkada*. The means of showing respect is adjusting individual ballots in accordance with the majority opinion in the

neighborhood. Consequently, the practice of *anut grubyuk* among participants in Laksono village makes sense. By displaying similarity in voting decisions, voters achieve two aims: communal peace and the exercise of individual rights as voters.

Nevertheless, voters in Laksono village in Trenggalek held different perceptions concerning the incumbent Soeharto's performance. They identified positive and beneficial programs credited to the incumbent, for instance, accessible health and education services; the development of dams, irrigation, and neighborhood and village roads; free uniforms for village officers; and the provision of subsidized fertilizer and free seeds. The incumbent was also perceived as a generous and religious person. A dissenting opinion pertains to the incumbent's failure to meet all the promises made when he campaigned in the 2005 *pilkada*. A community leader involved in supporting the incumbent felt disappointed as the latter did not keep his promises. The incumbent experienced the most crushing defeat in polling station number 8, where voters were interviewed. The incumbent's better performance did not automatically encourage voters to vote for him; voters decided not to vote for the incumbent because they matched their preference with the majority opinion in their neighborhood.

From the findings in Laksono village, three important points emerge. First, participants had different perceptions of the incumbent's performance during his time in office, compared to those of participants interviewed in Joyo village. A more positive perception of the incumbent's performance did not automatically persuade voters to elect him. The cultural phenomenon of *anut grubyuk* can both disfavor and favor the incumbent. Second, party attachment and personal connection with the contenders can encourage voters to disfavor the incumbent. Third, the support of an informal leader in Laksono village was important, as he could also act as an opinion leader who probably provided guidance for voters to disfavor or favor the incumbent. This could be a possible explanation for the phenomenon of *anut grubyuk* among voters in the village; voters matched their decision with the majority opinion in the neighborhood, which was probably under the influence of an informal leader. Voters in Laksono village also demonstrated a differing acceptance of local government policies and programs credited to the incumbent. This acceptance was unlike the non-government and government elites' opinions in the regency, which were inclined to disfavor the incumbent. These opinions did not express negative perceptions or gossip about the incumbent, as propagated by the local mass media.

Lastly, the practice of *anut grubyuk* in voting decisions and voters' ignorance of evidence-based local government performance and *pilkada*-related issues can explain the disconnection between the incumbent's performance during his time in office and the *pilkada* results. The practice of *anut grubyuk* among rural voters in Blitar and Trenggalek

could lead voters to ignore their individual choices as they adjusted their voting decision to the majority opinion in the neighborhood. Furthermore, *anut grubyuk* could negate positive or negative campaigns about the incumbents' performance. Voters made their decisions based on communal judgment without considering the costs or benefits of the incumbent's leadership in terms of long-term social, economic, or environmental outlook. It was such behavior (*anut grubyuk*) that disfavored the incumbent in Trenggalek and supported the incumbent in Blitar.

Other Motives in Voting

In addition to the practice of *anut grubyuk*, the case studies in these two rural regions found four other categories of motives that shaped voters' preferences at the polls. First, voters referred to the tangible policy output credited to the incumbent. Better infrastructure (roads) at the neighborhood level was recognized by voters in the regions. In Trenggalek, voters also considered rural infrastructure constructed during the incumbent's time in office, such as irrigation for rice fields, as a reason to vote for the incumbent. Nevertheless, the incumbent in Trenggalek was regarded as having failed to improve the regency's roads during his incumbency. This opinion was widely held among voters, though official data showed that under the incumbent's administration there was better development of the regency's roads compared to the previous administration's performance.

Second, complementary to the tangible and direct policy outputs are the populist images of the incumbents. The incumbent's so-called *blusukan* (impromptu community visits) was clearly remembered by voters. Voters frequently mentioned them as extraordinary activities performed by a person who held the most honorable and prominent position in the region. This admiration persuaded voters to vote for the incumbent. The incumbent's frequent visits to villages in Blitar Regency were appreciated by voters. Moreover, voters considered tangible aspects of the incumbent's populist activities, namely, donations and appearances. However, some voters in Trenggalek Regency perceived that the incumbent was not really a local person like the winning challenger was. Although the incumbent was known to be a religious person, some voters felt that his half-hearted local identity would discourage him from working for the regency's interests if he regained control of the regent post.

Third, voters compared the incumbent and the challenger before making their decision. Their basis of comparison was the competitive advantage between the candidates. This comparison was made mainly by voters who held leadership positions in the community, such as hamlet heads, neighborhood unit (Rukun Tetangga) heads, community unit (Rukun Warga) heads, and village heads. Voters voted for the incumbents in Blitar

Regency because they perceived that the incumbents were more experienced and better grounded than the challengers. Many of the incumbents' programs had not yet been completed in the first term, but voters felt that the development programs should be continued in the second term. By voting for the incumbents, these elite voters sought to minimize the risk of uncertainty. The case study in Blitar found a Javanese proverb to express this consideration: "*tinimbang golek wong nambal* or *tinimbang bakal aluwung nambal*" (it is better not to take a risk with a new leader). Voters are assumed to play safe or to avoid risky choices. In other words, voting for the incumbent was better than voting for a challenger who had not yet proven his worth. Voters wanted to continue to gain policy benefits equal to those they had received in the incumbent's first term. There is an Indonesian proverb expressing this idea: "*ibarat membeli kucing dalam karung*" (to buy a pig in a poke), or to avoid a mistake by not voting for a candidate who has no previous record. In other words, voters do not want to take a gamble as they do not have adequate information about the challenger's prior performance. In Trenggalek, voters decided to vote for the winning challenger as he had been the former regent (Mulyadi, defeated by the incumbent in the 2005 *pilkada*). Voters felt that the winning challenger showed better leadership compared to the incumbent. This could be called the "Mulyadi effect."

Finally, some voters considered party loyalty when deciding whether or not to vote for an incumbent. Voters' alignment with the party that nominated the candidate shaped their preference. Sometimes voters obeyed the party's decision and voted for the nominated candidate. One voter voted for the winning challenger in Laksono village in Trenggalek, since the party he was loyal to (PDI-P) had nominated the challenger.

Beyond a Cultural Explanation

Voters' social profiles probably shed more light on the external factors that shape *anut grubyuk* (see Table 1). Voters who practiced *anut grubyuk* had similar social profiles of inadequate involvement in organizational life, mainly at the neighborhood or village level. They did not join mass organizations, political organizations, professional organizations, or semi-government organizations. All participants stated that they regularly attended the weekly *yasinan* meeting conducted by *yasinan* groups.¹⁶⁾

In Java, *yasinan* is popular for both Javanese performing Javanism or Javanese rituals (*kejawen*) in their lives and traditional Javanese *santri*. *Yasin* epistle recitation is part of

16) See footnote 12 for an explanation of *yasinan*.

Table 1 Social Profile of Voters

Voter's Identity	Sex	Age	Education	Occupation	Organizational Life
Blitar 2	Male	50	Junior high school	Small entrepreneur	No
Blitar 4	Male	40	Elementary school	Peasant	No
Blitar 5	Female	40	Junior high school	Housewife	No
Blitar 10	Female	40	Senior high school	Housewife	No
Blitar 13	Female	50	Elementary school	Farmer	No
Trenggalek 12	Male	55	Elementary school	Farmer and micro-trader	No
Trenggalek 15	Female	47	Elementary school	Micro-trader	No
Trenggalek 17	Female	55	Junior high school	Micro-trader	No

Source: Fieldwork data, 2012.

Muslim funeral rites practiced several days after death and as collective veneration of a teacher or respected person (Woodward 2011, 40, 119).¹⁷⁾

In connection with *pilkada*, *yasinan* weekly meetings are also a campaign medium for candidates. In Tempur village in Blitar, an incumbent's campaign team member distributed free uniforms to the male *yasinan* group. In addition, the challenger's campaign team attended the weekly *yasinan* meeting in Kerjo village. In Laksono village in Trenggalek, participants said that the challenger's victory team distributed free *yasinan* uniforms for all *yasinan* group members in the hamlets where fieldwork was conducted. This profile shows less varied involvement of participants in organizational life. It can limit voters from having wider views and better arguments in voting.

Other social profiles of participants who practiced *anut grubyuk* in voting show that they mainly did domestic work or informal sector jobs for a living. Furthermore, the majority of voters had only completed their education up to elementary and junior high school. Also, *anut grubyuk* in voting was practiced by both sexes. Thus, the study cannot claim that *anut grubyuk* refers only to male or female voting behavior in rural Java.

Compared to voters who have individual stands on their preferences (non-*anut grubyuk*), this case study found different degrees of "engagement" based on the reasons given by the voters interviewed. Engagement is a degree of contact between voters and local political issues as well as policy implementation and organizational life prior to *pilkada* that can shape voters' choices. There are two categories of engagement to cover

17) In East Java, *yasinan* is an identical religious expression of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) followers (Shelia 2012, 4; Lukman 2014, 38). Therefore, *yasinan* can tell us about the presence of NU tradition in expressing Islam in three villages. Moreover, the existence of NU is very visible via the presence of NU branches (*pengurus ranting*) in Tempur and Kerjo villages. In Tempur, Ansor (Gerakan Pemuda Ansor, Ansor Youth Movement), a youth wing of NU, also exists. In Laksono village in Trenggalek, two schools under Maarif NU's supervision—a *madrrasah ibtidaiah* (elementary school) and *raudlatul athfal* (kindergarten)—have served the village for the last two decades.

all contacts between voters and local political issues and policy implementation: simple engagement and intensive engagement.

Simple engagement is a typology covering voters who pay less attention to *pilkada* issues, irrespective of the experience they have in gaining the benefits of local government policies. The majority of these voters belongs to the masses and has a less educated background. A male brick maker (50 years old, elementary school graduate) who has lived in Tempur village since 1980 said that shortly before the 2010 *pilkada* he heard that the incumbent had donated several sacks of cement for constructing a bridge in the village. To the best of his knowledge, education and health services were not totally free. He stated his reason for voting for the incumbent in the 2010 *pilkada* in plain Indonesian:

Hanya ikut-ikutan, aslinya tidak tahu. Ikut-ikutan kawan, pedoman utama (untuk memilih) tidak ada (Just fitting in, I actually do not know. Just blindly followed my neighborhood mates, [there is no] particular guidance [on whom to vote for]).¹⁸⁾

A micro-businesswoman (55 years old, junior high school graduate) who has lived in Laksono village since she was born recalled that she had benefited from a revolving fund program for women under the national program for community empowerment (*simpan pinjam perempuan program nasional pemberdayaan masyarakat*). Her children had also benefited from the national program of school operational aid (*bantuan operasional sekolah*). She gave a short answer for her reason for practicing *anut grubyuk* in voting for the incumbent: “*Alasannya, manut wong-wong, gitu aja*” (My reason is just following my neighborhood mates, nothing else).¹⁹⁾

In contrast, voters who pay attention to *pilkada* issues—mainly village leaders and other officeholders—can argue about the reasons for their choices. They show an intensive engagement with the issues as well as gaining the benefits of policy implementation. The leader of a farmers group in Kerjo village conveyed a clear answer about his reason for voting for the incumbent:

Saya nyoblos nomor dua karena kita menginginkan sarana transportasi lancar. Setelah kita bertanya ke teman-teman di daerah lain, janji-janjinya terbukti. Pak Herry itu orangnya enak, setiap diundang mau datang. Bantuan ke kelompok tani juga sudah ada sebelum pilkada (I voted for [candidate] number two [the incumbent] because we want a good infrastructure for better transportation. After asking for many fellows [farmers groups] in other villages, [the incumbent] kept his promises. Mr. Herry is a humble person; he wanted to come when we invited him [to the village]. [I also saw that] Aid for farmers groups was provided prior to the *pilkada*).²⁰⁾

18) Interview conducted on July 4, 2012.

19) Interview conducted on September 18, 2012.

20) Interview conducted on July 5, 2012.

An interesting reason for voting for the challenger was given by a village officer in Laksono who was responsible for managing the village's irrigation. He recognized that he had received an official uniform from the regional government during the incumbent's stay in office. He added that the incumbent had paid proper attention to infrastructure development at the village level, such as roads, dams, and irrigation. In fact, he voted for the challenger in the *pilkada* for a simple reason: "*Pak Mulyadi dulu pernah menjabat jadi Bupati, dulu ya baik . . .*" (Mr. Mulyadi was the former regent; he [performed] well . . .).²¹⁾

In rural regions, voters who are categorized as being intensively engaged are those who have official or cultural positions in the village, such as village heads, hamlet heads, the heads of farmers and religious groups, and those who have enjoyed a better education (are at least senior high school graduates). These voters are able to argue about their rationale for whether or not they vote for the incumbents. In urban regions, the case study found that all participants or voters were categorized as showing intensive engagement. They could explain the incumbent's popular policies and the benefits of these policies. As a consequence, they had clear arguments for their reasons to vote for either the incumbents or the challengers.

Related to *anut grubyuk* in voting, the degree of "engagement" can explain why rural Javanese voters practice *anut grubyuk* in *pilkada*. Inadequate engagement with *pilkada*-related issues can encourage voters not to take individual stands in *pilkada*. Engagement provides a complementary explanation of communal Javanese values that connect individuals to the life of their society in a rural neighborhood.

Beyond these cultural aspects, the profile of villages can also shed light on the nature of *anut grubyuk*. Tempur village in Srengat District is located 10 km southeast of the district capital and 8 km west of the Blitar Regency capital. The village is composed of four hamlets. About 40 percent of Tempur's territory consists of rice fields, 20 percent is residential, 35 percent is dry fields, and 15 percent is used for other purposes. Residents in this village mostly work as farmers, with some being traders, stock farmers, clerks, and factory workers. Kerjo village in Wonotirto District is located in southern Blitar, at a distance of 25 km from the central government of Blitar Regency. In 2011 the population was 3,962 people: 51 percent female and 49 percent male. The composition of the educational background in the village is dominated by elementary school graduates (68 percent) and those who did not graduate from elementary school (12 percent). The majority of the population is farmers (58.1 percent). Chili or red pepper is a prominent agricultural product of the village. This village is also known to be one of Blitar's migrant

21) Interview conducted on September 18, 2012.

worker contributors. According to the Blitar Regency branch of the Indonesian migrant workers union (Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia), the village had 257 migrant workers in 2013 (Rahayu 2013, 2). During fieldwork, the prominent role of the farmer-based group (*kelompok tani*) in the neighborhood where the interviews took place was apparent.

Joyo village in Trenggalek District is located exactly in the center of the regency of Trenggalek, as the regency office is located there. Many local government offices are also located in the village. Interestingly, the village is also where both Soeharto and Mulyadi were born. They still have their childhood homes in the village, in different hamlets. The majority of the population in the village consists of Javanese Muslims. Since this is an urban village, most people are occupied as civil servants, traders, entrepreneurs, and clerks. Observations in the village showed that most of the neighborhood infrastructure was well developed. The distance between houses was very short, and almost all the houses had vehicles.

Laksono in Watulimo District is a rural village in the southern coastal area of Trenggalek Regency, about 53 km from the center of the regency. In addition to fishing, the majority of the population in the village relies on the forest-based agricultural sector for their livelihoods. According to data from the Forest Village Community Institute (Lembaga Masyarakat Desa Hutan, LMDH), the village has 6,269 members. The LMDH working area of the village covers 4,271 hectares. In cooperation with the state-owned forestry company (Perhutani), LMDH manages forest areas in the village through Community-Based Forest Management (Pengelolaan Hutan Bersama Masyarakat). As a village-based association with a large membership, LMDH has a strong bargaining position in the village. Moreover, several key persons in LMDH at Laksono also hold important positions in the LMDH association in Watulimo District.

The above brief profiles can provide additional explanations for *anut grubyuk* in voting, beyond Javanese cultural aspects, by showing the rural and urban character of villages and the variety of villagers' occupations. The majority of the population in Joyo village is engaged in non-agricultural occupations, such as teachers, civil servants, street vendors, and entrepreneurs. In the village, the study did not find any explanation from voters concerning *anut grubyuk* in either voting for or not voting for the incumbent. Voters had their own arguments in this respect, based on their individually oriented preferences, and did not follow others in the neighborhood. In three other villages where *anut grubyuk* was found, the occupations of the population were homogenous, such as farming or fishing.

Another important non-cultural feature of villages and neighborhoods is the presence of farmer organizations. LMDH is the most popular farmer-based organization in Laksono village in Trenggalek. With its huge membership and wide networking, LMDH

is a potential political force in the *pilkada*.²²⁾ The incumbent was supported as well as challenged by LMDH in both *pilkada*. In 2005, LMDH's networks helped Soeharto to gain victory in the *pilkada*. There was an informal agreement between the incumbent and LMDH's leaders prior to the 2005 *pilkada*. LMDH supported Soeharto with the expectation of gaining direct benefits during his term in power, namely, infrastructure (roads), fertilizer donations, and seeds. However, the incumbent did not keep his promises during his term in office.

In the 2010 *pilkada*, LMDH's networks diverted their support to Mulyadi WR. A chairman of an LMDH forum at the district level as well as chairman of LMDH in Laksono village remarked:

When finally Mr. Harto [Soeharto] was elected [as the regent], the promise was not fulfilled. When he came here [to visit the village] he never greeted us or [LMDH] administrators. Finally, the LMDH board was not needed anymore by Mr. Harto. So, the promise was violated. He gave assistance to fishermen, but we farmers were not taken care of. We [LMDH] decided not to support Mr. Harto.²³⁾

Like Soeharto, prior to the *pilkada* Mulyadi and his running mate Kholiq met with LMDH networks in Nglongsor village. LMDH's decision to support Mulyadi in 2010 was influenced also by an informal agreement to support LMDH members. Mulyadi promised to subsidize fertilizer and farming tools for LMDH. Mulyadi's first attempt to fulfill his promise was the inauguration of the LMDH Association of Trenggalek on March 23, 2011. In the inauguration, Mulyadi also conducted a dialogue with LMDH's representatives to hear their aspirations.²⁴⁾

The effort to divert LMDH's support from Soeharto to Mulyadi prior to the *pilkada* was planned. An actor who encouraged LMDH to withdraw its support from the incumbent was Mr. K (pseudonym), a timber businessman who had close connections with LMDH networks. In 2005, he supported Soeharto's run in the *pilkada*. In the 2010 *pilkada*, Mr. K had registered to be the candidate for the regent through the National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa). Finally, he shifted his support to Mulyadi

22) Of the 157 villages in Trenggalek, 75 percent are categorized as forest villages with the total number of members (LMDH) amounting to approximately 104,000, both youths and adults (http://www.kabarbisnis.com/aneka-bisnis/2815165_Libatkan_LMDH_untuk_optimalkan_potensi_ekonomi_hutan.html, accessed December 10, 2013; <http://www.antarasumbar.com/id/berita/berita/j/21/175988/ibas-safari-kunjungan-kerja-di-lima-kabupaten.html>, accessed December 10, 2013).

23) Interview conducted on September 18, 2012. The interviewee lives in Laksono, where he was the former village head.

24) Interview conducted with a chairman of the LMDH forum at the district level on September 18, 2012. See also the inauguration news in <http://humas-trenggalek.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/bupati-kukuhkan-paguyuban-lembaga.html>, accessed November 27, 2013.

in the 2010 *pilkada* by directing LMDH networks' support to Mulyadi.²⁵⁾ In the LMDH association of Trenggalek, Mr. K was the adviser.

Meanwhile, Tunas Makmur, a farmer-based group, is the only organization in the area of polling station number 4 where interviews were conducted in Kerjo village in Blitar. The incumbent paid special attention to this group. Prior to the *pilkada*, the local agriculture office built a pond for farming in the village. The office also gave tractors and goats as aid for the farmers group and free bean and corn seeds for farmers. Moreover, the incumbent visited the village twice. A farmer and wood trader talked about the incumbent's visit: "Mr. Herry came when the farmers group conducted a chili harvest festival and inaugurated the operation of the pond in 2010."²⁶⁾

During the campaign, or one month prior to the *pilkada*, the chairman of Herry's campaign team (Mr. Z) met with villagers in the hamlet's hall. During this meeting, the chairman promised to build the hamlet's roads if Herry won in the *pilkada*.²⁷⁾ After the *pilkada*, Herry's people kept their promise to the villagers. The head of the hamlet testified that after the *pilkada*, one of Herry's victory team members visited the hamlet and donated a goat as well as Rp.1 million in cash to support the hamlet's activities.²⁸⁾ Mr. Z also kept his promise to the villagers. The leader of the farmers group testified that the local government had carried out development of the hamlet's roads. It was predicted that all roads would be built by 2014. In addition, Mr. Z wanted to donate materials to the farmers group when it built the group's hut. Mr. Z also helped to support the group's proposal to gain agribusiness development funds (Pengembangan Usaha Agribisnis Perdesaan) from the local government. In fact, before gaining Mr. Z's support, the group found it difficult to access funds. After gaining Mr. Z's support, the group regularly obtained funds of Rp.100 million per year from 2010 to 2012.²⁹⁾

These narratives show the power of farmer-based group leaders to shape voters' preferences by practicing *anut grubyuk* in voting. *Anut grubyuk* is probably a form of mobilization of voters to vote or not to vote for incumbents in return for benefits for the farmers groups as well as their leaders. However, the case study cannot judge the importance of the role of village heads and hamlet heads in shaping voters' preferences as they provided relatively formal answers during the interview by admitting that they had to be neutral in the *pilkada*.

25) Interviews with a local journalist on September 21, 2012; a local activist affiliated with the winning challenger on September 21, 2012; a local academic as well as a lawyer on September 19, 2012; a young party activist affiliated to the winning challenger on September 17, 2012.

26) Interview conducted on July 5, 2012.

27) Interview with a leader of a farmers group in the village on July 5, 2012.

28) Interview conducted on July 5, 2012.

29) Interview conducted on July 5, 2012.

The next question, then, among theories of voting behavior is how *anut grubyuk* can make a scientific contribution. The analysis of voting behavior is closely related to the discussion of factors that can shape voters' preferences in voting, in terms of rationale for both voting and not voting. The two main theoretical streams of voting behavior explain how external factors and internal evaluation by voters can shape voting preferences. The former is known as the social cleavage theory, and the latter is the rational choice theory.

Seymour Lipset and S. Rokkan (1967, 13) stress that locality and its dominant culture, class, and interest can shape voters' decisive criterion for alignment to parties or candidates. On the one hand, voters—without taking into consideration their economic position—vote for parties or candidates due to their commitment to locality and its dominant culture. On the other hand, due to the commitment to class and its collective interest, voters vote for parties or candidates that have or represent the same position irrespective of their localities. The importance of the social cleavage structure is not merely about class interest but a wider understanding of social influence. In addition to class, the criterion of alignment can be shaped by religion, gender, and other social aspects.

Another mainstream political scientist has criticized those who analyze voting without taking into account that citizens are rational people who respond rationally (efficiently) to political realities, particularly in the situation of imperfect information. A. Downs (1957a, 149) has suggested adoption of the economics of political action in analyzing the political behavior of citizens in a democracy. Rationality in political realities is not a simple cost-benefit analysis in which every rational action is justified by the result of a surplus equation between benefits and costs of action (benefits exceed costs). In an imperfect information situation in a large democracy, an intelligent citizen does not always use logical thinking in taking action, because “the marginal return from thinking logically is smaller than its marginal costs.” Consequently, rather than spending much to gain perfect information to support rational action, the citizen sometimes acts rationally (efficiently) to act irrationally, by intentionally avoiding devoting much time and cost for an uncertain outcome. In voting, voters act rationally in being apathetic toward elections or ignore the issues when they know that there is a very low probability that their ballots will make a difference in the election outcome. Furthermore, A. Downs (1957b, 49–50) concludes that voting behavior could be shaped by current party differentials, chance of winning, and the possibility of voter abstention.

Anut grubyuk in voting covers both theoretical streams. Javanese voters who practice *anut grubyuk* link their decision to a locality and Javanese as the dominant culture that encourages voters to live in harmony. Individual voters voluntarily align with a major

decision in the neighborhood in order to respect communal values and integration. *Anut grubyuk* can also be interpreted as a rational behavior. A voter intentionally does not engage in *pilkada* issues to overcome the cost of perfect voting. Fitting individual voting decisions to communal guided preferences is a result of logical thinking that shapes Javanese voters.

A more relevant logic views *anut grubyuk* as group-oriented voting, that is, the awareness of Javanese voters as being parts of groups in a society. The voters act rationally as a group of voters who demand that individual Javanese act with a communal logic. The case study in Blitar and Trenggalek found that individual voters matched their ballots to the preference of neighborhood voters that aimed to meet communal benefits promised by candidates as well as the ethical obligation of group interest.

As a result, understanding Javanese voters in a group perspective provides a different explanation for a previously existing framework (individual voting), which is predominantly viewed from the perspective of social cleavage, mainly locality and its dominant culture or Javanese socio-religious norms. This study interprets *anut grubyuk* through four possible explanations. First, *anut grubyuk* is a personal expression of Javanese voters to avoid conflict with neighbors by implementing the principle of *rukun*. By following *anut grubyuk*, Javanese also show respect for both community leaders and neighbors and apply the principle of *aji*. Second, *anut grubyuk* is probably a form of Javanese pragmatism in voting due to the situation of imperfect knowledge and irrationality in gaining adequate information to support the ballot. Third, *anut grubyuk* refers to mobilized group voting that is coordinated by a group leader or broker in return for specific rewards from candidates. Finally, *anut grubyuk* in voting is directed by an obligation to comply with group norms that share group interests, based on the positive result of evaluation of outcomes and payoffs.

Furthermore, regarding group-oriented voting, *anut grubyuk* echoes the works of Uhlaner (1989) on the possible voting mobilization for transactional benefit of elites in the neighborhood or in the region. This non-cultural logic enriches an explanation that relies on cultural factors, which remain influential among rural Javanese.

Arguably, the non-cultural explanations of *anut grubyuk* emphasize the need to assess its impact on running genuine democracy in Indonesia. In contrast to liberal democracy, *anut grubyuk* raises the issue of independence in voting. This group-oriented voting is contrasted to voting as an individual right ensured by the constitution. In terms of democratic process, this remains a critical question in the ongoing democratization of the country, as equal power relationships in democracy are challenged by communality. Moreover, *anut grubyuk* can potentially be distorted to become a hegemonic instrument of certain parties or elites to gain or retain office in national or regional elections.

Finally, beyond the cultural factors identified in the case studies, farmer-based organizations as well as leaders are influential in neighborhoods, including in mobilizing voters to practice *anut grubyuk* in *pilkada*. The leaders form a major opinion in neighborhoods, referred to by voters, by providing options to vote or not to vote for the incumbent. Not surprisingly, the regional leaders who survive in *pilkada* are consummate strategists who strengthen patronage-driven democracy. The regular succession of a leader who demands the major support of the people is, in fact, determined by much fewer numbers of vital backers. These backers attach themselves to the incumbent leaders who control the dynamics of support and opposition.³⁰

Therefore, *anut grubyuk* is susceptible to becoming trapped in patronage-driven democracy practices when community leaders trade benefits in return for the support of candidates. These practices potentially threaten voters who have inadequate engagement in election issues and community organizational life. Additionally, *anut grubyuk* as a local form of Javanese wisdom can be permanently converted to transactional political practices; and it can consistently support this inconsistent practice of democracy.

Conclusion

There have been repeated attempts to explain the behavior of Javanese voters in the Indonesian democratic framework, in both the Soeharto and the post-Soeharto eras. Unfortunately, these works have neglected the social reality of Javanese communal and hierarchical culture as well as its potential patronage in democracy.

This study reveals that Javanese voters do not base their decisions solely on individual preferences. Among rural Javanese, voters are familiar with the idea of applying *anut grubyuk* to voting. Individual voters adjust their preferences to the majority preference in their neighborhoods. *Anut grubyuk* is firmly rooted in the Javanese communal philosophy of life, namely *rukun* and the hierarchical value of *aji*. To live in harmony as well as avoid conflict, individuals in rural Java tend to follow the majority voice in the neighborhood, and this applies to voting as well. Individually, Javanese also apply the value of respect—not merely in relationships with people who have informal or formal positions, but also in relationships among neighbors.

Nonetheless, relying solely on the explanation of Javanese dominant culture would be misleading in comprehending Javanese voting behavior in the recently democratic

30) The word “patronage” in this article has two meanings: defender and protector (from the Latin word *patronus*). Political patronage means “distributing favors to the supporters in return for votes” (McMillan, in McLean 2003, 400).

Indonesia. Beyond cultural explanations, Javanese individuals who cast their votes in accordance with communal preferences in the neighborhood aim at gaining collective benefits from local government policies credited to certain candidates who run in the electoral race. In recently democratic Indonesia, *anut grubyuk* is vulnerable to manipulation (via mobilization), because certain community leaders or brokers exploit Javanese communality in return for both individual and communal short-term benefits from candidates. Instead of helping liberal democracy to grow, *anut grubyuk* potentially supports patronage-driven democracy, in which democracy ends up in the hands of certain elites who are able to play the politics of particularism.

As a preliminary finding that relies on only a small number of participants, this study needs further exploration. Future research might need more in-depth fieldwork in other rural regions where Javanese culture can be found. In addition, a further comparative study is urgent, to find out whether non-Javanese voters are more independent in voting than Javanese ones. Finally, both cultural differences and non-cultural explanations are relevant to discern voting patterns among Javanese and non-Javanese in the outer Java regions where Javanese also live, such as Lampung and North Sumatra.

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