

ABSTRACT

This study highlights the importance of understanding local dynamics and the community's dependence on patrons within the context of village politics, while also offering a new perspective on the failure of the patron-client relationship in electoral politics at the village level. Patron-client practice remains a prevalent phenomenon in local democracy, where the patron, as an influential figure, provides aid or protection to the clients (the community) in exchange for political support. This research aims to analyze the dynamics of the patron-client relationship of the village head candidate Wandu Rustandi during the 2019 Village Head Election (Pilkades) process in Arjasari Village, Leuwisari District, Tasikmalaya Regency. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method, where data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and documentation. The theories used are Patron-Client Theory by Scott and The Power Elite Theory by Mills. The Results and Discussion indicate that Wandu Rustandi (the Patron), a convection entrepreneur who provides employment and possesses strong Social Capital and Structural Economic Capital, failed to win the Pilkades, losing by a narrow margin. This failure proves that a solid patron-client relationship can collapse in a local political contest. The main factors behind the Patron's failure were massive and instant political money (*money politics*) attacks by the opponent in the final moments, as well as the intervention of a third actor (allegedly political gambling) which disrupted the established solid support base. This finding confirms a shift in political capital dominance from the Patron's Old Capital (long-term loyalty and employment) which is *hard* to the opponent's New Capital (liquid cash) which is more effective and pragmatic in the eyes of the voters (clients) acting based on the Rational Choice Theory. Although the Patron is part of the *Power Elite*, his power is limited when faced with the electoral pragmatism logic of liquid capital.

Keywords: Patron-Client Relations, Village Election, Arjasari Village, Power Elite