

## Description of Banjar Ethnic Voter Behavior: Lessons from the Simultaneous Regional Head Elections for the Governor and Vice Governor of Central Kalimantan Province in 2020

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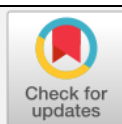
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### ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the low voter turnout in the 2020 Regional Head Election for Governor and Vice Governor in Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. The Banjar ethnicity was chosen because the Banjar ethnicity is the third largest ethnic majority in Central Kalimantan, so the behavior of the Banjar ethnicity can determine political contestation in Central Kalimantan. This study aimed to find out and analyze the behavior of the Banjar Ethnic voters. Qualitative research methods with a descriptive approach. The focus of the research is the behavior of ethnic Banjar voters, with research benchmarks using the Voter Behavior theory as follows: (a) Rational Voters, (b) Critical Voters, (c) Skeptical Voters (d) Traditional Voters. The results of the study, after the informants were interviewed, it was found that the behavior of ethnic Banjar voters mostly claimed to be rational voters, but the characteristics shown were closer to traditional voters. The critical behavior of ethnic Banjar towards prospective candidates did not combine a high orientation towards the performance of political parties and skeptical behavior towards ethnic behavior. Their Banjar is not oriented towards ideology or party and candidate policies. The behavior of traditional voters in Ethnic Banjar can be classified as traditional voters because issuing voting rights prioritizes socio-cultural closeness, origin, ethnicity and religion. This study concludes that the Banjar Ethnic voters' behavior belongs to the Traditional Voters.

**Keywords:** Banjar Ethnicity; Central Kalimantan; Regional Head Elections; Voter Behavior

## 1. Introduction

Regional head elections are one of the important agendas in political activities to elect regional heads and deputy regional heads. Citizen participation in general elections is a series of decision-making activities, namely choosing or not voting in general elections (Surbakti & Nugroho, 2015). Therefore, it is very important to map the voting behavior of a community to create a better election.

Based on the data, there are three dominant ethnic groups in Central Kalimantan (BPS 2010), namely: Dayak (46.62%), Javanese (21.64%) and Banjar (21.03%). The main residential areas of the Dayak ethnic group are the upstream and inland areas, the main residential areas of the Javanese are the transmigration areas, and the main residential areas of the Banjar people are the coastal and urban areas (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2012).

Palangka Raya city is the Capital of Central Kalimantan Province. Palangka Raya is divided into several sub-districts: Bukit Batu, Jekan Raya, Pahandut, Rakumpit, and Sabangau. Most of the population work as farmers and cultivators in the Bukit Batu sub-district. Jekan Raya sub-district, as a business center sub-district, most of the population are traders and entrepreneurs. Pahandut sub-district, the majority of the population works as government employees. The majority of the population in the Rakumpit sub-district are fishermen by profession. Sebangau sub-district's populations are farmers and cultivators (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020).

Jekan Raya sub-district consists of several urban villages: Bukit Tunggal, Menteng, Palangka, and Petuk Ketimpun. The area is 387.53 km<sup>2</sup>. The population is 147,520 people consisting of 74,710 men and 72,810 women, with a population density of 398 km<sup>2</sup> (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020).

Based on data from BPS – Statistics Indonesia, it can be mapped that most of the population in the Jekan Raya sub-district are Ethnic Banjar because the main livelihood is traders and entrepreneurs. Therefore it is very important to map the behavior of ethnic Banjar voters in the Jekan Raya sub-district in the 2020 Central Kalimantan Governor and Vice Governor Elections. In addition, the population of the Jekan Raya sub-district is the largest in Palangka Raya city. In other words, winning the election contest in the Jekan Raya sub-district will be significant in Palangka Raya city.

In Indonesia's simultaneous Regional Head election, several regions participated, including Central Kalimantan Province, on December 9, 2020. The candidates for Governor and Vice Governor were submitted by political parties or a coalition of political parties and obtained two pairs of candidates consisting of (1) Ir. Ben Brahim S. Bahat, M.M, M.T., paired with Dr. H. Ujang Iskandar, S.T., M.Sc. which was supported by three political parties, namely Democrat, Greater Indonesia Movement (Gerindra), and People's Conscience Party (Hanura), which won 12 seats in the Regional House of Representatives of Central Kalimantan; (2) H. Sugianto Sabran paired with H. Edy Pratowo, S.Sos., M.M. carried by eight political parties, namely the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-Perjuangan), Golkar Party, National Democratic (NasDem) Party, United Development Party (PPP), National Awakening Party (PKB), Indonesian Unity Party (Perindo), Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), and National Mandate Party (PAN) with the acquisition of seats in the Regional House of Representatives of Central Kalimantan of 33 seats (Komisi Pemilihan Umum Provinsi Kalimantan Tengah, 2020).

Based on calculations and recapitulations in the four sub-districts, there are 321 Polling Stations in the Jekan Raya sub-district, totaling 94,402 voters. The total number of Final Voter Lists for men is 46,487, while the total number of Final Voter Lists for women is 47,915. The candidate pair for Governor and Vice Governor Number 01, Ir. Ben Brahim S. Bahat, M.M, M.T., - Dr. H. Ujang Iskandar, S.T., M.Sc. outperformed the incumbent by obtaining 33,999 votes.

While candidate pair Number 02, H. Sugianto Sabran - H. Edy Pratowo, S.Sos., M.M., obtained 23,462 votes. At the same time, the number of invalid votes was 1,359 ([Komisi Pemilihan Umum Provinsi Kalimantan Tengah, 2020](#)).

There is an anomaly where candidate pair number 02 should be able to get the most votes as the winner on the similarity of religious identity with the Banjar ethnicity in the Jekan Raya sub-district, but it turns out that candidate pair number 01 received the most votes. Based on the descriptions presented above, this study becomes interesting because, in the Jekan Raya sub-district, where the majority are Ethnic Banjar, adherents of Islam turned out to be the winning pair of candidates from Dayak Ethnicity and non-Muslims.

This study aims to identify and analyze the behavior of Ethnic Banjar voters in the Jekan Raya sub-district in Regional Head Elections for the Governor and Vice Governor of Central Kalimantan Province in 2020.

## **2. Voter Behavior**

Voter behavior, according to [Surbakti & Nugroho \(2015\)](#), is the voting activity by individuals that is closely related to decision-making to vote or not to vote (to vote or not to vote) in a general election if voters or voters decide not to vote and choose or support a particular candidate.

### **2.1. Voter Typology**

According to [Firmanzah \(2012\)](#), four types of voters are found in making choices in a general election. Namely, rational, critical, skeptical, and traditional voters.

#### **1) Rational Voters**

Rational voters have a high orientation on policy-problem-solving and a low orientation on ideological factors. These voters do not see which party a candidate comes from. Factors such as origin, traditional cultural values, religion, and culture are not absolute benchmarks in making choices. However, the most important thing for these voters is prioritizing the ability of political parties or prospective candidates to achieve or realize their work programs which can be seen from the track record of the performance of political parties or prospective candidates in the past. Rational voters tend not to consider the party's ideological orientation ([Firmanzah, 2012](#)).

#### **2) Critical Voters**

Critical voters combine a high orientation on the performance of political parties with an ideological orientation. So, besides looking at the ability of a political party or a contestant to solve national problems, this type of voter also considers the suitability of the party's ideology with their ideology ([Firmanzah, 2012](#)).

#### **3) Skeptical Voters**

Skeptical voters are voters who do not have a high enough ideological orientation with a political party or a contestant, nor do they make party policies or work programs important. The attitude of doubt and distrust possessed by these voters makes them less concerned with the ideology and policies offered by a political party or candidate, so the desire of this type of voter to be involved in general elections is very low. Skeptical voters make the general election event a mere cancellation of obligations ([Firmanzah, 2012](#)).

#### 4) Traditional Voters

Traditional voters are voters of this type with very strong considerations regarding ideological orientation. The high level of this type of fanaticism in parties sometimes does not pay much attention to the work programs or performance of political parties or their candidates. Traditional voters consider the size based on social, cultural, value, origin, or religious affinity to vote for a political party or candidate. Usually, this type of voter prioritizes the figure and personality of the leader, the myths and historical values of a political party or a contestant. One of the fundamental characteristics of this type of voter is that they are very conservative in holding their values and beliefs (Firmanzah, 2012).

### 3. Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Interviews and direct observation were carried out for data collection. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2017). The informants in this study were the chairman and administrators of the Babuhan Banjar Harmony, several ethnic Banjar voters, Banjar community leaders and leaders representing the wider community in the Jekan Raya sub-district. The number of key informants is a minimum of 6 (six) people as follows:

- 1) The head of the Banjar Babuhan Harmony (Drs. K.H. Chairuddin Halim)
- 2) The head of the hamlet and Banjar Babuhan Harmony Core Board (Muhammad Rifani., S, Pd.)
- 3) Head of Neighbourhood and ethnic Banjar community figure (Ahmad Taufik)
- 4) The general public is ethnic Banjar, traders or entrepreneurs who live in the Jekan Raya sub-district (Mrs. Desi Wati, Mrs. Sri Hartati, Mrs. Puput Sri Rahayu)

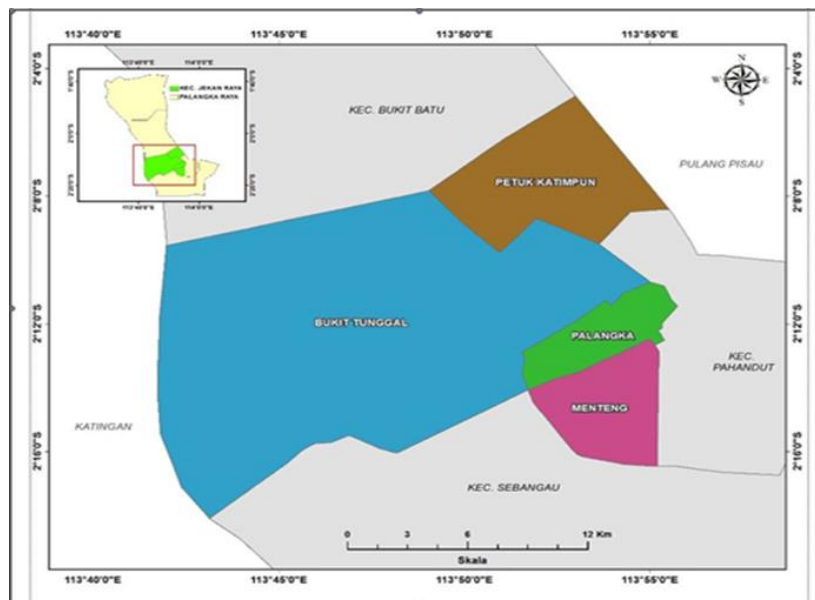
Concluding using the interactive data analysis process (Miles et al., 2014).

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1. Community Conditions in Jekan Raya Sub-district

Jekan Raya sub-district has an area of 35,262 km<sup>2</sup> divided into 4 (four) urban villages: Palangka Village, Bukit Tunggal Village, Menteng Village, and Petuk Katimpun Village. The boundaries of the Jekan Raya sub-district include the following:

- North : Bordered by Bukit Rawi/Gunung Mas Regency.
- East : Bordered by Tumbang Rungan, Pahandut sub-district.
- South : Bordered by East Kotawaringin Regency.
- West : Bordered by Kereng Bangkirai, Sebangau sub-district.



**Figure 1. Map of Jekan Raya sub-district**

Source: [Badan Pusat Statistik \(2020\)](#)

The population of the Menteng village is 45,052 people, with a population density of 1,440.74 km<sup>2</sup>. The Palangka village, with a population of 43,280 people with a population density of 1,924.41 km<sup>2</sup>. The Bukit Tunggal village, with a population of 49,149 people and a population density of 179.27 km<sup>2</sup>, and the Petuk Katimpun village, with a population of 5,384 people with a population density of 90.29 km<sup>2</sup>. More details are presented in the table below:

**Table 1. Area and Population of Jekan Raya Sub-district**

Urban Village	Total Population	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Population Density per km <sup>2</sup>
Menteng	45.052	31,27	1.440,74
Palangka	43.280	22,49	1.924,41
Bukit Tunggal	49.149	274,15	179,27
Petuk Katimpun	5.384	59,63	90,29
<b>Total</b>	<b>142.865</b>	<b>387,54</b>	<b>3.686,46</b>

Source: [Badan Pusat Statistik \(2020\)](#)

#### 4.2. The Behavior of Banjar Ethnic Voters in Jekan Raya Sub-district

Through in-depth interviews that have been conducted, several key informants acknowledged that they are rational voters. But the reality shows otherwise. based on some of the characteristics presented, it can be concluded that the behavior of ethnic Banjar voters in Jekan Raya District is more traditional.

To find out and analyze the behavior of ethnic Banjar voters, researchers used the theory of [Firmanzah \(2012\)](#), divided into four types: (1) rational voters, in the behavior of ethnic Banjar voters in the Jekan Raya sub-district were not found; (2) critical voters, ethnic Banjar also not too critical of potential candidates for their benchmarks in choosing; (3) skeptical voters, in the results of interviews with informants revealed that they had no doubts in choosing the candidate they wanted to vote for; (4) traditional voters, the behavior of ethnic Banjar voters, tends to be included in the characteristics of traditional voters because their benchmarks in

selecting potential candidates prioritize figure, candidate personality, cultural values, origin, or even religion.

This is evidenced by the Banjar Bubuhan Harmony forming the Baimbai Bubuhan Banjar Volunteer Team to support the winning candidate pair, H. Sugianto Sabran – H. Edy Pratowo, S.Sos., M.M. in the Regional Head Election of Central Kalimantan Province. Officially the team conveyed their statement of support when receiving a friendly visit from the Vice Governor candidate pair number 02, H. Edy Pratowo, S.Sos., M.M., to the Banjar Bubuhan Harmony Secretariat.

According to [Yahya \(2018\)](#), it is necessary to know the two variables that create voter typology, where this variable is formed from the subjectivity and objectivity of individual voters, which will then become the basic orientation for choosing a candidate. First, the policy-problem-solving variable. Voters who hold on to this variable will assess and weigh which candidate's work programs can address their problems within certain groups or communities. Contestants whose work schedule is unclear will be thrown into the "trash can" or not selected.

Second is the ideological variable. This variable tends to make voters lean towards the candidate based on aspects of subjectivity such as cultural, religious, moral, normative, and psychographic similarities. If the candidates manage this variable, they will get a traditional mass base. And for now, this traditional mass base is the biggest.

Traditional voters have very strong considerations in terms of ideological orientation. The high level of this type of fanaticism in parties sometimes does not pay much attention to the work programs or performance of political parties or their candidates.

The regional head election has been influenced by ideological variables, where one candidate is oriented towards the culture of being in a village and having a village, and the other is known for its strong religious dogmatics, where religion is used as a tool to gain people's sympathy.

The results of the observations by [Yahya \(2018\)](#) at least reflect this. Voters tend to support a candidate because of the hometown factor and the candidate's religiosity. "Why did you choose person A? Because of the person from the same village as me. Why did you choose person B? Because the person is a religious leader."

The program is carried out, and the candidate's track record benefits rational voters. Rational voters will assess which candidate's work programs can address their problems. In terms of track record, of course, they will reject candidates with a corrupt mentality, candidates who only prioritize the interests of their party and group. Rational voters will see how far a candidate is believed to be able to find the right solution to the problems faced by this city without being swayed by image.

For them, a leader who likes imagery is a leader who will only make false promises without the right solution for the long term. And this for them will be dangerous for the future of this city. However, for candidates, these two variables and typologies of voters must be managed as well as possible. The right strategy must be used to reach their traditional mass base, and rational voters choose. The rational voter category bases choices on demographic aspects such as work, education, and organization. Pay attention to issues before making a selection.

Most of the informants' answers lead to rational category voter behavior, namely paying attention to the issues of the governor candidate's vision and mission, work programs and policies, and parties. In the category of traditional voters, the indicators are voting because of ethnic origin and similarity in religion, colleagues or leaders who see the same candidate, and their personality. Many informants chose answers that led to rationality because it was a natural thing to consider in the selection, whereas the traditional indicators in the questions

seemed to have no convictions. Therefore, in the questions section of the last interview guide, the informant was tested again with questions containing what influenced the first choice in the Regional Head Election for the Governor and Vice Governor of Central Kalimantan Province in 2020. This confirms that the voting behavior of the Banjar ethnic community in the Jekan Raya sub-district is primarily included in the traditional voter type category.

In the explanation above, it makes sense if there are more traditional voters because even lower voter turnout, the more rational the voter, the higher the voter participation.

The commissioner of the Regional General Elections Commission of Central Kalimantan Province, Division of Socialization, Voter Education, Community Participation and Human Resources explained that many factors greatly influence community participation. Apart from that, some people still don't care about and understand the importance of exercising their right to vote. Many areas in Central Kalimantan also have "blank spots", so socialization through social media does not reach these areas ([Antara, 2022](#))

The results of vote recapitulation by the Regional General Elections Commission of Central Kalimantan Province determined that candidate pair number 2, H. Sugianto Sabran - H. Edy Pratowo, S.Sos., M.M. won 33,328 votes over candidate pair number 1, Ir. Ben Brahim S. Bahat, M.M, M.T., - Dr. H. Ujang Iskandar, S.T., M.Sc. the Regional Head Election for the Governor and Vice Governor of Central Kalimantan Province in 2020. The vote acquisition for candidate pair number 1 was 502,8000, and pair number 2 received 536,128 votes ([Komisi Pemilihan Umum Provinsi Kalimantan Tengah, 2020](#)).

This study is in line with [Sipahutar \(2019\)](#), who argues that the study's results can be classified as traditional voters. Voters of this type determine their choice based on the figure of the candidate and the similarity of ideological beliefs.

## 5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the Banjar Ethnic voter behavior in the Jekan Raya sub-district in the Regional Head Election for the Governor and Vice Governor of Central Kalimantan Province in 2020 is categorized into the traditional voter type. This type is the most prominent type of voter after the researchers got the results to see the characteristics shown to be closer to traditional voters. The behavior of Banjar ethnic voters is different from the confessions from the interview results that they claim to be rational voters, but according to rational theory, it is not suitable because they consider it rational in their common sense and without any coercion from anyone from the informants this is what causes the Traditional voter type to be the most visible type of voter.

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## 7. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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