

The Impact of Political Patronage on Community Economic Development in Kobalima District, Malaka Regency (A Case Study of Sisi and Rainawe Villages)

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Abstract

Patronage politics arises in democratic contests in Malaka Regency. This gives the community the impression of misuse of power and public funds by elected officials through awarding projects, positions, or assistance to campaign teams and their supporters. As a governance issue, this practice damages development because village funds and infrastructure allocations are not based on needs of residents, but on the distribution of political gains. This study applies a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach centered on Sisi Village and Rainawe Village, Kobalima District, Malaka Regency. The main focus of this study is to explore the phenomenon of post-election patronage politics and its impact on equity and allocation of economic development programs for the community. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with informants and document analysis techniques on APBDes data and reports on aid realization. Findings include the opening of space for mass turnover of village apparatus and unilateral diversion of recipients of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), which led to a decline in the quality of public services and slow local economic growth. The implications of this patronage politics broke the democratic governance by removing transparency, accountability, and professionalism of village officials, leading to reduced public trust.

Keywords: patronage politics (patronage); democratic principles; economic development impact.

INTRODUCTION

Border areas play a strategic role, not only as the spearhead of the Republic of Indonesia but also as border regions that reflect the dignity and sovereignty of the nation. Malaka Regency, the result of the separation from Belu Regency in East Nusa Tenggara, is strategically located because it has the frontline border with Timor Leste both on land and sea. This area has great economic potential, especially through trade operations at the State Border Post (PLBN) Motamasin.

According to official data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS 2025), Malaka Regency has a Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) based on

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current prices of Rp5.93 trillion with residents' per capita income of Rp20.66 million per year. As a border area located in the eastern sector of the Indonesia-Timor Leste land boundary, Belu and Malaka Regencies occupy a strategic position that requires serious attention to political and ideological conditions in order to strengthen national resilience and border security (Atikawati et al., 2024).

The regional border economic growth is strongly dominated by the sector agriculture, forestry, and fisheries which contribute about 37% to 40% of the region's total GRDP. Although it records a relatively low Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) of 2.07%, Malaka Regency still faces socio-economic challenges, with macro poverty levels ranging from 14% to 15% and a Medium Human Development Index (IPM) in a score range of 61.00 to 62.50. In rural areas, the village's economic conditions are absolutely reliant on the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector, which contributes about 37% to 40% of the region's total economy.

Economic independence at the local level is still very low, where village government revenues are dominated by the Village Fund (DD) allocation from the central government, with an average of Rp120.44 million per reporting unit, far exceeding the contribution of pure Village Original Revenue (PADes). This widens the development gap across sectors and between regions in Malaka Regency. Regional disparities are clearly visible because the concentration of commercial infrastructure, money circulation, and modern economic activities are still centered in the regency capital (Kota Betun District) and in the area of international border entry points (Kobalima District), while other remote interior villages still lag behind in meeting access to logistics and economic support facilities.

As a preventive measure, communities are involved in various organizations including engaging in politics in order to minimize welfare in a decent life after the election. However, political engagement is often accompanied by a payback political slogan that makes the public victims of the election. The tendency of direct local elections to open wider space for money politics has also been recorded in various regions in Indonesia, so that high electoral participation is not always followed by improvements in the welfare of voters (Noor et al., 2021).

The impact of the practice of payback politics (patronage) damages governance in border areas because it creates a deep development gap between villages and erodes the professionalism of local bureaucracy. When competence is outweighed by political closeness in filling strategic positions, the quality of public services at the line of the State such as health facilities, education, and the administration of public services in each office becomes less

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than optimal. This condition ultimately triggers feelings of injustice among neglected citizens, weakens social integration, and reduces the level of trust of border communities in the legitimacy of both local and central government. A systematic review of democratization and decentralization in Indonesia confirms that formal institutional reforms often produce mixed results at the local level because informal practices still dominate the way authority is exercised ([Hidayat et al., 2025](#)).

This study focuses on the dynamics of political patronage and misuse of power following the Regional Head Election (Pilkada), which is characterized by the removal of village officials and the manipulation of the allocation of public resources as a form of political retaliation. Specific issues such as the unilateral dismissal of village officials, the reshuffling of the list of recipients of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), and the redirection of development projects to supporting bases show how administrative authority is often co-opted for the interests of clientelism. Clientelistic relations that grow in rural areas are indeed known to significantly shape the dynamics and outcomes of regional head elections in Indonesia, particularly where villagers are socio-economically dependent on local elites ([Noak, 2024](#)).

This phenomenon confirms that leadership succession at the local level not only changes the government actors, but also restructures access to social justice for village residents. Although this research is highly relevant to the realities of village governance, reliance on administrative facts and informants' perceptions requires a strict data triangulation strategy. Administrative facts such as the Dismissal Decree Letter (SK) and APBDes documents must be cross-checked with formal regulations, such as Permendagri No. 67 of 2017, in order to prove the existence of intentionally violated procedures. Studies of village head elections also show that leadership succession at the village level reshapes the composition of local elites and their control over village resources ([Berenschot et al., 2021](#)).

Meanwhile, data Subjective perceptions of citizens and the harmed apparatus need to be correlated with the spatial pattern of aid displacement, so claims about political retaliation motives are not merely rumors but a verified pattern of policy discrimination. Methodologically, descriptive qualitative approaches through institutional case studies are the most appropriate instrument to uncover how formal rules are manipulated by informal interests.

Patronage clearly becomes a threat to democracy because it erodes public trust in leaders and the political system. Political decisions are no longer based on the ability or interest of the people, but on patronage and narrow interests. As a result, democracy becomes only a formality, while its substance

is lost (Jakson Saragih). Through this analytical lens, document facts function as objective evidence of deviations, while in-depth interviews with informants provide sociological context about the imbalanced power relations. Public perception surveys even show that vote buying is no longer strongly stigmatized and tends to be accepted as part of the electoral tradition, a condition that gradually weakens the substance of democracy itself (Djuyandi et al., 2025).

Synchronizing these two data sources will not only yield sharp and objective analysis of post-Pilkades conflicts but also provide strong scientific contributions to the study of local bureaucratic accountability in Indonesia. This is often found, even eroding the ears of the community in facing democracy celebrations. Political socialization is closely associated with the process of formation and political attitudes of society, where through the political socialization provided, the community can determine their attitudes and political orientations.

According to James W. Vander Zanden's study, socialization is defined as a process of social interaction in which individuals obtain knowledge, attitudes, values, and essential behaviors for participation or effective participation in society. If the definition of socialization is linked to politics, it can be said that political socialization is a process of transmitting knowledge, attitudes, values, norms, and behaviors. The study is supported by (Damsar 2010) that in relation to politics, socialization is needed to increase effective participation in public life.

In another study, it shows that the practice of socialization in relation to politics often deviates from the principles of justice and meritocracy (Alesina and Angeletos 2005) and may even hinder inclusive economic growth within society. Development, ideally focused on the needs of the community, risks being distorted into an agenda of certain groups and coerced to comply with rules or norms of certain groups voluntarily (Tyler, 2006), which ultimately slows the improvement of the economy of community residents. The above view is also supported by Tague's view stating that slow productive economic growth is caused by a failure of organizational morals and reflects how managers and employees view their organization.

Rural economic development heavily depends on transparency and accountability in budget management, as mandated in the governance of village funds. However, the local democracy process (Pilkades) is often colored by transactional practices or vote-buying politics and a system of patronage (clientelism) that degradingly undermines the fundamental value of democracy itself. Based on the views of Saputri, T. & Marianata, A. (2024) the

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practice of vote-buying politics has become an integral part of the electoral culture and is regarded as a normal tradition within society.

The democratic system, which should be based on political consciousness, has transformed into a space of transactions driven by economic interests. In the Kobalima District context, especially in Sisi Village and Rainawe Village, the practice of distributing rewards has transformed into a form of political compensation after the election of the Regent and his deputy. In the context of village finance, the accountability of village fund management is determined by the competence of village officials, leadership, internal control, and external pressure, so that the politicization of village positions directly threatens the quality of that accountability (Diansari et al., 2023).

The elected candidate often becomes entangled in political debt and tends to prioritize rewarding campaign teams and their relatives. This is evident in several people affected by clientelism politics, such as the dismissal of village officials and unilateral changes in BLT assistance provision. Based on the study (Rosana 2016) that one of the problems is patronage practices, i.e., a reciprocal relationship between those who have power or resources and the community, usually through the giving of money, assistance, or specific promises as a reward for political support. This condition is consistent with the logic of a patronage democracy, in which coalitions and political support are built upon the expectation of post-election pay-offs for the parties and teams that backed the winning candidate (Hendrawan et al., 2021).

Based on the above view, the researcher attempts to relate it to case examples through field studies in Sisi Village and Rainawe Village, Kobalima District, which have connections, and subsequently seeks to encourage the government to uphold the values and concepts of democracy as it should be, as well as provide recommendations in upholding the rights and duties of village officials and the community in fair public services in accordance with applicable laws.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative case study design to explore in depth the phenomenon of political patronage and alleged post-Pilkades retaliation in real-world context. This approach focuses on disentangling the boundary between manipulation of formal administrative rules and informal political practices at the village level.

Justification for Informant Selection

Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria, namely village officials who were dismissed unilaterally, villagers removed from the BLT recipient list, members of the Village Community Deliberation Body (BPD), and the elected village head as a form of confirmation. The sample size determination is based on the saturation principle, where data collection stops when new interviews no longer generate codes or new information patterns.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is conducted interactively and iteratively through five stages:

- 1. Data Reduction:** Sorting, editing, and summarizing interview transcripts and relevant administrative documents.
- 2. Coding:** Providing text labels to important information units (e.g., #PelanggaranSK or #AksesBLT).
- 3. Categorization:** Grouping similar codes into large conceptual clusters (e.g., "Discrimination in Resource Allocation").
- 4. Interpretation:** Linking data categories with clientelism theory and formal regulations to interpret the motives behind the policy.
- 5. Drawing Conclusions:** Formulating the core research findings based on the verified patterns of relationships between categories.
- 6. Research Ethics**

Considering the sensitivity of local political conflicts, this research applies three main ethical principles:

- a. **Informed Consent:** Explaining the research objectives and requesting voluntary consent from the informants before the interview begins.
- b. **Confidentiality:** Concealing all informants' original identities, positions, and village names using codes or pseudonyms.
- c. **Protection of Informants:** Ensuring that the informants' involvement does not create further social, legal, or political intimidation risks in their village.

To study the impact of patronage politics on economic growth, the most suitable method is qualitative research using a purposive study approach aimed at providing in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (Lexy J. Moleong (2007). This method also provides an opportunity to deeply explore data regarding social phenomena, power relations, and their direct effects in their natural context (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) on the people in Desa Sisi and Desa Rainawe.

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This research was conducted in Desa Sisi and Desa Rainawe, located in Kobalima District, Malaka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, for one month from April 1 to May 1, 2026. The choice of this location was made for the following reasons: (1) Desa Sisi and Desa Rainawe are villages in Kobalima District affected by patronage politics; (2) Desa Rainawe has strategic access because it directly borders the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste; and (3) Desa Sisi and Desa Rainawe experienced similar situations regarding the dismissal of village officials (Secretary, Treasurer, and head of the Hamlet).

The selection of informants was carried out using purposive sampling techniques, based on the consideration that the informants have insight, experience, as well as direct involvement and personally feel the impact of patronage politics in line with the research objectives. The informants in this study consist of 3 individuals, namely: (1) Mama Maria Goreti Lawa, who served as Treasurer of Desa Rainawe from 2018 to 2023, representing the administrative elements of Desa Rainawe and having in-depth understanding of the process and the impacts of unilateral dismissal in 2021 after the 2020 Local Election (Pilkada); (2) Mr. Salomon Metan, who served as Secretary of Desa Sisi from 2022 to 2025, representing the Government of Desa Sisi, who felt the impact of dismissal after the general election in 2025;

(3) an elderly person named Kornelia Seu (54), as a resident who receives Cash Direct Assistance (BLT), representing the people of Desa Sisi who understand the socio-economic conditions and feel directly from patronage politics with replacing his/her name with someone else by village-level political actors in the period after the 2025 local election. The data collection methods used consist of: (1) semi-structured in-depth interviews, which allow researchers to explore information comprehensively and deeply, while still focusing on the research topic; and (2) documentation study, which includes collecting and analyzing official documents relevant to the research.

Data analysis was carried out using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which consists of three stages conducted simultaneously and continuously. The first stage is data condensation, namely the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw data from the interview and documentation results.

The second stage is data display, namely organizing the information that has been condensed into the form of matrices, diagrams, or structured narratives to make it easier to draw conclusions. The third stage is drawing and re-examining conclusions, namely formulating the meaning of the data that has been presented and continuously testing the conclusions. The data was tested for its truthfulness using two triangulation methods: source triangulation, namely comparing the Village Head's statements with

community figures to ensure the data is consistent; and method triangulation, namely comparing the interview results with the existing official documents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The constitutional mandate “Building Indonesia from the Periphery” is a great dream of people in the periphery since their Indonesia; it has finally received an answer from the central government. This is realized in the central government's very constructive efforts in developing the 3T regions through physical development in order to create a better community life and an independent economy. In relation to this development, the central government has channels for aspirations as a bridge for information, one of which is the Political Party channel. In order to produce values of democracy with quality and to participate in improving the people's economy (James S.

Coleman), through political parties the public elects the best cadres through free, fair, and secret elections. However, the people's great dream has been buried, as a result of the election process for the Regent of Malaka Regency in 2015 and 2025 through direct elections, which in fact can create a space for discourse among village officials and society in general. Direct elections should provide space for the public to choose freely, but it has shifted into a new political model with a quid pro quo political system.

Clientelism politics (often called quid pro quo politics) is a system of unequal reciprocal exchange between political actors (patron/ruler) and their supporters (clients). The patron provides access to state resources, projects, or jobs, in return for political loyalty and votes from the clients during elections through a person called a Broker. The role of the broker in the clientelist network in the study by Misra et al., (2021), which reveals that in local elections in Indonesia, clientalist relationships are built through intermediaries who have in-depth knowledge of local communities, trust from both parties, and the ability to distribute resources to voters. Religious figures who the value meets the three criteria they know their congregation members trusted by the community because of their religious authority, and through participation in the campaign team, gain access to campaign resources that can be shared with their followers. Research on electoral handouts in Indonesia even finds that candidates more often buy the loyalty of brokers than the votes of citizens, because well-networked brokers are considered capable of securing the support of the groups around them (Hicken et al., 2022).

Table 1. Theory of Clientelist Politics (Patronage) according to Hubert Faustmann 2009

Dimensions Analysis	Main Characteristics of Politics Clientelism (Patronage /Clientelism)	Explanation According to Hubert Faustmann
Basic Definition of	Exchange of Reciprocity (Quid Pro Quo)	Asymmetric transactional relationship: the patron (politician/party) provides assistance, facilities, or jobs to the client (constituent) as reward for loyalty or political votes Rusfeti and Political Patronage in the Republic of Cyprus.
Forms of Clientelism Services	Services, Jobs, and Material	Including bureaucratic facilities, bribes, special access to the public sector (Civil Servants/State-Owned Enterprises), or distribution of money/goods during elections
Nature of the Relationship	Patron and Client (Patron-Client)	The relationship is hierarchical and personal. The client depends on the patron to survive or advance, while the patron depends on the client to maintain power
Main Function for Politicians	Locking in Power & Mass Base	Used by incumbent politicians or political parties as a long-term strategy long-term to expand control over society and secure electoral victory
Structure Systemic	Normalised Corruption	often institutionalized as favoritism or nepotism (known with the term rusfeti in Cyprus).
Negative Impact	Democratic Backsliding	Reducing the quality of democracy, triggering corruption practices, as well as creating power and welfare gaps for society wide

Source: Research Analysis Results 2026

According to the table above, clientelistic politics according to scholar Hubert Faustmann aligns with the concept of clientelism (patronage) and political patronage, a system in which politicians provide personal benefits

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(remuneration/services) to their supporters in exchange for political support (such as votes in elections). This also relates to the situation in the Desa Sisa area according to the interview results with Mr. Salomon Metan in Sisi, Kobalima District, Malaka Regency, who said that:

“I feel the impact of clientelistic politics at the village level, I worked as Village Secretary of Sisi for 4 years, during the 2024 local elections and after the Malaka Regent-elect pair was announced, the campaigning teams immediately came and expelled us officials by about 25 people. And I as village secretary was also dismissed and even my salary was cut without my knowledge. I only now realize the fruit of democracy for us ordinary people like this, so talking about politics or voting could lead society forward into a dilemma because not choosing is also wrong. continued Mr. Salomon.”

Mr. Salomon Metan's statement empirically confirms the functioning of the patron-client and clientelism theory in the local political ecosystem in Malaka Regency. The mass dismissal of 25 village officials by the campaign teams immediately after the 2024 Election shows that public positions at the village level are treated as assets owned by the patron (elected political elites) that are distributed transactionally to clients (loyal supporters). As a result, the clientelistic punishment mechanism is applied to those who are considered not loyal through unilateral dismissal and wage cuts without prior notice.

The dilemma experienced by Mr. Salomon regarding political choices reflects how small communities are trapped in a vortex of coercive politics, where citizens' economic rights and structural rights are vulnerable to exploitation in order to enforce top-down political compliance. In the long run, such clientelistic practices can backfire because they reduce citizens' support for democratic norms and encourage electoral retaliation against the actors involved ([Carlin & Moseley, 2022](#)).

The situation that befell Mr. Salomon as Village Secretary for these four years also serves as clear evidence of the collapse of the meritocracy principle in frontline bureaucracy. In a healthy governance system, the continuity of a bureaucrat's career must be based on competence, integrity, and objective performance evaluation protected by legal certainty. However, the case in Sisi Village shows the occurrence of a spoils system (a system of sharing power), in which Mr. Salomon's professional capacity built over many years is directly negated by the intervention of informal actors.

When a group of campaign teams has power that exceeds regulatory rules to expel village officials, blind loyalty to election winners has officially replaced the standards of bureaucratic competence. Empirical studies of local government organizations show that career patterns that are not based on

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merit weaken the neutrality of the apparatus and ultimately lower organizational performance in public service delivery ([Kadir et al., 2024](#)).

Post-election dynamics form a chain of causality that damages village governance, where quid pro quo politics due to campaign debt becomes the main upstream trigger that drives the non-procedural purging of village officials. This flawed bureaucratic mechanism produces discriminatory policy outputs in the form of manipulation of social assistance (BLT) as well as inequality in physical projects that are deliberately redirected to a support base. As a result, this practice anchored to the downstream fatal impacts consisting of economic shocks to the poor and the clear development gap between villages in the area.

At the macro level, the purging of village officials undermines the core foundations of good governance theory, particularly the pillars of the rule of law, transparency, and accountability. Mass firings that violate formal rules such as the Village Law and Permendagri No. 67 of 2017 and covert salary cuts demonstrate administrative law violations for momentary political gain. Institutionally, the sudden loss of 25 village officials undoubtedly creates dysfunction in public service delivery and paralyzes governance in Sisi Village.

Ultimately, this corrupt and non-transparent governance manipulation not only harms victims financially but also erodes the legitimacy and trust of local communities in the democratic institutions themselves. Public trust in state and political institutions is one of the main foundations of a well-functioning economy, so that the quality of the electoral process and its aftermath directly determines the level of that trust ([Al Izzati et al., 2024](#)).

Post-election politics implemented instantly triggered income shocks and damaged the social safety net at the ground level. Mass non-procedural firings, such as those targeting Mr. Salomon Metan and 25 other village officials, immediately cut the fixed income of dozens of households and seized their economic rights through unilateral salary cuts. The loss of purchasing power was exacerbated by structural exclusion from access to government aid programs, where objective poverty indicators were replaced by loyalty to political power.

Consequently, the poor in the rival-vote base area were deliberately removed from the direct cash aid (BLT) recipient list and redirected to groups supporting the new rulers, creating an exclusion error that severed the main economic cushion for the lowest social strata to survive. Poor households with limited social networks are indeed the most vulnerable group within clientelistic distribution, both as targets of mobilization and as parties that are excluded when their political loyalty is doubted ([Ravanilla & Hicken, 2023](#)).

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This view shows that the economic process is not neutral but always influenced by power structures and social relations that exist (Hasibuan & Susilawati, 2023). At the macro village scale, this clientelistic practice triggers spatial polarization that kills economic opportunities and hampers regional productivity overall. Manipulation of APBDes documents leads to Desa funds allocation no longer based on real needs, but distributed discriminatorily for infrastructure development such as farm access roads and irrigation only in the winner's vote pockets.

Villages politically opposed experience geographic isolation, infrastructure decay, and inflated logistics costs of agricultural output that stifle the lifeblood of micro-enterprises. Quantitative evidence from districts in Indonesia shows that in areas where clientelism is strong, electoral dynamics are followed by a decline in capital spending and in household access to public services (Lewis & Dong, 2025).

Added to this is the reduction in village bureaucratic capacity due to appointments based on personal closeness, causing the village to lose the competence to manage local potential professionally such as through BUMDes ultimately trapping communities in inter-village welfare inequality and structural impoverishment legitimized by policy. The village officials who once expected government intervention to sustain the economy have now turned darkly mysterious due to pressure from the campaign team who felt a strong reliance on the jargon of transactional politics. The same has also been implemented in Rainawe Village, Kobalima District, Malaka Regency in 2022. According to an interview with Mama Maria Goreti Lawa, a Village Treasurer with 8 years of service, she said that.

"I, along with several village officials including the head of the hamlet, were dismissed in 2021 by a person who contributed to the Malaka Regent election process for an unfounded reason. So in my view, this is politics; although our regulations prohibit village officials from practical involvement, because of the reward factor from the elected regent to his team, we became political victims."

Besides the removal of village officials and the distribution of assistance based on support, what happens massively is the erasure of rights or salaries of village officials, making the police a place to report and resolve issues. Local economic development policies are often influenced by hidden political elite interests, which can hinder the economic sovereignty of border communities and economic inequality among them. Thus, it can be said that economics and politics are like two sides of a different coin but inseparable and interconnected.

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Political economy is a field of study that combines economic and political perspectives, where each discipline has a different analytical focus but are interconnected. Research on political economy has become increasingly significant because it can reveal major global issues such as social injustice, poverty, and economic disparities. Martin Staniland states that political economy is the study that focuses on the interaction between economic processes and the dynamics of political power within theoretical contexts. This approach emphasizes that political power can be expressed through economic tools (Febriandiela et al., 2023).

Table 2. Impacts of Patronage Politics (Clientelism) according to Thompson & Ingraham

Organizational Justice	Causing unfairness in the distribution of tasks, promotions, and rewards for employees.
Professionalism	Sacrificing competence and meritocracy because positions are given based on political loyalty, not expertise.
Work Commitment	Decreasing motivation and employee commitment due to a work climate that is oriented toward political interests.
Service Performance	Impeding bureaucratic efficiency and declining quality of public service to the public.

Source: Research Analysis Results 2026

Based on the table above, patronage politics according to Thompson & Ingraham has impacts on the general public including in the village government area. According to an interview with the elderly mother Kornelia Seu said that:

“I am an elderly member of the community who has received Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) from the Desa Dana, Desa Government of Sisi. However, after we the people held the Malaka regent and deputy regent general elections celebration, my name was removed from the BLT recipient list by the government for reasons that were not true. But we are small people, whatever it is we just accept it.”

Overall, patronage politics often lead to development that is not properly targeted and focuses on certain groups. The impact is that efforts to improve

the welfare of border communities comprehensively become less integrated from a macro perspective. Vote buying also tends to distort redistribution, because the allocation of assistance follows the calculation of political loyalty rather than the real needs of the poorest groups (Guerra & Justesen, 2022).

Aspinall & Berenschot, (2019) define patronage as a form of exchange of benefits between politicians and voters to gain support. The benefits can include projects, job contracts, money, goods, services, or promises, and can be allocated to individuals or specific groups. The case of Desa Sisi and Desa Rainawe is a real manifestation of "patronage of jobs and public contracts".

In this area, village officials were removed and the village secretary received a salary cut because bureaucratic positions were seized as compensation for favors to the winning election campaign 'brokers'. There is often overlap of aid and infrastructure development on the Malaka border because development budget allocations follow patronage to the villages that are the base of support for the elected regent, while opposition villages are economically sanctioned.

To sharpen understanding of economic development, especially at the border, the author also presents supporting theories not only as a guide to development policy but also as theories that can contribute ideas regarding the importance of economic development and its relationship with Patronage Politics occurring in Border Communities of Malaka Regency.

Economic development according to Keynesian Theory

Keynesian Theory is more relevant for advanced capitalist countries than for developing countries. In brief, this theory states that aggregate income is a function of total employment in a country. The volume of work depends on effective demand: the higher the national income, the more jobs are created, and vice versa. In the context of border region development, the link between Keynesian Theory and Patronage Politics is often associated with the concept of the Ethical Policy based on the moral responsibility of the state to give attention or return wealth contributions to the regions that have been long neglected despite playing an important role.

Table 3. Economic development and reciprocal political relations according to Keynesian Theory

Aspect	Keynesian Theory	Reciprocal Politics of Services
Motivation	Rationality of economics (stimulus & multiplier).	Eti Ethics and morality (justice for those ignored).

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Method	Central government expenditure (government spending).	Special policies for welfare local.
Objectives	Economic growth and macro stability	Equality of dignity and welfare End social.

Source: 2026 researcher analysis

In the context of border region development, the relationship between Keynesian Theory and Reciprocal Service Politics (often linked to the concept of Ethical Policy) lies in the moral responsibility of the state to restore wealth or attention to regions that have long contributed but have been neglected.

In Malacca Regency, based on Keynesian Theory it provides alarm to political elites and brokers (connectors) that justice to the rights of the community is a rational service choice in increasing economic growth and preventing social inequalities that occur to make the border face competitive.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, this study concludes that the post-election phenomenon in Malaka Regency indicates strong evidence of political patronage practices that co-opt village bureaucratic governance. The empirical findings confirm that changes in the structure of village officials and the reshuffling of the allocation of public resources (such as BLT and physical projects) tend to align with patterns of political retaliation (punishment) against the rival mass base and the provision of rewards (reward) for the supporting group.

Even so, changes in people's economic conditions and inequality among hamlets at the research sites cannot be claimed unequivocally as being caused solely by single political favoritism, considering that other external factors exist such as the dynamics of the regional budget, initial geographic conditions, and fluctuations in local commodity prices that also affect residents' welfare.

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