From Dynastic Dominance to Competitive Fragmentation: Party Coalitions and Electoral Outcomes in the Direct Regent Elections of Kuningan Regency, 2008–2024

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Abstract

Since the introduction of direct regional head elections (*pilkada*) in post-Reformasi Indonesia, Kuningan Regency in West Java has held four regent elections, in 2008, 2013, 2018, and 2024. This article reconstructs their history in order to answer two questions: how the configuration of party support and candidates evolved across the four cycles, and how electoral outcomes changed over the same period. Employing the historical method—heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography—it draws on recapitulation sheets, official reports, and publications of the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Kuningan Regency, a Constitutional Court decision, an interview with an election official, and local and national press reports, interpreted through David Easton's systems model of politics. The findings trace a trajectory from the overwhelming re-election of the incumbent Aang Hamid Suganda in 2008, through the transfer of office to his wife in 2013 and the inclusion of his son in the winning ticket in 2018, to the defeat of the Suganda family's candidate in 2024 by a broad non-dynastic coalition. Party alignments proved fluid and pragmatic, with nearly every party changing sides at least once; candidates were recruited chiefly through the bureaucracy, the legislature, and kinship networks; and the winner's share fell from 73.5 percent of valid votes in 2008 to 38.2 percent in 2024, with a margin of only 2.73 percentage points and declining turnout. The article argues that dynastic dominance in Kuningan was electorally produced and electorally reversible, and offers a longitudinal, archive-based history of direct local elections in the regency.

Keywords: *direct regional elections; political dynasty; party coalitions; local democracy; Kuningan; post-Reformasi Indonesia*

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Introduction

The selection of political leaders has always been shaped by the social, cultural, and institutional settings in which power is exercised. In early Islamic history, succession after the death of the Prophet was settled through deliberation (*musyawarah*) and consent: Abu Bakr was chosen after debate at Saqifah Bani Sa'idah, ʿUmar through public allegiance, and ʿUthman by a six-member council (*ahl al-ḥall wa al-ʿaqd*) appointed by ʿUmar, practices that framed leadership selection as a collective act requiring social and religious legitimacy.[1] In the Indonesian archipelago, by contrast, the colonial state left little room for such participation. Under the Netherlands Indies administration, regional heads were appointed rather than elected, the structure of political and administrative power remained under direct colonial control, and the limited elections that did exist were indirect and restricted along racial and economic lines; local leadership selection functioned as an instrument of colonial control rather than of popular participation.[2]

After independence and throughout the period before Reformasi, the selection of regional heads remained firmly under the control of the central government. Regional heads were not chosen by the people but through procedures involving the Regional People's Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, DPRD) and the approval of the President, so that selections were neither simultaneous nor uniform but followed the terms of individual office-holders.[3] Although the DPRD held formal authority, citizens had no direct voice, and the arrangement was widely regarded as insufficiently democratic because it invited central intervention and narrowed public participation in determining local leadership.[4] Even in the first years of Reformasi, regional heads continued to be elected by the DPRD; it was Law No. 32 of 2004 on Regional Government that replaced this arrangement with direct popular election.[5] Direct regional head elections (*pemilihan kepala daerah*, hereafter pilkada) came to be understood as an expression of popular sovereignty conducted according to the principles of *luber-jurdil* (direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair), although their consolidation continued to face problems such as "partycracy" and the tyranny of the majority.[6] The principle of direct election was reaffirmed by Law No. 1 of 2015, its technical rules were refined by Law No. 8 of 2015, and Law No. 10 of 2016 further specified the role of political parties in candidate recruitment and nomination requirements.[7]

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[1] Nurkholijah Siregar, "Kepemimpinan Masa Khulafa ar-Rasyidin Abu Bakar as-Shiddiq dan Umar bin Khattab," *Ar-Raudah: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keagamaan* 1, no. 4 (2025): 1–12.

[2] Nikita Rosa, "Sejarah Pemilihan Kepala Daerah di Indonesia, dari Masa Penjajahan sampai Reformasi," *detikEdu*, September 21, 2022, https://www.detik.com/edu/detikpedia/d-6303020/sejarah-pemilihan-kepala-daerah-di-indonesia-dari-masa-penjajahan-sampai-reformasi.

[3] Komisi Pemilihan Umum, "Pemilu 2009," n.d., https://www.kpu.go.id/page/read/1115/pemilu-2009.

[4] Muhammad Bahrul Ulum, "Pemilihan Kepala Daerah di Indonesia setelah Reformasi: Kesinambungan dan Perubahan," *Undang: Jurnal Hukum* 4, no. 2 (2021): 309–43.

[5] Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 32 Tahun 2004 tentang Pemerintahan Daerah.

[6] Siti Nurhayati, "Dinamika Perkembangan Demokrasi serta Problematikanya Pasca Reformasi," *As-Shahifah: Journal of Constitutional Law and Governance* 3, no. 1 (2023): 14–30.

[7] Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 1 Tahun 2015 tentang Penetapan Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 2014 tentang Pemilihan Gubernur, Bupati,

Direct elections widened the arena for political parties, including Islamic parties, which entered local contests not merely as nominating vehicles but as ideological and social forces linked to *kiai*, *pesantren*, Islamic mass organisations, and religious constituencies.[8] Parties also act as channels of political education, organisers of voter bases, and mediators between social groups, and thus constitute one of the pillars of local democratic legitimacy.[9] How these functions actually operated at the district level, however, can only be established empirically and over time.

Kuningan Regency, in the eastern part of West Java, offers an instructive case. Since the transition from DPRD selection to direct election, the regency has held four direct regent elections—in 2008, 2013, 2018, and 2024—during which patterns of competition, coalition building, and voter participation changed considerably. Above all, Kuningan displays clear signs of family-based elite dominance: actors linked by kinship to Aang Hamid Suganda, regent from 2003 to 2013, held the executive across several terms, raising questions about how kinship and political power together shaped access to strategic office, perceptions of representation, and the chances of rival candidates.[10] The question has acquired renewed public relevance since President Prabowo Subianto proposed in December 2024 that regional heads once again be chosen by legislatures rather than by voters, citing the cost of the 2024 simultaneous pilkada, estimated at around Rp37 trillion; the proposal provoked broad debate about popular sovereignty and the quality of electoral democracy.[11] A long-run historical account of what direct elections have actually produced in one regency is therefore of more than local interest.

Existing scholarship on Kuningan has concentrated on particular actors or moments. Fadiyah, Dewi, and Karyana explain the Suganda dynasty as the product of a leadership record judged successful, party backing, and electoral legitimation, noting that the transfer of power to Aang Hamid Suganda's wife and son met little popular resistance because it was seen as continuing development already under way.[12] Kristono analyses Aang Hamid Suganda as a local strongman whose political-economic strategy enabled the inheritance of power within his family between 2003 and 2018.[13] Yunizar and Rochmansjah assess the 2024 candidacy of M. Ridho Suganda from the standpoint of political ethics, concluding that it remained ethically acceptable because no legal violations were found and public trust persisted, while recognising

dan Walikota menjadi Undang-Undang; Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 8 Tahun 2015; Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 10 Tahun 2016.

[8] Gonda Yumitro, "Partai Islam dalam Dinamika Demokrasi di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 17, no. 1 (2014): 35–50.

[9] Muhtar Haboddin, *Pemilu dan Partai Politik di Indonesia* (Malang: UB Press, 2016).

[10] Dina Fadiyah, Rahmi Kania Dewi, and Ayi Karyana, "Kekuatan Dinasti Politik Aang Hamid Suganda di Kabupaten Kuningan," *Journal of Political Issues* 4, no. 1 (2022): 19–28, https://doi.org/10.33019/jpi.v4i1.77.

[11] Raja Eben Lumbanrau Lubis, "Prabowo Subianto Usul Pilkada Tak Langsung, Mengapa Wacana Ini Berbahaya bagi Demokrasi Indonesia?," December 18, 2024.

[12] Fadiyah, Dewi, and Karyana, "Kekuatan Dinasti Politik."

[13] Riyana Kristono, "Local Strongman and Political Dynasty: Political Economic Analysis of Aang Hamid Suganda in Kuningan Regency, 2003–2018," *JUSS (Jurnal Sosial Soedirman)* 7, no. 1 (2024): 139–59, https://doi.org/10.20884/juss.v7i1.12146.

the weight of electability, popularity, and family lineage.[14] Maulana examines public perceptions of dynasty formation in the 2018 election.[15] Beyond Kuningan, Pertiwi's study of neighbouring Garut traces the shift from traditional, network-based and culturally symbolic contestation in 2008 toward more competitive and media-driven elections, still marked by money politics and fluctuating turnout.[16]

What remains missing is a longitudinal reconstruction that follows the Kuningan elections across all four cycles, treats the dynasty as one force among several rather than as the sole object of analysis, and grounds the narrative in the primary records of the election administration. Single-actor and single-election studies cannot show how coalitions were made, unmade, and remade from one cycle to the next, nor how the electoral strength of dominant actors eroded over time. This article addresses that gap. Its objectives are, first, to analyse the configuration of party support and candidates in the Kuningan regent elections from 2008 to 2024, and second, to examine the vote results of each election in the same period. Its contribution lies in combining recapitulation sheets, official reports, and publications of the General Elections Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, KPU) of Kuningan Regency with court records and press coverage into a single chronological narrative, interpreted through David Easton's systems model. Its novelty is the demonstration, across four cycles, that dynastic dominance in Kuningan was produced and sustained through electoral mechanisms and was ultimately reversed by them, as coalitions fragmented, rival kinship networks emerged, and the electorate itself divided.

Method

This study employs the historical method in its four conventional stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography.[17] Although the subject is recent, the inquiry remains historical: it reconstructs a sequence of events from surviving traces, tests them critically, and explains change and continuity over time.

Heuristics. Sources were collected at the office of KPU Kuningan Regency, from the commission's official website, and in the libraries of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung and its Faculty of Adab and Humanities. The primary corpus consists of two KPU publications—*Rekam Jejak Pilkada Kuningan Tahun 2018* and *Kilas Balik Penyelenggaraan Pemilihan Bupati dan Wakil Bupati Kuningan Tahun 2024*—and four sets of administrative records: the recapitulation of vote counts for the 2008 regent election; the recapitulation of voting and counting for the 2013 election (form Model DB1-KWK); the official report (*berita acara*) of the 2018 results, No. 74/HK.05-BA/3208/KPU-Kab/VII/2018; and, for 2024, the announcement of candidate pairs No. 609/PL.02.3-Pu/3208/2024 together with the official report and certificate of

[14] Putri Eva Yunizar and Heru Rochmansjah, "Etika Politik dalam Pencalonan M. Ridho Suganda pada Pilkada Kabupaten Kuningan Tahun 2024", http://eprints.ipdn.ac.id/22512/.

[15] Hafizh Atha Maulana, "Persepsi Masyarakat Kecamatan Kuningan terhadap Terbentuknya Dinasti Politik pada Pemilihan Kepala Daerah Kabupaten Kuningan Tahun 2018", Universitas Siliwangi, 2024.

[16] Intan Aulia Pertiwi, "Kontestasi Calon Bupati dan Wakil Bupati dalam Dinamika Pemilihan Kepala Daerah Kabupaten Garut Tahun 2008–2024" UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2024.

[17] Louis Gottschalk, *Mengerti Sejarah* (Jakarta: Yayasan Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1975); Helius Sjamsuddin, *Metodologi Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2020).

district-level recapitulation (form Model D.HASIL KABKO-KWK). These are supplemented by a Constitutional Court decision on the 2013 dispute, a candidate-profile compilation prepared by KPU Kuningan, and contemporaneous reports in national and local media, including *Tempo*, *Kompas*, *Pikiran Rakyat*, *detikJabar*, and *Kuningan Mass*. An interview was also conducted with Aof Ahmad Musyafa of the Division of Human Resources, Socialisation, Voter Education, and Community Participation of KPU Kuningan Regency.[18] Secondary literature on local politics, dynasties, and coalition formation provided context and comparison.

Source criticism. External criticism examined provenance and integrity. The two KPU books were obtained directly from the issuing authority, and their logos, imprint, and dates are consistent with the periods they document. The 2008 and 2013 recapitulations, accessed as digital copies from the KPU website, match official KPU formats (including the DB1-KWK form, institutional headers, and commissioners' and witnesses' signature fields), but because the digitised versions lack visible stamps and wet signatures they were checked against other official and press sources. The 2024 decision on the elected pair carries the commission's identity, a decree number, the signature of the KPU Kuningan chairman Asep Budi Hartono, and a certified-copy endorsement by the secretariat. Press reports were weighed by the outlet's reputation and by whether they reported official results or partisan claims; victory claims and quick counts were treated as evidence of campaign perceptions, not of results. Internal criticism tested the consistency of the content. The vote tables of 2008 and 2013 are arithmetically coherent—candidate totals sum to the valid votes, and valid and invalid votes sum to the ballots cast—and the 2024 report is corroborated by the signatures of commissioners and witnesses. The KPU books, however, adopt a formal-administrative register that foregrounds the commission's success and is largely silent about field-level problems; their narratives were therefore read against press reports and electoral-oversight findings. The oral testimony was treated with the same caution. Having joined KPU in 2017, the informant had close knowledge of its procedures, but his position carries a risk of institutional bias; his account was therefore used only as supplementary oral evidence, triangulated with documentary records.

Interpretation and historiography. The verified facts were interpreted through David Easton's systems model, which conceives of the political system as a mechanism that converts inputs—demands and supports emanating from society—into outputs in the form of authoritative allocations of values, which in turn feed back into the environment and shape subsequent inputs.[19] Applied to Kuningan, the input stage comprises the aspirations, demands, and support of the electorate for particular candidates, mediated by the popularity of local figures, family networks, and party coalitions; the conversion stage is the electoral contest itself; the output is the election of a regent and deputy, who set the direction of regional policy; and feedback consists of public satisfaction or disappointment that reshapes voter behaviour, coalition

[18] Interview with Aof Ahmad Musyafa, Division of Human Resources, Socialisation, Voter Education, and Community Participation, KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, Tuesday, December 16, 2025.

[19] David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1965).

alignments, and the emergence of new contenders in the following cycle.[20] The narrative that follows is organised chronologically by electoral cycle, followed by a thematic analysis of candidate recruitment.

Results

The 2008 Election: Incumbent Dominance in the First Direct Contest

The regent election of 2008 was the first in Kuningan to be decided directly by voters, and it took place under conditions that structurally favoured the incumbent. Aang Hamid Suganda, a cadre of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, PDI-P), had governed since 2003, when he and his deputy Aan Suharso were confirmed by a plenary session of the DPRD on 3 November 2003.[21] The party's local pre-eminence had been confirmed in the 2004 legislative election, in which it won 13 of the 45 DPRD seats (28.9 percent), displacing Golkar, the dominant force in Kuningan under the New Order.[22] The 2008 contest accordingly displayed a simple configuration in which PDI-P served as the backbone of the incumbent's coalition while other parties occupied more marginal positions.[23]

Three pairs competed (Table 1). Aang Hamid Suganda ran with Momon Rochmana, a career bureaucrat and former regional secretary (*sekretaris daerah*), backed by PDI-P, Golkar, the United Development Party (PPP), the National Mandate Party (PAN), and the Crescent Star Party (PBB).[24] Against them stood Aan Suharso—formerly regional secretary and then Aang's own deputy in 2003–2008—with Iwan Sonjaya, a former member of the Kuningan DPRD, nominated by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the Democratic Party (Demokrat).[25] The challenge of a sitting deputy against his own regent in the very first direct election was a bold calculation. The third pair, Nana Sudjana—a retired police officer who had served as head of an intelligence unit and as a district police chief—and Eman Sulaeman, a non-bureaucratic community figure, entered as independents under the name SAE, after collecting tens of thousands of photocopied identity cards to pass KPU verification; they were among the first independent candidates in Kuningan to reach the ballot.[26]

[20] Miriam Budiardjo, *Dasar-Dasar Ilmu Politik* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2008).

[21] Anonim, "Bupati Kuningan Terpilih Dilantik," *Kompas.com*, 2008, https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2008/12/04/10024495/bupati-kuningan-terpilih-dilantik.

[22] KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, "Rekapitulasi Hasil Penghitungan Suara Pemilihan Bupati dan Wakil Bupati Kabupaten Kuningan Tahun 2008" (Kuningan: KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, 2008).

[23] Fadiyah, Dewi, and Karyana, "Kekuatan Dinasti Politik."

[24] Anonim, "Paguneman," *Kompas.com*, 2008, https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2008/07/22/20000042/index.html.

[25] KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, "Rekapitulasi 2008"; Edwin Firdaus and Syahrul Ansyari, "Mantan Anggota DPRD Kuningan Disebut Makelar di DPR," *VIVA.co.id*, 2018, https://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/1060640-mantan-anggota-dprd-kuningan-disebut-makelar-di-dpr.

[26] KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, "Rekapitulasi 2008."

Table 1. Candidate pairs (regent – vice-regent) and nominating parties in the Kuningan regent elections, 2008–2024

Election	No.	Candidate pair	Nominating parties
2008	1	Aang Hamid Suganda – Momon Rochmana	PDI-P, Golkar, PPP, PAN, PBB
	2	Aan Suharso – Iwan Sonjaya	PKS, Demokrat
	3	Nana Sudjana – Eman Sulaeman (SAE)	Independent
2013	1	Momon Rochmana – Mamat Robby Suganda (ROCHMAT)	Golkar, Demokrat, PKB; Gerindra and PKS (unregistered support)
	2	Kamdan – Elit Nurlita Sari (HK ELIT BAIK)	Independent
	3	Utje Ch. Hamid Suganda – Acep Purnama (UTAMA)	PDI-P, PAN, PPP, PBB, PKP, PDK, PKPB
	4	Zaenal Mustafa Affandi – Cartam Sulaeman (ZAMAN)	Independent
2018	1	Toto Taufikurohman Kosim – Yosa Octora Santono (SANTOSA)	PKB, PKS, PPP, Demokrat
	2	Dudy Pamuji – Udin Kusnedi (BISA)	Golkar, PAN, Gerindra
	3	Acep Purnama – M. Ridho Suganda (ARAS)	PDI-P, NasDem
2024	1	Dian Rachmat Yanuar – Tuti Andriani (DIRAHMATI)	Golkar, Gerindra, PKS, NasDem, PSI, Partai Buruh, Partai Ummat*
	2	M. Ridho Suganda – Kamdan (RIDHOKAN)	PDI-P, PPP, Demokrat
	3	Yanuar Prihatin – Udin Kusnedi (HATIKU)	PKB, PAN, PBB

Beyond the party structure, the incumbent's campaign rested on a personal machine: the AHAS Volunteers (Relawan AHAS), named after Aang Hamid Suganda and recruited from party cadres, religious leaders, youth figures, and cultural actors across all 32 districts (*kecamatan*). The network functioned as a reserve mobilisation instrument able to reach segments that party infrastructure could not.[27] The campaign

[27] Sultani, "Jejak Trah Suganda di Balik Pilbup Kuningan," *Kompas.id*, 2018, https://www.kompas.id/artikel/jejak-trah-suganda-di-balik-pilbup-kuningan; Kristono, "Local Strongman and Political Dynasty."

itself projected continuity: it centred on accelerated infrastructure development and fostered the image of Aang as the "Father of Kuningan's Development."[28] His electoral strength also drew on a nationalist constituency rooted in urban and semi-urban voters.[29] To safeguard bureaucratic neutrality while the incumbent was a candidate, the Governor of West Java, Ahmad Heryawan, appointed Ano Sutrisno as acting regent (*penjabat bupati*) on 15 September 2008, a post he held until the elected regent was inaugurated in December.[30]

Polling took place on 12 October 2008, and early reports already showed the incumbent ahead.[31] The official recapitulation (Figure 1) records 554,560 ballots cast, of which 536,739 were valid and 17,821 invalid. Aang Hamid Suganda and Momon Rochmana won 394,588 votes, Aan Suharso and Iwan Sonjaya 119,604, and Nana Sudjana and Eman Sulaeman 22,547.[32] The incumbent carried every one of the 32 districts. His largest totals came from Kuningan, the regency seat (36,321), Ciawigebang (29,135), Cigugur (18,459), Kramatmulya (17,632), and Darma (15,557); Aan Suharso's strongest showings, in Kuningan (9,694) and Darma (7,901), came nowhere near closing the gap. No dispute over the result escalated to the Supreme Court or the Constitutional Court, a relatively calm outcome compared with post-election disputes elsewhere in the same period.[33] The 2008 election thus consolidated both PDI-P's dominance and a socio-political infrastructure—the volunteer network—that would shape the regency's politics for the following decade.[34]

[28] Fadiyah, Dewi, and Karyana, "Kekuatan Dinasti Politik."

[29] Anonim, "Para Pengusung Andalkan Suara Daerah Pemilihan," *Kompas.com*, August 22, 2008, https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2008/08/22/11324667/para.pengusung.andalkan.suara.daerah.pemilihan.

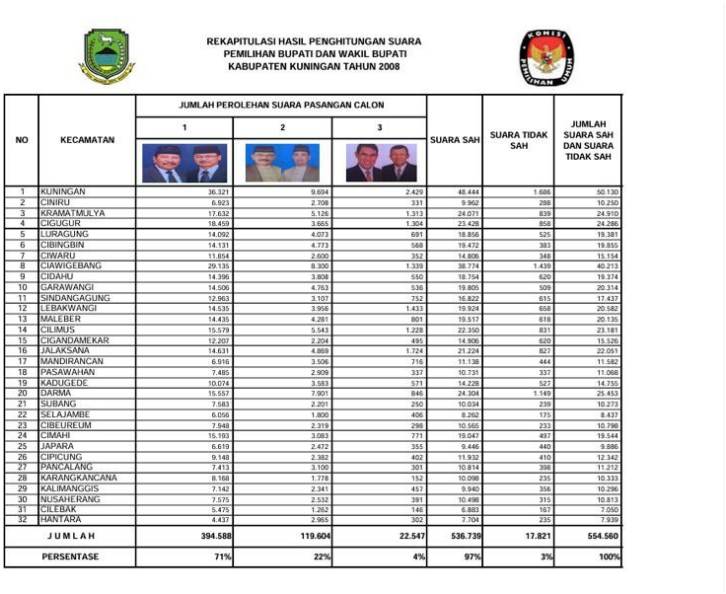
[30] Hilal Ramdhani and Valina Singka Subekti, "Dynamic Local Political Elite in Process for Proposing Regional Expansion," *JIP (Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan): Kajian Ilmu Pemerintahan dan Politik Daerah* 5 (2020): 15.

[31] "Aang Hamid Ungguli Pilkada Kuningan," *Tempo*, October 13, 2008, https://www.tempo.co/arsip/aang-hamid-ungguli-pilkada-kuningan-1918204.

[32] KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, "Rekapitulasi 2008." The percentages printed on the recapitulation sheet (71, 22, and 4 percent) are calculated on total ballots cast, including invalid ones; calculated on valid votes, as in Table 2, the shares are 73.52, 22.28, and 4.20 percent respectively.

[33] KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, *Dokumen Rekapitulasi dan Evaluasi Pemilihan Kepala Daerah Kabupaten Kuningan Tahun 2008* (Kuningan: KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, 2008).

[34] Maulana, "Persepsi Masyarakat Kecamatan Kuningan."



REKAPITULASI HASIL PENGHITUNGAN SUARA
PEMILIHAN BUPATI DAN WAKIL BUPATI
KABUPATEN KUNINGAN TAHUN 2008

NO	KECAMATAN	JUMLAH PEROLEHAN SUARA PASANGAN CALON			SUARA SAH	SUARA TIDAK SAH	JUMLAH SUARA SAH DAN SUARA TIDAK SAH
		1	2	3			
1	KUNINGAN	36.321	9.694	2.429	48.444	1.686	50.130
2	CINIRU	6.923	2.708	331	9.962	288	10.250
3	KRAMATMULYA	17.632	5.126	1.313	24.071	839	24.910
4	CIGUGUR	18.459	3.665	1.304	23.428	858	24.286
5	LURAGUNG	14.092	4.073	691	18.856	525	19.381
6	CIBINGBIN	14.131	4.773	568	19.472	383	19.855
7	CIWARU	11.854	2.600	352	14.806	348	15.154
8	CIAWIGEBANG	29.135	8.300	1.339	38.774	1.439	40.213
9	CIDAHU	14.396	3.808	550	18.754	620	19.374
10	GARAWANGI	14.506	4.763	536	19.805	509	20.314
11	SINDANGAGUNG	12.963	3.107	752	16.822	615	17.437
12	LEBAKWANGI	14.535	3.956	1.433	19.924	658	20.582
13	MALEBER	14.435	4.281	801	19.517	618	20.135
14	CILIMUS	15.579	5.543	1.228	22.350	831	23.181
15	CIGANDAMEKAR	12.207	2.204	495	14.906	620	15.526
16	JALAKSANA	14.631	4.869	1.724	21.224	827	22.051
17	MANDIRANCAN	6.916	3.506	716	11.138	444	11.582
18	PASAWAHAN	7.485	2.909	337	10.731	337	11.068
19	KADUGEDE	10.074	3.583	571	14.228	527	14.755
20	DARMA	15.557	7.901	846	24.304	1.149	25.453
21	SUBANG	7.583	2.201	250	10.034	239	10.273
22	SELAJAMBE	6.056	1.800	406	8.262	175	8.437
23	CIBEUREUM	7.948	2.319	298	10.565	233	10.798
24	CIMAHI	15.193	3.083	771	19.047	497	19.544
25	JAPARA	6.619	2.472	355	9.446	440	9.886
26	CIPICUNG	9.148	2.382	402	11.932	410	12.342
27	PANCALANG	7.413	3.100	301	10.814	398	11.212
28	KARANGKANCANA	8.168	1.778	152	10.098	235	10.333
29	KALIMANGGIS	7.142	2.341	457	9.940	356	10.296
30	NUSAHERANG	7.575	2.532	391	10.498	315	10.813
31	CILEBAK	5.475	1.262	146	6.883	167	7.050
32	HANTARA	4.437	2.965	302	7.704	235	7.939
JUMLAH		394.588	119.604	22.547	536.739	17.821	554.560
PERSENTASE		71%	22%	4%	97%	3%	100%

Figure 1 Recapitulation of the vote count in the 2008 Kuningan regent election by district

The 2013 Election: Dynastic Succession and Intra-Regime Rupture

The end of Aang Hamid Suganda's second term opened a more competitive field and produced a struggle for influence among local elite factions.[35] Four pairs contested the election of 15 September 2013—two nominated by parties and two independent.[36] The first was Utje Choeriah Hamid Suganda, the outgoing regent's wife, paired with Acep Purnama under the label UTAMA. Her candidacy plainly used the electoral process as a mechanism for transferring power within the family, a rational choice that capitalised on ten years of accumulated social capital. UTAMA was backed by a numerically broad coalition of PDI-P, PAN, PPP, PBB, the Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (PKP/PKPI), the Democratic Nationhood Party (PDK), and the Concern for the Nation Functional Party (PKPB).[37] Its principal rival, ROCHMAT, paired the sitting deputy regent Momon Rochmana with Mamat Robby Suganda; it was formally nominated by Golkar, Demokrat, and the National Awakening Party (PKB), with the publicly acknowledged but unregistered support of Gerindra and PKS.[38] The contest was therefore less a confrontation between ideologically opposed parties than a rivalry between two factions that had governed together, demonstrating that solidarity within a governing coalition did not automatically translate into electoral solidarity once candidacy interests collided.[39] Both factions claimed to be the legitimate heirs of the developmental legacy of Aang Hamid Suganda's two terms.[40]

[35] Fadiyah, Dewi, and Karyana, "Kekuatan Dinasti Politik."

[36] Administrator, "KPU Kuningan Menetapkan Nomor Urut Empat Pasang Calon Bupati," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 2013, https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/nasional/pr-01152748/kpu-kuningan-menetapkan-nomor-urut-empat-pasang-calon-bupati.

[37] Deden Rijalul Umam, "Ada 7 Parpol Pengusung Utama saat Pilkada 2013," *Kuningan Mass*, 2016.

[38] KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, "KPU Kuningan Lakukan Pengundian dan Penetapan Nomor Urut Pasangan Calon Bupati," Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2013.

[39] Administrator, "KPU Kuningan Menetapkan Nomor Urut."

[40] Syamsuddin Haris, *Dinasti Politik di Tingkat Lokal: Kajian Kasus Pilkada di Indonesia* (Jakarta: LIPI Press, 2014).

Two independent pairs completed the field: Zaenal Mustafa Affandi and Cartam Sulaeman (ZAMAN), and Kamdan with Elit Nurlita Sari (HK ELIT BAIK).

Between 2008 and 2013, PDI-P thus shifted from nominating the incumbent to reproducing the dynasty through Utje's candidacy—a manifestation of what Djati calls the revival of familism, a response by local elites to term limits, made possible by the failure of local parties to regenerate leadership, by the high cost of democratic competition, and by the absence of a balance of power among local elites.[41] The enlargement of the coalition compensated for the loss of incumbency advantage, and the reactivation of the AHAS Volunteers in support of Utje showed that the infrastructure built in 2008 remained effective in a different candidacy.[42]

The pairs articulated distinct programmes. UTAMA offered "Kuningan MAS" (*Mandiri, Agamis, Sejahtera*: self-reliant, religious, prosperous), emphasising rural infrastructure and agribusiness; ROCHMAT promised a prosperous, just, and highly competitive Kuningan through bureaucratic reform, budget transparency, and equal access to health facilities; HK ELIT BAIK campaigned for "change toward popular self-reliance" through a people's economy; and ZAMAN pledged a just and morally upright society with scholarships for poor families. In campaign practice, UTAMA ran a dual system combining its seven-party coalition with the AHAS network, led personally by Aang Hamid Suganda, whereas ROCHMAT relied on a grand coalition of parties and on open-air rallies to counter its rival's volunteer penetration.[43]

The rivalry split the loyalties of civil servants and village officials, caught between a sitting deputy and the instructions of the regent. ROCHMAT and civil-society actors criticised the dynastic character of UTAMA's candidacy and alleged misuse of state facilities. Tension peaked during the count: a quick count by the Lembaga Penelitian Sosial (Lensa), based on 69 percent of data, showed ROCHMAT leading with 43.48 percent against UTAMA's 41.06 percent. The official KPU recapitulation, however, gave UTAMA 240,528 votes (44.99 percent) against ROCHMAT's 199,653 (37.34 percent), with Kamdan–Elit Nurlita Sari at 53,934 (10.09 percent) and Zaenal Mustafa–Cartam Sulaeman at 20,195 (3.78 percent).[44] Of 534,682 ballots, 514,310 (96.19 percent) were valid and 20,372 (3.81 percent) invalid.[45] ROCHMAT then petitioned the Constitutional Court (case No. 136/PHPU.D-XI/2013), alleging structured, systematic, and massive violations involving sub-

[41] Wasisto Raharjo Djati, "Revivalisme Kekuatan Familisme dalam Demokrasi: Dinasti Politik di Aras Lokal," *Masyarakat: Jurnal Sosiologi* 18 (2013).

[42] Umam, "Ada 7 Parpol Pengusung."

[43] Endun Abdul Haq, "Pawai Damai dan Kampanye Simpatik di Kuningan Meriah," KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, 2013, https://www.kpu.go.id/berita/baca/2876.

[44] KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, "Rekapitulasi Catatan Pelaksanaan Pemungutan Suara dan Penghitungan Suara Pemilihan Bupati dan Wakil Bupati Kuningan Tahun 2013 Tingkat KPU Kabupaten" (Kuningan: KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, 2013); Administrator, "Pleno KPU Menetapkan Suara Terbanyak Diperoleh Pasangan 'Utama,'" *Pikiran Rakyat*, September 20, 2013, https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/nasional/pr-01158031/pleno-kpu-menetapkan-suara-terbanyak-diperoleh-pasangan-utama.

[45] KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, "Rekapitulasi Catatan 2013." As in 2008, the candidate percentages reported for 2013 are shares of total ballots cast; as shares of valid votes (Table 2) they are 46.77 percent for UTAMA, 38.82 percent for ROCHMAT, 10.49 percent for Kamdan–Elit Nurlita Sari, and 3.93 percent for Zaenal Mustafa–Cartam Sulaeman.

district heads, village heads, and the covert use of the regional budget. The Court rejected the petition in its entirety, closing the legal and political conflict of the 2013 cycle.[46] The outcome transferred office from husband to wife, with PDI-P again serving as the principal vehicle of succession.

The 2018 Election: Incumbency, Kinship, and a Minimal Winning Coalition

The 2018 election was held on 27 June 2018 as part of the third wave of simultaneous pilkada, involving 171 regions nationwide, and coincided with the West Java gubernatorial election, so that Kuningan voters received two ballots.[47] Its political context had been transformed by the death of Regent Utje Choeriah Hamid Suganda on 7 April 2016, after which Acep Purnama assumed the executive and entered the contest as a de facto incumbent. Three pairs, whose ballot numbers were drawn on 13 February 2018, represented more clearly segmented coalitions, reflecting increasingly complex calculations among local interests, central party instructions, and the availability of electable figures.[48]

The first pair, Toto Taufikurohman Kosim and Yosa Octora Santono (SANTOSA), was backed by PKB, Demokrat, PKS, and PPP—a coalition of Islamic parties and one nationalist party with bases among *santri*, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) communities, and urban Islamist voters.[49] The second, Dudy Pamuji and Udin Kusnedi (BISA), was nominated by Golkar, PAN, and Gerindra, a combination of pragmatic nationalist, moderate reformist-Islamic, and right-nationalist parties with no substantive ideological common ground beyond the calculation of victory.[50] The third, Acep Purnama and Muhammad Ridho Suganda (ARAS), was backed only by PDI-P and the National Democratic Party (NasDem). Ridho, the youngest son of Aang Hamid Suganda and Utje, symbolised the continuity of the Suganda lineage, so that the pair combined two sources of legitimacy: incumbency and dynastic social capital.[51]

The programmes again emphasised development. SANTOSA proposed "Kuningan Sajati" (prosperous, religious, advanced, transparent, and innovative), focusing on public health services and small enterprises; BISA advocated a self-reliant, prosperous, and just Kuningan through modern agriculture, rural infrastructure, and job creation; and ARAS offered "Kuningan MAJU" (*Makmur, Agamis, Pinunjul Berbasis Desa*: prosperous, religious, and outstanding, village-based) by 2023.[52] In campaigning, ARAS combined incumbent bureaucratic advantage and the traditional strength of PDI-P and NasDem with micro-targeting of rural areas; SANTOSA

[46] Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia, Putusan Nomor 136/PHPU.D-XI/2013 tentang Perselisihan Hasil Pemilihan Umum Kepala Daerah dan Wakil Kepala Daerah Kabupaten Kuningan Tahun 2013.

[47] KPU Kuningan, *Rekam Jejak Pilkada Kuningan Tahun 2018* (Kuningan: KPU Kuningan, 2018); Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 10 Tahun 2016.

[48] KPU Kuningan, *Rekam Jejak 2018*, 55.

[49] Agus Mustawan, "Para Mantan Kontestan Pilkada Merapat ke Pasangan Tosa," *Kuningan Mass*, 2018; Admin, "Mengenal Lebih Dekat Yosa Octora Santono," *Kuningan Terkini*, 2017, https://www.kuninganterkini.com/profil/6707-mengenal-lebih-dekat-yosa-octora-santono.html.

[50] Anonim, "Koalisi Golkar, PAN dan Gerindra Makin Solid Memacu untuk Melawan Incumbent," *Infosaudara.com*, 2017.

[51] KPU Kuningan, *Rekam Jejak 2018*, 55.

[52] KPU Kuningan, *Rekam Jejak 2018*.

mobilised through *pesantren* and religious leaders; and BISA relied on door-to-door canvassing and social media aimed at young and urban voters.[53] The election office's own publication, however, records these strategies in a uniformly positive register; electoral oversight bodies found indications that some civil servants had covertly favoured the incumbent, provoking protests from rival campaigns, while black campaigns, hoaxes, and allegations concerning the use of official facilities circulated online.[54]

At the open plenary session of 4 July 2018 in the Subagja Ballroom of the Horison Tirta Sanita Hotel, KPU Kuningan declared ARAS the winner with 233,539 votes (40.8 percent), followed by SANTOSA with 183,156 (32.1 percent) and BISA with 155,017 (27.1 percent).[55] ARAS led SANTOSA by 50,383 votes and BISA by 78,522, carried 26 of the 32 districts (81.3 percent of the regency's territory), and was inaugurated for the 2018–2023 term; turnout reached 71.40 percent.[56] The most striking feature of 2018 is that the coalition with the fewest parties won by a substantial margin. Party alignments, moreover, shifted markedly between cycles: Golkar, which had lost in 2013, moved to the BISA coalition and lost again, while NasDem emerged as a key partner of the winners.

The 2024 Election: The End of an Era

The election of 27 November 2024, held simultaneously throughout Indonesia, marked a turning point. Its context was shaped by two developments. The first was legal: Constitutional Court Decisions No. 60/PUU-XXII/2024 and No. 70/PUU-XXII/2024 of 20 August 2024 allowed parties or party coalitions to nominate candidates even without DPRD seats, which facilitated the formation of three competing coalitions.[57] The second was demographic in the narrowest sense: former regent Acep Purnama died on 23 May 2024, and no incumbent stood for re-election, which opened the field to more balanced competition.[58]

The first pair, Dian Rachmat Yanuar and Tuti Andriani (DIRAHMATI), campaigning under the slogan "Kuningan MELESAT" (*Maju, Empowering, Lestari, Agamis, Tangguh*), was backed by the broadest and most heterogeneous coalition: Golkar, Gerindra, PKS, and NasDem in parliament, joined by non-parliamentary

[53] KPU Kuningan, *Rekam Jejak 2018*.

[54] Parastiti Kharisma Putri, "PNS Tak Netral Ditemukan di Pilkada Jawa Barat hingga Maluku Utara," *detikNews*, 2018, https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4080568/pns-tak-netral-ditemukan-di-pilkada-jabar-hingga-maluku-utara.

[55] Media Centre KPU KNG, "Inilah Rekapitulasi Hasil Penghitungan Suara Pilkada Serentak 2018," *suarakuningan.com*, 2018, https://www.suarakuningan.com/2018/07/inilah-rekapitulasi-hasil-penghitungan.html; KPU Kuningan, *Rekam Jejak 2018*, 117. =

[56] KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, "Rekapitulasi Hasil Penghitungan Suara dalam Pemilihan Bupati dan Wakil Bupati Kuningan Tahun 2018" (Kuningan: KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, 2018); Media Centre KPU KNG, "Inilah Rekapitulasi Hasil Penghitungan Suara."

[57] Deden Rijalul Umam, "Masalah Hukum dalam Pelaksanaan Pilkada," *Kuningan Mass*, 2024, https://kuninganmass.com/tag/putusan-mk/.

[58] KPU Kuningan, *Kilas Balik Penyelenggaraan Pemilihan Bupati dan Wakil Bupati Kuningan Tahun 2024* (Kuningan: KPU Kuningan, 2024).

parties.[59] The second, M. Ridho Suganda and Kamdan (RIDHOKAN), represented the direct attempt to regenerate the Suganda dynasty. Ridho, deputy regent in 2018–2023, now ran for the top post with the support of PDI-P, PPP, and Demokrat; some reports also list Perindo, Gelora, and PKN among his supporters.[60] His running mate Kamdan had himself contested the 2013 election as an independent against the Suganda camp—an instance of individual pragmatism in response to new opportunities.[61] The third pair, Yanuar Prihatin and Udin Kusnedi (variously labelled HATIKU, DIHATIKU, or YAKUSA), was nominated by PKB and PAN, with PBB listed in the KPU candidate data. Udin Kusnedi, BISA's vice-regent candidate in 2018 under a Golkar–PAN–Gerindra coalition, now stood with a different partner and a different coalition, giving up the DPRD seat to which he had just been elected for 2024–2029.[62]

The alignments of 2024 reversed much of the earlier pattern. NasDem, a partner of the winners in 2018, moved to the non-dynastic DIRAHMATI coalition, while PDI-P stayed with Ridho Suganda. The fragmentation indicated that the dynasty no longer possessed sufficient pull to hold a multiparty coalition together, and that the durability of a local dynasty depends on its continued control of territory and influence.[63] Programmatically, DIRAHMATI emphasised bureaucratic reform, environmental resilience, and community-based economic capacity; RIDHOKAN offered "Kuningan JEMBAR" (*Jadi Emas Jawa Barat*), prioritising human development, public infrastructure, and equitable use of regional potential; and the third pair promised "Kuningan EMAS" (*Ekonomi Maju Agamis Sejahtera*), stressing the people's economy, religious values, and investment-friendly spatial planning.[64] RIDHOKAN relied on PDI-P's historical constituency and the AHAS volunteer network, the PKB-led pair on *pesantren* and religious study groups. In the public debates organised by KPU, Dian Rachmat Yanuar displayed command of budgetary and governance data but faced repeated attacks over extreme poverty in the regency; Ridho Suganda concentrated on criticising the effectiveness of previous policies; and Yanuar Prihatin positioned himself as a middle way, criticising dependence on central transfers.[65] The most prominent controversy concerned the neutrality of civil servants and village officials, a vulnerability heightened by Dian's background as the regency's most senior bureaucrat; the election oversight body received reports of officials allegedly

[59] Eki Nurhuda Almutaqin, "Ini Kekuatan Partai Pengusung 3 Calon Bupati Kuningan," *Kuningan Mass*, 2024; Tim Redaksi, "Pilkada Kuningan, Golkar Resmi Usung Dian Rachmat Yanuar dan Tuti Andriani," *KaceNews.id*, August 21, 2024, https://www.kacenews.id/2024/08/21/pilkada-kuningan-golkar-resmi-usung-dian-rachmat-yanuar-dan-tuti-andriani.

[60] Ahmad Ripai, "Akronim Tiga Pasangan Calon di Pilkada Kuningan 2024, Ada RidhoKan, DirahmaTi dan YaKusa," *Tribun Cirebon.com*, 2024; KPU Kuningan, *Kilas Balik 2024*.

[61] Eki Nurhuda Almutaqin, "Bos Bawang Didorong Nyalon Bupati, Ini Profil H Kamdan," *Kuningan Mass*, 2024.

[62] Andri Yanto, "Maju Pilkada Kuningan, Udin Kusnedi Korbankan Jabatan Anggota DPRD Terpilih 2024–2029," *iNews Kuningan*, 2024.

[63] KPU Kuningan, *Kilas Balik 2024*; Helmi Mahadi, "Pragmatisme Politik: Studi Kasus Proses Rekrutmen Politik PDI-P, Kabupaten Sleman," *Jurnal Studi Pemerintahan* 2 (2011).

[64] KPU Kuningan, *Kilas Balik 2024*.

[65] KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, "Debat Publik Calon Bupati dan Wakil Bupati Kabupaten Kuningan Tahun 2024," KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/live/iTTt8n1Oz2Y.

directing support, while black campaigns and competing survey claims circulated on social media.[66]

On the evening of the vote, the DIRAHMATI camp claimed victory with 211,314 votes (38.26 percent) on the basis of its internal count, and the local pollster Jamparing's quick count put the pair 3.2 points ahead of RIDHOKAN.[67] The district-level recapitulation was concluded, after a protracted final session, on Thursday, 5 December 2024 at the Horison Tirta Sanita Hotel (Figure 2). DIRAHMATI obtained 211,961 votes (38.24 percent), RIDHOKAN 196,853 (35.51 percent), and the Yanuar–Udin pair 145,474 (26.25 percent). Of 892,867 voters on the permanent and special voter lists, 585,233 cast ballots.[68] The winning pair was formally determined at an open plenary session at the Grand Cordela Hotel, Kuningan, on 9 January 2025, on the basis of official report No. 229/PL.02.7-BA/2/2024 and KPU Kuningan Decision No. 2882 of 2024; the resulting decision on the elected pair, Decision No. 12 of 2025, rests on official report No. 1/PL.02.7-BA/2/2025 of the same day.[69] Dian Rachmat Yanuar declared that from that day there were no longer supporters of numbers 01, 02, or 03, only supporters of Kuningan; no petition against the result proceeded to the Constitutional Court.[70] Dian and Tuti were inaugurated on 20 February 2025.[71]

[66] Humas DPRD, "Pragmatis atau Idealis? Rana Suparman: Mutasi Pejabat Jadi Ujian Awal Bupati Dian," DPRD Kabupaten Kuningan, 2025, https://dprd.kuningankab.go.id/berita/pragmatis-atau-idealis-rana-suparman-mutasi-pejabat-jadi-ujian-awal-bupati-dian.

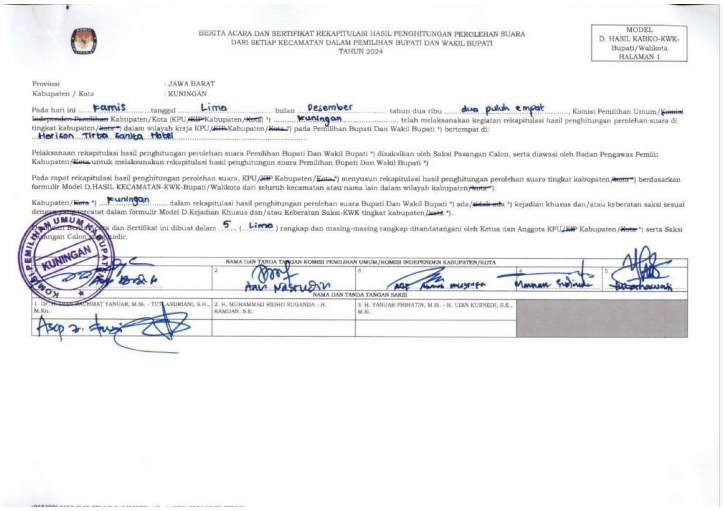
[67] Mohamad Taufik, "Paslon Dian–Tuti Klaim Menang Pilkada Kuningan," *detikJabar*, November 28, 2024, https://www.detik.com/jabar/pilkada/d-7660883/paslon-dian-tuti-klaim-menang-pilkada-kuningan; Eki Nurhuda Almutaqin, "Quick Count Jamparing, Dian–Tuti Unggul 3,2% dari Ridhokan," *Kuningan Mass*, November 28, 2024.

[68] KPU Kuningan, "Hasil Pilkada Kabupaten Kuningan 2024," KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, https://kab-kuningan.kpu.go.id/page/read/hasil-pilkada-kabupaten-kuningan-2024; Berita Acara KPU Kabupaten Kuningan Nomor 229/PL.02.7-BA/2/2024, December 5, 2024. KPU Kuningan reports turnout as 65.61 percent; the two figures given yield 65.55 percent, and a press report cites 64.98 percent. Anonim, "Tingkat Partisipasi Pemilih Minimum dalam Pemilu 2024 Terjadi secara Nasional," *kamangkaranews.com*, 2024.

[69] Berita Acara KPU Kabupaten Kuningan Nomor 229/PL.02.7-BA/2/2024; Keputusan KPU Kabupaten Kuningan Nomor 2882 Tahun 2024 tentang Penetapan Hasil Pemilihan Bupati dan Wakil Bupati Kabupaten Kuningan Tahun 2024; Keputusan KPU Kabupaten Kuningan Nomor 12 Tahun 2025.

[70] Andri Yanto, "Berikut Hasil Akhir Pleno Rekapitulasi Pilkada Kuningan, Paslon Dirahmati Unggul 211 Ribu Suara," *iNews Kuningan*, 2024.

[71] Eki Nurhuda Almutaqin, "Dilantik Jadi Bupati Kuningan Tanggal 20 Februari 2025, Ini Profil Dian Rachmat Yanuar," *Kuningan Mass*, 2025, https://kuninganmass.com/dilantik-jadi-bupati-kuningan-tanggal-20-februari-2025-ini-profil-dian-rachmat-yanuar/.



BERITA ACARA DAN SERTIFIKAT REKAPITULASI HASIL PENGHITUNGAN PEROLEHAN SUARA
DARI SETIAP KECAMATAN DALAM PEMILIHAN BUPATI DAN WAKIL BUPATI
TAHUN 2024

MODEL
D. HASIL KABKO-KWK-
Bupati/Walikota
HALAMAN 1

Provinsi : JAWA BARAT
Kabupaten / Kota : KUNINGAN

Pada hari ini ... kamis ... tanggal ... Lima ... bulan ... Desember ... tahun dua ribu ... dua puluh empat ..., Komisi Pemilihan Umum/~~Komisi Independen Pemilihan~~ Kabupaten/Kota (KPU/~~KIP~~ Kabupaten/~~Kota~~) *), ... Kuningan ..., telah melaksanakan kegiatan rekapitulasi hasil penghitungan perolehan suara di tingkat kabupaten/~~kota~~ *) dalam wilayah kerja KPU/~~KIP~~ Kabupaten/~~Kota~~) pada Pemilihan Bupati Dan Wakil Bupati *) bertempat di: Horison Tirta Kanika Hotel

Pelaksanaan rekapitulasi hasil penghitungan perolehan suara Pemilihan Bupati Dan Wakil Bupati *) disaksikan oleh Saksi Pasangan Calon, serta diawasi oleh Badan Pengawas Pemilu Kabupaten/~~Kota~~ untuk melaksanakan rekapitulasi hasil penghitungan suara Pemilihan Bupati Dan Wakil Bupati *)

Pada rapat rekapitulasi hasil penghitungan perolehan suara, KPU/~~KIP~~ Kabupaten/~~Kota~~ *) menyusun rekapitulasi hasil penghitungan perolehan suara tingkat kabupaten/~~kota~~ *) berdasarkan formulir Model D.HASIL KECAMATAN-KWK-Bupati/Walikota dari seluruh kecamatan atau nama lain dalam wilayah kabupaten/~~kota~~ *).

Kabupaten/~~Kota~~ *) ... Kuningan ... dalam rekapitulasi hasil penghitungan perolehan suara Bupati Dan Wakil Bupati *) ada/~~tidak ada~~ *) kejadian khusus dan/atau keberatan saksi sesuai dengan ~~catatan~~ tercatat dalam formulir Model D.Kejadian Khusus dan/atau Keberatan Saksi-KWK tingkat kabupaten/~~kota~~ *).

... dan Sertifikat ini dibuat dalam ... 5 ... (Lima) rangkap dan masing-masing rangkap ditandatangani oleh Ketua dan Anggota KPU/~~KIP~~ Kabupaten/~~Kota~~ *) serta Saksi ~~Pasangan Calon~~ dan Pengawas Pemilu.

NAMA DAN TANDA TANGAN KOMISI PEMILIHAN UMUM/KOMISI INDEPENDEN KABUPATEN/KOTA				
1. DR. [illegible] HIDAYAT YANUAR, M.Si. - TUTI ANDRIANI, S.H., M.Ki.	2. K. MUHAMMAD RIDHO SUGANDA - H. KANDAR, S.E.	3. H. YANUAR PRIHATIN, M.Si. - H. UDIN KURNEDI, S.E., M.Si.	4.	5.

Figure 2 First page of the official report and certificate of the district-level recapitulation (Model D.HASIL KABKO-KWK) of the 2024 Kuningan regent election, dated Thursday, 5 December 2024

The 2024 result carried four significant markers. For the first time since 2003—twenty-one years—a force outside the Suganda lineage captured the regency's highest office. The margin of 15,108 votes (2.73 percentage points) was the narrowest in Kuningan's electoral history. Turnout fell from 71.40 percent in 2018 to roughly 65 percent. And no pair surpassed 40 percent of the vote, revealing a far more dispersed distribution of preferences than in earlier cycles.[72] Geographically, DIRAHMATI dominated most districts, especially bureaucratic strongholds and NU-based areas; RIDHOKAN led in some districts and appeared, in the provisional count, to dominate Ciawigebang, one of the regency's largest electorates; and the PKB-led pair performed well in strongly *nahdliyin* districts.[73] The winning coalition was also read as aligning the regency's political configuration with the national one, since its members were largely parties supporting President Prabowo Subianto's government in the Advanced Indonesia Coalition (Koalisi Indonesia Maju, KIM) Plus.[74]

Table 2. Official results of the Kuningan regent elections, 2008–2024 (winners listed first)

Election	Candidate pair	Votes	% of valid votes
2008	Aang Hamid Suganda – Momon Rochmana	394,588	73.52
	Aan Suharso – Iwan Sonjaya	119,604	22.28
	Nana Sudjana – Eman Sulaeman	22,547	4.20
2013	Utje Ch. Hamid Suganda – Acep Purnama	240,528	46.77
	Momon Rochmana – Mamat Robby Suganda	199,653	38.82

[72] Azzis Zulkhairil, "Daftar Pemenang Pilkada 2024 di Seluruh Kabupaten Kota Jawa Barat," *IDN Times Jabar*, 2024, https://jabar.idntimes.com/news/jawa-barat/daftar-pemenang-pilkada-2024-di-seluruh-kabupaten-kota-jawa-barat-00-nqtvm-zhs77b.

[73] KPU Kuningan, *Kilas Balik 2024*, 44.

[74] Umam, "Masalah Hukum dalam Pelaksanaan Pilkada."

	Kamdan – Elit Nurlita Sari	53,934	10.49
	Zaenal Mustafa Affandi – Cartam Sulaeman	20,195	3.93
2018	Acep Purnama – M. Ridho Suganda	233,539	40.85
	Toto Taufikurohman Kosim – Yosa Octora Santono	183,156	32.04
	Dudy Pamuji – Udin Kusnedi	155,017	27.11
2024	Dian Rachmat Yanuar – Tuti Andriani	211,961	38.24
	M. Ridho Suganda – Kamdan	196,853	35.51
	Yanuar Prihatin – Udin Kusnedi	145,474	26.25

Party Alignments across Four Cycles

Table 3 summarises the movement of each party between winning and losing coalitions. Virtually every party changed position at least once. PDI-P stood with the winner from 2008 through 2018 and lost in 2024; Golkar won in 2008, lost in 2013 and 2018, and won again in 2024; PKS lost three times before joining the winning coalition in 2024; PPP and PAN moved from the winning side in 2008 and 2013 to the losing side in 2018 and 2024; and NasDem, absent in 2008 and 2013, was on the winning side in both 2018 and 2024. Coalition loyalty to a given candidate was thus never permanent but was determined by calculations of interest and the prospect of victory in each cycle.[75]

Table 3. Coalition positions of political parties in the Kuningan regent elections, 2008–2024

Party	2008	2013	2018	2024
PDI-P	W	W	W	L
Golkar	W	L	L	W
PPP	W	W	L	L
PAN	W	W	L	L
PBB	–	W	–	L
PKS	L	L†	L	W
Demokrat	L	L	L	L
PKB	–	L	L	L
Gerindra	–	L†	L	W
PKP	–	W	–	–
PDK	–	W	–	–

[75] Syamsuddin Haris, *Partai, Pemilu, dan Parlemen Era Reformasi* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014), 87–89.

PKPB	–	W	–	–
NasDem	–	–	W	W
PSI	–	–	–	W
Partai Buruh	–	–	–	W
Partai Ummat	–	–	–	W
Hanura	–	–	–	W*

Pathways of Candidate Recruitment

The candidates' political biographies reveal three principal pathways to candidacy (Table 1). The first is the executive bureaucracy. Momon Rochmana and Aan Suharso had both served as regional secretary before becoming deputy regent, and Aan's dual record as regional secretary and as deputy regent in 2003–2008 gave him unusually comprehensive knowledge of the regency's government.[76] Dian Rachmat Yanuar served more than thirty years in the civil service, holding posts including head of public relations, head of the education office, and regional secretary in 2018–2024, before taking early retirement to stand in 2024. He also chaired GP Ansor, the NU youth wing, in Kuningan in 1999–2001—an organisation his father had first led in the regency—led the Kuningan branch of the National Committee of Indonesian Youth (KNPI) in 2008–2011, and sat on the West Java regional board of NU.[77]

The second pathway is the legislature, from the regency to the national level. Acep Purnama was deputy chair and then chair of the Kuningan DPRD in 1994–1999 and again chaired the DPRD in 2009–2014, while leading the PDI-P branch for several terms—thereby controlling both the legislature and the party machine.[78] Dudy Pamuji rose through Golkar's youth wing (AMPG), which he chaired in Kuningan in 2017, entered the DPRD in 2014, and became a deputy chair of the Golkar regency board, which nominated him unanimously.[79] Yanuar Prihatin was the only candidate in four cycles with a direct national-level parliamentary career. Formed in the NU-affiliated student organisations IPNU and PMII (1988–2000), he sat on PKB's central board from 2008, represented PKB in the national parliament in 2014–2024, serving as deputy

[76] Anonim, "Bupati Kuningan Terpilih Dilantik"; KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, "Rekapitulasi 2008."

[77] Redaksi, "H. Dian Rachmat Yanuar, Perjalanan Menuju Bupati Kuningan," Pemerintah Kabupaten Kuningan, 2025, https://kuningankab.go.id/home/h-dian-rachmat-yanuar-perjalanan-menuju-bupati-kuningan/; Almutaqin, "Dilantik Jadi Bupati Kuningan."

[78] Ricky Prayoga, "Acep Purnama Dinilai sebagai Sosok Berdedikasi bagi Kabupaten Kuningan," *Antara News*, 2024, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/4119987/acep-purnama-dinilai-sebagai-sosok-berdedikasi-bagi-kabupaten-kuningan; Andry Yanto, "Bupati Acep Purnama Pimpin PDIP Kuningan," *ciremaitoday*, 2019, https://kumparan.com/ciremaitoday/bupati-acep-purnama-pimpin-pdip-kuningan-1rT2YHbZQ95/full.

[79] Admin, "Mengenal Lebih Dekat Cabup Dudy Pamuji," *Kuningan Terkini*, 2017, https://www.kuninganterkini.com/profil/7480-mengenal-lebih-dekat-cabup-dudy-pamuji.html; Deden Rijalul Umam, "Golkar Siap Menangkan Dudy Pamuji di Pilkada," *Kuningan Mass*, 2017, https://kuninganmass.com/golkar-siap-menangkan-dudy-pamuji-di-pilkada/.

chair of Commission II on domestic governance and elections, and was reappointed to PKB's central board for 2024–2029. He is the son of KH Ahmad Bagja, secretary-general of NU's central board under Abdurrahman Wahid and a founder of PKB.[80]

The third pathway is non-formal and rests on kinship and personal capital. Utje Choeriah Hamid Suganda, born on 17 April 1952, had no independent record of party office or legislative service before 2013, although she was a PDI-P cadre, accompanied her husband throughout his administration, and was known for environmental advocacy, receiving the Pangajen Bumi Satya award from *Pikiran Rakyat* on 24 March 2016. She also belonged to the Effendi family, prominent across West Java: her brother Agus Utara Effendi was regent of Bogor in 1998–2008, and her nephew Dede Yusuf was vice-governor of West Java in 2008–2013.[81] Muhammad Ridho Suganda chaired the KNPI of Bogor City from 2000 to 2013 and Karang Taruna of Bogor City until 2021, an apprenticeship in politically charged youth organisations; yet the Suganda name was the decisive asset, and his 2018 candidacy as Acep Purnama's deputy was widely read as a way of prolonging the family's hold on power.[82] Kinship operated outside the Suganda family too. Yosa Octora Santono is the eldest son of Amin Santono, a Demokrat member of the national parliament in 2009–2014 and 2014–2019, and Yoyoh Rukiyah, a member of the West Java provincial council in 2014–2019; the election-watch organisation Perludem identified the Santono family as one of the three largest kinship factions in West Java's 2018 elections, alongside the Yasin family and the Effendi family of Bogor. Yosa organised his base through the Amin Family Center, a family-based volunteer association.[83] In 2024, Tuti Andriani—a notary who had twice chaired the Kuningan branch of the Indonesian Notaries Association (2016–2019 and 2019–2023)—entered politics after the death of her elder brother Acep Purnama. Much of his non-party volunteer network, "Balad Acep Purnama," eventually backed her, although Acep's widow, Ika Siti Rahmatika, supported a rival pair—a telling divergence between lines of descent and lines of marriage.[84]

Personal capital outside kinship also mattered. Kamdan, a former banker, built an onion-supply business serving major food companies and later chaired NasDem in

[80] Dadang Hendrayudha, "Siapakah Yanuar Prihatin?," *kamangkaranews.com*, n.d., https://www.kamangkaranews.com/2024/10/siapakah-yanuar-prihatin.html; Fachrul Irwinsyah, "Ini Daftar Pengurus DPP PKB Hasil Muktamar Bali," *kumparanNEWS*, 2024, https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/ini-daftar-pengurus-dpp-pkb-hasil-muktamar-bali-23T2HXDlNAC/full; OM, "Putra KH Ahmad Bagja, Cabup Yanuar Prihatin Ditetapkan sebagai Ketua DPP PKB 2024–2029," *Kuninganonline.com*, 2024, https://kuninganonline.com/putra-kh-ahmad-bagja-cabup-yanuar-prihatin-ditetapkan-sebagai-ketua-dpp-pkb-2024-2029/.

[81] Data KPU Kuningan, "Profil Singkat (CV) Kandidat Bupati & Wakil Bupati Kabupaten Kuningan (2008–2024)" (Kuningan: KPU Kabupaten Kuningan, 2026).

[82] Mayang Ayu Lestari, "M. Ridho Suganda Siap Teruskan Jejak Kedua Orangtuanya," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 2018, https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/jawa-barat/amp/pr-01293102/m-ridho-suganda-siap-teruskan-jejak-kedua-orangtuanya-418961; Sultani, "Jejak Trah Suganda."

[83] Maharddhika, "Sengkarut Politik Kekerabatan pada Pilkada 2018 di Daerah Jawa Barat," *Rumah Pemilu*, 2018, https://rumahpemilu.or.id/sengkarut-politik-kekerabatan-pada-pilkada-2018-di-daerah-jawa-barat/; Admin, "Mengenal Lebih Dekat Yosa Octora Santono."

[84] Rifki Arof, "Siapa Tuti Andriani, Kandidat Wakil Bupati Kuningan Nomor 1," *netralnews.com*, 2024; Eki Nurhuda Almutaqin, "Dampingi Dian sebagai Wakil Bupati Kuningan, Ini Profil Tuti Andriani," *Kuningan Mass*, 2025.

Kuningan.[85] Cartam Sulaeman founded the "Putra Cimahi" chain of wholesale and retail stores; Elit Nurlita Sari was one of the first women to stand for vice-regent in Kuningan through the independent route.[86] Toto Taufikurohman Kosim, director of the regional hospital RSUD 45 Kuningan, turned his reputation as a socially engaged physician into a political movement after losing the 2016 Golkar regency leadership contest, and registered with Yosa on 10 January 2018, the last day of registration.[87] Taken together, these biographies show a field in which kinship and bureaucratic capital predominated, but in which retired police officers, notaries, entrepreneurs, physicians, and religious-organisation activists also found room.

Discussion

Read through Easton's systems model, the four Kuningan elections constitute a continuous cycle in which outputs repeatedly became inputs.[88] The input of 2008 consisted of a decade-old incumbent's developmental record, a party that had displaced the New Order's dominant force, and a volunteer network that converted personal loyalty into votes. The output—an overwhelming re-election—did not merely allocate office; it created the infrastructure that would become the input of the next cycle. The AHAS network, reactivated in 2013 and again in 2018, illustrates how a feedback loop can entrench an actor beyond the formal term of office. By the same logic, the shocks of 2016 and 2024—the deaths of Utje Choeriah Hamid Suganda and Acep Purnama—altered the system's inputs in ways that no coalition arithmetic could fully compensate. The fragmentation of 2024 thus appears less as a sudden rupture than as the cumulative product of feedback: disaffection within the governing bloc (visible as early as Momon Rochmana's challenge in 2013), the redistribution of volunteer networks after Acep Purnama's death, and the realignment of parties seeking access to a new configuration of power.

The Kuningan case confirms, but also qualifies, the literature on local strongmen and political dynasties. Kristono, following Migdal and Sidel, interprets Aang Hamid Suganda as a local strongman whose control of party machinery, personal volunteer networks, and kinship ties enabled the inheritance of power.[89] The evidence assembled here supports this reading for 2008–2018: the Suganda camp won three consecutive elections, the last two without Aang himself on the ballot, positioning him as the most influential kingmaker in the regency's history.[90] Yet the longer view suggests that dynastic power in Kuningan was neither self-perpetuating

[85] Agus Sugiarto, "H Kamdan Ramaikan Bursa Calon Bupati Kuningan, Bakal Berpasangan dengan Dr Alfan?," *radarcirebon.com*, 2024, https://radarcirebon.disway.id/kuningan/read/180938/h-kamdan-ramaikan-bursa-calon-bupati-kuningan-bakal-berpasangan-dengan-dr-alfan/15; Data KPU Kuningan, "Profil Singkat (CV)."

[86] Data KPU Kuningan, "Profil Singkat (CV)"; Eki Nurhuda Almutaqin, "Ada Nama Elit Nurlitasari, Ini 7 Pendaftar Dewas LPPL yang Lolos Seleksi Administrasi," *Kuningan Mass*, 2025.

[87] Muh, "Gagal Pimpin Golkar, Toto Didorong Maju Pilbup," *Rakyat Cirebon*, 2016, https://rakyatcirebon.disway.id/paarlemen/read/86105/gagal-pimpin-golkar-toto-didorong-maju-pilbup; Saiful RN, "Ditemani Ratusan Dokter Simpati Toto Taufikurohman dan Yosa Octora Mendaftar di KPU Kuningan," *Radar Nusantara*, 2018, http://radarnusantara.com/2018/01/diiringi-ratusan-simpatisan-dokter-toto.html.

[88] Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*.

[89] Kristono, "Local Strongman and Political Dynasty."

[90] Fadiyah, Dewi, and Karyana, "Kekuatan Dinasti Politik."

nor unchallenged. It depended on the survival of particular individuals, on the continued cohesion of a multiparty coalition, and on the absence of equally organised rivals. Djati's account of the revival of familism, which attributes local dynasties to failed party regeneration and the high cost of democratic competition, explains why the dynasty could arise; it explains less well why, in a regency with competitive elections, the dynasty eventually lost.[91] Kuningan also complicates the image of a single dominant family. By 2018 the Santono family was competing through its own organisation, and by 2024 a second line of kinship—Acep Purnama's sister and the volunteers who had followed him—had moved into the opposing coalition. Kinship politics in Kuningan was therefore plural and competitive: dynastic capital was a resource that rival camps could also mobilise, and it was a split within the networks of the dominant bloc, rather than the disappearance of kinship politics, that ended the Suganda era.

The pattern of coalition formation supports the view that direct elections push parties toward pragmatism—prioritising candidates' electability over ideological or programmatic coherence. Parties occupy a paradoxical position: they are the only formal gateway to candidacy apart from the demanding independent route, yet their machines are frequently overshadowed by the social capital of candidates.[92] Kuningan provides an unusually clear demonstration. The smallest coalition won in 2018; the largest won in 2024; and the same individuals—Kamdan, Udin Kusnedi—reappeared in successive elections under different and sometimes opposed coalitions. Coalition size, in other words, was not in itself decisive; what mattered was the combination of coalition, candidate capital, and the mobilising capacity of networks that lay partly outside the parties.[93] The AHAS Volunteers, the Amin Family Center, and Balad Acep Purnama each represent what may be called relational clientelism—mobilisation grounded in personal proximity and community loyalty rather than in purely material exchange—consistent with Aspinall and Berenschot's portrait of Indonesian electoral politics, in which personal networks frequently matter more than party organisation.[94] The role of NU-linked networks in 2018 and 2024, through *pesantren*, GP Ansor, and PKB, likewise shows how Islamic organisations and parties functioned as social as well as ideological forces in local contests.[95]

The theme of continuity and change also emerges clearly from the vote data. In 2008 the incumbent took nearly three-quarters of the valid vote and every district; in 2013 the dynastic successor won 46.8 percent of the valid vote against an intra-regime challenger; in 2018 the winner's share fell to 40.8 percent; and in 2024 no pair reached 40 percent and the margin narrowed to 2.73 points. This trajectory may be read as the gradual maturation of local democracy toward greater competitiveness, in line with Budiardjo's observation that sustained participation produces figures with stronger legitimacy than newcomers—a pattern visible in the dominance of candidates with

[91] Djati, "Revivalisme Kekuatan Familisme."

[92] Fhisilmi Kaffah and Auradian Marta, "Dinamika Pembentukan Koalisi Partai Politik pada Pilkada," *Jurnal Kebijakan Publik* 14, no. 4 (2023): 499–506.

[93] Leo Agustino, *Politik Lokal dan Otonomi Daerah* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2014).

[94] Edward Aspinall and Ward Berenschot, *Democracy for Sale: Pemilu, Klientelisme, dan Negara di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2019).

[95] Yumitro, "Partai Islam dalam Dinamika Demokrasi."

bureaucratic, legislative, or kinship capital.[96] At the same time, the decline in turnout from 71.40 percent in 2018 to roughly 65 percent in 2024 qualifies any simple narrative of democratic deepening. Lower participation may indicate weakened enthusiasm for, or confidence in, local contests, and it reminds us that competitiveness among elites does not necessarily translate into broader engagement by citizens. Recurrent complaints about civil-service neutrality in 2013, 2018, and 2024 point in the same direction.

These findings bear directly on the current debate over indirect election. Proponents of returning the choice of regional heads to legislatures cite cost; the Kuningan record suggests that direct elections have, over time, allowed voters to end a long period of dynastic dominance, whereas the Suganda era itself had begun with a DPRD selection in 2003.[97] Without adjudicating the policy question, the evidence indicates that direct election was itself a principal means of political change in the regency.

Historiographically, the article shifts attention from the dynasty as an isolated phenomenon to the electoral system within which dynastic and non-dynastic actors competed. Previous studies of Kuningan have illuminated particular figures or particular elections; Pertiwi's study of Garut has shown comparable movement toward more competitive contests in a neighbouring regency.[98] By reconstructing all four direct elections from KPU records and testing official narratives against press and oversight evidence, this study adds a longitudinal and source-critical dimension. It also illustrates the value of source criticism even for recent, quantitative records: the shares printed on the 2008 and 2013 recapitulations were calculated on total ballots rather than valid votes, and three different turnout figures circulate for 2024—small discrepancies, but ones that matter for an accurate account. The study's limitations are equally clear. The KPU publications are institutional narratives that understate conflict; press reports, particularly from local outlets, often rely on statements by elites; and the oral evidence comes from within the election administration. Future research might extend the analysis to district-level voting patterns across all four cycles and incorporate the testimony of party actors and voters.

Conclusion

This article set out to analyse the configuration of party support and candidates in the Kuningan regent elections between 2008 and 2024 and to examine the results of those elections. On the first question, it has shown that party alignments were fluid, flexible, and pragmatic. The landscape moved from an initial pattern dominated by PDI-P and the kinship network of Aang Hamid Suganda—sustained by a personal volunteer machine in 2008, 2013, and 2018—toward a more open multiparty competition. That dominance was broken in 2024 by the victory of the non-dynastic pair Dian Rachmat Yanuar and Tuti Andriani, backed by a broad coalition that also aligned the regency with the national configuration of power. Across the four cycles, nearly every party changed sides at least once, and candidate recruitment rested on

[96] Budiardjo, *Dasar-Dasar Ilmu Politik*.
[97] Lubis, "Prabowo Subianto Usul Pilkada Tak Langsung."
[98] Pertiwi, "Kontestasi Calon Bupati dan Wakil Bupati."

three pathways: the executive bureaucracy, the legislature from regency to national level, and non-formal capital rooted in kinship and personal networks, alongside a measure of professional diversity among contenders.

On the second question, the vote results record a concrete shift from overwhelming dominance to fragmentation. The incumbent's 73.5 percent of the valid vote and clean sweep of all 32 districts in 2008 gave way to 46.8 percent for the dynastic successor in 2013 and 40.8 percent for the winning pair in 2018, and in 2024 no pair reached 40 percent, while the margin of 2.73 points was the narrowest in Kuningan's history and turnout fell from 71.40 percent to roughly 65 percent. Viewed through Easton's systems model, the elections formed a living cycle in which demands and supports were converted into regional leadership and in which feedback continually reshaped the next contest.

The contribution of this article lies in its longitudinal, archive-based reconstruction of all four direct regent elections in Kuningan, and its novelty in demonstrating that dynastic dominance in the regency was produced through electoral mechanisms and was, in the end, reversed by them—through the fragmentation of coalitions, the emergence of competing kinship networks, and the division of the electorate itself.

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