The Rise of New Candidates in Indonesia's 2019 Legislative Election: Comparative Cases in Aceh and Yogyakarta

Ridho Al-Hamdi[1,*], Yessy Windasari[2], Dicky Salpiandi,[3] David Efendi[4]

[1,2,3,4]*Department of Government Affairs and Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia*
*Corresponding author. Email: ridhoalhamdi@umy.ac.id

ABSTRACT
In Indonesia's latest national legislative election of 2019, several new legislative candidates could defeat the incumbent candidates in the intraparty competition to achieve seats in the House of Representatives. The application of the Open-List Proportional Representation (OLPR) system since Indonesia's 2009 election enabled new candidates to succeed in the electoral contest. Thus, this paper investigated driving factors inducing the rise of new legislative candidates in Indonesia's 2019 legislative election by applying three indicators of the powercube theory: visible power, hidden power, and invisible power. More specifically, the National Mandate Party (PAN) in Aceh and the National Awakening Party (PKB) in Yogyakarta were selected as a comparative case. Methodologically, it is qualitative research by employing the case study approach. In data-gathering, this study utilized two main techniques: in-depth interview and documentary. The findings revealed that the use of the powercube theory in the Indonesian political stage worked effectively. They could influence the triumph of new legislative candidates with different levels of dose. Therefore, these findings motivate other new legislative candidates not to give up on fighting for and winning the electoral competition despite coping with forceful incumbents.

Keywords: 2019 legislative election, powercube, new candidates, Aceh, Yogyakarta

1. INTRODUCTION

The democratization in Indonesia goes to positive developments, as seen in some indicators. Firstly, the emergence of various political parties with distinctive types. Second, four free and fair election cycles. Third, the amendment of the 1945 Constitution. Fourth, empowering women in public spaces. Fifth, removing police-military representatives in the legislature and state control over societal organizations. Sixth, freedom of association and press. Seventh, the separation of powers into legislative, executive, and judicial. Meanwhile, the weaknesses also can be presented here. First, the deprivation of basic human needs in many regions. Second, rampant corruption and bribery of officials, with failure by the government to punish the corrupt officials. Third, patrimonial ties and nepotism encroaching on democratic institutions. Fourth, the lack of religious and tribal tolerance amongst society. Fifth, the fairly stagnant economy. Sixth, the powerlessness of human rights enforcement for marginal people, indicating that the law is sharp for marginal groups and blunt for people with power and money. Seventh, the rise of extreme-radical religious groups, separatist movements, and terrorist deeds.[1,2,3,4,5,6]

Indonesia has been successful in free and fair elections because there were no hazardous tragedies during such elections from 1999 until 2019. Indeed, many problems in the electoral implementation should be evaluated thoughtfully. Therefore, the election is a competitive arena for all political actors, whether executive or legislative competition. Win or lose is unavoidable for them. If legislative incumbents win, it is normal. Nonetheless, if new candidates can defeat the incumbents, it is fascinating to investigate further the driving factors affecting their triumph.

In Indonesia's 2019 national legislative election, although most incumbents could hold their parliamentary seats for a second or third or fourth time, some other incumbents could be defeated by new candidates in the same electoral district (*Dapil*). It can be seen in two comparative cases: the National Awakening Party (PKB) candidate in the *Dapil* of Yogyakarta and the National Mandate Party (PAN) candidate in the *Dapil* of Aceh I. The PKB candidate is Sukamto, while the PAN candidate is Nazaruddin Dek Gam. Previously, Sukamto was a PKB's local politician in Yogyakarta. He first ran in the national legislative election in 2019. Meanwhile, Nazaruddin is a businessman of a football club who never joined any political activities previously. The first time he ran in the electoral competition was in 2019, at the national level.

Sukamto could defeat the PKB incumbent, namely Agus Sulistiyono. Agus has been a House of Representative (DPR) member for two periods, 2009-2014 and 2014-2019. In the meantime, Nazaruddin succeeded in beating the PAN incumbent, namely Muslim Ayub. Muslim was a member of DPR for one period, 2014-2019. Therefore, it is fundamental to determine the driving factors affecting both new candidates to defeat the incumbents. The theory of power cube, introduced by Steven Lukes and John Gaventa, was used in this study to analyze such driving factors.

Some studies adopted the theory of powercube to examine the electoral contestation in Indonesia, mainly local executive elections. In the East Java gubernatorial election of 2015, Chalik (2016) argued that incumbents effectively applied power cube to succeed their positions for a second period. The engagement of *pesantren*-based local elites such as *kyai* (Muslim cleric) and *santri* (devout Muslims) has a powerful influence on the re-election of incumbents.[7] It was supported by Fadli, Tobarasi, and Rusba (2018), claiming that powercube was effectively used by incumbent candidates running in the regional head elections of 2018.[8] Furthermore, the case of the Simalungun Regency's head of village election of 2017 demonstrates that hidden power (one of the powercube's dimensions) worked, where power relations were built.[9]

The three cases underline that applying the theory of powercube to examine the legislative election is rare. Thus, this study attempts to adopt such a theory to analyse a small space of power, i.e., the legislative election in 2019. This paper aims to change the public assumption that new candidates cannot defeat incumbents. In other words, it proves that new candidates have a similar chance with incumbents to be victors in the political arena.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts the powercube theory to analyse the driving factors influencing the successful performance of new candidates in defeating incumbents in the 2019 national legislative election. This theory was initially introduced by Steven Lukes and, in turn, developed by John Gaventa. According to Lukes, there are three dimensions of power. First, the power focuses on one thing, namely the actor's deeds in decision making. Second, the power concerns subjective interests of choices or complaints. Third, the power focuses on the decision-making of the political agenda, including controlling it.[10]

Lukes' theory inspires Gaventa to invent powercube theory, where this theory is used as a framework to analyze three dimensions of power: levels, spaces, and forms. First, the level dimension discusses the level of power, whether global, national, or local. However, we cannot separate each other because if we discuss, for instance, local issues, we automatically include national and global affairs. Second, the space dimension discourses three kinds of space, i.e., closed spaces, invited spaces, and claimed/created spaces.
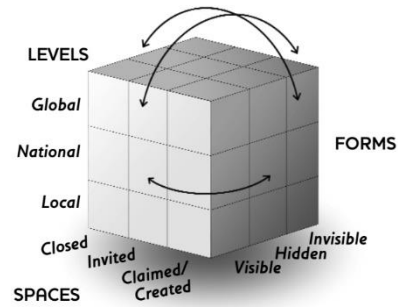

Figure 1 Three Dimensions of Gaventa's Powercube Theory.[11]

Third, the form dimension discusses three things: visible power, hidden power, and invisible power.[11] In this context, the powercube theory can be understood as the control conducted by a person or a group toward another person or group.[12]

Among Gaventa's three dimensions of power, this study adopts the form dimension to analyze the power case in Indonesia, especially in the 2019 national legislative election. This dimension is applied due to its relevance with the issue of the Indonesian legislative election.[11]

1. Visible power includes visible and definable aspects of political power, where the public knows them. It can be reflected in two indicators: (1) the campaign strategies conducted directly by the candidates to attract and mobilize voters, and, in turn, the voters engage in the electoral process; and (2) the pattern of the party's support on the candidate.

2. In the hidden power, certain influential people and institutions maintain power by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda. It can be seen at least in two indicators: (1) the concealed influence carried out by the electoral management bodies (EMBs), and (2) money politics operated by the team, which cannot be identified clearly by the regulation.

3. Among others, invisible power is seemingly the most insidious dimension because it shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of the public. The ideology is a crucial issue of the invisible power to influence public views. It can be operated by any stakeholders such as politicians, clerics, local elites, and even societies.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed the qualitative method.[13,14,15] by applying the case study as the research approach. The case study is an intensive investigation describing one or more cases for particular aims within a tied case or multiple cases through in-depth data collection by gathering various sources.[16,17] Data were gathered from contesting candidates (PKB and PAN candidates), including their teams, political parties as well as the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs),

namely the Election Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) to gain a completed perspective related to this issue. This study has two different types of data: (1) empirical data, obtained from interviews with ten informants with vital positions, and (2) literature data, taken from any accountable sources.

To gather data, this study employed in-depth interviews and documentaries.[14] The in-depth interview was conducted approximately three months from December 2020 to February 2021. One informant could be interviewed twice. Meanwhile, the documentary was carried out before, during, and after the field research. After data were collected, the last step was performing analysis into four steps: reducing data, displaying data, drawing and verification, and conclusion.[16]

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Aceh Case: The Rise of Nazaruddin Dek Gam (PAN)

Visible Power. In the electoral campaign process, Nazaruddin applied a threefold strategy. First, the maximization of personal networks to support his candidacy. Nazaruddin took advantage of his position as the president of Aceh's *Persiraja* Football Club. He recruited *Persiraja's* supporters to be volunteers in campaigning and branding himself in the electoral stage. It is a good strategy for him because 70 percent of Acehnese people were football lovers. Having many employees, he asked them to influence their family, relatives, neighbors, and friends as the success team.

Moreover, Nazaruddin had a close relationship with *Dayah* (Muslim clerics) in various Aceh's *pondok pesantren*, making the *Dayah* support his candidacy. Second, the prioritization of the campaign in merely five of fifteen regencies/cities across the *Dapil*. However, Nazaruddin ensured he had a big chance to win in each TPS in those five regencies/cities. It is important to note that Nazaruddin did not impair the incumbent constituency, but he reached swing voters. Third, inviting voters to the Nazaruddin office center in each district. It was effective, and, in turn, Nazaruddin could manage his time to campaign in other places because of the immensity of the *Dapil.*

Regarding the party's support, PAN commonly encouraged Nazaruddin candidacy by assigning all administrative documents during the selection process. Nonetheless, PAN preferred to support the incumbent, Muslim Ayub, rather than Nazaruddin because of some considerations. First, Muslim Ayub has been the PAN functionary for more than two decades and a member of DPR from the PAN Fraction, while Nazaruddin was not the PAN cadre or member. Second, when Nazaruddin and PAN functionaries in Sabang City and Aceh Jaya Regency agreed to meet in a scheduled meeting, those PAN functionaries suddenly avoided and did not attend the meeting.

Hidden Power. There is no evidence demonstrating the engagement of KPU and Bawaslu (in Aceh, they are called KIP and Panwaslih) in influencing the Nazaruddin's victory. After this study collected data and interviewed related parties, such as KPI, Panwaslih, Nazaruddin Dek Gam, and Muslim Ayub, including their success teams, no cheating signs were found. The integrity of the EMBs at the regional stages possibly can be examined, but it is not applied at the level of the polling station (TPS) officers. Thus, to obtain evidence, it needs a severe inquiry in many polling stations across the *Dapil*.

In coping with vote-buying, this study has no data proving Nazaruddin as one of the candidates who behaved vote-buying practices. The regulation (Act No. 7/2017 on Election) only judges the money politics deeds if a person informs the case to Bawaslu/Panwaslih by supplying entire proofs. It is not easy for the public to behave it because of a fundamental risk for them. Afterward, Nazaruddin declared that he spent roughly five billion IDR on his campaign. He confirmed that he also received many subsidies from society regarding foods, vegetables, coffee, etc. Five billion IDR for Nazaruddin was not expensive as he had various business companies, such as gas and fuel stations, fishing boats, hotels, transport rental, laundry, and so on. In addition to that, Nazaruddin provided football and volleyball t-shirts to society in each district in the Aceh Besar Regency. However, politically it is the party of money politics or vote-buying, but in the regulation perspective, it cannot be claimed automatically as a vote-buying deed.

Invisible Power. Nazaruddin has a close relationship with various Muslim clerics in Aceh, called *kyai* or *Dayah* and *Tengku*, *Abu*, *Walit*, and *Abati*, having significant power in influencing society in Aceh. Once those Acehnese Muslim clerics deliver their views to the public, society always adheres to the views. Nazaruddin has maintained such a relationship with them by assisting their *pesantren* continuously, such as the subsidy of the electricity payment. By doing this assistance, Nazaruddin positively impacted Muslim elites in Aceh to support him for the national legislative candidacy.

In this context, Nazaruddin took advantage of the invisible power of *kyai/dayah* and other Muslim clerics to influence voters. It seems effective where Nazaruddin believed that a twofold factor caused his victory in gaining the national parliamentary seat: (1) the influence of football club supporters and their networks, and (2) the powerful influence of *kyai/dayah* and the like to inspire society.

4.2. Yogyakarta Case: The Sukamto (PKB) Triumph

Visible Power. Sukamto is a police retirement and a local politician of PKB in Yogyakarta. Between 2004 and 2019, he was a member of the local parliament (DPRD) in Yogyakarta. Besides, he is a businessman in trading and building construction. Thus, he has a lot of employees who

work with him and broad networks. Because of such a background, Sukamto personally can interact and communicate flexibly with any people and community. Sukamto asked them to support him when he ran for the legislative election competition in the election context.

Sukamto took advantage of his relations to achieve his target to be elected as the national member of DPR. It was not easy for him because he needed a massive effort to beat the powerful incumbent, Agus Sulistiyono. Therefore, Sukamto maximized his potential networks to support his candidacy. First, he tried to map the base of constituency across the *Dapil*. With this map, he could prioritize in which area he would promote himself powerfully and vise versa. Overall, he focused on boosting his campaign and branding in Sleman Regency, and, in turn, he expanded to other regencies/cities. He prioritized Sleman because of two considerations: Sleman had more considerable voters than other regions, and Sleman was his main base as he started his career as a politician in this regency. Second, he asked his employees to be volunteers in campaigning and branding himself directly to society. Other potential networks supported it. Thus, the success team of Sukamto was any people outside the PKB politicians and activists. They worked to campaign the profile of Sukamto almost every day. Even, Sukamto could attend more than three events in a day.

In terms of the party's support, the PKB officially encouraged Sukamto candidacy by providing all administrative documents during the selection submission. Nevertheless, PKB essentially still supported the incumbent fighter, Agus, rather than Sukamto, as some facts prove. First, Agus has been the chairperson of PKB in Yogyakarta and having a close relationship with Muhaimin Iskandar, the general chairperson of PKB. Consequently, the PKB structurally focused on winning Agus rather than Sukamto. Second, most members of the success team of Agus were PKB politicians and activists, while Sukamto took the network of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) members culturally as his team. Third, Sukamto had no witnesses provided by PKB because his party preferred to provide witnesses for Agus. If the party's support could be calculated quantitatively, Sukamto merely received 5 percent of PKB support while Agus earned 95 percent.

Hidden Power. In terms of the EMBs' role, no empirical fact revealed the involvement of KPU and Bawaslu in influencing the triumph of Sukamto. After collecting data and interviewing related parties, such as KPU, Bawaslu, Sukamto, and Agus, including their successful teams, no fraud indications were discovered. The integrity of the EMBs at the regency and municipal levels can be tested, but it is not applied at the grassroots level, mainly officers and operators at the polling station (TPS). Indeed, it needs a deep investigation in various polling stations across the *Dapil* to obtain empirical proof.

In dealing with money politics, no data can prove Sukamto as one of the candidates who carried out money

politics. The regulation merely judges the money politics acts if someone reports the case to Bawaslu by providing complete proof. It is difficult for society to do it because of considerable risk for them. Moreover, Sukamto claimed that he already spent approximately 15 Billion IDR for overall financial expenditure during his campaign for the 2019 legislative election. In addition to spending a normal budget on transportation, accommodation, and food provision, he frequently spent much money on unpredictable activities and donations for society.

Invisible Power. Although Sukamto is a devout Muslim who originated from NU, he declared that he is inclusive for all *madzhab*s (schools) in Islam and all religious devotees. He convinced the public that he is always open to all backgrounds of society. Thus, he tried to get close with Muslim groups outside NU and other religious communities to attract their support. This strategy seems successful because some Christianity and Buddist communities eventually invited him to campaign for his programs.

The close relationship between Sukamto and NU *kyai* (clerics) is part of the successful strategy to convince the public that Sukamto is still part of the NU cadres. Kyai Nurdin, one of the leaders of *pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Bantul Yogyakarta stated that he promoted Sukamto as the NU cadres to society. The ideology which Sukamto built is that he always maintains his identity as the NU cadres, but he enlarges an expansion to Muslim groups outside NU and other religious communities. This effort effectively influenced public opinions, making voters preferred to vote for Sukamto rather than Agus Sulistiyono.

Table 1. Driving Factors Influencing the Rise of New Candidates in the 2019 Legislative Election

No	Dimension	Sukamto	Nazaruddin
1	Visible Power	Maximizing personal networks: trading and social capital. There was no party's significant support.	Maximizing personal networks: football club, *dayah*, etc. There was no party's significant support.
2	Hidden Power	The EMBs' influence did not work. Money politics was found, but the regulation does not detect it.	The EMBs' influence did not work. Money politics was found, but the regulation does not detect it.
3	Invisible Power	Maintaining his identity as the NU cadres and enlarging an expansion to other religious groups.	Maintaining a close relationship with Muslim clerics to influence public opinion.

Source: Compiled by the authors

Table 1 demonstrates that the two selected cases have a similar pattern on the driving factors influencing the triumph of new candidates. In visible power, they preferred to maximize personal networks because they did not receive significant support from the party. In terms of hidden power, no empirical data revealed the influence of the EMBs' on the triumph of both candidates. Nevertheless, they behaved in money politics or vote-buying despite not being detected legally by the regulation. Concerning invisible power, both

candidates maintained a close relationship with local elites, mainly religious leaders, to influence public views. They succeeded in capitalizing it invisibly where the public and such religious leaders did not realize that they were being exploited smoothly by politicians.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study confirms that the powercube framework in Indonesia's 2019 legislative election worked effectively. Two selected cases in Aceh and Yogyakarta already proved it. The rise of new candidates who succeeded in defeating the powerful incumbents was tangible that three dimensions of the powercube had influential implications in the Indonesian political stage with different degrees of dose. However, this framework can be examined further in other cases to figure out different findings.

For practical implications, these findings inspire other new legislative candidates not to quit to fight and win the electoral contestation despite dealing with powerful incumbents. It is also applied in the executive election, whether national or regional.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LISTS OF INTERVIEWEES

1. Adeka Sutejo, the Success Team of Sukamto, interviewed on 03 January 2021.
2. Agus Sulistiyono, a former member of House of Representative (DPR RI) 2009-2019, originated from the PKB Fraction, interviewed on 23 December 2020.
3. Ali Nurdin, member of Panwaslih in Gayo Lues Regency, interviewed on 25 January 2021.
4. Faisal, Vice Chairperson of PAN in Gayo Lues Regency, interviewed on 09 February 2021.
5. Hazijah Ritonga, member of Panwaslih in Gayo Lues Regency, interviewed on 25 January 2021.
6. KH. Nurdin, leader of *Pondok Pesantren* in Bantul Yogyakarta, interviewed on 16 January 2021.
7. Muh. Amir Nashiruddin, a member of the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) in Yogyakarta Special Region, interviewed on 23 December 2020.
8. Muslim Ayub, a former member of the House of Representatives (DPR RI) 2014-2019, originated from PAN Fraction, interviewed on 31 December 2020.
9. Nazaruddin Dek Gam, member of House of Representative (DPR RI) 2019-2024, originated from the PAN Fraction, interviewed on 27 December 2020.
10. Noor Aan Muhlishoh, a member of the Election Commission (KPU) in Sleman Regency, interviewed on 18 February 2021.
11. Sukamto, a member of House of Representative (DPR RI) 2019-2024, originated from the PKB Fraction, interviewed on 03 January 2021.
12. Sulaiman, chairperson of Panwaslih in Gayo Lues Regency, interviewed on 21 January 2021.
13. Trapsi Haryadi, Chairperson of the Election Commission (KPU) in Sleman Regency, interviewed on 18 February 2021.