

The Power of Local Political Actors in the Village Head Election in Tanjung Jati Village in 2019

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the power of local political actors in the village head election in Tanjung Jati Village, Binjai District, Langkat Regency, in 2019. This study aims to understand the role and influence of local political actors in the village head election process and how this power affects the election results. The research method was descriptive qualitative, with data collection through interviews and document analysis. The results show that local political actors, including religious figures, business people, and community leaders, are essential in mobilizing support and influencing election outcomes. The Power Cube theory analyzed local power's visible, hidden, and structural dimensions. The research also identified several forms of fraud during the election process, such as vote manipulation and spreading fake news, which undermined democratic principles. The findings underscore the importance of understanding local power dynamics and their impact on democratic processes at the village level.

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INTRODUCTION

Villages are government organizations/power organizations that tactically have special authority because they form part of the State Government (Putri, 2016). The village is said to be a legal community unit with the power to organize its Government (Rusnan et al., 2023). In the mass of reforms, the village government experienced a transition in the government system in Indonesia through the implementation of regional autonomy in order to realize a decentralized government (Fartini, 2022). In the birth of Law No. 22 of 1999 concerning Regional Government, the contents have accommodated the hopes and goals of the Community to bring up the concept of autonomy and decentralization for the better. On the other hand, Law No. 32/2004 on Regional Government contains provisions for regions and villages. Based on Law No. 32/2004, the position of the village government is as a unit of customary law communities, by Article 18B paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution. The position of the village government in Law Number 4 of 2014 concerning Villages where the village has the authority, duties and obligations to regulate and manage the interests of its Community.

Tanjung Jati Village, Binjai sub-district is an area of Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province. Based on information from village community leaders, Tanjung Jati comes from 2 words, "TANJUNG" and "JATI", which means the land surrounded by teak trees. Tanjung Jati Village is 80% in the PTPN II area, and at the beginning of the formation of Tanjung Jati Village, the village leader was appointed by PTPN. However, along with the government government is running, the village head's appointment is by the Regional Government Regulation of Langkat Regency. Since 1981, Tanjung Jati Village has been led by several Village Heads. This is supported by the village head election, one of the components of the democratic party at the regional or local level most anticipated by the village community and local political elites (Harjadi et al., 2023; Averus & Alfina, 2020). It is undeniable that village head elections are one of the causes of complex political dynamics; these dynamics arise due to miscommunication, which causes the village head election process in various regions to cause conflict in the Community (Tokan & Ola, 2020). These dynamics occurred in the Tanjung Jati Village village head election after 5 candidates were determined. Then, the Community focused on the five candidates for the village head position. In the Decree of the Regent of Langkat Number 141-11/K/2019 dated May 6, 2019, concerning the Stages of the Implementation of the Simultaneous Pilkades Phase III in 2019.

There are several stages before the five pairs of Village Head candidates are elected. This preparation stage began on June 12, 2019. The Village Consultative Body formed a Village Head election committee at the preparation stage, which was then reported to the Regent. The nomination stage began on 20-30 June 2019 with the Socialization of the Village Head Election to the Community. After the committee has completed the socialization, the announcement and registration of candidates will be determined within 9 days. The examination stage of the village head candidate files and the determination of eligible candidates

will be carried out from July 1 to July 11, 2019. The next day, July 12-18, 2019, the TKD stage, interviews, submission of test results to the committee, election of Village Head candidates, and determination of the Village Head serial number. After one week, they passed many stages and fulfilled 019 Tanjung Jati Village Head elections, which were requirements fulfilled to determine five candidates (BPD, 2019).

Following the selection of the five candidates, the village head candidates received training on July 19 and 20, 2019. Following the training from July 21 to August 9, 2019, the stages of forming pantarlih, selecting voters based on polling stations, determining and announcing DPS, revising DPS, announcing DPS-HP and additional voters, and determining and announcing DPT will begin. On August 10, 2019, the vision and mission of the Village Head candidates were presented through a voting simulation. After the vision and mission presentation, the campaign begins for three days, namely on August 12-14, 2019. August 15-18 was a quiet period where candidates rested and prepared for the next voting stage. On August 19 and 21, 2019, TPS equipment was built and prepared. The voting and vote counting stage, which took place on August 22 and 23, 2019, in Tanjung Jati Village, was much anticipated by the candidates for Village Head and the Community. The last stage is the committee's report to the BPD, which the BPD forwards to the Regent of Langkat Regency (Tanjung et al., 2019). The election of the Village Head simultaneously and in waves in Langkat Regency is scheduled for Wave 1 (first) in 2015, Wave 2 (Second) in 2016, and Wave 3 (third) in 2019. The next wave of Pilkades will be held in 3 (three) years (Perbup village head election Number 10 of 2019 Langkat district). On August 22, 2019, langkat district conducted the Wave III Village Head election. One of them is Tanjung Jati Village, where 5 candidates for the Village Head attended the Village Head Election. These are the names of the Village Head candidates according to the serial number:

Table 1. Name of Village Head Candidate

Sequence Number	Candidate Name
1	ASLINDA NASUTION
2	MARKAM
3	SAMINO S.Pd
4	RUMAN SEMBIRING
5	AKIP KURNIAWAN LIU, S.Pd

Source: managed by researchers, 2024

During the village head election, people came to the polling stations, where the election was only conducted in one location at that time. There were 4,357 voters in the Tanjung Jati Village Head election. In this case, the number of people exercising their right to vote or voting was only 3,935 people; however, this vote was significant. People were encouraged to exercise their voting rights through voting in the Village Head Election. The large number of participants in this democratic party is inseparable from the presence of local political actors who often help inform the community to participate in this election (BPD, 2019).

Table 2. Vote Acquisition of Village Head Candidates

Sequence Number	Candidate Name	Number of Votes
1.	ASLINDA NASUTION	1.867
2.	MARKAM	24
3.	SAMINO S.Pd	922
4.	RUMAN SEMBIRING	56
5.	AKIF KURNIAWAN LIU S.Pd	1.066

Source: Minutes of the village secretary in the voting of Tanjung Jati Village

METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this research is qualitative. Creswell said qualitative research is a scientific study that is intended to understand the dilemma of human problems in the social context using forming a comprehensive and complex illustration that is presented, reporting a candid view from the origin of the gossip, and carried out in a natural setting without any hegemony from the researcher. The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive-qualitative research methods are centered on problems based on existing facts using interviews, and documents (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This method was chosen as one of the writing methods because it obtained results in the field and the power of local actors that occurred in Tanjung Jati village.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Political Actors Involved in the Election of the Head of Tanjung Jati Village, Binjai District, Langkat Regency in 2019

Visible power is a conflict of interest in public areas or policy-making institutions. Visible forms of power include legislative, executive and judicial institutions, political parties and other mass organizations (Harefa & Hulu, 2020). Various policies are developed as policy formulation (decision-making) and objectives in institutions. Visible forms of power include institutions, actors and interests. Visible power is an expression of visible power and a kind of power contestation at the regional and central levels (Fadli et al., 2018). In the study of power, institutions, actors, and interests are the constituent units of visible forms of power to describe the contestation of power actors (Fadli et al., 2018). The position of incumbent candidates benefits from the position attached to the social position of the community, especially as leaders in a region. Incumbent candidates have the potential to directly win public sympathy by selling development programs that are planned or implemented in terms of visible forms of power (Mutamir & Fitriana, 2020). This is because, conceptually, candidates who want to compete in direct regional election contestation must have three capitals: political capital, social capital, and economic capital.

When considering all the strengths of each existing actor, each candidate and their chosen success team has a unique approach to their role and the position of each job desk, such as how to mingle with diverse groups

and utilize the impact of position and various socio-economic conditions to influence the community to encourage public participation by voting (Arbi et al., 2023). The actors who emerged from various factions in Tanjung Jati Village did so for a reason. For example, the nominated village head candidates came from bureaucratic elites, economic elites, local party elites, and only those who were close to the elites. Similarly, with the selection of the success team, applicants must be appointed or invited to join the success team with a reason. They are a successful team because they significantly influence the surrounding community, especially in a small scope in their neighbourhood. Community leaders, such as religious leaders whose values can influence the community with social and good teachings and values in the community, as well as business people who are economically established and able to provide goods through valuable activities, are also effective in attracting community interest in participating in village head elections (Miranti & Suryani, 2023).

In this case, the influence of other political chords is reflected in the symbolic and representational influence they bring as success teams. The combination of local strongmen theory and visible power theory shows that former village heads can have a strong influence as success teams for village head candidates (Rofii et al., 2018). They utilize the power and dominance associated with their previous positions and the symbolism and representation they have as former village heads. Their influence is apparent in their ability to mobilize support, leverage resources, influence perceptions, and gain legitimacy from the community (Rofii et al., 2018). However, it is essential to ensure that this influence does not infringe on the principles of democracy, transparency, and fairness in the political process and is mindful of individuals' freedom to form opinions and choose their preferred village head candidates.

The Process Conducted by Candidates for Village Head to Win the Election of Tanjung Jati Village Head, Binjai District, Langkat Regency in 2019.

Candidates for village head candidates carry out various methods and use their respective strategies in the Village Head Election process to win the election and gain power. Power always exists in the political process, which is one of the goals of every leader's election (Heriyanto, 2022). In the village head election, there were reports of fraud that damaged the democratic process. Some forms of fraud are someone's ballot papers registered by someone else. This kind of fraud undermines the basic principles of democracy and destroys people's trust in the electoral system. People who are supposed to have a free and fair vote and election are instead trapped in a harmful cycle of political manipulation. Irregularities can also occur through unethical political activities, such as spreading fake news or slander, to influence public opinion (Rozy et al., 2020; Susmanto, 2022). Such actions manipulate people's perceptions and views, undermining the integrity of an election that is supposed to be transparent and fair.

In winning the village head election process to gain power at the village level, campaign strategies and mass mobilization are needed to gain support and sympathy from the village community. Attacks on the

opposing party characterize the campaign period. The committee provides an opportunity for each candidate for village head to conduct a campaign. The campaign is the initial and most urgent process for each candidate for village head because a political campaign is an organized effort aimed at influencing voters' decision-making process. Visible power is one of the critical factors for village head candidates to win the 2019 Tanjung Jati village head election process. However, it is essential to remember that visible power is not always the only form of power. There is also invisible or unstructured power that arises from social influence, knowledge, skills, or interpersonal relationships. This invisible power can influence actions and decisions in ways that may not be direct or obvious. Through persuasive approaches and attractive promises, this village head candidate succeeded in creating the image that by voting for him, the community would gain a continuation of tested and trusted leadership. Understanding visible power is essential to understand how power works in various contexts. Visible and invisible powers are often intertwined and influence each other, and understanding these dynamics can help analyze power structures and decision-making in societies and organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

Several main conclusions can be summarized based on the discussion of the research results regarding the power of local political actors in the 2019 village head election in Tanjung Jati Village. First, local political actors, particularly cracker entrepreneurs, played a dominant role in this election. They used their economic wealth to influence the outcome of the election, either through gift-giving, campaign sponsorship, or financial support to supporters of their candidates. In addition, other actors, such as religious institutions, provided symbolic support that strengthened the legitimacy of village head candidates in the eyes of voters. Religious institutions and community leaders serve as the candidate's success team and are essential in mobilizing support through religious and social activities.

The influence of community leaders is also significant, with specific individuals or groups leveraging their local power to mobilize support. Perwiratan leaders, with strategic positions in the social structure, also played a role in influencing voter opinion through their influence within their communities. Former village heads running for re-election as village head candidates also demonstrated significant power, utilizing their authority and experience to influence community opinion and support. In addition to visible power, this research also highlights the importance of invisible power, such as social influence, knowledge, skills, and interpersonal relationships. These forces, while not always immediately visible, play an essential role in indirectly influencing voters' decisions. Therefore, in the village head election process, visible and invisible forces should be considered to understand the complex dynamics of local power.

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