

FAILURE OF A POPULAR LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE: A CASE STUDY IN RIAS VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the failure of the legislative candidate in the 2019 election in Rias village, Toboali District, Southern Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung Islands Province. This study is based on the fact that Rias village is one of the villages that has a very large number of fixed voters, even the largest in the Southern Bangka district. However, despite a large number of voters, there is still not a single member of the community of Rias Village who has succeeded in becoming a legislative councilor. This study focuses on two key points: how communities perceive candidates' failures and what factors contribute to their failure. The method used in this study is a qualitative one with a descriptive approach, with data obtained from in-depth interviews. The study shows that there are five factors that cause the failure of popular legislative candidates in Rias Village, i.e., political constellation, public political behavior, political actors, successful teams, and political costs. The community also had a notion that the same thing happened as a factor in the failure of a legislative candidate in Rias Village.

Keywords: *Legislative Candidate, 2019 Election, Failure Factor, Rias Village.*

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan tentang kegagalan calon legislatif pada pemilu tahun 2019 di Desa Rias Kecamatan Toboali Kabupaten Bangka Selatan Provinsi Kepulauan Bangka Belitung. Kajian ini didasarkan pada fakta bahwa Desa Rias merupakan salah satu desa yang memiliki jumlah pemilih tetap yang sangat besar, bahkan terbesar di Kabupaten Bangka Selatan, namun dengan jumlah pemilih tersebut tetap saja belum ada satu pun anggota masyarakat dari Desa Rias yang berhasil menjadi anggota legislatif. Terdapat dua poin penting yang menjadi fokus kajian yaitu bagaimana pandangan masyarakat terhadap kegagalan para calon dan apa faktor utama kegagalan mereka. Metode yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif dan data diperoleh dari wawancara mendalam. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat lima faktor yang menyebabkan kegagalan calon legislatif populer dari desa rias yaitu; konstelasi politik, perilaku politik masyarakat, aktor politik, tim sukses, dan biaya politik. Masyarakat juga memiliki anggapan bahwa hal yang sama terjadi sebagai faktor gagalnya calon legislatif di Desa Rias.

Kata Kunci: *Calon Legislatif, Pileg 2019, Faktor Kegagalan, Desa Rias*

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to describe the failure of legislative candidates in the 2019 elections in Rias Village, Tobaoli District, Southern Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung Islands Province. This study is based on the fact that Rias Village is one of the villages that has a very large number of voters, even the largest in Southern Bangka Regency, but with this number of voters, not a single member of the community from Rias Village has succeeded in becoming a member of the legislature. This study focuses on two important points: how the Rias Village community perceives the candidates' failure and what factors contributed to that failure.

In the 2019 legislative elections, there was an interesting and different phenomenon from the previous election periods in Rias Village. At that time, four popular figures were registered as legislative candidates. However, the election results showed that none of them succeeded in being elected as members of the legislature, even though they were popular and well-known by the public of Rias Village. The four figures failed to gain public trust. In fact, if the votes of the Rias Village community were given to the four figures evenly, then all four of them could be elected as members of the legislature because the number of Rias Village voters registered on the Permanent Voter List (DPT) at that time reached 5,493 people (KPU, 2019). But it hasn't happened.

Sociologically, there is no single factor for every failure, as well as a political contestation in the form of legislative elections. There are many factors behind the failure of a political actor in a contest. In some literature, these various factors are usually collected into two categories: internal factors and external factors (Kumalasari, 2018; Nimrah & Sakaria, 2015; Nurafifah & Fitriyah, 2022; Sumartia & Damayanti, 2011). Internal factors are failure factors originating from the internal conditions of the legislative candidates themselves, which can be in the form of figures, capital, family, or parties. While from the external side in the form of political competition, culture, and the dynamics of society. Muhtadi (2013) or example, identifies that one of the elements of a person who can win a contest is his party identity, or party ID. Then Sumatria and Damayanti (2011, p. 10) stated that campaign costs and competition between legislative candidates were the causes of failure.

The failure of the Rias Village legislative candidates is certainly not much different from the opinion above and is not singular. However, this study found that there were several specific conditions that later became the main reasons for the failure of the four legislative candidates from Rias Village in the 2019 election.

METHOD

The study aims to describe the failures of popular legislative candidates in the 2019 elections and the public's views of their failures using qualitative methods with descriptive approaches. Through these approaches, the author presents a specific picture related to the phenomena being studied. In order to collect data, the author conducted in-depth interviews with the three legislative candidates from Rias Village. One candidate failed to interview, so the author interviewed his winning team. In addition, the author also interviewed several members of the community and the winning team of the four candidates, and the authors also conducted a literature review that was relevant to the focus of this study. The data from the interview is then analyzed according to the model of analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman, which is an interactive analysis model (Ridder et al., 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Rias Village is one of the villages located in the Toboali district, Southern Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung Islands Province. The area of Rias Village reaches 5,000 hectares, and it was the largest village in the Toboali district that was officially recognized as a definitive village in 1999. Currently, there are 45 RT and 8 hamlets that are the administrative areas of the government of Rias Village of Rias, namely Rias Sp.A., Air Paim, Sp.B., Sukamaju, Sidomakmur, Sungai Gusung, and Bukit Anda Hamlets. The majority of Rias Village people worked as farmers, and a small part worked as freelancers. Until 2020, Rias village is still recorded as a larger padde producer in the Southern Bangka Regency. (Amin et al., 2020, 2021).

1. Public Views on the Failure of Legislative Candidates

This study found that there were various views in the community regarding the factors leading to the defeat of each legislative candidate from Rias Village. Based on the results of the interviews conducted, there were four aspects that contributed to the failure of the popular legislative candidates from the perspective of the Rias Village community.

Figure and family

The four legislative candidates for Rias Village who participated in the competition were not considered to have any deficiencies in the eyes of the community. All of them are considered problematic and will not be able to become leaders. Mr. MR was considered indecisive, had problems with his family, and was unable to take care of his family until his own son was involved in a theft case. Mr. SJ is seen negatively by his family and the religious beliefs he adheres to. Mr. SG is seen as a person who is not fit to be a leader; his family is also troubled, and he is considered

uneducated. Mr. SY as an individual is seen as too arrogant and elitist, and his wife is very unfriendly to society.

The Winning Team

The majority of the winning team and volunteers from each candidate were people who were no longer trusted by the general public. In addition, the existing winning team also played as a team of other candidates, so they were not serious about the candidate from Rias Village.

Political Cost

Political costs are in the spotlight in the Rias Village community because money politics always emerges every time there is an election. Even though it has never been proven, people think that in order to win, they have to spend a lot of money. In this context, the legislative candidates from Rias Village were considered to have no money like other candidates from outside, so they lost.

Community Dynamic

The failure of the legislative candidates from Rias Village, according to several members of the community interviewed by the authors, was caused by the dynamic of the Rias Village community itself. The way of thinking of the people who don't want to be followers and all want to be leaders makes the political dynamics of the village chaotic and easy to be manipulated by candidates from outside. Everyone wants to be on a winning team and wants to appear politically savvy. As a result, the unity that was expected to raise legislative candidates from within the village was never achieved because the villagers were not able to unite.

2. Failure Factors: An Analysis

a. Political Constellation

Constellation literally means an order or arrangement (KBBI, 2020). If it is associated with the word "politics," the political constellation means a political order or structure. According to Halkis (2017), political constellations in society arise and develop from intersubjective natural life when dealing with common problems at a certain time and under certain circumstances. This means that the political constellation is something that has been processed for a long time and occurs naturally, likewise with the political constellation that developed in Rias Village.

Prior to Rias Village becoming official as a definitive village, there were already developing political forces, namely the Golkar and PPP parties. This is not surprising, given that only these two powers were able to survive during the New Order era. These conditions changed when the direct election system was enforced; changes began to occur in people's political lives, and new

elites emerged from various new parties and also contributed to instilling influence in society in various ways. Some through the party line and others through the winning team. The party line was formed through party networking, while the winning team line was formed by forming a winning team and "maintaining" it.

A large number of voters in Rias Village made the political elite from outside Rias Village flock to instill their influence in every phase of the election. The winning team was also maintained by continuing to provide economic assistance at certain times, both by elected legislative candidates and political party elites. From several interviews, we found that in every region or hamlet in Rias Village, there is a winning team that is looked after by the party elite from year to year and from election season to the next election. This condition is possible to continue because, at the beginning of the direct election, there was no political elite that emerged from Rias Village; there were only beginners with weak financial strength. Meanwhile, the outside elite has good financial and political influence, making it easy for them to "control" their team.

As a result, the team and volunteers, who have been "maintained" by political elites outside the village, cannot be shifted by a "new player" from within the village because personal, emotional, and financial ties have already been formed and intertwined with elites from outside the village.

The presence of new elites in the 2019 Legislative Election contest was rendered futile by the existence of the political constellation in Rias Village. Rias Village voters are definitely divided because they have dependency relationships. This is not half-hearted because the intertwined relationships are personal, emotional, and financial. Meanwhile, the legislative candidates from Rias Village had primarily regional, ethnic, or familial ties, which were quite frail.

b. Community Political Behavior

According to Noor (2014), "political behavior" refers to a pattern of behavior of political actors based on culture, ideology, a set of norms, and political interests within a political system. Political behavior can be rational, critical, traditional, or skeptical (Efriza, 2012). The results of the interviews that the authors conducted found that, in terms of politics, the people of Rias Village tended to be pragmatic but also rational. This attitude arose due to the socio-economic and political dialectic that had developed in society for a long time. Referring to Weber (George, 2014; Ritzer & Goodman, 2009), Legislative Election is a type of instrumental rationality or goal-oriented rationality with pragmatic goals. The pragmatic attitude of the people of Rias Village in making choices is not solely based on the economic aspect but is based more on the ego aspect. In fact, we found that the ego side appeared to be more influential. The attitude of not wanting to be the

"followers" and wanting to be the "leader" encourages cleavages. This cleavage was then used by other political contestants so that the votes were divided and legislative candidates from within the village lost a solid social basis.

Based on the results of the research, there were three political behaviors of the community that caused the defeat of the legislative candidates from Rias Village in the 2019 election: 1) a pragmatic attitude; 2) a critical attitude towards candidates from within the village but not for candidates from outside the village; and 3) an attitude that does not want to be a follower and wants to always appear as a leader.

A pragmatic attitude is characterized by prioritizing personal interests and the dysfunctional networks of kinship and ethnicity in making choices. A critical attitude towards legislative candidates from within the village is characterized by negative views and looking for faults or sources of dislike for legislative candidates from within the village, such as family, education, experience, social skills, and religious beliefs. However, the community is not critical of legislative candidates from outside the village, even though these candidates are not personally known, have never met, and have a completely different religion. Finally, the attitude of not wanting to be a follower and always wanting to appear as the best is marked by the behavior of approaching and visiting legislative candidates from outside so that they can become a major part of a successful team. I don't want it if he's not part of the main team. Even if he joins a team with one of the legislative candidates from within the village and doesn't become the main one, he will look for other legislative candidates to become the main one. In fact, this was done openly by visiting the legislative candidate's house. They have a sense of pride and will be considered important people in political events because they are a significant part of the team of legislative candidates (Interview Results, 2020).

Conditions like the ones described above lead to a loss of regional and ethnic solidarity in family relationships. As a result, even within one family, one tribe, or one hamlet, the choices are different and will favor each other's choices. The impact on legislative candidates from within the village is a loss of support and patronage in making choices because leaders want to take part, and in the end, the people lose their patrons. When the election took place, only a small portion of the votes were given to legislative candidates from within the village, while the remainder went to other legislative candidates, with a small number evenly distributed to legislative candidates from outside the village.

c. Political Actors

Prior to the election, the popularity and electability of the legislative candidates from Rias Village were not in doubt. However, when the election was close, the people's critical view increased, and then incidents emerged that tarnished the name of the legislative candidate from Rias Village in the eyes of the public. As legislative candidates participating in the 2019 Legislative Election, the four legislative candidates for Rias Village basically have minimal political experience. Even though there is one legislative candidate who has competed in the election, his experience is still lacking. In contrast to legislative candidates from outside the village who already have experience in politics, especially as cadres in political parties. Based on the research results, the four legislative candidates from Rias Village are basically "new players" or "beginners" in the political context. Mr. MR, for example, even though he was once a party cadre but did not have sufficient political experience, was easily taken advantage of by the public and easily believed in the whispers of the people around him. In simple language, he is too innocent as a candidate for the legislature, too easily influenced, too receptive to promptings, and too skeptical to believe what he hears. Likewise, Mr. SJ believes too much in the team he has. The other two legislative candidates also have the same tendency, namely, inexperience. The legislative candidate's personal weaknesses are exploited by the public, which then creates a discourse about how unfit they are to be members of the legislature. Various interview opportunities revealed that, despite their popularity and personalities, the four legislative candidates from Rias Village were not viewed as ideal figures by the people of Rias Village. It is this aspect of political figures or actors that then influences the people's choice not to vote for them and instead to vote for candidates from outside Rias Village. Legislative candidates from within the village are too close to the community so that all parties are assessed, while legislative candidates from outside, even though they have never met, do not have many negative things to say about them that reach the ears of the community.

d. The Winning Team

Ideally, a winning team can be a determining factor in a legislative candidate's victory in a contest. However, this did not happen to the legislative candidates from Rias Village. This study found that the winning team for the legislative candidates from Rias Village actually contributed to the failure of the legislative candidates. From the interviews, there are several conditions that the authors found related to the winning team and volunteers as part of the failure factors for the legislative candidates from Rias Village:

1. Most of the winning teams for legislative candidates from Rias Village are made up of old names who no longer have any influence on the people of Rias Village; even their presence

on the team has the potential to reduce the votes for the legislative candidates because, as individuals, they are figures that the community does not like.

2. The team selected by the legislative candidates is not made up of people who are experienced in politics, do not have the ability to influence, and only rely on the extended family side. This means that he was chosen or appointed as part of the winning team because he has a large family.
3. Members of the winning team and volunteers only used money owned by the legislative candidate and did not really fight for the victory of the legislative candidate concerned. This was confirmed after the election when the legislative candidates met in a plenary session to determine the election results. The legislative candidates found that the people who had taken money from them had also taken money from other legislative candidates.
4. The majority of each legislative candidate's team members are recruited from other legislative candidates outside the village. In this study, the authors found that of the four legislative candidates for Rias Village, the success team was a double team, meaning that apart from being a winning team and volunteers for legislative candidates from Rias Village, they were also a team of legislative candidates from outside the village. There were even several names from the success team of legislative candidates from within the village who went around to the houses of legislative candidates from outside the village to offer themselves to be their team. What's worse, those involved are people who are the main team or the confidants of the legislative candidates from Rias Village.

e. Political Costs

Political costs are economic resources in the form of money to finance political work such as supporting popularity, campaign costs, paying witnesses, and other political costs. In the 2019 election in Rias Village, the political costs owned by each legislative candidate were one of the factors causing failure, although not the main cause. Little political costs meant that the legislative candidates for Rias Village could not freely use the money they had to maximize vote acquisition. Because of this limited capital, many of the legislative candidates' team members and volunteers are not solid near the election. Several teams admit this. Mr. MR, for example, lost most of his team members when it was near the election because the costs he had to maintain the rhythm of his team's movements had run low, so the team could not work effectively when it was close to the election.

If one looks at the total costs incurred by each legislative candidate from Rias Village, it can be seen that this capital is indeed not enough to finance the political work of the teams and volunteers they have. Mr. MR only has a capital of IDR 80 million, Mr. SJ has IDR 100 million, Mr. SG has IDR 45 million, and Mr. SY has IDR 200 million. In contrast, other legislative candidates from outside the village successfully disrupted the people's choices by incurring significant political costs. Most of the informants interviewed by the authors stated that the political costs owned by the legislative candidates from Rias Village were very small, and they considered it impossible to win the contest with this capital. Moreover, there are candidates from outside the village who have large political costs and, with that, they are able to gain people's votes.

CONCLUSION

A political contestation certainly provides valuable experience for those involved. The victory or defeat obtained is inseparable from the efforts that have been made. This study shows that there are five factors that cause the failure of the popular legislative candidates from Rias village, namely: 1) the political constellation that has raised itself in the village; 2) the political behavior of the village community, which tends to be pragmatic and selfish; 3) local political actors who become candidates are considered less qualified; 4) the winning team for legislative candidates was weak and not solid; 5) small political costs and inappropriate use. These five things are interconnected and influence each other, so the four popular legislative candidates failed to gain voters in the 2019 election.

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