



## OPEN ACCESS

### EDITED BY

F. Ramón Villaplana,  
Universidad de Murcia, Spain

### REVIEWED BY

Caroline Paskarina,  
Padjadjaran University, Indonesia  
Guillem Ninyoles,  
University of Valencia, Spain

### \*CORRESPONDENCE

Tunjung Sulaksono  
✉ [tunjungsulaksono@umy.ac.id](mailto:tunjungsulaksono@umy.ac.id)

RECEIVED 16 November 2025

REVISED 12 February 2026

ACCEPTED 12 February 2026

PUBLISHED 26 February 2026

### CITATION

Sulaksono T and Ambardi K (2026)  
“Derby” in Bekasi: competition and  
cooperation among labor candidates in  
the 2019 Indonesian legislative election.  
*Front. Polit. Sci.* 8:1747641.  
doi: 10.3389/fpos.2026.1747641

### COPYRIGHT

© 2026 Sulaksono and Ambardi. This is  
an open-access article distributed under  
the terms of the [Creative Commons  
Attribution License \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). The use,  
distribution or reproduction in other  
forums is permitted, provided the  
original author(s) and the copyright  
owner(s) are credited and that the  
original publication in this journal is  
cited, in accordance with accepted  
academic practice. No use, distribution  
or reproduction is permitted which does  
not comply with these terms.

# “Derby” in Bekasi: competition and cooperation among labor candidates in the 2019 Indonesian legislative election

Tunjung Sulaksono<sup>1\*</sup> and Kuskridho Ambardi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Government Science, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, <sup>2</sup>Department of Sociology, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

**Introduction:** This article investigates how severe organizational fragmentation within Indonesia’s labor movement – widely regarded as a structural barrier to electoral success – was managed in the 2019 legislative election, and under what conditions cross-union cooperation can emerge and sustain electoral coordination. Existing scholarship consistently links labor’s electoral marginalization to fragmentation, restrictive electoral institution, and the absence of a pro-labor party. The electoral victory of Obon Tabroni, a labor candidate from the Federation of Indonesian Metal Workers Union (FSPMI), challenges this dominant expectation.

**Methods:** The study employs a qualitative process-tracing design, combining documentary analysis of official electoral data from the General Election Commission (KPU) and labor organization records from the Ministry of Labor with in-depth interviews with union leaders and labor activist.

**Results:** Focusing on Bekasi, a labor-dense industrial hub, the findings identify a clear mechanism: fragmentation produces “derby” dynamics in which multiple labor candidates compete within the same constituencies, leading to vote splitting intensified by Indonesia’s open-list proportional representation system. However, the case also demonstrates that fragmentation can be temporarily neutralized through instrumental cross-union coordination that concentrates labor votes behind a single candidate.

**Discussion:** Extending Baccaro and Howell’s framework, the article argues that labor agency under fragmented institutional conditions operates through flexible, ad-hoc coalition-building rather than structural unification. Cooperation becomes viable when supported by sectoral commonality, shared historical trajectories, and respected bridging figures. A key limitation is that the observed coordination remains localized and personalized, limiting broader generalization.

### KEYWORDS

cross-union cooperation, electoral politics, Indonesia, labor unions, union fragmentation

## 1 Introduction

Since the collapse of the authoritarian New Order regime, Indonesia has held six legislative elections, culminating in the 2024 general election. In the early years of the *reformasi* period, these elections were widely praised by political scientists as a major democratic achievement, signaling a successful transition from authoritarian rule to electoral democracy. Over time,

however, this initial optimism has given way to more cautious assessments. While Indonesia has succeeded in institutionalizing regular, relatively peaceful, free, and fair elections, serious challenges remain, particularly those related to democratic consolidation and the uneven distribution of political power (Warburton et al., 2021).

One persistent obstacle to democratic deepening in Indonesia lies in the limited effectiveness of grassroots participation in electoral politics. Despite the procedural openness of elections, political parties and electoral competition have remained largely dominated by old and new elites (Aspinall, 2013) who possess superior access to financial resources, party infrastructures, and political networks (Wadipalapa and Tyson, 2025). Civil society groups and pro-democracy activists who played a crucial role in toppling the Suharto regime have found themselves marginalized in the post-authoritarian political landscape either because they voluntarily distanced themselves from electoral politics or because they lacked the organizational and material capacities required to compete within elite-dominated party systems (Lee, 2018).

Organized labor has been no exception to this pattern. Political liberalization following the New Order regime marked by the restoration of freedom of association, electoral democracy, and decentralization has gradually encouraged segments of the labor movement to engage with electoral politics. This engagement, however, has not replaced labor's longstanding reliance on street-level politics. Since the early reform period, contentious collective action has reminded a key bargaining instrument through which labor unions has sought to influence labor policy (Juliawan, 2011). Yet, despite expanded political opportunities, labor's electoral achievements have remained strikingly limited (Sulaksono et al., 2024). Internal organization fragmentation, combined with restrictive party and electoral regulations, has constrained workers' ability to translate mobilization strength to electoral success over more than two decades of democratic transition (Caraway et al., 2015).

This article focuses on labor candidates' involvement in legislative elections, as electoral representation constitutes a critical mechanism through which workers can directly influence public policy and industrial relations. In post-authoritarian Indonesia, elections have once again become the primary gateway to political power and representation (Ford, 2004). Legislative elections, in particular, require a level of organizational coordination that extends beyond episodic mobilization. Labor unions must recruit and select candidates, negotiate nomination ticket with political parties, avoid intra-union competition within electoral districts, and mobilize organizational resources in disciplined manner.

During the reform period, Indonesian labor unions have experimented with various modes of engagement. In the early years, at least five labor-affiliated or worker-labeled political parties contested national elections. These parties, however, failed to secure parliamentary representation and did not survive beyond 2009 elections, largely due to minimal electoral support from workers themselves (Sulaksono and Ambardi, 2019). After the disappearance of labor-linked political parties, union cadres seeking legislative office dispersed across existing political parties, while others attempted to access elections for the regional representative council (senate) which do not require party nomination. In executive elections, labor organizations primarily supported non-labor candidates with sufficient popularity or electability. Even attempts to advance labor candidates through independent channels for executive seats produced limited result (Savirani, 2017).

The persistent marginalization of organized labors in electoral politics is particularly striking when contrasted with labor's relative success in contentious politics. Taking advantages of democratic openness

which provides many political opportunities for elements of civil society including the labor movements (Ford, 2000), Indonesian labor unions have demonstrated remarkable mobilization capacity through mass protests and disruptive collective action, forcing both national and local governments to make policy concessions (Juliawan, 2011). Yet this success in the streets has not been replicated in the electoral arena, reinforcing the dominant assumption that organizational fragmentation undermines labor's political effectiveness in representation institutions.

It is precisely this assumption that the 2019 legislation challenges. In that election, Obon Tabroni, a labor candidate from the Federation of Indonesian Metal Workers Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia*, FSPMI), successfully won a seat in the national parliament. This victory is analytically significant because it occurred in a context of highly fragmented labor unionism, long characterized by competition and organizational rivalry. Rather than organization unification, the victory was achieved through cross-union cooperation that temporarily neutralized fragmentation in the electoral arena.

This article is guided by two central research questions. *First*, how was labor's deep organizational fragmentation that widely considered an obstacle to electoral success effectively managed in the 2019 legislative election? *Second*, under what conditions can cross-union cooperation emerge and sustain electoral coordination among competing labor unions? By addressing these questions, the article seeks to move beyond descriptive accounts of labor's electoral failure and to identify the mechanism through which fragmented labor movements can still exercise electoral agency.

Theoretically, the article draws on Baccaro and Howell's (2017) critique of the dominant *Varieties of Capitalism* (VoC) approach. Against VoC's emphasize on institutional stability and cross-national variation, Baccaro and Howell demonstrate that Western European industrial relations have undergone a broadly convergent transformation since the 1970s, marked by liberalization, the expansion of employer discretion, and the weakening of collective labor institutions. Importantly, neo-liberal transformation in their framework does not entail the wholesale dismantling of institutions, but rather a functional reconfiguration in which institutions persist formally while operating through increasingly fragmented and decentralized logics.

Crucially for this article, Baccaro and Howell argue that organizational fragmentation and the erosion of collective institutions do not automatically eliminate labor's political agency. Instead, these processes alter the forms and strategies through which labor actors pursue their interests. Under conditions of de-collectivized industrial relations, unions are compelled to adopt more flexible, *ad hoc*, and often cross-organizational strategies of coordination, rather than relying on permanent structural unification. From this perspective, labor's political capacity is not solely determined by organizational integration, but by the ability of union actors to construct instrumental coalitions within fragmented institutional environments.

Building on this framework, this article conceptualized labor's electoral breakthrough in 2019 as an instance of coordinated action under fragmentation. Drawing on qualitative methods, including documentary analysis of electoral data from the General Electoral Commissions (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*, KPU) and in-depth interviews with the labor activist and labor union leaders, this study demonstrates that cross-union cooperation was facilitated by two interrelated factors: shared historical trajectories and sectoral commonalities among unions, and the presence of a widely respected figure capable of bridging organizational divides. In doing so, the

article contributes to broader debates on labor politics by showing that fragmentation is not a structural dead end for labor in electoral politics, but a contingent condition that can be politically managed under specific circumstances.

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 Fragmentation and the failure of labor unions

Labor engagement in electoral politics in Indonesia has attracted sustained attentions from social scientists since the early years of the *reformasi* period. Given the rapid political liberalization that followed the collapse of the New Order regime, it is unsurprising that scholars have closely examine whether democratic elections could serve as an effective channel for workers to advance their collective interest. Among these scholars, Michele Ford has been particularly influential, producing a substantial body of work that documents the evolving dynamics of the Indonesian labor movement, including its attempt to enter electoral politics.

Ford's early work highlights that labor involvement in elections began almost immediately after the fall of Suharto, particularly in heavily industrialized areas where unions were organizationally strong. However, these early experiments largely failed to produce durable electoral success. In her analysis, Ford (2014) identifies two main factors underlying these failures. *First*, she points to the limited political maturity of voters in general, which constrained the ability of labor candidates to mobilize electoral supports beyond narrow constituencies. *Second*, she emphasizes the fragmented social structure of the working class itself. While workers often exhibit strong internal ties within specific workplaces or sub-urban communities, there is little sense of broader working-class community that transcends these localized identities. Instead, hierarchical divisions between different groups of workers persist, accompanied by weak recognition of shared collective interest.

Subsequent studies reinforce and extend these findings. Caraway et al. (2015) argue that translating union membership into electoral support is far from automatic. They identify three structural factors that help explain labor's electoral failures: the enduring legacies of authoritarianism, restrictive electoral rules, and trade union fragmentation. Fragmentation, in particular, emerges as a recurring explanatory variable across the literature, shaping both labor's organizational weakness and its limited capacity for electoral coordination.

Further work of Caraway and Ford (2017) adds an important nuance to this discussion by distinguishing between labor's capacity for collective action in different political arenas. While fragmented unions have demonstrated an ability to cooperate in policy-oriented struggles especially through contentious politics and street-level mobilization, such cooperation has not translated into the electoral sphere. According to their analysis, the key obstacle lies in the absence of institutions that can generate incentives for sustained inter-union cooperation in elections. Political parties, which could potentially bridge antagonism and competition among unions by imposing shared rules and organizational discipline, have largely failed to play this role.

Indeed, political parties occupy a central position in analyses of labor's electoral marginalization. In the absence of a strong left or labor-based party, Indonesian labor unions lack a clear partisan home. This condition is rooted in both historical and institutional factors

(Sulaksono et al., 2024). The violent regime changes of the mid 1960s resulted in the effective eradication of the organized left (Kammen and McGregor, 2012) leaving a lasting imprint on Indonesia's political landscape (Iannone et al., 2025). In the post-authoritarian period, attempts to establish labor parties have been systematically hindered by stringent registration requirements and electoral threshold, making it difficult for new parties to emerge and survive. As Caraway and Ford (2017) demonstrate, these institutional barriers have significantly constrained labor's ability to build an independent electoral vehicle.

Caraway and Ford (2020) consolidate these insights by identifying five interrelated factors that explain labor's limited electoral success: the absence of a strongly pro-labor party, weak cooperation among labor unions, the tendency of many unions to refrain from mobilizing their members during elections, electoral rules that pose major obstacles to party formation and survival, and the difficulty unions face in influencing their members' voting behavior inside the polling booth. Taken together, this body of literature presents a consistent picture. Despite political openness and organizational proliferation, labor's engagement in electoral politics has been largely characterized by failure.

Two broad conclusions can be drawn from these studies. *First*, scholars overwhelmingly agree that labor's participation in Indonesian electoral politics has produced only marginal successes, often limited to exceptional cases rather than representing the broader working-class population. Notably, many labor-affiliated candidates who succeeded in the 2014 and 2019 elections held formal positions within political parties, enabling them to draw on party-based resources beyond those provided by unions alone. *Second*, fragmentation appears repeatedly as the most frequently cited explanation for labor's electoral weakness, shaping both organizational rivalry and the absence of effective coordination.

### 2.2 Fragmentation and the transformation of labor agency

While this literature offers a compelling diagnosis of labor's electoral failures, it tends to treat fragmentation as a structural constraint that mechanically produces political ineffectiveness. Fragmentation is often understood as an organizational deficit that prevents unions from acting collectively in elections, in contrast to their relative success in policy-oriented collective action. What remain unexplored, however, is whether fragmentation necessarily forecloses labor's electoral agency or whether fragmented labor movement can develop alternative strategies of coordination under specific conditions.

To address this gap, this article builds on Baccaro and Howell (2017) critique of the dominant Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) approach. Against VoC's emphasis on institutional stability and cross-national variation, Baccaro and Howell demonstrate that industrial relations systems across Europe have undergone a broadly convergent neoliberal transformation since the 1970s. This transformation is characterized by an expansion of employer discretion and a weakening of collective labor institutions. Importantly, neoliberalism in their framework does not imply wholesale deregulation or institutional dismantling. Rather, institutions often persist formally while being functionally reconfigured to operate through increasingly fragmented and decentralized logics.

Crucially for the present study, Baccaro and Howell argue that fragmentation and de-collectivization do not automatically eliminate labor's political agency. Instead, these processes transform the modes

through which labor actors pursue their interests. A centralized and hierarchical forms of coordination become less viable, unions are pushed toward more flexible, *ad hoc*, and often cross-organizational strategies of action. From this perspective, labor's political capacity is not determined solely by organizational unity, but by the ability of fragmented actors to construct instrumental coalitions within a fragmented institutional environment.

By integrating insights from the Indonesian literature on labor's electoral failure with Baccaro and Howell's theoretical framework, this article reconceptualizes fragmentation as a contingent condition rather than a political dead end. The central analytical question thus shifts from why fragmented unions fail to win elections to how fragmented unions can, under certain circumstances, coordinate effectively in the electoral arena. The 2019 legislative victory of Obon Tabroni provides a critical case through which to examine the mechanism that enables cross-union cooperation and electoral success in a highly fragmented labor movement.

### 2.3 Conditions for coordination: shared histories, sectoral alignment, and brokerage

Theoretical insights from Baccaro and Howell also point to the importance of social and relational foundations for coordination. Because instrumental coalitions lack strong formal enforcement mechanisms, they depend heavily on informal sources of cohesion. This article identifies three interrelated conditions that facilitate cross-union coordination in fragmented labor movements.

*First*, shared historical trajectories create a basis for trust and mutual recognition. Unions that emerge from similar struggles, operate within comparable political contexts, or have previously collaborated in contentious politics are more likely to perceive each other as credible partners. Shared histories do not eliminate competition, but they reduce uncertainty and lower the costs of coordination.

*Second*, sectoral alignment plays a crucial role in shaping labor coalitions. Unions operating within the same industrial sector often face similar regulatory environments, employer strategies, and labor market conditions. These shared material interests increase the likelihood that unions will converge around common political goals, particularly in elections where sector-specific concerns can be translated into concrete policy demands.

*Third*, coordination in fragmented contexts often depends on political brokerage. Widely respected individuals can function as bridges across organizational divides, mediating conflicts, facilitating communication, and symbolizing collective purpose. Such figures do not derive their authority from formal positions alone, but from personal legitimacy accumulated through past leadership, activism, and moral standing within the labor movement.

These conditions highlight that coordination is not merely a strategic calculation, but a relational process embedded in historical, sectoral, and personal networks. Understanding labor's electoral agency therefore requires attention not only to organizational structures, but also to the social foundations of cooperation.

## 3 Methodological approach

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to examine how organizational fragmentation within the Indonesian labor movement

was temporarily managed through cross-union cooperation, enabling electoral success in the 2019 legislative election. A qualitative design is most appropriate for this research because the core questions of the study are explanatory and mechanism-oriented (Kopec, 2023), rather than variable-centered or predictive. Specifically, the article seeks to understand how and under what conditions fragmented labor unions were able to coordinate electorally, rather than to measure the aggregate effects of fragmentation on electoral outcomes.

The research questions focus on causal processes, strategic interactions, and actor-level interpretations within a specific political context. These phenomena cannot be adequately captured through purely quantitative methods, as they require close attention to sequencing, decision-making, and relational dynamics among labor actors. For these reasons, the study relies on qualitative methods that allow for in-depth analysis of political processes and organizational behavior.

More specifically, this article employs process tracing as its primary methodological strategy. Process tracing is a qualitative research technique for investigating causal mechanisms by connecting causes and results. This strategy enables researchers to draw solid assumptions about how specific causes contribute to obtaining certain outcomes (Beach and Pedersen, 2019). Process tracing is particularly suitable for explaining outcomes that appear anomalous when viewed through dominant theoretical expectations (Crasnow, 2022) such as the electoral success of a labor candidate in a highly fragmented union landscape. Rather than testing correlations across multiple cases, process tracing allows the researcher to reconstruct the causal mechanisms that link fragmentation, coordination, and electoral outcomes within a single, analytically significant case.

In this study, process tracing is used to identify and analyze the sequence of events, strategic decisions, and interactions among labor unions that led to the consolidation of electoral support behind a single labor candidate. The method makes it possible to assess how organizational resources were coordinated in practice. By tracing these processes, the article avoids treating fragmentation as a static condition and instead examines how labor actors actively navigated and managed fragmentation in the electoral arena.

The analysis draws on two primary sources of qualitative data: documentary research and semi-structured interviews. First, documentary research was conducted using official electoral data published by the General Electoral Commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*, KPU), which is an independent electoral management body. These documents include candidate lists, electoral district data, vote and seat distributions, and party affiliations in the 2014 and 2019 legislative elections. Meanwhile, data on labor organizations in Indonesia was obtained from the Ministry of Labor (*Kementerian Tenaga Kerja*, *Kemnaker*) website. While numerical in form, these data are not used for statistical inference or hypothesis testing. Instead, they serve an illustrative and contextual function, helping to map patterns of competition among labor candidates and to demonstrate how fragmentation manifested concretely in electoral districts. The quantitative information thus supports the qualitative analysis by providing empirical grounding for claims about intra-labor competition and coordination.

Second, the study relies on in-depth interviews with labor activists and union leaders who observed and involved in electoral strategies during the 2019 legislative election. These interviews were conducted to capture actors' perspectives on inter-union relations, candidate selection, coordination efforts, and the role of trusted figures in facilitating cooperation. The interviews are particularly important for

uncovering informal practices, strategic considerations, and shared understandings that are not visible in official documents or electoral statistics. In addition to these primary sources, the study incorporates secondary data from existing scholarly literatures on Indonesian labor politics and reliable internet-based sources that document union activities and public statements during the election period.

Data analysis follows the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which emphasizes three interrelated analytical processes consisted of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview transcripts and documentary materials were systematically coded to identify recurring themes related to fragmentation, cooperation, sector alignment, and leadership brokerage. These themes were then organized into analytical categories that correspond to the causal mechanisms identified through process tracing.

Conclusions are not derived mechanically from numerical indicators or isolated observations. Instead, they emerge from the iterative comparison of multiple data sources, allowing the researcher to assess the plausibility and consistency of the proposed explanatory mechanisms. By triangulating interview evidence with documentary data from the KPU and existing literature, the study strengthens the credibility of its findings and avoids tailoring the analysis to confirm pre-conceived arguments.

## 4 Discussion

The discussion proceeds in four steps. *First*, it shows how acute organizational in Indonesia's labor movement has repeatedly undermined unions' attempts to translate organizational strength into electoral victories. *Second*, it explains how features of Indonesia's electoral system, especially the open-list dynamic and the 2019 formula change, intensify candidate-centered competition. Making coordination problems inside labor even more costly. *Third*, it examines the "derby" pattern among candidates in Bekasi Regency during the 2019 election as an observable manifestation of fragmentation and weak inter-union coordination. *Finally*, it analyses Obon Tabroni's victory as evidence that fragmentation is not a structural dead end. Under specific conditions, cross-union cooperation can concentrate potential labor votes behind a single worker candidate and thereby overcome fragmentation in the electoral arena.

### 4.1 Fragmentation in the labor movement and its electoral consequences

The Indonesian labor movement is organizationally dense but politically fragmented. Its associational landscape operates across three levels: unions, federations, and confederations, and by 2020 reportedly included 16 confederations, 161 federations, and 10,748 unions with more than 3.23 million union members ([kemnaker.go.id](http://kemnaker.go.id), 2020). Yet, this proliferation has not translated into electoral strength. Fragmentation is not merely numerical: it is also relational and political. An interview with a journalist and labor observer revealed that unions compete for membership bases, particularly in industrial zones, and antagonism among organized labor further exacerbates rivalry and mistrust (A. Gumilang, personal communication, August 8, 2018). Under this condition, the labor movement's entry into electoral politics has often reproduced internal conflict rather than collective leverage. An interview with the general secretary of KASBI

confederation revealed that not all unions are interested in electoral politics. Some even view unions that engage in electoral contests with scepticism and suspicion (Sunarno, personal communication, August 15, 2018).

In terms of membership, KSPSI AGN and KSPI are the two largest confederations in Indonesia. In 2022, KSPSI-AGN had 655,819 members, while KSPI had 563,350 (Idamatussilmi, 2024). Both confederations are also considered the most experienced in experimenting with various modes of engagement on the electoral political stage. Members from these two confederations are the most frequent legislative candidates at various levels of electoral competition, including at the regency/city, provincial, and central levels, through their diaspora of cadres within various political parties. For example, since 2014, FSPMI, the backbone federation of THE KSPI confederation has begun its effort in electoral politics with the *Buruh Go Politics! Movement* (A. Otang, personal communication, August 9, 2018). Although both come from labor groups, the two confederations frequently declare their support for different presidential candidates (Caraway and Ford, 2014).

Historically, labor electoral experimentation has been shaped by this fragmented environment. Interview with a senior labor figure and Indonesian Prosperous Workers Union (*Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia*, SBSI) founder revealed that early efforts to establish labor parties in the post-authoritarian era failed to survive beyond 2009, in part due to organizational weakness, institutional hurdles, and the perception that these parties were "personal project" (M. Pakpahan, personal communication, August 14, 2018). After 2009, labor candidates were effectively compelled to seek legislative tickets through existing political parties, even when these parties did not represent labor agendas. This shift carried reputational costs. An interview with a labor activist and general secretary of KRPI confederation revealed that labor candidates were sometimes labelled class collaborators by rival union factions because political parties are viewed by some union elements as bourgeois vehicle that should be opposed rather than engaged (A. Maruf, personal communication, March 10, 2018).

By 2019, labor candidacies became more widespread when major confederations began to pursue legislative representation more actively. KSPI fielded more than eighty cadres across multiple levels, while two factions of KSPSI (KSPSI AGN and KSPSI YR) together fielded more than sixty cadres. Bekasi Regency, an industrial centre and union-dense area, became an especially revealing site for observing how fragmentation plays out electorally, because multiple confederations and federations deployed candidates into the same geographical and social bases. The key implication is that fragmentation produces a specific electoral pathology: labor's potential vote base becomes divided among multiple labor candidates and dispersed across multiple party tickets, turning labor's electoral presence into intra-labor competition rather than collective bargaining power within representative institutions.

### 4.2 Institutions and the intensification of candidate-centered competition

Indonesia's electoral institutions shape how fragmentation is translated into electoral outcomes. Although Indonesia uses proportional representation electoral system, the shift from a closed-list to an open list system in 2009 fundamentally altered the arena of competition. Under open list, voters may vote for candidates, and seats won by parties are distributed to candidates with the highest vote totals on

the party list (Negri, 2018). This creates powerful incentives for candidate-centered campaigning and weakens the coordinating role of parties in managing competition among candidates, including candidates from the same sociopolitical constituency, such as labor.

The 2019 change from the Largest Remainder to the Highest Average method further complicated strategic coordination (Blais et al., 2014) since parties and candidates could no longer approximate an electoral quota in the same way. This uncertainty encourages an accumulative logic: gathering as many votes as possible, which intensifies intra-party and inter-candidate competition especially in densely competitive districts (Aspinall and Mietzner, 2019).

In such a context, labor candidates face a double challenge in electoral competition. On the one hand, they must confront entrenched party machines that possess superior access to financial resources, patronage networks, and vote-buying practices that have become normalized in Indonesia's post-authoritarian elections. These advantages allow established parties and elite candidates to mobilize voters through material inducements and long-standing clientelistic ties, mechanisms that labor organizations—despite their mobilizational strength in protests—are structurally ill-equipped to replicate. Workers, who are often economically vulnerable, are also particularly exposed to these practices, making it difficult for labor candidates to rely solely on programmatic appeals or class-based solidarity at the ballot box.

On the other hand, and more critically, labor candidates are frequently forced to compete against fellow workers within the same labor-dense constituencies. Organizational fragmentation translates into multiple union cadres running simultaneously, often on different party tickets, while drawing support from overlapping membership bases. This intra-labor competition fragments what might otherwise constitute a sizable electoral bloc, transforming labor's numerical strength into a source of mutual neutralization. Instead of challenging elite dominance collectively, labor candidates undermine each other's prospects through vote splitting, a dynamic that is particularly damaging under Indonesia's open-list proportional representation system, where individual vote totals determine seat allocation within party lists.

This dual pressure—external competition from well-resourced party elites and internal rivalry among labor candidates—produces a structural disadvantage for organized labor in electoral politics. Even in constituencies with large concentrations of industrial workers, labor candidates struggle to convert organizational density into electoral success because coordination failures amplify institutional biases against them. As the Bekasi cases demonstrate, labor's electoral weakness cannot be explained solely by hostile electoral rules or elite dominance. Rather, it emerges from the interaction between fragmented labor organization and an electoral system that rewards vote concentration while penalizing divided constituencies. Without mechanisms to manage internal competition, labor's entry into elections risks reproducing fragmentation in the electoral arena, thereby reinforcing, rather than challenging, its political marginalization.

These institutional features are crucial because they help explain why organizational fragmentation translates into electoral disadvantage rather than merely reflecting internal diversity. Indonesia's open-list proportional representation system shifts the locus of competition from parties to individual candidates. While seats are formally allocated to parties, the decisive contest occurs among candidates within party lists, as those with the highest personal vote totals are awarded the seats. In this institutional setting, electoral success depends less on collective identity or programmatic alignment and more on a candidate's ability to personally consolidate voters. For fragmented

constituencies such as organized labor, this creates a structural bias: without effective coordination, multiple labor candidates are compelled to compete for the same pool of voters, undermining their collective electoral potential.

The costs of fragmentation are further amplified by the absence of an electoral quota under the Highest Average formula introduced in 2019. Without a clear benchmark for the "price" of a seat, both parties and candidates adopt an accumulative logic that prioritizes maximizing individual vote totals rather than managing competition strategically. In labor-dense districts, this logic encourages union cadres to enter constituencies where they believe mobilization will be easiest—precisely the areas already saturated with other labor candidates. As a result, open-list competition rewards candidates who can monopolize organizational resources and voter support, while penalizing those who must share overlapping constituencies with rival labor candidates, even when their combined vote total would be sufficient to secure representation.

Consequently, fragmentation becomes electorally costly not simply because unions are divided, but because electoral institutions actively transform division into vote loss. Labor's inability to coordinate candidate placement and vote concentration means that organizational density fails to translate into parliamentary seats, even in constituencies with large working-class populations. The Bekasi cases demonstrate that labor candidates often lose not because they are individually unpopular, but because their votes are dispersed across multiple labor contenders and mediated by party-level aggregation rules. In this sense, Indonesia's open-list system does not merely disadvantage labor incidentally; it systematically rewards coordination and penalizes fragmented collective actors. Without mechanisms to manage internal competition, labor's participation in elections risks reproducing fragmentation in the electoral arena, reinforcing labor's political marginalization rather than alleviating it.

### 4.3 The Bekasi "derby": how fragmentation fractures labor votes

Bekasi Regency illustrate these dynamics vividly. It is an industrial hub with 864 manufacturing companies across major industrial zones and a working-age population that constitutes roughly 70 percent of its 2.8 million residents (Savirani, 2016). Given the density of industrial workers and union membership in Bekasi (for example, FSPMI reportedly had 115,207 members in 2018), the Regency appears to offer strong electoral potential for labor candidates (Caraway et al., 2015).

Unfortunately, the real numbers that can be expected are not always that big, because not all labors are eligible voters in Bekasi Regency. Although Bekasi is a union-dense area, not all union members who work and live in Bekasi Regency are eligible voters, especially because they do not always have a local identity card that administratively makes it difficult for them to vote in the electoral districts of Bekasi Regency. Moreover, unions also rarely have real numbers about how many of these members are entitled to vote in an electoral district. This lack of valid data is another obstacle for unions to develop appropriate strategies (A. Gumilang, personal communication, August 8, 2018).

During at least two elections, the *Golkar* Party controlled Bekasi Regency assembly. In 2009 the *Golkar* Party had nine seats, then rose to 10 seats in 2014, but then dropped to 7 seats in 2019 elections. The party whose acquisition showed a significant upward trend was *Gerindra* Party, which in the 2009 election won 1 seat, in the 2014

election it rose significantly to 7 seats, and in 2019 the election succeeded in increasing its seat acquisition to 11. Other parties tended to fluctuate the acquisition of their seats.

In the 2019 election, Bekasi regency had 2,053,546 voters and more than 500 candidates competing for 50 seats across six electoral districts (KPU Kabupaten Bekasi, 2018). It is therefore not surprising that many union candidates were contesting in the regency. At least 18 labor candidates who competed there, consisting of one national assembly candidate, one provincial assembly candidate, and 16 district assembly. Of the 18 candidates 14 of them came from KSPI confederation, three candidates came from KSPSI-AGN confederation, while one candidate was a union member affiliated to KSPSI-YR confederation. Fourteen candidates run for Bekasi regency assembly were scattered in five electoral districts, namely electoral districts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 (KPU Kabupaten Bekasi, 2019).

Those labor candidates departed with different party tickets. Seven candidates used the *Gerindra* Party ticket, five candidates used the *Berkarya* Party ticket, two candidates used the PAN party ticket, and one candidate each used tickets from PDIP, PKB, *Golkar* Party and PKS (KPU Kabupaten Bekasi, 2019). Rather than functioning as a unified bloc, labor’s organizational presence translated into fragmented candidacy across districts (Sulaksono and Ambardi, 2019).

Of the 18 labor candidates who fought in Bekasi Regency, only two of them were able to win the seats, namely Obon Tabroni who won the national assembly seat through the West Java electoral district which includes Bekasi Regency, Karawang Regency, and Purwakarta Regency (kpu.go.id, 2019); and Nyumarno, who won Bekasi regency assembly seat for the second term following his victory in the 2014 election. Obon Tabroni who used ticket from *Gerindra* Party managed to collect 134,880 votes, while Nyumarno who used tickets from PDIP succeeded in collecting 11,782 votes, almost double the number of 6,092 votes in the 2014 election (KPU Kabupaten Bekasi, 2019).

This is the most visible in the “derby” effect, where multiple labor candidates competing within the same electoral district. In Bekasi District 6, four labor candidates competed, Three from KSPI confederation and one from KSPSI-AGN confederation, yet only Nyumarno won a seat (see Tables 1–3).

The ‘derby’ situation did not occur solely in electoral district 6. In Bekasi Regency electoral district 1, there were four labor candidates, all from KSPI, who ran under different parties. The electoral district is called the FSPMI voting base. They all failed to win a seat. Nurdin Muhidin, an incumbent labor candidate from FSPMI, was unable to retain his seat in the 2019 election (KPU Kabupaten Bekasi, 2019).

Electoral district 2 of Bekasi Regency is also known as a union-dense electoral district since the covered area are labor bases. In this constituency the same case also occurred. In this electoral district, four labor candidates compete for seven available seats by trying to attract dense labor population in this constituency. They consisted of two KSPI candidates, one KSPSI-YR member and one KSPSI-AGN member. As happened with electoral district 6, no labor candidate was able to win a seat in this electoral district.

These derbies matter because they show fragmentation working through a clear mechanism: vote splitting among labor candidates. Even when labor appears numerically strong, multiple candidacies dilute labor’s potential voting power (Pinto, 2017). If labor votes in a district could be concentrated behind one candidate, that candidate could plausibly surpass non-labor competitors. Yet in practice, labors’ votes were divided across several labor candidates and mediated by party vote aggregates, candidate ranking, and voters’ diverse preferences.

TABLE 1 Union candidates in electoral district 6 of Bekasi regency assembly.

Candidate name	Party	Votes	Result	Candidate union affiliation
Denny Dwi Indriyanto, S.T.	Partai Golkar	1,321	Failed	KSPSI-AGN
Nyumarno	PDIP	11,782	Succeeded	KSPI
Roza Febrianti	Berkarya	194	Failed	KSPI
Sulaeman	Gerindra	4,530	Failed	KSPI

Source: kpu.go.id (2019).

TABLE 2 Union candidates in electoral district 1 of Bekasi regency assembly.

Candidate name	Party	Votes	Result	Candidate union affiliation
Susanto, S.E.	Berkarya	367	Failed	KSPI
Baris Silitonga	Gerindra	7,750	Failed	KSPI
Nurdin Muhidin	PAN	5,649	Failed	KSPI
Suryono	Berkarya	202	Failed	KSPI

Source: kpu.go.id (2019).

TABLE 3 Unions candidates in electoral district 2 of Bekasi regency assembly.

Candidate name	Party	Votes	Result	Candidate union affiliation
Nono Kartono, S.E.	Gerindra	5,519	Failed	KSPI
Suroso	Berkarya	385	Failed	KSPI
Hasbiallah, S.T.	PAN	1,522	Failed	KSPSI-YR
Efendi Subandono	PKS	974	Failed	KSPSI-AGN

Source: kpu.go.id (2019).

In the List System of Proportional Representation with the Highest Average method used in legislative election in Indonesia, there is no electoral quota that can guide how many votes must be obtained by candidates in an electoral district (Reitzig and Wild, 2024). The seat allocation is indeed given to the party, but with the open-list ballot structure the seats allocated to the party will be given to candidates who get the most votes (Reynolds et al., 2005). This means that the candidate’s vote alone cannot be used as reference for the acquisition of seats because the allocation of seats will also depend on the total vote acquisition of the party which is the accumulation of the party’s own vote with the votes of all candidates in the party list in a particular electoral district. For example, in Bekasi Regency electoral district 2, Rusdi Haryadi, a non-labor candidate from PKS Party managed to win a seat with only 4,256 votes, while Nono Kartono a labor candidate who departed with *Gerindra* Party ticket failed to win a seat, even though he was able to collect 5,519 votes (KPU Kabupaten Bekasi, 2019).

But the second biggest problem that is far more difficult to overcome than the problem of calculation is to ensure that eligible union

members in the area will carry out instructions from the union leaders to select candidates recommended by the union (Caraway and Ford, 2017) as a result of the different political preferences of workers. It further demonstrates that labor coordination must address not only candidate votes but also party-level mechanism. Nyumarno's success also underscores how "labor victory" can be conditional on non-union resources: family networks, incumbency advantages, and formal party position (Nyumarno is a Bekasi Regency PDIP Party secretary) provided organizational support beyond labor mobilization alone. This reinforces the broader point: in fragmented contexts, labor candidates often win not because labor acts collectively, but because candidates access alternative networks.

#### 4.4 Cooperation amidst fragmentation: the case of Obon Tabroni

Obon Tabroni's victory is analytically important because it provides evidence that fragmentation does not necessarily foreclose labor's electoral agency. Here, Baccaro and Howell's (2017) framework helps interpret the meaning of fragmentation and the possibilities of labor action under fragmented institutional conditions. Baccaro and Howell argue that neo-liberal transformation is not best understood as the simple dismantling of institutions, but as a functional reconfiguration in which collective arrangements persist formally while operating through increasingly decentralized and fragmented logics. In such environments, labor's collective capacities are weakened, yet labor agency does not disappear; it adapts. Rather than relying on stable, centralized, and permanent forms of unity, unions are pushed toward flexible, *ad hoc*, and cross-organizational coordination to achieve specific goals.

Bekasi findings closely mirror this theoretical insight. The Indonesian labor movement operates in a context where it is highly plural and fragmented; it lacks a unifying labor party that could impose discipline and coordination; and electoral institutions reward candidate-centered competition. These conditions create a setting in which fragmentation is "normal," not exceptional. Under these constraints, the appropriate analytical question is not whether labor is fragmented, but whether labor actors can construct instrumental coordination that temporarily neutralize fragmentation for electoral purposes.

Obon Tabroni's case demonstrates exactly such instrumental coordination. Despite longstanding rivalry between KSPI and KSPSI, Bekasi regency KSPSI confederation reportedly instructed its members and their families to support Obon Tabroni, an FSPMI leader affiliated with KSPI, their competitor confederation (koranperdjoeangan.com, 2019). One charismatic labor figure in Bekasi Regency who endorsed Obon Tabroni was R. Abdullah, a respected senior labor figure. In addition to being the chairman of Bekasi branch KSPSI, he also serves as the chair of the Central Executive Board of the Federation of Chemical, Energy, and Mining Workers' Unions (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Kimia, Energi, dan Pertambangan*, FSP-KEP), which is affiliated with KSPSI (spspbekasi.org, 2022). Abdullah is also the vice president of KSPSI-AGN (dppkspisi.com, 2022).

Abdullah revealed that Obon was born as a KSPSI activist who later decided to be active in the FSPMI which affiliated to KSPI. Abdullah continued that the cadre who possessed the "KSPSI gene" was obliged to be legally supported by the workers in the West Java province, especially in the Bekasi, Karawang, and Purwakarta regencies. The KSPI confederation, to which FSPMI is affiliated, is a labor organization genetically derived from the KSPSI confederation. Meanwhile, the FSPMI federation, the organization of which Obon

Tabroni is a member, is a splinter group from the Federation of Metal, Electronics, and Machinery Workers (*Federasi Serikat Pekerja Logam, Elektronik, dan Mesin*, FSP-LEM), which is affiliated with KSPSI.

With the slogan "*buruh pilih buruh*" (labor votes for labor) FSPMI and FSP-LEM carried out consolidation to ensure that workers from two different federations would elect legislative candidates who also came from labors under the auspices of the two federations. Officially, the electoral collaboration between Bekasi FSPMI and Bekasi FSP-LEM was launched through a consolidation event attended by leaders and cadres of both federations and confederation leaders on March 28, 2019. A similar event was also held by the two federations in Karawang Regency on April 9, 2019, attended by hundreds of labor activist (koranperdjoeangan.com, 2019).

As the only labor candidate in the national assembly running in Bekasi Regency, Obon Tabroni appears to be benefiting from this situation. Unlike labor candidates at the regency level, whose votes are split among numerous labor candidates due to the large number of labor candidates competing at that level, Obon Tabroni's vote from labor voters in Bekasi Regency has a greater chance of being consolidated.

From Baccaro and Howell's perspective, this is a key mechanism for overcoming fragmentation: coordination substitutes for unification. Instead of trying to eliminate fragmentation structurally which is an unrealistic goal given Indonesia's union landscape and party system, unions can manage fragmentation politically by building cross-union cooperation that concentrates votes behind a single labor candidate. In this case, the cooperation plausibly contributed to the accumulation of votes. Obon won 134,880 votes overall, with 112,046 coming from Bekasi Regency alone (kpu.go.id, 2019), making him the highest vote-getting national legislative candidate in that regency. The empirical implication is straightforward. Where derbies fragment labor votes and weaken labor's electoral leverage, cross-union cooperation can consolidate labor votes and convert organizational density into electoral victory.

This evidence also clarifies when such cooperation becomes feasible. Three conditions appear particularly important. *First*, sectoral commonality. Cooperation is more likely when unions operate in overlapping industrial and organizational fields, where members share workplaces, labor markets, and policy concerns. In Bekasi's industrial context, unions face similar employer strategies and local political issues, making coordination more materially meaningful.

*Second*, shared historical trajectories. The "KSPSI gene" narrative is not merely rhetorical. It functions as a trust resource. It lowers the symbolic and political costs of supporting a candidate from a rival confederation by reframing cooperation as continuity with a shared movement history rather than betrayal.

*Third*, a respected bridging figure. In fragmented environments, cooperation often requires a broker-like figure who is credible to multiple factions, able to reduce suspicion and facilitate coordination without requiring formal unification. In addition, the endorsement made by Abdullah, a veteran labor figure from KSPSI Bekasi, seems to be able to transform the cooperation agreement into real action on polling day. Together, these conditions map onto a broader theoretical claim consistent with Baccaro and Howell's emphasis on adaptive labor agency. Under fragmented and de-collectivized conditions, labor can still act strategically through instrumental, cross-organizational coalitions, provides that cooperation is anchored in shared sectoral interests, historical ties, and legitimate leadership.

The broader implication is that fragmentation should not be treated as a fatal diagnosis for labor representation. Bekasi evidence shows that fragmentation produces predictable electoral failures through vote splitting and derby dynamics, especially under open-list competition. Yet the Obon case demonstrates that fragmentation can be managed politically through inter-union cooperation that concentrates labor votes and neutralizes destructive competition. In short, fragmentation is not a structural dead end. It is a condition that can be navigated through coordination, particularly when enabling conditions are present.

The evidence from Bekasi suggests a clear causal sequence linking fragmentation to both failure and, under specific conditions, success. *First*, acute organizational fragmentation generates weak strategic coordination among unions, which in turn produces a “derby” pattern—multiple labor candidates contesting the same labor-dense districts on different party tickets. *Second*, this derby dynamic fractures the potential labor vote bloc through vote splitting, and under Indonesia’s open-list, candidate-centered competition, fragmented labor votes are rarely converted into seats even in union-dense areas. *Third*, where unions build inter-union cooperation involving an instrumental, cross-organizational pact in spite of structural unification but through, fragmentation can be temporarily neutralized. *Fourth*, such cooperation enables vote concentration by directing members and organizational resources toward a single worker candidate, reducing intra-labor competition and increasing the candidate’s relative standing within the party list and constituency. *Finally*, this concentrated mobilization makes electoral victory possible, as illustrated by Obon Tabroni’s win in West Java 7 electoral district, where cross-union support plausibly converted labor density into a decisive vote margin rather than dispersed, self-canceling electoral competition.

## 5 Conclusion

This article examined two questions: how acute organizational fragmentation within Indonesia’s labor movement was managed in the 2019 legislative election, and under what conditions cross-union cooperation can emerge and sustain electoral coordination. Drawing on a qualitative, process-tracking approach based on documentary electoral data and interviews with labor activists, and focusing on the labor-dense Bekasi Regency, the study demonstrates that fragmentation is not a fatal constraint on labor’s electoral agency.

The findings identify a clear causal mechanism linking fragmentation to electoral failure. Under Indonesia’s open-list proportional representation system, fragmentation generates weak coordination and “derby” dynamics, in which multiple labor candidates compete in the same constituencies. This produces vote splitting and prevents organizational density from translating into representation. However, the case of Obon Tabroni shows that fragmentation can be temporarily neutralized through instrumental cross-union cooperation. By concentrating labor votes behind a single candidate, rival confederations were able to convert dispersed organizational resources into electoral victory without formal unification or the creation of a labor party.

Theoretically, these findings extend Baccaro and Howell’s argument about labor agency under neoliberal fragmentation. Rather than viewing fragmentation as a structural endpoint, the Indonesian case illustrates how labor actors can construct flexible, *ad hoc* coalitions that substitute for institutional unity. Electoral agency, therefore, depends not solely on organizational integration but on the capacity to build strategic coordination within fragmented institutional environments.

At the same time, this study has important limitations, the observed cooperation was highly contextual, localized in Bekasi Regency, and dependent on specific relational and leadership dynamics. The reliance on qualitative interviews and documentary data also constraints the ability to measure precisely the relative weight of alternative causal factors such as party affiliation or candidate popularity. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as analytical illustrative rather than universally generalizable. Future research should examine whether similar coordination mechanism emerge in other regions and electoral cycles, and under what institutional or political conditions such cooperation can become routinized rather than episodic.

## Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

## Author contributions

TS: Writing – original draft, Methodology, Conceptualization, Validation, Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition. KA: Supervision, Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization.

## Funding

The author(s) declared that financial support was received for this work and/or its publication. The authors would like to express their gratitude to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia for providing approximately USD 594.11 through Publication Assistance Program in Reputable Journals by 2025. The authors also declare that there was no interference from the grant in the writing of this article.

## Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared that this work was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

## Generative AI statement

The author(s) declared that Generative AI was not used in the creation of this manuscript.

Any alternative text (alt text) provided alongside figures in this article has been generated by Frontiers with the support of artificial intelligence and reasonable efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, including review by the authors wherever possible. If you identify any issues, please contact us.

## Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated

organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

## References

- Aspinall, E. (2013). A nation in fragments: patronage and neoliberalism in contemporary Indonesia. *Crit. Asian Stud.* 45, 27–54. doi: 10.1080/14672715.2013.758820
- Aspinall, E., and Mietzner, M. (2019). Indonesia's democratic paradox: competitive elections amidst rising illiberalism. *Bull. Indones. Econ. Stud.* 55, 295–317. doi: 10.1080/00074918.2019.1690412
- Baccaro, L., and Howell, C. (2017). *Trajectories of neoliberal transformation: European industrial relations since the 1970s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beach, D., and Pedersen, R. B. (2019). *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines, 2nd Edn*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press. doi: 10.3998/mpub.10072208
- Blais, A., Erisen, C., and Rheault, L. (2014). Strategic voting and coordination problems in proportional systems: an experimental study: an experimental study. *Polit. Res. Q.* 67, 386–397. doi: 10.1177/1065912913520573
- Caraway, T. L., and Ford, M. (2014). Labour unions divided by Indonesia's presidential elections. *East Asia Forum*. (Accessed May 14, 2014). Available online at: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2014/05/14/labour-unions-divided-by-indonesias-presidential-elections/>
- Caraway, T. L., and Ford, M. (2017). Institutions and collective action in divided labour movements: evidence from Indonesia. *J. Ind. Relat.* 59, 444–464. doi: 10.1177/0022185617110046
- Caraway, T. L., and Ford, M. (2020). *Labor and politics in Indonesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Caraway, T. L., Ford, M., and Nugroho, H. (2015). Translating membership into power at the ballot box? Trade union candidates and worker voting patterns in Indonesia's national elections. *Democratization* 22, 1296–1316. doi: 10.1080/13510347.2014.930130
- Crasnow, S. L. (2022). "Process tracing and narrative science" in *Narrative science: reasoning, representing and knowing since 1800*. eds. M. S. Morgan, K. M. Hajek and D. J. Berry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 229–244.
- dppkspisi.com. (2022). Susunan Kepengurusan DPP KSPSI periode 2022-2027. Available online at: <http://dppkspisi.com/category/susunan-pengurus/>
- Ford, M. (2000). Continuity and change in Indonesian labour relations in the Habibie interregnum. *Asian J. Soc. Sci.* 28, 59–88. doi: 10.1163/030382400x00055
- Ford, M. (2004). "A challenge for business? Developments in Indonesian trade unionism after Soeharto," in *Business in Indonesia: New Challenges, Old Problems*. eds. M. Chatib Basri and P. van der Eng. (Singapore: ISEAS).
- Ford, M. (2014). Learning by doing: trade unions and electoral politics in Batam, Indonesia, 2004–2009. *South East Asia Res.* 22, 341–357. doi: 10.5367/sear.2014.0219
- Iannone, A., Setiyono, B., Adnan, M., Abdurrahman, W., and Afandi, M. N. (2025). False consciousness and political disenfranchisement: the Indonesian labour party in post-Soeharto capitalism. *Labor Hist.* 1–25. doi: 10.1080/0023656X.2025.2483341
- Idamatussilmilmi, F. (2024). Saatnya Berserikat: Lebih dari 4 Juta Pekerja Bergabung di Serikat Pekerja Indonesia Available online at: [https://data.goodstats.id/statistic/saatnya-berserikat-lebih-dari-4-juta-pekerja-bergabung-di-serikat-pekerja-indonesia-MbD2O#goog\\_rewarded](https://data.goodstats.id/statistic/saatnya-berserikat-lebih-dari-4-juta-pekerja-bergabung-di-serikat-pekerja-indonesia-MbD2O#goog_rewarded)
- Juliawan, B. H. (2011). Street-level politics: labor protests in post-authoritarian Indonesia. *J. Contemp. Asia* 41, 413–433. doi: 10.1080/00472336.2011.582706
- Kammen, D., and McGregor, K. (2012). *The contours of mass violence in Indonesia 1965–1968*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press.
- kemnaker.go.id. (2020). Organisasi Pekerja/Buruh, Juni 2020. Available online at <https://satudata.kemnaker.go.id/data/kumpulan-data/33#:~:text=Jumlah%20Serikat%20Pekerja/%20Serikat%20Buruh%20ini%20mengalami%20penambahan%20sekitar%2047,16%20unit%20pada%20Juni%202020.&text=Daftar%20perusahaan%20yang%20telah%20mendapatkan,perusahaan%20yang%20mendapatkan%20Sertif...&text=Pada%20periode%20Januari%20s.d.%20Desember,Provinsi%20Jawa%20Barat%20>
- yait...&text=Jumlah%20Perusahaan%20yang%20telah%20terdaftar,2025%20adalah%203.651.941%20perusahaan
- Kopec, A. (2023). Policy feedback & research methods: how qualitative research designs with marginalized groups inform theory. *Int J Qual Methods* 22, 1–12. doi: 10.1177/16094069231217915
- koranperdjoeangan.com. (2019). Kolaborasi Calon Perwakilan Dari FSPMI dan FSP LEM SPSI; Mendukung Penuh Caleg Buruh, Buruh Pilih Buruh. (Accessed April 10, 2019). Available online at: <https://www.koranperdjoeangan.com/kolaborasi-calon-perwakilan-dari-fspmi-dan-fsp-lem-spsi-mendukung-penuh-caleg-buruh-buruh-pilih-buruh/>
- KPU Kabupaten Bekasi (2018). Rekapitulasi dan Penetapan daftar Pemilih Tetap (DPT Hasil Perbaikan pemilu Tahun 2019 untuk Wilayah Kabupaten Bekasi. Available online at: <https://jdih.kpu.go.id/kepkpukabkot/detail/-YOLyFPEcfqJzkyJydcqnNqU1h3bWJIVXdNaHgyZzMxdXlyMFE9PQ>
- KPU Kabupaten Bekasi (2019). Penetapan Rekapitulasi Hasil Penghitungan Perolehan Suara Peserta Pemilihan Umum Anggota Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah Kabupaten Bekasi Tahun 2019 Pasca Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi. Available online at: [https://jdih.kpu.go.id/kepkpukabkot/detail/ywMT-CzCUFSG8wV4A\\_KxJ2dVTkp2YkdIWnZvdVF0M2J5cjR2Tnc9PQ](https://jdih.kpu.go.id/kepkpukabkot/detail/ywMT-CzCUFSG8wV4A_KxJ2dVTkp2YkdIWnZvdVF0M2J5cjR2Tnc9PQ)
- kpu.go.id. (2019) Rekapitulasi Hasil Pemilu Legislatif DPR RI 2019 Daerah Pemilihan Kabupaten Bekasi – Jawa Barat VII, Available online at: <https://pemilu2019.kpu.go.id/#/dprri/rekapitulasi/>
- Lee, D. (2018). The legacies of the Reformasi movement in Indonesia. *Curr. Hist.* 117, 222–228. doi: 10.1525/curh.2018.117.800.222
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., and Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. London: Sage.
- Negri, M. (2018). Preferential votes and minority representation in open list proportional representation systems. *Soc. Choice Welfare* 50, 281–303. doi: 10.1007/s00355-017-1084-2
- Pinto, L. (2017). Candidacy rules and party unity: the impact of multiple candidacies on legislative voting behaviour in Italy. *Acta Polit.* 52, 43–63. doi: 10.1057/ap.2015.24
- Reitzig, R., and Wild, S. (2024). A simple and fast linear-time algorithm for divisor methods of apportionment. *Math. Program.* 203, 187–205. doi: 10.1007/s10107-023-01929-5
- Reynolds, A., Reilly, B., and Ellis, A. (2005). *Electoral system design: the new international IDEA handbook*. Stockholm: International IDEA.
- Savirani, A. (2016). "Bekasi, West Java: from patronage to interest group politics" in *Electoral dynamics in Indonesia: Money politics, patronage and clientelism at the grassroots*. eds. E. Aspinall and M. Sukmajati (Singapore: NUS Press).
- Savirani, A. (2017) Melawan oligarki dan pragmatisme warga: Gerakan buruh di Pilkada Kabupaten Bekasi 2017. Available online at: <https://indoprogress.com/2017/05/melawan-oligarki-dan-pragmatisme-warga-gerakan-buruh-di-pilkada-kabupaten-bekasi-2017/>
- spspbekasi.org. (2022). R. Abdullah kembali Pimpin PP FSP KEP SPSI (2022-2027). Available online at: <https://spspbekasi.org/2022/06/01/r-abdullah-kembali-pimpin-pp-fsp-kep-spsi-2022-2027/>
- Sulaksono, T., and Ambardi, K. (2019). Spectator or player? labor movements in post-new order Indonesian electoral politics. *J. Gov. Polit.* 10, 31–48. doi: 10.18196/jgp.10196
- Sulaksono, T., Riyanto, A., Suswanta, and Gusmi, A. D. (2024). The failure of post-new order labor parties in Indonesia in the perspective of path-dependence theory. *AIP Conf. Proc.* 2952:120010. doi: 10.1063/5.0212824
- Wadipalapa, R., and Tyson, A. (2025). Cross-party presidential dynasticism in Indonesia: evidence from the 2024 presidential elections. *Pac. Aff.* 98, 79–102. doi: 10.5509/2025981-art4
- Warburton, E., Muhtadi, B., Aspinall, E., and Fossati, D. (2021). When does class matter? Unequal representation in Indonesian legislatures. *Third World Q.* 42, 1252–1275. doi: 10.1080/01436597.2021.1882297