

# Village Elite and Cement Company: Power Relation of Village Heads Association of Bayah and Cement Company in Lebak, Banten

**Try Adhi Bangsawan**

Political Studies, Sanggabuana Institute, Banten, Indonesia

**Email address:**

[tryadhi.b@gmail.com](mailto:tryadhi.b@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** This research departs from industrial development in rural areas, one of which is the construction of a cement company in Bayah which has an impact on the environment and social welfare of rural communities. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, research data obtained through interviews and documentation studies, with the aim of describing how power relations take place in the countryside between village heads and cement companies. To describe the power relation, this study uses Gaventa's Power Cube theory, which looks at power from three dimensions of the power cube. These dimensions are the form of power, the space of power, and the level of power. The three dimensions above are seen separately, but each other has a relationship that is like a Rubik's cube, which if one dimension is changed, it will have an impact on the other. From this study, there are several findings of power relations based on three dimensions of the power cube. First, the power relation of the village head association with the cement company is related to one another when illustrated in a Rubik's cube form. Second, the power relation in the dimension of form, namely the relation between the visible and hidden forms of power of the village head. Third, power relations based on the village head's space use open and closed spaces. Fourth, power relations based on level, the village head raises the level of power to the sub-district level and the power level in the village takes place between the village head and the cement company, not the association as an institution.

**Keywords:** Rural Politics, Power Cube, Village Head, Power Relations

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, industrialization has pushed its way into the countryside, one of which is in Bayah with the presence of cement companies. Bayah is a village in the southern part of Banten Province. Bayah became a historic village in Indonesia because it was the last village in the guerrilla, under the guise of the Father of the Republic: Tan Malaka. Tan Malaka's last disguise as Ilyas Hussein in Bayah was carried out between 1943-1945.

Positive and negative impacts color every development, along with the production of cement companies, various problems begin to appear. Especially on the environmental and social issues of the surrounding community, ranging from pollution to the physical and chemical environment (dust), the impact of dynamite on people's homes, and residents' fields which are affected by mining activities for

this cement raw material. The above, then received a response from various elements of society, one of which was the village head.

Responding to this problem, in 2017, village heads in Bayah District or Community Heads in Bayah District held meetings with cement companies about social and environmental conditions. Apart from that, this is done to ensure and supervise the realization of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility [19] (Rapiudin, 2019).

In its movement, the Village Head Association prioritizes a persuasive approach such as hearings with the company. However, on Tuesday 27 August 2018, the Village Head Association sent a notification letter for the demonstration led by the village head regarding the realization of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). However, on Wednesday, August 28, 2018, the Village Heads Association again sent a letter to cancel the action, so an audience with the company

was held which was attended by the District Muspika and local community leaders.

If you look at the process, first the village head held a meeting which was only attended by the village head so that a joint decision was born for a demonstration that was for the benefit of the community. But the day before the action, several village heads were gathered by the Camat whose contents were to cancel the action. There were several village heads who did not want the cancellation of the action, which caused an uproar within the Village Heads' Association. Then, from the cancellation of the action, several village heads heard news that the action was conditional on the interests of two (2) village heads who have invoices for their business with the company. Thus, the demonstration was basically driven by the personal interests of individuals from the village head so that the invoice bill with the company was paid off immediately.

According to the author, the Village Head Association shows the forms of power, space, and levels of power that take place. The presence of the Village Head Association is a visible form of power, apart from that the village head's ability to mobilize the masses related to demonstrations is also a similar form of power. Also from him, this coincides with hidden power, seeing the interests of unscrupulous village heads infiltrating the agenda of the Village Heads Association movement and increasing power relations at the sub-district level.

The village head association has power relations in three dimensions, which can be seen in the form of power, space, and level of power. Every related power will have an impact on the performance of the village head. Because every power relation in these three dimensions will influence each other, which will also describe different power tensions in each dimension of power.

Studies of power relations in rural contexts generally see these relationships as patronage, for example between landlords and small farmers [7] (J. C, 1981). In this study, power relations are seen through the power cube approach, which explains power relations based on form, space, and level of power.

The Power Cube has been used more than ten years ago by John Gaventa to understand power relations in an effort to bring about social change. And in 2006 the Power Cube first appeared in the Bulletin of the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), Exploring Power for Change. John Gaventa's first article (Finding Room for Change: Power Analysis) introducing the Power Cube has been cited 508 times [4] (Gaventa J., 2017).

Application the Power Cube in practice, Gaventa sees several dimensions one by one, not fully understanding them at the same time because they will experience difficulties in practice. For this reason, by understanding one by one it will be found the relationship with one another [3] (Gaventa, 2009). Thus, in the Power Cube operation, Gaventa does not conclude power relations that end in domination or transactional. Because basically Gaventa sees power as something that operates and is not

owned by a person as a whole.

Therefore, in the Power Cube it is possible to visually map oneself and the situation of the Rubik's cube, including other actors, relationships and strengths, and then see possibilities for movement, mobilization, and change. In doing so, it allows people to plan advocacy and find entry points for action [3] (Gaventa, 2009).

This study aims to determine the power relation based on the dimensions of the form of power, space of power, and level of power in the perspective of the power cube. Where each dimension has three indicators to describe the interrelated power relations.

Then, this issue is important to investigate in order to describe the power relationship between the village head and the cement company in the countryside. In addition, this issue is also intended to enrich the study of rural politics in Indonesia. By explaining how the power relation of the village head association with the cement company in Lebak, Banten.

## 2. Power Relations in the Perspective of the Power Cube

The Power Cube approach has evolved through the work of a number of people. What we call here 'forms of power' builds on Lukes' 1974 work, and a revised edition in 2005. The spatial dimensions of cube theory also have many roots, growing from the work of Gaventa, Cornwall, McGee, and Brock to understand various arena as a form of participation in poverty issues in Nigeria and Uganda. Then, along with the swift currents of globalization, it is likely that there will be the emergence of levels in power that influence each other [1] (Institute of Development Studies, 2009).

The context of this research will describe the power relation of the village head association with the cement company with a power cube, where all analyzes of the dimensions of form, space, and level have a relationship with one another, will be adjusted according to the findings in field.

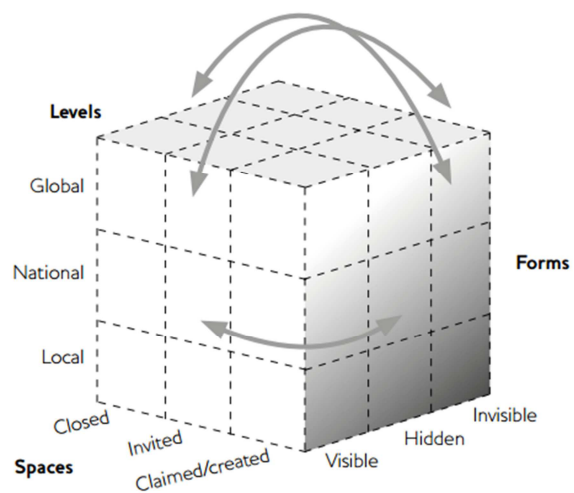


Figure 1. Power Cube.

In the power Cube, Gaventa's form of power refers to the way in which power manifests itself, including its visible, hidden and invisible forms. Power space refers to potential arenas for participation and action, including what we call closed, invited and claimed spaces. While the level of power refers to the various layers of decision-making and authority held on a vertical scale, including local, national and global [3] (Gaventa, 2009).

### 3. Power Relations Dimensions of Power Form in Power Cube

One thing that is most visible in the form of power seen in the Power Cube approach is the formation of the Village Head Association in the Bayah District as a forum consisting of Village Heads. Where the village heads as actors, and the Village Heads Association as an institution that accommodates problems from all villages in Bayah District. In addition, the village head association was born along with the process of building a cement company in Bayah [12] (P1-PKD, 2020).

In the context of CSR, the village head association also plays a role in how to make CSR realization evenly distributed to every village. Therefore, within the Village Heads' Association internally, they often discuss the impact of cement companies on every village in Bayah District [12] (P1-PKD, 2020).

A hidden form of power, in the Power Cube each part has a close relationship with the other parts. The hidden power will be related to the visible power of the village head community itself. For this reason, the data that will be presented in this section will be interrelated with the form of power as seen from the power relations of the village head association with the cement company.

Demonstrations that end in dialogue are a form of hidden power, where there is an interest in the village head actor. The results of interviews in the field showed that the motive behind this action was the existence of invoices for the stone procurement business and the rental of transportation for transportation of raw materials for cement companies, which were not known by other village heads, apart from the actor who initiated the demonstration. Of the 11 (eleven) village heads in the Bayah sub-district, there are 2 (two) village heads who have business with a cement company in Bayah. And this was confirmed by several village heads when asked the same question [13] (P3-PG, 2020).

Furthermore, the form of power is not visible. It is more advanced as compared to visible and hidden powers. Focusing on narrative and ideological matters to silence people's awareness of their rights. In this study, the authors did not find invisible power related to the power relations of the village head association with the cement company.

### 4. Power Relations Dimensions of Power Space in Power Cube

Power relations in the form of space, the village head opens access for the community to dialogue, and this is an

effort of democratization in the countryside. Dialogue is the lifeblood of deliberative democracy that is used to reach agreement as a strategy in filling representation in a modern democratic society [10] (Jonanovski & Sarlamanov, 2013).

According to Habermas [5] (Haliim, 2016), public space must meet two requirements, namely free and critical. Free means that each party can speak anywhere, gather, and participate in political debates. While critical means being ready and able to fairly and responsibly highlight the public decision-making process.

In the rural context, this space will look at the participation of the village community and also the space created by the village head in involving the village community. According to Verba [22] (Verba, 1984), that political culture will run in harmony with the existing political structure.

The pattern of political interaction is undergoing a transformation. In the twentieth century, the phase of the increasing role and influence of organized interest groups and interests. The 1950s and 1960s were the height of enthusiasm about 'group politics' [6] (Heywood, 2014).

From the findings in the field, from eleven (11) villages in Bayah District there are several village heads who open space for the community to express their aspirations. For this reason, in responding to complaints from the community, the village party opens space for villagers to directly convey the impact felt by residents on the activities of the cement company. Then, after this process, it is the village head who will directly convey to the company the issue and facilitate community meetings with the company [17] (P8-BT, 2020).

The village head has opened health insurance for communities affected by the cement company with the authority he has through open spaces. Where the village head uses the power he has to open the space. Then, the authority can be used to resolve what is considered a public problem [23] (Warren, 1996).

Apart from conveying the impact of the cement company, there are other things that the village head also becomes a facilitator in conveying the aspirations of the residents. Usually this happens when in one of the villages there is construction of public facilities such as a mosque, the village head helps to procure cement from the cement company CSR [15] (P6-ST, 2020).

Furthermore, the closed room, in this study the decision-making process for demonstration actions. The closed room also took place at the birth of the second decision, namely a dialogue with the company. Where before the second decision was born, when the notification of the action was sent to the authorities, the day before the action the village head association held a meeting with the Camat until finally a second decision was made to have a dialogue with the company [16] (P7-PMB, 2020).

Created Space is the answer to the closed space created by a handful of people. This space is born from the community or from below, the space is articulated into an institution that is driven directly by the community as a medium for conveying aspirations. One of them is the Bayah Care Community Network (JMPB). Where JMPB was born from

the community to supervise environmental issues, and provide direct complaints to the company for the impact felt by the village community.

The Community Care Network for Bayah (JMPB), in its movement, puts forward a persuasive approach to conveying complaints that are felt by the community. One example of a complaint made by JMPB was related to wharf dust which was directly discussed with the company, that the community was affected by the activity [11] (P11-AM, 2020).

S As a sub-district organization concerned with environmental issues, JMPB also networked with national-level organizations such as Walhi, Greenpeace, AMAN, KPA, JATAM and Kiara. For this reason, researchers assess that with the network built by JMPB, this community-born institution has the power to express its aspirations [11] (P11-AM, 2020).

The power cube dimension of space in the Power Cube refers to the potential arenas for participation and action, including what we call enclosed, invited and claimed spaces. The space discussed by Gaventa places more emphasis on community participation to participate in decision making [3] (Gaventa, 2009).

According to the researcher, the power relation of the village head association with the cement company is in the form of space. Behind the open space deliberately created by the village head, the village head also has a closed space in the operation of his power that cannot be reached by the community. For the open and closed spaces created by the village head by not maximizing the struggle for the aspirations of the community, then this is the reason for the space created by the community to express their own aspirations.

## 5. Power Relations Dimensions of Power Levels in Power Cube

Globalization which has pushed its way into remote villages has changed many political situations in it, external factors [2] (Bachriadi, 2012), such as globalization and democratization have changed the appearance, strategy and orientation of a number of rural social movement groups in Indonesia.

The level of power that exists in the Power Cube theory that Gaventa has formulated about the workings of power within the framework of the Power Cube. In today's world, power is increasingly seen as multi-layered and multi-polar, that is, it is found at multiple levels and between state and non-state actors [1] (Institute Of Development Studies, 2009).

Therefore, the history of globalism in the countryside itself is dominated by the history of resistance carried out by farmers and other marginalized groups [9] (Jati, 2014).

Despite the growing importance of Supra-National bodies of international or regional governance, many argue that national governments are still important entry points for change [1] (Institute Of Development Studies, 2009). Given, in the global political arena, the government at the national

level becomes the meeting point in a very global situation.

In many contexts, sub-national decision-making arenas are important points of leverage for holding and challenging power [1] (Institute Of Development Studies, 2009).

As stated [21] (Valderrama, 1999), that popular reform carried out by the State is a process of decentralization. Where this space opens wider and deeper citizen participation at the local level.

In its operationalization, the level dimension in this study will be adjusted to the scope of the research. Which divides it into local, sub-local, and village levels.

In 2016, the district government issued a Regional Regulation which regulates corporate social and environmental responsibilities. In this regulation, companies located in the administrative area of Lebak Regency allocate at least 2% of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds from the company's net profit. The allocation of CSR funds includes several aspects such as education, environment, socio-religious, health and so on [8] (Jaelani, 2020).

In addition, the regulation also establishes a District Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility Forum which is ratified by the Regent's decision. In its work, this Forum works for coordination in the implementation of corporate and social responsibility in Lebak Regency [8] (Jaelani, 2020).

In relation to the research, the results of the interviews did not show any relationship related to the village head association with the district government. Even the village head himself was not aware of the existence of a forum that oversees corporate social and environmental responsibility activities in Lebak Regency. Thus, the safety pin cannot elaborate further on the power relations at the district level.

The formation of the Village Head Association, which covers one sub-district of Bayah, has automatically raised the level of power from the village level to the sub-district level. This can be strategic because of its wide scope, which will add strength when faced with cement companies. In addition, with its wide scope, the association can accommodate issues from all villages in Bayah District, the impact of the construction of a cement company so that it is more effective and efficient.

Power relations at the sub-district level will of course be related to the role of the sub-district head and his relationship with the village head association. This problem was detected when the village head association was about to conduct a demonstration, where the involvement of the Camat was very influential at this stage. The planning for this demonstration was initially only attended by village heads from eleven villages in Bayah District, after a notification letter for the action was issued, then representatives of the village head held a meeting with the Camat and a decision was made to cancel the action with mediation facilitated by the Camat [14] (P4-DR, 2020).

After discussing power relations at the sub-district level, in this section the researcher will discuss power at the village level itself. This village level power is closely related to the internal village head association where the main actor is the

village head, and the village head association as the institution that oversees it.

The division of zoning for the realization of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) turned out to affect the internal political tension of the village head association. This happens because the realization of CSR only takes place in the ring of one company, and does not touch other villages. Meanwhile, the impact of the activities of the cement company is also felt by villages far from the location of the cement company [18] (P9-CSRN, 2020).

One of the things to anticipate the above problems is to accommodate all problems in each village in an institution, namely the association of village heads throughout the Bayah District. However, from the results of interviews, village heads complained that the realization of CSR only took place in villages that were directly adjacent to the cement company [18] (P9-CSRN, 2020).

Even because of the problems above, the village head is located far from the center of the sub-district government or far from the cement company. When asked about the collection carried out by the village head association to discuss the realization of CSR, the village head just followed the results of the collection and did not participate, because from the start he knew that CSR realization was only realized in the ring of one company [13] (P3-PG, 2020).

The pattern seen in this problem is the ability of the village head to see an opportunity. For example, from the village of Pamubulan, which is part of a company ring, the village head locks in on manual labor matters for the cement raw material section in the village, that workers may not come from outside their village. And this agreement has been made with the company regarding labor [16] (P7-PMB, 2020).

Each form of access can activate, conflict with, or complement other access mechanisms and result in complex patterns of distribution of social benefits [20] (Ribot & Peluso, 2003).

The researcher assessed that power relations at the sub-district level had an effect on the cohesiveness of the village head association internally. Because of the pattern of relations that occur at the village level, it is not the village head association as an institution but the village head as the actor.

## 6. Conclusion

The power relationship of the village head association with the cement company in the Power Cube approach, divides into three parts looking at the power relation of the form of power, the space of power, and the level of power. Of the three divisions, the findings in the field give the results of a different pattern of power relations.

First, the power relation of the Village Head Association in Bayah District and the cement company based on the form of power in the Power Cube found a pattern of power relations using visible power that was used by one of the village head actors for personal interests, hereinafter referred to as hidden forms of power.

The power relation based on the form of power of the sub-district village head associations with cement companies also has links with other dimensions in the power cube, where the village head association has raised its level from village to sub-district level and has given over the power possessed by the village head, this is also helped create an open space at the village level for complaints from residents affected by the company.

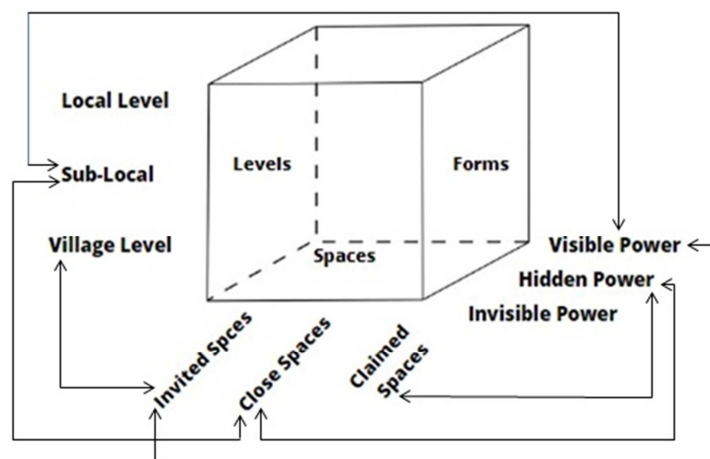


Figure 2. Research result.

Second, the power relation of the association of village heads in Bayah District with the cement company in the spatial dimension is that behind the open space created by the village head, the village head also has a closed space in the operation of his power that cannot be reached by the community. For that, people create their own space, in a power cube called the created space.

In addition, this open space is closely related to the form of

power possessed by the village head. On the power he has, the village head opens open space, and the closed space related to the interests of one of the village head actors is then called a form of hidden power.

Third, the power relationship of the association of village heads in the Bayah sub-district with cement companies is based on the dimensions of the level of power, at the sub-district level is influenced by the Camat, and at the village

level is dominated by the village head, not the village head association as an institution. At the sub-district level, the camat plays a role in canceling demonstrations and at the village level, the village head builds power relations with companies to reach job opportunities.

From the findings of power relations at the power level, that this is related to the open space at the village level for complaints from the community, and with the form of power seen from the village head association which opens relations with the power level at the sub-district level.

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