

## Electoral volatility of the 2019 presidential election: A study in Jakarta and Depok, Indonesia

### *Volatilitas pemilihan pada pemilu presiden 2019: Studi di Jakarta dan Depok, Indonesia*

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#### Abstract

In democratic countries around the world, electoral volatility is a challenge for political actors. Because one vote is significant, political parties and candidates are increasingly difficult to predict the preferences of citizens. This study aimed to analyze motivational factors that make voters change their choice of votes and focuses on examining the inter-election volatility of 2014-2019 in the context of the presidential election in Indonesia. This study employed a quantitative method and proposed three variables, including political sophistication, candidate evaluation, and exposure to media campaigns. The results of the logistic regression show that voters who positively evaluate candidates become loyal voters ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ). Meanwhile, voters who consume political information from social media and the internet intensively, as well as those who are interested in politics are non-volatile voters ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001$  and  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ , respectively). These findings contrast with studies in parliamentary countries where interest in politics motivates voters to change their votes. This study concludes that voters in Indonesia are still the center of political goals. In addition, the political knowledge of individuals is also considered to influence political choices.

**Keywords:** electoral volatility; exposure to media; political sophistication; presidential election; switched voters

#### Abstrak

*Dalam masyarakat demokrasi yang semakin maju, volatilitas pemilihan menjadi tantangan bagi para pelaku politik di dunia. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor yang memotivasi pemilih untuk mengubah pilihan suaranya dan menguji volatilitas antar pemilihan umum pada tahun 2014-2019 dalam konteks pemilihan presiden di Indonesia. Studi ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dan mengajukan tiga variabel, yaitu kecanggihan politik, evaluasi terhadap kandidat, dan paparan media kampanye. Hasil dari regresi logistik menunjukkan bahwa pemilih yang secara positif mengevaluasi kandidat akan menjadi pemilih yang loyal (nilai  $p < 0,001$ ) dan pemilih yang mengonsumsi informasi politik dari sosial media dan internet secara intensif adalah pemilih yang tidak volatil (nilai  $p < 0,001$ ). Sementara itu, pemilih yang memiliki ketertarikan terhadap politik juga menjadi pemilih yang loyal (nilai  $p < 0,01$ ). Sebagian dari temuan dalam studi ini berlawanan dari studi yang pernah dilakukan di negara-negara bersistem parlementer di mana ketertarikan terhadap politik justru memotivasi pemilih untuk berpindah. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa di Indonesia pemilih masih menjadi pusat tujuan politik. Selain itu, pengetahuan politik pada individu juga dinilai memengaruhi pilihan politik.*

**Kata kunci:** volatilitas pemilihan; paparan media; kecanggihan politik; pemilu presiden; perilaku pemilih

## Introduction

Research on electoral volatility in inter-election has become a central topic in the study of political science (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000; Lazarsfeld et al. 1949; Mainwaring 1998). The crucial question and proof of evidence will involve several layered variables from the type of adopted political systems to the characteristics of individual citizens. The ability of the community to evaluate the ideal democratic life

is the most tested aspect (Dassonneville 2014; Dewitt 2013; Stiers 2015). Scholars ascertain whether the public is genuinely sophisticated in reviewing it. In a democratic system, where voters have the authority in making choices, politicians and political parties face the consequences of predicting unstable voters' desires because inevitably, the industrial democratic system has driven high degrees of volatility (Dassonneville 2014). To answer the cause of volatility, this study investigates the link between political electoral volatility as a dependent variable and some independent variables such as political sophistication, candidate evaluation, and exposure to political information as confirmatory variables. The main reason, in a democratic system of society, is equal and has the opportunity to evaluate the life of democracy through the election of leaders.

Scholars from the Columbia School have linked volatile voters as part of "floating voters." Based on their research, voters who were most susceptible to persuasion during the campaign were the least informed members of the electorate, inferring that the citizens who contributed to the inter-election volatility in the two-party vote for president were the same poorly informed citizens (Lazarsfeld et al. 1949). However, Converse's results about the ownership between political knowledge and inter-election change in partisan voting were not the final word. Empirical evidence on the subject remains mixed (Converse 1966). On the other hand, Dalton and Wattenberg (2002) refuted theses that tend to be pessimistic. They showed some field results which concluded that the characteristics of volatile voters could also have adequate knowledge (Dassonneville 2014). Recent research in Sweden showed that education and political knowledge have a positive influence on volatility (Geers & Strömbäck 2018).

The paradox in the study of electoral volatility and political knowledge is to consider the differences in the political system adopted by a country. This factor plays a role in the tendency of how the proposed variables are influential. In a parliamentary system, the analysis focused on the engagement of voters and political parties (Dassonneville et al. 2015). Without a doubt, political parties in Europe are the main actors in the political system. Meanwhile in a presidential system, a president who is elected directly by the people gets more attention than the political party. As national actors who are considerably popular, the performance and ideology of presidential candidates are relatively easy to be identified (Mainwaring et al. 2017). The difference between these systems is significant for the submission of the electoral volatility hypothesis in Indonesia.

Based on that, this article attempted to capture the phenomenon of switched voters in the context of the 2014-2019 presidential election in Indonesia. The 2019 presidential election was a continuation of the competition between Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto. Incumbent Joko Widodo was the winner of the 2014 presidential election. In 2019, he was again promoted by the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP). His political opponent and challenger, Prabowo Subianto, is the chairperson of the Gerakan Indonesia Raya (Gerindra). Both involve a coalition of political parties that are almost balanced. The competition between the two encourages a keen interest in voters as a phenomenon of political identity. The cleavages of support open broader ideological characteristics of voters who identified themselves as Islamic and secularist, or centrist (Fossati 2019). Beyond that, understanding the character of floating voters, those who are in the middle position, and those who explicitly evaluate their performance of the choices in the ballot box, are engaging. Questioning whether the switched voters are included in the unsophisticated or high level of understanding in politics is also important.

This study focussed on examining the dynamic of electoral volatility of the two presidential candidates in inter-election. This study conducted a recalling question on the survey to the respondents to find out the 2014 presidential election. Volatility between elections was a change in the preferences of voters when the choice in the previous election was different from the current election. This study used logistic regression analysis to measure whether voters with higher education levels are likely to change votes and do those who have an interest in politics and knowledgeable about politics have the potential to change choices? This study included a suitable variable, the disaffection, and lack of exposure to media as volatility triggers.

The best volatility review in elections is to involve the most data sets in the election period. The longer the election period, the better the accuracy of the pattern of the shifting of voters. It also describes the consistency of whether volatility is influenced by long-term or short-term factors. As the first empirical research, this study utilizes a short-term panel, 2014-2019. As it only held one wave after the presidential election, this study relies on the recalling question to explain the phenomenon in 2014.

This research is limited to presidential elections based on the main reason that in Indonesia, the presidential election has seized public attention. In other words, the presidential election represents the feelings of most Indonesian people towards the supreme power on a significant national change. However, this research is limited because the term of office of the president is limited to only two periods, which impact on an insufficient pattern, whether people are attracted to type A or type B presidents and change from president A to B or vice versa by considering individual evaluations.

Administrative areas in Indonesia that represent electoral volatility in the presidential election are Depok City, South Jakarta, and East Jakarta. Two reasons why these three areas are the focus of research are first, comparison of the results of the 2014 presidential elections and 2019 has shown a dramatic shift in votes from the two candidates. Data from the Komisi Pemilihan Umum of the Republic of Indonesia (KPU-RI) showed that Widodo loses his voters despite an increase in turnout in the 2019 election. Although KPU-RI's data indicated that Widodo lost more votes, the findings on the survey also show the shift of votes from Subianto to Widodo (Saragih 2019). Therefore, this study generally centered on the possibility of factors that motivate voters to change their preferences. Second, these regions also represent the metropolitan area, which is expected to be able to describe connections between the proposed variables. In big cities, citizens have access to the availability of internet networks, adequate educational facilities, and geographically close to political information centers, that should be more affordable to support political sophistication, evaluation, and exposure to the media (Dalton 2007; Luskin 1990; Suzuki 1994).

One of the first empirical studies examining the relationship between volatility and political sophistication resulted in the conclusion that volatile behavior shows a lack of interest and knowledge of politics (Lazarsfeld et al. 1949). Nevertheless, the conclusion was debated by some political scientists. That difference can be very acceptable, considering the change in intention to vote involves subjective motivational factors (Dassonneville 2018).

First, the definition of political sophistication is a concept used to measure the political knowledge of citizens about an ideal (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000; Luskin 1990; Suzuki 1994). As Luskin described, the political sophistication component consists of several predictors, including interest in politics, education, exposure to political information, intelligence, and occupation (Luskin 1990). The measurement of political sophistication is to examine the cognitive complexity of politics or one's political skills. This is what distinguishes it from the ideology that is considered the end of knowledge. Some scholars claimed that unsophisticated voters are the most likely to move from one party to another (Dassonneville 2012; Macdonald et al. 1995). Others claimed that the most knowledgeable voters tend to make more independent voting choices, sometimes motivating them to switch (Dalton 2007).

An empirical study conducted by Dassonneville (2012) examining the link between political sophistication with switched voters indicated the degree of variation. In her research in Germany, she concluded that political sophistication had little effect on increasing the likelihood of switching parties before the campaign began. However, in the campaign period, political sophistication did not affect party change. On the other hand, Lachat's research in Europe showed that volatility weakens among voters who have a strong tendency, while in a weak tendency, volatility will strengthen (Lachat 2007).

The impact of political sophistication on electoral volatility also considers the political system. The party system adopted by a country is a significant factor in the extent to which political sophistication influences electoral volatility. Granberg and Holberg (1990) found that in the United States, volatile

voters are those who lack information. Meanwhile in Sweden, the voters with the potential to change are mostly non-partisan. Political parties in Sweden are the main actors, whereas, in the United States, election campaigns focus more on candidates (Dassonneville 2012). According to some researchers, in a candidate-centered system, apathetic voters are more likely to change their preferences during a campaign. Another way to get out of this riddle is to say that both scholars claimed that more sophistication leads to instability and less sophistication causes actual turmoil. When doing so, the link between volatility and sophistication is expected to be nonlinear. Scholars expect volatility to be the highest among voters with a moderate level of political sophistication (Kuhn 2009; Zaller 1992).

In the Indonesian context, voters seem to be driven to focus on candidates for presidential elections even though this is ultimately a paradox that the power of political parties has traditionally outperformed the president's existence. The concurrent 2019 election model, shows that rational voters still dominate apart from those who identify parties and presidential candidates. Therefore, the hypothesis in this study uses examples from countries that focus on candidates.

Literature that explains the evaluation of candidates by citizens belongs to the concepts of party organization and party identification (Gherghina 2015; Miller 1991). Negative evaluations of candidates have a direct impact on political disaffection; in other words, the phenomenon of delegitimization requires the most cynical perspective of society (Linek 2016; Torcal & Montero 2006).

The attitude output resulting from the evaluation process has two categories: satisfaction and dissatisfaction. During the campaign period and when voters are in the ballot box, cognitive memory for the candidates' performance motivates a change in vote. Voters who feel their candidates have excellent visibility address their direction to vote rather than closed candidates (Herrnson 2004). The relationship between political parties and candidates that can influence volatility is a causal mechanism that is seen from the premise of closeness between voters and candidates nominated by political parties. Conscious perception is divided into several complex and complementary criteria. Studies on voting behavior have broken the opinion of "candidate appearance" into a variable that considers proximity (Lawson et al. 2010)

Therefore, candidates who provide constituency benefits and show high expertise will increase their visibility and reputation. Besides, the evaluation of rational motivation is closely related to experience. The incumbent's amazing performance also makes it possible to reduce volatility. Otherwise, if the opposition's strategy convinces the citizens, it will increase volatility (Gherghina 2015). In the Indonesian context, presidential candidates are the actors in the highest contestation that gain high visibility in all media. Therefore, their strength is the traditional measure that can motivate voters to switch, which is their expertise and status in society (Kruikemeier et al. 2018).

Empirical studies of volatility and the effects of exposure to the media are still lacking. Borrowing from the conclusions of studies in a parliamentary country, exposure to the media has different effects. Van der Meer et al. (2015) concluded that there was an effect for voters who read particular newspapers, while Dassonneville (2012) found no effect of exposure to media on volatility. The theoretical perspectives on media and the desire to choose were different. Researchers further developed the assumption that campaign exposure in the media can change one's choices. It means that voters who are more informed about political information and campaigns will tend to change their choices (Geers et al. 2017). This assumption is in line with Zaller's (1992) hypothesis that voters with strong political attitudes often have better information during the campaign than uninformed ones. Converse assumes that those who are most influenced by the media are extremely stable voters and volatile voters. The former will decide before the final weeks of the election campaign. They are very concerned about campaign news because of the effect of interest in politics. Meanwhile, the latter use the media as a new source of information to help them make choices (Converse 1966).

The presidential election is a well-known election in Indonesia so that the presidential candidate's information coverage reaches national issues. People get relatively more accessible information about presidential candidates than that about internal parties. The role of social media is to connect information faster to the cellphones of urban communities. There is tension between the official news and news from social media to influence the community. The presidential candidate's competition is also colored by national mainstream media competition (Tapsell 2013). Giving influence to loyal or switching voters, literature about media and voters in the era of democracy are interrelated. The media is a means of effective communication of the candidates to the people in Indonesia. This study assumes that voters who have a high interest in political news and consume information about their candidates are loyal.

## Research Method

The data set is a survey that was collected after the 2019 election in a community over 21 years old. Data collection was begun in mid-April and ended on September 1, 2019. The focus of the study is in selected areas, including South Jakarta, East Jakarta, and Depok City. Based on KPU data, these three regions can illustrate the concept of electoral volatility in which one candidate loses many voters, where Depok City records the most changes. The purpose of choosing the urban area as the research location is the consideration of the modernization of industrial society. The metropolitan area supports the expansion of the variable of political sophistication, especially in the availability of political information through the media. Most importantly, rather than a rural area, the urban area has the level of political mobilization that has facilitated citizens' interest in politics and the process of digesting information as an indicator of political sophistication and the ability to deal with the complexities of democracy (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000)

The data collection had two stages: first, this research conducted a random survey of citizens. Second, to conduct the electoral volatility analysis, this research sorted out only those who have elected president in the 2014 and 2019 elections in a row. This sorting method, as used by Blais (2004), is useful to reduce bias in measuring voter loyalty. This study then combined data collection strategies using online media, face-to-face interviews, and telephone. Cumulatively, in mid-September, only 1,010 respondents were ready to be involved in the analysis. As explained in table 1, the following is the volatility between the 2014-2019 presidential elections.

**Table 1.**  
Inter-election volatility in 2014-2019 presidential election

2014 (Recall)	2019	Frequency (N=1,010)	Percentage of Respondents
A	A	414	41.0%
A	B	596	59.0%

Source: Primary data

A meaningful way to explain the past five years is to use recalling questions as Dassonneville (2012) and Lachat (2007) did in examining the volatility of voters towards political parties. Although this method has weaknesses, especially regarding respondents' explanations about what they remember, this type of question can capture the phenomenon that occurred during 2014-2019 to support the design of this study. The design focused on examining the relationship between political sophistication and candidates' evaluation in inter-election volatility where the dependent variables are dichotomous: (0) not volatile or (1) volatile.

This study found that 59.0% of respondents had changed their choices in the 2019 elections. Changes in this study were highly dependent on the existence of a gap between 2014 and 2019, where dynamics during the campaign were expected to be an essential time for respondents to process the information and evaluate the presidential candidates. Therefore, this research differs from the tradition of studies in countries with the parliamentary system; this study takes advantage of the phenomenon in Indonesia, that



presidential elections are always received more considerable public attention than legislative elections. Because presidential elections obtain close attention, they can encourage increased turnout compared to semi-presidential. This study included independent variables that theoretically affect electoral volatility.

First, this study focused on the role of political sophistication in changing voters' votes. This study included three predictors that were initially offered by Luskin (1990), among others, political knowledge, interest in politics, and the level of education. It measured the political knowledge using at least four questions, in which the highest value of all questions is four (4) and the lowest is 0. Questions regarding political knowledge test the cognitive expertise of the respondents. The content of the questions may not be related to the context of the presidential election, but includes awareness that supports understanding of their knowledge in politics, such as what is the name of the head of the people's consultative assembly, what is the level of poverty in Indonesia, and political actors who are entangled in some instances of corruption at certain times. Regarding knowledge in politics, this study offers a reverse hypothesis from Dassonneville's (2012), Lachat's (2007), and Geers and Strömbäck's (2018). It means that in the Indonesian context, the higher the knowledge gained, the higher the negative impacts on changing choices of votes.

Meanwhile, for the variable of education, it is also linear with political knowledge according to McAlister that the existence of education level in political sophistication is crucial because it influences the existence of an interest in politics. Meanwhile, political knowledge as a predictor has an indirect impact (McAlister & Farrell 2006). The scale for the education variable is (1) for did not graduate elementary school, (2) did not graduate junior high school, (3) graduated high school, and (4) higher education as shown in table 2.

The scores of the variable of the interests in politics are self-reported from 1-10. Political interest explains that someone is interested in the latest political news in Indonesia. Using a single question, as Dassonneville (2012) once did regarding voters' interest in national politics, this method has strengths and weaknesses. Regarding the strength, interest describes the voters' preferences for leadership competition so that the voter intensively consumes the candidates' information. Meanwhile, the weakness is not enough to describe the quality of interest in politics as expected by Luskin (1990).

**Table 2.**  
Control variables of political sophistication

<b>Political Sophistication</b>	<b>Previous Implemented</b>
Political Knowledge	Lachat (2007), (Dassonneville, 2012)
Interest in Politics	Luskin (1990)
Level of Education	McAlister and Farrel (2006)

Source: Primary data

*H1: Political sophistication decreases volatile voters.*

The second variable is the measurement of candidate evaluation. This variable is useful to measure public disappointment with candidates who were elected in the 2014 presidential election. All questions are recalling questions. In the concept of political disaffection, voters who are disappointed with the incumbents tend to change their votes. Meanwhile, those who have chosen the losers will evaluate their performance as opposition. Undoubtedly, Subianto's (opposition) voters might be influenced by Joko Widodo's positive performance so they did not vote for Prabowo or vice versa. In essence, the opposition's position will benefit from maintaining the loyalty of its voters if the incumbent's performance is not satisfactory. The survey question is a combination of the concepts proposed by Gherghina (2015), in which the assessment in this variable include experience, visibility, constituency benefits, and expertise, combined with the concept of political disaffection, where the highest score of each element is 5 for positive evaluation to the maximum of each.

*H2: Negative evaluation of candidates increases volatile voters.*

The third variable is the measurement of media exposure to the candidate's information. The candidates require a campaign for exposure, and the media is used to obtain information frequently. Geers's conclusion shows the role of exposure to campaign media to switched voters who have much information to change (Geers et al. 2017). This study asked about how high the frequency of candidates' information intake via newspapers, television, the internet, and social media where a score of 5 is very high intensity.

*H3: Exposure to candidates' information reduces volatile voters.*

This study also controls socio-cultural variables consisting of age, gender, and ideological extremism as electoral volatility stabilizing variables. This study expects age to have an impact on voter behavior, where older voters are relatively experienced in participating in presidential elections. On the other hand, young voters do not yet have enough information for their first general election. The variable of ideological extremism is a way to assess respondents' profiles of democratic life in Indonesia. The measurement used a scale of 1-10, where 5 is the midpoint. A score of 1 describes someone who has the most religious views and a score of 10 is someone who craves a secular life. Following a recent study, people with a higher level of extremism are loyal voters (Dassonneville 2012). Voters who are in the middle position are possible to change the choice of votes. In the political context in Indonesia, ideological cleavages are in those who are secular and Islamism, but also a mix of admiration for figures. To wrap it, this study asks the respondents about the ideal government life. Possibly the candidate's personality can influence the choice of answers.

Hypothesis testing in this study used logistic regression in inter-election presidential elections in Indonesia, where volatility has only two choices: volatile (1) and non-volatile (0). This test is to check whether independent variables affect volatility. The logistic regression results presented in table 3 include logit coefficient (B), standard errors (SE), odds ratios (Exp. (B)), and level of significance. In binary logistic, odds ratios predict that more than one indicates decreased chances of predictor for volatility. Odds with a value over one increase the chances for volatility (Berger 2017). The coefficient in logistic regression can be estimated using the following formula:

$$\text{Log} [ (P/(1-P)) ] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3 \dots \beta_5 + e \quad (1.1)$$

$P$  is the chance that the respondents have switched choices, and  $1-P$  shows the respondents who are loyal to the choice of the previous president.  $\beta_0$  is a constant.  $\beta_1$  is the coefficient of interest in politics,  $\beta_2$  is the coefficient of political knowledge,  $\beta_3$  is the coefficient of education. Each subsequent coefficient is the independent variable discussed in table 3, and the symbol  $e$  is an error.

## Results and Discussion

Of the three political sophistication predictors proposed by this study, interest in politics has a significant impact that is inversely proportional to intra-election volatility. Meanwhile, education and political knowledge do not have a significant impact. This describes the tendency of urban communities who have an interest in politics potentially to be more loyal to those chosen. This result is different from what has been researched in Belgium and Germany; voters who have a high interest are unstable (Dassonneville 2012, 2014). The effect of interest in politics may be the foundation on which a person improves his cognitive quality and motivation in political participation. At least, citizens who have an interest in politics will gather more information regularly and reflect on it more (Luskin 1990). That is, voters who have a high interest in politics might consider any dissatisfaction in the campaign period to be evaluated on the ballot box. Meanwhile, in the context of presidential elections in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta and Depok City, voters who have an interest in politics make it possible to consider dissatisfaction in different ways. The incumbent's voters maximize their expectations on the expansion of development data.

On the other hand, the opposition's voters will tend to evaluate weaknesses in development policy. These examples are in line with the general definition of interest in politics as the basis for a democratic political belief system as a result of developing identity. However, the most important note from this measurement is that respondents were only given one question, "are you interested in political issues in the last five years? A single question might not entirely describe the activities of political participation that describe the life of democracy in Indonesia. Because there is only one significant political sophistication variable, the power of influence is limited in the context of presidential elections in Indonesia. Therefore, this research considers that political sophistication is partially answered.

These findings suspect education and political knowledge to have no significant effect on electoral volatility due to factors of subjectivity. First, in the context of presidential elections in Indonesia, democracy has experienced a split in the identity of politics since Subianto and Widodo began to compete for the presidential seat in 2014. In early and mid-2017, the situation was increasingly tense before the election of the governor of DKI Jakarta, which involved PDIP cadres versus Gerindra cadres. In this case, Subianto received sympathy from the public and political parties that showed religious symbols. Besides, Widodo has support from secular society and political parties. The strength of this identity issue enables people at all levels of political knowledge and formal education to potentially be loyal and volatile voters. The second was the political knowledge that this study asked respondents separately in support of interest in politics. This phenomenon is in line with Luskin' statement that the component of political sophistication does not have to bind to one another (Luskin 1990). Previous research on electoral volatility has put forward various factors that can be analyzed as an aspect of community evaluation of incumbent performance. This research can be understood that political sophistication, especially interest in politics and political knowledge, also involves variables such as the visibility of candidates to explain volatility. Visibility of politicians in the media and positive evaluation can explain the characteristics of voters who are exposed to political knowledge (Geers & Bos 2017).

**Table 3.**  
Logistic regression results with electoral volatility as the dependent variable

	<b>B</b>	<b>Inter-election Volatility</b>	
		<b>SE</b>	<b>Exp. (B)</b>
<i>Sociocultural</i>			
Gender	-.630ns	.146	.946
Age	-.045*	.007	.406
Ideological Extremism	.108ns	.295	1.114
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>		.093	
<i>Political Sophistication</i>			
Education	.099ns	.099	1.104
Interest in Politics (1-10)	-.179**	.029	1.082
Political Knowledge	-.096ns	.055	.909
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>		.091	
<i>Party Organization</i>			
Candidates' Evaluation	-.438***	.023	1.015
<i>Political Information Exposure</i>			
Television	.331ns	.113	1.392
Newspaper	.241ns	.115	1.022
Internet	-.368**	.076	.627
Social Media	-.237***	.59	1.225
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>		.67	
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> Full Model		<b>.693</b>	
Significance * <0.05, ** <0.01, *** < 0.001			

Source: Primary Data

The second hypothesis is to prove whether a positive evaluation of the elected presidential candidate reduces volatility. Based on the results of logistic regression, the variable of candidate's visibility achieves significant results in reverse (> 0.001). That is, voters who consistently rate positively in



candidate experience, visibility, constituency benefits, and expertise during the 2019 campaign period are loyal. This variable is in line with Gherghina's research in measuring the incumbent's evaluation. Expertise, visibility, and constituency benefits are evaluation factors that cannot be separated from volatility. The candidate's visibility has strong communication characteristics between candidates and voters. Therefore, this factor supports the ability of communication media. The candidate's expertise is directly related to the role of the candidate in society. Widodo, as the incumbent, has the probability of delivering development results and plans in the future, while the incumbent allows evaluating the performance of the government and delivery of new programs, the extent to which they can reach the target voters. Faithful voters of Subianto and Widodo rate their performance positively. These findings, especially constituency benefits, may have to be supplemented by concrete evidence. It is because some researchers who investigated the characteristics of Indonesian society in the election associate voters' evaluations with money politics and describe Indonesian voters as being pragmatic (Aspinall & Berenschot 2019; Mietzner 2013; Winters 2013). Note that in the context of the presidential election, there is no consideration regarding the quality beyond the partial benefits. This study assesses the urban areas; loyalty is the element of complex aspects, such as closeness and how much voters are interested in following political information.

Besides the two variables above, it is essential to study the campaign exposure in Indonesia. This study pairs the variable of candidates' visibility with the exposure to political campaign media in one model and generates Nagelkerke  $R^2$  of 69%. Of the four variables of exposure to political information, only social media and the internet show a negative impact significantly; therefore, the people who use social media and the internet in receiving information about their candidates become the factor that makes them loyal. This finding shows the opposite of the concept proposed by Geers et al. (2017), that voters who have information in this study tend to be loyal. Social media and the internet are a means for citizens to express a sense of interest in politics because they are considered easily accessible and portable. This finding contrasts with studies in parliamentary countries, especially in Sweden and Belgium, which explained that the higher exposure to campaign information, the stronger the potential to become volatile (Dassonneville 2012; Geers et al. 2017). In Indonesia, especially in this study, the higher exposure to campaign information has the potential to become loyal voters. This result answers Luskin's thesis that political interests and media exposure are complementary.

This study also controls socio-cultural variables. Of the three variables, only age has a significant negative effect on volatility. The mean value for the age variable is 31.87. Populations of older age tend to be more experienced in the presidential election. This result is similar to Luskin's (1990) statement that the level of age influences one's interest in politics. This study has not found whether men or women tend to be in the position of loyal voters. Meanwhile, ideological extremism ( $mean = 3.85$ ) and gender were not influential in this study, but it is possible to continue the study of ideology from those who expect secularism and religious extremism in various regions with varying types of community characteristics.

Political sophistication theory apart from volatility may explain the capability of voters in political participation, but the decision of the voters in the ballot box to determine to vote is difficult to trace. In volatility studies, political sophistication, especially political knowledge, is not a guarantee that voters can be loyal or not. Subjective factors play a significant role in this concept, such as the influence of the closest family, complex disaffection, or even the way they view democracy. At the same time, the variable of interest in politics may not be able to explain the pattern of voters to be loyal or volatile correctly.

Evaluation of candidates in this study may be only half of the way voters evaluate candidates, so other factors need to be found, such as the influence of mass mobilization and money politics. The ability of the internet and social media to improve voters' information need to be traced to the types of news that are consumed by citizens. What is difficult to understand is whether this type of information tends to be educative and induce a logical critical attitude or fosters a momentary emotional attitude.

These three theories pose a challenge for volatility research in Indonesia because researchers face a presidential system controlled by political parties. However, the influence of figures becomes the primary driver of citizen turn out motivation. Volatility at the party level is potentially to be higher because of the change in presidential candidates, which is limited to 10 years.

## **Conclusion**

Previous studies have proven that political sophistication influences voting behavior. However, the relationship between electoral volatility and political sophistication still concludes different results. One determining factor is the political system adopted in each country. Another opinion is that political sophistication already has a high subjective dimension for an ideal democratic life.

The first hypothesis in this study is to answer whether political sophistication makes voters volatile in the context of presidential elections. For urban areas, of the three proposed political sophistication variables, only interest in politics has a significant negative impact ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ). That is, a high interest in this study motivates the desire to choose a previous candidate loyally. The context of presidential elections is undoubtedly different from previous research in countries with a parliamentary system and implementing compulsory voting such as Belgium, Sweden, and Germany that voters with political knowledge and interests tend to change party choices. Because only one predictor influences the first hypothesis, this study argues that the hypothesis is answered a half, and it needs to be investigated more deeply, whether the other two predictors, political knowledge and education, still have the potential to support the hypothesis, especially in refining questions for the context of political knowledge. The second hypothesis is to answer whether negative evaluations for candidates motivate volatile voters. As a result, voters who evaluate their candidates negatively have motivated them to be volatile ( $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ). Meanwhile, the third hypothesis is to reveal whether voters who are more exposed to political information have the effect of reducing volatility. As a result, those who are exposed to the internet and social media tend to be loyal ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ). In this session, this study assessed that the internet and social media are essential media for candidates to maintain the loyalty of their voters. In addition to easy access, exposure to information from the internet and social media can be consumed repeatedly.

This research transforms electoral volatility from the election of political parties in Europe to the Indonesian presidential election. By utilizing the variable of political sophistication, the results are reversed, and it has been explained that the visibility of political parties and candidates is two different things. Future research should test the hypotheses of this study with a strict methodology, especially in utilizing items of political knowledge. It is highly recommended to involve economic factors in testing the variable of the candidates' evaluation because economic issues are prevalent in Indonesia. The advantage of this transformation is that Indonesian society and countries with presidential systems tend to understand candidates better than political parties. The obstacle to explaining the findings in this study, in general, is that the presidential term of office is only two periods (10 years). Although relatively brief, the strength of the president's influence is more than political parties. Meanwhile, political parties have a longer life. The figure of a presidential candidate in Indonesia is believed by the people to have the power to encourage party votes. This uniqueness is a challenge for the study of electoral volatility in Indonesia, where voters are central to political aims. Meanwhile, political parties are competing to defend the voice of changing figures.

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