

The Factors Determine Voter's Participation in Bantul Regency Elections

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Abstract

Election is an important element of democracy. As a consequence of a democracy, post-New Order Indonesia held four legislative elections regularly that were held in 1999, 2004, 2009, and 2014 and presidential elections in 2004, 2009, and 2014. In order to strengthen the legitimacy of local government head, Indonesia also held direct local executive election since 2005 onward. World have nevertheless admitted that the first Post-New Order 1999 was a peaceful, fair and free election, met the global democracy standard with an impressive voter's participation, reaching 92,7% of voter's turnout. The subsequent elections also performed alike, strengthen assumption that Indonesia has remarkably succeeded in making a democratic leap. (Soebagio, 2008). Unfortunately, election in Indonesia still faces challenges to tackle, which one of those is the decline in voter participation. But in the middle of national trend, Bantul booked an anomaly. Participation level in Bantul also always higher compared to the national average. Nevertheless Bantul still face a problem of participation discrepancy. For instance, Triwidadi village booked 87.7% voter's turn out in 2014 legislative election, but in Banguntapan village only booked 74.3% of participation within the election. Considering the fact, it is important to figure out factors influencing electoral participation among the Bantulese. By identifying the factors we might draw a certain pattern that could be a recommendation to the Bantul electoral commission to develop a right policy. The factors determine high level of voter's participation in Bantul Regency are as follows: (1) political affiliation of closest relations; (2) participation stimulus; (3) tight social control; (4) voter's mobilization; (5) The concern of societal institution. Meanwhile the factors hamper voter's participation are as follows: (1) The saturation of voters toward elections; (2) Less-frequent and less-innovative socialization; (3) less-accurate voter data gathering; (4) the lack of social bond and control; (5) pragmatism.

Keywords: voter participation, Bantul Regency, determinant factors, election

A. INTRODUCTION

Election is one of the most important elements of democracy. Regarding to democratic theories, election is the main indicator to measure the quality of democracy (Dahl, 1971:3; Schumpeter, 1976:260; Nielsen, 1991:5). As a consequence of democracy

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adopted by Indonesia, after New Order, there were four times of general election of legislative branches of government that had been conducted regularly every five years those were in 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. Furthermore, to emphasize and strengthen the presidential system, Indonesia also introduced presidential elections in 2004, 2009 and 2014. For the similar excuse, direct election to choose governors and regents had also been conducted since 2005 onward.

Even though there were facts concerning weaknesses of those political events, the majority of international communities recognized and admired that Indonesian election in 1999, as the first election in reform period, was praised as honest, fair, and peaceful election with the high numbers of political participants reaching 92.7 percent, met the requirements of global democratic standards . Subsequent elections also booked similar achievement. Based on those facts, it could be summarized that Indonesia has been switched significantly from authoritarianism to democratic political system (Soebagio, 2008).

Perceived from historical perspective, actually participation in the whole of Indonesian electoral history hid many obstacles in terms of the fact that there is an indication of voter's turn out decrease, remembering that election is the key factor of people sovereignty. When there are the more voters in the election, there is an indication that people really aware and acknowledge their rights. On the contrary, if less people participate in an election, it indicated that people less appreciative and less supportive to governmental and political issues. Voter's participation in Indonesia since 1999 election to 2014 election moved fluctuatively. In legislative elections, voter's turnout decreased about 10% consistently until 2009 election. Meanwhile in 2014 election voter's turnout increased by 5 percent. In presidential elections, 2014 election booked less voter's turn out compared to legislative election, which were the first time in history.

Although participation level in those elections measured by voter's turnout in Bantul booked an increase, actually there was a problem of discrepancies between one district to another. As an example, in Triwidadi village, district of Pajangan, its voter's turn out booked 87.7%, meanwhile in Banguntapan village, district of Banguntapan, voter's turnout only reached 74.3%. Discrepancies also can be found between villages within a district.

Based on those facts, it is important to conduct a research concerning factors influencing participation of the people in elections in Bantul Regency, therefore from the research findings it could be drawn a certain pattern that could be a recommendation for Bantul electoral committee to formulate a policy enhancing public participation in election. By considering the problem setting mentioned earlier, the research question is what factors influence voter's participation in Bantul elections?

B. THEORY AND METHOD

1. Theoretical Framework

a. Election and Democracy

Election is an important feature of people sovereignty, therefore almost impossible to find a democratic entity without a regular, fair, and systematic election. Based on that postulate, election also assumed to be the most important indicator within democracy. The quality of an election held by a democracy determines the quality of democracy itself (Hendrik, 2010). Election in democracies is a mean to peacefully rotate power based on the constitutional arrangements. Some principal values of election which meet constitutional arrangements are a government that based on people sovereignty that mean every citizen have rights to actively involved in a decision making process, public policy, and determining their political as well as public officers. Election is both institution and political practice as well, enabling a manifestation of a representative government. By taking a part in election, people as individual have rights to choose or to be chosen as political leader or his or her representatives. Election is an ideal portrait of a democratic government in modern ages.

In Indonesia, election is a political mechanism held regularly in every five years to choose legislative members and the executives. There are four kinds of elected legislatives to be chosen through party candidacy, those are for regency/city level called DPRD Kabupaten/Kota, for provincial level called DPRD Provinsi, and for national level called DPR RI. Beside the house of representative members, Indonesians also vote for their 34 provincial representative members called DPD as a consequence of bicameralism in Indonesia parliamentary system. Furthermore, since 2004 Indonesians also directly vote for their Presidents as well as for their local leader in regency/city (regent/mayor)

and provincial leader (governor). Those vast rights of the people to determine their own leaders and representatives cannot be separated from Indonesian reform in 1998 following the Soeharto's regime dismissal. It was an impressive and significant chance and achievement remembering how the regime marginalized and obviously limited public rights and participation into political realms. Public participation was limited and just took a form of mass mobilization for the sake of sustaining the power (Hendrik, 2010).

b. Political Participation

According to Ramlan Surbakti, political participation is an ordinary citizen's taking part in determines decisions influencing his or her life. Meanwhile Michael Rush and Philip Althof suggested that political participation is an organized attempt by citizens to choose their leaders and to influence the formulation and implementation of public policy. Political participation as a manifestation of people sovereignty is a fundamental elements of democracy and determines how the democratic wheels move on regularly. If more people participate, the political development of that political entity will be running well. In the contrary, if less people participate, the political development of that political entity will be disrupted. Public participation is essential within democratic political system. That's why the degree of political participation by the people within an election is an important thing to elaborate.

Political participation in democracies is actually the rights of its people. Anyway, to be positioned as a right political participation opens an opportunity to be neglected by the citizens for many reasons. Some scholars suggested there are factors influencing people to participate or not to participate within political process, as well as in an election. Those factors are:

1. Social and economical status

Social status is somebody's position within social stratification determined by his or her blood, education, and occupation, meanwhile economic status is somebody's position within societal stratification based on his or her wealth. Surbakti suggested that the more high somebody's position in those stratification, the more high somebody's concern and interest toward politics (Surbakti, 1992).

2. Political situation

Ramlan Surbakti also suggested that political situation also influences participation. Political situation refers to a circumstance influences directly political actors such as weather, family, spatial condition, group condition, and threat. A relatively conducive situation will encourage actor to participate. (Surbakti, 1992).

3. Political affiliation of closest relatives

Affiliations means that somebody has joint into a certain group or a collectivity. Political affiliation could be formulated as somebody's membership done by individual or groups involved in certain political streams or ideology. Political affiliation encourages people to grow their political maturity and awareness in using their rights freely but responsible by their political activity such as to be a member of political party, in government, and in a decision making process and policy implementation (Surbakti, 1992).

4. Political awareness

Being aware of their rights and obligations as a citizen in a democratic regime will affect somebody to participate. The awareness included his or her knowledge on political and social environment, and regarding somebody's concern toward those environment where he or she lives (Hendrik, 2010).

5. Participation stimulant

Media role in socializing elections is a crucial point influence people to participate (Hendrik, 2010). Parallel with media role is of course electoral committee's role in socializing technical and substantive issues toward future voters. Well informed voters will of course enhance the quantity and the quality of an election. Beside those actors, informal activity concerning politics through discussion about the track record of candidates will contribute positively toward public participation.

2. Method

a. Research Design

This research was conducted in a qualitative design. Qualitative approach is a process of examining and understanding based on methodology investigating social phenomena and problems. In this design researcher make a complex picture, examine words, detailed report of respondent's perception and study the occurred situation

(Creswell, 1998:15). Meanwhile Bogdan and Taylor (Moleong, 2007:3) suggested that qualitative method is a research procedure resulting descriptive data manifested in written words or orally spoken from people and observed behaviour. To comprehend degree of participation in Bantul elections, researchers need to deeply analyze the phenomenon. Researchers need to identify how high as the participation degree and then elaborate what factors constituted the founded facts based on theoretical framework.

2. Collecting data methods

This research used three methods of data collecting included interview, documentary report and focused group discussion. Interview was used in this research to re check the information gained. The interview technic employed in this research was indepth interview, a process of obtaining information based on research goals by a face to face meeting between interviewer and informants by using an interview guide. Informants of this research are people in the research location that had been identified as having ability to answers the questions and having relatively broad knowledge about the research questions. As a huge number of data is codified into documentary reports, especially related to participation percentage and distribution of votes, this research also employed documentary data collecting. There were reports and notes concerning those issues that had been checked and studied. Finally, to cross check the preliminary research findings, researchers also held a focused group discussion, by inviting electoral stakeholders in Bantul regency and relevant actors perceived to be contributive confirm research findings.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The location of this research is Bantul Regency, with a rationale have been discussed earlier. Bantul which consisted of 17 districts and 75 villages is classified into three specified area: urban, hilly (mountaineous), and coastal areas. For that reason there are three districts involved in this research. The first is Banguntapan district. Banguntapan represented an urban type of district in Bantul. It recorded the lowest degree of participation in legislative election 2014 compared to other districts. There are two villages in Banguntapan included in this research to represent highest and lowest

participation level, those are Banguntapan village which represents lowest level of participation and Jambidan Village which represents the highest level in the district. The second district is Sanden. Sanden represented a coastal districts of Bantul. Two villages in the district involved in this research are Gadingsari which represented the lowest level of participation meanwhile Gadingharjo represented highest level of participation in the district. Imogiri is the third. Imogiri represented a hilly district in Bantul. Villages taken into account of this district are Sriharjo represented lowest level of participation and Imogiri village which represented highest level of participation of the district.

1. Factors determines low level of participation

Banguntapan village is a village with a highest popular density in whole Bantul. Because of its demographic density, there are a lot of ballot booths in the village, gave an excess loads to local electoral committees to act their role in socializing electoral events. This issue also limited their span of control and span of socialization that in turn producing a less informed voters. Banguntapan village was also characterized by a high degree of popular mobility since there are migrants from surrounding regions. Majority of its population are not natives of the district, produces a more heterogeneous community. It also characterized by many of them who work outside the district or even outside the Bantul regency.

Those demographic characteristics affect the nature of social relations and engagements between its inhabitants. There were less social bonds that created a communal mechanism to participate. Moreover, in the matter of candidate proximity, it results in less popular or less acknowledged candidates by the population. It also produces a less social and emotional engagement between the population and the candidates. Less social bonds also manifested in Gadingsari. As a fisherman's village, they rarely got opportunity to met in a social forums and events because almost their whole day was spent off shore. This relatively weak social bond amongst Gadingsari villagers discourage them from developed a social mechanism potential to remind each other for attending and participating in elections. There are no such a "social punishment" when someone did not go to the voting booth.

As a village with a high level of education of its inhabitants, Banguntapan village is considered to be an example of rational voters, giving them a relatively high ability to

access quality of candidates running for election. But in reality, it resulted in low level of participation as an impact of public distrust to candidates' too much promise. Rationality also created such saturation to Banguntapan villagers toward so many elections they should to be involved. It was the effect of a less benefit elections to the villagers. They evaluated that there were no meaningful advantages in participating the elections. As a consequence, many of them opted to stay in their workplaces rather than casting their votes in ballot booths, turning their rationality to pragmatism.

Such a problem of pragmatism was also manifested in Gadingsari village, district of Sanden, which many of its habitants are fishermen. They calculated and compared the benefit of casting vote with their daily wage. Since they could not found the benefit of elections for their life they chose to stay at the sea rather than cast their votes, something they perceive more promising for their life. As well as in Gadingsari, the kind of calculation also founded in Sriharjo. The villagers perceived elections as a merely matter of economic advantage and disadvantage. Since they rarely able to find benefit of elections for their social and economical life, they frequently chose to work, in spite of attending elections. Added by less innovative methods of socialization and less frequent of socialization delivered by electoral committees, less people attracted to cast their votes in Sriharjo.

As an exaggerating factor, there was a problem of electoral administration data adjustment in the Banguntapan village also. Since there was a highly dynamics demographics records, voter's data in the village is susceptible of maladministration issues affecting low level of voter's turn out in elections. Its population high mobility also complicated local electoral committee to hold a more frequent meeting to socialize electoral events toward Banguntapanese. Less frequent socialization was also happened in Gadingsari. As many of its inhabitants are fishermen, it took their whole day off shore. This popular characteristic disabled them to be frequently met one another or gathered in a social meetings. Because of this occupational characteristic, electoral committee failed to reach them for massive electoral socializations that in turn created less informative and relatively apathetical voters. The kind of issue also found in Sriharjo, although it was not caused by a demographic dynamics as well as in Banguntapan. The issue is more an effect of less technical skill of local electoral ad hoc committees rather than

demographics problems. As a result, voter's data determining who has and has not a right to vote was not arranged in a proper way. This had in turn prevented somebody who should have a right from attending the elections.

2. Factors determines high level of participation

Contrary to its counterpart Banguntapan village, Jambidan village booked highest level of participation in the district of Banguntapan. The demographics data shows that its dynamics is not as high as its counterpart. There are more natives in Jambidan compared to Banguntapan village. Those characteristics produced a relatively high proximity between Jambidan people with some of candidates, motivated more voters to cast their votes compared to Banguntapan village. Moreover, one of candidates run for legislative election there was their former chief, adding more villagers to cast their votes. As a homogeneous community and less mobile people, there is a high social bond between its inhabitants, resulted a tight social control amongst them. Someone who opted to cast his or her votes would be considered as "abnormal" or at least "unusual" by others. Since there is a social bonds, political affiliation of closest relative and neighbors also influence someone's perception toward elections. What had been decided and became political choice of its local leader might had been influenced people's decision to attend the elections. Furthermore, local leaders' party sometimes became a reference for people to choose for the same. Related to social bonds manifested, one specific research finding in Jambidan is about people perception toward elections. Jambidanese perceived participating in elections as an obligation rather than a right, affecting its high percentage of voter's turn out compared to its counterpart, Banguntapan.

As less mobile communities, it opened more opportunities for its residences to hold many social events in Jambidan as well as in Imogiri and Gadingharjo. When they gathered in regular or irregular, formal or informal meetings, they also gave opportunity to local electoral committees to join and involved to socialize election to the villagers. Because of this relatively intensive socialization, more voters in those three villages understood specific issues in elections and more informed about candidates that going to represent them. Involvement of local leader of community groups such as RT and Dukuh within local electoral committees influence more people to participate in elections. In turn, this will affect the higher degree of voters turn out in those three villages compared

to their counterparts. Population density in hilly and coastal districts such as Imogiri and Sanden gives a specific advantage toward participation. There were more little number of ballot booths compared to a high density district such as Banguntapan. This influences the manageability of elections Imogiri and Sanden since the local electoral committees able to perform better and reach their responsibility more deeply. More intensive and more intensity of socialization contributed to more voters in those districts.

Participation stimulants still also played a significant role as incentives in participation. Issues of money politics still became a hot issue in Bantul for general. As a homogenous community, it opens an opportunity to organize Jambidan people in a collective political pragmatism. Head of community groups such as the Dukuh and the Head of RT mobilized people under their supervision to cast their votes for a certain candidates, affecting high degree of participation in general. As a trade off, certain candidates provided those communities public or social infrastructures.

More advantage of being less mobile also met by Imogiri and Gadingharjo villagers in a matter of high participation degree. Since they rarely mobile to another region, there were much more simple demographic dynamics compared to the urban characteristics villages such as Banguntapan. Moreover, just few migrants enter these villages. This simple demographic profile resulted in a relatively simplified sustainable data correction should applied by local electoral committees. Because of this circumstance, there were just few problems stem from the demographic matters and resulted a more accurate voters data. This accuracy had in turn produced a high voter's turnout. The whole research findings, discussing factors that discourage and encourage participation in Bantul could be summarized into a table as follow.

Tabel 1.
Research Findings

District	Village	Determinant Factors
Bangun-tapan	Banguntapan (Low Level of Participation)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Highly mobile inhabitants 2) Majority of them are migrants 3) Less popular candidates 4) Pragmatic people 5) Problem in data adjustment 6) Less social bonds
	Jambidan (High Level of Participation)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Majority of population perceived elections as an obligation, not a rights as it should be 2) Less mobile inhabitants 3) Political affiliation of closest relative
Sanden	Gadingsari (Low Level of Participation)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) High mobility of its inhabitants 2) Pragmatic people 3) Intensitas sosialisasi kurang karena warga tidak mudah dikumpulkan) 4) Less social bonds
	Gadingharjo (High Level of Participation)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) High intensity and innovative electoral socialization 2) Less mobile inhabitants 3) Political affiliation of closest relative
Imogiri	Imogiri (Low Level of Participation)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Saturation of inhabitants toward so many elections 2) Elections perceived as less benefit 3) Problem in data adjustment related tonlow quality of local electoral committees 4) Less innovative and less frequent electoral socialization 5) Pragmatic people
	Sriharjo (High Level of Participation)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Voter mobilisation by local electoral committees 2) High involvement of local community leaders within electoral committee. 3) Less number of ballot booth 4) Political affiliation of closest relative

D. CONCLUSION

Conclusion drawn from the research findings are as follow:

1. Factors determines high level of participation amongst Bantulese are: (a) Political affiliation of closest relative ; (b) participation stimulants; (c) tight social control; (d) political pragmatism of society manifested in organized collective transactional

- arrangement between inhabitants and candidates by local leaders; (e) societal institution awareness and concern toward elections.
2. Factors determines low level of participation are: (a) Saturation and less direct benefit of elections for society; (b) Limited, less innovative and less frequent socialization discourage people to vote; (c) Poor performance of electoral committees in adjusting voter's data especially in a highly mobile, dense population and vast areas; (d) Weak social bond and social control; (f) Society pragmatism that perceived elections is less benefit for their life.

Based on those research findings, it is highly recommended to design an innovative socialization method that attract more people to come and discuss about electoral regulations and issues to create more informed and rational voter that in turn will be contributive toward enhancing voter participation as well as development of the quality of election. On the other side, administrative issues related to voter data should be organized in a more systematic and integrated method therefore involves more people to participate.

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2. DPRD (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah): Local House of Representatives
3. DPD (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah): Senate
4. DPRD Provinsi: Local House of Representatives for Provincial level
5. DPRD Kabupaten/Kota: Local House of Representatives for Regency/City level

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