

Government Strategy in Political Education as Public Participation Improvement to Reach Democracy System in Semarang City

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Abstract

Republic of Indonesia is a democratic country which means all matters in the country must be based on the wishes of the people. Successful democracy in a country can be judged by the implementation of direct, general, free, and secret elections. The people have the right to determine their government so that people have valuable values in a democratic country. In this study, researchers formulated the government strategy in political education as an effort to increase public participation in realizing a democratic system in Semarang City. This research used a descriptive qualitative method. This research was conducted in Semarang City, Central Java. The implementation of a political education by the Semarang City government has not been maximized. Based on the results of the research, the provision of information for the implementation of public political participation, especially the young age group has not been running optimally. Second, the Media (political parties) as an aggregation of the public interests, must be more active in building communication systems, one of which is by gathering public aspirations in public consultation forums. Third, the implementation of political activities are in various methods, such as social activities, seminars, studies, socialization and training, and coaching, those implementations are determined according to the right conditions, scheduled and routine, but do not rule out the possibility of activities adapted to existing conditions.

Keywords

Political Education; Participation; Democracy

INTRODUCTION

In a democratic nation and state life, political education is urgently needed due to the fact that we everywhere to participate in a democratic, critical and

consciously acting society in a plural world. Political education has the aim of increasing the abilities, skills of the community, both in terms of knowledge and the rights of their lives hence people become good, politically aware and responsible development people.

Political awareness is as crucial as the responsibility of the government in improving the process of political education, in light of the fact that the government has an obligation to organize

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national education and realize the success of education for all Indonesian people, one of which is political education, the aim is to foster political awareness in the community (Chattoraj, 2019). Political awareness of the community as one of the fundamental needs in supporting the success of development. In order for high political awareness, the community can actively participate in national development.

Research by Saputra et al., (2016), with the title "Strategies of the Semarang City Election Commission in Socializing the 2015 Mayor Election". Where the results of his research shows that: Semarang City Election Commission has a strategy, which is based on long-term learning through the selection of the previous Mayor and Deputy Mayor, specifically in 2010 which reached 60% showed the lowest level of participation, therefore in 2015 the Election Commission General Semarang City, for that to make breakthroughs and sustainable creations such as involving the Election of Chairman of the Intra-School Student Organization as a novice voter.

A country's democratic political participation of citizens or citizens realizes that the sovereignty of the state comes from the people (Syahputra & Ritonga, 2019). Therefore, in its implementation in making political decisions the role of the people must be involved in it. It is

intended that every political policy that is produced truly embodies the interests of the people (Cross, 2004). Indonesia as a unitary state of the Republic is a democratic country. Therefore, all activities of the implementation of state power must be based on the will of the people. This is regulated in the constitutional basis for democratically administering state power in article 1 paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945) which has been amended. Where that "State sovereignty is in the hands of the people and implemented according to the Constitution".

Republic of Indonesia is a democratic country hence the people of Indonesia play an important role in all the implementation of state power. Based on the 1945 Constitution Article 1 paragraph 2 that the amendments have made explains that people play an important role in political decision making. A society that is democratic, critical and conscious in acting plurally needs political education. Increased public knowledge of their rights to live to be able to build a society that is aware of politics and has a responsible nature is the goal of political education.

One of the means of political succession possessed by a democratic country is general elections (elections). Measures in the success of organizing a democracy are judged by the success in holding direct,

general, free and secret elections. The people have the right to determine their government hence people have valuable values in a democratic country.

Semarang City Government has the authority over general elections (elections), the government has a political education program for the community to support the successful implementation of legislative elections, presidential elections, and regional election. Based on the background, the research question in this research is: what is the government's strategy in political education as an effort to increase public participation in realizing a democratic system in the Semarang city?

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the authors conduct a descriptive qualitative approach. Data Sources used are primary and secondary data sources. Primary Data Sources are interviews and observations. Secondary Data sources are regional legal products, literature books, various documents that discuss research issues. Data collection techniques that used on this research are interviews, literature study, and discussion (FGD). Data analysis technique that used on this research is interactive model analysis, including data reduction, data presentation and concluding. On this research the authors using several techniques to validate the data,

specifically: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior Research

Previous researches result that are relevant to the theme of this study are: first, [Saputra et al., 2016](#) entitled "Semarang City Election Commission Strategy in Socializing the 2015 Mayor Election". The result of this research shows that: Semarang City Election Commission has a strategy, which is based on long-term learning through the selection of the previous Mayor and Deputy Mayor, specifically in 2010 which reached 60% showed the lowest level of participation, thus in 2015 the Election Commission General Semarang City, for that to make breakthroughs and sustainable creations such as involving the Election of Chairman of the Intra-School Student Organization as a novice voter. This is in order to get interaction from the target group, in spite of the fact that it is hoped that through this interaction, the Pemilos can spread the information back to the surrounding environment. Apart from that, as a consideration for socialization provision, the Semarang City Election Commission (KPU Semarang) cooperated with scholar to initiate a research on the participation of the 2015

Regional Head Election (Pilkada) along with the 2015 Mayor Election.

Secondly, [Soeharto \(2011\)](#) entitled "Urgency of Political Education for Women", the result of this research is efforts to empower women, to be more intensified and optimized in every joint of development. This was realized one of them by continuing to actively assist women in all regions of Indonesia. There is a political influence for women themselves not only in the legislative or executive, but must be far broader, specifically in the social sphere and the development of democracy towards political intelligence. To increase the role and performance of women's roles in organizations and political parties, political education needs to be carried out and improved.

Public Administration

Study of public administration in several developing countries. Numerous changes have occurred with the growing complexity of the problems faced by public administrators. This complexity is discussed by the theories by continuing to develop the science of public administration ([Saleh and Muluk, 2005](#)). And until now according to [Denhardt & Denhardt, \(2003\)](#) there are 3 perspectives public administration, specifically old public administration, new

public management and new public service.

Public Administration is a change in meaning and substance from the term state to public. State Administration can be interpreted as a state, meaning that the administrative actors/actors are carried out by the government/bureaucracy (sole agent), for that the state/government as the driving forces in administrative activities, as actors of good government (good governance). The orientation of the state administration is more on state activities; thus, the function of the government as public servant does not involve the community in administrative activities carried out by the government itself. In administration activities carried out by the bureaucracy as a government organization, this research is based on the state administration of Weberian type of organization, where administrative activities tend to be rigidly concerned with hierarchy and not on customer oriented.

Public administration not only has government elements but also private and public sectors. The executor/actor in public administration involves 3 (three) elements, such as the community, private party and the state or government, these is in line with the concept of good governance as a change in the concept of good government.

Therefore, in the public administration, state is no longer as the main actor but also as a facilitator and catalyst for the interests and desires of the private sector and the community that guides the administration in carrying out administration to carry out public service

Political Education

Political education is an effort to increase public knowledge to participate in political activities to the fullest. [Rusadi \(2004\)](#) explains that several forms of political education are carried out through a variety of media, specifically (1) reading sources, for example in the form of magazines or newspapers (2) audio-visual media in the form of radio broadcasts or through television (3) public educational institutions, such as informal or formal institutions, for example, lectures delivered at mosques or churches. The legal basis for implementing political education in Indonesia is Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945).

[Andrews and Mas'ood \(1978\)](#), explained that the means of political education can be carried out through several institutions, specifically in the form of providing citizenship material in schools, it is designed to aim as one of the means of political education. In addition to this, it is also necessary to apply socializing or

working groups, which can affect socialization indirectly.

Political Participation

[Budiardjo \(2008\)](#), explained that political participation is the activity of a person or group of people in playing an active role in political activities, for example, participating in giving their right to vote in election activity, hence it can affect government policies either directly or indirectly (public policy). Other things include developing relations with members of parliament or government officials, by coming and giving opinions at general meetings, becoming members of political parties, and participating in social activities in the community.

[McAndrews and Mas'ood \(1978\)](#) explained the division of forms of political participation; particularly, conventional political participation, and non-conventional. Numerous types of conventional political participation include voting or gathering votes, conducting discussions that discuss politics, campaigning, joining and acting in interest groups, developing good relations or communicating with government officials. Furthermore numerous types of unconventional political participation including submission demonstration petitions, strike confrontations, acts of political violence against people or property (including

waging war against fellow human beings, murder, kidnapping children, acts of destroying property through arson or bombing). The conventional form of participation is a form of political participation that is normal in modern democracies. Unconventional forms of political participation may be legal or illegal, revolutionary and full of violence.

Huntington and Nelson (2008) conveyed that the nature of political participation can be classified into two, including autonomy and mobilization. Autonomous participation is political participation that is autonomous in which citizens have a personal awareness to participate in politics without the involvement of other parties in determining choices (Parinduri, 2019; Rodan, 2020). Mobilized Participation is political participation that is mobilizing in which citizens do not have personal awareness in making choices, other parties play a role in determining choices either through coercion, threats or other acts of violence.

Democracy

A democratic country is a country that involves its people in determining government policies due to the reason that people hold the highest power in the country. Assegaf (2012) explained the origin of the word democracy which is derived from demos and Kratos. Demos

defines the people, while Kratos defines power. Winarno (2010) explained something similar to the opinion of Abd. Rahman Assegaf, specifically democracy is a form of people's government, in which the people are very instrumental in the power of government in a country. Zamroni (2001) also explained the value of democracy, particularly a) tolerance, b) freedom of the people in expressing their opinions, c) respecting and respecting if there are differences in the opinion of each person, d) understanding diversity in society, e) nature openness when establishing communication between others, f) upholding human dignity and human values, g) confident in yourself or confident and not bother or depend on others, h) respect for others, i) be able to control yourself, j) the spirit of togetherness with others and k) balance. The value of democracy requires various stages hence it can be embedded in someone.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Government on Political Education

Political education in society is one of the keys to efforts to improve the democratic system (Al-Muchtar, 2000; Frazer, 1999). Without political education, the democratic party (election) will only

become a kind of five-year ritual in which the people will only become the object of the election candidates' voices without knowing what the people choose. The following are the results of research in the field in expressing opinions about the application of political education as an effort to increase public participation in realizing a democratic system in the Semarang City.

Information on political education regarding Presidential Elections, regional head elections (Pilkada), legislative elections. Who has a role in organizing political education? These include (1) Regional Election Commission (KPUD) and Bawaslu, (2) political parties, (3) city government (Kesbangpol), and (4) mass media.

The results of the study were delivered by informants as the Regional Election Commission (KPUD): "Citizens who are always active in the community (active citizenship), for this reason, it is necessary to increase political knowledge (Galston, 2001). Active citizenship is a citizen who not only has knowledge but also knows very well how to use his political knowledge in the process to determine the running of his country" (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018).

Semarang City Election Commission stated the same thing, that political education is essential for political parties

due to the fact that people who deliver information in socialization activities such as campaigns must have the same party ideology and same struggle hence socialization is more massive.

The Semarang City has a moderate and low election vulnerability index, said the chairman of the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu). Based on this statement political education is needed for the community hence they are willing to participate in the general election hence a democratic party can run smoothly and successfully.

In the implementation of elections for political education as an important stage the process cannot be ruled out by the election organizers (Aspinall, 2017). While some people still question the importance of the General Election for them, moreover when many people are still pessimistic about the General Election as a change for the life of the nation and state. Then the election education becomes important to give a good understanding to the public about the importance of elections in order to be proactive from the community to give their voting rights properly, correctly and responsibly. An informant from the Commissioner of the General Elections Commission, revealed that: "The existence of political education is expected that all Indonesian people can be involved in the 2019 elections hence this democratic

party can run orderly, smoothly, and successfully”.

This shows that the five-year democratic party can be attended by all people who have the right to vote, hence the realization of democracy that is channeled through the General Election can really be implemented (Hadiz & Robinson, 2017). Thus, the educational process undertaken is certainly not limited to inviting the public to come to the polls, but also inviting the public to maintain order and the smoothness of the 2019 elections.

The order and smoothness of the General Election is addressed by the General Election Commission, starting from the central level up to the regional level, hence the General Election process is carried out by means of healthy political competition when entering the campaign period. As the circulation of black campaigns is fatal in light of the fact that black campaigns tend to corner or attack political opponents without being accompanied by credible evidence hence it can trigger political conflict, moreover at the lower levels (Bräuchler, 2017). The existence of political education can reduce or minimize the occurrence of political conflict, the public is given an obvious understanding of the dangers of a black campaign for security stability, order and the smoothness of elections.

Public understanding regarding the importance of elections can be achieved through political education, which is reflected in a proactive attitude in conveying the right to vote with full responsibility, good and right.

The role of political parties, Informants, (Gerindra Party) provides political education, not because of the lure of money and imaging but awareness. Efforts of *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (PDIP) is to deliver information or knowledge hence the community has a good understanding and is critical and militant towards problems that occur in the nation. One strategy used to democratize the Indonesian people is to make the community critical, creative, and participatory through political education (Brownhill & Smart, 1989; Callan, 1997; Litt, 1963).

Next is the role of the Semarang City government, represented by Kesbangpol Semarang City, which is to introduce nationalism through the national echo. The informant (Head of the National Unity and Politics/Kesbangpol Agency) of Semarang City, explained the meaning of the National Echo, which is an activity that is routinely carried out to provide understanding to the public about the value of statehood and nationality to create a spirit of harmony among each other. Other programs that

were formed were political education, nationalist insight, and national defense.

The younger generation participated in the general elections to cheer up the implementation of the democratic party in 2019. The younger generation is said to not neglect their rights to the nation and state if they exercise their voting rights in elections, this reflects the nature of responsibility, mature attitude, and think that the younger generation has.

Political education for women, in the Semarang City, needs to be considered, in light of the fact that female voters (583,649 participants) have more numbers than male voters (550,630 participants). One social factor that causes women to become one of the targets of political education is that female voters in the Semarang city who live in the TNI/Polri dormitory generally have family heads as members of the TNI/Polri who do not have political rights. The informant stated that: "Women who live in this environment rarely get information about politics, so they are less interested in political affairs". Women in the dormitory environment are more active in terms of official affairs than their husbands. Besides these other factors are women with low economic and educational status and are in domestic areas so it is difficult to get information about elections.

The role of mass media on political education is also important. In the era of globalization which is very sophisticated, it is very easy to deliver many informations. The government must be able to utilize the media to provide an understanding of political education to the public. With frequent opinions in print and electronic media (Pang et al., 2016). With content as creative as possible in providing an understanding of political education, the community will indirectly absorb the information obtained in the mass media. Thus, political education is a way to develop and deliver information or knowledge about various things about politics to the public (Almond, 1996). This is useful for the community hence they understand and know correctly about politics.

Community Participation as Voters in General Elections Semarang City 2004-2019

After the reforms, general elections have been held in Semarang City six times, starting in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2015 and 2019. The Semarang City KPU reported voter participation from general elections which began from 2004 to last in 2019.

In 2004, the percentage of public participation in using their voting rights in the general election of members of the

Table 1. Community Participation as Voters in General Elections Semarang City 2004-2019

No.	Election	Year	Number of Voters	Voter Participation
1	People's Representative Council, Regional House of Representatives, and Regional Representative Council	2004	1.031.392	78,69%
2	Election of President and Vice President Round I	2004	1.076.118	78,71%
3	Election of President and Vice President Round II	2004	1.052.047	78,60%
4	Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Semarang	2005	997.200	66,68%
5	Election of the Governor and Deputy Governor of Central Java	2008	1.086.521	62,74%
6	General Elections of People's Representative Council, Regional House of Representatives, and Regional Representative Council	2009	1.087.463	78,79%
7	Election of President and Vice President	2009	1.094.832	78,79%
8	Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Semarang	2010	1.100.337	60,06%
9	Election of the Governor and Deputy Governor of Central Java	2013	1.125.696	61,44%
10	Election of Members of the People's Representative Council, Regional House of Representatives, and Regional Representative Council	2014	1.101.290	75,15%
11	Election of President and Vice President	2014	1.121.824	79,88%
12	Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Semarang	2015	1.109.045	65,67%
13	Election of President and Vice President, Members of the People's Representative Council, Regional House of Representatives, and Regional Representative Council	2019	1.134.279	80,05%

Source: Processed by researchers.

People's Representative Council, Regional House of Representatives, and Regional Representative Council was 78.69%, with a total turnout of 1,031,392. In the same year, the number of voters in the general election of President and Vice President in the first-round with total 1,076,118, the percentage of public participation was 78.71%. the percentage of public participation in the General Election of President and Vice President in the second

round was 78.60%, with a total of 1,052,047 voters.

In 2005, the percentage of community participation in using their voting rights in the general election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Semarang was 66.68%, the number of people participating in giving their voting rights was 997,200. In 2008, the percentage of public participation in the general election of the

Governor and Deputy Governor was 62.74%, with a total of 1,086,521 voters.

In 2009, the percentage of public participation in the general election of members of People's Representative Council, Regional House of Representatives, and Regional Representative Council was 71.41%, with a total of 1,087,463 voters. In the same year, the number of voters in the general election of President and Vice President was 1,094,832, the percentage of public participation was 78.79%.

In 2010, the percentage of public participation as voters in the general election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Semarang was 60.06%, with the number of male and female voters totaling 1,100,337. In 2013 the number of voters in the general election of the Governor and Deputy Governor was 1,125,696, with a percentage of public participation of 61.44%.

In 2014, the percentage of people in the general election of members of the People's Representative Council, Regional House of Representatives, and Regional Representative Council was 75.15%, with a total turnout of 1,101,290. In the same year, the number of voters in the general election of President and Vice President was 1,121,824, with a percentage of 79.88%.

The number of people who have the right to vote is 1,109,045, but not all of the people participated in determining their voting rights, only 65.67% of the people participated in the General Election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Semarang in 2015. In the previous year political participation only reaching 60%, this shows that there is an increase in community participation in determining their voting rights.

In the presidential and vice-presidential elections, members of the People's Representative Council, Regional House of Representatives, and Regional Representative Council in 2019, the number of people who have the right to vote is 1,134,279, but not all people participate in determining their voting rights, namely only 80.05%.

Political Education

Political education for the Indonesians, moreover the Semarang city peoples, as one way in an effort to improve the democratic system. This affects democracy (general election) which becomes a five-year ceremonial where people become the object of the voting contestants in the general election are not told for what the people choose.

Political education is an effort to develop community knowledge about politics, either through training or teaching

hence people understand their rights and obligations, and have an adult attitude, responsibility towards the nation and state. Education owned by a person is very influential in the ability to absorb information and communicate. Political orientations on a person can be formed and grown through political education.

Political education can be defined as a systematic attempt to transform all struggles from political parties to the community hence they are aware of their responsibilities to the state, as well as their rights and obligations towards the nation and state. It is time for political education to be realized through concrete activities towards people of all ages (Berinsky & Lenz, 2011; Biesta, 2007).

Political education is also useful in increasing individual awareness of politics, forming political systems that are democratic, stable and effective, and able to preserve the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945).

Political education has variety of objectives, specifically (1) Political personality, which can be formed through direct or indirect methods. the direct method through political teaching or the like, the indirect method through training and outreach. (2) Political awareness forms a personality that has an awareness of politics through dialogue and instructive methods. (3) Political participation,

creating characters who actively participate voluntarily in political activities.

Law No. 2 of 2008, explains the notion of political education, particularly the learning process regarding the rights, obligations and the personality of responsibility to the community towards the nation and state. [Surbakti \(1999\)](#) explains the concept of political science, specifically the common good, can be realized in several things that are abstract and have moral goals in the form of justice, happiness and truth. [Budiarjo \(2008\)](#) explained that politics is one of the sciences that approached researching several political events. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that politics is considered to have various virtues and truth values.

Law No. 2 of 2011 article 11 number 1 explains the role of political parties, one of its roles is constitutional, particularly to inform political education to the people of Indonesia. Law No. 2 of 2011 Article 13 letter e, explains the obligations of political parties, one of which is to inform political education to its members. Political parties in the Semarang city are expected to provide a good example in organizing political education.

Political Education Strategy in the Semarang City

A strategy is an overall approach to

plan, implement, and execute of actions within a specified period. Coordination of working group members, having a theme, having a plan to achieve goals, and stable funding, are various things needed in forming a good strategy.

Strategies and methods used in implementing political education are initiate training, seminars, and various social activities. Implementation is determined according to the right conditions, scheduled and routine, but does not rule out the possibility of activities adapted to existing conditions.

The election of the student council president was included in the 2019 general election. This is one of the strategies carried out by the Semarang City Election Commission to socialize the election. Various inhibiting factors experienced by initiating socialization are: (a) the minimum number of members of the Semarang City General Election Commissions, (b) lack of public awareness of politics, (c) public has no desire to participate in general elections and enjoys entertainment programs held by the City General Election Commissions Semarang is like a car-free day, (d) there are still some residents who do not have a identity card, (e) many people cannot participate in elections due to the reason that they do not live in the Semarang city.

CONCLUSION

First, the implementation of a political education by Semarang City government has not been maximized, this is due to the still lack of provision of information on the implementation of public political participation, moreover in the younger generation.

Second, the media (political parties) as an aggregation of the interests of the people, must intensively build the communication systems, one of which is a public consultation forum. The forum is a meeting between members of the regional legislative assembly and the community discussing various problems that occur in the community.

Third, various strategies used in the implementation of political education, specifically training, seminars, and various social activities. Implementation is determined according to the right conditions, scheduled and routine, but does not rule out the possibility of activities adapted to existing conditions.

Fourth, the issue of education in campaigns is often used by political party as material for both candidates for regional heads or heads of state, where education should not be used as a tool to seek public support or mobilize certain political parties or candidates. The issue of education must become a party's work program and be fully implemented in party

activities as a principle of benefit for the community.

Fifth, longer as an object of policy. Society has a role in evaluating, controlling, giving opinions or input to the legislative or executive institutions. The community must play a role in expressing opinions regarding the implementation of the general election.

Recommendations

First, the Government has to maximize the potential of the young generation to get wider opportunities in the public sphere, for example becoming a member of a political party, or becoming a member of other social-political organizations.

Second, political education delivered to the public at various levels or age groups must be educational and rooted hence democratic values are understood as a whole, that is the community participates in the political process. Therefore, the community must be critical, rational in assessing and considering the vision and mission of the candidate to be chosen.

Third, e-Vote. The concept can be applied to regions that have sufficient resources, by applying the concept it is expected that the implementation of elections can be direct, effective, efficient and able to minimize the manipulation of votes.

Fourth, the Election Law needs to be revised mainly in relation to candidate requirements. Where the Election Law does not limit which people who meet the requirements are eligible to be candidates and which are not. Due to the fact that it is less strict or there are no community restrictions hence it is often wrong to choose or not want to vote due to the reason that it does not like the candidates who are registered.

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