

Voters' Political Participation in the Covid-19 Pandemic According to the Geography and Topography Condition of the Region (Study on the 2020 Regional Head Election in Pekalongan Regency)

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Abstract

Implementation Election Regent and Representative Regent Pekalongan It is the year 2020, which is one of the elections in Indonesia, which was held amid the Covid-19 Pandemic, experiencing enhanced political participation in society. Different from the most significant challenge during this implementation election common in the district of Pekalongan is the level of participation people tends to be low because of the condition of geography and topography different in the district Pekalongan. The results of this study conclude that first, with the high political participation of voters during the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunity for people to come to the polling station is significant. However, the topography and geography of the region also have a significant influence because each region provides equal opportunities for voters to come to the polling station. Second, implementing the 2020 Pekalongan Regent and Deputy Regent Elections can be carried out safely and adequately with high voter political participation. High voter political participation was achieved by 77.75% and exceeded the national target. That is equal to 77.50%. So it is also higher than in the previous elections. The findings show that the local government of Pekalongan Regency is more innovative in increasing the political participation of its people.

Keywords:

People's sovereignty; Political participation; Elections; Voters; Geography & topography different

INTRODUCTION

People's political participation in determining the government is an important aspect of a democratic state order and a characteristic that indicates the existence of people's sovereignty (Siavelis, 2009 ; Hadiati, 2021). The sovereignty of the people becomes the

highest power, as stated by Abraham Lincoln about democracy that democracy is a system of government that the people implement and for the people (Antlöv et al., 2008) so that the highest holder of government power is the people (Landemore, 2014).

In Indonesia, the form and sovereignty of the people are regulated in the 1945 Constitution Amendment IV, which states that Sovereignty is in the hands of the people and is implemented

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according to Law No. 17 of 2017 concerning Elections (Article 1 paragraph 2). One form of the implementation of popular sovereignty is utilizing general elections held in a direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair manner every five years. This implementation proves that the Indonesian state adheres to a democratic system of government.

The form of people's sovereignty in the regions as a form of regional autonomy (Law No. 13 of 2014 concerning Regional Government) is the holding of Regional Head Elections (Pilkada). Therefore, it is hoped that there will be community political participation and community participation in government administration activities. The fulfillment of political rights is carried out by providing freedom for every citizen to express opinions and gather, such as voting at the polling station (TPS), group discussions, forming and joining organizations, individual political communication, and filing petitions (Hadiati, 2021). The state has guaranteed the freedom of association and assembly to express thoughts verbally and in writing, stipulated by law.

The 2020 Simultaneous Regional Head Elections were also held in Pekalongan Regency. In terms of leadership periodization, the election of the Regent and Deputy Regent of Pekalongan was held in 2021. However, the positions of the Regent and Deputy Regent of Pekalongan ended on 27 June 2021.

The election of the Regent and Deputy Regent of Pekalongan was finally held in 2020 (Lipuma et al., 2009),

which was one of the regional elections in Indonesia that was held during the Covid-19 pandemic. Various parties are apprehensive that the participation rate will decrease drastically due to people's fear of coming to polling stations that have the potential for Covid-19 transmission and violations of health protocols Prokes 5M (Wearing masks, Keeping Distance, Washing hands, Avoiding crowds, Reducing mobilization).

Researchers are very interested in holding simultaneous regional elections in 2020, especially in Pekalongan Regency, which has a different regional topography (<https://pekalongankabppid.kpu.go.id/info/0/3764/>). In addition to this incident being a concern for various parties that the number of political participants will drop drastically, an election like this has never happened in Indonesia's history of holding elections amid the Covid-19 Pandemic. The researcher also wants to analyze the political participation of the community based on the geographical and topographical conditions of different regions in the 2020 Regional Head Election in Pekalongan Regency.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a holistic study, which is a study that does involve not only political and socio-economic aspects but also public administration. Considering the peculiarities of the subject, the object of research, and the nature of the research, this study uses a qualitative research approach (Cresswell, 2015) and includes a phenomenological type of research.

Data collection techniques in research are carried out by obtaining primary data supported by secondary data (Sugiyono, 2019). *Primary data* is collected by researchers directly from the first source at the research site (in-depth interview). While secondary data is collected, namely laws and regulations, literature, and data documents by organizations (e.g., participation data, population data) that have been ratified or published.

The informant from the Pekalongan Regency KPU is the Chair of the Pekalongan Regency KPUD, Abi Rizal, who is in charge Institutionally. It is also related to the responsibility for the implementation budget for the implementation of the Pilkada. Herminastuti Lestari, a Member of the KPUD Legal and Supervision Division responsible for the regulation on the implementation of the regional election, and Laelatul Izah, a member of the KPUD of the Planning and Data division who is responsible for planning implementation and voter data. Achyar Budi Pranoto, a member of the KPU Division of Human Resources, Voter Socialization and Education who is responsible for the use of media and forms of voter socialization and education in the implementation of the election, and M. Ahsin, a member of the KPUD Technical division who is responsible for the implementation of voting. The informant from Bawaslu is the Chairperson of the Bawaslu of Pekalongan Regency, Ahcmad

Dzulfahmi, who is generally responsible for supervising the implementation of the Pilkada.

The informant from the Regional Government organization is Totok Budi M, who serves as Assistant for Government and Welfare of the Pekalongan District Secretary and the Deputy Chair of the DESK who carries out support activities for successfully implementing the Pilkada in Pekalongan Regency—running smoothly.

Political parties are taken from political parties with the largest one and two votes according to the results of the 2019 elections (Carnes et al., 2014) so that in the 2020 elections, they can carry candidates for regional heads (Michels, 2001). Informants from the National Awakening Party, Zainal Abidin as deputy chairman of the Tanfidz Council of the PKB DPC and from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, Endang Suwarningsih as Treasurer of the PDIP DPC as well as a member of the Pekalongan Regency DPRD.

In this study, the authors explore more problems with primary data through interviews, namely data collection techniques by digging data directly from the source through a dialogue conducted by interviewers (Matthew et al., 2014) to obtain information from them: primary informant, secondary informant and supporting informant, for the questions that have been prepared in advance. The data of the informants are as follows:

Table 1. Data of Informants

No	Type of Informant	Name	Organization Origin	Position
1	<i>Primary Informants</i>	Abi Rizal	Pekalongan Regency KPU	Chairperson of the Pekalongan Regency KPUD
		Ahcmad Dzulfahmi	Bawaslu of Pekalongan Regency	Head of the Pekalongan Regency Bawaslu
2	<i>Secondary informants</i>	Herminiastuti Lestari	Pekalongan Regency KPU	Member of KPUD Legal and Supervision Division
		Achyar Budi Pranoto	Pekalongan Regency KPU	Member of KPU Division of Human Resources, Voter Socialization and Education
		Muhammad Ahsin	Pekalongan Regency KPU	Member of KPUD Technical division
		Totok Budi M	Pekalongan Regency Government	Assistant to the Government and Welfare of the Regional Secretary of Pekalongan Regency, at the same time Deputy head of the Pekalongan Regency Election Work Unit Element Support (DESK)
		Zainal Abidin	National Awakening Party (PKB)	Deputy Chairman of the Board of Tanfidz DPC PKB
		Endang Suwarningsih	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP)	Treasurer of the DPC PDIP at once Member of Pekalongan Regency DPRD
3	<i>Supporting informants</i>	Siti Maemunah	Residents of Paninggaran Village District Paninggaran	Voter
		M. Rif'an	Residents of Kalipancur Village, Bojong District	Voter
		Suprihadi	Residents of Wonokerto Wetan Village, Wonokerto District	Voter

Source: Processed Data

Elements of the community or voters were taken according to regional representation, namely: Siti Maemunah from Paninggaran Village, Paninggaran District, mountainous region, M. Rif'an, a resident of Kalipancur Village, Bojong District, Central plains region, Suprihadi from Wonokerto District, coastal plain area, each of whom was a voter residing in the coastal plains. In different geographical and topographical areas in Pekalongan Regency.

In addition, the information or data used in this study was obtained from published reports on the following websites: <https://journals.sagepub.com/>; <https://www.researchgate.net/>; <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/>; <https://link.springer.com/>; <https://search.proquest.com/>; <https://journal.unnes.ac.id/>.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

a. Political Participation

Previous studies stated that the basic principle of community participation in the implementation of regional elections must always be based on the principle of openness as the main principle of community participation (Michels, 2001). According to Surbakti (2010), political participation is the participation of ordinary citizens in determining all decisions concerning or affecting their lives. Budiarjo (2008) generally defines political participation as the activity of a person or group of people to participate actively in political life, namely by choosing state leaders directly or indirectly so that they can influence government policy (public policy).

Silvia (in Calise et al., 2010) defines *political participation* as "... a series

of activities related to political life, at influencing public". According to him, political participation is all activities related to political life intended to influence decision-making directly or indirectly, legally, conventionally, peacefully, or by force. Decisions in a direct way are legal, conventional, pacific, or contentious.

b. Regulation

Election Implementation must be based on several principles, as stated in Article 2 of the Election Law No. 17 of 2019: direct, public, free, confidential, honest, and fair (*luber jurdil*).

Adjusting the regulations for implementing the Regional Head Election during a pandemic requires specificity compared to when it was carried out in a non-pandemic state. The regulations set by the KPU were then used by the Pekalongan Regency KPU as the basis for formulating a decision as technical guidance regarding the implementation of the stages of implementation, as SE KPU No 421/PL.02.1-SD/01/KPU/VI/2020 concerning Changes in the number of voters. These technical guidelines serve as a legal umbrella for organizers, political parties, local governments, and all elements of the community and interested parties to provide much information about the voting day, and all procedures are carried out safely with strict health protocols.

During the extraordinary COVID-19 pandemic, more understanding is needed than just the implementation of democracy under normal circumstances. The intensive and deep, and continuous understanding given by the parties

makes the voters have no doubts when they exercise their political rights while at the TPS, so that there is no anxiety when they are at the TPS to make their political choices, as well as being safe from the threat of transmission. Covid-19.

c. Topographical & Geographical Analysis of the Region

Topography is defined not only as the shape of the earth's surface but also vegetation, vertical height area (from sea level/dpl), and human influence on environment social and physical environment, including local culture (Pattinaja et al., 2019). While the study of geography is a relationship between man and the environment. In general, geography studies the causal relationship of phenomena on the earth's surface, both physical and those concerning the life of living things and their problems through spatial, environmental, and regional approaches for the benefit of programs, processes, and successful development (Ari Welianto, 2020; Priyono et al., 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The concern mentioned above that public political participation will decrease drastically during the pandemic has yet to be proven. The people's political participation in nineteen (19) Sub-districts in Pekalongan Regency has increased by almost 10% compared to the 2015 Election (Pekalongan Regency KPUD Report data, 2021).

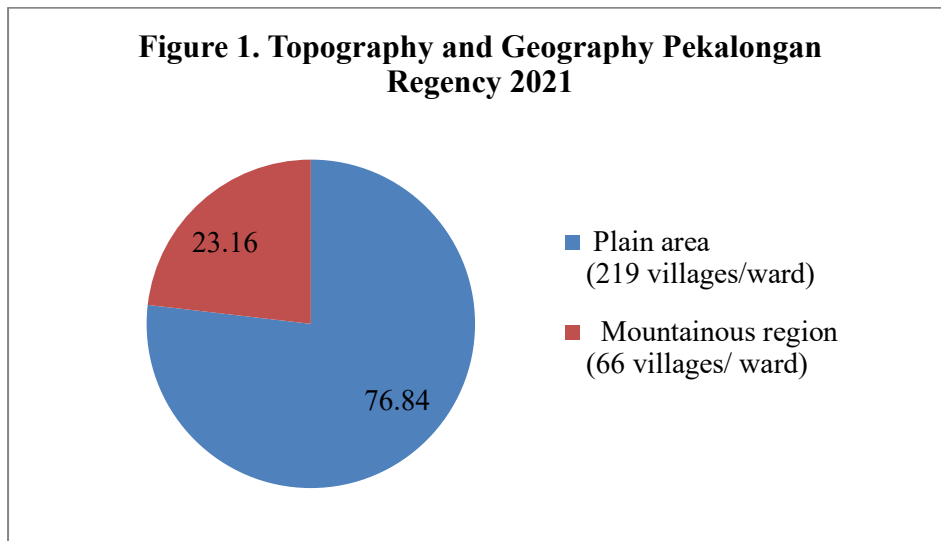
Explains that community involvement is quite good in various forms of political participation; the involvement varies from voting at

polling stations, discussions with community leaders, and participating in candidate campaign activities. In the 2015 election, voter turnout reached 68%. (Data from Pekalongan Regency KPU Report, 2016). Pilkada, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, apparently did not dampen their involvement in forms of community political participation to voice their choices.

The Regional Government of Pekalongan Regency includes having particular policies according to the geography and topography of the region to overcome the impact of the covid 19 pandemic. Research by Romli (2007) states that regions can have policies tailored to their respective regions' conditions. The implementation of direct regional head elections is a policy in the reform era, which is the starting point for changes to actual decentralization policies.

The reform of Indonesia's political system has subsequently succeeded in rolling out a decentralization policy and regional autonomy (Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government). Regional autonomy is considered to be able to introduce democratic practices at the local level and increase the political participation of people living in areas with diverse geography and topography—(Romli, 2007).

Likewise, Pekalongan Regency, with its unique territory, a combination of lowland areas in the north and highlands in the south, consists of 19 sub-districts and 285 villages/wards. Topographically, 66 villages/wards (23.16%) are located in the highlands, and 219 villages/wards (76.84%) are in the lowlands. See the following image:



Source: *Pekalongan Regency in Figures, 2021*

The preparation of the Voter List for the 2020 Pekalongan Regent and Deputy Regent Election begins with the submission of the List of Potential Electoral Voters (DP4). This DP4 is submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs to the KPU RI, then synchronized with the last General Election DPT and submitted to the Regency/City KPU, through the Voter Data Information System portal (Sidalih). The Pekalongan Regency KPU updated it to become the Permanent Voters List (DPT). The number of DPT in the 2020 Pekalongan Regent and Deputy Regent Election, men, were 364,052 people, women 356,602 people, so the total number of voters was 720,654 spread over 2,163 TPS (PPID Pekalongan Regency KPU, 2021).

In the face of the extraordinary Covid-19 pandemic, the Pekalongan Regency KPU prepared various strategic steps to hold the 2020 Pilkada in a pandemic situation safely. The strategic

steps influence the high and low political participation of voters when voting at 2,163 polling stations, in the central plains to the coastal plains and mountainous areas. These factors are Regulation, Budget, Organize, Voter Data, Voter Political Socialization & Education, Voting Technical, and Voters' Awareness.

1. Regulation

According to information obtained from the Legal and Supervision Division, Herminiastuti Lestari said, "The first problem faced was change for change at the regulatory level as the legal basis for planning and action as an implication of the national emergency status due to the Covid-19 pandemic".

Simultaneous Elections to carry out the mandate of Election Law No. 1 of 2015, which was last amended by Law Number 6 of 2020 as the legal basis for the implementation of the Election. The Pekalongan Regency KPU finally issued a decision related to the Stages,

Programs, and Schedules, as well as other decisions as a technical guideline for implementing the Pekalongan Regent and Deputy Regent Election in 2020.

This was corroborated by the statement of the Chairperson of the Pekalongan Bawaslu Achmad Zulfahmi, saying that "The making of regulations is aimed at ensuring justice in the implementation of elections in all regions with different topography and geographic areas, as a contestation carried out following the rule of law, where all citizens must be guaranteed equality of rights, especially the right to vote as a political right." However, regarding regulations, most voters do not know or do not understand, so their political participation is not related to government regulations.

2. Budget

According to information from the Chairperson of the Pekalongan Regency KPU, Abi Rizal, who is also in charge of the Finance, General, and Logistics Division, said that "The very crucial stages, of course, are the stages of Budget planning and Submission of the Election Budget to the Regional Government."

This is because following the mandate of Law No. 10 of 2016 concerning the election of Governors of Deputy Governors, Regents, and Deputy Regents as well as Mayors and Deputy Mayors, which states that the Election Implementation Budget is charged to the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD). Pekalongan Regency KPU, in its stages, must also submit a budget to the Regional Government.

The Covid-19 pandemic,

budgeting is also changed as a form of adjustment to budget needs for the topography and geography of different regions and the standard health protocol of the population (Yang et al., 2012). Regarding the budget, most voters need to learn or understand the process of submitting or using it. However, the voters are happy to disseminate information to their regions, both in the southern mountains and the northern coastal areas. Their political participation is not affected by the decline in the government budget (Bishin et al., 2006).

3. Organizer

The election is carried out by the General Election Commission (KPU) of Pekalongan Regency. This ad hoc body organizes elections (Howlett et al., 2009). KPU, as an organization at the district level, is assisted by smaller organizations in the form of ad hoc bodies at the sub-district and village levels (Vergara, 2013 ; Morgan, 2007). Furthermore, the committee assisted them again at 2,163 polling stations in the central plains-coastal plains and mountainous areas, as well as officers who updated voter data.

In recruiting ad hoc bodies, the KPU selects following the laws and regulations. Adhoc bodies that have passed the selection will be subjected to a rapid test. If the results of the rapid test are positive, then a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is performed to ensure the organizers are not in an actual state of Covid-19.

In the face of public concerns about implementing the 2020 Pekalongan Regent and Deputy Regent Election during a pandemic, the organizers prepared their human

resources by limiting the organizers' ages between 17-50 years and indeed not being confirmed by COVID-19. This is an effort to make careful preparations related to health protocols so that people do not hesitate to come to the polling stations during voting.

Related In the Pilkada organizers, most voters understand the process of submitting and recruiting the Adhoc Agency and the technical implementation at TPS. Voters are happy to come to polling stations in their regions, both in the southern mountains and the northern coastal areas. Voters are also comfortable coming to polling stations because they know some of the election organizers, so their political participation can be mobilized or autonomous.

4. Voter Data

According to a statement from KPU member of the Planning, Data and Information Division, Laelatul Izah, said that "According to PKPU 19 of 2019, the number of voters per polling station was a maximum of 800, but according to KPU SE No 421/PL.02.1-SD/01/KPU/VI/2020 Regarding changes in the number of voters, for the mapping of the 2020 Simultaneous Election TPS, it was agreed that in the implementation of the 2020 Simultaneous Elections advanced stages, the number of voters per each TPS needs to be rearranged.

At the Regional Head Election Previously, there were a maximum of 800 voters per TPS, to a maximum of 500 voters per TPS. The results of the mapping of TPS carried out by PPK assisted by PPS were a total of 2,163 TPS in all regions, which PPK with

the KPU operator then uploaded into the Voter List application, namely "Sidalih."

The List of Potential Electoral Voters (DP4), synchronized with the last Election Voters List, Pekalongan Regency KPU conducts a re-examination by screening voters who do not meet the requirements as death, double, and change of domicile. The results of this examination mapped TPS by PPK and PPS, which was used as "coklit" material (matching and research) in the Election of Regent and Deputy Regent of Pekalongan 2020. In this mapping of TPS, as many as 2,163 TPS were evenly distributed throughout the sub-district, then per TPS, the maximum number of voters was recorded. 300 voters. This is to minimize the number of voters in order to avoid crowds at polling stations.

Bawaslu's supervision related to updating voter data has hampered the preparation of a comprehensive voter list in the field because voters are the beginning of determining who has fulfilled the requirements as voters to exercise their voting rights (Schumpeter, 2003; Bernhagen et al., 2014). In the field, some do not care whether they are registered as voters because of a lack of understanding of election regulations related to the voter list, so they need to know if their rights to be registered as voters are violated and tend to be ignored. Here, potential data still need to meet the requirements as voters, such as voters who have died or have moved, are still on the voter list.

Through input from the community and Bawaslu, the Pekalongan Regency KPU maintains voter data to minimize voter data that does not meet the requirements of not

getting a voting notification letter and provides information to voters who have not registered to come to polling stations after 12.00 local time to provide information. The right to vote

Related to voter data, most voters need to understand that the verification process is quite complicated. Although a few do not care, most voters are happy if they have registered and gotten a voter card. The related socialization that voters have to take them to the polling stations on the D day has reached the voters' areas both in the southern mountains and the northern coastal areas, so they are proactive in coming to the polling stations according to schedule: voter Socialization and Political Education.

5. Voter Political Socialization and Education

The role of the Regional Government through its apparatus, prioritizing the neutrality of ASN and the role of ASN in the use of voting rights also affects the implementation of clean elections. The public has become more aware of their responsibilities in the success of the 2020 Simultaneous Regional Head Elections compared to the previous regional elections (Nicholson, 2011). According to information from a member of the Pekalongan Regency KPU, Achyar Budi Pranoto's HR Division, Voter Socialization and Education said that "To achieve high participation, the Pekalongan Regency KPU socializes all stages in the 2020 Pekalongan Regent and Deputy Regent Election to the public, both directly and indirectly to the community". This is done in various ways (Head, 2007), such as face-to-face collaboration with community groups,

through socialization materials such as banners, billboards, and leaflets, and mass media and social media owned by the Pekalongan Regency KPU. The socialization was carried out by the organizers of the 2020 Pilkada, both the KPU and the ranks below, as well as political education and campaigns carried out by the participants through their campaigners, as well as the use of other campaign media (Seligson et al., 2011).

According to the National Awakening Party administrator, Zainal Abidin, "the political education carried out by his party is to carry out party regeneration continuously both in mountainous areas from the mainland to the coast." Cadre is carried out to provide political education for the community so that they can use their voting rights and wisely shape cadres' attitudes or behavior in political behavior (Edward, 2000). Cadreization can also strengthen bases from below to build militant participation. Political Education by political parties is also a mandate of the Political Party Law and is supported by a budget by the Regional Government because the Government is required to provide financial assistance to political parties whose use is prioritized for political education.

According to the administrator of the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, Endang said that "To provide political education to the community by implementing a monitoring, evaluation and agitation pattern, advocacy and provocation so that the party will quickly enter people's lives, both in mountainous areas from the mainland to the coast (Landau et al.,

2014). This can increase public political participation. The implementation of the application of this pattern includes conducting a two-way traffic and small group discussion (SGD) dialogue with the community and establishing partnerships or fostered groups in areas needed by the community, according to the topography and geography of the area. For example, the development of traditional herbal medicine in mountainous areas, processed seafood dishes that are primarily on the beach,

According to the deputy head of the DESK Pilkada, Totok Budi Mulyanto, "One of the supports given by the government is to increase public political participation by providing socialization to its officers and voters." This increase in public participation is carried out through political education in the upper class (the have) and the lower class (the have not) to make the elections successful.

6. *Voting Technical*

According to KPU member of the Technical Division, M Ahsin said that "In the implementation of voting, the provisions of the new norm in the 2020 Pekalongan Regent and Deputy Regent Election during the pandemic period, the rule was applied that the age limit for organizers was 20 years to 50 years for KPPS members. In addition, the organizers must carry out rapid tests and PCR to avoid the transmission of COVID-19." This is intended so that the organizers are physically ready for their health and are not confirmed by COVID-19, with strict implementation of health protocols. In addition, to avoid crowds, attendance is also scheduled at TPS.

The implementation of health protocols is also carried out at polling stations by providing hand washing facilities at the entrance and exit of polling stations, using a body temperature check (thermogenic), using special booths (for voters whose body temperature is above 37.3°C), Hazmat clothes (worn by KPPS members). to serve voters who are positive for COVID-19), the use of masks, gloves and hand sanitizers for organizers and voters. Then to avoid using the ink together that was previously dipped, it was replaced by dripping it on the finger. Regarding voting techniques, most voters understand the technical process of voting at polling stations, and even voters are pleased to come to the nearest polling station in their area, both in the mountains of the south and on the north coast, so their political participation is outstanding.

7. *Voter Awareness*

Rif'an, a resident of Kalipancur Village, Bojong District, in the central mainland region, said that "I came to the TPS because I was interested in the socialization of various parties, including those in the mass media and KPU social media." has passed, regulations, Pilkada organizers, voter data for each family, and voting techniques carried out at polling stations. There is self-awareness as a voter to come according to the schedule, and election procedures at the polling station must use the standard Covid-19 protocol so that the fear of Covid-19 transmission can be eliminated and there is no need to worry anymore, so it will be safe to be at TPS locations in all

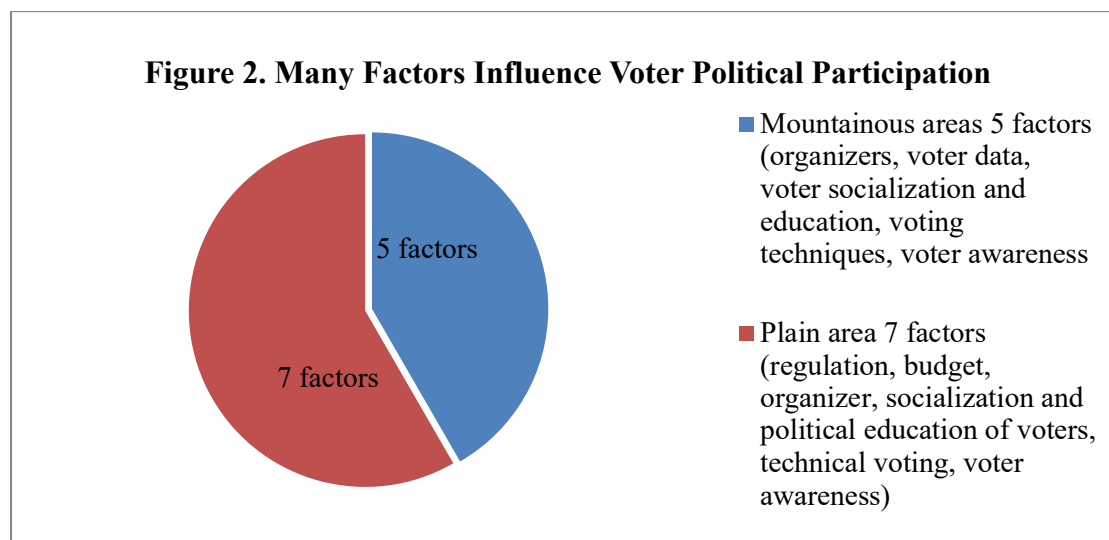
regions. With the scheduling of attendance at TPS not more than 300/TPS,

Siti Maemunah from Paninggaran Village, Paninggaran Sub-district in the mountainous region, on July 25, 2021, said that "I received information and socialization from PPS regarding the implementation of the Pilkada, information on Voter Data, implementation of voting, socialization of candidate campaign teams, and limited meetings with presenting a maximum of 50 people face to face". Siti Maemunah does not know about the regional election regulations and budget.

Supriyadi, a voting community from Wonokerto Wetan Village, on July 24, 2021, in Wonokerto in the plains region, said that "I know about the Pilkada organizers, my family's voter

data, the implementation of the regional elections through campaigns, and voting techniques held at TPS as well as the distribution of attributes as well. Campaign to distribute necessities with a value of around Rp.50,000". Supriyadi admitted that he only knew a little about the regulations and budget for the regional elections that had fallen. Besides that, Supriyadi's house is close to the polling station. He was also interested in coming to the TPS because the TPS display was made by KPPS in a unique, creative, and lively manner while also being safe from the spread of the coronavirus.

The number of factors that influence voter political participation based on topography and regional geography can be seen in the following figure:



Source; Processed data

Voters' Political Behavior

The political behavior of voters in democracy through the Pilkada is shown by the diverse responses of the people (Landemore, 2014; Hadiati et al., 2020). Even though the voters paid enough

attention to the Pilkada organizers, checked voter data, attended socialization and political education, and understood voting techniques, the figure was 70.42%. Needs for more responses, such as inattention in observing the

voter list and not understanding regulations and budgets, occurred in mountainous areas, namely Kandangserang, Paninggaran, Lebakbarang, and Petungkriyono sub-districts.

Meanwhile, in Talun and Doro sub-districts in the plains, voter participation tends to be high at around 79.81%. Most of the livelihoods are farmers, so the people stay home during the voting. This supports the high number of voters' political participation and the large number of participants who attend political socialization and education activities. Good/good voter awareness about the activities of Pilkada organizers, voter data, and voting techniques is also an essential factor influencing political participation in this plain area.

In the central plains, namely Karanganyar, Kajen, Kesesi, Sragi, Bojong, Wonopringgo, Kedungwuni, Buaran, and Karangdadap sub-districts, the livelihoods of many people are engaged in the industrial and trade sectors. Political participation of voters in the central region reached 77.90%. Eight sub-districts in the central region have the highest participation rate in Kedungwuni District, reaching 85.72%. Psychological factors greatly influence the candidates for Pekalongan Regent in the 2020 Pilkada, both from the Kedungwuni area.

The coastal areas in Pekalongan Regency are the sub-districts of Tirto, Wiradesa, Siwalan, and Wonokerto, with a participation rate of 74.88%. The absence of voters to exercise their political rights is influenced by the livelihoods of the residents, who are

primarily fishermen, causing many residents to be unable to come during the day.

With the high awareness of the public to participate in politics in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunity for the public to come to the polling station is very important (Silvia, 2020). However, the topography and geography of the region also have an important influence, because each region provides equal opportunities for voters to come to the polling station. Mountain areas with less political participation than other areas, due to the difficult topography and geography conditions and it is not easy to travel in these mountainous areas. The area of the earth's surface is in the form of hills and mountains, there are several road points that often slide when it rains heavily, for the journey to villages/kelurahan and sub-districts, it is through steep uphill roads and steep descents. With a left and right path of high cliffs and steep ravines,

While the central plains to the coast, have the topography and geography of the different areas are sloping, the roads are wide enough paved and easy to reach, if you travel to all places. The population is more and it is quite close to the location of the village/kelurahan, sub-district and the center of the Pekalongan Regency local government.

Soverall, the national target of 77.50% voter political participation could be exceeded in the Pekalongan Regency election in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was an average of 77.75% for the whole. This shows that the local government of Pekalongan

Regency is smarter in increasing the political participation of its people (Zavediuk, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research and discussion results above, first, with the high political participation of voters during the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunity for people to come to the polling station is significant. However, the topography and geography of the region also have a significant influence because each region provides equal opportunities for voters to come to the polling station. Mountain areas have less political participation than other areas due to challenging topography and geographical conditions. It is not easy to travel in this mountainous area, such as to villages and sub-districts through steep uphill roads and descents. Meanwhile, the central plains to the coast have very different topography and geographical area, and the area is sloping. The roads are wide enough paved and easy to reach. If We travel to all places, it is close enough to quickly get to the location of the village/ ward, sub-district, and central government of Pekalongan Regency.

Second, implementing the 2020 Pekalongan Regent and Deputy Regent Elections in a non-natural disaster situation, COVID-19, can be carried out safely and adequately with high voter political participation. High voter political participation was achieved by 77.75% and exceeded the national target. That is equal to 77.50%. So it is also higher than in the previous elections. This shows that the local government of Pekalongan Regency is more innovative

in increasing the political participation of its people.

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