

Political Participation of Voters in the Simultaneous Regional Elections at South Sulawesi

(Perspective Laws of General Election)

Firman Umar ^{[1](*)}, **Muhammad Akbal** ^[2]

^{[1][2]} Department of Civic Education and Pancasila, Faculty of Social Science, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

(*)✉ (e-mail) firman.umar@unm.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to analyze: (1) the level of political participation of voters in the simultaneous regional elections in 2015 in South Sulawesi Province, and (2) the contributions of legal election towards political participation of voters in South Sulawesi Province. This research was normative law-sociological research. The locations of research were 11 (eleven) districts at South Sulawesi province that conducted local leaders election in 2015. The techniques of collecting data used were interviews and documentation. The technique of analyzing data used was descriptive qualitative. The results of the research: (1) the level of political participation of voters in the simultaneous regional elections in 2015 in South Sulawesi Province was 68.88%; and (2) there was positive contributions of legal election towards political participation of voters in South Sulawesi Province.

Keywords: *Political Participation, the Simultaneous Regional Elections.*

Introduction

There is no democratic country without a general election, and the quality of the implementation of the general election is determined by the awareness of political participation of the citizens itself as the voters. In the democratic country, the political participation of the public in holding general elections often get attention and become a public issue, because it is closely related to the political legitimacy of a government. It means that the higher the level of political participation of the people through general elections, the higher the level of political legitimacy acquired by the government, either vice versa. Besides that, the level of political participation in general elections also has functions to fill government political positions and the effectiveness of government administration for the people interests.

In Indonesia, normatively, amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Year 1945 is a consequence from political reform after a new era, marked by the government's efforts to foster democracy in the life of the state, that is general election namely direct, free, secret, honest and fair. As for, the general election is held by the General Election Commissions (KPU) which is national, permanent and independent. Empirically, the level of people political participation in Indonesia on legislative elections showed fluctuate number, while Presidential Election tended to decrease. In the legislative elections in 2004, the number of the public political participation was 84.1%, but in 2009 it decreased by 13.1% to 71%, and in 2014 the number of the public political participation increased by 4.11% to 75.11% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2016). While, in the Presidential Election in Indonesia in 2004 was conducted twice, for the first round was 79.76%, and the second round was 77.44%, participation rate decreased in 2009 which was 72.09%, and in 2014 participation rate decreased again 70% (Ramadhanil, F., Junaidi, V., and Ibrahim 2015).

Furthermore, how does public political participation in general elections in South Sulawesi Province? The total number of final voter list for general elections in 2014 recorded 6.282.339 people,

but the number of valid ballot papers in the legislative elections was 4.404.165 or 70.1%. The Presidential Election was 4.251.883 or 67.68%, and Local Leaders Election was 4.294.960 or 68.34% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2016). The results of the research showed that political participation and voter behavior in 2014 general elections were influenced by three factors, namely; (1) sociology, that is the religion and educational background or the experience of the legislative candidate and voter education background; (2) psychology, that is identity of the party, interest in politics, political discussions and the quality of political figures; and (3) rational choice, that is evaluation for economic condition (welfare) of the state and government performance (Yustiningrum & Ichwanuddin, 2016).

The object of this study was political participation of voters in the direct election of the simultaneous regional elections in 2015 in South Sulawesi Province reviewed from a legal perspective. As for political participation of voters in this research namely Indonesian citizens who are 17 (seventeen) years old, either more or not yet but they already/were married, they can use their right to vote, observing the process of general elections, monitoring, and reporting (asking petition) the results if there are any violations in the general election (Van Deth, 2014), whereas Simultaneous Regional Election is for selecting Governor, Regent / Mayor are carried out directly and held every five years during the tenure of local leaders.

This research was important to conduct because the following three reasons: (1) The Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Year 1945 confirms that sovereignty is in the hands of the people and carried out according to the constitution. The implication is that Indonesia adheres to the concept of constitutional democracy, which means that all activities for government administration that must be based on legal rules; (2) in a democratic country, a general election is a mechanism for the change of authority for government administration legally; during five years that provides direct opportunity for the people to determine who is the leader; the people give their mandate as holders of the highest sovereignty to government administration for the purpose to create welfare, orderly, and security; and (3) the level of political participation of voters is one of the factors to evaluate holding general election, because the participation is not only a problem of how many voters use their voting rights (quantity of voters), but also concerns about voter awareness to use their right to vote (quality of voters). Therefore, the political participation of voters play a role and create the process of general election that is honest, fair and democratic.

Based on the descriptions above, then the focus of this research namely how does the level of political participation of voters in the simultaneous regional elections in 2015 in South Sulawesi Province? And how does the contribution of legal election towards political participation of voters?

Research Method

The population in this research was 11 (eleven) districts in South Sulawesi Province which carried out simultaneous Regional Election in 2015 namely Maros, Pangkep, Barru, Soppeng, East Luwu, North Luwu, Tana Toraja, North Tana Toraja, Selayar Islands, Gowa and Bulukumba. As for, to support the results of this research, the Regional General Elections Commission (KPUD) who held simultaneous Regional Election in 2015 at South Sulawesi Province became as informants of this study.

The instruments used in this research were interview guidelines and documentation sheets. The interview guidelines contain a number of questions that are used to interview Regional General Elections Commission (KPUD) in the district who hold simultaneous Regional Election in 2015 about the suitability between legal election (materially and procedurally) and political participation of voters, while the document sheets are used to collect data about the total of voter who is registered in the final voter list, and the total of voters who used their voting rights.

The type of this research was normative legal-sociological research that examines the issue about political participation of voters in the simultaneous regional elections in 2015 in South Sulawesi

Province both in terms of the setting and the implementation. The data obtained was analyzed qualitatively through the data reduction phase, presentation and drawing conclusion. Next, to check the validity of data, the researchers triangulated the source data and applied *member checking*.

Result and Discussion

The research result showed that: **First**, in South Sulawesi Province, the level of political participation of voters in the simultaneous regional elections in 2015 was 68.88%. In detail, it can be seen in the following table below:

Table 1. The Percentage of Using Voting Rights
In The Simultaneous Regional Elections in 2015 in South Sulawesi Province

No	District	Number of voters	Number of voting right user	Percentage	Total of valid ballot	Total of invalid ballot
1	Selayar	92.580	75.011	81.02%	74.616	395
2	Soppeng	181.549	140.488	77.36%	139.903	585
3	Barru	131.854	101.708	77.13%	101.181	527
4	North Luwu	223.921	170.503	76.14%	169.438	1.065
5	North Toraja	178.172	131.780	73.96%	131.222	558
6	Tana toraja	171.687	122.910	71.58%	122.177	733
7	Pangkep	253.073	181.460	71.70%	180.439	1.021
8	East Luwu	199.325	137.352	68.90%	136.316	1.036
9	Gowa	553.848	366.834	66.23%	363.894	2.940
10	Maros	261.481	159.389	60.95%	158.116	1.273
11	Bulukumba	371.494	216.771	58.35%	213.862	2.909
	Total	2.618.984	1.804.206	68.88%	1.791.164	13.042

Source: General Election Commission, 2015

From the table 1, the interesting thing to study is the percentage of voting rights in Selayar District which occupies the highest position (81.02%) and Bulukumba district which occupies the lowest position (58.35%), the percentage number indicates that there is a significant difference in the use of the right of voters to use their voting rights. In fact, if it viewed from a geographical aspect, Selayar Island District is difficult to reach because it consists of islands where the distance is relatively far away and the transportation is inadequate. Meanwhile, in Bulukumba District, it is reachable and requires short time because it is reachable using two-wheeled vehicles and four wheels, the information and communication are good, thus it facilitates campaign activities. If it viewed from the society profession, in Selayar Island, most of the people work as fishermen, maybe when election day, they still in the sea and bad weather happen, thus it block their journey and late, even they do not use their voting rights, while in Bulukumba district, the people work as a farmer/gardener. Besides that, when it viewed from an educational background, Bulukumba district is more advanced than Selayar Island with considerations of good communication and transportation. There are also private university and class assisted education of higher education postgraduate program and magister, and every year the students lived there to an internship or to serve the community. Therefore, further research is needed, why does the participation of voting rights in the Selayar Islands District higher than Bulukumba District?

Besides that, the thing that must be noticed is in using voting rights, there are some factors should be considered by voters to determine their local leader candidates, those are vision and mission (19.6%), personality (14.9%), never corruption (13.6%), same religion (9.6%), professional background (8.3%), and performance (6.8%) (Simanjutak, 2017). Those considerations indicate that the voters try to learn information about their identity, experience, and performance of candidate during the

campaign period, and next it will influence their vote decisions. The same thing also happened in the United State of America, in the election of Governors and senates without incumbent candidates, the voters learn the ideology of candidates during the campaign period, and that information is used to determine their vote decision (Hirano, Lenz, Pinkovskiy, & Snyder, 2015).

Second, the political participation for women in using their rights vote in the general election of regional head simultaneously in 2015, at South Sulawesi Province was **71.29%**. Specifically, it can be seen in the following table below.

Table 2. The Percentage of Using Voting Rights for Men and Women in The Simultaneous Regional Elections in 2015 In South Sulawesi Province

No	District	Number of Voter		Number of voting right user		Percentage	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1	Selayar	43.852	48.728	34.827	40.184	79.41%	82.46%
2	Barru	63.305	68.549	46.553	55.155	73.53%	80.46%
3	Soppeng	85.242	96.307	64.481	76.007	75.64%	78.92%
4	North Luwu	112.219	111.702	83.861	86.642	74.72%	77.56%
5	North Toraja	90.491	87.753	65.334	66.446	72.19%	75.71%
6	Tana toraja	87.177	81.510	61.492	61.418	70.53%	75.35%
7	Pangkep	121.210	131.073	83.653	97.807	69.01%	74.62%
8	East Luwu	102.351	96.974	69.198	68.154	67.60%	70.28%
9	Gowa	268.096	285.752	170.411	196.424	63.56%	68.73%
10	Maros	125.215	136.266	72.908	86.481	58.22%	63.46%
11	Bulukumba	180.864	190.630	99.563	117.208	55.04%	61.48%
	Total	1.280.022	1.335.244	852.281	951.926	66.58%	71.29%

Source: General Election Commission, 2015

Why do researchers compare the participation in voting right between men and women? The interesting things to examine is that the percentage of participation in voting right of women was higher than men, even though the men population is more than women. That phenomenon occurred in four districts in South Sulawesi Province, namely North Luwu, North Toraja, Tana Toraja, and East Luwu.

In the United States of America, women's turnout has been higher than men's in every presidential election since 1980 (CAWP, 2015). Meanwhile, Rai (2017) found that, in India, the participation in voting right of women in general election was lower than men. To obtain a broader view, Solijonov (2016) stated that women were more active in elections than men in 21 of the countries, most notably Russia, Belarus, New Zealand, and Trinidad and Tobago. Whereas, the low level of women's political participation in general elections mostly found in Middle Eastern, North African and Asian countries, the lowest is in Pakistan (see World Values Survey, Sixth wave (2010–14)).

In legal perspective, citizens have the same position in front of law and government. The implication is the upholding the principle of equality, it means that every citizen has the same rights and obligations, they must get same treatment without seeing gender, social status, tribe, race, ethnic, and religion. As for, the high and low levels of voter participation in general elections in a country is dynamic, because it influenced by some factors, among others: (1) socio-economic factors: population size, population stability, and economic development; (2) political factors: closeness of elections, perception of political issues at stake; campaign expenditures, political fragmentations, (3) institutional factors: electoral system, compulsory voting, registration requirements and voting

arrangements; (4) individual factors: age; education (Mayer, 2011); political interest and civic duty (Solijonov, 2016).

Third, electoral law has contributed towards voter political participation. Regulatory, Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7 Year 2017 concerning General Elections and Laws of the Republic of Indonesia Number 8 Year 2015 concerning Election of Governors, Regents and Mayors affirms that: (1) in preventing election violations, Election Supervisory Agency and Election Supervisory Committee involve society participation in election supervision; (2) society participation can be carried out in the involvement of society in the holding general elections, control every stages in general elections, the socialization of the election, political education for voter, monitoring elections, surveys or polling about elections and quick count; and (3) the form of public participation is carried out with the following provisions: (a) impartiality that is advantage or disadvantage to election participants; (b) not disturb the process of implementing election phase; (c) aims to increase political participation in society widely; and (d) encourage of a conducive atmosphere for the implementation of elections that are safe, peaceful, orderly and run well.

Next, the rule of General Election Commission Republic of Indonesia Number 5 the Year 2015 about Socialization and Society Participation in selecting regional head affirms that in administering of public participation, the society has the right to (1) deliver and share public information related to elections; (2) give their opinion or convey their thoughts, oral and written; (3) participate in the process of drafting election policies or election rules ; (4) join in each stages of the election; (5) join in evaluating and observing holding general election; (6) make confirmation based on the results of election supervision; (7) give suggestion for the results of election supervision, and the society obliged to (1) respect others right; (2) responsible for their opinions and actions in participating; (3) maintain ethics and politeness based on the culture in society; (4) maintain the implementation of public participation based on the principles of independent, honest, fair, orderly, legal certainty, public interest, professional, accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Empirically, raising voter awareness and participation (society) in elections is not easy. However, there have been an efforts to make that happen, for example the existence of the People's Voter Education Network (JPPR) in South Sulawesi Province which opens access for the community to complain of election violations in cyberspace, so that the society (public) can directly send information and photo that assumed break general election. However, the challenge is a lack of understanding about monitoring after the general election process, procedures and what things should be monitored. This is confirmed when looking at the recapitulation reports that assumed break general election in selecting Governors, Regents and Mayors in South Sulawesi Province simultaneously, 433 cases of violations were recorded, consisting of 160 cases in reports and 273 cases in the form of findings either from the community or general election organizers, however, from the 433 cases, only 299 cases were investigated by Election Supervisory Committee (Badan Pengawas Pemilu, 2015). Therefore, community participation in the electoral law enforcement process is also very essential. The voters (society) are required to actively monitor and supervise and even report if there is a violation in organizing elections, but the rights of voters are still considered less attention, with the following two reasons: (1) there is no legal protection mechanism (security guarantee) given to the voter (society) as the election observers or supervisors or rapporteur if there are violations in general election, both from the regulation aspects and the policy of the organizer / supervisor and law enforcement; (2) the process of handling reports of election violations is less optimal, because voters who report have to collect evidence and witnesses. When the evidence and witnesses have not been collected at a certain time, the alleged violation cannot be investigated. Ideally, the report will be the subject of study for election supervisors together with other law enforcement officials. The results of the study are clearly conveyed to the rapporteur; and (3) it needs to provide information to rapporteur about the status of the alleged report, whether it has been investigated, stopped, or in the process from the election supervisor together with other election law enforcement officers.

Conclusion

The conclusions of this research are summarized in two important points: first, society participation plays an important role in the administration of general elections, both in their position as voter participants, monitors, supervisors, and rapporteur about deviation in general election. The elements that need to be noticed in the political participation of the community are the knowledge, understanding, and awareness of the public about their rights and obligations in general elections; and second, the contribution of legal election towards political participation in elections is quite good, but it still necessary to renew, especially the mechanism of legal protection and security guarantees given to voters (public) as observers or supervisors of the election or rapporteur if there are violations in the general election.

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