

Democracy and Political Consciousness Investigating Difabel Toward Political Participation in the 2014 Presidential Election in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract—Every citizen has right to choose and to participate in the general election, and the state must protect this basic right of politics. The high percentage of people with a different ability (difabel) participated in the 2014 presidential election in Yogyakarta (66,5%) indicated the remarkable work of inclusive democracy in this city. Community participation is the main barometer to measure how the democracy is meaningful. This paper aims to explain the group of difabel responses electoral process in Yogyakarta towards democratic space provided by Local General Election Commissions (KPUD). This narrative research was conducted through interview and documentation which consists of several stakeholders, such as Election Commissions of Yogyakarta city, SIGAB, and difabel groups. By conducting field research, there are two main findings of this study. First, difabel community competences in responding the existence of participation space in Yogyakarta city was influenced by the awareness level, these are semi intransitive, naive transitivity and critical consciousness. In Yogyakarta, difabel groups will gain stronger power in encouraging an enhancement of general election implementation, when they had critical consciousness. Second, the critical participation of difabel categories was not only giving a votes contribution (voters) or become an object in an electoral process, but they were considered as a subject by participating in election time, for instances, they decided to be team members of democratic volunteers and voting committee officers. Moreover, disabled communities also did political practices as the manifestation of their political consciousness level.

Keywords— *Presidential election; political participation; conciousness, Difabel, Democracy*

INTRODUCTION

To begin with, difabel community who recognized as one of the Indonesian communities hold the basic right to be involved in political process following UN convention (Cogburn & Reuter, 2017). Article 43:1 Low.No 39/1999 on “human right” has demonstrated clearly that citizen has right to receive an equal opportunity in governance both to choose or to be chosen. Convention legalization of difabel group rights in UU. No 19/2011 has also ensured the difabel’s suffrage in general election. Besides, this constitution also emphasizes that the state is obligated to provide the difabel’s right, to guarantee the equality of right and to realize the basic freedom, which one of them is the right to obtain protection and service in general election (Merly, 2015).

In contrast, the difabel category could not be linked to the equality principle of general election. There were a number of discriminations

occur to them. Clearly, up to the year 2014, the difabel discourse has not been paid much attention yet by public or even democracy researcher in Indonesia. It is proved by the few existences of academic research on democracy issues which related to the difabel discourse both after or before the 2014 general election (Salim, dkk, 2014).

Furthermore, there are only a few journals which focused to demonstrate the difabel existence in general election. First, the publication which was conducted by Ishak Salim on difabel perspective in the 2014 general election and the contribution of their movement for inclusive general election in Indonesia. This research has analyzed on how the Indonesian difabel movement contribution to emerging inclusive general election in Indonesia. Second, is “National Defence Journal” by Mario Merly on “The accessibility of the election in 2014 and its implication to Political Defence. The research discussed the accessibility which still limited in

the process of general election for difabel in 2014 (Merly, 2015).

To conduct the crucial research on democracy and difabel becomes stronger not only because of the absence of specific publication of the difabel community responses, but also the number of difabel population are in high percentage. According to the data of social department of DIY/2015 which was released by Tribun Jogja showed that nowadays there are 25.050 difabel categories in the DIY province which were taken in five regions/cities. Kulonprogo amounted to 4.399 people, Bantul 5.437, Gunungkidul 7.860, Sleman 5.535 and Yogyakarta city 1.819. From all these amounts, there were 3.708 children on the list. Then, Yogyakarta becomes a prominent area to research, because KPUD Yogyakarta was given a prestige by national general election commission for its success to create inclusive access for voters. As a result, they are recognized as a role model in providing election access to difabel groups. It is quite understandable due to in Yogyakarta, such development is easily supported by many social capital in the regions. The existence of big number voluntary organizations in Yogyakarta are very productive in supporting political development agenda (Efendi, 2012).

DEMOCRATIC AND POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A. *Difabel and Political Participation*

According to Low No.8/ 2016 on the Difabel categories stated that difabel is every individual who experiences physical limitation, intellectual, mentally and sensory for long duration of time, and she or he gets difficulty to interact with the environment and another society and to participate by full participation effectively based on the equality of right. In his book on the electoral participation of a person with special needs in Canada, Michael J. Prince (2007) found that the participation of a person with a disability in election is determined by society condition and highly influenced by Canadian policy reform that play significant role in improving access in election.

According to Miriam Budiardjo in the *Fundamentals of Political Science* book, she defined that political participation is the activity of a person or group to participate actively in political practice by choosing the leadership of the State directly or indirectly, affect the government policy. These activities include actions of voting in elections, attending public meetings, contacting or lobbying with government officials or parliamentarians,

becoming party members or one of the social movements with their direct action (Budiardjo, 2010).

Samuel P. Huntington and Joan Nelson (1994) articulated forms of political participation, including (1) election activities including votes, and it also recognized for their contributions to campaigns, working in an election, seeking support by a candidate or any intended action, which affect the outcome of the election process; (2) Lobbying which includes of individual or group efforts to contact government officials and political leaders with a view for influencing their decisions on matters on involving large numbers of communities; (3) organizational activities concerning participation as members or officials in an organization whose principal and urgent objectives are influencing government decision-making; (4) seeking contact (contact) is an individual act directed against government officials and usually with the intention of benefiting only one person or a few; and (5) violence may also constitute a form of political participation and for the purposes of analysis and its usage to define as a separate category. It means that it is useful in an attempt to influence government decision making by causing physical harm to persons or property. This theory is quite helpful to understand the dynamics of participation of difabel in Yogyakarta.

B. *Political Consciousness*

A consciousnesses substantial factor which should be possessed by individuals to acquire political rights. It is a true phenomenon that without having it, particular people tend to be apathies society. According to Paulo Freire (1999) in the book of "Political Education Culture, Power, and Liberation" there are three levels of awareness which are semi intransitive consciousness, naïve consciousness, and critical awareness.

Firstly, Semi Intransitive Consciousness is owned by an introvert social structure. In a society circumstance which is supposed to comply the reality, the consciousness will not be able to grasp the existence of a number of challenges or understand them in a distorted way. This awareness was failed to objectify facts and everyday life that actually contains many problems. Secondly, *Naïve Transitivity* awareness emerged because of the development of semi transitive consciousness within the process of silent culture, so they would be able to visualize and distinguish what was not being understood clearly before. This consciousness emerged to be

full awareness, which affects the appearing of mass movement in order to press the power of elites, although this stage does not give solution for solving silent culture, but the citizen awareness can influence the government consciousness. Thirdly, it is the critique consciousness. In this stage, the community was able to see and observe what were mistaken before. Although they want to hold the freedom, they also worry about finishing their silent culture. During the transition from silent culture to full consciousness, the withdrawn behaviour of the societies will gradually be in changes to the opened ideology in all aspects of life. Along with the emergence of critical awareness of intellectuals.

METHODOLOGY

It is research problem-solving procedure objectively (Hadari Nawawi, 1992). Likewise, (Surakhmad, 1989) also stated that the main feature of the descriptive research is the focusing on the actual problem, and it is begun by collecting data, and then it will be analyzed. These data are used by researchers to describe the existing phenomenon, and they are also utilized to explain the relation which formed between one phenomenon to others. Besides, this research is usually used to examine the hypothesis. Interviews were addressed to difabel members, KPUD members, and SIGAB (NGO). The interview process is conducted through an *unstructured interview* which is used for interview guideline that is included the question outlines. (Arikunto, 1996) or used *opened interview* (Moleong, 2001). Furthermore, data analysis process is begun by analyzing various provided data from the interview, observation from field area report, personal document, legal document pribadi, pictures etc. (Moleong, 2001).

DIFABEL-GO POLITICS: FROM OBJECT TO ACTIVE SUBJECT

At 10th November 2011, the Parliament issued Law no. 19 of 2011 which contains the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD). It was explained in its discussion that the State's obligation is to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of life, including politics (KPUD Yogyakarta, 2014). Similarly, Wignosoebroto within Saiful Arif *et.al* (2006) also emphasized the significant meaning of the achieving requirement of the societies existence as political animal, which are not only given protection guarantee but also the guarantee of

the usage of societies right to build democracy, so the general election commission as a representative of state has an obligation to hold and to ensure the general election accessibility. Related to the difabel rights especially in political sector in 2014, KPUD Yogyakarta has a big duty to ensure all citizens and groups to participate in. In the 2014 general election, the numbers of disabled voters in Yogyakarta were 268 people, which consisted of 143 men and 125 women. From 268 Difabel voters, there were 27 people came from "*tuna daksa*", "*tuna Netra*" amounted to 112 voters and "*tuna rungu*" amounted to 129 voters (KPUD of Yogyakarta, 2014).

C. From Naïve to Critical Consiouesness

Frère (1999) argued that when society becomes fully aware of the existing problems, there will be a mass movement that suppresses the elite. The appearing of this consciousness at the same time also affects the level of awareness of the rulers of the Election Commission and other policymakers. Also, the contributions of Freire's (1999) theory of the three levels of consciousness described how Difabel experiences in the process of responding to the space of participation from KPUD Yogyakarta during the presidential election in 2014. The stages are as follows: First, it is Semi Intransitive Awareness. Within this stage, the disabilities in Yogyakarta is still being in introvert circumstance, and they tend to ignore the socialization. As a result, they do not acquire the information and socialization which affects the useless of their rights as citizens in the election. However, this awareness was owned by difabel in Yogyakarta city before the 2014 presidential election, because in the 2014 elections, they have actively participated not only as a voice contributor but also much more meaningful than just the participant of votes. In this stage, the societies will be magical ones, which assume that what occurs in their environment is an unfortunate event, because the incidents are repeatedly felt and consider that the election as a five-yearly procession change nothing.

According to Freire (1999) what occurs to introvert society is actually a silent culture, which can only be solved by the rebellious individual. When this silent culture meets a fatalistic attitude, the ruler who created this culture is rarely sued. Likewise, in this stage, the Difabel in Yogyakarta have not acted an anarchist action stage, because Freire discovered culture is not the same as difabel in Yogyakarta which is

relatively utilize the audience space as a container of resistance to the existing problems.

Second, it is the awareness of Naïve Transitivity. The awareness of naïve transitivity has two phases. First, according to Freire (1999) people are able to describe the problems concerning themselves. The collapse of the silent culture in Indonesia occurred because of the fall of the New Order regime, which has opened up a vast space of democracy and expression for the people like difabel.

Difabel and civil society organizations which concerned with the issues of disabilities that emerged in post-reform of 1998 era began to demonstrate their maturity organizing and negotiating various parties. According to SIGAB which is recognized as Difabel representation, it is assumed that one sector or institution that ignores the existence of a difabel is a political system, particularly the two of subsystems in it, namely the electoral and the political representation system. These two institutions inevitably have to be seized considering to the significance of reaching the system, so the difabel must adapt to various political mechanisms that are set with the assumption of normality or normal. Whereas, normal has caused what called 'disablism' which means ignoring the existence of difabel in various ways (SIGAB, 2015).

At silent culture collapse stage, the difabel movement has understood what problems that have not been voiced yet, it is suitable as what was stated by Freire (1999) that in this circumstance people have been able to distinguish and to describe the existing problems. The biggest problem is the difabel is not being facilitated in general election, and there is also discrimination from the society or the government so that the election could not catch the inclusion system. In observing this problem, it is finally moved to make improvements by fighting for their rights. The second phase, according to Freire (1999) is that people are becoming fully aware of the problems and the existence of mass movement, which suppresses the elite. This stage is a follow-up of the difabel situation, who has been able to describe the existing problems. However, what distinguishes disabilities movement currently (disability movement) from the previous form is that the movement now is a more massive entry into the spaces of political participation. Not only in the space of provided or packaged participation by the state, but also in alternative rooms made by the disabilities themselves. In the state space which has been closed the space for

difabel now, they are unable to enter and to show their identity and to influence the policy changes. The emergence of this awareness also affects the level of consciousness of the ruler. This elite pressing movement takes place in 2013.

Based on Solikin's explanation, difabel movement in 2013 has consolidated to discuss the problems of disabled groups election data and other violations. These indicated the raise of the emergence of a critical force or movement from them especially in Yogyakarta so that it can be a great power to change what has been less in fulfilling the rights of people with disabilities. This meeting is the response and support of difabel Organizations for the development of an Inclusive Election System. This meeting resulted in a number of overarching recommendations, and it has been dialogued with KPU and Bawaslu in each place. For Election Organizer and Supervisor, the input from disabilities people Organization is essential and useful to be a guideline for organizers to ensure the accessibility of the 2014 election and subsequent general elections (Solikin, 2014)

Third, Critical awareness. According to Freire (1999), in this stage, society has been able to look critically of its environment, critical awareness of progressive groups evolved into a mass movement, society begins to be extrovert in all dimension of life. In the year 2014, Difabels in the city of Yogyakarta has been at the stage of criticism awareness. The Difabel movement in Yogyakarta city during the 2014 election has observed the legislative elections, and they have found some problems, then they conduct public hearings to the KPUD Yogyakarta so that the problems could not appear during the 2014 presidential elections. What is done after being able to criticize the legislative elections circumstances is how to encourage policymakers like KPU to create accessibility elections, providing many TPS access, how to treat the dissolute difabel. No fixed data saying that disability causing the lack of service due to inaccurate data and campaign media which is not fully understood by difabel. According to Rohmanu although there were already volunteer democracy there were still many gaps in the violation found.

In 2014 difabel movement in Yogyakarta also discussed the formulation of the issues and interests of difabel, while the results of this FGD formulated some obstacles, the constraints are accessibility and data and reference choice (SIGAB, 2015). The explanation of each constraint is as follows: first constraint,

Accessibility. The availability of unfiltered voting tools was proved by inaccessibility by difabel. Second, it was a matter of data, which gave unavailability of accurate Difabel data in voter participation. For election organizers, the unavailability of data is often used as an excuse for unavailability of accessible TPS and voting tools. In addition, the invalid data also has an unfavorable impact on difabel, for instance, the unfamiliarity of them to engage optimally in the election. Third, most of the references have no reference to the choice they deserve. Consequently, campaign models which are widely used by election contestants did not help much for difabel to get to know their choice of candidates and then decide on a choice.

The existence of the steady response of difabel movement also creates the awareness of election organizers. The KPU of Yogyakarta City sought to develop innovations and strategies to maximize the access to disabilities in 2014, which was started from the providing the information access to facilities level. KPU of Yogyakarta city also made efforts to fulfill the right of Disable, the strategies as follow: Coordinating with Election Organizer in high districts and sub-districts to maximize the list of difabel voters in Yogyakarta; Conducting Recruitment of Democracy Volunteers from difabel activist organizations in Yogyakarta; Conducting data collection and identification of difabel voters in all polling stations in Yogyakarta. Third, Coordinating by drafting with difabel activists in Yogyakarta to ensure access for disabilities people for participating in the 2014 election in Yogyakarta; together with difabel Organizations to Conduct Technical Guidance for Democracy volunteers as material for disseminating for difabel of Yogyakarta; Creating Matter that fits the needs of difabel in Yogyakarta; enacting a Map of Targeted Areas Socialization for disabled groups in Yogyakarta City; Division of tasks in Democratic Relevance to socialize difabel in all election areas of Yogyakarta. Coordinating with ad hoc department to create polling-friendly TPS in Yogyakarta City; involve Interpreter while doing socialization in people with hearing impaired all of the time (KPUD of Yogyakarta, 2014).

D. Difabel and Political Participation

Difabel communities also have the right to influence the government in the policy-making process. For instances, through inclusive election policymaking, the participation of disabled people and organizations in participating will be

discussed in this section, to see how Disability participation in the 2014 presidential election in Yogyakarta City, the researcher will use the theory which was described by Samuel P. Huntington and Joan Nelson (1994) on political participation like electoral activities which is divided into two phases, namely pre-voting and at the election process.

Firstly, At the Pre-election stage of Disabled participation in Yogyakarta, there were two forms of the participant; they are participating as the organizer which is to be Volunteer of Democracy and Conducting lobbying in order to influence the success or the winning team of the two candidates who are contesting. Participation as a Democracy Volunteer is believed to be able to provide electoral information to difabel, but indirectly also can change the paradigm or understanding of disabilities to the whole society that when they are given equal opportunity and space then they are able to do the same thing. Then joining in a volunteer democracy can be a booster to other difabel to be actively involved in political activities. Thus, the future participation in the election will not only be in the election, and they are not only as a participant but already involved to be the organizer.

SIGAB as a representation of disabled People Organization (OPD) was also active in the socialization process in cooperation with the Yogyakarta General Election Commission and Democracy Volunteers. Socialization is one way of raising the participation of the community in the general election, in the process of socialization occurred a phenomenon that was the giving intact information by KPUD to society, so that people receive correct information.

Secondly, political activities in lobbying and political contract. According to Samuel P. Huntington and Joan Nelson (1994) lobbying includes individual or group efforts to contact government officials and political leaders with a view for influencing their decisions regarding issues that concern a large number of people. disable movement in Yogyakarta also did lobbying for the political contract. This meeting is a meeting to discuss the interests of people with disabilities in Indonesia with vice-presidential candidates. The meeting discussed a number of important issues with the two presidential and vice-president candidates from 2014 to 2019. The meeting discussed a number of important inputs from various disabilities on the underlying issues they faced. As a result, it is true that there was an existence of agreement contained in the political contract.

In the stage of participation in the election phase, it was shown in Helen and Agusfindings (2016) that political participation of difabel in the 2014 elections reached to 66.5%, it means that the participation of disabled in Yogyakarta is higher than the participation rate in other areas, such as data released by the Bandung Trust Advisory Group (D-Trust) for the participation rate of persons with disabilities in West Java reached only 53.7%.

Although the general population participation rate in elections declined year by year, the 2014 election was a milestone of Disability participation in elections, especially in Yogyakarta. In the 2014 election, difabel in the city of Yogyakarta was not only as voters or voters for one candidate during the election but also their role was further and more meaningful than that. Similarly, according to Samuel P. Huntington and Joan Nelson (1994) electoral activities do not only include votes but also contributions to campaigns, working in an election, seeking support for a candidate or some actions aimed in influencing the outcome of the process election.

One of difabel community progresses in 2014 elections was the decision to directly get involved in TPS and KPPS structure. This is very significant progress if it is compared with previous agendas. With the involvement of disabled categories into election organizers, it can be another disabilities people spirit to engage directly in taking a serious part in the electoral process. This involvement in KPPS was not on accommodation bases, but it based on his ability and their political consciousness in democracy realm.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, there are important points here. First, the ability of difabel groups to respond and participate in the electoral process was strongly influenced by political consciousness level from semi intransitive, naïve transitivity and critical consciousness. Difabel group gain stronger power in encouraging the enhancement of general election implementation if they have critical consciousness. Second, the involvement of their critical thinking was not only in providing vote contribution (voters) or being an object in the political electoral process but also to ensure the election results take their interest into account, they decided to subject by participating in team member of democracy volunteers and election committee. Moreover, policy reform is needed to

open more opportunity for the people with disabilities.

In addition, this research requires any further investigation to observe and analyze how this form of consciousness transformative level of participation to more progressive political engagement and also to see how does its socio-political impact work better for an inclusive democracy establishment in the long term.

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