

## General Election Commission and Non-Voting Behavior (GOLPUT): An Analysis from Political Communication Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and explain any factors causes of non-voting behavior by constituent on the election at Sragen regency in 2015. The magnitude of the numbers of abstention at the election was quite large at the time. The numbers was reaching about 29.3 percent of people who are registered as voters remain. This research is a qualitative research, with is case study pattern. The research subjects were voters who did not exercise their suffrage (GOLPUT). Primary data collection was conducted with in-depth interviews to a number of informants from the golput community. Secondary data resources are coming from the documentation and reporting file in mass media, numerical data in KPUD Sragen, and other relevant information. Then, the data is reduced, selected and sorted with interactive techniques according to Miles and Huberman thought. The results showed us, that, there are four reasons non-voters in the election in 2015 in Sragen, that are: (1) Interests of citizens factor, (2) The factor of dissemination of information about election by the Local Election Commission, (3) The political actor or candidate figure, and (4) Factor of disappointment residents. The conclusion that can be put forward in this research is political communication from local election commission (KPUD), Political Party and other Community / Organization to the society / constituent in order to influence its political behavior. Furthermore, from the research findings, then suggested some thoughts for efforts to reduce the quantity of golput met significant results. Advice can be given is the sense of empathy community to increase their political participation through political education in its various manifestations.

**Keywords:** Political Communication, Non-Voting Behaviors and General Elections of Regional Head.

### INTRODUCTION

Direct election in general election of regional head is a manifestation of true democracy, because sovereignty has completely returned to the people, from the people, by the people, to the people. And finally the people are free to make choices. If the people do not want to participate / use the right to vote, of course there is a separate reason. One of the important symptoms of the elections up to now is the high number of voters who do not participate in the election or can be said as a golput. In the implementation of General Elections of Regional Head (Pemilukada) in several regions, according to the Voter Education Network for People (JPPR), from 26 provincial elections at the provincial level lasted from 2005 to 2008, there were 13 of governors election were won by *golput*, such as elections in North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Riau Islands, Bangka Belitung Islands, Bengkulu, Banten, West Java, Central Java, East Java (at Round I election), Central Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, South Sulawesi and Southeast Sulawesi (Al - Wa'ie. 2008). This means the amount of voting support for elected governor of the elections is less than the number of voters who do not exercise their right to vote.

The term of non-voting behavior (*golput*) firstly appeared at the first general election in 1971. New Order era, the proponent attitude to not choose it, among other things Arief Budiman, Julius Usman and the late Imam Malujo

Sumali continue to voice in the middle of the community not to vote during elections as well as elections. Their pace based on the view the rules of democracy are not enforced, tend to be trampled (Putra, 2003).

For now, as an institution mandated to conduct the election, the formation of General Election Commission (KPU) as a state institution mandated by the government in accordance with Law No. 15 of 2011. The commission was appointed to conduct General Election (in national level) and Election of Regional Head, from the preparation until the “d” day election and more period until the selected candidate can be fixed. With the formation of the public institutions hope that the Commission was successful agencies in organizing the elections and the election is quite large, one is the lack of numbers of non-voting behavior.

In fact golput does not only occur in national elections, but also the regional elections. The reality shown the high numbers of golput also occurred in Sragen district, in the governor of Central Java election (Pilgub) at 2013 ago. In that time the non-voting behaviors was reached about 47.95%. The data of Golput of Central Java Governor Election in Sragen regency can be known from the number of 782,756 voters less using 407,914 voters so that those who did not use the voting rights were 375,271 persons or 47.95%. I think not only the election of the Governor trend increase in the number of golput also met in the election simultaneously December 9, 2015 ago. In Sragen Regency, in the election on December 9, 2015, KPU has been able to conduct the election event and has resulted in the elected Regent Dr Kusdinar Untung Yuni Sukowati-Dedy Endrianto. Despite having successfully run the event five years, which is worth noting is the high number of Golput in Sragen regency reached 29.6%. While the participation of the community in the election of 70.4%. This condition is also far from the targets set by the General Elections Commission (KPU) which set the national target of community participation level in elections in 2015 as much as 77.5%. (KPU Data 2015). Furthermore, the question arises is why non-voting behavior can be occurred? How political communication by the KPU of Sragen to the voters , in order to increase their political participation?

## **THE CONSTRUCTION OF THEORY**

### ***Political Communication***

Political communication began by the political process. The political communication is considered as a process and is an ongoing activity. That is, what is happening now is actually a continuation of what has gone before and all will be connected with what pervades in the period to come (Pawito, 2009). Politics is similar interaction patterns between communicators and participants do in order to make decisions. Political communicator can be done by politicians, government officials, professionals or activists using persuasive talks, good for the interplay of the audience members involved in politics (Garceau in Nimmo, 2011).

Communication channels are a means as tools to facilitate the exchange of information or messages. Submission of messages from communicators to communicants can be in the form of images, writing, or action. Not only the technical media used as a means of delivering the message, but every individual who wants to convey a message can directly convey it to a particular person or group. In short, it can be said that the channel of communication is more than a point of connection, but it consists of a shared understanding of who, who can speak to, what, in what circumstances, and to what extent can be trusted (Thomas, 2016).

To get the effect, that people are not golput, then the KPU should be able to form a good political image to the public. With a positive image, the public response to political institutions (in this case the KPU) will get the gain of public trust. The political image is formed based on information received to the audience, both directly and through the political media, including social media and mass media working to convey a general and actual political message from the KPU. Political image is also related to the formation of public opinion, because basically political public opinion is built through political image (Arifin, 2011). The political image associated with the formation of public opinion because it is basically a political public opinion manifested as a consequence of political communication cognition (Yulianto, 2014). According Pawito (2009), the image is the shadow of an impression, or a picture of an object, especially the political parties, candidates, political elite and the government. Imagery as far as there is sufficient freedom, can determine ways of thinking and how to behave in a person, including in making a decision in the election. Image theory is an interesting approach to the political psychology of relations between decision makers and the image of the resulting behavior (Cottam 2012 ).

The success of participation in the election depends on the political communication run by election organizers and political parties in mobilizing voters to come to the polls. With political communication to voters, maybe the voters will know and be open to their knowledge of the importance of their use of the right to vote. One of the successes of the election is the level of voter participation, due to the high participation of public confidence in political institutions and strong candidates. In contrast, if the level of participation is low or number of golput was so high, so the election can be said has not been successful and the government will face the issue in political legitimacy. Various ways are done by election organizers to increase the level of participation in the election. A high level of participation will further enhance the quality of democracy in our country.

### ***Non-Voting Behavior (Golput)***

Political participation is the activity of a person or group of people to participate actively in political life, namely by choosing the led either directly or indirectly influence government policy/*public policy* (Budiardjo, 1982). These activities include actions such as voting in elections, attended the rally became a member of a party or

interest group, make contact (*contacting*) with government officials or member of parliament and so on. To participate, there are at least three reasons of a person took part in participatory activities, namely: (1) to communicate the demands or the aspirations, (2) In an effort to achieving the goals of the political system, (3) To show support for the political system and the leaders or political elite (Pawito, 2009). By looking at these three reasons, it should be able to provide enlightenment to the public, so do not bring political apathy in society. But something cannot be denied, people who do not participate and prefer to golput cannot be separated from other factors namely the Act mentioned vote is the right.

According to Kacung (2010) using the right to vote in the elections is a "Civic Privatism" as a private right. As a consequence of civil privarism, exercising the right to vote in elections is not an obligation. With that attitude, the situation in Indonesia who expects public involvement in the election would pose a problem because it will lead to apathy and can lead to indifference (*ignorance*). The attitude of *ignorance*, this can happen is a reflection of the attitude of *ignorance* conducted by representatives of the *disconnect* adanya *electoral* result.

The phenomenon of voters who do not exercise their right to vote is called the white group (Golput) every election continues to increase, and each year tends to rise. Budiarmo (1994) defines the white group (golput) is a person who consciously does not exercise his right to vote because he thinks that the election as it is held today is irrelevant. Based on its history, Golput is ideological, ie people who do not want to vote because it is anti-party. However, the current development Abstentions identified with disappointment to the parties, who cannot bring change for the better. There is a type of voters who tend to move in either direction called protest voters. First choose another party different from the previous election due to the disappointment of the previous party which only resulted in disappointment, this is what is called a swing voter. Both chose not menggu nakan voting rights a tau often referred abstentions (Husin, 2014). In its current development, the attitude of golput as a form of voter protests against political parties, because it is considered not to give change to the voters.

The non-voting behavior as a voters protest expressed by Novel Ali. Abstentions to vote as protest voters are disappointed with the party group (Ali, 1999). It cannot be denied that non-voting behaviour are apathetic voters who belong to a group. Even today, a group of non-voters has been positioned as a striker against the ruling group (Arifin, 2014). Many opinions on the theory that causes people not voting in the election. The view can be seen voter behavior theory (1). Socio-psychological that is by emphasizing the influence of the environment, community groups and political experience. (2) Psychological theory as the decision to vote, particularly political attitudes. (3) The revisionist perspective, which gives an important role to the media to campaign giving the impression positif to citizens to participate politically (Nimmo, 2010).

## DISCUSSION

### THE POSSIBILITIES OF *GOLPUT* CAUSE

#### *Low Interest of Peoples*

Theoretically, the apathy is actually a manifestation or further development of the authoritarian personality, which is simply characterized by a lack of interest in political issues. This may be due to low socialization or political stimulus, or the feeling (assumption) that political activity does not cause a feeling of satisfaction or immediate outcome. They see that political activity is a waste, because they find it impossible to influence political events or policies. For such voters, choosing or not to vote has no effect, because political decisions are often beyond the control of the electorate. As show at Jumali claimed already no intend to follow the election because the economy of family does not change. He answered of the interview as follows:

*"I'm not interested in the election, because the succession also does not bring the economic influence for my family. I am still poor, and remain in a state of deprivation. Except to the election, there are changes in the economy for the people then I will use my right to vote"* (Jumali, 2017).

The explanation of not choosing from psychological factors is fundamentally related to personality traits and personality orientations. The personality traits of a person, in which the behavior of not choosing is, caused by a personality that is intolerant, authoritarian, indifferent, feelings of insecurity worry, lack of personal responsibility and the like. People who have intolerant personality tend not to choose because it is not related to his interests (Deliarnov, 2006). Relating to the personality orientation of a person, where the behavior does not choose is caused by the personality orientation of a person, who can conceptually demonstrate the characteristics of apathy, anomy, and alienation (Deliarnov, 2006). Apathy is a manifestation or further development of an authoritarian personality, characterized by a lack of interest in political issues. Anomy is an attitude of not being able to accept anticipated decisions. Where every individual acknowledges political activity as a useful activity, he feels absolutely unable to influence political events and forces so that it creates a sense of indifference to political activity that ultimately causes him to unwilling to participate in political activities, such as do not want to leave his job because it is more important or more heavy to work as experienced.

#### *The Political Charm of Candidate*

In addition to the interest factor, it also found to result from interview the Regent candidates were less well known closely by the public. As stated by Sunardi who claimed less clicking to the figure nominate as regent, in the interview below:

*"At the time of the election, I was less so familiar to the Regent candidate, so I do not really know close to the candidate..... Moreover, the candidate comes from outside my area. This contrasts with*

*the election of member of the regional legislative assembly, which are generally no candidate from my area and close to the citizens” (Sunardi, 2017).*

The next, although familiar, it is possible that he or she does not interested in selected candidates by the peoples. This condition implies the information about its party figures or campaigns, as well as the socialization of the KPU is less able to touch the target of persons with the right to vote to exercise their suffrage. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the role of the Election Commission as the organizer of the election, as well as political parties that promote the elected candidates to introduce to the wider community of candidates to be elected. The KPU through socialization should be provided information not only by posting photographs or drawings of candidates, but also providing the background of elected candidates. In this case, for example, the Commission reminded the public to attend the TPS through TV or Radio channels. It could be the KPU also conducting a dialogue or gathering mass or groups to convey its political message.

### ***The Quality of Political Socialization***

The socialization, has been done by the KPU to the voters, starting from the schedule of election, voter data collection for eligible citizens to be voters who are also interspersed with the invitation to come to TPS in the upcoming election, followed by a joint campaign between KPU with candidate pair in 20 districts. Socialization to the community is also done before the day of voting. At this stage of socialization, the KPU also took a number of print and electronic media to socialize the stages of election, the introduction of candidates to the citizens. This is similarly conveyed by Ibnu Prakosa KPU’s commissioner when interviewed, he is stating:

*“... to establish communication with the citizens, the form of introducing the candidate to the public is through the mass media, for example, TV, Newspapers Solopos Daily, Suara Merdeka, Joglo Semar, Jawa Pos, Radio Buana Asri. ... In addition, face to face with people in different places. Deployment tools such as flyers and socialization of citizens campaign props pamphlets, posters, baleho basically running a dual function, i.e., the campaign is also socialization” (Prakosa, 2017).*

Meanwhile, from the perspective of voters regarding the efforts of the KPU socialization, it can be said that the voters have the impression of different voters there are several variations: that the socialization of the KPU has been implemented, although the other opinion that the socialization of the KPU has not touched some people in the rural environment. As noted informant who said KPU socialization less than the maximum:

*“Ever hear and know that there will be elections, because the Commission to disseminate only at the district level only. While I was living in the village, so I hear from the neighbors, and less know the election schedule. In addition to the election schedule, the number of candidates that I know only 2*

*candidate pairs. Though the time of voting, it turns out there are four candidate pairs” (Agustina: 2017).*

As an institution mandated to conduct the election, the establishment of the General Elections Commission (KPU) mandated by the government in accordance with Law No. 15 of 2011 was appointed to conduct the General Elections and Election of Regional Head from the start of preparation until the election of Regional Head directly at central, provincial to district level. In addition to those mentioned in Law NO. 15 year 2011, the efforts of the Commission are to socialize the implementation of elections and elections. The role of KPU in this case as political communicator in sending a message to the public. In this case, for example, the Commission reminded the public to attend the TPS through TV or Radio channels.

The process of introducing the political system to the community is one part of KPU's duty. The role of the KPU is responsible for the political learning process of the community to increase community participation. How society understands the idea or certain political values of others so that later will create a political attitude (participation) of society. The role of the KPU in carrying out this political communication is a form of political messages delivered by the KPU, as a means of preventing the occurrence of Golput.

### ***Displeasure of Constituents***

The results of data collection from interviews conducted directly with face-to-face methods to some informants showed that most of the informants encountered by researchers during interview many expressed his disappointment. As proposed by Ria Nurjanah.

*“I am disappointed because the promises that will repair the road is not fully met 100%. Road improvement is only done in certain areas and uneven. Proven still found a damaged road, so it is very disturbing residents to perform daily activities. In addition to the candidate factors, many parties always make the disappointment of the citizens such as campaign promises are not kept, the act of unscrupulous party elements such as corruption and this makes people no longer interested in them” (Nurjanah, 2017).*

Based on the attitude of society is represented by several informants in this study, suggesting that they have no party identification at all, but more on the figures or candidates to be selected. This can be possible because most societies also have no understanding of politics or knowledge of politics or their rights and obligations in the structure of a government. This is because it is also influenced by many factors one of which is the level of education, and political education itself. According to Cottam, et al. (2012) the tendency identifying political



party can be influence how people cast their votes, especially in people who intensely identify with their party. This is unlikely to happen to people or citizens who feel they have no or no part of party members.

### ***Political Interventions of Other Constituents***

The study also found the exist of invitation to select non-voting behavior fellow citizens because disappointed by candidates Regent broken a promise to the program that is not good. As stated by Saminem who claimed that she did not use her voice right because it is influenced by other people, because of disappointment with the figure which is not a candidate for Regent fully fulfill his promise during the previous campaign period. As revealed by Saminem in the following complete interview results:

*"I do not use voting rights as influenced by my neighbors who said the regent nominating candidates do not meet his promises during the campaign. The candidates do not repair many damaged roads between villages that interfere with the activities of citizens. Since I had stayed here before the election, then I said yes and did not vote me"* (Saminem, 2017).

The fact about person's invitation or encouragement shows that some citizens may be influenced not to vote or use the right to vote should be used. This shows that citizens do not have a fixed attitude or stance. This is non-permanent attitude or stance is a psychological form of personality orientation. People who have an unstable personality orientation can be influenced by the invitation of others. In this case is willing to be invited not to use the right to vote or *golput*. Coopersmith (1967) suggested that *self-esteem* is a self-assessment carried out by individuals associated with itself, which reflects an attitude of acceptance and rejection, and menujukkan how far individuals believed himself capable, significant, successful, and valuable. This Coopersmith opinion is proof that the person's personality in holding the principle is influenced by his self-esteem in self-judgment, so whether he or she will be influenced by people. If a person's personality is in good principle, then that person is not easily invited to not vote or *golput*.

### **THE END OF DISCUSSION**

The end of this research is a conclusion that can be formulated as follows: (1) Factually there are four reasons of non-voters in the election in 2015 in Sragen, namely: (a) lack of interest in political participation of citizens with a variety of causative factors, (b) less response of political socialization by the KPUD Sragen, (c) factors of figure or candidates to be selected, and (d) factors of disappointment or low levels of citizen satisfaction with the performance and behavior of political candidates. (2) Theoretically it can be suggested an exit strategy for reducing the quantity of non-voters in the upcoming election through: (a) improving people's political emotions effort - effort to arouse political participation. Efforts to improve citizens' political literacy can be manifested by



a political psychological approach. (b). KPUD and Political Parties can be manifest their political role in concrete steps to spark public political awareness, ultimately leading to real political participation. For example through training and other activities that are based on the political role of the community.

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