EFFENDI HASAN, RAUDHAH TUSNUR & ARDIANSYAH

The Analysis of Behavior and the Participation of Mentally Disordered Voters in the 2019’s Simultaneous Elections in Banda Aceh, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: This research utilized a descriptive qualitative method. The research results show that there are some factors that influenced the voter’s behavior in casting their vote, i.e. the social setting in the Aceh mental hospital; and the influence also came from similar religion and ethnic group of the candidates with the voters. The research results also show that their participation includes involvement in the Election socialization conducted by Banda Aceh Independent Election Commission, and their involvement was limited to only voting on Election Day. Based on the research results, some conclusions can be made. Firstly, the tendency of mentally-disordered voters’ behavior in deciding their votes was based on the sociological approach if they had been normal voters. However, they were the voters who were under the influence of drugs taken before voting. Secondly, their participation was considered passive participation if they had been normal voters. However, mentally-disordered voters were the voters experiencing a mental illness, so their awareness to participate in the Election was due to mobilization and guidance made by Banda Aceh Independent Election Commission in socialization regarding the Election and guidance provided by psychiatrists.

KEY WORD: Simultaneous Election; Mentally-Disordered Voters; Voters’ Behavior.


KATA KUNCI: Pemilihan Umum Serentak; Pemilih dengan Gangguan Mental; Perilaku Pemilih.

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INTRODUCTION

The General Elections Commission, which organized the Election, issued a policy which stated that mentally-disordered citizens need to be given a right to vote in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election. This policy is explicitly stated in the notice published by the General Elections Commission No.1401/PL.02.1-SD/01/KPU/XI/2018, on 13th November 2018. The policy has caused polemic, where the public considered that all mentally-disordered citizens would participate in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

People with mental illness include mentally-retarded people, namely those with below-average mental and intellectual ability, and limitation of adaptive function in adjusting to a new environment. They have an average IQ (Intelligence Quotient) of lower than 80 (Navit et al., 2014; Gustomy, 2017; and Sutinah & Saswati, 2019). However, this research deals with mental-disordered people who are in the process of healing and given the right to vote in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

In more detail, the policy made by the General Elections Commission is based on strong regulatory consideration from the 1945 Constitution, in point (1) of Article 27. The article states that all people have an equal position in law and government, and they need to abide by the law and government without any exception. In addition, Article 28D, point (1), of 1945 Constitution also support guarantee for the equality of right for each individual, because they are all entitled to recognition, protection, and certainty of law, and equal recognition before the law (KPU, 2015; Eddyono, 2018; and Huda, 2019).

The Constitutional Court Decision No.135/PUU-XIII/2015 is also a foundation for the involvement of mentally-disordered citizens. This Constitutional Court Decision states that people with a certain extent of mental disorder and with a recommendation from psychiatrists can use their right to vote in an Election. In this case, every citizen, although with a mental disorder, is entitled to the right to vote if their mental condition is not disturbed on an Election Day (Lestari et al., 2014; Ishak, 2015; and TY Jakarta, 2015).

Based on the data collected by the Banda Aceh Independent Election Commission show that the number of people suffering from a mental illness was 2,991 people in all areas of Aceh, spread in 23 Districts consisting of 289 Sub-Districts and 6,497 Villages, which were recorded in List of Permanent Voters in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election in Banda Aceh.

1See also, for example, Interview with Respondent A, a Chairman of the Election Independence Commission of Banda Aceh, in Banda Aceh, Aceh Darussalam, Indonesia, on 16th October 2019.
Election (Karim, Hanif & Arti eds., 2014; Sardini, 2018a; and Hasan & Nofriadi, 2019).

Based on the survey, the number of mentally-disordered voters in Banda Aceh was 60 people consisting of 42 males and 18 females, who participated in the Election. To cast their vote, the mentally-disordered voters needed to own the national ID (Identity) card consisting of ID number, name, date of birth, sex, and addressed before they were registered by the Banda Aceh Election Independence Commission (Hillman, 2011; Sardini, 2018a; and Hasan & Nofriadi, 2019).

However, from the number listed above, not all of them participated in the Election. Based on the information provided by the Aceh Mental Hospital, the number of people with mental illness was 38 people. The number of mentally-disordered patients considered eligible to vote was 19 people, and the other 19 were not eligible. The number of patients casting their vote in Banda Aceh was three people, and the other 16 people voted in their own areas.2

Based on the results of primary observation, mental health medical check-up was performed by psychiatrists one week prior to the Election Day. In addition, their awareness of voting was influenced by medicine. Their drug dependence made them ineligible to vote in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election in Banda Aceh (Natsir & Muhith, 2011; Halalia, 2016; and Elizabeth, 2017).

With mental disorder suffered by the voters, research regarding this policy is required, due to some unique conditions in this policy. The policy has never been made before, and research regarding this policy is very limited.

Preliminary data show that the involvement of mentally disordered people, who have a different mental state but obtain similar political rights with others, has become a serious issue among the public. There is a claim that this policy is one of the efforts made by the incumbent to manipulate votes, and others consider it as a part of human rights (Pawestri, 2017; Hasan & Nofriadi, 2019; and Herdiansah & Sumadinata, 2019).3

Based on the problems discussed above, this research is significant to find out and describe the behavioral factors and the participation of mentally-disordered voters in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

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2See also, for example, Interview with Respondent B, a Head of Aceh Mental Hospital, in Banda Aceh, Aceh Darussalam, Indonesia, on 22nd October 2019.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilized a descriptive qualitative approach. In this context, J.W. Creswell (2014), and other scholars, stated that qualitative research is one complex description, researching words, detailed reports of informants’ perception, and studying in a natural situation. Qualitative research is descriptive research; and it tends to use analyses with the inductive approach (Noor, 2011; Creswell, 2014; and Nachmias & Nachmias, 2014).

In this research, the researchers used a descriptive qualitative method, which is an approach which describes, records, and explains factors influencing the behavior of mentally-disordered voters in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. This research used a descriptive qualitative method to describe categories relevant to the objective of this study (Noor, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 2017; and Aminah & Roikan, 2019).

The data were collected for this research include primary data and secondary data. The source for primary data was field research that is results of interview and observation of Banda Aceh Mental Hospital and people living in the hospital neighborhood. The secondary data – documentation – were the data regarding the policy of the General Elections Commission Regulation regarding the participation of mentally-disordered voters in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election in Banda Aceh, by studying previous research, books, academic articles, and news from the internet.

In collecting the data, the writers used some data collection techniques. Firstly, an interview was conducted with informants who understood the problems related to the General Election Commission policy regarding the participation of mentally disordered people in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election in Banda Aceh. Secondly, the documentation study was conducted to obtain secondary data to support the primary data by studying and analyzing books, documents, or other information from the internet related to the topic of this research. Meanwhile, the literature review was very significant to support the current research (Noor, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 2017; and Aminah & Roikan, 2019).

This research was conducted continuously, so that the data collection and analyses were conducted simultaneously during the research process. When the data were collected, the data were immediately analyzed. When the data were analyzed, incomplete data were re-collected and re-analyzed.

The data, which have been obtained, were divided into each
pre-determined category. In the first step, the research object was determined, and the data were collected through an interview. After that, the data were categorized into relevant groups and transcribed. The transcription of oral text was made to simplify the following steps of the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors Influencing the Behavior of Mentally-Disordered Voters in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election. Based on the research results, mentally-disordered voters are the voters with mental state different from the normal voters. In social interaction, the mentally-disordered voters interacted with other patients, nurses, and psychiatrists. With this interaction, the mentally-disordered people decided their vote based on the influence of social interaction, without awareness. In addition, in deciding their vote, the mentally-disordered people tended to consider the religion and ethnicity of the candidates. They tend to vote for candidates who had the same religion and ethnicity as theirs (cf Adian, 2014; Hartini et al., 2018; and Sabatini, 2018).

In addition to religion and ethnic consideration, the mentally-disordered voters also had other considerations, which is based on emotional aspects for a candidate. In this case, the voters were attracted to the candidate’s physical appearance, and they voted for this candidate, as presented in the table 1.

Based on table 1, the most dominant behavioral approach of the voters was the sociological approach, because of the influence of the political orientation of people they have contact with and because of social classification (Merly, 2015; Halalia, 2016; and Herdiansah & Sumadinata, 2019).

The classification includes religion and ethnicity. In addition to the sociological approach, the mentally-disordered voters also have a supporting approach, i.e. psychological approach. This is motivated by an emotional relationship with a candidate, that is, they were attracted to a candidate who was good-looking, which made them vote for

Table 1: Theory of Voter’s Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sociological Approach</th>
<th>Psychological Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Political Orientation of Social Interaction.</td>
<td>Attraction to the Physical Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of a Candidate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Shared Religion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Shared Ethnicity.</td>
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</tbody>
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The Analysis of Behavior and the Participation of Mentally Disordered Voters

The research result showed that the theory presented above was not relevant to the result of the field research. Mentally-disordered voters are different from other voters, and they are suffering from a mental illness, so that it influenced their decision in voting. Their vote was influenced by the medicine they took, which made them able to successfully participate in the Election. Their dependence on medicine made them non-ideal voters, because they could not understand what they have done. This makes them ineligible to vote, because their votes only increase the quantity of democratic value without improving the quality of the result, which influenced the winning of state officials who would be leaders in government. See table 2.

Every voter has voter typology as a marker or identity of the voter behavior. In the context of mentally-disordered voters, who were suffering from a mental illness, they had voter typology as other normal voters (Farida & Yudi, 2010; Schroeder, 2012; and Sarbaini, 2015). The research results showed that with their condition, mentally-disordered voters did not have adequate knowledge of an Election.

As shown in the table 2, the voter typology of mentally-disordered people was skeptical voters. This theory was relevant if mentally-disordered voters had been normal voters (Pamungkas, 2010; Surbakti, 2010; and Sardini, 2019). Based on the research results, the theory is not relevant to the results of this research, because the mentally-disordered voters were the voters with a mental illness, so that they were the voters who could not make decisions perfectly.

Although they have attended socialization activity regarding an Election, it could not improve their understanding of an Election. This is evident from the fact that some mentally-disordered people voted for Sub-District Head, Village Head, and Settlement Head. In this case, their mental illness from which they were suffering made them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Skeptical Voters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lack of understanding of who they have voted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Focus on selecting President, Governor, Sub-District Head, Village Head, and Settlement Head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Lack of knowledge regarding visions and missions, and ignorance of policies, visions and missions of the candidate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Lack of ability to be involved in a political party.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 2:
Voter Typology
ineligible to be involved in making a decision to choose state officials, because they could not vote with total consciousness.

Due to their mental illness, they were required to consume medicine before voting, they cast a vote successfully without knowing visions and missions of their voted candidates; and they did not consider visions, missions, and policies as important considerations. In addition, they could not participate in a political party.

The Types of Participation by Mentally-Disordered Voters in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election. Political participation is one of the conditions related to human rights in politics, without exception for citizens with a disability, especially mentally-disordered voters. The system of democracy in Indonesia makes mentally-disordered voters have equal rights to other voters. This is the reason for mentally-disordered voters to contribute in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election based on regulations which are in line with the Constitution (Irman Etyah, Prasetyo & Minas, 2009; Suharyanto, 2014; and Sardini, 2018b).

In the context of mentally-disordered voters, they have an obligation to participate in an Election, which is one of the activities which all citizens need to participate in making a decision to choose candidates of state official through a General Election (Lee et al., 2017; Maiwan & Zid, 2017; and Yandra, 2017). However, the participation of mentally-disordered voters was not motivated by the belief that their participation could improve their welfare and was beneficial for them.

The quality of political participation of mentally-disordered voters can be analyzed through their involvement in the process of the planned development process, so that it creates types of political participation as one of the organized efforts to influence types and implementation of public policy. As voters, mentally-disordered voters had different political participation quality from other voters as an indicator of political participation (Marijan, 2013; Lestari & Arumsari, 2018; and Herdiansah, 2019).

Article 167 in Law No.7 of 2017 regarding the Implementation of the General Election in Indonesia explains steps, programs, and schedules of the 2019’s Simultaneous Election. Firstly, the budget and program were planned. Secondly, the General Elections Commission formulates regulations. The next step, thirdly, is the socialization of the Election and its regulation. Fourthly, candidates to participate in the

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4 See also, for example, “5.000 Tunagrahita Mesti Didata Sebelum Jadi Peserta Pemilu 2019” in magazine of TEMPO, Jakarta: November 22. Available online also at: https://difabel.tempo.co/read/1148523/5-000-tunagrahita-mesti-didata-sebelum-jadi-peserta-pemilu-2019 [accessed in Banda Aceh, Indonesia: March 11, 2020].

5 See also, for example, “Pemilu Belum Aksesibel bagi Disabilitas” in magazine of INDEPENDEN. Banda Aceh: July 12, 2019. Available online also at: https://independen.id/read/politik/860/pemilu-belum-aksesibel-bagi-disabilitas/ [accessed in Banda Aceh, Indonesia: March 11, 2020].
Election registered and they were verified. The fifthly step was dispute resolution regarding political parties to participate in the Election. Sixthly, election executing commissions were established. Seventhly, the data of voters were updated and the lists of voters were compiled. Eighthly, lists of oversea voters were compiled. As the citizens of Indonesia, mentally-disordered voters could follow all processes of the Election. The more processes of Election steps, the higher the quality of vote they made (Schroder, 2013; Flores & Nooruddin, 2016; and Soehandry, 2017).

From many steps of the Election presented above, the involvement of mentally-disordered people in the process of the Election was only limited to socialization conducted by Banda Aceh General Elections Commission and voting on the Election Day (Ahmed et al., 2012; Alvarez et al., 2013; and Ansori et al., 2015). Socialization activity was conducted to improve the knowledge of mentally-disordered voters regarding an Election and to motivate them to vote on Election Day. The number of mentally-disordered voters attending the socialization was 38 persons. Not all mentally-disordered voters attending the socialization voted on the Election Day (Nurbayani, Malihah & Alya, 2015; RSJ Banda Aceh, 2018; and Bawaslu, 2019).6

The research results show that the number of mentally-disordered

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voters registered in Banda Aceh, Indonesia was 60 people. However, the number of voters with a mental illness was 38 persons. From 38 persons, only 19 persons were considered eligible to vote, while the other 19 persons had not adequately recovered. However, 16 persons had been discharged and voted in their hometown, and only three persons voted in Banda Aceh Mental Hospital. See figure 1.

As shown in the figure 1, the number of mentally-disordered voters registered in Banda Aceh, Indonesia was 60 persons. However, people with mental illness were 38 persons. From 38 persons with mental illness, 19 persons had not clinically recovered, so they were not allowed to vote, and the other 19 persons had adequately recovered. However, 16 of them had been discharged and voted in their hometown. Meanwhile, the other three persons voted in Banda Aceh Mental Hospital. See table 3.

Based on the table 3, the participation of mentally-disordered voters was considered passive participation. This theory is relevant to the results of this study, if the mentally-disordered people had been normal voters, because they complied with all regulations and policies made by the government, including those made by Banda Aceh Independent Election Commission and their psychiatrist, i.e. to attend the socialization about the Election and to cast a vote on the Election Day. The voting was limited to following all regulations and complying with all policies (Efriza, 2012; Fahlevi et al., 2012; Heywood, 2012; and Ishiyama & Breuning, 2012). With their mental condition, they could not criticize or make a suggestion about the candidate they chose. Although the mentally-disordered people had been confirmed clinically recovered, their consciousness was influenced by the medicine they took.

The research results show that the theory was not relevant to the condition found in the field research, because the mentally-disordered people were not normal voters – they had a different mental condition from the others. With a mental disorder from which they were suffering, they did not understand the regulation which allows them to vote in
the Election. Therefore, their participation was a part of mobilization made by the Banda Aceh Independent Election Commission through socialization and guidance provided by their psychiatrists. The guidance was given to make them aware of the vote they had, so that they could participate in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

Based on the decision made by their psychiatrist through a process of mental health assessment, some mentally-disordered people were allowed to directly participate in voting in the Election. However, they needed to take some medicine before voting, which made their participation successful. This did not make them eligible to vote, as were other normal voters. The participation of mentally-disordered people in casting their vote was not under a complete consciousness in the 2019’s Simultaneous Election in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The tendency of mentally-disordered voters’ behavior in terms of normal voters was a sociological approach. However, mentally-disordered voters were the voters suffering from a mental illness. In deciding their vote, mentally-disordered voters were influenced by some factors, i.e. religion and ethnicity of the candidate and social interaction in the hospital neighborhood. The votes cast by the mentally-disordered people were influenced by the medicine they took before voting.

Therefore, mentally-disordered people were not eligible to vote because their consciousness was dependent on medicine. This drug dependence did not make them ideal voters, because they did not know the choice they made in the Election. The mentally-disordered voters were under the skeptical typology, if they had been normal voters. In this case, they were not normal voters because they were suffering from a mental disorder, although they had attended the socialization of the Election. This activity could not make them improve their knowledge of politics, so they did not know the visions, missions, or policies proposed by the candidate they have chosen. Their mental condition prevented them in understanding about the Election, which is evident from their knowledge of the Election, i.e. they thought that they were to choose President, Governor, Sub-District Head, Village Head, and Settlement Head.

The participation of mentally-disordered voters as passive participation, if they had been normal voters. However, they were suffering from mental illness. They only participated in two phases of
the Election, i.e. socialization and voting. In the voting process, they had to be accompanied by a nurse until the process was completed, so that the principles of an Election – direct, public, free, and confidential – could not be met. Their participation in the Election was a result of mobilization made by the Banda Aceh Independent Election Commission in the Election socialization activity and guidance by their psychiatrist. The guidance was given to improve their awareness of the right to vote they had.

It is suggested that the government, Banda Aceh Independent Election Commission, Elections Supervisory Agency of Political Parties, and legislative institution reconsider the policy of involving mentally-disordered people in the Election. This suggestion is based on the fact that the mental condition of the mentally-disordered voters prevented them from casting their votes without the influence of medicine. Their awareness to vote was a form of mobilization by Banda Aceh Independent Election Commission and guidance organized by their psychiatrist.

In addition, the principle of an Election – direct, public, free, and confidential – could not be implemented properly in the voting process by mentally-disordered people. Lack of understanding of an Election prevented them from casting their vote, so they thought they were to choose President, Governor, Sub-District Head, Village Head, and Settlement Head. The government should have reviewed this policy before implementing it, because their votes would benefit winning candidates without real intention from the voters.

References


Statement: We, undersigned, declare that this article is our own academic work, it is not the result of plagiarism, and has never been sent, reviewed, and published by another scientific journals. All the sources that we quoted in the analysis, we included correctly and completely in the Reference list. We also will not withdraw this article, if it has passed the review and be published in the SOSIOHUMANIKA journal in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. Thus, we make this statement seriously and responsibly.


Interview with Respondent A, a Chairman of the Election Independence Commission of Banda Aceh, in Banda Aceh, Aceh Darussalam, Indonesia, on 16th October 2019.

Interview with Respondent B, a Head of Aceh Mental Hospital in Banda Aceh, Aceh Darussalam, Indonesia, on 22nd October 2019.

3-14 [accessed in Banda Aceh, Indonesia: April 21, 2019].


