

## The Factors Affecting The Behavior of Abstain Voters In Governor Election

**T.Rohmawati**

Departemen Ilmu Pemerintahan, Universitas Komputer Indonesia, Indonesia

Email: [tatik.rohmawati@email.unikom.ac.id](mailto:tatik.rohmawati@email.unikom.ac.id)

**Abstract :** The study aims to determine the factors that affect the behavior of abstain voters in the election of governor. The governor election is a concrete manifestation of the local Democratic Party. In the election of governor, there is voter behavior that does not exist. The focus in this paper is on the factors that influence the behavior of abstain voters in the election for the Governor of West Java. The paper is the result of research using qualitative methods. The author acts as a research instrument. The data collection methods used include observation, interviews and documentation studies. The focus of the analysis of the research results shows that the factors that influence the behavior of abstain voters in the governor election are, among others, administrative factors, like not receiving an invitation letter, or not obtaining a voter card. Second, technical or individual factors, namely at work, having personal needs at the time of election, and the third is political factors, namely that the election is useless in improving a better life. The conclusions of this study include first, apathy, which is not compatible with existing candidate pairs, the reason is because they are not local sons but from other regions and are party choices. Second, do not believe in government, because they will not pay attention to and improve their daily needs for the voters. Third, the lack of socialization of the election for governor from the West Java KPU.

### INTRODUCTION

The process of democratization in Indonesia has occurred since the reform era, this can be seen in the implementation of the 2004 General Election which followed by the implementation of various Direct Regional Head Elections since 2005. This is not different from the thesis put forward by Samuel Huntington [3] that democracy is like waves. the waves are difficult to predict. It proves the existence of a democratic reality in Indonesia which must be understood as a fragile building of democracy, even though there is not a small amount of funds needed for a legitimate election of officials, both the election for governors and regents and mayors. A legitimate official means that he is elected in according to the applicable laws and has legality in the election, as well as the acceptance of the society.

In these conditions, the most serious challenge faced by regions in realizing democracy at the local level is the difficulty of opening the blockages of democracy that have been stuck for many years, especially in electing regional leaders [11]. Regional leaders are very important, because they are powerful figures in their each regions. The high number of voters who did not participate in the election or it could be said that they did not vote is one of the important symptoms of the election until now. In the implementation of regional head election in several regions, based on the Voter Education Network for the People (JPPR), from the twenty six provincial level of regional head elections that took place from 2005 to 2008, there were 13 gubernatorial elections that were won by non-voters or white groups, including regional head elections in North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Riau Islands, Bangka Belitung Islands, Bengkulu, Banten, West Java, Central Java, First Round East Java, Central

Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, South Sulawesi and Southeast Sulawesi [9]. This means that the number of votes for the winning governor of the regional head election is less than the number of voters who do not exercise their voting rights.

It is appropriate with what happened in the regional head election in West Java. Although Ahmad Heryawan-Dede Yusuf managed to get the most votes compared to other candidates, namely with 7,287,647 votes, the number of abstain was far greater, reaching 9,130,594 votes [9]. The 2008 West Java Governor Election yesterday was the first direct election by the people of West Java. People who have fulfilled the requirements as voters are given the right to vote. This event was followed by the people of West Java with a total number of voters of 27,972,924 voters with a total of 63,005 TPS (polling stations) [5]. West Java Governor Election will be held on April 8, 2008. The election time is closed, so the public can vote. However, in reality, even though the election time was closed, there were still people in West Java who did not vote in the election. Until now there has been no adequate explanation as to what caused a voter to vote for golput. Various explanations regarding abstains are still based on assumptions and have not been based on more in-depth research.

In this research [8] shows that there are at least three reasons someone does not participate in an election. First, administrative reasons, such as not receiving an invitation letter, or not having obtained a voter card. Second, for individual or technical reasons, such as at work, there are personal needs at the time of election. Third, the political reason is that the regional head election is useless in promoting a better life. According to Putu Suasta [12] there are two general abstentionists group. *First*, people become abstentionists as the representation of pragmatic's idea. *Second*, people chose abstain as their disappointment and rebellion's reactions. The first group is usually done by businessman, professional people and others. By their rationality and independence mind, this group tends to apply 'loss and profit' to determine their decision. This could be understandable because their affiliations are not political parties whether good or bad, but 'a good environment' to support their business. They do not care about who will be the winner in the political party. They mostly think that the important thing is their business will not be disturbed and still well-developed. The second group usually belongs to the activists in *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat (LSM)* / Non Profit Organization, intellectual people and other people who care about the destiny of the nation. This group usually becomes abstentionists when they lost their trust toward some political parties. Presenting their struggle, they prefer to do real with actions such as involving in LSM, striking and others activities.

This phenomenon makes the author try to find a more suitable explanation for the context of the case of governor election in West Java, especially in Coblong District. In addition, there has been no in-depth study of the factors that influence abstain voter behavior.

## METHOD

The author in this study uses a qualitative methodology [1] with the case study method which is a form of empirical research by investigating contemporary phenomena in the context of real life, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context do not have clear evidence [15]

Schramm's Community Verified Icon [15] further explains that the core of case studies is that the main trend among all kinds of case studies is that they seek to highlight a decision or set of decisions, why the decision was taken, how it was implemented and what the outcome was [13]

The author in this study took a case in Coblong District, Bandung City. The reason for choosing this place is because Coblong District is one of the areas with a fairly high level of golput.

This study uses a unit of analysis. The unit of analysis shows who or what has the characteristics to be studied [14]. The unit of analysis in this study is the political entity of the elite, which consists of institutional actors (Chairperson of the West Java Provincial KPU, Chair of the Bandung City KPUD and Coblong District Panwaslu) and golput voters, the processes, events and discourses that take place in the Javanese election process. West.

Data collection techniques in this study using observation, interviews and documentation studies. In accordance with the method used in this study, the data analysis used is descriptive qualitative analysis. Operationally, data analysis techniques are carried out through several stages as the data analysis technique model proposed by Miles and Huberman [10]

*First*, data reduction as a process of selecting, simplifying, classifying rough data from the use of data collection techniques and tools in the field. Data reduction has been done since data collection. The reduction is carried out in stages by making a summary of the data and tracing the scattered themes. Each selected data is crossed through the comments of different informants to gather information in interviews and observations. Information derived from figures in the sub-district organizational structure was crossed with information obtained from intellectuals in Coblong District and the Chairperson of the West Java KPUD and the Chairperson of the Bandung City KPUD.

*Second*, the presentation of data is an attempt to compile a set of information into a statement. Qualitative data is presented in the form of text which is initially scattered and separated according to the source of the information and at the time the information was obtained. Then, the data are classified according to the main issues related to the factors that influence the behavior of golput voters in Coblong District in the Election for the Governor of West Java.

*Third*, draw conclusions based on the reduction, interpretation and presentation of data that have been carried out in the previous stage in accordance with the logic of inductive thinking, so that the conclusion will start with specific things (specific) to general formulas.

## RESULTS

Voter behavior is the attitude taken by voters in the election for the Governor of West Java based on the situation at the time of the election. Most of the results of the election for the Governor of West Java were golput. Golput is defined as the attitude of voters who have voting rights but do not use their votes.

Another argument [6] regarding the cause of the increasing number of voters who do not exercise their voting rights is for various classical reasons. For example, on voting day, people prefer to have a vacation or recreation with their families. In rural and remote areas, farmers, for example, prefer to take care of rice fields and fields, apart from being reluctant to come to the TPS location which is far from where they live. Indeed, there are also groups, especially in urban areas who do not want to vote because they feel they choose or do not vote, then their fate will be the same, or because they are disappointed with the performance of political parties, feel they do not know candidates, and even are apathetic towards political life in the country.

Although most circles are concerned about the trend of increasing abstinence figures, it can still be said that the country's turnout is still a reasonable number in a democratic country with a multi-party system.

In a research shows [8] that there are at least three reasons someone does not participate in an election. First, administrative reasons, such as not receiving an invitation letter, or not having obtained a voter card. Second, for individual or technical reasons, such as at work, there are personal needs at the time of election. Third, the political reason is that the pilkada is useless in promoting a better life.

According to the author, the reasons above are related to the case in Coblong District which refers more to individual or technical reasons. This can be seen because the election day is closed, thus enabling voters to be absent or in other words traveling out of town. Besides that, it also includes political reasons. The Coblong community, especially the traders, considered that they felt they had no choice among the available candidates or did not believe that the pilgub would bring change and improvement in their daily lives.

Broadly speaking, from the records of monitoring results in the West Java Governor Election and the results of interviews with the Chairperson of the West Java Provincial KPU<sup>1</sup> that voters do not use their votes due to various reasons, including:

- 1) Voters are outside West Java Province / Regency / City because they work or go to school.
- 2) Voters travel outside West Java Province / Regency / City for a purpose.
- 3) Voters are sick / have died.

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<sup>1</sup> The interview is hold in KPU office in West Java, Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 09.30 pm.

- 4) Voters are in their residence but not present at the TPS.
- 5) Voters do not believe that the elected candidate pair can fix the difficulties of the people of West Java.

Meanwhile, based on interviews with the chairman of the Coblong District PPK<sup>2</sup> and the Secretary of the Pilgub Panwas<sup>3</sup>, the abstention attitude in Coblong was influenced by several factors, including:

First, dissatisfaction with the candidates for regional head to be elected. This means that the candidates do not come from local people but they come from outside so that voters are not familiar with the candidate. In addition, the pair chosen is not the choice of the community but the choice of political parties (parpol). This fact is formally legitimized by Law no. 32 of 2004 which states that only political parties or coalitions of political parties have the right to nominate regional heads. This law clearly closes the opportunity for the independent candidate that the people want.

Judging from the candidates for governor and deputy governor of West Java, none of them are independent. The Da'i pair (Danny Setiawan and Iwan Ridwan Sulandjana) were promoted by the Golkar and Democrat Party. The Safe Pair (Agum Gumelar and Nu'man Abdul Hakim) was promoted from the PDIP and PPP parties. The last pair is Hade (Ahmad Heryawan and Dede Yusuf) who are promoted by the PKS and PAN parties.

Second, society is already apathetic. For example, in Coblong Subdistrict, when the author asked the Chairman of the PPK and several traders<sup>4</sup>, they thought that it was more profitable to trade than to the TPS (polling station). The assumption of traders already feels that the candidate for governor cannot really bring about changes in their life environment. This is one of the duties of the West Java KPU to socialize the importance of the West Java election to all people in West Java, including traders. So that the voting rights of the traders are used in the election.

The third factor is the lack of socialization of the West Java Governor Election. This is according to what the author got based on the data on the implementation report of the West Java Pilgub results from the KPU. This socialization obstacle was the result of the new phase which was implemented in January 2008, which should have started in October 2007.

In addition, this obstacle is none other than the West Java Provincial Government's policy of assigning the West Java KPU to carry out the election stages within 5 (five) months and the resignation of the secretary's officials so that the disbursement of funds can only be carried out in February 2008. According to the KPU, the time is availability is felt to be insufficient to carry out the socialization according to need.

In addition, the researcher observes that the factors that influence golput in Coblong District are that many people do not know the importance of elections that have wasted people's money. Therefore, the community needs to get more outreach from the West Java KPU. The West Java KPU is the actor most responsible for the election administrators.

Another fact from observing a number of pilkada which results in non-voting is quite high from another perspective [7], namely first, the high number of abstentions shows that people are currently starting to be apathetic towards democratic parties to elect regional leaders. In fact, trillions of rupiah have been disbursed for several pilkada events, but the elected leaders have not been able to bring about improvements in people's lives. In fact, those that have received improvements are limited to the leaders and their families as well as the parties that became their supporters during the elections.

Second, the abstinence phenomenon can also be a symbol of warning for every political party, because several surveys conducted by several national survey institutions show that the current condition of political parties is experiencing a crisis of trust from the public. The public has begun to understand that the existence of political parties is more synonymous with super commercial riding horses, ready to be punished for anyone who wants to be in power. It is no longer an open secret that every person who wants to be in power through the election route, they have to spend hundreds of millions or even billions of rupiah to hire a political party. If it is not in the form of cash, it can also be

<sup>2</sup> The interview is held in the house of the Chief of PPL Coblong District at Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at 13.30 pm.

<sup>3</sup> The interview is held in the District office at Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2010 at 11.10 pm.

<sup>4</sup> The interview is hold in Dipati Ukur area, Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 09.15 pm

a commitment to give something else that is no less economically valuable if they succeed in seizing power.

Third, people's reasons for abstaining from voting are various, some are only technical reasons, for example when the voting is going to work so they do not vote. There are also those caused by ideological reasons, for example there are no candidates who explicitly and seriously base their policies on Islamic ideology. However, even the technical reasons are sufficient to show that the community considers the pilkada not important to them. If this was considered important, especially if it could give hope for improvement, of course the people would flock to the TPS.

The case in Coblong District, where abstentions were played by students for technical reasons because at the time of voting they were not in place, so they did not give their voting rights. This means that at the time of voting, there are those who return to their regions even though they are included in the DPT (final voter list) and deliberately carry out other activities such as traveling because the voting day is closed.

Efforts that must be corrected in the future if there is an unsuitable DPT is that before the election, there should be a review of voter data. This can be done by deploying urban village officials, be it RW (Rukun Warga) or RT (Rukun Tetangga) and certain community groups (students or students) to double-check the names on the final voter list.

In addition, there are three factors that cause abstention [2]. First, economic problems. People prioritize the rice bowl (rice plate) issue and do not want to leave their jobs to vote. Second, the socialization was not maximal, causing one of the triggers for the low level of community participation. Pilkada is interpreted as merely the wish of the political elite. The means by which political elites gain political power and which will gain social, economic and political benefits are of course only a small part. Meanwhile, the problems faced by society remain unchanged. Third, the issues surrounding the candidate himself. The candidate pair is considered not to bring new hope that can spur people's optimism. The couple offered no fresh air, which could be an excuse for voters to use their vote. The three reasons, according to the researcher, include those used by traders and students in Coblong District in the consideration of the election for governor and deputy governor in West Java.

Thus, the high level of golput is a political expression of society towards a political process that is only procedural. This is because the political participation that has been given by the community so far has implications for the level of community welfare. Politics is portrayed only as an activity that makes promises whose realization is very contradictory to public expectations. The high number of abstentions shows that something is wrong in today's political life. Politics runs and develops with its own affairs, politics develops incompatible and in step with the increase in social welfare. In the end, golput is an alarm or a signal that develops in society against the political elite. If this trend is not immediately noticed and its development anticipated, it is clearly a danger in political life. Democratic political life will be frozen, because democracy and public political participation are not accompanied by improvements in people's welfare.

There are other opinions about the general and specific causes of the high abstinence [4]. Common causes include, first, voter boredom and boredom of the continuous elections. This means that the pilkada is just a political routine that will not experience progress and improvements in the local social and political system. Thus, the pilkada in the eyes of the public is nothing but a "political play" packaged in democratic procedures. This is because, in essence, the elections will only benefit politically and economically by the local political elite, but will still torment the common people. Because it failed to change the fate of economic, political, legal and cultural rights.

People who choose to abstain are reflected in the results of the legislative and presidential elections in 2004, which initially had noble intentions to make changes for the future of the people. But the reality is that until today, people have not enjoyed this change, prices for basic necessities continue to soar, unemployment remains high, poverty continues to swell, and local officials still behave badly and are criminal (corruption).

Second, voter disappointment with the behavior of politicians. An accumulation of disappointments breeds frustration and antipathy. Third, the decline in community welfare and difficulty in fulfilling the necessities of life. Fourth, increasing poverty.

Further, abstention is also caused by special factors, including the first, the emergence of legal, political and administrative problems in the regions which create an unfavorable situation. Second, the low attractiveness of candidates is due to reduced credibility and accountability. Third, the lack of acceptability and popularity of candidates due to the absence of voters in the candidacy, which occurred in the regional elections. Fourth, voter confusion due to the large number of candidate pairs. eleven Eight of the eleven pilkada won by golput which was followed by four pairs. Fifth, the public's opinion and the party's concern that the incumbent candidate will definitely win the pilkada (cognitive distortion). Lastly, sixth, the lack of local election socialization.

From these various causes, it can be seen that the atmosphere surrounding voting behavior in the pilkada, namely a lack of trust (distrust), hopelessness and a decline in economic capacity. These are the things that explain the victory of golput and this situation defines less democracy.

The causes of abstention above are capital for a systematic abstinence prevention strategy, with action stages based on a priority scale. For that we need an understanding of the obstacles and opportunities to prevent golput. The main obstacle to abstaining from golput is the relatively far distance of interest between the governor and voters. Logically, the farther the interests are, the lower the degree of attention and concern. At an extreme point, the distance between interests dispels hope. This led to a decrease in the push to vote for the governor election.

These obstacles can be anticipated if opportunities can be optimal. First, the absence of an incumbent in the election. Second, in terms of discourse and policy, Minister of Home Affairs Mardiyanto continues to push for democratic and non-capitalist pilgub. Third, the long preparation time for the governor election.

With that, the priority scale can be mapped. The common cause of abstaining from winning is not directly related to the Pilkada. This problem can be bridged by appropriate and prompt policies and actions from central and local government administrators. As a result, the process of taking action and policy takes time. On the other hand, the specific cause of the golput victory can be resolved by affirming democratic principles in the regional elections. These principles must be manifested in policies and concrete actions of Pilkada / Pilgub stakeholders, particularly parties and KPUD.

Disappointment with candidates needs to be answered by recruiting candidates in a transparent and participatory manner in a process known as a convention. Apart from being a vehicle for recruitment, the convention also functions for political education, pre-campaign and socialization for the election. The potential convention process eliminates candidates who are not credible, acceptable and accountable. With the open convention, the possibility of a candidate with the above qualities or criteria will emerge, which automatically creates a conducive climate. It is important to remember that in many regional elections candidates with bad track records, especially in the case of KKN, are easy targets for political opponents. Such candidates will fall out of the open convention.

In addition, it is time for the election to be conducted. In principle, the more intense the socialization, the more community groups that the governor election information will target. Delays in socialization can actually prevent someone from exercising their right to vote. Pilgub socialization which is fixed at the time and stages of the pilgub election creates a negative impression. The strategies and efforts to prevent the victory of golput above rely heavily on the party (represented by the DPRD) and the KPUD of West Java Province.

## **CONCLUSION**

Factors Affecting the Development of Golput Voters' Behavior in the 2008 West Java Governor Election (Pilgub) include: First, apathy, which is not compatible with the existing pair of candidates, the reason is that they are not sons of the region but from other regions and are the party's choice. Second, Do not believe in the government, because it will not pay attention to and improve the daily needs of voters. Third, Lack of socialization for Pilgub from KPU West Java.

The result of this research may be a suggestion to the government, especially to the General Election Commissions West Java Province. They need to socialize the election for some period (take more time) before the election day. So, it will motivate some voters to participate in the election (not become abstain)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgments are addressed to the National Education Department's BPKLN (Bureau of Planning for Foreign Cooperation) for funding this research

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