

## **The Role of Communication in Improving Community Political Participation**



**Dewi Utami<sup>1</sup>, Yulius Yohanes<sup>2</sup>, Elyta<sup>3</sup>, Syarifah Ema Rahmaniah<sup>4</sup>, Syarifah Nurma Afhiani<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>, Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak Indonesia

**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to determine the factors that influence the level of public political participation in the general election of the Regional Head of Kubu Raya Regency in 2013. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. The research subjects or informants in this study were essential informants, principal informants, and key informants. Two sources of data were used in this study, namely primary and secondary data. The results of the study indicate that there are five types of factors that influence political participation: 1) a factor that stimulates participation, the emergence of the influence of someone who wants to contribute to political life; 2) the figure popularity factor, indirectly informants automatically choose a partner they already know; 3) factors of personal characteristics of voters, approach forms the personal characteristics of an individual included in the character of the electorate; 4) socio-political factors of social status, including several factors such as economy, group, race, ethnicity, one's beliefs; 5) the role of social institutions, public political participation can be increased through social institutions.

**KEYWORDS:** Political participation, elections, influencing factors

### **INTRODUCTION**

Humans, as social beings, always want to relate to other humans. He wants to connect with other humans. He wanted to know what was going on inside him. Curiosity is what forces humans to communicate. So every communication leads humans, namely people to whom a message is conveyed, to change human attitudes as an individual or group of people. Three primary functions can cause humans to need to communicate. First: is the human desire to control the environment because, through communication, humans can know the opportunities to be utilized, maintain, and avoid things that threaten the natural surroundings. Second: is the human effort to adapt to the environment. The continuous process of society depends on how the community adapts to its environment. The third: is an attempt to transform the legacy of socialization. People who want to maintain their existence, then community members are required to exchange values, behaviors, and roles (Cangara, 2003)

The digital era is a time of the emergence of digital technology that already uses the technologies used (Elyta & Darmawan, 2021). The digital era is an era that uses technology (Elyta., Martoyo., & Herlan, 2021). Likewise, general elections use digitalization to increase political participation.

Political participation is very fundamental in a democracy. One example is the existence of free competition among elites who fight for public support in order to get a position. One of the forms of public support is participation in general elections (elections) to elect people or parties to occupy public positions. (Saiful., William & Kuskridho, 2012). Political participation is the activity of citizens acting as individuals intended to influence government decision-making (Huntington & Joan, 1994). A common form of Public (Elyta & Martoyo. 2021), this minimal form of political participation can be found in even the most authoritarian and democratic political systems.

Our people with high political awareness and trust in the authorities have active political participation. However, if members of society have political awareness and trust in the rulers who do little, then political participation, including the inactive and even indifferent. The next type of participation is militant and seems radical. If political awareness is high, trust in the authorities is low. If political awareness is classified as very low, but trust in the authorities is considered very high, then this participation is considered inactive (Surbakti, 2007).

People who see groups or the general public are more needed than understanding the conditions individuals offer, making it more difficult for community members to make other decisions or not in line with the thoughts of the group or state (Elyta & Sahide, 2021). Therefore, voter behavior in developing countries must be studied again regarding the impact of leadership on voter choice (Kartikasari, & Elyta, 2021).

Things that are felt to influence the level of public political participation are political awareness and trust in the political system adopted by the government. Political awareness itself is aware of their rights and obligations as citizens. It is about the knowledge of community members about the community and politics, as well as about the interest and focus of community

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members on the surrounding community and politics. The attitude and trust referred to in the government is the view of community members towards the ruler, can be trusted, and can be influenced or not by the ruler. Public participation is a citizen's right in countries that use democracy as a political system. However, in practice, the portion of citizens participating in each country differs from others. It can be said that not all citizens participate in political activities.

Community involvement in elections starts from the selection of decisions, namely they participate in voting or not voting in elections. The reasons for voters placing their choices are classified into five approaches: sociological, structural, ecological, social psychology, and rational choice. First, the structural approach views choice-making activities as the result of a more extensive form of order such as social structure, party structure, general election system, problems, and programs highlighted by each party. The social structure at the center of political diversity can take the form of social class between bosses and workers, religion, urban and rural differences, language, and nationalism. The number of parties, the basis of the party system, and the steps are shown may not be the same in each country because of these social structural abnormalities. Second, the sociological approach is more about positioning election activities in the social context. More precisely, the choice of community members in elections is influenced by background, geographical and socio-economic conditions, for example, gender, place of residence, occupation, educational background, class, income, and religion. Third, the ecological approach is only practical if, in an election, an electoral district has different characteristics of voters based on territorial units, such as villages, kelurahan, sub-districts, and districts. If in America using district name, precinct, and ward. Blocking communities such as followers of certain religions, workers, middle class, students, certain ethnic groups, certain subcultures, and certain occupations are located in the territorial unit so that the change in the type of population in the territorial unit can be placed as an explanation for changes in the results of the election. This ecological approach is needed to be used because the characteristics of the election results data for other provinces are with the characteristics of district data or the characteristics of other district data with the characteristics of sub-district data. Fourth, a social psychology approach is used to describe behavior to vote for an election in the form of party identification. This approach is more directed to the voters' point of view of the available parties or the emotional attachment of voters to a particular party. The party that is emotionally felt so close to the voters is a party that will always be chosen without being influenced by other reasons. Fifth, the rational approach views voting activities as a result of the calculation for losses. What is considered is not only the "cost" of voting and the possibility that the vote will impact the desired outcome but also deviations from other avenues in the form of available choices. This thinking is used by voters and candidates who will run to become people's representatives. For voters, the profit and loss calculation is used to decide which party or candidate to choose, especially whether to vote. Of the five approaches described above, all of them argue that voting is an activity that is carried out without pressure from certain parties. However, in practice in developing countries, voting patterns are not only regulated by voters as described in the previous four approaches. However, they are also primarily regulated by group pressure, intimidation, and coercion from certain groups. The expected leadership is traditional leadership, such as traditional or tribal chiefs, religious (religious leaders), patron-clients (landlords-cultivators), and authoritarian bureaucrats (government officials, police, and military). The power of these leaders is not only in the form of persuasion but is sometimes faked, suppressed, and forced by threats (Surbakti, 2007).

In the 2013 General Election of Kubu Raya Regency, the political participation rate was 64.76%, or a total of 256,186 people who took part in voting from a total of 395,577 Kubu Raya Regency Permanent Voters List (DPT) (KPU of Kubu Raya, 2013). This means that 35.24% or 139,391 people have voting rights but do not exercise them. From these problems, researchers are interested in researching the factors that influence the level of public political participation in the case study of the 2013 General Election for the Head of the Kubu Raya Regency.

This study aims to analyze the role of communication in improving community political participation in the 2013 Kubu Raya regional head general election.

### METHODS

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. This research was conducted in the Kubu Raya Regency in 2013. The research subjects or informants in this study were essential informants, principal informants, and key informants. Two sources of data were used in this study, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data is in the form of data or information collected directly in the field by researchers through in-depth interviews and direct observation. Secondary data is collected indirectly by field researchers, but the data can be obtained through literature/library studies and documentation, print media, and related agencies. By the research technique used in this study, the data collection tools were observation guidelines, interview guides, tape recorders, notebooks, and cameras.

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### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

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##### **Participation Stimulating Factors**

Socialization is a process of planting or transferring habits or values, and rules from one generation to another in a group or society. Several sociologists mention socialization as a theory of the role (role theory). Because in the socialization process, the roles that individuals must carry out are taught. Political socialization can be done in everyday life. For example, 1) In the family environment, parents can teach their children specific ways of political behavior. Through light political chats, they have not realized that they have instilled political values in their children. 2) In the school environment, by including civic education. Students and teachers exchange information and interact in discussing political topics. 3) Within the State, you can carefully spread and instill the official ideologies. 4) Within political parties, one of the functions of political parties is to be able to play their role in political socialization. This means that the political party has periodically recruited members or cadres and their participants. Political parties must be able to create an impression or image of fighting for the public interest (Sarwah, Hidayah & Suaib, 2017)

The influence of someone who wants to contribute to political life. From this research, political influence is conventional and non-conventional. Conventional methods include following political discussions through mass media in the form of electronic or print, formal discussions (socialization of the party/success team), and informal discussions. The results of interviews with informants obtained information that some informants were interested in voting rights after conducting direct political debates, or indirectly. Informants own it with an excellent educational background and political insight. The informants will exercise their right to vote after being explained by their family, friends, and the success team.

The mass media has a significant influence in attracting interest in using the right to vote and information from informants. Mass media is considered the most effective means. This shows that the media is not only a source of political information but also a trigger for political change. In addition, the media has a significant influence on disseminating political information in the formation of public opinion. Based on the interviews with informants, the media with the most access is radio, especially community radio (in the areas of Rasau, Berembang, and Sui Ambangah). Radio access is considered more accessible, more manageable, cheaper and can reach all community structures in rural areas. In addition, other media that are also used as a center for political information are television and newspapers.

Rush and Althoff (2005) explain that the more sensitive a person is to political influence through personal and organizational contacts, the more likely they are to contribute to political activities. A person's openness is not the same as other people's and is part of a socio-political strategy. Differences often carried out by political discussion activities will also be encouraged to engage in political activities. A person's openness to the mass media can impact his interest in political issues and increase the opportunity to contribute to these issues.

Other political influences are grouped in unconventional ways, for example, choosing a particular pair of candidates due to the Issue of sure gifts in the form of money or gifts. It indicates providing goods and money to make voters use their votes and direct, confident choices. Chairman of the Election Supervisory Body for West Kalimantan Province, Ruhermansyah, S.Ag, indicated that money politics did occur in the 2013 Regional Head General Election of Kubu Raya Regency.

##### **Figure Popularity Factor**

Kubu Raya Region, 5 Pairs of Regent, and Deputy Regent Candidates are figures who have popularity in the post-conflict local election. Djohansyah is a member of the Pontianak City DPRD for the 2009-2014 period. Ahok Angking is a businessman. Meanwhile, Kamaruzzaman, the Golkar Party, had an executive position as Acting Regent in Kubu Raya Regency from 2007 to 2008. David Maryansyah, a member of the Pontianak City DPRD from the Madurese ethnic group, and Hasbulloh, a young leader from the Javanese tribe. This ethnic group is quite numerous in Kubu Raya Regency. Rusman Ali is a former member of the Indonesian House of Representatives from 2004 to 2009 and is a former Secretary-General of the PBR DPP. Meanwhile, Hermanus is the Dayak community in Kubu Raya Regency.

Indirectly, informants automatically choose a partner they already know. This study does not explicitly present the reason for the incumbent's loss. In the initial analysis, it is more solid and the work of the successful and supportive team of Rusman Ali-Hermanus. Moreover, the Rusman Ali-

Hermanus has been supported by PDIP (the winning party in the Legislative Election in Kubu Raya). The campaign budget by Rusman Ali-Hermanus is in the highest position of the other candidates.

##### **Factors of Personal Characteristics of Voters**

Someone with a personal character is the social character of each individual as a voter who has a significant concern in the social field regarding social, political, economic, and defense and security issues.

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### Socio-Political Factors

Social status includes factors such as economy, group, race, ethnicity, and beliefs. The social environment influences one's perception and behavior in political life. That is why they want to contribute to politics. According to the informant, financial satisfaction is the main factor that encourages someone to participate in political life. The low economic status causes a person to feel left behind in political life, causing apathy.

Ethnic factors influence community political participation. Voters will prefer candidates who have the same ethnicity as them. According to community leaders (SK), one factor that drives voter behavior is an emotional feeling. This is also supported by voters (Ft), which causes ethnic factors that affect people's political participation during direct elections. People of certain ethnicities will prefer candidates with the same ethnic background.

Conducive political conditions are one of the driving factors for political participation. In a democratic political environment, people will be more accessible to participate in political activities than in an authoritarian political environment. According to the chairman of the KPUD and Pan was of Kubu Raya Regency, when the post-conflict local election took place, it was carried out in an orderly, safe, and unimpeded manner.

### Role of Social Institutions

Face Community political participation can be increased through social institutions in Kubu Raya Regency, including KPUD, political parties, and the mass media. First, the KPUD has the most crucial role as the organizer of the election, as stated in Law Number 15 of 2011 concerning the Implementation of Elections Article 10, which reads: "One of the duties and authorities of the Regency/Municipal KPU is to organize the socialization and implementation of the General Election and related to the duties and authorities of the KPU. Regency/City to the community". KPUD increases political participation through socialization and public political education. KPUD Kubu Raya (Gustiar, S.PdI) stated that the efforts carried out by the KPUD were, for example, using face-to-face communication and socialization. All sub-districts conducted socialization in Kubu Raya Regency.

Second, based on Law No. 2 of 2008 concerning Political Parties, article 10 contains: "The specific purpose of political parties is to increase participation in carrying out political and government activities." Article 11 also states: "Political parties have a role as a means of political education for members and the wider community so that they can become Indonesian citizens who are aware of their rights and obligations in the life of society, nation, and state." The functions of political parties in the post-conflict local election in Kubu Raya Regency include controlling and driving politics for supported candidates, carrying out socialization, and maximizing party organizational functions.

The third is the function of the mass media. In this era of globalization, the media is vital in providing information as a communication channel for the public to socialize. The mass media that played a significant role during the post-conflict local election in Kubu Raya Regency were radio (RRI and the community), local television, and local newspapers.

### CONCLUSIONS

Political participation is voting at the time of the general election. The level of public political participation is political awareness and trust in the political system adopted by the government. Political awareness itself is aware of their rights and obligations as citizens. The results of the study show that there are five types of factors that influence political participation: 1) participation stimulant factors, the emergence of the influence of someone who wants to contribute to political life; 2) the popularity of the figure, indirectly the informant automatically chooses a partner they already know; 3) the personal characteristics of the voters, the approach to the form of an individual's characteristics are included in the character of the voters; 4) socio-political factors, social status, including several factors such as economics, a person's group, race, ethnicity, belief; 5) the role of social institutions, community political participation can be increased through social institutions.

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