Political Participation of Legislative Election Voters in Bengkulu City

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Abstract

General elections for the legislature are significant junctures in the political process because they involve the community in choosing its legislators. The city of Bengkulu held engaging legislative elections between 2014 and 2019, which are worth studying and analysing in the perspective of civic engagement. Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were used in this study. The political engagement of the electorate in the legislative elections in Bengkulu City saw numerous dynamics and changes between 2014 and 2019. Political campaigns run by legislative candidates can also have an impact on levels of political involvement. If the campaign fails to inspire and influence the electorate to vote in the 2019 election, political engagement may decline. Analysing political involvement is crucial for evaluating Bengkulu City's level of democracy and political representation. The degree of public confidence in the political process and candidates for public office is demonstrated by the amount of political involvement. The public's apathy and discontent with the political system may also be raised by poor political involvement.

Keywords: Participation, Politics, Legislative Elections

1. Introduction

Public participation in politics is a fundamental pillar of a healthy and well-functioning democratic system. Legislative elections in an area are important moments in the political process in which the community plays a role in determining their representatives at the legislative level. From 2014 to 2019, the city of Bengkulu experienced a series of legislative general elections which are interesting to study and analyze in the context of community participation (Herawan, 2022).

This article aims to analyze the level of public participation in politics during the legislative elections in Bengkulu city from 2014 to 2019. Through this analysis, we can understand political dynamics at the local level and evaluate the extent to which the community is involved in the democratic process (Buehler, 2013). In addition, this analysis will identify the factors that influence the level of participation and their impact on the quality of democracy and political representation in the city.

The period from 2014 to 2019 is an interesting period to analyze because it includes two general legislative elections, namely the 2014 and 2019 Legislative Elections. These events provide an overview of political changes and the dynamics of people's choices over the five-year period. In addition, during this period there were also various events and political issues that could affect people's participation in politics (Klinger et al., 2023).

As a city in the Sumatra region, Bengkulu has its own social, cultural and political characteristics. The city's political history also plays an important role in shaping patterns of public participation. Through an analysis of Bengkulu's political and social history, we can understand how patterns of public participation in politics have developed over time.

One of the aspects that will be analyzed is the level of voter participation in legislative general elections. Voter participation reflects the level of public interest and involvement in the political process. A high level of voter turnout can show the enthusiasm and trust of the people in the political system and legislative candidates. However, if voter turnout is low, this can raise questions about public apathy and dissatisfaction with the political system.

In addition, this analysis will examine patterns of public participation in political activities outside of elections, such as participating in political campaigns, discussing in public forums, and voicing their aspirations to legislative

candidates. This participation reflects the level of active involvement of the community in the political process and can affect political representation and the quality of the resulting policies.

Factors influencing people's participation in politics will also be analyzed. These factors can include the level of political awareness among the public, economic conditions and level of education, accessibility of polling stations, understanding of voting procedures, and perceptions of electoral integrity (Smets & Van Ham, 2013). By identifying these factors, we can understand what encourages or hinders people's participation in politics in the city of Bengkulu.

The impact of the level of public participation in politics on the quality of democracy and political representation will also be evaluated. Active public participation can affect the legitimacy of government and the diversity of representation in the legislature (Fung, 2015). In addition, community participation can also have an impact on public policy and community services, because it allows the aspirations and needs of the community to be more considered by the elected representatives (Crosby et al., 1986).

This article will also examine political events and issues that affect people's participation in the legislative elections in the city of Bengkulu. These events and issues cover national political dynamics, government policies, relevant local issues, and political campaigns conducted by legislative candidates. By considering the political context during this period, this analysis can provide a comprehensive view of people's participation in politics in the city of Bengkulu.

By analyzing people's participation in politics during the general legislative elections in the city of Bengkulu from 2014 to 2019, this article aims to provide in-depth insights into the dynamics of politics and democracy at the local level. Hopefully the results of this analysis can become an important reference for stakeholders in an effort to increase community participation and strengthen the foundations of democracy in the city of Bengkulu and throughout Indonesia.

2. Materials and Methods

Research on the political participation of voters in legislative elections uses qualitative and quantitative research. According to Whitney, descriptive research is a search for facts with the right interpretation with the aim of making a description, picture/painting, in a systematic, factual and accurate manner regarding the facts, characteristics and relationships between the phenomena being investigated. While qualitative research starts from a phenomenological paradigm whose objectivity is built on formulations about certain situations as lived by certain individuals or social groups and is relevant to the purpose of the research.

2.1. Political participation

Regarding the idea of political participation, Michael Rush and Philip Althoft define it as the actions that regular citizens do to influence the formulation and implementation of public policies as well as their participation in the election of representatives to public office. Political engagement activities can be defined as any citizen activity that affects the formulation and implementation of public policy, including the choice of government officials (Mettler & Soss, 2004).

Political evolution in poor countries by Samuel P. Huntington and Joan Nelson offers a more comprehensive analysis by expressly incorporating unlawful and violent behaviour. According to them, political participation is the activity of citizens who act as individuals who are intended to influence decision-making by the government, because participation can be individual or collective, organised or spontaneous, steady or sporadic, peaceful or violent, legal or illegal, effective or ineffective (Jandevi, 2019).

Elections are contests to choose candidates for formal selection to fill political offices in the government. Elections play a crucial role in the modern day because they are connected to a number of issues (Ferejohn, 1991). First, they are crucial for the survival of representative democracy. Second, elections reveal if a nation is democratic. According to Dhal, elected officials and free, fair, and regular elections are two of the six features of political institutions required for large-scale democracies. Third, it is crucial to talk about elections in relation to its broad ramifications. Huntington refers to elections in this phase as an instrument and a goal of democratisation.

Through elections, the populace establishes a social compact with the authorities. The electorate can select a dependable candidate to fill legislative and executive seats at the election Sisk, 2017). People who have met the prerequisites to vote cast their ballots freely, secretly, and for candidates who best meet their goals. As a result, the power that the leaders currently wield does not originate from them personally but is instead granted by the electorate. Elections are essentially an example of political engagement, or the ways in which regular people can affect governmental decisions. General elections are essentially the tools at the disposal of the populace to choose the representatives who will sit in populace representative bodies and exercise populace sovereignty. Elections are very meaningful for everyone, elections are an indicator of the democracy of a country (Birch, 2003).

varying from the general election's definition of political engagement. In the conclusion, this study also cannot exclude the social traits present in the research subject, particularly in Garut. Since the researcher must ultimately be able to concede that additional factors influence this political participation. Social factors have an impact on political engagement, according to a study by Seymour Martin Lipset published in 1960 titled Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (Smelser & Lipset, 1966). Income, education, occupation, race, gender, age, location of residence,

circumstance, status, and organisation are some examples of these social traits. Thus, the arrowroot's usual social traits serve as a complementing flavouring in the discussion of this study.

2.2. Rational Choice

According to Coleman3, the rational choice theory is interpreted as a set of personal choices or activities that lead to a specific objective. Actors and resources make up the two key components of Coleman's theory (Wall et al., 1998). Those that make decisions that maximise their utility or satiate their needs and wants are known as actors. Resources, on the other hand, are something that actors can manage and something that draws attention. According to Downs & Stea (1973) theoretical contributions, rational decisions take many different turns. According to the rational choice theory, people's decisions are driven by their personal preferences, convictions, and workable methods. No matter how complex the options, the mainstream version of rational choice makes the assumption that people have all the necessary time, emotional, and intellectual capacities to make the right decision. When every action has a known result (and there is therefore no risk or ambiguity), and the relationship between action and result is unaffected by other people's activities, the simplest problem in decision making conceptually is parametric in certainty. It is considered that people can evaluate both actions and results.

According to Downs4, people will vote for political parties or candidates in general elections if they believe that they will be able to advance their basic interests, especially their ability to pursue a decent standard of living. A voter's overall assessment of the state of the national economy (nootropic) under the current government compared to the previous year (retrospective).

According to Friedmen and Hechter, social institutions have a significant impact on people's political engagement, which explains how they can affect people's decisions to participate in politics by imposing both positive and negative consequences on society. According to Friedmen and Hecdter's view, social institutions have the power to persuade people to take an interest in politics. Electoral organisers (KPU, PPK, PPS, and KPPS), political parties, the media, and mass organisations are social institutions that help people become more politically active, according to researches' observations.

3. Results and Discussion

During the period from 2014 to 2019, the political participation of the people in the legislative elections in Bengkulu City experienced various dynamics and changes. The legislative elections in 2014 and 2019 were important moments in the political process in this region, and through an analysis of political participation, we can understand the degree of citizen involvement in the democratic process.

In the 2014 Legislative Election, the political participation of the people in Bengkulu City was quite high. This election is an arena for determining representatives in parliament and local government, so that the enthusiasm of voters to exercise their voting rights increases. People in Bengkulu City actively participate in the election process, with many voters coming to the polls to cast their ballots.

One of the factors contributing to the high political participation in the 2014 election is the relatively high level of political awareness among the people. The people of Bengkulu have a good understanding of the importance of the political process and their right to choose their representatives at the legislative level. Intense political campaigns from political parties and legislative candidates also motivated the public to participate.

However, even though political participation in the 2014 election was relatively high, there were also a number of challenges. One of them is the accessibility of polling stations, especially for people who live in remote areas. Some voters may face difficulties in reaching the polls, which may reduce their turnout.

In the period after the 2014 election, the political participation of the people in Bengkulu City underwent a change. In the 2019 Legislative Election, there was a decline in the voter turnout. Factors such as dissatisfaction with government performance, lack of trust in political parties, and difficult economic conditions can be the cause of the decline in political participation.

In addition, the level of political participation can be influenced by political campaigns carried out by legislative candidates. In the 2019 election, if the campaign is unable to motivate and move the public to participate, then political participation may decrease.

In the 2014-2019 period, there has also been a phenomenon of more active public political participation outside of elections, such as participating in political campaigns and public discussion forums. This shows that people are more active in expressing their political views and aspirations, other than through their voting rights in general elections.

In terms of political participation in legislative elections, issues relevant to the people of Bengkulu also influence voter interest and participation. Legislative candidates who are able to voice issues that are important to society clearly and decisively can attract the attention of voters and increase political participation.

During the 2014-2019 period, developments in information technology also played a role in influencing people's political participation. Easier and faster access to information through social media and digital platforms can influence people's understanding of political issues and legislative candidates. The use of social media also allows for wider and less expensive political campaigning, allowing candidates for the legislature to reach a wider range of potential voters.

Thus, people's political participation in legislative elections in Bengkulu City in the period 2014 to 2019 experienced complex dynamics. The level of political participation tends to be influenced by the level of political awareness, accessibility of voting places, political campaigns, economic conditions, trust in political parties, and political issues that are relevant to society.

This analysis of political participation is important for evaluating the quality of democracy and political representation in Bengkulu City. A high level of political participation shows the level of public trust in the political system and legislative candidates. Meanwhile, low political participation can raise questions about public apathy and dissatisfaction with the political system.

In an effort to strengthen democracy in Bengkulu City, there needs to be efforts to increase the political awareness of the people and create an environment that is inclusive and responsive to their aspirations and needs. Quality political campaigns, accessibility to polling stations, and effective voter education can be strategic steps in increasing people's political participation in Bengkulu City and creating a more democratic and representative political system.

4. Conclussion

Information technology advancements over the four-year period (2014–2019) also had an impact on how many people participated in politics. People's awareness of political problems and legislative candidates may be influenced by quicker and easier access to information via social media and digital platforms. The use of social media also makes political campaigning more accessible and less expensive, enabling candidates for the legislature to connect with more potential voters. As a result, the dynamics of political involvement in Bengkulu City's legislative elections from 2014 to 2019 were complex. The degree of political awareness, accessibility of polling places, political campaigns, economic situations, faith in political parties, and political problems that are important to society all seem to have an impact on the amount of political engagement. For assessing the standard of democracy and political representation in Bengkulu City, this analysis of political engagement is crucial. The degree of public confidence in the political process and candidates for public office is demonstrated by the amount of political involvement. The public's apathy and discontent with the political system may also be raised by poor political involvement. In order to develop democracy in Bengkulu City, efforts must be made to raise political consciousness among the populace and to foster an atmosphere that is welcoming and sensitive to their needs and ambitions. Effective voter education, accessible polling places, and high-quality political campaigns can all be used as strategic moves to boost political participation in Bengkulu City and establish a more democratic and representative political system.

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