

THE ROLE OF THE GENERAL ELECTION COMMISSION IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN GORONTALO CITY

Alfiyah Agussalim ^{1,4}, Dwi Nur Handayani ²

¹ STIA Bina Taruna Gorontalo

² STIA Bina Taruna Gorontalo

⁴alfiyahagussalim.a@gmail.com

Introduction

Indonesia is a country that adheres to a democratic system. Democracy in Indonesia is divided into four periods, namely the period of constitutional democracy, the period of guided democracy, the period of Pancasila democracy and the period of democratic reform. According to (Yuniarto 2018) democracy refers to the concept of state life in which citizens participate in government through elected representatives; the government encourages and guarantees freedom of speech, religion, opinion, association, upholding the "rule of law", the existence of a majority government that respects the rights of minorities and people whose citizens give each other the same treatment.

Ranny in (Thoha 2008) argues that democracy is a form of government that is organized and organized based on the principles of *popular sovereignty*, *political equality*, consultation or dialogue with the people (*popular consultation*) and based on the rule of majority vote. . To realize people's sovereignty as the original meaning of democracy (Thoha 2008) which is a government of the people, by the people and for the people, it can be done through the granting of the people's right to elect leaders and representatives of the people through general elections.

As stated in (Undang-Undang Number 7 2017) concerning General Elections, General Elections, hereinafter referred to as elections, are: means of popular sovereignty to elect members of the People's Legislative Council, the People's Legislative Council Regional Representatives, President and Vice President, and the House of Representatives Areas that are carried out directly, publicly, freely, confidentially, honestly and justice in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and The Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

Carrying out general elections in Indonesia is not easy to remember Indonesia's population is diverse and Indonesia's territory is quite large. For In order to realize people's sovereignty through general elections, then an authorized institution in terms of general elections was formed, namely the KPU which is an election administration institution that is national, permanent, and independent in charge of carrying out general elections (Dan et al. 2018)

The roll-out of the reformation period marked by a shift in the system authoritarian government into a democratic system, some characteristics democratic life began to emerge as many political parties, decentralization policies, freedom of speech, and so on. breakthrough extraordinary government since the beginning of the democratic system of government, namely Presidential and vice presidential elections were held in 2004. According to national and international recognition in (Mulyadi and Gedeona 2017) the 2004 elections were the most democratic elections in the world holding elections in Indonesia and encouraging the birth of head elections regions directly by all Regencies/Cities in Indonesia.

However, since the implementation of the democratic system in Indonesia, there are still many pros and cons regarding the success or failure of democracy. Most people think that democracy has not been successful. This is evident from the decline in the index of democracy in Indonesia which had previously been in the position 48, in 2016, dropped to position 68 (National 2019)

According to the researchers, the Association for Elections and Democracy (Perluden) Fadli Ramdanil evaluate the decrease of two aspects in the index of Indonesian democracy more donated by strong political polarization between citizens as voters. One of the elements that gives the biggest points is indeed the interaction between citizens in responding to socio-political issues. One of them is the election contestation (Eksa 2019).

Although the democracy index in Indonesia is declining, things are different with Gorontalo province. The Indonesian Democracy Index (IDI) for Gorontalo province is at 73.92% or is in the good category and is above the national average of 72.1% (Between 2019). The high IDI of Gorontalo Province is assessed through three aspects covering aspects of civil liberties which were categorized as good with a score of 85.30 points, aspects of political rights at 8.18 points in the moderate category, and aspects of democratic institutions with a score of 68.73 points in the medium category.

Community involvement in political issues is one of the indicators that is quite often used to measure the democracy index. One of the institutions directly involved in the general election is the General Elections Commission (KPU). As an institution that is directly involved in the electoral process which is part of the cultivation of democratic values, the role of the KPU is needed to improve the quality of democracy.

Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method by collecting data through observation, interviews and documentation. The informants in this study were the Chairperson of the Gorontalo KPU and all the Commissioners/Divisions in the Gorontalo City KPU consisting of the Commissioner for General Finance and Logistics, the Commissioner for Law and Supervision, the Technical Commissioner for Elections, the Commissioner for Socialization of Community Participation and Human Resources, and Commissioner of Planning and Data.

The data obtained from the informants were then analyzed by means of the data that had been collected by the researchers through interviews and presented in the form of narrative texts whose language had been scientified. After the data is presented in the form of a scientific narrative text, the researcher then draws conclusions from the research results that come from observations, interviews, and documentation.

Discussion

Insubordination Reinforcement

Democracy is a system of government with the concept of the people by the people and for the people. Based on this, the community has the right to determine the leaders and representatives of the people through general elections. According to (Cangara H 2009), democracy focuses on two important things that are interrelated, namely representation (representation) and participation. Representation shows consideration of the interests of the majority or the people, while participation shows the public's desire and participation in political activities.

The embodiment of representation and participation can be seen from the existence of general elections, in which the public participates in political activities to elect their representatives in parliament and also to elect their leaders. Leaders and representatives of the people are represented by the voices of the people they represent. In addition, general elections are a means of implementing people's sovereignty which are carried out directly, publicly, freely, confidentially, honestly and fairly within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Seran 2016).

The general election as a means to realize democracy demands the role of the KPU as one of the authorized institutions in the election process. To realize democracy through general elections, the KPU first needs to strengthen institutions by continuing to develop institutions through various components such as the capabilities and competencies of individuals, groups and institutions themselves.

To develop institutional capacity, a strategy is needed to improve efficiency, effectiveness and performance responsiveness. As stated by (Keban 2004), who is more specifically in the field of government, argues that capacity building is a series of strategies aimed at increasing the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of performance government by focusing on the development of dimensions, human resources, organizational strengthening, and institutional reform. or environment.

Institutional capacity building is not only aimed at government institutions but also for the DPRD and broad stakeholders, one of which is the KPU. To develop the capacity of the Gorontalo KPU as an institution authorized to organize elections, several strategies have been implemented, namely strengthening internal coordination. In order to maintain good coordination between individuals within the Gorontalo City KPU, the chairman of the KPU as a leader directs all his staff to make decisions through a plenary meeting. For urgent decision-making, plenary meetings can be held at any time, meanwhile the Gorontalo City KPU also has a routine plenary meeting agenda which is held every Monday every week. The plenary meeting aims to evaluate the activities of the past one week and to design activities for the next week.

In addition, the Chairperson of the KPU and the secretary along with each commissioner consisting of the Commissioner for Socialization of Community Participation and Human Resources, the Commissioner for Law and Supervision, the Commissioner for Planning and Data, the Commissioner for Election Organizers and the Commissioner for General Finance and Logistics coordinate both internally and externally. Internally, each commissioner coordinates the sub-sections. Meanwhile, external coordination is carried out by maintaining good communication with several parties including the local government, in this case the mayor of Gorontalo and also government agencies, namely the Population and Civil Registry Office so that voter data can be validated in order to avoid voter data errors. With good coordination and communication with the Department of Population and Civil Registry, the number of double voters can be minimized.

The Gorontalo City KPU also coordinates with all political parties through the delivery of information directly to political parties related to the election, both from the Provincial KPU and from the RI KPU. To continue to establish good communication with each political party, the Gorontalo City KPU regularly invites political parties to discuss technical matters related to the election. The coordination with the Election Supervisory Body is also carried out intensely considering that the KPU and Bawaslu are institutions that are related to each other in the administration of elections to create an election that is orderly and free from various forms of electoral fraud.

In addition to implementing several strategies to develop institutional capacity, the Gorontalo City KPU has also carried out institutional reforms that are in accordance with the demands of the community who want quick and easy access to information. For this reason, the Gorontalo City KPU has used several network-based applications that can be accessed by the public such as the Voter Registration System Application (SIDALIH) which aims to synchronize and validate voter information, and the Political Party Information System (SISPOL) which is intended to make it easier for the public to access political party information such as party management and the number of party members. Meanwhile, information on the legal section can be accessed through the Legal Awareness Information System (SIDAKUM). With the existence of several IT-based applications that have been used by the KPU, the Gorontalo City KPU has also developed the quality of its resources by conducting technical guidance at the PPK and PPS levels for the use of applications used for voter validation and also political parties.

Referring to the research results described above, the Gorontalo City KPU has made several efforts to develop its institutional capacity, ranging from coordination with various parties related to the election process to institutional reform and human resource development, as with the opinion (Ilato 2017) that development capacity as an effort to adjust policies and regulations as well as reform institutional structures and organizational culture, modify procedures and coordination mechanisms, improve skills and qualifications of human resources, and change individual value systems and attitudes as a way to meet the demands and needs of implementing autonomy a more democratic area in the welfare of society.

When viewed from the level of institutional capacity development intervention according to Grindle and UNDP in (Ilato 2017), the institutional capacity development carried out by the Gorontalo City Election Commission tends to be at the institutional/institutional level intervention, as seen from the organizational structure structuring that has been targeted at each main task and function starting from chairman, secretary, and also the commissioner who continues to coordinate with the sub-sections. In terms of decision making, the Gorontalo City Election Commission is also very careful, this is shown by the plenary meetings that are held every week and plenary meetings which are held anytime if there is an urgent matter. It is the same with procedures and work mechanisms and inter-organizational relations with other organizations where the Gorontalo City KPU always coordinates externally and internally to all relevant parties in order to create orderly elections and create good democracy.

Thoha in (Ilato 2017) asserts that if the bureaucracy does not make changes or revitalize itself, then the bureaucracy will be rolled up by him. This means that although the people have changed but the bureaucracy has not changed, the people will leave it and look for other alternatives, and in the end it will be difficult for the bureaucracy to generate public participation, especially in the implementation of development.

With the institutional reforms carried out by the Gorontalo City KPU, the existence of the Gorontalo City KPU will continue to survive in the community and also increase public confidence in the Gorontalo City KPU. After all, the Gorontalo City KPU is an institution that has an important role in the implementation of the general election, which will have a major impact on the development of the country, region, and community development.

Apart from strengthening the membership, the KPU of Gorontalo City continues to increase public participation so that the goals of democracy can be achieved. Increasing public participation in democracy, namely through general elections (elections). However, in order to increase public enthusiasm in participating in the general election, it is necessary to introduce it to the public, especially for novice voters, and ordinary people who do not know how the election actually is through socialization. According to Efrizal in (Triralmaldi, Miko, and Asrinaldi 2019) that political socialization is a process of how to introduce a political system to a person and how that person determines his responses and reactions to political phenomena.

Politic Socialization

Socialization is one form of democratic education. According to Yuniarto 2018 education democracy is to build the character and culture of democracy in the nation's political life. Meanwhile, according to Azra in (Yuniarto 2018) that substantially democratic education concerns the socialization, internalization and actualization of concepts, systems, values, culture and democratic practices for citizens, so that they become critical, participatory, democratic and civilized citizens.

To realize democratic citizens through general elections, the Gorontalo City KPU has conducted socialization in accordance with technical instructions from the RI KPU and the Gorontalo Provincial KPU. There are several forms of socialization that have been carried out by the Gorontalo City KPU to continue to increase public participation in participating in the general election (election) which will later be able to show how the quality of democracy in Gorontalo City is. Several forms of socialization carried out were election *run*, namely conducting healthy walks while distributing stickers and pamphlets containing voter data, political parties, and information about legislative candidates. In addition, the Gorontalo KPU also held a sovereign music concert. The KPU *Goes to School* and KPU *Goes to Campus* activities focused on the younger generation. As for the novice voters, the Gorontalo City Election Commission has established an election smart house by providing a room and then inviting several students from junior and senior high schools to be given reinforcement related to elections and democracy.

The Gorontalo City KPU also formed democracy volunteers in each sub-district which were divided into several groups, namely family groups, RT groups, Netizens focused on people who like social media, youth groups, religious groups, marginalized groups and people with disabilities who were then given material related to democracy and the stages - the steps involved in the electoral process.

Technically, the KPU has directed the PKK, PPs and electronic media such as RRI radio and Mimoza to help carry out the socialization. Due to the limited budget for organizing the socialization, the Gorontalo City Election Commission conducted asocialization, *no-budget* namely a democratic apple which was held every Monday by writing letters to schools to become ceremonial supervisors and also collaborating with campuses to provide material on the sidelines of lectures.

Socialization is done not only done on the eve of the election, even when no stage was still to be disseminated, but socialization in a different material, in this case does not concern electoral such as socialization related to the updating of voters,

In accordance with the results of the study indicate that KPU Gorontalo City has carried out various forms of socialization so that the public is more aware of government policies, especially those related to democracy, politics, and elections. Although the socialization carried out follows technical instructions from the RI KPU and the Gorontalo Provincial KPU, which in this case means that the form of socialization carried out is not much different from the socialization carried out by other regencies in Gorontalo Province, but with the socialization that has been carried out by the Gorontalo City KPU, it can increase voter participation in Gorontalo City which reached 81% in the 2019 simultaneous elections. This achievement has also exceeded the national target which is targeted to reach a minimum of 75.6%.

Although the form of socialization of the Gorontalo KPU is similar in all regencies and cities, the obstacles that hinder the implementation of socialization are certainly different. Several things hindered the Gorontalo KPU during the socialization, both internally and externally. The obstacles experienced include the lack of budget, the existence of pragmatic community groups and political parties that have been partners in political education are still lacking in socializing because some of the socialization attributes that have been provided by the Gorontalo City KPU for each political party are not fully installed.

Based on the research results, the Gorontalo City Election Commission is an agent of political socialization as stated by Greenstein in (Haryanto 2018) that political socialization is defined as political learning given through an agent who understands politics. Added by (Haryanto 2018) that agents do not always mean individuals but also various social processes, including institutions. As an agent who understands about elections starting from the process, implementation to the election monitoring process, he has provided political lessons, understanding and knowledge to the public regarding the importance of channeling voting rights through elections in order to create a democratic state for all levels of society in Gorontalo City.

The role of the KPU in democracy is not only as an agent who provides knowledge to the public, but more than that, the KPU must be able to convince the public that community involvement in general elections is a form of people's sovereignty. Through various forms of socialization, both those using the budget and those not using the budget. is an effort made by the Gorontalo City Election Commission in order to maintain the stability of public participation in the democratic process in Gorontalo City and has maintained the quality of democracy in Gorontalo City through

public participation in general

elections. General, Free, Secret, Honest and Fair (LUBER JURDIL) and orderly so that the public can participate in elections in order to create a democracy that is sovereign in the hands of the people. For this reason, the Gorontalo City KPU has taken several precautions so that the elections will continue to run in an orderly, honest and fair manner, especially related to several problems that often arise in the midst of society, such as the Black Campaign (*black campaign*), money politics (*money politics*), and multiple voters. .

Responding to various problems that occurred during the election, the Gorontalo City KPU tried to minimize these problems by conducting socialization against *money politics* which was technically in terms of supervision and prevention carried out by the Election Supervisory Body (BAWASLU). In addition to socializing, the KPU also uses LO where the LO is owned by each political party that bridges between the KPU, political parties and legislative candidates in each political party. Through the LO, the Gorontalo City KPU conveyed the substantive matters contained in the legislation. The Gorontalo City KPU also formed Addes, Smart Houses, and PPID. Even to anticipate some things that are not fully understood by political parties, such as allowed campaign forms and campaigns that are not allowed, the KPU provides a *call center* 1x24 hour, and *WhatsApp Groups* with each political party. With the *call center* 1x24 hour, and *WhatsApp Group* , it is hoped that every political party can coordinate fully with the Gorontalo City KPU in order to create an orderly election and also to minimize the existence of *money politics and black campaigns*.

The creation of an orderly election and in accordance with the will of the people, the community will indirectly follow, maintain and develop the election tradition. The creation of orderly elections will foster good political participation in society as a form of public awareness in democracy. Order in elections is not only created by one institution, but also requires the role of the media to bridge the delivery of information and matters relating to elections, this is in line with what was conveyed by (Cangara H 2009) that politicians and government officials need media to convey their thoughts and policies they take for the benefit of the people.

Based on this, it can be seen that the media has a relationship with government, politics and society. For this reason, in the socialization process, it is very important to involve the media in every socialization activity, as has been done by the Gorontalo City KPU involving several mass media as a means of socialization to convey meaning to people who are not directly reached by the Gorontalo City KPU socialization team so that people can participate. to elect a leader and also a representative in parliament.

The creation of a participatory general election followed by a quality democracy can certainly be created from an independent organizing agency. Gorontalo City KPU as an institution that has the authority to organize fair, fair and transparent general elections and provide general election results that are trusted by the people. For this reason, the Gorontalo City KPU must maintain its existence by developing effective, efficient and responsive institutions. To continue to develop its institutions, the Gorontalo City KPU has carried out various strategies both internally and externally and continues to coordinate with various parties that have close links with the implementation of direct, general, free, confidential, honest and fair general elections.

Conclusion

KPU of Gorontalo City as an institution that has the authority in general elections has carried out its roles and duties properly and in accordance with the technical instructions of the Indonesian KPU, especially in terms of socialization. Meanwhile, in institutional development, the Gorontalo City KPU is at the level of institutional capacity development intervention, as can be seen from the organizational structure that has been targeted at each main task and function, starting from the chairman, secretary, and also commissioners who continue to coordinate with sub-sections. In terms of decision making, the Gorontalo City Election Commission is also very careful, this is shown by the plenary meetings that are held every week and plenary meetings which are held anytime if there is an urgent matter. The success of the KPU in carrying out its role can be seen from the increase in the number of voters which reached 81% which also means that there is public trust in the institution that oversees it so that people are still very enthusiastic about the implementation of the general election.

The success of the Gorontalo KPU in improving the quality of democracy through public participation in general elections is an achievement that needs to be maintained considering the quality of democracy in Gorontalo is relatively good compared to other regions in Indonesia. For this reason, the Gorontalo City KPU needs to maintain and continue to improve the quality of institutions and be more intense in socializing matters related to democracy to the public in order to realize a democratic state and democratic government through public participation in democracy.

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