

The role of community-based democracy volunteers in increasing the voter participation in general elections

Peran relawan demokrasi basis komunitas dalam peningkatan partisipasi pemilih pada pemilihan umum

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Abstract

Voter participation in general elections is one of the challenges for general election organizers. Various attempts were made to increase voter participation in every general election. This study aims to identify the role of community-based democracy volunteers in increasing the voter participation, analyzing the increase in voter participation, and analyzing the obstacles that affect the implementation of community-based democracy volunteer activities in 2019 in Pekalongan City. This research is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach case study toward The General Elections Commission of Pekalongan City. The results suggested that the role of community-based democracy volunteers in increasing voter participation was manifested through the socialization of elections to the community, considering the large number of communities in Pekalongan and the members who were also voters in the 2019 election. The socialization carried out by community-based democracy volunteers in Pekalongan greatly influenced the increase in voter turnout in the 2019 elections which reached 84%. The obstacles occurred during socialization by community-based democracy volunteers could be properly resolved. Community-based democracy volunteers have a very important role in increasing voter participation in elections through socialization activities carried out.

Keywords: community base; democracy volunteer; general election; voters' participation

Abstrak

Partisipasi pemilih dalam pemilihan umum menjadi salah satu tantangan untuk penyelenggara pemilihan umum. Berbagai upaya dilakukan untuk meningkatkan partisipasi pemilih dalam setiap pemilihan umum. Tujuan studi ini untuk mendeskripsikan peran relawan demokrasi basis komunitas dalam peningkatan partisipasi pemilih, menganalisis peningkatan partisipasi pemilih, dan hambatan yang mempengaruhi pelaksanaan kegiatan relawan demokrasi basis komunitas tahun 2019 di Kota Pekalongan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif tipe studi kasus di Komisi Pemilihan Umum Kota Pekalongan. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa peran relawan demokrasi basis komunitas dalam peningkatan partisipasi pemilih dilakukan melalui sosialisasi pemilu kepada komunitas, hal ini mengingat jumlah komunitas di Kota Pekalongan cukup banyak dan memiliki anggota yang juga termasuk dalam pemilih pemilu 2019. Kegiatan sosialisasi relawan demokrasi basis komunitas Komisi Pemilihan Umum kota Pekalongan sangat berpengaruh dalam peningkatan angka partisipasi pemilih dalam pemilu 2019 yang mencapai 84%. Hambatan yang dialami saat sosialisasi oleh relawan demokrasi basis komunitas dapat diatasi dengan baik. Relawan demokrasi basis komunitas memiliki peran sangat penting dalam peningkatan partisipasi pemilih dalam pemilu melalui kegiatan sosialisasi yang dilaksanakan.

Kata kunci: basis komunitas; relawan demokrasi; pemilihan umum; partisipasi pemilih

Introduction

The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Article 1 Paragraph 2 states that sovereignty is in the hands of the people and is implemented according to the Constitution. This sovereignty is manifested through general elections held every five years. General elections are a means of selecting members of the People's Representative Council (*DPR*), Regional Representative Council (*DPD*), President and Vice President, and Regional People's Representative Council (*DPRD*). General elections are held directly, publicly, freely, secretly, honestly and fairly every five years as stated in Article 22E Paragraph 1 of the 1945 Constitution.

General elections belong to one of the means to renew the legitimacy of power given by the people. General elections refer to a process of electing the executive and the government (legislative), in which the role of the voters is not to make decisions in political issues but to elect people who will be in charge of decision-making (Varma 2010). People own the right to make political choices as the citizen through general elections. In other words, the general elections act as an effort to persuasively influence the public to determine their political choices. The owners of voting rights in general elections are often referred to as constituents. Each constituent in the general election represents a particular constituency and will elect their own representatives.

The Decree of the General Election Commission of the Republic of Indonesia Number 276/PL.01.3-Kpt/06/KPU/IV/2018 states that the area of Pekalongan City in the 2019 General Election is divided into several electoral districts. The electoral districts for electing members of the *DPRD* at the city level are divided into four: West Pekalongan District as the electoral district I, North Pekalongan District as the electoral district II, East Pekalongan District as the electoral district III, and Pekalongan Selatan District as the electoral district IV. Pekalongan City is included in the XIII Central Java electoral district (covering Batang Regency, Pekalongan City, Pekalongan Regency, and Pemalang Regency) to elect members of the *DPRD* of Central Java Province and the Electoral District of Central Java X (covering Brebes Regency, Tegal Regency, Tegal City, Pemplang Regency, Pekalongan Regency, Pekalongan City, and Batang Regency) for the election of members of the Indonesian Parliament.

General elections are held with public participation in the form of election socialization, political education for voters, surveys or opinion polls on elections, and quick counts of election results. The conditions of public participation requires that there is no taking sides that are either considered beneficial or detrimental to the election participants, it does not interfere with the process of organizing the election stages, it aims to increase the political participation of the community at large, and it fosters the conducive atmosphere to the implementation of a safe, peaceful, orderly, and smooth election. This is stipulated in Law Number 7 Year 2017 Article 448. To achieve quality political participation requires political education (Hariyanti 2015). Political participation can also be in the form of participation in seminars/training on democracy, writing in the media regarding political issues, participating in demonstrations, etc.

The increasingly complex nature of the 2019 General Election implementation stimulates the tough challenges in socialization and education of the voters. This is because, in the 2019 General Election, the community will conduct presidential and vice presidential elections, the People's Representative Council (*DPR*), the Regional Representatives Council (*DPD*), the Provincial Regional Representatives Council (*DPRD*), and Regional People's Representative Council (*DPRD*) simultaneously. Education is considered important for first-time voters, considering their new status at the acceptance stage (acceptability) and have not yet reached political choices (Nur Budi Hariyanto in Bakti 2012).

Voters will be given 5 (five) types of ballots at polling stations (*TPS*). Voters need to be careful to ensure the correct voting procedures at the polling stations. More massive and intensive voter socialization and education are also needed to encourage voters to participate by voting and to reduce the number of invalid votes in the election. The General Election Commission (*KPU*) has created a Democracy Volunteer program which serves as a social movement intended to increase the participation and quality of voters in using their voting rights. This program involves the largest participation of the community where they are positioned as the pioneers of democracy for their communities.

The Democracy Volunteer program was initiated to encounter the tendency of declining voter participation. The last four general elections and the implementation of regional elections in many regions showed indications of declining voter participation. For example, the declining number of voter participation in the national elections, namely the 1999 General Election (92%), the 2004 General Election (84%), the 2009 General Election (71%), and the 2014 General Election (73%), became one of the challenges in achieving the success of the 2019 General Election (Harsoyo 2019). Democracy volunteers play a role as partners of the General Election Commission in carrying out the agenda of outreach and voter education in districts/cities. Voter education can serve as the effective preventive method to eliminate mass conflict in the electoral process. Therefore, an attitude of mutual respect, tolerance and respect toward others' voting right must be maintained and internalized among each individual voter (Fahri 2008).

This form of community participation is expected to be able to foster the growth of awareness and thorough responsibility of the community to use their rights in an optimal election. Almond & Verba (1984) state that public awareness toward the importance of their participation in determining candidates indicates a transition in forms of community political culture from parochial politics to subject political culture or even participant political culture. The General Election Commission (*KPU*) of Pekalongan City formed a Democracy Volunteer program which consists of 11 bases, including: (1) Family Base, (2) Beginner Voters Base, (3) Young Voters Base, (4) Female Voters Base, (5) Voter Base for People with Disabilities, (6) Voter Base for People with Special Needs, (7) Marginalized People Base, (8) Community Base, (9) Religious Base, (10) Democracy Volunteer Base, and (11) Internet Citizen (*netizen*) Base (Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia 2019). One of the voluntary bases for democracy that becomes the focus of this research is the Community Base.

In general, community is far from political activities, yet it does not imply that it lacks information regarding political issues. It is not uncommon for community members to discuss current political issues in their activities. Community has high level of independence, since they are generally well-established in terms of education, finance, and thinking. If we are able to synergize and provide education to the influential figures in the community, it will be easier for other members to participate in the socialization and education for voters. In this regard, this article will discuss "The Role of Community-based Democracy Volunteers in Increasing Voter Participation in the General Election 2019."

Research Method

This research belongs to a descriptive study with a qualitative case study approach toward the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City. Descriptive research refers to the research in which the problem solving procedure is investigated by describing the condition of the subject and/or research object (Nawawi 2000). The main focus of a case study is the specification of cases in an event, including individuals, cultural groups, or a portrait of life (Creswell 2016). The research subjects were selected by applying purposive sampling technique, with the criteria of the subject as follows: literate, experienced, and provided information related to community-based democracy volunteers at the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City.

The informants in this study were three persons, including: (1) a community-based democracy volunteer coordinator, (2) a community-based democracy volunteer, (3) a member of community-based democracy volunteer. The data collection involved interviews and documentation. The data validation in this study included triangulation of sources and techniques. Triangulation of data sources was applied to test the data credibility by checking the data obtained through several sources. Triangulation of technique was applied to test the data credibility by checking the data to the same source with different techniques. This study applied flow model analysis technique which included data collection, data reduction, data interpretation, and conclusions (Miles & Huberman 1992). Data processing is processing and preparing data for analysis, and interview transcript data are typed and sorted according to study needs. Furthermore, the reading of the data is carried out to reflect the overall meaning. Furthermore, the interpretation of the data is done by linking the theory. After that, the data are interpreted and presented in narrative form as a result of the research. The data from the interviews that have been collected are then triangulated with sources and analyzed with theories and previous research to produce a research conclusion.

Results and Discussion

The role of community-based democracy volunteers in increasing voter participation

Community-based Democratic Volunteers was established based on the following legal bases: (1) Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, (2) General Election Commission Regulation No. 05 of 2008 concerning the Work Procedures of the General Election Commission, Provincial General Election Commission, and Regency/City Election Commission, as amended by General Election Commission Regulation No. 01 of 2010, (3) General Election Commission Regulation No. 06 of 2008 concerning Organizational Structure and Work Procedures of the General Election Commission Secretariat, Provincial General Election Commission Secretariat, and Regency/City Election Commission Secretariat, (4) General Election Commission Regulation No. 10 of 2018 concerning Socialization, Voter Education and Public Participation in Organizing General Elections, (5) Regulation of the Minister of Finance Number 190/PMK.05/2012 concerning Payment Procedures in the Context of Implementing the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget, (6) Regulation of the Minister of Finance Number 32/PMK.02/2018 concerning Standard Input Costs for Fiscal Year 2019. Political education aims not only at making citizens politically literate by knowing the concepts and theories in politics, since the goal is not forming political science experts but fostering citizens to the awareness of political events that occur both in the context of society and the state, which is manifested in the form of participation in the political process (Brownhill & Smart 1989, Kartono 2009, Sunatra 2016). Political news has more influential effects compared to websites and persuasive advertisements, and this is an important source in building political participation (Thorson et al. 2017).

The formation of democracy volunteers in Pekalongan aimed at increasing voter participation in the 2019 General Election. It was quite a challenge to increase the voter rate in the election since the motivation to come to polling stations was not only determined by the professionalism and integrity of election organizers, but also the quality of election participants. Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, the objectives of community-based democracy volunteers are (1) increasing voter participation in the 2019 elections from a community base, (2) creating a literate community regarding the 2019 election, (3) increasing public confidence in the democratic process, (4) suppressing the number of *golput* (abstain) from community-based voters in the working area of the General Election Commission of Pekalongan. The forms of socialization activities carried out by community-based democracy volunteers include lectures, interactive discussions, giving general election stickers, cleaning the environment with the community followed by election socialization, 2019 simultaneous election simulations, watching short films, giving questions and prizes to participants, and ending with a group photo. An example of a form of socialization activity is by cleaning the Brengi River with the Sapu Lidi community and the surrounding community on March 8, 2019. The activity began with an opening led by the head of the Lidi Sweeping Community and the head of the community-based democracy volunteer. Then it proceeded with cleaning the Brengi River which is filled with water hyacinth plants. After cleaning, they continued to rest and participate in the socialization of the 2019 simultaneous general elections in vacant land on the banks of the Brengi River. The socialization went smoothly through interactive discussions and simultaneous general election simulations using the five samples of ballot papers that had been provided.

Activities and targets of the community-based socialization of election

The socialization outreach program organized by community-based democracy volunteers in relation to the implementation of the general election held on April 17, 2019, applied various effective and efficient methods, including learning by doing. Generally, the learning by doing method is considered a simple but effective method which shows a technical and detailed description of the process of general election held on April 17, 2019. Certainly, this method helped ease the community-based voters in the voting process. Simulations and public hearing services opening were also carried out by community-based democracy volunteers with the aim of providing understanding and a forum for community communication and online consultation (through social media) in relation to general elections, as well

as organizing the Group Discussion Forum network of community-based general elections which aims to describe and provide intense understanding and to resolve the community obstacles in preparation for participation in the 2019 General Election. Electoral engagement is a combination of online political information use along with voting behavior. The reason for focusing on electoral engagement over other political outcomes was to examine closely the effect of education in two realms. One, education is implicated as an important factor for both Internet skills and use. Education is closely associated with the information and strategic use of the Internet rather than with access to the Internet (Van Deursen & Van Dijk 2011, Wei & Hindman 2011). Two, education is a key factor for electoral engagement. "Formal education is almost without exception the strongest factor in explaining what citizens do in politics and how they think about politics" (Nie et al. 1996). Social media utilized in the political agenda which include Twitter and other social media platforms are potential to attract non-involved people into politics (Bekafigo & McBride 2013). Among Internet users, research has shown that the relationship between political knowledge and citizenship shows gains only for those who are already politically involved (Delli Carpini & Keeter 2003). Nonetheless, the decentralized nature of Internet communications offers new visions of citizenship practices (Coleman & Blumler 2009).

"We volunteers for community-based democracy were given two tasks by the Pekalongan City Election Commission, namely to carry out personal or individual outreach and basic/group outreach. Personal or individual socialization is carried out by involving a minimum of 10 community members in the city of Pekalongan. Usually for personal socialization, we do it by visiting communities that are gathering in the Pekalongan city area. For example, on a Sunday night around Mataram field, there are many communities that gather, so that's where we participated in socializing the 2019 simultaneous general election. Yes, basically, members of the community-based democracy volunteers help each other. Now for the socialization of the community base, it was carried out three times and was attended by approximately 80 participants. Now, we are holding this together and in a more interesting and varied form of socialization activity. The socialization activities include lectures, interactive discussions, cleaning the environment with the community, followed by election socialization, displaying a simulation of the 2019 simultaneous elections, watching short films, giving questions and prizes to participants, and ending with a group photo. Yes, we carry out all of these activities to achieve the target voter participation rate that has been set, which is 77.5%." (Informant INH).

Although we are unable to determine who responded to our tweets by becoming politically involved themselves, we know that these, seemingly, small bits of political communication on Twitter have the potential to turn into acts of political participation beyond the initial user (Bond et al. 2012). Borge & Cardenal (2011) argue that skillful and frequent Internet users are more likely to participate politically than unskillful and nonfrequent Internet users. The internet, social media, and Twitter have all been lauded by proponents of democracy for being able to engage "average citizens" in the political process (Carpenter 2010). The Internet delivered a wealth of political information and increased the capacities of political groups and supporters (Smith et al. 2009). Twitter's role in elections, for example, a study of tweeters during a 2009 German election found average citizens tweeting about the election, but a small percentage dominated most of the online debate (Tumasjan et al. 2011). The 2008 US presidential election was a remarkable one that shattered voter turnout records to elect President Obama, who captured 53% of the vote, to his first term (McKee et al. 2012). By 2008, the Internet and its various political users became more adept at its role to facilitate campaigns and political participation online through a variety of platforms (Baumgartner & Morris 2010, Garcia-Castanon et al. 2011, Vitak et al. 2011, Jorba & Bimber 2012, Nam & Stromer-Galley 2012).

Socialization activities consist of basic socialization and personal socialization. Personal activities are mandatory activities that every volunteer member of community-based democracy must carry out (Figure 1). Members of the Democracy Volunteer program acted as informants in the socialization and delivered material according to what had been learned in the guidance and technical activities organized by the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City. The basic outreach activity refers to a bonding activity involving all volunteer members of this community. The socialization was carried out with approximately 80 participants representing various communities in Pekalongan City (Figure 2). The informant in the community-based socialization was one of the commissioners of the General Election

Commission of Pekalongan City. Democracy Volunteer members prepared the needs related to the outreach program, including rooms, leaflets, stickers, pamphlets, props, and other necessities.

Table 1.

The implementation of election socialization of the Community-Based Democracy Volunteer program of the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City

No.	Activities	Date and Location	Form of socialization
1	Community-based Election Socialization at <i>Guru Belajar</i> Pekalongan	February 16, 2019 at Wifi Id Corner Pekalongan	giving election stickers, lecture, gathering the community.
2	Community-based Election Socialization at Reggae, Modelling, and Vespa Pekalongan Community	February 17, 2019 at Pantai Pasir Kencana Pekalongan	interactive discussions, giving election stickers, gathering the community
3	Community-based Election Socialization at <i>Forum Pramuka Garuda Kota</i> Pekalongan	February 17, 2019 at <i>Sanggar Kegiatan SMAN 1 Pekalongan</i>	interactive discussions, giving election stickers.
4	Community-based Election Socialization at Dance Pekalongan Community	February 23, 2019 at Mataram Court	interactive discussions, giving election stickers.
5	Community-based Election Socialization at Suzuki Satria FU (SSF) Pekalongan	February 23, 2019 at Area Pedestrian Diskominfo Kota Pekalongan	interactive discussions, giving election stickers.
6	Community-based Election Socialization at KOKAM Kota Pekalongan	February 23, 2019 at Masjid Istiqomah, Pekalongan	interactive discussions, giving election stickers.
7	Community-based Election Socialization at HIPMI Perguruan Tinggi Kota Pekalongan	February 25, 2019 at Santika Hotel Pekalongan	interactive discussions and giving election stickers.
8	Community-based Election Socialization at <i>Sapu Lidi</i> Pekalongan Community	March 8, 2019 at <i>Bremi</i> riverbanks	cleaning the <i>Bremi</i> river together with community and society, election simulations, giving quizzes and prizes.
9	Community-based Election Socialization at Astrea Motor Pekalongan Community	March 9, 2019 at around Mataram Court	interactive discussions, giving election stickers, election simulations.
10	Community-based Election Socialization at Sepeda BMX Pekalongan	March 17, 2019 at around Mataram Court	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers.
11	Community-based Election Socialization at Slanker Mania	March 17, 2019 at Landmark Batik Pekalongan	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers.

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12	Community-based Election Socialization at Himpunan Mahasiswa Ekonomi Islam STIE Muhammadiyah Pekalongan	March 20, 2019 at Sekretariat HIMA Ekonomi Islam STIE Muhammadiyah Pekalongan	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers
13	Community-based Election Socialization at Motor Honda Pekalongan Community	March 24, 2019 at around Mataram Court	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers
14	Community-based Election Socialization at PKK RW 05 Kelurahan Kraton	March 25, 2019 at RW 05 Kelurahan Kraton	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers
15	Community-based Election Socialization at Catur Pekalongan Community	March 26, 2019 at Hoegeng Stadium	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers
16	Community-based Election Socialization at Varian Motor Matic Club Pekalongan	March 30, 2019 at around Mataram Court	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers
17	Community-based Election Socialization at Burung Lovebird Pekalongan	April 2, 2019 at Sorogenen Court	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers
18	Community-based Election Socialization at Kicau Mania Pekalongan	April 2, 2019 at Sorogenen Court	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers
19	Community-based Election Socialization at Parkir Pekalongan Community	April 3, 2019 at around Sorogenen Court	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers
20	Community-based Election Socialization at Berbagi Nasi Community	April 6, 2019 at Sorogenen Court	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers
21	Community-based Election Socialization at Binaraga and Angkat Besi Pekalongan Community	April 7, 2019 at Hoegeng Stadium	interactive discussions, election simulations, giving election stickers
22	Community-based Election Socialization at Doodle Art Community, Film Community, and Tourism Ambassador	April 10, 2019 at Pekalongan Batik Museum	giving election stickers, watching a short movie, interactive discussions, election simulations, lecture, giving quizzes and prizes,
23	Community-based Election Socialization at Reptile Community, Oi Trahlor Community, Hosland Community, <i>Imakaba</i> , and Indie Music Community	April 13, 2019 at Sanggar Pramuka (Scout Center) Pekalongan	giving election stickers, interactive discussions, election simulations, lecture, giving quizzes and prizes, and a little humor on the sidelines of socialization.

Source: Community-based democracy volunteers of the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City, processed data (2019)



Figure 1.

Personal socialization of the 2019 General Election of community-based democracy volunteers of General Election Commission of Pekalongan City

Source: Community-based democracy volunteers of the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City (2019)



Figure 2.

Base socialization of the community-based democracy volunteers of the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City at the Pekalongan Batik Museum

Source: Community-based democracy volunteers of the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City (2019)

Figure 2 shows that community-based democracy volunteers are carrying out election socialization activities which are attended by the doodle art community, film community, and tourism ambassadors. The activity was held on April 10, 2019 at the run from at 20.00 pm to 22.00 pm. Commissioner of the Pekalongan City Election Commission, Muhamad Bilal became a resource person in the activity. The majority of participants in the general election socialization were followed by the younger generation of representatives from each of these organizations. The socialization was carried out using interactive discussion methods, watching short films, giving election stickers, simulating general elections, and giving quizzes and prizes. Ferris et al. (2007) stated that political skills are competencies needed to be effective in the community. The knowledge, experience and skills developed form the political insight of an individual. This political insight includes comprehensive views, broad interviews, critical ideas and a sense of responsibility. Socialization activities run smoothly and interactively. The younger generation who participated in the socialization made the discussion more interesting. They asked questions related

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to the requirements to have voting rights, the registration procedure if they are not registered in the permanent voter list, how to use their voting rights if they are not at their domicile, what to do if at the time of the election it turns out that they are already eligible to take part in elections, and other questions related to general election technicalities. The activity was closed with a group photo between the socialization participants, community-based democracy volunteers, and the commissioner of the Pekalongan City Election Commission.

The socialization activities for the 2019 General Election carried out by community-based democracy volunteers included the political education provided for each community. Political education refers to the dialogical process between message givers and recipients, in which, through this message, community members recognize and learn the ideal political values, norms and symbols from various parties in the political system, such as government, schools, and political parties (Surbakti 1992). The socialization activities for the 2019 General Election are political education in a loose sense. The benefit of political education is that it can train citizens to increase their political participation. Election education provides people with politically relevant information. Extant research shows that such information stimulates participation in national politics, such as voting (Collier & Vicente 2014) or contacting government officials (e.g. Mvukiyeha 2018).

The target groups for the socialization of community-based democracy volunteers were communities engaged in the arts, sports, culture, technology, hobbies, animals, automotive and other fields in Pekalongan City. The implementation of personal socialization was carried out in open or public places in Pekalongan. The locations for the 2019 General Election socialization covered the area around the *Mataram* Court (on Saturday night), the *Sorogenen* Court, the *RT* (neighborhood unit) or *RW* (community unit) meeting hall, and the hotel ballroom (along with certain organizational activities). The areas around the *Mataram* Court in Pekalongan were considered very strategic places to carry out the general election socialization since many communities held gatherings or meet ups at these spots.

"Yes, we carry out general election socialization for communities in several places. Yes, some were held around *Mataram* Field, *Sorogenen* Field, *RT* meeting hall, open space, hotel ballroom, mosque Tuesday, and several community base camps in Pekalongan city. Communities that we provide socialization for, for example the Pekalongan dance community, lovers of onthel (roadster bicycles), Suzuki Satria FU (SSF) Pekalongan, Astrea Pekalongan, Pekalongan BMX bicycles, Pekalongan Honda motorcycles, Birds chirping Community and Pekalongan bicycle communities." (Informant MUN).

Communities chosen as the subjects of socialization for the General Election 2019 around the Mataram field included the Pekalongan dance community, *onthel* (roadster bicycle) lovers, *Suzuki Satria FU* (SSF) Pekalongan, *Astrea* Pekalongan, Pekalongan BMX bikes, Pekalongan Honda motorbikes, and the Pekalongan bicycle community. The implementation of community-based democracy volunteer socialization lasted for three months, including both basic and personal socialization activities. Kleinberg and Lau (2019) argue that individuals with high political knowledge exhibit behaviors that impact a well-functioning democracy, including holding more stable political opinions, exhibiting greater ideological constraints, knowing more about political candidates, and being more likely to vote correctly.

The ages of community members who participated in the 2019 General Election socialization were varied. In general, the participants of the community-based socialization included the youth/teenagers. Every member of the community served as an agent of the socialization to the surrounding community. Youth concern for the general election process is indispensable. The apathy of youth can lead to political instability in society, while an irresponsible generation reflects distrust toward the government, including its institutions and leaders (Harris et al. 2010). A focus on encouraging youth to participate is not only on the agenda of several countries but is also the focus of almost all governments (Cammaerts et al. 2014).

The political socialization activities carried out by community-based democracy volunteers at the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City are in accordance with the specific purpose of shaping political values, namely how each member of society should participate in the political system (Almond & Verba 1984). In addition, "Political socialization is a process of learning political contents

which begins at an early age and is affected by the context in which the children live” (Dawson et al. 1977, Greenberg 2009). However, what is of most interest to us is the effect of the political socialization agents on the initial level and the growth of political participation. First, if we look at the effect of the political socialization agents on the intercept of political participation, we find that almost all agents exert a positive influence on political participation. The most outspoken effects are found among peers and voluntary engagement. Through discussions, preferably in a diverse network, young people become more engaged in politics than without such discussions (Quintelier 2015).

The increase in voter participation rate in the 2019 concurrent general elections in Pekalongan City

The turnout rate of voters in every general election in Indonesia is basically a very important focus. Election organizers should make every effort to increase voter participation in general elections. The low turnout rate of voters, especially novice/adolescent voters, is a problem in many countries that adhere to democratic systems. Tamanna (2018) states that Bangladesh as a country that is also new to a democratic system faces the same problem, namely the low political participation of youth. The results of Tamanna’s (2018) study suggested that there are several factors driving this low participation, namely: (1) adolescents do not have access to politics, politicians and government, (2) adolescents cannot benefit directly from politics, (3) there is no closeness between politicians/political parties and adolescents since there is no interaction between the two, and (4) adolescents think that politicians do not have good knowledge or leadership. Pirie and Worcester (2000) state that teenagers in Britain today are less involved in politics than teenagers 30 years ago (O’Toole et al. 2003).

A research conducted by Suprojo (2013) also shows that adolescents in Malang have a skeptical attitude toward politics. This attitude arises because the media always displays negative news about politics. In the end, this skepticism causes teenagers not to participate in politics. This directly affects the turnout rate of voters in general elections. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that it is very important to increase the political participation of citizens in general elections through various strategies.

“During the evaluation of democracy volunteers organized by the Pekalongan City General Election Commission, the commissioner of the Pekalongan City General Election Commission said that the voter participation rate in the 2019 simultaneous elections had increased to 84%. This certainly exceeds the target that has been set in the initial technical guidance before we go into the field, which is 77.5%.” (Informant MUN).

The voter turnout rate in the General Election in Pekalongan City is varied. The voter turnout rate in Pekalongan in the 2004 Legislative Election was 85.84%, the Presidential and Vice Presidential Election in the first round of 2004 was 82.67%, and the second round was 76.34%. The voter turnout in the 2005 Mayoral Election was 67.95%. The voter turnout rate in the 2009 Legislative Election in Pekalongan City was 74.50%, the 2009 Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election was 73.91%, the 2014 Legislative Election was 79.48% and the 2014 Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election was 75, 83% (Basir 2019). The General Election Commission of Pekalongan City as one of the organizers of the General Election in the city targeted an increase in voter participation. The target of voter participation in the 2019 General Election was 77.5% (Harsoyo 2019). The General Election Commission applied various strategies to increase the voter turnout, one of which was by forming community-based democracy volunteers.

“Thank God there was an increase in the number or number of voter participation in the general election held in the work area of the General Election Commission of Pekalongan city. This was conveyed by the commissioner of the Pekalongan General Election Commission during the evaluation of democracy volunteers. Of course this is pride for us, democracy volunteers who have worked for three months to carry out socialization to many people, especially for communities in the city of Pekalongan. During the evaluation of democracy volunteers, the commissioner of the Pekalongan General Election Commission said that the voter participation rate in the 2019 simultaneous elections in the Pekalongan city area reached 84%.” (Informant AHF).

Community-based democracy volunteers have carried out various socialization activities, both personal and community-based. The socialization of general election by democracy-based democracy volunteers is carried out before the general election. The role of community-based democracy volunteers in providing socialization for the 2019 General Election was considered very influential in increasing the voter turnout rate. This can be seen from the achievement of the voter participation rate in the 2019 General Election, which was above 77.5%. Rahmi Rosyada Thoha (2019) states that the voter turnout rate in the 2019 General Election in Pekalongan city reached 84% (Portal Berita Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Tengah 2019).

Obstacles and solutions that affected the implementation of community-based democracy volunteer activities in the 2019 concurrent general elections

Researchers categorized the obstacles experienced by community-based democracy volunteers in the implementation of the socialization activities for the 2019 General Election of the Pekalongan City Commission based on the research results, consisting of internal and external obstacles. The internal obstacles mean the obstacles that exist in the community-based democracy volunteers. Internal obstacles in the implementation of community-based election socialization are as follows: (1) The obstacles encountered by community-based democracy volunteer members were related to the need for space or location where community-based socialization took place. The total number of community-based socialization participants was approximately 80 people; therefore, democracy volunteers needed to prepare a room that could accommodate the socialization participants and did not require rental fees, (2) The lack of details in work planning related to socialization to community-based democracy volunteers which created a tendency to hinder the performance of community-based democracy volunteers in delivering socialization to communities community-based, and (3) The lack of adequate props to support the socialization of general elections on a community basis, which resulted in an ineffective obstacle in carrying out the socialization.

External obstacles in the implementation of community-based election socialization are as follows: (1) Several community members did not focus or pay attention properly during the socialization process. Some members actually focused on their phones and talked to their friends instead, (2) Several community members arrived late since the majority of members are workers, and (3) Few community members came due to the unfriendly weather. The third barrier is usually related to personal socialization.

“There were several obstacles that we encountered during the socialization of the general election. First, during the general election socialization held by community-based democracy volunteers, some participants did not focus on the material but instead focused on talking with other friends and playing on their cellphones, so the solution was interactive socialization, giving questions and gifts, and interrupted with some humor and general election simulation. Second, related to personal socialization. Some communities do not get together because the weather is not favorable, so we reschedule so that we can provide socialization for them. Third, some community members came late because they were workers, so we coordinated with community representatives regarding the availability of time and members who would come for socialization. Socialization activities will begin when the majority of community members have gathered.” (Informant INH).

Based on the data described in Table 2, community-based democracy volunteers at the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City made efforts to overcome these obstacles. Efforts to overcome internal obstacles are as follows: (1) The obstacles related to the need for space or location for community-based socialization that could accommodate about 80 participants and did not require rental fees could be overcome by community-based democracy volunteer members by contacting various connections of each member. The space or place for the socialization of community-based democracy volunteers were the *Aula Museum Batik Kota Pekalongan* (Pekalongan Batik Museum Hall), *Sanggar Pramuka Kota Pekalongan* (Pekalongan Scout Center), and the vacant area next to the *Bremi* River, Pekalongan (Table 1). (2) Obstacles related to the lack of detailed work planning for socialization could be overcome by making plans for outreach activities and all volunteers thinking about basic outreach activities together. Before carrying out the activity, community-based democracy volunteers prepared a work program. Work

programs included community-based socialization programs as well as personal outreach programs. (3) Obstacles related to inadequate socialization aids could be overcome by using oral socialization and personal artificial props. The props in socialization are very important considering that in the 2019 election voters will get five different ballot papers. After getting socialization props from the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City, volunteer members of community-based democracy utilized them during basic and personal socialization.

Table 2.
Obstacles and Solutions That Affected the Implementation of Community-Based Democracy Volunteer Activities

	Obstacles That Affected the Implementation of Community-Based Democracy Volunteer Activities	Solutions That Affected the Implementation of Community-Based Democracy Volunteer Activities
1	The obstacles encountered by community-based democracy volunteer members were related to the need for space or location where community-based socialization took place. The total number of community-based socialization participants was approximately 80 people; therefore, democracy volunteers needed to prepare a room that could accommodate the socialization participants and did not require rental fees.	Could be overcome by community-based democracy volunteer members by contacting various connections of each member. The space or place for the socialization of community-based democracy volunteers were the Aula Museum Batik Kota Pekalongan (Pekalongan Batik Museum Hall), Sanggar Pramuka Kota Pekalongan (Pekalongan Scout Center), and the vacant area next to the Bremi River, Pekalongan.
2	The lack of details in work planning related to socialization to community-based democracy volunteers which created a tendency to hinder the performance of community-based democracy volunteers in delivering socialization to communities.	Could be overcome by making plans for outreach activities and all volunteers thinking about basic outreach activities together. Before carrying out the activity, community-based democracy volunteers prepared a work program. Work programs included community-based socialization programs as well as personal outreach programs.
3	The lack of adequate props to support the socialization of general elections on a community basis, which resulted in an ineffective obstacle in carrying out the socialization.	Could be overcome by using oral socialization and personal artificial props. The props in socialization are very important considering that in the 2019 election voters will get five different ballot papers. After getting socialization props from the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City, volunteer members of community-based democracy utilized them during basic and personal socialization.
4	Several community members did not focus or pay attention properly during the socialization process. Some members actually focused on their phones and talked to their friends instead.	Overcome by conducting interactive socialization, giving quizzes and prizes, and providing a little humor on the sidelines of socialization
5	Several community members arrived late since the majority of members are workers.	Handled by first contacting the community coordinator regarding the availability of time and members who would come for the socialization. Socialization activities would begin when the majority of community members had gathered.
6	Few community members came due to the unfriendly weather. The third barrier is usually related to personal socialization.	Overcome by rescheduling socialization activities which must be adjusted to the community gathering schedule.

Source: Primary data

"There are bound to be obstacles, from community-based democracy volunteers. One of them is the delay in procuring teaching aids from the Pekalongan City Election Commission which also hinders community base volunteers from delivering their socialization. The solution is we make simple teaching aids, the most important thing is that the message to participate in the 2019 simultaneous elections is conveyed. Then the lack of work planning from the General Elections Commission, it also hinders it. Apart from that, there were also obstacles related to the place to socialize the community base which was attended by approximately 80 participants. Of course we need a space or place that is large enough and does not require rental fees. We have a solution by seeking information from friends or partners from each member of the democracy volunteers, and finding several places that can be used for activities, namely the *Aula Museum Batik Kota Pekalongan* (Pekalongan Batik Museum Hall), *Sanggar Pramuka Kota Pekalongan* (Pekalongan Scout Center), and the vacant area next to the *Bremi* River, Pekalongan." (Informant AHF).

The efforts made by community-based democracy volunteers at the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City in dealing with external obstacles are as follows: (1) Obstacles related to community members who did not focus or pay attention properly during the socialization process, were overcome by conducting interactive socialization, giving quizzes and prizes, and providing a little humor on the sidelines of socialization, (2) Obstacles related to community members who arrived late because they had just finished work were handled by first contacting the community coordinator regarding the availability of time and members who would come for the socialization. Socialization activities would begin when the majority of community members had gathered, (3) Obstacles related to the few community members who came due to bad weather constraints, such as raining, were overcome by rescheduling socialization activities which must be adjusted to the community gathering schedule.

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the role of community-based democracy volunteers in the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City in increasing voter participation in the 2019 General Election was carried out through the socialization of general elections to various communities in the city. Since many members of communities in the city of Pekalongan own the voting right in the elections, the socialization given to community members was considered very appropriate. The socialization materials for the 2019 election were well-presented and various strategies were applied so that participants were educated and could comprehend the procedures of the 2019 General Election. The forms of socialization activities carried out by community-based democracy volunteers include lectures, interactive discussions, giving general election stickers, cleaning the environment with the community followed by election socialization, 2019 simultaneous election simulations, watching short films, giving questions and prizes to participants, and ending with a group photo. The increase in voter turnout in the 2019 General Election in Pekalongan City which reached 84% cannot be separated from the role of community-based democracy volunteers.

The obstacles that occurred during the socialization of the 2019 election were well-handled by community-based democracy volunteers. Internal obstacles are as follows (1) The obstacles related to the need for space or location for community-based socialization that could accommodate about 80 participants and did not require rental fees could be overcome by community-based democracy volunteer members by contacting various connections of each member. (2) Obstacles related to the lack of detailed work planning for socialization could be overcome by making plans for outreach activities and all volunteers thinking about basic outreach activities together. Before carrying out the activity, community-based democracy volunteers prepared a work program. (3) Obstacles related to inadequate socialization aids could be overcome by using oral socialization and personal artificial props. The props in socialization are very important considering that in the 2019 election voters will get five different ballot papers. After getting socialization props from the General Election Commission of Pekalongan City, volunteer members of community-based democracy utilized them during basic and personal socialization. External obstacles are as follows: (1) Obstacles related to community members who did not focus or pay attention properly during the socialization process were overcome by conducting interactive socialization, giving quizzes and prizes, and providing a little humor on the sidelines of socialization, (2) Obstacles related to community members who arrived late because they had just finished work were

handled by first contacting the community coordinator regarding the availability of time and members who would come for the socialization, (3) Obstacles related to the few community members who came due to bad weather constraints, such as raining, were overcome by rescheduling socialization activities which must be adjusted to the community gathering schedule. The General Election Commission of Pekalongan City was considered very helpful in catering the needs of community-based volunteers during the socialization of the 2019 General Election.

Volunteer members of community-based democracy who are representatives of various communities in the city of Pekalongan can be a very big advantage for the election commission to carry out general election socialization for the community. This means that the government, through the General Elections Commission, has no difficulty when it comes to outreach to communities in the community, this is because community-based democratic volunteers have been formed. The role of community-based democracy volunteers in socializing the 2019 simultaneous general elections is very important with various socialization strategies and methods that have been implemented and have an impact on increasing the general election participation rate. Therefore, community-based democracy volunteers as agents of the general election commission can be used as best practices in general election socialization activities and the government through the general election commission can continue the democracy volunteer program for the next general election.

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