

ARTICLE

Abstentions Phenomenon (Golput) of Local Elections

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Abstract: The phenomenon of the "Golput" occurs in each election fluctuation, sometimes up and down, sometimes influenced by various factors. This research uses the literature study method by summarizing some documentation related to Indonesia's phenomenon of abstentions. Factors that cause voters not to give their voting rights are political, ideological, and identity factors. But abstentions can also be influenced by an improperly organized election system. From the results of this study, someone behaves abstentions from the technical aspects due to voters' technical constraints. It prevents them from exercising their right to vote, for example, having other activities at the same time on election day so they cannot come to the voting place. Golput is a person's attachment to voting in the general election process based on psychological factors, sociological factors, and rational voter factors. On the political aspect, abstentions have reasons such as distrust of the party, and candidates do not believe in a better chance. Meanwhile, if viewed from one aspect, identity can see based on religion, education level, age, gender, etc. In terms of faith, a person decides to abstain because party is expected not to be elected as a candidate. For example, Christian tends not to choose a party that carries Islam, such as the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the United Development Party (PPP), and others. In contrast, most nationalist candidates or political parties are considered less representative to accommodate their aspirations. Then abstentions will be the final choice taken.

Keywords: voter behavior; local elections; abstentions; political parties

1. Introduction

The Golput or abstentions that the wider community is better known are deviant behavior for a democratic country. It is said to be a deviation because, in a democratic country, the people's opinions or voices are crucial in whether a leader is elected or not. Some argue that abstentions (Golput) are stupid because they have wasted the opportunity given to them. The reduction in golput means that the people's political participation in the election increases, and the elected legislative and presidential candidates' political legitimacy becomes stronger (Bakti, 2015). Strangely, when the elections and party controversy has now led to a more democratic form, abstentions are still an attractive choice for some people. It could be seen from the lower turnout of voters in legislative elections in the current reform period.

Abstentions (Golput) are those who do not use their voting rights. According to Nyarwi, he explained four types of abstentions (golput), namely, first, technical abstention. For technical reasons, this type includes people who cannot go to the voting place (TPS) and vote, but their votes are not valid. Second, technical-political abstention, abstaining from being registered as a voter due to himself or another party. Other parties, such as general election organizers or related statistical agencies (Nababan, 2017). Third, political abstention. People in this category feel they have no choice among the available candidates or do not believe that elections will change. Fourth, there is ideological abstention, abstention because they do not believe in democracy, whether for religious fundamentalism or other ideology.

Data from the General Election Commission (KPU) shows that in the 2019 elections, out of 190,770,329 registered voters, 110,298,176 registered voters exercised their voting rights. The 2004 Election results decreased from 23.30% who did not give their voting rights, 27.45% in the 2009 Election, and 30.42% in the 2014 Election. Whereas in the 2019 presidential election, it fell in the 19.24% of voters who did not use their voice. The same thing happened in several local elections where the abstentions were very high, as shown by local elections (Pilkada) of West Java (32.17%), East Java (38.37%), Central Java (35.40%), and North Sumatra (31.46%). However, there was a decline in some places, such as South Sulawesi (25.57%) (Muhtadi, 2019).

Many factors cause high abstentions in elections in Indonesia (Hillman, 2011). Among them are (1) prospective voters feel that there are no voter participants who accommodate their interests, (2) lack of information about the elections, (3) it is difficult to arrange a letter of transfer of polling stations, (4) voters do not yet have an e-ID card (e-KTP), (5) pessimistic about election results. But in the local elections, there is a tendency different from the case in the presidential election.

Because of these abstentions (Golput) phenomenon, every election is always interesting to study. In this study, researchers want to discuss the causes of the abstentions (Golput) phenomenon, the factors that cause abstentions in Indonesia, the abstinence phenomenon that often occurs in local elections in Indonesia, and the possibility of legal protection for communities who do so and do not give their voting rights. Researchers try to examine the phenomenon associated with the abstentions (Golput) in Indonesia's local elections that will compare cases on Java's island.

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative method with a library study approach. Literature study itself is a study used in gathering information and data with the help of various materials in the library such as documents, books, magazines, historical stories, and so on (Mardalis, 1999). A literature study is also related to theoretical studies and some references that could not be separated from scientific literature (Sugiono, 2012).

The library research procedures to be carried out in this study include: 1) preparing equipment, 2) compiling bibliographies, 3) arranging time, 4) reading and making

research notes (Zed, 2004). While the steps that are usually used in library research, according to Kuhlthau (2002), are as follows:

- a. Selection of topics
- b. Exploration of research focus
- c. Determine the focus of research
- d. Collection of data sources
- e. Preparation of data presentation
- f. Report preparation

Data sources are obtained from relevant literature such as books, journals, or scientific articles related to the chosen topic. Data collection techniques used in this study are the library approach by finding data about things or variables in the form of notes, books, papers or articles, journals, and so on (Arikunto & Jabar, 2010). The research instrument used by researchers was a checklist of the classification of research materials based on the study's focus, the writing schema/map, and the format of the research notes.

The data analysis technique used in this library research is the content analysis method. In reviewing, preventing, and overcoming misinformation (a human misunderstanding that can occur due to lack of knowledge of researchers or lack of literary writers), it is checked between libraries and reread literature. This research article is prepared on the principle of simplicity and convenience. This principle was chosen given the limitations of researchers who have not conducted a literature study in-depth and in more detail. Besides, using the principle of simplicity and simplicity is to make it easier for readers to understand the core content of the abstentions phenomenon in the regional elections in Indonesia.

Furthermore, researchers limit the discussion only to examine data on regional elections on the island of Java. The discussion is not too broad and can focus on local elections in several areas on Java alone. We take cases related to the 2018 Gubernatorial Elections (Pilgub) phenomenon in West Java, DKI Jakarta, Central Java, and East Java Province.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Reason of Abstentions

Abstentions (Golput) is related to economic issues that are more important in handling the political nation. It means that the community prioritizes the problem of daily consumption. The fulfillment of food needs is more important than exercising its rights in the political constellation (Masitoh et al., 2013). Based on this issue, then the conclusions could be drawn temporarily. The lack of work and income was the main problem of politics. In future economic issues, labor and inequality were political issues for this nation, old issues but have not been reached optimally. What is clear, Abstentions must be managed by conducting cultural movements through education and political socialization to restore the spirit of choice. Abstentions will be very counterproductive when elections were presented, and abstentions (Golput) will never give birth to good leaders (Djuyandi & Herdiansah, 2018).

The Golput's comments and struggles ideally come from political elites and academics in fostering public confidence in the existing democratic process. An essential prerequisite for democracy that can explain is that democracy will only work if it is in line with full community involvement. There was no democracy in a country with a poor population. It means that poverty is a barrier to the growth and development of democratic systems and culture. Thus, an essential demand for democracy is creating a cheap label for the people of Indonesia. Hopefully, the Golput phenomenon is a thesis, not a synthesis for this nation. The higher the level of community participation in elections will determine the community's political participation level that impacts our daily lives. Providing support is not meant merely to provide voice support; more than that, providing support will be followed by efforts to distribute in the sense of governing, not in power as participation in democracy.

Below will present several factors that make abstentions (Golput) increasingly develop in our society. A study conducted by the world economic forum from Harvard University around 2002 on failed states, their characteristics, and their consequences in 59 countries and Indonesia included. This study has concluded the indicators and factors of failed countries:

1) *High rates of crime and violence*

The emergence of various cases and acts of vandalism, a crime that has occurred in the community lately, is an early symptom that our country has failed in empowering its people (Kompas, 3/27/2008). The public gets angry more quickly because of trivial and then fatalistic behavior (Kompas, 3/9/2008). Symptoms of violence and cruelty are phenomena and indicators of anomic public life and identity crisis. The mutilation case is a real example of a society that tends to resort to violence and cruelty, which is considered normal for the community.

2) *Corruption is rampant*

"Just replace this republic with a republic of thieves?" Such was the interruption of Mashadai, a member of the reform faction at the House of Representatives' plenary meeting who discussed whether or not Akbar Tanjung had to be deactivated DPR chairman on Thursday 27 February 2003 (Kompas 9/3/2007). This statement is as if its validity could be tested. According to the Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW), during 1998-2007, the number of state losses due to corrupt practices was 1,413.29 billion, 61.19 percent due to corrupt practices in central government agencies. With a breakdown of 56 regional cases, the country's total loss was 548.53 billion, the center of the 26 issues with the country's loss was 864,746 billion. The corrupt mode varies, namely executives in using the remaining funds without procedures, deviations from the use of the remaining regional budget (APBD) and manipulating the procurement of goods and services. Whereas the legislative body is increasing and enlarging budget lines, channeling regional budget (APBD) to fictitious institutions, and manipulating official travel (Jawa Pos 11/2/2008). This data reinforces that corruption is a suicide process that is very effective in the development process while at the same time spaying the democratic process that will develop.

3) *Poor public opinion*

Public opinion that has been built and formed so far is biased because public opinion itself does not take place in a vacuum. It was controlled by social, political, and economic realities interconnected with various interests for a moment without forming a humanistic communication civilization, building a culture of life but leading to a culture of death. Public opinion presented through the mass media has experienced a dysfunction of meaning and disorientation because it is balanced by community values and culture, professional ethics, the honesty of information, and awareness of healthy public opinion. The news reality construction is elitist with a top-down approach to news content but not bottom-up, so social problems lack the place and portion. Instead of forming various destructive social issues and adding to social pathology, spreads develop in society. This low public opinion occurs because the public opinion agent itself is opportunistic and has an affair with the existing authorities.

4) *An atmosphere of high uncertainty*

In the globalization era, we lived in a global village and led to the international invaders' phenomenon, which raises various risks and uncertainties. In our nation's context, primarily the economic phenomenon, the state's role is increasingly lost, as if society without a state. It arises from a neoliberal financial system that prioritizes market interests through privatization, privatization, deregulation, which benefits the capitalists, leads people to the abyss of poverty, death graves, and widespread

economic sterility. In culture, our nation's present context experiences a crisis of identity, chaos, alienation, and local wisdom loss. Things that are a local genius are slowly fading because of a global culture that is gradually eliminating the nation's culture and global cultural uniformity. In the field of politics or our political world, there is no political space but digital political space. Politics is a "business show," said Neil Postman, a pedagogic and media critic. Politics has become a media business area. In a spectacle society influenced by information and image communication, messages and impressions, and outward appearances are everything. All political messages are packaged to attract the public. Image politics becomes packaging politics. In the digital era and television culture, politics and politicians become the entertainment stage. Politicians prefer to appear in the media and create news sensations, like rhetoric rather than works, prefer hooked fashion to vision, spread promises rather than spread performance, and prefer to spread charm rather than applied action. TV appears as the primary media for communication channels for the political elite and a source for political gossip.

This phenomenon has led to various Abstentions because people identify politics with dirty, deception, politics far from reality. Society has no political beliefs but political trade. There was no political reality but a political mirage. There were no political virtues but free political games. Our political world has fundamental changes in the definition, understanding of space, truth, belief, and political reality for the community.

There are three main issues of change and uncertainty in our world of politics: first, geopolitics, namely politics becoming a global space that breaks through barriers and space without clear geographical boundaries so that it loses its spirit and orientation to society because of the effects of the information age and globalization. Second, spatial politics, that is, public spaces that become political orientations, are disoriented due to virtual space factors that prioritize imaging. Politics becomes virtual without reality because the promising area is more dominant than the action space. Third, the politics of the time, namely the essence and substance of politics, are not prioritized because they prioritize the speed and acceleration of information to achieve interests. Through the symptoms of party cadre recruitment and vague recruitment and the emergence of troubled and troubled candidates, it was through party cadre recruitment signs. These three main issues make our politics, borrowing the term Yasraf A. Pilliang experiencing trans political due to a political cross with the media, politics with the world of entertainment, politics with sexuality, politics with commodities. This shift in political function makes people dissatisfied with a political performance far from their reality and expectations.

Abstentions (Golput) phenomenon is a reaction to political symptoms that fail to bring change to society. Political systems change, many new parties emerge, regional autonomy and local elections are imposed. Everything is done in the hope that it will bring change and improvement to the community. But hope remains hope, and corruption is increasingly rampant, disobedience is increasing - many national assets are sold to foreigners, political parties scratch each other on their own, members of the legislature play money politics. All depravity occurred at the central level to remote areas. Under such conditions, what do people expect? People are helpless and cannot do anything except show their disappointment with abstentions (Golput) in every Gubernatorial election (Pilgub)/local election (Pilkada). The phenomenon of the high number of Abstentions and the ever-increasing tendency in the reform era is more indicative of the widespread apathy of the people towards the process of reciting local elections throughout Indonesia. Changes in a tiring election, high costs do not provide direct benefits for the people. Elections do not resolve the hunger of people who hang themselves because they cannot pay school fees for their children, or mothers burn their children because the burden of life is heavy. Also, a country that forgets to improve public health.

3.2. Factors That Influence the Occurrence of the Abstentions in Indonesia

The Golput, or often referred to as abstentions, is a political term for students and youth's protest movement to protest the implementation of the first election of the new order. First appeared in the 1970 elections, which were initiated by Arief Budiman (Soe Hok Djin). At that time, abstentions were intended to find an anti-authoritarian system of government because of the New Order's pressure to force to vote during the election (Sanit, 1992). Arif Maulana believes that a person or group of people who choose not to vote is not a violation of the law, and no single rule of law is violated. UU no. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections no article prohibits a person from being abstentions because constitutionally it is also clear that Indonesian citizens have the right to vote and be elected in a general election contestation (IDNTimes, 2019).

The research results from Masitoh, related to the Golput in Pati district elections in 2011, found that the factors that influence voters to abstain. In addition to technical aspects, political factors and ideological factors and identify factors that affect the three technical, political, and ideological elements influence abstention behavior in society (Masitoh et al., 2013).

Titi Anggraini Director of Perludem revealed that abstentions were caused by five things, namely:

1) *Prospective voters feel that no participant can accommodate their interests (abstentions)*

The number of users of suffrage in the 2019 elections declined due to limited choices. As a result, they are politically apathetic because they feel that they are not accommodated or facilitated.

2) *Lack of information about the 2019 elections*

Voters do not get information about the election simultaneously, they consider the election only presidential election, they are not aware of legislative elections.

3) *Difficult to arrange a letter to move the voting place*

The mechanism for arranging A5 turnover letters or formulis is very complicated because it is administered no later than H-30. While there are things that the voter cannot anticipate so he has no time to deal with them.

4) *Voters do not have e-KTP (e-ID card)*

Election-related regulations state that prospective voters are those who have e-KTPs, so that when they do not have e-KTPs it is likely that they cannot exercise their voting rights, at this stage they are already pessimistic even though they did not vote.

5) *Pessimistic about the results of holding elections*

Some pragmatic voters did not consider the election important and faced a long holiday.

The reasons individuals behave abstintently according to characteristics can be seen from age. The reasons for not participating in choosing are divided between administrative and technical or individual reasons. Whereas in terms of gender, among men, abstentions mostly occur due to technical/personal reasons, while among abstentions, women occur more because of administrative reasons. In terms of education, among highly educated people, quite a large proportion of abstentions that arose due to political causes such as dissatisfaction with the elections and viewed from work, people whose work base is daily (such as motorcycle taxi drivers, opening stalls, traveling vendors and so on), most of the abstentions for technical reasons. While for other occupational categories, most abstentions are divided between administrative and technical/personal reasons.

Indeed, Abstentions are not a wise choice, but Abstentions are a voting right. Why? First, the option not to vote is a form of waste of the State budget. Second, the legitimacy of the power of elected candidates does not represent the people's aspirations, in the sense that the legitimacy of the material test and public test of elected candidates is invalid and can lead to civil disobedience in the future. Direct election as it is now is a form of popular choice or, in other languages, connotes free to do what he wants because people elected. It backfires for abstentions. Whereas, Golput does not have an actual and legal procedure and is seen as a failure of the democratic process. Third, Abstentions are a form of complaint against the existing situation (Subanda, 2009).

To describe and analyze the factors that influence a person's behavior for abstentions. This research makes a positive contribution to giving a discourse, although academically has not been able to contribute significantly.

3.3. Abstentions (Golput) Phenomenon in Local Elections

The abstention phenomenon has become a common thing in the election contestation in Indonesia. Although constitutionally, these abstentions do not violate, and legally no criminal or civil matter is violated. But the problem of abstentions can be a bad precedent for the holding of elections in Indonesia in the future. Abstentions in elections are always interesting to study because each election trigger factors are still different.

Abstentions (Golput) can be interpreted as protest or rejection of the running mechanisms and systems. And we should respond with ethics, morals, and civil society as positive things to the structural, structural, and procedural problems as a political, moral movement. Political parties in carrying out candidates should provide space for the voting community in formulating interests and confirmation to supporters in proposing candidates in political contestation. If not, the high number of Abstentions becomes homework for political parties in Indonesia to immediately re-think of formulations so that their constituents can return home and move closer.

The voting coalition, abstentions (Golput), and political parties make all interests happy. Negotiations, income crowds, political contracts are getting closer, as we see and hear on radio, newspapers, and TV (Ferza & Aulia, 2020). It has led to political communication, in the sense that we still need parliamentary relations between the president, parliament, and the existing Abstentions. The coalition must be useful and productive. Likewise, the interests of the Golput must be accommodated so that democracy is not trapped in a primordial political tradition (Apriani et al., 2018). It means that as an institution, our democracy is healthy, legitimately, our democracy is still weak, and the coalition between voters, abstentions, and political parties is the solution. It takes a figure of understanding and understanding between those who have political authority through voice unions (voters, abstentions, and political parties) so that the voice's penetration shows the inclination of the people's vote. In other words, Abstentions are shadow forces that act as imitators of political markets or disguised opposition and tend to enlarge when democracy itself hurts itself.

Buying voters is one thing that causes people to be apathetic to the electoral system, which ultimately impacts abstentions (Golput). This pattern causes the electoral system to run less effectively, which has an effect on the lives of the surrounding community so that this pattern of abstention spreads to the surrounding community (Putra, 2017).

In the 2018 Central Java Gubernatorial Elections (Pilgub), the voter turnout increased to 64.6%, while the number of voters who did not exercise their right to vote or abstentions was at 35.4% (LSI, 2018). Whereas previously in 2013, voters who did not exercise their right to vote were 44.7%. Of course, this is an exciting thing for the implementation of the elections in Indonesia. Meanwhile, in the Gubernatorial Election (Pilgub) of West Java event in 2018, the voter participation rate increased by 72% after the previous voter participation rate was only 67.31% (Gubernatorial

Election (Pilgub) of West Java 2009) and 63.85% (Gubernatorial Elections (Pilgub) of West Java 2013) (Djuyandi & Herdiansah, 2018). The increase in voter turnout in the 2018 West Java Gubernatorial election shows that the improvement of a candidate's public electability and the system is very influential in increasing voter turnout (Amalia & Mulyadi, 2019). In the 2018 East Java Gubernatorial Elections (Pilgub), the abstentions phenomenon has decreased. It was at 59%, 61% Gubernatorial Elections in 2013) and in 2018 East Java Gubernatorial Elections (Pilgub), the participation rate was at 70% (General Election Commission of East Java Province, 2018).

3.4. Protection of Abstentions (Golput) Law from a Human Rights Perspective

It is an essential part of the rule of law with a democratic government system regarding human rights. Human rights are fundamental rights possessed by humans as innate ones since birth closely related to human dignity. Protection of human rights is not just a discourse at the national law level but also part of international law. Theoretically, human rights are divided into two types, namely:

- a. Individual human rights, namely rights to life and development of life such as rights to inner freedom, rights to a good name, rights to a good reputation, rights to freedom of religion, etc. These fundamental rights are formulated based on the protection of the human person against state power.
- b. Human rights as social beings are divided into economic, social and cultural rights (Bakti, 2015).

Human rights in giving choices in general elections are individual human rights. The option to become abstainers is a political, human right that emerged as a human right in the first generation, namely the struggle for civil and political rights (civil and political rights). This struggle began in the 17th century through the reformist theories constructed by liberalists in Western Europe. The concept of this first generation originated from the hope of freedom and protection against the abuse of political authority against individuals and communities.

This first generation put human rights in negative terms (freedom from) rather than positive (right to). Thought related to the conception of human rights has long been developing in scientists' discourse since Europe's enlightenment era increased to become official international legal documents. The culmination of the development of the first generation of human rights was signing the universal declaration of the United Nations' human rights in 1948. After previously, the ideas of protecting human rights were listed in historical texts in several countries, such as England with the Magna Charta and Bill of Rights, in the United States with the Declaration of Independence in France with the Declaration of Rights of Man and the Citizens (Bakti, 2015).

In this 1st generation conception, the essential elements of human rights include social integrity, basic human needs, and civil and political freedom principles. This first generation of human rights is the fundamental right to life, liberty, personal security, and physical integrity, which is officially confirmed in the international covenant on civil and political rights. Judging from historical and theoretical views, abstention as part of political rights cannot be ruled out, which means that this human right must be pursued to be fulfilled by the state.

Fulfillment of human rights in Indonesia is carried out based on Acts Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, which further elaborates the values of Pancasila (Hariono, 2018). As the basis of the state, Pancasila contains the idea that God Almighty created humans with two aspects: individuality (personal) and the element of sociality (society). Therefore, the freedom of everyone is limited by the human rights of others. The rights of others determine the space of everyone. It means that everyone should recognize and respect the human rights of others. This obligation also applies to every organization at any level, especially the state and government. Thus, the country and the government are responsible for respecting, protecting,

defending, and guaranteeing every citizen and population's human rights without discrimination (Bakti, 2015).

Protection of human rights for people who choose to abstain must do when living in a democracy. The community as togetherness is built based on trust and mutual need. In this case, the law is built throughout procedural, bureaucratic, and system legislation (Nababan, 2017). To create abstentions (golput) must be respected as an option, and people must respect this choice even if they disagree with this view.

Even though abstentions (golput) are protected by human rights, as an election organizer, the General Election Commission (KPU) certainly needs to disseminate information to the public to run smoothly. The voter rate is high. Candidates who are contesting in the elections also need to carry out good political communication to high their electability. It helps the General Election Commission (KPU) increase the local elections' high number of votes. So, both parties must cooperate in the interests of an honest, fair, and democratic election (Djuyandi, 2017).

One thing that the General Election Commission (KPU) can try to increase the voting level is the e-voting model. The Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology (BPPT) has developed this. However, the community seems to understand less about the electronic system. So that the influence of human resources in each region is also delayed (Supriyanto, 2016). The e-voting model can be carried out during this pandemic period. Of course, it is advisable not to make direct contact. Urgently e-voting has met the requirements of the election. In a pandemic like this, the context of the electoral system must pay attention to health protocols. E-voting should be able to overcome (Apriani et al., 2018).

4. Conclusion

Political and ideological factors more influence abstentions (Golput). Several cases mentioned that the regional election contestation could not provide hope for changes in the region, for example, economic conditions, infrastructure conditions, and other social conditions. These conditions positively affect people's behavior to use their voting rights. Most people do not believe in politicians. In contrast, the ideological factors themselves consider the existing system to be incompatible and unable to solve society's problems and conditions. Politicians' direct election mechanism tends to be used by politicians to buy the people's votes and only deliver promises that have never been fulfilled or even impossible to fulfill. In addition to some of these things, there are other reasons to coincide with national holidays, so people prefer to take long vacations with family. Besides, some communities in Central Java, East Java, and West Java are mostly migrants, so they choose to earn money rather than return home to give their voting rights.

Political parties and election organizers must respond to this well. At least they can provide room for aspirations for these abstentions to minimize the implementation of future elections. Improvements to the electoral system to prevent buying voters occur so that the political image in Indonesia in the public's eyes is not bad, and voter participation can increase.

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