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Regional Head Election During Covid-19 Outbreak in Sigi District and Palu City, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Original Article

Abstract

This research aims to determine the increase in community participation in the 2020 election in Central Sulawesi and find out the factors that influence the increase in community participation in the 2020 election. This research is also to find out how community participation in the 2020 election in Central Sulawesi is and what factors influence it. influencing increased public participation in the 2020 election. The method used in this research is mixed methods (combination method), which combines quantitative methods and qualitative methods to be used together in this research activity so that comprehensive, valid, reliable, and objective data is obtained. This year's regional head elections are very different from previous regional elections because this is the first-time regional head elections have been held in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. With regard to the simultaneous regional elections in 2020, which also coincide with the COVID-19 pandemic, the government is also swiftly and precisely thinking about and anticipating that these regional elections must still be carried out.

Keywords: *Regulation, Electronic Medical Records, Health Facilities.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peningkatan partisipasi masyarakat pada Pemilihan tahun 2020 di Sulawesi Tengah dan mengetahui faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi peningkatan partisipasi masyarakat pada Pemilihan tahun 2020. Penelitian ini juga untuk mengetahui bagaimana partisipasi masyarakat pada pemilihan tahun 2020 di Sulawesi Tengah dan faktor apa saja yang memengaruhi peningkatan partisipasi masyarakat pada Pemilihan tahun 2020. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah mixed methods (metode kombinasi) yang menggabungkan antara metode kuantitatif dan metode kualitatif untuk digunakan secara bersama-sama dalam kegiatan penelitian ini, sehingga diperoleh data yang komprehensif, valid, reliable, dan objektif. Pemilihan kepala daerah pada tahun ini sangatlah berbeda dari Pilkada-Pilkda sebelumnya, di karenakan ini pertama kalinya dilaksanakan Pemilihan Kepala Daerah di tengah – tengah pandemi Covid-19. Berkenaan dengan adanya Pilkada Serentak pada tahun 2020 yang juga bersamaan dengan terjadinya Pandemi covid-19, Pemerintah dengan sigap dan tepat juga memikirkan dan mengantisipasi agar Pilkada ini harus tetap terlaksana.

Kata kunci: *Pilkada, Kepala Daerah, Covid 19*

1. INTRODUCTION

The regional elections during the Covid-19 pandemic are concerning due to a potential decrease in voter turnout. This decline contradicts the primary purpose of elections, which is not only to select a leader but also to engage community participation. Holding the elections amid the pandemic may discourage voters from going to polling stations due to fear of the virus and concerns about electoral fraud. Such fears could lead to higher abstention rates, increasing the risk of misuse of voting rights. Additionally, Covid-19 affects all demographics indiscriminately.¹

Given these considerations, it is imperative to ensure that the 2020 Provincial and City/Regency Regional Head Elections proceed democratically and uphold political stability while adhering to health protocols. Despite the rising Covid-19 cases and associated deaths, voter interest in participating in the elections remains robust. Delaying the elections could hinder government functioning, emphasizing the necessity of conducting them promptly and safely.

The date for the regional head election is approaching, leaving little opportunity to postpone the election schedule. Although policies might allow for a postponement, considering the proximity of the election date, it is preferable to hold the election as scheduled. The ongoing pandemic poses significant concerns, and any further delay could disrupt governmental stability and the democratic process.²

Recently, a working and hearing meeting was held between Commission II of The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia and the Minister of Home Affairs, the Chair of the Indonesia's election commission, the Chair of the Republic of Indonesia's Election Watchdogs, and the Chair of the Republic of the Indonesia's Election Organizer Honorary Council at the Parliament Building in Senayan, Jakarta. During this meeting, the Chairman of Commission II of The House of Representatives, Ahmad Doli Kurnia Tandjung, affirmed the decision to proceed with the regional head elections on December 9, 2020. Given that the current situation remains manageable and aligns with the planned schedule, Commission II of The House of Representatives, along with the Minister of Home Affairs, the Chair of the Indonesia's election commission, the Chair of the Indonesia's Election Organizer Honorary Council, and the Chair of the Indonesia's Election Organizer Honorary Council, agreed to continue with the elections.

The 2020 Simultaneous regional elections will proceed on December 9, 2020, with strict enforcement of discipline and legal sanctions for violations of Covid-19 health

¹ Toni Anwar Mahmud, "Partisipasi Pemilih Masyarakat Pada Pemilihan Walikota Dan Wakil Walikota Tangerang Selatan Tahun 2020," *Jurnal Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan* 4, no. 1 (2021): 82–91, <https://doi.org/10.47080/propatria.v4i1.1115>; Mokhammad Samsul Arif, "Meningkatkan Angka Partisipasi Sebagai Upaya Menjamin Legitimasi Hasil Pemilihan Kepada Daerah Dan Wakil Kepala Daerah Di Tengah Pandemi Covid-19," *Electoral Governance Jurnal Tata Kelola Pemilu Indonesia* 2, no. 1 (2020): 18–40, <https://doi.org/10.46874/tkp.v2i1.197>.

² Tajul Arifin et al., "Proteksi Diri Saat Pandemi COVID-19 Berdasarkan Hadits Shahih" (Bandung, 2020), <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/30833/>.

protocols. This decision underscores the importance of this year's regional elections for both societal interests and governmental stability. The government has emphasized the necessity for people to wear masks at all times. Additionally, it is expected that polling places will provide hand sanitizer and disinfectant in designated areas. The government is anticipated to increase the number of polling stations and enhance facilities to protect the public from Covid-19. Measures such as expanding voting areas and maintaining social distancing will help ensure efficient election procedures and public safety. However, these measures require a larger budget, as the 2020 regional elections differ significantly from previous ones.

According to legal provisions, each polling station accommodates up to 800 voters. Reducing this number to 400 voters per station will necessitate an increase in the number of polling places, consequently raising the budget for logistics and other election-related matters. Globally, the fight against Covid-19 is intense and fast-paced. The pandemic has caused a crisis in governance and policy-making in many countries.³ Almost every nation, whether developing or technologically and economically advanced, faces significant challenges and uncertainties in managing the Covid-19 outbreak.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research method, the researcher outlines the type of research employed, which is a juridical-normative study. This study thoroughly examines Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perppu) No. 2 of 2020, which includes the Third Amendment to Law Number 1 of 2014 concerning the Election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors. The study also addresses the implementation of simultaneous regional head elections. Qualitative methods were chosen to gain a deeper understanding of this issue, aiming to provide comprehensive insights into the dynamics of law and its practical application. The research was conducted in Sigi Regency and Palu City, Central Sulawesi, selected as study locations to obtain relevant and accurate data on the policy's implementation. Through this research, a better understanding of the impact and effectiveness of Perppu No. 2 of 2020 in the context of regional head elections is anticipated.

3. RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Impact of Covid-19 on Regional Elections in Central Sulawesi Province

The Central Sulawesi Provincial General Election Commission, in collaboration with the Palu City General Election Commission, is conducting simulation activities for voting, vote counting, and the use of SIREKAP Application in the 2020 simultaneous regional elections while adhering to Covid-19 health protocols. This activity involves the General Election

³ P. S. Mas'udi, W., & Winanti, *Tata Kelola Penanganan Covid-19 Di Indonesia: Kajian Awal*, ed. Wawan Mas'udi and Poppy S. Winanti (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2020), <https://ugmpress.ugm.ac.id/id/product/kedokteran-umum/tata-kelola-penanganan-covid-19-di-indonesia-kajian-awal>.

Commissions of all regencies and cities in Central Sulawesi Province, the Election Supervisory Body, members of Voting Organizing Group, and witnesses from the candidate pairs for Governor, Mayor, and Regent. The purpose of the simulation is to enable election organizers to identify and evaluate potential obstacles during the elections.

Given the unique challenges posed by the pandemic, the General Election Commission recommends periodic sterilization of polling locations to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This includes measures such as spraying disinfectant. Additionally, to mitigate the risk of virus transmission, the General Election Commission has altered the traditional method of marking voters' fingers with ink. Instead of dipping fingers in ink, a pipette will be used to drop ink onto voters' fingers.

Moreover, the Central Sulawesi General Election Commission has developed a comprehensive health protocol for the voting process. Voters are required to wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer provided by officers of Voting Organizing Group before entering the polling place. Voters must also wear masks and have their body temperatures checked with a thermogun upon arrival. Additionally, disposable plastic gloves will be provided to voters to maintain hand hygiene and prevent virus transfer.

After voting, polling station officials instruct voters to dispose of used plastic gloves in designated trash bins. Voters confirmed positive for Covid-19 and undergoing quarantine receive special accommodations.⁴ This procedure was established in a recent plenary meeting of the General Election Commission and is implemented at all polling stations throughout Indonesia.⁵ The General Election Commission ensures that all Covid-19 patients in Central Sulawesi can exercise their right to vote, provided they are on the Permanent Voter List. Covid-19 patients can vote with the assistance of election organizers and medical teams, even if they are self-quarantined or in local government health service centers. Voting Organizing Group officers will deliver ballot papers to these patients.

For asymptomatic Covid-19 patients undergoing self-quarantine, Voting Organizing Group officers will visit their residences. For patients in hospital or integrated quarantine, officers will coordinate with medical teams to facilitate voting. Officers serving Covid-19 patients will be equipped with personal protective equipment and must follow health protocols to avoid contracting the virus. These officers receive training on safely providing ballot papers to Covid-19 patients. All materials will be wrapped in plastic and disinfected before and after the voting process to ensure safety.

3.2. Possible Malpractice

⁴ Samsul Ode et al., "Pemilu Dan Covid-19 Di Indonesia: Partisipasi Pemilih Dalam Pilkada Serentak 2020," *Journal of Political Issues* 4, no. 1 (2022): 29–41, <https://doi.org/10.33019/jpi.v4i1.74>; Noor Alis Setiyadi et al., "Pelayanan Rumah Sehat Covid-19 Inovasi Pengendalian Mortalitas Dan Morbiditas: Studi Kasus Di Kabupaten Sukoharjo, Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Kesehatan Masyarakat Indonesia* 2, no. 1 (2021): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jppkmi.v2i1.47457>.

⁵ Desca Thea Purnama, Viza Juliansyah, and Chainar Chainar, "Pandemi Covid-19, Perubahan Sosial Dan Konsekuensinya Pada Masyarakat," *Proyeksi: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora* 25, no. 1 (2020): 61–80, <http://dx.doi.org/10.26418%2Fproyeksi.v25i1.2613>.

Malpractice in elections refers to violations that can be intentional or unintentional, legal or illegal.⁶ The occurrence of such violations depends on the strictness of the electoral rules and the measures taken to prevent them. A common issue brought before the Election Organizer Honorary Council (DKPP) is negligence or carelessness in implementing election stages.⁷ This problem is prevalent even under normal circumstances and is exacerbated in abnormal and emergency situations, such as conducting regional elections during the current Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, as of May 13, 2020, amidst the pandemic, approximately 156 individual candidates had been accepted by the General Election Commission (KPU), while 45 candidates had their registrations rejected for not meeting initial requirements.

Initially, the verification of support requirements for individual candidate pairs was scheduled to close by May 28, 2020. However, due to the pandemic, this stage was delayed, including the postponement of verifying these support requirements. With the issuance of Government Regulation in lieu of Law, Number 2 of 2020, the KPU must take more rational steps to verify support terms. The KPU faces time constraints, particularly as the nine provinces and 270 districts/cities holding the 2020's election might be implementing Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). Verification must be done randomly, requiring officers to visit locations to ensure the validity of the support requirements provided by candidates.

The potential for malpractice in the 2020 regional elections is significant, especially during the sensitive stage of verifying individual candidates' support requirements, which determines whether a candidate can proceed to the elections.⁸ The possibility of malpractice at this stage is high, as past experiences during normal situations have shown that verifying support requirements often leads to disputes. Consequently, the potential for malpractice in this verification process could become a major obstacle for election organizers if not conducted meticulously.

Another issue that could lead to malpractice in the 2020 regional election is the registration and updating of voter data. This has historically been a crucial problem in Indonesian elections because voter databases are often inconsistent, leading to disputes between election organizers and participants. A particular challenge for the upcoming

⁶ Josua Satria Collins and Pan Mohamad Faiz, "Penambahan Kewenangan Constitutional Question Di Mahkamah Konstitusi Sebagai Upaya Untuk Melindungi Hak-Hak Konstitusional Warga Negara," *Jurnal Konstitusi* 15, no. 4 (2018): 687–709.

⁷ Jingga Dian Eka Rindra Sari and Rizal Maula, "Model Pembuktian Dalam Putusan Kabul Mahkamah Konstitusi: Studi Kasus Sengketa Pemilu Legislatif No. 86-03/26/PHPU.DPR.DPRD/XVII/2019," *Jurnal Konstitusi & Demokrasi* 3, no. 2 (2023): 183–97, <https://doi.org/10.7454/JKD.v3i2.1310%0A%0A>.

⁸ Lidya Christin Sinaga et al., eds., *Penanganan Covid-19 Dalam Perspektif Politik* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2020); Muhammad Reza Baihaki and Alif Fachrul Rachman, "Kewenangan Dewan Kehormatan Penyelenggara Pemilihan Umum Mengadili Penyalahgunaan Wewenang Penyelenggara Pemilu," *Majalah Hukum Nasional* 53, no. 1 (2023): 131–53, <https://doi.org/10.33331/mhn.v53i1.214>; Warjio Warjio, *Demokrasi Di Era Covid-19: Isu, Persoalan Dan Rekomendasi* (Medan: Gerhana Media Kreasi, 2020).

regional elections is managing voters who migrate or live outside the province or district where the elections are held, especially if Covid-19 persists. Although the KPU has allowed for the voter updating stage to extend until December 9, 2020, this extension indicates a lack of confidence in the existing data. Previously, the KPU had planned to update voter data until September 23, 2020.

Inaccurate voter data can negatively impact participation levels in regional elections. Research conducted in 2015 and 2016 demonstrated that low voter turnout in Medan and Batam regional elections was due to voter migration and high voter mobility. Consequently, voter data often becomes outdated and does not reflect the actual electorate, making it difficult for organizers to locate voters. This issue is prevalent even under normal circumstances, raising concerns about the effectiveness of voter data updates during the Covid-19 pandemic.⁹

Relying on the Special Voter List (DPK) and the Additional Voter List (DPTb) without significant improvements can be considered a form of electoral malpractice. In the 2019 General Election, voters who wished to vote in locations different from their registered addresses faced various difficulties due to a cumbersome processing system.¹⁰ During the PSBB period, with physical and social distancing restrictions, these challenges must be anticipated by regional election organizers.¹¹

Another potential area for malpractice is during the vote-counting process. Participants in the 2020 regional election, both party and individual candidates, must ensure they provide witnesses at each polling place (TPS). However, the necessity of maintaining social distance during the PSBB period could hinder effective participatory supervision. Additionally, candidates might face difficulties in finding witnesses due to the challenging conditions, which could also affect election observers.

CONCLUSION

The Central Sulawesi's election commission has maximized its efforts in preparing for the regional elections, which must be conducted with strict adherence to health protocols, enforced by law and accompanied by strict sanctions to prevent the emergence of new Covid-19 clusters. These simultaneous regional elections are expected to serve as a catalyst for new methods and innovations, allowing both the community and organizers to collectively rise and transform the election into a platform for the exchange of ideas and actions aimed at reducing and breaking the chain of Covid-19 transmission. Regional

⁹ Mochamad Nurhasim et al., "Masa Depan Partai Islam Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian Politik* 13, no. 2 (2016): 227–244, <https://doi.org/10.14203/jpp.v13i2.567>.

¹⁰ Agus Sutisna and Ita Nurhayati, "Pemutakhiran Daftar Pemilih Berkelanjutan: Tantangan Problematik Mewujudkan Daftar Pemilih Berkualitas," *Electoral Governance: Jurnal Tata Kelola Pemilu Indonesia* 3, no. 1 (2021): 70–96, <https://doi.org/10.46874/tkp.v3i1.296>.

¹¹ Aleksander Yandra et al., "Understanding the Voter Data Information System (SIDALIH): The Need for Sustainable Voter Data Accuracy (DPB) Ahead of the 2024 General Election," in *LAPA 2022 International Conference and International Indonesia Conference on Interdisciplinary Studies (IICIS)*, 2023, 385–399, <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v8i5.13012>.

elections have a multidimensional impact, and their success relies not only on the organizers but also on the cooperation of all Ministries/Institutions, political parties, and the community. To prevent social conflict, it is essential to prepare the necessary strategies and resources to prevent, halt, and recover from such conflicts if they arise. The goal is for election and regional election organizers to perform optimally amidst the Covid-19 outbreak, ensuring compliance with health protocols and the provision of public services. This approach will not only ensure justice in the democratic process but also guarantee that the public can access all their rights in the regional elections.

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