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## Challenges and Changes in Political Behavior of City Community in the Local Election during Covid-19: Acehnese of Indonesia

**Zulham**

Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Malikussaleh University, Indonesia

**Ristati**

Lecturer, Department of Management, Malikussaleh University, Indonesia

**Bustami**

Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Political Thought-UINSU, UINSU-Medan, Indonesia

### **Abstract:**

*Changes in people's political behavior during Covid-19 became a separate problem for the government who wanted to carry out election in 2024 as it is known that this year the international world, including Indonesia, was hit by a Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, resulting in the rescheduling of the implementation of the democratic party in Indonesia. This research was conducted using observation and interview techniques using a list of questions as a research instrument, then the data were analyzed descriptively. The results of this study are: people's political behavior has changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, therefore, some people are afraid to come to give their right to vote on polling day. There are people's political behavior in the local election who are participating in the election and some are afraid to participate in the election, because after all this is a consideration that Covid-19 does not vote because of the frightening outbreak. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic made people afraid to exercise their right to vote when a democratic party was held, so the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak became a separate obstacle where people were prohibited from gathering together when they exercised their right to vote. Political behavior in the election has also changed due to changes in the political culture adopted by the community, but during the Covid-19 pandemic, people's political behavior changed by itself even though it was not influenced by political culture. Political behavior has changed because of people's fear of pandemic disease outbreaks that have hit the world as well as in Indonesia, so the government has to postpone the schedule for the elections to be held in Indonesia, because it is to break the chain of the Covid-19 pandemic.*

**Keywords:** Political behavior, political participation and Covid-19

### **1. Introduction**

Election is one of the characteristic that must exist in a democratic country, thus election is an important means for the people in the life of the state, namely by choosing their representatives who in turn will control the wheels of government. The results of the general election, which was held in an atmosphere of openness with freedom of opinion and freedom of association, were considered to reflect fairly accurately reflect the aspirations and participation of the community.

According to Harris G. Warren, elections are an opportunity for citizen state to elect government officials and decide what they want the government to do. In making the decision it's the citizen countries determine what they really want to have. Meanwhile, according to A. Sudiharto, elections are an important means of democracy and are a real manifestation of people's participation in state life. (Budiarjo 2008)

Pilkada was held in Indonesia in 2005 at which time the people were free to choose the regional head they wanted and who would hold office for the next five years. Pilkada was also held after the success of a democratic event, namely in 2004 the people had succeeded in electing the president and vice president who were first elected by the people, so departing from the success of this direct election which made the regional elections also held directly in Indonesia. But basically the rules regarding the elections have been regulated in Law no. 32 of 2004 which regulates regional elections in Indonesia. And vice versa, the lower the level of freedom, the worse the election will be. This gives rise to the assumption that the more people who take part in the election, the higher the level of democracy in holding elections. However, under certain circumstances, there are several obstacles that can hinder the implementation of the post-conflict local election, such as the current Covid-19 pandemic.

All parties agreed to postpone elections and reallocate unused election budgets to local governments to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Government Regulations in Lieu of Laws have been issued as a legal basis until parliament can incorporate them into law at the next session. The current content of the law is based on the results of a meeting held on 14 April 2020 where parliament agreed with the government's proposal to postpone elections until 2024, but this will be

reviewed once the current crisis is declared over (currently set for 29 May 2020). International IDEA's Senior Program Manager for Asia and Pacific, Adhy Aman in a webinar with an Indonesian audience on Monday, 6 April 2020, proposes the need for alternative electoral methods to be considered during the COVID-19 crisis, in addition to considering alternative dates for postponed or postponed elections (<https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/elections-and-covid-19?lang=id>). The General Elections Commission is currently drafting implementing regulations after Government Regulation in Lieu of Law Number 2 of 2020 was issued on May 5, 2020. Based on the interpretation above, it is a consideration for the government to postpone the implementation of the democratic party due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As for the few obstacles and obstacles to the implementation of the election when it was hit the Covid-19 virus pandemic, there are several regions in Indonesia where direct local elections will be held in Indonesia, but the problem of this pandemic is also an obstacle to delaying the elections that may be held in Indonesia, because after all the safety and security conditions of citizens are also a consideration for implementing direct elections in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. As for the case of the development of covid-19 in Indonesia, from the report of the Covid-19 task force team that the development of covid-19 has increased from month to month, this is what causes people to be afraid and worried about getting involved in the elections. Meanwhile, from these considerations, the government even had to postpone the elections in Indonesia because it was feared that there would be crowds of people.

Furthermore, William G. Flanagan (2010) explains that political behavior is political processes or activities carried out by individuals or groups. An individual/group is required by the state to carry out his rights and obligations to carry out political behavior as for what is meant by political behavior. Especially for urban communities, they are still influenced by the dimensions of the city's physical and economic development. This is related to the magnet that is owned by the city, which is the offer of a large turnover and economic movement. This phenomenon occurs because urban communities have the characteristics to take a rational choice approach in every economic and political activity. So based on this, the political behavior of the people in the local elections has changed slightly from the normal conditions before Covid-19,

However, when viewed from the political behavior of urban and rural communities, it is clearly different where urban people who already have advanced thinking from all aspects and the horizons of thinking of urban people are far ahead of the village community. However, it is also an obstacle if the election is held in the midst of a pandemic it will also change the political behavior of the city community in terms of making their choices in the election. Judging from the motivation behind the emergence of political behavior, Huntington and Nelson divide political behavior into two categories Sadhid (2011).

- Autonomous behavior, namely political behavior that is driven by the perpetrator's own desire to carry out the action.
- Mobilization behavior, namely political behavior that is driven or desired by others, not because of the awareness or desire of the perpetrators themselves.

As an action or activity, either individually or in groups, political behavior has several functions. Robert Lane in his study of political engagement, found four functions of political behavior for individuals (Sastroatmodjo, 1995).

- As a means to pursue economic needs.
- As a means of satisfying a need for social adjustment.
- As a means to pursue special values.
- As a means to fulfill the integrity of the subconscious and certain psychological needs.

On the other hand, Rush and Althoff (1971), view that there are three functions of political behavior. The first is to provide support to the rulers and the government they have formed and the political system they have formed. Second, as an effort to show the weaknesses and shortcomings of the government. And lastly, as a challenge to the authorities with the intention of overthrowing so that structural changes are expected in the government and in the political system, for example through strikes, riots, and coups. The political behavior of the people in the election is also very influential, especially in the midst of a virus outbreak that is happening like this in Indonesia. However, the community has slightly changed their attitude towards the Pilkada, so this change can later mobilize the community in the Pilkada.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This study uses qualitative research methods with descriptive analysis. A qualitative approach is an approach that seeks to interpret the meaning of an event as an interaction of human behavior in certain situations. This research is descriptive, namely as a problem solving process that is investigated by describing the current state of the subject and object of research based on the facts that appear as they are Moleong (2010). Informants are people who provide information about the data/information needed in a study, because through the informants the primary data/information needed can be obtained by Moleong (2010). The informants in this study are people who are considered capable of providing information. Informants are determined purposively, which is determined based on the criteria possessed by the informants themselves. The informants are as follows: urban community leaders. The stages of Data Collection and Data Analysis in this study consisted of several stages, namely;

- Library Studies. The data and information in this literature study were obtained from journals, books, laws and regulations, and documents deemed helpful in the research process and analysis of the research problems being studied.
- Interview (in-dept interview). The interview process was conducted freely and guided, namely the interview was conducted freely, but so that the interview could focus on the object of research, an interview guide was used. This type of interview is flexible and open, not strictly structured, but with questions that are increasingly focused and lead to depth of information.

- Documentation. Documentation process is a method of collecting data in a document carried out to explore documents related to research. Secondary data obtained through the literature, the authors conducted a literature study on secondary data, namely legislation, books related to waste management to obtain a theoretical basis Sugiyono (2009).

After all data has been collected, the next step is conducting data analysis which is very important. The data analyzed were descriptive qualitative, as well as excerpts from the interviews processed to support data analysis. Analysis of the data used in solving problems that arise from the research from the beginning to the completion of data collection. Data verification is carried out continuously throughout the research process. Since first entering the field and during the data collection process, researchers tried to analyze and find meaning from the data collected by Moleong (2010). The research period is within three months, namely May to July 2020. In that period,

### 3. Result and Discussion

Elections have been postponed due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak spreading across the globe. Non-governmental organizations in Indonesia have been pressing for the postponement of regional head elections (Governor, Regent/Mayor) due to the fact that the General Elections Commission on March 21 suspended four important activities around updating voter data as a result of having to maintain 'physical distance' between residents. This actually makes the September election date difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. According to the Chairman of the General Elections Commission, on April 17, in all 9 provinces that must hold gubernatorial elections, 209 of the 224 districts that must hold regent elections and all 37 cities that must hold mayoral elections are affected by the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) imposed by the national government. Around 100 million voters were also affected by the PSBB (<https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/elections-and-covid-19?lang=id>). Input from various parties made the government have to postpone and reschedule for the implementation of regional elections in some parts of Indonesia. Then the General Elections Commission must reschedule the postponement of regional elections in Indonesia, namely: 9 December 2020, 17 March 2021 or 29 September 2021. Input from various parties made the government have to postpone and reschedule for the implementation of regional elections in some parts of Indonesia. Then the General Elections Commission must reschedule the postponement of regional elections in Indonesia, namely: 9 December 2020, 17 March 2021 or 29 September 2021. Input from various parties made the government have to postpone and reschedule for the implementation of regional elections in some parts of Indonesia. Then the General Elections Commission must reschedule the postponement of regional elections in Indonesia, namely: 9 December 2020, 17 March 2021 or 29 September 2021.

#### 3.1. Changes in Political Behavior of City People in the Local Election During Covid-19

If it is associated with the political behavior of society, behaviorists play an important role in explaining the relationship of human behavior as part of society with the existing political conditions in the area as well. People's political behavior is formed in various ways, but the big influence still comes from the environment. This is because the basic behavioral constructs of humans are still concerned with profit and loss that affect themselves. The profit and loss in question is not only a matter of material, but how their hopes, ideas, or achievements can be achieved or not. However, from the results of interviews, the community still wants this election to be held even though it still follows the health protocol because the community hopes that the election will continue to be held even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak that hit Indonesia, because no matter what the people want, the elections will continue so that the people know who will be the leader in the future. The interpretation of the interview above explains that there are some people who want the elections to be held despite the Covid-19 pandemic, but still by complying with the appropriate health protocols recommended by the Covid-19 task force team and in line with the recommendations from the government.

On the other hand, Sathid (2011) views that there are three functions of political behavior. The first is to provide support to the rulers and the government they have formed and the political system they have formed. Second, as an effort to show the weaknesses and shortcomings of the government. And lastly, as a challenge to the authorities with the intention of overthrowing so that structural changes are expected in the government and in the political system, for example through strikes, riots, and coups. The community comes to give voice and support in the elections that will be made by the government based on or guided by health protocols. The narrative above explains that the community is involved in providing support and input to the government to provide change to the community. As well as citizens come to vote based on the findings in the field and there are still people who do not want to come to give their voting rights in the elections. Although there is a small part of the community who thinks that they don't want to come to vote because they are afraid of the covid-19 outbreak, so that political behavior changes too during the covid-19 pandemic outbreak.

Political behavior also has a function for the interests of the government. In the interest of the government, political behavior has the following functions, (1) To encourage government programs. This means that community participation is realized to support political programs and government programs. (2) As an institution that voices the interests of the community for input for the government in directing and improving development. (3) As a means to provide input, suggestions and criticism of the government in the planning and implementation of development programs Rush & Althoff, (2005). Political behavior can also be a tool that will be used by the government to make government programs successful, both political programs and programs that will be designed to provide change to the community. Political behavior is also a suggestion and criticism for the government if the community has a change in attitude and also changes in behavior in the election, this is due to the community's disappointment with leaders who have been elected but

do not fulfill what they have promised in the elections. The political behavior of the community is the key to success that will encourage

Political behavior as an activity is certainly influenced by various factors. Many opinions highlight the factors that influence political behavior; some highlight factors from within a person, some highlight external factors and some combine them. These various opinions can be seen in the following description. Arnstein SR sees that people's political behavior is based on political factors to determine a final product. In more detail, he explained that the political factors included political communication, political awareness, public knowledge of the decision-making process, and public control over public policy. Meanwhile, according to Frank Lindenfeld, the main factor that drives someone to behave in political life is financial satisfaction. In his study, he found that low economic status causes a person to feel excluded from political life, and the person concerned will become apathetic. According to him, this does not happen to people who have economic stability. Based on the explanation above, it has something to do with the interview with Mr. Zulkifli who said that the community felt that they had no benefit after voting so that the people found it difficult to come to vote at the polling station (TPS) because they did not get any benefit from the election results, so choose golput (white group). The narrative above explains that there must be factors that can be felt by the community so that they are interested in giving their right to vote in elections and supporting factors are very important so that they can influence the political behavior of the people in the elections, so that some people feel that they do not benefit from the elections where they do not come to vote. vote at the polling station. Therefore, it is the final product factor that can influence the political behavior of the people in the election, so as not to injure the democratic party that will be held in this country. Because after all, the final product factor is visible and must be felt by the community so that people are interested in coming and actively participating in the elections which are held every five years.

Surbakti (1992) mentions two important variables that influence the level of a person's political behavior. First, the aspect of one's political awareness which includes awareness of the rights and obligations as a citizen, for example political rights, economic rights, the right to legal protection, the right to social security and obligations, such as obligations in the political system, obligations in social life, and other obligations. Second, concerning how the assessment and appreciation of the government, both on government policies and the implementation of government. Political behavior is influenced by political awareness and this is in accordance with an interview with Mr. Dhiyauddin who said that the community participates because they are aware that their obligations as citizens are protected by the state as rights and obligations as citizens in a country. The political behavior of the community is also influenced by the government's appreciation of the public interest. So that it can make people come and participate in every policy and decision-making process carried out by the government. However, if the community does not respect the government, they do not respond to anything that will be taken by the government, then here it is seen that if the government's response is good then the community will participate and appreciate the government, however the government's response to the interests of citizens,

Weimar mentions that there are at least the following five factors that influence Sastroatmodjo's political behavior (1995), namely modernization in all fields having implications for agricultural commercialization, industrialization, increasing urbanization, increasing education levels, expanding the role of mass media, and communication media. This progress has resulted in an increase in the behavior of citizens, especially in urban areas, to participate in political power. They are, for example, workers, traders, and professionals. The political behavior of the people in the city is actually different from that of the people in the village because after all, the education rate of the people in the city is actually higher than that of the people in the village, which is still primitive. So the high and low number of education also affects the political behavior of the community in determining rights and choices in the elections. So here it can be concluded that the higher the level of education, the more aware people are of their rights and obligations as good citizens.

In the context of Indonesia, Sadhid said there are five factors that drive the political behavior of the Indonesian people Sadhid (2011). First, there is freedom to compete in all fields, including in politics. Second, there is a broad and open political reality. Third, the distribution of political resources in society that seeks wealth in society. Fifth, the distribution of power among the people so as to create a balance of power. Freedom to compete in Indonesia is the basis that there is a change in people's political behavior in elections because people are free to carry and win candidates promoted by the community so that from here people change political behavior in the elections that will be held even in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic.

According to Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, another factor that also greatly influences the level of community behavior is the civic culture (Almond et al., 1990). Political culture also influences changes in people's political behavior where the political culture of the participants is in the majority owned or embraced by countries that are already very developed and also by citizens who are well-established in the field of education and have an established economy. This parochial political culture is mostly adopted by third world countries where third world citizens are still low in terms of education and are still not well established in the economic field. In fact, this factor is something that becomes the core point of the growth of citizens' political behavior. Citizen culture (civic culture) is essentially a reflection of the growth and development of democratic values in a good society (good citizen). According to Sadhid (2011), a good citizen is basically reflected in a complete Indonesian human, namely a Pancasila-based development man with the following characteristics: (1) having awareness as a citizen, (2) having a sense of responsibility towards society, and (3) behavior towards development. Therefore, indicators of citizens that can be relied on by the nation and state include the ability to: (1) participate or behave in realizing a democratic state (political democracy), (2) behave in realizing humanity (social democracy) and (3) behave in realizing social justice (economic democracy).

Political participation is an activity of citizens either directly or indirectly (unintentionally) related to government policies that can be carried out by individuals or groups spontaneously or mobilized Sitepu (2012). In terms of political participation, people will come to vote because they feel it is their right and obligation as citizens who will use their votes at a democratic party that will be made by the government, this is based on an interview with Mrs. Fuadati who said that they would come to vote because it was their right and obligations as citizens. The description above explains that every society has obligations and obligations as citizens,

According to Damsar (2012) political participation is understood through the notion of combining two concepts, namely participation and politics, then political participation can be explained as taking part, participating or participating in activities related to power (power), authority (authority), public life, government, state, conflict and conflict resolution, policy, decision making, and distribution or allocation . The understanding of the combination of meanings has provided an understanding of what the scope of the concept of political sociology is. The narration above agrees with the results of the interview with Zainidar who said they would come and participate in the election to be held by the committee who is in charge of the democratic party. The interview above explains that the community participates in the election because it purely participates in the election which will determine the choice and vote in the election where the community is actively involved in determining who will be their leader in the future, the community is involved consciously and without coercion purely on awareness individuals as citizens whose rights and choices are guaranteed by the state.

#### 4. Conclusion

Changes in people's political behavior have also changed and are also affected by the covid-19 pandemic outbreak, because after all this covid-19 outbreak makes people afraid and worried if they are contaminated with the covid-19 virus outbreak. There are people's political behavior in the local elections who are participating and some are afraid to participate in the elections, because after all this is a consideration that this covid-19 is a frightening outbreak. Political behavior in the regional head elections has also changed due to changes in the political culture adopted by the community, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, people's political behavior changed by itself even though it was not influenced by political culture. Political behavior has changed because of people's fear of pandemic disease outbreaks that have hit the world and in Indonesia.

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