

# Political Education as the *Civic Application Engagement* for Strengthening Democracy (The Case Study in Grobogan Regency)

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**Abstract.** Political education as a means of political socialization is certainly needed in an effort to improve the democracy quality. Political education can be carried out through political socialization and a process of transforming political values from society to individuals. Political education aims to increase public knowledge so that they can participate optimally in the political system. In accordance with the understanding of people sovereignty or democracy, people must be able to participate. Civic engagement is defined as collective and individual action taken to identify and demonstrate the relevance of general issues. To realize civic engagement, political knowledge and political information are needed. Civic engagement is synonymous with civic participation in which citizens participate in making policy. Civic engagement requires the citizens' engagement in policy making and other political activities for strengthening democracy. This study discusses political education, civic engagement and strategies or models in political education by all parties. This research is conducted by using an explanatory approach, and the finding shows that one of the most widely used and effective models in the implementation of political education is the extension model, religion recitation with the involvement of community leaders who have an interest in political activities.

**Keywords:** Political Education, Civic Engagement

## 1 Introduction

Politics in the life of the nation and state is very important in an effort to increase the political awareness of the community [1]. Politics is actually more than power [2], politics can also be defined as the way the state formulates its goals and how the state formulates its goals and how the state builds relationships with its citizens [3]. Cooperation between governments and citizens is needed to provoke participation in establishing the country [4], and the ultimate goal is to succeed the goals of politics itself. The path to politics that take side to community is an effort to increase the political awareness by raising democracy which focuses on people for all political activities [5].

Democracy is a form of public participation to make political decisions and run the government [6]. The political decision is an agreement that is sought to rule the people. Budiardjo [7] explains that democracy can be realized through political participation. And political participation can be seen through activities that include actions such as voting in general elections, attending general meetings, lobbying with government officials or members of parliament, becoming party members. Or member of the social movements with direct

action etc. Democracy provides a very broad opportunity for the public to participate accurately, effectively in the decision-making process concerning the public policy and people's interests [8]. Hence the people will be able to exert control over the agenda which has been decided together. Civic Engagement is always associated with citizens. Meanwhile, the American Psychologist Association defines civic engagement as "Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern" because civic engagement is an individual effort to involve himself in solving problems in the community.

The political participation in this term is participation that encourages democratic activities. One of which is general elections from the central to regional levels. This participation can also improve indicators of improving the quality of democracy in the nation [9].

The general election for governor position in Central Java has a high appreciation for the democratic success. In 35 regencies in Central Java, a total of 34.55 million people out of 27.348.878 people registered as voters. It can be said that the people of Central Java are still care about democracy. Most of them have their own criteria in determining the candidate for leader they want.

Grobogan is an area that has a concerned of choosing their leaders. They will see the activities of the candidates and which parties supporting them. Grobogan had 1,062,868 votes during the 2015 elections. It was a high figure for districts in Central Java. At the time of the 2016 the winner of the Pilkada was 2 with candidate name Sri Sumarni - Edy M with 505,507 votes or 73% of all voters. This condition confirms that community political participation as a form of civic engagement is well realized.

## **2 Methodology**

The study method used in this research is exploratory, namely by collecting data through literature studies that come from relevant books, scientific journals, scientific articles, and field case studies. From the narrative exploratory analysis, a scientific study of the aims and objectives of exploratory research is obtained. The data analysis by using the interactive model from Miles & Huberman [10] with the stages of collecting data related to the theme of political education research as the application of civic engagement in strengthening democracy.

## **3 Discussion**

Grobogan is one of the regions in Central Java that has a good practice of democratic life. Populist democracy that can penetrate in all elements of the society is already a hallmark of this region. The word politics is so easily accepted because of several reasons, one of which is Sri Sumarni's figure as the regent of Grobogan. The efforts made by Sri Sumarni before and after becoming the regent deserve appreciation, because she always involves the people for political education media in the Grobogan area.

After serving as Regent, political education is still lasting in the Grobogan area, this condition can be seen from various government agencies and community organizations competing to try to educate politics in society in various ways. There are several actions of Sri Sumarni's leadership. One of them is Pilkades which is the most common civic engagement in

Grobogan community. Pilkades is part of political activities processes to strengthen community participation.

Next is the effort to provide political awareness to the public carried out by the Grobogan Police, through Seminar which discusses the political agenda that will be run in the next few months. Then, another example is, KPU Grobogan as the organizer of official political activities in the area has also educated the public several times through several activities to make people aware of public participation, by conducting a discussion with the following are some of the efforts made by KPU Grobogan. Recruit the community to become democratic volunteer which is a social movement used to increase voter participation in the 2020 Grobogan election. This is also a form of political education to increase civic engagement in society. This movement began by forming 8 bases used in the formation of democratic volunteers, namely family base, religious base, beginner base, young voter base, women base, community base, netizen base and base for people with disabilities creating a mascot for the 2020 Grobogan regional election to attract the interest of the Grobogan community in participating in the Pilkada. It is the effort to increase civic engagement through program intermediaries, namely the making of a mascot named KI SUGRO which has various philosophies in accordance with the background of the Grobogan area. There are various efforts made by formal and non-formal parties in political education, for example, KPU Grobogan as an organization that facilitates community political activities in an effort to increase community participation by inserting political education in its implementation. Even though the KPU is an organization that cannot be intervened, because KPU Grobogan is within the scope of the Grobogan area, all models of political activities carried out must be in accordance with the existing rules in Grobogan.

Efforts to improve political education in Sri Sumarni's leadership are through religious field. Geographical Grobogan has a strong religious base. Political education is also found in religious activities. Among other things, Muhammadiyah as one of the religious-based social organizations has a way to educate its congregation to participate in politics to use their voting rights in every regional head election regardless of their choice. They must use their voting rights, although they must be given the option to choose an empty box if it must be done. The most important is participating in the election. Another activity is running the program through activities that involve the general public. One of which is by commemorating Charity Day by holding a healthy walk program participated by 5000 Grobogan people. This implies that people must live in harmony and peace. This program was facilitated by the Regent of Grobogan. The political representatives in the Grobogan together with local religious leaders carried out an open plenary activity which was useful to 'convey a political message after the 2019 Grobogan Election. The program is by inserting politics into Friday prayer activities through sermons carried out throughout mosque in Grobogan. This was also done to increase the number of voters during in 2018.

Since Sri Sumarni's leadership, communication with the community has almost no boundaries at all because all elements can have sufficient space to provide political education without causing offense in society. Grobogan community is opening minded and has very high tolerance even though this area is known as a rural area.

Sri Sumarni's policy was a direct political lesson given in a number of ways and by cooperating with various elements of the character of a person, organization, formal, non-formal and religious institutions which had the ultimate goal that political education was always implemented in society to better understand contestation politics, rights, and obligations of the state so that it leads to an increase in democratic life.

Democracy needs to improve the system of best practice of political life and it can be started by managing the life of the party system in controlling conflicts and suppressing the interests of certain political elites. Therefore, the party system that is elected in an effort to democratize must be able to accommodate a diverse cultural character.

The other efforts to the development of democracy can be carried out with political education and political socialization which have the substance to reorganize and recommend citizens' political understanding through formal and non-formal channels. Civic engagement as a form of public civil authority in responding, implementing political education carried out by figures and institutions/organizations. Therefore, the structures and regulations prepared by the government should be accommodative, responsive, adaptive and able to recommend community expectations. Thus, the substance of implementing civic engagement will increase and strengthen democracy so that the transformation of a democratic culture will continue to exist.

#### 4 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the success of political education that involves community to participate has a great influence in their environment. People need guidance to understand and realize that they are invited to study politics or recognize policies that have been made, implemented and committed to their existence as responsible citizens of society. The result showed that community is able to realize civic engagement. Grobogan, community can actually understand how to do politics, but without socialization they will be apathetic, so that the political culture itself will fade because it is eroded by the dynamic conditions that occur in society.

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