



RESEARCH ARTICLE

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS IN PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF KENDARI CITY:
A SOCIO-ANTHROPOLOGIC PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a reflection of a research of writer about direct election process in 2004 and in 2009. One of the main focuses is how is the perception and evaluation of all society components toward legislative members who are elected in legislative body of Kendari city. The research is developed through a mixing method between qualitative and quantitative approach (Brannen, 1993; Creswell, 2013). The result shows that the members of Regional People's House of Representatives in Kendari elected in every legislative election tend to be viewed as "impromptu politician and bad politician". It means that, up till now, the members of the house of representative do not show the real identity and character as trychotomy (religious, feudal and egalitarian) as reflection of socio-religious as Geerts meant (1983). Moreover, their competence and integrity are also still questioned by the people in area where they are elected, Kendari city.

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INTRODUCTION

After the fourth amendment of the 1945 Constitution in 2002, the general election was directly done by people for the first time in 2004 to elect President and Vice President. It was under the regime of President Megawati Soekarno Putri for the first time in the history of Indonesian general election, the direct election successfully held. The election was conducted two rounds and was won by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as the President and Muhammad Jusuf Kalla as the Vice President (Peribadi, 2004; Suaib *et al.*, 2008). In particular for legislative direct election, until the election in 2014, the attention and the voter turnout were focused to vote political parties and legislative candidates. Have the elections already resulted great legislative members as the people wish to be conveyor and fighter of the people's aspiration?.

All sorts of political problems come up, which in turn, some of them were completely solved and the others are still continuously searched for the alternative solution. The results of Regional Head Election in Southeast Sulawesi are mostly reached or ended in the Constitutional Court. Pros and cons of some issues regarding violations and money politic among the society components which allegedly occurred since the initial determination of the candidates in the level of political parties and Election Commission, campaign process, voting and counting is the main reason for the elections had to be resolved in the court before the inauguration. The problem is happened as the result of different and irrational political vision, perception, attitude and action among the elites and the middle class during the process of election.

Review of Literature

Voters behavior is manifestation of their own perception toward any circumstances existed in their environment, include election matter.

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It means that each individual will decide a choice based on good and bad aspects of the objects observed. In this context, according to Kristiadi (1996) to identify the tendency of public perception as a choice from a group of individuals, there are some kinds of voting theory which grouped into three big approaches, namely sociological approach, psychological and economic or rational approach. The three approaches are different in viewing the attitude of voters with various influencing factors. The sociological approach with social definition paradigm as explained by Weber is seemingly more comprehensive and flexible than paradigm of social fact that tends to be more deterministic particularly in the Marxian. They exceedingly give emphasis to the role of social class as a determinant of political preference, so that the class is considered as basis of political grouping. In the context of Indonesia, the reflection of the class role likely exists in the election of the ruling group called bureaucrats, whereas people is regarded as a primordially influential grouping. In that sense, the perception of individual has different levels between the ruling class as bureaucrats and ordinary people as primordial one.

Meanwhile the psychological approach views that the perception is highly relevant to the orientation of a person to the object perceived. In that sense, one will give a good perception of the objects observed because of political purposes. However, according to Kristiadi (1996) that studies of voting developed on the basis of the two approaches seems less satisfactory to some scholars, therefore they attempt to develop a theory of voting using economical or rational approach. It stresses that the perception as a gift of the reaction and response based on the calculation of profit and loss. Of course, that the public perception on the general election will be seen in one of these three approaches, which are considered relevant to use as a new perspective in noticing the election results of Regional Heads and legislators.

In addition to the voters' perception as a form of behavior that can be determined by these three approaches, the perception of which is given as a personal decision is also influenced by a structural relationship between the bureaucracy as an agent and society as actors termed structuration. And in every society, organizations, groups and institutions, there are some individuals who make various decisions. Hence an individual is not a passive subject who merely reacts to external values and structural conditions surrounding them. The actors not only response to the established structure, but also make changes to the structural conditions. Therefore, in understanding the political life, it becomes important to give special attention to the values, motivations and individual perceptions of those actors (Suaib, *et al.*, 2008; Ghorri, 2016).

Martin (1993) stated that political behavior is actions of individual and group in performing relevance actions to the political consciousness and political objectives of the actors who play them. Moreover, political behavior is the result of a connecting and a union of personality structure, political belief, political action of individual and the structure and the political process as a whole. The consciousness here means an ideology contained in a perception to give a reaction or response through experience of an object related to the election of

Regional Head. Therefore, every individual and society in general will act in accordance with the base framework of idealism and their subjective orientation. The linkage between factors influencing the political behavior of a person or group can be observed from the perception toward a particular object. Indeed, several previous studies on the behavior of politicians and voters can be used as a source of information on the political behavior in nowadays direct election. One of them is a study developed by Geertz (1983) in East Java. According to him, the preference of voters contained in the typology of *trichotomy* is a reflection of the existence of Santri/Religious, Priyayi/Feudal and Abangan/Egalitarian as socio-religious portrait. The analysis has been developed by several subsequent studies, that are research of Mulkhan (1989) Changes in Political Behavior and Muslims Polarization, Kristiadi (1996) about Voter Behavior in Indonesia, Surbakti (1999) that described the results of the 1999 election in East Java, Gaffar (2004) that studied on Politic of Indonesia headed for transition era of democracy, and Peribadi (2009) who analyzed the Voter Preferences and Level of Public Participation in Kendari.

However, according to Peribadi, *et al* (2016) that now, the typology of Geertz is irrelevant used as an analytical framework. It is caused by the orientation of the politicians now, mainly that appeared in the most recent Election is more dominant in motivation and pragmatism orientation. Overall, in the sociological perspective, some social groupings that affect a person's political behavior are socio-economic background, social class, religion and ideology (Mulkhan, 1989; Nasir, 2000; Peribadi, 2009). Basically, the perception of a person and a group of people is determined in the final decision, and it is dependent upon each individual to determine rational alternative options. In this context, according to Ritzer and Douglas (2010) that rational choice theory is a rational act of an individual or actor to perform an action based on the specific purpose, and that purpose is determined by the value or choice. Nevertheless, in the end he focused on the relational aspect of micro-micro or impact of individual actions to the actions of other.

In connection with that, Santoso and Supriyanto (2004) stated that the rational choice approach focuses on the choices of a person when engaging in political behavior. The assumption is that if a person is exposed to some alternative action, then he or she will choose an action that maximizes usability as they expect. According to him, if the rational choice theory is inadequate, then research on political sociology can also use the theory of voting behavior by reinterpreting the concept of rational choice. Finally, political behavior performed by the actor as a manifestation of the perception, is at least influenced by four factors. The first is an indirect influencing socio-political environment such as political system, economic system, cultural system and the mass media. The second, the political and social environment that directly influence and shape the personality of actors such as family, religion, school and social groups. Third, the structure of personality reflected in the attitude of the individual. The fourth is direct political environments in the form of a situation that directly influences actors when they wanted to do an activity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used a mixing method or a combined analysis between qualitative and quantitative approaches. Brannen (1993) and Creswell (1994) justify the process of integration the two approaches in some models of mixing. However, the study tends to be classified as a *qualitative dominant-quantitative less dominant*. In this context, the qualitative approach is emphasized. It is intended to express the reality on voter perception of the behavior of politicians who fought in the legislative elections. Thus, the merging process is an effort to take advantage of one paradigm to another paradigm as a complement. Nevertheless, the research design is preferred to qualitative approach with the core of phenomenological study method. While quantitative approach is only intended to illustrate the reality of politic in relation to the influence of political stimulus toward the perception of voters. The data interpretation is developed according to the term of Max Weber, "verstehen" in order to get valid discussion about the meanings of subjective social action and rational action (Johnson, 1986). Similarly recorded conversation is analyzed through ethnomethodologic. However, to further understand the meaning behind the implicating interaction, then it uses model analysis of symbolic interactionism (Muhadjir, 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Legislative candidates as a collection of politicians from any political party who successfully become members of legislative seemed to get varied responses and assessments from the people they represent. The existence of members of legislative who have problems covers all regions from Sabang to Merauke, including some members of parliament of Kendari, so it seemed negative in the view of the public and their constituents. In addition to the case of abuse from some of legislators of Kendari which had been processed in court, also in the view of the public in general that of course there are other irregularities behaviors that have not been successfully disclosed or prosecuted. From observations and in-depth interviews with any level of society in Kendari, it is found that behavioral deviations successfully brought to the court and other behavior that allegedly have not been revealed, greatly affected public perception in response to the members of the representative house, so it seems the attitude and behavior of the legislator perceived in negative ways. When viewed from one side, it is possible that perception instantly justified. But when we do a clarification, it is found that mostly among those remain idealistic and consistent with the aspirations they represent.

Public Perception on Idealism of Politicians

In connection with the dynamic process of social and cultural change with a variety of effects that occur in contemporary society, it is certainly not only thesis of Geertz (1983), which can be used as a theoretical approach in examining matters of preference of voters and especially the idealism of politician but also a sociological perspective in the context of Durkheimian, Marxian and Weberian and the development of theories and interpretive-humanist sociological concepts such as dramaturgy, ethnomethodology and interactionism of

symbolic (Poloma, 1987; Weber, 2012; Ritzer, 2013). Even Geertz's thesis perhaps considered no longer relevant to be used as analysis of political culture. In this context, according to Nasruddin Suyuti, an anthropologist in Haluoleo University Kendari, that Geertz is irrelevant to be used as a framework for analysis in reviewing the current voter preference. Geertz is only right in the past, and it is only in accordance with the culture conditions of Java communities and the surrounding (Sarmadan and Peribadi, 2012). Similarly, Muhammad Lubis, a member of Parliament of Kendari from Crescent Star Party, said that the viscosity of the pattern of political culture in Java is not the same as the pattern of political culture outside of Java, because people in eastern Indonesia is not polarized clearly into social structure as *Abangan, Santri and Priyai* as in Java in general (Peribadi, 2009).

It is a phenomenon that basis of choice of a voter toward a political party not longer based on the idealism. In other words, one wants to become a politician and then choose a political party that is consistent with his ideals or on the contrary, he or she wants to be a politician without an orientation and a clear target, so be speculative and absurd. This seems to depend on the politician himself. However, within the framework of postulate, assumption and hypotheses, regarding to issues of money politic that became official talk in the print and electronic media, and even more widely become a public rumor, that in general the gates of political parties tend to be "springboard" to gain quick and accurate profit (Sarmadan and Peribadi, 2012). Indeed, the behavior of politicians is not much different from the behavior of voters. Both are not based on deep-rooted idealism as *Abangan, Santri and Priyai* which later influenced them to choose and enter a political party, as Geertz referred. According to most of informants that a person's background and motivation for entering the political parties and then became a member of the house is dominantly based on the rational and the economy considerations as a thesis developed by Kristiadi.

Public Perception Of competency Politicians

Generally, informant stated that the intellect of the candidate is still substandard. In that sense, it has not been able to offset the intelligence of executive apparatus so it is not up to contribute both ideas and critical attention to the executive, especially when having a meeting and discussion in the legislative forum. Similarly, according to Southeast Sulawesi political observer, Eka Suaib, that indeed in general, competency and intellectual intelligence of legislators are still inferior (Peribadi, 2009). Pragmatically, according to Yusrianto, Subsection Chief of the Government Law of Kendari that indicator of competence of the house members can be seen in terms of the legislative function of Parliament. Has the legislative function been manifested by legislative members of Kendari city? According to him, the legislators of Kendari from period to period have not successes to trigger regulation purely. They just merely add the concept that has been designed by the executive itself (Peribadi, 2009).

In connection with it, according to Mohammad Sjaiful, a lecturer of law in Haluoleo University and as a law observer of Southeast Sulawesi that there has actually been quite a lot of

local regulations have been proposed by legislators of Kendari from period to period. However, the regulations mostly are not the result of pure thought or not directly designed by the Parliament. Everything comes from the executive's own creativity that supposed driven directly by Parliament in accordance with its legislative function under its control. In this context, the members of legislative just read and correct what is then directed to the interests of their group. Even among them, there are some copies from other areas, without considering the social and political ethics. In fact, the legislators need to use all the senses to hear and see and feel the people's aspirations and then compile them into a local regulation draft to be instructed and recommended to the executive (Peribadi, 2009).

This subject is deeply regretted because the members of Parliament are apparently more dominant demanding their rights rather than maximally function their authority and obligations. And apparently, this view is recognized by Muhammad Ali, a member of Commission B from Golkar (Functional Group Party) faction that indeed, the house of representative of Kendari not yet function the role of legislation as they should, because besides competency supported by expert staff in their respective fields, executive also has a very sufficient budget to produce some legislations. While the Parliament does not have an adequate budget to bring in some professional stakeholders to design a decision, so up till now it only corrects regulation concept that has been prepared by the executive (Peribadi, 2009). But according to some members of the house that the present Parliament has formed a special committee that works to develop and produce some regulations, because there has been a law that specifically address the matter, thus the Parliament has an opportunity to draft local regulation in the future.

Public Perception on Integrity of Politicians

Mostly informants view that in general, people who become politician are "impromptu politicians", and they are very astute to make treats to achieve what they desired. And when questioning aspects of integrity and morality, legislators of Kendari are not eligible yet as model figures. More empirically emphasized by Suharman from PKS (Prosperous Justice Party) that almost all members of the legislature forget the people's mandate as a conduit and fighter of aspirations. In general, they only concerned with themselves, their families and political parties. Moreover, they often attempt to find additional income through a project by lobbying a certain department to pass a contractor from their family, friends and colleagues. Even, they often commute to Jakarta to confirm certain parties in relation to the succession of leadership in Southeast Sulawesi (Sarmadan and Peribadi, 2012). This is not surprising as said by Kisran Makati as an environmental activist that if we walk around the city and areas, it will be seen large and wonderful houses that belong to members of the parliament, consequently it certainly raises subjectivity questions and even perhaps tend to be prejudiced. "Where is the source of funding of house construction and the luxury cars?" While their salaries and honoraria only reach about 7 million rupiah per month. Whether within one period, for example, the official source of income is highly enough to

have all so luxurious amenities? This certainly cause legislators in nearly every region of the archipelago become an object tracking and arrest of KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission), prosecutors and polices. Finally, from some in-depth discussions with other academicians, it can be stated that the behavior of politicians especially the members of legislative can not be released by the behavior of executive apparatus itself, both on Municipality House of Representatives of Kendari and Regional House of Representatives of Southeast Sulawesi and so are the executive members of the municipal government of Kendari and province government of Southeast Sulawesi. Imagine, if an executive officer, regional head or the vice of regional head that winning the status position for the support of the house members as his cronies is indicated "money politics", then of course between the two sides will hold a secret and also will have mutual gratitude, which in turn is also mutually beneficial.

Conclusion and Suggestion

First, the results of direct elections in 2004, 2009 and 2014, including some of candidates of Legislative from the various political parties that successfully elected to Legislative members can be categorized more democratic compared with the results of the previous general election. It is caused that the election process in that span has been sustained by the law as well as several Commission decisions that oriented to the honest, fair and transparent election. Second, they nonetheless saw some forms of anomaly political behaviors directly or indirectly from some candidates, so they are claimed by the public as "bad politicians". However, most of informants admitted that the direct election is sufficient to give freedom to the entire community for controlling and evaluating and disclosing more transparent for any divergence or violations occurred, so that the chosen candidates are considered little better than when democracy and freedom and social control became stuck. Third, according to the majority people that the legislators of Kendari do not show yet sufficient competence and political integrity to be a warrior of people aspiration they represent. In that sense, the competency of legislators has not been able to balance the competency of executive members that become their main partner every day, especially in terms of drafting work program and regional regulations as well as the discussion of development programs in various fields. Hopefully, that all politicians primarily those who have successfully occupied a status position as a fighter of aspirations and executive heads at various levels should continue to make efforts to improve intellectual intelligence, emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. This is very important, because in addition to the dire condition of our beloved country that needs attendance of figures with "multiple intelligence", also can not be denied that the emergence of a "ghost voters" caused by dissatisfaction of aspiration holders and executive officers with no maximum political will.

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