



The Role of The National Unity and Political Agency in Increasing Political Participation in The 2024 Election Era

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Abstract

Background. The role of the National Unity and Politics Agency (Kesbangpol) in increasing public political participation during the 2024 Election.

Aims. This research aims to analyze the role of Kesbangpol in political participation through the theory of political participation by Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie as an analysis deep.

Methods. The research in Majalengka Regency uses a qualitative method with observational data sources, interviews, and documentation studies to further carry out validity tests through data triangulation.

Result. The study's results show that Kesbangpol plays a strategic role as a facilitator through political education programs, inclusive discussion spaces, and the use of digital media, thereby increasing access to political information. Although Majalengka Regency won the title of the third-highest city/Regency in West Java with a community political participation rate of 76.91 percent, this figure is not optimal because it falls below the West Java KPU target of 86%.

Conclusion. The researcher incorporated culture as a complement to Sidney's theory, which originated from Western countries, thereby introducing novelty to the research.

Implementation. Culture is an additional element to support increasing community participation in Indonesia, especially in Majalengka Regency.

Keywords : Unity of the Nation; Institutional Transparency; political participation; 2024 elections; Culture



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INTRODUCTION

Political participation is a fundamental element in a democratic system, as it reflects the active involvement of the community in the decision-making process that affects public life. However, the level of political participation in Indonesia is often influenced by various factors,

including the accessibility of information, trust in political institutions, and the level of education within the community. In the context of the 2024 elections, efforts to increase political participation are becoming increasingly crucial, given the challenges faced, including political apathy and information access gaps in various regions. Therefore, the role of the National and Political Unity Agency (Kesbangpol) is very strategic in encouraging more inclusive and participatory community involvement.

In the 2019 and 2020 elections, the Ministry of Home Affairs, through the National Unity and Politics Agency (Bakesbangpol), encouraged the implementation of massive political education to the public. However, in various regions, these efforts still face challenges. Many political education activities are only ceremonial, such as seminars or one-way socialization, and have not directly touched the needs of the community at the grassroots level. In addition, there is still political apathy, high golput rates, and the rise of political hoaxes on social media that have not been handled optimally through educational strategies.

In Majalengka Regency, community participation in elections still faces classic challenges, such as a lack of political literacy, low youth involvement, and limited access to political education in remote villages. In the previous election, the level of political participation in several sub-districts, such as Maja and Lemahsugih, was relatively lower than in the central sub-district. This indicates that a gap remains in the political understanding of suburban residents. Kesbangpol has a mandate to strengthen public political awareness through various political education programs and socialization activities. This role aligns with the theory of political participation proposed by Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, which emphasizes the importance of the social and institutional environment in promoting political participation. According to the theory, political participation is influenced not only by individual factors but also by access to political information, trust in institutions, and social environmental support. Thus, Kesbangpol functions as a facilitator that creates conducive conditions for the community to be involved in the political process, especially during the 2024 election. The number of Permanent Voter Lists (DPT) for the Majalengka Regency Community in the 2024 Election can be seen as follows:

Table 1. Distribution of Voter Data in the 2024 Election in Majalengka Regency

Yes	Generation	Age (years)	Percentage (%)	Number (people)
1	Baby Boomer	>77	7,6	75.595
2	Elderly	56 – 76	27,9	278.817
3	Gen X	40 - 45	30,1	301.530
4	Millennial	25 – 39	22,8	227.825
5	Gen Z	17 – 24	11,7	116.611
Total DPT				1.000.378

Source: Processing Researcher Data through <https://www.metrotvnews.com/>

Kesbangpol, in carrying out its role, faces various challenges, such as budget limitations, low public trust in political institutions, and gaps in access to information in remote areas. However, through a community-based approach, the use of digital technology, and the organization of inclusive discussion forums, Kesbangpol seeks to overcome these obstacles. This study aims to analyze the role of Kesbangpol in increasing community political participation, based on the theory of Verba and Nie, with a focus on the strategy, implementation, and effectiveness of the programs carried out. This analysis is expected to provide in-depth insights into how these institutions can be more effective in encouraging sustainable political participation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory of political participation put forward by Sidney Verba & Norman H. Nie (1972) emphasizes that political participation is an individual action intended to influence government decisions. According to Permendagri No. 90 of 2019, one of the tasks of Bakesbangpol at the regional level is to organize political education for the community to increase active and responsible political participation. In this context, the National and Political Unity Agency (Kesbangpol) has a strategic role as a facilitator and mediator to increase public political awareness. This theory is relevant because it highlights the importance of accessible political information and public involvement in the democratic process, which is one of the main focuses of Kesbangpol in carrying out its duties. According to Verba and Nie, political participation can be categorized into several forms, including voting, campaigning, and engaging in political discussions. Kesbangpol plays a role in creating

inclusive and educational political discussion spaces, so that the public can understand the importance of their involvement in elections. By providing this platform, Kesbangpol supports the theory that political participation is influenced not only by individual factors but also by the supportive social and institutional environment.

This theory also emphasizes the importance of resources, such as education and information, in increasing political participation. Kesbangpol can contribute through political education programs designed to improve people's political literacy. Thus, Kesbangpol not only serves as a liaison between the government and the community but also as an agent of change that encourages the active involvement of citizens, aligning with the principles of Verba and Nie's theory. In addition, Verba and Nie's theories underscore the importance of trust in political institutions as a factor influencing participation. Kesbangpol has a responsibility to build this trust through transparency and accountability in each of its programs. By ensuring that the public feels heard and involved, Kesbangpol can strengthen the relationship between the government and citizens, which ultimately increases political participation.

Kesbangpol can also use this theory to identify obstacles to political participation, such as apathy or distrust of the political system. By understanding these factors, Kesbangpol can design a more effective strategy to overcome these obstacles. This aligns with Verba and Nie's view that political participation is the result of an interaction between individuals and social structures, allowing for targeted intervention to increase community involvement in the political process.

Another opinion from Ball (2007) is that, just like in the private sector, public participation requires education that must be carried out by those who have the authority to support and encourage public participation. Furthermore, Clark (2003) stated that public participation is a consistent characteristic of an organization's existence, necessitating transparency and accountability from every organization that serves the public interest (Ebrahim, 2007). Furthermore (Pearce, 2010), public participation is a characteristic of a democratic state, where people not only participate but also have space to speak freely as a manifestation of their rights in the state (Tracy & Margaret, 2007). According to Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning Elections, public participation is the constitutional right of every citizen to vote and be elected, as well as participate in the process of holding honest, fair, and democratic elections. Interaction in social media is two-way, so that participation runs dynamically (Dynel, 2015).

Various forms of information dissemination exist in public participation (Ramasubramanian, 2010), without restrictions on gender, ensuring it is applied fairly and equitably (Burns, 2001). Meanwhile, the KPU RI regularly issues socialization programs to increase voter participation. In this context, Bakesbangpol, as a strategic partner of the KPU, is also expected to optimize political education so that political apathy does not occur, especially among the younger generation and novice voters. This condition will foster public attachment to the government, making political participation more accessible in a country (Creighton, 2005).

METHOD

The method employed is a qualitative approach, utilizing a descriptive research design. The research technique employed is purposive sampling. The data research techniques used include observation, interviews, and documentation. As well as testing its validity using data triangulation techniques, (Heryanto et al., 2023). The primary data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with officials of the National Unity and Political Agency (Kesbangpol) in Majelengka Regency. This interview aims to gain a direct understanding of the strategies, programs, and policies implemented by Kesbangpol in increasing public political participation during the 2024 Election. Data triangulation is employed as a validity test tool in this research by comparing theories, research results, and direct observations of researchers, while also incorporating data content from various research documents (Patton, 2001).

The validation process also involves assessing related parties by inviting resource persons in the fields of political participation and public policy. Related parties are asked to assess the suitability of the instruments for the research purpose and provide suggestions to improve the quality of the questions and indicators used. The researcher integrates inputs from the trial and the assessment of related parties to produce a valid and reliable instrument. The final instrument is then compiled into an easy-to-use format, suitable for both interviews and surveys, to support the collection of accurate and research-relevant data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Identity in Political Participation in the 2024 Election

The results of the study indicate that Kesbangpol plays a significant role in enhancing public political awareness through various political education programs. The results of the interview showed that it encouraged the optimization of community affection. These programs run by Kesbangpol, such as seminars and workshops, are designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the importance of participation in the democratic process. This is done to involve the community more intensely, not only on election day. Based on observations, this activity has successfully attracted the attention of various community groups, including novice voters and vulnerable populations. Kesbangpol also uses social media as a means of disseminating political information, which has proven effective in reaching a wider audience, especially the younger generation. However, based on the results of interviews with the public, data was obtained that the use of information through social media was not optimal. In terms of intensity and appearance, as well as reciprocal communication through social media, it is less visible, and people are not interested in delving deeper into social media information. The researcher examines the community's culture to establish effective communication and explore government information, thereby addressing the cognitive aspect.

Additionally, Kesbangpol has developed strategies to engage groups that have traditionally been less involved in the political process. From the results of the interviews, it was found that baby boomers, the elderly, and Millennials tend to be more adaptable compared to the Gen Z generation. For example, in areas with low literacy levels, Kesbangpol collaborates with educational institutions to conduct political literacy training in conjunction with the General Election Commission (KPU) and seeks cooperation from local universities. In urban areas, Kesbangpol conducted interactive discussions that utilized digital technology to engage the younger generation. This approach not only enhances political understanding but also creates a sense of ownership of the democratic process. Thus, Kesbangpol has successfully expanded the reach of its programs, ensuring that political education is accessible to various levels of society.

Interviews with Kesbangpol officials revealed that one of the main focuses in the 2024 election is to create an inclusive discussion space. This is in line with Verba and Nie's theory, which emphasizes the importance of a social environment that supports political participation. In practice, Kesbangpol organizes discussion forums that involve various elements of society, including religious

leaders, youth, and civil society organizations. This forum not only raises political awareness but also builds trust in political institutions through transparent and participatory dialogue. This can happen because of the support of organizational decision-making from the central level to the lowest level in Society.

Analysis of data from observations reveals that Kesbangpol programs have been successful in enhancing public understanding of current political issues. Participants in the activity report an increase in knowledge about their rights and obligations as citizens, as well as the importance of participating in elections. This reflects the relevance of Verba and Nie's theory, which posits that political education is a key factor in encouraging participation. However, the effectiveness of this program varies in different areas of Majalengka Regency depending on the level of accessibility and local support.

Mobilizing Human Resources in Political Participation in the 2024 Election

Kesbangpol also plays an important role in overcoming political apathy through a community-based approach, guided by Eastern morals and ethics. Based on interviews and observations, this approach involves collaborating with local organizations to convey political messages relevant to the local social and cultural context. This strategy has proven to contribute positively to increasing political awareness in rural areas, where access to information is often limited. This approach supports Verba and Nie's view that a supportive social environment can encourage political participation. However, this study also identified several challenges faced by Kesbangpol, such as budget and human resource limitations. This challenge affects the consistency of program implementation in various areas of Majalengka Regency. To overcome this, Kesbangpol needs to improve coordination with local governments and related institutions. By strengthening this synergy, Kesbangpol can be more effective in fulfilling its role as a facilitator of political participation, based on the principles outlined in the Verba and Nie theories.

The results of the evaluation show that the political education program organized by Kesbangpol has had a positive impact in increasing public political awareness, especially among first-time voters. Based on interviews with Kesbangpol, programs such as seminars and workshops are designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the democratic process and the importance of

political participation. This aligns with Verba and Nie's theory, which emphasizes that political education is a key factor in encouraging individual involvement in the political process.

Observations of the program's implementation show that Kesbangpol has successfully created an inclusive educational space where participants from diverse social backgrounds can actively participate. Based on the interview results, it was found that the community is currently aware of the importance of participation, but the culture has not yet been established. The material presented included current political issues, citizens' rights and obligations, and election mechanisms. The community reported an increase in understanding after participating in this activity, which supports Verba and Nie's view that access to adequate political information can increase people's political participation. However, the effectiveness of these programs varies across regions. In urban areas, political education programs are more accessible and have a higher participation rate compared to rural areas. This factor underscores the importance of information accessibility, as outlined in Verba and Nie's theories. Kesbangpol needs to address this gap by expanding the program's reach to remote areas in Majalengka Regency through collaboration with local communities and the use of digital technology.

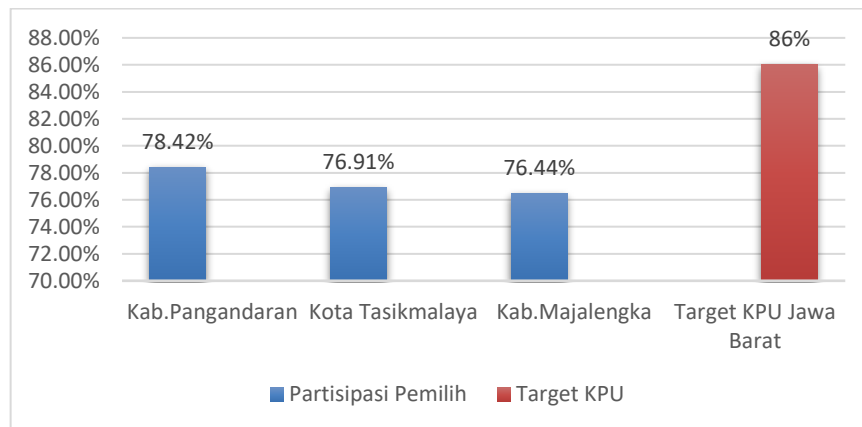
Additionally, the evaluation revealed that the program's success was also supported by the level of public trust in Kesbangpol as a government institution. So far, it is known that communication on an equal footing with positioning the voting community as a partner has been running in Majalengka Regency. In areas with high levels of trust, political education programs tend to have a more positive impact on encouraging community participation. This supports Verba and Nie's theory, which emphasizes the importance of trust in political institutions as a key determinant of political participation. Therefore, Kesbangpol needs to continue to build transparency and accountability in the implementation of its programs. Although political education programs have yielded significant results, challenges such as budget and human resource constraints remain major obstacles. This affects the consistency of program implementation in various regions. To overcome this challenge, Kesbangpol needs to increase synergy with local governments and civil society organizations. With a more coordinated strategy, Kesbangpol can be more effective in carrying out its role under the principles outlined in the Verba and Nie theories.

Based on the research results, Majalengka Regency is one of the top three regencies/cities in West Java with the highest number of voters, alongside Pangandaran Regency, Tasikmalaya City,

and Majalengka Regency. First, Pangandaran Regency, its voter participation reached 78.42 percent. Although Majalengka Regency won the title of the third-highest city/Regency in West Java with a community political participation rate of 76.91 percent, this figure is not optimal because it falls below the West Java KPU target of 86%.

Political Polarization of Institutions and Voter Participation

The study's results indicate a positive correlation between trust in political institutions and the level of voter participation. Based on interviews with Kesbangpol officials, transparency and accountability in the implementation of political education programs are the main factors that affect public trust. Observations of Kesbangpol activities reveal that in areas with high levels of trust in political institutions, voter participation tends to be higher. This supports the theories of Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, who emphasize the importance of institutional trust in encouraging community political engagement.



Source: Processing Researcher Data through <https://www.metrotvnews.com/>

Figure 1. Political Participation Rate of the 3 Largest Regencies/CITIES in West Java in the 2024 Election

Analysis of statistical data from the General Election Commission (KPU) reveals that regions with lower levels of trust in political institutions tend to have lower voter participation rates. This factor is reinforced by interviews with the public, who reveal that distrust of the government is often caused by a lack of transparency and effective communication. Kesbangpol seeks to overcome this through programs that emphasize open dialogue between the community and the government, aiming

to rebuild public trust. However, its implementation has not had a significant impact on increasing the number of political participants from the people of Majalengka Regency.

The political discussion program organized by Kesbangpol has proven effective in increasing public trust in political institutions. Based on observations, these forums offer a platform for the public to express their aspirations and obtain information directly from relevant officials. Participants reported that the openness in these discussions increased their perception of the integrity of political institutions. This aligns with Verba and Nie's view, which posits that trust in institutions can be strengthened through transparent and participatory interactions. However, the study also found that the level of trust in political institutions varied based on demographic and geographical factors. This relates to the condition of differences in Ideology in society, which applies variously, as represented in the idealism of individuals when choosing a candidate pair or the candidate chosen in the 2024 Election. In rural areas, for example, trust in political institutions is often lower than in urban areas, which have better access to information. Kesbangpol faces challenges in reaching out to these areas, but the community-based approach they have implemented has shown positive results in building local trust.

The conclusion of this analysis is that trust in political institutions is a key factor in increasing voter participation. Kesbangpol plays a crucial role in fostering an environment that promotes trust through transparent, inclusive, and dialogue-based programs. To increase its effectiveness, Kesbangpol needs to strengthen synergy with local governments and civil society organizations, as well as continue to adapt to local needs to build broader trust.

The Influence of Political Information Media and the Level of Community Participation

The study's results indicate that the accessibility of political information has a significant impact on the level of public participation in the political process. Based on interviews with Kesbangpol officials, one of the main strategies implemented is the use of social media to disseminate political information widely. Social media is considered an effective platform, especially in reaching the younger generation who tend to be more active in using digital technology. Observations of Kesbangpol programs indicate that areas with better access to political information exhibit a higher level of political participation compared to areas with limited access.

Analysis of statistical data from the General Election Commission (KPU) supports these findings, indicating that areas with high internet penetration have higher levels of voter participation. This shows that the accessibility of political information through digital media can increase public awareness of the importance of participating in elections. However, challenges persist in rural areas that have limited technological infrastructure. Kesbangpol seeks to address this problem by organizing face-to-face activities, such as seminars and workshops, to ensure that political information is accessible to all levels of society.

Interviews with people in various regions reveal that adequate access to political information not only enhances their understanding of political issues but also fosters a sense of responsibility as citizens. Participants in Kesbangpol activities reported feeling more confident about participating in the election after receiving clear and accurate information. These findings align with Verba and Nie's theories, which emphasize the importance of access to information in promoting political participation. Kesbangpol plays an important role in providing this information through various communication channels. However, the study also found that the accessibility of political information does not necessarily guarantee increased participation, especially among people who are apathetic to politics. Observations indicate that, despite the availability of information, some individuals remain reluctant to participate due to a distrust of the political system. This suggests that, in addition to enhancing information accessibility, Kesbangpol should also integrate other strategies, such as building trust in political institutions, to encourage broader participation.

Kesbangpol's Strategy in Overcoming Obstacles to Political Participation in the 2024 Election Era

The study's results show that Kesbangpol adopts a community-based approach to overcome barriers to political participation, particularly in areas with high levels of apathy. This approach involves collaborating with community leaders, local organizations, and youth to deliver culturally relevant political messages. This was done by Kesbangpol as an effort to maintain the political emotional stability of the people of Majalengka Regency, so that sporadic movements and black campaigns are not seen within the community, parties, and candidate pairs. When the 2024 election is won, this approach tends to ensure safety.

Observations of these programs reveal that these strategies are effective in building public trust in political institutions, which is one of the important factors in encouraging political engagement, as described in the Verba and Nie theories. Kesbangpol also utilizes digital technology to reach community groups that are difficult to reach through conventional methods. Based on interviews with Kesbangpol officials, social media is used as the main platform to disseminate political information widely and interactively. This strategy has proven effective in increasing political participation among the younger generation, who are more familiar with digital technology. However, challenges persist in rural areas with limited internet infrastructure, so Kesbangpol needs to integrate a face-to-face approach to reach this group. In addition, Kesbangpol facilitates political participation by providing an inclusive and transparent discussion space. These forums are designed to engage various elements of society, including vulnerable groups such as Women and novice voters. Political Mobilization of the Voter Community is protected by normative, and the value of compliance with Election Policies at the KPU and other Political Institutions is complied with by Political Actors and the Community. Observations show that these discussion spaces not only improve public understanding of political issues but also build a sense of collective responsibility to participate in elections. This supports Verba and Nie's view that a supportive social environment can encourage political participation.

Kesbangpol also faces challenges in the form of low public trust in political institutions in several regions. To overcome this, Kesbangpol implements a strategy of transparency and accountability in each of its programs. Based on the results of the interviews, people who feel actively involved in the decision-making process tend to have higher trust in political institutions. This demonstrates that openness and participatory dialogue can be an effective means of overcoming barriers to trust. Finally, Kesbangpol aims to overcome resource limitations by fostering greater synergy with local governments and civil society organizations. This collaboration enables more consistent and affordable program implementation across various regions. Based on observations, this synergy also helps to overcome the gap in access to political information between urban and rural areas. With a coordinated approach, Kesbangpol can be more effective in fulfilling its role as a facilitator of political participation, based on the principles outlined in the Verba and Nie theories.

CONCLUSION

The study's results show that Kesbangpol plays a strategic role as a facilitator through political education programs, inclusive discussion spaces, and the use of digital media, thereby increasing access to political information. Although Majalengka Regency won the title of the third-highest city/Regency in West Java with a community political participation rate of 76.91 percent, this figure is not optimal because it falls below the West Java KPU target of 86%. The researcher added culture as a complement to the use of Sidney's theory, which originated from Western countries, thereby introducing novelty to the research. Culture is an additional element to support increasing community participation in Indonesia, especially in Majalengka Regency. This study concludes that the National and Political Unity Agency (Kesbangpol) has a strategic role in increasing public political participation during the 2024 elections. Through political education programs, such as seminars, workshops, and discussion forums, Kesbangpol has successfully created an inclusive space that fosters public political awareness. These findings support the theory of Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, who emphasize the importance of political education and a supportive social environment as key factors in increasing political engagement. However, the effectiveness of these programs varies based on the accessibility of information and local support in different regions. Additionally, this research underscores the significance of a culture-based approach in implementing Kesbangpol programs. In some cases, the integration of local cultural values into political education has been proven to increase public acceptance of the program. For example, in areas with strong traditions of deliberation, approaches that prioritize collective dialogue are more effective in building political awareness. In contrast, in areas with low levels of political literacy, the use of simple visual and narrative methods is key to success. By utilizing local wisdom, Kesbangpol can bridge the gap in political understanding in various communities, thereby creating more equitable participation. Kesbangpol also plays a crucial role in fostering public trust in political institutions through a transparent approach and participatory dialogue. Community-based programs and the use of social media have proven effective in reaching young people and vulnerable groups; however, challenges persist in rural areas with limited infrastructure. This approach aligns with Verba and Nie's view that trust in political institutions is a crucial determinant of encouraging political participation. Kesbangpol needs to continue to strengthen this strategy to overcome obstacles to trust and political apathy.

Although Kesbangpol's programs have shown a positive impact, this study identifies several challenges, including budget limitations, human resource shortages, and gaps in access to political information. To overcome these obstacles, Kesbangpol needs to increase synergy with local governments, civil society organizations, and local communities. With a coordinated and adaptive approach to local needs, Kesbangpol can be more effective in fulfilling its role as a facilitator of political participation, in line with the principles of Verba and Nie's theory. This is important to ensure inclusive and sustainable political participation throughout Indonesia.

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