

UDC 332

## **VOTERS' PERCEPTION OF RETIRED STATE CIVIL SERVANTS AS LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS CANDIDATES IN THE ENDE REGENCY GENERAL ELECTION 2019**

**Karmin Elisia Kelly\*, Pandie David B.W., Libing Zet Sony**

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Nusa Cendana Kupang,  
East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

\*E-mail: [sherlynkarmin146@gmail.com](mailto:sherlynkarmin146@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to: (1) examine the lack of votes for former State Civil Servants in the Ende Regency General Election 2019, (2) describe the voters' perception of Retired Civil Servants as Legislative Members Candidates in the Ende Regency General Election 2019 based on sociological, psychological, and rational approach, (3) analyze the factors that influence voters' perception on Retired Civil Servant in the Ende Regency General Election 2019. This research used the qualitative method. The study was conducted in Political District 1 (Ende Tengah District, Ende Selatan District, Ende Utara District, and Ende Timur District), Ende Regency, Nusa Tenggara Timur Province, Indonesia. The research focused on a sociological, psychological, and rational approach. We determined the informants using the purposive sampling technique with certain considerations. We selected the following informants: former Legislative Members Candidates, voters representative (religious figures, feminist figures, medics, and entrepreneurs), and socio-politic researchers. The data collection used interviews, documentation, and observation. We used the Miles and Huberman method to analyze the research finding. Furthermore, we used the triangulation technique to assess data validity. The research showed the community's reluctance to vote for Retired Civil Servants as Legislative Members Candidates in the Ende Regency General Election 2019. Political District 1 voters claimed the followings. (1) The Retired Civil Servants were neither family nor relatives; therefore, the community was neither familiar nor related to the Retired Servants. (2) Retired Civil Servants should act as advisors instead of competing for positions and maintaining the status quo. The Retired Civil Servant need to provide the opportunity to younger generations, as doing otherwise would increase the unemployment rate. On the other hand, the younger generations are highly competitive and competent. (3) Implement the economic democracy concept to improve community welfare and intelligence. It is necessary to continuously implement the economic democracy concept in Ende Regency to achieve *Ende Lio Sare Pawe* (artistic, just, and prosperous Ende Lio)

### **KEY WORDS**

Perceptions, voters, legislative members' candidates, election.

An intelligent and rational community can think logically and analyze, investigate an event to determine the actual condition, perform careful considerations during decision-making, and not easily accept new elements or changes. The community rejects irrational and negative changes. In contrast, the community takes rational and positive changes. The intelligent and sensible community is calculating and confident, believing in equality and justice. The characteristics above describe the modern community. Political District 1 community in Ende Regency is one example of a modern community. Political District 1 community consists of Students, University Students, Teachers, Lecturers, Civil Servants, Indonesian National Police, Indonesian National Armed Forces, Entrepreneurs, Religious Figure, and Retired Civil Servants with middle to high education levels. Therefore, we determined Political District 1 as a valid research subject and represented all regions in Ende Regency.

Table 1 presents complete data on the election results in 2009, 2014, and 2019 from the Ende Regency General Election Commission of Indonesia (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum* - KPU):

Table 1 – List of Retired Civil Servants/Indonesian National Police as Permanent Candidate and Selected Candidate of Ende Regency Legislative Members in 2009, 2014, 2019

No.	Year	Permanent Candidate			Selected Candidate			Total		
		Name	Occupation	Party	Name	Occupation	Selected Candidate	%		
1	2009	1	Philipus Hami, SH	Retired Civil Servant	Hanura	1	-	-	0	0
		2	Drs. Hendrikus Pedosor	Retired Civil Servant	KBP	2	-	-		
		3	Benediktus Mbulu	Retired Civil Servant	PRN	3	-	-		
		4	Yeremias Satu, Sm. Hk	Retired Civil Servant	PPI	4	-	-		
		5	Drs. Fransiskus Wangge	Retired Civil Servant	Golkar	5	-	-		
		6	Adrianus Langi S.Pd	Retired Civil Servant	Golkar	6	-	-		
		7	Benediktus Bene Ly	Retired Civil Servant	KDI	7	-	-		
2	2014	1	Thobias Tonda, SH	Retired Civil Servant	Gerindra	1	-	-	0	0
		2	Drs. Raymundus Panda	Retired Civil Servant	Nasdem	2	-	-		
		3	Tili Anfridus, SE	Retired Civil Servant	PDIP	3	-	-		
		4	Drs. Hendrikus Reku	Retired Civil Servant	Hanura	4	-	-		
		5	Drs. Anton David Dalla	Retired Civil Servant	Demokrat	5	-	-		
		6	Emanuel Bernadus Ly	Retired Civil Servant	PPI	6	-	-		
		7	Yakobus Dua	Retired Civil Servant	Hanura	7	-	-		
3	2019	1	Martinus Ndate, SH	Retired Civil Servant	Nasdem	1	-	-	0	0
		2	Yosef Bali	Retired Civil Servant	Berkarya	2	-	-		
		3	Desa Ismail	Retired Civil Servant	Berkarya	3	-	-		
		4	Yohanes Djawo	Former Indonesian National Police	PSI	4	-	-		

Source: Ende Regency KPU, 2020.

Table 1 shows that the election result for Retired Civil Servants was 0%, despite belonging to a popular party. It indicates that the community did not elect Retired Civil Servants as Members of the Legislative in the Ende Regency General Election 2009, 2014, and 2019.

The community did not allow Retired Civil Servants to participate in Ende Regency legislative activities for three periods. On the other hand, the community knew the quality (social status) of the Retired Civil Servant. Retired Civil Servant is smart, rational, and qualified community members due to their experience in Civil Servant activities. Civil Servant has social status stratification (a set of rights and obligation), as well as duty and privilege. The community has high regard for the Civil Servant due to the aforementioned characteristics. However, Retired Civil Servants were not elected as Members of the Legislative, which raises the question of Civil Servants' social status. We aimed to determine the community perception of Retired Civil Servants as Legislative Members Candidates. Due

to the large research area, the researcher studied the Political District 1 community during the Ende Regency General Election 2019. The Ende Regency General Election 2009 and 2014 are treated simply as an introduction.

Table 2 presents the voting result of the Ende Regency General Election 2019 in Political District 1.

Table 2 – Voting Result of Retired Civil Servants/Indonesian National Police as Members of the Legislative Candidates in Political District 1 during Ende Regency General Election 2019

No.	Name of Legislative Members Candidate	Name of Party	Occupation	Civil Servant Career	Total		Description
					Vote	%	
1	Martinus Ndate, SH	Nasdem	Retired Civil Servant	Assistant of Ende Regent	450	0,83	Four Legislative Members
2	Yosef Bali	Berkarya	Retired Civil Servant	Office Secretary of Ende Regency	370	0,68	Retired Civil Servant
3	Desa Ismail	Berkarya	Retired Civil Servant	Prison Head of Ende Regency	150	0,28	No Crime Record
4	Yohanes Djawo	PSI	Former Indonesian National Police	Chief of Ende Regency Police	480	0,89	Any Case

Source: Ende Regency KPU, 2020.

Table 2 shows the total number of votes in Political District 1 during the Ende Regency General Election 2019. The Retired Civil Servant obtained less than 500 votes or 1% of 54,151 total voters in Political District 1. The 500 voters were family members who voted for Retired Civil Servant. However, most of the community did not vote for the Retired Civil Servant. The election system and party popularity did not influence the vote for the Retired Civil Servant vote. Instead, community perception influenced the vote for Retired Civil Servants. Due to the background of the research, we studied “Voters Perception on Retired Civil Servants as Legislative Members Candidates in the Ende Regency General Election 2019”.

This research aimed to: (1) examine the lack of votes for former State Civil Servants in the Ende Regency General Election 2019, and (2) describe the voters’ perception of Retired Civil Servants as Legislative Members Candidates in Ende Regency General Election 2019 based on sociological, psychological, and rational approach, (3) analyze the factors that influence voters’ perception on Retired Civil Servant in the Ende Regency General Election 2019.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Public Perception

Perception is a cognitive process of an individual to assess the information in the surrounding community through the sense of sight, smell, and hearing, as well as understanding and feeling. Perception is a unique interpretation of a situation instead of an accurate description of an event. According to Kottler (1997), perception is a process of an individual choosing, organizing, and interpreting information to create a view. Perception does not merely refer to the physical aspect but also the community and environment. According to Mulyana (2000), perception is the core of communication. Furthermore, interpretation is the core of perception, identical to decoding in the communication process.

According to Huse & Bowditch in Miftah Thoha (2019), perception has several sub-processes, illustrating that perception is complex and interactive by nature. The sub-

processes are as follows: (1) Stimulus or existing situation. Perception emerges when an individual faces a situation or stimulation. The stimulus may influence an individual sense directly or through the sociocultural and physical environment. (2) Interpretation. Individual senses influence the perception of an emerging phenomenon. Individuals rely on their senses to see or hear available information. Afterward, the individual register all obtained information. After registering obtained information, the individual proceeded to interpret the information. Interpretation is a cognitive aspect of perception. The interpretation process relies on the individual learning process, motivation, and personality. Each individual has a different learning process, motivation, and personality. Therefore, each individual will have a different interpretation of a similar phenomenon. In conclusion, interpretation is a crucial sub-process that creates differing perceptions. (3) Feedback may influence an individual's sub-process.

According to Huse & Bowditch in Miftah Thoha (2019), factors influencing individuals' perception are as follows: (1) Psychological aspect. A person's perception of the world relies on psychological conditions. (2) Family has the biggest influence on perception. Parents have developed a unique method to understand and perceive the world. As a result, their children inherit their perception. (3) Cultural and community values strongly influence an individual's perception and behavior.

### **Voters' Behavior**

Voters' behavior during an election is one aspect of political behavior. Hutington (1990) stated that voters' behavior and political participation are inseparable. Political participation refers to election activity consisting of "votes, campaign donations, voting activity, candidate support, or any activity that aims to influence the election result". According to Mahendra (2005), voters' behavior refers to an individual's participation in selecting a candidate, party, or public issue. Kristiadi (1994) defined voters' behavior as an individual's attachment that influences voting based on psychological, sociological, and rational factors (Behavioral Voting Theory).

Voting refers to a process in which a group member determines their opinion and participates in an activity that defines a consensus between group members over a decision or policy. Individual or community backgrounds influence their actions and therefore influence voting behavior.

Surbakti (1999) states that voters' behavior relies on several approaches: (1) Structural Approach refers to the voting activity as a product of a broader structural context, such as social structure (sources of political pluralism in the form of social class, religion, language, and nationalism), party system, general voting system, party programs, and troubleshooting. (2) Sociological Approach refers to voting activity in relation to social context. An individual's vote is influenced by demographic and socioeconomic background, such as gender, residence, occupation, education, income, and religion. (3) Ecological Approach is relevant when a political district contains different voters' characteristics based on the territorial unit. (4) Social Psychological Approach refers to party identification. The individual has an emotional attachment and a tendency to vote for a certain party without the influence of other factors. (5) Rational approach refers to voting activity based on profit and loss calculation.

### **General Election**

Elections usually aim to fill the position of representative institutions in state administration. After the amendment to the 1945 Constitution, all members of representative institutions, including the president and regional heads, were elected by an election mechanism. Therefore, elections are an agenda that is held regularly in Indonesia.

In general, elections are one important means that adhere to democratic principles, allowing citizens to participate in politics by electing representatives who channel their aspirations. Tricahyo (2009) defines an election as "an instrument that realizes the people's sovereignty which intends to form a legitimate government as well as a means of articulating the aspirations and interests of the people".

The definition above explains that an election is an instrument to realize the citizen's sovereignty and form a legitimate government that articulates the people's interests and aspirations. Indonesia encourages its citizen to participate in state administration. People's sovereignty is exercised by representatives in parliament using a representative system (representative democracy) or indirect democracy (indirect democracy). The citizens elected their representatives through periodic general elections to realize people's aspirations.

Citizens may directly elect the President, Regional Head, and Legislative Members. Therefore, the President, Regional Head, and Legislative Members are people's representatives with their respective power functions. The position and function of the people's representatives in the state administration cycle are important. Therefore, the citizen must personally choose people's representatives through general elections to ensure that they act on behalf of the people.

## METHODS OF RESEARCH

We used a qualitative research method. Furthermore, the research was conducted in Political District 1 (Ende Tengah District, Ende Selatan District, Ende Utara District, and Ende Timur District), Ende Regency, Nusa Tenggara Timur Province, Indonesia. The following Table 3 presents the research focus and sub-focus:

Table 3 – Research Focus and Sub-Focus

No	Research Focus	Research Sub-Focus
1	Sociological Approach	a. Family b. Kinship c. Residence d. Race/Tribe e. Religion
2	Psychological Approach	Candidate Quality
3	Rational Approach	Actor Popularity

The researcher determined the informants using the purposive sampling technique (certain considerations). We selected the following informants: former Legislative Members Candidates, voters representative (religious figures, feminist figures, medics, and business people), and socio-politic researchers. The data collection used interviews, documentation, and observation. Furthermore, we used Miles and Huberman (2009) to analyze the research findings. Finally, we used data triangulation to assess the data validity.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion chapter presents the research findings related to research focus and approaches (1) sociological approach, (2) psychological approach, and (3) rational approach.

In terms of the Sociological Approach, political experts (informants) stated that the community of Political District 1 Ende Regency did not vote for Retired Civil Servants due to the following aspects: (1) the Retired Civil Servants were not part of family members, (2) the voters did not know nor befriend the Retired Civil Servant, (3) have differing ideology despite following the same religion, (4) distance between their residence, and (5) Retired Civil Servant was not of the same race or tribe. The observation result showed similar results to the opinion of five political experts. However, the observation result contrasted two previous candidates for Legislative Members.

Regarding the psychological approach, political experts stated that Political District 1 Ende Regency community did not vote for Retired Civil Servants due to the following aspects. (1) Retired Civil Servants applied to be Legislative Members to obtain prestige and social status (in social structure, Legislative Members belong to elite members of society). (2) Retired Civil Servant tends to be old. On the other hand, there are many promising young people. (3) Retired Civil Servants generally are stingy. (4) Retired Civil Servants have limited

interactions with the community. (5) Retired Civil Servants tend to be attention seekers. For example, Retired Civil Servants actively participate in public activities (building religious facilities or social activities) to obtain fame. (6) Retired Civil Servants tend to fear risk. In addition, Retired Civil Servants did not retire before they applied to be Legislative Members. The observation result showed similar results to the opinion of five political experts. However, the observation result contrasted two previous Legislative Members candidates.

Regarding the rational approach, political experts stated that Political District 1 Ende Regency community did not vote for Retired Civil Servants due to the following aspects. (1) Retired Civil Servant are weak figures, lack potency and capacity, and has very low value. (2) Retired Civil Servants could not accommodate community interest due to a lack of energy. (3) Retired Civil Servant in Political District 1 is not better than the youth figures. (4) Retired Civil Servants' popularity and expertise are limited to their field. (5) Retired Civil Servant has limited social networking. (6) Retired Civil Servant has limited financial resources and connection for political activities. Therefore, Retired Civil Servants tend to be stingy and are reluctant to make decisions. (7) Despite having necessary resources, retired Civil Servants have no professional ability to manage the resources. The observation result showed similar results to the opinion of five political experts. However, the observation result contrasted two previous candidates for Legislative Members.

We deemed it necessary to provide additional information regarding two candidates that contrasted the opinions of 5 political experts. Both candidates were convinced that Political District 1 of Ende Regency had succumbed to money politics. The two candidates were reluctant to use money politics to win a seat in the legislation as they did not want to bribe the community with money. In contrast, the two candidates lost the election due to money politics. One of the candidates stated they would provide money to the community after being elected. The candidate mentioned above would use half his legislative salary for community interest. Furthermore, the candidate promised IDR 500,000.- for each head of the family as a form of appreciation for the community's trust.

Mr. Marselinus Sea (45 years old), a young entrepreneur, stated there was no money politics in Ende Regency General Election 2019. Former candidates of the Berkarya Party stated that none of the candidates, party members, or community are involved in legal proceedings due to money politics. Individuals or groups may donate to aid the community, whether they have pure intentions or ulterior motives. The remaining four political experts did not speak of money politics. Therefore, there were no money politics in Ende Regency.

According to the informants, money politics refer to financial support or operational cost. Each political action requires financial resources. Therefore, legislative candidates require sponsors, supporters, parties, and the community to finance their campaigns. Therefore, we concluded that there were no money politics in the Ende Regency General Election 2019 at Political District 1. Related parties and candidates used existing financial resources for political activity (internal and external), such as food and drinks, transport, party uniform, and campaign shirts. In addition, the party donated basic food, education grants, sports tournament, transport fee, burial fees, hospital fees, religious facilities, village road development, and others. The existing funds are readily available for internal and external activities and the surrounding community.

However, the Retired Civil Servant did not understand the condition, so their opinion contrasted the informants. Retired Civil Servants lacked the necessary financial resources for the operational cost of political activities. The Retired Civil Servants were not prepared to fund the operational cost of political activities, especially those who are merely killing time (continue working after retiring) and under pressure from family or party members to join a political activity. Retired Civil Servants consider money politics the biggest hurdle that deterred them from joining the Legislative Members. Furthermore, Retired Civil Servants considered that other candidates used money politics to win the election. In addition, the Retired Civil Servant used money politics as a cover-up story that explained their defeat in the election process. We considered this phenomenon disappointment to the community.

## CONCLUSION

Based on analysis result using the sociological approach (kinship), psychological approach (candidate quality), and rational approach (actor popularity), the community of Political District 1 were reluctant to vote for Retired Civil Servant in the Ende Regency General Election 2019 due to the following perceptions:

1. Retired Civil Servants were neither family nor kin. Therefore, the community had no kinship with the candidates and did not vote for them.
2. Retired Civil Servants are intellectuals who should act as advisors instead of competing for a seat in legislation and maintaining the status quo. The Retired Civil Servants should provide the opportunity to the younger generations, as doing otherwise would increase unemployment. The younger generations are highly competitive and competent.
3. We must implement the concept of economic democracy to improve community welfare and intelligence. It is necessary to implement the concept continuously in Ende Regency to realize *Ende Lio Sare Pawe* (artistic, just, and prosperous Ende Lio).

## Suggestions

Based on the conclusion above, we formulated the following suggestion for the Retired Civil Servants and community, in addition to Legislative Members Candidates of Ende Regency in Political District 1:

1. For the Retired Civil Servant: Despite failing three election periods, the Retired Servants do not necessarily need to be pessimistic. Retired Civil Servants need to transform challenges into opportunities. Furthermore, it is necessary to self-introspect, improve self-image, and collaborate with the millennial generation. In addition, Retired Civil Servants need to close the distance with the community through social services. For example, becoming the head of labor, farmer, and fisher group (social-economy); becoming chairman/member of the Pastoral Council, chairman/member of Mosque Organizer and chairman/member of the Assembly Council (religion); serving as Head of Neighborhood Association/ Ward Association, Secretary and Village Head or involved in certain Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as Legal Aid Institutions (governance). In doing so, the Retired Civil Servant may become Public Figure. Therefore, the Retired Civil Servants may fulfill sociological, psychological, and rational requirements during a campaign.
2. For the community of Political District 1 Ende Regency: Community or active Civil Servants aiming to become Legislative Members of the Ende Regency need to form a long-term strategic plan. Conduct political maneuver that supports the community, real activities that benefit the community, and improve the community welfare (religion, society, economy, politics, law, security, art, custom, and culture). Each strategic plan needs to be realized 5 to 10 years before the political campaign. The prospective Legislative Members may do so to introduce themselves to the community and gain their sympathy. Furthermore, it is necessary to carry out political lobbying and actively participate in the real activities of political parties. The parties must possess similar goals, objectives, vision, and mission. In addition, it is necessary to build financial power independently to finance political activity. Doing so would deter political and financial obstacles during a campaign.

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