

THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN KPU, DISABILITIES, AND MEDIA TO SOCIALIZE INCLUSIVE ELECTIONS FOR DISABILITIES IN SURABAYA

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to analyse the challenges faced by voters with disabilities in the general elections in Indonesia and to explore the importance of collaborative governance in creating an inclusive election. This study employs a literature review method by collecting data from various sources, including journal articles and online publications. The analysis results indicate that voters with disabilities encounter multiple issues, such as the lack of integration of voter data, insufficient access to information, and difficulties in exercising their voting rights. Furthermore, collaboration between the General Election Commission (KPU) and disability organisations is crucial to provide the necessary assistive tools and training for election officials. This research concludes that implementing collaborative governance can enhance the participation of voters with disabilities and create a more inclusive election, allowing all citizens to participate fairly in the democratic process.

Keywords: Voters with Disabilities; General Elections; Collaborative Governance; Inclusion; Participation.

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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the number of people with disabilities is estimated at 10.38% of the total population², which means more than 28 million people are eligible to participate in the General Election (Pemilu). According to data from the 2020 National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas), the number of people with disabilities in Indonesia is around 28.05 million³. Elections, as a fundamental mechanism in a democratic system, allow people to make choices about candidates for leaders at the central and regional levels.

In Islam, the concept of leadership and representation is fundamental, as explained in the Qur'an:

*"And those who respond to their Lord and establish prayer, and conduct their affairs by mutual consultation, and spend out of what We have provided for them"*⁴

The Prophet also emphasised the importance of participation in leadership with his saying:

*"The best of your leaders are those whom you love and they love you, you pray for them and they pray for you"*⁵

Elections serve as a means to select and delegate sovereignty to trusted individuals or parties and a tool to mobilise popular support for the state and government. Law No. 7/2017 states that general elections are a means of popular sovereignty to elect members of the House of

² Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS). *Statistik Penyandang Disabilitas*. (2020). <https://www.bps.go.id>.

³ Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia. *Laporan Survei Sosial-Ekonomi Nasional (Susenas) 2020*. Jakarta: Kementerian Sosial.

⁴ Qur'an 42:38.

⁵ HR. Muslim.

Representatives, the Regional Representatives Council, the President and Vice President, and members of the Regional Representatives Council. In this context, all eligible citizens, including persons with disabilities, have the right and obligation to participate in elections. Persons with disabilities, according to Law No. 8/2016, are everyone who experiences physical, intellectual, mental, and/or sensory limitations for an extended period, who can encounter obstacles in interacting with the environment.

However, despite regulations governing the rights of people with disabilities in elections, challenges remain. Data from the General Election Commission (KPU) shows that in 2024, there were 1,101,178 voters with disabilities, or 0.54% of the total voters in the Permanent Voter List (DPT). In Surabaya City, for example, the number of voters with disabilities was recorded at 5,937 people, with details showing various types of disabilities, including physical, sensory and mental disabilities.

Although there are efforts to accommodate the needs of voters with disabilities, such as providing voting aids, many problems are still faced. In a discussion forum initiated by DPD Pertuni East Java, it was found that the election organisers' lack of understanding of the needs of voters with disabilities, such as Deaf disabilities, caused them not to get adequate access when voting. Not to mention, there are always officers who do not understand the function of assistive devices for blind people in voting in the voting booth. This shows that collaboration

between the KPU, the disability community, and the media must be improved to create more inclusive elections.

Based on these problems, this article aims to discuss more deeply how collaboration between the KPU, the disability community, and the media can improve the socialisation of inclusive elections for people with disabilities in Surabaya City, and find the right policies to overcome the existing problems.

Collaborative governance is an essential strategy for coordinating and integrating the goals and interests of various stakeholders. According to Lima, it is a tool to resolve conflicts and facilitate cooperation between public, private, and community groups⁶. In this context, Mosley explains that collaborative governance brings together multiple stakeholders in a common forum, where public institutions are involved in decision-making⁷.

The importance of collaborative governance in elections, especially for people with disabilities, cannot be overlooked. Collaboration between the General Election Commission (KPU), the disability community, and the media is key to creating inclusive elections. In a democratic framework, inclusivity is essential, ensuring that all citizens, including those with disabilities, have equal access to participate in the political process.

⁶ Valesca Lima, Collaborative Governance for Sustainable Development, *Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*. Springer (2021).

⁷ Jennifer E. Mosley dan Meghan Jarpe, How Structural Variations in Collaborative Governance Networks Influence Advocacy Involvement and Outcomes, *Public Administration Review*, Volume 79 Nomor 5 (2019).

Key factors in collaborative governance include consensus, collective leadership, multi-directional communication and resource sharing. Consensus is necessary to reach agreement among stakeholders, while collective leadership ensures that all voices are heard and considered. Effective communication between all parties is also crucial for building trust and transparency in the electoral process.

Collaborative governance can help identify and overcome barriers faced by persons with disabilities in the context of inclusive elections. For example, by involving the disability community in the planning and implementing elections, the KPU can better understand their specific needs and develop more effective strategies to ensure accessibility.

As such, collaborative governance serves not only as a tool for conflict resolution but also as an approach that can increase the participation and representation of people with disabilities in elections. Through good collaboration, it is hoped that elections can be more inclusive and reflect the diversity of Indonesian society.

Experts use different terms to refer to governance, for example, collaboration, participatory management, collaborative governance, sound governance, and cooperative governance, to describe the joint efforts of stakeholders and non-states in addressing complex problems through joint decision-making and implementation⁸. The purpose of collaborative governance is to address current problems that traditional

⁸ La Ode Syaiful Islamy H, *Collaborative Governance Konsep dan Aplikasi* (Yogyakarta: Deepublish).

governance models cannot solve.⁹ The emergence of issues in the group management system with different interests requires collective resolution by considering the active involvement of all parties.

Based on the journal article entitled “How Structural Variations in Collaborative Governance Networks Influence Advocacy Involvement and Outcomes” by Jennifer E. Mosley and Meghan Jarpe, it is known that collaborative governance is intended to solve complex problems and promote democratic outcomes by connecting grassroots stakeholders and government. It must still pay attention to the influence and opportunity of all participants to express their opinions so that the objectives of this governance are achieved. The application of collaborative governance allows non-governmental parties to initiate cooperation in solving problems that sometimes transcend jurisdictional, professional and sectoral boundaries.

According to Ansell and Dan Gash, the criteria for collaborative governance are as follows: First, the forum is initiated by public institutions. Second, Participants in the discussion include non-state actors. Third, Participants are involved in decision-making and not just consulted. Fourth, the Forum is officially organised. Fifth, the forum aims to make decisions by consensus. Sixth, the focus of cooperation is public policy or public management.

From these criteria, it can be explained that the implementation of collaborative governance needs to pay attention to several aspects,

⁹ Valesca Lima, Collaborative Governance for Sustainable Development, *Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*. Springer (2021).

especially the active involvement of all participants by not limiting groups or excluding others. This inclusiveness aspect is important because it aims to increase the opportunity for all citizens to participate and engage collaboratively, have a democratising effect, and open up new knowledge related to organisational governance management. The conditions that must be considered to be able to participate are public institutions or representing as public parties, social groups, companies, governments, and social movements¹⁰. Christopher Ansella Saba Siddikid also suggested that the requirements for inclusive governance are respect from each party involved, mutual trust, and mutual dependence on each other.

Meanwhile, according to Lima, some factors contributing to collaborative governance are: 1) Power imbalance. 2) Rewards for collaboration. 3) Accountability. 4) Legitimacy. 5) Sustainability. 6) Time limitation.

These factors are also supported by institutional design variables, including participation, limited forums, basic rules supporting collaboration, and transparency. All factors, variables, and actors in collaborative governance, which are government, private, and community, will produce three dimensions in this governance, as follows.

- a. How to design an institution based on participation, limited forums, clear ground rules, and transparent processes.

¹⁰ Valesca Lima, Collaborative Governance for Sustainable Development, *Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*. Springer (2021).

- b. How can we build a collaborative process by paying attention to trust and commitment between collaboration participants, awareness of mutual need, mutual openness, sharing understanding of a clear mission, jointly establishing strategic planning, and being able to negotiate in reaching an agreement?
- c. What is the role of facilitative leadership? Meanwhile, an article entitled *The Dynamics of Collaborative Governance in Public Policy Studies* explains four fundamental values of collaborative governance, including the following.¹¹
 - 1. Consensus Orientation: This point explains the purpose of collaborative governance. Ansell and Gash, in *Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice*, clarify that the criteria for collaboration are consensus. This means that the agreement is based on common interests. Consensus must be based on commitment. This is related to the preservation of promises or agreements. Realising the unity of the accords and promises is difficult without high commitment. In addition, what determines a consensus depends on symbiotic mutualism. If there is a disadvantaged party, the chance of not reaching consensus is huge. Of course, this is a challenge because different organisations or groups must have other interests.
 - 2. Collective Leadership: This explains the institutional structure of collaborative governance. One of the main themes in

¹¹ Ni Luh Yulyana Dewi, *Dinamika Collaborative Governance Dalam Studi Kebijakan Publik. Jurnal Ilmiah Dinamika Sosial, Volume 3 Nomor 2* (2019).

cooperative practice, according to Osborne, Stephen P., is leadership. Emerson et al. add that leadership is part of the capacity for collective action in collaborative governance practices.¹² Collaboration leadership is more of a network than a hierarchy. This means that each party is in the same position. The parties' relationship is more of a coordination function than a command. Unlike the hierarchical pattern that emphasises command. Each has a different task but is in the same position. Tasks and responsibilities are carried out regularly. The understanding of leadership in collaboration is directed towards collective leadership. However, a coordinator is recommended. This makes it easier to know the collaboration's progress, results, and impact.

3. Multi-directional Communication, this point explains the interaction between actors in the collaborative governance process. Cline states that communication is a subsystem of policy implementation¹³. Collaboration requires multidirectional communication. Multidirectional communication is feedback involving more than two parties that takes place continuously with high intensity. Responses are made to all parties involved in various communication

¹² Kirk Emerson, Tina Nabatchi, Stephen Balogh, An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Volume 22 Nomor 1 (2011)

¹³ Kurt Cline, Defining the Implementation Problem: Organizational Management versus Cooperation. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Volume 10 Nomor 3 (2000)

methods (oral or written). The ideal collaborative governance includes at least three parties: government, private and community. Tirrel and Clay make communication one indicator to assess the collaboration level. Tirrel and Clay divide the level of collaboration into five parts: exploration, formation, growth, maturity, and end. In short, cross-parties must communicate directly with each other to implement collaborative governance.

4. Resource Sharing: This explains the process that occurs during collaborative governance actions. The resources in question are human, financial, and other resources that can strengthen collaborative activities in public policy. Emerson et al. place resources as part of the variable of resource shortages. Sometimes, the lack of resources is why a problem-solving approach is not implemented. Institutional performance is strongly influenced by its resources¹⁴. These resources also include knowledge. If all these components are met, the implementation of collaborative governance can be more robust, resulting in a high reputation for its members.

In all opinions from researchers, it can be seen that there are similarities in the definitions, categories, requirements, and objectives of collaborative governance. These similarities emphasise a governance

¹⁴ Soo-Young Lee, Andrew B. Whitford, Assessing the Effects of Organizational Resources on Public Agency Performance: Evidence from the US Federal Government, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Volume 23 Nomor 3(2013)

model that excels in the active involvement of all participants, the opportunity to initiate cooperation to solve complex problems, and the opportunity for the participation of all citizens without distinguishing factors of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and others. This allows this governance to better address or accommodate the diversity in a group or organisation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This article uses the literature study method, a systematic approach to collecting and analysing data from various sources. Data is collected through written literature, where the author gathers information from journal articles and news sources in physical and electronic formats. The author also examined news and articles on the internet to enrich the information with reliable sources. According to Creswell (2016), literature reviews allow researchers to understand the context and background of the topic under study and provide a strong basis for further analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problems that occur in general elections in Indonesia are very diverse, especially related to voters with disabilities. One of the main issues is the lack of integration of voter data with the population owned by government agencies, which has become a polemic in every general election. The absence of a definite reference for data on people with disabilities, coupled with the negative stigma of the community and the efforts to hide families with disabilities at home, are also problems that

have not been resolved to date in obtaining appropriate data on voters with disabilities. In addition, access to information and access to voting rights are also significant challenges for voters with disabilities.

In this context, collaboration between various stakeholders, such as the General Election Commission (KPU), organisations of persons with disabilities, and the media, is essential to overcome recurring problems. This collaboration has technical aspects in governance and a deeper meaning from an Islamic perspective. Islam teaches the importance of cooperation and social solidarity (*ta'awun*) in creating community welfare. In this case, the role of the General Election Commission (KPU), organisations of persons with disabilities, and the media have values that are in line with the principle of *ta'awun* to realise justice in elections. In addition, in Islam, the concept of *ihsan* is to do maximum good to others. *Ihsan* in implementing elections can be realised by providing fair and proper access for persons with disabilities. In this article, the author will describe the analysis results regarding the effectiveness of collaboration and provide recommendations for future improvements.

Collaboration for data integration

A critical step in increasing voter participation with disabilities is ensuring that voter data is well-integrated. Collaboration between KPU and other government agencies needs to be improved to create a more transparent and accurate system. The analysis shows that despite efforts to integrate data, there are still shortcomings in communication and coordination between institutions. Therefore, collaborative

mechanisms must be improved to ensure that data on voters with disabilities can be accessed and used effectively. In a discussion initiated by the Regional Executive Board of the Indonesian Association of the Blind of East Java Province, it was revealed that the Surabaya City KPU did not involve organisations of persons with disabilities in data compilation efforts. The discussion participants mentioned that this also happened in various KPUs at the city/regency level, even at the provincial level. The absence of disability involvement in data collection will make it difficult for officers to find indications of concealment of family members with disabilities in the community. Not only that, the lack of knowledge of officers and the community in identifying people with disabilities is also one of the factors in not detecting people with disabilities in the voter data.

Collaboration for information access

Access to adequate information is key to ensuring that voters with disabilities can properly exercise their voting rights. In this regard, collaboration between the KPU, disabled people's organisations and the media is essential. The analysis shows that despite several initiatives to improve access to information, there are still many voters with disabilities who do not get enough information about the electoral process. This is due to the limited human resources of voters with disabilities accessing information. In addition, the information available is usually in the form of videos or images without detailed alternative text, so some types of disabilities cannot access it. Visual disabilities, for example, will find it difficult to access information media that is only

visual, while hearing/speech disabilities will also find it difficult if the information is delivered in audio only. Therefore, further efforts must be made to improve the socialisation and distribution of relevant information to voters with disabilities. In this case, the media can be a processor of information that can adapt to the community's needs, with the involvement of competent organisations of persons with disabilities in providing input and suggestions. KPU members can play a role in increasing their capacity to deliver information related to elections to the public.

In addition to voters with disabilities, information about elections, especially voting techniques for people with disabilities, can also be processed in such a way as to be conveyed to all officers involved. The results of the analysis found that the Disability Base Democracy Volunteers at the Surabaya City KPU in 2019 had made three videos on voting techniques for the visually impaired, deaf / speech and physically challenged, however, the KPU did not disseminate the videos that had been uploaded on the youtube channel of one of the volunteer members.

Collaboration for access to voting rights

Access to voting for voters with disabilities is also a challenge that needs to be addressed. In some cases, voters with disabilities experience difficulties when voting, either due to a lack of appropriate assistive devices or a lack of understanding by election officials of their needs. Better collaboration between the KPU and disabled people's

organisations can help provide the necessary assistive devices and training for election officials.

Although regulations stipulate that assistive devices must be available at each polling station, people with visual disabilities often receive information from officers that they are not available. Even if assistive devices are available, officers cannot provide services to persons with disabilities, even though the KPU has provided guidelines. Therefore, increasing collaboration in voting for voters with disabilities is necessary.

CONCLUSIONS

Voters with disabilities face significant challenges in organising elections in the Republic of Indonesia, especially in Surabaya City. For example, the diversity of types of disabilities requires a different approach to handling them. In addition, the problem of unintegrated data, lack of access to information, and limitations in the use of voting rights are also serious obstacles for voters with disabilities.

These challenges indicate an urgent need for increased collaboration between the Election Commission (KPU), the media, and disabled people's organisations. With better cooperation, it is hoped that election officials will be provided with appropriate tools and training to understand the special needs of voters with disabilities.

From an Islamic perspective, inclusive elections reflect the values of justice (*'adl*), deliberation (*shura*), and *ihsan*, which are fundamental to social life. To create inclusive and fair elections, all stakeholders must continue to work together to address the issues at hand. Only with a

comprehensive and collaborative approach that is not only based on administrative aspects, but also takes into account the moral and ethical values in Islam, can voters with disabilities enjoy their voting rights fully and equally with other voters.

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