



Democracy Education as A Vehicle to Anticipate the Development of SARA Politics in Elections

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Abstract: This study aims to determine the role of democratic education in anticipating racial politics and the implications of democratic education on harmony between differences. This study used a qualitative approach with a literature research method. The data collection technique in this research was documentation (journals articles (nationally reputable, nationally indexed by Sinta, internationally indexed by DOAJ, and internationally indexed by Scopus), books, online news and others) and the data analysis used is content analysis. The results showed that the role of democratic education is to instill democratic values based on the nation's personality, such as tolerance, responsibility, openness between others, justice, realizing diversity, humanity and others. Democracy education activities could be carried out in schools through civic education learning, in the family environment carried out by often interacting with friends or relatives who have differences in religion, ethnicity, race and others, and in the community can be done by deliberation in RT meetings and holding regional art activities. Governments, political parties, organizations, and families can organize democracy education. Suppose the role of democracy education runs optimally. In that case, it can anticipate politics with SARA nuances so that it will have implications for harmony between others, including religions, tribes, races, groups and so on. Harmony of life among others in the life of the nation and state is the ultimate goal of democratic education.

Article History

Received: 08-11-2023

Revised: 05-12-2023

Accepted: 23-12-2023

Published: 10-01-2024

Key Words:

Democracy Education;
SARA Politics; General
Election; Nation's
Personality.

How to Cite: Nuryadi, M., & Widiatmaka, P. (2023). Democracy Education As A Vehicle to Anticipate the Development of SARA Politics in Elections. *Jurnal Paedagogy*, 11(1), 61-70. doi:<https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v11i1.9805>



<https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v11i1.9805>

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Introduction

Indonesia is a democratic country based on Pancasila. However, in the New Order era, democratic life was limited by the rulers, so freedom of opinion and association did not run optimally. Over time, democratic life has improved because citizens are more mature in democracy and better understand their rights and obligations. On the other hand, the third amendment to the 1945 Constitution, especially in Article 1, paragraph 2, mandates sovereignty to be in the hands of the people and implemented according to the Constitution. The principle of people's sovereignty is contained in democracy, known in the constitutions of various countries, including Indonesia. However, each country has its mechanism and system to implement this principle (Noviati, 2013). The presence of the reform era shows that in Indonesia, the people's voice has the highest position, especially in choosing leaders through the general election system. Besides that, democratic life in Indonesia has also experienced significant development.



The characteristics of the reform era are the holding of democratic elections and the change of power from the central government to regional governments (Purnamawati, 2020). General elections are democratic parties held in countries that adopt a democratic system periodically to elect leaders or representatives of the people (Sunarso et al., 2022). Indonesia has held repeated elections, and Indonesia has historically held its first general election in 1955 to elect a Constituent Assembly. However, in 1959, President Sukarno dissolved the members by Presidential Decree. The holding of general elections by the General Elections Commission has a juridical basis, namely Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning general elections. Although elections in Indonesia have a juridical basis, they always experience challenges related to practical politics.

The results of a survey conducted by the LIPI Political Research Center involving 145 experts, especially in the field of politics in the period April to July 2018, show that several factors hinder the 2019 general election, and some political observers predict that this case will also be a blocking factor in the holding of the 2024 general election. Here are some indicators that hinder the holding of the 2019 general election:

Table 1. Inhibiting Factors for the 2019 General Election

No	Indicator	Presented
1	Politics SARA	40 %
2	Intolerance	21 %
3	Radicalism	10 %
4	Mutual suspicion	7 %
5	Fake news (<i>hoax</i>)	7 %
7	Alignment of the apparatus	15 %

(Direktorat Politik dan Komunikasi BAPPENAS, 2018)

SARA politics has the highest percentage in the survey results, so it is very worrying about the existence of diversity in Indonesia. Besides that, the survey results turned out to be proven during the 2019 general election, especially in SARA politics. Successful team members and sympathizers attacked each other by taking advantage of the SARA issue (Qusnulyaqin, 2019). For example, at that time presidential candidate Joko Widodo was considered pro with communism which tended to have atheism beliefs and was considered irreligious, then it was developed on social media so that it became fake news (Afriadi et al., 2019). SARA politics occurred in the 2019 general election and when regional elections were held in various regions in Indonesia. SARA politics is a form of attitude and action formed intentionally or engineered within the political frame so that SARA becomes a political commodity that functions to gain political benefits at certain times, such as during general elections. At this time, SARA was only used as merchandise to get support from the people in the general election (Bawaslu RI, 2017).

Based on data from Bawaslu, it shows that in the simultaneous regional elections in 2018, out of 171 regions, it turned out that there were still many who carried out practical politics, such as money politics and SARA politics. Due to money and SARA politics, areas prone to conflict are West Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, Papua, Maluku, and Southeast Sulawesi (Rahman, 2018). Member of Bawaslu (Ratna Dewi) explained that the 2020 regional elections were still thick with money politics and SARA politics. The spread of fake news that raised the issue of SARA became a challenge in the 2020 regional elections. Although the mandate of Law No. 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections prohibits using the SARA issue to give up one of the regional head candidates, the SARA issue still



arises when the regional elections are held (Rama, 2020). In addition, the simultaneous regional elections in 2019 increased political participation from the public, but money politics also strengthened (Hasanuddin et al., 2021). Researchers from the Constitution and Democracy Initiative explained that SARA politics and the neutrality of civil servants, TNI and Polri became an obstacle or problem in general elections. This phenomenon has great potential for the re-emergence of SARA politics in the 2024 general election (Saputra, 2021), So it must be anticipated immediately so that the upcoming general elections run democratically.

Previous research conducted by Khoiruzadid Taqwa et al on perspective analysis in addressing SARA issues ahead of the 2019 general election showed that SARA issues were very thick through social media and political money, so students were of the view that SARA issues and money politics should not easily provoke people because this could cause division (Taqwa et al., 2019). Further research has been conducted by Kusno regarding the formation of a negative image of President Jokowi's candidate ahead of the 2019 general election, showing that there are people who make a bad image of Jokowi-Ma'ruf Amin, as was the case during the 2014 general election. The issue spread was that Jokowi was a PKI who had no faith in embracing religion and was considered an LGBT supporter. The formation of a negative image succeeded in dividing the supporters of the two presidential candidates, because political sentiment was very high in the community (Kusno, 2019). This research has differences from the two studies; research conducted by Khoiruzadid Taqwa et al emphasizes aspects of student perspectives on money politics and SARA issues ahead of the 2019 general election, while this research emphasizes democracy education as a means to anticipate SARA and money politics issues. Then, the research conducted by Kusno emphasizes denaming presidential candidates with the issue of SARA, while this research emphasizes strategies to anticipate the issue of SARA and money politics. This study aims to analyze the role of democracy education in anticipating SARA politics and the implications of democracy education on harmony between differences in Indonesia.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a literature research method. Literature research is bibliographic research with scientific systems, which involves collecting various bibliographic materials associated with the research target (Dananjaja James, 2014). Data collection techniques in this study were by document study, namely strategies or ways for data or variables in the form of transcripts, books, journals, newspapers, meetings, minutes, magazines, inscriptions, seminar proceedings, the internet and others (Suharsimi, 2006). The data in this research used journal articles (reputable national, nationally indexed by Sinta, internationally indexed by DOAJ, and internationally indexed by Scopus), books, online news and others. The data collected in this study were related to democracy education in heterogeneous societies, SARA politics and elections. Data analysis used in this study was content data analysis or content study; the steps in content analysis or content analysis in this study are 1) unifying data, 2) sorting data, 3) analyzing data by coding each data, 4) simplifying data), 5) drawing a conclusion from data analysis, 6) making a narrative from the results of the study) (Moleong, 2021). The conclusions in this study were used as a reference basis for making recommendations given to several related parties.



Results and Discussion

The Role of Democracy Education in Anticipating SARA Politics

There are several factors to support the implementation of democracy in Indonesia strongly. These factors are (1) the existence of democratic education, (2) the existence of community organizations and political parties, (3) the existence of direct, general, free, honest and fair elections, (4) the existence of a representative system to represent the voice of the people (DPR, DPD, and MPR), (5) the existence of a responsible government, (6) the existence of an independent judiciary, (7) the existence of press freedom and independence (Cholisin, 2013). These factors greatly affect Indonesia if it becomes a democratic country, so the government and the people must work together to realize these factors to realize common welfare or community welfare. Democracy education is one of the important factors in a democratic country. Democracy education seeks to instill democratic values in every citizen. Zamroni explained that the values contained in a democracy are (1) tolerance (2) respect and respect for differences of opinion (3) understanding and realizing the diversity that develops in society, (4) openness and upholding human values and dignity (5) able to control themselves (6) togetherness and humanism (7) confidence (8) obedience to applicable regulations (Winarno, 2019). On the other hand, a country is considered a democratic state, if the country contains several clusters, namely the existence of free elections, public control of the government, the existence of the majority principle and guarantees of the basic rights of the community, the rule of law, and the existence of the majority principle (Suseno, 1997).

Raharjo explained that democracy education is a comprehensive process and approach to the community and can be carried out in various places, such as in the school or college environment, in the family or home, in the community or certain communities and so on (Nur & Sudarsono, 2019). Democracy education is a vehicle for the implementation of character education, which can be done in various places, such as in religious institutions or Islamic boarding schools. Character education in Islamic boarding schools strives to build the character of students to have a good attitude, honest, responsible, democratic and so on (Fahhan, 2013).

Democracy education itself has several missions to realize national goals, namely providing facilities for citizens to obtain freedom in obtaining information or freedom of access to information related to democracy, both in theory and implementation in the life of the nation and state, (2) providing facilities for citizens to study deeply related to democracy, both conceptually and praxis and ideals to gain confidence in opinion and decision making of individuals or groups, and (3) provide facilities for citizens to participate in politics, association, vote, influence public policy, and supervise the government (Winataputra, 2012). In the process of socializing democratic values, formal and non-formal leaders build a democratic life, both in state organizations, community organizations, institutions, and the business world. All state officials or government officials are responsible for being a learning medium for democratic education to form a democratic society (Asshiddiqie, 2019). Democracy education itself aims to build citizens who can think critically act democratically and have an awareness that democracy is a form of community life that can guarantee equality and freedom of citizens' rights (Zamroni, 2001).

Democracy education can be implemented in formal education (school), informal education (family), and non-formal education (community). Formally, the term democracy education is often used in formal education through the learning of state education. Basically, civic education is a vehicle to build the nation's character, especially to build democratic citizens and have a character of tolerance (Widiatmaka & Purwoko, 2021). Through civic



education learning, students will be more guided to have a broad insight into diversity in Indonesia, so that they will know that Indonesian society is not only one religion, one tribe, or one race, but that the society is very diverse, consisting of various kinds of ethnic religions, and races. Then, activities in the family environment implement democratic education for their children, namely by parents giving freedom to their children to choose schools, choose clothes to wear, and play folk songs. Parental assistance to provide learning to their children is an effective strategy to build children's awareness and responsibility (Afriansyah, 2022). In the community, it can be implemented by implementing democratic education through RT and RW meetings by prioritizing freedom of opinion and mutual respect for differences of opinion, participating in certain community organizations to develop their potential, holding regional art performance activities, celebrating Indonesian independence every August 17, and others (Widiatmaka, Mujahidah, et al., 2023).

Through democracy education, it is hoped that the Indonesian people can understand politics or political literacy, especially related to their rights and obligations as Indonesian citizens (Tokrri et al., 2022). Here are some indicators that people understand politics or are politically literate: (1) understand news about power holders or leaders (president, governor, regent/mayor) and understand how government institutions work, (2) have strategies to be actively involved in utilizing science for the public interest, (3) can predict the impact of government policies, (4) understand the policy objectives decided and issued by the government, whether to solve a problem or otherwise and (5) accept the opinions of others and also conduct self-evaluation (Nurdiansyah, 2015). Democracy education is very important for the Indonesian people, not only in participating in general elections, but also very important in the life of the nation and state, especially in establishing harmony between others, so it is hoped that the government can provide facilities related to democracy education.

Political education has a very diverse function, one of which is to anticipate the emergence of SARA politics, especially when general elections are held so that there is no polarization in society or divisions as happened a few years ago when general elections or regional head elections were held. As happened in the 2019 general election to elect the president, DPR, and DPD, the issue of SARA became a very extraordinary merchandise or commodity that affected the emergence of division or polarization in society (Sirait, 2020). The role of democracy education for problems arising in the 2019 general election is the spearhead so that these problems do not arise again in general elections or regional head elections in the coming year, especially in 2024. Through this role, it is hoped that democracy education will be able to build *civic virtues* of society, especially young people who are holders of leadership relays in the future. *Civic virtues* itself is a term in civic education that refers to character or *disposition* and the commitment needed to develop and maintain a democratic government and society (Kalidjernih, 2010).

Democracy education provides opportunities for the younger generation, especially those who take the formal education path to obtain knowledge, skills, *attitudes, characters, and values contained in democracy* (Naval et al., 2002). Democracy education has benefits for every citizen to develop his potential and is beneficial for the future for those interested in studying it (Widiatmaka, Wibowo, et al., 2023). Democracy education itself, when associated with elections, is also political education that seeks to provide understanding and awareness to the public regarding rights and obligations as citizens or the relationship between the state and citizens. Kartini Kartono explained that the purpose of political education is to make people able to carry out social interaction, explore the potential and develop potential related



to political knowledge, political and critical skills and also so that everyone can actively participate in the political process for the benefit of the commons, nation and state (Shalihudin & Hermanto, 2021).

Political parties themselves are indirectly obliged to carry out democracy education to the public, especially those anticipating SARA politics, because in Law No. 2 of 2008 concerning Political Parties in Article 10 paragraph 1, one of the objectives reads "developing democratic life based on Pancasila by upholding people's sovereignty in the sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia". Meanwhile, in Article 11, paragraph 1, one of its functions is "political education for members and the wider community to become Indonesian citizens who are aware of their rights and obligations in the life of society, nation, and state". One of the keys to citizens being aware of their rights and obligations is not to discriminate against political SARA in elections.

Political parties can function as a means to conduct democracy education because political parties are a means or place for all levels of society to associate or gather, convey aspirations, and express opinions related to common interests, nation and state. In addition, political parties in Indonesia are a forum whose role is to respond to the democratic political system in Indonesia. Political parties as a vehicle or means of democratic education so that every community can make their political choices, especially in general elections, properly and intelligently without doing SARA politics and to improve the quality of elections so that they can choose leaders or representatives of the people who are by the expectations of the people and can prioritize the interests of the people (Sahira, 2019).

Democracy education is the spearhead to anticipate SARA politics, especially when general elections will be held, but what is formed is that the government and all levels of society must be able to work together to hold activities related to democracy education (Namphande et al., 2017). Democracy education can be carried out in various places in schools or universities through civic education learning and in the family environment through parent education and community environments, such as RT / RW meetings, government offices, and various activities (socialization from village or regional governments, socialization from political parties and so on). Democracy education provides understanding and awareness to the public that everyone has freedom and equal rights and obligations as citizens and actively participates, especially in activities that prioritize common interests, nation and state, especially participating in general elections without distinction of race, ethnicity, religion, and group.

Implications of Democracy Education on Harmony Between Differences in Indonesia

Indonesia has a diversity of ethnicities, religions, races, and languages. So, it is undeniable that Indonesia is considered a multicultural country. Certain individuals often use this diversity to achieve political interests or groups, so it is undeniable that general elections in Indonesia are often coloured by SARA politics, as happened in 2009, 2014, and 2019. The nuanced politics of SARA that often occur in Indonesia cause societal polarisation, so it must be anticipated immediately. Democracy education is a solution to anticipate SARA nuanced politics, especially when general elections are held, and it turns out that democracy education has implications for life between differences in Indonesia (Arifin et al., 2015).

Democratic education is one of the spearheads anticipating the occurrence of SARA politics in general elections, leading to conflict, division, or polarization in society. Suppose democratic education can carry out its role optimally and can anticipate SARA politics, especially in general elections. In that case, it has implications for the life of the nation and



state, especially harmony between differences in background (ethnicity, religion, race, and group). Concrete evidence of democratic education can play a maximum role if every community realizes the importance of democratic values and strives to implement them massively in everyday life. If the values contained in democracy can be embedded in every community, it can realize democratic elections and can also affect harmony between harmonious differences (Raihani, 2018).

Life between differences can be well intertwined and harmonious if, in the general election, there is no issue of SARA or SARA politics (Widiatmaka et al., 2022). Harmony between differences in good backgrounds can be implemented in various ways, namely by establishing life without gaps, especially suspicion between tribes, races, religions, and between groups, enthusiasm by promoting mutual respect and respect between others, 3) good cooperation without seeing differences (ethnicity, religion, race, between groups), and socializing and helping each other without intimidation from certain parties (Rahmanika et al., 2018). The implications of democracy education can build harmony between others, even though they have different backgrounds. Mutual aid is one of the goals of democracy education, assisting in any form or *waqf* in the form of money or goods for social interests, as done by the Nahdlatul Ulama organization of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Fahham, 2015).

Democracy education can also maintain harmony between religious communities. Democracy education is an effort to build peace. Zulfirman, as Chairman of Halakah Thaliban in North Aceh Regency, revealed that without inter-religious harmony in Indonesia, the development and progress of the Indonesian nation cannot be realized. However, suppose there is a condition between religious believers who do not respect each other. In that case, the division is inevitable and will lead to the division of the Indonesian nation or national disintegration (Wahyudi et al., 2019). Cooperation between Bergama people is indeed needed to build peace and progress in the Indonesian nation, as well as what is done by the people in Bali, cooperation between Muslims and Hindus in various activities (Fahham, 2018) Democracy education always tries to anticipate the emergence of divisions between differences or national disintegration, so all people are expected to get facilities related to democracy education. The government, political parties, and organisations can provide democratic education to the Indonesian people properly and optimally so that there will be no re-emergence of SARA-nuanced politics. Democracy education can anticipate SARA politics in general elections, which has implications for harmonious life between differences (between tribes, religions, races, and groups).

Conclusion

The results of this study conclude that the challenges to holding democratic elections in Indonesia are money *politics*, racial politics, and the spread of fake news through social media. To anticipate SARA politics in the general election, namely by maximizing the role of democratic education, the government and all levels of society must work together to organize democracy education through various activities (socialization, cultural art performances, and others). It needs to be done so that the upcoming 2024 elections do not recur politics with racial nuances. The role of democracy education here is to instill democratic values based on the nation's personality, such as tolerance, responsibility, openness, justice, realizing diversity, humanity/humanism, and obeying laws and regulations, among others. Governments, political parties, organizations, and families can organize democratic education. If the role of democratic education runs optimally, it can anticipate



politics with SARA nuances so that it will have implications for harmony between others, including religions, tribes, races, groups and so on. Harmony of life among others in the life of the nation and state is the ultimate goal of democratic education. Harmony of life between differences is needed in Indonesia, considering that Indonesia is a multicultural country.

Recommendation

The suggestions or recommendations given are (1) it is hoped that every institution or educational institution (Elementary School, Middle School, college) can provide democratic education to students properly and maximally through Civic Education learning so that it can anticipate the occurrence of SARA politics in general elections, (2) it is expected that every government institution, especially educational institutions, can work with all levels of society especially community institutions/organizations to anticipate SARA nuanced politics, especially in general elections, and (3) it is hoped that all Indonesian people will not be easily provoked by certain elements related to SARA issues, especially when holding general elections.

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