

## Political Socialization of the General Election Commission (KPU) of Solok Regency for Novice Voters in the 2020 Regional Elections

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### Abstract

Political socialization for novice voters is crucial, because novice voters are very vulnerable to being influenced by various issues in making political choices. This article aims to find out the form of socialization of the Solok Regency KPU for novice voters in the 2020 Regional Elections in Solok Regency for novice voters. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. The political socialization carried out by the Solok Regency KPU in socializing the 2020 Regional Elections is through the official website of the Solok Regency KPU, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and Youtube KPU Solok Regency, KPU Goes To School or KPU Goes To Campus as well as direct visit services to the Solok Regency KPU office. There are several obstacles in the socialization activities including lack of human resources, budget constraints, limitations due to the covid-19 pandemic conditions, The interest in reading novice voters and the access to schools that will be given socialization is quite far away. Political Socialization affects the political participation of novice voters in election activities. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen political socialization programs for novice voters.

**Keyword:** Political Socialization, KPU, Novice Voters



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### INTRODUCTION

Elections are one of the tangible manifestations of democracy in a country, as well as in Indonesia. One of the indicators of the success of a country's democracy can be seen from the participation of citizens in political activities such as elections. Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections states that elections are a means of people's sovereignty that is held directly, publicly, freely, confidentially honestly and fairly based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. In the Regulation of the General Election Commission of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 2018, it is stated that it is necessary to socialize elections to the public to convey information about the implementation of elections. Election socialization aims to disseminate information about the stages, schedules and programs of the elections; increase public knowledge, understanding and awareness of rights and obligations in elections; and increase voter participation in elections. In article 5 of the KPU regulation, it is also stated that one of the targets of election socialization is novice voters.

According to Law No. 10 of 2008 novice voters are citizens of the country who on polling day are 17 years old, those who are the first time to vote or have been married and have the right to vote in elections. Novice voters are particularly vulnerable to being influenced by a variety of issues in making their political choices. Voter education for novice voters is important considering the potential votes in this group to contribute approximately 30% of the total number of voters.

Unfortunately such great potential is often not well managed through systematic and comprehensive voter education (Rafni, Al and Suryanef, 2019). The political orientation of novice voters is often dynamic and can change according to the conditions and factors that

influence them. However, the votes of these novice voters are also promising in the general election. Every election participant has the opportunity to benefit from the votes of novice voters (Nur Wardhani, 2018). KPU data shows that novice voters have reached 70-80 million voters out of about 193 million voters in the country, this situation is around 35-40 % which has a major influence on the election results (Harnom, Syahrizal, & Valentina, 2019).

Novice voter participation also has an important and significant influence on elections, with many political parties seeking to hunt down the votes of novice voters. Novice voters are often described through the following behavior: 1) voters are still labile, 2) voters still have low political knowledge, voters who are dominated by peer-groups, 4) voters make choices because of the popularity aspect of political parties or candidates proposed by political parties, and 5) voters who come to polling stations just to abort their voting rights (Bakti, 2012).

In general, novice voters do not have adequate political literacy and tend to follow trends in their neighborhoods. Novice voters, especially teenagers, have a cultural value that is relaxed, free, and tends to be informal and fun-seeking things, therefore all unpleasant things will be avoided (Suharto, 2009). Novice voters have high enthusiasm while the choice decision has not been unanimous, actually placing novice voters as real swing voters. Their political choices have not been influenced by certain ideological motivations and are more driven by the context of the dynamics of the local political environment. Often what they choose does not correspond to expectations.

Ignorance in practical politics, especially with choices in elections or regional elections, makes novice voters often do not think rationally and think more about short-term interests (Setyowati, 2019). And novice voters are often targeted by political elites to embrace novice voters in various ways and political promises that become social anesthetics. Because the factors of figure and track record of candidates' spouses, socialization and campaigning, regional factors, factors of influence of scholars, and political awareness factors are one of the factors driving novice voters to participate in voting (Dyuandi, 2018).

Empirical data shows that the tendency of community participation in Solok Regency is still low. In simultaneous elections in 2019, there were 281,902 Permanent voter lists with a 74.42 % participation rate percent. Likewise, in the 2020 regional elections, as many as 175,954 people voted and 90,712 did not vote out of a total of 266,666 Permanent Voter Data in Solok Regency, voter participation was only 65.98%. This percentage has not reached the national target set by the National KPU, which is 77.5%. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency of Solok Regency, there are 8,366 upper secondary students who are part of the novice voter group. Many novice voters who are currently studying in high school have not received political socialization from the Solok Regency KPU, because of the lack of maximum political socialization carried out by the Solok Regency KPU.

Many novice voters who are outside Solok Regency cannot give their Suffrage, and there are even novice voters who choose not to vote because they feel that their political votes are not so influential. The election schedule, which is usually between school schedules, makes students or novice voters often lazy to go home to participate in the regional elections. Low voter turnout is a problem in both elections and local elections. Low public awareness of the importance of voting in general elections requires the role of various parties to carry out political socialization. The role of political socialization is needed by novice voters in order to have clear political knowledge and orientation and be able to actively participate in election/election activities. Therefore, it is very necessary to have political education or political socialization for novice voters.

Based on research conducted by Wahyudi and Fachri Adnan (2019) on the Influence of Political Socialization on Novice Voter Participation in the 2018 Padang City Regional Election. The results of the study stated that the political socialization carried out by the Padang City KPU had a significant effect on the participation of novice voters. Furthermore, research conducted by Al Rafni and Suryanef in 2019 on Voter Education for Novice Voters through the Election Smart Home, as well as Syahfitri and Al Rafni's research in 2021 on Socialization of Election Smart Homes as a Means of Political Education for Novice Voters (study at KPU Padang City) which influenced the political participation of novice voters.

In this regard, the KPU of Solok Regency has carried out political socialization to novice voters both in the election agenda and regional elections. The political socialization carried out by the Solok Regency KPU in socializing the 2020 Regional Elections is through the official website of the Solok Regency KPU, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and Youtube KPU Solok Regency, KPU Goes To School or KPU Goes To Campus as well as direct visit services to the Solok Regency KPU office. This article will explain how the form of socialization of the Solok Regency KPU carries out political socialization for novice voters in Solok Regency in the 2020 Regional Elections and the constraints of the Solok Regency KPU in conducting political socialization in the 2022 Regional Elections.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The type of research used is qualitative research with a descriptive approach, this research will describe the form of political socialization of the Solok Regency KPU for novice voters. The informants in this study included the Head of the Division of Socialization of Voter Education, Community Participation and Human Resources and KPU Staff of Solok Regency. Data collection techniques are carried out by observation, interviews and documentation studies. This is done to see how the Solok Regency KPU Political Socialization forms for novice voters.

## **RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION**

### **Political Socialization for Novice Voters by KPU Solok Regency Socialization through the KPU Official Website**

The Solok Regency KPU conducts socialization through the official website of the Solok Regency KPU, which is <https://kab-solok.kpu.go.id/> to inform the public and novice voters about KPU information, elections, and Solok Regency KPU activities. KPU Solok Regency also provides socialization through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and Youtube KPU Solok Regency. The media became a means of political socialization of the KPU to convey information to the public.

Michael Rush and Philip Althoff (2011) suggest that political socialization is the process by which individuals can recognize the political system, which then individuals can determine the nature, perception of politics and their reactions to political symptoms. Through this socialization process, it can increase public awareness of the importance of the role of each individual in the political development of the nation. Furthermore, Almond (2008) explains that political socialization is part of a socialist process that specifically shapes political values, showing the way in which members of society participate in the political system. Political socialization shows the processes in shaping political attitudes and behavior patterns. Political socialization is a generational medium to pass on political clues and beliefs to the next generation.

One of the indicators that attract young people to use social media as an agent of political socialization is The content or issues presented have a match with the current

conditions of society that are being faced by young people. (Kahne and Middaugh, 2012). Mass media, both print media, as well as electronic media such as radio, television, and the internet increasingly play an important role in influencing a person's perspective, way of thinking, way of acting, and attitude. There is a tendency to increase political advertising during campaigns to the mass media, especially television, to make the media an agent of political socialization. (Almond, 1993).

Syahfitri and Alrafni (2021) also explained that social media can be easily accepted by novice voters because the existing approach in social media touches the emotions of novice voters. Such as content directly related to them, student demonstrations, student criticism etc. It attracts youth voters to find out more about the issues. This influences first-time voters to pay attention to the development of issues that da through social media. The Solok Regency KPU has conducted political socialization through social media to convey information to novice voters. Through the Solok Regency KPU Web and its social media, the Solok Regency KPU conveyed information about the series of activities for the 2020 Regional Elections. So that information quickly arrives and can be easily obtained and accessed by novice voters.

### **KPU Goes To School / KPU Goes To Campus**

The implementation of KPU Goes To School / KPU Goes To Campus aims to provide political socialization about the importance of elections to novice voters. KPU Solok Regency visited high schools and colleges in Solok Regency. Socialization activities were held face-to-face at SMA N 1 Gunung Talang and the UUMY Solok campus. The Solok Regency KPU provides election information, briefings and invitations for novice voters to become smart voters. Because the political education that students get as novice voters in school is still on the understanding of political theory, nationalism is according to the learning material only. With the direct socialization of the Solok Regency KPU in schools and campuses, it provides clearer information about the technicalities of holding elections and regional elections.

The process of political socialization helps the development of individuals into social beings who can adapt well in society, become good citizens and understand the rights and obligations as citizens. (Pratiwi, 2015). The direct socialization provided by the KPU of Solok Regency makes students' political understanding more developed and understands their rights and obligations as citizens. The KPU conveyed information about the activities of the regional elections, candidates for the head of the daerah and the technical implementation. The Political Socialization material given to novice voters contains clear political information so that the needs of each material that is socialized to novice voters are presented equally and can develop effectively and efficiently (Sudirman, 2021). Furthermore, for this KPU Goes To School activity, Vivin Gusmita as the Head of the Division of Socialization of Voter Education, Community Participation and Human Resources of the KPU of Solok Regency said that he would continue socialization activities to schools for novice voters to welcome the upcoming 2024 elections. Where this socialization activity has become a routine the agenda carried out by the KPU of Solok Regency every time there is an election or regional election in Solok Regency.

### **Direct Visit Service**

KPU Solok Regency also provides services to receive direct visits from the community including novice voters directly to the KPU Kabupaten Solok office. When visiting the KPU of Solok Regency, the community will also be given direct experience about elections through the Election Smart Home (RPP), where in this RPP novice voters will be given material on ownership, to secure awareness of the importance of democratic values. There are also

inspirational materials and videos to motivate novice voters to actively participate in elections. The presence of the Election Smart Home is one of the sources of political learning for the public, including novice voters. The Election Smart Home hereinafter referred to as RPP is a concept of voter education by utilizing the space of a special building to carry out all programs of community education project activities about elections and democracy. Thus, on the rpp on the one hand, various political education / voter education programs are carried out and on the other hand it becomes a forum for the community of election activists to discuss various political issues and build movements. (Rafni, Al and Suryanef, 2019)

According to Sampara and Lukhman, service is an activity that occurs in direct interaction between one person and others and provides customer satisfaction. With the KPU direct visit service, it provides knowledge about elections and elections directly to novice voters (Syahfitri, 2021). Based on this, the direct visit service to the KPU provided by the KPU of Solok Regency is one of the efforts to provide knowledge and instill political awareness for novice voters.

### **Obstacles of the Solok Regency KPU in Conducting Socialization for Novice Voters**

#### **Lack of Human Resources of KPU Solok Regency**

KPU Solok Regency has 26 staff, consisting of one Chairman, Secretary, Division of Socialization of Voter Education for Community Participation and Human Resources, Division of Data and Information Planning, Technical and Implementation Division, Division of Law and Supervision and Division of General Finance of Logistics and Households (KULRT), 4 people of the KPU Secretariat and implementing staff. The implementing staff consists of 10 civil servants and 6 PPNPM / KPU honorary workers. The secretariat is in charge of all staff, staff will be placed in certain divisions by the secretariat. There is no definite determination and remains on the placement of each KPU staff in each division. Due to the shortage of staff and human resources, KPU Solok Regency resulted in an overlap of the activities that the staff had to work on. As for the current condition, one secretariat head handles 2 KPU divisions. Mrs. Vivin Zulia Gusmita as the Head of the Division of Voter Socialization for Community Participation Educators and HR stated that the shortage of human resources is one of the main obstacles to the KPU movement, she wants additional KPU staff in Solok Regency. So that KPU activities and agendas can be implemented optimally.

#### **Disadvantages/Limitations of the KPU Budget in Solok Regency**

The budget owned by the KPU of Solok Regency is very limited for fulfilling election socialization activities to the community. Because the budget for the Solok Regency KPU only relies on funds from the government and there are no other additional funds. Savitri and Sawitri explained that the Budget is defined as a planning tool as well as a tool for controlling the organization. As a planning tool, the budget is used to plan the various activities of an accountability center. Furthermore, the budget as a tool for controlling the makhsudnya budget can be used as a benchmark for the performance of the accountability center (Syahfitri, 2021). Netra and Damayanti stated that an effective budget requires the ability to predict the future which includes two factors, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors in the form of data, information and work experience. While external factors in the form of a series of activities that have been planned in the preparation of a budget that can predict the activity plan and some funds needed (Syahfitri, 2021).

#### **Limited Conditions of the Covid-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the obstacles faced by the Solok Regency KPU in socializing the 2020 Regional Elections. The Health Protocol Rules limit the space for the

Solok Regency KPU to conduct direct socialization to schools in Solok Regency. The socialization carried out at SMA 1 Gunung Talang can be carried out in collaboration with the school and must obtain an activity permit and still pay attention to health protocols.

### **Limited Access of KPU to Schools**

Election Socialization conducted The Solok Regency KPU has just touched a nearby school. The location of schools spread across various sub-districts is quite far and difficult to access by the Solok Regency KPU. SMA 1 Gunung Talang has received political socialization conducted by the Solok Regency KPU. However, there are still many other schools that have not received direct socialization from the Solok Regency KPU. As well as the University of Muhammadiyah Muhammad Yamin (UMMY) Solok college has also received political socialization from the Solok Regency KPU, but not all students get this socialization because only a few students in the faculty of economics study at campus II UMMY. Because the location of this campus is opposite and close to the Solok Regency KPU office. Meanwhile, campus I UMMY Solok is located in the solok city area which is notably the target of socialization of the Solok City KPU.

### **Low Interest of Novice Voters to Visit the Official Web or KPU Office Directly**

Interests include a person's desire after seeing and considering something with the desired need. According to Aiken in (Syahfitri, 2021) states that interest as a liking for certain activities exceeds other activities. Interests are closely related to the values that make a person have choices in their life. The low interest in visiting novice voters is due to their lack of enthusiasm in using social media as a means of political socialization. Novice voters are likely to access social media that only makes mass media a medium of entertainment and games. Novice voters should be wise in using the media, especially the media, to find useful information such as information on political activities.

The lack of thinking of novice voters about the importance of socialization and political education has resulted in novice voters arguably never visiting the KPU, except for certain people who have an interest in knowing more about elections and political education. The low motivation of novice voters to find out about political information is also a cause of low interest in visiting the official website and KPU office of Solok Regency.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of simple research and discussions that have been carried out, it can be concluded that the form of political socialization carried out by the Solok Regency KPU for novice voters in the 2020 Regional Elections is conduct socialization through the official web and social media such as facebook, instagram, tiktok and youtube KPU Solok Regency. Then KPU Goes To School / KPU Goes To Campus, there is a service for direct visits to KPU for novice voters. In carrying out these socialization activities, there are obstacles experienced by the Solok Regency KPU, namely limited human resources in the Solok Regency KPU, budget constraints, limitations due to health protocols, limited KPU access to schools and the interest or interest of novice voters to visit the KPU official website and the Solok Regency KPU Office is very lacking.

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