

## Early Voter Engagement Through Smart Voting Movement RRI Makassar

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**Abstract:** General elections target novice voters as a *flying vote*. Novice voters are those who are eligible to participate in general elections for the first time with a minimum age of 17 years. Among them are class XII SMA/MA or new students. In the 2024 General Election, novice voters as a whole dominated the permanent voter list (DPT) with a number reaching around 56.45% of the total voters. However, the level of voter participation has decreased, due to disappointment in the results of previous elections and local elections. Various problems have resulted in a decrease in voter participation, including the tendency of pragmatic political elites who do not want to know about citizens' participation rights. In order to increase public confidence in domestic democracy, a strategy to increase political participation is needed. The development of Indonesian politics must be known to all citizens, in order to understand the correct political choices and in accordance with decisions without tendency and intimidation according to applicable rules. The research method used is descriptive qualitative method, because it explores the phenomenon in depth. The Smart Choosing Movement (GCM) is effective in increasing political awareness among first-time voters. GCM succeeded in raising awareness of the importance of elections, government functions, and rights and responsibilities as citizens. GCM is effective in increasing understanding of the electoral process, from registration to voting. The program is able to increase the motivation of novice voters to be directly involved in elections.

**Keywords:** Early Voter Engagement, Smart Voting Movement, RRI Makassar

### A. Introduction

General elections target first-time voters as the *flying vote* (Cutts et al., 2014). First-time voters are those who are eligible to participate in general elections for the first time with a minimum age of 17 years. Among them are class XII SMA / MA or new students. In the 2024 General Election, novice voters as a whole dominate the permanent voter list (DPT) with a number reaching around 56.45% of the total voters. This means that election contestants who succeed in getting the most votes from

novice voters have the potential to win the election (Zamhasari, 2017). However, the level of voter participation has decreased. This is inseparable from disappointment in the results of previous elections and local elections. Various problems have resulted in a decrease in voter participation, including the tendency of pragmatic political elites who do not want to know about the rights of citizen participation.

According to (Elen Pitria et al., 2023) Political participation is an activity of citizens either directly or indirectly (accidentally) related to government policies that can be carried out by individuals or groups spontaneously or mobilized. Novice voters have political rights to be channeled as a contribution to democratic life in Indonesia.

Political rights are rights owned by everyone given by law to achieve, seize power, position and wealth that are useful for themselves. According to Article 43 paragraph (1) of Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, it is emphasized that every citizen has the right to be elected and vote in general elections based on equal rights through direct, general, free, secret, honest and fair voting in accordance with statutory regulations (Bawamenewi, 2019).

In order to increase public trust in the domestic democratic party, a strategy to increase political participation is needed. The development of Indonesian politics must be known to all citizens, in order to understand the correct political choices and in accordance with decisions without tendency and intimidation according to applicable rules (van Klinken, 2018).

Democracy is based on the principle of equality, namely that every citizen has equal rights and position in government, therefore every citizen actually has the same power to govern. The power of the people is the source of legitimacy and legality of state power. have equal rights and position in government, therefore every citizen actually has the same power to govern. This people's power is the source of legitimacy and legality of state power (Sarbaini, 2015).

Democracy and freedom are often assumed to be two things in one package. Getting democracy "must" also get freedom. On the other hand, democracy and freedom sometimes still encounter many problems in their implementation, especially those related to the freedom of citizens, while freedom can only be obtained or obtained if there is democracy and a constitution that guarantees it (Nuna & Moonti, 2019)

Elections are a tool to elect representatives of the people. Therefore, if elections are not conducted competitively, honestly and fairly; it can be said that there is an absence of democracy. Democratic elections are the cornerstone of legitimized government. If there are no democratic elections, the government will lose legitimacy and support from its people. It should be noted that sometimes elections are a party event by the owners of capital to obtain their status as a council by influencing voters in this case

the community through various means, be it in the form of giving money and rewards and so on, but also in the form of political pressure and even not infrequently using physical pressure.

Political socialization of novice voters is expected to affect their knowledge of political development and democracy in Indonesia. Thus, those who are making a choice for the first time, are not influenced by the lure of *money politics* but have common sense and smart thinking in seeing the vision and mission of the contestants, so that they are considered worthy of being elected.

Socialization can utilize radio media (Lizakowska, & Fajczuk, 2019; Mwangi, & Wangungu, 2020), because it can disseminate information simultaneously with a large number. Thus, the effectiveness and efficiency of socialization can be achieved. The information disseminated can be listened to at the same time by listeners with a very wide range.

Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) Makassar as a public radio is responsible for providing information, education and healthy entertainment for the community (Altamira, & Subagio, 2024; Yudhapramesti et al., 2024). Among them is knowledge about elections, so that people, especially novice voters, get clear information about election regulations, processes and implementation.

In addition to on-air, it is necessary to meet directly with constituents who are novice voters, so that they better understand how important their involvement is. In addition to being on-air, it is necessary to meet directly with constituents who are novice voters, so that they better understand how important their involvement in the democratic party is. The event program can be packaged as a program with a variety show format. The program is called Gerakan Cerdas Memilih (GCM) by creating a talk show that presents competent speakers in their fields, entertainment performances, games/quizzes, jingle/spot playback and election fillers. Furthermore, it raises the formulation of the problem: How can the Smart Voting Movement (GCM) increase the interest of novice voters to participate in elections?

## **B. Methods**

The research method used is descriptive qualitative method, because it explores the phenomenon in depth. Descriptive qualitative research is conducted to explain existing research without providing manipulation of the variable data under study by conducting direct interviews (Hanyfah et al., 2022). According to (Fadli, 2021) the purpose of qualitative research is to understand the conditions of a context by directing to a detailed and in-depth description of the portrait of conditions in a natural context, about what actually happens according to what is in the field of study. In this case, the involvement of novice voters can be explored through interviews,

discussions, or observations to gain an in-depth understanding of how the RRI “Smart Voting Movement” campaign affects the attitudes, understanding, and involvement of novice voters, so as to increase voter participation. Data collection techniques with Observation aimed at observing campaign or program activities in the field to see the involvement of novice voters. In-depth interviews involving novice voters consisting of 12th grade high school and MA students in Makassar, 1st and 2nd semester students from Makassar State University, GCM committee from RRI Makassar, lecturers and teachers, as well as commissioners of KPU and Bawaslu South Sulawesi. In addition, conducting a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the aim of gathering several first-time voters to discuss their experiences and understanding of the Smart Voting Movement.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

After conducting the research, it was found that there was a significant increase in political awareness among first-time voters after the Smart Voting Movement (GCM) was implemented (Bolshakov, & Perevalov, 2020). They became more aware of the importance of elections, government functions, and their rights and responsibilities as citizens. From the survey conducted, 78% of first-time voter respondents stated that the program helped them understand how important their vote is in elections. This is shown by their increased interest in getting directly involved in elections. Another result found that the GCM was also effective in increasing the knowledge of first-time voters about the electoral process, from registration to the voting stage. Many of the first-time voters previously felt confused or uninformed about this process. The data shows that 65% of respondents stated that previously they did not fully understand the registration and voting process, but after participating in GCM activities, they felt more prepared to participate in the election.

There is increased motivation to participate. The GCM provided a motivational boost through participatory approaches, such as election simulations and interactive dialogues with KPU and Bawaslu commissioners, as well as political observers. Novice voters who were involved in these activities were more motivated to participate. Data shows that 72% of first-time voters revealed that they felt more motivated to participate in the election after participating in simulations and dialogues in the GCM program. The GCM fosters a sense of engagement and ownership of the democratic process among first-time voters. It does this by engaging them in discussions on relevant issues and providing them with a platform to express their opinions. As many as 80% of respondents felt that GCM provided a space for them to be more actively involved in the democratic process, including through discussions and debates on public policy issues.

Looking at the results of the study, it can be explained that the effectiveness of political education for first-time voters GCM proved to be an effective platform to raise

political awareness among first-time voters (Lyubarev, 2020). The interactive approach to education, through election simulations and group discussions, successfully addresses the problem of ignorance or indifference often faced by first-time voters. This is in line with the theory that political education plays an important role in increasing democratic participation.

The GCM uses a participatory approach that engages first-time voters in live simulations and interactive dialogs (Singh et al., 2022). This creates a strong sense of engagement, which in turn increases motivation to participate. This approach is in line with political participation theory which states that direct involvement in the democratic process can increase a sense of responsibility and a desire to contribute.

Programs such as the GCM not only have a short-term impact by increasing knowledge and interest, but can also contribute to long-term levels of political participation. Voters who have been given a good understanding from the start are likely to have more consistent participation in various political activities in the future.

#### **D. Conclusions**

*Gerakan Cerdas Memilih* (GCM) is effective in raising political awareness among first-time voters. GCM succeeded in raising awareness of the importance of elections, government functions, and rights and responsibilities as citizens. GCM is effective in increasing understanding of the electoral process, from registration to voting. The program was able to increase the motivation of first-time voters to be directly involved in elections. The GCM provided a space for first-time voters to actively participate in discussions and debates on public policy issues, with 80% of respondents stating that they felt more involved in the democratic process. The GCM proved to be an effective platform to overcome ignorance or indifference among first-time voters. The program demonstrates that interactive political education can increase democratic participation. The GCM not only has a short-term impact of increasing knowledge and interest, but also has the potential to increase political participation consistently in the future. Overall, the GCM uses a participatory approach that is in line with political participation theory, and is able to create a sense of engagement that encourages first-time voters to participate more in the democratic process.

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