

# The Effectiveness of Service Delivery for Issuing Relocation Voting Certificates at the Palangka Raya City Election Commission for Migrant Students

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## Abstract

The political participation of migrant students is a crucial issue in the context of Indonesia's 2024 general elections, particularly in Palangka Raya City, reflecting structural and cultural challenges within the country's democratic framework. This study aims to explore the barriers faced by migrant students in the voter transfer process, focusing on the complexity of administrative procedures, informational gaps, and inadequate infrastructure support. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed to examine the experiences and perceptions of migrant students regarding the effectiveness of electoral services provided by the local election commission (KPU). Data were collected through in-depth interviews with migrant students, KPU staff, and the Head of the KPU in Palangka Raya City. Purposive sampling was utilized to ensure the selection of informants relevant to the research objectives, capable of offering detailed insights. The findings reveal that the participation of migrant students in democratic processes is influenced by the interplay between structural barriers and individual motivation. The study applies the theories of political mobilization and structuration to analyze the dynamics of migrant students' political participation, highlighting the interaction between individual agency and social structures in a democratic context. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors affecting youth voter participation and serves as a foundation for further studies on participatory democracy in Indonesia.



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## INTRODUCTION

The ever-growing global population has produced various generational cohorts. In the context of Indonesia's 2024 General Election (Pemilu), Generation Z (aged 12–27) and Millennials (aged 28–43) represent a significant group of young voters. According to 2020 data from BPS (Statistics Indonesia), Generation Z accounted for approximately 74.93 million people (27.94% of the total population), while Millennials numbered around 69.38 million (25.87% of the total population). Assuming a stable population growth rate, by 2024, the number of young voters from these two generations is projected to reach approximately 144.31 million, which is more than 50% of the total 205,853,518 registered voters in the Provisional Voter List (DPS) (KPU 2024). This indicates that young voters will play a crucial role in determining the outcome of the 2024 elections.

Voter participation is an essential element of representative democracy, which serves as the fundamental foundation of electoral democratic practices (Teorell et al., 2007: 1). Through elections, voter participation reflects a concrete manifestation of democratic implementation. Democracy itself can be understood through two approaches: normative and empirical. The normative approach emphasizes the fundamental principle of democracy – sovereignty rests with the people, and thus, the government is conducted by, from, and for the people. On the other hand, the empirical approach views democracy as a

procedural process that governs how the people elect, appoint, and hold their representatives accountable (Gaffar, 1999; and Surbakti, 2010).

The implementation of general elections is one of the key milestones of democracy in Indonesia, requiring the active participation of all citizens in exercising their voting rights. In this context, migrant university students hold a strategic role as a youth demographic with heightened political awareness and potential to significantly contribute to the democratic process. Palangka Raya City, as one of the regions with a dynamic academic environment, hosts a large number of migrant students—approximately 10,000 individuals—enrolled across various universities and study programs (KPU Palangka Raya City, 2024).

According to data from the Palangka Raya City General Elections Commission (KPU), over 1,200 residents registered for a voter relocation (*pindah memilih*) in the 2024 election, with a portion of them being migrant university students. Overall, the city's Permanent Voter List (DPT) includes 211,423 voters spread across 30 urban villages, with the KPU having established 827 polling stations (TPS) to facilitate the voting process (Documentation of KPU Palangka Raya City, 2024).

The phenomenon of voter relocation among migrant students is a noteworthy subject, given the complexity of the required administrative procedures. Available data shows that only 234 out of 10,456 migrant students successfully completed the relocation process. This figure suggests that not all students are able or willing to comply with the administrative requirements imposed by the KPU to exercise their voting rights (Administrative Report of KPU Palangka Raya City, 2024).

The effectiveness of services in issuing voter relocation letters is a key factor in determining the political participation of migrant students. Complicated administrative processes, lengthy processing times, and lack of public outreach can pose major barriers for students in exercising their right to vote. A previous study by Setiawan & Pratama (2022) found that the quality of public services is positively correlated with voter participation levels, particularly among young voters such as students.

The challenges faced by migrant students in the voter relocation process are not only administrative but also involve psychological and motivational aspects. Awareness of the importance of participating in democratic processes, understanding procedures, and institutional support are critical factors influencing their success in voting. Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively examine the effectiveness of the voter relocation letter service at the Palangka Raya City KPU, with a specific focus on the experiences and perceptions of migrant university students.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted at the General Elections Commission (KPU) Office of Palangka Raya City, located at Jalan Tangkasiang No. 16A. The location was chosen for its relevance to the research objective, which is to examine the effectiveness of the service for issuing voter relocation letters. Moreover, this location facilitated the researcher in collecting the necessary data. The study employed a descriptive design with a qualitative approach, aiming to provide an in-depth depiction of the phenomenon being studied. As Creswell (2014: 4–5) notes, a qualitative approach is designed to explore problems or phenomena based on the perspectives of individuals directly involved in the situation. The data collected consisted of both qualitative and quantitative elements and were analyzed comprehensively to generate relevant and representative findings regarding the issue.

To gather data, the researcher applied purposive sampling, as described by Patton, allowing the selection of individuals or groups deemed most relevant for providing in-depth and valid information. The informant selection criteria included active involvement in the subject matter, availability to contribute, a thorough understanding of the relevant socio-cultural context, and the ability to provide honest and unbiased responses

(Patton, 2002: 230–246). Based on these criteria, the researcher selected three main groups of data sources: migrant students studying in Palangka Raya, staff of the KPU Office, and the Head of the KPU in Palangka Raya. This approach ensured that the information obtained would accurately reflect the effectiveness of voter relocation services, aligning with Yin's (2018: 81–87) guidelines on case study research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The structuration theory proposed by Anthony Giddens (1984: 25–28) provides a theoretical framework for understanding the dynamic relationship between social structures and individual actions. In this view, structure not only constrains but also enables human action. Structures encompass the rules, norms, and resources present in society, while individuals as agents have the capacity to reproduce or transform these structures through their actions. This theory rejects deterministic views that consider structure as fully controlling individual behavior, as well as voluntaristic perspectives that emphasize individual freedom without considering structural influences. In modern studies, structuration is often used to analyze how bureaucratic systems, policies, or technologies influence and are influenced by human agency. Giddens emphasizes that the interaction between agents and structures occurs within specific temporal and spatial contexts, creating both opportunities and constraints depending on the situation.

Giddens' perspective is not without criticism. Scholars such as Archer (1995: 89–91) argue that structuration theory does not adequately account for the autonomous role of structures independent of individual action. Archer introduced the morphogenetic approach, which separates the analysis of structure and agency across different time frames, thereby enabling a deeper investigation of social change. Nevertheless, structuration theory remains relevant, particularly in understanding the complex relationship between individuals and social systems in an increasingly interconnected global context.

The theory of political mobilization by Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995: 36–39) complements this discussion by focusing on how individuals are encouraged to participate in political activities. According to them, political participation is determined by three main elements: resources, engagement, and recruitment. Resources refer to access to time, money, and skills that enable participation. Without access to these, individuals are likely to face difficulties engaging in political activities. Engagement encompasses political awareness, understanding of relevant issues, and personal interest in politics. Individuals with high engagement are more likely to participate, particularly if they believe their involvement can make a difference. Recruitment involves external efforts by political parties, civil society organizations, or social groups to invite individuals to participate.

Criticism of political mobilization theory often focuses on its insufficient attention to broader structural contexts. Researchers such as Norris (2002: 52–54) argue that political mobilization depends not only on individual factors but also on institutions that either support or hinder participation. Norris emphasizes the importance of trust in political institutions as a major factor influencing both motivation and recruitment. In this light, structuration and political mobilization theories can be complementary – one highlighting structural influences, the other emphasizing agency.

These theories are increasingly relevant in the context of public services, where the SERVQUAL model developed by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1988: 12-16) provides a framework for evaluating service quality. This model emphasizes five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Tangibles include physical aspects such as infrastructure, equipment, and technology used in service delivery. Reliability focuses on the ability of service providers to deliver consistent and dependable outcomes. Responsiveness reflects the promptness of service providers in addressing user needs and complaints. Assurance relates to the perceived competence, credibility, and safety experienced by users. Empathy indicates the personalized attention given to users.

The SERVQUAL model is widely used to analyze the quality of public services, including those in government administration. However, the model also faces criticism. Cronin and Taylor (1992: 56-58) argue that SERVQUAL overly emphasizes users' perceptions rather than actual service outcomes, making it less reflective of overall service effectiveness. They propose an alternative model, SERVPERF, which focuses more on performance outcomes. Nevertheless, SERVQUAL remains a popular framework due to its ability to identify specific aspects that need improvement in public services. The model enables researchers and practitioners to gain in-depth insights into user expectations and experiences – critical factors in efforts to improve service quality.

In a broader social context, social movement theory developed by Della Porta and Diani (2006: 14-17) highlights the importance of social networks in building collective awareness and mobilizing joint action. Social networks consist of relationships between individuals, groups, and organizations that interact to achieve common goals. In this theory, social movements are seen as responses to dissatisfaction with existing social structures or policies. Social networks play a critical role in disseminating information, fostering solidarity, and coordinating actions. This theory is relevant in understanding how isolated individuals can be mobilized through social connections to participate in social or political change.

However, social movement theory also faces challenges from other approaches such as rational choice theory. Tilly (2017: 14-17) argues that individual participation in social movements often relies on a cost-benefit calculation. If the expected benefits outweigh the costs, individuals are more likely to participate. While this approach is useful for understanding individual motivations, it often overlooks emotional and normative factors that also influence participation. Thus, both social movement and rational choice theories can be used complementarily to provide a more comprehensive understanding of collective participation.

The theory of procedural democracy, as elaborated by Gaffar (1999: 67-69) and Surbakti (2010: 42-44), emphasizes the importance of formal procedures in ensuring citizen participation in governance. Procedural democracy includes mechanisms such as elections, referendums, and public consultations, which allow citizens to voice their opinions. These procedures are designed to create inclusiveness and accountability in political decision-making. However, procedural democracy is often criticized for neglecting the substantive aspects of democracy, such as social justice and meaningful participation. This criticism reflects an ongoing debate between procedural democracy and deliberative democracy, the latter stressing the importance of discussion and consensus in decision-making.

From a more critical perspective, Chomsky (2003: 89–91) argues that democratic procedures are often manipulated by economic and political powers, reducing their effectiveness in reflecting the will of the people. This illustrates that although formal procedures are essential, they must be complemented by efforts to empower communities substantively so that they can fully participate in the democratic process. Integrating these various theories provides a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the dynamics of political participation, public service quality, and the role of social networks in shaping collective action. While each theory has its own focus and limitations, this multidimensional approach allows for a deeper analysis of the complex interactions between individuals, structures, and social contexts. It also opens up space for further research on how these theories can be practically applied to improve political participation and the quality of public services.

## CONCLUSION

The political participation of migrant students in Palangka Raya City during the 2024 General Election reflects systemic challenges rooted in the complexity of administrative procedures, limited socialization, and inadequate supporting infrastructure. With only 234 out of 10,000 students successfully completing the process of changing their voting location, this phenomenon highlights the urgent need for comprehensive reform within the electoral system. These barriers not only indicate institutional failure in providing inclusive access, but also reflect low levels of political literacy and the lack of social networks to support the mobilization of young voters. Based on political mobilization theory and the structuration perspective, the participation of migrant students should not be viewed merely as an individual issue, but as the result of interactions between social structures and personal motivation. Strategic recommendations—such as the digitization of administrative systems, the strengthening of political literacy, and multi-stakeholder collaboration—offer holistic solutions to increase youth voter participation. Through the implementation of these strategies, it is hoped that the younger generation can be more substantively engaged in democratic processes, thereby strengthening the legitimacy of Indonesia's political system. The participation of migrant students in elections is not only a fulfillment of democratic rights, but also a reflection of a country's success in building an inclusive, participatory, and responsive democracy that meets the needs of its citizens..

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