

The Dynamics of Local Politics and Preferences of Generation Z Students in the 2024 Presidential Election in North Sulawesi

Irfan Rifani^{1*}, Xaverius Erick Lobja², Muhamad Isa Ramadhan³

¹²³Department of Geography Education, Manado State University, Indonesia

*corresponding author E-mail: irfanrifani@unima.ac.id

Received: January 20, 2024; Revised: March 1, 2024; Approved: March 31, 2024

ABSTRACT

The political geography of North Sulawesi provides insights into the local political dynamics with specific geographic considerations. This research employs a quantitative method, focusing on voter rationality, social identity, social cognition, social change, and political alternatives. Findings indicate that Generation Z students choose candidates based on vision, mission, performance, and digital information. Despite positive perceptions of performance, there is a discrepancy with the level of interest. Voter rationality is more focused on individual assessment than party loyalty. Social identity, including ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, plays a role in political decision-making. Social media serves as the primary source of information, but voters actively seek verification from other sources. Mental processes and social cognition influence the interpretation of political information, and awareness of choosing in line with values, interests, expectations, and believed changes. Although voters have convictions, there is potential uncertainty in their choices. This study provides insights into political geography, voter behavior, and the socio-political context in North Sulawesi, supporting a deeper understanding of local political dynamics and student preferences.

Keywords: Local political dynamics, political geography, social identity, Generation Z students, voter preferences.

INTRODUCTION

Political geography is a crucial field that examines voter preferences in presidential elections, as geographical factors significantly influence the perspectives, needs, and interests of communities in a region. It involves analyzing the demographics and social structure of an area, considering factors such as age, education level, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic background. Voters prioritize issues that directly impact their lives, and

candidates who can effectively respond to these issues tend to garner greater support. Urban and rural areas, as phenomena in geographical space, undoubtedly have different needs and perspectives, influencing voter preferences.

Preferences refer to choices individuals make regarding someone or something, while behavior involves actions or responses based on these preferences. Preferences can influence behavior, such as support, votes in elections, or engagement in political activities. Internal factors, such as personal values and beliefs, motivation, perception, emotions, and psychological conditions, along with external factors like social influences, peer influence, family influence, and economic conditions, can influence behavior and shape preference frameworks.

In the context of geography, behavior is studied in relation to how individuals and groups interact with physical space, cognitive mapping, and place perception. This concept emphasizes the importance of emotional bonds with a place and its influence on identity and self-perception based on prevailing values, norms, and culture within the geographical space. Behavior in geography involves spatial behavior in the context of social, public space, and the influence of place on psychological well-being. Behavior in the geographical context also explores how social factors, cultural dynamics, and place perceptions influence human behavior in decision-making. Geography's understanding of human behavior in the context of spatial interaction is based on the nature of the environment, perception, and behavioral patterns, including social phenomena (Abdurachman, 1988; Lowenthal, 1967; Marsden, 1976; Rifani & Ramadhan, 2022).

Preferences as individual behavior but also as social behavior. Preferences as individual behavior are based on decisions regarding choices made by individuals based on personal values. Preferences as social behavior are often influenced by norms and values within the community where individuals belong. Individual preferences can be part of social behavior when

an individual's choices or decisions are influenced by interactions with others or by social demands and norms. Therefore, individual decisions, in some parts, reflect and are influenced by social dynamics.

Preferences as individual and social behavior can be linked to several foundations. Firstly, voter rationality, where voters decide based on the highest utility. Voters will choose what aligns most with their interests, values, and expectations. Secondly, social identity, where voters will choose what can represent their social identity, such as religion, ethnicity, gender, class, or others that are part of the voter. Thirdly, social cognition, when voters use perception or mental processes to interpret information, facts, or opinions. Fourthly, social change, where voters analyze and evaluate the impact of political contestation on social change, related to the extent of participation in contestation, integrity, accountability, transparency, independence in administration, and accommodation of the aspirations and interests of the community in the outcome of political contestation. Fifthly, political alternatives as a form of comparison among the various options faced by voters.

Rational action is an individual's action in influencing political decisions based on values and goals (Mahmud et al., 2022). There are four types of rational actions: traditional rationality, instrumental rationality, value-oriented rationality, and affective actions (Alfarizi & Fauzi, 2022; Ritzer, 2012). Rational action is the voter's behavioral approach to deciding based on the highest utility while minimizing losses from political actions. These choices are based on benefits and losses or solutions offered (Mansyur, 2019).

In the sociological approach, social factors such as economic status, age, ethnicity, occupation, religion, and gender significantly influence political behavior. Furthermore, in the psychological approach, structural social indicators, religion, and education influence political behavior. The psychological approach also states that personality is a variable influencing political behavior, such as party identification, candidate orientation, and

individual orientation (Ferdian et al., 2019; Fisa, 2023).

Individuals define social identity as a source of self-esteem and values. Tajfel classifies it into three main aspects: categorizing the world into in-groups and out-groups, determining self-worth from in-group identity, and defining one's self-concept. There are three components contributing to the formation of social identity: cognitive (knowledge of self-identity), evaluative (positive or negative knowledge about the group's self-worth), and emotional (emotional attachment to a group) (Nengsih, 2023). Besides the basic belief in being part of a group based on shared characteristics, through interactions, positive and negative experiences are cultivated as a form of evaluation and encouragement of positive responses, such as a sense of belonging to the group. Identity can also be associated with ethnicity as a social category in the form of social identification (Korompis, 2023). Therefore, social identity serves to explain competition between groups. Differences in identity, ethnicity, and politics often occur in multicultural and multi-ethnic societies like Indonesia, which may influence political participation influenced by social identity (Ardipandanto, 2020).

The abundance of identities in various societies makes them vulnerable to conflicts based on differences (Said, 2023). Identity is utilized when defending identity and engaging in competitive political processes (Indrawan et al., 2023). Freedom of expression in democratic countries becomes a crucial reason for individuals with thoughts, ideologies, ethnicity, and religion to form a common social identity (Adiwilaga et al., 2017). This identity can take the form of ethnicity, religion, race, or social group. As an illustration of research results on how voters use religious identity in making choices, with reasons such as having the same truth and law and some others not minding religious differences, this indicates a shift in voters towards rationality, but religious identity still influences some voters (Sofianto, 2013).

In their political decision-making, individuals also use perception or mental processes to interpret information, facts, or opinions about various

political choices. Mental processes in cognitive theory involve thinking, reasoning, and concluding activities that influence behavior. Cognitive theory is relevant for understanding behavior with the assumption that behavior arises from internal factors such as beliefs, emotions, and perceptions influenced by cognitive structures (Wisman, 2020). Cognitive theory refines behaviorism, emphasizing the importance of the environment in shaping behavior through reinforcement and punishment (Wiradintana, 2018).

In cognitive theory, perception, cognition, beliefs, and expectations or things originate from an individual's internal factors also influence behavior. From a social cognition perspective, individuals are influenced by internal biology, external environments, and self-confidence that affect thoughts, actions, and decisions (Mukhid, 2009). Based on reciprocal determinism, personal factors, social factors, and environmental influences create interactions influenced by the reciprocal effects of all three (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 2002; Pajares & Schunk, 2001). Therefore, social and political information, facts, or opinions are interpreted based on perception, cognition, beliefs, expectations as personal factors, social factors, and environmental factors as inseparable components.

Voters who have the right to participate in elections play a crucial role in social change. Voters who analyze and evaluate the impact of political contests on social change are those with strong political beliefs. Some impacts of political contests on social change include increased participation in political processes, enhanced integrity and accountability of the government, improved transparency and independence in the administration of government, fostering aspirations and interests of the community, and actively contributing to better social changes. By understanding the role of politics in shaping social change, individuals can make informed decisions and contribute to a more inclusive and effective society.

Political alternatives encompass various choices available to voters in general elections, such as candidates, political parties, or political ideologies.

The array of options faced by voters can be viewed from various aspects, such as ideologies, programs, and personalities. Politically aware voters understand the importance of comparing the various options they encounter. By comparing these options, voters can make informed decisions. Through an examination of candidates and political parties, performance evaluations, and discussions with others to gain different perspectives related to political choices.

There are several reasons for determining the subjects and objects in this study. Regarding research informants, they are students who belong to Generation Z. In terms of quantity, the number of Generation Z voters is 46,800,161 people (22.85%) of the total number of voters. As young and novice voters, they tend to be easily influenced (especially through social media) due to their limited or lack of extensive political experience (Ramadhan, 2022). The role of youth in promoting a healthy campaign in society is expected to be a catalyst for change (Witarti et al., 2020), making campaigns more humane. The political awareness of young voters needs to be enhanced (Apriyadi, 2014). The tendency for obstacles to the involvement of young voters in politics is closely related to the perspectives, goals, and values embraced by Generation Z, which tends to be apathetic. Characteristics of Generation Z, such as low commitment, lack of future outlook, virtual and shallow relationship patterns, short-term life goals, critical thinking, intuitiveness, and reactivity to new things, pose challenges in human resource management practices (Bencsik & Machova, 2016; Y. S. Putra, 2017). Similarly, human resource management faces the challenge of political awareness.

North Sulawesi is a province with heterogeneity that fosters interaction and community relations based on values of harmony, forming tolerance. At least five cultural values, namely 'torang semua basudara' (we are all brothers), 'situ timou tumou tou' (living humanely towards others), 'mapalus', democratic values, and anti-discrimination, contribute to harmony in North Sulawesi (Suleman, 2017). Community harmony can be observed through the-

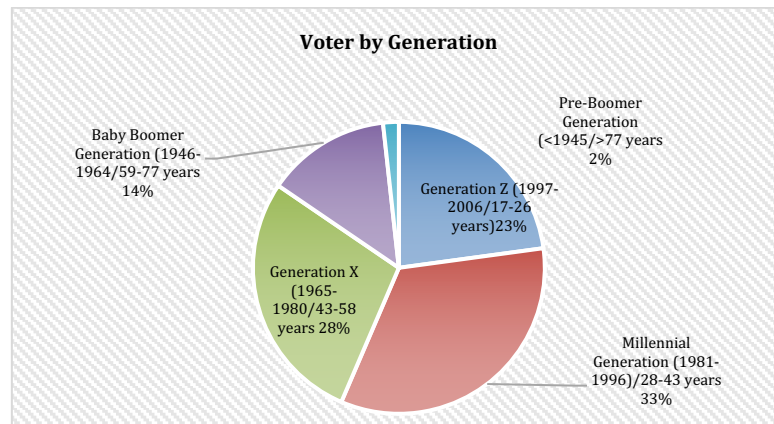


Figure 1. List of Permanent Voters (DPT) for the 2024 Election Based on Generation (R. R. Putra, 2023).

existence of Islamic villages, Ternate Village, Arab Village, Gorontalo Village, Jawa Tondano (Kyai Modjo), Jawa Tomohon Village, and Chinese Village, each representing distinct identities yet coexisting with other communities.

North Sulawesi is a province with heterogeneity that fosters interaction and community relations based on values of harmony, forming tolerance. At least five cultural values, namely '*torang samua basudara*' (we are all brothers), '*situ timou tumou tou*' (living humanely towards others), '*mapalus*', democratic values, and anti-discrimination, contribute to harmony in North Sulawesi (Suleman, 2017). Community harmony can be observed through the existence of Islamic villages, Ternate Village, Arab Village, Gorontalo Village, Jawa Tondano (Kyai Modjo), Jawa Tomohon Village, and Chinese Village, each representing distinct identities yet coexisting with other communities. During significant religious celebrations, when Christians celebrate Christmas, maintaining order, safety, and smooth proceedings are the responsibilities of the Muslim community around the church. Similarly, when Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr, Christians living around the mosque take on similar responsibilities.

In 2020, Manado (ranked third) and Tomohon (ranked fourth) were among the top ten cities with the highest tolerance scores. In the 2019 index

of religious harmony, North Sulawesi ranked fourth, and civil liberties were ranked third (Nugrahaeni, 2021). Examining the reflection of cultural values and recognition can help explain why North Sulawesi is the subject of this research. The study of harmony in North Sulawesi requires further discourse on how harmony is deeply interpreted in the lives of the people, aiming to prevent conflicts based on religious and ethnic identity. It goes beyond surface-level inclusivism or passive and formal tolerance alone (Syamsurijal, 2016). If relationships follow this pattern, then the substance of fulfilled tolerance only acknowledges differences in life and recognizes the rights of others, while failing to meet other substances, such as expressing openness, full support for differences, and learning to understand others (Walzer, 1997).

The research object, later elaborated into research variables, is based on the assumption that every political decision is considered based on rationality. Voter identity is embedded in every political decision. The perceptions, cognitions, beliefs, and expectations of individuals, along with considering facts, opinions, and issues, including political dynasties, identity politics, and political polarization, shape political preferences in political decision-making.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a quantitative research method. The analysis technique involves simple descriptive statistics in the form of percentages. Data collection utilizes a Google Form questionnaire during the period of December 1-8, 2023. The research variables encompass (1) voter rationality, (2) social identity, (3) social cognition, (4) social change, and (5) political alternatives aimed at elucidating students' political preferences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demography of North Sulawesi Region

The demographic structure of North Sulawesi is characterized by low

birth and death rates. It exhibits a high median age with a low dependency burden, particularly in older age groups. The population of North Sulawesi Province was 2,659,453 people in 2022. The majority, or 69%, falls within the productive age range (15-64 years), while the non-productive age groups include 23% for those under 14 years and 8% for those aged 65 and above. Voters are distributed across 14 regencies/cities, with the highest number from Manado City (20%), followed by Minahasa Regency (15%), South Minahasa Regency (10%), and North Minahasa Regency (9%), while the rest are spread across 10 regencies/cities. Based on data from the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU RI) and population data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of North Sulawesi Province, voter classification by generation is estimated. Millennials dominate with 33%, followed by Generation X with 28%, Generation Z with 24%. Meanwhile, Baby Boomers account for 14%, and Pre-Boomers represent 1%.

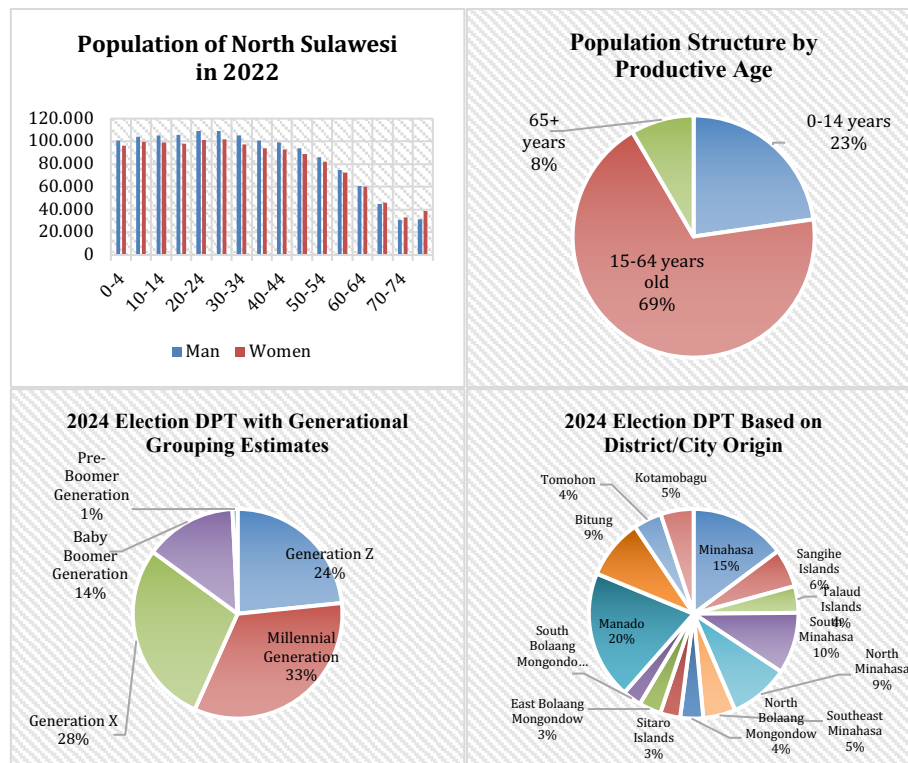


Figure 2. Demographic Structure of the Permanent Voter List for the 2024 Election (BPS Provinsi Sulawesi Utara, 2023; KPU RI, 2023)

The multicultural society of North Sulawesi is evident in its population, observed through the main sub-ethnic groups residing in the region. The primary sub-ethnic groups, defined as successful descendants of the Minahasa tribe who have preserved the group's life in one language and customary practices, include Tombulu', Tonsea', Tondano, and Totembuan (Wenas, 2007). Another perspective identifies sub-ethnic groups as Tou'nsea, Tou'mbulu, Toulour (Pinontoan, 2018). Additionally, immigrant/foreign sub-ethnic groups, such as the Chinese, Arab, Bajo, Borgo, and Islamic communities, who arrived independently or were forced, can be identified. The term 'Islamic community' refers to those brought forcibly by the Dutch colonialists from outside Minahasa (Wenas, 2007). In the modern era, multiculturalism in North Sulawesi extends beyond the Minahasa ethnicity to encompass various ethnicities from across Indonesia.

The history of religion in the land of Minahasa (North Sulawesi) after the ancient beliefs is characterized by Catholicism introduced by Catholic missionaries in the 16th century, followed by Protestantism during the VOC era in the 17th century. Christianity in Minahasa flourished massively in the 19th century. Certain Islamic communities were present since the 17th century, and by the mid-19th century, several Islamic communities, such as Kampung Jawa Tondano, were established (Wenas, 2007). Presently, Protestantism is the most widely embraced religion in North Sulawesi at 63.91%, followed by Islam (31.85%), Catholicism (4.45%), Hinduism (0.59%), Buddhism (0.14%), Confucianism (0.02%), and others (0.05%) (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2022).

Although the majority of North Sulawesi's population adheres to Protestantism, statistically, diversity, uniformity, and dominance indices are categorized as low. These indices are calculated using the Shannon-Wiener formula to quantitatively measure religious entities in the community and the Simpson dominance index to measure the dominance of entities in the community (Odum, 1993).

Some provinces in Sumatra have a high dominance index (many Muslim adherents), except for North Sumatra and the Riau Islands, which, despite having a significant Muslim population, have low quantitative dominance over other religious adherents. Provinces in Java have high dominance with many Muslim adherents. Provinces in Kalimantan tend to have high, medium, and low dominance. Bali and West Nusa Tenggara have high dominance, while East Nusa Tenggara has low dominance. Provinces in Maluku have medium and low dominance. Provinces in Papua vary with high, medium, and low dominance. Similarly, provinces in Sulawesi have high, medium, and low dominance. North Sulawesi province itself has a low dominance index, meaning that despite the majority being Protestant, their quantity does not dominate over other religious entities. Other provinces with low dominance indices include East Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, West Papua, and Southwest Papua. This explanation is intended to support the assumption that quantitatively, North Sulawesi has no dominance of a single religion, aligning with its multicultural society.

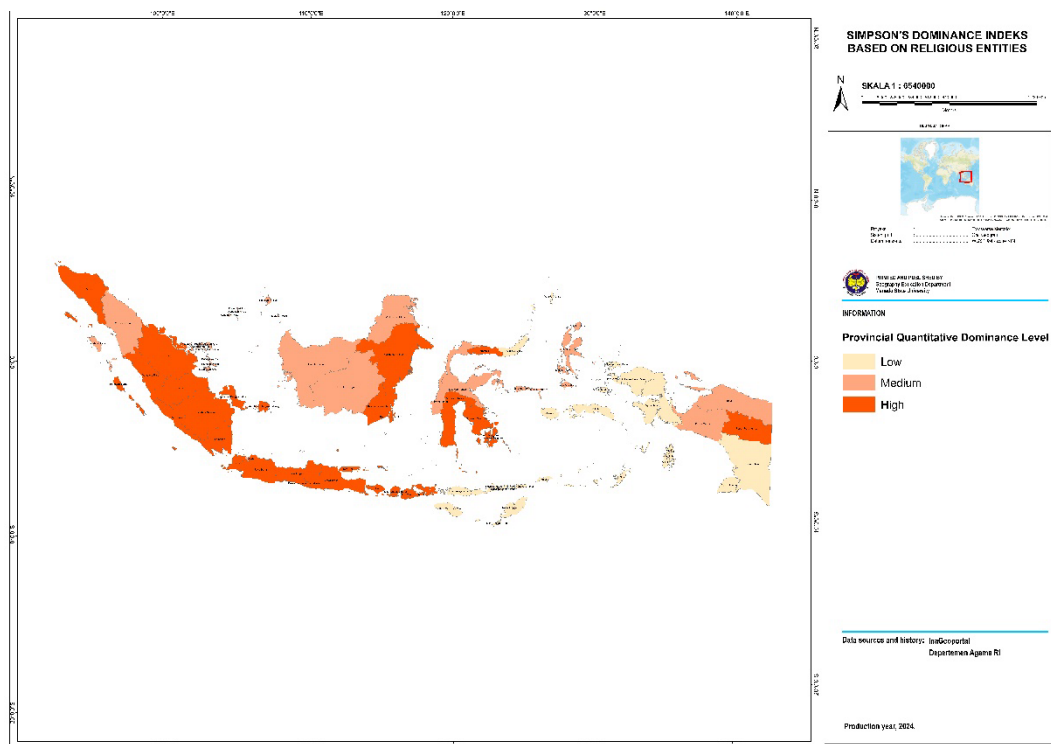


Figure 3. Quantitative Dominance Map Based on Religious Entities in Indonesia

The profile or characteristics of the economy of North Sulawesi can be explained through the structure of primary occupations and Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP), a measure of the total value of all final goods and services produced from economic activities. The primary occupations of the population are mainly in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, wholesale and retail trade, motor vehicle and motorcycle repair, processing, and construction. The primary occupations are then reflected in the GRDP by sector, with the largest percentage in these fields. In conclusion, the majority of North Sulawesi's population is agrarian.

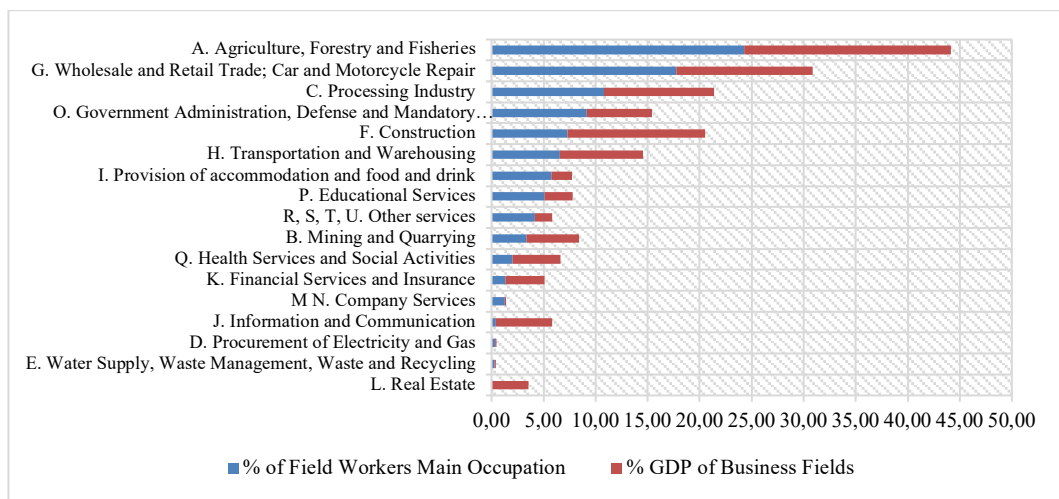


Figure 4. Economic Structure of North Sulawesi based on Main Job Fields and GDP by Business Sector (Central Statistics Agency of North Sulawesi Province, 2023c, 2023b).

The 2019 Presidential Election and the 2020 Regional Elections

The results of the previous elections help to observe trends in voter support for political parties or presidential and vice-presidential candidates (Paslon Capres-Cawapres). At the very least, it aids in understanding the political dynamics and changing voter preferences. Previous election results can also reflect voters' assessments of the government's performance as it nears the end of its term. Analyzing past performance can provide insights into the factors influencing voter decisions, shed light on important issues and voter sentiments in the past. This information can be used to design campaign strategies that are responsive to the needs and aspirations of voters.

Understanding shortcomings or successes in previous elections can help avoid the same mistakes and improve strategies to garner greater support and create better strategies for upcoming elections.

Based on the 2019 elections, the PDI-Perjuangan party dominated the vote count. Several parties such as Golkar, NasDem, Demokrat, and Gerindra garnered smaller percentages compared to PDI-Perjuangan. In the 2019 Presidential and Vice Presidential elections, the pair Joko Widodo - Ma'ruf Amin, supported by the PDI-Perjuangan party, won with a significant percentage. In the 2020 Governor and Vice Governor elections, Olly Dondokambey - Steven Kandouw, supported by the PDI-Perjuangan party, also won with a notable percentage. Thus, North Sulawesi became a stronghold for the PDI-Perjuangan party.

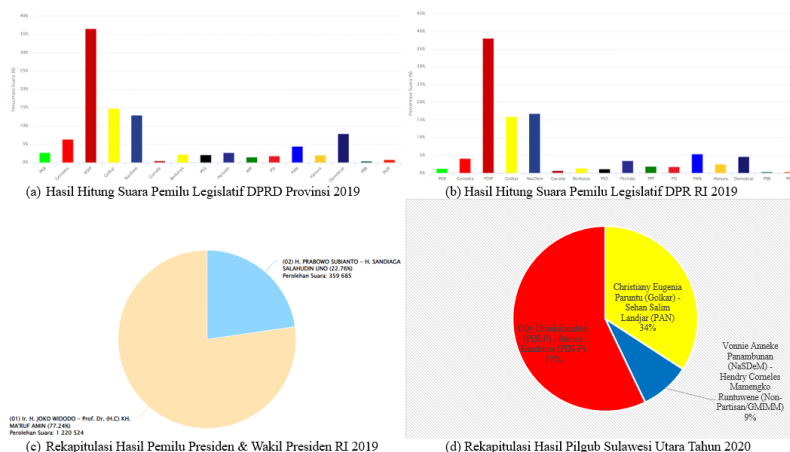
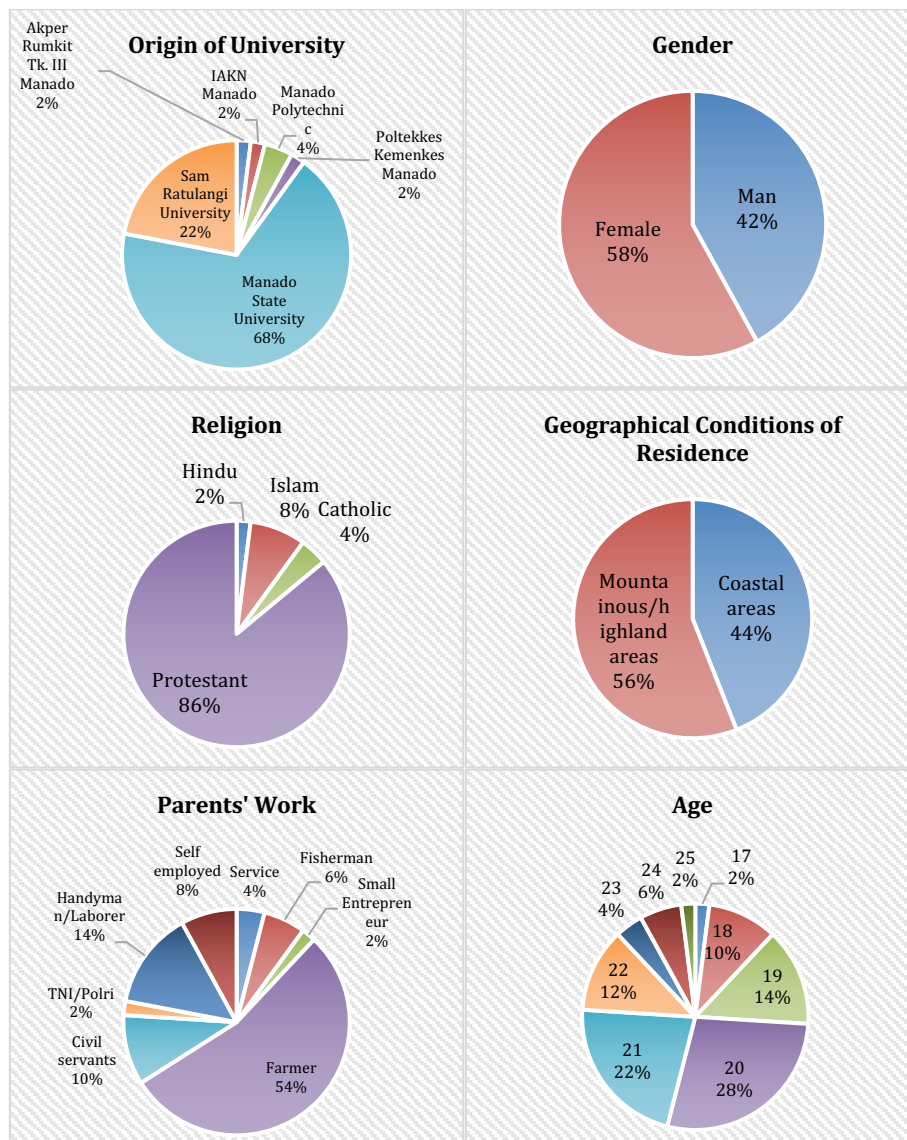


Figure 5. Vote Counting Results and Recapitulation of the 2019 Elections and 2020 Regional Elections in North Sulawesi (KPU Provinsi Sulawesi Utara, 2020; KPU RI, 2019b, 2019a, 2019c)

Characteristics of Respondents

Respondents in this study were based on several characteristics. A total of 68% of respondents came from Manado State University, 22% from Sam Ratulangi University, and the rest from various universities in North Sulawesi. Of the respondents, 58% were female, and the remaining were male. The majority of respondents, 86%, identified as Protestants, while others followed

different religions. About 56% of the respondents came from areas with mountainous or highland living conditions, while 44% came from coastal areas. The parents' occupations were predominantly farmers (54%), while others worked in different fields. The age of respondents varied, ranging from 19 to 25 years old. They hailed from various districts/cities in North Sulawesi, with the Talaud Islands Regency being the origin of the highest percentage of respondents (34%). The majority of respondents came from rural areas (78%).



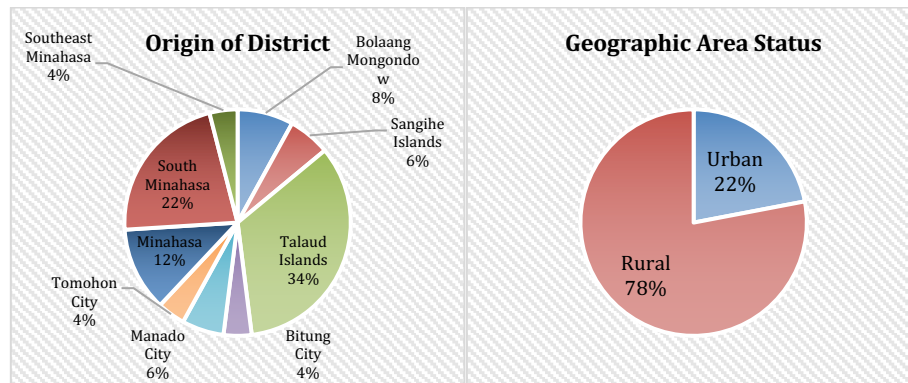


Figure 6. Characteristics of Respondents

Voter Rationality

More than half of the preferences (52%) in choosing a candidate pair (Paslon) are based on their vision and mission. This indicates that the vision and mission of Paslon play a key role in shaping voter choices. About 30% of voters state that Paslon's performance plays a significant role in their decision, while 14% consider the track record. Interestingly, only 4% consider the endorsing political party as the primary factor in the selection. Furthermore, the majority of voters (80%) express that Paslon's performance is considered good. This indicates that a positive perception of performance is a primary factor in evaluating candidates.

In the presentation of vision-mission, Paslon Prabowo Subianto – Gibran Rakabuming Raka receives a favorable rating from 90% of respondents, while 10% state that Paslon Ganjar Pranowo – Mahfud MD is viewed favorably in presenting their vision-mission. Conversely, Paslon Anies Baswedan – Muhaimin Iskandar is deemed not proficient by respondents. The reasons for the positive assessment of vision-mission are based on innovative and solution-oriented characteristics (40%), suitability with conditions and challenges (28%), and the ability to accommodate all elements of society (20%). Other reasons are detailed as well.

As Generation Z, closely tied to social media, respondents tend to obtain information about Paslon through various digital platforms. TikTok emerges

as the most significant source of information at 21%, followed by Instagram (16%), Facebook (13%), Youtube (13%), and Twitter/X (5%). Mainstream media such as television still holds a significant share at 13%. The surrounding environment (11%) and family (7%) also contribute as information sources. The deep engagement of Generation Z with social media influences their social interaction, making information about Paslon more accessible than traditional television media. The process of information verification is mainly done by checking the primary information source (mass media) by 58% of respondents, while 32% attempt to verify facts from more than one source. Overall, this indicates that the voting preferences of Generation Z are influenced by various factors, ranging from vision and mission, performance, to digital information sources closely integrated into their daily lives.

The presentation of vision-mission, track record, and positive perceptions of Paslon's performance significantly influence and serve as considerations in determining choices, surpassing the significance of endorsing political parties. This is more related to the personal characteristics of Paslon figures. Voters tend to trust the figures due to their morality, social responsibility, and professional expertise compared to political parties (Mujani & Liddle, 2010; Sofianto, 2013). Digital information, especially through social media, has a significant impact on voting preferences. The surrounding environment and family contribute less compared to the exposure of information through social media, aligning with research indicating that exposure to social media influences a candidate's image and political attitudes (Aragon, 2017; Worotikan, 2022). For voters, social media serves as a facility for seeking information and references, while for candidates, it functions as a means of socialization and campaigning (Alfani, 2018).

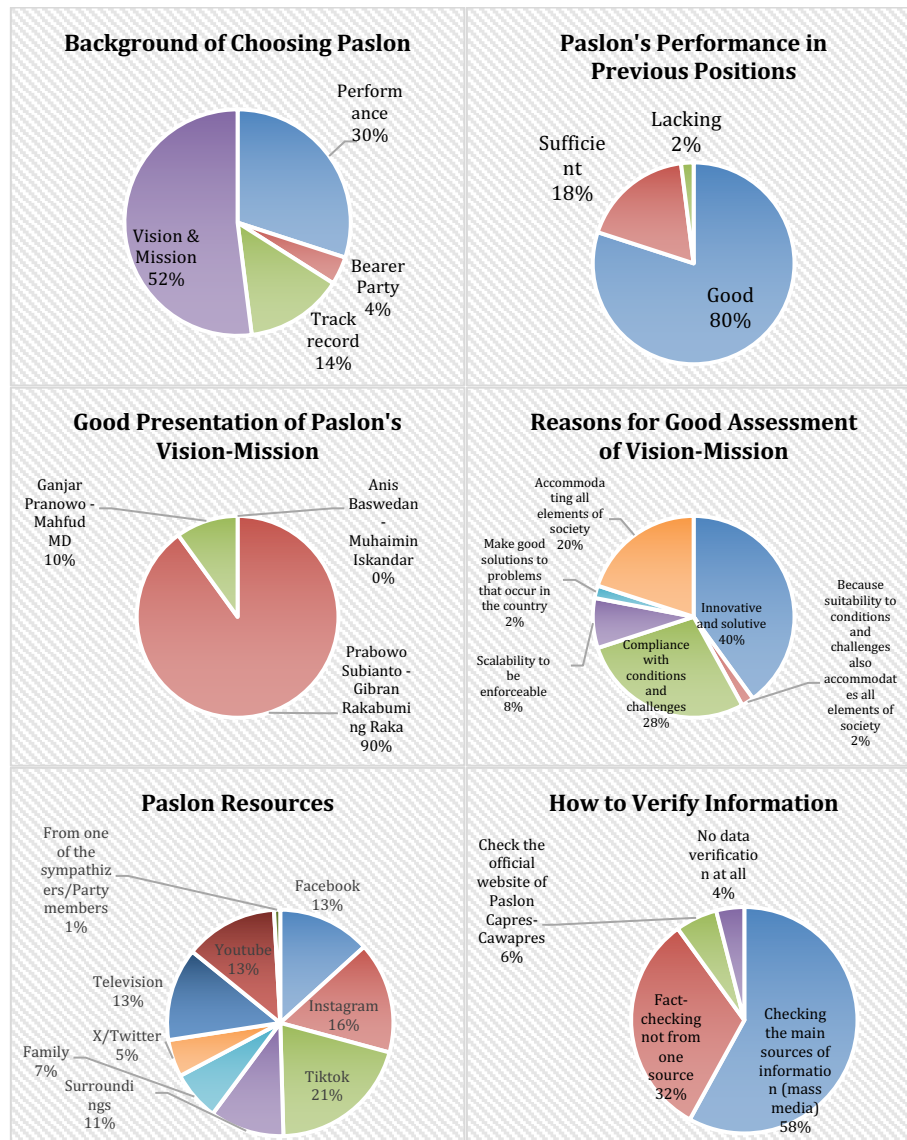


Figure 7. Voter Rationality

Social Identity

The majority of respondents (92%) had already made their choice before the Presidential and Vice Presidential election took place, while only 8% had not decided yet. Factors such as religious background, ethnicity, and social groups played a significant role in influencing voters' decisions. In the context of religious and/or ethnic/group backgrounds, 32% of respondents stated that these factors were very important in choosing Paslon, while 32% considered them important enough, 12% deemed them less important, and

14% stated them as not important. This indicates that religious and ethnic/group identities influence most respondents in determining their choices. Regarding the influence of political parties, the majority of respondents (76%) stated that their choice was not based on party affiliation (sympathizers). Only 14% stated that their choice was based on party affiliation (sympathizers), and 10% stated that their choice might be based on party affiliation (sympathizers).

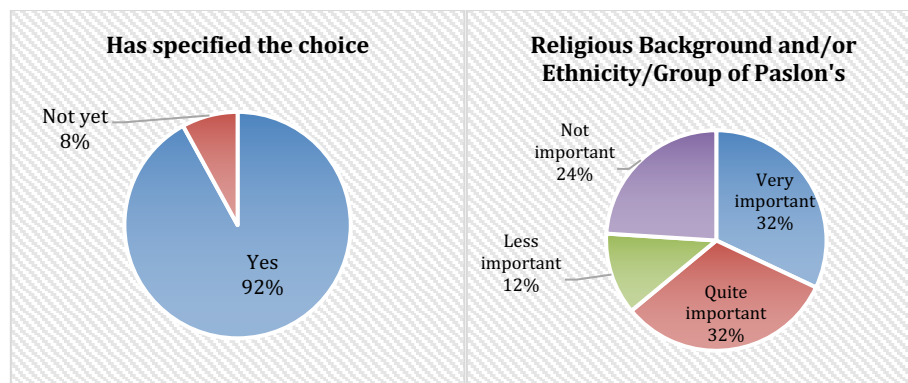
Most respondents (90%) chose Paslon without considering the same religion, while 8% stated that they chose based on the same religion, and 2% said they might choose based on the same religion. A similar situation also occurred concerning ethnicity/group/tribe, where 80% of respondents chose without considering the similarity in ethnicity/group/tribe, while 10% chose based on this similarity, and 10% stated they might choose based on similarity. Although the majority of respondents stated that they did not share the same religion and/or ethnicity/group with Paslon, some respondents (24%) identified themselves as having partial similarity based on religion and/or ethnicity/group, while 12% identified themselves as having the same religion and/or ethnicity/group. This is likely due to indirect connections of religion and/or ethnicity/group between the respondents and all three Paslons. With these differences and similarities, the majority of respondents (48%) stated that they feel comfortable and trust each other despite different religions and/or ethnicities/groups, 40% stated they feel fairly comfortable and trust, 2% stated they feel uncomfortable and distrust, and 10% stated they didn't know. This reflects the complexity of the respondents' views and preferences regarding identity factors in choosing Paslon.

The intersectionality of identities in multicultural societies allows political choices to be influenced by social identities, which are then polarized into groups. The amalgamation of various identity symbols as a political act aims to strengthen arguments and undermine political opponents through cultural and ethnic issues, which can be destructive and must be countered

with a tolerant attitude (Said, 2023). The positive relationship between social identity and Schadenfreude can have adverse effects on society, potentially leading to conflicts (Nengsih, 2023).

Statements of superiority and inferiority, as well as majority and minority, become the seeds of intolerance and radicalism (Indrawan et al., 2023). Populist politics as a paradox of globalization that reinforces identity (Burhani, 2020). The moderate space that emphasizes rationality becomes closed by identity politics. Fulfilling the principles of democracy by embodying a representative government is a middle ground for political behavior based on ethnicity so that ethnicity does not become an obstacle to democratization but rather a universal value that can be accepted and applied towards better democratization (Adiwilaga et al., 2017). In other words, an agreement is created in facing conflicts over differences (Lobja, 2003).

Ethnicity as a universally acceptable element is portrayed in respondents' statements in this study. Despite ethnicity playing a role and being a consideration in choosing Paslon, where the party is not the main background and the majority identifies themselves as not the same as Paslon, most respondents (48%) state that they feel comfortable and trust each other despite different religions and/or ethnicities/groups. This indicates tolerance and openness in accepting identity differences but still choosing based on identity considerations.



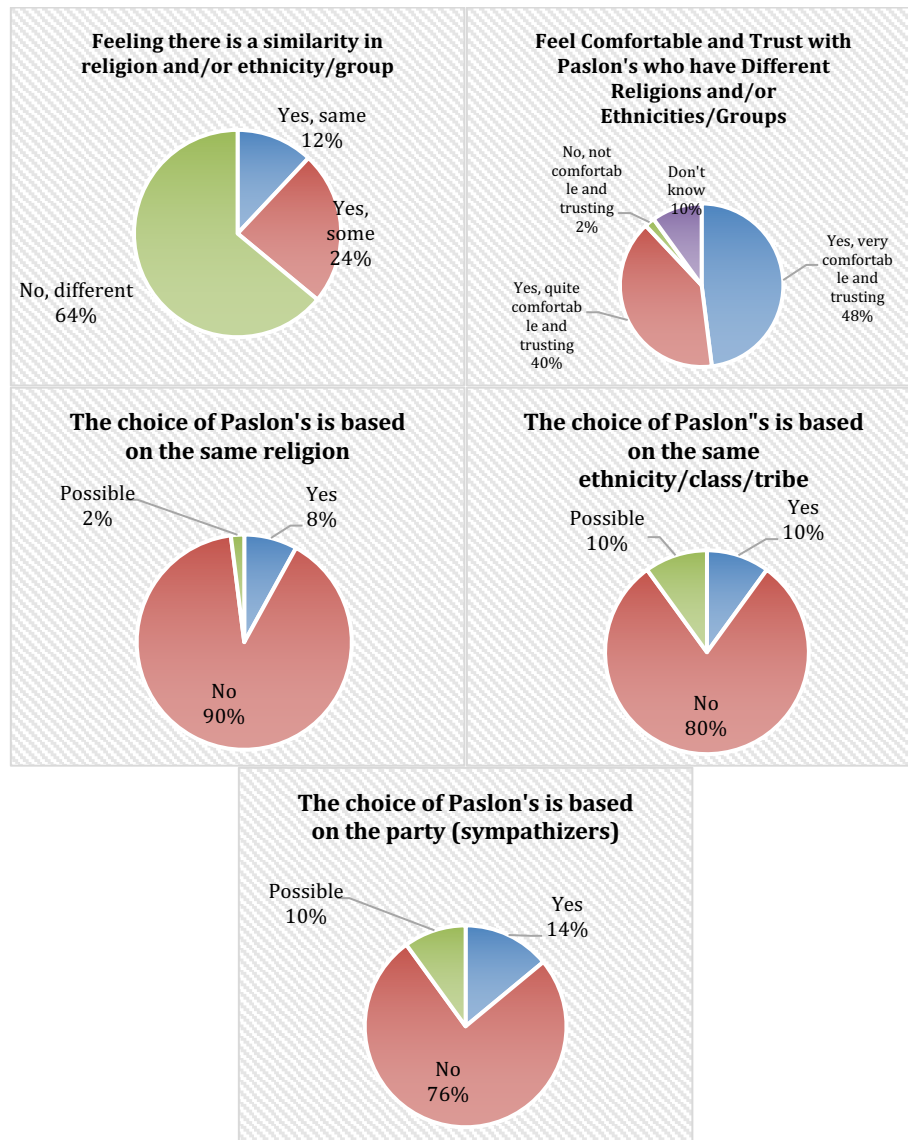


Figure 8. Social Identity

Social Cognition

As many as 82% of respondents have understood the vision-mission of the Candidate Pair (Paslon), while 18% have not. The influence of social media in choosing Paslon is significant for 42% of respondents, with 22% stating a significant influence, 24% considerable influence, and 10% minor influence. Considerations in choosing are based on personal understanding (56%), information from mass and social media (26%), information from the environment/friendship/community (16%), and information from family

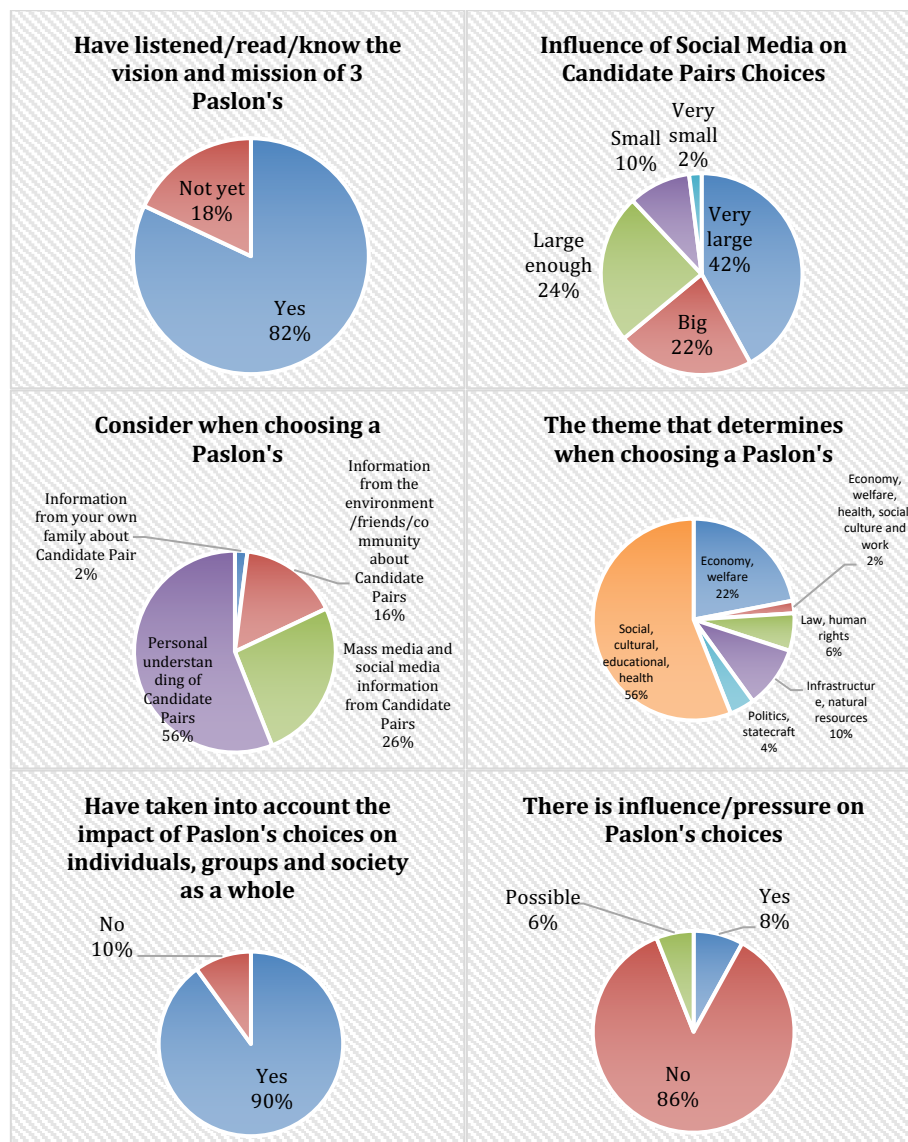
(2%). The main themes involve social, cultural, educational, and health issues (56%), followed by economic and welfare themes (22%), infrastructure and natural resources (10%), and law and human rights (6%).

As many as 90% of respondents consider the impact of Paslon's choice on themselves, groups, and society. In determining their choice, 80% state that it is without pressure from others, while 8% and 6% experience influence or pressure from others. Although having their own choices, 96% of respondents respect differences in choices, while 2% do not, and 2% may respect differences. As many as 86% remain open and critical of negative information about Paslon's choices, while 10% do not, and 6% may remain open and critical.

This shows a high level of voter participation in seeking information related to Paslon. Social media plays a crucial role as a source of information and influence in the election process. Personal aspects and public information play a significant role in voters' decisions. Themes such as social, cultural, educational, and health issues dominate as reasons for choosing Paslon. This reflects voters' awareness and concern for social issues deemed important. Cognitive and affective elements play an important role, where engagement in logical analysis or intellectual ways and overall perception influences decisions (Rachmahna, 2008). Information acceptance and personalization as a form of perceptual meaning, as internal mental processes in understanding the external environment (Anidar, 2017).

Considering the impact of choices indicates voters' awareness of the implications of their choices in a broader context, as shown by the majority still deciding independently. This means taking responsibility for personal choices. Democratic maturity and tolerance in political views are demonstrated by a positive attitude and respect for differences in choices. The attitude of remaining open and critical of negative information related to Paslon's choices indicates a skeptical stance and a desire for balanced information. Skepticism as an attitude of evaluating and seeking evidence

before accepting or trusting information about Paslon. Although skepticism does not always mean complete rejection, it is more about caution and a critical attitude toward understanding or beliefs. This reflects aspects of active voter participation and political dynamics, as well as the strong influence of social media, and awareness and openness to differences in the political context.



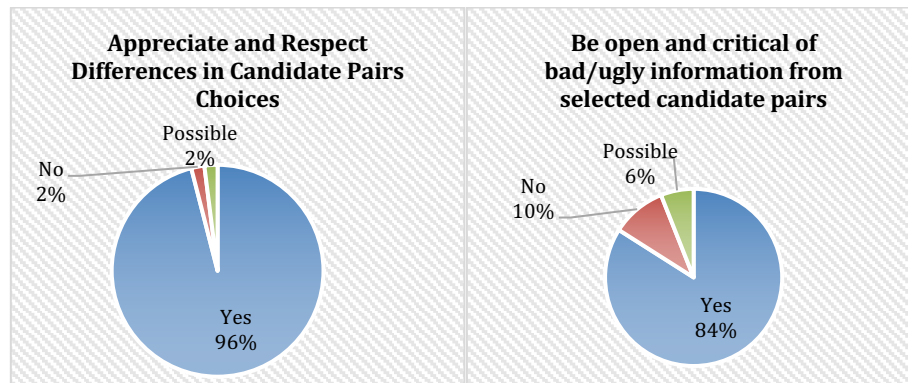


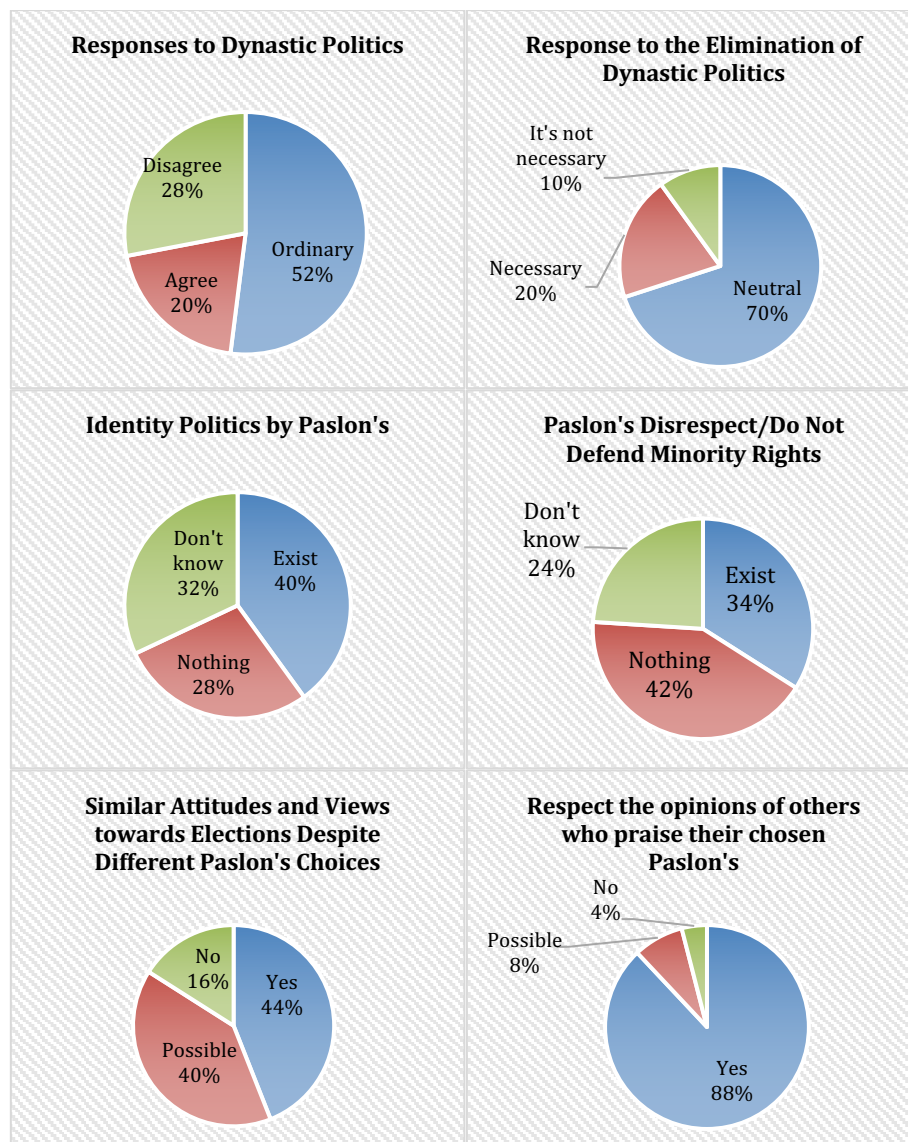
Figure 9. Social Cognition

Social Change

Respondents critically assess the impact of political contestation on social change. The majority are neutral regarding political dynasties (52%), although there are some who support their elimination (20%). Identity politics in candidate campaigns are acknowledged by 40% of respondents, while some feel that it does not marginalize minority rights (42%). There is a high level of tolerance, with 88% respecting the views of others who differ, and 44% sharing similar views, and possibly 40% even if they have different choices. A significant number of respondents (74%) are comfortable interacting with those with different choices. However, there is caution regarding political information from those with different choices (26% do not trust), although the majority are comfortable interacting with those with different choices (74%). The younger generation places hope in candidates, desiring positive change, transparent leadership, and solutions to various issues. Relevant issues for the younger generation relate to education, job opportunities, technology, health, gender equality, political participation, and the environment.

The majority feel neutral about political dynasties, while others support their elimination. The existence of identity politics is acknowledged but not seen as marginalizing minority rights. A high level of tolerance is evident by valuing the views of others and feeling comfortable interacting with people who have different political preferences. However, some do not trust political

information from parties with different preferences. The younger generation has high hopes for the candidates, desiring positive change, transparent leadership, and solutions to various issues. Relevant issues for the younger generation include education, job opportunities, technology, health, gender equality, political participation, and the environment. This provides an overview of voters' attitudes and expectations, highlighting the dynamics of politics, tolerance, and the aspirations of the younger generation for social change.



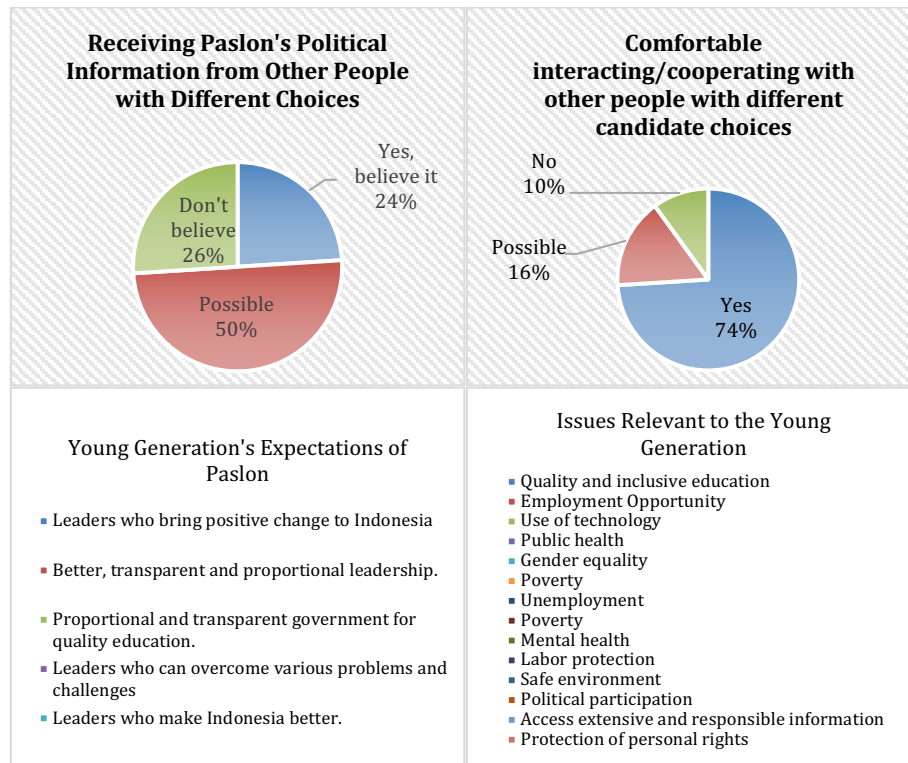


Figure 10. Social Change

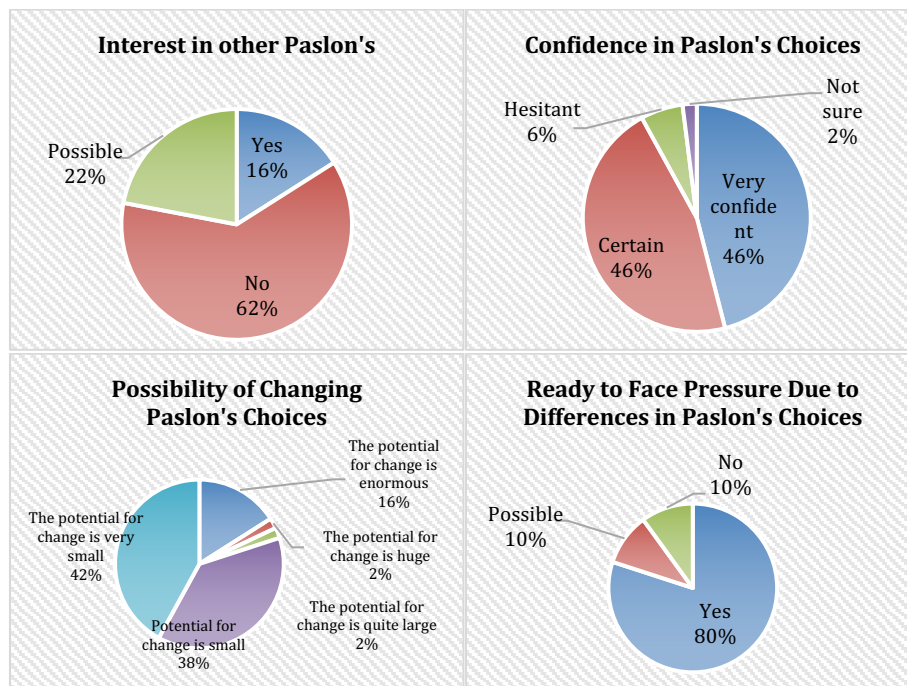
Political Alternatives

Political alternatives reflect various options or choices within the political realm, especially in the context of elections. This serves as a comparative analysis of the various options faced by voters. In this context, respondents demonstrate the dynamics of attitudes and beliefs regarding political alternatives, particularly related to the candidacy selection. A total of 62% of respondents express no interest in other candidates, while 22% indicate potential interest, and 16% express interest in other candidates. Nevertheless, confidence in the current candidate choice is quite high, with 46% being very confident, 46% confident, 6% uncertain, and 2% not confident.

The steadfastness in choosing a candidate is evident in statements about the potential for a change in choice. A total of 42% state a very small potential for change, 38% a small potential for change, 2% a fairly large potential for change, 2% a large potential for change, and 16% a very large potential for change. If a change in candidate choice occurs, factors considered

involve an evaluation of the candidate's personality, performance, and track record (44%), a mismatch of vision and mission that is measured and does not accommodate personal/group interests (34%), changes in political party support and key supporters (10%), non-accommodation of religious/ethnic/group factors (10%), and changes in goals, vision, and mission that are inconsistent from the beginning (2%). Respondents also indicate readiness to face pressure due to differences in candidate choices, with 80% stating they are ready, 10% possibly ready, and 10% stating they are not ready. This reflects the complex dynamics in dealing with political options and readiness in managing differences of opinion.

The complexity of attitudes and beliefs towards political alternatives tends to be either firm and confident in the current choice or open to considering or switching support. Factors such as personality, performance, and the track record of the current candidate are the primary considerations. Regarding the choice of a candidate, the majority express readiness to face pressure due to differences in candidate choices.



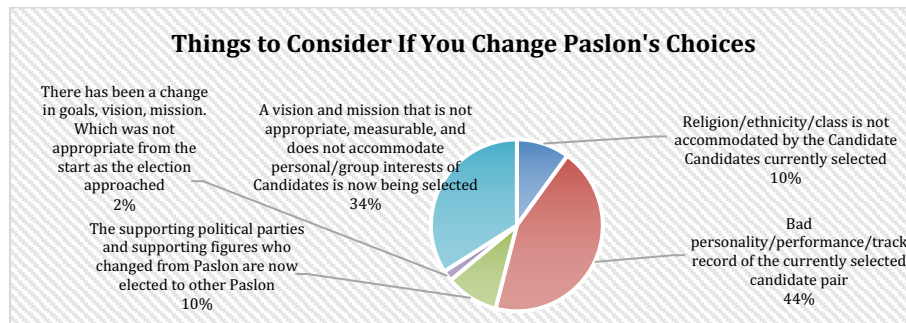


Figure 11. Political Alternatives

CONCLUSION

Political preferences of Generation Z students in North Sulawesi tend to be based on the vision and mission, performance, and digital information. Most evaluate the candidates' performance, but a small portion does not consider performance as a crucial factor in decision-making. This creates a mismatch between the positive perception of performance and the level of importance of this factor in the election. Vision and mission become key factors in shaping voter choices. This reflects rationality in determining political choices by considering various factors objectively, but also not being entirely confident in choices based on vision and mission.

Social media is the dominant source of information, while still verifying through primary sources. Despite being closely tied to social media, they actively seek information and consider various factors in determining political choices. It is also evident that the rationality of Generation Z voters tends to be oriented towards individual assessment rather than loyalty to political parties.

Social identity plays a significant role in political decision-making. Social identity, in the context of political elections in North Sulawesi, reflects ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, especially in the context of a multicultural society like North Sulawesi. On the other hand, mental processes and social cognition influence the interpretation of political information and voting decisions. Comparing variations in political choices is crucial in decision-making. Awareness of the importance of choosing from various

political options reflects an effort to choose the most suitable ones based on values, interests, and expectations of change. Uncertainty in choices can occur, although having confidence in choices but having the potential for changes.

Specifically, research results show that Generation Z voters in North Sulawesi have a critical attitude towards the impact of political contestation on social change. High tolerance is reflected in respecting the views of others who differ and feeling comfortable interacting with people with different choices. This research provides valuable insights into the political dynamics at the local and specific geographic levels, taking into account unique social, cultural, and economic factors for the North Sulawesi region.

The society in North Sulawesi differs in terms of religious entities from Java, serving as a political conduit nationally. In the view of the sociology of religion, Dahrendorf's theory emphasizes the duality of conflict and consensus. The focus of the conflict theory is on differences in interests and the potential for violence, while the consensus theory highlights values of integration (Pramono, 2017). Therefore, candidates with different entities but believed to have integrating values become the choice. A shift in voters towards rationality occurs as a result of religious moderation (Burhani, 2024; Nashir, 2019), or the lack of polarization and identity politics in the 2024 Presidential Election (Soderborg & Muhtadi, 2023).

In the end, this research provides a comprehensive overview of the relationship between political geography, voter behavior, and the socio-political context in North Sulawesi. The research findings can offer valuable insights for a deeper understanding of local political dynamics and student political preferences.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdurachman, M. (1988). *Geografi Perilaku: Suatu Pengantar Studi tentang Persepsi Lingkungan*. Jakarta: P2LPTK Dirjen Dikti Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.

- Adiwilaga, R., Ridha, M., & Mustofa, M. (2017). Pemilu dan Keniscayaan Politik Identitas Etnis di Indonesia: Sebuah Tinjauan Teoritis. *Jurnal Bawaslu*, 3(2), 269–284.
- Alfani, H. (2018). Peran Facebook dalam Kampanye Politik Pemilukada di Kabupaten Ogan Kemiring Ulu. *LUGAS Jurnal Komunikasi*, 2(1), 42–50.
- Alfarizi, E., & Fauzi, A. (2022). Rasionalitas Masyarakat Penerima Politik Uang di Kota Surabaya. *Jurnal Politikom Indonesiana*, 7(2), 19–28.
- Anidar, J. (2017). Teori Belajar Menurut Aliran Kognitif serta Implikasinya dalam Pembelajaran. *Jurnal Al-Taujih: Bingkai Bimbingan Dan Konseling Islami*, 3(2), 8–16.
- Apriyadi, A. (2014). *Partisipasi Pemuda Dalam Menggunakan Hak Pilih Pada Pemilu Legislatif Bagi Para Pemilih Pemula (Studi Kasus Pemilu Legislatif Tahun 2014 Desa Sidomulyo Kecamatan Delanggu Kabupaten Klaten)*. Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.
- Aragon, H. H. (2017). *Efektivitas Terpaan Informasi Melalui Media Sosial dan Media Cetak Dalam Membangun Citra Kandidat Pilgub Banten dan Membentuk Sikap Politik Masyarakat*. Fakultas Psikologi dan Ilmu Sosial Budaya Universitas Islam Indonesia.
- Ardipandanto, A. (2020). Dampak Politik Identitas Pada Pilpres 2019: Perspektif Populisme (The Impact of Identity Politics On President Election 2019: Populism Perspective). *Jurnal Politica Dinamika Masalah Politik Dalam Negeri Dan Hubungan Internasional*, 11(1), 43–63.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1986(23–28).
- Bencsik, A., & Machova, R. (2016). Knowledge Sharing Problems from The Viewpoint of Intergeneration Management. *ICMLG2016-4th International Conference on Management, Leadership and Governance: ICMLG2016*, 42.
- BPS Provinsi Sulawesi Utara. (2023). *Jumlah Penduduk Menurut Kelompok Umur dan Jenis Kelamin 2021-2022*. <https://sulut.bps.go.id/indicator/12/942/1/jumlah-penduduk-menurut-kelompok-umur-dan-jenis-kelamin.html>
- Burhani, A. N. (2020). Agama, Kultur,(In) toleransi, dan Dilema Minoritas di Indonesia. *Orasi Pengukuhan Profesor Riset Bidang Agama Dan Tradisi Keagamaan*. Jakarta: LIPI.
- Burhani, A. N. (2024). Beragama Maslahat. *Kompas.Id*.

<https://www.kompas.id/baca/opini/2024/01/12/beragama-maslahat>

Ferdian, F., Asrinaldi, A., & Syahrizal, S. (2019). Perilaku Memilih Masyarakat, Malpraktik Pemilu Dan Pelanggaran Pemilu. *NUSANTARA: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial*, 6(1), 20–31.

Fisa, N. R. D. (2023). *Kemenangan Ganjar yang Mengagetkan di Daerah Santri (Studi tentang Perilaku memilih di Kabupaten Kudus pada Pemilihan Gubernur Jawa Tengah 2018)*. Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Universitas Diponegoro.

Indrawan, J., Rahmawati, R., Ilmar, A., & Yuliandri, P. (2023). Ancaman Politik Identitas Bagi Pemilihan Umum 2024. *Al Qisthas Jurnal Hukum Dan Politik*, 14(1), 31–55.

Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. (2022). *Jumlah Penduduk Menurut Agama*.

Korompis, M. E. (2023). *Relasi Etnis dan Integrasi Bangsa* (E. Lobja & H. M. Karwur (eds.)). Tondano: Jurusan Pendidikan Geografi Fakultas Ilmu Sosial Universitas Negeri Manado.

KPU Provinsi Sulawesi Utara. (2020). *Rekapitulasi Hasil Pemilihan Gubernur dan Wakil Gubernur Sulawesi Utara Tahun 2020*.

KPU RI. (2019a). *Hasil Hitung Suara Pemilu Legislatif DPR RI 2019 Sulawesi Utara*. <https://pemilu2019.kpu.go.id/#/dprri/rekapitulasi/>

KPU RI. (2019b). *Hasil Hitung Suara Pemilu Legislatif DPRD Provinsi 2019 Sulawesi Utara*. <https://pemilu2019.kpu.go.id/#/ppwp/rekapitulasi/>

KPU RI. (2019c). *Rekapitulasi Hasil Pemilu Presiden & Wakil Presiden RI 2019*. <https://pemilu2019.kpu.go.id/#/ppwp/rekapitulasi/>

KPU RI. (2023). *Rekapitulasi Daftar Pemilih Tetap (DPT) Dalam Negeri Pemilu Tahun 2024*. <https://opendata.kpu.go.id/dataset/3af73316d-6f826961c-613979c81-8e311>

Lobja, E. (2003). *Menyelamatkan Hutan dan Hak Adat Masyarakat Kei, Tinjauan Terhadap Praktek Pengelolaan dan Pemanfaatan Lahan Hutan oleh Masyarakat Tradisional Kei*. Jogjakarta: Debut Press.

Lowenthal, D. (1967). *Environmental Perception and Behavior*. Chicago: The University of Chicago.

Mahmud, R., Wantu, A., Yunus, R., & Adhani, Y. (2022). Perilaku Rasional Politik Birokrasi dalam Pemilu 2019 di Kabupaten Boalemo. *Publik: Jurnal*

Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia, Administrasi Dan Pelayanan Publik, 9(3), 564–572.

Mansyur, I. (2019). *Rasionalitas Orientasi Politik Masyarakat Nelayan Kabupaten Majene Pada Pemilihan Umum Legislatif Tahun 2014*. Universitas Hasanuddin.

Marsden, W. E. (1976). *Evaluating the Geography Curriculum*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd.

Mujani, S., & Liddle, R. W. (2010). Personalities, Parties, and Voters. *J. Democracy*, 21, 35.

Mukhid, A. (2009). Self-Efficacy (Perspektif Teori Kognitif Sosial dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pendidikan). *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 4(1).

Nashir, H. (2019). Moderasi Indonesia dan Keindonesian Perseptif Sosiologi. *Pidato Pengukuhan Guru Besar Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta*.

Nengsih, S. W. (2023). Pengaruh Identitas Sosial Terhadap Schadenfreude Pada Pendukung Bakal Calon Presiden Tahun 2024. *PESHUM: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 2(6), 1141–1148.

Nugrahaeni, A. (2021). *Menelisik Tingkat Toleransi di Indonesia*. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2021/06/02/menelisik-tingkat-toleransi-di-indonesia>

Odum, E. P. (1993). *Dasar-Dasar Ekologi*. Gadjah Mada University Press.

Pajares, F. (2002). *Overview of Social Cognitive Theory and of Self-Efficacy*.

Pajares, F., & Schunk, D. H. (2001). Self-Beliefs and School Success: Self-Efficacy, Self-Concept, and School Achievement. *Perception*, 11(2), 239–266.

Pinontoan, D. H. R. (2018). *Praktik Pengelolaan Keragaman di Indonesia: Konstruksi dan Eksklusi Sosial* (pp. 103–133). CRCS (Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies) Progam Studi Agama dan Lintas Budaya Sekolah Pascasarjana Lintas Disiplin, Universitas Gadjah Mada. <https://crcs.ugm.ac.id/download/praktik-pengelolaan-keragaman-buku-kedua/>

Pramono, M. F. (2017). *Sosiologi Agama dalam Konteks Indonesia*. Ponorogo: UNIDA Gontor Press.

Putra, R. R. (2023). INFOGRAFIS: Jumlah Pemilih Pemilu 2024 Berdasarkan

- Usia. *CNN* *Indonesia*.
<https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20230711154230-620-972133/infografis-jumlah-pemilih-pemilu-2024-berdasarkan-usia>
- Putra, Y. S. (2017). Theoretical Review: Teori Perbedaan Generasi. *Among Makarti*, 9(2).
- Rachmahna, R. S. (2008). Psikologi Humanistik dan Aplikasinya dalam Pendidikan. *El-Tarbawi*, 1(1), 99–114.
- Ramadhan, D. (2022). Generasi Rasional-Demokratis: Proyeksi Partisipasi Memilih Kaum Muda. *Jurnal Bawaslu Provinsi Kepulauan Riau*, 4(2), 144–158.
- Rifani, I., & Ramadhan, M. I. (2022). Perception and Behavior of Forest Resources in Sukamaju Village Cihaurbeuti District Ciamis Regency. *Jurnal Geografi Gea*, 22(2), 135–147.
- Ritzer, G. (2012). *Teori Sosiologi Dari Sosiologi Klasik Sampai Perkembangan Terakhir Postmodern*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Said, R. W. (2023). Fenomena Politik Identitas dalam Pemilu di Indonesia. *CITIZEN: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Indonesia*, 3(1), 44–51.
- Soderborg, S., & Muhtadi, B. (2023). Indonesia's Polarisation Isn't Dead, Just Resting. *New Mandala*. <https://www.newmandala.org/indonesias-polarisation-isnt-dead-just-resting/>
- Sofianto, A. (2013). Orientasi Pemilih Terhadap Figur Politik (Studi Pemilu di Jawa Tengah). *Jurnal Litbang Provinsi Jawa Tengah*, 11(2), 210–220.
- Suleman, F. (2017). Keberagaman Budaya dan Agama di Kota Manado. *Endogami: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Antropologi*, 1(1), 55–62.
- Syamsurijal, S. (2016). Sisi Gelap Toleransi Beragama di Sulawesi Utara; Menyingkap Problem Kerukunan Beragama di Bolaang Mongondow, Bolaang Mongondow Utara dan Kotamobagu. *Al-Qalam*, 18(1), 66–73.
- Walzer, M. (1997). *On Toleration*. Yale University Press.
- Wenas, J. (2007). *Sejarah dan kebudayaan Minahasa*. Institut Seni Budaya Sulawesi Utara.
- Wiradintana, R. (2018). Revolusi Kognitif Melalui Penerapan Pembelajaran Teori Bruner dalam Menyempurnakan Pendekatan Perilaku (Behavioural Approach). *Oikos: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Pendidikan Ekonomi*, 2(1), 47–51.

- Wisman, Y. (2020). Teori Belajar Kognitif dan Implementasi dalam Proses Pembelajaran. *Jurnal Ilmiah Kanderang Tingang*, 11(1), 209–215.
- Witarti, D. I., Puspitasari, A., & Fithriana, A. (2020). Pemuda Pengawal Demokrasi: Pengenalan Peace Journalism Dalam Rangka Mewujudkan Kampanye Sehat Kepada Pemilih Pemula. *Sebatik*, 24(2), 234–239.
- Worotikan, G. S. (2022). Efektifitas Kampanye Pemilihan Presiden Dan Wakil Presiden 2019 di Kelurahan Kawangkoan Bawah. *POLITICO: Jurnal Ilmu Politik*, 11(1), 46–57.