DOES AN INCREASE IN EDUCATION INCREASE ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN INDONESIA?

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By

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DOES AN INCREASE IN EDUCATION INCREASE ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN INDONESIA?

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ABSTRACT

This study reviews the effects of years of educational attainment on civic engagement in Indonesia. It is based on the Indonesian family life survey 2007 conducted by the Rand Corporation. The results suggest that there is a positive relationship between years of education and participation in elections.
First and foremost, thank you to Professor Gillette Hall for her patience and advice and being an extraordinary adviser.

Thanks to Igor Kheyfets for all his assistance, and to all my colleagues in the workshop for their sympathy and advice: Camille D’Andrea, Ryan Carrington, Mahreen Hasan, Aldo Ortega, Carly Reed, Andrew Rothman, Alex Solano, and Jade Winfree.

For my father and mother, Hasan and Havva Orman, for raising me and supporting me, and for my brothers Ergin and Omer for picking me up all the times I’ve been knocked down.

Lastly, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Puspita Awalany Asmara, your smile is bright and beautiful as the reflection of the moon over a lake.
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Chapter 1. Introduction and Background

“People often say that, in a democracy, decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course, that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote - a very different thing.”

Walter H. Judd

In the last decade, Indonesia has made dramatic political progress from the autocratic rule of Suharto’s New Order administration to the current government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) and the Democratic Party. The journey even includes the election of a female president, Megawati Sukarnoputri. Despite the changes, however, golongan putih or golput (or non-voting) is on the rise as documented by Ananta, Arifin and Suryadinata (2005). Voter apathy is unhealthy for a democratic country. As the number of people abstaining from voting increases, the percentage of people that exercise the right have a disproportionate say in choosing public leadership, government administration and management of national resources.

When people choose not to vote, they cede control of politics to others. Voter apathy also has a negative effect on politicians and political parties. They are less likely to take into consideration the effects of policies if they know that specific groups of people do not vote. Moreover, if a specific group like low-income constituents do
not vote, politicians are less likely to be responsive to their needs. Voter participation is both substantially and ideologically relevant to any open, democratic nation.

One of the most practical concerns of the electoral system is that a democratic system will allow constituents to vote out incompetent and/or self-serving politicians. If a certain candidate is elected on a platform to increase educational spending or improve infrastructure, it is the job of the constituents to hold him accountable to those promises. By the end of the term, if the politician’s actions do not live up to their pledges in a reasonable sense, then the constituents vote him/her out of public office.

Major public policy decisions are decided by politicians and political parties. By not voting and voicing their opinions, citizens cede their control on public figures. When fewer people participate, politicians are afforded more opportunities to abuse their privileges for private gain. This apathy ultimately contributes to political corruption. An immediate item of apprehension is Indonesia’s ranking as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. In terms of rankings, Indonesia places 143 out of 179 in Transparency International’s 2007 Corruption Perception Index.

This study examines whether increases in schooling increase voting in Indonesia. Increases in educational attainment add to social capital and make it possible for informed debate and substantive deliberation in electoral matters. Ideologically, the primary purpose of education is to nurture critical adults who can
function in society. Practically, education is intended to impart skills to students who can use what they have learned for gainful employment. This increases income and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. There are other benefits to education, including the instilling of social values such as tolerance, compassion and civic duty.

- **Education in Indonesia**

  In the past, the Suharto New Order government was focused on the idea of creating an Indonesian national identity in the ethnic and linguistically diverse archipelago. This obsession manifested itself in the role that teachers played. Public school teachers were extensions of the national government. Unfortunately, teachers put more emphasis on their role as bureaucrats than as instructors. Bjork (2005) describes the conflict between the centrally imposed bureaucracy and current efforts to decentralize in 1999. Today teachers have to struggle to take initiative and increase schooling quality, while resisting the authoritarian mindset and institutional culture of the Suharto era.

  Indonesia has universal primary school enrollment rates, but it does not extend to junior secondary schooling rates. In the past, great increases in primary school enrollment followed Suharto’s decision in the 1970’s to set aside oil revenue to build 40,000 primary schools. After attending the mandatory six years of primary school, ninety-two percent of students graduate; but less than sixty percent of graduates
continue their education. Only about half the children from low-income families are enrolled in secondary school. A study by Suryahadi and Sumarto (2006) concludes that the main reasons for the discontinuity between almost universal primary school rates and much lower secondary school rates include gender discrimination, regional employment opportunities, household welfare, and whether children are from Muslim families. Irregularities in education for Muslim households may also decrease civic participation if education is positively correlated with voting. The authors conclude that cost is one of the chief factors that prohibit further schooling in Indonesia.

In a report published by the World Bank (2007), Indonesia faces three primary challenges in education: finding a balance between federal, national, local spending, especially in regards to teachers’ wages. Second, a more equitable distribution of funding, some provinces have a huge gap between what they need and what they get in finances. Third, teachers are distributed unequally with overstaffing in over fifty percent of schools and understaffing in thirty percent. In an international scale, Indonesia ranks low in student learning achievement. They have ranked in the bottom quarter on international exams like Third International Mathematics Science Study and Program for International Student Assessment.

- **State Provision of Education and Positive Externalities**
Most policy analysts make the case that public spending is justified if it unleashes positive externalities that would otherwise be ignored by the private sector. This idea has been explored by Wolfe and Haveman (2001) who emphasize the role education plays in non-market related decisions. The authors conclude that education plays a vital role in the social well being of a community and in building economic growth. The benefits of education are not limited to the individual. Wolfe and Haverman find that the family unit, which often assumes the opportunity cost of foregone wages, also gains from having better educated members who later positively influence decisions that improve health, and the cognitive development of children, lower fertility and poverty rates, and generate other forms of social returns. Similarly, Solmon (1975) explains that as education increases, the tendency to save also rises. In addition, direct increases in earnings, educational attainment decreases risk aversion.

Other benefits of education are non-economic. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) find that education serves as a key factor in determining who exercises the right to vote. Their basic conclusion is that those with more schooling are more likely to find information on voting, registering to vote, and feel compelled to exercise civic rights. Their work suggests that a strong correlation between education and civic duties may be a relevant research topic in democratic countries. In particular, in the third largest democracy in the world, Indonesia, the correlation may be a key factor in
raising a generation of active and engaged citizens. It is also possible that other issues are at play, factors such as a stable, cohesive family that also instills a sense of political engagement would keep children in school.

An extensive literature documents the correlation between voting and educational attainment in developed and democratic countries. However, the amount of research on voting behavior in developing countries is not as vast. This thesis expands the literature in this area by examining the voting habits in a South-east Asian developing country by using survey data in Indonesia.

Voting in a nascent republic is more contingent than in countries where electoral participation has existed for a much longer period of time. People’s attitudes and expectations differ also depending on their socioeconomic backgrounds. For example, those from the upper echelon of society may personally know public officials; therefore their needs and demands are more likely to receive attention. This is a stark contrast to someone from the rural areas, who is much less likely to have seen his/her parliamentarian representative, let alone know them on a first name basis. This thesis investigates these factors and tests empirically if increases in schooling in Indonesia may have significant effects on political participation, and whether the effects vary across socioeconomic groups.
The dataset used is the Indonesian Family Life Survey (IFLS) 2007 sponsored by the Rand Corporation. The model tests how additional years of education affect the probability of voting in a probit model, while controlling for socioeconomic factors, religious variables and ethnic groups. The remainder of this paper covers the motivation, literature review, conceptual framework, analysis plan, model, framework, descriptive statistics, results, and ends with policy recommendation and conclusion.
Chapter 2. Motivation for the Research

The research hypothesizes a strong, positive correlation between increased education, and civic participation in Indonesia. Specifically, it tests if increases in education in Indonesia also increase voter turnout. The importance of civic participation comes from the founding principle that voting is considered the duty and responsibility of citizens. People can make their voices heard through the act of voting. When certain groups tend not to vote, their interests are marginalized compared to citizens that exercise this right. More interestingly, those that do not vote often dive into apathy apologist histrionics that they are ignored by politicians, giving reason to believe that this relationship works both ways. Voter apathy in Indonesia may also be affected by choices of candidates (or lack thereof). However this may be debatable, since there are more than a dozen major political parties in Indonesia, with one at least representing the point-of-view of any citizen who wants his/her voice heard. Therefore, there must be some other factors behind voter apathy rather than a lack of candidates.

Current international interest in Indonesia stems from the recent democratic practices established after the end of the Suharto regime in 1998. With each successive political administration, Indonesia has made substantial progress towards full-fledged democracy. This does not yet amount to the country having an excellent system of
governance. However, in the fourth largest nation in the world, each change matters when it moves toward building a transparent, accountable government.

These developments set the stage for active civic participation. With the constant involvement of the public, it may be possible to build institutions that are accountable to the people. The key is to build momentum and encourage the active participation of citizens to hold their government responsible. Otherwise, a non-responsive and neglectful government may exasperate restive conditions for citizens who believe that the government and political parties no longer care. It may also fuel separatist tensions (as in Aceh and West Papua) or cause inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence.

Lastly, as the biggest Muslim country in the world, elections in Indonesia play a huge role in international discourse on the compatibility of Islam with democracy. Past elections indicate that these two are not mutually exclusive. In general, as stated by Nasr (2005), the international community may see in Indonesia the emergence of Muslim democrats to counter the influence of extremist Islam.
Chapter 3. Literature Review

- Who Votes?

The primary objective of this thesis is to study the relationship between years of schooling and civic participation (voting). A great deal of rich literature has been published on this relationship in countries such as the UK or the US from Milligan, Moretti and Oreopoulos (2004). The article demonstrates a strong, robust relationship between education and civic engagement in the United States, but not in the United Kingdom. Moreover, voting is also affected by voter registration. If voter education had a cost or procrastination was a problem, then liberalization of registration would increase voting. However, if these two factors were not a concern, then it would not affect voter turnout.

Most empirical research finds a positive correlation between voting and education. For example, Mark N. Franklin (1999) finds a strong relationship in Europe between average education and the proportion of the population that votes in elections. While Franklin controls for many socioeconomic variables to help screen for confounding causes in voting, it is difficult to take into account all factors such as intergenerational attitudes, changes in political party rhetoric or personalities, and degree of competition in elections. There are other issues to contend with in democratic and developed countries, such as voter malaise, as noted by Galston in his
2001 study on low voter turn-out among American high school students, compared to fifty years ago. Despite increases in secondary school enrollment in America, education does not directly lead to increases in political knowledge, but, overall, those with more education are more likely to participate and make their voices heard.

Cassel and Lo (1997) stress the importance of omitted variable bias in the empirical studies of education and voting. While assuming that socialization plays a minor role, the authors explain much of the difference in people’s decision to vote in terms of self-selection, rather than the much accepted role of education. In other words, they suggest political involvement and innate ability are more likely to play a more important role in the likelihood of voting, than schooling itself. This means that those that will vote may further their education in order to extend their influence in the political life.

- **Voting in Developing Countries**

Civic participation and voter turnout in the developed world is categorically different from what would be seen in the developing countries (Bulmer, Warwick 1993). A large part of the difference will likely be due to different traditions and expectations regarding citizen-government relations. In the west, the government has been viewed traditionally as an accessory to its people. However, in countries where
expectations and responsibility have not been thoroughly defined, it is not surprising to find widespread cynicism directed towards politicians and political parties in the developing world (Torney-Purta 2002). When social policies are weakly defined or finances sporadic or strictly limited this creates suspicion and doubt. This cynicism is reflected in abysmal voter turnout rates.

While there are no broad spectrum applications of voter turnout in the developing world, there are a few noteworthy patterns. For example, in the developed world, there was above a seventy percent turn out in countries such as Sweden, Australia, Netherlands, Germany, Canada, with an overall average of 81 percent turn out over the last ten years for developed western countries. With the exception of the United States and Switzerland (with an average around 55%), participation is overall healthy. In some lower-income countries such as Burkina Faso, Colombia, India and Kazakhstan, however, there is voter turn out of less than sixty percent of those eligible to vote (source: International IDEA, 2002). This extends to many regions of the developing world, such as parts of Central and South America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

In developing countries, a strong determining factor in voter turnout is the state of the economy and structure of ruling political parties (Pacek & Radcliff, 1995). Strong support of government is positively affected by short-term bursts in the national
There are many local factors that determine the outcome of voter turnout in developing countries (in this article the authors use data from South Asian, Caribbean, West African and South American countries), but the authors note two common themes that apply: 1) during a recession there is an increase in turnout, with marginalized and disaffected citizens voting for the opposition parties, but 2) voters abstain from participating when incumbent parties oversee strong economic growth. Therefore, developing country constituents vote to punish governments failing to manage economic development, but, unlike western countries’ (constituents), will largely abstain from voting during periods of rising income.

Remmer (1991) states that this relationship between economic changes and political outcome is determined largely by the system of political party cooperation. When political parties are pragmatic, they will put aside short-term political process gains for the sake of stability. In addition, Remmer finds that than the aggregate age of the democracy does not have a strong effect on voting outcomes. In other words, the existence of elections is not statistically significant in the case of political stability.

• Voting in Indonesia

Indonesia first gained their independence from Netherlands in 1945 under the leadership of Sukarno. After a failed experiment in liberal democracy, the leader
proposed “guided democracy” which sought to appease secular nationalists, religious
groups and communists in 1957. Suharto, a leading general, would overthrow this
system to establish an autocratic form of government that would last for three decades.
As Bertrand (1997) notes, elections during the New Order era were meticulously
rigged internally, as to create believable external results. This voting system lasted
until the Asian Financial Crisis, which indirectly ousted Suharto. Indonesians would
not see parliamentary style free elections until the formal end of the New Order regime
in 1999.

After open and relatively transparent democracy has taken root, Indonesia had
been guided under the rocky, executive leadership of B. J. Habibie, Abdurrahman
Wahid, and Megawati Sukarnoputri (daughter of Sukarno). Each president was granted
one term before being promptly replaced by a new candidate. Aspinal (2005) states
that these transitions in presidential and legislative elections mark a pivotal watershed
moment for pent-up voter anguish. While the elections give evidence of the post-
authoritarian democratic transition of Indonesia, many citizens would still be
influenced by their ethnic and religious ties in casting their votes.

With open elections came higher expectations from politicians and parties.
Unfortunately, thirty-three years under authoritarian rule had a major, long-lasting
effect on state institutions. The federal agencies, judicial system, legislative body,
military and state-owned corporations had been calibrated to serve a single authority. Mcleod (2005) said that for any statesman/stateswoman to reform this system, it would take a tremendous, extraordinary effort. Unfortunately, many politicians had over-promised and under-delivered in this regard. Voters welcomed elections, but could not understand why government had suddenly become more ineffective than under the New Order regime.

Disappointment in democratic leadership was evident in the 2004 presidential election. In a runoff election between incumbent Sukarnoputri Megawati and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), the latter candidate defeated Megawati in a landslide of 61% support of 150 million voters. Liddle and Mujani (2005) state that demographically; there was not much difference between the voters that chose Yudhoyono over Megawati. In terms of urban/rural differences, province, age, schooling, and work there was no strong inclination for either candidate. More telling was the fact that observant Muslims were also split down the line between both choices, despite the fact that Megawati’s party is relatively more secular and SBY’s supporting party has a coalition with Islamist parties.

The majority of the support for SBY had come from the major dissatisfaction over Megawati’s performance as president. Disappointment with the previous administration stemmed mostly for high unemployment and corruption. Voters felt
uneasy with many of the compromises Megawati made with other parties and gave their support to the opposition. Most importantly, Qodori (2005) notes the transition between the Megawati and SBY was peaceful, with not a single security problem from the electoral process to the declaration of the winner. Ultimately, the political elites have adjusted to the system and accepted the voters’ choices. Not only was the president of Indonesia chosen directly by voters, but also provincial leaders, parliamentarians, governors, and mayors. Indonesians have more power to pick, and dismiss, those who will take public office.

While it was up to human rights campaigners, labor unions and students to change the political system to a democracy, it is the responsibility of political parties to further those gains in the long-run. Tan (2006) explains that the political party system in Indonesia is weak, the majority of them elite-led and ultimately out of touch with the common voter. The parties in Indonesia do not have a strong, apparent platform on policy issues, therefore voters choose based on personalities. Ultimately, someone may decide to vote if they agree with the character and charisma of a party leader.

- **Education and Politics That May Influence Voting**

Other factors that may influence voting include the use of political indoctrination in schools. Richard B. Coffman (1990) describes states that may use
public education as a means to indoctrinate youth to accept government authority. Moreover, states may use schools to encourage citizens to vote or not vote. He suggests that political parties also use indoctrination to influence behavior, even if it is not used immediately for receiving votes. Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer (2007) demonstrate the high correlation between democracy, education and voting. The underlying premise in their work is that education prepares citizens social norms and mores on interaction, which also benefit civic participation activities such as voting. Interestingly, the authors compare the system of democracy and authoritarian rule. In the comparison, democracy suffers from the free-rider dilemma (where citizens benefit from an open system without having to put in resources to support an open government), but it has a much wider support base. On the other hand, authoritarian regimes give strong incentives to a small elite, but are dependent on key participants to function properly. As the provision of education increases, the authors conclude that the value of civic engagement also increases, creating a bottle-neck ensuring popular support for democratic governance. This theory has important implications for Indonesia, given its size and recent democratic reforms; reform makes it unlikely that it will return to single party rule.

While democratic reform is blooming, there is still the possibility of political indoctrination affecting voting habits. Indoctrination in Indonesia often employs the
ideology of Pancasila, the philosophical foundation of the country. It includes the five main concepts of belief in God, just humanity, unity in diversity, democracy by deliberation, and social justice. In the past, Pancasila has been used to indoctrinate government workers. They were subject to the strict requirements of attendance in two weeks of Pancasila-inspired classes. While secular in nature, the Pancasila doctrine emphasizes belief in God through religion. It did not matter which one specifically, but this doctrine, originally intended to counter the growing influence of communism, could affect voters’ feelings toward sectarian candidates.
Chapter 4. Conceptual Framework

Political science theory suggests that education can have two possible effects on voting behavior in Indonesia. The first is that with each additional year of study, one would have a better understanding of the policies and platforms of the political parties. If a person drops out of secondary school to start working, he/she may not receive the additional lessons from social sciences that would enable him/her to distinguish between candidates and understand the effects of politics. However, if he/she continues on to tertiary levels, on average their grasp of socioeconomic workings of society are vastly more knowledgeable, both in breath and depth.

A second effect of education is the expectations from government. In poor, rural areas, where social services or government offices are few and far between, people may not vote because they feel that none of the candidates has much to offer. In addition to expectations, ignorance or low comprehension of political systems and candidates strongly contribute to voter apathy. While less educated citizens may care, they may not know enough about where or how to vote. Other consequences of little education, such as illiteracy, act as serious roadblocks to civic participation.

The idea that poor education leads to low government expectations is supported by the character of Indonesian politics. In much of Indonesia political contestants dole out gifts such as instant noodles or t-shirts in areas that suffer from great destitution, a
practice termed “goodie bag” politics. Ultimately, this form of vote-buying undermines the long-run capabilities of political institutions because low-income citizens expect free hand-outs every election cycle, rather than policy changes.

This type of political chicanery only perpetuates the bouts of poverty and increases apathy in the electoral process. Even though a small gift may mean a great deal for Indonesians living in crushing destitution, the trade-off leads to votes being determined by those who can come up with short-term goods over long-term plans. However, by staying in school, citizens are more likely to understand the responsibilities and interests of government offices and political parties through better education. These understandings play out in the ballot box, where Indonesians can choose, and more importantly, discharge politicians who are incompetent or negligent.

This study poses the following hypothesis:

That Indonesians with more education are more likely to have voted.

The focus of the paper is to test this theory. As noted above, the subject has been written about at length, and many studies focus only on American or European countries. This thesis will explore this relationship in an Indonesian context.
Chapter 5. Proposed Empirical Model and Analysis Plan

The probit regression model examines aggregate years of schooling and its effect on voting while controlling for other socioeconomic variables. Many factors influence the decision to vote, so it is essential to control for variables such as the years of schooling, socioeconomic variables, ethnicity, religious beliefs and piety, marital status and employment status.

The analysis uses a probit model to examine the effects of schooling on voting while testing for the additional controls of religious beliefs and ethnicity. In the model, voting is the dependent variable and years of education is the chief explanatory variable, with additional socioeconomic controls.

Education is the explanatory independent variable. Holding all other variables constant, hypothetically there will be an upward trend: as the years of education increase, the likelihood of voting should also increase. Education is associated with an increase in probability of voting because those with higher levels of schooling are more likely to understand the political implications of voting and more importantly how to cast a vote.

In addition to education, other factors may also play a role in determining the likelihood of civic participation. For example, are older people less likely or more
likely to vote if they have spent the better part of their lives living under an authoritarian regime? One might also think that those living in the middle-aged cohort would be less likely to vote because of the dual responsibilities of taking care of parents while providing for their children. On the other hand, youth may become disaffected by the widespread corruption which has unfortunately been endemic to Indonesian politics. However, the exact time at which this “golput” or “nonvoter” apathy begins remains to be determined. It could also be possible that non-voters may be equally distributed among age groups.

Those that are married may also be more likely to vote through marital ties to the larger community, as opposed to single, divorced or separated individuals that may feel less attached to their surroundings. Females may have more difficulties in voting because of dual constraints of having less education and more home-bound roles usually prescribed in male-dominated, developing countries. Those coming from urban areas are more likely vote due to higher population density within cities leading to easier access to polling booths. In regards to the log of family expenditures, those coming from backgrounds with higher spending are more likely to engage in civic participation because they are not financially constrained and have additional leisure time to know and understand politics.
In terms of ethnicity, the Javanese have been known for their political savvy in making their voices heard in Jakarta. Therefore they might be more likely than other groups to exercise their right to vote. However, as the political sphere continues to expand across the archipelago, an increasing involvement of minority groups may be seen. For example, Sigelman et. al. (1985) note that ethnicity no longer plays a major role in voting habits relative to other conditions in western democracies, but this may not be the case in multi-ethnic Indonesia, with increasing decentralization in a country with more than 700 different languages and dialects.

General happiness is taken from a question on the survey asking the participants how satisfied they are with their current conditions on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very happy to 4 being miserable. Responses 1 and 2 have been combined to create a dummy variable to signify happiness with current life conditions in the participant. Moved is coded as a variable signifying if the participant has changed home locations since the age of 12. The study included this variable so that those who migrate may feel less of a connection to their current community; therefore, they may be less likely to vote in local elections. Furthermore, a variable was added to capture the effects of becoming unemployed, which is defined as having lost a job or quitting work within the last five years. This variable was included because those who are no longer employed may have more leisure time to express their discontent or engage in
civic participation by voting. Lastly, controls for religious beliefs (Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, and Hindu) and levels of piety were included. Pious is coded as a dummy variable from the original survey question asking how devout the participant was, from a scale of 1-4, with one being very religious to 4 being non-practicing. Survey answers 1 and 2 were coded to signify piety in the respondents.

The model testing the hypothesis is presented below:

**Model: Citizen Voted**

Probability of Having Voted in a Past Election = \( \beta_0 + \beta_1 \) Years of Schooling + \( \beta_2 \) Age + \( \beta_3 \) Age Squared + \( \beta_4 \) Married + \( \beta_5 \) Female + \( \beta_6 \) Urban + \( \beta_7 \) Log of Family’s Monthly Expenditures +\( \beta_8 \) Javanese + \( \beta_9 \) Sundanese + \( \beta_{10} \) Balinese + \( \beta_{11} \) General Happiness +\( \beta_{12} \) Moved + \( \beta_{13} \) Fired from job +\( \beta_{12} \) Pious + \( \beta_{13} \) Muslim +\( \beta_{14} \) Catholic + \( \beta_{15} \) Protestant + \( \beta_{16} \) Hindu + \( \mu \)

In short form:
Probability of Having Voted in a Past Election = $\beta_0 + \beta_1$ Years of Schooling + $\beta_2$ Demographic Variables + $\beta_3$ Socioeconomic Variables + $\beta_4$ Ethnicity + $\beta_5$ Religious Controls + $\mu$

The models integrate findings from various sources to determine the probability of voting. The most relevant factor which determines the chance of a citizen participating in an election is the years of formal schooling the person receives. Individuals who remain in school longer are hypothetically more likely to turn out at the polls than their compatriots that exit earlier from schooling.

- **Data Source**

The data set for this thesis is drawn from the IFLS, the Indonesian National Socioeconomic Household Survey 2007 sponsored by RAND Corporation. IFLS is a series of large scale multipurpose longitudinal socioeconomic and health surveys. While the longitudinal study began in 1993, questions on specific voting patterns were not included until the latest 2007 survey. The survey generates a great deal of data collected at the individual and household levels, including different indicators of economic and non-economic indicators: consumption, income, assets, education,
migration, labor market outcomes, marriage, fertility, contraceptive use, health status, use of health care and health insurance, relationships among family members, processes of family decision-making, transfers among family members, and participation in community activities. Aside from individual- and household-level information, IFLS also has detailed information from the regions where IFLS households are located and about the institutions that serve citizens of those neighborhoods. These data cover aspects of the physical and social environment, infrastructure, employment opportunities, food prices, access to health and educational facilities, and the quality and prices of services available at those facilities.

The population of interest is the Indonesian voter, whose age ranges from 17 to 100. The minimum age to vote in Indonesia is 17. Therefore, the population of interest is Indonesians aged 17 and older. The sampling method is a random selection of about 15,000 families and 44,000 individuals across the country. The 2007 survey gathered records of roughly 30,000 observations on voting that occurred in 2007.

In the survey, respondents were asked eight questions on the explanatory variable, electoral participation: Did you vote in the following elections: presidential election, regional representative election, legislative-central election, legislative-provincial election, legislative regional election, governorship election, mayoral election, and village leader election.
## Chapter 6. Descriptive Statistics

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<td>0.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Voted on Governor Election</td>
<td>Dep. Var.</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>Voted on Mayor Election</td>
<td>Dep. Var.</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village head</td>
<td>Voted on Village head election</td>
<td>Dep. Var.</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Years of formal schooling</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Person's age in years</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>36.80</td>
<td>15.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Squared</td>
<td>Quadratic function of age</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>1604.19</td>
<td>1370.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Marital status (1=married, 0=not)</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sex (1=female, 0=male)</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Urban (1=urban, 0=rural)</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log of Per Capita Family Expenditures</td>
<td>Monthly log of family expenditure</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>12.97</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>Ethnicity (1=Javanese, 0=not)</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundanese</td>
<td>Ethnicity (1=Sundanese, 0=not)</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balinese</td>
<td>Ethnicity (1=Balinese, 0=not)</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Overall content (1=happy, 0=unhappy)</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>Moved since 12 years old (1=moved, 0=constant)</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fired</td>
<td>Lost job in last five years (1=yes, 0=no)</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pious</td>
<td>Observant in faith (1=yes, 0=no)</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Muslim (1=Muslim, 0=non-Muslim)</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Catholic (1=Catholic, 0=non-Catholic)</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Protestant (1=Protestant, 0=non-Protestant)</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>Hindu (1=Hindu, 0=non-Hindu)</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 7. Results

The overall results from the probit regressions support the hypothesis of this work. According to the findings, additional years of education to a degree affects whether a citizen has engaged in the political process by voting.
The direction of the results show that, ceterius paribus, holding other controls constant, there is a positive statistically significant effect of years of education and voting. In 8 cases of voting, years of education are statistically significant in 7 instances, with the exception of having voted in the gubernatorial election. In other words, the demonstrated behavior of more schooling in the regression on data from the Indonesian Family Life Survey 2007 indicates, on average, it will give a positive and statistically significant indication of having voted. It is as predicted, that more education will substantially increase the probability of voting. This is true for the presidential election and parliamentary level elections. However, the results are not as vigorous in the cases of local level elections involving the mayor and village ahead.

a. Explanatory Variable Results

After controlling for age, socioeconomic characteristics, ethnicity and religious measures, the probit regression table reports that the years of schooling has a significant and positive effect in determining if someone voted. According to the previously cited literature review, people with more schooling tend to better understand the mechanism of democracy and politics. Therefore, when looking at the table, it looks like Indonesians are more likely to have voted with additional years of education.

While the above may be true, these effects should be interpreted with some concern in the case of village head elections. The majority of results indicate that there
is a statistically significant positive effect of education on voting, except it is negative in the case of village leader elections.

The years of schooling variable is associated with a 2.0 percentage point of increase in the probability of having voted in the presidential election. In the case of the parliamentary elections (legislative provincial, central legislative, regional legislative) there is about a 1.3 percentage point increase across the board for each additional year of education. In local elections, years of schooling has a statistically insignificant effect, but in the case of mayoral elections each year increases the probability of voting by 1 percentage point. There is a negative effect in village head elections, with a decrease of 1.4 percentage points for each additional year of education.

An Indonesian person with at least a high school degree is 3 percentage points more likely to vote in a parliamentary election and 3.8 percentage points more likely to vote in a presidential election. However, in village elections, the probability of voting decreases by 3.3 percentage points. An average married female with a high school education is more likely to vote by 14 percentage points. While a 20 year old unmarried, male with only a primary school education in a presidential election is less likely to vote by 29.8 percentage points. A similar male but with a university degree would be more likely to vote by 24.8 percentage points. Overall, education had a very
strong influence in determining the probability of voting in Indonesia. The main results of a strong, positive correlation between years of schooling and civic participation turn out to be as expected.

This provides evidence that more educated Indonesians are more likely to vote. Years of education has a negative, statistically significant effect on having voted for the village head, and not a significant effect on gubernatorial elections. However for the rest of the cases of civic participation by voting, there is a positive and statistically significant effect demonstrated in the probit regression of years of schooling on the probability of voting.

b. Determinants of Voting: Control Variable

The effect of socioeconomic and religious variables listed in the probit regression tables also play a significant role in determining voting. A person’s age and marital status are factors that significantly impact voting. Age also plays a quadratic role although the negative curve has a nominal role in affecting impact on voting. As predicted, the effect of age is positive up until a certain point where it will reduce the probability of voting. In a presidential election, an increase of one year increases the probability of voting by 2.5 percentage points. This effect gradually diminishes in parliamentary elections around 1.27 percentage point increase for each year increase.
Age has a higher magnitude effect in local elections, where an additional year will increase the probability of voting by 3.6, 4.4, and 2.4 percentage points for governor, mayor and village head elections respectively.

Marital status is statistically significant and positive in all of the regressions, but the magnitude varies. As predicted, married couples are much more likely to vote. For example, in presidential elections, being married increases the probably of voting by 9.3 percentage points. In the legislative elections, being married increases the probability of voting around 7.5 percentage points. In the governor, mayor and village head elections, married Indonesians increase their probability of voting by 2.4, 3.8 and 4.1 percentage points respectively.

Being female has a negative and strongly significant effect on the probability of voting, with the exception of presidential and governor elections, which are insignificant. Unfortunately, women were expected to be less likely to vote and it appears to be true in this model. Being female decreases the probability of voting by around 3.3 percentage points for parliamentary elections, 1.6 percentage points for mayoral elections, and 4.5 percentage points in village head elections.

Living in an urban area has a negative and statistically significant effect on all elections except for governor. Counter to the previous expectation, those living in urban areas are less likely to vote. It decreases the probability of voting by 5.5
percentage points for presidential elections and 4.2 percentage points in parliamentary elections. In mayoral campaigns, it decreases the probably by 11 percentage points.

The log of monthly per capita expenditures is statistically significant at the one percent confidence level across all of the interpretations, but overall, the higher amount of spending, the lower the proportional chance of voting is, with the exception of having voted for the last mayoral election. This result was the opposite of the expected effect, with those who have more money are also more likely to get involved in civic participation. For example, for a single male living in a family that spends an amount of 12.5 million Rupiah a month ($1,250 USD), the probability of voting in a presidential election decreases by 9.5 percentage points. While a married female living in a family that spends 3.5 million Rupiah ($350 USD) the probability of voting in a similar election decreases only by 2.1 percentage points.

Surprisingly, ethnicity has varied effects across the board. While being Javanese (the biggest and most politically active ethnic group) will not have a significant effect of voting in a national election, it would have a statistically significant effect on voting for any other local, regional or parliamentary choice. While being Sundanese or Balinese, the effects will also vary. A Balinese unmarried male will have a 24.5 percentage point increase in voting for a governor’s election, but the same male would have a negative effect on a legislative regional election of 9.5
percentage points. A 20 year old Javanese unmarried woman with a primary school education is 11 percentage points less likely to vote.

There are also other mitigating factors that have an effect on voting. Included is general happiness, if they have moved since they are 12 years old, or if they have been terminated from a job within the last 5 years. As predicted, having moved has a negative and strongly significant effect. For example, a married male, average age will be 11 percentage points less likely to vote in a regional representative ballot if they have moved in the last few years. However, if a married male, age 25 is generally happy with his life, this would have a 15 percentage point increase in the likelihood of voting. Overall, those that are happy, unexpectedly are more likely to vote than those that are not happy with their current condition.

Religion also plays a strong role in having to vote. Contrary to the initial expectation, observant voters are more likely to engage in civic participation. Overall, being devout, regardless of faith, plays a statistically significant effect almost across the board. It increases the probability of voting in a presidential election by 1.7 percentage points and parliamentary type elections by 2.8 percentage points. A Muslim, married female who is observant has a 31 percentage point increase in voting in a presidential election, while a Protestant, non-practicing unmarried male would
have a 8.2 percentage point increase in voting in a similar election. In almost all cases, faith plays a role in politics and the decision to vote.
Chapter 8. Policy Recommendation and Conclusion

Theoretically, we could assume that a more educated citizenry would be better prepared to make voting decisions. With additional schooling, the populace would better understand how political, economic and social systems work and how important decisions are made. Accordingly, this study shows that schooling is indeed associated with a higher probability of participation. However, such evidence should not be taken with overwhelming optimism. Even today, while the SBY administration has made considerable gains in eliminating the abuses of public office for private gain, voter dissatisfaction is on the rise, especially among the youth.

Many developing countries face steep budget constraints for social programs. Indonesia is no exception to this restriction. In addition to providing for health and social services for a population of 230 million, the Indonesian government is obliged to register each of the over 120 million eligible voters over 17,000 islands, 2,000 individual elections and a billion ballots with limited resources (Source: UNDP Election 2004 Support Programme). In the 1970’s, Indonesia has made huge progress in achieving near universal primary school education, financed by oil revenue. However the substantial cost of financing universal secondary schooling is a challenge for the Ministry of Education. In addition to schooling, the government has to provide
voter education. Moreover, knowing how to cast a ballot, Indonesians should understand the candidates’ platform and how to weigh the issues. Under-investment in voters’ analytical capabilities skews campaign and political incentives of candidates running for public office.

Using the Rand Corporation survey data, this thesis looks at the relationship between civic participation and voting by looking at the association between education and whether Indonesians cast their vote in presidential, parliamentary and local elections. Like previous studies conducted on education and voting, the regression results show that education has a statistically significant effect on voting habits, the more educated the person is, the more likely they are to vote relative to the average population. The other statistically significant variables that made it more likely for people to vote are age, and if they are married, Muslim, Christian (Catholic and Protestant) or Hindu and if they are ethnically Sundanese or Balinese. Also, whether the participant was male or female did not have a significant effect on the probability of someone voting.

While low voter turnout may be a symptom of the political expectations, policy recommendations should aim at fixing the causes of weak democratic participation. To sort out these dilemmas, we should aim for the following objectives 1) increased voter turnout 2) increase the perception that political parties are held accountable for their
decisions 3) ingrain a sense of responsibility for electoral results on the part of voters.

Therefore, the following three recommendations deal with non-participation:

- Increase of public funding on civic education and voter responsibility to ultimately increase political competition. Students should understand that not voting undermines the political process and weakens institutional responsiveness.

- Change the election system to encourage input from the ethnic minorities. Once these interests are re-aligned, politicians’ actions will be more reflective of their constituencies. Ultimately, this will increase the incentive for everyone to vote if they feel that their ethnic group’s interests are given attention.

- Lastly, provide support for voter information and education. Lower turnout among those with less education may be due to factors such as illiteracy or ignorance on how to cast a vote. In addition to providing information on the technical and procedural process of voting, election commissions should provide additional attention to areas with lower educational rates and high poverty.

While not all policy recommendations can be enacted simultaneously, especially given Indonesia’s limited resources, certain piece-meal approaches will suffice. Students can be taught that not voting is not equivalent to condemning corruption. There are a total of thirty political parties (including minor ones); voters should be able to find one that represents their views. They may not be able to gain immediate benefits, but it should be stressed that at least their principles and beliefs have been expressed through the ballot. To finance democratization, Indonesian
administrators can request unconditional grants from Western governments and NGO’s who believe in the mission of spreading democracy.

The road to developing a transparent democracy and educated citizenry is long and littered with many obstacles. However, to abandon this path will lead to social and economic decline. Indonesian policy makers must ultimately aim for the goal of a free and accountable political system, while utilizing the education system to galvanize their citizenry and instill a sense of civic responsibility and comprehension of how the electoral system works and where accountability lies. If the government of Indonesia hopes to retain legitimacy in the eyes of its people, then it should remain steadfast on working to improve Indonesia’s educational system.
References


Bulmer, Martin and Warwick, Donald P. Social Research in Developing Countries. UCL Press, 1993.


\(^1\) Unlike traditional OLS regressions, Probit models are interpreted by holding all variables at the mean value, then increasing or decreasing the variable(s) of interest to see the effect it has on the predicted probability of the dependent variable.