

Determinants of Low Voter Political Participation in the 2024 Elections in Gunung Sari Ilir Village

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the determinants of low voter political participation in the 2024 Elections in Gunung Sari Ilir Village by examining three major dimensions: internal psychological and perceptual factors, external socio-economic and environmental barriers, and institutional, administrative, and governance constraints. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach supported by thematic analysis to identify patterns, interpret respondents' perceptions, and understand the interrelated structure of deterrent variables influencing electoral engagement. The findings indicate that low levels of political efficacy, distrust toward political actors, weak political awareness, and negative political perception interact with socio-economic insecurity, limited information access, mobility constraints, and environmental difficulties that collectively reduce the feasibility and interest of citizens to vote. Meanwhile, systemic issues such as inaccurate voter registry data, low trust in electoral management institutions, administrative complexity, governance failures, and perceived corruption further reinforce disengagement and weaken the legitimacy of electoral processes. These multidimensional conditions suggest that voter participation cannot be understood merely as a matter of individual voluntarism but is influenced by structural forces that require integrated reform strategies across psychological, socio-economic, and institutional domains to rebuild electoral participation capacity.

Keywords: Voter Participation; Electoral Disengagement; Governance Factors

INTRODUCTION

Political participation is one of the main indicators of democratic quality in a country. Elections that are regularly implemented within the democratic system are not only a procedural mechanism to determine leaders, but also represent the extent to which citizens are aware of their political rights and are actively involved in determining the direction of governance in the future. In the Indonesian context, elections serve not only as a means of transferring power, but also as an instrument of political education, an evaluation tool of leader performance, a channel for articulating community interests, and a process that strengthens the legitimacy of the existing political system. However, high voter turnout does not automatically correlate with the quality of democracy. In many contexts, low voter turnout becomes an indicator of underlying social, political, and institutional problems that hinder citizen involvement in formal political processes, especially in local elections.

The phenomenon of low voter political participation at the local level is increasingly crucial because democratic reality in Indonesia is experiencing fragmentation of political competition, identity-based contestation, transactional politics, declining public trust in political parties and elites, as well as growing public apathy (Fossati & Martinez i Coma, 2020; Winengan, 2018). Although decentralization policies have provided space for citizens to be more directly involved in the election of regional leaders, the implementation of local democracy still faces systemic and cultural obstacles that accumulate into passive political behavior. This condition became visible in the 2024 simultaneous elections, including in urban areas with high social heterogeneity such as Gunung Sari Ilir Village. The low participation rate of voters in this area indicates the presence of both internal and external determinants that interact and affect political behavior, resulting in the decision not to use their right to vote.

Low voter participation cannot be interpreted merely as passive behavior, but also as a form of political expression (Lin, 2016). Apathy is not only a form of indifference, but can also be a signal of distrust, frustration, rejection of the political system considered to be unaccountable, or an accumulation of negative experiences during previous electoral processes. This situation emerges through a complex interaction between citizen perceptions of the integrity of election organizers, the effectiveness of state institutions, the quality of political information received, household socio-economic conditions, political literacy, and technical aspects of election administration such as population data accuracy, accessibility to polling stations, and the performance of election socialization. Therefore, low political participation must be positioned as a multi-level phenomenon that reflects psychological factors, social factors, institutional factors, and structural factors.

A single locus study such as in Gunung Sari Ilir Village is important because micro-level empirical mapping allows identification of determinants in a more contextual manner. National level data often simplifies participation into aggregate numbers, whereas determinants at the micro level are often highly specific according to local social culture, citizen mobility, employment structure, patterns of social relationships, local political habits, and the type of interaction between citizens and political actors. A focused exploration in one locus can generate more comprehensive understanding of the social and political reality shaping low voter participation in the 2024 election in the village (Rifai & Haeril, 2025). A qualitative approach also allows the discovery of citizen meaning regarding electoral participation, candidate evaluation, and the interpretation of the right to vote as part of democratic life.

The urgency of this study becomes stronger because democratic quality cannot be measured solely from turnout numbers, but from the quality of citizen engagement with political processes. Persistent low turnout threatens the legitimacy of elected leaders and reduces public support for government development programs. Low participation also creates the risk of strengthening dominance of certain political forces within local power structure because the voice of the public that should serve as control becomes weaker. Therefore, understanding the determinants of low voter participation becomes strategic for formulating policy recommendations that can increase democratic participation in future elections (Thelma et al., 2024; Utari et al., 2023).

This research attempts to fill the gap at the local level regarding determinants of low voter participation in Indonesia during the 2024 elections, using Gunung Sari Ilir Village as the case. The findings are expected to enrich the existing literature on political participation in Indonesia in the context of local elections and provide empirical basis for electoral organizers, local government, political parties, and stakeholders to improve voter education strategies, regulatory improvements, and population administration accuracy related to voter data quality.

Literature Review

Studies on political participation have long been central discussions in political science and public administration, because participation represents the core substance of democracy. Literature generally explains political participation as an active involvement process in which citizens engage in decision making processes that influence public policies. Participation is not limited only to voting behavior during elections, but also includes involvement in campaign activities, political discussions, membership in political or social organizations, and active participation in political advocacy. However, within the study of elections, the use of voting rights remains the most dominant indicator used to measure political participation.

The literature that discusses determinants of political participation explains that participation is influenced by multi-level interactions between internal and external factors (Alonso et al., 2019; Nový & Katrňák, 2015). Internal factors are related to psychological, cognitive, and attitudinal aspects of individuals such as belief systems, political trust, political efficacy, political awareness, and political literacy. Individuals who have negative experiences in previous elections tend to form perceptions that elections do not bring concrete changes, thus reducing their motivation to participate. Psychological aspects also include feelings of powerlessness, low confidence in understanding political issues, and doubts that individual votes can influence political outcomes. Low political literacy weakens the ability of individuals to understand the essence of elections and the importance of selecting leaders responsibly.

External factors are related to social, economic, cultural, and institutional contexts. External factors can include employment conditions, level of education, economic capability, financial security, mobility of the population, access to political information, access to polling stations, and quality of election socialization. In many urban contexts, mobility constraints are very high and can result in difficulties for voters in updating population data and ensuring they are registered in voter lists. In addition, socio-economic pressures can cause political participation to become secondary for groups who prioritize income stability and daily economic survival. Social structures and political networks also influence participation, especially in areas where informal networks such as patronage, kinship, or religious networks influence political preferences (Goodfellow, 2020).

Institutional factors are also described in the literature as important variables affecting participation. The strength and integrity of election organizers, the quality of government administration, regulatory clarity, transparency of procedures, and the credibility of political parties become the foundation of public trust in the electoral process. When institutional credibility is low, public trust will weaken, and this becomes a direct trigger of abstention choices in elections. Lack of consistency in law enforcement, cases of political manipulation, transactional politics, and failure to maintain the integrity of the democratic process contribute to distrust which accumulates into low political participation.

In addition to that, literature notes the influence of political context and national political climate. Political saturation due to frequent electoral cycles or repeated political competition without significant change in outcomes produces voter fatigue (Kostelka, 2025). Voter behavior becomes increasingly rational in choosing not to vote as a form of political protest or rejection of existing political choices. Abstention behavior in this view is not merely non-participation but becomes an expression of political criticism. This pattern aligns with the argument that political participation is not always reflected in active participation, but also through passive resistance strategies used by voters to express dissatisfaction.

Research also highlights socio-cultural factors embedded in communities. Social cohesion, social capital, and patterns of interaction between citizens play an important role in shaping participation behavior. In rural areas, social cohesion is usually stronger, making mobilization easier. In contrast, in urban areas with high plurality, social cohesion tends to be lower and individualism becomes stronger, making mobilization harder. Additionally, digital transformation has also changed voter behavior, where information consumption is no longer centralized through formal sources, but is fragmented through social media. Although social media enables access to information, it also increases misinformation, disinformation, and noise that can distort citizen perceptions toward elections and government. In some cases, misinformation campaigns can systematically weaken political participation.

Based on the literature, political participation is an outcome affected by multiple factors that interact simultaneously. Therefore, research that specifically examines the determinants of low political participation in a micro-context such as Gunung Sari Ilir Village is considered important. Local specificities cannot be generalized from national aggregates, because political behavior is shaped through lived experience, social interaction patterns, exposure to political information, and the contextual political environment. This literature also suggests that interdisciplinary approaches combining political behavior theories, socio-political structure analysis, and governance perspectives are required to understand the complexity of determinants of voter participation (Chanda Chansa Thelma & Lufeyo Chitondo, 2024).

Through a synthesis of existing literature, this research positions itself to contribute to the understanding of determinants influencing voter behavior at the local level during the 2024 elections. This literature review becomes the theoretical foundation to analyze how internal psychological factors, social dynamics, economic conditions, institutional credibility, and political environment shape voter decisions and voter disengagement. This study emphasizes that democracy is not only determined by electoral procedures, but also by the ability of the political system to build trust, transparency, equality, and meaningful participation.

Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze and understand the determinants contributing to low voter political participation in the 2024 Elections in Gunung Sari Ilir Village (Iswanto & Pamungkas, 2023; Yayan Sahi et al., 2024). The qualitative approach was selected because the phenomenon involves perception, meaning, experience, and subjective interpretation that cannot be measured solely through quantitative indicators, especially related to voter trust, awareness, psychological orientation, and socio-economic constraints. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation using purposive sampling to ensure variability of informants representing voters, non-voters, community actors, and election stakeholders. All collected data were analyzed using an interactive analysis model through continuous coding, categorization, and thematic interpretation to identify factors that interact and shape political disengagement. The validity of the findings was strengthened through triangulation of sources and verification of information with documentation and cross-informant confirmation to ensure consistency, accuracy, and credibility. This methodological approach aligns with the purpose of the study which focuses not on statistical generalization, but on producing in-depth contextual explanations that reflect internal and external determinants influencing voter behavior in the local political environment of Gunung Sari Ilir Village.

Results And Discussion

Identifying the determinants of low voter political participation in Gunung Sari Ilir Village in the 2024 Election requires in-depth elaboration that does not isolate influencing factors as single variables, but rather views them as a series of interacting dimensions that shape voter behavior. This phenomenon of non-participation cannot be understood solely as an isolated individual choice, but rather as a result of intersecting layers of psychological perceptions, socioeconomic conditions, environmental dynamics, and institutional credibility. Therefore, presenting findings through several thematic clusters is crucial to understanding the complexity of why voter participation remains low, even within a democratic structure that formally provides equal access and opportunity for every citizen to participate.

The first thematic structure emphasizes determinants rooted in voters' internal psychological dynamics and political perceptions (S. Baqutayan et al., 2024; Suniadewi & Abadi, 2024). The meaning of participation is constructed differently by each citizen, influenced by their political beliefs, trust, and belief that political participation will produce a meaningful impact. Apathy, declining political trust, and skepticism toward the electoral process do not emerge spontaneously, but rather as a result of the accumulation of life experiences, assessments of political actors, and the perceived irrelevance of political promises to the realities of their daily lives. This psychological withdrawal becomes the initial and most fundamental barrier that shapes the refusal to vote. When confidence that politics can bring about change fades, participation naturally declines, regardless of available institutional mechanisms.

The second thematic structure focuses on socio-economic pressures and contextual barriers arising from the external environment surrounding voters. Social inequality, employment patterns, household economic pressures, mobility constraints, access barriers, and the prioritization of life's needs over political engagement all form structural determinants that limit voters' opportunities and willingness to participate actively. In urban environments like Gunung Sari Ilir Village, daily pressures and fragmented social interactions create conditions in which political participation is deprioritized or even considered non-essential. Weak social cohesion in the urban landscape further diminishes the collective mobilization that traditionally plays a crucial role in driving voter turnout. This socio-economic reality reveals that participation

is not simply a matter of political interest, but also a negotiation between time, resources, and economic needs.

The third thematic dimension relates to the institutional and administrative elements that shape trust in the electoral system (Hooghe & Stiers, 2016; James et al., 2019). The credibility of election management bodies, the accuracy of voter data, the transparency of the process, and the effectiveness of election outreach activities significantly influence whether citizens perceive elections as worthwhile. Failures in population administration, unclear voter status, inadequate outreach, and repeated interactions with transactional politics undermine voter confidence in the fairness and integrity of elections. When institutions fail to demonstrate accountability and transparency, voters gradually withdraw and choose not to participate as a rational response. The interaction between institutional credibility and voter trust is a crucial determinant in shaping political withdrawal, demonstrating that electoral participation is highly dependent on the quality of governance and the institutional environment.

Through these three thematic structures, the complexity of low voter turnout becomes more visible as an interconnected system, rather than a single causal phenomenon. Understanding these interactions is crucial for interpreting voter non-participation not simply as accidental or individual apathy, but as an outcome shaped by overlapping forces that influence how citizens perceive the costs and benefits of participation. By presenting analysis through these three perspectives, this study provides a comprehensive view that combines internal psychological meaning, socio-economic reality, and institutional legitimacy as a coherent framework for interpreting the determinants of low voter participation in Gunung Sari Ilir Village.

Internal Psychological and Political Perception Factors Influencing Voter Participation

Psychological factors and internal political perceptions play a central role in shaping voter participation, as the decision to vote or abstain is primarily constructed at the individual level of meaning. Voters form interpretations about whether elections matter, whether voting will have a tangible impact on their lives, and whether political actors can be trusted to deliver on promises (Thomson & Brandenburg, 2019; Werner, 2019). When individuals perceive that their participation will not impact change, their motivation to vote significantly decreases. This psychological detachment does not occur instantly but is formed through accumulated experiences in previous election cycles, exposure to political disappointment, and the normalization of political practices viewed as transactional. Internal beliefs that politics is distant, irrelevant, or controlled by elites create a mindset where political participation becomes unnecessary or even perceived as a waste of energy, time, and hope.

Political trust is also one of the most important internal factors influencing participation. Citizens who have trust in political actors and institutions are more likely to participate because they believe their involvement contributes to the system. Conversely, when trust erodes, political perceptions become cynical and skeptical. Low trust is reinforced by narratives circulating in society about a lack of fairness, unequal political competition, or unaccountable decision-making. This distrust leads to the belief that politics operates not for the public good, but rather for elite bargaining (Bertsou, 2019; GOTTLIEB & KOSEC, 2019). As this distrust grows, voters psychologically distance themselves from the electoral process because voting is perceived as legitimizing a system that does not represent them. The feeling of having no meaningful influence in the political system then becomes a strong determinant of abstention.

Political efficacy serves as a psychological filter that determines an individual's willingness to engage in the electoral process. Individuals with low political efficacy feel they lack the knowledge, capacity, or influence to understand the political arena, or that their opinions and choices carry no weight. In this situation, political literacy becomes particularly relevant because a lack of exposure to credible political education and political discussion reinforces voters' hesitation and fear of making the wrong political choices. When political issues are perceived as complex or far removed from everyday reality, individuals will withdraw, regardless of the institutional mechanisms available to support participation. Therefore, psychological factors and internal political perceptions are the foundation that shapes whether political participation will occur or remain low, and in the context of Gunung Sari Ilir Village, this internal dimension is one of the most determining explanatory variables of voter non-participation in the 2024 election.

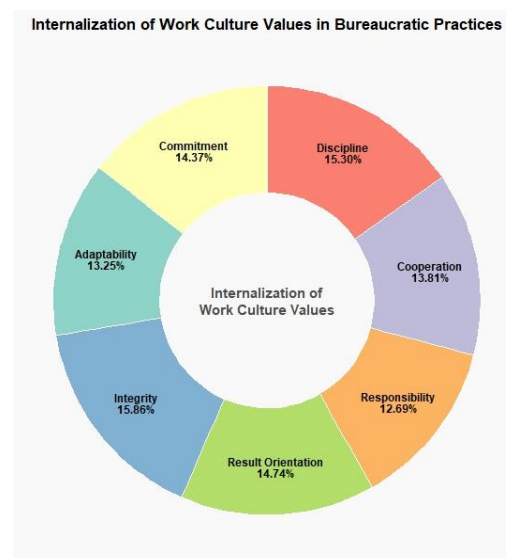


Figure 1 Internalization of Work Culture Values in Bureaucratic Practices
Source Data Processes by the Authors

Figure 1 is a donut diagram depicting the internalization of work culture values in bureaucratic practices. The diagram demonstrates that work culture values are not built from a single aspect, but rather emerge from a combination of various complementary dimensions. All the elements depicted collectively form the foundation of bureaucratic work behavior in the delivery of public services. Placing the main concept in the center of the diagram demonstrates that the core of all these components is the internalization of values, not merely normative knowledge isolated from daily administrative practices. This diagram reflects efforts to strengthen bureaucratic culture to make it more professional, modern, trustworthy, and aligned with ethical governance.

Integrity is featured as one of the components with the largest percentage (15.86%), reinforcing the argument that integrity is a crucial element of bureaucratic culture. In practice, integrity forms the basis of public trust and shapes the character of bureaucratic actors, preventing abuse of authority, manipulation of administrative processes, and unethical behavior (Menzel, 2015). When integrity is present in a bureaucratic system, public trust increases, government legitimacy is strengthened, and administrative processes become more transparent, predictable, and accountable.

Discipline also accounts for a significant proportion (15.30%) and reflects the need for bureaucracies to operate within clear, rules-based governance. Discipline ensures that bureaucratic actors follow standard procedures, adhere to administrative norms, complete tasks on time, and do not operate solely based on personal preferences or subjective considerations. Discipline is not only about procedural compliance, but also a mechanism for maintaining consistency, preventing irregularities, and ensuring fairness in administrative actions among all stakeholders.

The values of Results Orientation (14.74%) and Commitment (14.37%) emphasize that modern bureaucracies are concerned not only with following procedures but also with producing concrete outcomes that benefit society. Results orientation emphasizes that public administration must produce measurable impacts and public value, while commitment reflects the moral responsibility of bureaucratic actors to complete their tasks, maintain consistent performance, and adhere to institutional goals. The combination of these two values illustrates that current bureaucratic reform is directed toward results-based governance, rather than purely procedural actions (Aly, 2015).

The values of Cooperation (13.81%) and Adaptability (13.25%) indicate that the bureaucracy operates through interaction, collaboration, and continuous adjustment to dynamic external conditions. The bureaucracy does not operate in isolation, but rather engages horizontally across organizational units and vertically across all administrative levels. Adaptability reflects the bureaucracy's need to be responsive to technological developments, changes in the policy environment, and evolving public demands. These two values reinforce the notion that today's bureaucratic work must be flexible and able to respond effectively to change.

The value of Responsibility (12.69%) highlights that every administrative action has consequences that must be accounted for morally and institutionally. The overall diagram shows that internalizing work culture values within the bureaucracy requires a structured, comprehensive, and integrated process. These values collectively reinforce ethical behavior, strengthen transparency, increase accountability, and shape the professionalism of public service. When all these dimensions are effectively internalized, the bureaucracy not only complies with formal regulations but is also capable of upholding ethical governance principles and delivering high-quality public services that align with public expectations and democratic accountability.

External Socio-Economic and Environmental Barriers Affecting Electoral Engagement

Socioeconomic and external environmental barriers play a significant role in shaping levels of voter engagement during elections, particularly in local contexts like Gunung Sari Ilir Village. Socioeconomic pressures often force individuals to prioritize their economic survival over taking the time to participate in the political process. In communities with unstable employment, limited income, and daily needs that demand immediate attention, political participation becomes a secondary priority. These socioeconomic burdens reduce voter motivation because individuals assume that political engagement does not provide immediate benefits or impact their livelihoods. Therefore, low economic capacity becomes a structural factor contributing to low voter engagement.

Environmental barriers beyond the individual's reach, such as demographic mobility, limited access to polling stations, logistical constraints, and administrative complexities related to voter registration, also impact voter participation. In the sub-district context, residents who frequently move addresses or work outside the area often face difficulties updating their population data and confirming their status on the voter list. These conditions create practical

barriers that hinder their participation, resulting in reduced voter turnout (Bartle et al., 2017). Furthermore, environmental conditions such as misinformation spread through informal social networks and digital platforms also distort perceptions, weaken trust, and reduce voters' interest in exercising their political rights.

Limited quality of political information and weak election outreach play a crucial role in strengthening external disengagement. When political information is unevenly distributed, misunderstood, or not conveyed through channels accessible to grassroots communities, voters have little understanding of candidate programs, election mechanisms, or the importance of participating in elections. Without adequate political resources, voters become disconnected from political issues and believe that participation is irrelevant to their daily lives. These socioeconomic and environmental constraints collectively demonstrate that electoral disengagement is not solely driven by personal attitudes but also arises from an accumulation of structural barriers beyond individual control, which must be addressed through institutional reforms and more inclusive voter engagement strategies.

External Socio-Economic & Environmental Barriers Affecting Electoral Engagement

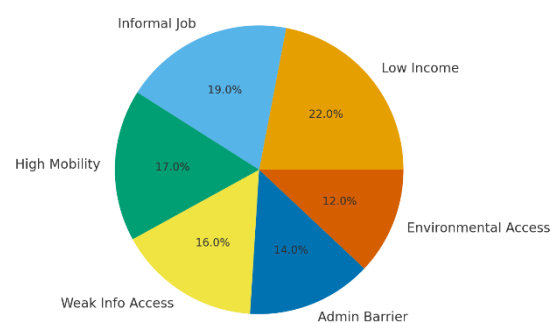


Figure 2 External Socio-Economic & Environmental Barriers Affecting Electoral Engagement
 Source Data Processes by the Author

Figure 2 shows that socioeconomic barriers and the external environment play a significant role in shaping voter turnout in elections. The proportion distribution in the pie chart indicates that low household income is the most dominant external factor inhibiting participation. Low-income voters tend to neglect voting behavior because they are more focused on economic activities oriented towards survival and meeting basic needs. Limited time, energy, and psychological bandwidth are diverted to generating income rather than civic engagement and elections. In contexts where poverty and economic precarity are more severe, political participation becomes a secondary goal due to the inability to immediately address pressing economic pressures. This condition significantly reduces their motivation to vote and weakens their belief that participation will provide tangible short-term benefits.

Informal employment and unstable job characteristics also demonstrate a substantial influence in weakening voter engagement. Informal workers generally experience higher levels of job insecurity, unpredictable working hours, lack of legal protection, and reduced employment rights. These conditions create structural disadvantages that reduce these groups' capacity to access political information and devote time to political activities, such as attending voter education programs, campaign discussions, or evaluating candidate platforms. Furthermore, informal workers are often less integrated into formal political networks, meaning their voices are rarely represented institutionally. As a result, their perceived benefits from participating in elections are weakened, while the costs of participation are relatively higher.

High mobility and migration pressures further exacerbate barriers to voter participation because frequent mobility often disrupts local identity attachments. Individuals who frequently move for work or temporary residence may lack strong emotional ties, a sense of belonging, or loyalty to the local political environment. They typically have limited access to community-level political networks, institutions, and information channels (Schmitt et al., 2016; Wallman Lundåsen, 2015). Their disconnected ties reduce the psychological motivation necessary for political participation and lead to relatively lower levels of commitment to local elections. Migration also increases the complexity of voter registration and administrative compliance for electoral participation.

Limited access to political information is another external barrier that directly limits voters' ability to make informed choices. When access to reliable information, political education, policy discourse, and credible media is limited, voters will struggle to understand election issues, the quality of candidates, and the differences in political platforms. Consequently, they are more likely to withdraw from participation due to uncertainty and cognitive fatigue in decision-making. Poor access to political information also increases vulnerability to misinformation, manipulation, and persuasive influence by political actors operating outside ethical norms, further hindering rational participation. This creates a cycle: information inequality breeds participation inequality.

Administrative obstacles in voter registration, voter list validation, or bureaucratic complexity also contribute significantly to weakening voter turnout (Clark, 2017; Debrah & Owusu-Mensah, 2023). In many election environments, voters still face outdated bureaucratic practices, limited coordination between administrative agencies, and ineffective synchronization of voter data. Procedural barriers, such as difficulties in updating the permanent voter list, discrepancies in identity documents, or a lack of clarity in the interpretation of regulations, reduce voter convenience and increase the costs of participation. These structural barriers further dissuade vulnerable groups, already struggling with socio-economic constraints, from further distancing themselves from the electoral process.

Environmental and logistical access issues complement the external barriers to electoral participation. Natural conditions, geographic barriers, lack of adequate transportation infrastructure, and environmental disturbances significantly hinder voters' physical ability to reach polling stations (TPS) or election facilities. This situation particularly affects rural, semi-urban, and resource-limited areas where distance and access costs are strong disincentives to political participation. Thus, external environmental realities amplify socio-economic pressures and bureaucratic constraints, resulting in a multi-layered structure of barriers that systematically suppress voter engagement during elections.

Institutional, Administrative, and Governance Factors Shaping Voter Disengagement

Institutional, administrative, and governance factors significantly contribute to the phenomenon of voter disengagement, particularly in contexts where to this day democratic institutions have not fully matured to ensure inclusive participation (DR. AKOJI, 2024). Weaknesses in institutional arrangements often manifest through rigid, unresponsive, and non-adaptive structures that fail to accommodate evolving public demands. When institutions operate more as instruments of routine administration rather than dynamic agents of democratic responsiveness, citizens lose confidence in the electoral process as a meaningful channel to influence government decision-making. The absence of effective institutional guarantees for transparency, accountability, and procedural fairness ultimately causes voters to believe that elections will not produce any substantive transformation capable of addressing public problems in real and measurable terms.

Administrative factors also contribute strongly to voter disengagement when electoral management bodies fail to ensure simple, clear, and equitable administrative procedures for all eligible citizens. Voter list inaccuracies, rigid document requirements, limited voter outreach strategies, and unclear communication between election organizers and communities create barriers that discourage voter enthusiasm. Administrative burdens produce participation fatigue, especially for vulnerable groups who lack resources to navigate complex bureaucratic steps. When election administration is perceived as inefficient or inaccessible, voters internalize a belief that the system is designed in a manner that is beneficial only for those who are already privileged politically or socially. This condition further discourages political participation because the administrative layer of the electoral process becomes a barrier rather than an enabler (Bade, 2024).

Governance factors such as the quality of leadership, the strength of political accountability mechanisms, and the capacity of government to ensure equitable distribution of public resources also shape voter perceptions regarding the relevance of voting (de Kadt & Lieberman, 2020). When governance practices are characterized by elite capture, patron-client arrangements, and political transactionalism, citizens feel that elections are merely symbolic rituals that do not result in real representation. In such situations, governance failures reinforce cynicism toward the electoral process and further deepen apathy among voters. Therefore, institutional, administrative, and governance dynamics together construct a complex ecosystem that systematically shapes citizens' perceptions and decisions regarding whether or not political participation holds meaningful value.

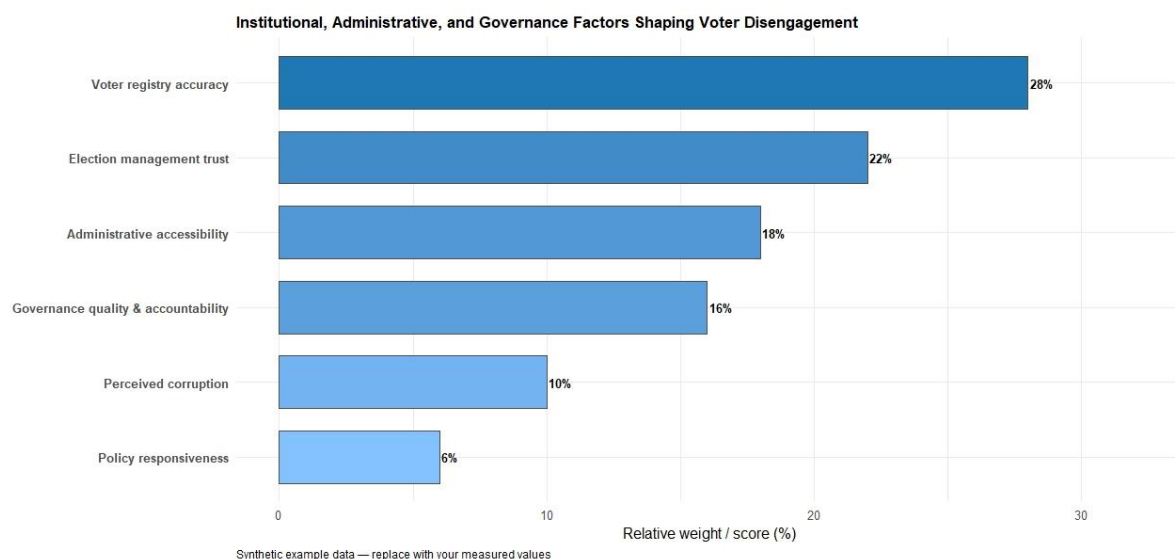


Figure 3 Institutional, Administrative, and Governance Factors Shaping Voter Disengagement
 Source Data Processed by the Author

Figure 3 is a bar chart depicting the magnitude of structural, institutional, administrative, and governance factors that shape voter non-participation in the electoral process. The chart displays the proportional strength of each factor, demonstrating how various dimensions of system-level failure can hinder citizen participation in elections. Voter list accuracy is the factor with the highest weighting, reflecting how errors and inconsistencies in voter list management fundamentally undermine voter confidence. When citizens perceive their names as potentially missing, duplicated, or manipulated on voter lists, their confidence in the credibility of elections decreases. This distrust forms a psychological barrier even before the election begins, as voters assume that official mechanisms designed to ensure fair representation may have been compromised. Thus, the accuracy of voter data becomes a crucial foundation influencing participation behavior.

Trust in election management also appears significant in the chart, demonstrating that trust in electoral institutions shapes whether individuals perceive their participation as meaningful. Election bodies perceived as unfair, partisan, or incompetent undermine voter confidence in the legitimacy of election results. Perceptions that election administrators are not neutral or transparent lead citizens to assume that election results are predetermined or manipulated (Kerr & Lührmann, 2017; Partheymüller et al., 2022). This reduces motivation to vote because individuals feel that investing time and effort in the electoral process will not make a difference. In a democratic system, the credibility of electoral institutions is crucial for maintaining political trust. Therefore, when institutional trust declines, disengagement becomes a rational response.

Administrative accessibility is another key factor shaping voter disengagement, suggesting that complex, confusing, or rigid bureaucratic processes limit participation. When administrative procedures for registration, validation, documentation, or ballot access are burdensome, voters experience high transaction costs. This administrative friction disproportionately affects those with limited time, low bureaucratic literacy, low incomes, and limited institutional access. Voters then internalize the belief that elections are structurally designed for those who are already advantaged and systemically connected (Bennett et al., 2018; Bornschier et al., 2021). When participation becomes more costly than beneficial, individuals disengage not because of a lack of interest, but because institutional barriers make participation inefficient.

The quality of governance and accountability also significantly shape disengagement, as shown in the graph. When the performance of government institutions is weak, voters perceive that electoral participation will not produce meaningful change (Bengtsson & Christensen, 2016; Dahlberg et al., 2015). If elected representatives fail to deliver policy outcomes, abuse their power, or demonstrate poor accountability, citizens lose confidence that elections serve as an instrument for improving public conditions. This reinforces feelings of political alienation. Disengagement in this context emerges as a rational adaptation to institutional disappointment, where voters choose not to participate as a form of tacit resistance to poor governance.

Perceptions of corruption further contribute to disengagement by reinforcing the assumption that political institutions are controlled by elites who prioritize personal or partisan interests over the public welfare (Bauhr & Charron, 2018; Peter Adoko Obicci, 2025; Stoecker, 2022). Corruption diminishes the moral legitimacy of political actors and weakens the normative meaning of elections. Citizens become demotivated because they see political competition not as a contest for ideas, but as a struggle for personal gain. This leads voters to believe that elections are merely symbolic events that mask transactional practices that occur behind closed doors.

When corruption becomes commonplace, cynicism increases, and disengagement becomes an emotionally justified choice.

Policy responsiveness, although the lowest proportion in the visualization, remains influential because voters expect elected officials to produce policies that respond to public needs (Einstein & Kogan, 2016; Hagen et al., 2019; Holder & Bearfield, 2023). When voters observe that policy outcomes remain disconnected from local issues, socioeconomic pressures, and societal realities, they conclude that voting does not yield substantive benefits. This failure to meet expectations gradually erodes political engagement and reduces the perceived benefits of electoral participation. Thus, the bar charts collectively illustrate that disengagement is not solely the result of voters' internal preferences, but rather systemic failures across multiple institutional domains.

The results from the three sub-sections collectively demonstrate that voter disengagement in Gunung Sari Ilir Village is not shaped by a singular determinant, but is instead the outcome of layered interactions between internal psychological drivers, external socio-economic pressures, and broader institutional-governance deficiencies. The internal dimension shows that voters' attitudes, political perceptions, belief systems, and psychological judgement regarding political relevance significantly influence their level of willingness to participate (Borg & Azzopardi, 2022; Bromme & Rothmund, 2021; Reichert, 2016). When individuals perceive elections as unimportant, feel politically powerless, or experience low political efficacy, these internal attitudes directly suppress electoral motivation. Psychological reluctance is particularly powerful because it operates before any administrative or socio-economic constraint takes effect. In other words, internal psychological conditions shape the cognitive baseline that determines whether citizens are inclined toward participation in the first place.

External socio-economic and environmental barriers further compound these internal attitudes by introducing practical, material, and access-based obstacles that reduce the feasibility of participation, even among those who may possess initial interest. Economic insecurity, unstable work patterns, limited access to political information, and mobility constraints make political engagement less rational to prioritize because the cost of engaging exceeds perceived benefit. Environmental constraints such as logistical access difficulties, misinformation networks, and bureaucratic registration limitations reinforce a structural disadvantage for certain voter groups (Apiri & Lim, 2025). These external barriers do not merely operate independently, but they amplify and interact with internal psychological barriers. When socio-economic pressures are high, voters who already have low psychological confidence toward political efficacy become even more disengaged because they lack both mental drive and practical capacity to participate.

Institutional, administrative, and governance factors further solidify this disengagement pathway by shaping the macro-structural context through which elections operate. Weak voter registry accuracy, declining trust in election management institutions, poor administrative accessibility, governance failures, and corruption all signal to citizens that the electoral system lacks fairness, integrity, and reliability. When the electoral system is perceived as flawed, non-neutral, or subject to manipulation, citizens do not view voting as a meaningful mechanism for change (Abdul Hakam Sholahuddin et al., 2025). The system itself becomes a deterrent, not an enabler of participation. This erodes the legitimacy of elections, intensifies voter cynicism, and makes non-participation an increasingly rational behavioral choice.

When these three dimensions are combined, the disengagement cycle becomes self-reinforcing. Internal psychological doubt reduces the willingness to invest emotional and cognitive energy in politics (Agina et al., 2023). External socio-economic constraints reduce the practical feasibility of participating. Institutional and governance failures diminish the perceived trustworthiness of the electoral system. The cumulative effect creates a closed loop in which each dimension strengthens the other, producing a multidimensional disengagement structure that systematically reduces political participation. Therefore, understanding voter disengagement requires a holistic approach where intervention is not focused solely on political education or administrative reform, but must simultaneously address internal voter perception, structural socio-economic inequality, and institutional governance rebuilding. Only by breaking all three layers can electoral participation be meaningfully increased and restored as an essential democratic behavior.

CONCLUSION

The overall findings indicate that low voter participation in Gunung Sari Ilir Village is shaped by a multidimensional combination of internal psychological perceptions, external socio-economic pressures, and systemic institutional-governance weaknesses that collectively reinforce disengagement. Internal beliefs and political attitudes reduce initial motivation, socio-economic and environmental constraints limit the practical ability to participate, and institutional failures undermine trust in the electoral process, making non-participation a rational response to perceived inefficiency, unfairness, and irrelevance of elections. This shows that efforts to increase political participation cannot rely solely on voter education or campaign mobilization, but must simultaneously address structural inequalities, improve institutional integrity, strengthen administrative accessibility, correct voter data management, and restore public trust in governance to produce sustainable electoral engagement.

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