

THE ROLE of SOCIAL CAPITAL in YOUNG VOTERS PARTICIPATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY of RURAL and URBAN COMMUNITIES in INDONESIA 2024 LEGISLATIVE ELECTION

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Political Science at the
Faculty of Social Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



by:

Fina Farhani

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**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA
DEPOK
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ABSTRACT

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This study explores how social capital influences the level of political participation among young voters in Indonesia by comparing urban and rural areas during the 2024 legislative election, notably for the House of Representative. Adopting Robert Putnam's concepts of social capital, comprising the three measurements of trust, networks, and norms, will investigate young engagement in two contrasting regions; Central Jakarta and Serang Regency, as urban and rural representation. Although young voters in both regions show similar levels of institutional trust, the two regions have a significant gap in turnout outcome. Through qualitative fieldwork and analysis of national survey data, the study reveals that young rural people who tend to belong to the strong bonding social capital and collectivistic norms, are more likely to vote. In contrast, young urban people are embedded in bridging social capital within fragmented networks, leading to lower turnout. By integrating the tipping point theory from Kernell and Lamberson (2023), the analysis identifies how social capital conditions can either sustain or suppress voter participation. Eventually, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the regional dynamics of young political behavior in Indonesia, offering practical and theoretical insights for electoral mobilization and democratic representation in Indonesia.

Keywords: Social Capital, Young Voter Turnout, Urban-Rural Divide, Indonesia, Legislative Election, Political Participation

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem

In Indonesia's 2024 legislative election, young voters, 17-39 years old, constituted over half of the total electorate, making their political participation crucial. According to Setiawan and Djafar (2023), this demographic reached 56% of the population, and Fernandes et al. (2023), estimate they accounted for as much as 60% of eligible voters. Given their size, the political participation of young voters is crucial for representation. However, voter turnout among young people varies significantly across regions, with young rural participating at higher numbers than their urban counterparts (LSI, 2025). Indonesian Survey Institution survey data, provide the likely trend that rural young people are more likely to participate in Indonesian House of Representative election, than urban approximately differ by 27%, with young rural people reaching 60,8% while urban only have 40,1% turnout. This study examines the paradox through the lens of social capital, a concept by Putnam (2000) as the trust, networks, and norms can facilitate collective action and offers a compelling explanation to understand why young people's political behavior during the election differs by region. Both rural and urban communities have different social dynamics, where communal ties and its structures remain deeply embedded in rural areas but are increasingly fragmented in urban environments, potentially weakening the social incentives and pressures that encourage such participation.

While some previous studies have explored young voter turnout globally (Rolfe, 2012; Watternberg, 2020), and the urban rural divide in participation (Kumar, 2017, Kaufman, 2021), comparative research focusing on the social dynamics of young voters in the two distinct areas, urban and rural, remains limited. In the Indonesian context, moreover, existing explanations emphasizing modernization and education fail to answer the turnout gap, as young urban should develop more than young rural and often have higher educational attainment to be politically exposed. In addition, even the institutional trust among young urban and young rural, towards the institution, may provide an answer through different turnout numbers, they hold the similar level of trust (Figure 4.3, p.40). Therefore, this study argues that the variation in young voter turnout between urban and rural areas is best understood by the differences in social capital. In particular, young rural establish close social ties, stronger communal norms, and higher interpersonal trust, which collectively foster discussion and positioned "voting" as a social expectation of collective action.

Conversely, the more individualistic and fragmented urban life undermines these mechanisms, weakening the communal pressures to have such collective action.

Young social capital has become an increasingly significant factor in analyzing political participation, especially within democratic societies experiencing rapid social political shifts. What has been through is the social capital as a social relationship has played an important role to influence participation. It is defined as three forms which together facilitate such collective action, vote, Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1988) highlighted the trust, networks and norms in shaping individual attitudes and behavior towards politics. These elements of social capital operate as enabling structures that shape how young people perceive politics and decide whether or not to participate. It is affecting how young people interpret political issues, engaging in discussions, and ultimately establishing its norms to have such action. Vote as one of political participation leveraging the collective actors as people gathered in such a reaction to the outcome. Thus, it can be seen not only driven by individual choice but also as a collective outcome, shaped by strength and nature of social capital among young people. There is less attention to the social dynamics that shape young political participation (Hooghe & Marien, 2013). Moreover, comparative analyses between urban and rural young people remain limited, even though socio-political environments in these areas can produce the different levels of political engagement.

Some of the previous research findings have raised how formal political participation' behaviour, vote, is divided according to its regions such as urban and rural (Kaufman, 2018; Kaufman, 2021). Urban and rural are the two areas that have different landscapes in terms of facilities and procurement of public goods, including the people's characteristics and growth related in the respective environments. In India, urbanised people vote less than rural. The trend had continued since 1984 in which rural people dominated turnout more than urban (Kumar, 2017). The findings also occurred In Irish which showed rural areas have a higher turnout compared to urban areas (Kavanagh et. al, 2004). The strong social interaction in rural may stronger than the urban environment has been supporting the people within the area is more socially connected, and act collectively towards their beliefs and norms. Through the characteristic distinction between urban and rural areas, it can indicate the main factor in the different shape of residential environment bringing over the people's political practice, constraint or reliance, especially during the election. It is often found that the people vote when they were socially mobilized rather than decide to vote towards the alienation feeling (Mo et al., 1991). The same pattern of findings occurred among young

people of South Korea, which the differences of such turnout is not influenced because of its urban in context rather of its modern life of the interaction patterns (Kim et. al, 1973). The religious and traditional values interacting within the rural environment led the young rural to trust the leader, as one of neighbor units, for their own political decisions. The mobilization in rural areas successfully engaged its people to gather and give the vote during the election than in urban areas. In fact, the sharing interaction held among neighbours in the area is the one that would establish and reinforce the political opinion in a region (Foladare, 1968).

Nevertheless, Chandra & Potter (2016) suggests since the data analysed through the ecological inference, it might allow the neighbourhood effect within its region settlements resulting in the number of voter turnout. In rural settings, individuals have a more religious life and conservatively belong to traditional values (Gimpel & Karnes, 2006; Kaufman 2021). The close-knit structure relationship developed to shape individuals in rural areas more socially connected. Stronger ties among rural community members foster more frequent informal political discussions, such as in religious gatherings or local community events. That informal political discussion, however, being a tool of bonds relations (Burt, 2005). As a result, individuals in rural areas may feel a greater sense of obligation to vote, reinforced by collective norms and expectation. However, such rural landscapes contrast to what is present in urban areas, which tend to be more individual in interaction.

Urban characteristics is well known as a region with high heterogeneity individuals who consist of diverse beliefs and habits (Almond & Verba, 1963). It also creates fragmented communities, in which people will look over the similar group of people, which propose the same beliefs. A raising of so many classifications both individuals and groups in urban areas, then influence a challenging collective action such as vote. Therefore, considering the social context and diversity of communities among urban people, empirically generated negative impacts to voter turnout (Clark et al., 2024). Urbans are usually fragmented in society as they migrate to work and seek a better life. Urban social interaction cannot translate the neighbourhood as strongly as rural has, to be the factor that can reinforce their opinion and norms. It becomes more challenging, in vote, when facing the individualistic and fragmented environment. Therefore, rural and urban social interaction characteristics could result in different ways of voter behaviour to each region and create the turnout distinction.

Young voters living in each area would adhere to its behavior. It is because of the collective action, vote, not only influenced by their personal interest but also for the norms and social expectations present in their respective environments. Thus, the possible cause of House Representative turnout gap among young Indonesia in two regions will be the main discussion in this analysis. There are several factors that have been proposed by others studies that can affect the turnout number distinction. Institutional trust is one of the theories that might be used to answer the different outcome between young urban and rural turnout (Levi & Stoker, 2000; Hetherington, 1999; Luks, 1999). That kind of trust can offer people confidence in a positive way affecting the number of turnout (p.2246-2247; Hooghe, 2018; Smets & Van Ham, 2013; Hooghe & Marien, 2013). However, national data shows that young people's institutional trust towards the House of Representatives, both in rural and urban, is at the same level and does not result in the same level of turnout (Figure, 4.3; see Figure, 4.2; LSI, 2024; 2025). In order to state that the institutional trust has an impact on young level participation is unproven. It is insufficient to count young voters' turnout in urban and rural areas.

This gap indicates that other factors might play a significant role in shaping young people's electoral behavior. Other than institutional trust, a relationship to turnout had been developed, not to mention that education was to grab scholar's attention to test its effect on turnout (Sondheimer & Green, 2010; Burden, 2009; Rolfe, 2004). It highlights the importance of education to increase an individual's likelihood of voting, as well as their interest in political knowledge. Nevertheless, while education has a recognized effect on turnout in some studies, Burden (2009) found another result. He perceived that the education role in encouraging voting is complex. In addition, urban education is much higher than education in rural areas. It suggests that educational explanations could not be enough to reveal the answer. Thus, it does not completely answer the gap found among young rural and urban turnout distinction.

Among these factors mentioned, the author served social capital to stand out in promising explanations of the analysis. The three milieu of Robert Putnam (2000) in social capital indicators of trust, networks, and norms within social interaction influence an individual's decision to participate during elections. Trust among the people within society network structures influence to either reinforce low participation or high participation (Kernell & Lamberson, 2023). Trust in each individual will impact to pursue in others perspective. To be involved within networks and communities, not that significant without

trust interacts' to norms playing the basic role of voting behavior. In the context of rural and urban young voters, those three social indicators may operate differently. Rural communities often have closed ties supported by the traditional values and religious life works within its interaction (Kaufman 2021). Unlikely, urban communities are more individualistic and often careless about public opinion. They are socially fragmented so it weakens the communal pressures and may reduce the turnout. The social pressure in every place has a peculiarity that varies the outcome of turnout (Martin & Webster, 2020). Exploring the social capital role offers a nuanced understanding of why young voters have a higher turnout than urban.

Therefore, this study aims to explore to what extent the social capital between urban and rural communities shape young voter's behavior in Indonesia's 2024 legislative election. By focusing on three crucial features of Putnam's social capital, this research seeks to explain the observed turnout gap beyond the unanswered institutional trust, education and modernization theories. In this thesis I argue that social capital level works differently among rural and urban young communities which enhance the variations of their 2024 legislative turnout.

1.2 Research Question

Why was young rural voter turnout higher than that of young urban in the 2024 Indonesian House of Representative election?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine why young rural voter turnout is higher than the urban. It explores how social capital influences political participation among young Indonesian voters, by comparing urban and rural contexts. This study also aims to identify how these differences persist even when levels of institutional trust are similar across both groups.

1.4 Significance of the Study

1. This study offers both theoretical and empirical evidence to the field of political science, particularly in understanding young voter behavior in democratic societies according to different regions in Indonesia. By doing so, the study sheds light on

how social factors, beyond individual rationality, can shape electoral participation, especially among young voters.

2. This study provides young voters' insights the way they are translating their social capital condition into what determines their turnout during the 2024 legislative election. It could lead to improving the capacity of institutions in getting more potential turnout in each region.

1.5 Structure of Thesis

In Chapter 1, this study provides an introduction of the research problem that includes the national number of young urban and rural turnout differences during the 2024 legislative election. Additionally, to a broader legislative institution which held elections at the year, this study specifically analyzed the House of Representative, as the citizen representative institutions. It gains a paradox to reveal as the reason that institutional trust between the demographic in two regions; urban and rural, is at the similar level. As so many studies empirically found that rural regions may always have a higher turnout than urban (Kumar, 2017; Kavanagh et al., 2004; Mo et al., 1991; Kim et al., 1973). Similarly, to the young demographic who are highlighted as the people vote less (Dowding et al., 2000; Alford, 1968), this study further explains through the question of why young rural voters have a higher turnout than young urban voters, through the lens of social capital theory introduced by Robert Putnam (1993, 2000). It also provides the objective of the study, contribution, and the structure of the thesis.

Furthermore, Chapter 2 will develop some previous studies that examine social capital research towards certain demographics such as age and different regions. In addition, theoretical framework written below the section, explores theories related to the scope of analysis as well as the constraints that lead to a crucial role of social capital theory to answer the research question. It also includes the hypothesis, indicators, and causal graph of analysis. This chapter further guided this thesis analysis about and give the details of what theories, previous studies related, how the hypothesis is going through the discussion and what causality is about.

MSSD as the methodology of analysis written in Chapter 3, gives the valuable explanation of why this method fits to the research design. Moreover, the case selection reflects the number of data observed in this chapter, while the table of comparison reflects the similarities and crucial differences of the cases. Those are lead the thesis analysis will

be discussed. Additionally, there is the detailed list of Informants who contributed in depth qualitative analysis. Lastly, how the study analyses the data also provided in this chapter.

In Chapter 4, the study has interpreted the data provided by Indonesian Research Institution (LSI, 2024; 2025) and World Values Survey (WVS 2018-2022) to give more information of the different demographic numbers towards the 2024 legislative election. In addition, the different of turnout number between the two selected regions, Central Jakarta and Serang Regency, is explained in this chapter. It also has the aggregate social capital index between young rural and urban which could illustrate overall distinction through those counted trust and network number according to the World Values Survey data from 2018-2022. Thus, the overall social capital index number in this study can be more related to the distinction social capital in each demographic region.

Not to mention, the findings and analysis which explain the qualitative data further examined in Chapter 5. It enhances a rich understanding of each social capital's features; trust, network, and norms in each young voter based of rural and urban communities. As the provided number data could not be sufficient to claim the answer, this chapter explores the comparative discussion and results. It enhances such discussion with the thematic findings that can complete three social capital features by Putnam out of the specific distinction number provided in Chapter 4. It gives the answer on how the way causal mechanism between those features to the young voter's turnout variations. Furthermore, it must be easy to read the final comparison findings through its table found at the last chapter.

Chapter 6 will cover all the background information, problems, answers, and the fast conclusion of the findings. In this chapter, author going to conclude in fast paragraph then the reader would be able to capture the point of the thesis discussion from the beginning to the findings. Moreover, it also gives the limitations transparency of the research can lead further research in gaining more discussion throughout young voters turnout with its social capital measurement.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Previous Studies

Social capital concept has long been employed by political scientists to analyse voting behaviour trends. Bartkus and Davis (2009), argues that social capital is not merely about “to whom individuals are networking”, but also “how communal norms embed individuals in collective behaviour”, thereby increasing voter turnout. In line with this perspective, several foundational studies have emphasized three main social capital features; trust, networks, and norms, as key drivers of collective electoral participation (Putnam, 2000; Verba et al., 1995). Putnam (1993; 2000), in *Making Democracies Work* and in *Bowling Alone*, claimed the direct face to face activities of such voluntary associations eliminates people's boundary to have the same shared values. It could promote interpersonal trust, stimulating work together, and creating social bonds of life (Norris, 2011). Every political participation might be individual-driven but societies could encourage each individual effectively in more effective ways than other societies (Hooghe & Quintelier, 2013). These findings demonstrate the significant role of social capital aspects in measuring individual involvement in election, beyond personal reason.

In observation of social capital implication as a factor to political participation, it is important to recognize that its influence may vary across different residential contexts, particularly between urban and rural areas. It is significantly proved that the role of social capital in both regions explains variations of turnout outcomes (Lagendre & Runge, 2025). Stronger social capital results in higher turnout in rural communities, where social pressure is more intense than in urban areas. Whereas urban areas with a heterogeneous population have a weaker social capital given a low turnout. Gimpel and Karnes (2006) conducted the research on the political divide of rural and urban population characteristics and attitudes. It gives a notion that rural populations tend to hold more conservative views, are more religious, are less economically developed, and have more isolated community or more community driven. Nevertheless, rural Americans in their analysis reported a high life satisfaction. In contrast, urban populations, which have more diverse backgrounds, are more educated, and more economically developed create fragmented social networks, then influence their political behaviour and turnout negatively. As many other scholars highlighted the specific relations of region variations towards turnout (Durkan, 2022; Chandra & Potter, 2016; Falcao, 2009; Agric & Econ, 2007), have similar outputs on that

higher turnout in rural areas which is smaller and undeveloped. On the other hand, even Durkan (2022) shows that urban areas relatively have an overall high turnout only for a smaller increase or even slight decrease than rural turnout. Thus, social capital may enrich a deeper understanding of varied turnout outcomes between rural and urban populations among Indonesian young voters.

Building on this broader understanding, political studies have increasingly turned to young voter's analysis as a specific group of interest. Bogard et al. (2008), highlight that social capital can compensate for young voters' limited political knowledge and experience. This is due to young peers tend to normalize voting as an easy work or even only as social reward behaviour, making their abstention during election is more acceptable. Thus, the absence of strong social capital elements increases election costs and generates low turnout. It requires great social capital activities that could lower the costs. As Clark et al. (2024) suggests social capital can reduce the costs of information and strengthen social norms that might encourage voting. Furthermore, recent studies underline the importance of considering the residential context of young voters. Social capital operates differently among young urban and rural, especially regarding parental influence and community norms (Berinsky, 2016). It suggests that rural young voters are more likely to follow their parent's voting behaviour while young urban exhibit reverse circumstances. Additionally, scholars highlighted contrasting perceptions towards government service between young voters in urban and rural. Hence, the social capital strength among young voter drives their willingness to participate during the election and can increase turnout number among this generation.

Kim et al. (1973) examined the propensity of numerous young urban and rural turnout. Insightly, provided social interaction patterns and community influences has been linked to Putnam's (2000) contribution of contemporary social capital concepts. The study reveals the higher turnout belonged to rural voters, subjected to vote mobilization and social pressures obtained from their communities. It explained how young rural voters indicating stronger social networks and collective norms lead to stronger social pressures to vote. Instead, urban voters have a more modernized style of social interaction; it produces less familiarity with the traditional norms prevalent in rural areas, particularly the norm that regards voting as civic duty as part of moral obligation. It delved to unique findings of young urban political participation, which a vote careless deals to those with less education and often abstained by those who are more educated as a reason for political alienation and sceptic. Such political landscape among young urban drive a lower turnout than that young

rural. Similar to Kumar and Banerjee finding (2017) that the lower electoral participation in urban areas is not primarily due to middle class apathy but because of the lower participation among urban poor. Thus, urban inequality as characterized by a heterogeneous and fragmented society makes a low turnout. Further study revealed (Keil et al., 2012), the level of life satisfaction in rural areas tends to be higher than urban, supporting over the homogenous in similar background of education and economic equality of rural. It lets social capital work well, builds great bonds among the rural population and generates higher turnout compared to urban.

Moreover, Indonesian scholars have examined how social capital operates across urban-rural settings. It suggests different social structure, cultural practice and spatial dynamics depending on regional and historical factors (Iqbal, 2018). The study developed how *Gotong Royong* works among rural and urban communities and analyzed Yogyakarta for the case. It provides the understanding of strong bonding social capital when meeting the rural characteristics in which belong to the close relationship and mutual aid in *Gotong Royong* practice. The community tends to be homogeneous and based on long standing traditions, lead them to be more cultural ethic towards communal cooperation and reciprocity rooted in agricultural and village life. On the other hand, urban areas are more likely to have heterogeneity with a diverse population and complex social networks. It challenges existing *Gotong Royong* as urban facing inequality, which includes poverty and is pressured by capitalists. It drives Indonesian urban society more shaped by bridging in ties across different groups.

The scholars argue for social capital forms in fixing the fragmented communities with modern socio-economic challenges. This highlights how domination of bonding and bridging social capital may differently influence young voters' turnout in Indonesian elections, as more or less of one was impact to outcome (Putnam 2000). Flanagan (2008) notes that a lack of social pressures and cohesion can constrain young people's political motivation. Positioning social capital as a reinvigorating force, Flanagan argues that participation in community organizations, clubs, and associations can mobilize young people into political activity (p.295). However, domination of bonding and bridging social capital type could intervene how such communities affect to the collective action, vote. It aligns to the perspective that mentioned not all collaborations can exhibit the trust among the people and collectively engaged in similar action (Wagner & Fernandez, 2009). These insights suggest that differences in dominations of bonding and bridging social capital

between urban and rural areas may shape how young Indonesians perceive and participate in elections.

Social capital facilitates the outcomes that may not be fully explained by other factors mentioned, even if the factor was controlled, it produces a significant effect (Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998). Together these studies show that social capital explains turnout differences better than individual factors alone. However, few studies have directly compared how social capital shapes electoral participation among young voters across urban and rural communities. In Indonesia, such an analysis is particularly relevant to understand the challenges and dynamics faced by young voters. Owing to rarely Indonesian studies discussed the problem, therefore, this analysis aims to fill the gap in electoral research by examining how regional differences with social capital influence in the participation of a generation, often characterized by more abstention voters.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Political participation is a society action that can influence politics itself (Deth, 2014). Zukin et. al (2006), believed that all people may express their political participation in kinds of activities as the generational replacement. Therefore, every deed a person intends and does to have a political impact, that affects his or her life, is the only one of political participation. Deth (2014) further emphasizes all action could be translated into political participation as long as it gives the politics intention. Salisbury (1975, p.329) grouping 4 modes of political participation, identified by Verba, Nie, and Kim (1971), includes voting, campaign activity, communal activity, and particularized contacts. Thus, it is not limited to a formal way of political participation such as voting. However, people undertake their voice to hear that the election is one way to choose their preferences. It remains the most direct and widespread means through which citizens influence government and policy choices. It is signed as democratic failure when people are willing not to vote (Downs, 1957). That is because of abstained people might reasoned by the alienated feeling, which no party can represent their ideas (Plane & Gershtenson, 2004). Hence, while political participation can take kinds of forms, voting plays a significant role in legitimizing democratic institutions and ensuring representation.

Moreover, the classical approach explored the socio-economic factors, political factors, institutional factors, and individual factors that might drive people to vote. However, young people indicated less likely to vote than their older counterparts as they do not see voting as a civic duty (Dowding et.al, 2001). In order to understand the variation

of young voter's political participation in urban and rural areas, this study adopts a theoretical framework that integrates several key perspectives. Among those are namely; education, institutional trust, and modernization theory bolstered scholars to analyse its relationship in political participation in which can be seen for two regions distinction. Those three could bridge the relationship between urban and rural in terms of vote. The empirical studies of urban and rural divergence on key determinants of voting behavior. Education levels remain the one gap indicator in both regions as it is higher in urban than rural areas (Legendre, 2025; Shen & Zhou, 2024). Political trust is also diverse in rural Europeans that there is significantly lower confidence in parliament and political parties than urban residents (Mitsch et al., 2021). The socioeconomic modernization, in addition, of urban areas is strongly linked to a greater civic trust and institutional engagement than rural (Steinhardt & Delhey, 2020). It should be the confounding factors that may influenced urban and rural people in turnout.

Education is associated with greater political knowledge and efficacy (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995), while institutional trust influences citizens' motivation to participate in established political processes (Levi & Stoker, 2000). Additionally, modernization theory suggests that socio-economic development fosters civic engagement through value shifts (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). These individual factors are frequently used to explain differences in political participation across regional contexts. However, it does not fully answer the core puzzle in this analysis; why was young rural voter turnout higher than that of young urban?. Hartshorne (2018) argues that education reduces the costs of voting, encouraging political discussion, which in turn increases individual's satisfaction and motivation to participate in elections. Given that urban areas typically have greater access to educational institutions, they should exhibit higher turnout. Nevertheless, the data reveals that young rural turnout is higher (Figure, 4.2). In addition, institutional trust does not align with previous findings. Contrary to Levi and Stoker (2000) claim that higher trust leads to higher turnout, urban shows the lower turnout in equal level of both region in institutional trust. Furthermore, rural groups which have long maintained traditional values are less affected by rapid social changes that often occur due to industrialization, instead likely to go to vote (Knutsen, 2012, p.251). Thus, it suggests that while education, institutional trust, and modernization theories are important, they may not be compatible in explaining the variations.

The most well-known of Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980; Sondheimer & Green; 2010) come up with their causal interpretation of education and voter turnout correlation.

It bears on how educated people possess the cognitive skills to have more discussion on political discourse and being exposed to a wide range of political information. It is undeniable when a people have a rich political understanding to not practice what is supposed to be an action of democratic citizens during the election. However, it could be endogenous in relations. Whoever intends to vote will find out political information more (Larcinese, 2009; Lassen, 2005). It can lead to a spurious relationship and some of previous scholars dubiously thought in its causal (Tenn, 2007; Kam & Palmer, 2008). The people with a higher education do not guarantee his political awareness unless he wants to be involved in politics. As McDonald (2001) found out the stagnant turnout in American national elections for 30 years in a time of increasing education levels and high exposure to political news and information. In similar, Sweden showed unrelated results for its national election (Ahlskog, 2021). Even though Lai (2024) analysis in an authoritarian country (China), he holds important education relations towards voting. In a higher education return, it does not result in a positive impact on turnout, as the people are focused on their professional activities. The individualistic characteristic is stronger than those in a place with lower education return. It means, education variables should not relate if the social capital is in low level. Moreover, Dowding et al. (2001) explained that younger people are less educated members of society than older. Yet within the comparison between young rural and urban, it must be more educated for those who based in urban, then why the data shows in reverse. Alford (1968, p.811) findings within better educated people is relatively low turnout, assumed for the individual correlation can extend toward the level of social organization community. To sum up, education does not answering the puzzle rather it offers new links to the level of individual community.

Similarly, the role of institutional trust highlighted in shaping political participation. Indeed, the institutional trust indicated to what extent the people filled their confidence towards the political institutions, including the House of Representative, to their satisfaction with the democratic system. Individual assessment of a fair representation determines an increased individual trust in House Representatives. Trust in institutions, such as the parliament, is thought to reduce perceived risks and uncertainties associated with participation, so the citizens are encouraged to vote (Levi & Stoker, 2000). Hooghe and Marien (2013) also find that higher trust levels can positively correlate with voter turnout, especially among young voters. Furthermore, recent data suggest that institutional trust alone may not translate to turnout variations between young voters in urban and rural areas that author provided (Figure, 4.3). For instance, survey data by Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI, 2024) indicate that young people's trust towards the House of representatives

remains relatively similar across both regions, yet turnout levels differ significantly. This implies that while trust reflects the extent to which people feel confident in political institutions and democratic processes (Schafer, 2004), it does not necessarily translate into higher participation (Schafer, 2004). Supporting this view, Smets and Van Ham (2013) show that although institutional trust can matter, its effect on turnout is often limited and sometimes statistically insignificant. In other words, institutional trust may play a role, but it is rarely sufficient on its own to account turnout differences, especially across diverse social contexts.

In modernization theory, human development will encourage political involvement and its development absence, may lead to lower engagement (Lipset, 1969; Inglehart & Welzel; 2005). It defines under un-development region can reduce political engagement. However, while modernization emphasizes the rising education as well as socioeconomic development could increase turnout, it might propose an inequality. At critical point of this theory, socioeconomic inequality is vulnerable in a region with higher political activities other than voting (Kaase, 1981; Lijphart, 1999). It aligns to such contentious political participation in urban region such as demonstration as the data shows the lower level for the conventional participation like vote. Based on the data provided (Figure, 4.2), young rural people are more likely to vote than urban, evidenced to an under-development region but might equal in quality. Compared to young urban, tend to have a high inequality as the reason of its heterogenous society and fragmented community. Other counterfactual side within modernization which discusses economic status, Hartshorne (2018, p.103) finds “people living in hospitable environments are not more likely to vote than the residents of less touched by government”. Urban region often found more likely developed than that rural region. It underlined the invisible modernization theory to explain how the political participation among regions differed. This observation highlights the limitation of modernization theory in fully explaining why political participation varies across regions. As Maulemann (2008) suggests that socioeconomic modernization is concerned with non-electoral participation. Social capital, whereas, would be a complement to the further discussion.

Demographic characteristics is one of the indicators which have been adduced to measure the participation as a dependent variable in political science (Salisbury, 1975). Urban and rural regions, as different demographic territorial landscapes, might be the case to analyse in this study. This study aligns with previous studies that found significant turnout differences across urban and rural regions (Kumar, 2017; Kavanagh et al., 2004).

The strong attachment of rural and urban identity leads individuals to adopt perceived values of their group, however the conditions in cities and villages can significantly influence political behavior such as access to different facilities and political issues in each region (Trujillo & Lin, 2025). In Indonesia itself, there is inequality of regions' improvement yet stands out significantly. If compared from the two regions' landscape, the infrastructure, economic development, education and health access, technology backwardness, and government policy are the most problematic issues (Kompasiana, 2024). It's understandable when talking about the place matters. The social pressure in every place has a peculiarity that varies the outcome of turnout (Martin & Webster, 2020). According to Kaufman (2019), the political polarization and feeling of deprivation such as the sense of "feeling behind" could motivate rural residents to participate more likely to vote. However, mobilization have a significant role than voting as alienation feeling (Mo et al., 1991). Therefore, social capital theory offers a deep understanding of the collective action grounded on trust, network, and norms which growing inside the community contributed to vote decisions (Putnam, 2000). It can fill the gap of theoretical understanding which does not answer urban and rural phenomena during the 2024 legislative election among Indonesian young voters. Given the rich explanation of Indonesian House Representative election, communal ties, and social pressure in shaping the conventional political participation.

2.3 Social Capital

This analysis aims to explain variations in turnout by examining the structure of social networks and the demographic patterns of young voters in urban and rural areas (Rolfe, 2004). Building on this premise, social capital theory helps to explore the extent to which young individual's connection can influence their political behaviour. Engbers et al. (2017) (as said by Coleman, 1988, p.98) noted the definition of social capital as "the aspects of the social structure that facilitate certain actions of actors within the structure..... Making possible the achievement of certain ends that, in its absence, would not be possible". In a high social capital society, one can identify many reasons to participate regardless of the result of its action (Fishkin, 1995, p.148). As conceptualized by Putnam (2000) social capital consists of three main features namely trust, network, and norms can pursue shared objectives such as voting. It emerges from the social life value adopted by each region's population. Political preferences of an individual influenced by social environment (Martin & Webster, 2020). In a place where people consider voting as a 'freedom' decision, so they are similar though to others, while when taking the vote as an activity they should perform,

then others will. These definitions highlight that social capital is not uniform rather its forms and effects vary depending on social context and structure. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998, p.243) describe social capital as “the sum of actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit”. A collective action might emerge through such individual connection.

Putnam considered those two types of social capital, bonding and bridging, as a kind of the dimensions not as a category (p.21). The cultural transition of the rural agrarian to industrial urban population can alter the different roles of the three social capital features. These cultural transitions shape how social capital acts in each context. Bonding and bridging social capital function as dimensions that vary in the dominance within social interaction (Putnam, 2000). Bonding social capital tends to form from the strong ties and solidarity among community members which share the similar background, experiences, and values. They mostly belonged to a high interpersonal trust, tend to close with neighbours around, and pursue condensed norms. On the other hand, bridging social capital connects the external assets to getting ahead. It can weaken the ties reflecting in the relationship formed in a more advanced perception compared to bonding that still relies on the existing values. As Campbell (2013) believed bonding and bridging social capital ties should be in a balanced position, in which the domination of one tie, weak or strong, leads to the significantly different turnout outcome. It aligns to Kernell and Lamberson (2023) theory of tipping point theory which explained the stable relations between social capital and its turnout outcome through the size of each social pressure. Thus, domination on one dimension, bonding or bridging, may leads to a different outcome.

At the end, whether a social environment must meet its social capital, it should be aligned to what social capital dimension had been dominate the people experienced in each region. In line with this, it is important to distinguish the means between two dimensions, bonding and bridging, can operate differently depending on the social and geographical context. Urban areas, due to their heterogeneity, tend to lack the strong social structures needed to sustain group-based behaviours, that the social capital would be fragmented and cannot gathered the people frequently to build stronger trust, network, and generate the shared norms. The people living in a high capital, industry, and international investment could establish a wider community (Auerbach, 2015). That implies a bridging social capital connects in diverse individuals across a broader background. Although it can facilitate informational access and ideas, this cycle has less collectively motivated forms of

participation. Individual liberty, scientific rationality, economic progress, permit young urban variances in individual characteristics towards the vote (Keil & Gabriel, 2012, p.29). The decision to vote becomes more personal and less influenced by communal norms. The weakening of bonding ties in urban areas, often shifted to non-electoral participation, such as online activism or issue-based involvement, which does not translate to turnout (Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999; Norris, 2002). Hence, the relationship of social capital theory towards urban young to examine its heterogeneous social life impact on their turnout.

In contrast to urban areas, rural-agrarian communities typically demonstrate stronger bonding social capital tends to have the close-knit relationships, shared norms, and strong mutual obligations among homogenous groups. It fosters frequent social interactions that help bind community members together. The strengthened bond created through its interaction frequency. Revealing that the conversations occurred among people not intended for its accuracy but as a tool to strengthen the bonding itself (Burt, 2005). Thus, the more people have conversations among their environment the stronger their bonding capital ties. However, while bonding ties are strong, the extent of bridging social capital remains weak in such settings. People are less exposed to diverse networks or external influences, limiting cross-group interactions. This kind of rural social environment tends to reinforce internal norms and collective conformity rather than openness to alternative views or practices. In addition, Coleman (1988) argues that such bonds cannot happen within an un-closely connected society. It defined that vote not only as a political act but also drawing through the local networks and traditional values of living expectations. It drives people more likely to go to vote. Social capital features in rural areas enhance the stronger sense of collective action that is respected better to make the same decision as others do. Justifying the true behaviour, as other people doing it, and that is the right thing to do (Coleman, 2004). Its collective characteristics often found among homogenous society that have not fragmented in social structure and culture.

While bonding and bridging social capital represent two important dimensions (Putnam, 2000), this study measures to focus primarily on the bonding social capital position in each region to be the main analytical lens. The rural and urban young social structures realize; in rural areas, strong bonding ties form through local interactions which may create high interpersonal trust and build shared norms, all of which reinforce voting as a collective obligation. In contrast, weaker bonding ties in urban area limit the local interactions in which they are externally tied the community and formal organization. In addition to social fragmentation, weaken the interpersonal trust among its people can limit the diffusion of

such norms. Cebula's (2023) findings suggest that strong bonding ties foster the social cohesion and trust necessary for higher turnout, while weak bonding ties may correspond to lower political participation due to network fragmentation and individualism. Thus, this research uses bonding social capital as the axis to assess the strength of social capital, categorized into strong and weak, to explain variations in young voter's participation across region.

This study categorizes social capital into two levels to explain turnout variations. First, weak social capital belongs to the community with low interpersonal trust, limited interactions, and individualistic norms among its people. As Letki (2008) noted for formal organizational involvement tend to be selective, reinforcing existing social divisions, and has a weaker effect on trust. It found negative effects to racial diversity which explained with fragmented socio-economic status of neighborhoods, in turn it limits interactions due to the factors like disorder, deprivation, and lack of infrastructure for socializing. Whereas, within informal social interaction, such as casual neighborly interactions, strengthen the trust within communities. It creates opportunities which conceptually closer to interpersonal networks that foster social capital. Secondly, strong social capital often pursued high interpersonal trust, frequent interaction, and collectivistic norms. In measuring the community strength with social capital, Western et al. (2005) distinct between informal and formal social networks that impacts to the norms of trust and reciprocity that govern them. Informal structures involved to family, friends, and neighbors that more personally than formally organized. In contrast to the formal which include to institutional and organizational connections. Such social capital influences the individual outcomes extended to the vote. This emphasis how social capital measured through network structures and normative attributes.

Table 2.1 Indicator of strong and weak social capital

Social Capital Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Strong Social Capital	Weak Social Capital
Interpersonal trust	Sociability	Frequent Informal Social Interaction (e.g neighbors, friends, local peers)	Infrequent Informal Social Interaction (limited to acquaintances, formal settings)
	Community Size	Living in small, close-knit Community	Living in a larger or more urban setting with weak communal bonds

	Life Satisfaction	High Life Satisfaction Feeling (Optimistic about life)	Low Life Satisfaction Feeling (Alienated and pessimistic)
Network (Social Ties)	Diversity of Contacts	Extensive social contacts but still within the close and homogenous relationship (neighbors, similar background of peers, local community)	Diverse social contacts within non close and homogenous relationship (External communities, clubs, organizations)
	Tie Strengths	Strong, emotionally close, and trust-based relationship	Weak, situational, and interest-based relationship
Norms (Social Expectations)	Moral Obligation	Strong sense of collective responsibility and moral duty to participate (e.g voting, community events)	Participation seen as optional; individual choice prioritized over community norms
	Sense of Duty	Internalize civic norms; participation seen as “the right thing to do”	Weak internal pressure; low perceived responsibility toward civic life

Source: Author’s Production

Therefore, by focusing the analysis on bonding social capital especially through interpersonal trust, networks, and norms, this study offers a nuanced explanation of why young rural, despite having similar levels of institutional trust and lower access to education and modernization, may demonstrate higher voter turnout than the urban. This approach highlights how structural social differences shape political engagement across regions. The following discussion outlines the theoretical foundations in three features of social capital, as proposed by Putnam.

2.3.1 Interpersonal trust

Interpersonal trust is recognized as one of the core elements of social capital. It is developed gradually through everyday social interactions and shared experiences (Kapsa, 2020; Zukin et al., 2006). Mutual trust, moreover, among individuals facilitates cooperation and reduces collective action costs (Paldam, 2000, p.635). This form of interpersonal trust often emerges among individuals who share the same social identity, norms and values, and is strengthened when people feel mutual respect (Fukuyama, 1999; Hardin, 1998). Trust

plays a crucial role in facilitating collective action by suppressing the risks of participation uncertainties (Levi & Stoker, 2000). It takes a chance for each individual to have more belief that another perception is true. For instance, people consider that the collective action to go to the polls has a meaningful outcome. Young interpersonal trust to their parents and peers, in addition, breaks the risk behaviors and increase communication behavior (Randall et al., 2010). It is in a credible sense that the trust within young society built through social capital can positively impact voter turnout, conversely, negative impact is in another stage. In a low maintenance interaction among society, the interpersonal trust would be low and not generate turnout. As Barry (2019) reported on the fewer specific memories that young adults recall lead to weakened social interaction. It means sharing memories or talking to others willing to develop social bonding. Thus, it argues that an individual must set their trust in the collective prior before deciding to trust others (Stickel, 2009).

The people living in a high trust of society are more likely to vote in elections. It is because the people who trust others will have the same perspective and objective towards legislative election then consider turn to vote. The study by Dowding et al (2001, p.87), has shown the statistical evidence that the higher trust within societies gives the positive correlation for vote. It proposed that most people can be trusted so they are more likely to vote than those people who do not trust others. This belief is that most people can be trusted so when voting as an action done by the people, it could be followed by another (Putnam, 2000). It determines what the public wants to vote for during the election. The cycle would be close to turning out in order for each personal interest to define the interest of society, that they hold a responsibility over the vote. As a result, high trust within the community develops collectivity that includes voting as an expected behavior, further reinforcing turnout. In contrast, where trust is weak, the sense of obligation to vote diminishes, which individuals may perceive the participation as less meaningful or less likely to influence outcomes. At the end, trust operates not only as attitudinal resources but also as the structure of social capital binds individuals in collective action especially voting behavior.

Reflecting earlier theories that explains the link between interpersonal trust associated and voting behavior, illustrates the contrast between urban and rural context. According to Keil et al., (2012), the reasons for greater interpersonal trust play in rural areas highlight the predictors of life satisfaction. The demands in rural communities do not create high life pressures, can chase people to trust their fellow man. On the other hand, the points of Putnam (2000) and Newton (2005) that offer two kinds fulfillments of “have nots” and “haves”, confirmed by Keil (2012) with the life satisfaction conclusion, deal with the

interpersonal trust ideas to input. In spite of rural communities seen as the “have nots”, materially more limited with less access to education and facilities, their homogenous social life helps them. They have invented the smaller and communal living network which pursues certain norms that produce the stronger interpersonal trust among the people (Coleman, 1988). The frequent interactions in rural settings, allows people to develop and maintain interpersonal trust to their fellow. At the time of the election held, they viewed the polling station as the place as they gathered with others to do the same action, vote. In addition, the strong interpersonal trust leads them to believe their peers who stayed supervise. Thus, it has been said that trust as one of social capital features arguably works with the same way of network and norms.

In contrary, the interpersonal trust among urban people is lower than that in rural. The populations composition might be an excuse of different social trust (Maulemann, 2008). Urban residents often experience fragmentation due to the diverse backgrounds within their communities. They are not bound by exclusive community leads to a diversity and unconnected in norms. In an environment where social differences are discovered, will increase social inequality, and it will reduce the social trust among the people (Neller, 2006). Moreover, turn it back to the interpersonal trust which play greater among rural people in the life satisfaction, then urban is in opposite. Urban communities ask for high demands that the high life pressure clearly defined among its population. It created the people cannot trust others as rural people do. Despite urban environment “haves”, fulfilled by easiest access to education and facilities, their heterogeneity does not result in the same structural life as rural. The weak interpersonal trust also weakens the sense of obligation in participating collectively (Burt, 2005). They perceived that election is something more individual matters, more inclined to whoever willing to do. In sum, strong interpersonal trust in rural areas promotes collective participation like voting, while weaker trust in urban areas may lead young voters to perceive voting as a personal choice rather than a norm of civic duty. Thus, in this matter interpersonal trust, weak or strong, is crucial in shaping how social capital work towards turnout outcome.

2.3.2 Social Network

Beyond trust, social networks represent other social capital features that shape collective action. As a part of social capital, this feature refers to the interpersonal ties connecting individuals within a community. It requires the feeling of safety that other people would not misbehave. Networks are built on interpersonal trust, as previously

discussed. Weatherford (1982) believed that fearful people to their neighbours are unlikely to be involved in the network, while praise expression supported them to form high neighbour interaction. Social networks control how people identify themselves as part of a community then they are likely to voluntarily engage in activities. Through social networks, individuals link each other through information and form such community norms, unconsciously. The people who are well-informed towards the common activity can create the perspective' uniformity towards actions. At this point, individuals will align according to their position in the network within their social interaction (Gabriel & Keil, 2013). This feature will deliver informal pressure as the individual needs to socially accept fearing disapproval when they are abstained from activities. Consequently, social networks operate not just as passive structure, talking about connection, but as active mechanisms linking individuals to collective participation.

The social contacts tendency will measure how individuals have a homogenous social network or bonding in ties while providing its context. The individual who actively socializes with his or her neighbours, has a positive feeling and is integrated in certain important collective activities such as political participation (Weatherford, 1982, p.125). Kernell and Lamberson (2023) further argue that "an individual's decision to vote is influenced by the actions, or expected actions, of their neighbours in a social network". In this context, voting is not an isolated choice but emerges from interactions where individuals discuss, observe, and align themselves with neighbours' political attitudes. The opportunity that drives by the positive feelings about neighbours fosters a sense of belonging and common purpose that motivates individuals' turnout at the polls. In addition, if a high relative social interaction took place, the citizens may worry over others and think less in the case of their failure to participate during election (Blais, 2000). This social network reinforces turnout by making voting both a personal act and a communal expectation.

Building on this, the role of social networks belonging to young individuals plays an important role in their political participation carried into adulthood (Campbell, 2013). It is important to look at individuals' adulthood of network experiences which have a critical role in an individual's view of political participation and generations after (Jennings & Niemi, 1981). Through regular interaction, individuals form networks with peers who have similar backgrounds and statuses, which in turn helps establish and reinforce their political opinions (Foladare, 1968). Networks can create a shared sense of belonging and collective

purpose among young voters. They adopt similar political behaviour, including the decision to vote, align to their social network.

In line with this regional division, there are typical social relationships strength that propose different contexts of social types; homogeneous and heterogeneous. As the social capital and its social types were divided, networking in each social type also worked differently. Folodare (1968) finds two exposures fit into the two social environmental landscapes, which are characterized by homogenous and heterogenous neighborhoods. In homogeneous society, the networking might easily influence a greater likelihood of interaction to produce equal interests. It creates conformity pressure in each individual within the community. Unlike within heterogeneous society, the networking among neighborhoods is more challenging, it prevents the interests to sign due to high exposure in conflicting views. It reduces the effect of individuals belonging to their own networks and leads them to behave individually. Moreover, the two social types of networking realize the two different social environments of rural and urban. Mo and Ro (1991), highlighted the region division as rural and urban will likely explain in contrast ways of turnout depending on its network. It claims that rural people tend to have mobilization towards voting behavior, as they are heavily depending on the advice or pressure of another person, family member, their village head, or a governmental official (Kim, 1980). Urban networks, conversely, experienced the rapid urbanization which declined in forms of communities as the mobilization cannot be influenced easily among societies. Thus, while rural communities with homogeneous networks foster stronger social pressure and collective mobilization to vote, urban areas shaped by heterogeneous networks are more likely to encourage individual decision making, in turn reducing turnout.

Different network structures can therefore lead to different turnout outcomes. The research of social networks and voter turnout done by Kernell & Lamberson (2023) provide the feedback turnout influenced by social networks structures. They explained two types of social networks' relationship to voter turnout. There are multiple equilibria and tipping points on how the social network affects turnout. Multiple equilibria act as the reflection of stable turnout both in low or high depending on initial conditions and social influences. It could examine whether the social network pulls together with others levels of social capital features such as interpersonal trust and norms. This stability gauges the social capital features in each individual to test turnout outcome. Moreover, the tipping point is the other reflection of how the connectivity of the networks affects the unstable turnout. It is according to how much social pressure spreads to surpass tipping points and push turnout

toward a higher stable equilibrium. It defines how individual challenges reach the stable turnout outcome. The two types of social network and turnout relations offered by the scholar contribute to summarize variations in the outcomes of young voter's turnout. Thus, theoretically and empirically, social networks influence the path dependence and unpredictability of turnout.

In sum, social networks serve as active channels to transmit norms and expectations, supporting young voters' participation across rural and urban contexts. These theoretical insights help to reveal the question of why young rural people tend to vote than in urban areas. It is underlining the importance of social networks as one of social capital features in understanding electoral behavior.

2.3.3 Social Norms

However, trust and network cannot fully determine participation, rather, the norms as unwritten rules, that emerge within these communities, deploys the powerful value generated from both features. As Putnam (2000) conceptualized norms of reciprocity embedded in community life, when churches provide the community activity, serve as cultural glue that binds trust and networks into meaningful collective action. Social norms configured an individual moral feeling to do something categorized as an obligation. Sometimes this features work in social sanction when the achievement is present within effective community relations, it shapes a robust social capital (Coleman, 1990, P.310-311). In this analysis, the norm found in the last social capital features which enhance through the networks of individuals. Communal norm is the one of social meaning that is considered of importance in relationship roles (Fiske, 1992). The norms can define an individual's decision and convey others' decision as well. It creates the same belief that one decision must be met in each individual decision. In the absence of social norms, citizens would not have social pressure in its activity (Blais, 2000). It also argues that the norm prevailing on how individuals believe towards the public thought. For individuals who view the norm is crucial, the action should be met, that they would act regardless of social pressure. On the other hand, if the people reject the norm and the action yields to personal choice, then the norm does not influence their decision. Thus, social norms serve as a critical mechanism linking individual choice to broader patterns of collective political participation.

Once trust and networks of social capital is filled, the norms emerge as the force to drive people in a collective action, particularly turnout. As Grossman and Helpman (2001) suggests that turnout is a form of social norm enforcement in each community. Blais and Galais (2016), in their study proof definition of the motivation to vote is moral obligation. The evidence is when people justify that the voting is a right thing to do and to abstain is wrong. However, it does not exist on its own. If the network gets larger, then the potential to spread the voting behavior is also greater (Rolfe, p.123). Most of the population wants to cooperate if they realize one thing has been reached out by enough people likely to vote. More family members, friends, and peers going to the polls and voting, make one more likely to vote as well. Nickerson (2008) found that voting influenced through internal forms such as family. As it is equal to each individual seeing themselves governed by norms appeared in their community as well as authority relationships. Therefore, it might internalize and lead them to have one ballot during the election. Although there is the possibility of all citizens pursuing similar opportunities to vote, it could not be denied that norms can historically adhere to community and local leaders (Rolfe, p.69). The people might be sinners to let themselves abstain from voting. Hence, the social norms by a group of beliefs, encourage individuals to do as the others are going to do.

The areas covered in this study, urban and rural, has different value norms when viewed using its role of trusts and networks. In both urban and rural populations, individuals experience and translate social pressure in different ways (Schram, 1991; Bufacchi, 2001). The three elements make the norm enacting the obligation of vote in a community; how much the frequency of individual interaction, how effectively the deterrent of social isolation can produce more effective enforcement, and how easily individual members observe others action (Geys, 2006). It offers suggestions for understanding social norms differently according to the two characteristics variations of rural and urban. Campbell (2006) argued homogeneous environments like rural, practicing the stronger civic norm. Even if the norms establish the formally-free status of voting, it still creates the citizenship morality to have an obligation in doing vote. Indicating the three elements of Geys (2006), the interaction among rural members has occurred incessantly. Interaction with high frequency shapes a greater individual relationship. Moreover, in a homogenous society, they are more likely to isolate each other at least through invisible moral obligation of public norms towards vote. Not to mention that narrower individual origins give such chance to them perceived information of one action. However, urban areas should produce those three elements conversely to rural communities.

Urbanization yields opposite individual social norms than those who are living in rural areas. To measure the social interaction frequency can be seen how they are pursuing their peers as the people exist around. Despite urban life being a larger connection that each of them can select the most appropriate networks, it might give unpromising reality. Some people could have one or more channels yet have fewer connections (Kernell & Lamberson, 2023). However, the political culture at the local level can be examined through its attitudes of social groups in a community. There is a community that tends to have “private-regarding” values which could not isolate its members, then it is going to make individual decisions sincerely, especially at the public event such as election (Wolfinger & Field, 1966). Unlike rural areas, the “public-regarding” reinforces people to consider public interest, common welfare, or public policies that benefit all citizens. Urban social structure that prioritizes personal life turns out to be difficult in getting information. So, at this community level, the norm will not be as strong as rural formed moral obligation towards the vote. Thus, the social structure of both regions generates different turnouts according to different social norms within its community.

Ultimately, understanding how social norms function differently across rural and urban settings helps explain the value adopted by each member region. This underscores the need to contextualize social capital within specific demographic environments.

2.4. Hypothesis

According to the previous theory and findings, it demonstrates social capital plays a significant role in encouraging young voters’ participation. However, social capital does not stand alone, rather, its impact varies depending on the social context in which it develops (Burt, 2005; Coleman, 1988; 2004). Scholars suggest that rural and urban based on different forms of social capital level, each shaping distinct norms and expectations regarding political participation, vote.

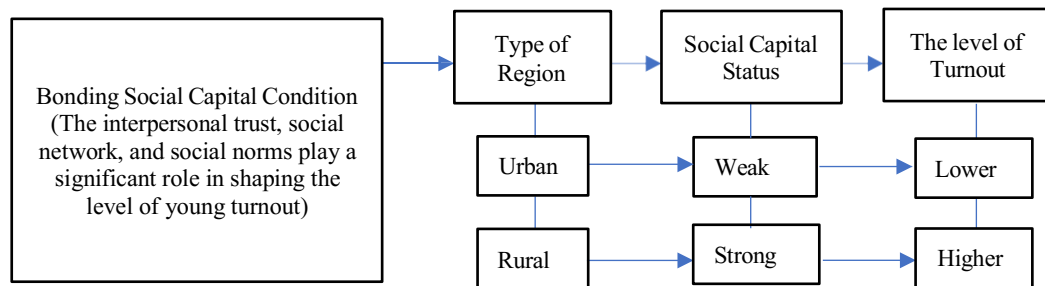
Putnam (2000) conceptualization of social capital theory identifies three interrelated features; trust, network, and norms, that together create opportunities for young social interaction and influence their collective behaviour (Martin & Webster, 2020; Rolfe, 2004; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Fishkin, 1995). Bartkus and Davis (2009) further emphasize that these social interactions help individuals within communal norms, reinforcing shared beliefs and values. Additionally, the distinction between how strong and weak bonding may explain why weak and strong social capital significantly influence the variations of turnout outcome (Putnam, 2000; Campbell, 2013).

In areas with a weak social capital, communities tend to become more individualistic, and decisions to participate in collective activities, such as voting, are often driven by personal motivation rather than shared obligation as a norm. Conversely, in areas with stronger social capital, communities develop a more collectivistic characteristic, where participation is influenced by moral obligation and social pressure, the norm often found in homogenous society. This collectivistic character can strengthen young voters' sense to vote as a civic duty and increase the turnout.

Through these theoretical perspectives, this study formulates the following hypothesis to examine how different social capital level work differently on young voters' turnout in urban and rural contexts.

Figure 2.1 I argue that

“Variations in social capital between young urban and rural explain the variation in their vote participation”



Source: Author's Production

Figure 2.1 Hypothesis

I propose that the weak social capital form in a region significantly impacts the lower turnout or strong social capital form leads to higher turnout. It is considering three social capital features by Putnam (2000): (1) interpersonal trust among and between people; (2) the type of social network (3) shared beliefs and values. Weak social capital of a region highlights, first, the young population who do not easily trust their peers and neighbours or even their own family. In response to that low trust, they tend to have low maintenance of network frequency, especially to their neighbours who are living in the respective region. They are more likely to follow the external community such as sport club, reading club, environmental community, or informal organizations. That fragmentation of network as a result of heterogeneous population in urban regions. Additionally, the result of the low trust and network patterns of young people in urban areas, generated an individualistic norm that

pursued “private-regarding” in any public activity which needed a collective action. It defines that they were not socially pressured to go to vote. Together social capital types among young urban people lead to a lower turnout in spite of more educated, modernized, and have a similar level of institutional trust to young rural.

In contrast, strong social capital formed through a homogenous demography which leads young people in rural areas to trust each other. They have a close-knit relationship towards peers, neighbours, and family through high frequency of social interaction. Trusting others makes them involved more in any local community and activities. Additionally, to a homogeneous society, information and interest are more likely isolated than that in urban environments which are vulnerable to conflicting views. Thus, great maintenance relationships held by young rural people create a moral obligation, as a norm, to public activities. They are seeing such activities as “public regarding”, then it is less acceptable for abstention. In the end, other individual factors cannot fully explain higher turnout among young rural people compared to young urban people.

2.5 Causal Graph of Hypothesis

The author draws different causal mechanisms based on the hypothesis that young urban people have a weak social capital that resulting in lower turnout during the 2024 legislative election. In contrast, young rural hold the stronger social capital which lead to a higher turnout than those young people who lives in urban region. Such different social capital landscape plays a significant role to its young people participation during the election. To further understanding of the thesis hypothesis, this causal graph illustrates the hypothesized mechanism by which residential context shapes the type and level of social capital, which in turn affects young voters’ turnout.

The causal graph in figure 2.2 (1) shows how young people in urban that have more heterogeneous society led to have a weak interpersonal trust, fragmented networks, and adopted individualistic norms. As a result, they do not have strong motivation internalize with themselves as there is no social pressure to go to the polls, and then prefer to be abstained from the 2024 legislative election.

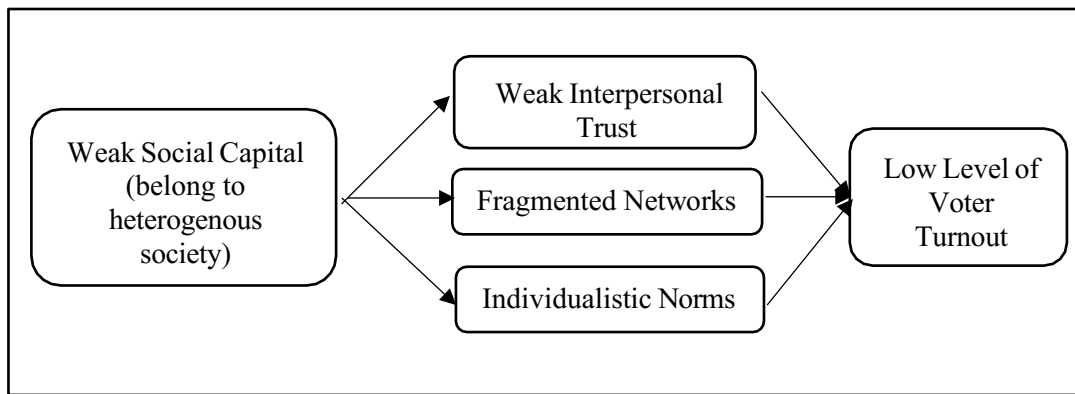


Figure 2.2 Causal Graph for Urban Community (Source: Author's Production)

Causal graph in figure 2.3 (2) define that in rural areas, a homogenous society has stronger social capital fosters strong interpersonal trust, close-knit networks, and collectivistic norms. As a results, they are more socially pressure and drives their motivation to go to the polls, then it turns to a higher level of turnout.

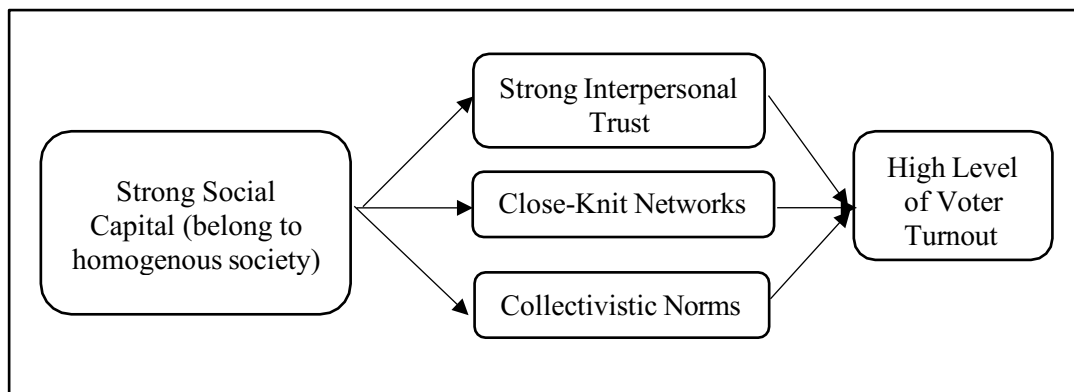


Figure 2.3 Causal Graph for Rural Community (Source: Author's Production)

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Method

This study used a comparative qualitative approach using the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) to examine the role of social capital in shaping young voters' participation during the 2024 Indonesian legislative election of House Representatives. It compares a region with common social capital features of Robert Putnam (1993, 2000); trust, network, and norm. However, each region, urban and rural, experienced different landscapes which in turn create a social capital level distinction and pursue the variations of its turnout. In particular, bonding work differently in response the collective action such as vote. According to Lijphart (1971), Most Similar Systems Design may compare cases that are similar in many respects but differ in the key variables. In this study, rural and urban communities isolate the effect of social capital on young voter participation. MSSD is appropriate to identify young Indonesian population in the same context of legislative election (17-39 years), but delve into turnout variations in different social capital dynamics. These communities differ in their patterns of turnout, which makes it possible to identify variations within its social capital (Landman, 2004; Lijphart, 1971).

This study focuses on two regions; Central Jakarta (representing an urban area) and Serang Regency (representing a rural area). According to official data from the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU, 2024, pp. 61-65), the overall turnout in Banten II constituency (including Serang Regency, Serang City, and Cilegon City) reached 85.96%, while Jakarta II constituency (including Central Jakarta, South Jakarta, and Indonesian citizen abroad) showed a lower turnout, nationally, at 65.47%. In addition, comparison turnout in region analyzed, according to KPU (2024), voter turnout in Central Jakarta was 74.79%, compared to 86.27% in Serang Regency. Thus, legislative turnout among young voters in Central Jakarta is lower than Serang Regency.

To examine young voters' turnout trend with these regions, the author provides a young urban and rural trend of turnout during the 2024 legislative election (House of Representative), with translate to an approximately 40.1 % in urban and 60.8 % in rural. The results showed a lower turnout of young urban than rural. It indicates the social capital may play a significant role towards turnout variations among young urban and rural.

3.2 Case Selection

Many studies have examined the impact of trust on voter turnout. Gronlund and Setala (2007), for example, emphasize that institutional trust is a people's confidence in institutions such as parliaments, government, or electoral bodies, being a stronger predictor of turnout than trust in individual politicians. According to Levi and Stoker (2000), political trust reflects people's belief that political institutions and actors work in the public's interest. Higher trust is expected to encourage participation, while low trust can produce apathy and abstention. In Finland, Gronlund and Setala (2007) found that institutional trust significantly explains variations in electoral participation. Similarly, Oswald (2023) suggests that distrust of political institutions influences non-voting behavior in Tanzania. Thus, low institutional trust leads to voter abstention.

The empirical evidence from Western democracies supports this idea. Hooghe and Marien (2013) show that citizens with higher trust in political institutions are more likely to participate in elections. However, they are largely based on Western contexts, do not fully fit in Southeast Asian countries. A student capstone by knight (2020) has also noted trends and determinants of institutional trust in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, operates differently due to regional political, social, and cultural factors. He found that social trust; trust in relatives, neighbors, and wider social circles tends to be higher than institutional trust in Indonesia. Moreover, Park (2017) similarly shows that institutional trust in the Asia-Pacific region fluctuates over time, which makes its effect on turnout less predictable. Furthermore, several scholars argue that institutions do not always consistently predict turnout. As Hetherington (1999) and Luks (1999) argues that low trust in incumbents may actually motivate voters to participate to seek political change. It is due to the trust judgment which was intended for the incumbent and would not have the long-term effect on vote. Hence, another perspective study of Rosenstone & Hassen (1993), Verba et al. (1995), and Seligson (1983) points out that institutional trust does not directly determine voting behavior in every context, highlighting the need to consider other social factors.

To address the previous study lay on the perspective of social factors, may receive social capital, can shape electoral participation. The data shows that institutional trust among young voters in both regions of urban and rural is similarly shown at the same level, yet young voters turnout differs significantly (Figure 4.2, see also Figure 4.3). This suggests that other factors may better explain participation in Indonesia. The study of Kaufman (2021), discusses how the rural and urban political divide is better explained by the social factors. It is supporting this study when the social and community ties within rural areas

are stronger and can encourage higher participation. The influence and engagement increase the sense of belonging and collective identity to motivate each other more actively during the election. On the other hand, urban young voters might experience greater political alienation or they often feel less connected to the political process. In addition to their inclination to national issues, they are fragmented in the types of social environments. It often occurred that the rural area had close knit relations and mobilized easily, reducing the mobilization costs. Another study of Kaufman (2019), in addition stated that they will be politically active when facing the belief of change or mobilized by the frame of politics as a struggle between the people and elites. Thus, it seeks social capital theory in enhancing the explanation of the study.

This study selects Serang Regency and Central Jakarta as cases under the urban and rural divide to explain a diverse turnout outcome despite on the similar level of its institutional trust.

Table 3.1 The comparison of Central Jakarta and Serang Regency

Aspect	Central Jakarta (Urban)	Serang Regency (Rural)
Similarities		
Election	2024 Indonesian legislative election (House of Representatives)	
The level of young Institutional Trust in region	The level of institutional trust towards House of Representative approximately to 68,01 % at the same level	
Age group of voters analyzed and its contribution to regional turnout	17-39 years old (37,83% of total regional population) (BPS, 2024). Potentially contribute to 50,6% of voter turnout	17-39 years old (42,35% of total regional population) (BPS, 2024). Potentially contribute to 49,1% of voter turnout
Crucial Differences		
Type of Region	Urban, metropolitan area	Rural, agricultural area
Represent on estimated young voter's turnout nationally (17-39 years)	Approximately represent to 40,1 %	Approximately represent to 60.8 %
Overall constituency turnout and Regional Vote Recapitulation (KPU, 2024)	Jakarta II: 65,47 % Central Jakarta: 74,79%	Banten II: 85,96 % Serang Regency: 86,27%

Type of Social Capital (Putnam, 1993; 2000)	Weak social capital	Strong social capital
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Source: Author's Production

3.3 Data Collection

The author collects the data from primary and secondary resources. The primary data includes several semi-structured interviews with almost 14 personnel (with one excluded as only act as the additional information) from young voters based on Central Jakarta and Serang Regency, as well as observers from two regions. It was conducted from May to June 2025. In addition, most of them asked for confidentiality, so it will not provide the detailed names of informants during the analysis held.

Table 3.2 List of Informants

No.	Respondents	Age	Institutions
1.	Young Voters in Central Jakarta (Informant 1)	22 years	Vice president of student executive board, A member of Indonesian Islamic Student Movement, A member of Indonesia Synergy Community, Indonesia Gen Z Community.
2.	Young Voters in Central Jakarta (Informant 2)	25 years	A member of student executive board, A member of Indonesian Islamic Student Movement, A member of Youth Cadres of the National Anti-Drug Movement, A member of Eastern Youth Alliance.
3.	Young Voters in Central Jakarta (Informant 3)	26 years	A member of Indonesian Youth Community, A member of Youth Religious Community, A member of Youth Mosque Community, A member of Indonesian Islamic Student Movement
4.	Young Voters in Central Jakarta (Informant 4)	19 years	A member of Muhammadiyah Student Association, A member of Muhammadiyah Student Organization.
5.	Young Voters in Central Jakarta (Informant 5)	23 years	A Head Division of Student Association, A GMNI Commissariat Secretariat.

6.	Young Voters in Serang Regency (Informant 1)	32 years	A Head of Ansor Youth Movement
7.	Young Voters in Serang Regency (Informant 2)	21 years	A member of Student Association, A member of Student Executive Board
8.	Young Voters in Serang Regency (Informant 3)	22 years	A Secretary of Indonesian Islamic Movement of Serang, A member of Student Executive Board
9.	Young Voters in Serang Regency (Informant 4)	27 years	A member of Neighbourhood Community, A member of Local Patrol Team Community
10.	Young Voters in Serang Regency (Informant 5)	35 years	A Chairperson of the Entrepreneurship Community in Serang Regency
11.	Young Voters in Serang Regency (Informant 6)	27 years	A member of Indonesian Islamic Student Movement
12.	Political Observer in Jakarta	50 years	Associate Professor in STIA LAN Jakarta, Inaugural Fellow at Cornell School of Public Policy, Senior Researcher at Populi Centre, Senior Fellow at IFAR Atma Jaya
13.	Political Observer in Serang	37 years	A Lecturer of Political Science at Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University, Secretary of the Social Science Department, Researcher of Political Party Studies, Electoral Studies, Religion and Politics Studies

Source: Author's Production

3.4 Data Analysis

The study primarily applies thematic analysis to identify patterns and types of social capital among young voters in two regions within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach allows the author to systematically code interview transcripts to read the pattern and translate the related social capital features such as trust, network, and norms. Moreover, the author compared such codes to the urban area. Through thematic analysis, the study aims to cover the distinctive level of social capital (weak or strong) and how these

two level of social capital are realized among young voters in Serang Regency and Central Jakarta.

In addition, it uses elements of process tracing to explore how social capital type might contribute to variations in voter turnout between urban and rural context (Collier, 2011). It examines how the identified patterns and social capital level generate a significant difference in turnout outcome of two regions. It explores how social capital can increase trust towards neighbours and peers, its close network, and norms adopted. Thus, the analysis of the three features answered the question of why young rural turnout is higher than young urban turnout.

While thematic analysis assists to control interview data, the process tracing method will provide in depth-qualitative insight. Hence, the study not only identifies what level the social capital variations belong to region but also seeks to enrich the understanding of the mechanisms between weak and strong social capital to the level of young political participation.

Table 3.3 Table of Methods

Method	Purpose	Source of Data
Thematic Analysis	To identify key social capital features of young urban and rural	Interview transcripts
Process Tracing	To examine the causal mechanism of social capital to different level of voter turnout	Interview data and official report

CHAPTER IV

SETTING AND CONTEXT: YOUNG VOTERS, TURNOUT, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL LANDSCAPE

4.1 Young Political Participation in Indonesia

Indonesia just held the 2024 legislative election, where the House of Representative (DPR RI) took place on February 14. In Indonesia, the election to select members of the House of Representatives, one of the central legislative institutions, is conducted simultaneously with the presidential election and other legislative elections such as the Regional Representative Council (DPD) and Provincial Representative Council (DPRD). This study specifically focuses on the House of Representatives, which according to Humiati (2022), holds significant constitutional powers: the right to ask questions, propose opinions, and seat a parliamentary immunity (Humiati, 2022). As stated in Article 20 A (1) of 1945 Constitution, the House of Representatives possesses legislative, budgetary, and supervisory functions while Article 20 A (2) grants the interpellation right, inquiry right, and the right to express opinions. These provisions place representatives in a position of significant authority, enabling it to represent the people and exercise checks on the president's prerogatives.

Ideally, given these powers, the House of Representatives should command a high level of public trust, considering its role as the people's voice. According to Lipset (1959, p.87), political institutions that earn public trust and loyalty are those that succeed in fulfilling the core values of the political system in alignment with societal values. Empirical data indicate that the public trust in 8,83% of the Representatives remains relatively low compared to other institutions (see Table 4.1; Figure 4.1). This suggests the public evaluation, towards the representative institution, has been unsatisfied considering to their workings and practices (Norris, 2011, p.25). Yet, despite lower institutional trust, the overall turnout in the House of Representatives election still reached 81,14%, surpassing the national percentage target of 77,5% as high participation, and 60% as low participation (Election Participation Index, KPU, 2024). It raises the question about what other factors may encourage voter participation to cast a ballot.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Indonesian institution (The data has been reanalyzed by the author based on the dataset of Indonesian Research institution, 2024)

	N	Minimu m	Maximu m	Mean	Std. Deviation
Trust_President	1220	1	5	4.05	.677
Trust_Military	1220	1	5	4.11	.612
Trust_Police	1220	1	5	3.90	.684
Trust_Corruption_Com mission	1220	1	5	3.82	.727
Trust_Attorney_Genera l	1220	1	5	3.85	.739
Trust_Court	1220	1	5	3.86	.719
Trust_Parties	1220	1	5	3.66	.807
Trust_Representatives	1220	1	5	3.73	.758
Trust_Consultatives_A ssembly	1220	1	5	3.77	.774
Trust_Regional_Repres entatives	1220	1	5	3.74	.781
Trust_Constitutional_C ourt	1220	1	5	3.77	.806
Valid N (listwise)	1220				

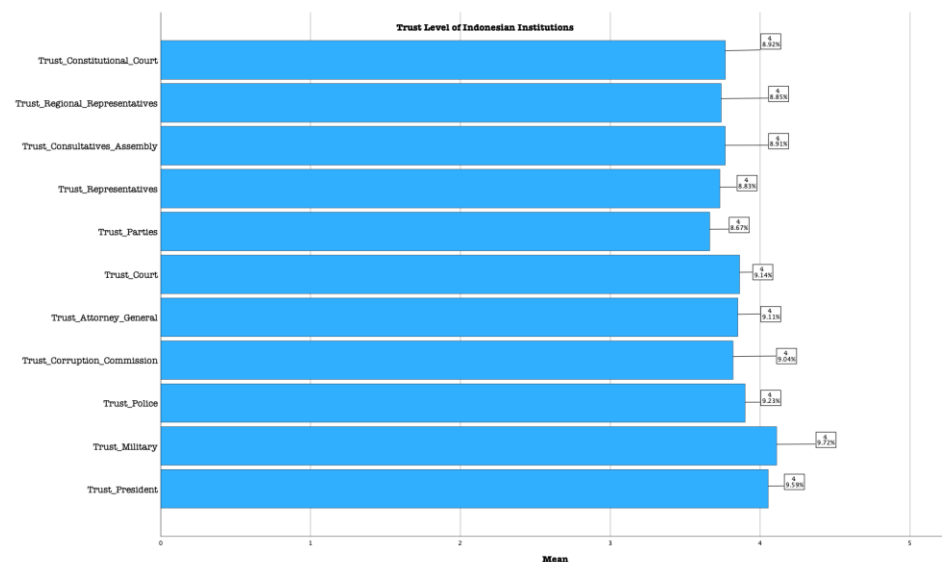


Figure 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Indonesian Institution (The data has been reanalyzed by the author based on the dataset of Indonesian Research institution, National Survey 29 January - 5 February 2024)

Following these numbers of political participation, this study focuses on young people as a crucial topic in electoral studies. The recent legislative elections offer an opportunity to examine that the demographic significance of young voters aged 17-39 have a substantial number. Scholars have long discussed why young people often show lower levels of turnout compared to those older people (Campbell, 2013, Zukin et al, 2006). This generation includes the Z generation and millennials, who constituted approximately 60% of total population can converted to 114 million of all Indonesian voters (Fernandes et al., 2023). It classifies as young voters in the start of first-time voters age and the millennial age limit. Categorized young voters further represent the majority of the voters, which makes their political participation important shaping turnout outcome. Henn and Foard's (2011) seminal study provides a comprehensive analysis of young people's political engagement in Britain. They reveal how young people's political interest is increasing whilst having a distrust and skepticism towards formal political institutions. According to a survey by Katadata Insight Center (2023) reported 87,2% of young voters will participate in the election. An overview of this number appears highly and with no concerns. However, such reported data also stated that the number 8,9% of abstain intention among generation can translate into millions of disengaged voters when comprising 60% populations. Thus, the participation seems to be high in number yet a significant remarks' raises an important question about the factors of young people's political behavior to be analyzed. Understanding young political participation could be essential to explain young voters turnout patterns in Indonesia.

4.2 Electoral Turnout in Jakarta II and Banten II

To further understand variations of young voters' participation, this study focuses on the contrast between urban and rural context in Indonesia. The social structural statuses between rural and urban are vary that evaluate the differences on their vote (Kelly & Lobao, 2019). Young rural and urban, both of them grow in that two disparities context, work on their needs to be filled. Urban and rural areas often practice different community life and social networks, in turn to impact the young people political engagement of each region. It is resulting in the deeper inequalities and power dynamics which shape their motivation and voting behavior. In addition, following the urban and rural context which would be the focus of study, Central Jakarta and Serang Regency were selected as two constituency districts with contrasting turnout outcomes in the 2024 legislative election. Central Jakarta represents Jakarta II as an urban region with a lower 2024 legislative election (House of

Representative) turnout. Furthermore, Serang Regency represents Banten II as a rural region with a high number of turnouts in the same election. According to official data from the General Election Commission (KPU, 2024), Jakarta II that includes Central Jakarta, South Jakarta, and Overseas Voters, nationally have a lower turnout to 65,47%. In contrast, Banten II which covers Serang Regency, Serang City, and Cilegon City have significantly higher turnout to 85,96% (KPU, 2024, pp.61-65). In the case of Central Jakarta, the voter turnout was 74,79%, notably lower than the 86,27% recorded in Serang regency. Thus, these two regions can represent as two different region contexts with significance turnout outcome seeks the factor beyond institutional trust.

Contextually, these two different districts' numbers of turnout have confirmed the national distinct data of young urban and rural (Figure, 4.2). The turnout percentage emerged at different levels that show rural higher levels turnout to 60,8% and urban to 40,1% (LSI, 2025). It delves into deeper research in comparison between young voter turnout in a rural and urban area. Furthermore, some scholars suggest institutional trust as the most related in citizen's confidence at a time of vote shaping turnout. The research from various contexts shows that higher institutional trust tends to correlate with higher electoral participation (Gronlund & Setala, 2007; Hooghe & Marien, 2013). However, young voters in both regions of urban and rural context do not show the pattern said (Figure, 4.2). The percentage of Institutional trust of young urban and rural at the same level, is approximately in 68,00 % (LSI,2025). The data reveal an interesting pattern in which institutional trust between young urban and rural people is at the same level whereas the turnout shows a significant difference, defining that there is no relationship between the factor and outcome.

Jakarta II as an urban region with a metropolitan area tends to have a heterogeneous society which would be populated by a greater diversity and fast socioeconomic life. Compared to Jakarta, Banten II while composed to two urban cities, it has one rural in Serang Regency. The rural district characterized by more homogeneous communities with the similar background and stronger in local networks (Kaufman, 2021). The comparison between these two areas provides an opportunity to explore how social capital factor affect the electoral participation among young voters. Given these theoretical expectations, therefore, this study explores in specific contextual patterns of Indonesian young voter institutional trust and its voter turnout, among urban and rural region, to see the variation. These observations delve to an examination of how other factors like social capital may explain the variations of the data.

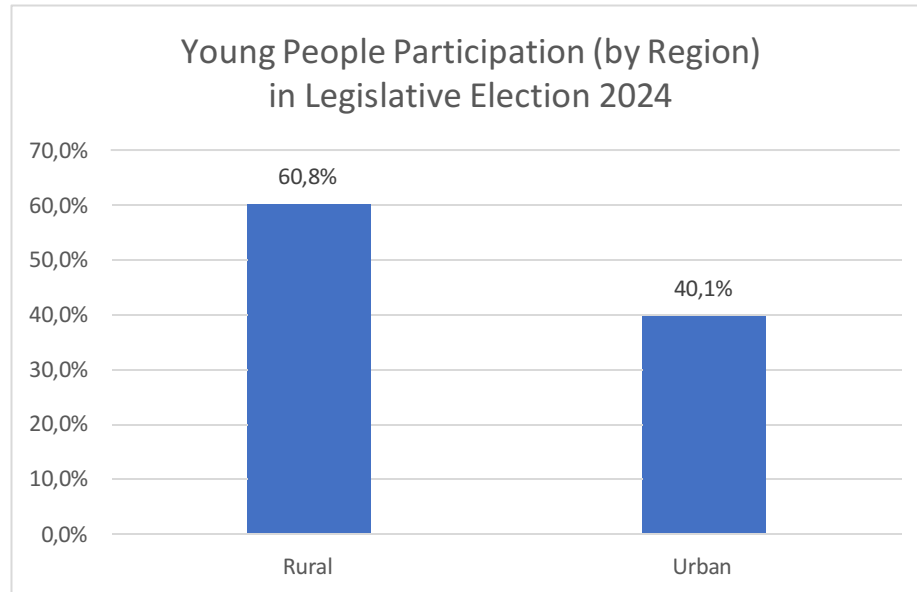


Figure 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Indonesian Young Voters' Participation Level (The data has been re-analyzed by the author, based on the dataset of Indonesian Research institution, National Survey 20-28 January 2025)

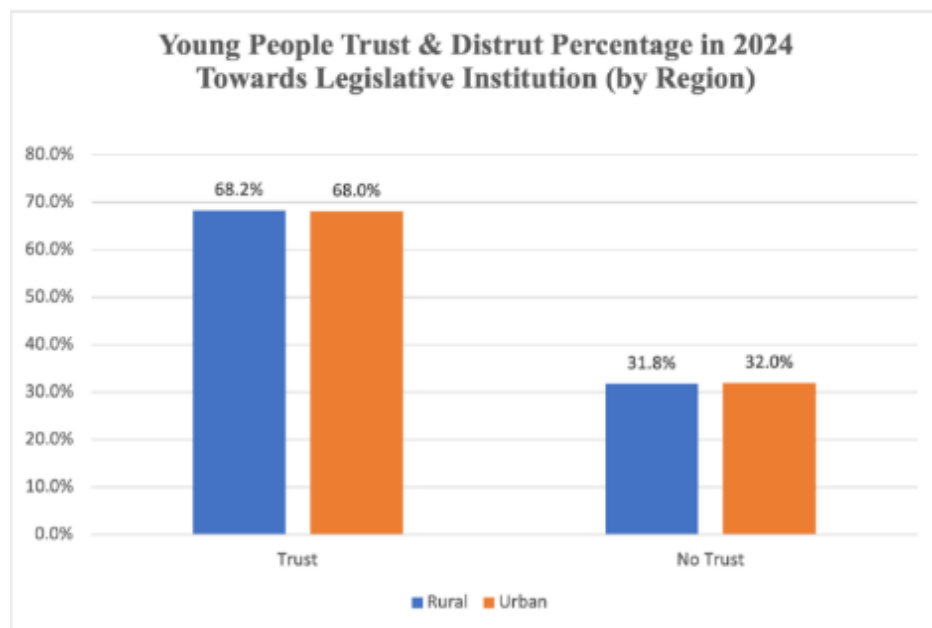


Figure 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of institutional Trust Percentage by Regions (The data has been re-analyzed by the author based on the dataset of Indonesian Research institution, National Survey 29 Jan-5 Feb 2024)

4.3 Aggregate Social Capital Index and Urban-Rural Divide

Social capital is the sum of values where trust, network, and norms produce a collective action (Putnam, 2000; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 2000; Engbers et al., 2017).

According to Levi and Stoker (2000), trust has a crucial role that encourages people to be able to be a part of a collective action. As trust is an important part, an individual with a confidence in their neighbor and peers would likely express their interest in the network (Kernell & Lamberson, 2023; Gabriel and Keil, 2013; Weatherford, 1982). At the position of an individual expressing their trust and seeking their own networks to socialize through such discussion, create activities, and have mutual cooperation will lead their own norms as a moral obligation. (Coleman, 1990; Grossman & Helpman, 2001; Rolfe, 2004) argues norms for the crucial result of social groups or communities. The social groups and communities which have a wider scope would likely constitute an individualistic character of its people (Aurbech, 2015; Keil & Gabriel, 2012). As Norris (2002) suggests this affects the turnout outcome to be low, as one collective activity. Conversely, an individual involvement in a close-knit relationship, mostly in homogenous society, can produce a social sanction and lead to a high turnout (Campbell, 2006; Geys, 2006). Thus, the three social capital features should be examined in two different contexts of communities to deliver a rich analysis in its turnout outcome.

To deepen understanding of the cause of political participation among young urban and rural, other than institutional trust factor, this study measures social capital index from the recent data provided by World Values Survey (2018-2022). The data combined all the kinds of trust observed by WVS (2018-2022), that are possible to represent trust such as towards other people, family, friend, neighbor, people in first meet and people of another religion. As the networks one of social capital features, it includes to various of networks which people had, and which they are actively engaged, such as religious member, sport or hobbies club, education or art organization, labor community, environmental organization, humanitarian community, consumer community, women organization, swabantu community, and others. The data below are young social capital index by region and aggregate social capital score of each social capital features measurement;

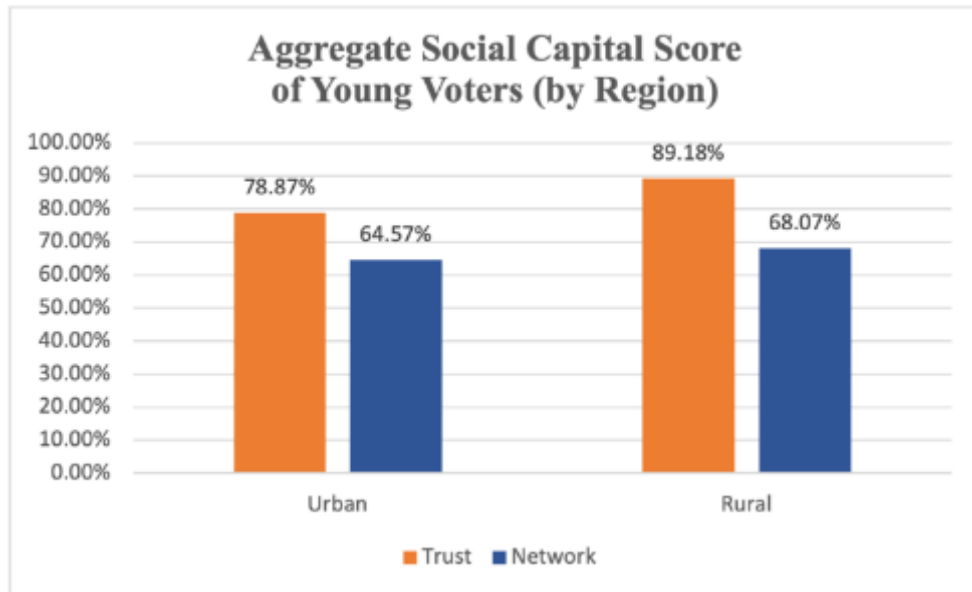


Figure 4.4 Aggregate Social Capital Score of Young Voters by Region (The data has been re-analyzed by the author based on the dataset of World Values Survey, 2018-2022)

The data illustrates the difference in the percentage level of aggregate score among young urban and rural people which measure the number of their trust and network. In urban areas, the trust score is approximately in 78,87 % while rural areas reached to 89,18%. The network itself demonstrated a similar result in which the network in urban areas is relatively lower than rural network. It shows that interpersonal trust as well as level of social network among young urban people is lower than that interpersonal trust and social network among young rural people.

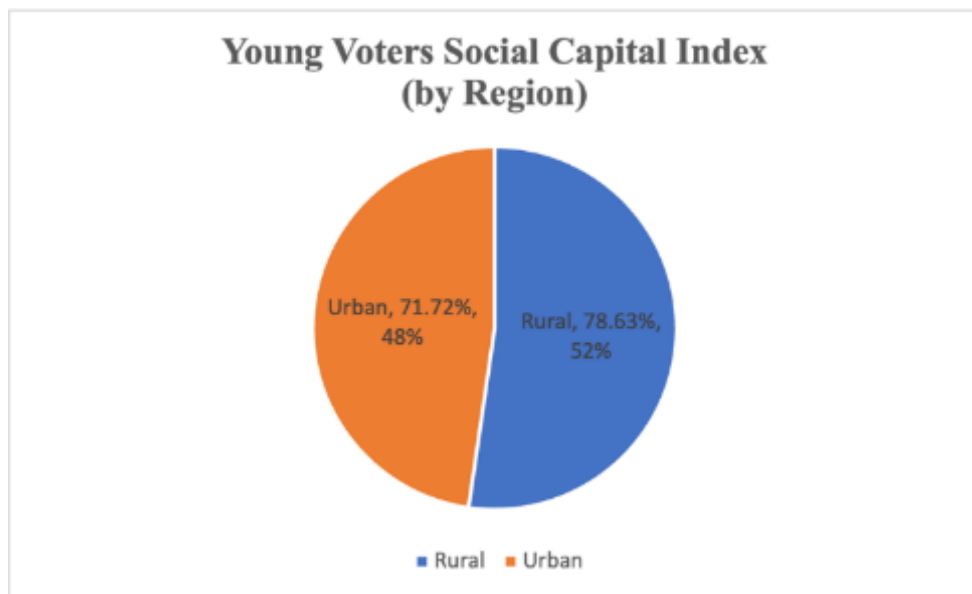


Figure 4.5 Social Capital Index of Young Voters by Region (The data has been re-analyzed by the author based on the dataset of World Values Survey, 2018-2022)

As shown in the social capital index that the trust and network have a relatively different number, the Figure 4.5 provided to capture the broader social capital in a single region more interpretable through score. The social capital index indicates that young voters in rural areas score is higher at 78,63% compared to the urban young people in 71,72%. This means, overall, rural young voters have slightly stronger social capital than those living in urban settings. The component numbers are important to see the variations of social capital features rather than just talking about the beliefs. However, (Engbers et al., 2017) argues that the norms cannot be provided with a number as the social capital form that is difficult to measure. Coleman (1988) highlighted norms as the important source which can facilitate the obligation and expectation. Thus, it should go to a deeper analysis where trust, network, and norms collaborate in shaping the difference in the number of electoral participation among young voters in two regions.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND YOUNG VOTERS TURNOUT IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

5.1 Overview of Field Findings

The field findings exert the spectrum of thematic analysis using the interview data and reported data, which are re-analyzed by the author to observe the number of data needed. It explains how the social capital shapes young voters' political participation by comparing two contrasting regions; the urban context of Central Jakarta and the rural context of Serang Regency. In Chapter 4, Jakarta II data turnout was 65,47% while Banten II wrote 85,96%. The findings suggest that while institutional trust of both regions remains at a similar level around 68,00%, the forms and social capital strength might differ, which account for the variation in turnout outcomes.

As an urban region, in this study is Central Jakarta, young voters tend to have a weaker social capital which correlates with lower voter turnout. Putnam (2000) put the inclusive social capital form, heterogenous ties, as the weak one that pursues external circles being worthless than those strong ties of homogenous form. Moreover, he highlighted the numerous groups or communities among people affected in low civic engagement (p.199). It fosters how the pattern of low turnout was seen through such external ties which does not evolve on the election as an event that needs a civic engagement. Conversely, Serang Regency that is characterized as rural, tend to rely on strong social capital as the one form could mobilize its members establishing exclusive identities. It pointed out that those who are involved within the community, would build exclusivity relations in which equality was found (p.390). They can build a strong trust exclusively in certain social structures. That social structure increased confidence in the neighbours and tended to vote more. Hence, the distinction between Young urban people in Central Jakarta and Young rural people in Serang Regency can be answered by this distinction of social capital forms.

5.2 Low Turnout and Weak Social Capital of Young Urban

The section discusses political participation patterns among young voters based on Central Jakarta, which the region relatively has a low turnout level in the 2024 legislative election. In addition, the findings from interview and secondary data would be included to enhance the understanding of each sub-section. It further examines a complete analysis of young participation, their social engagement, and their norms, to seek the causal

mechanism towards their lower participation during the 2024 legislative election, specifically to the House of Representatives. Furthermore, a comparison will be covered at the end of the chapter to delve into its comparison differences finding with rural one. The discovery interviews and secondary data highlights the weak social capital which is characterized by broader but looser networks, which are unattainable to mobilize high participation.

A. Political Participation among Central Jakarta Young Voters

Official data, in Jakarta II constituency, shows a lower percentage of 65.47% during 2024 legislative turnout, specifically for the House of Representative (KPU, 2024). This number is found in the constituency that includes Central Jakarta, South Jakarta, and overseas voters. Additionally, among young urban voters in particular, a survey by Indonesian Research Institution (LSI, 2025) indicates that young urban turnout, in the House Representative' 2024 legislative election, nationally stands around 40,1% lower than that of young rural voters which reached 60,8%. It reflects a consistent pattern of lower participation nationally both to urban regions as well as nationally among young urban demographics regions. Certainly, the study provides an interview analysis through young Central Jakarta informants, represented as young urban demographic, to delve into the explanation. The lower turnout number was influenced by several reasons that are attached in the Thematic Analysis of Young Voters interview data. It reveals diverse motivations and barriers.

Some of respondents expressed a sense of civic duty and desire to influence as a response of their complaints and dissatisfaction;

“I voted, it is because of the feeling that we, as a good citizen, should be participate, especially as young voters. In the political world, it's a shame to make a discarded vote. For instance, we have our own right to vote, we must turn that it is a civic duty..... It's better to vote than country ruled by irresponsible people” (Informant 1, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I still went to the polls station. First of all, I do not want if my voting rights, even though only for one voice, will be misused” (Informant 2, Central Jakarta, 2025)

Some young urban respondents reported that they have experienced participating in a sense of citizen obligation and fear that the voice of being misused if they abstained. These two words, although related, have different meanings. As Achen and Hur (2011) drawing on Smith (1954), moral obligation will force someone to vote because they

perceive it as the “right thing to do” appeared in personal values and civic duty. However, the only ‘obligation’ reason would not be enough for someone to vote (p.48). The fear that abstention could allow “irresponsible people” to seat the legislation, can threaten the sense of civic duty itself. It highlighted for the key important reason he voted, (Informant 1, Central Jakarta, 2025) stated “. that it is a civic duty... it’s better to vote than a country ruled by irresponsible people”. Such expression leads to the absence of natural obligation. Then these consist of both un-natural obligation and fear reflecting individual values with perceived external threats in shaping political participation. It could define how they were not seeing the success of turnout outcome and it reflects the low social capital among young rural voters (Wagner & Fernandez, 2009).

Young urban expectation-expressed tends to return on the cycle of the interpersonal trust of informants and it raises more questions on what type of network and norms builds such fears. As one of the Jakarta observers expressed the statement supporting these low social capital of young urban voters, “Because they are disappointed and have proven to understand many past events that their parents may not know about. Even though they didn't experience them, where does this come from? if not because of social capital that influences them?”. As Bartkus and Davis (2009) argues, a diverse form of network in social capital may expose young urban people to educate more, especially in warning of such problems. Additionally, to another reply moved in such a paradox “.... I do not want my voting rights, even though only for one voice, will be misused” (Informant 2, Central Jakarta, 2025). This highlights a kind of apprehension that their voice might be exploited or that the ‘wrong’ people could end up in power. Thus, social structure including trust, network, and norms within social capital should examine the paradox which could enhance more mechanism explanation of their turnout outcome.

Furthermore, a substantial number of interview data have shared skepticism or disconnection from formal politics, even the rest were expressed to fulfil the vote. It citing reasons such as abstained or even voted for nothing, despite of theirs actively engaged to such organizations and community, as there is no real action of such incumbent representing them;

“No, I abstained. It is just a formality. For them, to nominate themselves to be the candidates of Regional Representatives, Provincial Representatives or even for House of Representatives. Will they go straight down to the street? Helping the community when they need it? Without party frills..... Individually... just on their own. But, in fact, this is not happened” (Informant 3, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I went to the polling station, what is it to be? Almost all the ballots I casted, I thought it would be calculated as invalid vote or abstain. The reason is their role (House of Representatives) does not exist, barely any role left invisible. Instead of my voice being used badly, I should have been able to get rid the vote” (Informant 4, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“Voting is just one matter, I saw this one earlier, yes just voted rather than my voice was discarded.... Because they (candidates) themselves only exist during the campaign, only that. A lot of empty promises” (Informant 5, Central Jakarta, 2025)

The respondent mostly shows that they have no confidence to vote either 2024 candidates or its party of House Representatives. That is because people tend to vote for candidates who represent their political preferences (Dunn, 2012). Once young voters in urban areas feel unrepresented, they are preferred to abstain or though they come in pursuing the cast a null vote. As one respondent stated “Almost all the ballots I casted, I thought it calculated of invalid turnout, abstain... . there is no role that exists, invisible” (Informant 4, Central Jakarta, 2025). This pattern shows that even if he procedurally participated, (i.e. get through the polling station) may occur, does not always reflect vote involvement. Additionally, some similar interpretations of statements were found; “Will they go straight down to the street?... . in fact, this has not happened”, “The reason is their role does not exist”, “...Because they (House of Representatives) themselves only exist during the campaign, only that. A lot of empty promises”. Through vote implementation, as a democratic process, the people should have equal opportunity to perceive fairness of political representation (Dworkin, 2000). The lack of this opportunity and supported by the absence of strong social capital may allow them to have a lower turnout (Putnam, 2000).

These narratives draw a complex motivation behind young voters’ participation in Central Jakarta during the 2024 legislative election. Some respondents consider voting as a civic duty and means of guard against misuse of their rights, while others see the process only as a symbol, revealing their disappointment over unfulfilled promises and inadequate concrete representation. Those such disappointment rooted on the broader perception that elected representatives exist at a campaign time otherwise steer clear of the community life afterwards. Furthermore, structural factors which inherently affect the urban environment contribute to this trend of participation. Such skepticism and symbolic participation of ‘cast a null vote’ are not individual choices but are shaped by the broader social structure. This pattern cannot be separated from the urban social structure. Urban environments like

Central Jakarta belong to a more diverse population with individualistic life. An individualistic life can limit communal engagement and could not simply translate a cooperation of this political activity. It is strongly empirically proven by Clark et al. (2024) that heterogeneity population works through low information costs and social norms but does not affect social capital. Whereas, they further found a negative relationship between increasing heterogeneity population and voter participation. Fast socioeconomic life, capitalism pressured, that supported by heterogeneous urban communities may reduce the likely face to face discussion opportunities even less about politics. The individualistic in nature could not build collective mobilization, as daily they live in private matters.

The secondary data from a national survey support this qualitative finding. It interprets that young urban turnout will not be higher as young rural turnout (Figure, 4.2). Thus, the thematic findings suggest that young urban voters' lower turnout is not merely individual attitude or trust in political matters, but it is generated by the urban social structure which produces weaker bonding and creates fragmented engagement. This point becomes important to discuss the social capital forms of young Central Jakarta.

B. Trust among Young Voters in Central Jakarta

Interpersonal trust among young voters in Central Jakarta appears limited. While generally trust within family and close relatives can be strongly recognized, it expresses that trust towards other people (such as peers, neighbours, and people around) tends to be low. In addition, although some informants can trust their family members, this trust does not automatically translate into shared political views, even within the context of close relationships. Conversely, trust in friends, neighbors, and the surrounding community is perceived as weak and selective, often felt by suspicion or fear of others' ulterior motives. It reflects in less informal social interaction, then young urban people hold a weak interpersonal trust. As informant noted;

“I cannot trust them directly, there must be a feeling of suspicion, a feeling of fear that whether they are sincere or is there just something they want to find out” (Informant 1, Central Jakarta, 2025).

“If it's family, it is possible to put trust in them, but maybe not for friends. Maybe it's because my trust is not 100%, it's over to half less.... even to the peers within communities and organizations I engaged” (Informant 2, Central Jakarta, 2025).

“I cannot trust people around me, it involves peers and neighbors. Neighborhoods are a bit private, individualistic” (Informant 3, Central Jakarta, 2025).

“I only trust the closest relatives such as family but if it asked how the trust is feeling for the neighbors around, it might be at a low level... It is because the individual level in Jakarta is getting higher... It is the same for the community in respective living environment” (Informant 5, Central Jakarta, 2025)

The pattern reflects the concept of “the radius trust” discussed by Lee et al. (2011), which stated that strong social capital requires trust to extend beyond the private circles, not just within the family. However, in the urban context of Jakarta, trust to be narrow, not extending to the surrounding community, which hinders the cohesive social capital formation. When trust is solely private and not socially distributed, the potential for collaboration in collective action, such as participating in elections, is limited. This condition is further influenced by sociability, community size, as well as life satisfaction in urban environments. The large and heterogeneous urban populations often reduce face to face interactions towards the neighborhoods and peers around that can build trust, as individuals tend to be more private and selective in their social ties. The sociability measured through how young people are having informal social interactions around rather expands their relations to such organization, clubs, and communities, which could have limited acquaintances and should have the formal way of setting.

However, urban community size tends to be larger, dense, yet socially fragmented. In the table of Young Central Jakarta informants, they tend to be involved in a large community but its interactions are limited to close-knit relations. The informant consistently described their local environment as individualistic and private, and less interacted with the neighbors. Instead, they preferred to build connections with external communities or organizations that align more closely with their personal interests. Moreover, they were often have the discussion with the external communities than to such neighbors, it reduced their intensity to have communal bonds;

“It has been comfortable, but it depends on whether people are on the same track or not...” (Informant 1, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I am inactive in my respective living environment.... I don’t want to get involved... But i am active in such external communities and organizations” (Informant 2, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I am not comfortable having connections with neighbors... But I am feeling more welcome to such other organizations” (Informant 3, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“It's rarely found to have a community or connect with each other within the respective living environment For my political perspectives, it should be influenced by the senior in organizations” (Informant 4, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I often have political discussions in extra communities rather than intra communities... then such recent political issues were discussed in that community” (Informant 5, Central Jakarta, 2025)

A fragmented society with a diverse population is difficult to communicate because of a lack of trust (Sampson & Graif, 2009). Even so, an attachment to a trust towards neighbourhood will obtain an exclusive community (Belanche et al., 2021). That is reasoned because broad communities, except the nearest, does not create regular contact which foster trust and increase the desire to help others (Husband, 2005). Eventually, the trust that should be able to mobilize a collective action, does not react in the same way (Zissi et al., 2010). It's narrowing the trust limits constructing bonding social capital and shapes a fragile social capital. This helps explain why collective political mobilization does not meet among young voters in Central Jakarta despite the presence of some connections. Thus, it supports the explanation to the aggregate social capital scores that young urban people hold lower trust than young rural people (Figure, 4.4.1).

However, other than the patterns of sociability and community size, a deeper factor to ask is how satisfied young people are with their life and opportunities, which fundamentally affects their willingness to trust others. Life satisfaction plays an important role in shaping interpersonal trust among young people (Whiteley, 2000). It reflects that without a sense of optimism in life, individuals are less inclined to trust others or to view collective action like voting as worthwhile. These frustrations diminished their interpersonal trust as one of social capital features which can enhance the collective action;

“One of the big issues in Indonesia that I realize must be worrying is the employment problem... Young people sometimes worry about whether they will get a job after they graduate or not” (Informant 1, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I think government programs are merely tactical in nature rather than for its sustainable or long term It was arranged for their own benefit, as long as the formalities or perhaps fulfill their own agenda.... In fact, many people are unemployed” (Informant 2, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“The crucial thing is definitely about social inequality and socio-economic inequality... I have had this experience, we can do nothing, whether in the work or anything, without such relationships” (Informant 3, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“Young people today have only the chance to continue their university education around 40%, especially in Jakarta... for the middle to lower level, they have to work to get the education... even that the salary less than the average” (Informant 5, 2025)

These statements illustrate how young urban people in Central Jakarta are living with low life satisfaction. Many of them are concerned about their future life such as education and job issues, which still makes them concentrate on their own life struggles. In turn, these patterns influence weak interpersonal trust among young urban people in Central Jakarta.

C. Types of Young Urban Engagement Pattern

To further understand how networks play a significant role in contributing to the low number of young urban voters, it is appropriate to examine the differences of networks that have been analyzed. As Putnam (2000) delves the bonding social capital with the close-knit relations, Coffe and Geys (2006) delve to the different classification of its associations. It lies to whether social contacts are extensively or diversely connected in this urban young people. Diverse membership of associations such as youth clubs, organizations, and communities, that links major social categories, are built among heterogeneous societies (p.132). Through the responses among young people informant in Central Jakarta, most of them show the broader networks to various communities than such involving to the respective living environment community;

“Now I am part of BEM FISIP in one of university as a secretary, other organization is PMII and for the community are Sinergis Indonesia and Gen Z Indonesia” (Informant 1, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I am actively engaged in the structure of the PMII organization, before that I was BEM secretary and also involved much in the BATU (Barisan Anak Timur) community..... I also had been active in KIPAN (Kader Inti Pemuda Anti Narkoba)” (Informan 2, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“Actually, I connected to such local communities as Karang Taruna, Pemuda Sholat, Pemuda Masjid, then other organization is PMII” (Informant 3, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I am involving in IMM organizations and IPM Central Jakarta” (Informant 4, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“Currently, I am the head of one division of HIMA and also being a secretariat in GMNI commissariat” (Informant 5, Central Jakarta, 2025)

These responses reflect the diverse social contacts of young urban people in Central Jakarta. Most of them show the broader networks to various communities. It includes the network engaged by more than one organization or community. According to Putnam, such a network must reflect a “Getting ahead” facilitating the cross-cutting ties which have the potential to express a successful cooperation. In addition, he suggests that social support should be received from bonding social ties not through bridging ties, as it should be more closely connected. Bonding ties as explained in its theory, have the close-knit type of relationship rather than fragmented. It could differentiate the strength of ties among young Central Jakarta which would be emotionally weak or strong.

Young urban networks represent weak ties that are numerous but not necessarily emotionally connected. This is particularly because strong ties, such as those formed through consistent and frequent interaction, are more effective in generating trust, reciprocity, and collective action (Putnam & Gross, 2002). It may lack the emotional needed to sustain political mobilization or foster a shared sense of civic responsibility;

“In terms of political views, I tend to see the context of the problem.... If involved in communities and organization discuss it should be more conflicting in perspectives and view” (Informant 1, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I could see politics more through the reality” (Informant 2, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I feel that my political views is influenced by kinds of my own experiences and reality” (Informant 3, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“I am not really sure that I updated to such political condition but if asked for the influence the most is my senior in organization” (Informant 4, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“My political views tend to be influenced by my own personal opinion towards the political news and articles..... I still determined to not trusting peers and communities” (Informant 5, Central Jakarta, 2025)

Drawing from the informant answer, even though they are socially active in external communities, the nature of their engagement is fragmented and functionally oriented. These networks do not produce the bonding strength needed to foster solidarity, trust, or even civic action especially when interactions are interest based or temporary. This explains why a high degree of organizational involvement does not translate into higher voter turnout. Thus, the engagement patterns of young voters in Central Jakarta illustrate a form of fragmented social networks which are broader and have inclusive connection, yet incapable to drive collective participation.

D. Weak Social Capital Within Low Turnout

Social capital is not solely defined by the level of trust or its impact on participation, but also by its norms and the strength of ties within networks, which together affect voter turnout outcomes. In heterogeneous societies, social cohesion tends to weaken, negatively impacting collective mobilization (Coffe & Geys, 2006). While trust and networks establish the structural foundations of social capital, shared norms are crucial to transforming these relationships into collective action such as voting. Beyond trust and networks, the last feature shaping social capital is the presence of shared norms that follow the trust and networks among young voters in Central Jakarta. This becomes relevant since the trust and network appeared to have a limited influence in collective action. According to the respondent, the norms of reciprocity tend to be less found within inclusive communities. It often highlighted the pattern of respondent word of the sense of mutual cooperation which reflect to the shared norms;

“It depends on the community, sometimes young people are feeling unmotivated..... there are people who don’t care about anything in the organization, but it also depends on how we embrace them” (Informant 1, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“In my respective living environment, young people such as Karang Taruna is not active” (Informant 2, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“Today, people are individualistic and materialistic, they do not have the characteristic of mutual cooperation.....It is decreasing people’s ability to help each other.... That is really declining now” (Informant 3, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“In the respective environment, people tend to be careless.... It is like to concerned what the community is for, what its goals are, and that is not important” (Informant 4, Central Jakarta, 2025)

“Nowadays, youth are more individualistic.... They are less in helping others as well as less supportive.... It is like having a lack of empathy towards others” (Informant 5, Central Jakarta, 2025)

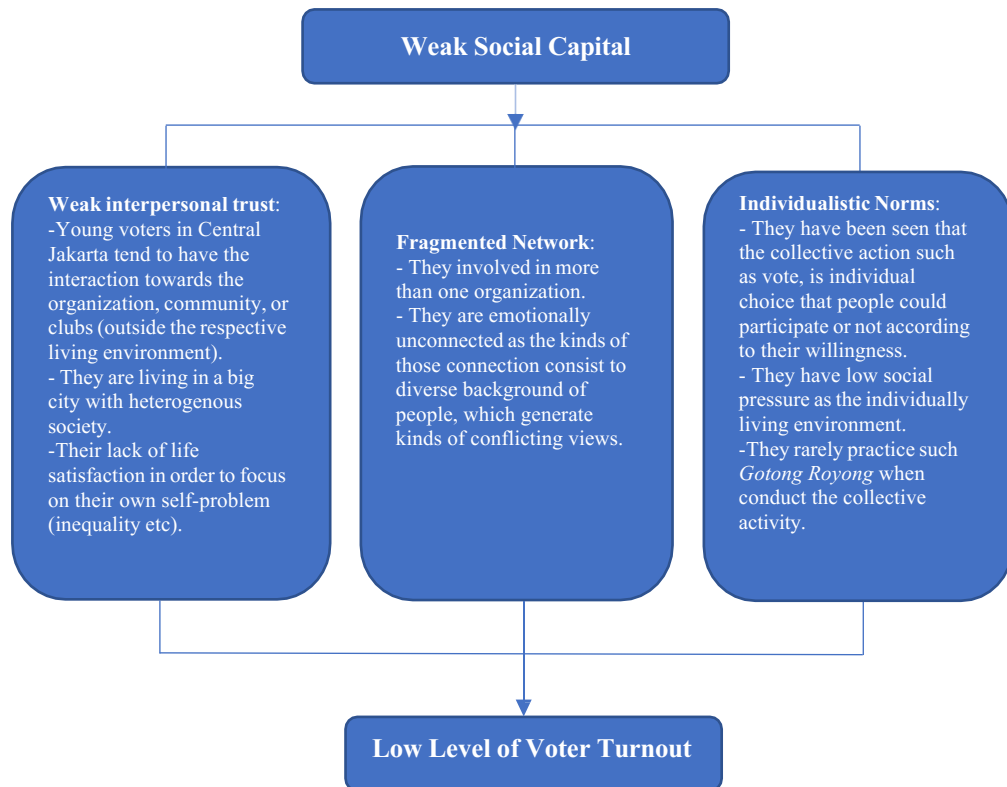
These statements lead to an understanding that while young voters participate in a broad network, they lack shared norms which usually sustain a sense of mutual connection and cooperation. The kind of outward connections reduces the informal social control or peer pressure that usually motivates electoral participation (Blais, 2000). Consequently, as the absence of strong bonding ties and norms of reciprocity, young voters are less susceptible to informal sanctions or encouragement from their communities to participate in elections. Norms of reciprocity refer to mutual expectations of cooperation and support

within communities. Wolfinger and Field (1966) describe “private-regarding” communities as social environments where individuals prioritize personal interests over collective goals, which limits the emergence of shared civic engagement. As a result, political engagement becomes more fragmented and individualized, and collective mobilization for turnout fails to emerge.

These responses illustrate that although there are some networks and participation, norms of reciprocity such as *Gotong Royong* or mutual concern have weakened (Iqbal, 2018). Moreover, another study by (Lanero et al., 2017) suggests that the high engagement to external communities, could be driven by instrumental motivations such as personal development or career advancement, rather than a sense of civic duty. As in the previous section, there are several respondents who abstained, (Informant 3 & Informant 4; Central Jakarta, 2025), while contributing in more than 3 communities. Such engagement patterns could not be sufficient to encourage them to be involved in such neighbourhood-localized communities. Additionally, Wagner and Fernandez (2009) argued for not automatically believing that all collaborations within communities can perceive the trust. It should be, at least once, create the successful feeling in intervening outcomes then the social capital may positively impact a collective action.

In sum, these findings suggest that low interpersonal trust, the conformation of weak over strong ties, and the absence of strong shared norms collectively weaken the potential for collective action. As Maulemann (2008, p.11) notes, norms can only shape behavior when they are recognized and shared among interaction partners; when this is absent, their effect diminishes. The accumulation of these social capital features among young urban voters, in Central Jakarta, fails to generate higher voter turnout. Thus, social capital plays a significant role to produce lower turnout outcomes among young urban voters.

Figure 5.1 Causal Mechanism of Weak Social Capital in Lower Level of Young Voter Turnout in Central Jakarta



Source: Author's Production

5.3 High Turnout and Strong Social Capital of Young Rural

As the previous discussion of urban young voters in Central Jakarta has demonstrated how weak social capital contributes to lower turnout, this section turns to explore the contrasting case of young voters in Serang Regency, a rural area characterized by higher turnout and stronger social capital. Similar to the analysis of Central Jakarta, the author draws on field findings and interview data to illustrate how social capital shapes young rural voter participation. As shown in chapter 4 (Figure 4.2) young voters in rural areas are more likely to have a high turnout compared to those who are living in urban areas. The trend of higher turnout of rural regions had been confirmed in many other analyses (Durkan, 2022; Chandra & Potter, 2016; Falcao, 2009; Econ, 2007). The paradox, despite other findings, shows urban people tend to have a higher education (Lagendre, 2025; Shen & Zhou, 2024), and have a great socio-economic (Steinhardt & Delhey, 2020), which would be the best factor for urban positions in higher turnout. In fact, the social structure and regional landscape between rural and urban regions is different (Kim et al, 1973). It must be differentiated to social capital that influences higher turnout in rural regions. Through three social capital features of Putnam (2000); trust, network, and norm,

the analysis will reveal each role in shaping the strength of bonding social capital and its contribution to lead higher turnout.

A. Political Participation among Serang Regency Young Voters

The turnout data of Serang Regency at legislative election of House Representatives reached 85,96% (KPU, 2024, p.61-65). This number, which is part of Banten II constituency (including Serang City, Serang Regency, and Cilegon), is notably higher than the turnout in Jakarta II. Moreover, it aligns with the national trend of young rural voters' turnout is around 60,8%, significantly higher compared to young urban voters 40,1% (Figure 4.2). Based on the field interviews data, the author seeks to understand young rural voters' participation in Serang Regency. The finding indicates that structural and cultural characteristics inherent to rural communities contribute to higher political participation among young voters. In rural context, the intention of social interactions and homogenous community based, create an environment that internalizes collective norms. According to Achen and Hur (2011), individuals who internalize a sense of moral obligation often act in accordance with what is perceived to be "the right thing", as collective community action. In line with that, where social interactions are frequent and community values are relatively homogeneous, moral obligation becomes more easily internalized and reinforced (Blais, 2000). It created social pressure among its members and shared expectations that voting appeared for a natural action. Furthermore, Gabriel and Keil (2013) suggests that every individual realizes the position within the community of their social interaction facilitates them to act as agents who contribute to the collective outcome. This is aligned in the responses of young voters, interviewed in Serang Regency, consistently describe voting as 'a natural and expected civic duty';

"Yes, I voted. It's because our voice is our aspiration that conveys through the institution. Who do we want to go through if we abstain.....it is our fault if our region does not develop. Who do we want to convey to if we are in hostile to the institution, it should not be occur" (Informant 1, Serang Regency, 2025)

"Yes, I am participated" (Informant 2, Serang Regency, 2025)

"Yes, I voted, the reason is concerning all of us, one vote is also important, helpful, it must be shame if the vote right was left" (Informant 3, Serang Regency, 2025)

"Yes, if in the election, I vote. But I did not join the campaign or be a successor team of candidates. I am participated as an active voter" (Informant 4, Serang Regency, 2025)

"Yes, I voted. What is abstaining for?" (Informant 5, Serang Regency, 2025)

“Yes, I am voted, because one vote is important, for the next five years” (Informant 6, Serang Regency, 2025)

These narratives illustrate how the voting act is perceived not merely as an individual choice, but a shared social norm reinforced by the community. Moral obligation tends to spread within homogeneous communities with frequent social interaction (Geys, 2006). It is closely related to the concept of strong social capital, characterized by the close-knit networks and a strong interpersonal trust. Notably, none of the respondents expressed the feeling of dissatisfaction with the political system or even framed voting as a form of protest. All the respondents showed they were turned to vote as ‘a moral obligation’ that must be filled. Young rural habits in socializing themselves within a surrounding environment and tend to be involved with community, exclusively, build their confidence to do what they are supposed to do. According to Coleman (2004), social capital features can enhance the feeling to contribute in collective action such as voting. It would identify one behaviour for most people doing, then forcing their self needs to do so. The individual perspectives towards political participation, especially during election, are shaped by what most people within the community believe. If it is saying that the vote is an obligation, then they are morally pressured as it is a public activity (Martin & Webster, 2020).

In addition, a kind of civic duty known only for the responsibility (Francois & Gergaud, 2019) and the preferences are no more the reason to vote (Blais et al., 2018). It defines that blindly and without understanding any voting preferences, young rural still prefer to vote. One of Serang Regency observers realized to such analysis, “The majority of young voters don't have party IDs or personal identification with the contestants. So, they just follow the crowd. Therefore, Huntington and Nelson's logic suggests that the practice of political participation is mobilized”. It aligns with Gimpel and Karnes (2006) finding out the conservative views the rural community have, it is noted for mobilizing them more easily than that of urban areas. Therefore, the higher turnout among young voters in Serang Regency cannot be separated from the presence of social capital role, which offer the shared norms as the communal sense of one vote matters for the community wellbeing.

In sum, the interview findings confirm the national data that young rural voters are more likely to participate, and this pattern is closely related to the structure of social capital in rural regions. For young rural voters, voting is not the thing linked to their choice but as the fulfillment of communal expectation, that they need to turn the vote for the development of the region. It highlights the social capital as a community norm and mobilizing force in

a democratic engagement. Following sections will further explore trust, networks, and norms to explain this higher turnout by young rural people.

B. Trust among Young Voters in Serang Regency

Trust plays a foundation in social capital development. Without interpersonal trust among individuals within a community, strong social networks and shared norms cannot be established. Trust highlighted both the willingness to participate and effectiveness of collective action. As previously discussed in the analysis of urban engagement, when trust is lacking, individuals are less likely to participate in community activities, which in turn limits the social capital and reduces the collective norms that encourage political participation (Putnam, 2000; Coleman, 2004). In Serang Regency, as a rural region, interpersonal trust appears to be a significant factor shaping high voter turnout among young people. Drawing on the interview data, there is a strong presence of trust within their social environment, which plays an important role in shaping higher voter turnout;

“In fact, I am following what most people say” (Informant 1, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I am trust them as I know people around. My parents always taught me to choose good friends, people who behave as they were taught at home” (Informant 2, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I trust those I have spent a lot of time, the people around” (Informant 3, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I think it certainly turns into social problems. As the social environment in Serang Regency is harmonious, then it is impossible for individual to not trusting others, no matter how the environment condition is” (Informant 4, Serang Regency, 2025)

“...I believed them. For instance, when they are given the responsibility, they do it. In addition to my position as the chairman of Youth Entrepreneurship Serang Forum. I think it is the value of trust. (Informant 5, Serang Regency, 2025)

“Yes, I trust them” (Informant 6, Serang Regency, 2025)

These answers show that young rural trust tends to have a high interpersonal trust among young rural voters. The expression of “I am following what most people say” indicates a tendency to align with community norms and decisions. It could be the key which illustrates that social influence is stronger in rural environments where trust reinforces communal actions like voting. This aligns with Fukuyama (1999) and Hardin (1998), who argue that trust is often present in shared social identity and mutual respects

among community members. In addition to the confidence that people around are well known, as said by Informant 2, “I am trust as I know the people around” suggests that close connection fosters trust, reinforcing a close-knit character of rural communities. It illustrates the frequent informal social interaction which goes better in their respective living environment. Unlike urban regions, where heterogeneity can lead to fragmented or selective trust (Neller, 2006), rural communities such as Serang Regency tend to be more socially homogeneous. This is also reflected in the relatively small and close-knit community size among young people;

“I am comfortable to my own respective living environment included the community, all in good” (Informant 1, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I feel in comfortable because it is still in the same scope of environment” (Informant 2, Serang Regency, 2025)

“For my environment, whether it’s on campus, organization, or in my living environment.... I am comfortable” (Informant 3, Serang Regency, 2025)

“If we talk about the social environment, so far I feel safe..... It is because the Tanara environment is a homogenous, we are still have one leader and have one perspective of live” (Informant 4, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I feel that comfortable to interact with the people around, no one obstacles” (Informant 5, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I am feeling a very safe in my respective living environment” (Informant 6, Serang Regency, 2025)

This sense of homogeneity and trust is crucial for fostering strong social capital, which in turn supports higher levels of political participation among young rural voters. Delhey and Newton (2005) argue that such homogeneity facilitates trust, as individuals perceive others to share similar values, goals, and constraints. Consequently, the strong interpersonal trust in Serang Regency contributes to the structure of social capital. According to Dowding et al. (2001), higher trust within society generated higher voter turnout. In fact, there is no variation in answers that indicates an important paradox in the analysis of interpersonal trust among young rural people. The interview findings from Serang Regency support that community size of young rural voters in close knit relations, have a high interpersonal trust, leading them to participate accordingly.

The pattern of sociability and its community size reflects how the homogenous society interacts can create a strong interpersonal trust among its people. In addition to life

satisfaction which would enhance the level of interpersonal trust within a society' social capital, as Whiteley (2000) suggest, there are informants responses which have to analyze;

“Young people need a lot of job training... when they graduate, they do not understand completely what they learned even though they are graduate from the vocational high school” (Informant 1, Serang Regency, 2025)

“If we have the capability to work in our own environment, it would be a great opportunity that we do not have to work far.... So far, the policy decisions have been good, but in terms of implementation, it is far from perfect” (Informant 2, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I my neighborhood, they are not really critical to the recent condition and no issues raises among young people..... they are seeing for the important of vote” (Informant 3, Serang Regency, 2025)

“Schools, education policies in Tanara Tirtayasa, the problems are the slogan of free schools, free education, but in reality it is still lacking in implementation.....There are cases that the students prefer to work at an early age because they want to earn money rather to spend in education” (Informant 4, Serang Regency, 2025)

“The youth population in Serang Regency is large, they have high potential. If the legislative members can reach them seeing their potential, it will become a kind of future development capital” (Informant 5, Serang Regency, 2025)

“Road infrastructure, the facilities is still uneven” (Informant 6, Serang Regency, 2025)

These statements illustrate that their life conditions are not even better than those who are living in Central Jakarta. The programs have not yet been implemented properly. However, the inequality is not felt as significant as what is felt by young people living in Central Jakarta. Those homogenous societies with the similar condition, experience, and communal expectation supports the argument that trust is a key mechanism linking social capital to drive collective action.

To conclude, interpersonal trust among young voters in Serang Regency helps explain the high voter turnout in the region. Trust, as a feature of social capital, functions not only as an emotional bond but also as a social structure that facilitates community expectations for collective actions like voting. The interview findings support the significant impact of trust as on social capital, reflected in the high young rural turnout. Thus, interpersonal trust helps explain why young rural voters demonstrate higher turnout compared to the urban. This further strengthens the explanation of social capital roles operating in rural areas.

C. Types of Young Rural Engagement Pattern

Interpersonal trust as one of the social capital features does not stand itself. To fully understand how trust fosters political participation, it is necessary to examine the networks in which young rural individuals are involved. It will help to find the patterns of young rural contribution in such collective action. It indicates that young rural people are homogeneously tied as they were stated to engage in one community or organization or if they do not formally belong to external communities, they remain actively involved in their local communities (see Table 3.3). This local orientation reflects the close-knit relations of rural communities that only prefer to be involved in one organization. In addition to such homogeneity in structure, then the community takes to more closely than urban;

“I am focusing to involve in Ansor community” (Informant 1, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I am active only in campus, HMJ organization” (Informant 2, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I am a secretary in IMM organization” (Informant 3, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I am active in the neighborhoods communities such as Pos Ronda, RT, and others small local communities” (Informant 4, Serang Regency, 2025)

“Currently, I am the chairman of the youth entrepreneurship forum” (Informant 5, Serang Regency, 2025)

“I probably active only in PMII” (Informant 6, Serang Regency, 2025)

Unlike young urban voters, who tend to maintain diverse social contacts across multiple organizations and communities, young rural voters in Serang Regency mostly engage within a limited number of groups, often answered by one engagement or more closely to neighborhood communities. This pattern of engagement reflects the homogenous and close-knit social environment of rural areas, where trust and social ties are concentrated within smaller, and more stable networks than urban. Such limited diversity in social contacts means that young rural have strong ties that reinforce mutual trust and cooperation. It must easily build emotional bonds for collective action. The difference in the structure of social networks shapes the nature of social capital and its impact on voter participation.

Other than the diversity of contacts, the strength ties also have to be measured. All rural respondents show their common engagement in political action influenced by the respective living environment as well as the community. That close knit relationship makes discussions frequently occur. As Burt (2005) suggests that political discussion being a tool to strengthen the social bonds, such discussion works to shape closest ties. They serve as

the foundation of strong social capital, where shared experiences and mutual trust enhance community cohesion. According to Kernell and Lamberson (2023), neighbourhood-based social networks can directly influence voting behaviour, particularly in rural settings where collective identity is stronger. Furthermore, political engagement is not limited to discussion, respondents also indicated that their political views and behaviours are shaped by people they trust and respect. In addition, the high interpersonal trust they have, and that frequent daily bonds by conversation, lead them to have more confidence to vote. As Mo et al. (1991) found that people could only go to vote if they were mobilized. In this case, young rural people are easily mobilized by others' perspectives and actions. When asked about 'what & who' would be influenced the most on their political thoughts;

“My political views influenced by the community.....maybe in coffee shops, in food stalls, any communities are always talk about political discussion” (Informant 1, Serang Regency, 2025)

“Its definitely the respective living environment influenced my political views” (Informant 2, Serang Regency, 2025)

“My family has influenced my political perspective..... it is definitely my parents, my environment.... Secondly, my senior in organization” (Informant 3, Serang Regency, 2025)

“The community leader in my respective living environment influence my political perspective” (Informant 4, Serang Regency, 2025)

“The community usually such as friends influencing my political perspective” (Informant 5, Serang Regency, 2025)

“My political perspective influenced by friends in community” (Informant 6, Serang Regency, 2025)

These statements provide a rich understanding of how the political behaviour of young rural people perceive political influence and mobilization. It is shown that political perspectives and voting behaviour among young rural people in Serang Regency are not formed in isolation (Zissi et al., 2010), but shaped by close community networks and figures they respect such as family members, religious leaders, organization chairperson, and community peers (Sutiyo & Maharjan, 2017). The pattern illustrates the function of strong social capital which tends to be adopted by homogeneous networks. They have similar backgrounds within certain networks, frequent discussions and shared experiences, not only fostering trust but also the norms, expecting for moral growth.

In this context, mobilization does not occur primarily through formal campaigns or media exposure, but can intervene through everyday interactions at coffee gatherings, local religious forums, and organization meetings. These networks not only reinforce trust but also serve as the political socialization and mobilization. The engagement of young rural voters in Serang regency is deep in social structures that support participation through localized networks. Hence, these young rural networks shaped bonding social capital supported by their interpersonal trust and close-knit relations. Thus, it has been seen that the network patterns of young rural, including high levels of interpersonal trust, can greatly influence high levels of voter participation.

D. Strong Social Capital Within High Turnout

Certain types of social organizations are ‘inward-looking’, fostering dense networks that connect individuals with similar social, cultural, or economic backgrounds (Norris, 2011). While these networks may lack diversity, they rely on strong interpersonal ties, frequent informal social interaction, and shared norms, elements that are particularly effective in reinforcing trust, cooperation, and responsibility (Lakon et al., 2008). These networks can give more benefit to individuals in enhancing openness to information as well as creating opportunities. Within rural communities, strong social capital fosters a collective sense of identity and civic responsibility that directly contributes to high levels of participation. Strong social capital produces great norms of reciprocity, encouraging a sense that mutual cooperation is not only expected but also valued. The daily lives of young rural voters, shaped by strong interpersonal trust, make it easier to establish and sustain these connections. Their social environment often links individuals who share similar experiences and beliefs then generates shared values that flourish within the community. All the respondents confirmed the existence of strong mutual cooperation and reciprocity in their communities;

“Yes, it tends to be more in reciprocity, helping each other and working together..”
(Informant 1, Serang Regency, 2025)

“Yes it is, for the local community itself...there is definitely mutual cooperation”
(Informant 2, Serang Regency, 2025)

“The people in my respective living environment is caring each other” (Informant 3, Serang Regency, 2025)

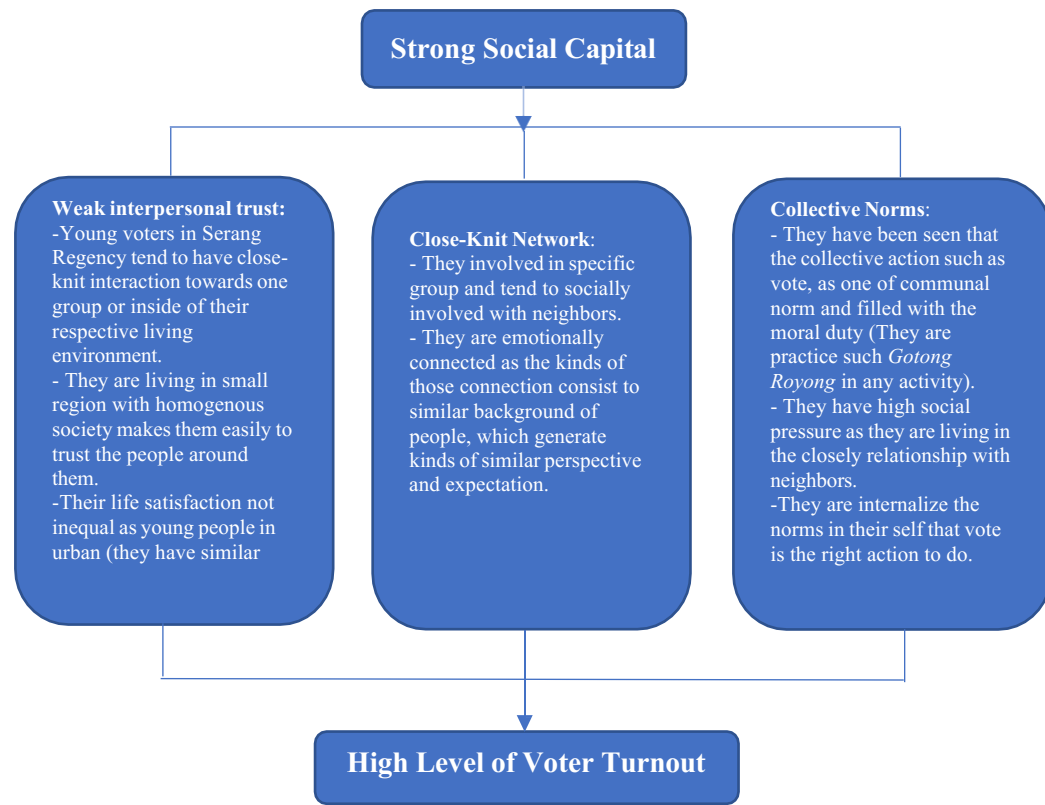
“Yes, it's absolutely we help and cooperate each other, especially if living in rural areas... we do *Gotong Royong* such as when we conduct the cleaning event, and Siskamling” (Informant 4, Serang Regency, 2025)

“Absolutely, we do help our members” (Informant 5, Serang Regency, 2025) “My neighbors really care about each other and like to help each other” (Informant 6, Serang Regency, 2025)

These findings illustrate that mutual cooperation expressed through daily practices like *Gotong Royong* and neighborhood solidarity, is not only expected but embedded in the lived experience of rural communities. The shared norms in reciprocal relationships reinforces the idea that civic engagement, such as vote, is part of one’s moral and communal duty, which bonds in the community. A collective action is not only driven by individual interests but also by group expectations and cultural norms as a shared responsibility. This sense of responsibility and cooperation is rooted in each individual who lives in homogeneous society. As Putnam (2000) and Wolfinger & Field (1966) argue, such close-knit relations in communities create stronger social pressure for “public-regarding” behaviour, including voting. Furthermore, Teilmann (2012) suggests that strong social capital motivated the development activities in rural areas. Young voters may expand their engagement beyond their community, but their networks often remain limited to those with similar backgrounds, and strong ties, in more diverse or external groups, remain relatively strong compared to urban areas. This may explain why political participation in rural areas, as well as nationally among young rural people, is more consistent that is collectively shaped rather than individually driven.

In this context, high voter turnout among young rural voters in Serang Regency as reflected in the broader Banten II constituency, is strongly supported by the presence of strong social capital. Young rural voters have a stronger social capital in an informal way (Sutiyo & Maharjan, 2017). The internal cohesion, shared expectations, and interpersonal trust within rural communities mobilize young people to vote as a collective acting on shared moral commitments (Mo et. al, 1991). It shows how strong social capital transforms a civic duty into a shared moral action. Thus, strong social capital built through high interpersonal trust, shared moral expectations, and close-knit networks, all act as a powerful component of political participation among young rural voters in Serang Regency. The civic duty of voting transforms into moral obligation and not only as an individual act, but a communal expression of solidarity and trust.

Figure 5.2 Causal Mechanism of Strong Social Capital in Higher Level of Young Voter Turnout in Serang Regency



Source: Author's Production

5.4 Comparative Discussion

This comparative analysis covers both contrasting regions between young rural voters in Serang Regency and young urban voters in Central Jakarta. The data from Indonesian Research Institution (LSI, 2024) shows a paradoxical number which includes the higher number of young rural turnout, nationally, than young urban voters. In addition, the official data from KPU (2025) also highlighted the lower turnout of legislative elections (House representatives) in Jakarta II, including Central Jakarta, than Banten II as it includes the rural region of Serang Regency. These two are confirmed through social capital theory which examines how trust, network, and norms are interrelated with each other to form the level of social capital. Thus, the type of social capital that is different from each region gives a deeper explanation. There is weak social capital which is rooted in heterogeneous societies that have fragmented communities and generate low trust that fails to create collective action. On the other hand, strong social capital reflects on homogenous societies that have cohesive communities and can generate high trust through shared moral obligation in collective action. Those two levels include a kind of distinction which affects the different turnout outcome.

As two regions are having different components within each strong and weak social capital, it reflects the different patterns of voter turnout. In Serang Regency, the 'moral obligation' to translate turnout as 'civic duty' gradually experienced through the frequency of informal interaction within the close communities. Not merely on such interaction, the leaders and figure perspective is extremely believed by most of the local community can easily internalize such common political views. Once they have "public-regarding" they would be likely to follow the dominance decision. Moreover, Serang Regency observer (2025) highlighted the slang political characteristic of young voters, "FOMO", Fears of Missing Out, that occurred in the absence of systematic socialization. He further mentioned young rural voters are afraid of being different to their circle or environment. Those patterns of daily mobilization linked to most similar backgrounds will enhance a high trust towards other people. Therefore, although there is a tendency for different connections among young people in Serang Regency, they still interact with a homogeneous community, where such bonds component will dominate strongly, and influence the analysis that supports strong social capital causes high election results among young rural.

In contrast, young urban voters, in a heterogenous kind of society, expressed more in an external community or organization which connects them to a broader connection. As Billet (2014, p.80) finds reducing the public space they can gather around should reduce a dialogue among them. It can reduce the frequency of informal interaction as rural people have and pursue a low interpersonal trust among young urban people. In addition, their networking towards multiple organizations only works on the broader flowing information which does not strengthen the shared norms as the fragmented communities involved by one person might perceive conflicting views. Moreover, characteristics of respecting self-intention rather than public needs as the motivations to be involved in a broader network will not cover the mutual cooperation as strong as local communities belonging in rural regions. These two distinctions of flowing social capital emerge how the social structure and cultural norms can influence the turnout outcome as collective action. Young rural strong social capital leads them to turn higher than young urban people during the 2024 legislative election. On the other hand, young urbanites cannot translate their weak social capital into their confidence during election, to vote. This shows that the presence of everyday life connection could enhance the individual interpersonal trust, network, and norms which affects the collective action.

These patterns of social capital adhere to Putnam's (1993, 2000) social capital theory that bonding reinforces participation through shared norms and networks of reciprocity. Kaufman (2021) similarly argues that social structures rooted in daily community interactions create environments where political engagement is perceived as expected and necessary. Additionally, Coleman (2004) perspective supports the idea that social capital impact is mediated through local relational dynamics rather than formal institutional. In rural contexts like Serang Regency, close social ties sustain their moral obligation to vote, while the more fragmented and individualistic urban environment lacks to influence the turnout outcome.

Table 5.1 Comparative Analysis and Discussion

Category	Young Rural Voters (Serang Regency)	Young Urban Voter (Central Jakarta)
Discussion Analysis		
Type of Social Capital	Strong Social Capital	Weak Social Capital
Interpersonal Trust	High: built through frequent informal interactions	Low: more individualistic and less frequency in informal interactions
Networks	Local, close-knit, informal networks (e.g. village groups, religious leaders)	External or formal networks (e.. university organization, youth clubs)
	Community based: Culturally, religiously, and socially homogeneous	Community based: Diverse backgrounds and fragmented communities
	Discussion: Frequent discussions embedded in daily life (e.g. coffee shops)	Discussion: Less frequent discussions spread across different groups and less routine (not as daily life routine rather as formally needs)
Norms	Vote as moral and collective duty	Participations often based on individual choice
Discussion Result		
Vote Participation	"Public Regarding" as communal expectation and moral obligation	"Self-Regarding" as individual interest

Turnout Impact	High Voter Turnout	Lower Voter Turnout
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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the differences in young voters' turnout between rural and urban areas during the 2024 legislative election, specifically for the House of Representative. The comparative region that represents the analysis are young rural voters in Serang Regency and young urban voters in Central Jakarta. This comparative analysis draws semi-structured interviews on both demographic young people and explains the provided data from officials' institutions. The findings highlight that young rural voters tend to participate more actively, driven by high interpersonal trust, local close-knit networks, and shared norms of reciprocity. These strong social capital characteristics create collective action which consist of social pressure, tendency, and a moral obligation to vote, generating participation is a natural civic duty. In contrast, young urban voters in Central Jakarta show lower turnout, which have been associated with the less frequent informal networks and less shared communal pressure, even often expressing low trust to others. These findings support Putnam's (2000) social capital theory suggestion that networks and strong social capital will have a central role in mobilizing individuals to vote, while weak social capital is insufficient to create individual confidence in participation. This comparative analysis confirms that strong social capital characterizes young rural voters, while weak social capital is more attached among young urban voters, influencing their variations of turnout levels.

Beyond institutional trust theory which is often highlighted to influence the number of turnout, it is not explained to what extent of democratic society measures institutional trust towards their voting right. Many studies (Groundlund & Setala, 2007; Hooghe & Marien, 2013) find that the institutional predicted level of voter turnout, while this relationship could not explain the Indonesian context. The social and cultural factors might be more beneficial to explore such an Indonesian paradox. As noted by knight (2020) social trust is higher than institutional trust. Therefore, Rolfe (2012) distinction of different social network and demographic patterns, Nahapiet and Ghoshal (2000) argued the sum of actual and potential resources, Putnam (2000) consisting three social capital features can operate differently, Campbell (2013), which the result of one domination between strong and weak capital ties, leads to different turnout outcome among Indonesian young voters' demographic.

6.2 Limitations of the Research

This study focuses on the scope of regional contrasting areas such as Serang Regency and Central Jakarta, which may not capture the full diversity of rural and urban context across Indonesia. The qualitative explanation, while offering deep insights, cannot provide statistical generalizations about all young voters. However, the study does not neglect the provided data illustrates the area of distinctions to be analysed. Even though it is limited to the official data that specifically does not have young voters' turnout to the region intended, Serang Regency and Central Jakarta. To cover this limitation, the author conducts interviews in order applying social capital indicators by Putnam (2000) to enhance a rich understanding of young voter behavior patterns. Furthermore, the analysis primarily centers on social capital and young voters without deeply examining other influencing factors such as media exposure, socio-economic disparities, or electoral competition. Future studies could broaden the scope to include other regions, apply mixed methods, and explore how digital platforms shape young voters' engagement in two different demographics landscapes such as urban and rural, even suburban areas.

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