

## A Portrait of Political Participation in Riau Province: A Literature Review

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of political participation trends in Riau Province through a literature review. Political participation, particularly voter turnout, plays a crucial role in reflecting the legitimacy and success of democratic processes. By analyzing data from various elections—both legislative (Pileg) and presidential (Pilpres)—from 2004 to 2024, the study highlights the fluctuating trends in voter participation across multiple electoral levels. While national trends show a general increase in voter turnout, local dynamics in Riau present unique patterns influenced by regional political factors, voter demographics, and election-specific contexts. The analysis also explores the impact of voter education, political awareness, and campaign strategies in shaping electoral engagement in Riau. Findings indicate that despite fluctuations, voter participation in Riau has remained relatively stable, with notable peaks in recent elections, reaching an average of 81% in 2024. The study emphasizes the need for more targeted strategies to sustain and further enhance voter participation in future elections, particularly by addressing local political challenges. This literature review contributes to the broader discourse on electoral behavior in Indonesia and provides insights into how regional factors influence national electoral trends.

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## INTRODUCTION

Every five years, the Indonesian people are invited to participate in a democratic party that involves the election of members of the Legislative General Elections (Pileg) for Regional House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR-RI), Regional House of Representatives (DPD-RI), Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), Presidential Elections (Pilpres), and election to the head of state. Voter participation is in the spotlight, not only as an indicator of public political awareness, but also as a reflection of the legitimacy of election results. Since the first election in the reform era in 1999, the level of voter participation has shown interesting dynamics. In the 1999 legislative election, the turnout rate reached an impressive 92.99%. However, five years later, there was a significant decline in the 2004 elections, with participation falling to 84% for the legislative elections and 79.76% in the first round of the presidential election. Despite the decline, this trend began to improve in subsequent elections. The 2014 elections recorded an increase in participation to 75.11% for the legislative elections, although it was slightly lower in the presidential elections which only touched 69.58%. The 2019 elections then recorded a significant leap with participation reaching 81.69% for legislative elections and 81.97% for presidential elections. However, this national data does not fully reflect trends at the local level. In Riau Province, for example, the voter turnout rate shows a unique fluctuating pattern. In the 2024 General Election, participation in Riau reached 81%, almost on par with the national figure. Interestingly, however, the turnout rate for the presidential election in Riau in 2024 was lower than the national level, with 77%, far below the 81.78% achieved at the national level. Nevertheless, the participation record in Riau remains positive, especially considering the increase in participation from the previous election. In the 2019 election, participation in Riau reached 78%, higher than the provincial KPU target of 75%.

This fluctuation in voter turnout invites further analysis. Do local factors such as regional political dynamics, candidates, or campaign strategies act as drivers or barriers? This phenomenon opens up space for a deeper study of how political participation in regions like Riau can be linked to national trends. Elections are not just about voting, but also about how people engage in the democratic process more deeply.

Tabel 1. Election Participation Rates in Indonesia and Riau

<b>Categori</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>DPT</b>	<b>Participation Level</b>	<b>Persentase</b>
A	National Presidential Election Participation Rate			
	2004	153.320.544	122.293.844	79,76
			116.662.705	77,44
	2009	176.367.056	127.983.655	72,56
	2014	190.307.134	134.953.967	69,58
	2019	192.866.254	154.257.601	81,97
	2024	204.807.222	164.227.475	81,78
B	Participation Rate of Presidential Election in Riau Province			
	2009	3.346.965	2.441.047	66,93
	2014	4.079.513	2.695.247	62,75
	2019	3.863.305	3.271.530	84,68
	2024	4.732.174	3.748.930	77,62

C	National Pileg Participation Rate			
	2004	148.000.369	113 490 795	84,06
2009	171.265.442	104.048.118	70,9	
2014	193.944.150	124 885 737	75,11	
2019	192.866.254	139.972.260	81,69	
2024	204.807.222	151.796.631	81,42	
D	Participation Rate of Pileg DPD-RI Riau Province			
	2009	3.366.383	2.292.893	65,35
2014	4.079.513	3.260,001	72,85	
2019	3.863.305	3.260022	84,38	
2024	4.732,174	3.739,118	77,44	
E	Participation Rate of the House of Representatives of the Province of Riau			
	2009	3.365.980	2.358.986	70,99
2014	4.079.513	2.669.684	69,5%	
2019	3.863.305	3.260.719	84,17%	
2024	4.732,174	3.737.063	77,40%	

Source: Compiled by Researcher, 2024

This research aims to contribute to the literature by investigating two key questions. First, what is the portrait of voter participation for the 2009-2024 presidential election, DPD RI, and DPR RI provincial elections in Riau? Second, what is the percentage level of voters in Riau from the 2009-2024 presidential election, 2009-2014 DPR-RI legislative election, and 2009-2024 DPD-RI legislative election by presenting quantitative data. In this context, there are at least three quantitative data points highlighted, namely the percentage level, the comparison level voters, and voters percentages from all levels of general elections in Riau province. This research qualitatively describes the potrait participation of the people of Riau province in every political contestation from 2004 to 2024. It also investigates how their political choices are determined on polling day. In this regard, the research outlines: that (1) groups of voters who have the use of voting day prefer to take a vacation; (2) groups of voters who have extensive experience and knowledge of politics and the democratic process tend to have stronger views and are not easily influenced by narratives on social media; (3) groups of voters who seek information from various sources, both from traditional media such as newspapers and television, as well as from direct discussions in the community, tend to rely less on information from social media. Finally, the article concludes by summarizing the findings and its contribution to the broader study of the level of electoral political participation in Indonesia.

Political participation is a crucial element in the sustainability of democracy, both in developed countries and in developing countries like Indonesia. Democracy not only facilitates citizen engagement, but also strengthens their commitment to democratic values. According to Barber (1984) and Dahl (1998), the relationship between democracy and participation is reciprocal. Democracy encourages citizens to engage in decision-making processes, while active participation strengthens citizens' democratic attitudes and skills.

Many empirical studies have analyzed the correlation between political participation and democratic quality. Some of them argue that they have a strong

relationship such as Diamond and Morlino (2004); Quintelier and Van Deth (2014); Zaslove, Geurkink, Jacobs and Akkerman (2021); Teorell (2006); Michels, AM (2006); Mervis, Box, Pleasant, Eve, Florence, and Caroline (2013); Parvin (2018), Morlino (2009), while others, Fukuyama (2013); Teorell, Sum, and Tobiasen (2007), and Verba, S., (2013); Parvin (2018)., & Nie, N. H. (1987), to some extent the quality of democracy beyond that, the quality of democracy, is one of the factors that lead to good citizenship in a democracy.

Altman and Pérez-Liñán (2002) analyzed democratic quality and political participation through the perspective of citizens in 18 Latin American countries. This research is supported by Danopoulos (2017) in Greece, Berg-Schlosser (2004) and Diamond (2008) in Africa, Mohammed (2023) in Ghana, D'Elia (2016) in Turkey, and Baker, B. (2003) in many countries in third world countries. Other democratic qualities through economic inequality and civic engagement such as those by Solt, F. (2008) found that higher levels of income inequality strongly depress political interest, frequency of political discussion, and participation in elections among all but the most affluent citizens, providing strong evidence that greater economic inequality produces greater political inequality. Similarly, Muller (1988) asserts that a very strong inverse A correlation is also observed between income inequality and regime stability. This association stands independent of economic development, which was found to have no direct effect on democratic stability after controlling for income inequality in 33 democracies. Several empirical studies, on the other hand, found that the internet has increased political participation and civic engagement, political turmoil in democratic countries (Tolbert and McNeal (2003); Boulianne (2020); Yasseri, Margetts, John and Hale (2016). There are many factors that improve the quality of democracy, including political freedom, political equality, and political and judicial control (Lauth, 2015), competition and participation (Centellas, 2011; Danopoulos, 2017), regime transformation (Altman and Pérez-Liñán, 2002).

Several previous studies have found a significant effect of electoral votes as one of the quality measures of democracy (Moon et al., 2006); Franklin, 1996); Kriesi, 2013); Dalton, 2008). As Manzoor et al. (2019), participation is the lifeblood of democracy, involving different numbers of people in different activities at different times. Maintaining a viable party organization requires the commitment of several people over a considerable period. Campaigning, lobbying or protesting requires greater commitment by more people, but over shorter periods. Voting requires a minimum commitment for a short period of time, but involves the largest number of people. Therefore, the highest citizen participation in electoral voting can affect the quality of democracy. However, previous research related to the portrait of political participation levels in Indonesia, especially at the local level, through a literature review approach is still rare in Indonesia. Nugroho Noto Susanto (2019) has explored the level of political participation in Riau province, however, his study only focuses on the 2019 contestation and lacks depth. The study only identifies the level of political participation in 2019 and does not detail the political percentage figures from 2004-2024. Similarly, a collaborative study between the General Election Commission (KPU) and the Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies (LKSPK) in 2019) on the level of political participation in Riau province. This study also analyzes the level of participation in the 2018 presidential elections, DPR-RI, DPD-RI and regional elections in Riau province, however, it does not analyze the level

of political participation in 2024. Although, there are research similarities, however, this study focuses more on the level of election participation from 2004 to 2024, by explaining the portrait of voter participation in Riau and at the same time comparing it with the level of political participation nationally. Therefore, this study aims to analyze and examine the portrait of voter turnout rates for presidential and legislative elections from 2004 to 2024 at the Indonesian local level, with a focus on political contestation in Riau province. This research seeks to bridge the gap in the existing literature by examining the percentage figures of political participation rates in Riau province, especially the presidential and legislative elections (DPR-RI, DPD-Ri) from 2004 to 2024. At the same time, this study, empirically speaking, does not criticize or even debate the two studies above, but rather aims to fill the literature gap regarding the level of political participation in Riau province in local politics and to improve understanding of how the portrait and figures of political participation in Riau province from 2004 to 2024.

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative-descriptive approach, with a literature study-based data collection method. Qualitative research emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon studied. In collecting data, we conducted interviews with the General Election Commission (KPU) of the Republic of Indonesia and the Riau Provincial KPU to obtain information directly from relevant sources. In addition, we also collected secondary data from various research reports and journals that are closely related to the research topic.

The data analysis process involved three main stages: data collection, reduction, and synchronization. The collected data were then organized and presented in the form of quantitative tables to facilitate interpretation. Afterwards, we conducted a descriptive analysis of the data to provide a comprehensive explanation of the research findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Portrait of Riau Voter Participation in 2009-2024

In the 2004 election, voter participation at the national level reached 79.76% in the first round and 77.44% in the second round. This shows the strong enthusiasm of voters in the post-Reformation era, when direct voting was first introduced. Although participation decreased slightly in the second round, this figure is still relatively high. Meanwhile, participation decreased to 72.56%. This may be due to voter apathy or dissatisfaction with the available candidates. This decline indicates that although elections are still attracting interest, voter engagement is starting to decline due to various socio-political factors. Similarly, the downward trend continued with participation of 69.58%, showing lower interest compared to 2009. Political apathy, boredom with candidates, or distrust of the political system could be the cause of this decline.

The big revival occurred in the 2019 election, where participation reached 81.97%, the highest figure in the last two decades. The 2019 election was marked by very tight political competition and high political polarization, which led to an increase in public awareness and political involvement. However, in the 2024 election, participation

decreased slightly to 81.78% but was still at a high number. This shows that even though there is no surge like in 2019, people are still actively involved in the democratic process. Meanwhile, the trend of Riau Province Participation shows that voter participation in Riau in 2009 was 66.93%, lower than the national participation rate which was 72.56%. These differences may be due to a variety of factors, such as more difficult accessibility, local issues, or less effective campaigns in the province. In the 2014 election, voter participation in Riau decreased to 62.75%, in line with the national downward trend but with a lower figure. This indicates that in Riau, the problem of political distrust or apathy towards the electoral process is more prominent than at the national level. There was a significant surge in Riau in 2019 with a participation rate of 84.68%, higher than the national level (81.97%). This indicates a strong political mobilization effort in the province, perhaps through more effective local campaigns, more attention to local issues, or increased accessibility to vote. Participation in Riau in 2024 will drop to 77.62%, in line with the decline in participation at the national level. However, this figure is still higher than the average participation in previous years, indicating a change in political consciousness that remains strong despite a decline from the peak of participation in 2019.

Looking at the two levels of comparison between the National and Riau Provinces, it shows that there is a difference in the level of participation. For example, in 2009 and 2014, the participation rate in Riau was consistently lower than the national level, with a difference of about 6-10%. This indicates that Riau province may face unique challenges, such as local political dissatisfaction or a lack of attention to local issues from candidates. However, in 2019, Riau showed a large spike that caused its participation rate to exceed the national average (84.68% vs. 81.97%). This is an indication that there are specific factors in Riau that drive high participation, be it from more intensive local campaigns or a special interest in national issues that are highly relevant in the area. In 2024, participation in Riau remains high, although slightly down from 2019, but still below the national level. In general, this trend suggests that political participation in Riau is developing in line with the national level, although more specific local challenges may remain.

#### B. Comparison of Legislative Election Participation Levels

The trend of participation in the National Legislative Election (2004–2024), shows that there was a legislative election in 2004, the national participation rate reached 84.06%, a very high figure. This is an important year where the Indonesian people are just starting to experience the post-Reformasi legislative election firsthand. This high level of participation shows enthusiasm for the newly developed democracy. Participation decreased drastically to 70.9%. This decline could be caused by several factors, including political fatigue or disappointment with the performance of the government and political parties. This condition shows that although the community is still involved, the level of trust in political institutions may decrease. Participation increased slightly to 75.11%. Although lower than in 2004, this figure shows an increase in voter interest in politics. There may be improvements in the election process, or the public is starting to pay more attention to the role of the legislature in the government. The participation rate increased significantly to 81.69%. This indicates greater enthusiasm for the election, possibly triggered by improvements in campaigning, increasing political polarization, and the emergence of issues that are more relevant to voters. Participation in 2024 decreased

slightly to 81.42%, but it is still at a high level. This figure reflects the stability of people's political involvement in legislative elections. Meanwhile, the trend of participation in the Riau Provincial House of Representatives (2009–2024) shows that the level of participation in the election of members of the House of Representatives in Riau Province shows interesting fluctuations. Voter participation for the House of Representatives in Riau is 70.99%, lower than the national average. This shows that there is a greater indifference to the DPR election compared to the presidential election or DPD. Participation decreased slightly to 69.5%, indicating a trend of apathy that may be caused by political fatigue or distrust of candidates or political parties at the legislative level. Participation jumped sharply to 84.17%, indicating a significant increase in public political involvement. This can be caused by high political polarization at the national level which has an impact on the regional level, or the existence of more effective campaigns in Riau. Participation dropped slightly to 77.40%, although it was still at a high rate. This may be due to political stability or saturation from the intense political process in the previous elections.

Looking at the trend, participation for the House of Representatives election in Riau has always been below the national average except in 2019, when participation in Riau reached 84.17%, close to the national figure. This indicates that in certain years, such as 2019, voters in Riau feel more compelled to vote for legislative members, perhaps due to tighter political competition or more intensive campaigns. The decline in participation in 2024 in Riau (77.40%) is more significant than the decline in national participation, indicating that after a surge in 2019, public involvement in electing members of the House of Representatives in Riau has experienced a sharper decline. Meanwhile, the level of voter participation in legislative elections at the national and Riau levels shows fluctuations influenced by various political, social, and economic factors. Emerging trends suggest that at certain times, such as 2019, there is a strong push from various factors that increase political engagement. However, in 2024, despite a slight decline, participation remains at a relatively high level, both at the national level and in Riau, reflecting political stability and increased political awareness among the community.

## CONCLUSION

The portrait of voter participation levels in Riau province from 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019 and 2024 has fluctuated. Voter participation in the national presidential election tends to fluctuate. In 2004, participation reached 79.76% and decreased to 69.58% in 2014. However, in 2019, participation increased significantly to 81.97% and decreased slightly to 81.78% in 2024. Voter participation in Riau Province is more diverse, with a decrease from 66.93% in 2009 to 62.75% in 2014. In 2019, there was a large increase to 84.68%, although it decreased slightly to 77.62% in 2024. Participation in the national Legislative Election (Pileg) also fluctuated, reaching 84.06% in 2004, and dropping drastically to 70.9% in 2009. Since then, there has been a gradual increase to reach 81.69% in 2019 and a slight decrease to 81.42% in 2024. Participation in the election of DPD-RI members in Riau showed a steady increase from 65.35% in 2009 to 72.85% in 2014, and peaked at 84.38% in 2019. However, participation decreased to 77.44% in 2024. The participation rate in the election of members of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia in Riau reflects a similar trend, with an increase from 70.99% in 2009 to



84.17% in 2019. In 2024, participation will decrease slightly to 77.40%. Therefore, voter participation in both the Presidential Election and the national Legislative Election has experienced an increasing trend from 2014 to 2024, although there is a slight decrease in 2024 compared to 2019. In Riau Province, the participation rate also increased significantly between 2014 and 2019, but again experienced a slight decline in 2024 in various election categories.

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