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Political Fragmentation, Labour Mobility, and Voter Turnout Decline in Border Areas (Batam Island) in Indonesia

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Abstract

Key words:

Political
Fragmentation,
Voter Mobility,
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Migrants, Local
Politics

The fall in voter turnout has emerged as a significant concern, particularly in island regions, warranting increased attention from researchers. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of political fragmentation and labor migration on the fall in voter turnout in Batam, Indonesia. This study also investigates the moderating influence of insufficient government support on the relationship between political fragmentation, labor migration, and the fall in voter turnout in Batam, Indonesia. The analysis utilized a quantitative methodology and collected primary data through the administration of questionnaires. The research employed the smart-PLS methodology to examine the interrelationships among the variables. The findings revealed a strong correlation between political fragmentation and labor migration and the fall in voter turnout in Batam, Indonesia. The findings also revealed that the absence of government assistance has a substantial moderating role in the relationship between political fragmentation, labor migration, and the fall in voter turnout in Batam, Indonesia. This study serves to assist policymakers in formulating policies aimed at enhancing voter turnout in Batam, Indonesia. Additionally, it provides guidance to election organizers, emphasizing the importance of recognizing migrant behavior in order to mitigate any potential reduction in voter participation that may undermine confidence in the democratic process.

Introduction

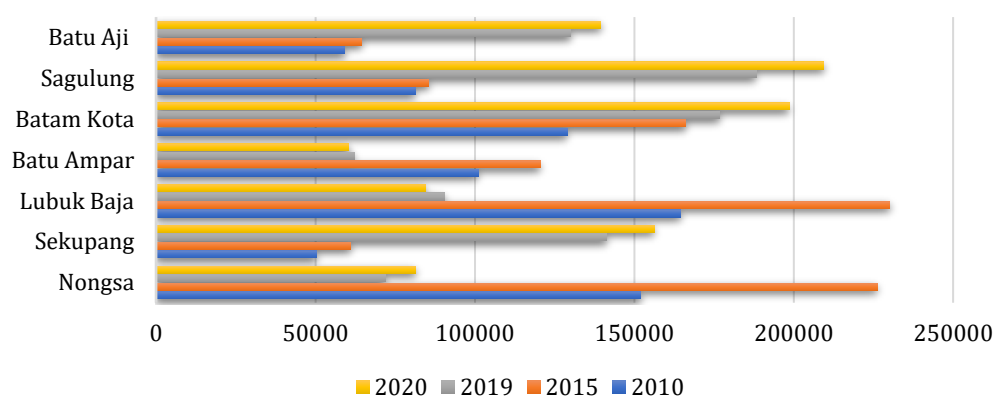
The decline in voter participation during presidential and parliamentary elections has raised concerns among numerous social scientists over the past four decades. The rise in abstention and other forms of political passivity undermines the legitimacy of authority and poses a threat to democratic systems. Several studies have been undertaken to elucidate these phenomena. [Abramson and Aldrich \(1982\)](#) discovered that decreasing voter turnout in the United States and Western Europe can be attributed to a lack of strong affiliation with political parties and a drop in trust regarding the government's ability to address citizen concerns. According to [Solt \(2008\)](#), there is evidence to suggest that in nations with established democracies, more income disparity has a significant negative impact on political interest, frequency of political conversation, and participation in elections, with the exception of the most affluent individuals. The political process serves to legitimise the existence of inequality, so resulting in a general lack of interest among the majority of residents ([Valenzuela et al., 2019](#)). Additionally, the rise of post-authoritarian democracies engenders fresh optimism for the advancement of democratic principles. The initial wave of open and competitive elections was met with much enthusiasm. However, the persistence of unresolved social, economic, and political challenges subsequently diminished the level of support for democratic governance ([Tambe, Cappelli, & Yakubovich, 2019](#)). The research was carried out in Batam Island, a region situated near the border of Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. Batam, situated in the Malacca Strait, serves as a highly frequented global

commercial route, functioning as a pivotal entry and exit point for both products and individuals. Its strategic location allows convenient maritime access to neighbouring countries (Japarin et al., 2021). The initial phase of the development of this region can be traced back to 1971, when Presidential Decree No. 74 was issued, specifically addressing the transformation of Batam Island into an industrialized zone. The concept of establishing a collaborative economic growth triangle involving Singapore and Johor-Malaysia originated after a period of nearly twenty years characterized by a lack of significant advancements. The abbreviation "Sijori" is commonly used to refer to the geographical region encompassing Singapore, Johor in Malaysia, and Riau (specifically Batam) in Indonesia. Singapore, a nation with a well-developed infrastructure, serves as the central region, whereas Johor and Batam have emerged as proponents of abundant natural and people resources. As predictable, Singapore has achieved greater profits (Hutchinson & van Grunsven, 2018).

The relationship has had a significant influence on Batam, leading to the expansion of its industrial sector and the emergence of new employment opportunities. In the year 1980, the population was recorded to be under 50,000 individuals. Yet, during the course of the subsequent two decades, the population experienced significant growth, reaching a total of 455,103 individuals. By the year 2020, the population had further increased to a substantial figure of 1,196,396 individuals (Hasanudin & Sutarto, 2021). The annual population growth rate on this island is 7.64 percent, which is the highest among other cities in Indonesia. Further, it is important to note that the annual rate of worker migration is at 5.5 percent. These people are employed across a total of 7,092 national and multinational companies (Hasanudin & Sutarto, 2021; Justyanita et al., 2021). Batam City serves as an attractive destination for those in pursuit of employment opportunities within the regions of Batam, Malaysia, and Singapore. The duration of travel between Batam and Singapore is approximately 40 minutes, however, the duration of travel between Batam and Malaysia is approximately 60 minutes when utilizing a speed boat. Batam's geographical positioning renders it a strategically advantageous location for facilitating inter-country mobility. The industrial attributes present in Southeast Asia contribute to the facilitation of labour mobility among nations. The industrial activities within this particular region are intricately connected to the global division of labour, which is facilitated via the establishment of production networks and overseen by multinational businesses (Felker et al., 2003). With the exception of Singapore, the transitional economy in this area continues to be characterised by labour-intensive businesses that face a shortage of trained people. This situation is particularly evident in Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia (Rasiah & Yun, 2009). The increase in the number of Indonesian workers migrating to Singapore for employment in the construction and domestic sectors, as well as to Malaysia for work in the plantation, informal, and domestic sectors, is facilitated by the utilization of employment contracts, with Batam serving as the designated entry and exit point. In Malaysia, the labour need for the cultivation and

collection of oil palm, rubber, and fruit is met by the employment of laborers from Indonesia. They repatriate to Indonesia upon the conclusion of the planting and harvesting cycle (Nguyen et al., 2021).

The trend of labor mobility is also observed in this urban area, primarily influenced by alterations in employment agreements. The outsourcing method facilitates seamless job transitions for workers in Batam across different organizations. This phenomenon is also observed in other industrial sectors across Indonesia (Rohadi et al., 2019). In order to minimize their living expenses, workers opt to rent houses in closer proximity to their places of employment. However, it should be noted that this particular entity is not officially registered with the Office of Population and Civil Registry, resulting in the absence of any recorded alterations to the data. Employees frequently exhibit a lack of interest in reporting modifications to settlements. The voter data collection carried out by the Office of Population and Civil Registry primarily targeted those residing in old dwellings, including workers who were also registered as voters. Consequently, any change in residence will result in a modification of the voter data. The population dynamics in Batam exhibit instability due to significant fluctuations in the number of residents within each sub-district over the course of several years, as evidenced by the data presented in Table 1. While the overall population increase has remained relatively steady, there has been a significant fluctuation in the number of sub-districts during the past two decades. Batam City consists of twelve districts, each of which encompasses industrial and trade hubs located in Sekupang, Nongsa, Lubuk Baja, Batu Ampar, Batam Kota, Sagulung, and Batu Aji. These areas have undergone varying degrees of changes through time. While secondary data provides insights into population changes by age, the significant variations depicted in Table 1 specifically illustrate the dynamics of labor migration within this urban area. The alterations engender disparities between the process of gathering voter data and the actual voter participation on the day of the election.



The population change depicted in Figure 1 exhibited an annual rise ranging from 1 to 3 percent, primarily attributed to natural demographic processes and migration patterns. The variation in voter behavior can be attributed to the dynamic shifts occurring in the labor market of Batam and

other nations, leading to fluctuations in voter turnout. The voter participation for the inaugural direct mayoral election in 2005 stood at 58.3 percent, which then declined to 53.5 percent in 2010 and further down to 47.1 percent in 2015. Through the use of many mobilization strategies, voter participation experienced a notable increase, reaching 64.1 percent in the year 2020 (General Election Commission (GEC) is an authoritative body responsible for overseeing and managing general elections within a certain jurisdiction. Political parties, the general election commission, and the Success Team for mayoral candidates emphasize the significance of voting in the mayoral election, with the primary motivating aspect being the monetary incentive. An individual was granted a monetary incentive amounting to 200,000 rupiahs, equivalent to 18.8 USD), as stated by the participants of the Focused Group Discussion held on July 23, 2022, in Batam City. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was attended by representatives from several political parties, including the General Election Commission, the Election Supervisory Body, and community leaders.

The political fragmentation observed in Batam City does not adhere to the typical pattern observed in regions characterized by strong Islamic influence. Out of the total of 24 political parties that participated in the 2004 general election, it was observed that only 10 of them managed to secure votes above 0.5 percent. The Labour Party, which relies on the support of workers as the most significant demographic in Batam, achieved a mere 2.3 percent of the vote. In the electoral contest of 2009, it was observed that merely 12 out of the total 38 political parties managed to secure a vote share of over 1 percent. The established political parties continue to occupy the highest ranks, including their respective factions. The political parties known as Demokrat, Gerindra, Hanura, and Nasdem, which originated as breakaway factions within Golkar, have demonstrated superior performance compared to the established major parties. However, the Golkar PKPI party, another faction that sprang from a larger political party, was unable to attain the electoral threshold of 3 percent due to its close association with the military. There is a significant disparity in the voting patterns between the PKS and PBB political parties, which can be traced back to their respective roots in the Masyumi party. The PKS has actively advocated for the Muslim Brotherhood and has garnered significant support comparable to that of nationalist groups. The party's cadre has effectively utilized networking strategies and engaged in recruitment efforts targeting young individuals through the campus mosque. By engaging in a critical analysis of secularism and advocating for the establishment of an Islamic state ([Machmudi, 2008](#)), PKS party rejects pluralism and seeks to build a state in Indonesia that adheres to Islamic principles. The Kebangkitan Bangsa Party (PKB) garners support from adherents of NU, a longstanding Islamic organization rooted in East Java. The party received support from migrants originating from East Java residing within the Batam community in East Java. The Amanat Nasional Party (PAN) is a political party with an Islamic ideology, which garners support from Muhammadiyah, a progressive Islamic organization known for its appeal among the middle-class demographic.

Fragmentation in Indonesia has been observed since the 1920s, characterized by the rise of various ethnic, religious, and political-ideological groups. Following the country's independence in 1945, these movements eventually transformed into political parties (Rochadi, Putri, & Fauzi, 2020). The severity of the symptoms has increased significantly during the past two decades. Several hypotheses have been put out to account for these symptoms, including the influence of patronage politics and the intensification of competition over state resources (Aspinall, 2013). Additional factors contributing to this phenomenon include the utilisation of the general election system, the absence of robust political party institutionalisation, conventional political campaign strategies (Tomsa, 2014), imbalanced ethnic distribution (Okthariza, 2022), and the establishment of new autonomous areas. The augmented share of the legislature has led to a rise in political party fragmentation. The inclusion of five parliamentarians leads to the emergence of two additional political parties (Lewis, 2018). The ongoing trend of political fragmentation has been shown to contribute to a rise in voter cynicism. This occurs when parties with identical objectives fail to provide voters with viable alternatives, hence intensifying issues such as the influence of money in politics, the prevalence of patronage, and the reinforcement of identity-based politics (Aspinall, 2013; Lewis, 2018; Rochadi, Putri, & Fauzi, 2020). The electorate expressed their intention to withhold exercising their voting rights unless remunerated by the candidate (Aspinall, 2013).

Literature Review

The extensive findings fail to account for the presence of political fragmentation, a prominent characteristic observed in democratic nations. This fragmentation pertains to the dispersal of authority among multiple political parties and formal as well as informal groups within central and regional governments, thereby impeding the formation of consensus. The lack of unity arises due to ideological disparities, transient political agendas, economic incentives, and animosity. Hence, it surpasses the narrow confines of the ideological framework proposed by Bright, Wallace, and Kuper (2018). In the last decade, there has been a notable prevalence of symptoms associated with political fragmentation observed in both the United States and Western Europe (Bright, Wallace, & Kuper, 2018; Muñoz & Meguid, 2021). An example of hyper-fragmentation in Brazil is evidenced by the rise of small minor political parties that engage in competition for electoral support (Zucco & Power, 2021). Fragmentation in nations with well-established democracies has resulted in a decline in the government's efficacy and has added complexity to the opposition's task of keeping the government accountable (Best, 2013). Also, Powell et al. (2019) asserted that the primary factor contributing to this issue was the absence of ideological congruence between voters and political parties. According to Goldberg et al. (2020), the causes contributing to rising abstention in the United States, Britain, the Netherlands, and Switzerland include the weakening of party-voter connections and the divisiveness among different social strata and religious groups. According to the findings of

[Tambe, Cappelli, and Yakubovich \(2019\)](#), those who do not participate in voting demonstrate a lack of psychological engagement with political matters in post-communist countries. These individuals experience social isolation from recruitment networks and reside in urban settings. The level of public confidence in the political system as a means of regulation and as a vehicle for accomplishing objectives has a direct impact on voter participation. [Koivula, Malinen, and Saarinen \(2021\)](#) conducted a study. Therefore, it is imperative to preserve party-voter ties, particularly in the aftermath of elections ([Ezrow & Krause, 2023](#)), as a means to enhance levels of involvement and foster loyalty. The proliferation of deceptive content on social media platforms has a discernible impact on the electoral inclinations of voters. The perspectives of inexperienced voters are mostly shaped by the influence of social media platforms. The utilization of this technology yields political engagement as its primary outcome. For instance, the proliferation of misinformation among voters in Chile has exerted an influence on their decision-making processes ([Valenzuela et al., 2019](#)). Furthermore, the emotional experiences of immigrants who are not fully integrated into the political system have an impact on their level of political involvement ([Leal-López, Sánchez-Queija, & Moreno, 2019](#)).

Political fragmentation has been found to have a detrimental effect on the electoral process in general elections. Multiple political entities provide voters with various options and encouraged their participation in the electoral process. However, the individuals exhibited a hesitancy to engage in social interactions and refrained from participating in the subsequent electoral process, thereby encountering the lack of a proficient political organization ([Grofman & Fraenkel, 2022](#)). [Zagórski, Rama, and Cordero \(2021\)](#) conducted a comprehensive analysis encompassing 31 nations and 96 legislative elections over the period from 1996 to 2016. The research revealed that political fragmentation has resulted in the disenfranchisement of individuals from participating in the electoral process, as adult voters refrain from voting due to experiencing a phenomenon known as 'option overload'. the research of [Zagórski, Rama, and Cordero \(2021\)](#), the emergence of political fragmentation can lead to the occurrence of 'choice overload' among voters and contribute to the lack of an efficient political party ([Taagepera & Nemčok, 2023](#)). This situation renders candidates vulnerable, compelling them to engage in the practice of paying voters. One further factor contributing to voter disinterest in politics is the apathy exhibited by migrants towards local political affairs. Based to a study conducted by [Leal and Fleishman \(2002\)](#) in the United States, it was observed that Latinos who express a desire to naturalize and have a robust ethnic identification tend to engage in political activities. This involvement is mostly driven by their ethnic identity rather than socioeconomic factors such as money and establishment. Voter participation in both national and local elections in Batam City displays a comparable occurrence. The voter turnout for national elections between 1999 and 2019 showed an average rate of 73 percent. The average voter turnout for regional head elections over four instances was recorded at 52 percent. Moreover, the utilization of voting rights in the 2015 mayoral

election in Indonesia reached a mere 47 percent, marking the lowest turnout in the country.

Furthermore, [Tomsa \(2014\)](#) discovered that the level of fragmentation at the local level tends to be larger compared to the national level, and it has exhibited steady growth over the course of the past three elections. The establishment of political parties often disregards the allocation of resources and lacks a pragmatic outlook. In instances where religious affiliations are not a determining factor, the newly formed political party exclusively engages in the sale of figurines. Meanwhile, party managers assume the role of intermediaries, facilitating the exchange of monetary compensation from voters in return for endorsing the mayoral candidate. The prevalence of vote buying in Indonesia has become increasingly commonplace during the past two decades, particularly in the context of regional head elections ([Reuter, Spacek, & Snyder, 2015](#); [Virananda & Ikhsan, 2021](#)). The rise in vote-buying observed during the 2020 Batam mayoral election can be attributed to multiple variables. Initially, the Success Team of the candidates harboured scepticism on the likelihood of voter participation in the election. This implies that a motivating factor is required to encourage voters to exercise their right to vote. In addition, it might be argued that the electorate possessed an incomplete comprehension of the proposed development initiatives put out by the political contenders. The Success Team sought to get a higher level of clarity on the information pertaining to the candidate that was chosen. The practise of vote-buying generally targets socioeconomically disadvantaged community groups, homemakers, and those residing in impoverished areas. Jamil, the leader of the Neighbourhood Association in the slum area, expressed during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) that there is a lack of comprehension regarding the terminology used by both the parties involved and the officials. When the request for voting was presented to us, we proceeded to disseminate it among the locals. We were requested to provide ten votes in return for a sum of 2 million rupiahs, as well as additional incentives such as T-shirts, rice, and noodles. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by [Putra, Cho, and Liu \(2017\)](#), who analyzed data from the Indonesian Family Life Survey. The survey encompassed 312 villages and 16,204 families across 13 provinces in the year 2015.

The high level of political participation observed in several nations can be attributed to the strong affiliation of citizens with political parties ([Abramson & Aldrich, 1982](#); [Valenzuela et al., 2019](#)). The party's stance on current topics aligns with the perspectives of its constituents. In this particular scenario, the level of trust that constituents place in a political party's ideological perspectives directly correlates with the intensity of their identification with said party. But it is important to note that this effect is not observed in the context of Batam City. The general perception among individuals is that political parties are primarily regarded as a means to acquire and exercise power, rather than being perceived as an alternative entity that offers solutions to societal issues. Therefore, there

has been a decline in the public's trust in the effectiveness of politics as a means of attaining objectives. In their study, [Tambe, Cappelli, and Yakubovich \(2019\)](#) conducted an examination of modern democracies, with a particular focus on the psychological engagement of voters in political processes and the need of avoiding the marginalization of citizens from social networks. While the citizens' involvement with ethnic groups and community organizations does meet this need, it does not lead to an increase in political participation. Elected MPs and mayors may exhibit diminished interest in development and community welfare due to the perception that their election outcomes have minimal impact on the well-being of the citizenry. The selection of members of parliament and mayors is perceived by residents as advantageous. The primary areas in which they express the greatest need are provisions like rice, noodles, sugar, cooking oil, and financial resources. This sentiment was expressed at a focus group discussion held in Batam on July 23, 2022. Hence, the study formulated the hypothesis that:

H1: Political fragmentation has a positive association with voter turnover decline in Indonesia.

Labor mobility has exerted a notable influence on the decrease in voter turnover within the nation. There are two distinct sorts of migrants: labor migrants and migrants seeking an improved quality of life. There exists a lack of substantial disparity between the initial and subsequent classifications of migrants, with the exception of variances in the duration of residency and improved economic circumstances. The first category of migrants similarly undergoes a comparable process prior to securing stable employment and establishing permanent residency in Batam City. The pattern of migrants in Southeast Asia adapting their mobility to accommodate employment changes has emerged as a prevalent trend, leading to conflicts since the onset of industrialization in the 1970s ([Evers, 1975](#)). The second category of immigrants resides in settlements constructed on state-owned land, commonly referred to as slums within the local population. The categorization is deemed incorrect due to the fact that the residents possess a distinct self-identity and are structured in a manner consistent with conventional communities. The lack of concrete settlement plans in Batam contributed to the voters' reluctance to cast their votes. The second cohort of migrants does not intend to establish permanent residency or extend invitations to their families to join them in the urban area, primarily due to the exorbitant expense of living. In the context of industrial and border areas, it can be observed that the cost of living in the city is marginally lower than that of Singapore. [Leal and Fleishman \(2002\)](#) similarly observed a similar trend within the Latin American population residing in the United States. Migrants who do not possess intentions of establishing permanent residency in the United States exhibit a decreased propensity to participate in local electoral processes. This study provides support for the findings of [Bevelander and Hutcheson \(2022\)](#) in their research on the 2014 Swedish municipal parliamentary elections. There exists a positive correlation between

migrant participation and factors such as education level, income, and aspirations to reside in metropolitan areas. Individuals who are new to a certain region and do not have intentions of establishing permanent residency typically abstain from participating in parliamentary and municipal elections.

Another problem related to the social structure in Batam is the lack of robust social integration. The increasing severity of this issue is attributed to the self-concept held by individuals who identify themselves as migrants and strive to maintain their migrant status. The growing trend of ethnic segregation has been reinforced by the presence of associations, whilst cross-ethnic organisations and governmental entities have not effectively contributed to fostering social cohesion. The cohesion among individuals is derived from their shared commitment to maintaining their employment positions. The strength of this connection is limited, as demonstrated by the presence of disputes between the Batak and Flores tribes. Tribal conflicts arise as a result of the competition for economic resources, including the protection of motorcycles and vehicle parking spaces in traditional marketplaces and businesses, as well as the acquisition of land. Ethnic associations are crucial in safeguarding the land holdings of major corporations. Voter mobility is not typically followed by a change in residential address, as voters often exhibit a lack of interest in managing administrative adjustments due to the absence of immediate personal advantages. By possessing a primary resident identity card, individuals are afforded the freedom to relocate across different regions within Indonesia while also being assured of their entitlements to dwell in the country. Mobile workers without a fixed abode in Batam exhibit diminished interest in local political affairs, instead prioritizing national politics that have a broader impact on all members of society. They describe themselves as individuals who migrate to Batam with the purpose of seeking employment opportunities. During the course of their interviews, the participants self-identified as migrants and disclosed their regular practice of returning to their respective hometowns at intervals of approximately two to three months. At the conclusion of the month of Ramadan, a significant number of individuals depart from Batam en masse to return to their own hometowns. This exodus results in the city becoming sparsely populated, with closed stalls and a sluggish economy. Furthermore, this phenomenon has implications for the electoral process, since it impacts voter turnout.

Batam is home to a total of 27 tribal associations, which encompass several ethnic groups such as the Malays. This diversity highlights a notable degree of socioeconomic polarisation within the region. The tribes would experience a sense of insecurity in the absence of their inclusion within the community. The imperative for social and political integration among individuals of many ethnic backgrounds within a unified nation is essential. Social integration refers to the active participation of individuals in social and cultural institutions that have been established within their local community. Multiple research studies have demonstrated that social integration has a significant role in mitigating migration stresses, fostering

trust in others, promoting chances for civic involvement (Brydsten, Rostila, & Dunlavy, 2019), enhancing subjective well-being (Appau, Churchill, & Farrell, 2019), and facilitating political participation. Tillie (2004) conducted a study in Amsterdam that revealed that immigrants exhibit lower levels of political interest, a phenomenon attributed to the perceived severity of associated risks. The significance of engaging in local politics is heightened upon the establishment of a civic community. Hence, the study formulated the hypothesis that:

H2: Labour mobility has a positive association with voter turnover decline in Indonesia.

The fluctuations in the political condition of any nation are inherent aspects of the political process. The government, through its provision of support, plays a crucial role in maintaining stability through exerting control over many matters. The act of voting plays a key role in the functioning of a political system. Before making their decision to vote, voters take into account many issues such as political fragmentation and party performance. Frequently, these factors contribute to a decline in voter turnout. Government assistance plays a significant role in facilitating the upliftment of society. In this regard, government support acts as a moderator, effectively influencing voter turnout. Anwar, Tajeddini, and Ullah (2020) conducted a study to investigate the potential moderating role of government support in the relationship between entrepreneur funding and venture success within the framework of moderation. The research was carried out on the demographic of Pakistan. The research utilised a sample of 182 ventures to gather data. The collection of the sample data was facilitated through the utilisation of questionnaires. In order to facilitate analysis, the study utilised the Smart PLS analytic technique. The findings obtained from the research suggest that government support can play a crucial role as a moderator in the association between entrepreneur funding and the success of ventures. In a recent study conducted by Moreira, Navaia, and Ribau (2022), the authors examined the potential moderating role of government support in the association between internationalization behavior, innovation competence, and export performance. The research was carried out on the demographic of Mozambique. The study employed a sample of 250 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for data analysis. The collection of the sample data was facilitated through the utilization of questionnaires. In an attempt to facilitate analysis, the study utilized the Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) analysis approaches. The findings derived from the study indicate that government support has a substantial moderating role in the association between internationalization behavior, innovation competence, and export performance. Based on the above debate the following hypothesis is derived.

H3: Lack of government support significantly moderates political fragmentation and voter turnover decline in Indonesia.

The human population serves as the primary source of power for nations worldwide. Through the use of their voting rights, individuals possess the

ability to determine the trajectory of their own future. On numerous occasions, a significant decrease in voter turnout has been documented, attributed to various factors such as parties presenting inadequate manifestos and displaying weak organizational capabilities. In this scenario, the interim administration assumes the responsibility of mobilizing the populace to participate in the electoral process and serves as a mediator. The study conducted by [Kim et al. \(2018\)](#) examines the potential moderating role of government assistance in the association between perceived value and adoption intention within the framework of moderation. The research was carried out on the demographic of South Korea. The study employed a sample size of 285 drivers to gather data. The collection of the sample data was facilitated through the utilization of questionnaires. In order to facilitate analysis, the study utilized the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) approach. The findings derived from the study indicate that government assistance plays an essential role as a moderator in the association between perceived value and adoption intention. In a similar vein, the study conducted by [Saber and Hamdan \(2019\)](#) sought to investigate the potential moderating role of government support in the nexus between entrepreneurship and economic growth. The research was carried out on the population of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies. The study utilized a sample of data spanning a period of nine years. The provided dataset encompasses the period spanning from 2006 to 2015. In order to facilitate analysis, the study utilized the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) approach. The findings derived from the study indicate that government support plays a crucial role as a moderator in the association between entrepreneurship and economic growth. Based on the above debate the following hypothesis is derived.

H4: Lack of government support significantly moderates labour mobility and voter turnover decline in Indonesia.

Research Methods

This study seeks to investigate the relationship between political fragmentation, labor migration, and the fall in voter turnout in Batam, Indonesia. Additionally, it attempts to explore the potential moderating effect of inadequate government support on this relationship. The core data for this study is obtained through the administration of survey questionnaires to the electorate of Batam, Indonesia. The constructs' questions or items are derived from previous scholarly works. For instance, the construct of political fragmentation consists of six items sourced from [Blaydes and Paik's \(2021\)](#) study. The construct of labor mobility is assessed using eight questions obtained from [Moeis, Dartanto, Moeis, and Ikhsan's \(2020\)](#) research. The construct of lack of government support is measured through five questions extracted from [Guenat, Dougill, and Dallimer's \(2020\)](#) investigation. Lastly, the construct of voter turnout decline is evaluated using seven items taken from [Kostelka and Blais's \(2021\)](#) study.

The participants of the study were chosen from the population of voters residing in Batam, Indonesia. The participants in this study were selected

using a basic random selection method. The questionnaires were distributed to the chosen participants through face-to-face interactions. The researchers distributed a total of 546 surveys, however, they received only 293 responses that met the criteria for validity. These responses exhibit a response rate of roughly 53.66 percent. Furthermore, the present study employed the smart-PLS methodology to examine the interrelationships among the variables. According to [Hair Jr, Howard, and Nitzl \(2020\)](#), the instrument in question is extensively employed for the analysis of primary data, demonstrating its efficacy, particularly in cases when researchers utilize intricate models and substantial data sets. The research employed two distinct variables, namely political fragmentation (PFG) and labor mobility (LM), as separate constructs. Also, the research included a single dependent variable referred to as voter turnout drop (VTD) and a moderating variable known as lack of government support (LGS). The variables depicted in [Figure 1](#) are provided.

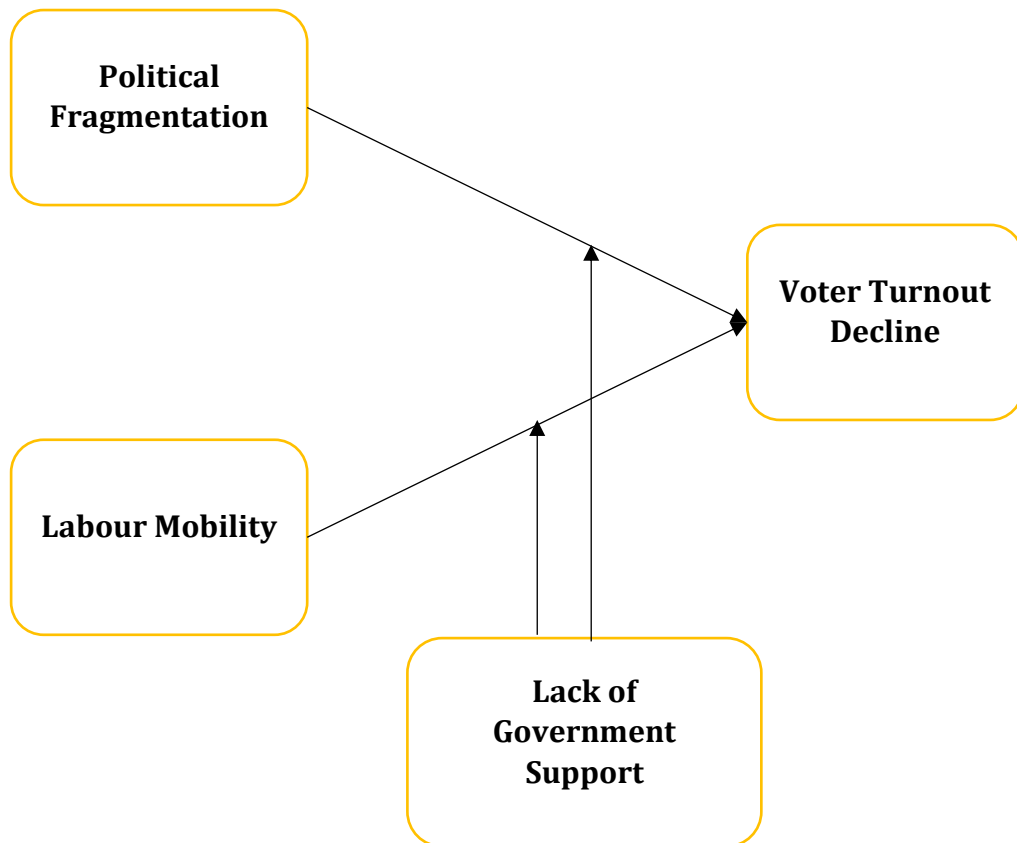


Figure 2: Research model

Research Findings

The present study examines the relationship between items, utilising Alpha and composite reliability (CR) as measures of internal consistency. Both measures exceed the threshold of 0.70. The assessment of the construct's reliability is further conducted through the utilisation of average variance extracted (AVE) and factor loadings. The results of both tests indicate values beyond 0.50. These numbers demonstrated a strong link between the items. The values are shown in [Table 1](#).

Table 1: Convergent validity

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE				
Lack of Government Support	LGS1	0.934	0.944	0.958	0.819				
	LGS2	0.862							
	LGS3	0.931							
	LGS4	0.935							
	LGS5	0.861							
Labor Mobility	LM1	0.947	0.970	0.976	0.871				
	LM2	0.917							
	LM4	0.955							
	LM5	0.952							
	LM7	0.926							
	LM8	0.901							
	Political Fragmentation	PFG1				0.879	0.926	0.942	0.732
		PFG2				0.768			
PFG3		0.851							
PFG4		0.896							
PFG5		0.840							
PFG6		0.894							
Voter Turnout Decline	VTD1	0.864	0.921	0.936	0.678				
	VTD2	0.836							
	VTD3	0.787							
	VTD4	0.789							
	VTD5	0.844							
	VTD6	0.867							
	VTD7	0.771							

The study examines the correlation between variables using the Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The obtained values indicate that the correlations are below 0.85. The observed values indicated a weak association among the variables. The values are shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2: Discriminant validity

	LGS	LM	PFG	VTD
LGS				
LM	0.522			
PFG	0.445	0.520		
VTD	0.526	0.436	0.559	

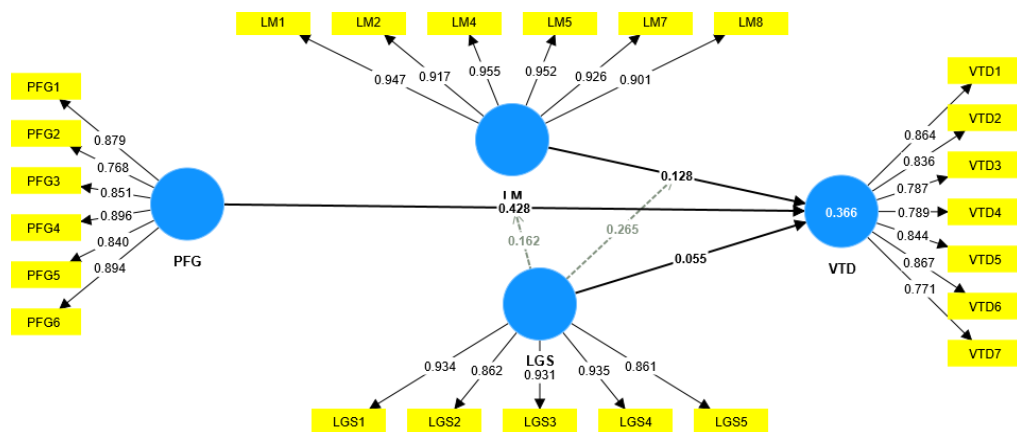


Figure 2: Measurement model assessment

The outcomes of the path analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between political fragmentation and labor mobility with the drop in voter turnout in Batam, Indonesia. These findings support the hypotheses H1 and H2. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that the absence of governmental assistance has a substantial moderating role in the relationship between political fragmentation, labor mobility, and voter turnout drop in Batam, Indonesia. These results support hypotheses H3 and H4. The aforementioned correlations are referenced in [Table 3](#).

Table 3: A path analysis

Relationships	Beta	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
LM -> VTD	0.128	0.060	2.118	0.035
PFG -> VTD	0.428	0.109	3.935	0.000
LGS x PFG -> VTD	0.162	0.064	2.518	0.012
LGS x LM -> VTD	0.265	0.053	5.015	0.000

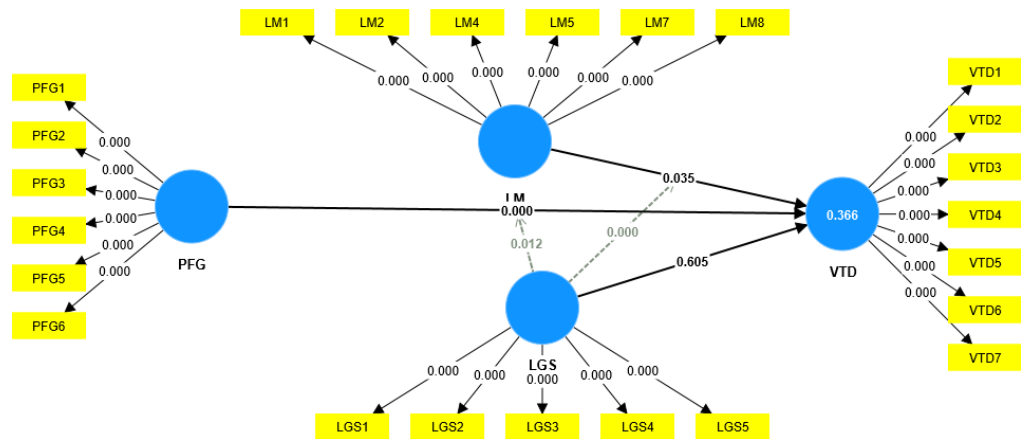


Figure 3: Structural model assessment

Discussions

The findings indicate a favorable correlation between political fragmentation and the fall in voter turnout. The findings presented here align with the research conducted by [Zagórski \(2022\)](#), which examines the impact of political fragmentation on the fall in voter turnout. The study suggests that in situations of political fragmentation, the primary governing entity within a nation exercises subjective decision-making and allocates political responsibilities and powers to specific individuals or collectives. The concentration of power and authority in the hands of a select few individuals may pose challenges to the holistic development of several domains. In this situation, there is significant disillusionment among the general populace, who serve as voters in the country's democratic political system, resulting in a decrease in political participation and turnover. These findings are consistent with the assertions made by [Faber, Budding, and Gradus \(2020\)](#) regarding the presence of political fragmentation in certain countries. The research postulates that in instances of political fragmentation, the empowerment of a certain group may lead to the exclusive development and enhanced well-being of a particular region or population. The deprivation experienced by certain individuals fosters a

climate of partiality and restlessness, ultimately leading to a decrease in voting turnout. These findings are further corroborated by Tavares, Raudla, and Silva's (2020) study, which emphasizes that in instances of political fragmentation, those in positions of power may engage in the abuse of their authority, resulting in a sense of disillusionment among the general public and a subsequent decline in voter participation.

The findings indicate a favourable correlation between labour mobility and the decrease in voter turnout. The results that are presented in this study are consistent with the findings of [Alacevich and Zejcirovic \(2020\)](#), which suggest that in developing nations, a significant portion of the population engages in manual labour and experiences the need to migrate in pursuit of economic sustenance. When a significant proportion of the labour force relocates from their homes in order to meet their economic requirements and are unable to return in time for voting, they experience disenfranchisement, resulting in a decrease in voter turnout. The results shown here are consistent with the research conducted by [Finseraas, Kotsadam, and Polavieja \(2022\)](#), whereby they examined the effects of labour mobility on the fall in voter turnout. The study demonstrates that a significant proportion of individuals are affiliated with the lower or middle socioeconomic classes, and they engage in employment inside various commercial enterprises as labourers, receiving monetary compensation as their primary means of sustenance. The process of labour mobility, wherein individuals relocate from one geographical location to another, including foreign countries or regions, leads to the absence of people who are unable to exercise their right to vote in accordance with democratic norms. Therefore, if there is labour mobility, it results in a decrease in voter turnout. The outcomes discussed in this study are corroborated by the research conducted by [Cheema et al. \(2023\)](#), which investigates the correlation between labour mobility and the decrease in voter turnout. The study suggests that in cases where there exists a legal or political framework facilitating labour mobility either within a region or across national borders, the voting rights of labourers are compromised, resulting in a decrease in voter participation.

The research results indicate that the absence of governmental assistance plays a substantial moderating function in the association between political fragmentation and the decrease in voter turnout. The findings presented in this study are corroborated by the research conducted by [Adam et al. \(2022\)](#). Their study similarly demonstrates that a government that provides support is mindful of the demands of the general people and exhibits fairness in its decision-making processes. However, in the absence of enough government support, issues such as political fragmentation might arise, leading to concerns over the integrity and effectiveness of the voting system. The consequence of this trend is a decrease in voter turnout. The findings shown here are consistent with the research conducted by [Sanz, Solé-Ollé, and Sorribas-Navarro \(2022\)](#), which demonstrates that in situations where the government lacks support, there is a lack of connection with the general public and a disregard for the welfare of the populace. In this situation, it is conceivable that the administration exhibits

a lack of concern for the ramifications of political fragmentation and allows its proliferation across the nation. Insufficient governmental assistance can lead to political instability, inadequate administration of the electoral process, and a decline in citizen engagement in voting activities. Consequently, the proliferation of political fragmentation leads to a decrease in voter participation. These results are consistent with the research conducted by [Lago and i Coma \(2021\)](#), who also argue that a dearth of governmental assistance to the general population is associated with an increase in political fragmentation, leading to a subsequent decline in voter turnout.

The findings of the study indicate that the absence of governmental assistance plays a substantial moderating function in the relationship between labour mobility and the decrease in voter turnout. The findings presented here align with the assertions made by [Uddfeldt \(2020\)](#), who posits that in the absence of government backing, there is a lack of commitment towards fostering community development and promoting the overall welfare of individuals. In the present scenario, it is conceivable that the government exhibits a lack of concern towards the social and political rights of the working class within the nation. The proposed measure has the potential to facilitate labour mobility, as opposed to imposing a situation where labourers are compelled to relocate to different regions. Additionally, in the absence of sufficient governmental assistance, the efficacy of the political and electoral framework is compromised, resulting in diminished citizen engagement in the voting process. Therefore, in the absence of sufficient governmental support, labour mobility has been observed to result in a decrease in voter turnout. The findings presented in this study are consistent with the research conducted by [Andersson et al. \(2022\)](#). Their study posits that when there is insufficient economic or social assistance provided by the government, it leads to increased labour mobility and a significant portion of the population being disenfranchised, thereby impeding their ability to participate in the electoral process and select governing representatives. Hence, the absence of governmental assistance plays a crucial moderating role in the relationship between labour mobility and the fall in voter turnout. The findings presented in this study are corroborated by Carriere's (2020) research, which suggests that in situations when the public lacks government assistance, there is a rise in labour mobility and a decrease in voter turnout. This study suggested that the decrease in voter engagement can be attributed to party fragmentation and voter migration, leading to diminished precision in voter statistics. The objective of this study was to elucidate the factors contributing to voter abstention, particularly in the context of local elections. The consideration of this element is crucial due to the important role that voter involvement plays in the preservation and sustenance of democratic systems. Furthermore, the active participation of voters plays a crucial role in fostering social integration within a region characterized by a diverse population comprising multiple ethnic groups. The migrants' economic interests are jeopardized by the disruption of social integration.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to examine the decrease in voter participation in regional elections for parliamentary representatives and regional leaders in Batam City, Indonesia. The urban area is populated by individuals who migrate often between nations and regions as a result of shifts in employment opportunities. With the exception of Singapore, the industrial structure in Southeast Asia is predominantly characterized by labour-intensive industries, which have encouraged the mobility of workers throughout the region's workplaces. The movement is also influenced by the system of short-term contract work. The influence becomes evident during the general election since it is observed that these mobile migrants tend to refrain from participating. The diminished participation of voters might also be attributed to the fragmentation of political parties. Various political entities offer an overwhelming array of options, leading to a phenomenon where individuals opt to abstain from exercising their right to vote. Further, a lack of discernible distinction can be observed across political parties with regard to their policy agendas. Political fragmentation is a consequence of social fragmentation, particularly arising from the divisions among native populations, immigrant communities, and various ethnic groups. The PKS party's attempt to employ Islam as a unifying force among the populace has proven unsuccessful. Elected authorities fail to effectively employ the public trust, hence diminishing public confidence in political efficacy. The lower socioeconomic stratum of voters capitalized on this circumstance by seeking recompense or engaging in vote-buying practices. In the absence of incentives, individuals belonging to lower socioeconomic strata have diminished motivation to participate in electoral activities. Therefore, a simultaneous election was conducted as a means to address the decrease in voter participation observed in the local officials' elections. The electorate participated in the democratic process by electing individuals to various positions of power, including presidents, vice presidents, members of both central and regional parliaments, as well as local authorities like governors, regents, and mayors, all in a concurrent manner. However, the potential hazards associated with this simultaneous election include voter hesitancy to use their voting privileges as a result of challenges in accessing and casting ballots, as well as the likelihood of voting errors.

Limitations and Future Directions

This current article still has several shortcomings that necessitate attention from future authors. First, the study is significant in its implications as it focuses on a limited set of characteristics, namely political fragmentation and labor mobility, as potential causes for the drop in voter turnout. Various economic, geographical, and social variables may contribute to a decrease in voter turnout. It is imperative for future researchers to give careful consideration and encompass a wide range of issues in order to develop a comprehensive framework. Furthermore, in order to conduct an empirical examination of the proposed framework,

data was gathered from border regions in Indonesia. The study's restricted coverage of a narrow area restricts its generalizability and broader implications. It is imperative for prospective authors to undertake comprehensive research surveys across wider domains in order to gather data and offer a comprehensive report.

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