

## Determinants of Voter Persistence in Re-elections: A Case Study of Participation Anomalies in Jambi City

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### Article Info:

### Abstract

#### Keywords:

Re-Voting  
Voters Fatigue  
Social Embeddedness  
Political Participation  
Jambi City

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#### Article History:

Received on February 15, 2026  
Revised on April 09, 2026  
Accepted on April, 2026

Re-voting (*Pemungutan Suara Ulang or PSU*) is a corrective mechanism in Indonesian elections often associated with voter fatigue and declining participation. However, a significant anomaly occurred at Polling Station 66 in Simpang Rimbo Village, Jambi City, during the 2024 Election, where voter turnout remained stable despite procedural repetition. This study investigates the determinants of this persistence through a qualitative case study, utilizing Expectancy-Value Theory as the analytical framework. Data were collected via in-depth interviews with voters, organizers, and community leaders. The findings reveal that high retention was driven by the strong social embeddedness of local political actors who mobilized early, serving as guarantees for voter expectancy. Furthermore, the re-voting process was successfully reframed from a mere administrative correction into a defense of local sovereignty, elevating the intrinsic value of participation. The study concludes that voter fatigue is not inevitable; it can be neutralized when there is strong political resonance between strategic actor mobilization and the collective emotional bonds of the community, challenging conventional assumptions regarding re-election dynamics.

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## INTRODUCTION

In practice, general elections are expected to proceed according to the principles of *Luber Jurdil* (direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair), which constitute the fundamental tenets of democracy. However, in implementation, elections often encounter obstacles in fulfilling these principles. One indicator of failure to uphold these principles is the occurrence of Re-voting (PSU), which is generally caused by technical issues in the execution of electoral procedures (Sukma, 2018). Re-voting is a mechanism within the Indonesian electoral system designed to ensure the validity of election results when violations or procedural discrepancies capable of affecting the vote count are discovered. Re-voting may occur for all ballot types or specifically for a single type of election. Several studies indicate that re-voting serves as a means to restore public trust in the electoral process. Meanwhile According to

(Ardipandanto, 2022) re-voting in Indonesia is frequently associated with procedural issues and public trust in election organizers, particularly the General Elections Commission (KPU). Although re-voting serves as a remedy for electoral irregularities, significant challenges remain regarding the professionalism of organizers and the transparency of the process.

The electoral track record in Indonesia demonstrates that the execution of Re-voting is a recurring phenomenon, reflecting the persistence of residual technical and procedural issues. Historically, (Sukma, 2018) noted that in the 2004 Election, the urgency for re-voting was driven by data discrepancies in the Final Voters List (DPT) and crucial logistical distribution hurdles, particularly in regions such as Papua and East Nusa Tenggara. This pattern of issues continued in the 2009 Election, where (Setiawan, 2020) highlighted the urgency of procedural evaluation by identifying that distortions in logistical supply chain management specifically regarding ballot papers and the prevalence of coercive indications forcing voter preferences in Aceh and Kalimantan were determinant variables that directly undermined electoral integrity, thereby necessitating re-voting. The dynamics of the 2014 Election once again confronted organizers with serious challenges of maladministration, as identified by (Pratama, 2015) who asserted that inaccuracies in logistics management specifically regarding ballot quantities and deviations in counting mechanisms in West Java and North Sumatra compromised the validity of election results, becoming determinant factors in disputes resolved through the re-voting mechanism.

Further phenomena regarding procedural electoral violations are discussed in research by (Febriansyah et al., 2021) where findings on administrative violations in the context of the 2019 Election in Central Bangka Regency were predominantly caused by procedural errors. Re-voting also possesses significant local aspects. (Bao & Padang, 2020) in their research on the re-voting phenomenon in the 2017 Jayapura Regency Regional Head Election, emphasized the need for a profound evaluation of the factors necessitating re-voting. The study's findings indicate that while re-voting can serve as a tool to rectify invalid election results, administrative and logistical issues at the local level exacerbate the decline in public trust in the electoral process, including voter participation rates. These issues suggest that although elections in Indonesia aim to consolidate democracy, challenges in achieving fully free, fair, and transparent elections persist. The KPU and the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) play crucial roles in maintaining electoral integrity through strict supervision and rapid handling of issues such as re-voting (Rohman, 2020).

The prevalence of Re-voting implementation in various regions necessitates a deep evaluation of its working mechanisms. This is critically important because, as revealed by (Maulana et al., 2021). re-voting initially intended to correct election result errors often brings negative impacts in the form of declining public participation due to the emergence of distrust regarding the integrity of the process. The importance of reviewing re-voting implementation is also emphasized in a study by (Gemilang et al., 2024) which examined the dynamics at Polling Stations (TPS) 14 and 16 within the Darullughah Wadda'wah Islamic Boarding School environment, Pasuruan Regency, during the 2019 Election. This research found that the success of re-voting is heavily influenced by social and cultural factors; voters tend to be more open and trust the re-election mechanism when it is conducted with an approach that respects local wisdom. Thus, understanding the local social context becomes a crucial key to achieving re-voting objectives without sacrificing voter participation.

Recent international scholarship also shows that electoral dissatisfaction does not always manifest merely in abstention, but can also take the form of protest-oriented voting behavior. In the 2020 Surakarta mayoral election, for example, (Subekti et al., 2023) found that political party oligarchy and the lack of meaningful electoral alternatives encouraged protest voting among local voters, reflected in a high proportion of invalid ballots and

declining turnout. Their study reported that invalid ballots in the election reached 11.99%, compared to 6.69% in the previous DPRD election, while voter turnout in the 2020 mayoral election fell to 70.52%, the lowest level compared to previous electoral cycles. These findings suggest that when voters perceive the contest as unfair, controlled by elite interests, or lacking credible alternatives, distrust may be translated into reduced participation or symbolic rejection of the electoral process.

At a broader level, international research trends also indicate that electoral behavior is increasingly shaped by communicative and symbolic factors rather than by procedural arrangements alone. A bibliometric study by (Subekti et al., 2022) based on 357 Scopus-indexed publications on political parties' campaigns in social media, identified political communication as the most dominant research theme and highlighted voting behavior as one of the important and still expanding areas of inquiry. This broader pattern is relevant to the present study because it suggests that voter participation in contemporary elections must be understood not only through institutional or administrative explanations, but also through how political meaning, trust, and mobilization are constructed within society. In this regard, the case of PSU at TPS 66 Simpang Rimbo becomes important, as it offers a contrasting empirical situation in which repeated voting did not produce strong voter withdrawal, but instead revealed the persistence of participation under specific local social and political conditions.

The dynamics of electoral politics in Jambi Province record that the implementation of Re-voting is not an unfamiliar phenomenon. One of the most crucial and decisive moments in the history of local contestation occurred during the 2020 Jambi Governor and Deputy Governor Election. As cited in (Hanapi, 2021) the execution of this re-voting had a significant scale as it covered 88 Polling Stations (TPS) spread across five strategic regions: Muaro Jambi, Batanghari, Kerinci, Tanjung Jabung Timur, and Sungai Penuh City. The decision to hold this re-vote was a follow-up to a result dispute filed by the candidate pair Cek Endra and Ratu Munawaroh, who argued there were administrative violations regarding ineligible voter participation. Based on the decision minutes (MKRI, 2021), the Constitutional Court confirmed findings of voters who did not possess electronic ID cards (KTP-el) or had not recorded their population data but were accommodated to exercise their voting rights. Although the post-re-voting recapitulation results ultimately confirmed the victory of the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair, this legal event affirms that the dispute mechanism at the Constitutional Court can tangibly open competitive opportunities for petitioners to reverse outcomes if allegations of violations are legally proven.

Jambi Province once again presents a precedent worthy of in-depth analysis. The primary focus is directed at a specific case at Polling Stations (TPS) 66, Simpang Rimbo Village, Alam Barajo District, Jambi City, which became the center of attention due to the complexity of its issues. The implementation of Re-voting at this location was inevitable due to serious maladministration by the Polling Station Working Committee (KPPS), which accommodated voting rights for seven individuals without a basis of legality in the Final Voters List (DPT), Additional Voters List (DPTb), or Special Voters List (DPK). The consequence of this procedural violation mandated a comprehensive re-vote for all five types of ballots, ranging from the President to the City Regional Representative Council (Muliawati, 2024). However, this case presents an interesting anomaly that contradicts general trends. While previous literature frequently associates re-voting with a drastic decline in public participation, data at Polling Stations (TPS) 66 showed high stability in participation, with a decrease of fewer than 20 votes compared to the initial process. This gap between the theory of declining participation and the empirical reality in the field drives the author to further investigate the motivational determinants that sustained voter participation during the PSU at Polling Stations (TPS) 66.

**Table 1. Comparison of Voters in the 2024 Election at Polling Stations (TPS) 66 Simpang Rimbo Village**

Final Voters List (DPT)	Total Voters Before Re-Voting	Total Voters After Re-Voting
279	214	196

*Source: Jambi City General Election Commission (2024)*

Based on the comparative data in the table above, the data shows that voter participation at Polling Stations (TPS) 66 Simpang Rimbo remained relatively stable despite undergoing a re-voting mechanism. Of the total 214 valid votes recorded in the initial election, the number of voters returning during the Re-voting (PSU) reached 196. This indicates that the decline in participation was limited to only 18 votes. This stability in participation figures represents an anomaly when juxtaposed with general trends in other regions, where re-voting execution often results in significant participation declines due to voter fatigue. The phenomenon of sustained voter enthusiasm amidst repetitive procedural situations forms the empirical basis for the urgency of this research.

To analyze this phenomenon of participation persistence, a normative approach alone is viewed as insufficient to explain the occurring dynamics. Therefore, this article adopts the Expectancy-Value Theory from (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002) as the primary analytical framework. Theoretically, this approach postulates that an individual's motivation to act in this case, to vote again is the result of a rational calculation between two dimensions: expectancy and value. The 'expectancy' dimension refers to the voter's perception that their vote has a tangible impact on determining the outcome or improving the process, while the 'value' dimension relates to how important the integrity of the election result is to their interests. Through this perspective, this research attempts to identify whether the stability of participation at Polling Stations (TPS) 66 was driven by the belief in the significance of their vote or by the high value they attached to the democratic process itself. Grounded in the intersection between anomalous data and the theoretical framework, this research aims to elucidate the determinant factors motivating voters to remain participatory in the PSU execution at Polling Stations (TPS) 66, Simpang Rimbo Village, Jambi City, in the 2024 Election. Through this study, it is hoped that the psychological and social constructions influencing voter behavior will be revealed. Consequently, these findings will not only serve as evaluation material for local election organizers but also contribute to enriching academic literature regarding voting behavior in the context of re-elections.

## **METHODS**

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design as the primary strategy to dissect the anomalous phenomenon of voter participation stability in Re-voting (PSU). The selection of a qualitative approach is based on the urgency to go beyond mere statistical participation figures and step further into understanding the construction of meaning and motivation behind the voter's decision to remain present at the voting booth (Creswell, 2018). An intrinsic case study design is used specifically to explore the unique dynamics occurring at Polling Stations (TPS) 66, Simpang Rimbo Village, Alam Barajo District, Jambi City, which demonstrated participation trends contradictory to the general theory of voter fatigue.

**Table 2. Research Informants**

No.	Position of Informants	Description
1	Re-voting (PSU) voters	Interviewed to explore their motivations, perceptions, and considerations in participating in the re-voting, particularly regarding expectancy and value attached to their vote.
2	Head of Neighborhood Association 26, Simpang Rimbo	Interviewed to provide information on the local social context, community responses, and neighborhood-level dynamics that influenced voter participation during the re-voting.
3	Chair of the Polling Station Working Committee (KPPS) of Polling Station 66, Simpang Rimbo	Interviewed because this informant was directly involved in the implementation of the voting and re-voting process at the polling station level, and could explain procedural issues and field conditions.
4	Member of the Village Voting Committee (PPS) of Simpang Rimbo	Interviewed to provide information on the administrative process, coordination, and local electoral arrangements related to the re-voting.
5	Member of the Village Election Supervisory Committee of Simpang Rimbo	Interviewed because this informant was responsible for monitoring the electoral process at the village level and could explain the supervision of procedural violations that led to the re-voting.
6	Member of the District Election Committee (PPK) of Alam Barajo	Interviewed to explain the broader coordination, decision-making process, and technical implementation of the re-voting at the district level.
7	Member of the District Election Supervisory Committee (Panwascam) of Alam Barajo	Interviewed to provide a supervisory perspective on the re-voting process, including monitoring mechanisms, identified violations, and institutional responses.

*Source: Author's elaboration (2025)*

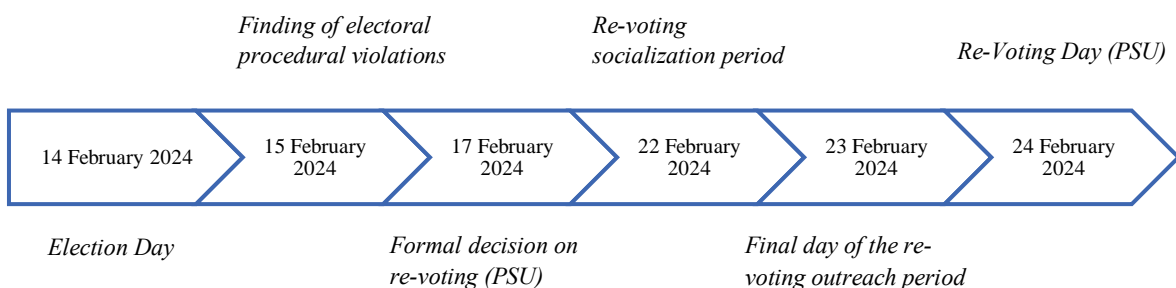
Research subjects were determined using a purposive sampling technique, with the primary criterion being voters who actively participated in both voting moments: the regular election and the re-voting. In addition to voters, informants also included local election organizers (KPPS/PPS) and local community figures to gain a comprehensive perspective regarding mobilization efforts and the social atmosphere during the re-voting. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews supported by field observation and official document tracing specifically the C-Result Form and attendance list data to validate voter participation levels (Bernard, 2017). To ensure the relevance of findings to the established theoretical framework, the interview guide was developed deductively based on the dimensions of the Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Research questions focused on exploring two fundamental aspects: first, the expectancy dimension, which traces the voters' subjective beliefs regarding the impact of their votes on improving election results; and second, the value dimension, which explores the importance of election process integrity and moral satisfaction for voters. All collected data were then analyzed using an interactive model comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, to be subsequently reconstructed into a cohesive narrative regarding the determinants of political participation in the context of re-elections.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The stability of voter participation at Polling Stations (TPS) 66 Simpang Rimbo Village during the 2024 Re-voting (PSU) was not a phenomenon that occurred by chance or naturally. Field findings indicate that this phenomenon was the result of a socio-political construction involving local political actors with highly adaptive strategies. The central actor in these dynamics was a city-level legislative candidate (*Caleg*) possessing a strong electoral base in the region. Unlike conventional campaign patterns in regular elections which tend to be mass-oriented and top-down, the strategy applied in anticipation of this re-voting was far more tactical and based on response speed. In-depth interviews with the campaign team and sympathizers revealed that the legislative candidate's success team did not wait for the Jambi City General Election Commission's decision regarding the re-voting order to begin mobilizing. From the moment strong indications or "early warnings" emerged regarding potential re-voting due to administrative violation findings in the Special Voters List (DPK) compilation at Polling Stations (TPS) 66, the campaign team immediately responded by mapping out a re-voting execution strategy.

This "pre-emptive strategy" (preceding regulation) was crucial in maintaining voter expectancy. In situations of post-election uncertainty, voters often experience political disorientation. The presence of a proactive campaign team was able to provide psychological certainty to constituents that "the game is not over" and "their votes are still valuable." This approach was further strengthened through horizontal communication methods utilizing social capital. The legislative candidate did not position themselves as a distant political elite, but as part of the citizen community, creating a relationship that was more egalitarian, participatory, and trust-based.

**Chart 1. Re-Voting Timeline**



Source: Jambi City General Election Commission (2024)

Based on the timeline above, although the official determination of re-voting execution was only made on February 17, 2024, the success team and legislative candidate had already utilized the situation to map votes and interact directly with the community. This is where the critical analysis regarding the concept of social embeddedness lies. In political science literature, it is often difficult to distinguish between genuine social closeness and clientelism (transactional politics). However, interview data reveal a specific nuance: the relationship between the legislative candidate and the registered voters at Polling Stations (TPS) 66 Simpang Rimbo was not merely a short-term vote-buying relationship. A key informant stated that the candidate's social assistance and presence had been felt long before the election cycle began. This created a perception of "indebtedness" (*utang budi*) or a moral social contract. Citizens felt a reciprocal obligation to attend the Polling Stations (TPS), not merely due to material incentives, but to "help a friend who is fighting." Through the lens of Expectancy-Value Theory, this embedded candidate figure functioned as an expectancy

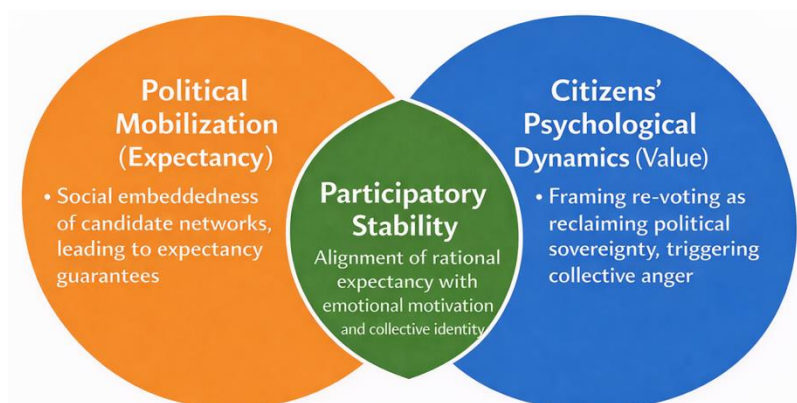
guarantee. Voters held a high belief that if they took the time to vote again, that vote would be safeguarded by someone they knew and trusted.

However, an effectively working political machine is only one side of the coin. The other equally crucial side and the primary determinant of high participation was the success in reframing the meaning of re-voting in the minds of the citizens. Technically and administratively, re-voting is a corrective procedure to rectify organizer (KPPS) errors. Yet, for the citizens of Polling Stations (TPS) 66, re-voting was interpreted far beyond these technical aspects. Observations of narratives circulating in citizen WhatsApp groups and conversations at neighborhood posts showed a significant transformation of meaning. The KPPS error of allowing ineligible voters (non-DPT/DPTb/DPK) to cast ballots on February 14, 2024, was viewed not just as procedural negligence, but perceived as a form of "affront" to local sovereignty. The organically constructed narrative was: "Outsiders (non-locals) could arbitrarily enter and damage our votes, so we must reclaim that sovereignty by guarding this re-vote."

This narrative shift drastically increased the Value dimension in the voters' calculation. Referring to the theory by (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), there was an increase in two sub-components of value. First, Intrinsic Value, namely the inner satisfaction gained by citizens when they felt they successfully "resisted" injustice. Second, Attainment Value, where the citizens of Polling Stations (TPS) 66 constructed a new identity as "conscious and united citizens." The statement of a housewife informant asserting, "We are small people, our vote is our only power. If that is disregarded, then we feel unappreciated," serves as the strongest empirical evidence. This anger was capitalized into participation energy. The social atmosphere in the Simpang Rimbo neighborhood transformed into a fluid political community space. Conversations regarding re-voting permeated from private spaces to public spheres such as in food stalls (*warung*), religious study forums, mothers' social gatherings (*arisan*), and night security posts making the presence of re-voting a new social norm, especially as this was the first occurrence in the region.

Ultimately, the high participation rate at TPS 66 Simpang Rimbo Village which statistically demonstrated a remarkable stability with a deviation of only 18 votes compared to the initial election serves as a profound manifestation of political resonance between external mobilization strategies and the internal psychological state of the citizenry. These two forces did not operate in isolation; rather, they functioned in a dialectical manner, where the intensification of one amplified the other, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of engagement. In this dynamic, the legislative candidate and their campaign team acted not merely as participants, but as astute catalysts. They demonstrated a keen sensitivity to the prevailing social atmosphere, accurately reading the citizens' collective psychology, which was arguably 'heated' and volatile due to the exposure of electoral fraud. Crucially, instead of attempting to suppress this unrest or manipulate the situation for short-term transactional gain, they strategically channeled this latent anger into constructive political action through legitimate electoral mechanisms. Consequently, the campaign narrative was recalibrated to align perfectly with citizen sentiment: abstract program promises were deprioritized in favor of emotive messages of communal solidarity and the restoration of dignity, effectively transforming the act of voting from a procedural obligation into a symbolic defense of the community's voice.

**Chart 2. Resonance model of participation in re-voting**



*Source: Author's elaboration (2025)*

In the context of Expectancy-Value Theory, the anomaly at Polling Stations (TPS) 66 Simpang Rimbo Village can be explained comprehensively. Citizens decided to participate because the product of their Expectancy and Value remained high, perhaps even higher than in the initial election. They possessed high expectancy because they were confident their participation would have an impact (guarded by a local figure), and they held high value because they felt this process was essential to restore a sense of justice. These findings refute the general assumption that re-elections always result in fatigue and apathy (*voter fatigue*). The case of Polling Stations (TPS) 66 proves that voter fatigue can be neutralized when voters have an emotional bond with the stakes involved and a social bond with the competing actors. Local democracy at Polling Stations (TPS) 66 Simpang Rimbo Village, therefore, did not go dormant amidst repetitive procedures; rather, it found renewed vitality through a fusion of managed anger and solid social networks.

To address the potential overlap between social embeddedness and clientelism, it is important to critically interrogate the boundaries between relational politics and transactional exchange within the findings. While the empirical evidence suggests that the legislative candidate's long-term presence fostered trust and reciprocity, such patterns may also superficially resemble clientelistic linkages. In classical political science literature, clientelism is characterized by contingent exchanges-material benefits distributed in return for political support. However, the case of TPS 66 Simpang Rimbo presents a more nuanced configuration. The relationship observed was not activated solely during the electoral cycle nor contingent upon immediate electoral returns, but rather embedded within sustained social interactions that predated the election. Nonetheless, the existence of perceived "utang budi" (moral indebtedness) indicates that even non-material, affective ties can generate obligations that function similarly to soft forms of clientelism. This suggests that social embeddedness and clientelism may not operate as dichotomous categories, but rather along a continuum where relational depth can, under certain conditions, produce expectations of political reciprocity.

Furthermore, this overlap becomes particularly salient when considering how voters interpret their own motivations. From an analytical standpoint, what distinguishes embeddedness from clientelism may lie less in the observable behavior and more in the subjective framing of the relationship by the actors involved. In TPS 66, voters articulated their participation not as a response to explicit inducements, but as an expression of solidarity and communal belonging. Yet, this internalized sense of obligation can still produce

structurally similar outcomes to clientelistic mobilization—namely, consistent electoral support tied to personal networks. This raises an important implication: the durability of democratic participation in such contexts may depend on whether these relational ties remain inclusive and community-oriented, or whether they evolve into exclusionary patronage systems. Therefore, while the findings lean toward interpreting the phenomenon as socially embedded participation, acknowledging this gray area allows for a more reflexive analysis that situates the case within broader debates on informal political institutions and the blurred boundaries between normative civic engagement and relational dependency.

## CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the anomaly of voter participation stability at Polling Stations (TPS) 66 Simpang Rimbo Village during the 2024 re-voting was not a statistical coincidence, but the result of strong political resonance between local actor mobilization strategies and collective citizen consciousness. These findings debunk the general assumption regarding *voter fatigue*, proving that participation can be maintained if voters feel an emotional bond and social guarantee regarding the election process.

Through the analytical lens of Expectancy-Value Theory, high voter retention was driven by the simultaneous strengthening of two psychological dimensions. In the Expectancy dimension, the presence of a legislative candidate figure with high social embeddedness functioned as a trust guarantor. The rapid movement of the success team preceding formal regulations gave voters the confidence that their votes would be guarded and have a tangible impact. Meanwhile, in the Value dimension, a transformation of meaning occurred regarding re-voting, shifting from a mere corrective administrative procedure to a moral struggle. The narrative of "resistance against fraud" and efforts to restore "citizen dignity" successfully increased the intrinsic value of participation. Citizens returned to the polling stations not merely to discharge an obligation, but to assert their local sovereignty which had been compromised.

The theoretical implication of this study asserts that in the context of local democracy, electoral procedures do not operate in a vacuum. The success of remedial mechanisms such as re-voting depends heavily on the ability of political actors and organizers to touch the affective dimensions of voters. Therefore, future evaluations of re-voting implementation must not focus solely on legal-formal and logistical aspects but must also consider sociological approaches that respect community networks. In closing, the case of Polling Stations (TPS) 66 Simpang Rimbo Village teaches that procedural democracy finds its life force when it is successfully adopted as a personal and communal affair of the citizens. Substantial political participation is not born from rigid regulatory instructions, but grows from a sense of ownership among citizens who feel valued, involved, and fought for within the democratic process.

## Acknowledgement

The author wishes to extend a profound and sincere appreciation to the honorable Commissioners and the dedicated Secretariat staff of the General Election Commission (KPU) of Jambi City. Their unwavering cooperation and openness in facilitating access to essential electoral data including voter attendance lists, procedural minutes, and official timelines were instrumental in the data collection process. Furthermore, the technical insights and administrative guidance provided regarding the complex mechanisms of the Re-vote (PSU) significantly sharpened the analysis of this research. This study's empirical validity

would not have been possible without their commitment to transparency and their support for academic inquiry into the dynamics of local democracy.

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