

# THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL CONTESTATION IN THE 2024 BANTEN GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION: A STUDY OF THE FACTORS BEHIND THE DEFEAT OF ANDRA SONI – DIMYATI IN VOTE ACQUISITION IN CILEGON CITY

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**Abstract.** Local elections (Pilkada), as a primary instrument of local democracy, play a crucial role in determining the direction of regional leadership. However, in practice, they often reveal a gap between theoretical assumptions of rational voter behavior and the realities on the ground, which are shaped by social, cultural, and psychological factors. This gap is evident in the defeat of the Andra Soni - Dimiyati pair in Cilegon City during the 2024 Banten gubernatorial election, despite their overall victory at the provincial level, indicating variations in voter behavior across regions that have not been widely examined in specific contexts. This study aims to identify and analyze the factors influencing this defeat at the local level. The research employs a qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews, documentation, and literature review, and analyzed using voter behavior theory. The findings reveal that the defeat was influenced by strong party identification, the dominance of local political networks, the influence of informal leaders, suboptimal grassroots campaign strategies, and limitations in penetrating deeply rooted voter loyalty. These findings indicate that voter behavior is not entirely rational, but is shaped by emotional attachments and local socio-political structures. Therefore, this study underscores the importance of sustained political strategies, strengthening local networks, and adopting context-sensitive campaign approaches in addressing the dynamics of politics at the regional level.

**Keywords:** *Banten Gubernatorial Election 2024; Voter Behavior; Cilegon City; Andra Soni -Dimiyati.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Regional Head Elections (*Pilkada*) in Indonesia constitute a primary instrument for implementing democracy at the local level. Since the introduction of direct elections in 2005, citizens have been granted the opportunity to directly select their regional leaders at the provincial (governor), regency (regent), and municipal (mayor) levels. This development marks a significant transformation in Indonesia's democratic practice, as *Pilkada* is no longer viewed merely as an electoral procedure but also as a manifestation of popular sovereignty, as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and the legal framework governing the election of governors, regents, and mayors [1]. In this regard, *Pilkada* represents a form of constitutional democracy that enables citizens to evaluate, choose, and replace their leaders through structured and regulated mechanisms. Normatively, this underscores *Pilkada* as a means to strengthen political legitimacy through direct public participation. Accordingly, the quality of democracy in *Pilkada* implementation can be assessed by the extent to which electoral competition is fair, public participation is active, and principles of transparency and accountability are consistently upheld. A well-functioning electoral contest provides space for candidates to compete based on ideas, visions, and policy programs, rather than

relying solely on political mobilization. Beyond serving as a mechanism for selecting regional leaders who hold authority in determining public policy direction and development priorities, *Pilkada* also plays a crucial role as a medium for political learning. Through this process, citizens are able to assess candidates' track records, evaluate their commitment to public interests, and monitor governmental performance after election [2]. Thus, *Pilkada* not only produces constitutionally legitimate leaders but also contributes to strengthening political awareness and enhancing the quality of civic participation, allowing local democracy to develop in a more substantive manner. Furthermore, each region possesses distinct social, cultural, and political characteristics, resulting in varied patterns of electoral competition, even within the same province. These local differences shape diverse dynamics in political contestation across regions [3]. In some areas, issues such as infrastructure development may become the primary determinant of voter choice, while in others, candidates' proximity to religious or traditional leaders may be more influential. Therefore, *Pilkada* reflects not only formal procedural democracy but also serves as a concrete representation of evolving local socio - political dynamics shaped by the specific context of each community. This study focuses on the 2024 Banten Gubernatorial Election, which was

both competitive and publicly salient. The contest featured two candidate pairs with distinct political bases and support configurations: Airin Rachmi Diany–Ade Sumardi and Andra Soni - Dimiyati. The Airin–Ade pair was nominated by Golkar Party and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), later forming a broader political alliance with several parties including PBB, PKN, the Labor Party, the Ummat Party, and the Gelora Party under the coalition “Koalisi Banten Maju Bersama” [4]. Political dynamics shifted when Golkar, which had initially supported the Andra Soni–Dimiyati pair, withdrew its endorsement and redirected its support to Airin - Ade, reflecting strategic recalibration within party politics [5].

Meanwhile, the Andra Soni - Dimiyati Natakusumah pair received backing from a large coalition known as the *Koalisi Indonesia Maju (KIM) Plus*, comprising Gerindra, PKS, NasDem, PKB, PAN, PPP, PSI, the Garuda Party, and the Prima Party. This multi-party support was formally declared in early August 2024 [6]. The formation of such a coalition, consisting of parties with diverse ideological backgrounds, illustrates the pragmatic and flexible nature of political parties in pursuing electoral success at the local level. This electoral contest thus reflects the convergence of two distinct political forces. On one hand, it represents the persistence of established political influence rooted in political dynasties and longstanding local networks that have fostered voter loyalty in Banten. On the other hand, the emergence of new political figures signifies efforts toward political renewal and highlights national parties’ strategies to consolidate their influence at the regional level. Cross - party support for the Andra Soni - Dimiyati pair also demonstrates an adaptive campaign approach aimed at reaching increasingly diverse voter segments across demographic, geographic, and social dimensions.

equivalent to 55.88 percent of the total valid votes, while their opponents, Airin Rachmi Diany - Ade Sumardi, obtained 2,449,183 votes or 44.12 percent. The margin of more than 650,000 votes indicates a substantial electoral advantage for Andra Soni - Dimiyati. This outcome reflects the pair’s success in consolidating broad political support at the provincial level [7]. Such superiority is evident not only in the aggregate vote count but also in the relatively wide distribution of support across most regions of Banten Province. Their support extended beyond major voter bases to include areas with diverse socio-economic and cultural characteristics, spanning both rural and urban contexts. This pattern suggests that Andra Soni - Dimiyati possessed the capacity to mobilize support across multiple voter segments. The relatively even distribution of support further indicates that the political strategy employed was not uniform but rather adaptive to local contexts. Variations in regional characteristics shaped different determinants of voter behavior. In rural areas, support tended to be formed through structural and relational approaches, where social proximity, local identity ties, and the influence of community leaders played dominant roles in building political trust [8]. The legitimacy of figures with historical connections to local communities reinforced electoral loyalty in these settings. In semi-urban areas, voting behavior was shaped not only by social proximity but also by the effectiveness of party networks in mobilizing votes. The interaction between party structures at the grassroots level and local elites became crucial in expanding support, resulting in preferences formed through a combination of structural influence and social relations. In contrast, in urban areas, voter behavior was more strongly influenced by psychological and sociological factors, particularly public perceptions of candidates. Political image, communication strategies, and exposure through mass and social media played significant roles in shaping voter preferences. In this context, popularity and electability became key determinants of candidate acceptance among urban voters [9]. Despite their overall victory across most regions of Banten, Andra Soni–Dimiyati experienced defeats in two areas: South Tangerang City and Cilegon City. The loss in South Tangerang, where they received 190,312 votes, can be explained by historical and political factors, as the city represents a stronghold of Airin, who previously served two terms as mayor (2011–2021). Consequently, the area naturally functioned as a vote base for the Airin - Ade pair [10]. In contrast, the defeat in Cilegon where Andra Soni–Dimiyati secured only 107,495 votes raises a more critical question. Unlike South Tangerang, Cilegon is not traditionally considered a political base for Airin - Ade and exhibits distinct socio-economic characteristics compared to other regions in Banten. Cilegon, located in Banten Province, is widely recognized as one of Indonesia’s major industrial centers. Its strategic geographical position, supported by land and maritime transportation infrastructure as well as an international-scale port, makes it highly attractive for industrial investment. Various sectors including steel, chemicals, and manufacturing operate in the area, utilizing both human and natural resources. The presence of industry has generated tangible benefits for the local population, such as employment opportunities, increased income, and the growth of small and medium enterprises as part of industrial supply chains, thereby



Source: obtained from the Instagram account @kpuprovinsibanten.

Based on the official recapitulation established by the General Election Commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum/KPU*) of Banten Province through Decree Number 190 of 2024, the gubernatorial candidate pair Andra Soni - Dimiyati Natakusumah was declared the winner of the 2024 Banten Gubernatorial Election. The pair secured 3,102,501 votes,

contributing to local economic development [11]. At the same time, industrialization and urbanization have influenced the mindset of Cilegon's residents. The community tends to adopt a more rational outlook, particularly in considering issues related to labor welfare, employment security, economic stability, and public service quality. Data from the Regional Development Planning Agency (*Bappeda*) of Banten Province (2023) indicate that Cilegon exhibits a higher level of urbanization and industrialization compared to other regions in the province, reflecting a society that places strong emphasis on welfare and quality of life [12]. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (*BPS*), Cilegon's population in 2024 reached approximately 476,000 people, with the majority belonging to the productive age group (15–59 years) [13]. The dominance of this demographic group is significant in understanding political behavior, as voter preferences are shaped not only by rational considerations but also by emotional factors and social identity attachments to candidates or supporting groups [14]. Individuals in the productive age group are generally more economically active, have broader access to information, and are more exposed to issues such as development, employment, and welfare, all of which influence their political preferences. Consequently, candidates contesting in such regions are required not only to rely on traditional political networks but also to formulate programs that align with the needs of an industrial society.

The defeat of Andra Soni - Dimiyati in Cilegon reflects the complexity of factors influencing voter behavior in determining political choices. Voting decisions are not solely based on the evaluation of programs and policy proposals but are also shaped by psychological processes that influence perceptions, attitudes, and judgments throughout the electoral process. Voter behavior is formed through exposure to campaign messages, communication media, and social interactions at the local level, where individuals interpret political information based on their experiences, values, and social conditions. Cultural proximity between candidates and voters also plays a crucial role in fostering emotional closeness and trust, leading voters to support candidates perceived as understanding local values, traditions, and community needs. Additionally, loyalty to previously recognized political figures influences voter evaluations of consistency and commitment, often based on past experiences. Voters also assess candidates' track records and performance, including their ability to address local issues, manage governance, and respond to public concerns. Perceptions of competence frequently become decisive factors, particularly in competitive electoral contexts where increased access to information encourages more critical evaluation. Conversely, leadership perceived as ineffective, unresponsive, or lacking commitment tends to erode public trust, while leaders who ignore public criticism risk losing support and facing electoral penalties [15].

These dynamics illustrate that electoral outcomes are shaped by the complex interplay of local voter behavior. The case of Andra Soni - Dimiyati demonstrates a discrepancy between initial expectations and actual electoral outcomes, as their predicted widespread victory did not materialize in Cilegon, where they suffered a significant defeat. This gap highlights the importance of understanding localized political dynamics. This study is motivated by the absence of research

that specifically examines the factors underlying the defeat of Andra Soni - Dimiyati in Cilegon using a voter behavior approach, particularly from a psychological perspective. Previous studies have generally focused on electoral defeat in broader contexts, emphasizing campaign strategies rather than variations in voting outcomes across regions within the same election. In practice, however, candidates may achieve overall victory while experiencing localized defeats due to distinct voter behavior dynamics. This phenomenon is evident in the case of Andra Soni–Dimiyati, who secured widespread support across Banten Province but underperformed in Cilegon. Accordingly, this study aims to fill this research gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the factors contributing to their electoral loss in Cilegon, with a particular emphasis on psychological determinants of voter behavior.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine in depth the factors underlying the electoral defeat of the Andra Soni - Dimiyati pair in the 2024 Banten Gubernatorial Election, particularly in Cilegon City. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate as it enables a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by exploring meanings, perceptions, and experiences of informants within a specific socio-political context [16]. Accordingly, the study does not merely focus on the final vote outcomes but also investigates the social processes and voter behavior dynamics that shaped those results. The object of the research is directed toward the political strategies employed and the patterns of voter behavior that contributed to the relatively low level of support for the candidate pair in Cilegon. The study involves five key informants selected through purposive sampling, a technique that determines participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The selection criteria include: (1) having direct involvement in or sufficient knowledge of the 2024 Banten gubernatorial election, (2) residing in or having a strong connection to Cilegon City as the research locus, and (3) being willing to provide open and in-depth information. The informants represent diverse backgrounds, including members of the campaign team, political party officials, representatives of community organizations, voters, and political observers. This diversity is intended to generate rich, comprehensive data and to capture multiple perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation [17]. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and literature review. The interviews were semi-structured, guided by a set of questions aligned with the research focus while allowing flexibility for further exploration of informants' responses [18]. Interviews were carried out both face-to-face and online, with each session lasting approximately 30 to 60 minutes. With the consent of the informants, all interviews were recorded to ensure data accuracy and subsequently transcribed systematically for analysis. In addition, a literature review was undertaken by examining relevant written sources, including official documents from the General Election Commission (KPU), academic journals, and media reports. These secondary data sources serve to complement and strengthen the primary data,

thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness and empirical grounding of the study. To ensure data validity and reliability, this study applies source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing information obtained from informants with different backgrounds to minimize subjective bias. Method triangulation is implemented by integrating findings from interviews with documentary data to ensure consistency. Furthermore, member checking is conducted by reconfirming interview results with informants to verify that the interpretations accurately reflect their intended meanings. These procedures are undertaken to enhance the credibility, validity, and trustworthiness of the research findings.

Data analysis follows the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selects, simplifies, and organizes data relevant to the research focus. The reduced data are then presented in a systematic and structured narrative form, facilitating the identification of patterns and relationships among findings. The final stage involves drawing conclusions, which is conducted iteratively by linking empirical findings with the theoretical framework employed, resulting in interpretations that are in-depth, logically coherent, and academically accountable [19].

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In explaining the formation of voting behavior, Campbell's concept of the *Funnel of Causality* provides a systematic analytical framework for understanding how individual political preferences are gradually and multilayeredly formed [20]. This model suggests that voting behavior results from the interaction of various factors operating over time, ranging from long-term influences such as social background including family environment, education, and life experiences to short-term factors such as political campaigns and mass media exposure. These early influences shape relatively stable psychological predispositions, which in turn affect how individuals interpret political reality, including their evaluation of candidates and responses to emerging political issues. Meanwhile, factors closer to the election period may either reinforce or shift previously formed preferences. Thus, voting behavior can be understood as a complex process in which structural and psychological factors interact dynamically.

In line with this framework, this study adopts a psychological approach to understand voter behavior in the context of the 2024 Banten gubernatorial election in Cilegon City. This approach, developed by the Michigan School through research conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, emphasizes the importance of individual-level internal factors in explaining political behavior. From this perspective, voting behavior is shaped not only by social and structural influences but also by attitudes, perceptions, and emotional attachments formed through ongoing political socialization. In other words, political choices are not solely based on rational considerations but are

also influenced by subjective experiences and social interactions that shape individuals' political orientations.

Furthermore, within the psychological approach, voting behavior is analyzed through three key variables: party identification, issue orientation, and candidate orientation. These variables serve as a foundational framework for understanding how voter preferences are formed and developed, while still taking into account the surrounding socio-political context. This approach also emerged as a response to the limitations of the sociological approach, which is considered less capable of capturing the internal dynamics of individuals in depth. Therefore, this study employs these three variables as analytical tools to systematically examine how psychological factors contribute to shaping voting behavior in Cilegon City.

#### Party Identification

Political parties serve as institutions that bridge societal interests with political power and function as the primary instruments in electoral competition. They are characterized as organizations with a degree of autonomy, a clear political platform or ideological orientation, and a role in articulating and aggregating group interests within the political system [21]. In addition, political parties contribute to political development as part of a state's political superstructure. From the perspective of psychological voting behavior, party identification is understood as a long-term emotional attachment between voters and political parties, formed through an ongoing process of political socialization. In the context of the 2024 Banten gubernatorial election in Cilegon City, party identification plays a relatively dominant role in shaping voter behavior. This is reflected in the tendency of voters to rely on political parties as the primary reference in making electoral decisions, particularly parties that have established strong support bases and historical closeness with the local community. As stated by Ardy, a representative of the Cilegon City DPC of the Gerindra Party: **"Banten, including Cilegon, is an area that has long had close ties with the Golkar Party."** Based on this statement, it can be understood that political parties with strong historical roots and established political networks are able to generate high levels of recognition and trust among the public. Parties that are consistently present in the social and political life of the community are more easily accepted and used as reference points in political decision-making. Theoretically, this condition indicates that party identification has a significant influence on voting behavior. Voters who have developed an attachment to a particular party tend to make their electoral choices with little hesitation, often without conducting an in-depth evaluation of the candidates being promoted. In this sense, the party functions as a cognitive shortcut that simplifies decision-making, whereby trust in the party is directly transferred to its candidates.

In this regard, it can be concluded that the majority of voters in Cilegon City still tend to base their electoral choices on party identification. Voters who recognize and feel close to a particular party are more likely to maintain their preferences, especially when the party has a strong reputation and widespread recognition in society. This indicates that political parties play a crucial role in shaping voting behavior and significantly influence electoral outcomes.

## Issue Orientation

Issue orientation refers to the extent to which voters use candidates' visions, missions, and policy programs as the primary basis for making political decisions. Within voting behavior theory, particularly the rational choice approach, individuals are assumed to possess the capacity to evaluate candidates based on their ability to propose solutions to social, economic, and cultural problems faced by society. Accordingly, rational voters are expected to assess the substance of policy programs, consider their relevance and benefits, and align their political choices with perceived individual or collective interests. However, findings from Cilegon City indicate that issue orientation has not functioned as the primary determinant of voter preferences. Although campaign issues such as economic welfare, education, and public services are articulated by candidates, these policy dimensions are not predominantly used as evaluative criteria by voters. Instead, political decisions are more strongly influenced by simpler and more readily identifiable indicators, such as candidate popularity, emotional proximity, and perceptions of socio-political reputation. This pattern suggests that decision-making processes are not fully grounded in programmatic rationality, but rather shaped by more accessible practical considerations. This condition is reinforced by an interview with a campaign team member, who stated: **"The programs offered are actually quite good and relevant, but they have not been evenly communicated to the public."** This statement highlights a fundamental issue in political communication, particularly in the transmission of information from candidates to voters. Well-designed policy programs do not automatically translate into electoral strength if they are not properly understood by the public. In other words, there is a gap between message production at the elite level and message reception at the grassroots level. Under such conditions, issues lose their electoral influence because they fail to become accessible knowledge for voter evaluation. Analytically, this phenomenon can be explained through the concept of bounded rationality, where limitations in access to information, time, and cognitive capacity lead voters to simplify their decision-making processes. When information about policy programs is not widely available or is communicated ineffectively, voters tend to rely on alternative considerations that are more easily processed, such as emotional attachment or social influence. This explains why political issues, although normatively important, do not always serve as decisive variables in electoral practice. This finding is consistent with the view that political decisions are not always based on rational evaluation of programs, but are instead influenced by contextual and easily observable factors in everyday life [22]. This tendency is further strengthened by voters' relatively passive behavior in seeking political information. Voters do not actively compare policy programs across candidates or critically evaluate campaign issues, resulting in a situation where program quality does not necessarily correspond to electoral support.

Nevertheless, issue orientation is not entirely absent from voting behavior. A small segment of voters still considers policy programs, particularly when these programs are directly related to their immediate needs. However, this rational voter segment remains limited in size and is not sufficiently significant to influence overall electoral outcomes. In this

context, issue orientation functions more as a complementary factor rather than a primary determinant of political preference.

In the case of the Andra Soni - Dimiyati candidacy, this condition presents a significant strategic challenge. Although the proposed programs are relevant and well-designed, limitations in communication and low voter attention to issues prevent these programs from being effectively leveraged as electoral capital. As a result, programmatic strengths fail to translate into electoral advantages. Based on this discussion, it can be concluded that issue orientation in Cilegon City has a relatively weak influence on voting behavior. The dominance of non-programmatic factors indicates that political decisions are more strongly shaped by affective and social considerations than by rational policy evaluation. This condition underscores that electoral success is not solely determined by the quality of policy programs, but also by the candidates' ability to communicate those programs effectively and adapt them to the characteristics of local voters.

## Candidate Orientation

Within the psychological framework of voting behavior, candidate orientation is not only associated with the level of candidate recognition, but also encompasses affective dimensions such as emotional closeness, assessments of personal character, and the level of trust granted by voters [23]. In this framework, voting behavior is not entirely based on rational considerations, but is instead strongly influenced by subjective perceptions formed through social experiences and everyday interactions. Accordingly, candidates who are able to build emotional attachment and trust tend to gain greater electoral support, regardless of the quality of their policy programs. Based on the research findings, candidate orientation plays a highly significant role in shaping voter preferences in Cilegon City. One of the main findings is the low level of public recognition of the Andra Soni-Dimiyati pair, which becomes an initial obstacle in shaping voter perceptions. This is reflected in the statement of one respondent during the interview: **"Personally, I am not very familiar with the Andra Soni-Dimiyati pair, and in this area, most people are more familiar with Airin."**

This statement indicates that popularity serves as a fundamental prerequisite in electoral competition. Analytically, within the psychological approach, recognition represents the initial stage before further evaluation of a candidate takes place. When voters do not have sufficient information or experience regarding a candidate, the process of trust formation becomes constrained. As a result, voters tend to shift their preference toward more familiar candidates who have already been cognitively established in their perception.

The low level of recognition also contributes to weak emotional attachment between candidates and voters. The findings show that emotional closeness is stronger toward rival candidates who have been more widely known and have established stronger links with the local socio-political context. This demonstrates that emotional attachment is not formed instantly, but develops through repeated interactions and consistent exposure in the public sphere. In this condition, the Andra Soni - Dimiyati pair faces limitations in building affective relationships with voters, resulting in relatively low voter loyalty. Furthermore, the research also indicates that candidate orientation is strongly influenced by the role of local

figures and the social environment. As stated by a member of the Pemuda Pancasila mass organization: “**Local figures, mass organizations, and the social environment play a major role in shaping people’s political choices, because people often follow the views of those they trust.**” This statement suggests that political preferences are not entirely individual in nature, but are shaped through social interaction. Conceptually, this reinforces the assumption that social networks function as key agents in shaping political perceptions. Local figures, community organizations, and the surrounding environment do not only serve as sources of information, but also provide legitimacy to certain candidates. Consequently, candidates supported by strong social networks tend to be more easily accepted by the public. In addition, the influence of political networks is also an important factor in shaping voter orientation toward candidates. Candidates who are connected to strong political or power networks tend to have higher visibility and legitimacy. In this context, the rival candidate pair holds an advantage due to their historical ties with local power structures, which facilitates the development of trust and emotional closeness with voters. Conversely, the Andra Soni - Dimiyati pair faces limitations in this regard, which contributes to their lower level of electoral appeal. From a comparative perspective, the findings show clear differences between the candidate pairs in terms of voter orientation. The rival candidates demonstrate advantages in popularity, emotional closeness, and support from social and political networks, whereas the Andra Soni - Dimiyati pair is relatively weaker in these aspects. These differences are key factors explaining why voter preferences tend to lean toward the rival candidates.

Thus, it can be concluded that candidate orientation is a dominant factor in shaping voting behavior in Cilegon City. Low popularity, weak emotional attachment, and limited support from social and political networks are the main constraints faced by the Andra Soni - Dimiyati pair. This finding further confirms that, within a psychologically based voting behavior framework, electoral success is strongly determined by a candidate’s ability to build visibility, emotional closeness, and social legitimacy within society, rather than solely by the quality of the programs offered.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that voter behavior in the 2024 Banten gubernatorial election in Cilegon City is influenced more by psychological factors than by rational, program-based considerations. Attachment to political parties particularly those with a long historical presence and strong organizational networks serves as the primary basis in shaping voter choices. This condition is further reinforced by candidate-related factors such as popularity, emotional closeness, and support from local figures and the surrounding social environment, which play a more decisive role than the quality of policy programs offered. Meanwhile, political issues have not become a primary consideration, indicating that most voters do not yet fully use programmatic information as the basis for their electoral decisions. Theoretically, these findings demonstrate that the psychological approach remains highly relevant for

understanding voter behavior at the local level. Political choices are not determined solely by policy programs, but also by emotions, trust, and social influences embedded in everyday life. This indicates that the formation of political preferences is a complex process, involving continuous interaction between individual and social factors. Based on these findings, several practical implications can be drawn. Candidates need to strengthen their communication strategies to increase public recognition while also building stronger emotional connections with voters. In addition, the role of local figures and social networks should be optimally utilized, as they have proven to be effective in influencing public political choices.

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