ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY CIVIC CULTURE IN REALIZING THE QUALITY OF THE 2024 ELECTION

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ABSTRACT

The quality of elections in emerging democracies is increasingly recognized as a social outcome rather than a purely procedural achievement. This study analyzes how civic culture within civil society influences public evaluations of the quality of the 2024 General Election in Lampung Province, Indonesia. Drawing on Civic Culture Theory, the paper evaluates the configuration of civil society actors, civic orientations, and their consequences for election quality at the subnational level. The research adopts a qualitative approach with a mixed-methods logic based on triangulation, integrating in-depth interviews with civil society actors, election stakeholders, and observers, alongside a descriptive public opinion poll. The data demonstrate an equivocal role of civil society in the electoral process. Although procedural awareness and voter engagement are high, evaluative civic attitudes remain poor, evident in the normalization of money politics and the dominance of symbolic and affective political mobilization. Public discussion is divided and primarily confined to elite forums, resulting in elections regarded as procedurally orderly but substantively contentious. This study contributes by contextualizing Civic Culture Theory and shows that electoral quality shaped by asymmetrical civic development. Limited to Lampung province situation, this study encourages comparative and longitudinal research to further analyze civic culture and electoral legitimacy.

Keywords: Civic Culture, Civil Society, Election 2024

INTRODUCTION

In the evolution of contemporary democracy studies, election quality is no longer seen only as a procedural concern connected to technical administration, conformity with legislation, or levels of voter participation (Daoust & Nadeau, 2023; Norris, 2013). Recent literature stresses that high-quality elections are the product of interactions between the institutional design of democracy and the civic character of the community that sustains it (Bauhr & Grimes, 2021; Fuchs & Roller, 2018; Mayne & Geißel, 2018). Within this concept, civic culture is viewed as a normative basis that impacts how citizens perceive politics, participate in electoral processes, and evaluate the legitimacy of election outcomes (Gabriel, 2017). A civic culture defined by participation views, tolerance toward political differences, social trust, and openness to public conversation is believed to contribute to elections that are not just procedurally competitive but also democratically meaningful (Almond & Verba, 2015; Carlin & Love, 2018; Maskivker, 2023). However, in the practice of democracy across various local contexts in Indonesia, the link between political engagement and electoral quality is typically non-linear (Fumarola, 2020; Kutuk & Usturali, 2023). High levels of voter involvement are not necessarily accompanied by the improvement of citizens' deliberative

and evaluative orientations (Jacquet, 2017). This phenomena becomes especially salient when elections take place within a public arena characterized by patronage ties, symbolic mobilization, and the use of material resources in political rivalry (Berenschot & Aspinall, 2022; Kramon, 2016).

The case of elections in Lampung Province provides a strong empirical illustration of this dynamic. Berenschot and Purba demonstrate that electoral contestation in Lampung cannot be separated from the involvement of significant economic actors and practices of material mobilization that shape voter preferences (Barenschot & Purba, 2014). Corporate support through the distribution of products, high-cost campaigning, and the strengthening of patronage networks not only increases candidates' visibility but also frames elections as arenas of socially negotiated material exchange. In this context, citizens' political participation remains high; however, the prevailing civic orientations tend to be pragmatic and affective, while the evaluative dimension concerning equity and the quality of electoral processes remains relatively weak. The 2014 election in Lampung Province aligns with the findings of Bayo, which indicate that electoral quality at the local level is firmly shaped by configurations of civic culture operating within local power and economic relations (Bayo et al., 2018). Conceptually, Civic Culture Theory relatively balanced combination of participatory orientations, adherence to norms, and moderate trust in political institutions (Conradt, 2015; Kaasa & Andriani, 2022). Societies with high levels of social trust, tolerance toward political diversity, and active civic participation tend to demonstrate more stable democracies and more genuine elections (Carugati, 2020). However, within the setting of modern democracies and societies undergoing transformations of the public domain, particularly the digitalization of political communication, this theory has also been subject to expansion and critique (Lamentowicz, 2019). This is consistent with the study by Johnson, which argues that civic culture may develop unevenly, whereby procedural participation strengthens while citizens' deliberative and evaluative orientations weaken due to the dominance of emotional narratives, identity mobilization, and transactional political practices (Johnson et al., 2019).

Although Civic Culture Theory has been frequently applied to evaluate democracy and elections in Indonesia, considerable research gaps remain. First, most previous studies continue to focus on macro- and national-level techniques, so failing to fully capture changes at the local level. Second, election studies in Indonesia are still dominated by procedural and institutional evaluations, while the civic culture of civil society as a factor of electoral quality has not been investigated in depth. Third, the relationship between civic culture, civil society practices, and public views of election quality is rarely defined within an integrated analytical framework. These discrepancies become especially prominent in the context of the 2024 General Election, which unfolded amid heightened social polarization and the restructuring of the digital public realm. Based on these inadequacies, this study offers a novel contribution by reinventing Civic Culture Theory as a primary paradigm for judging election quality, rather than relying exclusively on democratic stability. Rather than evaluating civic culture in an abstract fashion, this study approaches public perceptions of elections as an empirical

indicator of how civic culture operates in electoral practice. By adopting the local context of Lampung, this research extends the application of Civic Culture Theory to the subnational level, which remains relatively underexplored in the Indonesian electoral literature, while also enabling a more contextualized understanding of concrete civic dynamics in elections.

The primary goal of this study is to assess the civic culture of civil society in shaping the quality of the 2024 General Election in Lampung. Specifically, this research aims to: (1) identify the characteristics and roles of civil society in the electoral process; (2) analyze the orientations of civic culture through which citizens participate in and respond to political competition; and (3) assess electoral quality as perceived by citizens. The research questions are focused toward understanding how the civic culture of civil society is produced and functioning during the 2024 General Election, and how this culture influences public perceptions of election quality. This study takes a mixed-methods approach, with an emphasis on qualitative analysis through in-depth interviews, document analysis, and observation of public engagement activities. To complement the qualitative findings, the study utilizes public opinion survey data on elections, which are analyzed descriptively and used as a triangulation instrument, thereby enabling a more comprehensive assessment of the role of civil society's civic culture in realizing the quality of the 2024 General Election in Lampung..

METHOD

This study combines a qualitative approach with a mixed-methods rationale based on triangulation. The analysis focuses on understanding the meanings, value orientations, and practices of civil society's civic culture in affecting the quality of the 2024 General Election in Lampung Province. Civic culture is regarded as a contextual and interpretative social phenomena; consequently, a qualitative method is considered best ideal for capturing the relationship between civil society behaviors and public views of election quality. Survey data are employed in a restricted capacity to support and reinforce the qualitative findings. Primary data were acquired through semi-structured in-depth interviews with purposively selected key informants, including civil society actors, community leaders, election administrators, election observers, and other individuals with firsthand knowledge of the 2024 election in Lampung. Secondary data consist of official electoral records, monitoring reports, media releases, and public opinion surveys. The unit of analysis is civic culture as evidenced in civil society practices and public views during the election.

Data gathering includes in-depth interviews, document analysis, and descriptive analysis of survey data, which acted as a triangulation tool to map perceptions of fairness, transparency, and trust in the electoral process. Qualitative data analysis was undertaken using NVivo to promote analytical rigor and traceability. The analysis employed open, axial, and selective coding processes based on the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of civic culture. NVivo functioned merely as an analytical assistance and did not replace the researcher's interpretative role. The credibility of the findings was guaranteed through source and method triangulation. All interviews were conducted with informed consent, and

informants' names were anonymised. The research design and analytical methodologies are described in an operational manner to facilitate replication in other regional and electoral situations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result

The findings of this study are organized to address the main research questions, namely: (1) how civil society is configured and what roles it plays in the 2024 Election in Lampung; (2) the characteristics of civil society's civic culture during the electoral process; and (3) how this civic culture influences public perceptions of the quality of the 2024 Election.

Configuration and Roles of Civil Society in the 2024 Election in Lampung

Civil society can no longer be considered as an identical actor that constantly acts as a counterbalance to state power; rather, it encompasses diverse political perspectives and positions, that range from deliberative and advocative roles to direct involvement in the arena of electoral politics (Edwards, 2021). Civil society's contribution to democratic quality is substantially impacted by dominant civic value orientations and participation practices, rather than solely by the extent of organizational presence in the public sphere (Knutsen & Teorell, 2024). In the election context, literature over the past decade reveals a tendency toward role ambivalence within civil society, whereby certain actors work as monitors and promoters of electoral integrity, while others become active in political mobilization associated with specific electoral interests (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019). This circumstance is further supported by the rise of the digital public sphere, which enables civil society to work simultaneously as agents of discourse, makers of political narratives, and instruments of support mobilization (Vaccari & Valeriani, 2018).

Table 1. Configuration and Roles of Civil Society in the 2024 Election in Lampung

Actors	Configuration	Roles
Academics	Normative–critical actors with high analytical capacity but limited mass outreach	Production of democratic discourse, voter education, substantive critique of electoral processes
Journalists	Public actors positioned at the intersection of information control and the political arena	Information dissemination, issue framing of elections, shaping public political perceptions and interactions
Election Monitors	Formal and non-formal actors characterized by fragmentation and uneven capacity	Evidence-based monitoring, reporting of violations, safeguarding electoral integrity
Election Administrators	Institutional actors with formal legitimacy and local networks	Implementation of electoral stages, procedural socialization, maintaining electoral order and stability

Sources: In-depth interviews with key informants, 2024.

The findings reveal that civil society in Lampung during the 2024 Election was diverse and non-homogeneous, with people playing distinct positions in the voting process. Academics largely functioned as normative–critical agents contributing through democratic discourse, voter education, and substantive critique, albeit with limited public mobilization power. Election monitors operated in fragmented and uneven configurations; despite their role in evidence-based monitoring and reporting breaches, resource and coverage limits hampered the effectiveness of oversight across regions. Election administrators, by contrast, acted as institutional actors with formal legitimacy and strong local networks, focusing on procedural implementation, electoral socialization, and the maintenance of order and stability. At the same time, the study finds that civil society did not operate exclusively within neutral and deliberative frameworks, as some communities and organizations were involved in partisan political mobilization often embedded in social or religious activities thereby limiting civil society's mediating role and potentially intensifying social polarization during the electoral period.

Characteristics of Civil Society's Civic Culture during the 2024 Election

Rising levels of political engagement not automatically correspond to higher civic maturity levels, particularly in electoral democracies characterized by polarization, the individualization of politics, and the growth of the digital public sphere (Dalton & Welzel, 2014). Other studies underline that contemporary civic culture tends to be distinguished by tensions between deliberative rationality and emotive expression, in which emotions, identities, and group loyalties play an increasingly significant role in determining citizens' political attitudes (Foa et al., 2020). In the political context, multiple research demonstrate that a civic culture with inadequate deliberative capacity is connected with lower-quality public discourse, raised tolerance of non-ideal practices, and changing acceptance of electoral outcomes (Mutz, 2015).

Table 2. Characteristics of Civil Society's Civic Culture during the 2024 Election

Actors	Characteristics	Civic Culture
Academics	Rational–analytical, reflective, and distanced from electoral political practices	Deliberative, grounded in political literacy and substantive democratic values
Journalists	Observational–interactive, responsive to public dynamics and social media	Expressive and affective; shaped by emotions, media framing, and viral logics
Election Monitors	Critical–empirical, based on field findings and evidence of violations	Normative–pragmatic; aware of democratic values yet confronted with tolerance of non-ideal practices
Election Administrators	Procedural–institutional, oriented toward stability and order	Moderate–conformist; emphasizing rule compliance and acceptance of outcomes

Sources: In-depth interviews with key informants, 2024.

The results show that civic culture of citizens in Lampung during the 2024 Election remained diverse and not entirely merged throughout dimensions. Procedural awareness of electoral procedures and participation was rather robust, bolstered by socialization efforts from election officials and civil society, although substantive comprehension of policy problems and candidate proposals was generally confined to politically educated groups. Affective preferences rooted in personal relationships and partisanship played a significant role in determining attitudes and responses to political information, occasionally generating interpersonal conflict, especially in informal spaces and social media, although some communities actively sought to preserve social cohesion. At the evaluative level, while citizens generally articulated normative commitments to fair and democratic elections, including rejection of vote-buying, these standards were not consistently reflected in practice, as pragmatic issues led to acceptance of transactional politics, revealing an ongoing disparity between democratic principles and daily voter behavior.

Public Deliberation Practices in the Electoral Process

The increasing levels of citizen political participation may not inevitably promote reasonable and inclusive discussion, particularly in electoral democracies marked on divided public spheres and the dominance of digital media (Bächtiger et al., 2018). A number of research suggest that digital public places tend to favor quick and emotionally driven statements of opinion, while often weakening the quality of contentious debate and critical reflection (Theocharis & Jungherr, 2021). In the electoral setting, public discussion methods often encounter obstacles emerging due to the personalizing of politics, identity polarization, and unequal access to credible information. Research over the past decade reveals that public deliberation in new and developing democracy tends to take part more frequently in the way of symbolic and affective discourse rather than exchanges of arguments rooted in policy problems (Curato et al., 2019).

Table 3. Deliberative Practices and the Quality of Discourse in the Electoral Process

Actors	Deliberative Patterns	Discourse Quality
Academics	Confined to elite spaces (universities, discussion forums) with homogeneous participants	Argumentative but not inclusive; limited impact on the broader public
Journalists	Dominated by social media and digital public spaces	Reactive, emotional, framing-driven; weak deliberative rationality
Election Monitors	One-way discussions based on figures and local authority	Shallow and minimally verified; deliberation does not foster critical reflection
Election Administrators	Conducted in informal and digital spaces, relatively controlled	Socially stable, but low in deliberative quality and substantive issue engagement

Sources: In-depth interviews with key informants, 2024.

Research findings reveal that the public deliberation during the 2024 Election in Lampung was restricted and fragmented. Argumentative and policy-oriented debates were primarily confined to elite areas such as academic forums, open public discussions, and politically savvy youth populations where participants exhibited openness to differing perspectives and efforts at rational discourse. In contrast, broader public venues, particularly on social media and informal community discussions, were dominated by emotional narratives, issues simplification, and identity-driven contestation, with information about politics often flowing without proper verification.

As evidenced in interview and survey data, many residents saw these places as sources of conflict rather than constructive discourse. Moreover, local-level conversations frequently adopted one-directional forms centered on individual figures or social authority, limiting critical examination and alternative perspectives. Although discursive engagement grew over the campaign time, this quantitative growth was not followed by an enhancement in deliberative quality.

Public Perceptions of the Quality of the 2024 Election

Public perceptions play a critical influence in affecting acceptance of electoral outcomes and post-election political stability, even when elections are technically certified as free and fair (Birch, 2024). Recent study also stresses that electoral quality is increasingly recognized through citizens' subjective experiences in accessing information, participating in public discourse, and evaluating the neutrality of political players and election administrators (Van Ham & Lindberg, 2015). According to context of electoral democracies typified by the rise of the digital public sphere, public views of election quality have grown increasingly subject to the effects of false information, portrayals in the media, and affective polarization.

Table 4. Public Perceptions and Assessments of Electoral Quality

Actors	Public Perceptions	Assessment of Electoral Quality
Academics	Dualistic: procedurally satisfied, substantively critical	Elections are orderly, but the fairness of competition and the quality of information are questioned
Journalists	Shaped by information exposure and media framing	Quality perceived as fluctuating; procedural facts are often overshadowed by narratives
Election Monitors	Contextual and sensitive to field-based findings	Procedural aspects are relatively sound, but electoral integrity remains inconsistent
Election Administrators	Relatively stable regarding technical aspects and electoral stages	Procedurally valid, with substantive legitimacy remaining variable

Sources: In-depth interviews with key informants, 2024.

The data suggest that public assessments of the quality of the 2024 Election in Lampung were equivocal. While most informants viewed the election as procedurally orderly with voting and vote counting perceived as functioning well and generating moderate trust in election administrators substantive concerns persisted regarding the fairness of competition, the balance of campaign practices, and the quality of political information. These suspicions were strengthened by intensive exposure to social media, where emotive narratives, misinformation, and identity-based contestation often dominated public conversation.

The study further indicates that perceptions of electoral legitimacy were shaped by civic culture orientations: citizens with stronger cognitive and evaluative orientations tended to accept electoral outcomes through constitutional channels despite unfavorable results, whereas those with predominantly affective orientations were more inclined to contest outcomes based on political loyalty and group identity.

The Relationship between Civic Culture and Electoral Quality

Electoral quality is established not only by rule design, the expertise of election administrators, or oversight procedures, but also by civic value orientations that define how individuals engage, deliberate, and perceive electoral outcomes (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). A variety studies show that civic cultures that emphasize political literacy, tolerance, and belief in democratic procedures contribute to higher electoral legitimacy and post-election stability; conversely, civic cultures dominated by affective preferences, identity-based loyalties, and low intergroup trust tend to weaken deliberative quality and intensify political polarization, even when elections are conducted in accordance with regulations. (Graham & Svolik, 2020; Moehler & Lindberg, 2009).

Table 5. The Relationship and Implications of Civic Culture for Elections

Actors	Civic Culture Relationship	Implications for Elections
Academics	Civic culture serves as a primary foundation of electoral quality beyond procedural aspects	Electoral quality depends on political literacy, tolerance, and deliberative orientations
Journalists	Civic culture shapes how the public interprets and evaluates electoral quality	Perceptions of electoral quality are determined by the information ecosystem and media framing
Election Monitors	Civic culture determines the effectiveness of oversight and electoral integrity	Regulations are insufficient without the internalization of democratic values
Election Administrators	Civic culture functions as a buffer for electoral stability	Strong procedures exist, but substantive democratic quality depends on civic maturity

Sources: In-depth interviews with key informants, 2024.

The findings reveal that civic culture played a major influence in molding popular perceptions of the quality of the 2024 Election in Lampung. Citizens with stronger cognitive and evaluative perspectives tend to take part far more critically, remain open to differing views, and accept election results by proper processes, considering electoral standard in regards to compliance with procedures and democratic continuity instead of victory or defeat. In contrast, emotive and identity-based orientations were related with greater negative judgments, as strong political affiliations caused some voters to rate elections based on congruence with personal preferences, generating procedurally orderly elections regarded as unfair when outcomes deviated.

The research even reveals that the connection is controlled by public deliberation and the political content environment: less deliberative civic culture amplifies false information and emotional framing, reducing trust, while maturer civic culture assists in managing conflict and sustain post-election stability. In summary, these results highlight that electoral quality in Lampung is a social outcome of civic culture dynamics, and that procedural integrity itself was not enough unless ongoing attempts to enhance political literacy, deliberative rationality, and alignment between democratic values and political practice.

Integration of Survey Findings into the Analysis of Civic Culture

This segment integrates survey findings to enhance the qualitative investigation of civil society's civic culture during the 2024 Election in Lampung Province. Within a mixed-methods approach, survey data are employed judiciously to identify general patterns in civic orientations across the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions.

These data are drawn from a voter behavior survey completed in December 2023 through face-to-face interviews utilizing a structured questionnaire presented to 900 adult voters in Lampung Province, adopting a multistage sampling strategy to assure representation of both urban and rural areas.
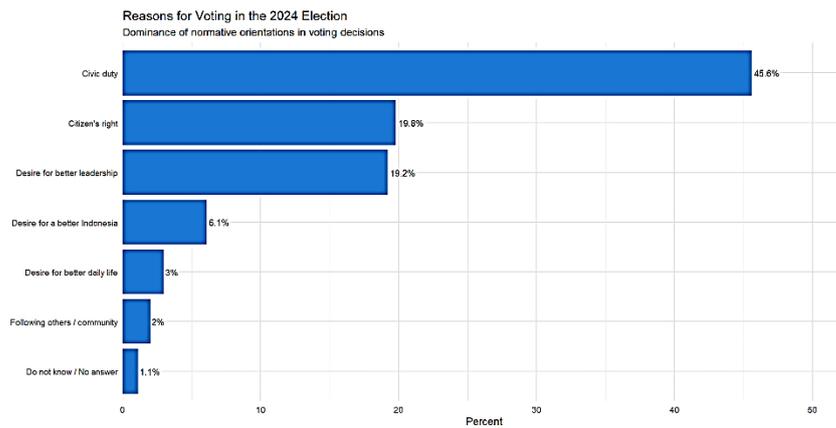
Figure 1. Awareness and Intention to Participate in the 2024 Election
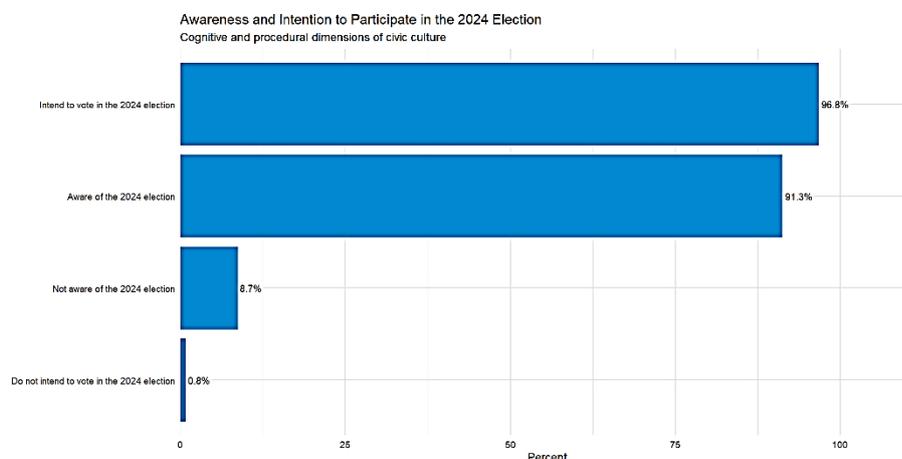
Source: Public Opinion Survey on the 2024 Election in Lampung Province, 2023.

Levels of voter awareness and participation intent were quite high, reflecting a strong cognitive and procedural dimension of civic culture. Nearly all answers was conscious of the elections and committed to participate, whereas the fraction of uninterested voters was negligible. These findings underline that the challenge to democratic quality rests not in the lack of participation, but in the worth of orientations and considerations that influence the decision-making process in voting.

Figure 2. Reasons for Voting in the 2024 Election

Source: Public Opinion Survey on the 2024 Election in Lampung Province, 2023.

Levels of voter awareness and participation intent were quite high, reflecting a strong cognitive and procedural dimension of civic culture. Nearly all answers was conscious of the elections and committed to participate, whereas the fraction of uninterested voters was negligible. These findings underline that the obstacle to democratic quality rests not in the lack of participation, but in the worth of orientations and considerations that influence the decision-making process in voting.

Figure 3. Affective Preferences toward Campaign Formats
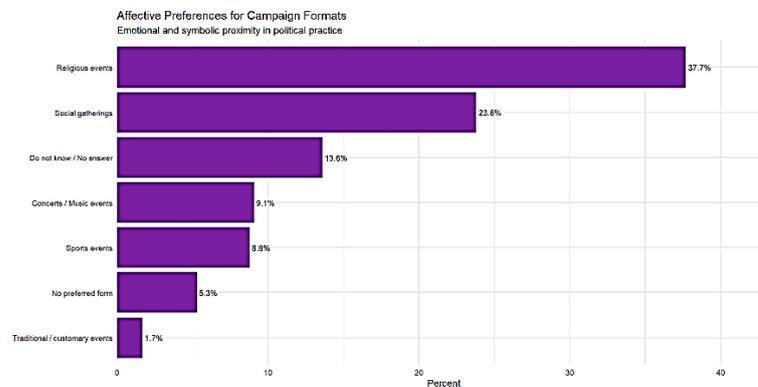
Source: Public Opinion Survey on the 2024 Election in Lampung Province, 2023.

These findings reveal that voters' emotive dimensions are most powerfully stimulated by religious activities, which function as the principal channel for emotional and symbolic proximity among candidates and voters. The prominence of social events in second place underlines that contacts anchored in social solidarity remain more successful than forms of political pleasure such as concerts or sports activities. Low interest in conventional cultural events and the significant share of uncertain preferences show that voters' political affect is more deeply anchored in religious principles and everyday social ties than in formal cultural representations.

Figure 4. Media Sources Considered Most Persuasive by Voters
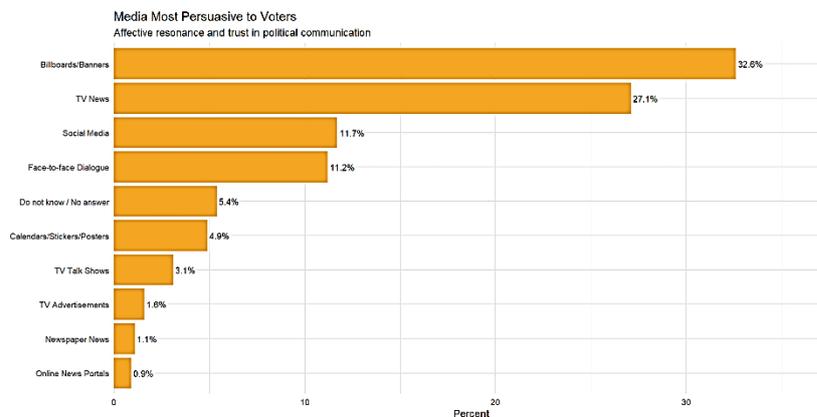
Source: Public Opinion Survey on the 2024 Election in Lampung Province, 2023.

Voters belief in political content remained largely dependent on mainstream visual media around visible public places, especially billboards or banners and television news. Social media and face-to-face discourse act as supporting channels rather than major sources of informational credibility. This trend shows that voters' affective resonance is changed through frequent visual exposure and the symbolic presence of politicians, rather than just through rational speech or digital means.

Figure 5. Perceptions and Acceptability of Vote-Buying Practices
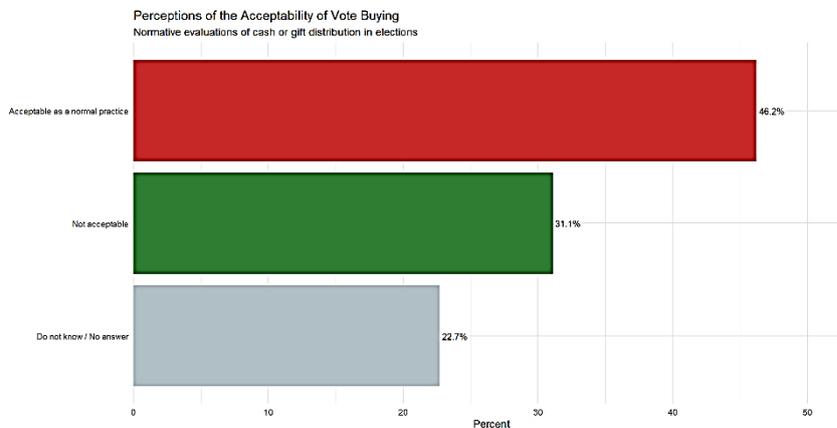
Source: Public Opinion Survey on the 2024 Election in Lampung Province, 2023.

Nearly half of the respondents saw vote-buying techniques as legitimate, demonstrating a tendency toward ethical acceptance within voters' political awareness. At same time, a presence of respondents who denounced such activities and those who expressed no definite view suggests a dispersion of normative judgments. This study shows that vote-buying is no longer regarded as an absolute departure, but rather as part of an electorally constructed social reality.

Figure 6. Behavioral Orientations toward Vote-Buying
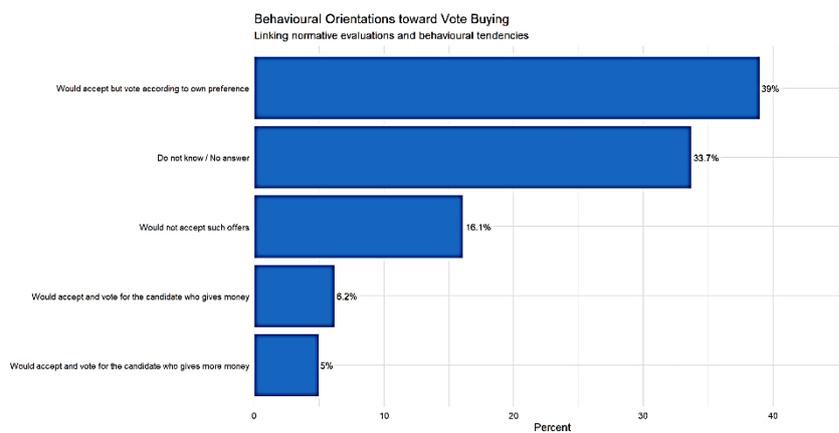
Source: Public Opinion Survey on the 2024 Election in Lampung Province, 2023.

Most voters chose an ambiguous attitude by accepting material inducements while keeping independent voting choices. This pattern suggests a split between material acceptance and political loyalty. However, the presence albeit a minority of voters who openly declared that they would support the giver of money demonstrates that vote-buying continues to exert operational influence on election conduct, rather than serving primarily as a symbolic event. Moreover, the majority of voters saw vote-buying as having a large influence on electoral choice. These data imply that the impacts of vote-buying function in a situational and situational way, rather than in an irreversible one.

Figure 7. The Influence of Vote-Buying on Electoral Choice
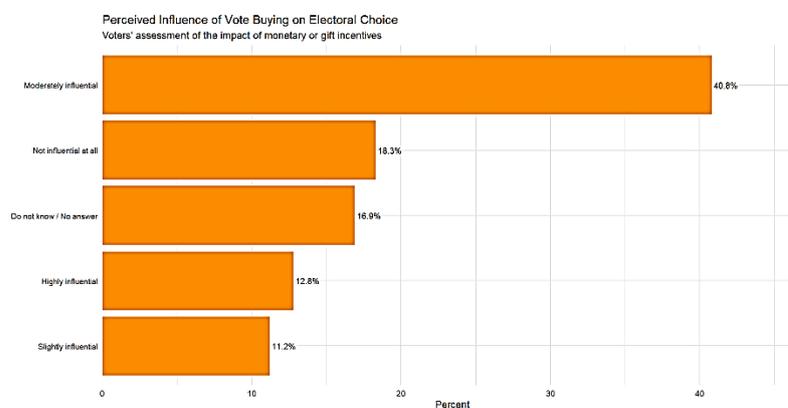
Source: Public Opinion Survey on the 2024 Election in Lampung Province, 2023.

Overall, the integration of survey and qualitative findings reveals that civic culture during the 2024 Election in Lampung reflects an uneven configuration of political attitudes. The cognitive dimension is quite robust, as indicated in high levels of voter knowledge and procedural awareness, while the behavioral dimension is seen in broad voting involvement.

The affective and evaluative elements connected to value orientations, moral judgment, and normative commitment to democratic procedures remain more equivocal and comparatively weak, notably in responses to vote-buying and symbolic political communication. This imbalance reinforces the qualitative finding that political participation in Lampung is still mostly procedural and instrumental instead of deliberative, revealing a civic culture in which formal involvement has developed more rapidly than deeper evaluative and normative engagement with democratic values.

Discussion

This discussion highlights that the quality of the 2024 Election in Lampung Province cannot be regarded only as procedural achievement, but rather as a social consequence affected by the functioning of civil society's civic culture. The data reveal that the link between political involvement, civil society behaviors, and election quality is non-linear.

Although elections in Lampung were handled in a relatively orderly technical way, substantive democratic quality was largely influenced by citizens' value orientations and lived civic experiences. This condition challenges classical assumptions within Civic Culture Theory that postulate an inevitable equilibrium between participation, conformity, and critical evaluation (Almond & Verba, 2015). Normatively, democratic literature portrays civil society as a vital actor in increasing electoral quality through voter education, oversight, and the promotion of democratic principles (Edwards, 2021; Rondinella et al., 2017). According to Lampung, academics, journalists, and election monitors contributed to formal socialization, the monitoring of violations, and the formation of democratic discourse, so supporting popular perceptions of administrative orderliness. However, our study also demonstrates a countervailing dynamic: certain civil society actors were involved in partisan political mobilization, typically interwoven in social and religious activities. This study validates critiques that civil society in Indonesia is fragmented and typically operates within local patronage structures (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019), It reinforces the thesis that the mere presence of civil society is insufficient to assure electoral quality without supportive civic culture tendencies (Hoskins, 2013).

Survey findings also suggest exceptionally high levels of voter knowledge and intention to engage, reflecting a strong sense of electoral involvement as a civic responsibility and right, aligned with the notion of participating citizens (Dalton & Welzel, 2014). However, high engagement wasn't accompanied by an improvement of the evaluative character of civic culture. Despite normative hostility to vote-buying, many voters took ambivalent attitudes by accepting pecuniary inducements while claiming independent choice, revealing asymmetry in which cognitive and behavioral dimensions were more developed, while evaluative orientations remained weak. This tendency is consistent with

results on the normalization of vote-buying in Lampung's electoral culture, where transactional practices are commonly rooted in local social and economic relations (Barenschot & Purba, 2014). This study strengthens previous findings by demonstrating that permissiveness toward vote-buying reflects not only economic incentives but also insufficient internalization of evaluative democratic norms. Consequently, vote-buying functions in a situational and contextual manner rather than deterministically, helping to explain why greater political involvement has not translated into proportional increases in substantive electoral quality (Barrett & Brunton-Smith, 2017; Johnston, 2017). This trend matches the research concerning the emotionalization of politics and the electoral power of symbols (Gerstlé & Nai, 2019). despite the prevalence of emotive orientations does not inevitably result in open conflict. Interview data suggest that some communities deliberately aim to preserve social cohesion by removing political differences from regular social relations. Even yet, affective dominance continues to inhibit substantive deliberation and policy evaluation. Although the political exchange during the 2024 Election was relatively intense, its thoughtful quality remained low: policy-based argumentative discourse was largely confined to elite spaces such as academic forums, while broader public arenas particularly social media were dominated by feelings expressed, media framing, and identity-based contestation. This conclusion accords with criticisms of digital democracy optimism which claim that larger communicative platforms do not inevitably boost deliberative quality (Kreide, 2016; Mutz, 2015).

Public evaluations of electoral quality were similarly ambiguous. as elections were mostly seen as technically orderly, concerns persisted regarding competitive fairness, information quality, and the normalization of vote-buying, highlighting that electoral validity is shaped more by civic experience and public perception than by procedural compliance alone (Norris et al., 2013; Tjahjoko & others, 2015). In this case, voters with stronger cognitive and evaluative orientations were more likely to accept the results of elections through constitutional means, but emotional dominance was associated with heightened questions about electoral legitimacy (Jost et al., 2022).

According to theory, this study simultaneous confirms and improves Civic Culture Theory. While the theory is useful for explaining election quality, its assumption of balance across civic culture variables requires contextual interpretation. In Lampung, civic culture has developed unevenly: procedural engagement is quite prominent, whilst deliberative and evaluative attitudes remain poor. By conceiving electoral quality as a social outcome impacted by citizens' lived civic interactions, this research extends Civic Culture Theory beyond its traditional focus on democratic stability toward a theoretical framework for assessing electoral quality at the local level. These findings underline that electoral reform must go beyond institutional and regulatory reforms and entail substantial investments in civic education, political literacy, and strengthening of deliberative public spaces.

CONCLUSION

This study points out that the quality of the 2024 Election in Lampung Province may not be regarded only as a procedural or technological achievement, but rather as a social outcome affected by the operation of civil society's civic culture. While political participation and procedural awareness were rather high, they were not matched by continuous evaluative orientations or great deliberative depth.

Civic culture evolved unevenly, with affective and symbolic orientations dominating political behaviors, including normalization of vote-buying and preferences for emotionally driven campaign techniques. This criterion explains why elections could run in an administratively orderly manner while yet raising public misgivings over the fairness of competition and the quality of substantive democracy. Electoral quality thus comes from the interaction of civic principles, civil society practices, and the public discourse ecology, rather than from formal rule compliance alone.

The ramifications of these results are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study verifies the usefulness of Civic Culture Theory for understanding electoral quality, while underlining the necessity for contextualization of its assumptions regarding balance among civic culture characteristics. In local democratic situations such as Lampung, procedural participation may grow more swiftly than the internalization of evaluative ideals and deliberative rationality. Practically, the findings show that increasing electoral quality cannot be reduced to institutional or regulatory reform. Sustained investment in civic education, political literacy, and the establishment of healthy public deliberation venues is vital for building sustainable democratic legitimacy.

This study also has some shortcomings. First, it focuses on a single subnational environment, demanding caution in generalizing the findings to other locations. Second, survey data were employed in a complimentary and descriptive manner, restricting causal analysis between civic culture aspects and electoral behavior. Third, the dynamics of the digital public sphere were not investigated longitudinally. Future research is therefore encouraged to adopt comparative regional designs, apply longitudinal methodologies to capture changes in civic culture over time, and further study the impact of digital media and information algorithms in determining perceptions of electoral quality. Such techniques would increase understanding of the relationship between civic culture and electoral democracy in Indonesia.

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