



## Adaptive Electoral Strategies of Gerindra in the 2024 Presidential Election in Jepara, Indonesia

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### Abstract

The 2024 Presidential Election in Indonesia revealed increasingly dynamic electoral competition shaped by interactions between national political narratives and local political contexts. In Jepara Regency, Prabowo–Gibran won the presidential election despite Gerindra not being the dominant legislative party and despite the strong electoral presence of PPP and PDI-P, creating a political anomaly that challenges conventional assumptions about party strength and presidential voting behavior. Previous studies have focused on candidate branding, digital campaigns, coalition politics, and organizational communication but have not explained electoral variation within the same party organization across different local contexts. This study analyzes Gerindra's adaptive electoral strategy across three sub-districts with contrasting electoral outcomes in Jepara Regency. Using a qualitative comparative approach based on interviews, documentation, triangulation, and SWOT analysis, the study finds that campaign effectiveness depended on contextual adaptation integrating organizational mobilization, psychological framing, sociological networks, coalition cooperation, and local political communication. The findings contribute to the concept of adaptive electoral strategy by explaining how political organizations adjust campaign resources and communication to heterogeneous local political environments.

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## INTRODUCTION

The presidential election represents the highest form of democratic political competition through which citizens exercise their sovereignty by selecting national leaders capable of representing collective interests and governing the state. Beyond a constitutional procedure, elections constitute a mechanism through which political legitimacy is constructed, public preferences are aggregated, and governmental authority is democratically transferred. In contemporary democracies, electoral competition increasingly reflects not only ideological contestation among political parties but also the interaction between candidate popularity, campaign strategy, institutional capacity, and voter behavior. Consequently, understanding electoral outcomes requires examining the dynamic relationship between political actors, party organizations, and local socio-political contexts rather than relying solely on formal institutional arrangements (Kyei & Dogbe, 2020; Vengesai, 2025).

The 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election illustrated this complexity through an increasingly competitive political landscape involving three presidential tickets: Anies Baswedan–Muhaimin Iskandar, Prabowo Subianto–Gibran Rakabuming Raka, and Ganjar Pranowo–Mahfud MD. At the national level, Prabowo–Gibran secured a convincing victory by obtaining approximately 58.58 percent of the valid votes, outperforming their competitors across most provinces. Similar electoral trends occurred throughout Central Java, where the Prabowo–Gibran ticket succeeded in expanding electoral support despite facing strong competition from parties traditionally associated with rival candidates. These results indicate that presidential elections in Indonesia increasingly involve strategic electoral dynamics extending beyond conventional party identification and organizational strength (Evans & Reher, 2025; Garcia Leon & Garcia Leon, 2022).

Within Central Java, Jepara Regency presents a particularly distinctive electoral landscape. Historically, Jepara has been recognized as one of the strongest electoral bases of Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) and Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDI-

P). Legislative election results consistently demonstrate the dominance of these two parties across multiple electoral cycles. PPP led the 2014 legislative election with 18.9 percent of total votes, followed closely by PDI-P with 17.8 percent. Similar patterns persisted in 2019 and 2024, where PPP and PDI-P remained the two largest political parties in the regency. Such continuity reflects deeply rooted ideological attachments, religious affiliations, and historical political identities that have long characterized local electoral behavior in Jepara (Fiala-Butora et al., 2024; Scott & Jones, 2024).

Based on this historical configuration, conventional electoral logic would predict that the presidential ticket supported by PPP and PDI-P, namely Ganjar Pranowo–Mahfud MD, should have secured victory in Jepara. Surprisingly, the empirical results revealed the opposite pattern. Prabowo Subianto–Gibran Rakabuming Raka won the presidential election with 438,762 votes (57.58%), while Ganjar–Mahfud obtained only 259,996 votes (34.12%) and Anies–Muhaimin secured 63,297 votes (8.31%). The contradiction between legislative party dominance and presidential electoral outcomes creates an intriguing political anomaly that cannot be adequately explained by conventional assumptions regarding party strength and electoral alignment (Austin et al., 2021; Parra, 2024).

To better understand the uniqueness of Jepara, presidential and legislative election results were compared with neighboring regencies in the former Pati Residency and Semarang City, as presented in Table 1. The table demonstrates that Jepara differs significantly from surrounding regions. In most neighboring regencies, Prabowo–Gibran's victory can be explained by relatively weak rival party organizations. In contrast, Jepara presents an unusual situation where both PPP and PDI-P substantially outperformed Gerindra in the legislative election, yet Prabowo–Gibran still won the presidential contest. This inconsistency between legislative party strength and presidential voting behavior reflects a split-voting phenomenon that deserves further investigation (Austin et al., 2021; Dickinson et al., 2023).

The anomaly becomes even more complex when electoral outcomes are examined at the

**Table 1.** Presidential and Party Votes in Former Pati Residency, Demak, and Semarang City (2024)

| Vote Type      | Jepara  | Kudus   | Blora   | Pati    | Rembang | Demak   | Semarang City |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| Prabowo–Gibran | 438,762 | 336,243 | 373,889 | 509,746 | 260,645 | 450,646 | 495,019       |
| Ganjar–Mahfud  | 259,996 | 151,812 | 157,176 | 281,786 | 123,911 | 228,742 | 395,978       |
| Gerindra       | 101,075 | 70,896  | 57,634  | 94,753  | 14,350  | 97,250  | 150,982       |
| PDI-P          | 121,540 | 106,203 | 102,285 | 201,840 | 50,672  | 162,788 | 264,550       |
| PPP            | 139,982 | 36,383  | 34,930  | 82,503  | 84,889  | 36,539  | 24,761        |

Source: *Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU)*, 2024

sub-district level. Among the sixteen sub-districts in Jepara Regency, Prabowo–Gibran won fifteen, yet the magnitude of victory differed considerably across local contexts. Mayong recorded a landslide victory with 62.63 percent of votes, Karimunjawa became the only sub-district won by Ganjar–Mahfud, while Tahunan produced only a narrow victory for Prabowo–Gibran. Such variations indicate that electoral success cannot be explained merely by party organizational strength or candidate popularity. Instead, different local socio-political environments appear to require different strategic approaches, raising important questions regarding the adaptability of political campaign strategies across heterogeneous electoral settings (Okura, 2021; Rocklin, 2021).

The concerning Gerindra's electoral strategy have primarily focused on single-case descriptions or specific dimensions of campaign activities. The regional campaign strategies without comparative local analysis. The digital political transformation, while political communication strategies and regional campaign organizations in a single municipality. Although these studies contribute to understanding electoral competition, they generally examine isolated cases and do not explain how identical party organizations implement different strategies under varying local political conditions (Giordano, 2021; Valentine, 2020).

Consequently, important gaps remain within the existing literature. First, previous studies rarely employ comparative analysis across different electoral contexts within the same party organization. Second, micro-level strategic variation among sub-districts has received limited scholarly attention. Third, existing studies provide insufficient explanation regarding why similar organizational structures

generate contrasting electoral outcomes across different local environments. Addressing these limitations requires a comparative investigation capable of capturing contextual adaptation in electoral strategy implementation (Bastien et al., 2020; Cardol et al., 2025).

This study adopts Firmanzah's four-dimensional political strategy model comprising philosophical, sociological, psychological, and organizational dimensions, complemented by SWOT analysis and rational choice theory as analytical frameworks. Rather than treating electoral victory as a consequence of party machinery alone, this study conceptualizes electoral success as the product of adaptive strategic configurations responding to diverse local political contexts. The novelty of this research lies in its micro-comparative analysis of adaptive electoral strategies across three contrasting sub-districts within a single regency, thereby extending the literature on local electoral behavior and contextual campaign strategy in Indonesian politics (Evans, 2023; Kramer et al., 2024).

Based on the empirical anomaly and theoretical considerations above, this study aims to (1) examine the adaptive electoral strategies implemented by Gerindra across Mayong, Karimunjawa, and Tahunan sub-districts; (2) comparatively analyze similarities and differences in strategic implementation under contrasting local political contexts; and (3) identify the internal and external factors that enable or constrain electoral success in each sub-district. Through this approach, the study seeks to contribute to the development of comparative electoral strategy studies and provide a deeper understanding of adaptive political campaigning in Indonesia's democratic landscape.

## METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive-comparative research design grounded in the rational choice perspective. The qualitative approach was selected because the research seeks to understand how political actors formulate and implement electoral strategies within specific socio-political contexts rather than measure causal relationships quantitatively. The comparative design enables systematic examination of similarities and differences in campaign strategies implemented across multiple local settings that produced contrasting electoral outcomes. Rational choice theory provides the analytical foundation by assuming that political actors make strategic decisions based on available resources, opportunities, and constraints in order to maximize electoral gains. Consequently, the electoral strategies adopted by the Gerindra Party at the sub-district level are interpreted as deliberate organizational responses to different local political environments (Halperin & Heath, 2020; Lowndes, 2017).

The study was conducted in Jepara Regency, Central Java, Indonesia, focusing on three sub-districts that represent maximum variation in electoral outcomes during the 2024 Presidential Election. Mayong Sub-district was selected because it recorded the highest electoral support for Prabowo–Gibran (62.63%), Karimunjawa Sub-district represented the only area where the pair was defeated (44.02%), while Tahunan Sub-district demonstrated a relatively balanced electoral competition with a narrow victory (51.22%). Selecting these three locations allows comparative analysis under the same organizational structure of the Gerindra Regency Executive Board (DPC Gerindra Jepara) while observing different local political contexts and strategic adaptations.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in campaign organization and electoral mobilization. The key informants consisted of Arizal Wahyu Hidayat as Chairman of DPC Gerindra Jepara, Muzaidi as Deputy Chairman and Electoral District IV Campaign Coordinator, Subandi as Chairman of PAC Gerindra Tahunan, Faisol as Chairman of PAC Gerindra Karimunjawa, and community voters

from each research location who participated in the electoral process. The inclusion of both party elites and voters enabled the study to capture organizational perspectives as well as public perceptions regarding campaign implementation and electoral behavior.

Data were collected between December 2025 and January 2026 through multiple qualitative techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted to explore campaign strategies, organizational coordination, and local political dynamics. Second, documentation analysis examined official election results issued by the *Komisi Pemilihan Umum* (KPU), party organizational documents, campaign reports, and supporting electoral statistics. Third, field observations were used to understand local socio-political characteristics and campaign environments within each sub-district. The integration of interviews, documentation, and observation provided comprehensive empirical evidence for comparative analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis model proposed consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved coding and categorizing interview transcripts and documentary evidence according to the dimensions of electoral strategy. Data display organized empirical findings into narrative descriptions and comparative tables to facilitate cross-case analysis. Finally, conclusion drawing identified recurring patterns and strategic differences among the three research locations. To strengthen strategic interpretation, SWOT analysis was employed to examine the interaction between internal organizational strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats influencing electoral performance in each sub-district.

The credibility and trustworthiness of the findings were ensured through methodological and source triangulation. Information obtained from party officials was cross-checked with voter interviews, documentary evidence, and official electoral records to confirm consistency across multiple sources. Triangulation was further complemented by continuous comparison among interview results, field observations, and documentary analysis throughout the research process. This validation strategy enhances the

reliability of the interpretations and minimizes potential bias arising from single-source information, thereby strengthening the overall rigor of the qualitative inquiry.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Adaptive Organizational Strategy of Gerindra in Jepara

The empirical findings indicate that Gerindra's electoral success in the 2024 Presidential Election in Jepara Regency cannot be explained solely by candidate popularity or national political trends. Instead, the campaign was supported by an adaptive organizational strategy that combined centralized coordination with decentralized implementation across different local contexts. Before examining campaign variation in Mayong, Karimunjawa, and Tahunan Districts, it is necessary to understand the organizational foundation coordinated by DPC Gerindra Jepara, which functioned as the institutional platform for campaign communication, coalition management, and grassroots mobilization.

The field findings reveal that Gerindra maintained a centralized organizational hierarchy while allowing local flexibility in campaign implementation. Strategic direction remained under the leadership of the DPC Chairman and followed instructions from provincial and national party structures, whereas tactical adaptation was delegated to local campaign actors. The organizational pattern identified in this study is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 demonstrates that Gerindra combined centralized strategic coordination with contextual adaptation. Rather than implementing a uniform campaign model, the party developed a common organizational framework while permitting tactical adjustments

according to local political conditions. As explained by Arizal Wahyu Hidayat:

*"Kalau berbicara di Gerindra itu kemenangan kabupaten sebenarnya tidak ada mas. Secara otomatis ketua partai yang memimpin kemenangan. Tapi untuk pembentukan tim kemenangan di Jepara itu langsung dibimbing oleh Ketua DPD kami di provinsi. Jadi kegiatan kami hanya menginduk pada apa yang menjadi perintah dari atasan atau pimpinan kami."*

This statement illustrates that campaign management remained integrated within the formal party hierarchy rather than being delegated to an independent electoral committee. Strategic authority flowed vertically from national and provincial leadership to local organizational units, ensuring consistency in campaign direction throughout Jepara Regency.

Another important organizational finding concerns coalition consolidation. As the leading party within *Koalisi Indonesia Maju* (KIM), Gerindra coordinated campaign activities with coalition partners and encouraged them to establish organizational structures down to village and polling station levels. According to Arizal Wahyu Hidayat:

*"Pertama tentunya berkordinasi dan melakukan konsolidasi dengan partai pengusung atau koalisi di kabupaten, kedua memerintahkan partai koalisi untuk mengadakan konsolidasi struktur sampai tingkatan desa untuk membentuk tim sampai tingkatan TPS."*

The interview indicates that coalition management functioned not only as political cooperation among elites but also as an operational strategy for expanding electoral mobilization. Through coalition synergy, Gerindra strengthened campaign penetration beyond its own organizational capacity and increased voter outreach at the grassroots level.

**Table 2.** Organizational Foundation of Gerindra's Adaptive Electoral Strategy in Jepara

| Organizational Dimension    | Empirical Evidence                        | Strategic Function                  |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Centralized leadership      | Interview with DPC Chairman               | Unified strategic direction         |
| Coalition consolidation     | Coordination with KIM parties             | Expansion of electoral mobilization |
| Multi-level party structure | PAC–Ranting–TPS organization              | Grassroots penetration              |
| Geographic adaptation       | Mainland–coastal–island differentiation   | Contextual communication strategy   |
| Local tactical flexibility  | Different approaches across sub-districts | Adaptive electoral implementation   |

The findings further reveal that organizational strategy was closely connected with local geographical characteristics. The DPC recognized that Jepara consists of three distinct territorial zones mainland, maritime, and mountainous communities each requiring different communication approaches. As Arizal explained:

*“Setelah saya menjabat sebagai ketua DPC, saya sebetulnya baru tahu bagaimana cara membagi komunikasi kepada masyarakat Jepara. Pada dasarnya, wilayah Jepara itu terbagi menjadi 3 wilayah, yaitu daratan, lautan, dan pegunungan. Kultur antara ketiga wilayah tersebut pasti akan mempengaruhi cara berkomunikasi.”*

This geographical understanding became the foundation of Gerindra’s adaptive strategy. Rather than standardizing campaign activities, communication methods and organizational mobilization were adjusted according to local cultural and territorial characteristics. Consequently, campaign implementation developed different strategic configurations in Mayong, Karimunjawa, and Tahunan despite operating under the same organizational leadership.

From Firmanzah’s political strategy perspective, these findings primarily reflect the organizational dimension of electoral strategy, in which institutional coordination becomes the infrastructure supporting philosophical, sociological, and psychological campaign approaches. The evidence demonstrates that Gerindra actively constructed an organizational ecosystem extending from the regency level to villages and polling stations while simultaneously integrating coalition partners into campaign implementation. Organizational capacity therefore emerged from the interaction between internal party machinery and coalition networks operating within local communities.

The findings also support the rational choice perspective adopted in this study. The decision to differentiate campaign communication according to geographical zones reflects strategic organizational calculation aimed at maximizing electoral effectiveness under different local conditions. Rather than allocating identical resources across all areas, campaign actors

adapted organizational approaches to local opportunities and constraints, thereby increasing communication efficiency and grassroots engagement (Azca, 2024; Bachtiar & Nur, 2023; Kimura et al., 2024; Maksum, 2024; Megawati et al., 2025; Meutia et al., 2025; Sembiring et al., 2024; Wadipalapa et al., 2024).

Compared with previous studies that emphasize candidate branding or national political communication, the Jepara case highlights the importance of organizational flexibility as a determinant of electoral performance. Adaptive organizational capacity enabled Gerindra to integrate centralized leadership with localized implementation, allowing campaign messages to be translated into locally relevant political narratives. The findings indicate that centralized coordination, coalition consolidation, hierarchical grassroots mobilization, and geographical adaptation collectively formed the institutional foundation of Gerindra’s adaptive electoral strategy in Jepara and explain the strategic variation observed across the three research locations.

### **Adaptive Electoral Strategy in Mayong District**

Mayong District represents Gerindra’s strongest electoral performance in the 2024 Presidential Election in Jepara Regency, where Prabowo–Gibran secured 36,976 votes (62.63%), substantially outperforming Ganjar–Mahfud with 16,964 votes (28.73%). Characterized by an agrarian economy dominated by farmers, UMKM actors, and informal traders, Mayong provided a favorable environment for campaign messages emphasizing welfare and economic development. The findings indicate that this landslide victory resulted from the interaction of philosophical narratives, candidate popularity, and strong grassroots organization rather than from a single campaign factor. The principal strategy implemented in Mayong is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 demonstrates that Gerindra integrated ideological narratives with practical socioeconomic programs. Rather than relying solely on Prabowo’s popularity, campaign actors linked his leadership image with policies supporting farmers, UMKM development, education, and social welfare. This strategy strengthened campaign credibility because

**Table 3.** Adaptive Electoral Strategy in Mayong District

| Strategic Dimension     | Empirical Evidence                           | Electoral Effect                                     |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Philosophical strategy  | Pro-rakyat narrative and welfare orientation | Strengthened emotional identification with candidate |
| Sociological strategy   | Farmers and UMKM communities                 | Increased policy relevance among local voters        |
| Psychological strategy  | Strong leadership image of Prabowo           | Enhanced candidate popularity                        |
| Organizational strategy | PAC–ranting–RT–TPS mobilization              | Expanded grassroots electoral penetration            |
| Supporting factor       | Coalition synergy and accessible geography   | Facilitated intensive campaign implementation        |

political promises were associated with concrete benefits expected by local communities.

Muzaidi, Deputy Chairman of DPC Gerindra Jepara, emphasized that the campaign consistently promoted a *pro-rakyat* orientation:

*“Kalau berbicara nilai atau prinsip utama Partai Gerindra dalam kemenangan Prabowo–Gibran di Jepara, khususnya di Mayong, yang paling ditekankan itu adalah keberpihakan kepada rakyat atau pro-rakyat. Itu yang selalu kami pegang. Pak Prabowo selalu menekankan kepada kami sebagai kader bahwa seorang pemimpin harus berpihak kepada rakyat kecil. Jadi setiap kali saya turun ke masyarakat, saya selalu menyampaikan bahwa Prabowo bukan hanya berbicara tentang kekuasaan, tetapi tentang bagaimana rakyat kecil harus diperhatikan.”*

The interview indicates that campaign philosophy was translated into practical concerns for ordinary citizens rather than abstract ideological discourse. The *pro-rakyat* narrative was reinforced through policy promises such as fertilizer subsidies, Kartu Indonesia Pintar (KIP), agricultural assistance, food price stabilization, and UMKM support. As Muzaidi further explained:

*“Jalan bareng. Visinya disampaikan, tapi juga dibuktikan lewat bantuan. Kalau cuma ngomong tanpa bantuan, masyarakat nggak percaya. Jadi bantuan sosial, janji KIP, janji bantuan alat pertanian, bantuan UMKM itu jadi bukti visi pro-rakyat.”*

These findings suggest that ideological narratives became persuasive because they were directly connected to everyday socioeconomic

issues experienced by local communities. Another important finding concerns the psychological dimension of electoral strategy. Prabowo was consistently portrayed as a firm, experienced, and pro-people national leader, strengthening emotional attachment among voters. This perception was confirmed by voter Naufal M. Zidni:

*“Alasan utama saya memilih Prabowo–Gibran karena melihat background militer Pak Prabowo. Saya lihat tensi global sedang panas, jadi menurut saya Indonesia butuh pemimpin yang tegas dan berpengalaman. Program Makan Bergizi Gratis itu jadi nilai tambah, tapi yang paling mempengaruhi tetap Pak Prabowo.”*

The testimony illustrates that Prabowo’s military background and leadership image became the dominant psychological factors influencing voter choice, while policy programs functioned as complementary considerations.

The findings further reveal that electoral success in Mayong was reinforced by systematic grassroots organization extending from PAC to village branches (*ranting*), neighborhood coordinators, and polling station teams. According to Muzaidi:

*“Struktur organisasi kemenangan dibentuk secara berjenjang dan solid, mulai dari PAC di tingkat kecamatan, hingga ranting di desa, RW, dan RT.”*

This hierarchical structure enabled campaign messages to circulate through trusted local networks. The organizational strategy was further institutionalized through the slogan *Jangkrik* (Jangkau Semua Titik), as explained by Muzaidi:

**Table 4.** Adaptive Electoral Strategy in Karimunjawa District

| Strategic Dimension       | Empirical Evidence                                | Political Effect                            |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Psychological strategy    | Empathy toward Prabowo's political journey        | Emotional attachment among voters           |
| Sociological strategy     | Recruitment of bos ikan and youth networks        | Expansion of local social influence         |
| Community approach        | Informal social interaction and youth engagement  | Increased campaign accessibility            |
| Organizational constraint | Inter-island logistics and weak structural depth  | Limited campaign intensity                  |
| External environment      | Strong PPP–PDI–P–PKB loyalty and political memory | Electoral resistance to campaign adaptation |

*“Kami di tim pemenangan juga punya slogan sendiri, yaitu ‘Jangkrik’, artinya Jangkau Semua Titik. Maksudnya, kami ingin menjangkau semua lapisan masyarakat, tidak membedakan. Karena presiden itu dipilih oleh rakyat, maka semua rakyat harus disentuh.”*

The findings indicate that organizational strength amplified both philosophical and psychological strategies by ensuring continuous interaction between party cadres and local communities. From Firmanzah's political strategy perspective, the Mayong case illustrates the integration of philosophical, psychological, sociological, and organizational dimensions within a single adaptive campaign framework. Unlike previous studies emphasizing organizational structure alone, this study demonstrates that campaign effectiveness depends on the ability to align political narratives with local socioeconomic conditions. Gerindra's landslide victory in Mayong emerged from the interaction between pro-rakyat philosophical framing, Prabowo's psychological appeal, and intensive grassroots organizational mobilization, providing strong evidence that adaptive electoral strategy requires contextual adjustment to local political realities (Angela & Novrizal, 2025; Muhtadi, 2025; Sadat & Basir, 2025).

#### **Adaptive Electoral Strategy in Karimunjawa District**

Karimunjawa District represents the most distinctive case in this study because it was the only sub-district in Jepara Regency where the Prabowo–Gibran ticket failed to win the 2024 Presidential Election. Located approximately 90 kilometers north of mainland Jepara and accessible only by sea transportation, Karimunjawa possesses unique geographical and

sociocultural characteristics dominated by fishing communities and island settlements.

These conditions create a political environment where interpersonal relations and local social networks strongly influence electoral behavior. Prabowo–Gibran obtained only 2,588 votes (44.02%), while Ganjar–Mahfud secured 2,976 votes (50.62%), demonstrating that identical organizational leadership under DPC Gerindra Jepara produced different electoral outcomes due to contrasting local conditions. The principal strategy implemented in Karimunjawa is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 demonstrates that Gerindra relied more heavily on sociological adaptation than formal organizational structures. Geographic isolation and limited organizational resources encouraged campaign actors to utilize local social capital through influential community leaders and informal communication networks. The findings indicate that adaptive strategy emphasized psychological persuasion and community engagement rather than hierarchical mobilization.

One of the most significant findings concerns the psychological framing adopted by the campaign team. Unlike Mayong, where Prabowo was portrayed as a firm national leader, the Karimunjawa campaign emphasized empathy toward his long political journey and repeated electoral defeats. Faisol explained:

*“Masyarakat punya rasa empati dari pengalaman Pak Prabowo yang banyak gagal, dan masyarakat debat juga Pak Prabowo banyak diserang oleh kandidat lain. Jadi sebetulnya masyarakat tanpa dikenalkan kami secara jauh, itu sudah paham sendiri.”*

This statement indicates that campaign communication appealed primarily to emotional

identification rather than ideological persuasion. Prabowo was presented as a resilient political figure who deserved public support because of his persistence despite repeated political setbacks. The same perception appeared among voters. Virga Ardana Saputra stated:

*“Saya melihat Pak Prabowo itu sangat nasionalis dan tegas. Saya percaya beliau mau berkorban untuk bangsa. Program makan bergizi gratis juga bagus untuk anak-anak. Jadi yang paling mempengaruhi pilihan saya tetap karakter pribadi Pak Prabowo.”*

The testimony suggests that Prabowo's personal character remained an important electoral asset despite difficult structural conditions. Candidate credibility and emotional attachment therefore became central psychological resources within the Karimunjawa campaign.

Beyond psychological strategy, Gerindra adopted a distinctive sociological approach by recruiting influential local actors, particularly *bos ikan* (fish traders) and socially active young people with extensive interpersonal networks. Faisol explained:

*“Jadi begini mas, kemarin kebetulan tim saya itu adalah orang-orang yang punya pengaruh, contohnya seperti bos-bos ikan, berpengaruh di masyarakat, serta anak muda yang punya banyak rekan. Itulah yang saya rangkai menjadi bagian tim saya.”*

Rather than relying exclusively on formal party organization, the campaign utilized trusted community figures capable of influencing everyday social interaction. This adaptive approach reflects recognition that political influence within island communities is closely associated with social trust and occupational relationships.

The findings further reveal that demographic conditions encouraged the campaign to prioritize youth mobilization. Approximately sixty percent of Karimunjawa's voters belonged to the younger generation, making youth communities a strategic electoral target. According to Faisol:

*“Maka strategi yang kami lakukan saat itu yaitu pertama mendekati kalangan muda dan juga tokoh*

*tokoh masyarakat. Anak muda menjadi salah satu target karena jumlah pemilih generasi muda dan tua berbanding jauh, 60 banding 40.”*

Campaign communication therefore emphasized informal interaction through Karang Taruna activities, coffee gatherings, and everyday social events rather than conventional political meetings. These settings enabled political messages to circulate naturally through community relationships.

Despite these adaptive efforts, the findings indicate that geographical isolation significantly constrained campaign effectiveness. The archipelagic nature of Karimunjawa complicated transportation, logistics distribution, and coordination among campaign teams. Faisol explained:

*“Kendalanya itu jarak dan transportasi mas. Mau pasang banner, ngirim logistik, bahkan distribusi sembako itu sulit karena harus nyebrang laut dan antar pulau.”*

The testimony illustrates that geography functioned as a structural political constraint limiting organizational effectiveness. High logistical costs and transportation barriers reduced campaign intensity and opportunities for direct voter contact. Another important finding concerns the persistence of historical political loyalty within Karimunjawa society. Electoral preferences remained strongly influenced by long-established support for PPP, PDI-P, and PKB, reinforced by collective political memory regarding infrastructure development during Ganjar Pranowo's administration. Faisol explained:

*“Itu tadi mas, saya sampaikan di awal, di beberapa wilayah orang itu cenderung mengingat apa yang sudah pernah terjadi, fanatik mas, itu sudah melekat. Jadi di sana fanatisme terhadap partai lain sangat besar. Di sana ada PDI-P, PPP, kalau tidak PKB, mas. NU sangat berpengaruh.”*

The interview demonstrates that political behavior was shaped not only by contemporary campaign communication but also by accumulated historical experience and institutional memory embedded within

**Table 5.** Adaptive Electoral Strategy in Tahunan District

| Strategic Dimension     | Empirical Evidence                              | Political Effect                             |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Organizational strategy | Activation of ranting and village coordinators  | Strengthened grassroots mobilization         |
| Campaign communication  | Door-to-door and informal community interaction | Increased interpersonal political persuasion |
| Psychological strategy  | Jokowi continuity narrative                     | Expanded support among swing voters          |
| Coalition strategy      | Cooperation with coalition parties              | Reinforced local campaign capacity           |
| Main challenge          | Strong PPP and PDI-P organizational bases       | Intensified electoral competition            |

community identity. Such long-standing partisan attachment significantly reduced the effectiveness of campaign adaptation.

From Firmanzah's political strategy perspective, the Karimunjawa case illustrates the interaction of sociological, psychological, and organizational dimensions under severe external constraints. Community-based social capital and emotional persuasion represented adaptive responses to local conditions, yet their effectiveness remained limited by geography and entrenched political loyalty. Unlike previous studies emphasizing campaign innovation or digital communication, this study demonstrates that structural factors such as territorial accessibility, political memory, and historical party attachment remain decisive determinants of electoral outcomes (Marwiyah et al., 2025; Rosadi et al., 2024; Sukmawan & Pratama, 2023; Yahya & Susilo, 2024). The findings indicate that Gerindra successfully adapted its campaign to local social characteristics through emotional narratives, youth engagement, and community networks, but these adaptive strategies were ultimately insufficient to overcome the structural disadvantages that shaped electoral competition in Karimunjawa.

#### **Adaptive Electoral Strategy in Tahunan District**

Tahunan District represents a competitive electoral arena characterized by heterogeneous socioeconomic conditions and historically strong support for PPP and PDI-P. Located adjacent to Jepara City, the district combines agricultural activities with furniture industries and trade, creating a diverse political landscape that differs from both Mayong and Karimunjawa. In the 2024 Presidential Election, Prabowo–Gibran obtained 37,180 votes (51.22%), narrowly

defeating Ganjar–Mahfud, who received 29,895 votes (41.19%). This relatively small margin indicates that Gerindra's victory depended on adaptive organizational strategies rather than overwhelming candidate popularity alone. The principal strategy implemented in Tahunan is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5 demonstrates that grassroots organization constituted the core of Gerindra's electoral strategy. Rather than emphasizing large campaign events, the party activated *ranting* organizations, village coordinators, and polling station teams to maintain continuous interaction with local communities. According to Subandi:

*"Kalau kemarin, saya lebih menggunakan strategi organisatoris, dengan tim hingga sampai ranting maka itu menjadi kunci pemenangan. Karena misal ada visi misi, maka perlu ada tim yang solid di bawah untuk bekerja secara penuh dalam pemenangan. Akar rumput jadi kunci, ranting itu paling jalan di bawah."*

The interview indicates that organizational depth became the principal determinant of campaign effectiveness. Political communication depended on active grassroots structures capable of maintaining direct relationships with local voters. Organizational coordination extended from PAC to village coordinators and neighborhood representatives, as explained by Subandi:

*"Intinya, saya itu membawahi koordinator desa, setelah itu nanti membentuk koordinator tiap TPS. Jadi saya membriefing masing-masing kordes untuk mengampanyakan di desa masing-masing, tapi juga kordes harus membentuk koordinator RT."*

This hierarchical structure enabled campaign messages to circulate through trusted

local networks while ensuring coordination across territorial levels. Beyond organizational consolidation, Gerindra emphasized interpersonal communication through informal social interaction. Campaign activities relied heavily on door-to-door visits, coffee gatherings, and discussions in neighborhood meeting places rather than formal political rallies. Subandi explained:

*“Kalau kampanye dari pusat (DPC), nah kalau PAC mengandalkan dari ranting (door to door), misal ketemu di warung warung, ngopi sama masyarakat untuk mensosialisasikan tentang Prabowo Gibran... kalau PAC lewat mulut ke mulut.”*

The findings indicate that informal communication reduced social distance between candidates and voters, allowing campaign messages to become embedded within everyday community interaction. This pattern was confirmed by voter Asmanah:

*“Kalau secara resmi gitu enggak, cuman misal lagi santai kadang ada diskusi sama masyarakat lain, nah di situ ternyata ada tim Gerindra yang mengenalkan paslon Prabowo–Gibran.”*

The testimony demonstrates that political persuasion developed organically through existing community relationships rather than through formal campaign activities.

Another important finding concerns the Jokowi coattail effect, which strengthened electoral support for Prabowo–Gibran. Many voters associated Prabowo with the continuation of President Joko Widodo’s development agenda through the nomination of Gibran Rakabuming Raka. Asmanah stated:

*“Nggih kalau saya mas jujur, karena sosok Jokowi sebetulnya, soalnya kan Pak Prabowo itu katanya mau melanjutkan kepemimpinan Jokowi, keberlanjutan gitu lah mas.”*

The interview suggests that electoral support was influenced by the transfer of political legitimacy from Jokowi to Prabowo–Gibran, expanding Gerindra’s appeal beyond its traditional partisan base. Despite these

advantages, Gerindra faced significant constraints from the strong organizational presence of PPP and PDI-P. According to Subandi:

*“Yang sangat berat itu partai lawan, terutama PPP dan PDIP, karena fanatisme masyarakat di beberapa wilayah masih kuat.”*

The findings indicate that historical party loyalty remained an important structural obstacle limiting campaign effectiveness. Moreover, ideological communication often encountered difficulties among lower socioeconomic groups. Subandi explained:

*“Masyarakat masa bodoh berkaitan dengan visi misi. Boleh dibilang karena SDM nya kurang, intinya yang penting ada uangnya baru mau milih. Saya pun berkampanye sampai berbusa pun kalau gaada amplopnya juga susah. Visi Misi tidak efektif untuk masyarakat bawah, cuman kalau SDM nya tinggi ya visi misi juga penting.”*

This testimony illustrates that socioeconomic conditions influenced political decision-making, requiring campaign strategies to combine ideological narratives with practical community engagement. From Firmanzah’s political strategy perspective, the Tahunan case demonstrates the interaction between organizational and psychological dimensions of electoral competition. Grassroots mobilization provided institutional capacity for voter outreach, while the Jokowi continuity narrative expanded political legitimacy among swing voters. Unlike previous studies focusing primarily on coattail effects at the national level, the findings show that legitimacy transfer became effective because it was reinforced through localized grassroots communication (Hanan et al., 2025; Huda et al., 2025; Susanto et al., 2025). Gerindra’s narrow victory in Tahunan resulted from the interaction between organizational strength, interpersonal communication, coalition cooperation, and psychological legitimacy, illustrating that adaptive electoral strategy depends on the ability to align campaign implementation with local political and social conditions.

### Comparative Adaptive Electoral Strategy across Three Sub-Districts

The findings from Mayong, Karimunjawa, and Tahunan demonstrate that Gerindra's electoral success in Jepara Regency did not result from a single standardized campaign model but from adaptive strategies adjusted to different local political contexts. Although all three sub-districts operated under the same organizational leadership of DPC Gerindra Jepara, campaign implementation varied according to geographical conditions, socioeconomic structures, political culture, and historical electoral experience. These variations indicate that electoral strategy should be understood as a dynamic process in which political organizations continuously adapt communication and mobilization according to local realities.

The comparative evidence reveals that the same presidential candidate was framed differently across communities. In Mayong, Prabowo was presented as a *pro-rakyat* leader committed to farmers and small businesses through welfare-oriented programs. In Karimunjawa, campaign communication emphasized empathy toward Prabowo's long political struggle while utilizing influential local figures and youth networks. In Tahunan, campaign narratives focused on policy continuity through the Jokowi coattail effect supported by intensive grassroots organization. The comparative pattern is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 demonstrates that adaptive electoral strategy emerged through different combinations of philosophical, sociological, psychological, and organizational dimensions. While organizational

coordination remained relatively consistent under DPC leadership, campaign messages and mobilization mechanisms were adjusted according to local political environments. This finding suggests that campaign effectiveness depends less on organizational standardization than on the ability to translate national political narratives into locally meaningful political messages (Al-Hamdi et al., 2025; Bin-Armia et al., 2024; Susanto et al., 2025; Syah et al., 2025).

One important comparative finding concerns the construction of Prabowo's political image. In Mayong, Prabowo was portrayed as a decisive nationalist leader supporting farmers and lower-income communities. In Karimunjawa, he was framed as a resilient figure deserving public empathy after repeated electoral defeats. Meanwhile, in Tahunan, Prabowo's legitimacy was strengthened through association with Jokowi's political legacy and expectations of policy continuity. The findings therefore indicate that candidate image functioned as a flexible political resource continuously reconstructed according to local psychological expectations rather than as a fixed national campaign narrative.

The comparison also highlights the relationship between organizational structure and geographical context. In Mayong, accessible transportation and dense village networks enabled the PAC–Ranting–TPS hierarchy to conduct intensive grassroots mobilization. Conversely, Karimunjawa's island geography reduced the effectiveness of formal organizational structures and encouraged greater reliance on informal community leaders, *bos ikan*,

**Table 6.** Comparative Adaptive Electoral Strategy across Three Sub-Districts

| Strategic Dimension       | Mayong                                  | Karimunjawa                                 | Tahunan                                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Dominant strategy         | Organizational and pro-rakyat narrative | Social capital and community networks       | Grassroots organization and Jokowi continuity |
| Philosophical orientation | Welfare and people's economy            | Limited ideological emphasis                | Policy continuation narrative                 |
| Sociological approach     | Farmers and UMKM communities            | Bos ikan, youth groups, fishing communities | Village networks and peri-urban communities   |
| Psychological strategy    | Firm nationalist leader                 | Empathy toward Prabowo's struggle           | Jokowi coattail effect                        |
| Organizational pattern    | PAC–Ranting–TPS hierarchy               | Informal local networks                     | Door-to-door grassroots mobilization          |
| Electoral outcome         | Landslide victory (62.63%)              | Electoral defeat (44.02%)                   | Narrow victory (51.22%)                       |

and youth organizations. Tahunan occupied an intermediate position where organizational hierarchy remained effective but required reinforcement through interpersonal communication and coalition cooperation. These findings suggest that geography constitutes an important contextual variable shaping organizational effectiveness and campaign implementation.

The comparative analysis further demonstrates that electoral strategy effectiveness depends on the interaction between organizational capacity and external political environments. Mayong combined strong organizational resources with favorable political opportunities, producing the highest electoral support. Karimunjawa illustrates how geographical isolation, logistical limitations, and historical party loyalty significantly constrained campaign effectiveness despite adaptive organizational efforts. Tahunan, meanwhile, reflects a competitive environment where grassroots mobilization and the Jokowi continuity narrative successfully expanded support among swing voters despite strong rival party organizations.

Another important finding concerns the psychological dimension of electoral strategy, which consistently appeared across all three research locations despite substantial variation in content. Psychological appeal in Mayong emphasized Prabowo's firmness and pro-people leadership, Karimunjawa highlighted perseverance and emotional identification, while Tahunan relied on legitimacy transfer through Jokowi's political reputation. The findings demonstrate that psychological communication was continuously adjusted to local political expectations, illustrating the contextual flexibility of candidate image construction (Agustyati et al., 2025; Hadiprodjo et al., 2025; Mohamad, 2025; Sahide & Maksum, 2024; Siboy & Al-Fatih, 2025).

From Firmanzah's political strategy perspective, these findings confirm that successful electoral competition requires the interaction of philosophical, sociological, psychological, and organizational dimensions. However, the empirical evidence indicates that these dimensions do not operate with equal

intensity across different electoral environments. Philosophical narratives became dominant in Mayong, sociological adaptation through community networks was central in Karimunjawa, while organizational mobilization reinforced by psychological legitimacy transfer proved decisive in Tahunan. This variation extends Firmanzah's framework by demonstrating that political strategy is inherently adaptive rather than universally standardized.

The findings are also consistent with rational choice theory, which assumes that political actors continuously evaluate opportunities, constraints, and available resources before selecting campaign strategies expected to maximize electoral outcomes. The strategic differences observed across the three sub-districts therefore represent rational organizational responses to heterogeneous local political environments rather than inconsistent campaign implementation.

Compared with previous studies that generally emphasize candidate branding, coalition politics, or digital political communication, this study highlights the importance of localized organizational adaptation. The Jepara case demonstrates that geography, historical party attachment, social capital, and collective political memory substantially influence campaign effectiveness and should be regarded as essential components of electoral strategy rather than secondary contextual factors.

The comparative findings indicate that Gerindra's electoral performance in Jepara emerged through the interaction between organizational capacity, local political culture, geographical conditions, coalition dynamics, social networks, and adaptive candidate image construction. The study therefore proposes adaptive electoral strategy as an analytical concept describing the ability of political organizations to recalibrate organizational mobilization, political communication, coalition management, and candidate framing according to local political conditions. This perspective contributes to Indonesian electoral studies by emphasizing that electoral success depends fundamentally on the compatibility between organizational strategy and contextual political

**Table 7.** SWOT Analysis of Adaptive Electoral Strategy across Three Sub-Districts

| SWOT Dimension     | Mayong District                                                            | Karimunjawa District                                                  |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strength           | Strong PAC–Ranting structure, high candidate popularity, coalition synergy | Influential local leaders (bos ikan), youth networks, community trust |
| Weakness           | Minor coordination constraints and dependence on candidate popularity      | Limited organizational depth and logistical capacity                  |
| Opportunity        | Open voter attitudes, agricultural policy resonance, accessible geography  | Large proportion of young voters and community social interaction     |
| Threat             | Rival party bases and transactional voting practices                       | Geographic isolation, historical party loyalty, political memory      |
| Strategic Position | Strength–Opportunity                                                       | Weakness–Threat                                                       |

environments rather than on standardized national campaign formulas alone.

### SWOT Analysis of Adaptive Electoral Strategy

The comparative findings demonstrate that Gerindra's adaptive electoral strategy in Jepara Regency cannot be separated from the interaction between internal organizational capacity and external political environments. Although campaign activities were implemented under a unified organizational structure coordinated by DPC Gerindra Jepara, electoral outcomes varied substantially across Mayong, Karimunjawa, and Tahunan because each locality presented different opportunities and structural constraints. To explain these variations, SWOT analysis was employed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats shaping campaign effectiveness in each research location.

The SWOT analysis indicates that each sub-district occupied a distinct strategic position, requiring different organizational responses. Internal organizational resources continuously interacted with geographical conditions, local political culture, socioeconomic characteristics, and voter behavior, producing different levels of electoral performance. Table 7 demonstrates that adaptive electoral strategy was strongly influenced by contextual political environments rather than by organizational strength alone. Electoral outcomes therefore emerged through the interaction between institutional capacity and local political opportunity structures.

Mayong represented the most favorable strategic environment among the three research sites. Strong organizational structures, coalition support, candidate popularity, and accessible geography reinforced one another, enabling

Gerindra to implement extensive grassroots mobilization and welfare-oriented political communication. These favorable internal and external conditions created an environment highly supportive of electoral success and explain the district's landslide victory. The organizational principle of *Jangkrik* (Jangkau Semua Titik) successfully expanded campaign penetration because local political opportunities aligned closely with party organizational capacity.

In contrast, Karimunjawa represented the most challenging strategic environment. Although local campaign actors successfully utilized influential community leaders, youth organizations, and informal social networks, these internal strengths were constrained by geographical isolation, limited logistical capacity, and strong historical attachment to PPP, PDI-P, and PKB. Collective political memory regarding previous regional leadership further reinforced electoral resistance toward Gerindra. The findings indicate that adaptive organizational innovation encountered structural limitations when external threats substantially exceeded available organizational resources (Adela et al., 2024; Albab et al., 2025; Ilham et al., 2024; Perbawa et al., 2024; Sanofi et al., 2025).

Tahunan occupied an intermediate strategic position characterized by relatively strong organizational capacity but equally significant external challenges. Active grassroots organizations and coalition cooperation strengthened campaign implementation, while the Jokowi continuity narrative expanded electoral support beyond Gerindra's traditional partisan base. Nevertheless, the campaign continued to face competition from established

rival party organizations and pragmatic voting orientations among portions of the electorate. The relatively narrow electoral victory reflects the balance between organizational strength and persistent external political resistance.

The SWOT findings collectively demonstrate that adaptive electoral strategy should be understood as a continuous process of strategic adjustment rather than the application of fixed campaign techniques. Political organizations must continuously evaluate local opportunities, identify contextual constraints, and recalibrate campaign communication according to changing political environments. Organizational flexibility therefore becomes an essential strategic asset because identical campaign models may produce different electoral outcomes when implemented under different geographical, social, and political conditions.

From the perspective of rational choice theory, these findings suggest that campaign actors behaved as strategic decision-makers seeking to maximize electoral returns through context-sensitive allocation of organizational resources. Decisions regarding coalition cooperation, communication style, grassroots mobilization, and candidate image construction were shaped by local opportunity structures rather than by rigid institutional procedures. The differences observed across Mayong, Karimunjawa, and Tahunan therefore represent rational organizational responses to heterogeneous political environments (Antonio & Mahendradhata, 2025; Effendi & Handoko, 2025; Hakim et al., 2024; Rusdiana et al., 2025; Sumerta et al., 2024; Utami et al., 2024).

The findings also extend Firmanzah's political strategy framework by demonstrating that the philosophical, sociological, psychological, and organizational dimensions of electoral strategy operate with different levels of intensity across local contexts. Philosophical narratives emphasizing welfare proved particularly effective in Mayong, sociological adaptation through community networks became dominant in Karimunjawa, while organizational mobilization reinforced by psychological legitimacy transfer through the Jokowi continuity narrative became decisive in Tahunan. This contextual variation suggests that political strategy should be understood as

adaptive and dynamic rather than universally standardized.

Compared with previous studies that primarily emphasize candidate branding, digital political communication, or coalition politics, the present study highlights the importance of localized organizational adaptation. Earlier research has generally assumed that campaign strategies operate uniformly across electoral regions. The Jepara case demonstrates instead that local geography, historical partisan attachment, social capital, collective political memory, and community political culture substantially influence campaign effectiveness and should be regarded as integral components of electoral strategy.

The principal scientific contribution of this study lies in the formulation of adaptive electoral strategy as an analytical concept explaining how political organizations continuously recalibrate campaign implementation according to local political environments. Rather than applying a single standardized campaign formula, Gerindra's experience in Jepara illustrates that electoral success emerges through contextual adjustment integrating organizational resources, coalition cooperation, grassroots mobilization, candidate image construction, and localized political communication. This perspective enriches comparative electoral studies by emphasizing that political strategy is fundamentally contingent upon the interaction between institutional capacity and contextual political opportunity structures (Hasrul et al., 2025; Subekti et al., 2025; Susanti & Khu, 2025; Tasya & Al-Hamdi, 2025).

The SWOT analysis confirms that electoral competition in contemporary Indonesian politics increasingly reflects adaptive organizational behavior operating within heterogeneous local environments. The variation observed across Mayong, Karimunjawa, and Tahunan demonstrates that campaign effectiveness depends not only on organizational strength but also on the ability of political actors to interpret local conditions and transform those conditions into context-sensitive electoral strategies. Adaptive organizational capacity should therefore be regarded as one of the principal determinants of electoral competitiveness in Indonesia's evolving democratic landscape.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Gerindra's electoral success in the 2024 Presidential Election in Jepara Regency was achieved through an adaptive electoral strategy that varied across different local political contexts rather than through a single standardized campaign model. The research confirms that although campaign coordination was centrally organized under DPC Gerindra Jepara, the implementation of philosophical, sociological, psychological, and organizational strategies was continuously adjusted to the geographical characteristics, social structures, political culture, and historical electoral experiences of each sub-district, thereby answering the research question regarding the variation of campaign strategies and the factors shaping their effectiveness. Theoretically, the findings extend Firmanzah's political strategy framework by demonstrating that strategic dimensions operate contextually and dynamically according to local political opportunity structures, while simultaneously strengthening the explanatory capacity of rational choice theory in understanding organizational adaptation during electoral competition. Practically, the study suggests that political parties should prioritize localized campaign design, grassroots organizational flexibility, and context-sensitive political communication instead of relying on uniform national campaign approaches. Accordingly, electoral institutions and political organizations should strengthen local organizational capacity, encourage evidence-based political mapping, and develop adaptive campaign mechanisms capable of responding to diverse regional characteristics across Indonesia. Future studies are encouraged to expand comparative analysis across different provinces and political parties while incorporating digital campaigning, social media ecosystems, and local political culture to further develop the concept of adaptive electoral strategy in contemporary Indonesian electoral politics.

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