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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Electoral Governance and Democratic Vulnerability Amid Disaster in the 2024 East Flores Regional Election

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Abstract: Previous studies generally examine the implementation of elections in crisis situations from a logistical and administrative perspective, while attention to the interactions between election governance, disaster governance, and democratic vulnerability is still relatively limited. To fill this gap, this study investigates how election governance was implemented during the Mount Lewotobi eruption and how these conditions shaped democratic vulnerabilities in the 2024 East Flores Regency Regional Head Election. This research offers a novel contribution by integrating the perspectives of election governance and democratic vulnerability in a disaster context. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through interviews with 15 key informants, document analysis, and field observations. They were then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that disaster conditions not only disrupt election administration but also create democratic vulnerabilities related to voter access, political representation, and election legitimacy. This research contributes to the development of literature on the implementation of regional elections in an emergency context and recommends the development of a disaster-responsive regional election governance framework to strengthen democratic resilience in future regional elections.

Keywords:

Electoral Governance, Regional Elections, Disasters, Democratic Vulnerability, Electoral Resilience.

About the Author

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1. Introduction

The 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections (Pilkada Serentak) represent a crucial momentum in the consolidation of local democracy in Indonesia. As part of post-Reformasi political decentralization, Pilkada serves as a mechanism of political legitimacy based on public participation and serves as a means to strengthen the accountability, responsiveness, and inclusiveness of local government (Aspinal & Sukmajati, 2016; Buehler, 2010; Hadiz, 2010; Mietzner, 2014). However, the quality of its implementation still faces various challenges, ranging from administrative issues to vulnerabilities in voter participation. In this context, electoral governance *is* a crucial factor in determining the legitimacy and quality of democracy (James & Matlosa, 2025; Norris, 2015). These challenges become even more complex when regional elections are held in disaster situations, because natural disasters not only disrupt logistical aspects and voter participation, but also have the potential to affect the legitimacy of the election process and results and create disruption to the democratic process more broadly (Higashijima et al., 2024; IFES, 2020; Zelin & Smith, 2023). In disaster situations, election administration must remain adaptive and inclusive to ensure citizens' political rights. However, various studies show that disaster conditions often increase the risk of voter exclusion, unequal access to information, and obstacles in fulfilling political rights (James & Alihodzic, 2020).

These conditions were evident in the 2024 East Flores Regional Election, which took place amidst the eruption of Mount Lewotobi. This disaster caused population displacement, infrastructure damage, and disruption of communication access, creating serious challenges for implementing the stages of the regional election. In response, organizers implemented various adaptive measures, such as relocation of polling stations, administrative flexibility, and cross-agency coordination. Although these measures are often seen as indicators of successful election governance in emergency situations, a critical review is still needed to assess the extent to which these practices can guarantee access and equal voting rights for all groups in society, especially those affected by disasters. Literature on elections in crisis situations shows that disasters can affect the quality of democracy by increasing the vulnerability of affected groups, disrupting political access, and weakening equal participation (Birch, 2011). However, studies on the relationship between electoral governance *and* disaster governance *are* still relatively limited (James & Alihodzic, 2020; Norris, 2015). This gap is important because the disaster context not only presents administrative challenges but also affects power relations, resource distribution, and citizens' access to political rights. Academic debates on electoral politics in disaster situations have developed in at least three main approaches.

First, the retrospective voting perspective views disasters as an evaluation mechanism for government performance, where voters award or punish based on the effectiveness of the state's response to the crisis (Ashworth et al., 2018; Healy & Malhotra, 2009). Second, the Electoral Politics of Disaster (EPD) literature shows that disasters can also become an arena for the reproduction of power through the politicization of aid, clientelism, and resource mobilization for electoral interests (Bechtel & Hainmueller, 2011; Cole et al., 2012; Noor et al., 2025). This perspective emphasizes that the political impact of disasters does not always result in accountability, but can also strengthen inequality and political advantages for certain actors. Third, studies on electoral integrity resilience shift attention to the capacity of electoral institutions to maintain the integrity and continuity of the democratic process during crises. Research shows that election resilience is significantly influenced by the ability of election organizers to develop adaptive mechanisms, regulatory flexibility, and cross-sectoral coordination to address uncertainty (Alihodžić, 2023; James & Alihodzic, 2020; James & Garnett, 2025).

The Indonesian context, the experience of the 2020 regional elections during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of the adaptive capacity of election organizers in maintaining the continuity of the electoral process (Ali, 2020). However, other studies indicate that the integration of disaster management and election governance still faces coordination and implementation issues at the operational level (Aji et al., 2025). Unlike previous studies, which tended to focus on administrative and procedural aspects or on general evaluations of election performance, this research specifically examines the governance of the 2024

Simultaneous Regional Elections in the context of the Mount Lewotobi eruption in East Flores Regency. This study presents the interaction among election governance, electoral political dynamics, and disaster risk management as a unified analysis to understand how political institutions operate under crisis conditions. In addition, this research attempts to fill the empirical gap regarding the implementation of elections in natural disaster situations at the local level, which remains relatively limited in both national and international literature. Focusing on the East Flores context allows for a deeper exploration of micro-political dynamics, including the relationship between election organizers, local governments, and communities directly affected by the disaster.

This research develops the concept of disaster-based democratic vulnerability as an analytical framework for understanding election administration in crisis situations. Unlike the concept of electoral resilience, which primarily emphasizes the ability of electoral institutions to maintain the continuity of electoral procedures and administrative stability during a crisis (James & Alihodzic, 2020; Norris, 2014). This concept focuses not only on procedural resilience but also critically assesses whether such sustainability is accompanied by the fulfillment of substantive democratic justice. Thus, the success of an election is measured not solely by the implementation of the electoral stages but also by the extent to which the political rights of disaster-affected citizens are truly guaranteed equally. Conceptually, disaster-based democratic vulnerability has three main analytical dimensions. First, political access, which includes the ease or obstacles that disaster-affected voters face in obtaining information, registering, and exercising their voting rights. Second, electoral competition examines how disaster conditions can alter the balance of political competition, including potential resource imbalances and advantages for certain actors. Third, resource distribution, which assesses how public aid and resources during disasters can influence political relations and create inequality in the electoral arena (Bechtel & Hainmueller, 2011; Cole et al., 2012).

In its operationalization, this framework was used to analyze the 2024 East Flores regional election by empirically identifying institutional practices and field conditions during the Mount Lewotobi eruption. Indicators of political access were analyzed through the accessibility of polling stations (TPS), the availability of election information, and the conditions of affected voters in evacuation sites. The dimensions of electoral competition are explored through campaign dynamics, distribution of political support, and potential inequality between political actors in crisis situations. Meanwhile, the distribution of resources is analyzed through the pattern of disaster relief distribution and the possibility of politicization in relation to electoral contestation. Thus, democracy in disaster situations is understood neither as a completely stable nor collapsed state, but rather as a dynamic arena that demonstrates the interaction between institutional capacity, political strategy, and social vulnerability. This approach aligns with the *disaster governance framework*, which emphasizes that disaster responses are not only technocratic but also political and fraught with power relations (Tierney, 2014).

In this context, the study also introduces the concept of emergency democracy as an extension of the electoral resilience approach. While *electoral resilience* emphasizes an electoral system's ability to withstand and recover from crises (Croissant & Lott, 2025; James & Alihodzic, 2020), emergency democracy explains how democracy can continue to function through flexible, context-specific emergency adaptations. This concept starts from the assumption that crises do not always cause democratic failure but can encourage procedural and institutional transformations that enable the democratic process to continue. Thus, democracy in emergency situations is understood as a form of political governance that maintains democratic principles through adaptive mechanisms that differ from normal practices (James et al., 2023; Walz et al., 2025).

To operationalize this, this study developed an Emergency Democracy Model consisting of three layers. First, the input layer describes disasters as external shocks that disrupt the stability of the electoral system, such as population displacement, infrastructure damage, communication limitations, and administrative uncertainty, creating a non-routine governance environment (Hosseinkhani, 2026). Second, the process layer explains institutional adaptation mechanisms that include spatial reconfiguration through polling station

relocation, procedural flexibility in adjusting election stages, multi-actor coordination between the General Elections Commission (KPU), Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), and local governments, and conditional electoral inclusion that continues to guarantee voting rights even in conditions of unequal access (James et al., 2023; James & Alihodzic, 2020). Third, the output layer shows two simultaneous consequences; procedural resilience in the form of the continuity and formal legitimacy of elections, and substantive vulnerability in the form of unequal access, information distortion, limited political mobility, and unequal electoral competition. This configuration emphasizes that procedural success does not always directly correlate with substantive justice, especially in the context of disasters that create asymmetric political access (Su & Rashkova, 2024; Yulyana et al., 2024).

Thus, emergency democracy serves as a mediating concept that integrates studies of electoral governance, electoral resilience, and disaster governance, and broadens the understanding that crises not only produce institutional challenges, but also new configurations of systemic democratic inequality. Democracy in disaster situations is therefore not understood as a stable or collapsed condition, but rather as a dynamic arena shaped by the complex interaction between institutional capacity, political strategy, and social vulnerability (Croissant & Lott, 2025). This study aims to critically analyze the governance of the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections (Pilkada Serentak) in the context of the Mount Lewotobi eruption in East Flores Regency. Specifically, this research focuses on identifying and evaluating institutional practices constructed as best practices for maintaining election continuity amidst the crisis, while also uncovering various forms of democratic vulnerabilities that have emerged, particularly those related to unequal voter access, distortions in electoral competition, and the politicization of resource distribution in disaster situations.

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative research design with a critical approach to examine electoral governance in the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections in the context of the Mount Lewotobi eruption in East Flores Regency, Indonesia. The qualitative approach is used to deeply explore the socio-political processes and interactions between actors in the crisis situation, while the critical approach is used to analyze power relations, inequality of access, and democratic distortions in electoral practices (Creswell, 2016; Flyvbjerg, 2006). This research was conducted in disaster-affected areas, including affected villages, refugee camps, and polling stations (TPS) that were relocated or adapted due to emergency conditions. The field context is characterized by population displacement, disrupted infrastructure, limited communication access, and administrative adjustments in the implementation of the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections.

This study involved 15 informants selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance and direct involvement in the election process during the disaster. The informants consisted of voters/disaster-affected communities (n=5), election organizers from the General Elections Commission (KPU) and Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) of East Flores Regency (n=4), local community leaders (n=2), campaign teams (n=2), and election activists and journalists (n=2). This composition aimed to capture multi-stakeholder perspectives on election governance and disaster response. Data were collected in March-April 2025 through in-depth interviews (45–90 minutes per informant) conducted at election organizers' offices, evacuation posts, and residents' homes. They were supplemented by document studies of election regulations, official reports, and field notes.

Data analysis followed an interactive model (Miles et al., 2014). Interview transcripts, field notes, and documentation were first analyzed through open coding to identify recurring concepts relevant to electoral governance, disaster response, and democratic vulnerability. The resulting codes were then grouped through axial coding into broader analytical categories. Through iterative comparison of various data sources, several key themes emerged, including vulnerabilities in electoral access, institutional adaptation, challenges to representation, and issues of legitimacy. These themes were then interpreted using a critical analysis perspective to examine how disaster conditions shaped the democratic process in the 2024 East Flores

Regency Simultaneous Regional Elections.

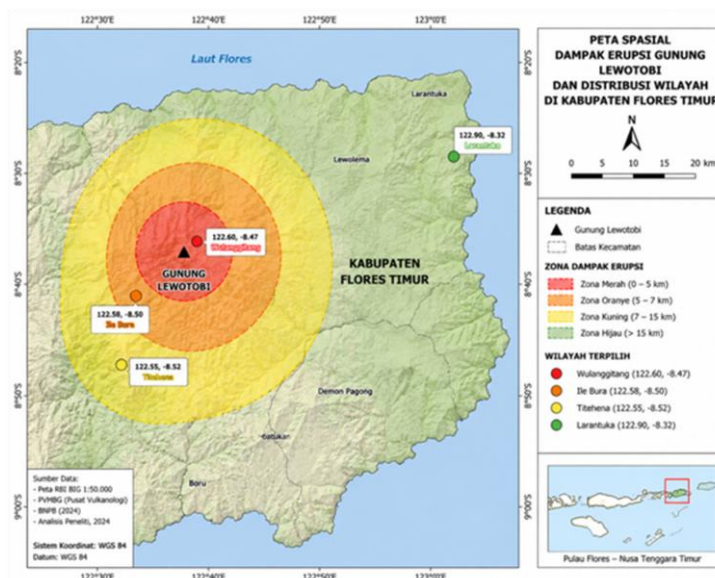
Ethical considerations were carefully considered throughout the research process. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to participate voluntarily or withdraw at any stage of the interview. Informed consent was obtained before data collection, and participant confidentiality was maintained through anonymization procedures. Considering that some of the participants were directly affected by the eruption of Mount Lewotobi, special attention was given to minimizing emotional stress and avoiding questions that could potentially re-traumatize disaster victims. Researchers acknowledge their close proximity to the research context and recognize that their understanding of local social and political dynamics can influence data collection and interpretation. This position provides advantages in gaining access to key informants and understanding the contextual nuances of the research. Nevertheless, researchers strive to minimize potential bias through data triangulation, reflective note-taking, and ongoing comparison of interpretations from various data sources.

3. Results and Discussion

Governance of the East Flores Regional Election in the Context of Disaster: Disruption and Structural Adaptation

The 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections in East Flores Regency took place amid an ecological crisis caused by the eruption of Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki. This situation presents multidimensional challenges to election governance, particularly regarding logistical disruptions, voter mobility, and local socio-political stability. Data shows that more than 13,000 voters were directly affected by the disaster, with dozens of polling stations experiencing operational disruptions (Nelfira, 2024; Purnamasari, 2024). From an electoral governance perspective, this situation indicates that elections can no longer be understood solely as an administrative process, but rather as a political practice vulnerable to external factors such as natural disasters. This confirms the thesis that local democracy in Indonesia remains highly dependent on structural stability and basic infrastructure.

Picture 1. Spatial Map of the Impact of the Eruption of Mount Lewotobi, East Flores



Source: Compiled by the authors using data from BNPB, InaRISK, and BIG (2024)

Empirically, the eruption of Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki caused the mass displacement of more than 13,000 people, with most placed in evacuation posts and others fleeing independently. This situation created a state

of emergency democracy, in which the state was forced to balance the continuity of electoral procedures with the fulfillment of citizens' basic rights. Furthermore, the eruption of Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki caused significant disruption to the regional election process, including mass evacuations and the relocation of polling stations (TPS). Based on these conditions, the eruption's impacts not only impacted humanitarian and environmental aspects but also created serious vulnerabilities to the continuity of local democratic processes. This situation can be more clearly seen through spatial mapping of the eruption-affected areas, which shows the distribution of disaster areas and potential disruptions to the implementation of regional elections in East Flores Regency.

The spatial map above comprehensively depicts the relationship between the impact zone of the Mount Lewotobi eruption and the distribution of Polling Stations (TPS) in the East Flores Regency area. This visualization shows that the eruption's impact was not only geophysical but also directly affected local democratic infrastructure, particularly the implementation of voting. Spatially, the eruption impact zone is divided into three main categories based on the radius from the eruption center, namely the red zone (0–5 km), the orange zone (5–7 km), and the yellow zone (7–15 km). Areas within this radius—such as Wulanggintang, Ile Bura, and the surrounding areas—are among the most vulnerable. In the red and orange zones, community activities are practically paralyzed due to the direct risk of eruption, so that polling stations in these areas cannot operate normally. TPS relocation data are shown in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Relocation of TPS Due to the Eruption of Mount Lewotobi in East Flores

No	Relocation Point	Origin District	Village of Origin	Number of polling stations Relocation	Number of Voters (DPT)
1	Konga Post	Ile Bura	Nobo	2	1,129
		Wulanggintang	Boru	2	1,186
2	Lewolaga Post	Ile Bura	Dulipali	1	578
			Nurabelen	2	620
		Wulanggintang	Boru	1	590
3	Bokang Post	Wulanggintang	Hokeng Jaya	2	1,171
4	Kobasoma Post	Wulanggintang	Nawakote	3	1,145
5	Lewoingu Post	Wulanggintang	Animals	1	584
			Waiula	3	1,141
6	Ile Gerong Post	Wulanggintang	Klatanlo	2	900
7	Watotika Ile Post	Wulanggintang	Boru	1	588
8	Nileknoheng	Wulanggintang	Pululera	2	1,119
		Amount		22	10,751

Source: East Flores Election Commission 2025

The relocation of polling stations (TPS) due to the eruption of Mount Lewotobi shows a concentration of voters at the main evacuation points. A total of 22 polling stations, serving 10,751 voters, were moved from several affected villages to eight relocation points. Spatially, this relocation pattern indicates a shift in voter access from their area of origin to relatively centralized refugee locations, which has the potential to affect the level of political participation due to changes in travel distance and limitations on voter mobility. From an electoral governance perspective, this situation indicates that elections can no longer be understood solely as an administrative process, but rather as a political practice vulnerable to external factors such as natural disasters. This confirms the thesis that local democracy in Indonesia remains highly dependent on structural stability and basic infrastructure.

Empirically, the eruption of Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki led to the mass evacuation of more than 13,000 people, with most housed in evacuation posts and others self-evacuating. Furthermore, the eruption of Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki caused significant disruption to the regional election process, including mass evacuations and the relocation of polling stations (TPS). This situation creates a state of emergency democracy, where

the state is forced to balance the continuity of electoral procedures with the fulfillment of citizens' basic rights. The term "emergency democracy" in the context of the 2024 East Flores Pilkada refers to the practice of holding elections that continued amidst the Lewotobi eruption, with a series of institutional and technical-procedural adjustments. Field findings show that voting took place under abnormal conditions due to the eruption, forming an emergency democratic practice. This is reflected in four main aspects. First, the relocation of 22 polling stations to safe zones (refugee camps) ensures that voting rights are still fulfilled through adaptive repositioning of electoral space. Second, voting was conducted in emergency infrastructure (tents and temporary facilities) with technical limitations, but the substance of the process was maintained through procedural flexibility. Third, Bawaslu's oversight was adaptive, with the focus shifting from procedural to vulnerability mitigation and prioritizing high-risk areas. Fourth, Intensive cross-agency coordination (KPU, Bawaslu, Pemda, and BPBD) is underway, enabling rapid decision-making and strengthening crisis-based election governance.

From a theoretical perspective, this condition confirms that elections are highly vulnerable to external shocks, such as natural disasters, which can disrupt implementation processes and affect voter access and participation (Norris, 2014). Nevertheless, the experience in East Flores shows that the local democratic system can still function in crisis situations, albeit with a number of institutional adjustments and changes in electoral dynamics. The stages of the regional elections continued and voter participation was maintained in emergency conditions, indicating institutional resilience and the adaptive capacity of the community in facing disasters (Aldrich, 2012). From a democratic perspective, the practice of *emergency democracy* in East Flores demonstrates that the continuity of electoral procedures can be maintained even under extreme crisis conditions. However, this sustainability does not automatically guarantee equal access and quality of political participation. The relocation of polling stations and the concentration of voters in refugee camps, for example, have the potential to create disparities in geographic access and information, which could affect the electoral experience of affected residents.

In a policy context, these findings emphasize the importance of strengthening disaster-responsive electoral governance that is not only oriented towards procedural sustainability, but also towards protecting the quality of substantive democracy. Integration between election organizers and disaster management agencies needs to be strengthened from the planning stage, not just when a crisis occurs. Thus, emergency democracy is not only understood as a technical response to disasters, but also as a political arena that requires a more inclusive, adaptive, and equitable institutional design.

Institutional Adaptation and Electoral Resilience

The eruption of Mount Lewotobi that hit Wulanggintang and Ile Bura Districts severely disrupted the 2024 simultaneous regional elections in East Flores Regency. The institutional response of election organizers demonstrated significant adaptive efforts. The General Elections Commission (KPU), the Election Supervisory Agency (BAWASLU), and the East Flores district government implemented various strategic measures, such as relocating polling stations (TPS) to evacuation sites, simplifying population administration, and coordinating across sectors. A total of 22 polling stations were established at the evacuation sites to ensure access for affected voters remains guaranteed. Furthermore, the government instructed voters who had lost their identity documents to simplify administrative procedures by using alternative documents. This responsive approach by election organizers and local governments aligns with the concept of electoral integrity resilience, which is the ability of an election system to adapt to crises without losing legitimacy (James & Garnett, 2025).

However, if analyzed critically, this adaptation tends to be reactive rather than anticipatory. There was no institutional design that integrated disaster management into election governance from the outset. In other words, the policies adopted were more firefighting governance than resilient governance. In this context, Mr. Stefanus Ratu Ile (Commissioner of the East Flores Election Commission) explained that:

"We never imagined a natural disaster would occur, so when the eruption of Mount Lewotobi

Laki-laki hit Wulanggitang and Ile Bura Districts, it severely disrupted the preparations for the regional elections in East Flores. Therefore, we had to quickly adapt to the situation by working with the Indonesian General Elections Commission (KPU), the East Flores regional government, and the East Flores Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), as there was no specific scenario for such a situation. So, there was no crisis management strategy or disaster mitigation for the regional elections" (interview, March 18, 2025).

This statement shows that the election-organizing institutions are institutionally unprepared, with adaptive capacity emerging only ad hoc when a disaster occurs. Adaptations carried out through cross-institutional coordination do indeed allow for the continuation of the regional election stages, but are not supported by a previously structured mitigation framework. Thus, the responsive capabilities that emerge are more improvisational than systematic. From a theoretical perspective, this situation reinforces the argument that election governance in disaster situations in many local contexts is still dominated by a crisis-responsive approach, rather than resilience-based governance based on long-term risk planning (James & Alihodzic, 2020; Tierney, 2014). This indicates a gap between the normative demands for adaptive election governance and the reality of institutional capacity at the local level.

This condition is consistent with the literature on resilience governance, which emphasizes that governance resilience cannot be achieved through ad hoc responses or emergency measures alone but requires planned, integrated, and sustainable systemic preparedness. Within this framework, institutional capacity is measured not only by the ability to respond to crises when they occur but also by the extent to which risks have been anticipated through policy design, cross-sectoral coordination, and the mitigation mechanisms inherent in the system. Thus, the weak response in the context of regional elections in disaster-affected areas can be understood as a consequence of the lack of a truly adaptive and anticipatory institutional system for crisis risk (Abdillah et al., 2025). The contribution of this finding is the affirmation that electoral governance in a disaster context is determined not only by the ability of institutions to respond to crises but also by the extent to which disaster risks have been institutionalized in the design of election policies from the outset. Thus, this study broadens the understanding of emergency democracy as a condition that is not only adaptive but also vulnerable to institutional delays in anticipating structural risks.

Best Practices: Local Democratic Resilience Amid Crisis

Despite various limitations, there are a number of good practices that deserve recognition as a form of local electoral resilience. First, the relocation of 22 polling stations to evacuation posts and the mobilization of voters to the polling stations on Election Day, November 27, 2024, has proven effective in maintaining voter participation. The presence of polling stations (TPS) in refugee camps allows residents to exercise their right to vote without having to return to their dangerous home areas.

The relocation practice demonstrates the adaptive capacity of election organizers to respond quickly and flexibly to emergency situations. This policy not only aims to ensure the safety of disaster-affected residents, but also ensures that people's constitutional right to vote remains protected during a crisis. To understand the scale and distribution of the relocation policy, the following presents the coordinates of the initial polling stations (TPS) before the eruption and the 22 relocation polling stations placed in refugee camps.

Table 2. Coordinates of the initial polling stations (before the eruption) and 22 relocated polling stations (at the evacuation sites)

No	Subdistrict	Village of Origin	Initial TPS Coordinates (Lat, Long)	Number of polling stations	Relocation Location	Relocation Coordinates (Lat, Long)	No
1	Wulanggitang	Boru	-8,276, 123,103	4	Konga Post	-8,320, 122,980	1
2	Wulanggitang	Boru	-8,276,	4	Lewolaga	-8,300,	2

			123,103		Post	123,020	
3	Wulanggitang	Boru	-8,276, 123,103	4	Watotika Ile Post	-8,310, 123,040	3
4	Wulanggitang	Hokeng Jaya	-8,248, 123,090	2	Bokang Post	-8,270, 123,000	4
5	Wulanggitang	Nawakote	-8,260, 123,085	3	Kobasoma Post	-8,260, 122,970	5
6	Wulanggitang	Animals	-8,240, 123,070	2	Lewoingu Post	-8,250, 122,990	6
7	Wulanggitang	Waiula	-8,255, 123,060	3	Lewoingu Post	-8,250, 122,990	7
8	Wulanggitang	Klatanlo	-8,230, 123,080	2	Ile Gerong Post	-8,240, 123,010	8
9	Wulanggitang	Pululera	-8,270, 123,120	2	Nileknoheng Post	-8,280, 123,060	9
10	Ile Bura	Nobo	-8,290, 123,140	2	Konga Post	-8,320, 122,980	10
11	Ile Bura	Dulipali	-8,300, 123,130	1	Lewolaga Post	-8,300, 123,020	11

Source: Processed from *the 2024 Pilkada TPS Mapping* data by the East Flores Regency General Election Commission.

The table above is based on mapping data for the 2024 Regional Election Polling Stations (TPS) obtained from the East Flores Regency General Election Commission. The initial geographic coordinates of the polling stations were not directly available in the official dataset, so an estimate was obtained using the village centroid approach based on the administrative map of East Flores Regency. This approach is used to represent the spatial distribution of polling stations in aggregate in geographic analysis. Spatial mapping results indicate that the relocation of polling stations (TPS) due to the eruption of Mount Lewotobi resulted in a geographic shift of voters from their original villages to evacuation centers at varying distances. Generally, the relocation distances ranged from 3 to 15 km, with the pattern of movement tending toward safer areas outside the eruption's impact radius. This shift has direct implications for voter accessibility and has the potential to influence political participation in the 2024 regional elections in East Flores Regency.

The impact of the geographical shift can be further measured by voter turnout at the relocated polling stations on election day. Voter participation analysis is important to assess the extent to which the TPS relocation policy is able to maintain the sustainability of the political rights of disaster-affected communities amidst limited mobility and emergency conditions. Therefore, the following table presents the voter participation rate at the relocated polling stations in the areas affected by the 2024 Mount Lewotobi eruption.

Table 3. Voter Participation Rate at Relocated Polling Stations in Areas Affected by the Eruption of Mount Lewotobi, East Flores Regency in 2024

No	Subdistrict	Village	TPS Relocation	DPT	Voter Rights Users (DPT)	Participation (%)	No	Subdistrict
1	Wulanggitang	Boru	4	2,364	392	16.58%	1	Wulanggitang
		Hokeng Jaya	2	1,171	491	41.93%		
		Nawakote	3	1,145	466	40.70%		
		Animals	1	584	225	38.53%		
		Waiula	3	1,141	222	19.46%		
		Klatanlo	2	900	149	16.56%		
2	Ile Bura	Pululera	2	1,119	457	40.84%	2	Ile Bura
		Nobo	2	1,129	477	42.25%		
		Dulipali	1	578	228	39.45%		
		Nurabelen	2	620	379	61.13%		

Total		10	22	10,751	3,486	32,42%	Total		10
No	Subdistrict	Village	TPS Relocation	DPT	Voter Rights Users (DPT)	Participation (%)	No	Subdistrict	
1	Wulanggitang	Boru	4	2,364	392	16.58%	1	Wulanggitang	

Source: Data processed from the Recapitulation of Voter Rights Users for the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Election Relocation Polling Stations of the East Flores Regency KPU, data from the Mount Lewotobi Eruption Refugee Post, and the results of researchers' field observations, 2025.

Voter turnout at relocated polling stations was relatively low, averaging only 32.42 % . Participation varied significantly between villages, with Nurabelen Village recording the highest turnout at 61.13%, while several villages, such as Boru and Klatanlo, recorded below 20%. This indicates that the relocation of polling stations due to the disaster directly affected voter accessibility and reinforced existing inequalities in participation in the context of emergency democracy. This disparity shows that the relocation of polling stations due to disasters is not only technical-administrative in nature but also creates asymmetric electoral access that directly affects the ability of affected residents to exercise their right to vote. In the context of emergency democracy, this condition shows that expanding electoral procedures does not automatically lead to greater substantive participation, especially when mobility, information, and geographical proximity are severely limited.

Second, cross-sector collaboration between the KPU, Bawaslu, local governments, and security forces is a key factor in the success of the regional elections. Antonius Bethan (Chairman of the East Flores KPU) explained that:

"The East Flores Regency General Elections Commission (KPU) held a Coordination Meeting on voter data management in areas affected by the eruption with the East Flores Regency Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), the East Flores Regency Government, the Regional Leadership Communication Forum (Forkopimda), the Regent and Deputy Regent Candidate Pair Teams, and the Press. The meeting also included the NTT Provincial KPU Leadership in a hybrid manner. The Coordination Meeting resulted in an agreement that voter data management in disaster-affected areas would be carried out in a coordinated manner by utilizing official data from local government posts. The local government provided information regarding the location of posts, the number of affected villages, and refugee data, which was then synchronized by the East Flores Regency KPU with the Population and Civil Registration Office to become voter data in the Final Voter List (DPT). Based on the results of this synchronization, the KPU prepared two schemes for providing polling stations (TPS): relocation of regular polling stations or construction of special polling stations in refugee locations" (interview, March 18, 2025).

Although cross-sector collaboration between the General Elections Commission (KPU), Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), local governments, and security forces successfully ensured the continuity of the regional election process amidst the disaster, voter turnout data at relocated polling stations (TPS) indicate that this administrative success does not automatically guarantee the fulfillment of substantive democratic quality. The low voter turnout, averaging only 32.42%, indicates a gap between the state's ability to organize elections and affected citizens' ability to effectively exercise their political rights. This coordination practice demonstrates the emergence of a form of crisis-driven governance, where the effectiveness of governance is largely determined by the ability of institutional actors to establish data synchronization, make rapid decisions, and maintain procedural flexibility. However, the dominance of this coordinative approach also indicates that institutional capacity is more reactive than it is based on integrated risk planning from the outset of election design.

From an Emergency Democracy perspective, this situation demonstrates that disasters not only create technical disruptions to election administration but also generate new forms of political exclusion. The relocation of polling stations (TPS), designed to ensure the continuity of the electoral process, can in reality create new obstacles for displaced groups experiencing displacement, loss of identity documents, limited access to transportation, and uncertainty regarding polling location information. Thus, low voter turnout cannot be understood solely as a technical consequence of the Mount Lewotobi eruption, but also as an indication that some groups in society disproportionately face obstacles to accessing the democratic process. Variations in participation rates across villages further highlight inequalities in democratic access. Nurabelen Village, which recorded a participation rate of 61.13 %, demonstrates that when access to information, proximity to polling stations, and community social networks are relatively well-maintained, residents can still participate in elections. Conversely, the very low participation rates in Boru and Klatanlo Villages indicate that the impact of the disaster was not felt equally by all affected communities. Differences in geographical conditions, levels of regional damage, refugee patterns, and access to public services mean that some groups of citizens face greater obstacles than others in exercising their right to vote.

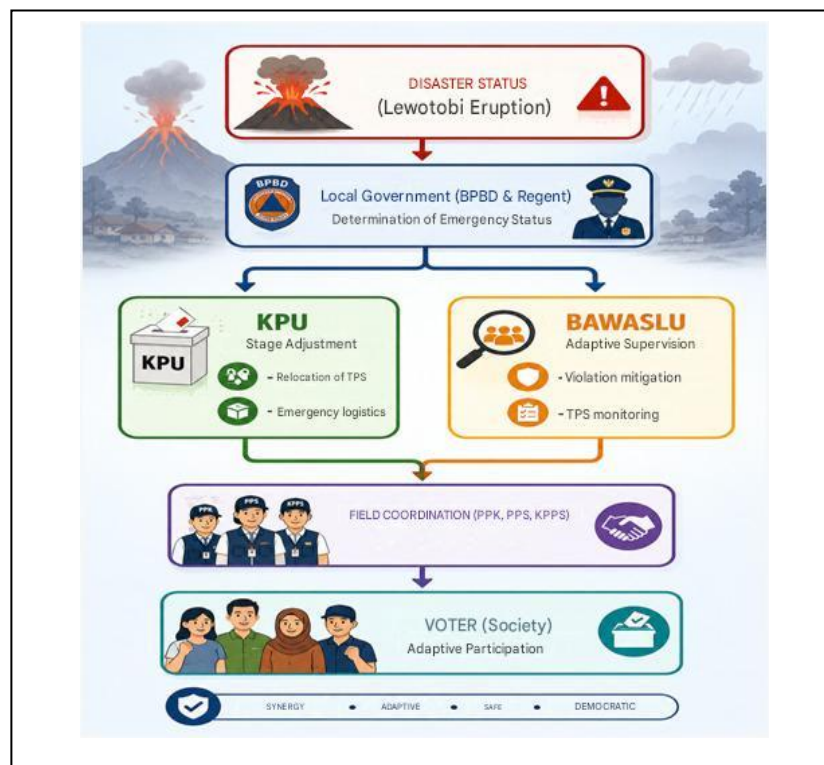
The most vulnerable group in this situation is displaced people who experience social and economic dislocation due to the disaster. Their main focus shifted to fulfilling basic needs such as housing, food, health, and family security. In such circumstances, political participation tends to be a secondary need. The vulnerability of affected citizens is not only related to the loss of material resources but also to their reduced capacity to actively engage in the political process. This situation suggests that disasters can deepen pre-existing political inequalities by placing affected groups in increasingly marginalized positions in democratic decision-making processes. Furthermore, the findings of this study provide insight into the state's capacity to guarantee citizens' political rights during times of crisis. The presence of a coordination mechanism among the General Elections Commission (KPU), the Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), local governments, the Civil Registration Agency (Dukcapil), security forces, and various stakeholders demonstrates a sufficiently adaptive institutional capacity to respond to emergency situations. The provision of relocation TPS schemes and special TPS in refugee locations is a form of institutional innovation to maintain the continuity of the regional elections. However, low voter turnout suggests that the state's administrative capacity is not yet fully equipped to address the social barriers and vulnerabilities faced by affected communities.

Thus, this study demonstrates that the quality of democracy in disaster situations is determined not only by the procedural implementation of election stages but also by the extent to which the state ensures that all citizens, especially those affected and vulnerable groups, have equal opportunities to exercise their political rights. In the context of the Mount Lewotobi eruption, the 2024 regional elections demonstrate the paradox of emergency democracy: on the one hand, the state succeeded in maintaining the continuity of the electoral process, but on the other hand, it still faces challenges in ensuring inclusiveness and equal political participation for all citizens affected by the disaster. This institutional collaboration shows that the governance of regional elections in disaster situations cannot be carried out in a sectoral manner but requires an integrated coordination mechanism among actors. Synergy among election organizers, local governments, security forces, and other stakeholders is an important foundation for maintaining the sustainability of the regional election stages amid emergency conditions. To illustrate the relationship pattern and coordination flow, the following is a coordination scheme for organizing the Regional Elections in the disaster situation of the eruption of Mount Lewotobi in East Flores Regency in 2024.

The flowchart [Picture 2](#) shows that in a disaster situation, election governance becomes a collaborative system involving the Regional Government, KPU, and Bawaslu within an adaptive coordination framework. Regional governments acted as the emergency status determinants, the General Elections Commission (KPU) acted as the technical implementer of stage adjustments, and the Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) acted as adaptive supervisors, ensuring the integrity of the process. This collaboration was then implemented on the ground by ad hoc bodies, ultimately influencing voter turnout under unusual circumstances. The governance of the regional election stages in East Flores in the context of the disaster reflects the practice of

adaptive electoral governance, namely the ability of institutions to adjust procedures to the dynamics of the crisis without completely abandoning the basic principles of democracy. Coordination between local governments, the General Elections Commission (KPU), and the Population and Civil Registration Office (DKP) in utilizing official data from evacuation posts as a basis for compiling the final voter list (DPT) represents an administrative innovation responsive to demographic disruptions caused by disasters. Recent literature has viewed this practice as part of efforts to maintain the sustainability of the electoral process through adjustments based on local context and emergency conditions (James & Alihodzic, 2020).

Picture 2. Coordination Scheme for the Implementation of Regional Elections in the Disaster Situation of the Mount Lewotobi Eruption in East Flores Regency in 2024



Source: Processed by the author based on field observations and coordination data from the 2024 Election organizers.

The governance of the Pilkada stages in the context of the disaster in East Flores shows adaptive efforts through coordination between the local government, the KPU, and the Population and Civil Registry Service. The use of official data from refugee posts as a basis for compiling the permanent voter list (DPT) represents a relatively fast and contextual form of administrative response. This shows that in crisis situations, election governance tends to shift from a procedural approach to a pragmatic approach based on field conditions. In addition, the KPU's choice to offer two schemes for providing polling stations: relocating regular polling stations and building special polling stations in refugee camps demonstrates the flexibility of its policies in responding to crisis situations. The use of refugee data also demonstrates a shift from a rigid administrative approach to a pragmatic approach focused on substantive fulfillment of voting rights. From a democratic governance perspective, this flexibility is crucial to prevent voter exclusion due to temporary changes in location and residency status (Norris, 2014).

However, this pragmatic approach still requires a strict verification mechanism to avoid creating new risks, such as duplication of voter data or inaccuracy of the final voter list (DPT). In addition, the KPU's decision to offer two TPS provision schemes, namely regular relocation TPS and special TPS in refugee locations, reflects the existence of policy flexibility that is adaptive to crisis conditions. This strategy is in line

with the concept of electoral resilience, namely the ability of the election system to maintain its main function even under external pressures such as natural disasters nature (Sarah, 2011). This adjustment also shows that election organizers are trying to balance procedural demands and practical needs in the field.

Third, community participatory commitment is also an important indicator. Several testimonies indicate that displaced residents remained enthusiastic about voting, even embracing the regional elections as a symbol of hope amidst the crisis. Filomena Boru, a refugee from Ile Bura sub-district, stated:

"We still went to the polling station to vote even though we were in a refugee camp because our vote would determine our fate and well-being for the next five years. We hope the government will pay attention to us later" (interview, March 14, 2025).

The participatory commitment of the refugee community shows that, even in a disaster situation, residents' political awareness to continue exercising their voting rights remains strong. The level of community involvement in the regional elections in areas affected by the eruption of Mount Lewotobi is evident in the following voter participation data.

Table 4. Voter Participation Rate in Areas Affected by the Eruption of Mount Lewotobi in East Flores Regency in 2024								
No.	Subdistrict	Number of Villages	Number of polling stations	Number of Voters on the DPT	Voter Rights Users of the DPT	DPTb Voter Rights Users	DPK Voting Rights Users	Participation Rate (%)
1	Wulanggitang	11	23	11,302	3,838	656	5	39.79
2	Ile Bura	17	14	5,742	3.106	360	2	60.38
Average Participation at East Flores Regency Level			61.39					

Source: Data processed from the Recapitulation of Voter Participation in the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections by the East Flores Regency KPU and the results of researchers' field observations, 2025.

Table 4 shows the voter participation rate in the areas affected by the eruption of Mount Lewotobi in Wulanggitang and Ile Bura Districts in the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections. Wulanggitang District had a participation rate of 39.79 percent, far below the East Flores Regency average of 61.39 percent. The low participation rate was influenced by disaster conditions, community evacuations, relocation of polling stations, and limited access to polling locations. Meanwhile, Ile Bura District recorded a turnout of 60.38 percent, relatively close to the district average. This data indicates that the disaster's impact on voter participation varied across regions, depending on geographic conditions, refugee mobility, and the effectiveness of election administration. The high number of voters on the final voter list (DPTb) in both districts also indicates that there was a shift in voting locations due to the emergency situation.

These conditions demonstrate that the regional elections in the areas affected by the eruption of Mount Lewotobi took place in a democratic emergency, requiring the adaptability of both election organizers and the community. Despite limited facilities, relocating polling stations (TPS), and sheltering in place, the voting process proceeded with relatively good public participation. This situation can be seen in the following documentation, which shows residents voting at the relocated polling stations in the refugee camps. The Picture 3 clearly show that voting was carried out under emergency conditions, namely in refugee tents with very limited facilities. Polling stations (TPS) were no longer located in formal buildings but rather in makeshift posts; facilities such as voting booths, chairs, and waiting rooms were extremely limited, and interaction between officials and voters took place under less-than-ideal conditions. Nevertheless, the voting and vote-counting processes continued in accordance with basic procedures, demonstrating institutional efforts to maintain the continuity of democracy.

Picture 3. Residents queue to cast their votes, and a resident dips his finger in ink after casting his vote at TPS 003 Boru Village, Konga refugee field post



Source: Antara News and East Flores Election Commission 2024

However, this situation also indicates a compromise in the quality of election administration, particularly regarding voter comfort, accessibility, and confidentiality. Therefore, this visual documentation serves not only as an illustration but also as empirical evidence supporting the argument regarding the practice of emergency democracy, where electoral procedures continue despite significant structural limitations. This phenomenon demonstrates that disasters do not necessarily reduce political participation, but can actually strengthen citizens' political awareness as a strategy to advocate for their rights and interests. These findings also indicate electoral resilience, the ability of citizens and the democratic system to continue functioning amidst crises (Birch, 2011; James & Alihodzic, 2020). Therefore, inclusive and adaptive election governance is crucial to ensuring that public participation remains optimally facilitated.

Democratic Vulnerabilities: Exclusion, Inequality, and the Risk of Politicization

In the context of holding elections amidst a disaster, democracy is not only tested in terms of procedural continuity, but also in terms of the quality of its inclusiveness and fairness. Crisis situations often expose democratic vulnerabilities, manifested in the exclusion of vulnerable voters, declining participation, and the potential politicization of social assistance. These conditions demonstrate that electoral democracy does not always operate under ideal conditions, but is instead influenced by structures of social inequality and the state's capacity to guarantee citizens' equal political rights (Aldrich, 2012; Norris, 2014).

Although polling stations have been relocated, not all affected groups have equal access to the voting process. The elderly, people with disabilities, and women with small children face greater barriers in accessing polling stations in evacuation centers. Mr. YosepPuka, an evacuee from Ile Bura District, explained:

"Many residents are still in refugee camps, especially the elderly, those with physical limitations, and pregnant women, who are reluctant to go to the polling stations to vote. Furthermore, some residents who did not receive a voting invitation letter were unable to vote at the relocation polling stations provided by the East Flores Election Commission (KPU)" (interview, March 14, 2025).

This statement indicates a serious vulnerability in the inclusiveness of the regional elections, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, pregnant women, and survivors still in refugee camps. The reluctance to come to polling stations due to physical limitations reflects structural accessibility barriers, while the failure to receive voting notification letters indicates administrative problems in updating voter data. From a procedural democracy perspective, this condition has the potential to result in *de facto* disenfranchisement, namely, the factual loss of voting rights, even though they are still formally guaranteed (Norris, 2014; Przeworski et al., 2000).

Furthermore, this situation can be understood through a capability approach, which emphasizes that political rights are not sufficiently guaranteed normatively, but must be supported by conditions that enable individuals to truly be able to access them. The lack of physical access to polling stations and the weak distribution of voter information demonstrate the state's failure to translate formal rights into real capabilities. Furthermore, the low participation of vulnerable groups contributes to unequal political representation, as the voices of the most affected groups are not heard in the democratic process. In the context of regional elections amidst a disaster, these findings underscore the importance of adaptive and inclusive institutional design, such as the provision of mobile polling stations, alternative voting mechanisms, and voter data updates that respond to the mobility of affected populations. Without such interventions, the quality of democracy will tend to be exclusive and not fully represent the will of all citizens.

In addition, there has been a decline in the quality of political participation. Political participation in crisis situations can be potentially "minimalistic," with voters attending without adequate information about candidates or political programs. This leads to what is known as procedural participation without substantive engagement. Several residents in evacuation centers provided testimony:

"We were at the refugee post on election day going to the polling station to vote. "However, many refugee residents are unfamiliar with the candidates for regent and vice-regent of East Flores, as well as the governor and vice-governor of NTT. Furthermore, many residents are unaware of the correct voting procedures, which inevitably leads to invalid votes. This is due to a lack of ongoing outreach in refugee camps" (interview, March 15, 2025).

These conditions indicate that disasters not only affect voter turnout at polling stations but also impact the quality of public political participation in the democratic process. This phenomenon is evident in the high number of invalid votes in the 2024 East Flores Regency Pilkada, as shown in the following. Table 5 shows data on the number of voters on the Permanent Voter List (DPT) and invalid votes in the 2024 East Flores Regency Pilkada, spread across 19 sub-districts. Overall, there are 250 villages, 487 polling stations (TPS), with a total DPT of 209,711 voters and 4,158 invalid votes. In the context of areas affected by the eruption of Mount Lewotobi, such as Wulanggintang and Ile Bura sub-districts, the number of invalid votes reached 150 and 93 votes, respectively. This condition can be attributed to the disaster situation that affected voter concentration, the mobility of displaced communities, and limited voting facilities due to the relocation of polling stations and emergency conditions. This situation has the potential to increase technical errors in voting, especially for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and people with disabilities.

Table 5. Voter Data on the Final Voter List and Invalid Votes in East Flores Regency in 2024

No.	Subdistrict	Number of Villages	Number of polling stations	DPT Voter Data	Invalid Vote	No.	Subdistrict
1	Wulanggintang	11	23	11,302	150	1	Wulanggintang
2	Ile Bura	7	14	5,742	93	2	Ile Bura
3	Titehena	14	27	10,157	190	3	Titehena
4	Demon Pagong	7	11	3,853	53	4	Demon Pagong
5	Lewolema	7	16	7,469	176	5	Lewolema
6	Larantuka	20	60	29,732	285	6	Larantuka
7	Ile Mandiri	8	19	8,921	186	7	Ile Mandiri
8	TanjungBunga	16	28	10,666	233	8	TanjungBunga
9	East Adonara	21	51	22,121	492	9	East Adonara
10	Ile Boleng	21	34	13,127	331	10	Ile Boleng
11	Witihama	16	30	13,566	405	11	Witihama
12	Kelubagolit	12	21	9,972	183	12	Kelubagolit
13	Adonara	8	19	8,758	200	13	Adonara

14	Central Adonara	13	23	10,417	164	14	Central Adonara
15	West Adonara	18	26	10,341	197	15	West Adonara
16	Wotan Ulumado	12	21	7,522	162	16	Wotan Ulumado
17	West Solor	15	21	8,772	179	17	West Solor
18	East Solor	17	30	11,860	347	18	East Solor
19	South Solor	7	13	5,413	132	19	South Solor
Amount 250	487	209,711	4,158			Amount 250	487

Source: Recapitulation Data for the 2024 East Flores Regency Regional Election.

This vulnerability is even more apparent among voters with disabilities and the older generation (pre-boomers), who face mobility limitations and require special assistance during the voting process in disaster-affected areas. This situation demonstrates that holding regional elections in emergency situations requires greater attention to protecting the political rights of vulnerable groups, as illustrated in the following data.

Table 6. Data on the Categories of Voters with Disabilities and the Pre-Boomer Generation in Areas Affected by the Eruption of Mount Lewotobi in East Flores Regency in 2024

No	Subdistrict	Number of Villages/Sub-districts	Number of polling stations	Voter Category					
				Disability			Pre-Boomer Generation		
				L	P	Amount	L	P	Amount
1	Wulanggintang	11	23	86	103	189	118	140	258
2	Ile Bura	7	14	68	70	138	79	119	198

Source : Processed by the author based on data from the East Flores Regency KPU in 2024.

Table 6 shows data on vulnerable voters in areas affected by the 2024 eruption of Mount Lewotobi in East Flores Regency, including voters with disabilities and pre-boomers in Wulanggintang and Ile Bura Districts. Wulanggintang District had the highest number of voters with disabilities, with 189 voters with disabilities and 258 pre-boomers, while Ile Bura District had 138 voters with disabilities and 198 pre-boomers. Overall, there were 327 voters with disabilities and 456 pre-boomers in the two affected districts. The findings indicate a gap between voter turnout *and* the quality of political participation among refugees. Although citizens continue to attend polling stations, limited knowledge about candidates and voting procedures indicates low political literacy, which results in a high potential for invalid votes. Recent literature suggests that the quality of political participation is largely determined by access to adequate and sustainable information, particularly in the context of vulnerable groups and situations (Norris, 2015).

This situation reflects the weak capacity of election organizers to conduct political outreach in disaster-affected areas. A recent study in the Scopus journal shows that elections in emergency situations tend to experience a decline in the quality of participation due to limited information distribution, communication disruptions, and low levels of voter education in evacuation centers (James & Alihodzic, 2020; Sarah, 2011). When voters lack sufficient understanding of the candidates and voting mechanisms, participation becomes merely procedural and loses its deliberative substance. Furthermore, the high probability of invalid votes can also be understood as an indicator of institutional failure to guarantee electoral integrity. According to Norris (2014) Electoral integrity relates not only to the transparency and fairness of the process, but also to the extent to which voters are able to participate effectively and meaningfully. In this context, the lack of ongoing outreach in refugee camps indicates that the election organizers' approach has not been fully adaptive to the crisis conditions, thus impacting the overall quality of the election results.

Thus, these findings emphasize the importance of more contextual and inclusive political socialization strategies, such as community-based voter education in refugee camps, the use of simple communication media, and direct assistance for vulnerable groups. Without such intervention, elections risk experiencing a

democratic deficit, where high quantitative participation is not accompanied by the quality of rational and informed political choices. Natural disasters also create space for disaster clientelism, where aid distribution can be used as a tool for political mobilization by local elites. The following testimonies from several residents at the evacuation post recounted a campaign team arriving at the post with basic food supplies, but they also mentioned the name of a specific candidate and hoped we would support them in the upcoming election at the polling stations (interview, March 14, 2025).

This phenomenon indicates the politicization of aid practices that overlap with *clientelism patterns* in the context of elections amidst the crisis. The provision of basic food aid accompanied by mentioning the names of candidates and the expectation of political support shows that aid is no longer neutral and humanitarian but has been used as an instrument of electoral mobilization. In recent literature, this practice is understood as a form of indirect political exchange (contingent exchange), where material resources are used to influence voter preferences, particularly among vulnerable groups (Mares & Young, 2016; Stokes et al., 2013). In the context of refugee camps, this relationship becomes increasingly problematic due to the imbalance of power between aid providers and recipients. Refugees in situations of dependency tend to experience psychological pressure to reciprocate aid with political support, although this is not always explicitly stated. Studies in the Scopus journal show that in situations of crisis or extreme poverty, clientelism practices become more effective because voters face limited options and pressing needs, making them more vulnerable to material influence (Mares & Young, 2016; Nichter, 2018).

This finding is consistent with the concept of electoral politics of disaster, where aid is used to boost political support (Imami et al., 2023). Within this framework, disasters are understood not only as humanitarian crises but also as arenas of political contestation, opening up opportunities for political actors to utilize aid distribution as an electoral strategy. This emphasizes that in emergency situations, the line between aid policy and political interests becomes blurred, potentially distorting voter preferences. This phenomenon also has implications for declining election integrity (*electoral integrity*). Aid, which should be based on humanitarian principles, has become a tool for unfair political competition, as candidates with greater access to resources have a greater chance of influencing voters. This aligns with Norris's (2014) study, which emphasized that election integrity is determined not only by formal procedures but also by fairness in political competition and voters' freedom from external pressure. Thus, this finding confirms that the politicization of aid in natural disaster situations is not only an ethical violation, but also a serious threat to the quality of democracy. Therefore, strict supervision and firm regulations are needed to separate the distribution of humanitarian aid from political campaign activities, in order to protect vulnerable voters from manipulative practices and maintain the principle of electoral justice.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that election governance in disaster situations is not limited to the technical aspects of election administration but also serves as a crucial mechanism for maintaining democratic legitimacy in emergency conditions. This study contributes to the literature on election governance by showing that disaster conditions fundamentally alter governance priorities, patterns of institutional interaction, and mechanisms for protecting democracy. Furthermore, this study develops the concept of democratic vulnerability by showing how environmental disruptions from disasters create new forms of electoral risk that cannot be adequately explained by conventional electoral governance frameworks.

The General Elections Commission (KPU) needs to develop a standardized, disaster-responsive election and regional election contingency protocol that includes voter relocation procedures, emergency polling station management, and alternative voting arrangements. Local governments and disaster management agencies also need to establish a permanent coordination mechanism with election organizers, both before and during disasters, to ensure the continuity of the democratic process. This study has limitations because it focuses on a single case in East Flores Regency and primarily relies on qualitative data from key stakeholders

involved in implementing the 2024 Regional Elections. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be directly generalized to disaster contexts or to the implementation of Regional Elections in other regions with different social, political, and disaster characteristics.

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