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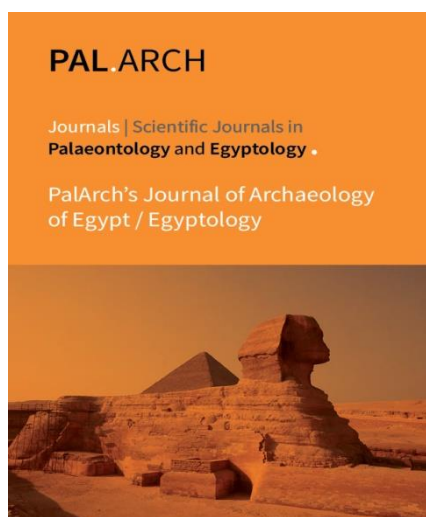
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**SCOPUS INDEXED JOURNAL**

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear **Chontina Siahaan<sup>1\*</sup>, Osbin Samosir<sup>2</sup>, Hapzi Ali<sup>3</sup>**

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We are glad to inform you that your research manuscript entitled “**POLITICAL COMMUNICATION OF CHRISTIAN LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES IN ISLAMIC-BASED VOTERS: A STUDY OF THE LEGISLATIVE GENERAL ELECTION IN INDONESIA REFORMED ERA OF 1999-2019**” has been ACCEPTED for publication in Palarch.

This letter is official confirmation of acceptance of your research paper.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mohamed El-Hosseiny", with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Prof. Mohamed El-Hosseiny,**

Editorial Office

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# PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

## POLITICAL COMMUNICATION OF CHRISTIAN LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES IN ISLAMIC-BASED VOTERS: A STUDY OF THE LEGISLATIVE GENERAL ELECTION IN INDONESIA REFORMED ERA OF 1999-2019

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**Chontina Siahaan<sup>1\*</sup>, Osbin Samosir<sup>2</sup>, Hapzi Ali<sup>3</sup> -- Political Communication Of  
Christian Legislative Candidates In Islamic-Based Voters: A Study Of The Legislative  
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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the political communication of Christian legislative candidates in Islamic-

based voters. Christian political parties in the five election periods in the Reformation Era, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 always got significant voting percentage nationwide, both in the electoral district where Christian was a majority or not. The most significant percentage of voters of Christian parties were from West Java province, a robust Islamic province with substantial issues on religious identity politics, especially in the 2014 and 2019 elections. One of the political parties that always gains victory in Islamic based districts in West Java is the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan* (PDI-P). The success is inseparable from the political communication of Christian legislative candidates in the constituencies. The theory used in this article is the Symbolic Interaction theory. The methodology is descriptive qualitative by explaining how the phenomenon of communication that occurs between Christian legislative candidates and the voters in the Islamic-based electoral district. The findings of this study are that the political communication of candidates for the Christian legislature uses a cultural approach to religion and local culture by approaching through the local cultural and religious orders, several local figures, i.e. religious, community leaders and

government leaders; and through free medication service, development of infrastructure facilities such as mosques, provision of drinking water, and roads.

### **Introduction**

General elections as a form of democracy in Indonesia have been going on since 1955. From one election to another, there have been changes from technical perspectives, depending on the implementation in the field. This study looks at the implementation of elections in Indonesia since the Reformation Era, in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 elections. Contestants vary in each election. In the 1999 Election, 48 political parties took place, in 2004 as many as 24 political parties, in the 2009 election 28 parties, in the 2014 12 parties and 2019 election 16 parties.

From all political parties that follow the contestants, there are always Christian legislative candidates who run from elective areas based on Islam. The uniqueness of this research shows that the legislative candidates who are Christian, win in the electoral districts that are predominantly Muslim. This data shows that religious differences in politics are not a serious problem, as is usually reported by the media. If we look at the percentage of the population who adhere to religions in Indonesia, it is impossible for a Christian legislative candidate to win the election from a Muslim base because the percentages are quite different, such as: 192,932,919 Muslims (88.8%), Protestants: 12,395,753 souls (5.7%), Catholics: 6,563,199 people (3.0%), Hindus: 3,698,282 people (1.7%), Buddhists: 1,306,248 people (0.6%), Confucian: 205,808 people (0.1%), Others: 243,931 people (0.1%). The total number of religions is 217,346,140 people (100%).

The existence of Christian politicians in 5 legislative elections in the Reformation Era cannot be separated from the political responsibility of the Christian community to participate in politics, both in local or national levels. The emergence of Christian parties in the Reformation Era Elections (Minkenberg, 2010; De Koster, Achterberg & Van, 2013; Mair, 2008) is inseparable from the national social and political situation with national unrest and upheavals, which left religious groups and ethnic minorities, victims. Christian people realized that the state did not protect the Christian communities. Christian politicians found it very important to get involved in both Christian and nationalist-based political parties. Therefore, this study seeks how the political communication of candidates for the Christian Party legislative party win votes in an Islamic-based electoral district while the purpose of this study is to analyze and uncover the political communication of Christian candidates when they run in strong Islamic bases, such as West Java, Banten, South Sulawesi, Riau, and several other regions. The benefits of this research can theoretically develop political communication for legislative candidates by using the symbolic interaction theory and the practical benefits of providing direction for legislative candidates to use political communication in winning votes based on the regions of their choices. The social benefits enlighten all people to be smart and careful in voting, not based on religion but the competency and credibility of legislative candidates.

### **Literature Review**

Research on Political Communication concerning reports in the legislative election campaign in Indonesia in 1999 was aimed to see how audiences from different groups comprehend and interpret campaign news broadcasted in television media using Focus Group Discussion. This study found that participants from different groups tended to understand and interpret the news differently, according to their socio-psychological background (Bar-Tal, 2013; Pawito, 2009). The Christian political representatives of the PDI-P and the *Golkar* Party won in the electoral districts whose acceptance is due much to the figures of the related candidates (Swestin & NurVidyarini, 2014).

**Political Communication as Part of Political Process** - In conveying ideas or thoughts, political parties need strategic communication so that the goals of legislative candidates and their constituents can be achieved accurately and effectively. Communication as political activity is delivering political messages by political actors to other parties (Larsson & Moe, 2014; McNair, 2017; Casero-Ripollés, Feenstra & Tormey, 2016). This activity is empirical because it is carried out clearly in social life. Political Communication is "all processes of information (including facts, opinions, beliefs", etc.) transmission, exchange and search engaged in participation in the course of institutionalized political activities (Arackal, 2015; Tsui, 2015). "Any exchange of symbols or messages that to a significant extent has been shaped by, or have consequences for the functioning of the political system (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2016)". It emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between communication and the political system. Communication between legislative candidates and voters in their constituencies becomes very important because it may solve the problem or create conflicts. Philosophically, the study of political communication is the study of the nature of human life to sustain life in the sphere of nation and state. The nature of experience as a motive or as a "das Wollen" (desire) that drives humans to take part which leads to the fulfilment of it.

**Political Parties and General Election** - Indonesia adheres to a democratic government system, where political parties are vehicles to link between the people and the government. Through political parties, the people have the right to determine who will be their representatives and who will be their leaders, determining public policies. Since the Reformation Era, political parties use many ways or strategies to win elections. For example, in the 1999 Election, campaigns used billboards, leaflets/booklets, newspapers, radio, television, and internet, each with advantages and disadvantages. In 2004 the legislative candidate campaigned through talk shows on television and radio, ran a poll, public opinion and the use of particular pages in print media. The public loved watching political talk show, watching which candidates are going forward, predicting and getting information from competent sources (Parkin, 2014; English, Sweetser & Ancu, 2011; Cook, 2006). In the 2014 and 2019 elections, legislative candidates used social media because they felt it was more useful to interact with their constituents. The symbolic interaction theory emphasizes it. It tries to understand human behaviour from the subject's point of view. This perspective suggests that human behaviour

must be seen as a process that enables human to form and manage their behaviour by considering other people's expectations. It is fundamental for social life is to use symbols in interaction (Cottingham, 2012; Hsieh & Tseng, 2017).

## Research Methodology

The research method is qualitative descriptive, using qualitative-interpretative categories (Naibaho, 2016), (Ali & Limakrisna, 2013). Research informants are determined by purposive sampling (Maseleno et al., 2019), in which the researcher deliberately chooses informant sources to fit the research objectives (Babbie, 2011). Five legislative candidates who won votes in the Islamic Electoral District were selected as informants. Data collection was obtained through in-depth interviews. Namely, the process of getting information for research purposes by way of the face to face question and answer (Bungin, 2010). Data is analyzed through breaking down, separating and dismantling in the form of individual pieces, elements, or units. The analysis was conducted by the opinion of Miles and Saldana, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation and concluding (Miles & Saldana, 2014).

## Result and Discussion

**Political Communication: Cultural and Religious Approaches** - The communication carried out by Christian candidates in Islamic-based electoral districts is done through religious and cultural approaches, in West Java, South Sulawesi and East Java, for example. From the interview, it is found that the religious and cultural approach is their entrance to voters whose religions and tribes are different from Christian candidates, said Maruarar Sirait, an informant. This Christian candidate from PDI-P explained in the interview as follows:

"I truly understand the culture in West Java Electoral District IX, including Subang, where I won twice. I got the most votes, as many as 128,850 votes, even though the area was more than 99.99% Muslim. I make friends with the Muslim religious leaders (*Kyai*) and students of Islamic boarding school (*pesantren's santri*). I also attended religious events at the *pesantren*. If you enter an area, we need to learn about the culture and try to learn their language. One of Sundanese philosophy is "*cai nu herang lauk na beunang* (we can catch the fish if the water is clear)". So this is about fighting for our vision, mission and goals correctly, not justifying any means."

Using local language is another cultural approach that is advantageous. Although not fluent, Maruarar speaks Sundanese language in the opening address to the voters or in daily meetings with residents. Maruarar explained,

"... We meet and greet citizens in their language. It is essential to appreciate the diversity of Indonesia, as Bung Karno always emphasized. I master the language, Sundanese, though not fluent like the locals because I studied at Parahiyangan. In every meeting, I attend, I always greet them in Sundanese. They appreciate it although I am not fluent".

Maruarar's explanation shows that mastery of local language is one of the powerful tools that unite him with the local community. Not much different, the second informant, Theodorus, explained that "the voters are modern and willing to accept change." He was not worried about the difference even though he was Catholic and had never lived or stayed in the area of his constituency:

"The important thing is that we do something for our constituencies not because of religious or ethnic backgrounds. We want them to develop, as mentioned by the Regent in his testimony. During the first period, I went to my electoral districts more than the Regent. I am also present in the small-scale development projects, not big ones. I am also present when problems occur in the village, though not all time. So I think religion is not a problem."

The people did not see his religious background but as a member of parliament who is ready to help them sincerely. In the last general election, he won over local candidates. Further, he explains:

"The people want change, I think, they don't buy issues like 'don't vote for non-Muslim' or 'vote for local people' I won because the previous legislative member, who were local people, did not keep their promises. They will accept those who give attention to them. They even campaigned for me. In Javanese tradition, people stay awake from 11 PM to 4 AM. They go to bed when 'the roosters start to crow'. I was there accompanying them, not campaigning. However, for them, it was indeed campaigning. Never before leaders, even Regent did that. People in many areas talk about what I did."

Another informant, Enggartiasto, who was born and grew up and spent his adolescence in the Cirebon area, confirmed the same thing. He has consistently blended with the culture and society of Cirebon, and he continued this until he has become a *Golkar* Party politician. It is difficult to get out of the constituency, admitted Enggartiasto. As Chairperson of the 2004-2009 *Golkar* Party DPP, he always urged members of the House of Representatives in the Regional Corps of Bali, NTB and NTT to establish relations as firmly as possible with their constituencies. Enggartiasto explained in the interview about his emotional closeness to his constituency as follows,

"I was chairman of *Golkar* Party at the time Jusuf Kalla was leading, and coordinator of Bali, NTB, NTT provinces. I brought all parliamentary members from those areas to discuss in the low governmental unit. I am fluent in the local language, and I was rooted there, I even curse in that language, something I will not want to lose."

In the interview, Enggartiasto explains that he learned tolerance from the place where he was brought up, Cirebon. In the Islamic dominated city and in Bandung, the city where he pursued higher education in IKIP. In all occasions, he would suspend the talks or programs at the time of prayer calls and starts again when it stops. This tolerant act amazes. Enggartiasto's statement above shows how much he enjoyed an association with the

people and culture in Cirebon, his hometown. In his work as a politician in the *Golkar* Party, he has long built close relations with the communities, including with their community leaders and religious leaders. So close that he was given the title Hajj Enggar. He focused on visiting all constituencies, especially in the period leading up to the General Election to provide an understanding of how to vote or mark the voting paper is regulated by law. Relating to his constituency, Enggartiasto said, "I always visited them in their villages, not just in the city, built a dialogue, come to help, etc. So their acceptance is earned. It is not easy. Because the rich man in the village was hajj, so I was also called Hajj Enggar. It is an appreciation. In the 2009 Election Campaign, where I got the most votes, I was in Cirebon for three months, staying in the hotel and was out in the field from morning to night 01.00 WIB visiting 75% villages. It was 75% because it's almost 100 at the time of simulation, the error rate is 100 per cent, so I go back there."

**Approaches to local and religious leaders and government officials** - One more strategy that Christian politicians do to get votes as many as possible is to win supports from the prominent local figures (royalties), religious leaders, community leaders, traditional leaders and other statistics. According to Christian politicians both in the PDI-P and in the *Golkar* Party, such an approach is quite effective in gaining support and confidence of the wider community. The support obtained by Christian candidates from local leaders has facilitated their penetrating to the people in their constituencies. Some candidates use the influence of local figures from the Royal families like Enggartiasto from the *Golkar* Party; some use the power of local figures from government officials like regents or mayors like Theodore from the PDI-P; and others use the influence of religious figures, like Markus and Enggartiasto. Enggartiasto explained thus in the interview, "I am close to Cirebon Kanoman Palace. The Minister of Kingdom campaigns for me, not outside the palace but inside. He said," he (Enggar) is a member of parliament. He has helped the palace.". They obeyed the order. I came and attended every program at Sunan Gunung Jati."

Enggarstiarto uses a patronizing strategy where the Minister of the kingdom orders the subordinates to follow orders. Another legislative candidate, Theodorus, is confident that his constituency understands the need to change and understands the multicultural condition of Indonesia. He explains in the interview:

"Political language is a sociological language, Javanese is a nursery of democracy and nationalism. In Java, everybody can apply for civil service. It is different outside Java. The people in Java has come to the point that they need welfare. We need people who want to pay attention to their well-being. I was positioned in East Java by the party. Strategically, I am suitable as council member there."

Theodorus in the interviews explains that he was accepted by his constituents, who made him a member of the Indonesian parliament for five years. Theodorus admitted, however, that his victory in becoming a member



of the House of the Representatives benefited from the top list of candidacy policy in the 2004 Legislative Election. The top of the list would become a member of the House of Representative. However, after the 2004 Legislative Election, Theodorus believed that his winning was due to immersing himself to the local people and became part of his constituents, both in terms of religion and the culture of their lives. It has proven that in the 2009 Legislative Election, Theodorus received a very significant vote, 300% more from the votes in the 2004 Election.

**Free medication approach** - Another political communication used by Christian candidates to win the Muslim voters is the typical approach in their constituencies. It is experienced by Dr. Ribka Tjiptaning, a Protestant Christian candidate who in the 2009 Legislative Election conducted community services in Sukabumi Regency, Sukabumi City, and Cianjur Regency. This strategy is essential because Tjiptaning realizes that the four challenges, she would encounter at the time she registered to run for candidacy, were far more complicated than her competitors. Regarding these four challenges, Tjiptaning explained:

"As mentioned by Taufik Kiemas, our senior politician at PDI-P, I was considered to have four weaknesses. He said that if I wanted to win, I must pass with flying colours. If I were in Solo, people know that my father was Javanese; in Jakarta or Tangerang, people are pluralists. Sukabumi was, however, different." My weaknesses are I am not Sundanese, I am not Islam, I am a woman, and I am stamped as the child of the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI) member. Sukabumi is Masyumi-based. However, wherever I gave my speech in the crowd, no one would ask me to step down or told me to leave just because I am Christian. No other Christian dared to replace my position in Sukabumi. When I won, Taufik said I was crazy."

The party's policy to place Tjiptaning in Sukabumi was out of the box since many people thought it was impossible for her to win.

"After the voting, a friend of mine suggested that I approached Mr. Taufik. I refused. Other people are busy going to the KPUD or the polling stations, and I was not. I had done my part when campaigning, and I left the rest to God. I succeeded and became chair of the commission because of my qualifications."

Tjiptaning was confident that she would be elected as Member of the House of Representatives because she used the health service approach to the community. According to her, there was already a secure emotional connection between herself and the community. She is very confident that free medication will remain active. She decided to continue to be a candidate for the same electoral district in the next elections. Tjiptaning explained:

"In the 2009 election, I won with the most votes. People who do not have a strong root from the start will choose money politics. I chose to have a strong root. I still choose to be in my electoral district now because I already have a single class hospital named "*Pelita Rakyat*." (meaning: People's Light) The name does not reflect particular religion,

no Muslim fanaticism in Muslim area or Christian fanaticism in Christian sites. So in Manado, for example, they must not talk only about the gospel."

**An approach to the provision of public facilities or infrastructures** - Building infrastructures like road or provision of facilities like drinking water or mosques buildings is practical tools to make them close to the communities, emphasized by Christian candidates. Enggartiasto was very concerned about the infrastructure and facilities for his constituency, even though he could not cover his identity as a Chinese descendant and a Protestant Christian. According to Enggartiasto, it is possible that citizens never asked themselves whether he was a Christian or not, but Enggartiasto could not possibly hide his identity as a Chinese descent. Enggartiasto did not hesitate to do the construction of facilities and infrastructure that were badly needed in the community, even including building facilities and infrastructure related to matters of houses of worship such as mosques. In the interview, Enggartiasto explained, "I have never hidden my identity as Chinese. It is obvious. I never said I was Javanese or Arabic. I built a Musholla and Mosque. That is me. I did not feel guilty because I also contributed to Church activities.

His constituency covers around 600 villages and 69 regencies. He admitted that he tried his best to help provide infrastructures and other facilities needed by the people. Christian representatives in the parliament not only come from nationalist parties but also Islamic-based parties. The Democratic Party and the Gerindra Party in the 2014 Legislative Election contributed 22 seats in the House of Representatives. In the 2019 Legislative Elections, the two parties only won 11 seats, the Gerindra Party with six chairs and the Democratic Party with five seats. In general, it can be said that the most significant number of Christian representatives contributed by two parties, namely the PDI-P and the *Golkar* Party, where the involvement of Christian politicians has never been devoid of Indonesian politics. It deserves to be analyzed. Miriam Budiardjo argued that since the mid-1980s, the authority of social sciences in Indonesia strongly encouraged the efforts of Indonesian scientists to develop political concepts from the treasury of Indonesian culture itself (Ford & Pepinsky, 2014; Porter, et al, 2011; Pratono & Sutanti, 2016).

The existence of Christian politicians in the House of Representatives during the three times of the Electoral Reform Era (Renwick, 2010; Norris, 2004; Giannetti & Thies, 2011) was apparently because of the support of Christian voters. Christian politicians were elected to the legislature because of the support of Muslim voters and especially precisely from a strong Islamic basis. The purpose of strong Islamic bases is that the majority or a significant portion and even almost the entire population in the constituency is Muslim. Muslim voters participate in electing legislators from the Christian Party.

### Conclusion

Religion, ethnicity, or local sentiments no longer sell in elections because what the voters see their candidates' capacity to prosper the community and

their direct involvement by communicating to the people in their constituents. Paying attention to the local culture, such as the use of mother tongue in the constituency is a strength. What touches the people is when they get closer to the local Kingdom's Minister or religious leaders. Through them, the community accept the candidates. Social service activities, such as building the hospitals, are political communications that can fulfil the community's welfare. Building facilities and infrastructures such as mosques, drinking water and roads are also political communications implemented by Christian legislative candidates who have been communicated from the beginning in their electoral districts. The victory of Christian political parties in the Muslim regions is a long process of political communication carried out by Christian legislative candidates in Islamic base areas. Since Symbolic Interaction theory is not enough to convince the voters, the personal approach should also be used. Legislative candidates are advised to be consistent with their constituents not only during the campaign but after being elected so that implementation can be demonstrated from what was done during the campaign. The following research methods are recommended using a mixed methodology.

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**BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS THE IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT – A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THOOTHUKUDI CITY**

Dr. V.C. JEYARATHA, Dr. S. SANTHANA KAMALA

5730-5736



**STUDYING THE WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN HAND WOVEN ARTIFACTS ACCORDING TO THE FEMINIST THEORY ON OBJECTIFICATION**

Sepideh Taravatimahjoubi

5737-5754



**EFFECT OF USING AMO THEORY ON GHRM ON SERVICE QUALITY WITH OCBE AS MEDIATION IN THE PANDEMIC TIME OF COVID-19 IN INDONESIA, SOE HOSPITAL**

Asep Saifudin, M. Havidz Aima, Achmad Hidayat Sutawijaya, Sugiyono

5755-5775



**POLITICAL COMMUNICATION OF CHRISTIAN LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES IN ISLAMIC-BASED VOTERS: A STUDY OF THE LEGISLATIVE GENERAL ELECTION IN INDONESIA REFORMED ERA OF 1999-2019**

Chontina Siahaan, Osbin Samosir, Hapzi Ali

5776-5786



**THE IMPACT OF WORK LOAD AND WORK STRESS ON EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENTS MOBILE SAKTI COMPANY**

Eric Hermawan, Madha Komala, Corry Yohana

5787-5802



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## ABSTRACT

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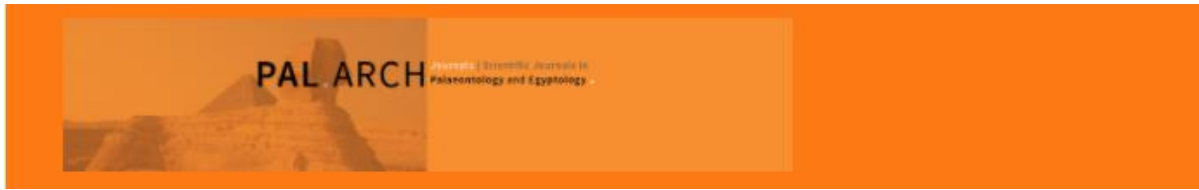
**Chontina Siahaan<sup>1\*</sup>, Osbin Samosir<sup>2</sup>, Hapzi Ali<sup>3</sup> -- Political Communication Of  
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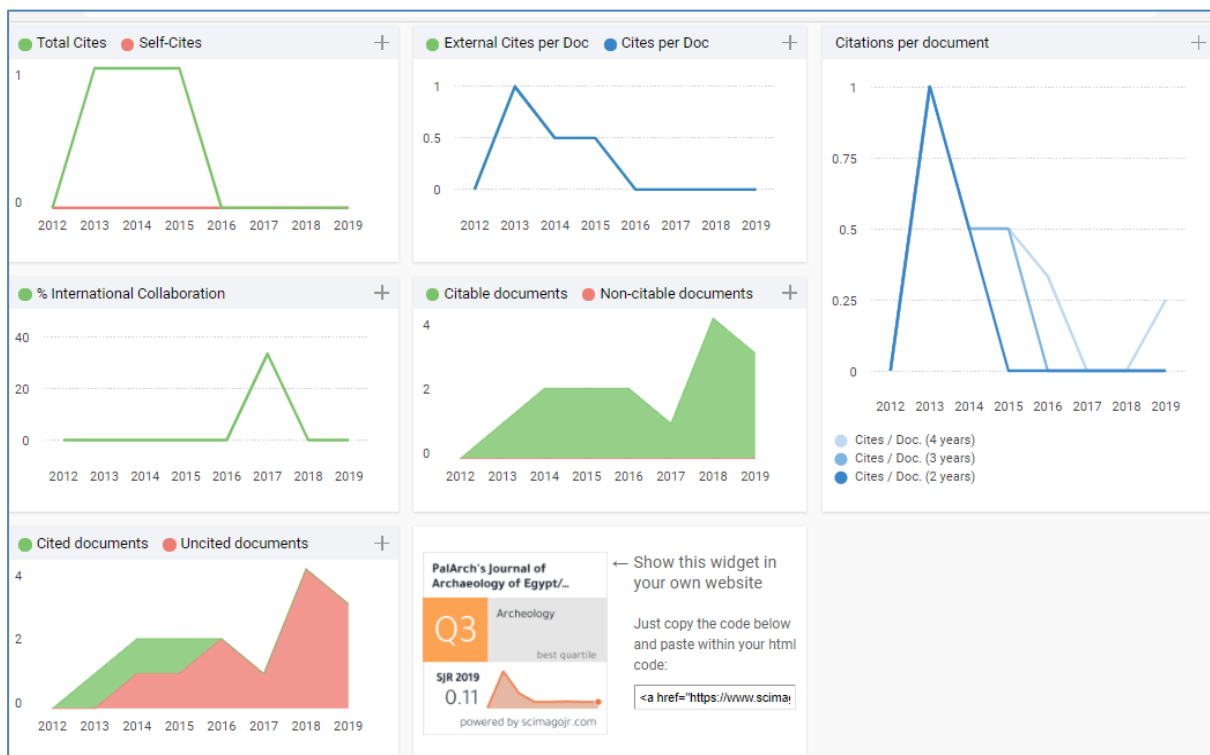
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Political Communication of Christian Legislative Candidates in Islamic-Based Voters: A study of the legislative general election in Indonesia Reformed Era of 1999-2019 Chontina Siahaan<sup>1\*</sup>, Osbin Samosir<sup>2</sup>, Hapzi Ali<sup>3</sup> <sup>1\*</sup>Communication Science Study Program, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta, email: chontina.siahaan@uki.ac.id <sup>2</sup>Political Science Study Program, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta, email: osamosir@gmail.com <sup>3</sup>Department of Doctoral Program, Universitas Mercu Buana, Jakarta Indonesia. email. hapzi.ali@mercubuana.ac.id Corresponding author: Chontina Siahaan<sup>1\*</sup> Abstract -This study aims to analyze the political communication of Christian legislative candidates in Islamic-based voters.

Christian **political parties in the** five election periods in the Reformation Era, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 always got significant voting percentage nationwide, both in the electoral district where Christian was a majority or not. The most significant percentage of voters of Christian parties were from West Java province, a robust Islamic province with substantial issues on religious identity politics, especially in the 2014 and 2019 elections. One of the political parties that always gains victory in Islamic based districts in West Java is the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (PDI-P).

The success is inseparable from the political communication of Christian legislative candidates in the constituencies. The theory used in this article is the Symbolic Interaction theory. The methodology is descriptive qualitative by explaining how the phenomenon of communication that occurs between Christian legislative candidates and the voters in the Islamic-based electoral district. The findings of this study are that the political communication of candidates for the Christian legislature uses a cultural approach to religion and local culture by approaching through the local cultural and

religious orders, several local figures, i.e.

religious, community leaders and government leaders; and through free medication service, development of infrastructure facilities such as mosques, provision of drinking water, and roads. Keywords: Political communication, legislative, Islamic-basis, general election Introduction General elections as a form of democracy in Indonesia have been going on since 1955. From one election to another, there have been changes from technical perspectives, depending on the implementation in the field. This study looks at the implementation of elections in Indonesia since the Reformation Era, in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 elections.

Contestants vary in each election. In the 1999 Election, 48 political parties took place, in 2004 as many as 24 political parties, in the 2009 election 28 parties, in the 2014 12 parties and 2019 election 16 parties. From all political parties that follow the contestants, there are always Christian legislative candidates who run from elective areas based on Islam. The uniqueness of this research shows that the legislative candidates who are Christian, win in the electoral districts that are predominantly Muslim.

This data shows that religious differences in politics are not a serious problem, as is usually reported by the media. If we look at the percentage of the population who adhere to religions in Indonesia, it is impossible for a Christian legislative candidate to win the election from a Muslim base because the percentages are quite different, such as: 192,932,919 Muslims (88.8%), Protestants: 12,395,753 souls (5.7%), Catholics: 6,563,199 people (3.0%), Hindus: 3,698,282 people (1.7%), Buddhists: 1,306,248 people (0.6%), Confucian: 205,808 people (0.1%), Others: 243,931 people (0.1%).

The total number of religions is 217,346,140 people (100%). The existence of Christian politicians in 5 legislative elections in the Reformation Era cannot be separated from the political responsibility of the Christian community to participate in politics, both in local or national levels. The emergence of Christian parties in the Reformation Era Elections (Minkenberg, 2010; De Koster, Achterberg & Van, 2013; Mair, 2008) is inseparable from the national social and political situation with national unrest and upheavals, which left religious groups and ethnic minorities, victims. Christian people realized that the state did not protect the Christian communities. Christian politicians found it very important to get involved in both Christian and nationalist-based political parties.

Therefore, this study seeks how the political communication of candidates for the Christian Party legislative party win votes in an Islamic-based electoral district while the purpose of this study is to analyze and uncover the political communication of Christian candidates when they run in strong Islamic bases, such as West Java, Banten, South

Sulawesi, Riau, and several other regions. The benefits of this research can theoretically develop political communication for legislative candidates by using **the symbolic interaction theory** and the practical benefits of providing direction for legislative candidates to use political communication in winning votes based on the regions of their choices. The social benefits enlighten all people to be smart and careful in voting, not based on religion but the competency and credibility of legislative candidates.

Literature Review Research on Political Communication concerning reports in the legislative election campaign in Indonesia in 1999 was aimed to see how audiences from different groups comprehend and interpret campaign news broadcasted in television media using Focus Group Discussion. This study found that participants from different groups tended to understand and interpret the news differently, according to their socio-psychological background (Bar-Tal, 2013; Pawito, 2009). The Christian political representatives of the PDI-P and the Golkar Party won in the electoral districts whose acceptance is due much to the figures of the related candidates (Swestin & NurVidyarini, 2014).

Political Communication as Part of Political Process - In conveying ideas or thoughts, political parties need strategic communication so that the goals of legislative candidates and their constituents can be achieved accurately and effectively. Communication as political activity is delivering political messages by political actors to other parties (Larsson & Moe, 2014; McNair, 2017; Casero-Ripollés, Feenstra & Tormey, 2016). This activity is empirical because it is carried out clearly in social life. Political Communication is "all processes of information (including facts, opinions, beliefs", etc.)

transmission, exchange and search engaged in participation in the course of institutionalized political activities (Arackal, 2015; Tsui, 2015). "Any exchange of symbols or messages that to a significant extent has been shaped by, or have consequences for the functioning of the political system (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2016)". It emphasizes the reciprocal **relationship between communication and** the political system. Communication between legislative candidates and voters in their constituencies becomes very important because it may solve the problem or create conflicts.

Philosophically, **the study of political communication** is the study of the nature of human life to sustain life in the sphere of nation and state. The nature of experience as a motive or as a "das Wollen" (desire) that drives humans to take part which leads to the fulfilment of it. Political Parties and General Election - Indonesia adheres to a democratic government system, where political parties are vehicles to link between the people and the government.

Through political parties, the people have the right to determine who will be their representatives and who will be their leaders, determining public policies. Since the Reformation Era, political parties use many ways or strategies to win elections. For example, in the 1999 Election, campaigns used billboards, leaflets/booklets, newspapers, radio, television, and internet, each with advantages and disadvantages. In 2004 the legislative candidate campaigned through talk shows on television and radio, ran a poll, public opinion and the use of particular pages in print media.

The public loved watching political talk show, watching which candidates are going forward, predicting and getting information from competent sources (Parkin, 2014; English, Sweetser & Ancu, 2011; Cook, 2006). In the 2014 and 2019 elections, legislative candidates used social media because they felt it was more useful to interact with their constituents. The symbolic interaction theory emphasizes it. It tries to understand human behaviour from the subject's point of view. This perspective suggests that human behaviour must be seen as a process that enables human to form and manage their behaviour by considering other people's expectations.

It is fundamental for social life is to use symbols in interaction (Cottingham, 2012; Hsieh & Tseng, 2017). Research Methodology The research method is qualitative descriptive, using qualitative-interpretative categories (Naibaho, 2016), (Ali & Limakrisna, 2013). Research informants are determined by purposive sampling, in which the researcher deliberately chooses informant sources to fit the research objectives (Babbie, 2011).

Five legislative candidates who won votes in the Islamic Electoral District were selected as informants. Data collection was obtained through in-depth interviews. Namely, the process of getting information for research purposes by way of the face to face question and answer (Bungin, 2010). Data is analyzed through breaking down, separating and dismantling in the form of individual pieces, elements, or units. The analysis was conducted by the opinion of Miles and Saldana, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation and concluding (Miles & Saldana, 2014).

Result and Discussion Political Communication: Cultural and Religious Approaches - The communication carried out by Christian candidates in Islamic-based electoral districts is done through religious and cultural approaches, in West Java, South Sulawesi and East Java, for example. From the interview, it is found that the religious and cultural approach is their entrance to voters whose religions and tribes are different from Christian candidates, said Maruarar Sirait, an informant. This Christian candidate from PDI-P explained in the interview as follows: "I truly understand the culture in West Java Electoral District IX, including Subang, where I won twice.



I got the most votes, as many as 128,850 votes, even though the area was more than 99.99% Muslim. I make friends with the Muslim religious leaders (Kyai) and students of Islamic boarding school (pesantren's santri). I also attended religious events at the pesantren. If you enter an area, we need to learn about the culture and try to learn their language. One of Sundanese philosophy is "cai nu herang lauk na beunang (we can catch the fish if the water is clear)". So this is about fighting for our vision, mission and goals correctly, not justifying any means." Using local language is another cultural approach that is advantageous.

Although not fluent, Maruarar speaks Sundanese language in the opening address to the voters or in daily meetings with residents. Maruarar explained, "... We meet and greet citizens in their language. It is essential to appreciate the diversity of Indonesia, as Bung Karno always emphasized. I master the language, Sundanese, though not fluent like the locals because I studied at Parahiyangan. In every meeting, I attend, I always greet them in Sundanese. They appreciate it although I am not fluent". Maruarar's explanation shows that mastery of local language **is one of the** powerful tools that unite him with the local community.

Not much different, the second informant, Theodorus, explained that "the voters are modern and willing to accept change." He was not worried about the difference even though he was Catholic and had never lived or stayed in the area of his constituency: "The important thing is that we do something for our constituencies not because of religious or ethnic backgrounds. We want them to develop, as mentioned by the Regent in his testimony. During the first period, I went to my electoral districts more than the Regent. I am also present in the small-scale development projects, not big ones.

I am also present when problems occur in the village, though not all time. So I think religion is not a problem." The people did not see his religious background but **as a member of** parliament who is ready to help them sincerely. In the last general election, he won over local candidates. Further, he explains: "The people want change, I think, they don't buy issues like 'don't vote for non-Muslim' or 'vote for local people' I won because the previous legislative member, who were local people, did not keep their promises.

They will accept those who give attention to them. They even campaigned for me. In Javanese tradition, people stay awake from 11 PM to 4 AM. They go to bed when 'the roosters start to crow'. I was there accompanying them, not campaigning. However, for them, it was indeed campaigning. Never before leaders, even Regent did that. People in many areas talk about what I did." Another informant, Enggartiasto, who was born and

grew up and spent his adolescence in the Cirebon area, confirmed the same thing.

He has consistently blended with the culture and society of Cirebon, and he continued this until he has become a Golkar Party politician. It is difficult to get out of the constituency, admitted Enggartiasto. As Chairperson of the 2004-2009 Golkar Party DPP, he always urged members of the House of Representatives in the Regional Corps of Bali, NTB and NTT to establish relations as firmly as possible with their constituencies. Enggartiasto explained in the interview about his emotional closeness to his constituency as follows, "I was chairman of Golkar Party at the time Jusuf Kalla was leading, and coordinator of Bali, NTB, NTT provinces.

I brought all parliamentary members from those areas to discuss in the low governmental unit. I am fluent in the local language, and I was rooted there, I even curse in that language, something I will not want to lose." In the interview, Enggartiasto explains that he learned tolerance from the place where he was brought up, Cirebon. In the Islamic dominated city and in Bandung, the city where he pursued higher education in IKIP. In all occasions, he would suspend the talks or programs at the time of prayer calls and starts again when it stops. This tolerant act amazes.

Enggartiasto's statement above shows how much he enjoyed an association with the people and culture in Cirebon, his hometown. In his work as a politician in the Golkar Party, he has long built close relations with the communities, including with their community leaders and religious leaders. So close that he was given the title Hajj Enggar. He focused on visiting all constituencies, especially in the period leading up to the General Election to provide an understanding of how to vote or mark the voting paper is regulated by law.

Relating to his constituency, Enggartiasto said, "I always visited them in their villages, not just in the city, built a dialogue, come to help, etc. So their acceptance is earned. It is not easy. Because the rich man in the village was hajj, so I was also called Hajj Enggar. It is an appreciation. In the 2009 Election Campaign, where I got the most votes, I was in Cirebon for three months, staying in the hotel and was out in the field from morning to night 01.00 WIB visiting 75% villages.

It was 75% because it's almost 100 at the time of simulation, the error rate is 100 per cent, so I go back there." Approaches to local and religious leaders and government officials - One more strategy that Christian politicians do to get votes as many as possible is to win supports from the prominent local figures (royalties), religious leaders, community leaders, traditional leaders and other statistics. According to Christian politicians both in the PDI-P and in the Golkar Party, such an approach is quite effective

in gaining support and confidence of the wider community.

The support obtained by Christian candidates from local leaders has facilitated their penetrating to the people in their constituencies. Some candidates use the influence of local figures from the Royal families like Enggartiasto from the Golkar Party; some use the power of local figures from government officials like regents or mayors like Theodore from the PDI-P; and others use the influence of religious figures, like Markus and Enggartiasto. Enggartiasto explained thus in the interview, "I am close to Cirebon Kanoman Palace. The Minister of Kingdom campaigns for me, not outside the palace but inside.

He said," he (Enggar) is a member of parliament. He has helped the palace." . They obeyed the order. I came and attended every program at Sunan Gunung Jati." Enggarstiarto uses a patronizing strategy where the Minister of the kingdom orders the subordinates to follow orders. Another legislative candidate, Theodorus, is confident that his constituency understands the need to change and understands the multicultural condition of Indonesia.

He explains in the interview: "Political language is a sociological language, Javanese is a nursery of democracy and nationalism. In Java, everybody can apply for civil service. It is different outside Java. The people in Java has come to the point that they need welfare. We need people who want to pay attention to their well-being. I was positioned in East Java by the party. Strategically, I am suitable as council member there." Theodorus in the interviews explains that he was accepted by his constituents, who made him a member of the Indonesian parliament for five years.

Theodorus admitted, however, that his victory in becoming a member of the House of the Representatives benefited from the top list of candidacy policy in the 2004 Legislative Election. The top of the list would become a member of the House of Representative. However, after the 2004 Legislative Election, Theodorus believed that his winning was due to immersing himself to the local people and became part of his constituents, both in terms of religion and the culture of their lives. It has proven that in the 2009 Legislative Election, Theodorus received a very significant vote, 300% more from the votes in the 2004 Election.

Free medication approach - Another political communication used by Christian candidates to win the Muslim voters is the typical approach in their constituencies. It is experienced by Dr. Ribka Tjiptaning, a Protestant Christian candidate who in the 2009 Legislative Election conducted community services in Sukabumi Regency, Sukabumi City, and Cianjur Regency. This strategy is essential because Tjiptaning realizes that the four

challenges, she would encounter at the time she registered to run for candidacy, were far more complicated than her competitors.

Regarding these four challenges, Tjiptaning explained: "As mentioned by Taufik Kiemas, our senior politician at PDI-P, I was considered to have four weaknesses. He said that if I wanted to win, I must pass with flying colours. If I were in Solo, people know that my father was Javanese; in Jakarta or Tangerang, people are pluralists. Sukabumi was, however, different." My weaknesses are I am not Sundanese, I am not Islam, I am a woman, and I am stamped as the child of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) member. Sukabumi is Masyumi-based.

However, wherever I gave my speech in the crowd, no one would ask me to step down or told me to leave just because I am Christian. No other Christian dared to replace my position in Sukabumi. When I won, Taufik said I was crazy." The party's policy to place Tjiptaning in Sukabumi was out of the box since many people thought it was impossible for her to win. "After the voting, a friend of mine suggested that I approached Mr. Taufik. I refused. Other people are busy going to the KPUD or the polling stations, and I was not. I had done my part when campaigning, and I left the rest to God. I succeeded and became chair of the commission because of my qualifications."

Tjiptaning was confident that she would be elected as Member of the House of Representatives because she used the health service approach to the community. According to her, there was already a secure emotional connection between herself and the community. She is very confident that free medication will remain active. She decided to continue to be a candidate for the same electoral district in the next elections. Tjiptaning explained: "In the 2009 election, I won with the most votes. People who do not have a strong root from the start will choose money politics. I chose to have a strong root. I still choose to be in my electoral district now because I already have a single class hospital named "Pelita Rakyat."

(meaning: People's Light) The name does not reflect particular religion, no Muslim fanaticism in Muslim area or Christian fanaticism in Christian sites. So in Manado, for example, they must not talk only about the gospel." An approach to the provision of public facilities or infrastructures - Building infrastructures like road or provision of facilities like drinking water or mosques buildings is practical tools to make them close to the communities, emphasized by Christian candidates. Enggartiasto was very concerned about the infrastructure and facilities for his constituency, even though he could not cover his identity as a Chinese descendant and a Protestant Christian.

According to Enggartiasto, it is possible that citizens never asked themselves whether he

was a Christian or not, but Enggartiasto could not possibly hide his identity as a Chinese descent. Enggartiasto **did not hesitate to** do the construction of facilities and infrastructure that were badly needed in the community, even including building facilities and infrastructure related to matters of houses of worship such as mosques. In the interview, Enggartiasto explained, "I have never hidden my identity as Chinese. It is obvious. I never said I was Javanese or Arabic. I built a Musholla and Mosque. That is me. I did not feel guilty because I also contributed to Church activities.

His constituency covers around 600 villages and 69 regencies. He admitted that he tried his best to help provide infrastructures and other facilities needed by the people. Christian representatives in the parliament not only come from nationalist parties but also Islamic- based parties. The Democratic Party and the Gerindra Party in the 2014 Legislative Election contributed 22 **seats in the House of** Representatives. In the 2019 Legislative Elections, the two parties only won 11 seats, the Gerindra Party with six chairs and the Democratic Party with five seats.

In general, it can be said that the most significant number of Christian representatives contributed by two parties, namely the PDI-P and the Golkar Party, where the involvement of Christian politicians has never been devoid of Indonesian politics. It deserves to be analyzed. Miriam Budiardjo argued that since the mid-1980s, the authority of social sciences in Indonesia strongly encouraged the efforts of Indonesian scientists to develop political concepts from the treasury of Indonesian culture itself (Ford & Pepinsky, 2014; Porter, et al, 2011; Pratono & Sutanti, 2016).

The existence of Christian politicians **in the House of Representatives** during the three times of the Electoral Reform Era (Renwick, 2010; Norris, 2004; Giannetti & Thies, 2011) was apparently because of the support of Christian voters. Christian politicians were elected to the legislature because of the support of Muslim voters and especially precisely from a strong Islamic basis. The purpose of strong Islamic bases is that the majority or a significant portion and even almost the entire population in the constituency is Muslim. Muslim voters participate in electing legislators from the Christian Party.

Conclusion Religion, ethnicity, or local sentiments no longer sell in elections because what the voters see their candidates' capacity to prosper the community and their direct involvement by communicating to the people in their constituents. Paying attention to the local culture, such as the use of mother tongue in the constituency is a strength. What touches the people is when they get closer to the local Kingdom's Minister or religious leaders. Through them, the community accept the candidates. Social service activities, such as building the hospitals, are political communications that can fulfil the

community's welfare.

Building facilities and infrastructures such as mosques, drinking water and roads are also political communications implemented by Christian legislative candidates who have been communicated from the beginning in their electoral districts. The victory of Christian **political parties in the** Muslim regions is a long process of political communication carried out by Christian legislative candidates in Islamic base areas. Since Symbolic Interaction theory **is not enough to** convince the voters, the personal approach should also be used.

Legislative candidates are advised to be consistent with their constituents not only during the campaign but after being elected so that implementation can be demonstrated from what was done during the campaign. The following research methods are recommended using a mixed methodology. References Ali, H., & Limakrisna, N. (2013). Research Methodology (Practical Guidelines for Business Problem Solving, Thesis Writing, Thesis and Dissertation). Deepublish: Yogyakarta. Arackal, F. (2015). Social Media as a Tool of Political Communication. In Conference Paper, Jaipur, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/300370737\\_Social\\_Media\\_as\\_a\\_Tool\\_for\\_Political\\_Communication](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/300370737_Social_Media_as_a_Tool_for_Political_Communication)

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