

## RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN THE 2019 INDONESIA-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

**Iswandi<sup>1</sup>, Gibran Abdullah<sup>2</sup>**

Faculty of Shariah and Law, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga  
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta  
Email: [Iswandish239@gmail.com](mailto:Iswandish239@gmail.com), [gibranabdullah21@gmail.com](mailto:gibranabdullah21@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*The election of a president and vice president is a fundamental way to fill the vacuum of power. However, in the 2019 presidential election, a striking phenomenon with the involvement of religion in the political contest so that there are many pros and cons if it is not suitable for the desire of each religious elite in the 2019 presidential election. The involvement of religion in the presidential election raises questions such as first, how religion was involved in the presidential election process; Second, how religious discourse takes place in legitimating a particular process in the presidential election; and Third, how does religious involvement in the presidential election bring consequences to the life of society as a whole.*

*The method used in this paper is a qualitative method. The qualitative method is often referred to as the generic qualitative method, which is to find out several indications of the 2019 presidential election with the involvement of religion as a marker of identity while the primary data source obtained from various online media in the form of writing or in the form of direct coverage and analysis of the author's using descriptive analysis.*

*During the presidential election, the religious elite considers emotional feelings as a priority so that they come out of the core problem. So that religion in the presidential election is only an instrument of political interests and can not be avoided again through movements that ultimately lead to pros and cons among fellow religious elites. Thus the professionalism of religion will be difficult to create because it is caused by religious elites who legitimize religion into practical politics.*

**Keywords:** *Politic, Religious Issue, Presidential Election*

### **A. Introduction**

The main topic in the 2019 presidential election was religion as a bridge to achieve victory. Religious involvement in a practical politics contestation in the 2019 general elections began in a large-scale demonstration of Islamic mass in 2016 in the context of demands against the governor of DKI Jakarta, which was considered conducting a blasphemy. As practical politics occur in the presidential election, religion becomes the main *marker*. Through the legitimacy of religion, each group has the power of religion (Islam) as the basis for achieving the goals of each candidate. While, the involvement of religion in practical politics basically does not have a positive impact, because it causes more conflict among religious communities. According to Budi Kurniawan, in



## **Religious Issues in the 2019 Indonesia-Presidential Election**

2018, the movement was dichotomized by the party of Allah and the Party of Satan, when the political movement # 2019GantiPresiden (#2019ChangeThePresident). Religious politics occur in a long time after various kinds of terms emerged, which had an impact on the pros and cons of religious diversity.<sup>1</sup>

As far as the study of religious identity politics before Indonesian independence is a moral framework in achieving national sovereignty; however, the development of spiritual identity politics has been legitimized in practical politics space. As expressed by Ahmad Isnaini, that religious legitimacy has existed since the movement of DI / TII, one of the political movements in the name of religion, the political content carried out is based on justification under the guise of religion, so that is very indecisive about creating violence between religious communities or even those with different understandings with their movements.<sup>2</sup> It continues in the reform era with the strengthening of religious identity politics very indecisive there is a difference in the will, while the reformation concept focuses on the concept of pluralism system. In the concept of pluralism in dealing with political situations (the 2019 presidential election), religion basically has to position itself as integrative rather than on the contrary disintegrative. Because, if religion is placed not in accordance with its position, it will lead to conflict among the groups, because it is due to the nature of supporting egoism and identity politics of religious background.<sup>3</sup> From these two aspects, there has not been a more specific study related to the role of political identity (religion) in the presidential election.

The purpose of this study is to examine in-depth how religion became a commodity used in the presidential election process, which occurred in Indonesia. Faith in the presidential election has become a tool of political

---

<sup>1</sup> Budi Kurniawan, "Politisisasi Agama Di Tahun Politik : Politik Pasca-Kebenaran Di Indonesia." (Jurnal Sosiologi Agama; 2018), p.59

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Isnaini, "Kekerasan Atas Nama Agama." (Jurnal *Kalam*, IAIN Raden Intan Lampung;2017), p.213

<sup>3</sup>Masykuri Abdillah, "Hubungan Agama Dan Negara Dalam Konteks Modernisasi Politik Di Era Reformasi." (Jurnal Ilmu Syariah, Fakultas Syariah dan Hukum UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta; 2013), p. 250.

transformation. In the campaign, religious diction is becoming a trend and is used to attract people's attention. For this reason, three questions can be asked: first, how religion is involved in the presidential election process; Second, how religion discourse takes place in legitimating a particular process in the presidential election; and Third, how does religious involvement in the presidential election bring consequences to the life of society as a whole?

This paper is based on the assumption that political identity in Indonesia is still occurring, even religious reproduction has taken place, in particular, in the political sphere due to the importance of religious identity. (The implementation of political identity/religion is still carried out as a *marker of identity* in society; why political identity is still relevant? What are the broad implications of the existence of political identity ).

## **A. Literature Review**

### **1. The legitimacy of religion in politics**

Religious and political relations are reciprocal processes in which both entities have a process of attraction of interest. Religion has a strategic role in constructing in providing a framework of values and norms in building the structure of the state and disciplining society. Whereas, the state uses religion as dogmatic legitimacy to bind citizens to obey the state.

The existence of a reciprocal relationship creates a mutually dominating relationship between the two entities.<sup>4</sup> In its development, the relationship between politics and religion is particular to each country; besides, an evolution of the process of secularization and de-secularization. The process of secularization and de-secularization appears to be influenced by contingents of political choice in the context of power struggles. Every social force aimed at achieving and consolidating power requires a certain level of popular support.<sup>5</sup>

In the process of power struggle, political actors use various strategies to gain enormous support. One of the attempts is used in political circles or

---

<sup>4</sup> Wasisto Raharjo Jati, Agama dan Politik: Teologi Pembebasan sebagai Arena Profetisasi Agama, (Pusat Penelitian Lipi Jakarta; 2014), p.134

<sup>5</sup>Loretta Dell'Aguzzo & Ester Sigillò. Political legitimacy and variations in state-religion relations in Tunisia, (The Journal of North African Studies, DOI: 10.1080/13629387.2017.1340841; 2017), p. 5

interests is religious legitimacy. Legitimacy as defined by Gerschewsky<sup>6</sup> as *the belief that a given actor has the right to govern and legitimization as the process through which actors and institutions attempt to legitimate their rule*. According to Aguzzo and Ester, legitimacy can be based on different sources, and the higher the source in which the political actors can claim legitimacy, the higher his political chance of surviving. Religious legitimacy can be done by transforming religious values that are directly or indirectly into the political sphere. In the political context of the struggle for power, religious doctrine is very effective in gathering the masses.<sup>7</sup> Whereas in Nurhadi's writing, reported forms of religious legitimacy in politics such as the use of fatwas or certain terms often used in influencing voters, fatwas, or developing terms are something that is reasonable as a way to appeal voters as long as it does not contain a negative image.<sup>8</sup>

The influence of religious legitimacy in the political context shown by Aguzzo and Esther's writing in the contemporary Tunisian context has led to the religious dynamics of secularization and de-secularization, which was influenced mainly by political player attempts to legitimate.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Vel<sup>10</sup> has reported in his research in West Sumba where religion was being played in the election campaign and has succeeded in attracting voters. In line with Vel's research, another study conducted by Blaydes and Tarouty<sup>11</sup> reported that the role of the instrument of religious legitimacy used by the

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.6

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>8</sup> Nurhadi Sunarso, Peran Kiai dalam Membangun Partisipasi Pemilih. (Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan;2018), p.147

<sup>9</sup> Loretta Dell'Aguzzo & Ester Sigillò. Political legitimacy and variations in state-religion relations in Tunisia, p. 10

<sup>10</sup> Jacqueline Vel, A.C., An Ethnography of Democratization in West Sumba, Indonesia, 1986-2006. Published by: Brill. (2008). Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76wwq.16>

<sup>11</sup> Kris Nugroholkhtiar Teoritik Mengkaji Peran Partai dalam Mobilisasi Politik Elektoral. Jurnal Departemen Politik, Universitas Airlangga; 2011), p. 210-214

Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt as an effective instrument to drive females of middle and lower classes.

## **2. Involvement of Religious Figures in Politics**

Political mobilization activities for electoral purposes are not only carried out by and through political parties but can also be carried out through political mobilization instruments of non-political parties. One of the political mobilization instruments used, according to Feith, quoted by Nugroho in his writing, is a network of religious figures /cleric and participation network. This social base connects political parties to the masses through social organizations or religious figures and is exploited for the interests of political mobilization of each political party. Religious figures are leaders of a religion that has a wide and large influence in society either because of their knowledge or because of their charismatic respected by the community. Religious figures, according to Rush and Althof, are political figures seen from political structures as political socialization groups in the family, education, peer groups, and workgroups.<sup>12</sup>

Democratic political developments provide space for all strata of society to play a role, including local elites such as religious figures. Religious figures can act to give or not provide political support for campaign activities and votes in general elections.<sup>13</sup> Several studies have shown how the relationship between religious and political figures as Chalik describes how religious figures play a dual role as religious leaders (dealing with spiritual aspects) and community figures (related to sociopolitical aspects).<sup>14</sup> Religious figures can be classified as elite groups who are not only as voters, but they also have political power, and some of them are politicians from the political parties leading parliamentarians. Other research conducted by Nurhadi<sup>15</sup> shows that religious figures cannot be separated from politics in which religious figures is a reference for society in determining their political orientation in elections and are considered as a

---

<sup>12</sup>Nurhadi Sunarso, *Peran Kiai dalam Membangun Partisipasi Pemilih*, p. 145

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.1

<sup>14</sup>Abdul Chalik Religion and Local Politics Exploring the Subcultures and the Political Participation of East Java NU Elites in the Post-New Order Era. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*; ISSN1978-6301. Published by the Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (LSAS) and the Postgraduate Program (PPs), the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya–Indonesia; 2010), p. 115

<sup>15</sup>Nurhadi Sunarso, *Peran Kiai dalam Membangun Partisipasi Pemilih*, p. 145-146

person who is able to influence and determine life and change in society. Kingsley<sup>16</sup>, in his article, also showed the role of religious figures who were very important for any analysis of social-political affairs and conflict management.

### **3. Ethnopolitics in General Elections**

In societies that tend to be homogeneous, problems can arise in General elections, especially in a plural society, which has many types of backgrounds. When making a choice, a person starts from his identity, as well as his chosen identity. Some political parties then attach a religious identity to him so that adherents of the religion sided with them.<sup>17</sup> In "Western" countries, the dichotomy that arises in politics is mostly interreligious. As mentioned by Olson & Warber<sup>18</sup> (2008), in America political affiliation to religion emerged: Protestant and Catholic. In countries with a Muslim majority, ethnopolitical discourses revolve around Muslims and non-Muslims<sup>1920</sup> as well as Islamic and non-Islamic<sup>2122</sup>. In Nusantara, the grouping of political parties is divided into Islamic parties and non-Islamic parties.<sup>23</sup>

Often one identity also overlaps with another identity. The notion of shared descent in ethnic identity can be elaborated to include sharing the same ancestral language, place of origin, ethnicity, or religion.<sup>24</sup> In Malaysia, for example, the divisions of Muslims

---

<sup>16</sup>J. Kingsley, Jeremy, Peacemakers or Peace-Breakers? Provincial Elections and Religious Leadership in Lombok, (Southeast Asia Program Publications at Cornell University; 2012), p. 61

<sup>17</sup>B. Reilly Electoral Systems for Divided Societies.(Journal of Democracy;2002), p. 156-170.

<sup>18</sup>Warber, A.L. Belonging,& L.R. Olson Behaving, and Believing: Assessing the Role of Religion on Presidential Approval. (Political Research Quarterly; 2008), p. 192-204.

<sup>19</sup>Warber, A.L. Belonging,& L.R. Olson Behaving, and Believing: Assessing the Role of Religion on Presidential Approval. (Political Research Quarterly; 2008), p. 192-204.

<sup>20</sup>W.Miles Muslim Ethnopolitics and Presidential Elections in Nigeria.(Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, African studies center leiden; 2000), p. 229-241.

<sup>21</sup>F.A. Gerges, The Islamist Moment: From Islamic State to Civil Islam? (Political Science Quarterly, Academy of political Science; 2013), h.389-426.

<sup>22</sup>Schwedler, J. A Paradox of Democracy? Islamist Participation in Elections. (Middle East Report; 1998), h. 25-29.

<sup>23</sup>L. Suryadinata, Golkar of Indonesia: Recent Developments. (Contemporary Southeast Asia, 1997), p. 190-204.

<sup>24</sup>E.J. Macapagal, dkk.The Unifying and Divisive Effects of Social Identities: Religious and Ethnopolitical Identities among Mindanao Muslims in the Philippines. (Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology; 2018), p. 12

and non-Muslims overlap with ethnic identity. Martinez explained the existence of a strong split conflict in Malaysia. The perpetuation of this conflict is carried out by the mass media such as newspapers, between Malays and non-Malays, as well as Muslims and non-Muslims. Then the conflict was also driven by the statement of Al-Mawardi-legal expert in Malaysia-that non-Muslims in Muslim-majority countries (*dhimmī*), which must be closely monitored (Martinez, 2001). This shows that influential figures also have a big influence on emphasizing background differences.

#### **4. The Use of Religious Symbols in General Elections**

To attract the attention of adherents of certain religions, often used as a tool in politics, is religious symbols. The importance of the symbol to attract the votes of religious adherents is shown in Hossain's writing that most Communist parties in Bangladesh used Islamic slogans during the election period. The use of religious symbols in general elections in the literature appears in several respects. The first is in party symbols.<sup>25</sup> For example, as stated by Suryadinata that PPP without its traditional Islamic symbol: Kaabah, is no longer considered by its many supporters as an Islamic party. Second, the use of religious symbols in general elections appears in political advertisements<sup>26</sup><sup>27</sup><sup>28</sup>(Akhsan, 2015; Aminah, 2015; Willnat, et al, 2017). Another example is in India; the public was so interested in posters and billboards used for religious, political, and entertainment purposes so that striking images of Hindu gods and sacred symbols such as cows are commonly found. In Indonesia, Akhsan gave an example, such as Advertisement of the Gerindra Party, in 2014. It depicted a spiritual atmosphere that shown by Prabowo by sitting with a group of people at an Al-Qur'an recitation.

---

<sup>25</sup>A.A. Hossain Islamic Resurgence in Bangladesh's Culture and Politics: Origins, Dynamics and Implications, (Journal of Islamic Studies; 2012), h. 198.

<sup>26</sup>M.F. Akhsan, Penggunaan Term dan Simbol Islam sebagai Iklan Politik di Televisi Pada Pemilihan Umum Tahun 2014 (Studi pada TV One dan Metro TV selama Masa Kampanye Pemilu tahun 2014 di Bulan Maret sampai Bulan Juli). (Tesis; 2015).

<sup>27</sup>S. Aminah, Political Branding Menggunakan Simbol Keagamaan dalam Iklan Politik PKB di Televisi. (Skripsi; 2015).

<sup>28</sup>L. Willnat, dkk. Symbols, Slogans, and Charisma: Political Posters in India's 2014 National Election. Dalam C. Holtz-Bacha & B. Johansson (Eds.). Election Posters Around the Globe (pp.187-209). (Swiss: Springer International Publishing AG; 2017)

Then religious symbols also appear during the campaign, such as the use of slogans and public speeches.<sup>29</sup> For example, Harmoko from the Golkar Party always shouted: "*Allah Maha Besar. Golkar akan menang!*" (Allah is great. Golkar will win! ) or on the PDI slogan on its banner: "*Indonesia negaraku, Islam agamaku, Banteng pilihanku.*" (Indonesia my country, my religion is Islam, my choice is Bull). Before starting the speech, some political figures also say some Islamic sentences such as *bismillah* or *assalamualaikum*. Religious symbols are also clearly demonstrated through the appearance of political figures. During the campaign, they use a muslim cap or prayer beads, for example, to show their religiosity. Husain (2012) gives an example of Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh who carries prayer beads and wears a headscarf.

## **B. Method**

This research is started from the phenomenon in the election of a president and vice president, which were carried out simultaneously by the general elections' commission. However, the interesting thing in the presidential election process because it is dichotomized by religion as the front line and becomes a fundamental instrument in influencing voters in 2019. As the religious legitimacy as a *marker of the identity* of practical politics, it creates a lot of conflict among religious elites (Islam) and the religious people to achieve the main goal of winning one of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates in 2019. To understand the phenomenon of religious involvement as the front line in the 2019 presidential election process, in this study, the authors used a qualitative method. Qualitative research is often referred to as *generic qualitative method* is a form of way to understand the symptoms through a process.

So the phenomenon associated with religious legitimacy. The data was obtained from various online media that contained information related to the presidential election in the name of religion. In this study, the primary source was obtained from online media, which released the most related writing with religious legitimacy in the campaign process up to the 2019 presidential election stage. Among the online media, the author observed were ten media, including CCN Indonesia, Detik News, NU Online, Political Interview, Tagar News, Compas.com, Talking Indonesia, Kaskus, Mata-mata Politik, and Kompas Tv. At the same time, descriptive analysis is used as the technique of data analysis, which the data obtained from the media that described phenomena related to religious involvement in practical politics and was analyzed to know the position of religion in practical politics contestation.

---

<sup>29</sup>L.S. Cahill, "Playing God": Religious Symbols in Public Places. (*The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*; 1995), h.341-346.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **A. The Involvement of Religious Figures in the 2019 Presidential Election in Indonesia**

#### **1. President Candidates Position who are Pro-Islam ( by hoping to get majority votes)**

The journey of the head of state is five years in serving as a leader (president) in Indonesia. Every five years, presidential elections are written in the constitution, within a certain period, must carry out the presidential and vice-presidential polls. But this is a conflict that often occurs lately. In relating to religious problems that were dichotomized by religion. Based on the fact that Indonesia is one of the majority of countries that has Muslims as the majority population compared to other religions. So the religion is central to every party that carries up the voice of the majority of Muslims.

Based on media reports expressed by political observer Adi Priyitno from the State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta, that the selection of vice-presidential candidates, Jokowi, chose Nahdatul Ulama cadres, Ma'ruf Amin, to accompany him in the 2019 general elections. It had a strong influence on Muslims, especially NU. Ma'ruf Amin is a religious figure who is respected in Nahdatul Ulama (NU) circle and was also a Rais Aam that fatwa always listened to in society. By choosing vice-president candidates from NU Ulama for the election, Jokowi claimed to be more concerned with Religious Issues than on Economic Issues.<sup>3031</sup>

#### **2. Religion Hijrah from the cultural sphere to the political sphere (Muslims began politics): controversy within NU itself.**

The journey of the Nahdlatul Ulama Political Party (NU) that seen from its history, in 1952, the NU organization degraded its role and struggled since NU has been more focused on Practical Politics. In the process, the decision to become a party also triggered a disagreement within NU at that time. After that, Kiai proposed to return to the Khittah NU 1926. With the proposal from Kiai to return to the real substance, this matter was only realized in 1997 at the 26th Congress of NU in Semarang, Central Java. In 2013, it re-practiced politics, but it was a national, public, and democratic politics, not a power-oriented politics.

---

<sup>30</sup><https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20180811202715-32-321557/soal-pemilih-islam-jokowi-dinilai-unggul-1-0-dari-prabowo> Soal Pemilih Islam, Jokowi Dinilai Unggul 1-0 dari Prabowo abtu, 11/08/2018

<sup>31</sup><https://news.detik.com/kolom/d-4169018/membaca-arah-populisme-islam-di-pilpres-2019>  
Membaca Arah Populisme Islam di Pilpres 2019 16 /8/2018.

According to the statement of KH MA Sahal Mahfudh about these political practices is *Siyasah al aliyah Samiyah* (high-level politics).<sup>32</sup> So there were differences from before, after experiencing changes in the 90s. However, the 2019 elections did not convey a declaration of diction to one of the candidates but allowed cadre to engage in any practical political activity as long as it was in line with the objectives of the NU. Aside from being also greatly influenced by the threat from Muhammin Iskandar (Cak Imin) related to the defeat of Jokowi, if he does not choose a cadre from his side to become vice president.

Essentially about NU could be seen by the writings of Professor Greg Fealy of the Australian National University; one of his writings on the **New Mandala** portal said was seemed partisan and out of the ideals of its founders. Fealy highlighted the biggest challenges are faced by NU as a social-religious society organization to bring the ideals of the religious-based civil society movement.<sup>33</sup> In contrast to Muhammadiyah, according to the Chairperson, Haedar Nasir, that prohibiting his cadres from declaring the statement of one of the presidential candidates, it was conveyed at the Tabligh Akbar and 106th Anniversary Reception.<sup>34</sup>

### **3. Controlling Social Tensions (Cooling System): Incisive Islamic dynamics in Indonesia (pro cons of Muslim-Non-Muslim)**

Current political developments, many movements have emerged in the 2014-2019 government regime. With this movement, there are many pros and cons among political parties and Islamic organizations and including non-Muslims. One example is about the hashtag 2019 over President. This term reaps a lot of dissents as the PKS Secretary-General Mustafa Kamal said. Seeing the 2019 Movement to Change the President is a natural process that develops in society. This movement is a political expression of the community that deserves respect because it is a natural and cultural process of a developing society that must be respected and respected.

While the opinion of PDI-P and PSI Secretary General PDI-P Hasto Kristiyanto deplored movements such as replacing the president, causing problems at the grassroots, such movements tend to be incompatible with the eastern culture of Indonesian society. And the

---

<sup>32</sup><http://www.nu.or.id/post/read/94009/jejak-nu-tinggalkan-politik-praktis-dan-perkuat-khittah-1926>, Jejak NU Tinggalkan Politik Praktis dan Perkuat Khittah 1926 ), 07/8/2018

<sup>33</sup><https://pinterpolitik.com/nu-terperangkap-politik-pkb/>, 17/7/2018

<sup>34</sup><https://www.tagar.id/nu-izinkan-kader-berpolitik-praktis> NU Izinkan Kader Berpolitik Praktis, , 23/11/2018

## **Iswandi and Gibran Abdullah**

Secretary-General of PSI considered the movement a black campaign. So, the transition to the presidential election has been marked by movements that have triggered conflicts with religious overtones, which are still in the realm of the continuation of the 2016 movement on blasphemy by Ahok.

### **B. Muslim and Non-Muslim Dichotomy Discourses and Practices in the 2019 Presidential Election**

#### **1. A discourse of the strengthening of the Muslim and non-Muslim dichotomy (since the emergence of Ahok case)**

The emergence of a case of blasphemy in Indonesia began with Ahok's statement about Surah Al-Maidah Verse 51 relating to a leader. This raised a polemic about blasphemy based on the demands of Muslims. In the case, there was a massive demonstration led by Habib Riziek and other leaders, that the blasphemy case against religion (Islam) must be dealt firmly by law. Thus, causing hatred, and sentiments carried out by Islamic Organizations, including FPI, MUIMI, and HTI. The government attempted to legitimize (Religion) Islam to get support to protect the blasphemy cases committed by Ahok. So, in the case related to blasphemy, Islamic groups are divided, such as Nahdatul Ulama (NU) instructed the masses not to be involved in demonstrations related to the Ahok case demands. While on the Muhammadiyah's side, there was no comment regarding the demonstration; however, ironically, the Chairperson Haedar Nathir rejected the demonstrations that were scheduled by Muslims. The anti-Ahok protest actually led to a split between progressive and conservative elements in the leadership of the two largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia. (*Talking Indonesia: Ahok, Race, Religion & Demokracy; Indonesai At Malbourne: 2016*)

#### **2. The strengthening of political parties (Islam PPP; Christian PDIP): The parties which tended to be associated with religion: NU PKB; PAN**

The presidential and vice-presidential election in the 2019 general elections, Islamism, and non-Muslim movements are one of the motives of opposing movements because of the influence of blasphemy conflicts that occurred before, so that, it has an impact to the 2019 general elections. Based on the data survey from the number of obligatory voters related to the 2019 presidential election, that the Voter calculations, which are Muslims, there are 52.7% Voting for Jokowi and Prabowo 33.2%. While non-Muslim voters of elections that year, Jokowi voters from Catholic Christians reached 95.5%, and Protestant Christians reached 93.1%, while Prabowo voters from Non-

Muslims, Catholic Christians 0% and Protestant Christians 7.5%.<sup>35</sup> Overall, non-Muslim voters from the candidates, Jokowi, reached 87%, and 8% gave their support for Prabowo.<sup>36</sup> In contrast to Muslim voters in the 2019 elections, it is clear that conservative and progressive movements include Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah and the 212 movements in declaring support for one of the candidates.

### **3. Discourse about PKI and Islam/Kafir, Indonesian Chinese**

Approaching the presidential election, those who follow practical politics; therefore, issues of the past and SARA (Ethnicity, Religion, Race, and Inter-Group Relations) issues emerge. The emergence of interests in government was resulting in mutual claims and defamation, such as an issue about PKI. The PKI judgment carried out in the 2014 general elections was released from the Obor Rakyat Tabloid. The discourse is still developing until now, becoming a tool for politicization before the election.<sup>37</sup> Political contestation in the 2019 general elections, religious hatred is one of the worrying aspects leading up to the 2019 presidential election. The religious rhetoric began in the downfall of the Governor of DKI Jakarta, and this continues until the 2019 general elections. In Religion and Politics, it has been a prolonged polemic about the PKI and *takfir* discourse. Vital discourse must be reduced and to be used as a lesson, so it will stop; also it does not continue to other stages of the election-related to religious issues.<sup>38</sup> The emergence of the term related to the term of *takfir*, which was discussed in public as conservative for the interests of a group in contestation of the 2019 general elections. So that the discourse about *takfir* does not cause internal conflict in Islam, and discredit minorities (non-Muslims).

### **C. The Use of Religious Symbols (Verses, Clothing, Art) as a Legitimation Tool in the 2019 Presidential Election**

<sup>35</sup><https://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5bd1363996bde661408b4569/survei-populi--umat-katolik-dan-kristen-lebih-pilih-jokowi-ketimbang-prabowo/Survei Populi: Umat Katolik dan Kristen Lebih Pilih Jokowi Ketimbang Prabowo failprophet, 25/10/2018>

<sup>36</sup><https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2019/04/03/23400571/survei-indikator-tunjukkan-perubahan-suara-pemilih-islam-dari-prabowo-ke> "Survei Indikator Tunjukkan Perubahan Suara Pemilih Islam dari Prabowo ke Jokowi ", Ch, 03/04/2009

<sup>37</sup><https://news.detik.com/berita/4345323/jokowi-diserang-isu-pki-rommy-selama-ini-kita-sudah-cukup-bersabar> Jokowi Diserang Isu PKI, Rommy: Selama ini Kita Sudah Cukup Bersabar, 15/12/2018

<sup>38</sup>[https://www.matamatapolitik.com/analisis-polemik-istilah-kafir-dalam-pusaran-pilpres-2019/polemik istilah "kafir" dalam pusaran pilpres 2019, 08/3/2019](https://www.matamatapolitik.com/analisis-polemik-istilah-kafir-dalam-pusaran-pilpres-2019/polemik istilah )

**1. Doctrine: Verses that Legitimize the Debate of Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates; Campaign**

Practical politics contestation becomes essential to achieve the goals of the nation and state. Presidential and vice-presidential debates are held as a form of conveying ideas to convince the people through the delivery of vision and mission as a benchmark to respond to social, cultural, legal, technological, religious, and development realities. The vision and mission become a substantial one to measure the steps of each presidential candidate. Thus the reality occurred, in the first and third session of debate, the candidates legitimized the verses of the Quran into the realm of the president and vice president candidates debate. The verses described in the debate was delivered by Ma'ruf Amin in the first session of debate about QS. Al-Maidah, verse 33 as a base argument in the post-debate<sup>39</sup>, next, the third debate session specifically the candidates of Vice President from the candidate pairs of Jokowi-Amin elaborated again. QS. Al-Hujurat verse 6 as the basis of the argument in the special debate session of the vice-presidential candidates.<sup>40</sup> Politics in the post-2019 general elections had freedom in exploiting religion and verses of the Qur'an in a campaign to arouse responses from Muslims. So that the speech in the campaign more dominated by religious terms and divine values to get support.

**2. The use of Islam Identity in Campaigning (White Clothes, Dawn Prayer, Shalawat)**

The campaign process of presidential candidates of the 2019 general elections, religion has been legitimized into the practical political sphere, by looking at social reality and religious figures who declare themselves involved in politics. Therefore, Islamic figures (ulama) get closer to politicians as a form of making choices and support for one of the candidates. Thus religious symbols or identities become political patterns and ornaments in carrying out the campaign of the candidates. Related to Ujang Komaruddin's statement, a political observer from Al-Azhar University, said that the instruction of using white identity in voting became a creative campaign. In addition,

---

<sup>39</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6G85GvVdzw&t=5233s> Debat Capres dan Cawapres pemilu serentak 2019, 17/1/2019

<sup>40</sup>[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MqHW\\_QEJNo&t=4268s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MqHW_QEJNo&t=4268s) Debat Cawapres yang ketiga Pemilu serentak 2019, 19/3/2019

## Religious Issues in the 2019 Indonesia-Presidential Election

the identity of white clothes is sacred and clean and signifies pro to Islam legitimizing Muslims in the election.<sup>41</sup> While the identity of Islam on Prabowo-Sandi clearly used a religious identity (Islam) in the grand campaign that took place at Gelora Bung Karno (GBK). The campaign of Candidate No.2, obviously exposing Islam identity by carrying out dawn prayer and dhikr, as well as sholawat badar,<sup>42</sup> so the GBK campaign activities seemed to signify the jargon of those who were holy.

### **3. Religious diction: (alms white); sky infrastructure ...**

The terms which were used by the candidates

No.	Jokowi-Ma'aruf	Prabowo-Sandi
1	Infrastruktur langit (Sky Infrastructure)	Allahu akbar
2	Allah dan Nabi (Allah and Prophet)	Sedekah putih (alms white)
3	<i>Tasharaful Imam 'Ala Arro'iyah</i> <i>Manutu Bil Mashlahah.</i>	<i>Baldatun Thoyibatun</i> <i>Warobbunnghofuur</i>
4	<i>Ta'azim</i>	<i>Wallahuwafiq Ilaa Aqwamitthaariq,</i> <i>Hasbunallah Wanimal Wakil Ni' mal</i> <i>Maula Wani' mannaashiir</i>
5	<i>Takmil</i>	Tuhan (God)
6	<i>Ziyadah</i>	Kebenaran pasti menang (the truth will win)

<sup>41</sup><https://mercinews.com/read/2019/03/27/15643/ajak-pakai-baju-putih-saat-mencoblos-jokowi-dinilai-bunuh-demokrasi>, Ajak Pakai Baju Putih saat Mencoblos, Jokowi Dinilai Bunuh Demokrasi, 27/3/2019

<sup>42</sup><https://www.suara.com/news/2019/04/07/091353/kampanye-akbar-prabowo-sandi-di-gbk-zikir-hingga-selawat-badar-bergema> Kampanye Akbar Prabowo-Sandi di GBK, Zikir Hingga Selawat Badar Bergema, 07/4/2019

7	<i>Islah</i>	<i>Khilafah</i>
8	<i>Thanzim</i>	<i>Islam Indonesia Rahmatan Lil Alamin</i>
9	<i>Hadist Innama Buitstu Makaarimal Akhlaq</i>	<i>Insya Allah</i>

**a. The fluctuation of Political Identity in Indonesia**

In the Post-Truth era, political culture presents social discourse that prioritizes emotion so that it gets out of the heart of the problem being discussed. Responding to this era, the phenomenon of attraction of interest in the relationship between religion and politics has resulted in obstacles from what was originally considered a celestial body revealed to earth to be a benchmark of right and wrong, then facing the demands of the age that cannot be avoided even by the religious community, though.

In the Post-Industrial era, religion played a role in creating control over the standardization of something about the levels of "right and wrong." Still, religion nowadays is merely a political tool. This shift results in divisions within the Muslim community because of the upbringing of the post-truth era, which presents a social discourse that is very different from the standard values held by the community so far.

**b. Why does political identity still relevant? Indonesia did not succeed in making a major transformation by eliminating primordial identity, because the political system actually reproduces primordial identity**

Political identity in the history of Indonesia also develops constantly changing starting in the colonial, the old order, the new order, and the reformation era had been progressing until now is a primordial thing in riding the 2019 presidential election process. Political identity has long been affiliated with political parties in Indonesia, among the parties affiliated with a certain identity, namely nationalist and Islamic ideologies. So that every 2019 presidential election, the battle is always associated with the identity that is involved in it. For example, the affiliation of identity incorporated in political parties is PDI-P "Nationalism" (Non-Muslim), while the PPP "Islamism Movement" (Muslim), thus each party has an ideology of Islam, then only those who believe in Islam will be accepted to join in party organizations. In contrast to the party's work for

Nationalism, the institution is more open, universally regardless of one's religious status or beliefs. So, the periodization of the 2019 presidential election, the politics of religious identity, caused a phenomenon that resulted in the hatred among Indonesian citizens as in the news in the online, print, and television media. Every information reported related to the general elections (2019 presidential election), almost reached the level of maximization of the rumored religious diction. One concrete example is about infidels, caliph, PKI, etc. It has become one of the forms of conservative political identity that has a negative impact on the development of the Nation and the State because it is still shackled by debates about political identity.

Political ethics on the momentum of the presidential election greatly influences the cycle of the social-political development of society. The cause of concern is that which hinders the growth of society maturity because dominance in the electoral process has been controlled by religion (identity). Polemics, which appear always leading to a social-religious context; therefore, religion has become one of the indicators in the 2019 presidential election. So far, religion has not been in an independent (Neutral) context in the presidential election and played a practical role in politics. Thus, religion's role in the state is no longer able to determine the way of professionalization, because religion has committed itself to the 2019 presidential election, so the path of control on religion (flow) in Indonesia is on one of the 2019 presidential candidates.

**c. Broad implications for political identity: Is it difficult to build professionalism and improvement?**

The statement of the attitude of Islamic leaders (ulama), to be involved in the practical political system in playing an active role in the party of democracy (practical politics) is caused by each group having different interests towards the Indonesian people. Hence the flow of politics (identity) spread widely to the regions in voicing ideas related to practical politics. Pros and cons occur from the lower level to the elite level. It starts with primordial interests, which have implications for the development of human life, namely the relationship between humans and humans themselves. Thus, in creating the professionalization of religion (Islam), it will be challenging to achieve it because it is caused by religious elites who are involved and legitimating according to their interests and needs so that the division of fellow groups continues.

Finally, to develop the nation's civilization will be hampered because of the dichotomy by practical politics and the widening political flow in Indonesia. The political identity will continue, how our destiny is going forward, in the 2019 presidential election the identity ( religion) is still massive in the practical politics. As political identities continue, the competition will continue in religious aspects to achieve the position and protection of the state. If political identity still continues, then the growth of society will be hampered, both in the form of rationalizing something and professionalism in religion or politics, because religion will be a tool of transformation and legitimating in the 2019 presidential elections onwards. But the irony in the 2019 presidential election, religious figures (Islam) declare themselves to provide support to one of the 2019 presidential candidates.

Religious figures (kyai) basically do not legitimize religion in the primordial form in the 2019 presidential election. In order not to close the community's rationality space, which is predominantly Muslim, and to show the characteristics of professionalism towards Muslims in confronting political struggle in the 2019 presidential election. Religious figures (kyai), that his substance is able to maintain the integrity of religion and prevent the characteristics of political identity in the 2019 presidential election. So that all forms related to political identity and identity politics, do not become material in gaining the votes. Therefore the professionalism of religious figures (kyai) as one of the talons to overcome the religion, which was used as a political issue in the 2019 presidential election until the next presidential election so that the society is able to rationalize something related to the presidential election.

## **CONCLUSION**

The development of political identity (religion) in the Indonesia 2019 presidential election, politics focused on the emotional atmosphere. So that the existence of religion as a sphere of moral formation of the nation has now become a tool of transforming the interests of the political elite by legitimizing religion in practical political fluctuations in an election. As the involvement of religion, the main support in getting votes. Religion freely determines policies that will mislead the society or voters. An example is that the birth of the

## **Religious Issues in the 2019 Indonesia-Presidential Election**

discourse of mutual disbelief between Muslims or non-Muslims; this happens due to not walking in the same path as what they want. So, it causes conflicts and radicalization in their movements.

Conservative Political Identity (Religion) involved in the sphere of practical politics turned out to have a negative effect on the cultural development of society because socio-political conditions did not work as effectively as the nation's expectations. Through religious legitimacy, the presidential election process has been dichotomized by religion, and religion has become the central controller after declarations from various religious elites in expressing their support for one of the candidates. Therefore, the level of professionalism as religious elites is not too obvious after entering into practical politics in the name of religion to achieve their political interests. Widespread political identity (religion) in the 2019 presidential election a lot of things that were covered both the elite and the society, besides that religion becomes a tool of practical politics transformation, then the space of rationalization in religion is not so visible from both the elite and society and religion in the cycle of practicals inclined towards emotional relationships.

## References

Abdillah, Masykuri. 2013. "Hubungan Agama Dan Negara Dalam Konteks Modernisasi Politik Di Era Reformasi." *AHKAM : Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 13(2): 247–58.

Akhsan, M.F. (2015). *Penggunaan Term dan Simbol Islam sebagai Iklan Politik di Televisi Pada Pemilihan Umum Tahun 2014 (Studi pada TV One dan Metro TV selama Masa Kampanye Pemilu tahun 2014 di Bulan Maret sampai Bulan Juli)*. (Tesis).

Aminah, S. (2015). *Political Branding Menggunakan Simbol Keagamaan dalam Iklan Politik PKB di Televisi*. (Skripsi).

Cahill, L.S. (1995). "Playing God": Religious Symbols in Public Places. *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 20, 341-346.

Chalik, Abdul. 2010. Religion and Local Politics Exploring the Subcultures and the Political Participation of East Java NU Elites in the Post-New Order Era. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*; ISSN1978-6301. Published by the Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (LSAS) and the Postgraduate Program (PPs), the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya-Indonesia

Gerges, F.A. (2013). The Islamist Moment: From Islamic State to Civil Islam? *Political Science Quarterly*, 128(3), 389-426.

Hossain, A.A. (2012). Islamic Resurgence in Bangladesh's Culture and Politics: Origins, Dynamics and Implications. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 23(2), 165-198.

Isnaini, Ahmad. 2017. "Kekerasan Atas Nama Agama." *Kalam* 8(2): 213.

Jati, Wasisto Raharjo. 2014. Agama dan Politik: Teologi Pembebasan sebagai Arena Profetisasi Agama. *Walisongo*, Volume 22, Nomor 1, Mei 2014

Kingsley, Jeremy J. 2012. Peacemakers or Peace-Breakers? Provincial Elections and Religious Leadership in Lombok, Indonesia. *Indonesia*, No. 93 (April 2012), pp. 53-82. Southeast Asia Program Publications at Cornell University

Kurniawan, Budi. 2018. "Politisisasi Agama Di Tahun Politik : Politik Pasca-Kebenaran Di Indonesia." *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* - 12(1): 133–54.

Loretta Dell'Aguzzo & Ester Sigillò. (2017). Political legitimacy and variations in state-religion relations in Tunisia, *The Journal of North African Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/13629387.2017.1340841

Macapagal, E.J., dkk. (2018). The Unifying and Divisive Effects of Social Identities: Religious and Ethnopolitical Identities among Mindanao Muslims in the Philippines. *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology*, 12(28), 1-12. DOI: 10.1017/prp.2018.16.

Martinez, P.A. (2001). The Islamic State or the State of Islam in Malaysia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 23(3), 474-503.

Miles, W. (2000). Muslim Ethnopolitics and Presidential Elections in Nigeria. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 20(2), 229-241.

Nugroho, Kris. 2011. Ikhtiar Teoritik Mengkaji Peran Partai dalam Mobilisasi Politik Elektoral. Tahun 2011, Volume 24, Nomor 3 Hal: 202-214. Departemen Politik, Universitas Airlangga

## Religious Issues in the 2019 Indonesia-Presidential Election

Nurhadi, Sunarso. 2018. Peran Kiai dalam Membangun Partisipasi Pemilih. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan*, Vol. 3, Nomor 2, Desember 2018. <http://journal2.um.ac.id/index.php/jppk>

Olson, L.R. & Warber, A.L. (2008). Belonging, Behaving, and Believing: Assessing the Role of Religion on Presidential Approval. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2), 192-204.

Reilly, B. (2002). Electoral Systems for Divided Societies. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2), 156-170.

Schwedler, J. (1998). A Paradox of Democracy? Islamist Participation in Elections. *Middle East Report*, 209(25), 25-29.

Suryadinata, L. (1997). Golkar of Indonesia: Recent Developments. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 19(2), 190-204.

Vel, Jacqueline A.C. 2008. An Ethnography of Democratization in West Sumba, Indonesia, 1986-2006. Published by: Brill. (2008). Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76wwq.16>

Willnat, L. dkk. (2017). Symbols, Slogans, and Charisma: Political Posters in India's 2014 National Election. Dalam C. Holtz-Bacha & B. Johansson (Eds.). *Election Posters Around the Globe* (pp.187-209). Swiss: Springer International Publishing AG.

### **Sumber-sumber dari media Online:**

<https://news.detik.com/kolom/d-4169018/membaca-arah-populisme-islam-di-pilpres-2019> Membaca Arah Populisme Islam di Pilpres 2019 16 /8/2018.

<https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20180811202715-32-321557/soal-pemilih-islam-jokowi-dinilai-unggul-1-0-dari-prabowo> Soal Pemilih Islam, Jokowi Dinilai Unggul 1-0 dari Prabowo abtu, 11/08/2018

<http://www.nu.or.id/post/read/94009/jejak-nu-tinggalkan-politik-praktis-dan-perkuat-khittah-1926>, Jejak NU Tinggalkan Politik Praktis dan Perkuat Khittah 1926 ), 07/8/2018

<http://ekoteguh23.blogspot.com/2010/10/hubungan-islam-dengan-politik.html>  
Hubungan Islam dengan Politik, 01/10/2018

<https://tebuireng.online/hubungan-antara-islam-dan-politik-di-indonesia/> Hubungan antara Islam dan Politik di Indonesia, 5/3/2018

<https://islami.co/apakah-islam-dan-politik-memang-tidak-bisa-bersatu/> Apakah Islam dan Politik Memang Tidak Bisa Bersatu? 13/03/2018

<https://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5bd1363996bde661408b4569/survei-populi-umat-katolik-dan-kristen-lebih-pilih-jokowi-ketimbang-prabowo> Survei Populi : Umat Katolik dan Kristen Lebih Pilih Jokowi Ketimbang Prabowo failprophet,25/10/2018

<https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2019/04/03/23400571/survei-indikator-tunjukkan-perubahan-suara-pemilih-islam-dari-prabowo-ke> "Survei Indikator Tunjukkan Perubahan Suara Pemilih Islam dari Prabowo ke Jokowi ", Ch, 03/04/2009

[https://www.matamatapolitik.com/analisis-polemik-istilah-kafir-dalam-pusaran-pilpres-2019/polemic-istilah "kafir" dalam pusaran pilpres 2019, 08/3/2019](https://www.matamatapolitik.com/analisis-polemik-istilah-kafir-dalam-pusaran-pilpres-2019/polemic-istilah-kafir-dalam-pusaran-pilpres-2019)

**Iswandi and Gibran Abdullah**

<https://news.detik.com/berita/4345323/jokowi-diserang-isu-pki-rommy-selamaini-kitasudah-cukup-bersabar> Jokowi Diserang Isu PKI, Rommy: Selama ini Kita Sudah Cukup Bersabar, 15/12/2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6G85GvVdzw&t=5233s> Debat Capres dan Cawapres pemilu serentak 2019, 17/1/2019

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MqHW\\_QEJNo&t=4268s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MqHW_QEJNo&t=4268s) Debat Cawapres yang ketiga Pemilu serentak 2019, 19/3/2019

<https://www.tagar.id/nu-izinkan-kader-berpolitik-praktis> NU Izinkan Kader Berpolitik Praktis, , 23/11/2018

<https://pinterpolitik.com/nu-terperangkap-politik-pkb/>, 17/7/2018

<https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2018/08/28/08065821/pro-kontra-gerakan-2019gantipresiden-dan-bagaimana-menysikapinya?page=all>. Pro Kontra Gerakan #2019GantiPresiden dan Bagaimana Menyikapinya" 28/8/2018

<https://mercinews.com/read/2019/03/27/15643/ajak-pakai-baju-putih-saat-mencoblos-jokowi-dinilai-bunuh-demokrasi>, Ajak Pakai Baju Putih saat Mencoblos, Jokowi Dinilai Bunuh Demokrasi, 27/3/2019

<https://www.suara.com/news/2019/04/07/091353/kampanye-akbar-prabowo-sandi-digbk-zikir-hingga-selawat-badar-bergema> Kampanye Akbar Prabowo-Sandi di GBK, Zikir Hingga Selawat Badar Bergema, 07/4/2019

1

