The Islamic political supports and voting behaviors in majority and minority Muslim provinces in Indonesia

Delmus Puneri Salim

The State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Manado
E-mail: delmus.salim@gmail.com
DOI:10.18326/ijims.v12i1.85-110

Abstract

This article focuses on the relation between Islam and politics during the past two presidential elections in Indonesia. The article looks at Islamic political supports to Prabowo Subianto and its influence into the results of the 2014 and the 2019 Presidential election in the majority and minority Muslim provinces. Data collection was conducted by a document study to texts of Internet media, especially on the issues of Islamic political supports to Prabowo Subianto and results of the 2014 and 2019 Presidential election in the chosen majority and minority Muslim provinces. This study reveals a strong correlation between Islam and politics from results of the two previous Indonesian Presidential elections, finding out that the Islamic political supports have increased votes of the promoted Presidential candidate in majority Muslim provinces and reversely decreased votes of the candidate in minority Muslim provinces. In fact, the study shows that the Islamic political supports affect voting behaviors more in minority Muslim provinces than in majority Muslim provinces. In turn, the importance of developing a strategy to manage religious political supports in Indonesian elections is highlighted by these findings.

Artikel ini berfokus pada relasi Islam dan politik di Indonesia dalam dua kali pemilihan presiden terakhir. Artikel ini membahas dukungan politik bernuansa Islam kepada Prabowo Subianto dan pengaruhnya terhadap pemilihan presiden tahun 2014 dan 2019 di provinsi dengan mayoritas dan minoritas Muslim. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan studi dokumen terhadap teks-teks media internet, khususnya mengenai isu dukungan politik bernuansa Islam kepada Prabowo Subianto dan hasil pemilihan presiden di dua tahun tersebut di provinsi terpilih mayoritas dan minoritas Muslim. Studi ini mengungkapkan korelasi yang kuat antara Islam dan politik dari hasil dua pemilihan Presiden Indonesia sebelumnya, dan menemukan bahwa dukungan politik bernuansa Islam telah meningkatkan suara kandidat yang dipromosikan di provinsi dengan penduduk mayoritas Muslim dan sebaliknya menurunkan suara kandidat tersebut di provinsi dengan penduduk minoritas Muslim. Studi ini bahkan menunjukkan bahwa dukungan politik bernuansa Islam lebih mempengaruhi perilaku pemilih di provinsi dengan penduduk minoritas Muslim daripada di provinsi dengan penduduk mayoritas Muslim. Studi ini, pada gilirannya, menyoroti pentingnya mengembangkan strategi untuk mengelola dukungan politik bernuansa agama dalam pemilihan umum di Indonesia.

Keywords: *Islamic political supports; Voting behavior; Presidential elections; Minority and Majority Muslim societies*

Introduction

Recent political dynamics have demonstrated the influence of Islam in voting behaviors in Indonesia. In 2018, the Indonesian Survey Institute shows more than 50 percent of Indonesians prefer a Muslim as a Governor than a non Muslim.[1] Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo et al. demonstrate religious sentiments are preference for religious persons in politics.[2]

---

[1] The Indonesian Survey Institute, "Tren Persepsi Publik Tentang Demokrasi, Korupsi, Dan Intoleransi", 2018. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ORslWKYn57NAkzQIOhN3rE wq9rRXf4eN/view

[2] Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo, Victor Ottati and **Vinaya Untoro,** "The Paradoxical Religiosity Effect: Religion and Politics in Indonesia and the United States", *Politics and Religion,* Vol. 9, No. 3 (2016), 481–507.

Thomas B. Pepinsky et al. also reveal economic uncertainty endorses religious sentiments in politics.[3] Diego Fossati argues that religious belief shapes the voting and policy preferences of the Indonesian Muslims.[4] *Syairal Fahmy Dalimunthe et al.* add that religious sentiments has increased dramatically since the 2017 Special Capital District (Daerah Khusus Ibukota) of Jakarta election.[5]

This is not new. Jeremy Menchik and Delmus Salim shows that Islam has already played an essential role in Indonesian politics ever since the Independence.[6] However, most studies present analysis at national and local politics independently and demonstrate the failure of Islamic political supports at national election and its success at various local elections. There have been no studies that examine Islamic political supports and voting behaviors in majority and minority Muslim provinces in Indonesia.

By examining the voting behaviors in majority and minority Muslim provinces in the 2019 and 2014 Presidential election in Indonesia, the present study fills this gap in literature. The two elections presented a unique case to examine Islam and politics because of the contestation between Jokowi and Prabowo in the two elections and the emergence of Islamic political supports to Prabowo Subianto in the 2019 Presidential election. Unlike in the 2014 election, Prabowo was presented as the chosen

---

[3]Thomas B. Pepinsky, Robert William Liddle and Saiful Mujani, "Testing Islam's Political Advantage: Evidence from Indonesia", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (2012), 584–600.

[4]Diego Fossati, "The Resurgence of Ideology in Indonesia: Political Islam, Aliran and Political Behaviour", *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (2019), 119–148.

[5]*Syairal Fahmy Dalimunthe, et al.*, "Politics of Identity and the Case of Ahok's Religion Blasphemy in the 2017 DKI Jakarta Election", *E-Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2020), 15-21; Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo, "Ethnic And Religious Sentiments In Indonesian Politics: Evidence From The 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election", *Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 21, Issue 1 (2021): 1–24.

[6]Delmus Puneri Salim, *The Transnational and The Local In The Politics Of Islam*, Oxford: Springer, 2015; Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without Liberalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Islamic leader in 2019. One hashtag at twitter was #PrabowoBersamaUlama (Prabowo With Religious Scholars). Conservative Muslims who argued that a more Islamic person should lead the country strongly supported him. Prabowo was given a letter of reference by an Islamic scholar institution to be the Indonesian President.

The examination of Islamic political supports in election is convenient, albeit limited.[7] The explanation does not discriminate between the voter and the candidate's religion. Moreover, Islamic as well as political messages are mixed. Then, voters' personal accounts are necessary in politics. The current study is a means to refom these limitations and examine more carefully the extent to which religious political supports shaped voting behaviors in the elections at majority and minority Muslim provinces.

This article presents models of Islamic political supports to Prabowo Subianto in the 2019 Indonesian presidential election. The article then demostrates results of the 2019 presidential election on Prabowo votes and compares them to those of his votes in the 2014 presidential election in majority and minority Muslim provinces. The analysis provides Islamic political supports to Prabowo increased votes in the majority Muslim provinces and reversely decreased his votes in minority Muslim provinces. Thus, the comparison reveals that Islamic political supports matter more in minority Muslim provinces; these findings highlight the importance of developing a strategy to reduce religious political supports in Indonesia's pluralism society.

Islam and politics in Indonesia

Islam have always played major roles in Indonesian elections. Menchik shows that religious organisations have played important parts in Indonesian politics since independence while Mietzner and Muhtadi

---

[7]Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo, "Ethnic And Religious Sentiments In Indonesian Politics…, 1–24.

argue that conservative Muslim voters have become more influential in Indonesian politics. The Indonesian Survey Institute found that 52 percent of Indonesians prefer a Muslim as Governor than a non Muslim. Gueorguiev et al. discover political supports for Prabowo in conservative Muslim provinces. Sumaktoyo et al. show that the more religious a person the more likely he or she prefer a political candidate based on his or her religious sentiments. Pepinsky et al. believe that an Islamic label influences vote support for a party under an uncertain economic condition. Fossati claims that religious ideology forms Indonesian Muslims' preferences in voting and policy.

These studies demonstrate the influence of Islam in forming politics in Indonesia. Sadly, there have no studies been analyzing the relative influence of the religion in politics comparatively at majority and minority Muslim provinces with a quantitative data analysis thus far. Nevertheless, such an analysis will provide enlightenment on how Islam and politics form voting behaviors in plural regional Indonesia.

Because Islam plays a vital role in Indonesian politics, with an inattentive investigation, what seems to be the Islamic way in national politics might be Islamic resistance in local politics, actually. Principally, this is true for Indonesian Muslims who are struggling to become elected official leaders in minority provinces since democratization in reformation era. A chance to fill this void in the literature is provided by the 2019 Presidential election. The Islamic political supports to Prabowo presented us an opportunity to investigate how far the Islamic political supports form voter behaviors in both majority and minority Muslim provinces in Indonesia.

Islamic political supports to Prabowo Subianto in the 2019 Presidential Election

Indonesian has run the direct presidential election since 2004. The direct elections have elected Susilo Bambang Yudoyono and Joko Widodo back

to back to the office each for two periods. The 2019 presidential election was the forth time Indonesians electing their presidents directly. The 2019 presidential election saw a couple of pairs of candidates competing for the office: Widodo-Amin and Subianto-Uno. Despite given Islamic political supports, Prabowo was not elected to the position. He had been a presidential candidate in the previous presidential election. This signifies that the 2019 Presidential election was the second time Prabowo challenged Joko Widodo for the office.

Prabowo is the leader of the Great Indonesia Movement party and currently Minister of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia. His late father, Professor Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, was an economist at the time of President Soeharto. Born in Jakarta on October 17, 1951, he has a military career to the rank of Major General in the Indonesian Army. Prabowo completed his trainings in the Indonesian Military Academy in 1970 and attended the Special Force (Kopassus) until his appointment as chief of the Startegic Reserve Command (Kostrad) in 1998 before he was dismissed from the military at the same year.

In the 2019 presidential election, National Movement for Guarding the Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (GNPF-MUI) – later became GNPF-Ulama, declared their support for Prabowo and appealed to all Indonesian Muslims to support Prabowo for the consensus of the Ulema. This religious political support certainly strenghtened Prabowo path to run the presidency in 2019, unlike his 2014 previous attempt. In that year, he promoted programs in prospering the marginalized people, saving Indonesia from all kinds of threats from within and outside the country as well as raising and glorifying Islam. In the 2019 presidential election, the last strategy was accelerated by Islamic political supports. It is a phenomenon that is inseparable from a prolonged rage over promises of development and the prosperity of capitalism that never materalizes. Prabowo took steps to

align himself with Muslim groups such as the Indonesian Committee for Islamic World Solidarity (KISDI) and the Islamic Da'wah Council (DDI). He was supported by conservative Muslim activists such as Habib Rizieq Shihab and Amien Rais, a respected Muhamadiyah figure.

The GNPF-MUI declared Prabowo as the representation of Indonesian Muslim through an Ijtima Ulama, Islamic scholars' agreement, a few months before the 2019 presidential election. Led by Bachtiar Nasir and Yusuf Muhammad Martak and supported by Habib Rizieq Syihab, GNPF-Ulama was established after Islamic political gathering (Aksi Bela Islam) during Jakartan gubernatorial election in 2017 in which another Islamic political support was endorsed for Anies Baswedan, which was succesfully elected to the position. This phenomenom shows that succesfully or not, Islamic political supports will be likely to emerge in every election in Indonesia.

Despite the Islamic political supports to Prabowo in the 2019 Presidential election, he lost the the 2019 presidential election that was held on April 17. Prabowo's vote share, however, was higher than what it would have been predicted if the voters had voted along party lines as it is shown in the following table presenting the candidates and their party coalitions in the 2019 presidential election.

Table 1. The candidates and their party coalitions in the 2019 presidential election

	Supporting parties	Legislative Seat Shares	Legislative Seat Shares	Vote shares
Prabowo – Sandiaga	Gerindra Demokrat PKS PAN	226	39 percent	44.68 percent

| Jokowi – Ma'ruf Amin | PDIP PPP NasDem PKB Golkar | 349 | 61 percent | 55.32 percent |

Jokowi – Ma'ruf Amin won the 2019 presidential election with 55 percent, lower the vote share of their coalition (61 percent). Therefore, Prabowo lost the election even though he gained Islamic political supports at the national level in 2019. The result slightly decreased from vote shares Prabowo gained in the 2014 presidential election. Table 2 shows vote shares of Prabowo and Jokowi in the 2014 presidential election. Supported by more political parties and shares of the legislative seats, Prabowo also lost the election in 2014. These results reveal the failure of Islamic political supports to Prabowo in 2014 and 2019 at national level.

Table 2. Vote shares of Prabowo and Jokowi in the 2014 presidential election

	Supporting parties	Legislative Seat Shares	Legislative Seat Shares	Vote Shares
Prabowo - Hatta	Gerindra PKS PAN PPP PBB Golkar	292	48.93 percent	46.85 percent
Jokowi - Kalla	PDIP NasDem PKB Hanura PKPI	207 seat	39.97 percent	53.15 percent

While the Islamic political supports to Prabowo failed at the national level, this article now seeks to demonstrate the influence of the Islamic political supports in majority and minority Muslim provinces based on the results of the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections. Table 3 below presents the votes Prabowo gained in the 2019 presidential election in the selected majority Muslim provinces and its comparison to the votes he gained in the 2014 presidential election. Prabowo ended up winning the election in the selected majority Muslim provinces in the 2019 presidential election with 9 to 32 percentage raising from the vote he gained in the 2014 presidential election. In Aceh, a region with special autonomous Islamic laws and an over 98 percent Muslim population, Prabowo gained 85 percent, 32 percent more than he had in the previous election. In South Kalimantan where more than 96 percent of population is Muslim, Prabowo gained 64 percent, 14 percent more than he had in the 2014 election. In Riau with 87 percent Muslims, he gained 61 percent, 11 percent more than he gained before. In West Sumatra and South Sumatra with more than 96 percent of Muslim population, Prabowo gained 86 percent and 59 percent votes consecutively in the 2019 presidential election, 9 percent more than he gained in the 2014 presidential election in each province. This explanation can be seen in the following table presenting the votes prabowo gained in the selected majority muslim provinces and its comparison to his votes in the 2014 presidential election.

Table 3. The vote Prabowo gained at selected majority Muslim provinces in the 2019 Presidential Election and its comparison to his votes in the 2014 presidential election

2014	2019	Vote increase	Provinces
54	85	32	Aceh
50	64	14	South Kalimantan
50	61	11	Riau
76	86	9	West Sumatra
51	59	9	South Sumatra

The table 4 below presents the votes Prabowo gained in minority Muslim provinces in the 2019 presidential election and its comparison to his votes in the 2014 presidential election. The table shows Prabowo's votes decreasing significantly from 10 to 24 percentage in all minority Muslim provinces. In Bali with the majority Hindu population and 13 percent Muslims, Prabowo gained votes of 8 percent in the 2019 presidential election and it is 20 percent less than in the 2014 election. In Papua with the majority Christian population and 15 percent Muslims, Prabowo gained 9 percent which is 18 percent less than what he gained in the 2014 presidential election. In North Sulawesi where Prabowo's mother was born and 30 percent of population are Muslims, he only gained 22 percent—24 percent less than he gained in the 2014 presidential election. In East Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Timur) with 9 percent Muslim population, Prabowo gained 11 percent in the 2019 presidential election, which is 23 percent less than in the previous presidensial election. In West Papua, Prabowo gained 20 percent of votes and it is 12 percent less than he had in the previous presidential election. In Maluku, he gained 10 percent less than in the 2014 presidential election. It means votes of

Prabowo decreased in all provinces with less than 50 percent of Muslim population as it is shown in the following table.

Table 4. The votes Prabowo gained at minority Muslim provinces in the 2019 presidential election and its comparison to his votes in the 2014 presidential election

2014	2019	Vote derease	Provinces
46	22	24	North Sulawesi
34	11	23	NTT
28	8	20	Bali
27	9	18	Papua
32	20	12	West Papua
49	39	10	Maluku

What explained Indonesian Muslims' voting behaviors in the 2014 and the 2019 Presidential elections in majority and minority Muslim provinces? Why did Prabowo win significantly in the selected majority Muslim provinces and lose siginifically in all minority Muslim provinces? Some suggest the importance of religious sentiment in Indonesia based on the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election.[8] Arifianto reveals the

---

[8]Alexander Arifianto, "The Missing Middle", *New Mandala* (blog), February 15, 2017. https://www.newmandala.org/the-missing-middle/; Chris Chaplin, "Mobilising Islam for Political Gains", *New Mandala* (blog), February 14, 2017. https://www.newmandala.org/mobilising-islam-political-gains/; Greg Fealy, "Bigger than Ahok: Explaining the 2 December Mass Rally", *Indonesia at Melbourne*, December 7, 2016. https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/bigger-than-ahok-explaining-jakartas-2-december-mass-rally/; Tim Lindsey, "Blasphemy Charge Reveals Real Fault Lines in Indonesian Democracy", *Indonesia at Melbourne*, November 24, 2016.; Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "Explaining the 2016 Islamist Mobilisation in Indonesia: Religious Intolerance, Militant Groups and the

contemporary conservative turn in Indonesian politics, which worried him, leading to him begging for moderate Muslims to be engaged in politics. Chaplin argues that the religious sentiment in Indonesian politics such as in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election is dangerous for Indonesia's democracy. Fealy argues that Indonesian politics is turning away from moderate Muslim democrats. Lindsey maintains that Islamic hardliners are occupying Indonesian politics. Mietzner and Muhtadi state that conservative Muslims participate in politics when they are excluded from Indonesian politics today. Mietzner, Muhtadi, and Halida show the emergence of Muslim political enterpreneurs as the main drivers of Islamic mobilizations in Indonesian politics. Sumaktoyo argues that religion and ethnicity both endorsed each other in Indonesian politics.

This article suggests the importance of Islamic political sentiment as well, not only in majority Muslim provinces but also in minority Muslim provinces. While Islamic political supports to Prabowo failed at the national level in the 2019 presidential election, they work at many majority and all minority Muslim provinces in different ways. Prabowo's voters increased at the selected majority Muslim provinces and decreased significantly at all minority Muslim provinces. In all Christian majority provinces and in the only majority Hindu province in Indonesia, Bali, Prabowo lost dramatically. This voting behavior was bound to oppose religiosity. Conservative Muslim groups put forward Prabowo as an Islamic candidate and declared him as the Islamic saviour. The issue of Prabowo as an Islamic leader is opposed in the minority Muslim provinces to having an Islamic leader either from Muslim or non-Muslim voters. The stronger the

---

Politics of Accommodation", *Asian Studies Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2018), 479–497; Marcus Mietzner, Burhanuddin Muhtadi and Rizka Halida, "Entrepreneurs of Grievance: Drivers and Effects of Indonesia's Islamist Mobilization", *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia,* Vol. 174, No. 2–3 (2018), 159–187; Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo, "Ethnic And Religious Sentiments In Indonesian Politics...*, 1–24.

political support for an Islamic candidate in majority Muslim provinces, the stronger the resistance for the candidate in minority Muslim provinces.

Prabowo is also supported by Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS). UAS is the most popular preacher in Indonesia. He is well known through Internet social media in which he delivers his messages. He utilizes Internet for preaching and has a great number of followers on Internet social media. While he delivers his messages occasionally on Internet social media, his fans post his messages intensively. He even claims himself as a preacher of millions viewers. With this personality, he declared his political support to Prabowo in the 2019 presidential election. As he is domiciled in Riau province, the table 3 shows that Prabowo vote increased significantly in Riau and its nearby provinces such as Jambi and West Sumatra.

West Sumatra declared itself as a region with an Islamic philosophy; local customs are based on Islam and Islam is in turn based on the Quran. It provides a strong association between Islam and regional identity and has solidified since reformation era. Thus, Islam has become a hegemonic position in West Sumatran identity. In this province, the claims of the Islamic identity has been utilised and justified in almost every political decision made at the provincial level and lower. Aceh is an autonomous region with implementation of Islamic laws. It locates on the northern tip of Sumatra and it is the first region to build Muslim kingdom.[9] In these two conservative Muslim population, notion of religion is central to their activism. In their minds, religion is everything and politics is a part of religious participation. With the association of Prabowo candidacy with Islamic activism, it is no wondering, Prabowo gained the most and the second most vote throughout the country with 86 percent and 85 percent consecutively in these provinces.

---

[9]Arskal Salim, "Sharia from Below in Aceh (1930s-1960s): Islamic Identity and the Right to Self-Determination with Comparative reference to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)", *Indonesia and the Malay World*, Vol. 32, No. 92 (2004), 83.

Islamic political supports in Indonesia

During the 2019 Indonesian presidential election, Islam was used to boost electoral gain. The Islamic political supports have recognized as a social political problem that may break Indonesian unitary, which consists of pluralistic religions. The Islamic political supports are given not only by political parties and politicians but also by Islamic institutions and leaders. While the first two parties are motivated to gain more votes in elections, the last two parties are motivated to be accommodated by the first two parties during their offices personally or institutionally or religiously.

As the world largest Muslim population with direct electoral democracy, religious political supports are palpable in Indonesia. It could be categorized as religious populism. It is characterized by its rejection of religious pluralism and its emphasis on an imagined homogonenous society. It is grouped into several forms such as utilization of Islamic sources and leaders, an enacment of Islamic law, preference of Islamic leaders, and notion of Islamic identity. The Islamic political supports tend to be performed by all parties. For example, QS. Al-Maidah Chapter 51 were used to support Anies Baswedan in the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election and he won the election. The Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P) preferred Ma'ruf Amin who was the chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council being the Vice President of Jokowi, rather than Mahfud MD, a politician, academics and judge, and the pair won the 2019 presidential election. Prabowo was supported by a consensus of some Indonesian Ulama but failed. Habib Rizieq Shihab, a popular Islamic leader, also supported Prabowo in the 2019 presidential election. Meanwhile, Jokowi himself was questioned about his Islamic identity during the election. These forms of Islamic political supports have pushed Nadirsyah Hosen, an Indonesian academic at Monash university of Australia to write a book entitled "Exegesis of Al-Qur'an in Social Media" in which he demostrates

Al-Qur'an understanding that is aimed at political interests.

The religious political supports have attracted attention of many researchers.[10] Alamond and Verba state that voters have been influenced strongly by religion in their participation in politics in the United States. Saiful agrees with Alamond and Verba's that general election in Indonesia is shaped by civic culture which has been developed inside major Islamic organizations. Meanwhile, Indikator Politik Indonesia revealed 59.1% of Indonesian voters considered religion important in establishing their political preferences through an exit poll conducted in the 2019 election. Luthfi Assyaukanie demonstrates the role of religion in the 2019 Indonesian election and how people utilize it as their political means. This research, however, looks at Islamic political supports to Prabowo in the Presidential election in 2019 and its influence to results of the election in majority and minority Muslim provinces and demonstrates how politicians and religious leaders utilize religion to influence voters in the general election. The research shows their actions affect results of the 2019 presidential election more in the minority Muslim provinces, than in majority Muslim provinces.

The nowadays Islamic political supports have been encouraged largely by Internet social media, which socialize people and deliver messages more quickly and more widely across places. There are many types of Internet social media available with different purposes such as social networking, media sharing network, discussion forums, and social blogging networks. The most familiar Internet social media type is Facebook. It is a social

---

[10]Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, London: SAGE, 1989; Saiful Mujani, *Muslim Demokrat: Islam, Budaya Demokrasi, Dan Partisipasi Politik Di Indonesia Pasca Orde Baru*, Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2007; Luthfi Assyaukanie, "Religion As A Political Tool: Secular and Islamist Roles in Indonesian Elections", *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2019), 454-479.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340072541_RELIGION_AS_A_POLITICAL_TOOL_Secular_and_Islamist_Roles_in_Indonesian_Elections.

media application where users can post details about themselves and their lives and invite other consumers to be friends. The users can exchange information, share pictures and videos as well as joining with others to form groups. The next social networking service is Instagram. It is designed to be viewed on smartphones and users can take photos and videos, and upload them in their accounts. Twitter is another Internet social medium where customers can publish and recite 140-character information called tweets. Networks can be created by following others and reading their tweets on their news feed. The feed provides a list of tweets from their network accessed through a website or a mobile device. Another popular Internet social media is Whatsapp. It is an application that allows users to send instant messages, pictures and videos to other users for free. The exchange of information can be used for one to one or group conversations. Another Internet social media website is YouTube where users can watch videos and create accounts and produce their own video to share to public. There are other Internet social media such as Google+, Pinterest, Snapchat and Tumblr with common characteristics.

Internet social media have reached many users in Indonesia. It exceeded 150 millions users in 2019, which is 64 percent of the Indonesian population of 268,283,016 people. [11]Around the world, there are almost 5 billion users of the 7.7 billion people, which is 63 percent of the world population.[12]

The widespread use of the Internet has increased a debate on its effect on society.[13] Castells argues that the media has increased the process

---

[11]Kementerian Informatika, Accessed 24 January 2021. URL:https://web.kominfo.go.id/sites/default/files/laptahkominfo2019

[12]World Internet Users Statistics and 2020 World Population Stats Accessed 24 January 2021. URL:https://internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

[13]Manuel Castells, "The Impact of the Internet on Society: A Global Perspective", *In Change: 19 Key Essays on How Internet Changing Our Lives*, Spain: BBVA Open Minded, 2013,127-148; Barry Wellman, "Physical Place and Cyberplace: The Rise of Personalized Networking",

of individualization and decreased group based community. Wellman believes that the Internet social media have contributed to a switch from a group based community to a network-based society. Moreover, Rainie and Wellman show that instead of isolating people or reducing their sociability; the Internet actually escalates sociability. Brandtzæg, Luders, and Skjetne report that Internet social media support relations and connect capital, and more connections with relatives, friends, and acquaintances, while Wang and Wellman demonstrate the media have increased friendships, both offline and online.

New channels of communication have been created by the internet and the flow of information has been changed compared to the conventional media. The news have been circulated through multimedia platforms across boundaries and social, cultural and political positions.

The politics has been greatly influenced by Internet social media. They created a room for the materialization of the ideal of direct democracy.[14] The Internet advances public participation in politics by creating networks among groups with a shared interest.[15] The Internet enables groups to share

---

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2001), 227-252; Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman, *Networked: The New Social Operating System*, Massachussett: MIT Press, 2012; Petter Bae Brandtzæg, Marika Luders and Jan Havard Skjetne, "Too Many Facebook "friends"? Content sharing and sociability versus the need for privacy in social network sites", *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, Vol. 26, No. 11 (2010), 123-138. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/220302534_Too_Many_Facebook_Friends_Content_Sharing_and_Sociability_Versus_the_Need_for_Privacy_in_Social_Network_Sites; Hua Wang and Barry Wellman, "Social connectivity in America: Change in Adult Friendship Network Size From 2002 to 2007", *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 53, No. 8 (2010), 1148–1169.

[14]Christa Daryl Slaton, *Televote: Expanding Citizen Participation in the Quantum Age*, New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1992; Charles S. White, "Citizen Participation and the Internet: Prospects for Civic Deliberation in the Information Age", *Social Studies*, Vol. 88 No. 1 (1997), 23–28.

[15]Mario Diani, "Social Movement Networks: Virtual and Real", *Information, Communication and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2001), 386–401; Peter Van Aelst and Stefaan Walgrave, "New Media, New Movements? The Role of the Internet in Shaping the 'Anti-Globalization' Movement", *Information, Communication and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (2002), 465–493.

political issues to citizens,[16] and to discuss the political issues on different perspectives.[17] The Internet has also been praised as a chance to facilitate new forms of political participation,[18] as a means to better connect citizens and political parties, and finally, as a new facility to discuss politics.[19] All these new conditions provided by the Internet should have been considered beneficial to reinforce democracies by increasing political partaking.

The importance of religion in Indonesian politics

Different opinion exists about the relationship between Islam and politics in the direct electoral democracy. The Islamic political supports are denounced in terms of using religion for political interests. Other say religion and politics cannot be separated and religions must inspire politics so that religiosity is central in national development. The diversed opinions about religion and politics make association of politics and religion absurd. This paper attempts to break the absurdity by showing the effects of Islamic political supports to voting behaviors in majority and minority Muslim provinces in Indonesia.

By examining the 2014 and 2019 presidential election, the present study shares concerns to the discussion on religious influence in Indonesian politics. Analyzing the result of the elections, I found that Islamic political

---

[16]Bruce Bimber, "Information and Political Engagement in America: The Search for Effects of Information Technology at the Individual Level", *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. *54*, No. 1 (2001), 53–67.

[17]Philip N. Howard, "Deep Democracy, Thin Citizenship: The Impact of Digital Media in Political Campaign Strategy", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. *597*, No. 1 (2005), 153–170.

[18]Steve John Wright, "Informing, Communicating and ICTs in Contemporary Anti-Capitalism Movements", In Wim *van de Donk*, Brian *D. Loader*, Paul G. *Nixon*, Dieter *Rucht* (Eds.), *Cyber-protest: New Media, Citizens and Social Movements* (1st ed.), London: Routledge, 2004, 77–93.

[19]James D. Fearon, "Deliberation as Discussion", in Jon Elster (Ed.), *Deliberative Democracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 44–68; Vincent Price and Joseph N Cappella, "Online Deliberation and Its Influence: The Electronic Dialogue Project in Campaign", *IT and Society*, Vol. 1 *No. 1* (2002), 303–329.

suports affect voting behaviors in all majority and minority provinces in Indonesia. Moreover, it does influence more in minority Muslim provinces than in majority Muslim provinces. In 5 minority Muslim provinces, which are North Sulawesi, East Nusa Tenggara, Bali, Papua and West Papua, Prabowo lost 97 percentage of votes compared to the gained 75 percentage of votes more in 5 majority Muslim provinces, which are Aceh, South Kalimantan, Riau, West Sumatra and South Sumatra.

The present study highlights the importance of religion in Indonesian politics. As evidence, the Islamic political supports to Prabowo Subianto in the 2019 presidential election affect the result of the election in majority and minority Muslim provinces. The Islamic political supports enables politicians and political parties to gain political advantages in conservative majority Muslim provinces in Indonesia but not in minority Muslim provinces. On the contrary, resistance to the Islamic political supports was palpable in all minority Muslim provinces in Indonesia. This is evidently true as the supported Islamic candidates receive negative observation from voters within minority Muslim provinces. In the 2019 Presidential election case, there are two reasons to explain why Islamic political supports influence more in the minority Muslim provinces.

The psychological reason is the first one. The consequence of the Islamic political supports to Prabowo in the 2019 Presidential election and other Islamic political movements by conservative Muslim groups is that many Muslims in minority provinces have to stand against the political religious movement, in order to ally with non-Muslim groups in their minority Muslim provinces. It means Muslims in minority Muslim provinces prefer their local political ally over an association with national Islamic politics in majority Muslim provinces. Voters in minority Muslim provinces would regard Prabowo as a representation of Islam was not a powerful message in their areas. In fact, it reduces their chances to participate and contribute

in local politics succesfully.

The second reason why Islamic political supports are more influential in minority Muslim provinces is related to counter-religious and political movement from Muslim and non-Muslim groups. The head of local Islamic organisation urged Muslim not to invite conservative Muslim leaders to North Sulawesi. Prabowo's close ally with conservative Muslim leaders such as Front of Guarding Islam (Front Pembela Islam, FPI) which is prohibited today was denounced by Muslim and non-Muslim groups in North Sulawesi. On the contrary, those who are denounced by conservative Muslim groups in majority Muslim provinces such as Ahok in Jakarta are applauded in the minority Muslim provinces. Ahok was asked to be governor in Bali and NTT. Ahok for Bali 1 (Gubernur of Bali), a petition, was created online and supported by more than 7000 followers. What this means is the more a political support is created based on a religious group, the more political resistance emerges from other religious groups.

Conclusion

This study of voting behaviors in majority and minority Muslim provinces reveals a strong correlation between Islam and politics demonstrated in the results of the 2014 and the 2019 Presidential elections in Indonesia. The Islamic political supports to Prabowo Subianto in the 2019 Presidential election have increased his votes from the 2014 Presidential election in majority Muslim provinces and reversely decreased his votes in minority Muslim provinces. In fact, the study shows that the Islamic political supports affect voting behaviors more in minority Muslim provinces than in majority Muslim provinces.

These findings raise theoretical and methodological interpretations. At the theoretical extent, the study reveals the influence of religion in politics in Indonesia. Islamic political supports work significantly both in majority and minority Muslim provinces. In conservative Muslim provinces, it works

in increasing votes of the candidate while in minority Muslim provinces it does in decreasing votes of the candidate. The Islamic political supports are deemed positive in some provinces and negative in other provinces.

The above analysis confirms the thread of political supports based on a religious affiliation in Indonesia. If it continues, the religious political supports will always create a polarisation based on religion in plural Indonesian society. The polarisation will reappear in every election and it very likely will trigger communal religious conflicts in the future. Politicians, religious leaders and governments are all responsible for finding the right solution as strategy to reduce religious political supports in Indonesia.

There is no easy way to limit religious political support and its effects. Religious political supports would include a form of religious populism in politics. Religious populism could be analyzed in two dimensions: as an openly religious manifestation, and as a delicate religious phenomenon, stranded in the sanctified of politics in societies of the modern era. Moreover, the religious political supports do not distinguish between politicians' or candidates' acts and other acts.

I find an ideal model of disengagement of religions in political activism underscores the need for absence of religious political movements in Indonesia from politicians and candidates. The present recommendation focuses on an effort to limit them from engagement in religious political activities. Any politician and religious leader should be limited to get involved in any religious political activities. Governments need to include an article on law of general election to limit politicians and candidates to commits an act of religious political supports either directly or indirectly to influence voters not to use their right to vote, uses their right to vote in a certain way so that the vote become invalid, votes certain candidates, or do not elect certain candidates. These politicians and candidates shall

be punished with imprisonment and a fine when they do so.

This will not be effectively efficient in elliminating religious political supports if narrative on religious political activism is not countered properly. The best countered religious political supports are based on research findings as this article does, rather than an opinion. This study needs to be read by all decision makers in general election in Indonesia.

At the methodological level, this study underlines the importance of applying more lineal approaches to the study of influence of religion and voter behaviors in majority and minority provinces in Indonesia. The use of a survey to understand reasons of the voter behaviors in those provinces are necessary.

Bibliography

Almond, Gabriel A. and Sidney Verba. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. London: SAGE, 1989.

Arifianto, Alexander, "The Missing Middle", *New Mandala* (blog), February 15, 2017. https://www.newmandala.org/the-missing-middle/.

Aspinall, Edward, "Interpreting the Jakarta Election", New Mandala (blog), February 16, 2017. https://www.newmandala.org/interpreting-jakarta-election/

Assyaukanie, Luthfi, "Religion As A Political Tool: Secular and Islamist Roles in Indonesian Elections", *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 13, No 2 (2019): 454-479. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340072541_RELIGION_AS_A_POLITICAL_TOOL_Secular_and_Islamist_Roles_in_Indonesian_Elections.

Brandtzæg, Petter Bae, Marika Luders and Jan Havard Skjetne, "Too many Facebook "friends"? Content sharing and sociability versus the need for privacy in social network sites", *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, Vol. 26, No. 11 (2010): 123-138. https://www.

researchgate.net/publication/220302534_Too_Many_Facebook_
Friends_Content_Sharing_and_Sociability_Versus_the_Need_for_
Privacy_in_Social_Network_Sites.

Bimber, Bruce, "Information and Political Engagement in America: The Search for Effects of Information Technology at the Individual Level", *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 54 No. 1 (2001): 53–67.

Castells, Manuel, "The Impact of the Internet on Society: A Global Perspective", *In Change: 19 Key Essays on How Internet Changing Our Lives*, Spain: BBVA Open Minded, 2013: 127-148.

Chaplin, Chris, "Mobilising Islam for Political Gains", *New Mandala* (blog), February 14, 2017. https://www.newmandala.org/mobilising-islam-political-gains/.

Dalimunthe, Syairal Fahmy et al., "Politics of Identity and the Case of Ahok's Religion Blasphemy in the 2017 DKI Jakarta Election", *E-Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2020): 15-21.

Diani, Mario, "Social Movement Networks: Virtual and Real", *Information, Communication and Society*, Vol. 3 No. 3 (2001): 386–401.

Fealy, Greg, "Bigger than Ahok: Explaining the 2 December Mass Rally", *Indonesia at Melbourne*, December 7, 2016. https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/bigger-than-ahok-explaining-jakartas-2-december-mass-rally/

Fearon, James D., "Deliberation as Discussion", in Jon Elster (Ed.). *Deliberative Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998: 44–68.

Fossati, Diego, "The Resurgence of Ideology in Indonesia: Political Islam, Aliran and Political Behaviour", *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (2019): 119–148.

Gueorguiev, Dimitar et al., "Rematch: Islamic Politics, Mobilisation, and the Indonesian Presidential Election", *Political Science,* Vol. 70 No.

3 (2018): 240–252.

Howard, Philip N., "Deep Democracy, Thin Citizenship: The Impact of Digital Media in Political Campaign Strategy", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 597, No. 1 (2005): 153–170.

The Indonesian Survey Institute, "Tren Persepsi Publik Tentang Demokrasi, Korupsi, Dan Intoleransi", 2018. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ORslWKYn57NAkzQIOhN3rEwq9rRXf4eN/view

Lindsey, Tim, "Blasphemy Charge Reveals Real Fault Lines in Indonesian Democracy", *Indonesia at Melbourne*, November 24, 2016. https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/blasphemy-charge-reveals-real-fault-lines-in-indonesian-democracy/;

Menchik, Jeremy. *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without Liberalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Mietzner, Marcus and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "Explaining the 2016 Islamist Mobilisation in Indonesia: Religious Intolerance, Militant Groups and the Politics of Accommodation", *Asian Studies Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2018): 479–497.

Mietzner, Marcus, Burhanuddin Muhtadi and Rizka Halida, "Entrepreneurs of Grievance: Drivers and Effects of Indonesia's Islamist Mobilization", *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 174, No. 2–3 (2018): 159–187.

Mujani, Saiful. *Muslim Demokrat: Islam, Budaya Demokrasi, Dan Partisipasi Politik Di Indonesia Pasca Orde Baru.* Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2007.

Pepinsky, Thomas B. et al., "Testing Islam's Political Advantage: Evidence from Indonesia", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (2012): 584–600.

Price, Vincent, and Joseph. N Cappella, "Online Deliberation and Its

Influence: The Electronic Dialogue Project in Campaign", *IT and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2002): 303–329.

Rainie, Lee, and Barry Wellman. *Networked: The New Social Operating System*. Massachussett: MIT Press, 2012.

Salim, Arskal, "Sharia from Below in Aceh (1930s-1960s): Islamic Identity and the Right to Self-Determination with Comparative reference to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)", *Indonesia and the Malay World*, Vol. 32, No. 92 (2004): 80-99.

Salim, Delmus Puneri. *The Transnational And The Local In The Politics Of Islam.* Oxford: Springer, 2015.

Slaton, Christa Daryl. *Televote: Expanding Citizen Participation in the Quantum Age.* New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1992.

Sumaktoyo, Nathanael Gratias et al., "The Paradoxical Religiosity Effect: Religion and Politics in Indonesia and the United States", *Politics and Religion,* Vol. 9, No. 3 (2016): 481–507.

Sumaktoyo, Nathanael Gratias, "Ethnic And Religious Sentiments In Indonesian Politics: Evidence From The 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election", *Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 21, Issue 1 (2021): 1–24.

Van Aelst, Peter, and Stefaan Walgrave, "New Media, New Movements? The Role of the Internet in Shaping the 'Anti-Globalization' Movement", *Information, Communication and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (2002): 465–493.

Wang, Hua, and Barry Wellman, "Social connectivity in America: Change in Adult Friendship Network Size From 2002 to 2007", *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 53, No. 8 (2010): 1148–1169.

Wellman, Barry, "Physical Place and Cyberplace: The Rise of Personalized Networking", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2001): 227-252.

White, Charles S., "Citizen Participation and the Internet: Prospects for Civic Deliberation in the Information Age", *Social Studies*, Vol. 88,

No. 1 (1997): 23–28.

Wright, Steve John, "Informing, Communicating and ICTs in Contemporary Anti-Capitalism Movements", In Wim *van de Donk*, Brian *D. Loader*, Paul G. *Nixon*, Dieter *Rucht* (Eds.), *Cyber-protest: New Media, Citizens and Social Movements* (1st ed.). London: Routledge, 2004: 77–93.