

Political Polarization based on Religious Identities: Empirical Evidence from the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election

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ABSTRACT

According to a research conducted by Anis Baswedan, Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, political Islam in Indonesia during the post Reformation had a moderate and pluralistic character. But this qualitative case study finds that a new phenomenon of polarization based on religious identities emerges among voters in the elections. In this article we argue that the results of the second round of the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election provide strong evidence that supports the idea of ideological polarization. We apply the root cause model presented by Veldhuis and Staun to understand how Islamic radicalization occurs in the Jakarta election. In line with the argument of Mainwaring and Torcal, we also argue that due to weak institutionalization, political parties did not play a dominant role in shaping the sharp ideological gap among voters. Rather it was the product of a successful campaign and political spin by alliances of Islamic organizations and politicians that exploited the issue of Islamic identity to outperform other contestants with different religious identity. We found that polarization of identity based on religiosity occurred due to social dynamics that were manufactured by campaign strategies and staff, politicians, and religious leaders. Political marketing strategies in the event of elections have, in fact, blatantly exploited the issue of religion as a political weapon in elections. It has led to the resurgence of religious identity in entering the political debate. Hence growing intolerance and conflicts based on religious identities during elections may have provided initial evidence to support the idea that Indonesian democracy is progressing towards illiberal democracy.

Keywords: polarization, religious identity, Islamic radicalization, intolerance, political marketing strategy

ABSTRAK

Menurut sebuah penelitian yang dilakukan oleh Anis Baswedan, Saiful Mujani

dan R. William Little, Politik Islam di Indonesia selama masa Reformasi memiliki karakter moderat dan pluralistik. Namun, studi kasus kualitatif ini menemukan bahwa fenomena polarisasi baru berdasarkan identitas keagamaan muncul di antara para pemilih dalam pemilihan. Dalam artikel ini kami berpendapat bahwa hasil putaran kedua Pemilu Gubernur DKI Jakarta 2017 memberikan bukti kuat yang mendukung gagasan polarisasi ideologis. Kami menerapkan model akar permasalahan yang diajukan oleh Veldhuis dan Staun untuk memahami bagaimana radikalisasi Islam terjadi dalam pemilihan di DKI Jakarta. Sejalan dengan argumen Mainwaring dan Torcal, kami juga berpendapat bahwa karena pelembagaan yang lemah, partai politik tidak memainkan peran dominan dalam membentuk kesenjangan ideologis yang tajam di antara para pemilih. Melainkan merupakan produk dari kampanye dan spin politik yang sukses oleh aliansi organisasi dan politisi Islam yang mengeksploitasi isu identitas Islam untuk mengguguli kontestan lain dengan identitas agama yang berbeda. Kami menemukan bahwa polarisasi identitas berdasarkan religiusitas terjadi karena dinamika sosial yang dihasilkan oleh strategi kampanye staf, politisi, dan pemuka agama. Strategi pemasaran politik dalam hal pemilihan umum, pada kenyataannya, dengan terang-terangan mengeksploitasi isu agama sebagai senjata politik dalam pemilihan. Hal ini menyebabkan bangkitnya identitas religius dalam memasuki perdebatan politik. Oleh karena itu, meningkatnya intoleransi dan konflik berdasarkan identitas keagamaan selama pemilihan mungkin telah memberikan bukti awal untuk mendukung gagasan bahwa demokrasi Indonesia berkembang menuju demokrasi yang tidak liberal.

Kata Kunci: polarisasi, identitas agama, radikalisasi Islam, intoleransi, strategi pemasaran politik

INTRODUCTION

This study is inspired by the landslide victory of election challenging duo Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno over the incumbent governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, along with Djarot Saiful Hidayat, in the second round of the 2017th gubernatorial election. The official results released by the Jakarta Election Commission (KPU DKI) during the second round of the election showed that Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno won the election with a total of 3,240,987 votes, equal to 57.96%, while Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno secured 2,350,366 votes, equal to 42.04%. An intense campaign strategy among candidates of the Jakarta gubernatorial election that lasted for two rounds of voting attracted the public not only within the capital area of Jakarta but also nationwide. It provided numerous topics of political debate among social scientists, political analysts, and TV commentators, especially when we looked at the programs and strategies of every candidate, which were very intensive, creative, and even provocative.

Every candidate managed to apply the strategy of *blusukan* (impromptu visits) to portray aspirations from the public, by including them in the program that had been planned to convince the voters of Jakarta. Unquestionably this model of campaign has an essential rationale underpinning it, especially when we compare it to the theory of political marketing that states that each campaign program should be constructed based on market surveys (Marshment, 2011). The decision to apply the “impromptu-visits” campaign model came about as a result of a market survey that stated that the majority of the public wanted a populist leader who would be able to grasp the aspirations of the low- and middle-class society. However, the use of campaign strategies that were nearly identical to each other created a condition in which the creativity of all campaign advisors and staff in applying their strategy would undoubtedly determine the outcome of the election.

This paper is based on some anomalies that emerged in the Jakarta gubernatorial election that contradicted the elections in other regions. One of them was that the Jakarta gubernatorial election marked an increase in voter turnout, with the second round turnout being 77.8% compared to the first round of only 75 percent. This has rarely happened in other regional and local elections in Indonesia because the second round elections have usually resulted in a decrease in voter turnout.

In this research, we will focus on two fundamental anomalies that we considered to be vital in the case of the Jakarta gubernatorial election. *First*, according to many political analysts the feature of political Islam during the post-reformation era has been characterized as plural and moderate. For example, when we parallel it to the writing of Anies Baswedan and Sandianga Uno, one of the main candidates in the election, his studies (2004) concluded that the characteristics of political Islam in Indonesia, after the reformation era, reflect the diversity and pragmatism of Muslim aspirations. Political Islam was not only represented by political parties that placed Islam as their formal ide-

logical platform but it was also taken over by political parties that were hospitable towards Muslim aspirations, including political parties with nationalist ideologies. Politics in the name of Islam has been actuated by almost all political parties ranging from the Islamist parties to Islamic-friendly parties and secular-inclusive parties ([Baswedan, 2004](#)).

What has been prevalent in the post-reformation era of Indonesia is the rise of catch-all parties, a species of parties with tendencies to be pivotal centerist parties ([Mietzner, 2008](#)). Mietzner is in line with Green-Pedersen, who has learned from the context of centripetal parties in Europe to argue that the existence of pivotal center parties has pulled other parties with extreme ideologies into the center of the political spectrum. To prove his argument, Mietzner provides data from Muslim parties in Indonesia. He argues that most Muslim parties in Indonesia have been moderate and pragmatic, with an orientation towards gaining seats in the cabinet, which made them move into the center of the political spectrum. Another example of a moderate and pragmatic party exists today in the period after the 2014 general election, manifested in the form of the Democratic Party under the direction of former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. After their bad performance in the 2014 general election, with the decline of their percentage of the vote, the Democratic Party maintained their policy of not joining the cabinet of President Jokowi while also not becoming include in the major opposition coalition.

However, in the midst of the current trend of moderate and pragmatic political parties during the post-reformation era, this article presents contrasting facts that arose from the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial election. We argue that the second round of the Jakarta election brought about a surprise that actually supports Sartori's argument regarding ideological polarization ([Sartori, 1976](#)). Campaign strategies and staff exploited religious issues in their political marketing strategies as they attempted to win the

election. This gave birth to religious intolerance and conflicts among the people of Jakarta. Polarization in society has been perceived since the protests of *Aksi Bela Islam* held on 4th November and 2nd December 2016, using the easily recognizable taglines of #411 and #212. These movements successfully gathered thousands of Muslims to protest against the government and demand punishment for Ahok, who derogatorily cited verses from the Qur'an in his speech in the *Kepulauan Seribu*.

To understand how this religious intolerance has been rekindled in the present political dynamics, we need to take a deeper look at the thesis of the civilizational clash that was brought into scholarly discussion by Samuel Huntington in the aftermath of the cold war. According to Huntington, the end of the cold war was marked by the death of ideologies as political doctrines that were born in Western civilization, including the ideologies of socialism- communism and liberal capitalism. The demise of those ideologies marked a new era in which many political actors, political parties and the government altered the pattern of political mobilization to gain support from the masses through religious and cultural identity ([Huntington, 1993](#)). Issues of religious intolerance, identity politics, and sectarianism have been raised during the 21st century.

In the context of the latest election in Jakarta, sectarian issues were used by campaign advisors and staff of each candidate to mobilize support from the majority of Muslim voters. This changed the election of the governor in the capital city of Indonesia from a contest based on a political program, as happened during the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election, to a contestant based on religious identities. Therefore, we highlight the fact that the chance of the incumbent candidate winning the election by running a campaign based on programmatic issues was destroyed by their unwillingness to address religious issues. In other words, it was the mistake of Ahok/Djarot themselves as the incumbent candidates that spoiled their chance of influencing rational voters. Consequently, both competing candidates

Challenging the incumbent in the elections exploited the issue of blasphemy to gain electoral support from the majority of Muslim voters.

Second, the 2017 Jakarta election seemed to break the myth of voter behavior in developing countries that has been characterized as highly volatile. A study conducted by Scott Mainwaring and Mariano [Torcal \(2005\)](#) became the reference for this case because they argue that in developing countries the political parties tend to have weak political institutions. Political parties in developing countries have not been able to strengthen their institutional relationship with the voters. On the contrary, the study of Mainwaring and Torcal failed to give explanations for the election results in the second round of the Jakarta elections, which demonstrated a low level of voter volatility. The outcome of the elections demonstrated the capability of two election challenging duos (both Agus/Silvy and Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno) to consolidate their votes to overthrow the incumbent from office.

This article focuses on two main questions that will be analyzed with a view to solving the new puzzle in Indonesian politics. *First*, to what extent was the ideology of voters polarized in the second round of the Jakarta Gubernatorial election? *Second*, what was the extent of voters' volatility during the two rounds of the Jakarta Gubernatorial elections? These two questions will be answered by revealing data from the National Survey Research Group, which conducts surveys and polls intensely in the event of elections.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper addresses two main problems as stated above: *first*, the political polarization that formed in the second round of the Jakarta elections as indicated by the data from several National Survey Groups; *second*, the extent of voters' volatility during the two rounds of the elections, which lasted from the registration of candidates in September until the second round of elections

in April. The data will be analyzed using a study case method. The data obtained in this study were collected by conducting post observation of the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial elections and secondary data collection was in the form of journals, books, and data surveys by credible National Survey Groups. The triangulation method has been applied in this paper, which refers to the use of several research methods to test the accuracy of data ([Babbie, 2010](#)). We checked the validity of data presented by several National Survey Groups by comparing them to the data from journals and other peer-reviewed materials.

IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITY AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

One of the most controversial concepts in the history of political science is that of ideology. Scholars have also studied the concept of ideology in the domain of philosophy of science. However, the concept of ideology should be at the center of the conceptual framework in political science and must be separated from philosophy of science. While in other works, for example that of Sartori, ideology is generally classified into two domains, i.e., ideology in the domain of science and ideology in the political domain ([Giddens, 1983](#); [Sartori, 1979](#)), this article limits the notion of ideology to the political domain and we specifically address it as the concept of ideological mentality in which individuals navigate and orient themselves in the sea of politics. Ideology has always been linked in the broader sense to an individual's belief system. The belief system that an individual possesses may include, among others, religious, philosophical, scientific, political, psychological, and social spheres. Thus, specifically in the political realm, ideologism refers to a set of beliefs in which individuals direct and orient their attitudes and behavior toward the political landscape ([Sartori, 1979](#)).

In his scheme of analysis, Sartori classifies the ideology of an individual into emotive and cognitive aspects (see Table 1). (a) The first element is called *fixed ideologism*, which is characterized by a closed cognitive status and strong emotional state. In this

first element of ideologism, an individual's behavior is highly rigid, dogmatic, and closed to, or impenetrable by, other arguments. (b) The second element is called *inelastic ideologism*, which is characterized by a closed cognitive status but a weak emotional state. The second element is cognitively still enclosed by arguments and evidence but still shows weak emotional dynamics and has a tendency to be open to new views without traumatic consequences. (c) The third element is the characteristic of *firm ideologism*, which has a tendency to be open to arguments and evidence, but is characterized by a strong emotive state. And (d) the fourth element is called *flexible ideologism*. This element is characterized by both a weak cognitive status and weak emotive status. This fourth element is characterized by pragmatism, and openness to arguments and evidence, and is easily transformed when confronted by other comfort situations.

TABLE 1. SARTORI'S FRAMEWORK OF IDEOLOGY

		Emotive Status	
		Strong	Weak
Closed	Fixed	Inelastic	
	Firm	Flexible	

Source: Sartori (2005).

More specifically, the Sartori's concept of ideology can be classified into two major categories: ideologism and pragmatism (see Table 2). Sartori describes it in a bipolar dispute scheme, between ideologism on the one hand and pragmatism on the other. Pragmatism also belongs to the classification of the belief system or part of the ideology itself, although it may also mean that an individual has no ideological preference in his behavior. Thus

the attempt to contrast idealism and pragmatism represents an ideological distance between the strength and weakness of an individual's orientation toward politics.

TABLE 2. IDEOLOGISM AND PRAGMATISM AS POLAR OPPOSITES

	Emotive Status	
	Strong	Weak
Closed	Ideologism	

Source: Sartori (1979). *Politics, Ideology, and Belief System*. *Revue européenne des sciences sociales*.

In this work, we use this framework to see the voters' behavior during the two rounds of the Jakarta Gubernatorial election. More attention can be specifically given to the outcome of the second round of the elections, which took place on 19th April. But this work does not mean to state that the two candidates contesting the elections represented a competition between *ideologism* on the one hand and *pragmatism* on the other. We shall see clearly that the competition between the two candidates represents two ideological identity differences, between conservative versus liberal and Islamic fundamentalist versus pluralist, or even the identity of Islam versus non-Islamic voters. This paper seeks to find a proper ideological explanation to show the contrast in ideological doctrines between the two groups of voters.

Sartori's scheme is one of the old and fundamental analyses in political science. It is mainly used as a tool for identifying the ideology of a political party, political institutions, and even individual behavior in a political system. A more recent study to explain ideological identity is provided by Tinka Veldhuis and Jørgen Staun, in which they attempt to find answers to the rise of

home-grown terrorism and radicalization in Western Europe. In their research they provide models to show why individuals decided to take part in Islamic radicalization or ignite certain kinds of activism to guard their religious identity. They argue that several macro-level factors that constitute a social context whereby an individual interacts in society may ignite ideological transformation when it is supported by micro-level factors such as disorders, pressures, and personal beliefs (Veldhuis&Staun, 2009). The argument of Veldhuis and Staun can be explicated in the following charts:

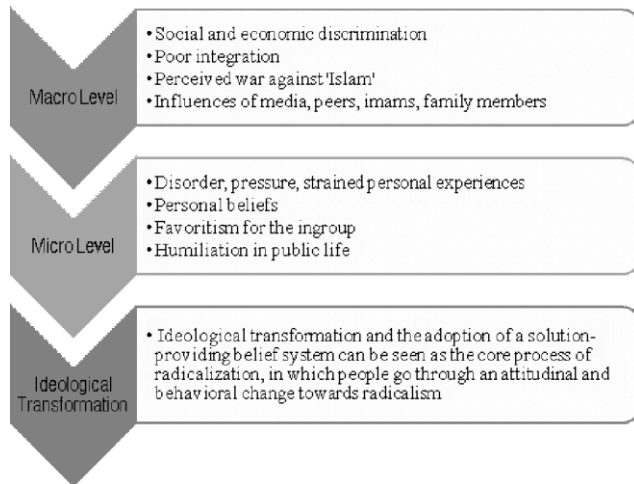


FIGURE 1. ROOT CAUSE MODEL OF ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION (VELDHUIS & STAUN, 2009).

In this article, we use the framework of Veldhuis and Staun to analyze the root of radicalization and religious intolerance that prevail during the process of a campaign. In the context of the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial election, two major events of mass protest to defend Islam (*Aksi Bela Islam* #411 and #212) require some explanation as to how such movements could prevail. Both protests occurred as a reaction to the case of Ahok's blasphemy in *Kepulauan Seribu* and went viral after being uploaded to social media by Buni Yani. We attempt to analyze how the public responded to the issues and how the public transformed their

ideological position towards the incumbent candidate in the election. Previously, especially during the first decade after the reformation era, scholars denoted Indonesian democracy as secular democracy with the majority of the Muslim community showing tolerance, pragmatism, and commitment to secular nationalism ([Baswedan, 2004](#); [Mujani, 2009](#)). But current developments have contributed to an antipathy towards scholarly analysis of Indonesian democracy. The events of the Jakarta election may have provided initial evidence to support the idea that Indonesian democracy is progressing towards illiberal democracy.

CHALLENGE TO THE STUDY OF MAINWARING AND TORCAL

The study by Scott Mainwaring and Mariano Torcal represented a strong critique of Sartori's analysis of polarization in the context of political parties. For Mainwaring and Torcal, Sartori's study only explains the context of party systems and elections in Western countries. Their major findings consist of three basic assumptions. *First*, the majority of developing countries that adopt democratic and semi-democratic systems have a higher volatility and more unstable voter character than cases in developed countries of the West. *Secondly*, they further highlight the weak institutionalization of party systems in developing countries where by political parties are unable to build strong ideological roots in the society. Political parties in developing countries have not been able to build an ideologically strong relationship with voters through the offering of programs that are able to tie the voters institutionally to the party.

Third, the relationship between voters and candidates from political parties in developing countries has a more personality-based character. Voters in developing countries do not vote for their candidates based on the ideology and programs their party offers. There are many factors underlying the personal relationship between voters and these candidates, for instance the candidates' relationships with voters based on their public images rather than based on voters' adherence to the party program.

The Jakarta gubernatorial election is a regional landscape in Indonesia where Mainwaring and Torcal's studies on voter volatility face serious challenges. Jakarta is an electoral district where there is a substantial portion of rational voters. A research by PUSKAPOL FISIP UI during the 2012 election in Jakarta shows that the majority of respondents have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the problems that occurred in Jakarta as well as the solutions to them. Competition between candidates based on programs has a big influence on the choice of citizens in Jakarta ([Ardiansa, 2014](#)). In other words, the presence of a large number of rational voters in Jakarta seems to contradict Mainwaring and Torcal's studies about the characteristic of voters in developing countries.

This assumption is also the basis for several major parties (The Golkar Party and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) and other middle parties (The National Democrat Party) nominating the incumbent duo, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama and Djarot Saiful Hidayat (Ahok/Djarot), as one of the contestants in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. The political reasoning behind this nomination comes from the results of polls from various National Survey Groups that indicate that the level of public satisfaction with the incumbent's performance is quite high.

Meanwhile, other parties also have a tendency to nominate other candidates who have at least as good an intellectual record in order to convince rational voters. The names of candidates appearing in election enrollment are based on the criteria of educational level, experience in governmental office, having a clean image in the case of KKN (Corruption, Collusion, Nepotism), and leadership capabilities. As a result, two other candidate duos appeared, Agus Harimukti Yudhoyono and Silvy (Agus/ Silvy) and Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno (Anis/Sandi), to challenge the incumbent. Therefore, these candidates were nominated based on their capacities, capabilities, and popularities in order to grasp the rational voters.

EXPLAINING THE DEFEAT OF THE INCUMBENT CANDIDATE

Scholars of political science are surprisingly shocked by the incumbent's performance in the recent Jakarta Gubernatorial election, especially with the result showing a wide margin of defeat. Scholarly explanations with regard to the factors behind the defeat of Ahok are rarely found. SaifulMujani and William Liddle offered a theoretical framework that is frequently cited to explain the election and voters' behavior in Indonesian politics. They explain that leadership and party ID were the two most important factors of the vote in the legislative elections and presidential elections held in 1999 and 2004 ([Mujani&Liddle, 2007](#)). The 2017 election in the capital city of Jakarta provided contrasting facts. It showed that religion and ethnic identities became the dominant factors behind the incumbent's defeat in the ballots, while leadership character and party ID were complementary factors.

Accordingly we argue that the landslide victory of the election challengers, Anis/Sandi, can be explained by the blunders made by the incumbent candidate in applying their political marketing strategies. *First*, the leadership factor, which can be classified into a number of characteristics such as public trust worthiness, leadership capability, impartiality, assertiveness and charisma, intelligence and smartness, hospitality and modesty, and personal appeal ([SMRC, 2016](#)). In October 2016, SaifulMujani Research and Consulting released surveys on the popularity and electability of every candidate contesting the ballot. They show important findings with regard to leadership characteristics in which Ahok scored low on his hospitality and modesty (42%), while Agus Harimukti Yudhoyono (72%) and Anis Baswedan (80%) scored higher in this variable. In contrast, Ahok showed his dominance in five other variables compared to other candidates, except the variable of personal appeal, which showed fairly commensurable scores. In other words, Ahok gained more advantages in appealing to rational voters with his remarkable achievements in office. Nonetheless, Ahok broke the fundamen-

tal rule in running for gubernatorial elections for a second term. He failed to display a good image of his character through harsh and vulgar political communications.

This argument was supported by the verdict of an exit poll released by the Indikator Politik, which showed how the voters for Agus/Silvy in the first round converted their votes to Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Unoin the second round (see Table 3). This shows that the voters for Agus/Silvy had a high degree of volatility with 81% of them switching their support to Anis/Sandy. Political commentators have suggested that the reasons behind the switching of voters were religious and ethnicity factors.

TABLE 3. THE SWITCHING OF POLITICAL PREFERENCE BASED ON POLITICAL ID

	Voters for Ahok/Djarotin in the second round of the election	Voters for Anies/Sandy in the second round of the election
Voters' affiliation to political parties (party ID)		
Coalition parties of Agus/Silvy in 1 st round of election	19.0	81.0
PKB	38.0	62.0
DEMOKRAT	15.0	85.0
PAN	18.0	82.0
PPP	11.0	89.0
Coalition parties of Ahok/Djarotin in 1 st round of election	83.0	17.0
NASDEM	68.0	32.0
PDIP	90.0	10.0
GOLKAR	51.0	49.0
HANURA	48.0	52.0
Coalition parties of Anies/ Sandy in 1 st round of election	6.0	94.0
PKS	3.0	97.0
GERINDRA	9.0	91.0
Nonpartisan voters	39.0	61.0

Source: Data Exit Poll from *IndikatorPolitik* April 19th, 2017

Second, a further explanation that clarifies Ahok's defeat is religious identity. This identity constitutes a long-established social cleavage in Indonesian politics. In the Old Order era, the contestation between *santri* (devout Muslims) and *abangan* (nominal Muslims) dominated Indonesian politics. In a previous study based on the data from the 2014 national election, scholars as-

sumed that the battle between *santri* and *abangan* became a “freezing” variable in Indonesian politics and could easily re-emerge in the context of local politics ([Trihartono & Patriadi, 2016](#)). Nevertheless, the use of *santri* identity is not entirely appropriate as the exact definition of this term is a religious student at a *pesantren* or Islamic boarding school. Moreover, there was an appeal from *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) forbidding their members to participate in the movements of #411 and #211 ([Tempo Online, 2016](#)). In this article, we use the dichotomy between *santri* and *abangan* to address the polarization of identity in the Jakarta election.

In our view, from the perspective of political marketing, the case of blasphemy is a mistake that should have been avoided by Ahok. His inability to construct a good personal image gave birth to the sentiment of ABA (*Asal Bukan Ahok*, which literally means “as long as it isn’t Ahok”) among the people of Jakarta. Voters who emotionally determined their political choice simply by the religious factor suddenly decided to cast their votes to figure beside Ahok. Further, this opportunity was exploited by groups of Islamic fundamentalists – referring to social institutions that use Islam as a conservative ideology – by constructing protests to defend Islam (*Aksi Bela Islam* #411 and #212), and through political spin strategies.

Basically, the case of religious defamation strengthens the argument of Jeremy Menchik, who summarizes the data regarding Indonesian religious characteristics. For Menchik, Muslim society in Indonesia is a tolerant society but does not place the credo of tolerance among liberal perspectives. Tolerance or respect for different religious communities is maintained through the autonomy of each community in matters of *Aqidah* (theology) and *Ubudiyah* (liturgy), while tolerance can arise within the context of *Muamalat* (social relations). Muslim society in Indonesia does not have a unified legal system, hence they put tolerance in social relations based on their legal or religious doctrines ([Menchik, 2011](#)). In this context, all religious leaders from various Islamic

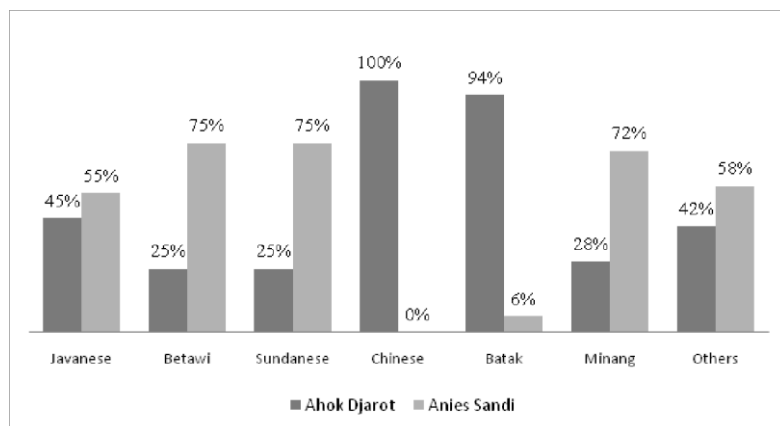
organizations in Indonesia also agreed that Ahok could not be tolerated for his defamations in the area of *Aqidah* (theology). Ahok's statement, which directly quoted and interpreted the verses of the Qur'an according to his belief, was beyond the limits of tolerance.

Third, a further aspect is ethnic identity. Ethnicity is one of the social cleavage structures that has become another determinant factor in explaining the local political context in the post-Reformation era ([Mujani&Liddle, 2007](#)). This ethnic-based social cleavage cannot be ignored in the context of local elections, including in Jakarta, and was one of the key determinants of public preference in previous elections. In the 2008 and 2013 elections, candidates used the issue of "native Betawi" to drive voters' behavior, but unfortunately this issue was defeated by the programmatic campaigns. During the first round of the elections, Silvyana used this issue by pointing out that she was the only "native Betawi" in the hope of convincing voters in the ballot. Ahok and Anis came from nonnative Indonesian origins, but during the election this issue was used for negatively attacking the incumbent candidate.

Ahok's position as a Chinese ethnic minority became detrimental to his political image. Voters with a large support base such as Betawi and Sundanese were more familiar with the Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno couple. Other ethnic groups such as Chinese and Batak had a strong preference for choosing Ahok/Djarot. This analysis is strengthened by the data on voters' distribution based on ethnic identities (see Table 4).

The data on voters' distribution based on ethnic identity show that the society is politically polarized on two aspects of ethnicity. One aspect is where the ethnic majority is Muslim and has close associations with Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno. As seen in the above surveys, the ethnic Betawi, Sundanese, and Minang predominantly preferred Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno to Ahok-Djarot. We can say that Ahok/Djarot has only been successful in attracting Chinese and Batak voters.

TABLE 4. VOTERS' DISTRIBUTION BASED ON ETHNIC IDENTITIES



Source: Data Exit Poll from *IndikatorPolitik* held on April 19th, 2017

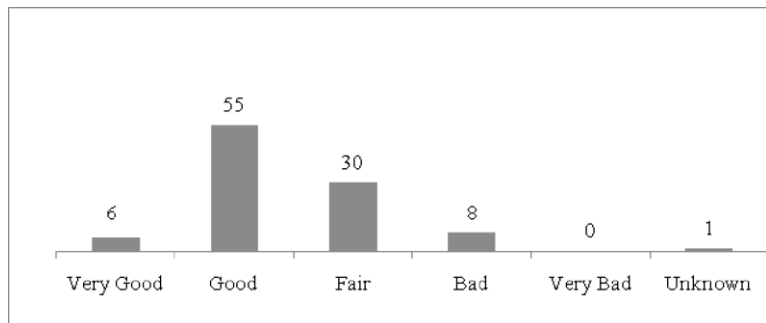
The results of the Jakarta gubernatorial election also serve as a theoretical reflection of the thesis of Mujani and Liddle, where in the regional and local elections the political landscape changed to a more localized and personalized contestation. This distinguishes the research of Mujani and Liddle, who took samples of national election results in both legislative and presidential elections. In this local political context, each candidate's campaign strategy is also getting closer to voters, either in terms of selecting issues or overall political communication strategies. In this situation the issues of religion and ethnicity, which reflect the personal identity of the majority of voters in Indonesia, are the most effective campaign material to drive voter decisions in the ballot box.

THE ANOMALY OF AN ELECTORAL WINNING STRATEGY

In general, political consultants formulate their strategy for winning an election by targeting three different aspects: the popularity, acceptability, and electability of their candidate. Further, these three aspects were elaborated into four main steps in the campaigning process. We can elaborate these four steps simply as knowing, being familiar, being acceptable, and casting a vote. In the initial step, the campaign manager and staff will try to

introduce the candidate to the public. This strategy is applied through the installation of campaign advertising so the public know the candidates running for election. Thereafter, campaign managers try to make candidates familiar to the public. This strategy can be carried out through a canvassing strategy. In the recent election for Jakarta gubernatorial office, every candidate used an impromptu-visits strategy to make them familiar to the public as well as rendering their visions, programs, and election promises. The third stage is to make candidates acceptable to the public. This strategy can be applied by designing programs and election promises that are favored by the public. Before the election day, campaign managers and staff must try to ensure that voters are willing to cast their vote for their candidate. This crucial stage is hard to measure because voters prefer to keep this private and their views will only emerge through the ballot box.

TABLE 5. PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE



Source: Surveys of SMRC held 1st – 9th October 2016.

In the case of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, most of the surveys released by polling institutions showed that the incumbent candidate had a high score on acceptability. Public perception of the incumbent's performance in gubernatorial office was high. The data show that 61% of voters in Jakarta were satisfied with the performance of Ahok/Djarot (see Table 5). This proved that Ahok/Djarot had been successful in tackling the city's problems, although some issues, such as traffic and floods, remain unresolved.

The data are in contrast to the opinion surveys held in the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election. Opinion surveys released by PUSKAPOL FISIP UI show that the public perception of government performance is at an average level (Ardiansa, 2012). This raises the assumption that once the incumbent has performed well in office, he has prepared the ground for re-election for a second term. It also shows linearity with the political marketing strategy in general that public acceptance of the incumbent candidate could lead to a high possibility of voters casting their vote for Ahok/Djarot in the ballot box.

Unfortunately, the election result was contrary to the opinion survey on the popularity and acceptability rates of Ahok/Djarot. Our explanations for this failure have been explained in the previous section of this article, and are comprised of leadership characteristics, religious identity, and ethnic identity.

THE FAILURE OF POLITICAL PARTY INSTITUTIONALIZATION

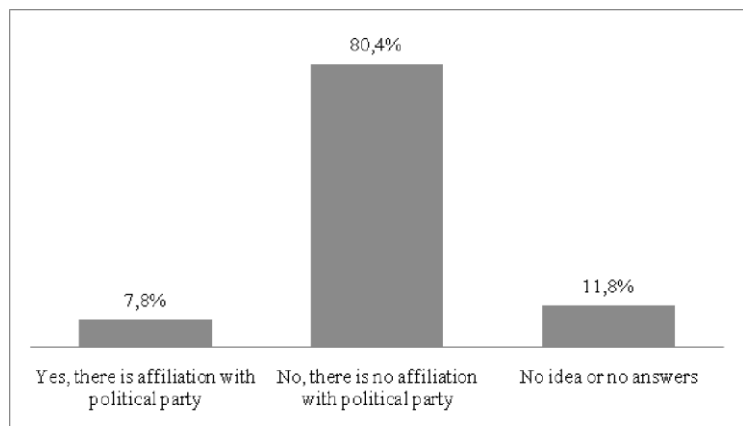
We have seen the data from opinion surveys above that the second round of the Jakarta gubernatorial election caused deep friction among the public in Jakarta. That impact also spread to many provinces outside Jakarta. This also strengthens the view that Jakarta is one of the important benchmarks in Indonesian politics. On the one hand, after the election, the president suddenly dissolved the *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI), a decision that in our opinion was made due to the growing polarization between the citizens. On the other hand, the Jakarta High Court sentenced Ahok to two years for blasphemy against Islam. The government's verdict post election seemed to underline the effort to curb deep polarizations among the society.

Chris Chaplin, one of KITLV's researchers, performed an interesting analysis of the dynamics of the Jakarta election. He pointed out that the emergence of Islamic conservatism is a product of the temporary alliance between Islamic intellectuals and politicians. Furthermore, he wrote that the alliance was only able to win the election because of the political situation that emerged

during thee. It did not represent an alliance of ideologiesthatis deep-rooted in society ([Asia and The Pacific Policy Society online, 2017](#)). Unfortunately, Chaplin’s analysis is not supported by strong data analysis.

In our view, Chaplin seems to argue that the dynamics that occurred during the Jakarta election was not ideological polarization, which resulted from the competition between political parties. In this case, Chaplin has the same views [Mainwaring and Torcal \(2005\)](#), who stated that political parties in the developing countries were still unable to establish strong institutional relations with the voters. Therefore, the switching electoral support from Agus/Silvy in the first round of the election to AniesBaswedan and Sandiaga Uno in the second round was not the result of their supporting political party strategy. To support this argument, we can refer to opinion surveys data from the *IndikatorPolitikon* the relation between voters and their party’s preference, commonly known as Party ID (see Table 5).

TABLE 6. OPINION SURVEYS ON PARTY ID IN JAKARTA



Source: Opinion Surveys of *IndikatorPolitik* held 12th– 20th January 2017

These findings indicate the weakness of political parties in constructing their ideological roots with voters, especially in Jakarta, which is well-known for its rational voters. This is indi-

cated by the low survey result, which shows that only 7.8% of the public revealed their party preference. The top five in surveys were PDIP, PKS, Demokrat, Gerindra, and PPP. The high percentage of people who say that they do not have any particular preference for any political party (80.4%) strengthens Mainwaring and Torcal's view that political parties in developing countries are incapable of building an ideological relationship with their voters.

However, we still argue that the Jakarta election showed a certain degree of ideological polarization. In the midst of the situation where the political parties were unable to establish an ideological relation with the people, their role was replaced by an ideological movement established by various Islamic organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI), *Gerakan Nasional Pembela Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (GNPF MUI), *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI), *Majelis Intelektual Muda Indonesia* (MIUMI) etc. These Muslim-based organizations took over the political parties' roles in consolidating the people's political preferences. Polarization also occurred among these organizations, with some of the organizations promoting Islamic moderation and others promoting Islamic conservatism.

IDEOLOGY BEHIND VOTERS' POLITICAL PREFERENCES

The explanation above has shown that the political process in Jakarta affects polarization within the society both at the local and nationwide level. It is also mentioned above that this paper aims to analyze the ideological distance that emerged during the contestation in the Jakarta election. Therefore, we shall identify ideologies that existed during the contestation. This can be traced from a series of events during the election, starting from the announcement of candidates, to the first round of the election, and then to the second round of the election. It can be analyzed by tracking campaign materials, political marketing strategies, and all political maneuvers by the winning staff and party

volunteers to party elites, as well as community leaders who were actively involved in the Jakarta election.

Everything seemed positive for Ahok before a video containing his speech was posted on Facebook by BuniYani on 6th October 2016. Thereupon, a blasphemy issue spread rapidly on social media around a statement made by Ahok who blatantly cited from *Al Qur'an*, *Surah Al Maidah*, verse 51, in *Kepulauan Seribu* on 27th September 2016. This brought a serious challenge to the incumbent candidate because it coincided with the candidates' verification period. Ahok's speech in *Kepulauan Seribu* was sui- cidal in terms of his image and was soon being exploited as an effective weapon by his political opponents. This issue was also exploited by his political opponents in building a mass move- ment that united Indonesian Muslims over the issue of imprisonment for Ahok. In the midst of the blasphemy issue, Ahok's staff released a pocket book entitled *7 Dalil Umat Islam DKI dalam Memilih Gubernur* in an attempt to justify why the public should vote for Ahok (see Picture 6). Instead of gaining support, the book was misused by the Islamic fundamentalist groups who released a counter book entitled *Haram Memilih Pemimpin Non-Muslim* (see Picture 6).



FIGURE 2. THE BOOKCOVERS RELEASED BY THE AHOK'S CAMPAIGN STAFF AND THE FRONT SANTRI NASIONAL.

The *Al Maidah* case paved the way for the emergence of *Anti-Ahok* movements and black campaign issues attacking Ahok's personal image. The spread of these two campaign books to the people of Jakarta strengthened the voters' ideological position. We can see from the perspective of political marketing that the biggest mistake made by Ahok was bringing the religious issue to the fore, while at the same time not successfully bringing out their main strengths and opportunities in the programmatic campaign.



FIGURE 3. PAMPHLETS CONTAINING RELIGIOUS ISSUES.

The publication of two contrasting campaign books in the Jakarta election correlates to the study of Colm Fox and Jeremy [Menchik \(2011\)](#), which explains why campaigning through various religious posters can effectively alter the political preference of voters (see Pictures 6 and 7). According to their research, a large number of religious symbols were used during the campaign in Jakarta. From the total amount of campaign materials collected from Jakarta, 32% of the tools are religious symbols and put Jakarta in third place after Aceh (36%) and South Borneo (43%). Fox and Menchik provide three important answers to why religious campaign materials are very intense in Jakarta. *First*,

it was due to the existence of a university, which has become a fertile camp for the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia over the past two decades. Second, the majority of Indonesia's younger generations are more religious than the older generations and the urban areas have more young populations. Third, most urban communities are not bound by regional identity, so they become more affiliated with religious identity (Fox & Menchik, 2011).

Interestingly, we can settle an argument by saying that there was a similar strategy among all the candidates participating in the election, and that they all brought the religious issue to the forefront. Nevertheless, there were substantial differences in how they framed the religious issue to the public. On the one hand, Ahok/Djarot's campaign staff tried to dismiss the non-Muslim issues by presenting arguments such as tolerance, pluralism, democracy, and justice. In fact, they presented toleration as their ideological content in the campaign, which in our opinion can be categorized as Islamic moderation. On the other hand, both Agus/Sylvi and Anis-Sandi had a common strategy, which was trying to dismiss the notion that indigenous Muslim people could vote for non-Muslim and nonindigenous leaders. In this regard, they presented a political marketing strategy that shaded conservative ideology.

Coinciding with the ideological consolidation of moderate Islamic organizations that represented Ahok/Djarot issues, massive mass movements emerged to beat the negligence of Ahok's political marketing strategy. It gave birth to the indigenous Indonesian Muslim movements both in the form of populism and conservatism, initiated by *Aksi Bela Islam #411*, which demanded that the government punished Ahok for blasphemy. This movement was followed by thousands of people from Jakarta and other cities. After the protest of December 12th, a massive movement returned with a larger number of participants, both from inner and outer Jakarta, in the name of *Aksi Bela Islam #212*. Both movements, *Aksi Bela Islam #411* and *#212*, were promoted

by Islamic intellectual figures who were members of several mass organizations such as FPI, GNPF-MUI, HTI, Muhammadiyah, NU, and other organizations affiliated with them.

The blasphemy case led to the emergence of religiously defended acts both in the form of mass movements and also hate campaigns on social media. Their participation in *AksiBela Islam*#411 and #212 was essentially in line with one of the Islamic principles, i.e., *Hirastuaddinwasiyasatuaddunya*, which means guarding the religion and managing worldly things ([Menchik, 2014](#)).

APPLYING THE ROOT CAUSE MODEL

The most recent theoretical framework in understanding Islamic radicalization came upon the analysis of an “embedded individual” and left a stage model of analysis behind. In their analysis, Veldhuis and Staun postulate a notion that radicalization occurs due to an individual process that can be understood in connection with the individual’s social environment. They avoided a stage model in understanding Islamic radicalization, a model that is commonly used by government in a deradicalization program and counter-terrorism strategy ([Veldhuis&Staun, 2009](#)). The religiously defended acts of #212 and #411 can certainly be categorized as Islamic radicalization, although these movements did not lead to violence. Violence is the climax of the radicalization process. Individuals may decide to take part in violence, protests, and other unlawful behavior when mitigated by the issue that threatens their identity. Both movements undoubtedly emerged due to intense political dynamics in the election.

The root cause model is based on the context of home-grown terrorism and Islamic radicalization in Europe. To apply this theory to the context of the Jakarta election, we need to examine the social dynamics in the election, which in the root cause model is referred to as macro-level analysis. In this paper, we find that the events of the Jakarta election produced extremely vigorous social and political dynamics that were manufactured for the purpose of winning the elections by campaign staff, poli-

ticians, religious leaders, academics, social activists, etc. We can classify the social issues that occurred in the Jakarta election by applying the root cause model. It can be categorized into macro-level units of analysis as follows:

TABLE 7. MACRO-LEVEL FACTORS OCCURRING IN THE JAKARTA ELECTION

MACRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS	SEVERAL FACTS OCCUR DURING ELECTION
Social and economic discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of economic gap between indigenous people versus nonindigenous (Chinese) • Government policy to relocate inhabitants of riverbanks of Jakarta. • Reclamation policy of Jakarta bay
Poor integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social segregation • Ethnic identity issues
Perceived war against "Islam"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahok's blasphemous statement
Influences of media, peers, imams, family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign materials containing religious symbol • Hate speech from religious leaders and politicians in mosques • Hate spin via social media

Source: THE Author's documentation based on Veldhuis and Staun's Model:

TABLE 8. PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF AHOK'S BLASPHEMOUS STATEMENT

	Base	Voters for Agus/Silvy	Voters for Ahok/Djarot	Voters for Anies/Sandy	No idea or no response
Insulting Religion or Not					
Ahok's statement insulting religion	57.3	27.1	16.2	51.4	5.2
Ahok's statement not insulting religion	27.4	6.4	83.2	9.8	0.6
No idea or no response	15.2	19.5	40.9	27.0	12.6

Source: Opinion surveys of *Indikator Politik* held 2nd – 8th February 2017

Among the many issues mentioned above, Ahok's blasphemous statement became the center of attention and we considered it to be the fundamental factor behind his poor performance in the second round of the election. The public perception of Ahok was very negative and contributed to the diminishing of

his popularity (see Table 6). We consider blasphemy issues to be the triggering factors that give birth to the revival of religious identity in elections.

Statistical data show that Ahok's statement in *Kepulauan Seribu* received a negative response from voters. The data were collected from surveys held a few weeks before the first round of the election. They indicated that 57.3% of the public expressed their views that Ahok despised Qur'anic verses. Meanwhile, the data illustrated that only 27.4% of the public disagreed with the allegations of blasphemy and another 15.2% refused to give answers to such a question. These facts are in line with the outcome of the first round of the election in which Ahok failed to realize his positive achievements in going from incumbent to decisive victory in the first round of the election.

In brief, we can clarify that the ideological identity behind the mass movements of #411 and #211 was the identity of Muslims who confronted the threat to their religion to achieve a desired social state. Veldhuis and Staun mentioned in their analysis several factors that became the micro level of analysis of individuals. Those factors included psychological disorder and strained personal experiences, persona beliefs, favoritism for the in group community, and humiliation in public life. Accordingly, we argue that the religious identity of the majority of Muslim voters in Jakarta is the strongest evidence for the micro-level analysis presented in this article. Religious identity is part of the "embedded" identity of the voters. This identity constitutes "anendogenous" identity and has been able to convince voters to transform their ideological stance toward the incumbent candidate. We took as an example the behavior of supporters of Agus/Silvy, where in the first round of the elections this candidate collected 17% of the votes. In the second round, they switched their votes to Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno. Moreover, there are other micro-level factors such as ethnic identities, economic deprivation, relocation, and reclamation policy that affected deeply the inhabitants of the riverbanks and bays of

Jakarta. But we could not provide convincing data to settle the argument. One important finding has emerged from this research: that religious identity could seriously challenge the development of Indonesian democracy.

CONCLUSION

The 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial election is over, but it still leaves many questions as to whether the political construction in the capital territory of Indonesia can affect the contestation of elections in other provinces and regencies outside Jakarta. Some scholars in political science have appreciated, sarcastically satirized, or even rejected the victory of Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno in the Jakarta gubernatorial election. But the fact of the matter is that it shows how religious identity may still exist as one of the most important cleavage structures in Indonesian politics. It has been considered a “freezing” cleavage and returns to the stage in contestations between *santri* and *abangan*.

We can underline that polarization of voters both politically and ideologically became keys to Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno’s victory. The evidence of political polarization can be clearly seen in the behavior of rational voters who did not favor the public image of Ahok. It came from the supporters of Agus/ Silvy in the first round of the election who thus switched their support to Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno in the second round. They clearly did not see the figure of Ahok as politically representing them. Meanwhile, the evidence of ideologically polarized voters was imminent on those who were compelled not to vote for Ahok due to his blasphemy against Islam. Ahok’s statement (*AlMaidah* 51) became a stimulant for these voters to further strengthen their ideological standing so as not to vote for candidates who had violated religious faith in the election. This was evidenced from *Aksi Bela Islam*#411, #212, and other political mobilizations during the election. The movement also showed signs that the disruption of the established ideological order may lead to massive repudiation.

One could argue that the blasphemy incident was politically hijacked by political parties, interest groups, political elites, or even religious leaders. Actually, if we look at the people's reaction in the *Aksi Bela Islam of #212* and *#411*, we can infer that those who participated in the religious movement, most of their reasons were always ideological. It was simply because they could not tolerate any political figures who insulted their faith or ideology.

Polarization of voters occurred due to the presence of religious blasphemy issues raised by Ahok and his campaign staff and was maintained from the registration of candidates until the second round of the elections. Some alleged that the main factor behind Ahok's defeat was his own inability to portray a good image in political communication. On the other hand, the campaign advisor and staff of two other candidates were accused of excessively exploiting religious issues in the election.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The impacts of the Jakarta election were not only at the provincial level but could bring serious conflict and the spread of intolerance to other areas outside Jakarta. They could lead to nationwide issues for the central government, which is facing the agenda of "Pilkada Serentak" in 2018 and "Pemilu Serentak" in 2019. However, the question of whether the Jakarta election will be a model for elections in other provinces and regencies requires further research, bearing in mind the fact that every region in Indonesia has unique characteristics with a certain level of differences in the nature of political systems, social systems, and cultural systems. Further researches are also needed to address the question of whether Indonesian politics have advanced towards illiberal democracy. Many scholars have begun such projects and have come to the conclusion that Indonesian democracy is under threat of growing intolerance, massive corruption by government officials at the national and local level, weak institutionalism of political parties, and social conflicts based

on religion and ethnic identity, etc.

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