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## Journal of Communication

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## Political Marketing and Identity Politics: Implications for Voter Engagement and Interest

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### Abstract

This study examines the impact of identity-based political marketing on voter interest in Tasikmalaya City for the 2024 Legislative Elections. Using a quantitative research design with a survey approach, data were collected through questionnaires distributed to a randomly selected sample from the city's official voter list. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to assess the relationship between identity-based political marketing strategies (independent variables) and voter interest (dependent variable). The findings indicate that identity-based political marketing strategies—which include ethnic, religious, and cultural factors—significantly influence voter interest. This underscores the critical role of identity politics in shaping voter preferences in Tasikmalaya City. These results suggest that political parties and legislative candidates should tailor their campaign strategies to align with the local voter identity dynamics. Understanding the complexity of identity politics is essential for political actors to formulate effective and relevant campaign strategies. A deep understanding of how identity factors influence voter engagement can enhance voter participation and promote a more inclusive and representative democratic process. This research provides valuable insights into how identity politics can be strategically leveraged to influence election outcomes.

**Keywords:** Political Marketing, Identity Politics, Voter Interest, Legislative Elections,

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak pemasaran politik berbasis identitas terhadap minat pemilih di Kota Tasikmalaya untuk Pemilihan Legislatif 2024. Menggunakan desain penelitian kuantitatif dengan pendekatan survei, data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang disebarakan kepada sampel yang dipilih secara acak dari daftar pemilih tetap (DPT) kota tersebut. Analisis regresi linier berganda digunakan untuk menilai hubungan antara strategi pemasaran politik berbasis identitas (variabel independen) dan minat pemilih (variabel dependen). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa strategi pemasaran politik berbasis identitas—yang mencakup faktor etnis, agama, dan budaya—secara signifikan memengaruhi minat pemilih. Hal ini menegaskan peran penting politik identitas dalam membentuk preferensi pemilih di Kota Tasikmalaya. Hasil ini menyarankan agar partai politik dan calon legislatif menyesuaikan strategi kampanye mereka dengan dinamika identitas pemilih lokal. Memahami kompleksitas politik identitas penting bagi aktor politik untuk merumuskan strategi kampanye yang efektif dan relevan. Pemahaman yang mendalam tentang bagaimana faktor identitas memengaruhi keterlibatan pemilih dapat meningkatkan partisipasi pemilih dan mendorong proses demokrasi yang lebih inklusif dan representatif. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga tentang bagaimana politik identitas dapat dimanfaatkan secara strategis untuk memengaruhi hasil pemilihan.

**Kata Kunci:** Marketing Politik, Politik Identitas, Minat Pemilih, Pemilu Legislatif,

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## INTRODUCTION.

Political actors frequently exploit religion and ethnicity as identities to win political contests, making political marketing one of the most essential strategies to sway voters in multicultural settings. Politics based on race and religion can polarize society and mobilize large numbers of people; this is why it is frequently employed in political marketing techniques in an attempt to win important electoral support. (Bernstein, 2005). Political marketing plays an important role in shaping voter preferences through narratives of ethnic and religious group identities, especially in multicultural societies (Rasul & Asim, 2023). Religion is a powerful social force with understandable appeal. In a chaotic and unpredictable world, religious principles remain stable and provide peace.

Marketing and consumer researchers have indeed shown increasing interest in consumers' political affiliations (Ulver & Laurell, 2020). Politicians often exploit religious and ethnic sentiments as a tool to strengthen electoral support through campaigns designed to highlight the closeness of identity between voters and candidates (Gadjanova, 2022). Political marketing greatly influences voters' perceptions and decisions, especially in identity politics involving religion and ethnicity. Political identity becomes an important strategy in countries with a lot of ethnic and religious diversity, and it influences how voters view candidates or political parties (Burton, 2000). Political marketing often uses ethnic and religious identity politics to gain electoral support. This method has the ability to attract the attention of voters from certain groups (Husband, 2005).

Religious and ethnic identities are often used by political marketers to create effective communication strategies. Here, candidates or political parties position themselves through stories that appeal to certain groups in society (Verma, 2015). However, this often leads to debates about the politics of exclusivity and social fragmentation (Emilia & Ichwanuddin, 2015). In identity politics, religious and ethnic indicators are often central components of political campaigns with the aim of mobilizing certain groups by highlighting identity differences and defending the rights that these groups are perceived to have. This results in a rhetoric of exclusivity that links group identity to political demands, such as redistribution and representation (Gadjanova, 2013).

General elections are an important milestone in a democratic system, where people have the opportunity to choose their representatives in government. In this context, political marketing strategies play a crucial role in influencing voters' preferences and interests (Muhtadi, 2018). One approach that is gaining increasing attention is identity politics-based political marketing, which leverages aspects of identity such as ethnicity and religion to attract voter support. With candidates, parties, and interest groups spending billions of dollars each election cycle to "win" the democratic process, political marketing plays a significant role in shaping a country's political and policy landscape. Despite its influence, research on political marketing strategies, particularly those related to voters' religious and ethnic identities, is still very limited in marketing research (Weber, 2016).

Identity politics based on religion and ethnicity and political marketing have become important phenomena in political contestation, especially during the 2019 Indonesian Presidential Election. Through the utilization of SARA (Ethnicity, Religion, Race, and Intergroup) issues that have caused discussions in the digital world, this approach has proven effective in influencing voter sensitivity. The use of social media, such as Facebook,

has become an important tool for spreading political identity propaganda. This can be done in the form of narratives, memes, or hoaxes, which cause conflict between supporting groups (Lund, 2015). Religious and ethnic identity politics increasingly dominate political campaigns in many countries, so that political marketing has become a strategic tool for gaining electoral support. This supports the idea that political parties must be more flexible in identifying the preferences and identities of today's voters if they are to appeal to diverse demographics (Caron & Markusen, 2016).

Identity politics has become an increasingly prominent phenomenon in Indonesia's political landscape. This is evident from the widespread use of ethnicity and religion issues in political campaigns, both at the local and national levels (Aspinall, 2011). This strategy is considered effective because it is able to build emotional closeness between candidates or political parties with certain voter groups based on shared identity.

The spread of identity politics or biopolitics is a result of the collapse of a scientifically planned society which is a movement with the application of objective demographic control. (Cesur & Mocan, 2018; Misbahuddin et al., 2023). Three methods exist for forming an identity, specifically: Primordialism is the belief that identity is inherited or acquired organically. According to constructivism, identity is something that develops through a difficult social process. Social bonds based on culture can help shape identity. Families, or clans, are often networks of relationships that start the process of forming an identity. Identity, or instrumentalism, is something that serves the elite's interests and places a greater emphasis on the power dynamic (Soenjoto, 2019).

Politics based on ethnicity and religion has changed the increasingly complex dynamics of political discourse in democracies. Politics nowadays is mainly focused on identity narratives that are tailored to the current group, aside from economic issues. Politics-based marketing is crucial to developing effective communication strategies that are recognized by various employee groups (Afif et al., 2022; Lynch, 2006; Mcloughlin, 2002; Sinha, 2022). Political campaigns that use religious and ethnic symbols can build emotional connections between candidates and certain groups of voters. Ultimately, this has an impact on voters' preferences and decisions. However, this method can lead to polarization, meaning that certain social groups are marginalized or alienated (Burton, 2000). Election-related interest is impacted by a voter's degree of political engagement, educational background, media exposure, political discourse, personal circumstances, and the significance of the topics on the ballot for them (Prior & Bougher, 2018)

This study aims to explore the influence of political marketing based on identity politics on voter interest in Tasikmalaya City in the context of the 2024 Legislative Election. This study focuses on two main aspects of identity politics, namely ethnicity (X1) and religion (X2), as independent variables, and voter interest (Y) as the dependent variable.

Identity politics that emphasizes religious and ethnic relations can have a significant impact on voter interest, especially when used to highlight differences between groups in society. As a result, the use of religious and ethnic identity politics in political marketing often leads to greater polarization among voters, which ultimately impacts how they choose politics. Tasikmalaya City, with its strong ethnic and religiosity diversity, is an interesting location for this study. With a permanent voter population of 538,324 people, the city provides a representative sample to analyze the dynamics of identity politics in the local



context. The significance of this study lies in its efforts to understand the extent to which identity factors influence voter behavior in the contemporary democratic era of Indonesia. The results of the study are expected to provide valuable insights for political practitioners, academics, and other stakeholders in designing effective and ethical campaign strategies, as well as understanding the dynamics of voter preferences in the context of a diverse society.

**METHODS.**

The method used is Quantitative with a survey approach. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to respondents selected randomly from the permanent voter list (DPT) of Tasikmalaya City. The total number of respondents distributed to fill out the questionnaire was 100 respondents. The data analysis technique used multiple linear regression tests. The study aims to determine the effect of two or more independent variables (X) on the dependent variable (Y). The multiple linear regression model can be called a good model (has accuracy in estimation, is unbiased and consistent) if the model meets the assumption of normality and is free from classical assumptions (V. Wiratna Sujarweni, 2014). In this study, the researcher used Ethnicity as independent variable 1 (X1), Religion as independent variable 2 (X2) and Voter interest as a dependent variable (Y).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.**

Quantitative analysis studies measure the influence of entities (individual ethnic identities of candidates or political parties) and Religion (religious background of candidates and their followers) on voter interest (political interest, demographics and political issues).

**Tabel 1. Normality Test**  
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Unstandardized Residual
N	101
<i>Normal Parameters</i>	
Mean	0.0000000
Std. Deviation	5.17265196
<i>Most Extreme Differences</i>	
Absolute	0.088
Positive	0.069
Negative	-0.088
Test Statistic	0.088
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.054
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	
Sig.	0.054
<i>99% Confidence Interval</i>	
Lower Bound	0.048
Upper Bound	0.060

- a. Test distribution is Normal.
- b. Calculated from data.
- c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
- d. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 2000000.

Source : Research result, 2024



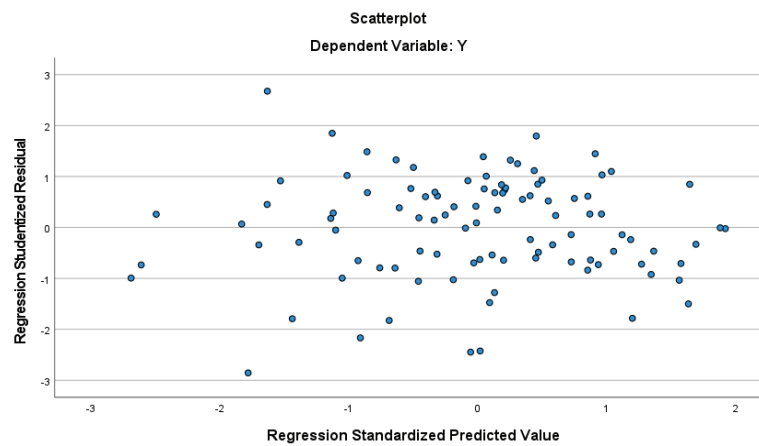
The Kolmogorov Smirnov normality test is part of the classical assumption test which aims to determine whether the residual value is normally distributed or not. The basis for making the decision is if the Significance value is  $>0.05$  then the residual value is normally distributed and vice versa. Based on the normality test results in Table 1, a significance value of 0.54 is obtained. The conclusion is that the data is normally distributed.

**Tabel 2. Multicollinearity Test Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	VIF
1	(Constant)	24.012	2.099		11.438	<.001		
	X1	.949	.273	.526	3.468	<.001	.387	2.583
	X2	-1.102	.288	-.581	-3.827	<.001	.387	2.583

Source : Research result, 2024

According to Imam Ghozali (2011) there is no symptom of multicollinearity if the Tolerance value is  $> 0.100$  and the VIF value is  $< 10.00$ . When viewed in table 2, because the Tolerance value of X1 is 0.387 and X2 is 0.387 and the VIF value of X1 is 2.583 and X2 is 2.583, it can be concluded that there is no symptom of Multicollinearity.



**Figure. 1 Heteroscedasticity**

Source : Research result, 2024

If there is no clear pattern (wavy, widening and narrowing) in the scatterplot figure 1 and the points are spread above and below the number 0 on the Y axis, then the conclusion is that there is no symptom of heteroscedasticity.

**Tabel 3. Autocorrelation Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.368	.136	.118	5.12465	1.999

a. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1  
 b. Dependent Variable: Y

Source : Research result, 2024

If the Durbin Watson value lies between  $d_u$  and  $(4-d_u)$ . Based on the distribution of the Durbin Watson table 3 value based on  $k$  (2) and  $N$  (101) with a significance of 5%, the  $d_u$  value is 1.7163. And when  $4-d_u$  then  $4 - 1.7163 = 2.2837$ . Because the Durbin Watson value lies between  $d_u$  ( $1.7163$ ) < Durbin Watson ( $1.999$ ) <  $4-d_u$  ( $2.2837$ ) then there is no symptom of autocorrelation.

**Tabel 4. Multiple Linier Analysis Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	24.012	2.099		11.438	<.001		
	X1	.949	.273	.526	3.468	<.001	.387	2.583
	X2	-1.102	.288	-.581	-3.827	<.001	.387	2.583

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Source : Research result, 2024

If the sig. value <0.05, it means that the independent variable (X) partially influences the dependent variable (Y). Based on table 4, sig value X1 <0.001 and the value X2 <0.001, it can be concluded that Ethnicity (X1) and Religion (X2) have a partial effect on voter interest (Y). To find the positive or negative influence of the X1 value, the formula for finding the t table is used, namely  $(\alpha / 2; n-k-1) = (0.05 / 2; 101-2-1)$  so that the number used as a benchmark for finding the t table is  $(0.025; 98) = 1.987$ . So because the calculated t is 3.468 and is in the positive influence area because it exceeds the t table number, namely 1.987. So the conclusion is that Ethnicity (X1) has a positive effect on voter interest (Y). But when looking at Religion (X2) with a calculated t of -0.581, it can be concluded that Religion (X2) has a negative influence on voter interest (Y).

**Tabel 5. F-Test**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
1	Regression	399.747	2	199.874	7.611	<.001
	Residual	2547.418	97	26.262		
	Total	2947.165	99			

Source : Research result, 2024

If the Sig. Value <0.05 then it means that the independent variable (X) has an effect on the dependent variable (Y). Based on table 5, sig value. X is <0.001 then as the basis for decision making simultaneously or together ethnicity and religion (X) have an effect on voter interest (Y).

**Tabel 6. Percentage of influence X on Y**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.673	.453	.441	4.12254	1.742

Source : Research result, 2024

If expressed in percentages listed in table 6, the influence of (X) on (Y) is 45.3%. So it can be concluded that ethnicity and religion (X) have a significant influence on (Y).

## DISCUSSION.

Partial analysis reveals differences in the direction of influence between the two independent variables. Ethnicity (X1) shows a significant positive influence on voter interest, while religion (X2) actually shows a negative influence. These results indicate the complexity of the dynamics of identity politics in Tasikmalaya City, where ethnicity factors seem to be more effective in attracting voter interest compared to religion factors. These findings provide important nuances in understanding voter behavior in Tasikmalaya City and highlight the need for a more careful approach in applying identity-based political marketing strategies.

Religion has a negative influence on political participation. This research is in line with research that states that citizen associations will focus on discussing worthy candidates in promoting visions and missions (Jones-Correa & Leal, 2001). Regardless of religious distinctions, religiosity by itself frequently acts as a disincentive rather than a mobilizing factor for political action. People are more likely to participate in politics when they are members of secular voluntary societies and religious organizations (Omelicheva & Ahmed, 2018).

According to Aspinall's research, political architecture, institutional variables, and the history of Indonesian national identity are the primary drivers of ethnic politics' proliferation in the country. According to Aspinall's research, ethnicity or ethnic identity is employed in three ways in the Indonesian political battle for regional elections are mobilize tribal symbols, become a factor for voters; and the strategy and choice of candidates like Putra Daerah (Aspinall, 2011; Kustiawan & Samin, 2020). Other research was conducted using qualitative methods but showed that the political forces used in elections were religion and ethnicity to influence voter behavior (Pinem & Iqbal, 2023). Political identity is the means and source of politics; it is the political process through which identity (political and social) is organized. The idea that identity politics may serve as both a source and a tool for politics in the fight for political dominance is becoming more and more prevalent in day-to-day political activity (Kambo, 2018).

The importance of identity-based political marketing strategies in Tasikmalaya shows that voters are highly influenced by the social and cultural factors they identify with. In the context of multicultural political communication, it is important to pay attention to the diversity that exists in society (Awaluddin et al., 2023; Chambers, 2009; Hasrat Efendi Samosir, 2023). Political communication must be able to reach various existing identities and formulate messages that can be accepted by all levels of society (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Kreiss et al., 2020).

Ethnic factors that have been proven to have a positive influence can be utilized by political parties and candidates to build messages that are relevant to the identity of a particular ethnic group (Koev, 2022; Mujani, 2020; Sumaktoyo, 2021). By understanding the values and aspirations of different ethnic groups, political communication can be an effective tool to increase voter interest. For example, strengthening cultural symbols that are in accordance with ethnic identity can create a sense of closeness between candidates and voters, thereby increasing the likelihood of support for candidates who uphold these values (Gadjanova, 2021).

On the other hand, the negative influence of religious factors indicates the need for a more careful evaluation of strategies in incorporating religious elements into political campaigns. Although religion plays an important role in people's lives, in the context of Tasikmalaya, the use of religion in campaign strategies may be ineffective and may cause resistance among voters. This emphasizes the need for adjustments in political communication strategies so that they are not only based on religious beliefs, but also take into account broader social and cultural dynamics (Habermas, 2006; Norris & Mattes, 2003; Van Aelst et al., 2012).

This discussion shows that a deep understanding of identity politics, ethnicity, and religion is essential for political actors in formulating effective strategies. Amidst the diversity of Indonesian society, political communication must be able to accommodate these differences and create an inclusive space for dialogue. This will not only increase voter participation, but also encourage a more representative and accountable democratic process.

In this context, further research needs to explore further how political communication can be adjusted to accommodate the diversity of identities in various regions in Indonesia. Qualitative research that explores the experiences and perceptions of voters from various ethnic and religious backgrounds can provide additional insights into how best to utilize identity politics in campaign strategies. Thus, the results of this study are not only relevant for the development of identity politics theory, but also for the practice of more effective political communication in Indonesia. Therefore, political communication strategies can be a means of gaining votes for candidates in general elections.

The influence of identity politics in the context of the Tasikmalaya City election shows that awareness of diverse social and cultural dynamics is essential. Policy makers and political stakeholders must realize that effective communication is not only speaking to the masses, but also trying to understand and involve all identities in society. With the right approach, stakeholders can create a more inclusive political environment and encourage active participation from all elements of society.

## CONCLUSION.

This study shows that political marketing based on identity politics has a significant influence on voter interest in Tasikmalaya City in the context of the 2024 Legislative Election. Multiple linear regression analysis reveals that the variables of ethnicity (X1) and religion (X2) simultaneously influence voter interest (Y), with a significance level of  $p < 0.001$ . These two independent variables are able to explain 45.3% of the variation in voter interest, indicating a substantial role of identity politics in shaping electoral preferences in Tasikmalaya City. This finding confirms the importance of identity factors in political campaign strategies at the local level, especially in areas with strong ethnic and religious diversity such as Tasikmalaya City. The implications of this study are significant for political practitioners, academics, and other stakeholders. First, the results of the study emphasize the importance of understanding the local context in designing political campaign strategies. Second, the findings regarding the differences in influence between ethnicity and religion indicate that identity politics is not a monolithic concept and can have varying effects depending on the aspects of identity that are highlighted. Finally, this study paves the way for further studies on the interactions between various aspects of identity in shaping voter behavior, and how these dynamics may vary across geographical and socio-cultural contexts in Indonesia. Thus, this study not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of identity politics in the electoral context, but also provides practical insights for the development of more effective and ethical campaign strategies in the contemporary democratic era of Indonesia.

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