Religion and Politics: Symbolization of Religion in the contestation of legislative elections 2019

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Politics and religion have become inseparable these days. Politicians or political parties' piety and religiosity have become a necessity. A Strong religion as a doctrine, even politics, requires religion as a tool of legitimacy to achieve existence, power and attract votes and sympathy from the masses. Finally, spirituality and religious symbols become political products and domains that become the identity of politicians and political parties and are then introduced to the public, known as political marketing. This article aims to understand further political discourse with religious symbolic packaging on PKS candidate posters used as campaign tools to influence public choice. The approach in this article uses semiotic analysis to analyze the symbols in the political campaign posters of candidates on social media. So, Semiotics tries to dismantle signs that have meaning in social life and political life. The method used in this article is a qualitative method that is descriptive-analytical, with a data collection technique analyzing campaign posters on Instagram social media on the @pkstangerang account. The result of this article is that religious politics exists because of the role of religion that can touch the emotional side of humans. In the account @pkstangerang, most of his posts are inseparable from religious spirituality and religious doctrine elements. While campaigning in legislative elections also can not be separated from religious symbols and narratives or symbols of piety, for example, candidates who wear peci, koko clothes, and hold the book of fiqh. For this reason, the term religious politics in politics or legislative elections is a religious campaign term that describes religiosity in politics as a way of political marketing.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Legislative election campaigns often use media online, offline, or large stirs scattered along the highway (Hartanto, 2016). The unique about each legislative candidate is how he builds a self-image, commonly called an image. The legislative candidates compete to brand themselves with convincing narratives or symbols. After the author observes every election, the banners and posters published are often used as symbols of certain religions, in this context, Islam's religion (Amelia, 2011).

The characteristics of the symbols that develop in campaign posters are related to symbols inherent in specific religious constructions, such as photos of religious-looking candidates using peci (kopiah), turbans, sarongs, koko clothes, if women wear hijab, and many more. In addition to religious symbols, the narrative written in legislative campaign posters is also often built with religious narratives. One example of a campaign poster for the Banten Provincial DPRD Candidate named Teuku Muhammad Zacky from Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) was distributed on Zacky's personal Instagram. The written on the poster contains the call, "Let us vote for the PKS candidates; PKS wins the protection of religious leaders and religious symbols."

Theoretically, symbols and language greatly influence society in influencing their attitudes. Theoretically, symbols and language greatly influence society in influencing candidates' attitudes because political communication influences ideology and even hegemony to show religious authority. Althusser mentions this as awareness formation that works and is readily accepted by the public (Piliang, 2016); Gramsci also said the dominance that worked and was built on identity in understanding the power struggle (Goncing & Syahrul, 2021). Religious symbols have become a tradition and built a good image in the public sphere even as a communication tool to convey messages of political value to influence people's behavior (Widyawati, 2014). It means that religious symbols as a method of non-verbal communication that is articulated will be a process of social transactions used by humans or political parties to construct meanings that are imaginations about truth through the power of religious symbolic meaning.

Another candidate from PKS, Tanggerang, also uses religious symbols in his political campaign posters. He is Arief Wibowo, a legislative candidate for the Tangerang City DPRD. In the poster published on his Instagram account, Arief wore symbols of religious beliefs inherent in Islam, such as koko clothes, black peci, and holding fiqh books. Arif also wrote a caption with a religious narrative. However, this account has only been active in his posts for a few months, and the majority of the posts are about political campaigns.

Religious marketing in political campaigns as branding is considered quite effective because some Indonesian people still see the religiosity side of a people's representative. We can flashback when the politicization of religion heats up in DKI Jakarta, religious movements or mass organizations (community organizations) that openly support one candidate pair with religious narratives and religious issues played out in the public sphere as social media. In the study of communication, the power of symbols and language significantly influences people's responses.

The phenomena above show that political and religious narratives are fascinating to study, primarily related to political campaigns in political marketing because the narratives that develop on social media show how the role of religion is very central in political campaigns. Religious issues, religious narratives, and even religious *da'wah* are published as a discourse in political campaigns. This condition shows that religion is vital in political discourse or narrative in political marketing. Various religious issues and identities have become mainstream as public and campaign narratives.

Religious discourse is inseparable from the public sphere because the existence and role of religion is a transformation of values as a significant source of morals that has strong legitimacy in people's minds. Religion is a social attribute and a political attribute that is often used in elections by political parties and politicians. This condition shows that religion works in the private sphere and exists in the public sphere and has a vital role for humans both socially, culturally, politically as a symbol and faith. Habermas considers religion as all inspiration in the public sphere, both socially, culturally, and as a political symbol in a democratic country (Hardiman, 2009).

Several questions arise as to why religion is still one of the crucial instruments in political campaigns and whether religion's role in political campaigns has a significant impact on the results of general elections. If religion is often a sensitive issue, why publish religion is even more massive in this era. It is necessary to conduct more profound studies on religion and the public sphere, religious, political campaigns, and political marketing to answer the above. For this reason, this paper will lead to the conceptual framework that the author has described.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the author uses a qualitative descriptive-analytical research method, with a data collection technique analyzing campaign posters on Instagram social media on the *@pkstangerang* account. The approach in this article uses semiotic analysis to analyze the symbols in the political campaign posters of candidates on social media. Semiotics shows that something we consider natural or explicit in a public discourse must be considered first. The symbols built in the media have no intrinsic meaning because they are more dominant, like authority. So, Semiotics tries to dismantle signs that have meaning in human social and political life. The author uses a data collection Technique by conducting semiotic analysis on legislative campaign posts on the *@pkstangerang* account related to the symbols on the legislative candidate campaign posters.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.1. Political marketing

The theory used in this paper is the theory of Political Marketing Communication (political marketing). This theory describes the social and political transactions related to general elections. This theory also explains strategic methods in political marketing communications, strategic methods, and narratives in the dissemination of political messages, as well as reading interpretations from audiences or potential voters.

There are several theories related to political marketing, one of which is the theory from Niffenegger; according to him, political marketing is the same as marketing in general or commonly referred to as commercial marketing (Sutrisno et al., 2018). This political marketing theory is 4p, namely product, promotion, price, and place. The product in political marketing is the same as marketing in general. The product is goods or services in commercial marketing, but in the political parties as a platform or main product in political marketing. This primary product contains ideological concepts, identities, and work programs offered to customers' communities or potential voters who can be called consumers. For this reason, the main product must have a positive reputation and track record from the public and prospective voters. In addition to the term promotion, promotion is the main instrument that is quite important to introduce candidates or legislative candidates in political contestation and general elections. However, promotion is not just publishing or disseminating legislative candidates. It should share the promotion appropriately, the place, the media, and the audience. The candidates must think of the correct narratives in the promotion or campaign, cooperate with certain media (advertising), and publish through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and other social media (Wahyudi, 2018).

After product and promotion, there are price and place. Price is used for the marketing process or campaign that includes the image of a candidate, psychological, economic, and image in a national context. Psychological image is related to a voter's perception in determining his choice; before that, the voter must first feel comfortable with the candidate to be elected (legislative). Meanwhile, the place is related to whether the candidate pair can reach and maximize it and how effective he is in attracting prospective voters to vote for him. Meanwhile, the place is related to whether the candidate pair can reach and maximize it and how effective he is in attracting prospective voters to vote for him. Candidates must be able to enter and reach every level and element of society and position themselves with the excellent image they build. Candidates also should have read the characteristics of the community so that the narrative in the campaign is right on target. Candidates can also see the demographics of a society grouped by level of education, age, education, understanding of religion, politics, social level, ethnicity, religion, and race (Sutrisno et al., 2018).

Political marketing is a way to look for the existence of political parties as to the main product (main building) that becomes the framework for a legislative candidate to advance to the general election (election) (Lipset, 1960). A legislative candidate must promote himself (marketing) to convince prospective voters of a product. For this reason, political parties as the main product with ideological content, concepts, identities, and work programs must still exist and provide legitimacy to the community by providing concepts, ideas, ideas, promises, or strong narratives to attract potential owners massively. Political parties should have a good self-image so that people choose them. So branding and marketing are necessary for a good name and creating a good image. (Solatun, 2014).

In the scope of politics, the implementation of marketing science still leaves polemics related to the techniques and methods used, sometimes eliminating the substance of democracy itself, even considered a step to weaken a nation's ethical values and morality. An organization often gives different information in marketing activities, as in reality, it means manipulating the information transferred. In this case, consumers only get incomplete information (Firmanzah, 2012). As a result, consumers are seen as victims

of information manipulation. Consumer satisfaction and trust can be manipulated in getting a profit. The benefits of marketing in politics sometimes do not parallel reality. Misuse of marketing applications to win votes in political party elections is still possible. The winning team, often termed the success team, continuously gives fascinating information to potent discourse on the unrealized reality of life. The reality of this information is full of camouflage because it manipulates information with the seduction of political information carried out in campaigns, both in pamphlets and in the form of speeches (Chabibi, 2020).

3.2. Political Marketing Religious Campaign

The character of the Indonesian religious people is often the attention and spotlight of the political world in Indonesia, be it political parties, politicians, or people who have other interests. Religiosity is often a fundamental market to convince and become a tool of legitimacy for political parties or politicians. It is not surprising that campaigns in religious patterns have become mainstream in Indonesia today.

Rose and Urwin (in Asep, 2017) stated that in their many studies, which included studies in 17 countries, they explained that democracy is a religion because it is considered the most supporters of the party. In Indonesia itself, a political party with religious and Islamic images is PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera). Through this paper, the author will analyze the @*pkstangerang* account to see and dissect the political side of marketing carried out through Instagram social media, using a semiotic analysis approach.

Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) is indeed known as the Islamic party because its basic ideology is indeed Islamic or religious. So, it is not surprising that the narratives built and criticisms of the government often use religious legitimacy or normative religious bases. We can search in the official PKS account on Instagram and the @*pkstangerang* account. Based on the author's search, most posts cannot be separated from religious normative narratives and invitations to do good on a religious basis.

Figure 1. Ideology of Islamic or religious
Source: @*pkstangerang* Instagram account

Suppose analyzed using the Political Marketing 4p theory, product, promotion, price, and place. It can be found that through the @pkstangerang account, political parties are trying to introduce the religious side of the political party based on ideological content in the form of religious narratives (Islam), religious identity, and reputation. The ideological narrative is considered quite effective because the fundamental identity of PKS is religious or Islamic. Hence, PKS seeks to promote it with the religious narrative, to produce social impact as a religious party image to become a consideration for prospective voters who have a paradigm or style to vote Islamic party (Yuning & Agustino, 2018).

In addition to political parties as to the central foundation (core product), a candidate under the party's auspices must also follow the direction or ideology of the party, the way of campaigning must also follow the identity, narrative, and ideological content of the party. In the @*pkstangerang* account, the pattern of political marketing as outlined in the campaign poster can be seen, with various symbols and text narratives in the poster, as in the image below, we can see with a semiotic approach. A person wearing a cap, a koko shirt, and holding a fiqh book indicates that the figure of the candidate is a pious person who understands religion and religious because the sign from the symbol has an interpretation of an Islamic and religious figure from a cultural point of view. Armed with the religiosity of candidates, it will encourage the possibility of attracting voters who hold a religious normative basis in choosing candidates.

Figure 2. Political parties as to the central foundation (core product)
Source: @*pkstangerang* Instagram account

3.2. The Existence of Religion as Political Marketing

Looking back at the political phenomenon in Indonesia, the existence of religion plays a central role and is important enough to hegemony society in Indonesia. This condition occurs because many Indonesian people still see or like political piety. It is undeniable that if religion finally enters and becomes a strong legitimacy in the middle of the political and democratic contestation stage in the country, politics becomes a religious identity that is difficult to argue. Often groups that oppose religious identity politics are seen as opposed to religion.

Religious politics is difficult to argue because of the sacred value of religion that has been attached and has become a strong legitimacy in politics. Political narratives on social media cannot be separated from religious narratives with a correlative and dynamic relationship. Religion and politics create ideological existence and power existence through religious piety. It is not surprising that politicians create symbols of piety in their political marketing to attract voters in Indonesia, some of whom still see the religious and pious side of politics.

Religion and politics are inseparable units. It is stated in the visions and missions of political parties that have become platforms, one of which is Partai Kesejahteraan Sosial (PKS). Even more firmly, PKS claims to be a *da'wah* party that fights to uphold justice and welfare within the framework of the unity of the people and the nation. It is proof that religion and politics cannot be separated and divided in a public space (Hadiz, 2019).

George Herbert Mead's terms about the symbolism of PKS candidates with Islamic identity used the cap and the book as the symbolic interactions that they function to convince the public and Islamic parties to provide full support (Nugroho, 2021). George Herbert Mead's terms about the symbolism of PKS candidates with Islamic identity used the cap and the book as the symbolic interactions that they function to convince the public and Islamic parties to provide full support (Lintang, 2019).

A symbol or sign is a concept with a characteristic and contains logical analysis through associations in the human mind that have an element of truth. It means that symbols can stimulate thoughts that encourage human actions and behavior (Dillistone, 2002). A symbol or sign is a concept with a characteristic and contains logical analysis through associations in the human mind that have an element of truth. It means that symbols can stimulate thoughts that encourage human actions and behavior (Suherdiana, 2008).

The use of religious issues is the most famous tool used by party elites and legislative candidates who are very simple at the level of symbols or slogans, in a way that does not educate the people who vote and do not have any contribution to the people. Religion should be used as an instrument that provides solutions to various societal problems. However, in analysis, political discourse and practice built on religious issues as symbols only serve as fanaticism debates between religious groups, especially in the election contestation. It caused a new conflict in society because it placed the religious community as a political identity. Moreover, this tendency mobilizes religious people to become natural in any political process, including Indonesian society, which is still relatively strong in using religious symbols in political contestation. So that religious symbols become an issue in political interests in the long term and stimulate religious tensions in people's lives that are contrary to the ancestral mission of each religion (Froniko, 2008).

4.   CONCLUSION

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