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The Politics of Identity in Indonesia: Results from Campaign Advertisements

By Colm Fox and Jeremy Menchik

Paper for Presentation at the American Political Science Association Conference 2011.
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In recent decades, western governments, development agencies, and scholars have promoted the spread of democracy throughout the globe. In doing so they cite a wealth of long-term benefits such as peace, justice, and economic development. Despite these long-term benefits, a number of scholars have cited the initial dangers of introducing democratic elections in ethnically divided states. They argue that competitive elections in these states often leads to a politicization of ethnic identity and sets the stage for instability or conflict.¹ Taking the case of an ethnically diverse new democracy, Indonesia, this paper investigates the politicization of identity during national and local elections from 2009-2011.

This analysis draws on a unique data source of 4,289 political campaign advertisements gathered by the authors. Spanning 21 of Indonesia's 33 provinces, all of Indonesia's 44 political parties, and over 3,500 national, provincial, and local-level political candidates, this represents the largest collection of Indonesian political advertisements ever gathered. All the campaign posters were individually coded for political party and ethnic (nationalist, religious, indigenous ethnic, and regional) symbolism. In contrast to recent Indonesian literature on the trend towards secularism by parties, candidates, and voters, our analysis shows that ethnic symbols dominate Indonesia campaign posters. Our research goes on to investigate the reasons why candidates choose to make these ethnic appeals. We find that a number of institutional, regional, and individual level factors offer incentives for politicians to appeal to ethnic groups. Overall, this research can help us better understand the dynamics and development of political identity in Indonesia a decade after the democratic transition.

¹ (Snyder, 2000; Mansfield and Snyder, 2002; Chua, 2003)

This paper begins with a literature review of the recent research on electoral politics and political identity in Indonesia. We then outline the value, and potential contribution, of our unique data source - campaign posters. In our methodology section we explain how the campaign posters were gathered, coded, and labeled. Finally, in our findings we show how the electoral system, political parties, ethnic demographics, urbanization, past rebellion, and the sex of a candidate can all influence a candidate's use of ethnic symbolism. Before turning to the recent scholarship however, we need to clarify what we mean by 'ethnic'.

Within Indonesia scholars usually use the term ethnicity to refer to indigenous/linguistic groups i.e. ethnic Javanese. In contrast, the term ethnicity in this study uses the standard political science convention and has a broader meaning. We define ethnicity as a broad term that includes any descent-based category necessary for membership. Ethnic identity can therefore refer to tribe, religion, nationality, indigenous identity, region, clan, language etc. However, it does not include gender, class, or occupation. To avoid confusion, when we refer specifically to an indigenous/linguistic category such as the Javanese, we will use the term 'indigenous ethnic' group.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia and has a population of 238 million. It is the 4th most populous country in the world and with 86% adhering to Islam, the most populous Muslim-majority nation. In terms of indigenous ethnicity it is very diverse, with around 300 distinct indigenous native ethnic groups and over 700 local languages and dialects. In 1998 the impact of the Asian Financial Crisis and a popular uprising put an end to 32 years of authoritarian rule. Indonesia swiftly transitioned to democracy. Since then there have been three national elections. All of elections have been seen as largely free and fair, and currently Indonesia is the only country in Southeast Asia, which Freedom House rates as 'free'.

Since the transition to democracy scholars of Indonesia agree that religion and indigenous ethnicity have remained an important part of Indonesian's social life. Moreover, there is good reason to believe that religion and indigenous ethnic identities have strengthened since the

introduction of democracy. Recent studies have found Indonesians to be devotedly religious and express their piety in diverse ways within social life.² Furthermore, there has been a blossoming of indigenous ethnic since democratization. This is evidenced through the growth of indigenous ethnic associations, festivals, rituals, film, dance and language over the last decade.³

What is less clear is the role of religion and indigenous ethnicity in electoral politics. On the one hand early evidence after the transition suggested that religion and indigenous ethnicity were playing increasingly important roles in elections. Scholars found that numerous 'native sons' (Putra Daerah) and traditional sultanates drew on their ethnic and regional heritage and were into local political office.⁴ Looking at voting patterns in the 1999 election and 2004 election, King and Baswaden argued that religion to a large degree, and indigenous ethnicity and region to a lesser degree, were important factors driving electoral outcomes.⁵ Furthermore surveys in 2001 and 2002 showed that the majority of Indonesians had a preference for an Islamic government and Shariah law.⁶ Overall, religion and indigenous ethnicity appeared to be playing central roles in Indonesian politics.

In contrast, the trend in recent research on identity and electoral politics in Indonesia posits that while religious and ethnic identities play a strong role in the social sphere, their impact on electoral politics is at best, marginal. Indonesians, it appears, are pragmatic voters - more concerned with party platforms and issues of corruption and economic development than with identity politics. Evidence comes from the declining performance of Islamic parties at the polls and the failure of radical Islamic and indigenous ethnic leaders to get elected in recent district/municipality head elections.⁷ Drawing on a number of surveys for the most recent elections in 2004 and 2009, Liddle and Mujani found little evidence that religious, indigenous ethnic, or regional identities played a role in voting behavior. The appeal of a

² (Fealy and White, 2008)

³ (Purdey, 2004; Purdey, 2009)

⁴ (Van Klinken, 2004; Jeroen, 2007; Collins and Sirozi, 2004)

⁵ (Anies Rasyid, 2007; King, 2003)

⁶ Surveys were undertaken by the Research Center for the Study of Islam and Society (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat or PPIM) and the data cited from (Liddle, 2003)

⁷ (Mietzner, 2005; Mietzner, 2006; McGibbon, 2006)

party and in particular, the personal appeal of a party leader, were the main drivers of voting behavior. They did note that party appeal weakened considerably in the 2009 election, while two other factors strengthened - the role of media campaigns and perceptions of the national economic condition influenced voters.⁸ Finally, Van Klinken has pointed out the relative inability of one of Indonesia's largest and most powerful ethnic organization, the South Sulawesi Family Association, to influence electoral politics.⁹

Much attention has been paid to the apparent decline in the influence of Islam in electoral politics. However, some scholars have begun to argue that this might not represent a decline at all, but shifting patterns in how political parties view the role of Islam and politics. A number of scholars have pointed out what they see as a 'mainstreaming' of Islam in Indonesian politics or the creation of a 'middle'.¹⁰ They argue that nationalist parties have increasingly begun to support Islamic organizations¹¹ and back religiously inspired legislation.¹² Meanwhile some Islamic parties are also changing – becoming more open and more nationalist.

To contribute to this debate, this research project analyzes political campaign posters from local and national elections that took place between 2009 and 2011. We look at the levels and kinds of ethnic appeals that candidates are making, and the factors that offer candidates incentives to make these appeals. Before explaining our methodology, the question needs to be answered, why study campaign posters?

WHY CAMPAIGN POSTERS?

While it is very difficult to judge the impact of campaign posters, the sheer numbers and variety of campaign posters posted during elections in Indonesia indicate that candidates consider them an important part of their campaigns. This is not unique to Indonesia.

Developing countries seem particularly prone to becoming awash with campaign posters. In

⁸ (Liddle and Mujani, 2007; Mujani and Liddle, 2010)

⁹ (Van Klinken, 2008)

¹⁰ (Platzdasch, 2009; Tanuwidjaja, 2010; Evans, 2009)

¹¹ (Sukma, 2010)

¹² (Buehler, 2009) (Tanuwidjaja, 2010)

the recent elections in Afghanistan the day-in-day-out blanketing of posters around the country was so pronounced that an Afghan shopkeeper remarked how he was fearful of leaving his house in case someone pasted him with a campaign poster.¹³ Candidates also spend a considerable part of their budget on campaign posters. While figures on the amount of money Indonesian candidates spend on posters is currently unavailable, in other countries it has been found that posters can cost up to 50% of the campaign budget.¹⁴



Recent elections and campaign posters in Afghanistan (top left), Iraq (top right), Zimbabwe (bottom left), and Indonesia (bottom right)

In addition to being an important campaign tool for politicians, for researchers of political campaigns, posters are a scalable and comparable data source. Coding posters in a reliable and systematic way allows us to compare campaign appeals across the country, as well as over time. A media analysis of campaign posters holds advantages over other methods such as surveys. While surveys allow researchers to ask pointed and direct questions, the responses are often half-truths – particularly when the questions deal with sensitive subjects.

¹³ Cite NY Times article.

¹⁴ Marsh found that Irish candidates spend 50% of their budget on campaign posters. (Marsh, 2004)

Respondents' answers may be colored by what they think is the politically correct response. In contrast, a media analysis is representative of what candidates do, not what they say they do.

Campaign posters are somewhat limited in that they usually only contain a few images, symbols and/or text messages. However, this brevity has its advantages. It means that politicians are forced to make careful decisions on the kinds of verbal and non-verbal messages that they put on their posters - carefully choosing the ones that they believe will resonate most with voters. For researchers, this brevity makes it feasible to analyze and compare across multiple regions and thousands of candidates. With 4,289 posters across 21 provinces in our dataset, our analysis is the largest systematic study of political campaigning in Indonesia to date. Furthermore, it is to our knowledge, the largest analysis of political campaign posters inside or outside Indonesia.¹⁵

METHODOLOGY

Gathering & Selection

The first stage of this research project was to gather photographs of Indonesian campaign posters. We photographed campaign posters, billboards, and stickers that were publically posted along the street. In addition to photographs of posters taken by the authors, we are thankful to a network of Fulbright and Surveyometer researchers across the country that photographed thousands of campaign posters for this project.

Photographs of campaign posters were taken in two waves. They cover the legislative elections in 2009 and the district/municipality head elections in 2010 and 2011. The first wave was in March of 2009, right before the April 9th national, provincial and local legislative elections. Another wave of poster photographs was taken before district/municipality head elections (Pilkada) between 2010 and 2011.

¹⁵ In recent years a number of good case studies on individual election campaigns in Indonesia have been written, see (Buehler, 2007; Buehler and Tan, 2007; Mietzner, 2007)

The digital photographs were cropped and color corrected, and the final sample set was selected. From the initial sample of over 6,000 posters only posters that contained at least one message or symbol beyond the mandatory information of candidate name, candidate number, political party, election, and district number, were chosen. About 10% of the posters for the 2009 legislative elections had more than one candidate. Multiple candidates in a poster complicate coding and inferences because the candidates are often competing in different elections.¹⁶ To simplify the coding and make clearer inferences, only posters with a candidate competing in one election was chosen. In this way we could more concretely tie appeals in a poster to a particular candidate competing in a specific election. Finally, images of the same poster design were then removed, so each poster in the dataset is a unique design. In sum, a poster was selected for coding if, a) the candidate was competing in just one election, b) it had at least one symbol or message, and c) it was a unique design. From an original set of over 6,000 posters, 4,289 posters were finally selected for coding.

Coding

The selected posters were then coded. Over 30 custom fields were created to code candidate and election information, and non-verbal symbols in the posters.¹⁷ The posters were first coded for the sex of the candidate, the electoral district, the candidate's party and the election type. 17% of the posters were for female candidates. This is probably about 10% less than the actual number of women competing in the 2009 election.¹⁸ The number of posters by female candidates is low because campaigning among candidates was not even. Male candidates, were more experienced, tended to be ranked higher on the party lists, and had more personal resources to invest in their poster campaigns.

Posters were gathered from 5 different types of elections. 62% from the four legislative elections in 2009 (national, provincial, and district) and 38% from district/municipality head

¹⁶ For example, one party candidate might be competing for a seat in the national legislature while another might be competing for a seat in the local district legislature.

¹⁷ A photography database program called Extensis Portfolio that allows the creation of custom fields was used to code the campaign posters.

¹⁸ We do have some data on the numbers of women candidates - 35% of the candidates for the lower house national legislature (DPR-RI) and 9% of candidates for the upper house (DPD) were women. At the time of writing, no data is available on the number of female candidates in the provincial and district legislatures.

elections in 2010 and 2011.¹⁹ Posters came from a total of 21 out of Indonesia's 33 provinces.²⁰ The posters for district/municipality head elections covered 48 districts – with an approximate equal number of urban and rural districts. The dataset contains posters from all 44 parties that competed in the 2009 election. For all the parties that won seats in the election, the final dataset contains significant numbers of posters.²¹

After selecting the posters they were then coded for candidates clothing, headdress and background imagery. In order to code these consistently, drop-down lists were created that contained a list of possible options. For example, some of the options for 'Headdress' include Peci, Turban, Jilbab etc. As much as possible, elements were coded in a literal fashion and interpreted during the interpretation and labeling stage of the research project. All coding was done by one of the authors, so there were no issues of inter-coder reliability. Due to the rich variety of ethnic and Islamic clothing styles in the posters, the authors consulted with a number of Indonesians during the coding process and presented the coding system to audiences at two presentations in Jakarta.

Interpretation & Labeling

After the posters were coded, they were then interpreted and labeled according to the kinds of identity symbols that they contain. A poster can be labeled with one or more of the following labels - Party Symbolism, Nationalist Symbolism, Religious Symbolism, Indigenous Ethnic Symbolism and Regional Symbolism.

¹⁹ 28% of the posters were from district legislative elections (DPRD Kabupaten/Kota), 15% from provincial legislative elections (DPRD Provinsi), 14% from national lower house legislative elections (DPR-RI), 4% from national upper house legislative elections (DPD) and 35% from district/municipality head elections (Pilkada).

²⁰ Posters from the 2009 legislative elections came from 17 provinces, Aceh, Bali, Central Java, East Java, Central Sulawesi, South Sulawesi, North Sulawesi, West Sulawesi, Jakarta, Lampung, Maluku, North Sumatra, Nusa Tenggara Timor, South Kalimantan, West Java, West Papua, and Yogyakarta. The posters for district/municipality head elections covered 48 districts across 15 provinces, Bali, Bengkulu, West Java, Central Java, East Java, Maluku, North Sulawesi, South Sulawesi, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Nusa Tenggara Timor, East Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, West Kalimantan and Yogyakarta.

²¹ Numbers of posters in the dataset from the main parties, PDI-P (328), Golkar (312), PAN (246), Partai Demokrat (236), PKS (128), PPP (123), Hanura (109), PKB (90), Gerindra (88).

- *Party Symbolism*: A poster is coded with party symbolism if any of the following is true, if the candidate is wearing clothing in the party's color; if the candidate is wearing the party logo; or if there is a party logo designed into the background.²²
- *Nationalist Symbolism*: The primary measure for nationalism is whether a candidate uses the Indonesian flag in the campaign poster, but posters that had nationalist symbols or national monuments were also labeled as nationalist.
- *Religious Symbolism*: A poster is coded to have religious symbolism if any of the following is true, if the candidate is dressed in religious clothing; if the candidate is wearing religious headdress; or if there were religious symbols or images used in the background.
- *Ethnic Symbolism*: A poster is coded to have ethnic symbolism if any of the following is true, if the candidate is dressed in ethnic clothing; if the candidate is wearing an ethnic headdress; or if there were ethnic symbols or images used in the background.
- *Regional Symbolism*: Posters were coded to have regional symbolism if they used regional images (e.g. regional maps, or regional imagery of the land) in the background.

Often posters use a mix of different ethnic symbols and party symbols. Occasionally, however there are posters that contain no identity symbols. Below are some examples of the different types of posters in the dataset and how they were labeled.²³ These posters are from legislative and executive elections.

²² All candidates in legislative elections are required to put the party logo on their posters. We did not code this. We only coded the party logo when it was designed into the background or worn by the candidate.

²³ In addition we made aggregate measures of symbolism for posters. These measures added up the numbers of symbols for party symbolism, religious symbolism etc., so they also captured a level of intensity. However, when we used this measure in the analysis, the results were very similar to using the simpler measures above. In the end, it was decided to use the simpler 'at least one symbol' measure as it makes interpretation easier.



Party Symbolism, Nationalist Symbolism, Religious Symbolism (from left to right)



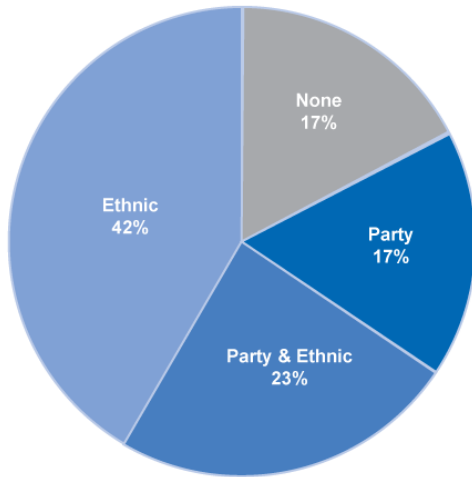
Indigenous Ethnic Symbolism, Regional Symbolism, No Ethnic or Party Symbolism (from left to right)

FINDINGS

Taking a broad overview of the dataset, the posters can be categorized as having ethnic and/or party symbolism. Ethnic symbols include nationalist, religious, indigenous ethnic, and regional symbolism. The chart below shows this breakdown. The majority of posters (65%) contain at least one ethnic symbol, while 40% contain at least one party symbol. 23% contain both ethnic and party symbols and 17% contain neither party nor ethnic symbols. Across the country and across different types of elections, Indonesian politicians appear to be more inclined to draw on ethnic symbols rather than political party symbols in attempting to attract votes.

Distribution of Ethnic & Party Symbols

% posters with at least one ethnic or party symbol.

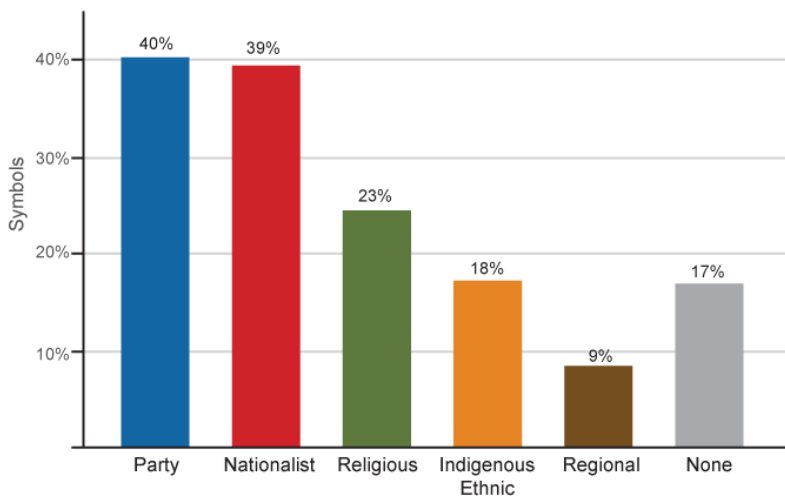


Ethnic Symbols include nationalist, religious, indigenous ethnic and regional
 Total Number of Posters = 4,229.
 2,637 were from 2009 National election. 1,592 were from Pilkada elections.
 (150 of the total number of posters are for DPD candidates who do not have a party.)

Taking a closer look at the particular categories of ethnic symbolism that politicians draw on in both national and local elections, we find that nationalist symbolism is most often used (39%) followed by religious (23%) indigenous ethnic (18%) and regional (9%). Of the religious symbols the vast majority are Islamic - other religious symbols are very rare. In contrast there is much more variety in the range of indigenous ethnic symbols in the posters.

Types of Symbols in Posters

% posters with at least one of these symbols



While this is a broad overview, there is a lot of variation in the levels, and kinds, of ethnic appeals that candidates make across electoral systems, political parties, and regions. To understand why particular politicians use ethnic appeals we explore the influence of these factors.

1. Electoral System

Within the dataset we have posters from three different types of electoral systems. They can be categorized as Proportional Representation (PR), Semi-Proportional Representation (Semi-PR), and Majoritarian/Plurality electoral systems.

PR: First, the national, provincial and district house (DPR-RI and DPRD Provinsi, DPRD Kabupaten/Kota) elections use PR in multimember districts with open lists. Voters can vote for a candidate, or for a party. Seats in an electoral district won by a party are then allocated to their candidates with the most personal votes.

Semi-PR: The Regional Representatives Council (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, DPD) has a semi-PR electoral system using a Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) in multimember districts with plurality. Voters vote for one candidate and the four candidates with the most votes in the province get elected. Candidates are independent and party endorsement is not allowed.

Majoritarian/Plurality: Finally, district (kabupaten) and municipality (kota) head elections use a plurality two round system (TRS) with single member districts. Candidates can be nominated by political parties, or run independently if a quota of signatures is collected. Voters vote for one candidate pair (Head and Vice). The threshold for a win in the first round is 25% of the vote. If a second round is needed, the top two candidate pairs face off.

Looking at the variation in ethnic appeals across electoral systems can help us understand whether some electoral systems offer candidates incentives to make ethnic appeals while others don't. There isn't a literature that speaks specifically to this question, but research by

Shugart and Carey is helpful. They argue that electoral systems vary in the incentives they offer for politicians to cultivate a ‘personal reputation’ versus a ‘party reputation’.²⁴ They go on to provide an ordinal ranking scale for different electoral systems, from most ‘candidate-centered’ to most ‘party-centered’. To develop this ranking system the authors draw on four variables common to all electoral systems - ballot control, vote pooling, type of votes, and district magnitude.

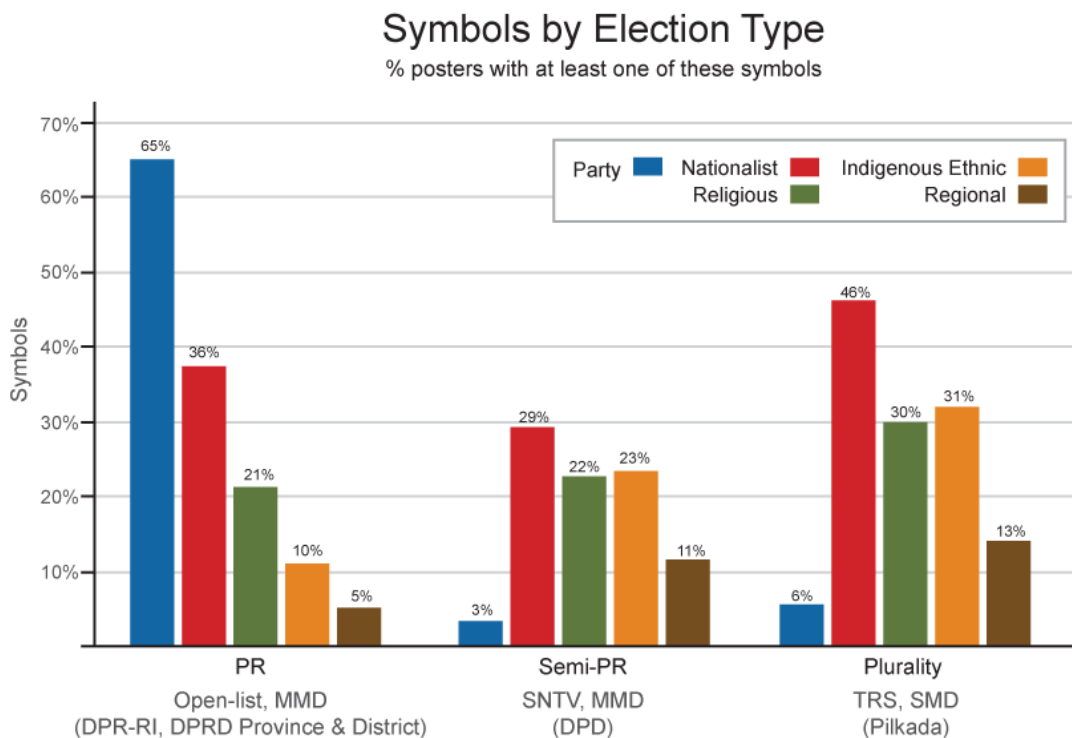
Drawing insights from their ranking scale we expect Indonesia’s PR elections to be the most ‘party-centered’, and the semi-PR and plurality elections to be the most ‘candidate-centered’. In the semi-PR (DPD) and plurality elections (Pilkada), party leaders have limited, or no control on the candidates’ access to ballots, the votes are not pooled, and voters cast a single vote below the party level. All these factors, Shugart and Carey argue, make ‘personal reputation’ more important than ‘party reputation’.

In the context of Indonesian politics, one of the main ways to cultivate a ‘personal reputation’ is to signal your solid religious and/or indigenous ethnic credentials. Given that, we expect to see more ethnic symbolism and less party symbolism in the semi-PR (DPD) and plurality (Pilkada) elections, compared to the PR (DPR-RI and DPRD) elections.

We also expect that plurality (Pilkada) elections will have the highest levels of ethnic appeals. Compared to PR’s multimember districts, candidates competing in plurality, single-member districts need a larger share of the vote to win. Needing a large support base, they have strong incentives to make broad ethnic appeals and to reach out across ethnic groups.²⁵ In the plurality (Pilkada) elections we would then expect candidates to make a higher number of ethnic appeals because they are attempting to appeal to multiple ethnic groups.

²⁴ (Carey and Shugart, 1995)

²⁵ Horowitz argues that by forcing politicians to reach out across ethnic groups, these majoritarian/plurality systems can have positive benefits for ethnically divided countries.(Horowitz, 1990)



From the chart, it is clear that the type of electoral system has a significant effect on the use of party symbolism. Party symbolism in Semi-PR and Plurality elections is very low. This is not surprising. In the Semi-PR (DPD) elections candidates are not allowed to be affiliated with parties. However, on occasion they do use some party symbolism to attract votes.²⁶ It is very low in plurality (Pilkada) elections because candidates have strong incentives to cultivate a ‘personal reputation’ rather than a ‘party reputation’.

As we move from a PR to a plurality system there is a rise in the use of ethnic symbolism. Candidates in plurality (Pilkada) elections use ethnic symbols (nationalist, religious, ethnic indigenous, and regional) to the largest extent. In this electoral system, candidates are forced to reach out across religious and indigenous ethnic groups. A closer look at the data shows that these candidates in Pilkada elections make more numerous ethnic appeals, because they are trying to appeal to more numerous indigenous ethnic and religious groups. Pilkada candidates often design multiple campaign posters, each containing a myriad of ethnic

²⁶ Cases above usually involved images of SBY, the leader of Partai Demokrat.

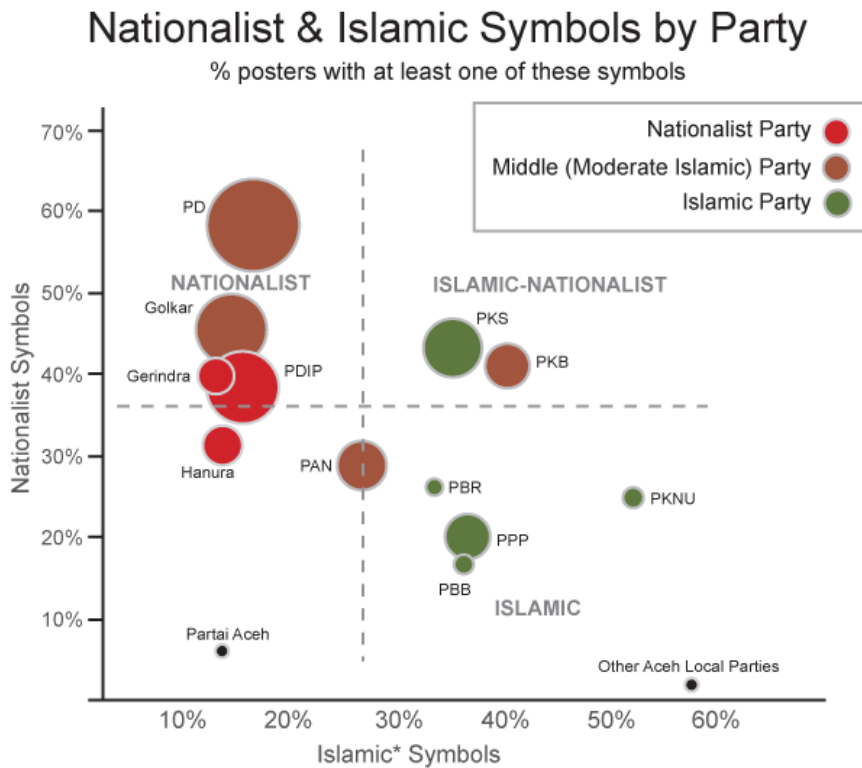
symbols from a variety of local religious and indigenous ethnic groups. The evidence suggests that the electoral system offers strong incentives to make these broad-based and usually inclusive ethnic appeals.

2. Political Parties

a. Ideology: One obvious way to predict if a candidate will make particular kinds of ethnic appeals is to look at the party they belong to. Unlike in the west, where a right-left split based on economic ideology often divides parties, Indonesian parties are split based on their views of Islam within the public domain. On the left are the parties that do not see a special role for Islam in politics and tend to promote nationalism. These nationalist parties include PDI-P and PDS. On the right are the parties that scholars label Islamic – they believe that Islam has a very important role to play in politics. They include PBR, PKS, PBB, PKNU and PPP.

In the past this division has polarized the nation, however as noted above, there are signs that a number of nationalist (Golkar and Partai Demokrat) and Islamic parties (PKB and PAN) are taking up a middle ground. These nationalist parties, it is argued, have recently given more of a role to Islam in politics. Meanwhile the Islamic parties PKB and PAN (who still have special links to Islamic organizations) do not see Islam as being central to politics.²⁷ In addition, there are Islamic parties such as PKS who have become more open and promote strong nationalist themes. An analysis of campaign posters allows us to systematically compare how hundreds of politicians from these parties use religious and nationalist symbols. As such, it helps us see if a new ‘middle’ is manifesting itself – at least within campaign materials.

²⁷ (Evans, 2009)



The chart above lays out the degree to which members of the main political parties used nationalist and Islamic symbolism in the 2009 legislative elections. Along the horizontal axis is Islamic symbolism and along the vertical axis is nationalist symbolism. The size of the circles represents the percentage of vote that each party got in 2009. Parties are coded red for nationalist parties, green for Islamic parties and brown for the parties that a number of scholars believe are occupying a middle (or moderate Islamic) space.

Overall, the original broad distinction between parties labeled as Islamic and those labeled as secular still holds. There is less evidence in the posters of the creation of a middle ground. While PAN fits the bill - using religious symbolism to a lesser degree than all the other Islamic parties - the PKB uses plenty of Islamic imagery, and there is no evidence that Golkar and Partai Demokrat use Islamic appeals significantly more than the other nationalist parties.

From the chart we see that nearly all the parties fit into three quadrants that can be termed Nationalist, Islamic, and Nationalist Islamic. The high use of nationalist symbolism and religious symbolism by the PKS and PKB is notable. PKS has fared a lot better than other Islamic parties in the elections – possibly one contributing factor is the appeal of both Islamic and nationalist symbolism. Moreover, Partai Demokrat uses more nationalist symbols than any of the other nationalist parties and secured more votes than any of these parties. Overall, it appears that the plentiful use of nationalist symbols - whether you are in an Islamic or nationalist party can be helpful at the polls.²⁸

b. Local Parties: Aside from the ideology of a party, being in a national or local/regional party can influence whether politicians appeal to ethnic groups. A considerable amount of research emphasizes the importance of inclusive national parties and has shown that they foster peace between ethnic groups and decrease conflict.²⁹ In contrast to large inclusive national parties, it has been shown that the prevalence of regional or ethnic parties tends to increase the likelihood of ethnic contestation and conflict. In a statistical analysis of thirty democracies Brancati showed that compared to national parties, regional/ethnic parties have a higher tendency to reinforce regional identities, produce legislation in favor of certain groups, and mobilize groups to engage in conflict.³⁰

While Indonesia has institutional rules that inhibit the formation of local parties, the province of Aceh is allowed to have local parties. Aceh is a former separatist province and the concession for local parties was offered as part of the peace agreement. It is also a province where religion is particularly deep rooted.

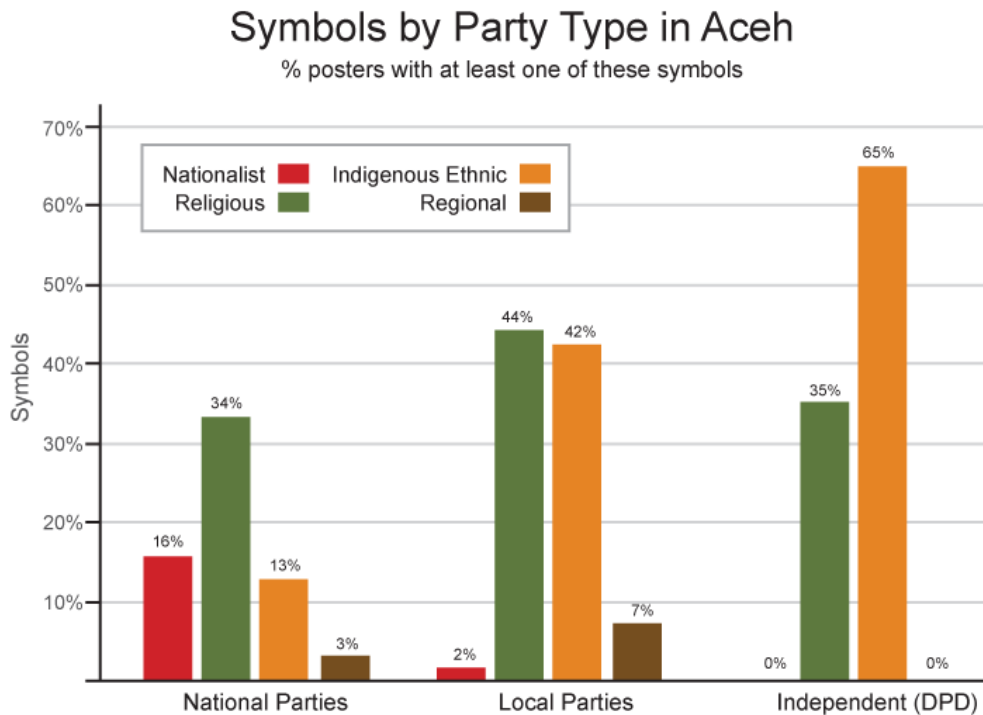
If we compare appeals by the national and local parties in Aceh we should expect the local parties to use ethnic symbols to a greater degree. Aceh's high level of religiosity and rebellious past should also be reflected in how national party candidates campaign in Aceh.

²⁸ We coded posters that had images of their party leaders. SYB's (Partai Demokrat) and Megawati (PDIP) images were the most prominent. Interestingly the Islamic parties very rarely had images of their leaders. Potentially, it is the lack of visible charismatic leaders (rather than their use of Islam) that is hurting the Islamic parties at the polls.

²⁹ (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova, 2004; Riker, 1964; Stepan, 2001; Bakke and Wibbels, 2006)

³⁰ (Brancati, 2006)

We can expect national party candidates in Aceh to use lower levels of nationalist symbols and higher levels of religious symbolism compared to fellow party candidates in other provinces.



The chart shows levels of ethnic appeals by national parties, the 6 local parties, and the independent candidates (for the national upper house, DPD) in Aceh. As expected national party candidates in Aceh campaign a little differently compared to how they campaign in the rest of the country. National party candidates in Aceh use religious symbolism much more (34% versus the average of 23%), and nationalist symbolism much less (16% versus the average of 39%). This shows how the appeals of national party candidates can vary according to local conditions.

There is a stark difference between the national parties and the local parties. Local parties use religious and indigenous ethnic symbolism to a much greater degree, but nationalism much less. Similarly the independent candidates in Aceh also use indigenous ethnicity to a much higher degree. Local parties in Aceh do not use religious and ethnic symbolism to the same

degree. Partai Aceh, the party with many former GAM separatist fighters, almost exclusively use indigenous ethnic symbolism and no religious symbolism. Meanwhile the other 5 parties almost exclusively use religious symbolism.³¹

3. Region

A number of regional factors will be explored to see if they have some effect on how politicians use ethnic appeals. They include, ethnic demographics, whether the electoral district is urban or rural, and if the region has a history of rebellion.

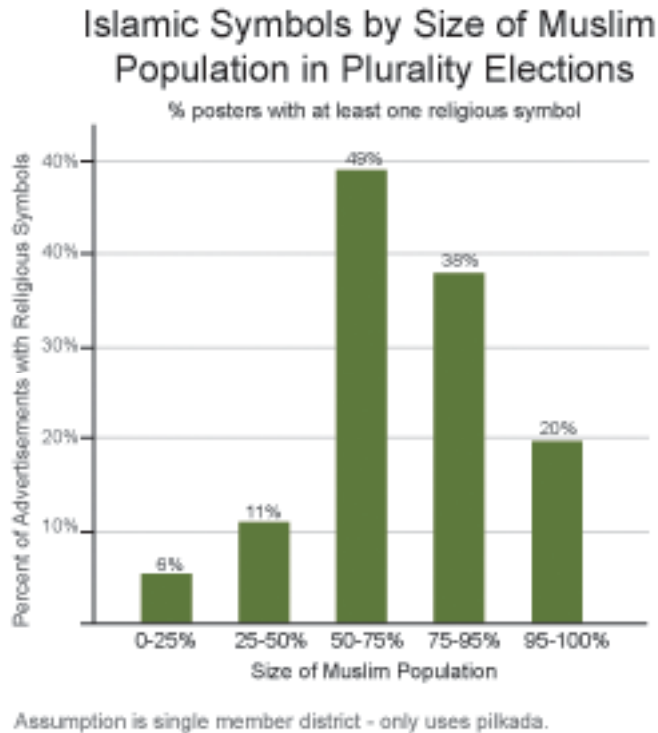
a. Group Size: To understand how ethnic demographics might affect a politician's decision to appeal to ethnic groups during elections, the extensive literature on ethnicity and conflict is helpful. Recent large-N studies that focus squarely on ethnic demographics have found a parabolic relationship between diversity and conflict, with highly diverse or homogeneous populations being less prone to conflict.³² In very diverse societies no one group is large enough to be a major threat to others and in homogenous societies there is no threat from a competing group. Studies find that the likelihood of violent conflict is greatest when there are two to three ethnic groups and/or where a dominant group is 45-90% of the population.³³ If these insights on ethnic conflict relate to ethnic politics, we should expect low levels of religious appeals when an electoral district is either religiously diverse, or religiously homogenous, but high levels when there are two or three large religious groups. At this point we are only looking at Islamic symbolism and Islamic demographics because we do not have indigenous ethnic demographic data yet.³⁴

³¹ The other 5 local parties in Aceh are, Prosperous and Safe Aceh Party (Partai Aceh Aman Sejahtera, PAAS), Aceh Sovereignty Party (Partai Daulat Atjeh, PDA), Independent Voice of the Acehnese Party (Partai Suara Independen Rakyat Aceh, SIRA), Aceh People's Party (Partai Rakyat Aceh, PRA), Aceh Unity Party (Partai Bersatu Aceh, PBA)

³² (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000)

³³ (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998; Siegle and O'Mahony, 2005)

³⁴ We plan to look more closely at indigenous ethnic symbolism and demographics in a later version of this paper.



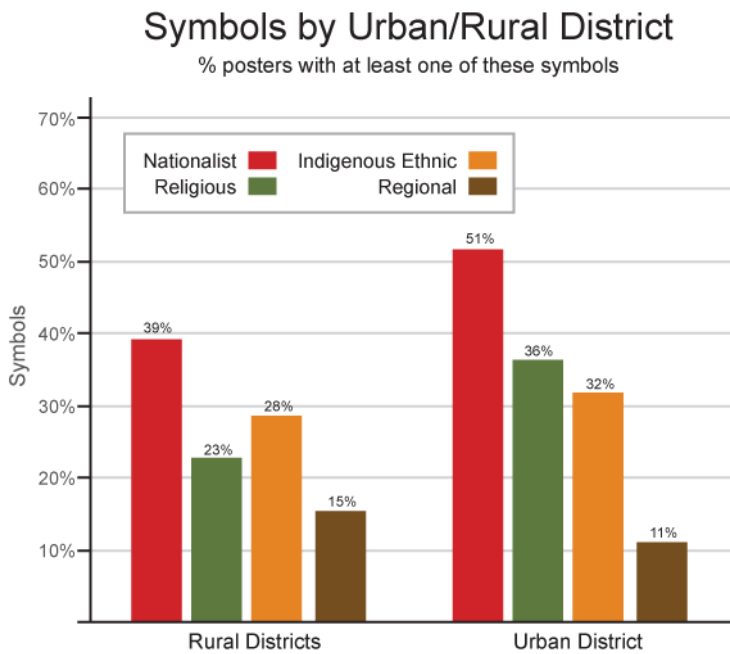
After incorporating data on religious demographics we found that religious appeals are highest in regions that have a Muslim population between 50% and 75%. This demographic appears to create favorable conditions for politicians and constituents to rally around Islam. When Muslims are in a large majority 75%+, politicians are somewhat less likely to make religious appeals. Meanwhile if Muslims are in a minority, it is highly unlikely that politicians will make religious appeals.³⁵ This finding aligns with theoretical insights from the literature on ethnicity and conflict.

b. Modernization: Levels of modernization might also effect whether politicians use ethnic appeals. Early modernization theorists such as Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, all viewed ethnic identities as “traditional” and predicted that the process of modernization would lead to the displacement of indigenous ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities by class/occupational, or national identities. If these theorists were right, we should expect to find the strongest ethnic identification among people located in rural, traditional sectors -

³⁵ Electoral districts with 50-75% Muslims are very likely to be situations where Muslims are in, what Riker calls a ‘minimum winning coalition’. It is a situation where you can win the election, by drawing on one group, but share the spoils with a minimum of others.

such as farmers and fishermen. Lower levels of ethnic identification could be expected in the urban areas since they are more exposed to modern currents. But we can also expect to see more nationalism.

In contrast, a later set of scholars have argued that that the processes of urbanization, industrialization, education, political mobilization, and competition for jobs would deepen ethnic identities as individuals exploit their ethnic group memberships as a tool for political, economic, and social advancement.³⁶ If this is true we can expect more ethnic mobilization in the modern sectors in urban areas, compared to the rural traditional sectors of farming and fishing.



In looking at a range of different ethnic appeals across urban and rural areas the results suggest that the later set of modernist theorists might be right. In urban areas nationalist and religious appeals and indigenous ethnic appeals are higher.³⁷ Religious appeals in the capital,

³⁶ (Bates, 1983; Bates, 1974; Posner, Eifert and Miguel, 2008) Regardless of whether modernization theorists causal arguments are right or wrong, there are a number of other good reasons, such as the sheer proximity of living space in urban areas, to believe that ethnic mobilization may have different patterns and in urban areas compared to rural areas. Because of this it will be fruitful to separate out rural and urban districts in the analysis.

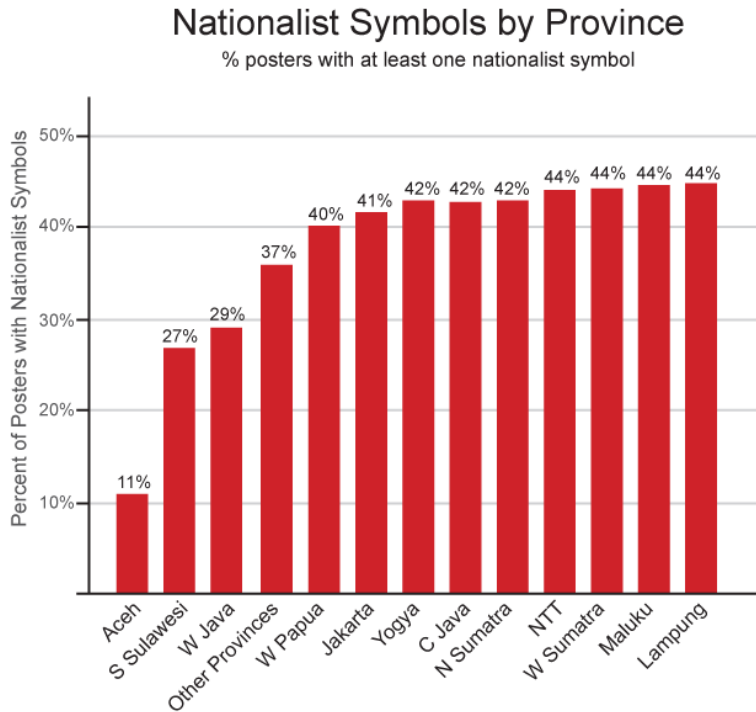
³⁷ One of the earlier theorists on nationalism, Ernest Gellner, argued that industrialization led to the development of nationalism.

Jakarta is very high. 32% of Jakarta's posters contain religious symbolism, only trailing the traditionally Islamic provinces of Aceh (36%) and South Kalimantan (43%). There are potentially three specific reasons why we see this urban/rural distribution.

First, it is the universities, located in urban areas, which have been a fertile ground for the rise in religion across Indonesia during the last two decades. Second, but related, is the fact that the youth of Indonesia are more religious than the older generation, and on average cities have younger populations. Third, there might be a sense of dislocation that migrants feel in cities, which compels them to form ethnic associations. Finally, it might simply be the case that politicians have incentives to make identity appeals in urban areas because it is an effective tool to reach out to higher concentrations of people that they cannot meet personally.

c. History of Rebellion: Regional historical factors such as having a rebellion against the state in the past could also have an impact on the use of ethnic appeals by candidates today. Past rebellion against the center might represent a deep-rooted distrust of the center and offer incentives for politicians to play down nationalist symbolism. There are 5 regions within the dataset that have past rebellions of significant size - Maluku, West Papua, Aceh, South Sulawesi, and West Java.³⁸ Three of these rebellions (in Aceh, South Sulawesi and West Java) were Darul Islam rebellions - rebellions that to varying degrees had aspirations for an Islamic state.

³⁸ In 1950s a Republic of south Maluku was declared and attempted to secede. In the late 1950s Manado, the capital North Sulawesi was the center for a rebel movement called Permesta. The rebels were led by civil and military leaders and fought against the central government before being defeated. A similar rebel movement developed at the same time in West Sumatra calling itself the PRRI movement.

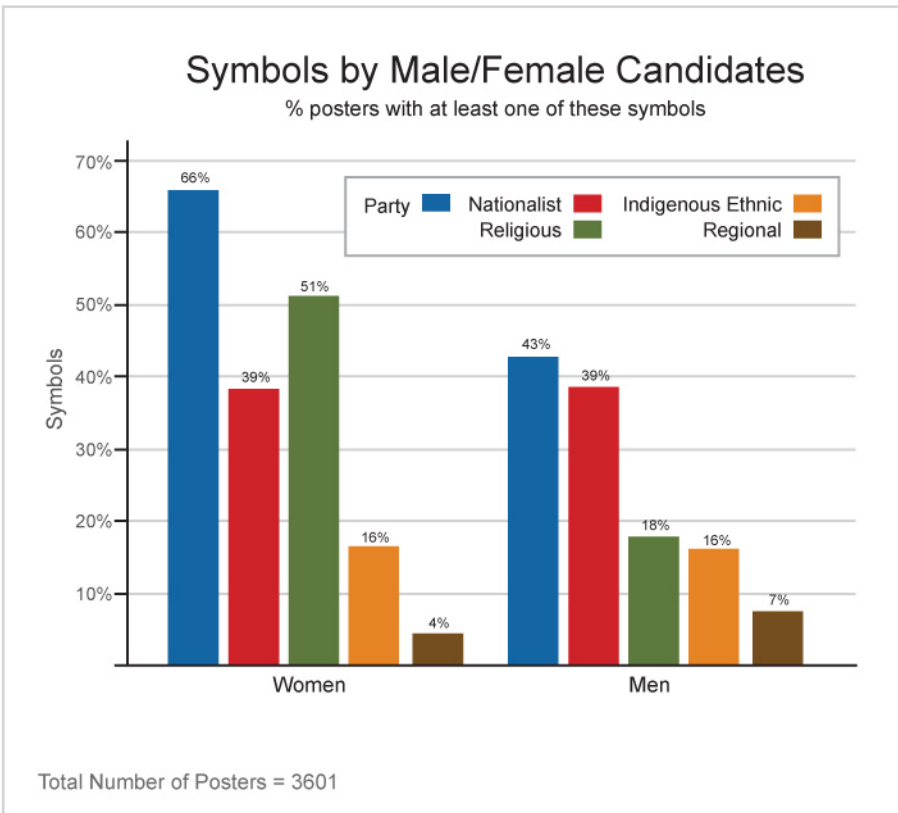


The results from the campaign posters show that past rebellion against the center is correlated with the use of nationalist symbolism in campaign posters. 4 of the provinces that had significant past rebellions use nationalist symbolism the least. The lowest levels of nationalism are in the provinces that had Islamic rebellions - Aceh, South Sulawesi, and West Java. However, nationalism is relatively quite high in the one case of Maluku.

4. Individual Level

Whether a candidate is male or female might also affect their propensity to make ethnic appeals. This could be rooted in social norms on how women and men are expected to present themselves. Interviews with religious leaders in North Sumatra suggest that women more frequently attend houses of worship. In addition, Indonesian women appear to more frequently wear Islamic clothing compared to men.³⁹ We may then expect female candidates to use more religious symbolism. There are no clear expectations however, when it comes to the use of party, nationalist, indigenous ethnic, or regional symbolism, by male and female candidates.

³⁹ Check to see if there are any studies on levels of religiosity among men and women.



The chart shows that female candidates are much more likely to use religious symbolism compared to men. This might largely be explained by the fact that it is common for women in Indonesia to wear the Muslim headdress. A closer look at the data shows that while women are more likely to wear religious clothing, men are more likely to use external religious symbols such as mosques in their campaign posters.

In the chart we can also see that female candidates are much more likely to use political party symbols in their posters compared to male candidates. While the reasons for this need to be explored through interviews, it is possible that the introduction of quotas for female politicians plays some role in this outcome. Quotas meant that a lot of women were running for election for the first time. Lacking a large personal network, it is likely that they leaned on party symbolism more than male candidates. On average male candidates have more political experience and a more developed network. Levels of nationalist, indigenous ethnic and regional symbolism are similar across male and female candidates. We also looked to see

if the position of a candidate on the party list had any impact on the kinds of appeals they made. We found little or no impact.

To conclude, below is a summary of all the factors, which we found offer incentives for candidates to use nationalist, religious, indigenous ethnic and regional symbolism in their campaign posters.

	Nationalist	Religious	Indigenous Ethnic	Regional
ELECTORAL SYSTEM				
Plurality versus PR System	Plurality	Plurality	Plurality	Plurality
POLITICAL PARTY				
Islamic vs Nationalist Ideology	Nationalist Ideology	Islamic Ideology	--	--
Local vs National Party	National Party	Local Party	Local Party	Local Party
REGION				
Demographic Group Size	--	Muslim Pop. 50-75%	--	--
Urban vs Rural	Urban	Urban	Rural	Rural
Past Rebellion	No Past Rebellion	--	--	--
INDIVIDUAL LEVEL				
Male vs Female	--	Female	-	-

CONCLUSIONS

It is important to point out that the use of ethnic appeals by politicians is not necessarily detrimental for a new democracy, particularly if they are broad and inclusive. Two scholars even go so far as to make the claim that ethnic politics can be good for democracy. Birnir's research shows the positive role that ethnic identity and ethnic parties play. In a study of all democracies since 1945 she shows how ethnic parties offer stable but flexible information shortcuts for political choices in new and mature democracies.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Chandra's research on India shows that ethnic parties can sustain a democratic system if the institutions foster multiple dimensions of ethnic identity.⁴¹

Finally, we should note that our research project is still incomplete. The current analysis focuses only on an analysis of the non-verbal cues in campaign posters (clothing, headdress

⁴⁰ (Birnir, 2007)

⁴¹ (Chandra, 2005)

and background imagery). We plan to also code the text messages and slogans in the posters for ethnic and party appeals. In addition, posters will be labeled for another type of appeal - populism. Populist appeals are more frequently made through the use of text messages in the posters so it is not included in the current analysis.

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