

The configuration of ethnic and religious relations towards the 2024 general election: A case study in Medan, Indonesia



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Abstract After the 2014 presidential election, which Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla won, sentiments based on religion and ethnicity towards Jokowi persisted. The discourse regarding the strengthening of ethnicity and religious politics continues not only at the national level but also at the municipal level during the political transition period. Almost identical to the elections for the Governor held in 2008 2013, and 2018, the issues that continue to develop in the election for the Governor of North Sumatra cover the same three aspects: religious issues, ethnic identity politics, and local son issues. This study aims to discover ethnic and religious relations in Medan following the 2019 general elections and the configuration of ethnic and religious connections in Medan towards the 2024 general elections. The research method used was quantitative research. The sample of this study was 100 responders chosen randomly by using simple random sampling technique. The data were collected through a close-ended questionnaire distributed offline to responders. It was found that the polarization of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Medan following the 2019 elections and the 2020 Medan mayoral race altered the societal patterns of interaction. Several factors contribute to this, including ending amicable contacts, viewing other races or religions as provocateurs, and establishing political preferences based on ethnic and religious concerns.

Keywords: configuration, ethnicity and religion, medan 2024 election

1. Introduction

Following the 2014 elections, Indonesian politics was marked by a strengthening of identity politics. Some political elites used ethnicity, religion, or specific ideologies to paint a poor picture of their political opponents (Mietzner 2015). The polarization of candidates Prabowo Subianto (Prabowo) and Joko Widodo (Jokowi) in the 2014 election meant categorizing their supporters based on religious identification. Islamic-based parties such as *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)*, *Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN)*, and *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)* especially Djan Faridz's faction overwhelmingly supported the pair Prabowo-Hatta. The only Islamic-based parties backing Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla were the *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* and the PPP (Romahurmuzy faction). The primary Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla supporter, *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP)*, which symbolizes secular left nationalism, brought its color to the election struggle with a nationalist nuance (Herdiansah 2017).

After the 2014 Presidential election, which Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla won, religious and ethnic animosity toward Jokowi persisted. Anis Matta, the leader of the PKS party at the time, even defined the political atmosphere following the 2014 election as an era of conservative ideology against liberalism. Following the 2014 election, the development of discourses relating to ethnic and religious issues created several problems in communal life, including an influence on social activities in daily life. In carrying out social activities, distinct ethnic groups with diverse cultural backgrounds will engage in a reciprocal relationship known as social interaction. Social interaction is necessary for social activities to take place. Individuals and social groups can engage in social activities when they meet and define the systems and forms of such relationships (Arkanudin 2011). Martodirdjo (2000) identifies many forms of connections between individuals or ethnic groups that are frequent in society, including acculturation, domination, paternalism, pluralism, and integration. Acculturation occurs when two ethnic groups interact and influence each other. Domination happens when one ethnic group outnumbers another. Paternalism is a relationship between ethnic groups in which one group is superior to another without any features of dominance. Pluralism is a partnership between multiple ethnic groups that recognizes political and civil rights equality for connected community groups. Meanwhile, integration is a set of interactions that encourages equality and even merges one group with another. When individuals or human groups collaborate and communicate with one another to achieve common goals, certain patterns of interactions can emerge (Arkanudin 2011).



The discourse regarding the strengthening of ethnicity and religion politics continues not only at the national level but also at the municipal level during the political transition period. One notable example can be seen in Medan, Sumatera Utara. Medan is a city that is rich in diversity. Medan is Sumatra's major city and one of the largest cities in Indonesia. Medan, being the most important component of Indonesia's mainstream development, has the potential to become an international city because it is physically next to the Malacca Strait. Medan, Indonesia's multi-ethnic civilization area, is home to a diverse range of native and immigrant ethnic groups. Based on BPS data for Medan (2020), the majority ethnicity is Javanese, accounting for 33.03% of the population. The Batak ethnicity is then equal to 20.93%. There are several other nationalities among the rest, including Malays, Minangkabau, Acehnese, Arabs, and a tiny percentage of Chinese. Nonetheless, Medan is an example of a city that is not dominated by a single ethnicity or culture (Suparlan 2005).

Based on the KPU's vote recapitulation data from the 2018 Sumatera Utara Governor election, the Edy Rahmayadi and Musa Rajekshah (ERAMAS) pair excelled in seventeen districts, while the Djarot and Sihar Sitorus (DJOSS) pair excelled in just four districts, namely Medan Tuntungan, Medan Kota, Medan Baru, and Medan Petisah. The high level of plurality in Medan regarding religion, ethnicity, and culture has significantly impacted the issues that arose during the governor's election. Almost identical to the governor election in 2008, the concerns that occurred in the Sumatera Utara governor election from 2013 to 2018 comprised the same three aspects: religious issues, ethnic identity politics, and local candidate issues (Sarumpaet and Nababan 2014). Furthermore, research conducted by Subandi and Ubaid (2022) in the 2020 Medan mayoral election shows that the sociological model, namely voter behavior according to the people's sociological preferences, is the most dominant model of voter behavior in the people of Medan. Religion, ethnicity, and gender preferences are the key aspects that contribute to this approach. Sociological voters comprised 43.1% of the examined population, whereas rational voters were present but not as numerous, accounting for 36.8%. Only about 10.8% of voters were psychologically. Identity politics narratives that developed during past elections, such as the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, the 2018 Sumatera Utara gubernatorial election, and the 2019 presidential election, have influenced the strength of sociological voting behavior.

As a country with a high potential for ethnic, religious, and race conflicts, the possibility of national fragmentation and disintegration must be monitored (Adlparvar and Tadors 2016). Several ethnic wars have occurred in Indonesia, including the Sampit conflict, the Maluku struggle, the 1998 reform conflict, and others. These conflicts stem from a variety of sources, including social, economic, cultural, and political ones. Hadiluwih (2010) identified three major sources of possible conflict in Medan: clashes between locals and non-natives, clashes between local tribes, and clashes between native-born people and immigrants. In essence, politics and democracy exacerbate the threat of national fragmentation and politics (Tambunan 2003). People recognize the idea that politics continuously promote misinformation, issues, and slander that lead to political division and that the heated struggle between candidates ignites emotions among supporters and establishes polarization in society. The 2010 local elections, which were followed by the 2015 elections, the 2018 Sumatera Utara gubernatorial election, and culminating in the 2019 national elections, which were followed by the 2020 local elections, have all had a significant impact on the form of polarization in the relationship between ethnic and religious groups (Karim 2019).

As a large city, Medan undoubtedly suffers from the following effects: suspicion among politicians, cynicism towards other ethnic or religious groups, and perspectives on differences, which are feared to create a polarization of relationships among ethnic and religious groups in society and, as a result, will have an impact on the 2024 elections. This water is sometimes quiet on the surface but strong and drowning beneath. Therefore, we must be conscious of whether the interaction between ethnic and religious groups in Medan is a treasure trove of tranquility or a hidden danger. Based on Kleden (2001), in the discourse of social science, violence has a deep structure that is hidden in numerous cultural domains in today's Indonesian society, which then reveals itself in various distinct ways. The majority of study done to far has focused on the politicization that happens during elections or on how the public behaves when exercising their right to vote. The interaction between various identification groups (such as ethnicity and religion) after an election and how it relates to a subsequent election, in this case the 2024 election, is a topic rarely studied by researchers. This is what distinguishes this study as innovative. Therefore, this study aims to discover ethnic and religious relations in Medan following the 2019 general elections and the configuration of ethnic and religious connections in Medan towards the 2024 general elections.

2. Method

This study employs a quantitative approach. In this study, both primary and secondary data were utilised. Researchers employed simple random sampling technique to get the sampling from population, namely by assigning sequential numbers to each of Medan's subdistricts. Then, rolls that are made at random to create the sample will be used to generate these numbers. Additionally, 10 responders were chosen at random from each subdistrict. Consequently, there were 100 responders in total for this survey. The data were collected through a close-ended questionnaire distributed offline to responders. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they were asked to complete the questionnaire. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The data collected were treated with confidentiality and stored securely. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed by using SPSS.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. The Configuration of Inter-Ethnic and Inter-Religious Relations in Medan

Following the 2019 General Election, Medan, a city characterized by its multi-ethnic composition, underwent the effects of inter-identity mistrust. The development of negative attitudes towards individuals of different ethnic or religious backgrounds and varying viewpoints on diversity will contribute to the division of inter-ethnic and inter-religious connections. The electoral events that took place in Medan, namely the 2010 and 2015 regional head election, the 2018 Sumatera Utara Governor Election, and the 2019 General Election followed by the 2020 regional head election, have had a notable influence on the polarization of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in the region (Karim 2019). Based on a study conducted by Amalia et al (2021), Medan is identified as a potential area of concern that could pose a threat to the successful conduct of the 2019 General Election.

The 2014 Presidential Election witnessed a polarization of the candidate axis between Prabowo and Jokowi, which resulted in categorizing supporters based on their religious identity. The Prabowo-Hatta ticket received significant support from Islamic-oriented political parties, including but not limited to PKS, PAN, and PPP under the leadership of Djan Faridz. In the interim, solely the PKB and PPP (Romahurmuzy faction) were the Islamic-affiliated parties that supported Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla. Based on Herdiansah (2017), the PDIP, a left-wing secular nationalist party, played a significant role in the election campaign of Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla. The party's involvement added a distinct nationalist element to the overall political discourse.

The polarization of inter-community relations can be attributed to dividing the two communities into opposing groups, as evidenced by one of the parameters. An instance of conflict arose between the #2019GantiPresiden campaign and the #DiaSibukKerja T-shirt movement during the Car Free Day event in Jakarta in 2019. Social media polarization can escalate into real-world conflicts, resulting in physical confrontations. The present occurrence evokes a prior event that took place during the 2017 DKI Jakarta Pilkada. However, the current incident has garnered greater attention due to its association with the presidential election (Ri'fan 2018).

It is believed that the emergence of the phenomenon of identity politics in the Muslim community of DKI Jakarta did not occur in the 2017 DKI Jakarta post-conflict local election, but because there was religious blasphemy committed by Ahok in one of the verses, namely in Q.S. Al-Maidah verse 51, so that it becomes the cause and trigger for conflicts between Muslims and non-Muslims, and as a result a religious movement emerges namely the 212 peaceful action driven by religious leaders, clerics, Habib, and the Muslim community in the country. This peaceful action was the right moment and at the same time, an entry point for the Anies-Sandi pair to win the 2017 Jakarta governor election. Of course, this moment is the main mover, the ulama, Habib, politicians who are able to take advantage of situations and opportunities, as well as the existence of mass Islamic movements who feel compelled to defend the Koran and Islam, as well as the existence of a fatwa from scholars relating to blasphemy committed by Ahok in the the Thousand Islands (Fautanu et al 2020).

Based on the events above, the issue of religious and ethnic differences emerged. Islam and non-Islam, China and not China, the majority and the minority, so that a political movement emerged that carries the tagline "As long as it's not Ahok" or "As long as it's not Ahok". Therefore, some people think that in the 2017 DKI Jakarta Pilkada there was indeed identity politics which was quite thick, strong, fundamental and had an impact on religious and socio-political life and became the concern of the community, not only Jakarta public, but also the Indonesian people as a whole. The 212 peaceful demonstration in Jakarta is a manifestation of the strong relationship between religion (Islam) and politics (state) as a form of identity politics that has so strongly colored the 2017 Jakarta governor election in Fautanu et al (2020).

Not only in Medan city, the issue of identity politics also emerged during the 2017 Aceh governor election. In the contestation for the 2017 of Aceh Governor election in several areas such as Central Aceh District, there was an issue of identity politics in the form of strengthening the issue of the Son of the Region, especially among the Gayo community as said -said *Ara urang kendiri, hana turah jema Len* (if there are people from ourselves, why does it have to be other people). The issue of local sons has had a major influence on the vote acquisition and absolute victory for the Irwandi-Nova pair in the 2017 regional elections yesterday in four districts where the majority of the population is ethnic Gayo, Central Aceh 53.5% (56900 votes), Bener Meriah District 53.2% (41836 votes), Gayo Lues 40.6 (21675 votes), and Aceh Tamiang 43.9% (53143 votes). The issue of local people is getting stronger when it is related to family descent, where Nova Iriansyah is a descendant of HM Nurdin Sufie, a senior politician who served as regent of Central Aceh in the 1970-1974 era. As if taking advantage of the existing situation, the pair of candidates then used a political strategy which is by elaborating the regional language according to the location and language of the community during the campaign, namely using Gayo, Aceh and Minang languages (Nofriadi et al 2023).

With the prediction of Jokowi and Prabowo as potential presidential candidates in the upcoming 2019 election, political tensions in Indonesia are intensifying. Despite the presence of individuals who opt for silence, many people participate in the confrontations and hostilities that arise between the two opposing factions. The issue has sparked considerable discourse and even discord among the general populace and grassroots organizations, pitting Jokowi's proponents against those favoring Prabowo. The occurrence of this conflict is solely attributed to divergent political preferences. Similarly, in the gubernatorial election of Sumatera Utara, the concerns that arose were centered around three key themes, namely: religious matters, ethnic

identity politics, and local son issues, as noted by Sarumpaet and Nababan (2014). The most visible issue in the 2018 election for the governor of North Sumatra is related to the politicization of identity, especially related to ethnicity and religion. Candidate pair Edy Rahmayadi and Musa Rajekshah (ERAMAS) learned a lot from what happened in the 2017 Jakarta governor election to gain the sympathy of voters. The image built by ERAMAS is that of an Islamic candidate pair who is close to the clergy and can create prosperity for Muslims in North Sumatra. Starting from the primordial background of his political opponents, ERAMAS plays on the issue by providing a stimulus to the people that they are native sons of the region who grew up and grew up in North Sumatra who deserve to lead rather than opposing partners who are immigrants who do not understand the conditions in Sumatra. North. This was more directed at Djarot than Sihar because Sihar himself is of Batak ethnicity, even though he was born in Jakarta (Chaniago and Sardini 2020).

The aforementioned assertion is reinforced by research findings indicating that the sociological voting behavior model predominantly influenced the 2020 Medan Mayoral Election. This model is characterized by the community's sociological preferences, with religious, ethnic, and gender factors being the primary contributors. Following the General Election and Regional Head Election, many individuals residing in Medan encountered social fragmentation among inter-ethnic communities. The observation of post-2019 election statements reveals that a significant proportion of the population in Medan have severed ties with acquaintances who hold divergent political views.

Based on figure 1, respondents strongly agree that since the 2019 presidential election, they are no longer friends with those who are considered too fanatical in defending a candidate of the same ethnicity, even though they believe the candidate is not worthy of leading. There were 7 respondents (7%) who answered "Strongly Agree", while 37 respondents (37%) answered "Agree". The remaining 49 respondents (49%) answered "Disagree" and 7 respondents (7%) answered "Strongly Disagree". Such a condition is certainly a barrier to integration in society. Based on Horton and Hunt (1992), there are two things that can hinder good and ideal social interaction between ethnic groups, namely social prejudice and social discrimination. The first is a judgment expressed before knowing the facts in full and correctly, while the second is the way people treat others based on individual characteristics. Sears, as quoted by Gerungan (1996), states that social prejudice is related to people's perceptions of others or other groups and their attitudes and behavior towards them. Prejudice against members of a social group turns out to be a type of attitude that is socially very damaging to intergroup relations.

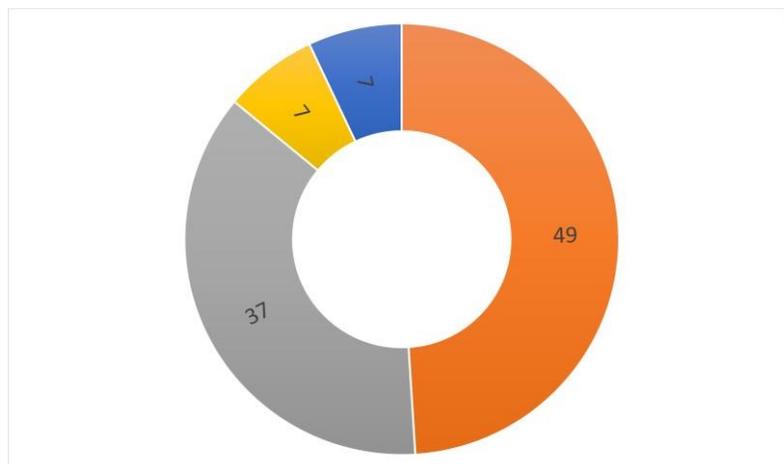


Figure 1 Respondents have no longer relationship with friends with fanatical choice after 2019 election.

Over time, prejudice can turn into stereotypes, which are perceptions of someone's unique culture and characteristics within society based on subjective prejudices that may not necessarily be accurate (Purwanto 2006). Stereotypes can be either positive or negative. Stereotypes that exist in society tend to be negative and can become a cause of social discrimination. In Indonesia, the relationship and interaction between diverse ethnic groups often lead to subjective perceptions about other ethnic groups. Various negative stereotypes eventually lead to prejudice that results in discrimination and even violence against certain social groups. Various social prejudices, discrimination, and violence against specific ethnic groups have been documented (Purwanto 2006). Furthermore, Mastumoto (2003) explained that prejudice has two components: cognitive (thinking) and affective (feeling). Stereotypes form the basis of the cognitive component of prejudice (stereotypic beliefs), assumptions, and attitudes that one holds about others. Meanwhile, the affective component consists of a person's feelings towards people from other groups, which may include anger, disgust, resentment, or contempt. The emotions that have arisen in the community in Medan are anger and resentment towards a particular ethnic group. This can be seen from the results of research statements made to respondents, which include stereotypes or prejudices that someone has against another ethnic group that is considered a troublemaker.

Based on figure 2, respondents strongly believe that different ethnicities and religions outside of their own frequently cause social and political issues in Medan, with 11 respondents (11%), while nearly half of them agreed, with 43 respondents

(43%). The remaining 44 respondents (44%) disagreed, and two (2%) strongly disagreed. In Medan, numerous negative attitudes toward other races continue to haunt every part of its society's life, not only in politics but also in the community's social environment. This circumstance will impact the lack of engagement among different ethnic populations. The pattern of inter-ethnic and inter-religious connections in society determines harmony in community life. If this relationship pattern continues in a bad manner, it might lead to numerous categorizations in society.

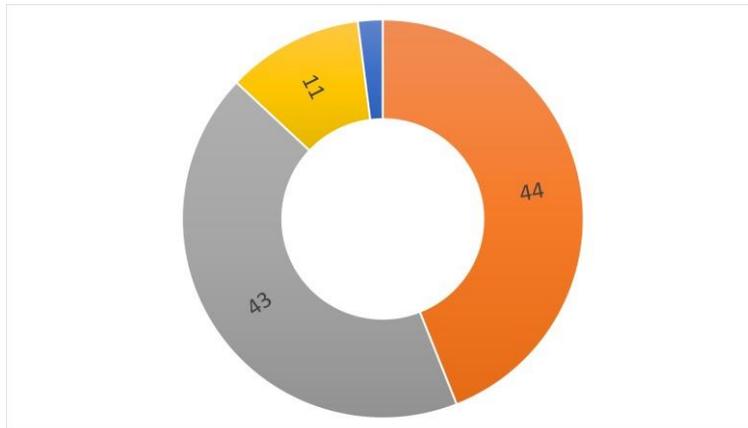


Figure 2 that different ethnicities and religions outside of their own frequently cause social and political issues in Medan.

Social categorization occurs if a group of people is divided based on race or religion (Abrams and Hogg 1990). Medan offers a variety of sociocultural groupings based on ethnic and tribal identity. Of course, this categorization might lead to the establishment of "us" (ingroup) and "them" (outgroup) groups (Tajfel 1982). Hostility arises after the "us" and "them" groups are created, reducing social peace. The most serious consequence of a lack of peace is the occurrence of violence. Based on Kleden (2001), violence has a hidden underlying structure in various cultural areas and Indonesian society's life today, revealing itself in several distinct ways. The formation of various ethnic-based groups, as indicated by the desire to join ethnic and religious groups, is one of the features of strengthening this social classification. Based on quantitative data, most people in Medan still value affiliation with ethnic and religious groupings.

Based on Figure 3, 17 respondents (17%) strongly believe that joining a group of the same ethnic group as them is significant, while the majority, 55 respondents (55%), answered believe. The remaining 25 respondents (25%) disagreed, and 3 (3%) strongly disagreed. Certain ethnic communities' exclusivity permeates all aspects of collective life, including personal life. For example, Lubis (2012) claims in her research that interactions between the Chinese ethnic minority and the native population remain problematic in Medan. In Medan, the exclusive impression and lack of blending between ethnic groups impede exchanges. The impact of diverse social and political events will eventually lead to a reluctance to associate with or form relationships with people of other ethnic groups. Furthermore, research suggests that having neighbors from different ethnic groups causes discomfort in the community.

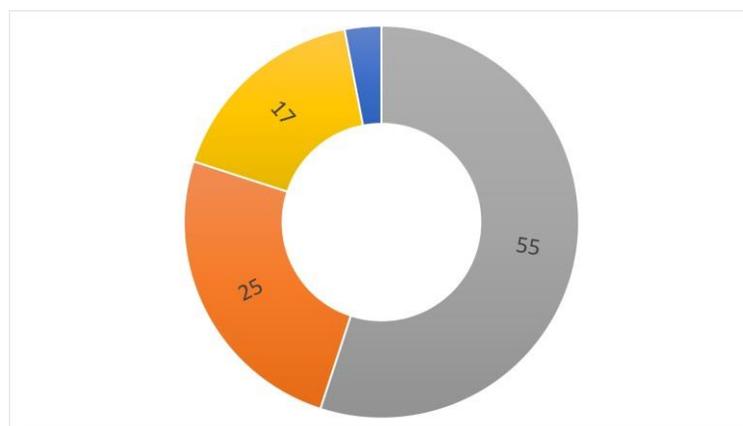


Figure 3 Society's perception related to the importance of social categorization.

Based on Figure 4, 6 respondents (6%) strongly agree that living next to someone of a different ethnicity makes them uncomfortable, while 39 respondents (39%) agree. Most responders, 51 (51%), disagree, with 4 (4%) strongly disagree. The neighborhood can be defined as a minor section or sub-unit of a city or a scale between individual families and the entire city. Warren proposed three categories of neighborhood determined by the social organization of the neighborhood in (Porteous

1977) as follows: 1) Interaction (degree of social exchange), 2) Identity (level of individual affiliation with the neighborhood), and 3) Connections (level of explicit neighborhood association with broader communities). Warrens (Porteous 1977) identified types of neighborhoods that belong to the Anomie Neighborhood category for respondents who agree or strongly agree with this statement, which means the neighborhood is called anomie if there is low interaction, identity, and connections.

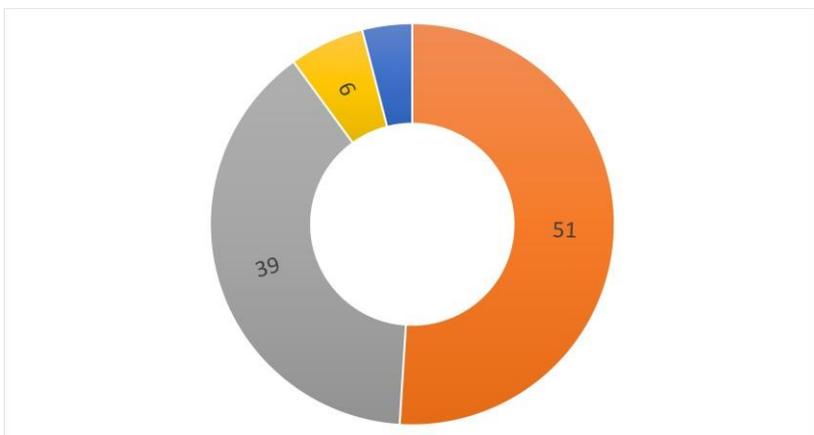


Figure 4 Living next to someone of a different ethnicity makes them uncomfortable.

Based on the SPSS data processing results, the number of respondents who agree and strongly disagree with the statement "living next to people of different ethnicities makes me uncomfortable" is bigger than the number of respondents who agree and strongly agree. However, this figure should alarm us all since it indicates that many individuals are still uncomfortable living with people of different ethnicities. Furthermore, when asked how much a news report affects them when their religion or race is insulted, most respondents say it substantially influences them. This is depicted in Figure 5.

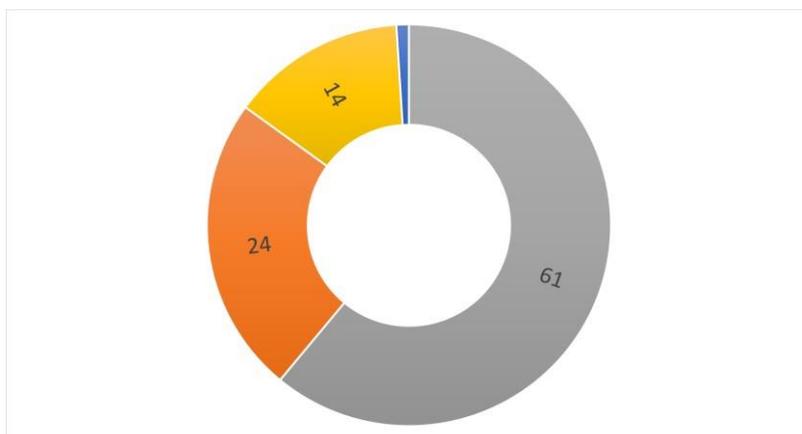


Figure 5 The influence of news on religious or ethnic insults on respondents' reactions.

Based on Figure 5, respondents strongly agree that various news or concerns relating to religious harassment considerably disturb their minds, with 14 respondents (14%) agreeing, while the majority (61%) said Agree. The remaining 24 respondents (24%) chose Disagree, while only 1 (1%) chose Strongly Disagree. Based on the author's findings, news of harassment towards certain religions or races will likely spark the spread of false information. The issue in society is not how to receive news, but rather how to assimilate proper information. Medan residents like obtaining current information through social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. The issue is that alternative information channels, such as Facebook or other social media, are not necessarily accurate sources of information/news, but are utilized as propaganda and provocation by some to overturn political opponents. This is known as a political hoax, which is fake news about politics used as propaganda to influence people based on the content of the news, which is popular in the post-truth period (Lemhanas 2019).

Based on the APJII survey data, Sumatera Utara was the fourth-largest region, accounting for 6.3% of Indonesia's 75.3% internet users, trailing only West Java (16.7%), Central Java (14.3%), and East Java (13.5%) (apjii.or.id). Medan itself is plagued by a variety of challenges, including hoaxing. Based on data from the Special Criminal Directorate's Subdit II/Cyber Crime (Ditreskrimsus), the Sumatera Utara Regional Police handled eight incidents of hate speech and hoaxes between July 2017 and February 2018 (sumutpos.co). As a microcosm of multi-ethnic Indonesia, if hoax news becomes the norm, unity and security will be jeopardized, particularly ahead of the 2024 general election.



3.2. Medan Residents' Political Preferences Prior to the 2024 General Election

The various perspectives and preconceptions that emerge among Medan's ethnic populations will eventually develop political preferences ahead of the 2024 general election. Political preference is an activity based on ideals that a person believes in, creating a political reaction. Changes in voter behavior in choosing their political choices in general elections are frequently related to changes in political preferences. Political preferences will eventually produce certain perceptions of the chosen leader. One example is shown in the Figure 6 below.

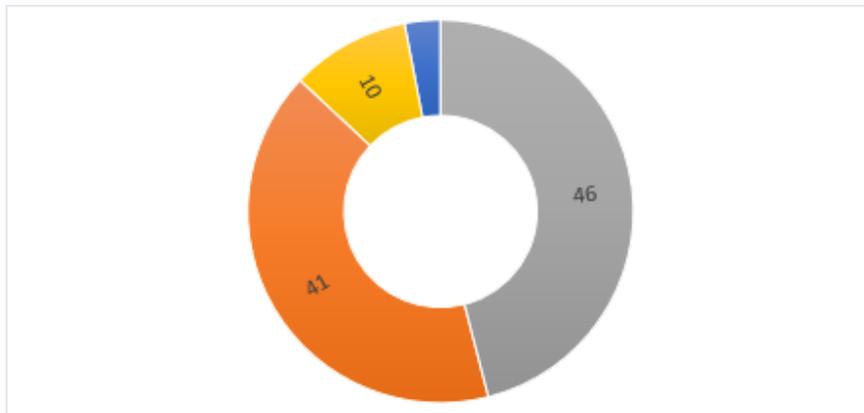


Figure 6 Respondents' believe regarding leader outside their ethnicity will not understand their problem.

Based on Figure 6, respondents highly agree that leaders outside of their ethnicity do not often grasp their ethnicity's challenges, with 10 responding "Strongly Agree" and 46 responding "Agree." The remaining 41 respondents (41%) chose "Disagree," and 3 (3%) chose "Strongly Disagree." Nearly half of the respondents say leaders from other ethnicities do not always understand their ethnicity's challenges. The Batak ethnic group dominates the bulk of ethnic groups present in Medan itself. Of course, the phenomenon of Bobby Nasution's ascent is that, besides being the president's son-in-law, Bobby is also a Bataknese.

Based on Dahl (1999), cultural conflicts can spill over into the political arena, especially when it comes to religion, language, school uniforms, or educational equality; or discriminatory actions taken by one group against another; or whether the government should support religion or religious institutions, and if so, which ones and how; or actions taken by one group that are considered extremely rude and should be prohibited by another group, such as abortion, cow slaughter, or And so forth. Based on Dahl (1999), such challenges provide a unique challenge to democracy. Followers of a particular culture may see their political demands as a matter of principle, strong religious or semi-religious convictions, cultural preservation, or group survival.

Based on Figure 7, respondents strongly agree that they will fight for a candidate leader who shares their religion because they believe that having a leader who does not share their faith will result in unfairness. This is replied by nine people (9%) who strongly disagree, while 43 people (43%) agree. Most responders, 47 (47%), said they disagreed, and only one (1%) said they strongly disagreed. Based on the poll findings, when it comes to preferences in picking a leader based on race or religion, respondents value a leader's religious identity more than ethnic affiliations. In this situation, when applied to the setting of national leader election (presidential election), it can be utilized to demonstrate that voters in Indonesia continue to prioritize religious identity resemblance when selecting a presidential candidate.

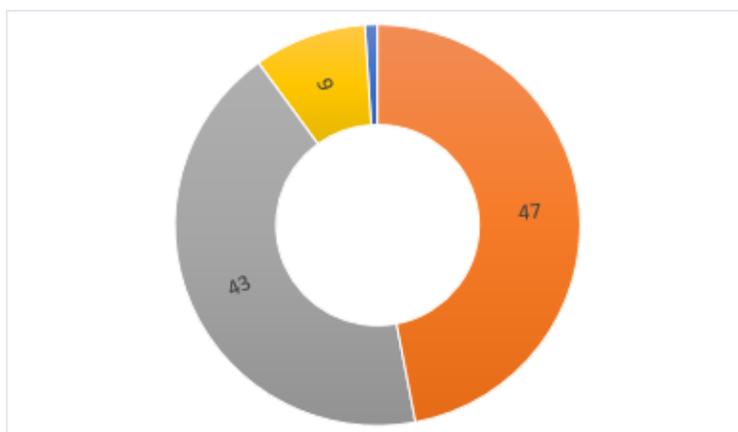


Figure 7 Respondents will struggle for prospective leaders who have the same religious and ethnic background.

4. Conclusion

The political struggles for religious identity, ethnic identity and regional sentiments are typical characters in local political dynamics in Indonesia, and Sumatera Utara is no exception. The political struggles for religious identity, ethnic identity and regional sentiments are typical characters in local political dynamics in Indonesia, and Sumatera Utara is no exception. For the city of Medan, it is common knowledge that in every political contestation, ethnic identity, religion and local issues are often used as vote getter instruments. When viewed from the relationship of social interaction between the ethnic groups in Medan, basically the relationship is running normally. However, it cannot be denied that the level of suspicion among each ethnic group is very high. The effect that arises from this suspicion is that between these ethnicities rely on each other's existing primordial ties as the basis for political movements when dealing with political contestation. Major political events such as simultaneous elections for the President, DPR RI, DPD, Provincial DPRD and Regency/City DPRD in 2024 for Medan must really consider many things that must be known such as how to determine the right issues when viewed at the age level residents in Medan, determine what policy packages are suitable for campaigning in terms of the level of education and economic growth of the population in Medan and determine what campaign themes are appropriate to attract voters in terms of gender. However, some of the things above may not go Based on plan when each of the contesting candidates ignores three main issues, namely the issue of how to package relevant religious issues, how to manage issues of ethnic identity, and regional issues related to accommodation of regional interests.

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Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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