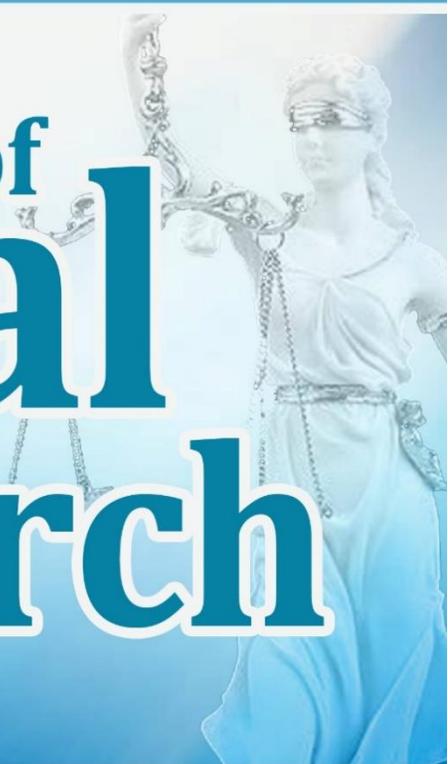




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## Identity Politics' Issue In Indonesia Presidential Election 2019\*

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### Abstract

Presidential Election in 2019 has become the most interesting executive election throughout Indonesia's political history. People likely separated, either Jokowi's or Prabowo's stronghold. Then it can be assumed, when someone, not a Jokowi's stronghold he or she certainly within Prabowo's stronghold. The issue that was brought up in the presidential election campaign, sensitively related to religion, communist ideology, China's employer, and any other issues. On the other side, political identity also enlivened the presidential election's campaign in 2019. The normative Yuridis method was used in this research, which was supported by primary and secondary data sourced from either literature and social phenomenon sources as well. The research analysis concluded that political identity has become a part of the political campaign in Indonesia as well as in other countries. The differences came as an inevitability that should not be avoided but should be faced wisely. Finally, it must be distinguished between political identity with the politicization of identity clearly.

**Keywords:** Identity Politics, 2019 Presidential Election

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## Introduction

Indonesia as the state adopted a democratic system. Thereby, general elections applied as a great state ceremony in voting rights their citizens in the case to realize the representative's government based on democracy political system. The state should not be called a democratic state unless implementing general elections, because general elections functioned as political recruitment and a form of democratization of the political system in essence.<sup>4</sup>

The year 2019 became a historical year in Indonesia because the twelfth general elections were held this year, after eleven previous general elections held in 1955, 1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 1999, 2004, 2009, and 2014. The first general election in 1955 until the eighth general elections in 1999 has only held legislative elections. Begun in 2004 (ninth general elections), general elections held to vote both executive and legislative, it was based on the amendment to the fourth 1945 Constitution in 2002 after the 1998 reformation. Then in 2009 based on Law number 22 of 2007, the regional executive elections were adopted as a part of general elections in Indonesia. Finally, the twelfth general elections in 2019 were held to vote both executive and legislative simultaneously.

It was interesting to have attention toward Hariyadi Hamid's article (2019) about his opinion in mass media, he expresses his view that general elections are an embodiment of a democratic system aimed to gain trustful leaders either for executive or legislative body. A democratic system was chosen because considered it was better than any other political system in constructing a good leader for a good government. Cited from Solihah and Witianti's article (2017) titled "Conflict and Effort to Realize a Democratic General Elections in Indonesia Post-Reformation" (Permasalahan dan Upaya Mewujudkan Pemilu Demokratis di Indonesia Pasca Reformasi)", defined democracy as a government by the peoples, that is a system based on the principle popular sovereignty with two basic values attached to it; both are liberty

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<sup>4</sup>Galuh Kartiko, "*Sistem Pemilu Dalam Perspektif Demokrasi Di Indonesia*", dalam Jurnal Konstitusi, Vol. II No. 1, Juni 2009, p.38.

and equality. According to Solihah and Witianti, freedom (liberty) is responsible for freedom derived within constitutional, law, and norm boundaries. While equality covers the law, economy, social, and political fields. Both principles mostly closer to popular sovereignty as a fundamental foundation in democratic life. However, Solihah and Witianti's final statement quotes that indeed threats toward democratic political systems in Indonesia are real and dangerous in every general election practically.

Hopefully, the implementation of the democratic system balanced with the right political socialization, as an effort to realizes the main purpose of the nation and state. Political socialization should understand the people's political culture because the political culture very close to political socialization within the region. Political culture is often linked with social values and norms toward the political system in every region or state.<sup>5</sup> Political culture giving an impact on the political socialization' process. Education level, social culture, religion, environment, and other factors came as determinant indicators of the political culture in society including Indonesia's peoples.

Globalization has impacted the democratic party in Indonesia in 2019. Unfortunately, hoaxes became one of the trending topics within Indonesia's General Elections in 2019. On the other hand, the issues of religion's politicization and identity's politicization were also widely discussed in the twelfth of Indonesia's general election. As a state with multi-ethnicity, multi-cultural, multi-religion, and multi-languages so-called "Bhinneka" or diversities giving great challenges to Indonesia in implementing recent general election in 2019, significantly in political identity issue. Based on ethnicity, culture, religions, and any other diversities making identity politics a challenge in political socialization and democratic parties in Indonesia. Then, that is the focus of the study in this research. The issue of identity politics is present as a central issue in the 2019 presidential election with all its forms and interpretations.

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<sup>5</sup> Beddy Iriawan, *Sistem Politik Indonesia: Pemahaman Secara Teoretik dan Empirik*, Jakarta: Rajawali Pers: Jakarta, Edisi Kedua Cetakan Kelima: 2017, p.70.

## Research Methodology

Qualitative Research Method was used in this research. Qualitative research is research applied to describes and analyze such phenomena, events, social activities, believes, perceptions, and either individual or social thoughts also. While descriptive analysis approaches were chosen in this research to identifying the issues. This research also implemented both sociological and literature approach besides descriptive analysis approaches. The sociological approach has come as a method of this research of general elections in 2019 which is based on political identity as the main issue.

## Politics Identity In Theoretical Optic

Politics identity is mostly identified by emotional political attitudes rather than rational political attitudes, then it leads some people to argue that political choices based on their political interest ruled out from public benefits. Politics identity raised as States of America's general attention since 1970 when issues of social minority emerged and increased to be religious's issues as well as belief's issues.

Habibi argued (2017) that political identity is a new concept related to political sciences. While (2009) assumed politics identity just another name of bio-politics and the politics of difference. The differences that arise from the body differences is the basic of bio-politics. Differently from the science of philosophy which gave rise to this discourse for a long time, but applied recently in the study of political science and became famous after Vienna's International Summit of the International Political Scientists Association which was held in 1994.<sup>6</sup>

Saputro (2018) cited by Agnes Haller defined politics identity as a concept and political movement focused on differences as a primary

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<sup>6</sup>Symposium ini telah diadakan oleh European Center for Social Welfare Policy dan Dr. Karl Renner Institut, serta disponsori oleh Jewish Museum of Vienna, dan Departement of Scientific Affairs. Hasil Symposium tersebut dibukukan dalam bentuk antologi yang dieditori oleh Agnes Heller dan Sonja Puntscher Riekmann dengan Judul Biopolitics: The Politics Of The Body Race and Nature, (Brook field: Avebury, 1996).

political category. Unlikely, identity politics in Indonesia are still in high demand by political elites to win the political competition. While identity politics according to Jeffrey Week related to the belonging of similarities with some people and what distinguishes one person from another. This argument emphasizing the importance of identity for each individual as well as for a group or community. One of their distinguishing identities is religion.

Jihye Jung and Vikas Mittal in *Retailing Journal* (2019) cited from Grove, Remy, and Zeigler (1974) defined political identity as an individual concept derived from their ideology which is based on their goals and ideals as well as the system and politics must work. Cited from Erikson dan Tedin (2003), Jihye Jung and Vikas Mittal defined identity politics as a broader concept which represents a hatred of beliefs about the desirable and adopted order based on the aims of the people and how they can achieve them.<sup>7</sup>

According to Ma'arif (2012), identity politics are generally more related to ethnicity, religion, ideology, and local interests represented generally by the political elite with their respective articulations. Local territorial reform and governmental power transition making identity politics one of the political tools in gaining political elites' interest. Issues on justice and regional development become like a central issue in their political discourse so that it is more influenced by the ambitions of the local elite to appear as leaders and this is a problem that is not always easy to explain.<sup>8</sup>

Islam has universal standard values, therefore Muslims have their characteristics of civilization and cultural identity that is formed from Islamic values. The Islamic character of *wasathiyah* which is often interpreted as a moderate attitude became one of the cultural identities of Islamic politics<sup>9</sup>. History proves that when Muslims increasingly moved

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<sup>7</sup> Jung, Jihye, and Mittal, Vikas, *Political Identity and The consumer Journey: A Research Review*, *Journal of Retailing* 709, 2019, No.1 of page 19.

<sup>8</sup> Maarif, Ahmad Syafii, 2012. *Politik Identitas dan Masa Depan Pluralisme Kita*, Jakarta: Democracy Project, 2012, pp.55-100.

<sup>9</sup> Abu Ridha, *Karakteristik Politik Islam: Seri Tarbiyah Siyazah*, Bandung: Syamil Cipta Media, Agustus 2004, p.83.

away from Islamic values, Muslims lose their basic character as *'ummatan wasathan'* (moderate people). The character of *wasathiyah* or moderate becomes the political identity of Muslims as moderate people who always avoid extreme things. Islam as a political identity has basic values that underlie Islamic politics, where the basic character of Islamic politics according to Abu Ridha namely;<sup>10</sup> *rabbaniyah* (goodness), *syar'iyah* (legal Islamic), balanced, fair, moderate, natural, egalitarian, freedom, moral, *ukhrawi* oriented, dan serving oriented. Those are as the prophet Muhammad apply toward political development in Medina city-state, by fostering nationalism to shift primordialism then increasing it to Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*).

### Politicization of Identity

One of the threats that can damage the democratic order in Indonesia is related to the practice of identity politics, it was further explained that the politicization of identity is political methods by manipulating understanding and knowledge by using issues of ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-groups for certain political interests. Identity politicization is done as an effort to use, exploit, or manipulate identity, whether the form is based on religion, ethnicity, or adherents of certain ideologies. It aims to cause negative opinions and stigma to the community with the aim of political interests.<sup>11</sup>

Identity politics is described as the political use of humans that prioritizes the interests of a group, that opinions are based on equality of identity which includes race, ethnicity, and gender, or certain religions. Identity politics in that perceptions are often used in the past, for example, Adolf Hitler who convinced the Germans that the source of the economic crisis and the defeat of the world war was due to the influence of the Jews. Hitler and his party won the election in 1932 by using ideal promises to raise Germany at the time, he offered solutions to re-increase the German economy is by eliminating the Jews and that promise was what most German people accepted. Finally, the tragedy has occurred in Germany

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, pp.1-173.

<sup>11</sup> <http://korankaltara.com/melawan-politik-identitas/2019>

when the Nazis came to power, among six million Jews fell victim to the atrocities of politicization of identity and it became one of the worst genocide events recorded in world history.

Relating to the character of the Identity movement, Klaus Von Beyme (1996) analyzes the character of identity movements in several stages of development namely pre-modern and post-modern stages. In the Pre-Modern Stage, there are fundamental divisions in tribal and national groups, which can give rise to a whole social-political movement. In this case, ideological mobilization is usually initiated by leaders, which aims to usurp power from a ruler to a new ruler. While in the Post-Modern Stage, the identity movement emerged with a conditional split approach that needed resources to be mobilized.

Syafi'i Ma'arif argues that identity politics in Indonesia is more directed at religious, ethnic, and political ideology issues. The emergence of separatist movements that led to rebellion, such as the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) rebellion movement, Republic of South Maluku (RMS) rebellion movement, Free Aceh Movement (GAM), Darul Islam (DI) Movement, and Free Papua Movement (GPM) as an example of identity politics in Indonesia which can jeopardize the ideology of a single, diverse nation.<sup>12</sup> Syafi'i Ma'arif and Eric Hariaj have different views on seeing the emergence of identity politics. Syafi'i Ma'arif tends to explain that the emergence of identity politics is caused by the existence of a complete and stable identity as a basis for resistance. In contrast, Eric Hariaj argues that identity politics emerged as an attempt to restore the identity of groups that had experienced a crisis to become stable and integral entities again.<sup>13</sup> While Imam Shamsi Ali believes that the tendency to choose based on identity is basic human nature, with the result that making identity choices as a problem in the selection process

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<sup>12</sup> Syafi'i Ma'arif, *"Politik Identitas dan Masa Depan Pluralisme Indonesia"*, dalam *Politik Identitas Dan Masa Depan Pluralisme Kita*, Jakarta: Paramadina: Pusat Studi Agama dan Demokrasi (PUSAD), Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina, pp.20-21.

<sup>13</sup> Eric Hariaj, *"Pluralisme, Politik Identitas dan Krisis Identitas"*, dalam *Politik Identitas dan Masa Depan Pluralisme Kita*, Jakarta: Paramadina: Pusat Studi Agama dan Demokrasi (PUSAD), Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina, p.55.

is a human failure to understand the essence of difference itself.<sup>14</sup> Because humans can not be separated from differences in race, ethnicity, gender, ethnicity, beliefs, and others.

The role of the leader is no longer dominant when there is a balance of mobilization from the government and participation from the people. This system aimed at the distribution of power in the order of balancing power. In this case, Aristotle saw that politics is an effort undertaken by citizens to realize the common good. Therefore, if it is associated with identity politics, then the basic identity politics is the situation and the way of politics that unites the group because of a sense of injustice and dissatisfaction based on equality of groups such as ethnicity, race, religion, and gender. It can be said that identity politics is not only a matter of sociology but also includes the political sphere. Based on the theory, identity politics can have both good and bad effects which can be likened to a double-edged sword in this diverse country.

Based on various ethnicity, race, religion, and culture, Indonesia is classified as a multicultural country. According to the 2010 Central Statistics Agency (BPS) census data, there are 1211 languages registered in Indonesia, of which 1158 are regional languages. From the same source, it identified 1340 tribes in Indonesia, where the Javanese occupies the first position in terms of the number that reaches 41% of the total population of the Indonesian population. Saputro's research results (2018) states that Indonesia as a democratic country has held at least eleven general elections (elections) regularly, began in the year 1955 then pursued in the year 1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 in the context of selecting presidential and vice-presidential candidates (Presidential elections). In the history of elections from Post-Independence until before the 2019 Presidential Election, Indonesia has been led by 7 Presidents with several different models of appointment and election.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Imam Shamsi Ali, "*Politik Identitas, Mengkhawatirkankah?*", Kolom: [Republika.co.id](https://republika.co.id), Rabu 25 April 2018, 08.00 WIB. Diakses dari <https://republika.co.id/berita/p7p5eb396/politik-identitas-mengkhawatirkankah>

<sup>15</sup> Agus Saputro, *Agama dan Negara: Politik Identitas Menuju Pilpres 2019*. Jurnal Asketik, Vol. 2 No. 2 Desember 2018, pp.111-120.

## Politics Identity's Issue In Presidential Elections 2019

Regarding identity politics related to the 2019 election, the political life of the Indonesian people is alarming, due to the stigma of the majority and minority. This primordial sentiment is not something new. Long before identity politics emerged in the United States, the establishment of the Abbasid Empire in the middle of the 7th century was also loaded with identity politics. Propaganda on behalf of the Arabs and the Quraysh became one of Abu Abbas's strategies in gathering the power of the people in defeating the Umayyad Empire. Besides, coupled with the political sentiments of the Shi'ites in Khurasan, Abu Abbas's strength at the time was toppling the Umayyad Empire's power.<sup>16</sup>

The United States as a country that has a long experience in democracy has also experienced the same thing related to political identity. Eep Saefulloh Fatah who had been an Anis-Sandi political consultant at the Jakarta Governor Election in 2017, explains the dynamics of the 2017 DKI regional head election commotion, he argues that the 1960 United States presidential election contestation that confronted John F. Kennedy with Richard Nixon was an example of contestation that made use of religious and majority versus minority sentiments, as was the case in the Jakarta gubernatorial election in 2017. However, Eep Saefulloh's statement was refuted by Airlangga Pribadi Kusman's - CEO of The Politics Department's Institute of Political Teaching Institute initiative – which quoting the opinion of Shaun A Kasey, (2009) in *The Making of Catholics President in the case of Kennedy vs Nixon*, that the form of political moderation over the struggle between Kennedy and Nixon took place within the framework of the issue of secularization, namely the separation of religion and politics. Kennedy's intelligence also contributing to suppressing the issue and his expertise in showing his loyalty to the principles of religious secularization which became a fundamental tradition of state life in the United States. Finally, Kennedy was also successful in gaining support from 'black' protestants who were

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<sup>16</sup>Muhammad Sohail Bhatti, *Political and Cultural History of Islam*, Lahore, Pakistan: Bhatti Sons Publisher, 2004-2005, pp.511-515.

simultaneously fighting for civil rights to be equal to 'white' citizens (Casey, 2009; Carty, 2004). Kusman explained that the analysis of Eep Sefulloh Fatah was not correct in explaining identity politics through religious sentiments in the 2017 Jakarta Election Election. Certainly different in the case of America which he considered even more mature in responding to the case of identity politics at that time. Identity Politics that took place at the 2019 Presidential Election, precisely indicate that there is no maturity of the community in politics so that it can potentially divide the community

That is a picture related to the phenomenon of identity politics in Indonesia in the 2019 elections, meaning that politics can unite but can also divide the nation. The condition of the essential value of politics that has begun to be abandoned and the pragmatism in politics that has begun to increase is a picture of the political world that is always in line with the public.<sup>17</sup>

The results of the University of Indonesia (UI) Political Study Center Research related to the 2019 General Election found that there were some polarizations applied in the elections in Indonesia. Among the contexts that occur in society is:

First; contestation during the 2019 Presidential Election is a residue of the sharp political polarization and the politicization of identity issues that occurred during the 2014 presidential election in the 2017 Jakarta governor election. Then it can be said that there are dynamics of contestation and polarization that are treated from politics in Indonesia.

*Second:* the existence of an electoral design that establishes a Presidential Threshold also increases the intensity of political polarization.

*Third:* the phenomenon of the political consulting industry, influencers, and buzzers in the candidate couple digital campaign determines an important role in determining the production of issues and the amplification of campaign content on digital platforms. Their roles

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<sup>17</sup><https://tirto.id/membaca-pilgub-jakarta-dari-pengalaman-pilpres-amerika-coa16>  
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contributed to exacerbating political polarization and politicization of identity issues. This can explain that each non-pragmatic issues continue to be produced by the cyber Army of each candidate pair supporters.

*Fourth:* On the one hand, concurrent election events can have an impact on efficiency and optimization on various sides. But on the other hand, the 2019 general election which was held simultaneously caused more dominant Presidential Election issues compared to legislative election events, even the People's Representative Council (DPR), Regional Representative Council (DPD), and Provincial, Regency, and City Regional People's Representatives Council (DPRD).

Fifth; the tendency of the media as a source of public information has a preference for non-programmatic issues in its reporting.<sup>18</sup> The mass media seemed to compete to preach political issues that arise in the community, but the tendency to only display or display order issues from certain candidates also often occurs.

The use of racial and religious sentiments still has the potential to expand hatred in society, not only in Jakarta as a metropolitan city but in other places that are potentially more durable than the political process itself. As in Gayo, for example, Saradi Wantona et al explained based on the results of his research on local elections in Gayo, that the identity politics of Uken and Toa were still carried out as one of the political campaign tools for the benefit of politicians, both executive and legislative.<sup>19</sup>

The second round of the 2017 Jakarta regional election was also highlighted by several researchers. Juhana Nasruddin and Ahmad Ali Nurdin concluded that the political orientation of identity and political, economic, ethnic, and religious politics strengthened during the 2017 elections in DKI Jakarta held.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, many parties expressed their

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<sup>18</sup> Puskapol UI Center For Political Studies, Press Release 6 Maret 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Saradi Wantona, Rilus A. Kinseng, dan Sofyan Sjaif, "*Praktik Politik Identitas Dalam Dinamika Politik Lokal Masyarakat Gayo*", dalam *Jurnal Sodality: Jurnal Sosiologi Pedesaan*, Vol. 6 No. 1, April 2018, p.86.

<sup>20</sup> Juhana Nasruddin dan Ahmad Ali Nurdin, "*Politik Identitas dan Representasi Politik (Studi Kasus Pada PILKADA DKI Periode 2018-2022)*", dalam *Jurnal Hanifiya: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, Volume 1 Nomor 1, Tahun 2018, pp.45-46.

concern over the potential for outrage in hatred in the 2019 presidential election as an effect of the 2017 Jakarta Election and considered it to be an excessive form of anxiety.

In the political contestation of power struggles and sources of prosperity, in addition to the contestation that smells of religion, the contestation smells of gender, ethnicity, and race often occur. In the political contestation of power struggles and sources of prosperity, in addition to the contestation triggered by religion, contestation has been driven by gender, ethnicity, and race often occurs. Even more fierce fighting when sentiment between groups provoked by the argument of the majority and minority. But in the modern political state, it should be able to moderate all of these cultural attributes so as not to worsen the common living space. In the modern political order, the main task that must be addressed is to discipline all racial, religious, ethnic, and gender sentiments so that all citizens receive equal protection and rights as other citizens. Therefore, a democratic system is not only expected to regulate the rotation of the government periodically through elections but more than that, namely to be a guarantor in the equality of rights and laws. Based on the management of political contestation that often uses cultural identity and disciplined living together, can lead the people towards dynamics in the life of the modern state.

In addition to religious sentiment, black campaigns are also widely used in the 2019 Presidential Election. The black campaign is an attempt to spread slander or hoax information to assassinate a candidate's character. the black campaign will effectively change the electoral map in areas where the community has not yet chosen by the 2019 elections.

According to Politics observer from Padjajajaran University Bandung Idil Akbar (2019) to CNN Indonesia that based on context can influence people's voting behavior, of course, it will be more effective if it is done on a basis of the uncertainty of choice or people who are undecided or swing voters when compared to voters who have confirmed the choice.<sup>21</sup> He further stated that the steps of the black campaign carried out by mothers in Karawang by attacking the Jokowi-Maruf Amin pair

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/Senin 25-02-2019>.

just before the 2019 Presidential Election had the potential to influence the electoral map in the city. Reflecting on the results of a survey of some institutions, Idil said that Karawang was rated as a region that gave Jokowi-Ma'ruf Amin victory. He also stated that the black campaign could be said to be successful when the issue had entered into the community discussion spaces. According to him, it all depends on the quality of the issue and intensively entering the public discussion sphere. If so, it will be quite vulnerable and action must be taken immediately.

Democracy party can be used as a place for learning and experience for the people, but it can also be used as a vehicle for political learning in Indonesia. with a series of democratic parties since the process of registering candidates, political campaigns, presentation of vision and mission, candidate work programs to candidate debates, people learn to think mature and think. Voting should produce citizens who are smart in politics, because the people can directly assess and supervise the government process, as a result of the democratic party, and is a tool in the efforts to prosper society

## **Conclusion**

General Elections as a means of democratizing political systems and governance face various challenges in the global era. Political campaigns and political outreach are colored by various issues that develop during the general election process, one of them is the issue of identity politics in the 2019 election. As a politically conscious society, it is expected to be able to distinguish between identity politics and identity politicization, to avoid the appearance of polemic or political upheaval in the community. Identity politics is human nature as a social creature that was born with all the differences, both race, ethnicity, ethnicity, and even religion. While identity politicization leads to misuse of identity in achieving political goals and interests, While identity politicization leads to misuse of identity in achieving political goals and interests, both individually or in political groups. Identity politics is a reality that should be widely accepted in viewing differences in a plural society. What needs to be awarded is the effort to politicize identity which can lead to conflict

and feud. Pancasila as the ideology of the Indonesian nation becomes an ideal solution in viewing the issue of identity politics in the community with the slogan "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in diversity). Therefore, the Indonesian people should be able to appreciate any differences that have historically been born and are inherent in people's lives, especially in the face of general elections political events.

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