Political Communications Model for Women in Indonesia in Winning Regional Elections Against the Domination of Male Leadership

Puji Santoso

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatra Utara, Medan City, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: pujisantoso@umsu.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research examines strategies and models of women's political communication in East Java, focusing on the case of Khofifah Indar Parawansa, a prominent figure from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Despite losing two consecutive gubernatorial elections, she successfully secured victory in 2018. Using a qualitative approach grounded in a constructivist paradigm, this study analyzes primary data collected through field research, website reviews, and in-depth interviews with relevant informants. The findings highlight the critical role of NU's charismatic clerics (Kyai) in mobilizing support for Khofifah's campaign. This study underscores the importance of political education for Indonesian women, emphasizing effective communication with religious leaders to navigate male-dominated governance at both local and national levels.

Keywords: Communication Politics; Election governors; Kyai Nahdlatul Ulama, Khofifah; Indonesia

1.   INTRODUCTION

The introduction contextualizes the issue well, linking gender gaps in Indonesian politics to broader societal and cultural dynamics. However, A stronger link between the research question and the literature review could enhance coherence.

This stark reality underscores the urgent need for policies that champion gender equality, ensuring that Indonesian women can unlock their full potential. The quest for women to carve out a space in the political arena has been a long and arduous journey. Women's political narratives are not fixed and unmoving structures; rather, it is a dynamic, ever-evolving story. This trajectory has seen a gradual rise, especially following the impactful actions of radical feminists who have worked to dismantle the veiled political landscape created by men. Best known for their rallying cry, "The personal is political" (Oxford Reading in Feminism, Feminism, The Public and The Private), radical feminists have shifted the discourse. This political narrative has gone beyond the basic rights of voting and candidacy, evolving into deeper issues surrounding a hidden political reality: the systemic oppression of women in the private domain, which ultimately hinders their ability to engage and influence the public sphere (Widiyaningrum, 2020).

Politicians are often portrayed as distant individuals. Or considered elitist and socially distant. Traditional media typically capture politicians in situations that are often unique, rumored, and sometimes controversial. As such, it does not gain insight into how politicians become day-to-day workers and may have the same work habits as society. Thus, social media or other mass media allow politicians to bridge these gaps by showing the public that politics is an everyday occupation and that what politicians do is perceived to be relevant to social needs. Political stories

are often told through a live image of the politician's public image campaign. (Mohamed, 2019; Santoso, 2021)

Building a civil society means striving to create a public space that includes all citizens, men, and women, without exception. So far, in our political system, these policies only apply to discriminating against women as other people. (Mudrika and Yusri, 2019) The lack of women's participation in political institutions has led to the fact that the interests of various women are not adequately considered in some political decisions, which are often negative. Masculine and less gender-influenced, while most political decisions always target women. (Diana, M.Si, 2012)

One of the hallmarks of the success of the women's movement is the high political attention and participation of women themselves. (Allen et al., 2019; Ross, 2016) Gender gaps in public and political life remain a major concern. Challenges continue to be faced today as the extent of women's participation in every public and political activity remains unresolved. (Haugsgjerd et al. 2021). On a broader scale, the issue is also about women's leadership. It must be recognized that throughout civilization, the realm of politics and leadership is a public, and often a human, realm. Although there have been female leaders in the history of world civilization, they are also numerous. (Witriani & Kusuma, 2019)

Since the first Women's Congress in Yogyakarta in 1928, women's political awareness based on Indonesian history has grown. In the 1955 elections, women also had the right to participate and exercise their political rights. vote and be elected. (Susanto, 2013) Equal recognition of the rights of men and women has been firmly recognized in Indonesia's national and national life. This recognition is established through various legal instruments and ratification of various conventions guaranteeing women's political rights. (Mukarom, 2008)

The presence of women as district leaders is one of the strategies for establishing more gender-equitable policies. Female district leaders gain votes from voters in a variety of ways. Despite their similarities, the communication modes used are varied. (El Adawiyah et al., 2019) The lack of female leadership in state formation in some parts of the world from ancient times to the present is an interesting question to examine. (Freelon & Wells, 2020; Perloff, 2017) Is this because of the unpopularity of female leaders or because of the political influence of identity and sexuality (gender)? This may be due to women's lack of political communication skills when they hold top government positions. (Masruri et al., 2019)

There are already many governors and mayors at the prefecture/city level, but the percentage is still very low compared to the number of male leaders. (Masruri et al., 2019) As a state with the principles of democracy, Indonesian people reflect their democratic position through general elections. In the general election, the public is represented through its representatives, or the parties of the early elections of 1955, or through the representatives of the People's Assembly, the parliamentary elections known as parliamentary elections, or the presidential elections or PilPres that began in 2004. Direct elections are held by one of the president's direct elections known as. (Famelasari & Prastiwi, 2021)

171 General Elections Indonesia was held simultaneously by the General Election Commission (KPU) in 2018, detailing 17 districts, 115 districts, and 39 cities. Being a leader not only in Indonesia's Governor but also in state and local governments can be very costly. These charges are known in Indonesia as "political costs" or "dowry". Indonesia's national television news station tvOne has admitted that La Nyala Matateli, a candidate for Governor of East Java, has been asked for up to Rs. 40 billion to get support from the Gerrinda party. I raised it. La Nyala's confession, which once shocked the public with an impressive nominal dowry, is accompanied by the confession of several other presidential candidates in the region.

The Democratic Party of Partai Golkar has been jointly nominated by East Java Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa and his deputy Emil Elestianto Dardak. As is well known, in the People's Republic of the Congo in East Java, the Golkar Party has 11 seats, and the Democratic Party has 13 seats. Of course, with so many seats, these two parties have made very important political achievements in nominating the candidates they carry. (Wahyudi, 2018)

This research has the potential to develop a relevant political communication model for women, which can be used as a reference for future female leaders, as well as in political campaigns. Social and Political Impact: By highlighting the success of women in regional elections, this research can provide inspiration for other women to become involved in politics, as well as provide a strong argument for policies that support women's participation.

In Indonesia, the role and lack of representation of women in politics have become a major issue. According to data from the General Election Commission (KPU), 1,145 candidates were registered for the 2018 simultaneous elections of the regional presidents. However, the number of female candidates is only 101, which is very small, accounting for only 0.9% of all registered candidates. (Komisi Pemilihan Umum Pusat, 2020) Therefore, in the 2017 district mayor's simultaneous elections, there were only 46 female candidates out of a total of 662 candidates. This percentage is 14% higher than the 2018 simultaneous local elections. The phenomenon of few female political representatives is seen not only in governments but also in parliament. (Putra, 2019)

The growing exclusion of women from politics is a sad phenomenon, as it is considered a violation of the rule of law. The direction of local democracy. The presence of women as regional headquarters is one of the strategies for creating more gender-equal politics (Sazzali and Best, 2020). Women's efforts to demonstrate political leadership in the region are not easy. Many factors influence women in achieving community leadership. (El Adawiyah et al., 2019)

Khofifah's persistence in seizing the East Java seat is interesting to observe. In addition to her tireless and relentless efforts to participate in the fight three times, the purpose of this study is to find out Khofifah's political communication model in winning the East Java gubernatorial election contestation, where the government in East Java has been dominated by men.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Political communication is communication that involves political messages and political actors or something related to power, government, and government policies. (Freelon & Wells, 2020; Neumann, 2002; Perloff, 2017) In simpler terms, political communication is translated as communication between "ruling" and "ruled". (Pureklolon, 2016, p. 95) However, it is interpreted that communication in the message process can be understood as a study of political communication in the development of communication to various developing situations. (Bracciale & Martella, 2017)

In the theory of political communication, Swanson and Nimmo said, namely "Who; Says What; In Which Channel; To Whom; With What Effects; as a way that is considered appropriate to describe the act of political communication a note that modified the formula from linear to circulation (to whom to with whom). According to Nimmo, the view of political communication includes several aspects that need to be considered in both a practical and theoretical setting and its study. The aspects of political communication, among others, are: (1) political institutions with their communication aspects; (2) media institutions with aspects of political communication; (3) audience orientation towards political communication; (4) aspects of communication that are relevant to political culture; (5) political communicators who carry political messages to

audiences as communicants, and (6) views of political audiences as recipients of messages in society (Swanson & Nimmo, 1990, p. 120)

Nina W. Syam (2002) defines political communication as not enough just to combine two definitions, "communication" and "politics". It has its own concept, although it is simply a combination of the two concepts. Communication and politics in the discourse of human science are two areas of search, each of which can be said to be relatively independent. However, both of them have something in common because they have the same material object, namely humans. (Syam, 2002, p. 10)

According to Bungin (2018), communication is the most important part of all social systems in human society. This includes the political system. In political communication, social facts are always associated with the events and times in which the social facts occur. Momentum is a social construction that occurs through engineering as a reality that is constructed to create an imagined condition to give a certain impression to the audience or political opponents. Of the two, the most important is a description of the socio-political reality that is meaningful and can be conveyed to the public. The problem then becomes wider because the descriptive text, when it goes through the publicity process, becomes detached from its context. (Bungin, 2018, pp. 174–175) According to Littlejohn, political communication always emphasizes that we always influence the perception of others, whether we want it or not. do not want. (Littlejohn & A. Foss, 2014, p. 101)

According to Subiakto and Ida (2014), political communication as a field of study originally came from several studies such as rhetoric studies, propaganda analysis, studies on attitude change, studies on public opinion, studies on voter behavior, as well as studies on government relations with the media, and campaign engineering studies. The study of political communication becomes a scientific study, as well as can be applied to practical studies related to strategies to influence opinion to voting behavior. (Sikumbang et al., 2021) As a relatively new study, political communication borrows a lot from other disciplines, both theory, and methodology. As an example, anthropology and sociology are used to understand linguistics and symbolism in politics, including semiotic and discourse studies, to cultural studies. (Rawnsley & Gong, 2016)

Likewise, psychology and social psychology are used to understand aspects of communication in individuals, such as changes in attitudes, the effects of political messages through the media, and political sociology. Political science is used to understand political systems and their implications for communication systems. (Adhani et al., 2022) One of the most important topics in political communication is persuasive communication. Because at the core of political communication is persuasion. Namely, human efforts to influence other people to conform to what is political will. (Subiakto & Ida, 2014, p. 6)

According to Hendry and Ida (2014), the notion of political communication is largely determined by the purpose of delivering a political message, namely, to make the recipient of the message behave in a certain way. Experts and scholars provide boundaries regarding political communication as a communication activity that has political consequences or consequences on the functioning of the political system. (Subiakto & Ida, 2014, p. 20)

According to Brian McNair (2016), the study of political communication leads us to the relationship of three elements in the process of realizing and understanding political action. The three elements are political organizations, political parties, and public organizations. (McNair, 2016, p. 5) The effect of political communication on behavior and attitudes is to consider its impact on the democratic process itself. There is something qualitatively different about a political system in which the main means of communication is the mass media. (Freelon & Wells, 2020)

Politicians will be more sensitive to public opinion conveyed through the mass media, as measured in opinion polls. Politicians inevitably turn into captives of public opinion. The government and those who want to be in power allow these principles to be undermined by market researchers (survey institutions). Ideology and value systems are left at the altar of popularity. (Ayish, 2002, p. 14; Hayes, 2012, p. 133; Scheufele, 2014; Schlesinger, 1999) And political persuasion (self-image) activities are a cynical response to any poll results conducted by survey institutions. Not only policies but leaders are also elected and removed based on public opinion, although that is regardless of their intellectual quality. The image of the leader or potential leader is said to be far more important than his abilities. (McNair, 2016, pp. 52–53)

Clever use of the media must also be taken into account by political actors in carrying out their communication. According to McNair (2016), political actors must use the media to convey their messages to the audiences they want. Political programs, political statements, appeals to vote, pressure group campaigns, and acts of terrorism all have a political existence (and potential for effective communication) only at the level where they are reported and accepted as messages by the media audience. Therefore, all political communicators must gain access to the media by any means, be it legislative, as in the rules of political balance and impartiality. (McNair, 2016, p. 15)

According to Cangara (2011), discussing political communication is not as easy as talking about political movements. The difficulty arises because two concepts carry this discipline, namely the concept of 'communication' and the concept of 'politics'. It is a battle area and is enlivened by competing theories, approaches, agendas, and concepts in building their identity (image). Because of that, communication that talks about politics are sometimes claimed to be a study of aspects of election campaigns (election campaign). Because it includes persuasion of voters, debates between candidates, and the use of mass media as a campaign tool. (Neumann, 2002, p. 12)

According to Nyarwi Ahmad (2012), the popularity of the study of political communication cannot be separated from the emergence of analysts, experts and consultants engaged in political communication in the arena of general elections and regional head elections. In addition, the space for print media and broadcast media has increased in discussing and providing the latest developments in the field of political communication. (Ahmad, 2012, p. 11)

3.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used by this researcher is using qualitative analysis with a constructivist paradigm that relies on data collection through focus group discussions and analysis in a series of studies. The main premise is the use of a qualitative approach to provide an understanding of the research problem. According to Bungin (2014), qualitative analysis is rooted in a phenomenological approach. The reason is that phenomenology is considered more relevant to be used to unravel the problems of human subjects which are generally always changing, have individual subjectivity, have emotional tendencies that tend to be unstable, and so on. Thus, qualitative analyzes tend to use an inductive logic approach. Where the syllogism is built based on specific things or field data and leads to general or inductive conclusions. (Bungin, 2014, p. 147) Meanwhile, according to Creswell, the purpose of qualitative research is generally to include information about the main phenomena explored in research, research participation, and research locations. The purpose of qualitative research can also state the research designs selected. This objective is written in "technical" research terms that are derived from the language of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014, p. 167).

To get more comprehensive results, we combined several analysis methods. Namely, data from in-depth interviews with key informants such as Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Nahdlatul Ulama figures in East Java, and political observers in universities, then combined with the results of content analysis to get a deeper understanding of how political messages are delivered and received by the public.

According to Moleong (2011), the approach taken is qualitative. This means that the data collected is not in the form of numbers, but the data comes from interview scripts, field notes, personal documents, notes, memos, and other official documents. So that the purpose of this qualitative research is to describe the empirical reality behind the phenomenon in-depth, in detail, and thoroughly. Therefore, the use of a qualitative approach in this study is to match the empirical reality with the applicable theory by using a descriptive method. (Moleong, 2011) Qualitative analysis strategies are generally not used as a means of finding data in terms of frequency but are used to analyze ongoing social processes and give meaning to the facts that appear on the surface. Thus, qualitative analysis is used to understand processes and facts, and not just to explain these facts. (Bungin, 2014, p. 148)

The data were collected either through observation, in-depth interviews, and documents. Then the data are classified into certain categories. This classification or categorization considers validity (validity), taking into account the competence of the research subject. Furthermore, triangulation, namely interviewing relevant informants selected by researchers. According to Kriyantono (2014), this meaning is the basic principle of qualitative research. Namely that reality already exists in the human mind. And the reality is the result of human construction. In carrying out the meaning or interpretation, researchers are required to theorize to explain and argue. Theorizing is considered important to help researchers defend their arguments (blocking interpretation). (Kriyantono, 2014, p. 196–198) The data of this study consisted of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected from informants, while secondary data was obtained through a document study. Determination of informants as primary data sources are determined purposively (chosen deliberately), based on the objectives and problems that the researcher wants to study. (Iskandar, 2009, p. 11)

The validity of this research data uses data triangulation, namely using various data collection methods (interviews, observations, and documents) to ensure that the findings are consistent and reliable. Member check: involves participants in verifying research results, so they can provide feedback on the accuracy of data interpretation. Data reliability is by conducting an audit trail, namely recording all analysis steps and decisions taken during the research, so that other people can trace and understand the process carried out.

4.   ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Only two pairs of candidates will compete for the leadership seat of the Governor of East Java. They are Khofifah Indar Parawansa and her partner Emil Dardak, respectively, and her opponent is Syaifullah Yusuf and his partner Puti Guntur Soekarno Putri. In the 2018 East Java Regional Election, the East Java KPU announced the number of votes obtained by each contestant. The number of votes obtained by the pair Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Emil Dardak was 10,465,218 votes or about 53.55 percent. Meanwhile, Syaifullah Yusuf received 9,076,014 votes or 46.45 percent.

The pair Khofifah and Emil controlled the votes in almost all districts and cities in East Java, including Sampang (Madura), Bangkalan (Madura), Sumenep (Madura), Pacitan, Trenggalek, Tulungagung, Ponorogo, Ngawi, Bojonegoro, Tuban, Lamongan, Nganjuk, Jombang, Mojokerto, Sidoarjo, Gersik, Surabaya City, Probolinggo, Lumajang, Jember, Bondowoso, and Banyuwangi. Meanwhile, the pair Syaifullah and Puti Guntur only managed to win votes in nine regencies/cities, namely Madiun, Kediri, Blitar, Batu City, Malang, Malang City, Pasuruan, Situbondo, and Bangkalan (Madura). The East Java KPUD also announced the results of the recapitulation of votes from many regional head elections, including the East Java Pilkada. Based on East Java KPUD data, for the East Java Regional Head Election: The number of voters: 30,155,719 voters Number of valid ballots: was 19,541,232 votes, while the number of invalid ballots: was 782,027 votes.(Komisi Pemilihan Umum Pusat, 2020)

Figure 1. The results of the vote for Mrs. Khofifah against Mr. Syaifullah Yusuf in 2018 East Java gubernatorial election.

(**Source**: 2018 General Election Commission website.(Komisi Pemilihan Umum Pusat, 2020)

In the plenary meeting of the determination of the East Java KPU, it was confirmed that the National Awakening Party (PKB) was the winning political party in the 2014 Pileg in East Java, with 20 seats, followed by PDI-P with 19 seats and Gerindra and Democrats, each with 13 seats, followed by the Golkar Party with 11 seats. The sixth place was the National Mandate Party (PAN) with 7 seats, while the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) got 6 seats, the United Development Party (PPP) got 5 seats, Nasdem got 4 seats, and Hanura with only 2 seats.

Number	Party Name	Number of Representatives in Parliament
1	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa	20
2	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan	19
3	Partai Demokrat	13
4	Partai Gerindra	13
5	Partai Golkar	11
6	Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN)	7
7	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)	6
8	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)	5
9	Partai Nasional Demokrat (NasDem)	4
10	Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat (Hanura)	2

Table 1 Number of Political Party Seats in East Java DPRD 2018

*(**Source**: Processed from research results 2024)

5.   DISCUSSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTION

The political communication process carried out by Khofifah's informants to win the seat of Governor of East Java for the 2018-2023 period is quite tough. The difficulty of the political communication process was due to the tug of war to get the support of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Kiai who was considered quite influential in the people of East Java. The problem is that the two contestants or candidates who will compete for leadership seats in East Java are both NU's best cadres, namely Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Syaifullah Yusuf. For Khofifah herself, this 2018 regional election is the third election she has participated in, after the two East Java regional elections, Khofifah lost and failed to become the Governor of East Java. Khofifah lost twice in a row against the same pair, Soekarwo, and Syaifullah Yusuf. Khofifah's failure twice in a row did not stop her from taking part in the 2018 Regional Head Election for the third time. For Khofifah's informant, there is no term to stop fighting in the East Java Pilkada as long as she feels sure that she is trying as much as possible. The motivation Gus Dur (the late KH Abdurrahman Wahid) became the capital of Khofifah's informant for the third time participating in the 2018 East Java Pilkada contestation

> *"The final decision is in the 'hand' of Allah. I remember Gus Dur's words (former General Chairman of PB NU, the late KH Abdurrahman Wahid) that fighting does require sacrifice, and every sacrifice has great rewards. Gus Dur always reminded him that. So the task of man is endeavor, struggle and the decision is in the hands of Allah. Yes, if we see it like that, if we have tried our best, God will determine what is best for us." (Informant Khofifah Indar Parawansa)*

From the beginning, the informant Khofifah realized that there were parties who did not approve of her participating in the East Java Pilkada contestation since the period she first participated. However, the request of the NU clerics who are considered charismatic and influential in East Java, is what causes him to keep trying to win the contest. Apart from Gus Dur or the late KH Abdurrahman Wahid, there were at least 16 NU Kyai who requested and encouraged him to become one of the contestants for the 2018 East Java Pilkada.

> *"I have been a member of the DPR RI four times. Suddenly in 2008, Kyai Hasyim Muzadi (late) and Kyai Wahid As'ad Syamsul Arifin called me. "Khofifah, please 'run' for governor of East Java?" And I answered: "Why should I? But if I have accepted the assignment, I have to go all out. Likewise for the second period, and the same for the third period. Then I said: "Kyai if I 'run' (then) I have to resign from the post of social minister. I said if I don't back down how can I control the court? It's a long process. But in the end, I said yes, if this is what Kyai-Kyais think is a field of service that is mandated by me, then I will make an effort. And let's make an effort 'together' (together with NU Kyai)." (Informant Khofifah Indar Parawansa)*

The total loyalty of Khofifah's informants to the *old* NU Kyai made the Kyai have deep sympathy for Khofifah. This attitude of glorifying the NU Kyai by Khofifah's informant seemed to force him to keep moving forward even if he took a step, even though he lost twice and felt cheated in the two previous East Java Pilkada periods. Her determination and enthusiasm to 'fight' with male regional head candidates further showed that Khofifah's informant was a female figure who did not give up easily and was easily defeated by any strong man.

Informant KH Salahuddin Wahid (Gus Solah) admired Khofifah's persistence and patience in seizing political leadership in East Java Province, after years of being dominated by male figures. Among NU's senior ulema and Kyai, the name Khofifah is the main capital to gain the support and voice of the member of Nahdlatul Ulama organization or *Nahdliyin* in East Java. In the 1997 NU ulema deliberation, NU was no longer a problem if there were women who were able to appear in the arena of national and local leadership.

> *"First of all, I find it strange that nowadays there are still people who forbid it (women's leadership). The 1997 NU Ulama National Conference allowed female leaders. And that's not a problem anymore. It's the people who don't allow it that's weird. In today's context, there is no need to question why we allow women to lead in Indonesia, starting with the village head, then the sub-district head, regent or mayor, governor, minister, president, and vice president. So there's no problem." (Informant KH Solahuddin Wahid, senior NU figure)*

With various valid arguments and references, the decision of the NU ulema's congress essentially allowed women to become leaders. Based on the results of the 1997 NU Ulama National Conference, encouraged NU clerics to enthusiastically invite NU Muslimat such as Khofifah to become leaders of the people who are predominantly Muslim in East Java. The decision of the NU ulama as a result of the NU ulema's National Conference may still cause controversy among NU scholars.

One of the controversies is that the decision resulting from the congress is not binding on all scholars and Muslims in Indonesia. One of the proofs is that the ulama or *Dayans* in Aceh still hold tightly to Allah's commands in Surah An-Nisa' verse 34. That women should not be the leaders of men. That is why Eliza Sa'auddin Jamal failed to be elected Mayor of Banda Aceh, as a result of the Acehnese clerics refusing women to become leaders in the majority Muslim area. Aceh is different from East Java. In the province of East Java to date, there are at least 10 women who have become regents or mayors.

Meanwhile, in Aceh Province, there are no women who become regional heads in districts or cities in the Aceh region. Informant Illiza Sa'auddin Jamal felt that he had failed to become the Mayor of Banda Aceh, one of which was due to propaganda and open campaigns from the ulama or Tengku in Aceh which he considered had cornered him as a woman. In open campaigns or not, the Tengku and religious leaders in Aceh always convey the Qur'an in Surah AnNisa verse 34 for practical political purposes to thwart women's leadership in Aceh, especially in Banda Aceh.

In Aceh's history, it is not once a regional head was led by a woman as happened in East Java Province. The Islamic tradition in Aceh has made it impossible for women to become regional heads. Although there may be female figures who are always ready to occupy the district police or mayor, even the governor. The tradition of Islamic teachings that are firmly adhered to by the ulama and the people of Aceh and surrounding areas has prevented women from obtaining positions in local government leadership. Informant Illiza Sa'auddin Jamal had been the Mayor of Banda Aceh because of the "forced" factor. The regulation (law number 23 of 2014) gives Eliza a political advantage so that she automatically replaces the top leadership when the leadership is permanently absent (died).

In a study conducted by Shahibul Izar, from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh, in 2018, it was stated that in the 2017 local elections in Banda Aceh, Illiza Saaduddin Jamal, who was paired with Farid Nyak Umar, lost by the percentage of 33.23% compared to the victory of Aminullah Usman's pair which reached 66.27%. This study concludes that Illiza Saaduddin Jamal's failure was caused because Illiza Sa'auddin Jamal was considered unable to provide satisfaction and comfort for the people of Banda Aceh in the provision of infrastructure and policies regarding gender issues. Women should not be leaders in Muslim-majority areas. (Izar, 2018)

Informant Illiza Sa'auddin Jamal realized that he was not wanted by several ulama figures to lead Banda Aceh because of gender reasons. The informant acknowledged that there were attempts to prevent him from becoming the Mayor of Banda Aceh for the 2017-2022 period. In the process of participating in the democratic series in the Banda Aceh Pilkada, the informant admitted that

he had surrendered. Informants only expect help and blessing from Allah SWT. Even though the informant feels that he is a victim of a black campaign carried out by parties who do not want him to come forward and lead a government area where the mass base is a Muslim community who is obedient to the ulama or Tengku.

If you compare the case of the Pilkada in East Java and the case of the Pilkada in Banda Aceh, which puts forward identity politics, the case of gender responsiveness is still relatively louder than putting forward work programs. The emergence of identity politics will then trigger the emergence of a black campaign that is considered detrimental to some contestants and benefits other contestants. If you have seen the similarities between the two Pilkada East Java and Banda Aceh in terms of gender responsiveness, the researcher sees the difference between Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Illiza Sa'auddin Jamal in terms of making political communication strategies, especially political communication carried out against religious leaders (Islam). To simplify the explanation, the following matrix can be described as follows:

No	Name	Differences in Political Communication of Two Female Regional Head Candidates
1	**Khofifah Indar Parawansa** (female/58 years old)	1. Has a strong social capital because he has a background as a minister twice, a member of the DPR RI for 4 terms from the PKB Faction, and has been the General Chair of Muslimah NU since 2000-present. 2. Encouraged by ulama and NU Kiai to become candidates for Governor of East Java from 2008 to 2018. 3. Optimism can be accepted by the people of East Java, who are predominantly Muslim, and are considered to understand the concept of women's leadership as the concept of women's leadership exemplified by Queen Balqis during the time of Prophet Sulaiman 'Alaissalaam, as illustrated in the Qur'an surah An Naml: 20-44 and surah Al Baqarah: verse 228) 4. The Kiai and NU clerics gave the 1997 National Conference decision that women could be political leaders. 5. Carrying out a political communication strategy by maximizing the role of Kiai and NU clerics to the general chairmen of political parties in Jakarta. 6. Successfully became the first female governor in East Java as a result of the 2018 Regional Head Elections
2	**Eliza Sa'auddin Jamal** (female/50 years old)	1. Has a background in being a member of the DPR RI from the PPP faction. 2. The ulama (Tengku) of Aceh was prevented from becoming the Mayor of Banda Aceh because Islam did not teach women to be leaders for men. 3. The ulama (Tengku) in Aceh forbids women to be leaders for men, as mandated by the Qur'an Surah An-Nisa' verse: 34. 4. Failed to become the first female regional head in Aceh, after losing the Pilkada in Banda Aceh in 2017. 5. Based on the research, the level of dissatisfaction of the citizens of Banda Aceh was very low during Illiza Sa'auddin Jamal as mayor. 6. There are *swing voters* as much as 68% and turn to support their political opponents.

Table 2 Comparison of Khofifah Indar Parawansa's Political Communication in East Java and Illiza Sa'auddin Jamal in Aceh, Indonesia.

Source: Processed based on research results in 2024

The researcher compares it with political participation in other countries such as Malaysia. In a study conducted by Victor, Othman & Nazariah (2021), women's political participation in Malaysia has been guaranteed by the country's government. Even the Malaysian government has also guaranteed in their laws gender equality. This is done to avoid discrimination or marginalization of women in Malaysia in pursuing political life in the country. The results of the study indicate an upward movement or increase in the number of Malaysian women occupying prominent political positions such as Deputy Prime Ministers, Members of Parliament, Cabinet Members, Anti-Corruption Chairmen, Ministers, and Deputy Ministers after the 2018 general election. (Okpe et al., 2021)

According to Faiz Manshur (2015), Khofifah Indar Parawansa is a persistent female figure, focused, patient, and never gives up. At least that's the most appropriate expression the researcher attaches to Khofifah Indar Parawansa in the 2018 East Java gubernatorial election. In a foreword to the publisher of the book that published Khofifah's book, editor Faiz Mansur wrote that Khofifah Indar Pawansa is one of the rare female figures in this country. He came forward as a public figure not because he had benefited from the political momentum, but then skyrocketed. He is also not a figure *narcissistic* who has stage fright because he happens to get a space because of the vacancy of women's leadership. Khofifah is a leader who was born from the process and matured through experience. From organizational experience to experience as a State official, the many professions he has carried out have made him a distinctive character. (Manshur, 2015, p. 15)

The people of East Java, who are generally members and sympathizers of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) listen more to the appeals or invitations of their Kiai or clerics rather than obeying the government's advice. That is why the regional development in various sectors in remote East Java carried out by the government generally informally includes the Kiai or NU clerics. This is done to make the development process in the region run smoothly as expected.
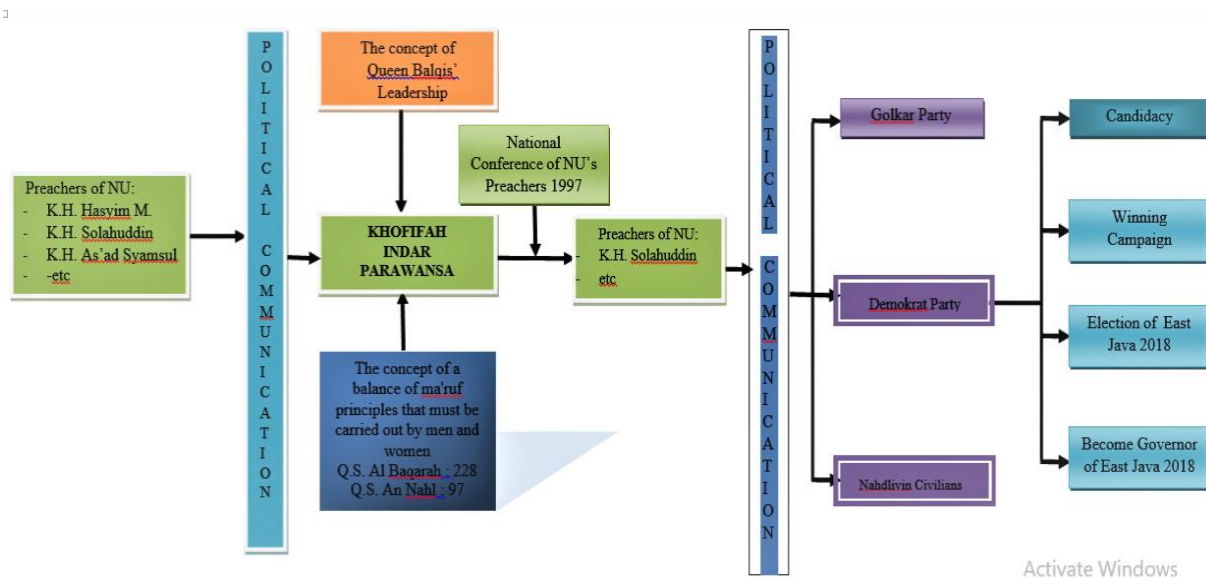

Figure 2. Khofifah's Political Communication Model in Winning the 2018 East Java Governor Election.

(**Source**: Processed based on 2024 research results)

Khofifah Indar Parawansa's victory in the 2018 East Java gubernatorial election, the only factor that caused her victory was God's destiny which He gave through the role of NU Kiai and scholars.

It was as if the NU Kiai and clerics had "ignored" Allah's command in the Qur'an Surah Annisa' verse 34 that this man is the female leader and not the other way around. But the accusation of "ignoring" the Qur'an has of course been denied by the NU Kyai and clerics. In a national meeting (Munas) of NU ulama in 1997, the concept of male and female leadership was thoroughly discussed and decided. With various valid arguments and references, the decision of the NU ulema's congress essentially allowed women to become leaders. Based on the results of the 1997 NU Ulama National Conference, encouraged NU clerics to enthusiastically invite NU Muslimat such as Khofifah to become leaders of the people who are predominantly Muslim in East Java. The decision of the NU ulama as a result of the NU ulema's National Conference may still cause controversy among NU scholars.

This research still has limitations, especially in confirming the informant Syaifullah Yusuf, as Khofifah Indar Parawansa's main rival. Several technical problems made it difficult for us to interview Syaifullah Yusuf and his deputy candidates.

6.   CONCLUSION

Khofifah Indar Parawansa's politeness, patience, focus, and persistence are considered one of the factors that became the main attraction for the senior NU Kyai so that they consciously and openly supported Khofifah Indar Parawansa to become the first female governor in East Java, regardless of the factors involved. gender. Another factor is the assessment of senior NU Kyai against Khofifah who is considered to have succeeded in leading various state institutions and leading mass organizations successfully. Through political communication with the ulama and NU Kyai, Khofifah succeeded in becoming the first female leader in a Muslim-majority area in East Java Province, defeating a male leader candidate. This study recommends the necessity of education in political communication for women and ulama when they have to compete for power and governance at the local and national levels. Even though we have drawn conclusions from this research, there are still limitations to this research. Among other things, there are limitations in terms of data where we face difficulties in collecting comprehensive data regarding women's participation in political communication, especially in remote or less accessible areas. Then we encountered limitations in terms of informant subjectivity: Informants involved in the research may have subjective views that could influence the results, especially in terms of perceptions about the effectiveness of women's political communication. Then there are limitations in terms of complex variables. Many factors influence victory in regional head election contestations, making it difficult to isolate the specific role of women's political communication. Then there are time and scope limitations. The research we conducted within a certain period of time did not cover rapidly changing political dynamics and was limited in scope to one region only. For this reason, we need to provide suggestions to future researchers who are interested in conducting research that is relevant to our research. We suggest that future researchers use mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) in future research to get a more comprehensive picture of the role of women in political communication. Our other suggestion is to involve more respondents from various backgrounds, including women from various social and economic strata, to get a broader perspective on the political role of women. We need to recommend that future researchers conduct longitudinal research to monitor changes in women's political communication over time, as well as their impact on election outcomes.

BIODATA

Puji Santoso is an associate professor of communication science and a lecturer in the Communication Science Study Program at, the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatra Utara in Medan, Indonesia. He is interested in the field of communication science research, especially mass communication and media, digital communication, as well as political communication. Email: pujisantoso@umsu.ac.id

REFERENCES

Adhani, A., Anshori, A., & Mahardika, A. (2022). Public attitudes towards the government's policy communication in preventing COVID-19. *Jurnal Aspikom, 7*(1), 61–70. https://doi.org/10.24329/aspikom.v7i1.1058

Ahmad, N. (2012). *Manajemen komunikasi politik dan marketing politik.* Pustaka Zaman.

Allen, E., Lyons, H., & Stephens, J. C. (2019). Women's leadership in renewable transformation, energy justice and energy democracy: Redistributing power. *Energy Research & Social Science, 57,* 101233. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2019.101233

Ayish, M. I. (2002). Political communication on Arab world television: Evolving patterns. *Political Communication, 19*(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600252907416

Bracciale, R., & Martella, A. (2017). Defining the populist political communication style: The case of Italian political leaders on Twitter. *Information Communication and Society, 20*(9). https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1328522

Bungin, B. (2014). *Penelitian kualitatif: Komunikasi, ekonomi, kebijakan publik, dan ilmu sosial lainnya* (Edisi ke-2). Prenada Media Group.

Bungin, B. (2018). *Komunikasi politik pencitraan: The social construction of public administration (SCoPA).* Prenada Media Group.

Cangara, H. (2011). *Komunikasi politik: Konsep, teori, dan strategi.* Rajawali Pers.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Terjemahan, 3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Diana, I. N. (2012). Islam dan kepemimpinan perempuan di ranah politik. *Egalita.* https://doi.org/10.18860/egalita.v0i0.1979

El Adawiyah, S., Hubeis, A. V., Sumarti, T., & Susanto, D. (2019). Strategi komunikasi politik perempuan dalam meraih kepemimpinan daerah. *Metacommunication: Journal of Communication Studies, 4*(1). https://doi.org/10.20527/mc.v4i1.6356

Famelasari, R., & Prastiwi, J. H. (2021). Kepemimpinan perempuan dan tata kelola tambang di Bojonegoro. *JIIP: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pemerintahan, 6*(1). https://doi.org/10.14710/jiip.v6i1.10198

Freelon, D., & Wells, C. (2020). Disinformation as political communication. *Political Communication, 37*(2), 145–156. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1723755

Haugsgjerd, A., Hesstvedt, S., & Karlsen, R. (2021). Increased media choice and political knowledge gaps: A comparative longitudinal study of 18 established democracies, 1995–2015. *Political Communication, 38*(6), 731–750. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1868633

Hayes, D. (2012). Making sense of media & politics: Five principles in political communication. *Political Communication, 29*(3).

Iskandar. (2009). *Metode penelitian kualitatif.* Gaung Persada.

Komisi Pemilihan Umum Pusat. (2020). Info Pemilu 2018. Retrieved from https://infopemilu.kpu.go.id/pilkada2018/hasil/penetapan/t1/jawa_timur

Kriyantono, R. (2014). *Teknis praktis riset komunikasi.* Kencana Prenadamedia Group.

Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A. (2014). *Teori komunikasi: Theories of human communication* (Terjemahan, Edisi ke-9). Salemba Humanika.

Manshur, F. (2015). *Terobosan Khofifah.* Penerbit Nuansa Cendekia.

Masruri, Sobari, W., & Tawwakal, G. T. I. (2019). Memudarnya patron-client: Relasi politik elektoral kiai dan santri dalam pemilihan gubernur Jawa Timur 2018. *Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan dan Politik Daerah, 4*(2), 75–89. http://governmentjournal.org/index.php/jip/index

McNair, B. (2016). *Pengantar komunikasi politik* (Terjemahan). Penerbit Nusa Media.

Mohamed, S. (2019). Instagram and political storytelling among Malaysian politicians during the 14th General Election. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication, 35*(3), 353–371. https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2019-3503-21

Moleong, L. (2011). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif.* PT Remaja Rosdakarya.

Mudrika, S., & Yusri, D. (2019). Wanita antara posisi depan dan pinggiran. *Al-Bukhari: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis, 2*(1). https://doi.org/10.32505/al-bukhari.v2i1.1131

Mukarom, Z. (2008). Perempuan dan politik: Studi komunikasi politik tentang keterwakilan perempuan di legislatif. *Mediator: Jurnal Komunikasi, 9*(2). https://doi.org/10.29313/mediator.v9i2.1125

Neumann, S. (2002). Modern political parties. In H. Eckstein & D. E. Apter (Eds.), *Comparative Politics: A Reader.* The Free Press of Glencoe.

Okpe, V. V., Othman, M. F., & Osman, N. B. (2021). An assessment into women's political participation in Malaysian democratic governance. *E-Bangi: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 18*(5), 21–36. https://ejournal.ukm.my/ebangi/article/view/49481

Perloff, R. M. (2017). *The dynamics of political communication.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315624426

Pureklolon, T. T. (2016). *Komunikasi politik: Mempertahankan integritas akademisi, politikus, dan negarawan.* PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Putra, A. (2019). Pandangan kiai Nahdlatul Ulama tentang perempuan kandidat pada pemilihan kepala daerah Jawa Timur 2018. Universitas Airlangga.

Rawnsley, G., & Gong, Q. (2016). Political communications in democratic Taiwan: The relationship between politicians and journalists. *Political Communication, 28*(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2011.572462

Ross, K. (2016). *Women, politics, news: A game of three sides.* Wiley Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118561652

Santoso, P. (2021). Framing pemberitaan media televisi berita terhadap figur 'Habib.' *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi UPN Veteran Yogyakarta, 19*(3), 281–295. https://doi.org/10.31315/jik.v19i3.5335

Sazali, H., & Basit, L. (2020). Meta-analysis of women politician portrait in mass media frames. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communications, 36*(2), 320–334.

Scheufele, D. A. (2014). Science communication as political communication. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 111.* https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1317516111

Schlesinger, P. (1999). Changing spaces of political communication: The case of the European Union. *Political Communication, 16*(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/105846099198622

Sikumbang, A. T., Kholil, S., & Pohan, R. (2021). The political communications of Khofifah Indar Parawansa to obtain support of the Golkar Party, the Democrat Party, and Nahdlatul Ulama figures in the 2018 East Java Governor election. *Randwick International of Social Science Journal, 2*(4). https://doi.org/10.47175/rissj.v2i4.290

Subiakto, H., & Ida, R. (2014). *Komunikasi politik, media, dan demokrasi* (Edisi ke-2). PT Prenadamedia Group.

Susanto, E. H. (2013). Dinamika komunikasi politik dalam pemilihan umum. *Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi, 1*(2), 163. https://doi.org/10.24198/jkk.v1i2.6041

Swanson, D. L., & Nimmo, D. D. (1990). *New directions in political communication: A resource book.* Sage Publications.

Syam, N. W. (2002). *Rekonstruksi ilmu komunikasi perspektif pohon komunikasi.* Simbiosa.

TVONE. (2019). Blak-blakan La Nyalla soal mahar Gerindra: La Nyalla serang Prabowo (tvOne). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b40Jvbvwy8M

Wahyudi, V. (2018). Peran politik perempuan dalam perspektif gender. *Politea: Jurnal Politik Islam, 1*(1), 63–83.

Witriani, W., & Kusuma, B. M. A. (2019). Mapping isu jurnal berbasis pengarusutamaan gender dan HAM pada perguruan tinggi di Indonesia. *Musãwa: Jurnal Studi Gender dan Islam, 18*(1). https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2019.181.45-59

Widiyaningrum, W. Y. (2020). Partisipasi politik kader perempuan dalam bidang politik: Sebuah kajian teoritis. *JISIPOL: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, 4*(2), 126–142.