

HADITH AND ELECTORAL POLITICS: ELITE DISCOURSE AND VOTER MOBILIZATION IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the constructive practices employed by political elites during elections, particularly through social interactions that shape their political behavior and interests. The study aims to identify political strategies that facilitate consensus between elites and voters, considering various models of social exchange that occur within political processes. In an effort to counter negative perceptions of politics, this research highlights the positive dimensions of elite–voter interactions. Adopting a qualitative approach and drawing upon secondary data from books and scholarly journals, the study analyzes the role of hadith in electoral politics. Hadiths addressing leadership, justice, and deliberation are explored as ethical foundations for understanding political strategies, including compromises made by political elites. The findings reveal that political engagement can generate positive outcomes, such as the formation of social networks that foster political stability. Although political elites are often perceived negatively, their efforts at compromise contribute to conflict mitigation and the balancing of political interests. From the perspective of hadith, politics extends beyond the pursuit of power. It serves as a means to realize the common good. The concept of compromise in voter mobilization should therefore be grounded in the values of justice, deliberation, and unity as taught in hadith. Consequently, politics can be understood as a vehicle for promoting collective welfare, serving the public interest, and aligning with Islamic ethical principles.

Keywords: *Compromise, Elite Social Interaction, Political Ethics, Political Hadith, Voter Mobilization.*

INTRODUCTION

In every democratic election, the interaction between political elites and the voting community plays a crucial role in determining a country's policy direction (Ramlan, 2005). Elections, as a manifestation of democracy, are not merely arenas for contesting votes but also spaces for social interaction between political elites and society. The phenomenon of electoral politics in Indonesia demonstrates that elite-driven voter mobilization often relies on various strategies, including compromise and the exchange of interests. However, in many cases, electoral politics is perceived

negatively by the public due to the widespread practices of pragmatism, transactional politics, and even vote manipulation (Ahyani & Nurhasanah, 2020; Pradana, 2020b; Sutarso, 2011).

In contrast, Islam has long taught the principles of political ethics through the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad. Hadiths discussing leadership, justice, deliberation, and political responsibility provide an ethical framework for understanding political interactions (Rahman, 2020). In the context of electoral politics, these hadiths can serve as guiding principles for political elites, encouraging them to perform their roles with honesty,

justice, and concern for the public good. Given that Indonesian electoral politics is often marked by polarization and conflicts of interest, it needs to be re-examined from a more ethical perspective to foster a more harmonious and constructive political climate.

Observations from recent elections in Indonesia reveal that the relationship between elites and voters is not always grounded in trust and integrity (Juditha, 2019; Pradana, 2020b). Communities often become mere objects of mobilization, with little to no continuity of engagement once elections conclude. This situation raises concerns about public trust in democratic institutions and their leaders. Therefore, examining electoral politics through the lens of hadith offers a valuable perspective on how interactions between elites and voters ought to unfold.

When interests between political elites and the public diverge, democracy frequently encounters obstacles. Consequently, democratic institutions should be strengthened based on the principles of justice and honesty as taught in the hadiths of the Prophet, which emphasize the importance of fair and trustworthy leadership. The Prophet Muhammad said, *“The best of your leaders are those whom you love and who love you; you pray for them, and they pray for you”* (HR. Ahmad).

This hadith underscores that public trust in leadership is fundamental to a healthy democracy. Such trust reflects the moral integrity of leadership exemplified in Islam. The hadith further teaches that leadership is not merely the pursuit of power but a mandate that must be fulfilled with full responsibility. In elections, social interactions between political elites and voters serve as an avenue for leaders to demonstrate their commitment to justice and the common good.

As the Prophet stated, *“The Imam (leader) is like a shield; behind him, the people fight and seek protection”* (HR. Muslim).

Democracy is not only a political system but also a reflection of the moral values embedded in society. Misunderstanding democracy can lead to its exploitation for personal or group interests rather than for the welfare of the broader community, which often triggers public distrust and social conflict (Harefa & Fatolosa Hulu, 2020; Kodi, 2021). In this regard, compromise becomes a vital instrument for achieving political stability. Islam advocates the concept of deliberation (*shūrā*) in resolving differences of opinion, as mentioned in the Qur'an (QS. Ash-Shura: 38) and reinforced in numerous hadiths (Dalimunthe, 2016). The behavior of political elites who embrace compromise aligns with Islamic values, as compromise aims not only to reach political agreement but also to preserve unity and prevent division. The Prophet Muhammad himself frequently practiced compromise in conflict resolution, as exemplified in the Charter of Medina, which accommodated the diverse interests of multiple groups. In the context of modern democracy, compromise serves as a means to achieve a higher political goal, the welfare of the people.

In political practice, compromises made with sincere intentions can serve as effective mechanisms to reduce conflict and build a more inclusive political system. Historical records show that during the 2019 election, the two competing parties eventually reached a compromise for the sake of democratic stability (Trijono et al., n.d.; Yunus, 2014). This process reflects the importance of agreements founded on justice, honesty, and deliberation as taught in the hadith. Therefore, this paper seeks to analyze the extent to which social interactions between political elites and voters in Indonesia can be grounded in hadith-based ethical values. By understanding how Islamic teachings found in hadiths can be applied to political practice, this study aims to demonstrate how democracy in Indonesia can operate

more ethically, reflecting the principles of justice and the common good.

Literature Review

In efforts to build harmonious political stability, political elites play a crucial role in shaping public perception and countering negative narratives that may damage their image (Winasis & Setyawan, 2016; Wulandari et al., 2019). These efforts aim to create a conducive political climate that supports success in political contestation. One commonly employed strategy is the compromise approach, which functions as part of the social exchange mechanism within the dynamics of electoral processes (Sutarso, 2011; Yuliahsari, 2016). This process reflects the reciprocal relationship between the community and political parties, often manifested through social activities, public services, and political promises expected to be fulfilled (Ahyani & Nurhasanah, 2020; Muhadam & Teguh, 2015; Nababan et al., 2020). The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) underscores the importance of honesty and responsibility in leadership: *“The leader of a people is their servant”* (HR. Abu Nu‘aim). This serves as a reminder that the relationship between leaders and the community should be grounded in responsibility and mutual welfare, rather than mere electoral transactions.

Some scholars argue that this practice of compromise is often driven by the economic needs of society, particularly among the poor. From a social exchange perspective, such conditions create an attachment between political elites and their constituents, wherein political support is exchanged for economic or material assistance. Poverty, in this sense, is perceived as a functional element within the social system, as it connects various social structures that sustain community life. However, this phenomenon also risks diminishing the idealism of democracy, reducing politics to a mere instrument of transactional power (Mushodiq & Imron,

2020; Nasution, 2005). In Islam, the Prophet Muhammad reminded his followers of the moral burden of leadership: *“Each of you is a leader, and each of you will be held accountable for his leadership”* (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). This hadith highlights that leaders must not exploit public trust for short-term political gain.

In the study of socio-political interactions, the widespread perception that politics is inherently corrupt has prompted political elites to adapt their strategies to align with prevailing social behavior. Their interactions are not solely intended to build short-term connections but also to establish political networks that enable them to sustain influence over the long term. This phenomenon can be observed in electoral trends, where political elites compete for votes through various means, including political contracts that involve negotiations among voters, parties, and candidates (Biyanto, 2015). Peter Blau (1964) in his theory of social exchange, asserts that social relations inherently contain elements of reward, sacrifice, and benefit. Within the political context, this suggests that agreements between elites and society are often motivated by pragmatic interests.

According to elite theory, society is generally divided into two categories: elite groups that hold power and the masses, who are larger in number but function as objects of power (Bottomore, 2006; Lenger et al., 2010; Malang, 2019; Pettinicchio, 2017). This structure creates a political hierarchy in which elites control resources and strategic decision-making, while the masses play a more passive role in policy processes. This dynamic became particularly evident during the 2019 election, when political polarization led to an eventual compromise of power between previously opposing factions (Handini & Dunan, 2021). The Prophet Muhammad also emphasized in his hadith that leadership must be rooted in justice and public welfare: *“The best leaders among*

you are those whom you love and who love you" (HR. Tirmidhi). This principle affirms that a leader's legitimacy should stem from genuine concern for the people, not merely from electoral strategies.

Social interaction also contributes to expanding political networks and strengthening elite influence over voters (Ortikova, 2018; Rahman Khan, 2012). In Putnam's view, building voter networks extends beyond transactional exchanges; it involves reputation, credibility, and sound decision-making. Therefore, political elites must cultivate substantial connections with the public to maintain a stable support base (Munte & Monica, 2023). From an Islamic perspective, the Prophet Muhammad exemplified the ideal leader who remained close to his people, actively engaging with their lives and offering solutions to their problems.

At the local level, social interactions between elites and their constituents are often mediated by influential community figures who possess strong legitimacy. Studies on local elites show that symbols of legitimacy are frequently manifested through social norms and cultural values that reinforce their authority within power structures. This is evident, for instance, in Tajikistan, where kinship-based Islamic groups maintain dominance through collective identity and moral authority (Gordon & Stenvoll, 2007; Ortikova, 2018). In Islamic teaching, leaders are expected to act as unifiers rather than exacerbate social divisions for political gain. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, *"A Muslim is a brother to other Muslims; he should neither oppress them nor allow them to be oppressed"* (Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim).

This hadith emphasizes that political elites must serve as protectors and moral guardians of society, rather than exploit social structures for self-interest. In Migdal's (2001) perspective, the effectiveness of local politics is often determined by a leader's capacity to organize communities, manage resource

distribution, and maintain social stability. This concept resonates with Indonesia's political reality, where local actors frequently act as intermediaries between the national elite and grassroots communities. Through inclusive, community-oriented approaches, local political leaders are expected to foster relationships grounded in collective welfare and justice, values deeply embedded in Islamic ethical teachings (Ridwan et al., 2025).

From the above discussion, it can be inferred that compromise is an inherent part of the social interactions between political elites and the public, often manifested in transactional politics. Such patterns are rooted in elite-driven transactional leadership and social exchanges, particularly in economically vulnerable communities. Previous studies have also highlighted how local elite power (Pettinicchio, 2017), or local strongmen (Carroll & Carson, 2003), play critical roles in shaping political reputations and strengthening voter networks. By understanding these dynamics, this study seeks to explore how compromise strategies can be transformed into more ethical and constructive forms of political engagement.

Reflecting on these insights, the authors underscore the importance of compromise-based political strategies as mechanisms for mitigating conflicts of interest. Compromise, as one of the four recognized conflict resolution approaches, involves negotiation and participatory deliberation among multiple stakeholders (Meyer, 2008). In Islam, this notion aligns with the principle of *shūrā* (deliberation), which emphasizes the pursuit of collective agreement for the greater good of the *ummah*. As stated in the Qur'an: *"And (for) those who accept (obey) the call of their Lord and establish prayer, their affairs are (decided) by deliberation between them"* (QS. Asy-Syura: 38).

Conceptual Framework

This study is positioned at the intersection of Islamic political communication, elite discourse, and religious mobilization. It conceptualizes the use of hadith in Indonesia's electoral context not merely as an expression of individual religiosity but as a calculated political strategy through which religious symbols are instrumentalized to construct legitimacy and shape voter behavior. Informed by Van Dijk's theory of elite discourse and Bourdieu's notion of symbolic power, political elites are viewed as strategic agents who actively produce, manage, and circulate religious meanings. By selectively citing and framing hadith, they seek to assert moral authority, differentiate themselves from political rivals, and transform sacred texts into persuasive instruments within the public and political sphere (Carroll & Carson, 2003).

The study also draws on theories of religious mobilization and identity politics, which highlight the function of religion as a driver of collective action. From this perspective, religious narratives, particularly those derived from hadith, operate as emotionally charged and morally resonant resources that cultivate voter solidarity and political loyalty (Ortikova, 2018; Rahman Khan, 2012). In the Indonesian setting, where faith and politics are deeply intertwined, references to hadith in campaign discourse often reinforce collective identity, evoke shared moral obligations, and translate religious sentiment into electoral participation.

Furthermore, this study employs an interpretive framework rooted in contemporary Islamic hermeneutics, which understands hadith as dynamic texts that acquire new meanings across diverse socio-political contexts. The selective invocation of hadith by political elites demonstrates the evolving nature of religious interpretation and its responsiveness to modern political agendas. This interpretive flexibility

underscores the adaptive capacity of sacred discourse to legitimize political narratives and sustain moral persuasion.

Overall, the conceptual framework integrates perspectives from discourse theory, symbolic power, and religious mobilization to elucidate the dual role of hadith as a discursive and mobilizational instrument in Indonesian electoral politics. It reveals the intricate interplay between elite strategies, religious communication, and voter behavior, showing how textual interpretation becomes a site through which power and piety are negotiated within Indonesia's democratic environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach to examine the social interactions between political elites and voters within the context of electoral politics, incorporating both sociological and hadith perspectives. The analysis focuses on understanding how compromise and voter mobilization practices reflect broader socio-political and ethical frameworks. Data were collected primarily from secondary sources, including academic journals, books, and classical hadith compilations. The study follows a multi-stage process. First, it identifies key literature related to social exchange theory, political contracts, and elite behavior in democratic systems. Second, it analyzes hadiths that discuss leadership, justice, and social interaction as normative foundations for ethical governance. At this stage, the *takhrīj al-ḥadīth* method is applied to trace the authenticity, context, and interpretive meaning of relevant hadiths. This process ensures that the selected hadiths are both textually valid and contextually relevant to contemporary political ethics. Through this analysis, the study aims to reveal how political elites employ social and normative strategies to build voter networks, and how Islamic principles

derived from hadith can offer an ethical framework for transforming transactional politics into moral, community-centered leadership.

DISCUSSION

The electoral process often produces negative social, economic, and political consequences, reflecting what is sometimes referred to as the “dark side” of democracy, where political competition can exacerbate societal divisions. Nevertheless, in political practice, the art of negotiation and finding common ground among diverse interests is indispensable. Therefore, the strategies employed to resolve conflicts are critical for maintaining social stability.

Political literature identifies four main strategies for conflict management. First, the authoritarian strategy relies on absolute power to resolve disputes without considering diversity or tolerance. Such an approach contradicts democratic principles and resembles dictatorial practices (Arwani, 2016; Nazmudin, 2018). Second, the consensus strategy seeks agreement through discussion and exchange of arguments. However, it is challenging to implement in democratic systems like Indonesia's, which primarily operate through voting mechanisms (Ahyani & Nurhasanah, 2020; Latiful Anam, 2019). Third, the majoritarian strategy bases decisions on majority votes, which may occasionally marginalize minority groups (Pradana, 2020b, 2020a). Fourth, the compromise strategy entails negotiation and mutual agreement, ensuring that all parties perceive the benefits of political processes as fair. Among the four conflict management strategies discussed, compromise is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, as it allows political actors to navigate diverse interests while maintaining social cohesion. To better understand how compromise operates in practice, several key aspects can be identified.

First, the dynamics of electoral politics in Indonesia demonstrate how hadiths are frequently invoked as instruments of legitimacy by political actors. During the 2019 presidential election, for instance, several religious leaders and politicians cited hadiths concerning trust (*amanah*) and justice to reinforce the moral credibility of their preferred candidates. These references were not merely normative but served to strengthen claims of moral authority in the public sphere. This practice indicates that hadiths, beyond their role as religious texts, are mobilized as authoritative symbols that justify leadership within the democratic electoral arena.

Second, the use of hadiths is also evident at the local level, particularly in regional elections. In several areas, Friday sermons and religious lectures became important channels through which hadiths were cited to influence voter preferences. Emphasis on just leadership, honesty, and adherence to religious norms was used not only to construct a positive image of certain candidates but also to delegitimize their opponents. In this way, hadiths function as symbolic devices linking political interests with religious values deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of Indonesia's Muslim society.

Third, this phenomenon illustrates that the use of hadiths in electoral politics is not merely rhetorical ornamentation but part of a systematic strategy of persuasion. Hadiths convey moral guidance and mobilize voters, particularly within religious constituencies sensitive to symbolic appeals. At this point, hadiths assume a dual role: as sources of ethical legitimacy and as forms of social capital that strengthen political networks. Accordingly, analyzing hadith use in national political contests reveals how religious authority, symbolic religiosity, and voter mobilization strategies are intertwined in contemporary Indonesian democracy.

In the context of electoral politics, compromise is frequently employed by political elites to mitigate conflicts of interest. Social interactions emerging from group dominance create political actions oriented toward the common interest. As central actors, elites bear the responsibility to resolve conflicts using approaches that are not only transactional but also grounded in moral and ethical principles. The hadith states:

"If three men travel, let them appoint one of them as leader." (HR. Abu Dawud no. 2858).

This guidance highlights the importance of leadership in managing communities or groups, including in political settings. Ideal leaders not only hold authority but also manage social relations fairly and wisely. Effective political elites exemplify transformational leadership, focusing on positive social change rather than mere power consolidation. This form of leadership encompasses four dimensions:

1. Ideal Influence – Leaders serve as trustworthy role models respected by society.
2. Inspirational Motivation – Leaders provide a clear vision and inspire followers.
3. Intellectual Stimulation – Leaders encourage critical thinking, avoiding blind adherence to pragmatic political currents.
4. Individual Consideration – Leaders understand the needs and expectations of individuals within the community.

Compromise in politics not only serves as a strategy for agreement but also reflects leadership principles taught in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad exemplified prioritizing justice and public welfare. Islam teaches that communities should select leaders who are just and trustworthy. The Prophet stated:

"If a leader is appointed from a person who is not competent, then wait for destruction." (HR. Bukhari no. 6496).

This hadith underscores that leadership selection should consider moral integrity and competence, not solely political expediency. Therefore, political compromises by elites should not focus only on electoral victory but also on long-term societal welfare. By employing a political strategy grounded in compromise and fair leadership, social interactions between elites and society can foster harmonious synergy. Consequently, politics becomes not merely a struggle for power but a means to realize justice and public welfare for all.

Building on the discussion of compromise and ethical leadership in electoral politics, the following analysis examines four interconnected aspects of elite-voter interactions: the strategies for relating well to others, the political interaction from an Islamic perspective, the phenomenon of social exchange in politics, and leader-voter relations.

Elite–Constituent Interaction

The interaction between political elites and the public, as well as other actors in the political arena, is a dynamic process that spans from the early stages of the campaign to the post-election period. This pattern of interaction reflects the elites' strategy of building an image and garnering support. It establishes a reciprocal relationship in which both political elites and voters influence each other in constructing a social network oriented toward political interests (Pradana, 2020a).

The success of political elites in mitigating conflicts and controlling political situations heavily depends on the interaction strategies they employ. According to Soekanto (1982), several key elements in social interaction support the political process. First, social contact, the initial stage in which political elites establish direct relationships with the community, occurs through social activities and community assistance. This strategy is often considered an effort to

“brand politics,” introducing leading figures to voters. Second, communication plays a crucial role in conveying the vision, mission, and work program to the community. Political communication also functions in conflict resolution, including lobbying and negotiation processes (Rohmah & Febrina Ernungtyas, 2019).

Political lobbying is often perceived negatively because it is associated with hidden interests and attempts to gain exclusive influence. However, in modern politics, lobbying is an essential communication strategy aimed at reaching compromise in decision-making processes. In contrast, negotiation is a more transparent communication process, emphasizing conflict management and the pursuit of mutual agreement (Hasan, 2014). In electoral politics, both lobbying and negotiation are frequently conducted behind closed doors to ensure effectiveness in building strategic alliances. These processes require compromises involving various parties. From personal meetings to large forums, political communication is key in determining agreements that benefit all stakeholders. Through rhetoric and strategic communication, political elites influence voters and foster a sustainable political process.

Political Interaction from an Islamic Perspective

Leadership entails not only the exercise of political authority but also the fulfillment of moral and social responsibilities, as emphasized in Islamic teachings. The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad states:

"When three people travel, let them appoint one of them as leader." (HR. Abu Dawud no. 2858).

This guidance highlights that leadership, even in small communities, requires maintaining harmony and managing shared interests. A leader must establish effective communication with

their constituents and avoid relying solely on power, while upholding the values of justice and social welfare. The Islamic principle of *shura* (deliberation) further serves as a normative guideline for political interaction. As stated in the Qur'an:

"And (for) those who accept (obey) the call of their Lord and establish prayer, while their affairs are (decided) by deliberation between them; and they give a portion of the sustenance that We have given them." (QS. Asy-Syura: 38).

This verse underscores the importance of discussion and negotiation in decision-making processes, ensuring that political decisions reflect the collective interest. The principle of *shura* aligns closely with the practice of compromise in modern politics, emphasizing consensus and fairness without compromising justice.

The Phenomenon of Social Exchange in Politics

In contemporary political practice, social interaction often manifests as political contracts involving the exchange of interests between elites and society. Peter Blau (1964) explains that social exchange occurs when both parties gain rewards, incur sacrifices, and obtain benefits. In electoral politics, such social contracts frequently take the form of material assistance as a strategy to secure voter support. However, transactional social exchange can evolve into money politics, which in some cases has become normalized in the post-Reformation era. Studies indicate that Indonesia ranks third globally in the practice of money politics (Hanafi et al., 2020; Siti Maryam, 2017; Wulandari et al., 2019). This phenomenon is further complicated by the involvement of high-profile figures, as political parties often nominate celebrities to enhance electoral appeal, even when these figures lack sufficient leadership capacity (De Vries et al., 2021).

From an Islamic perspective, political practices that rely solely on financial transactions contradict the principle of justice. The Prophet Muhammad stated:

"Allah curses bribers and bribes in legal matters." (HR. Abu Dawud No. 3580).

This hadith issues a stern warning against money politics, which undermines the integrity of leadership. Leaders should be chosen based on competence and moral character, rather than financial influence or celebrity status. The interaction between political elites and society in electoral dynamics represents an ongoing process of social communication. Agusyanto (2012) notes that political elites engage in relationship-building with their constituents as a form of personal agreement construction, which fosters closer social ties and strengthens public trust in political leaders.

Political compromises are more likely to be accepted and trusted when they align with previously agreed campaign promises. In this context, compromise serves not only to secure political legitimacy but also as a strategy to cultivate a positive public image and gain legislative positions. Consequently, during elections, political elites compete for support regardless of their level of political or economic capital. The lobbying and negotiations that underpin political agreements are grounded in trust between elites and the public, which develops over time through sustained interaction. Political elites must demonstrate concern for the community, as public perception of their empathy toward social issues is crucial in forming social trust (Meyer, 2008). In Islam, trust constitutes a fundamental element of leadership. The Prophet Muhammad stated:

"If a leader is given a mandate, then he must carry it out with full responsibility, because every leader will be held accountable for his

leadership." (HR. Bukhari and Muslim).

Relationships based on trust create the perception that elected leaders will not abuse their authority once in office. A notable example of political compromise is observed in the 2019 Indonesian elections, where two initially opposing camps ultimately reconciled by joining the same government. This integration reflects a constructive form of compromise aimed at sustaining political stability and strengthening democratic order (Kiftiyah, 2019). This aligns with Islamic principles emphasizing the importance of deliberation (*shura*) in decision-making, as stated in the Qur'an:

"And (for) those who accept the call of their Lord and establish prayer, their affairs are (decided) by deliberation among them." (QS. Ash-Shura: 38).

Maintaining authority within constituency social structures requires long-term strategies that build trust and public awareness of political initiatives. Established trust leads to voter loyalty (Meyer, 2008), a factor often overlooked by new political elites who have lost to incumbents. The sustainability of community support is influenced by reputation, ethical conduct, and political image cultivated over time (Putra, 2019).

Becoming a political elite trusted by the public is a gradual process that necessitates deliberate efforts to shape an image consistent with public expectations. Effective political communication is central to this endeavor. Political elites advancing in electoral contests are no longer merely pragmatic actors; they must implement strategic communication approaches. Barge (2009) identifies three key aspects of political communication that support elite compromise: framing of issues, political strategy, and relationship management. By employing appropriate communication strategies and aligning their vision and mission with community needs, political elites can enhance their

influence and strengthen their bargaining position in the political arena (Picard & Expert, 2011; Pradana, 2020a).

Leader-Voter Relations

Political agreements emerging from social interactions through compromise play a crucial role in enhancing the influence of political elites. Political networks within constituencies are built not only on strategic relationships but also on systematically organized political mapping. One important strategy is establishing connections with influential local political figures. In this regard, the presence of strong local figures, or local strongmen, serves as a key factor in facilitating the entry of political interests into society. Migdal (2001) emphasizes that the existence of local strongmen reflects the strength and influence of the community itself.

Beyond communicating with these key figures, political elites also cultivate relationships with formal, informal, and familial networks to convey their vision and mission in a structured manner. The compromise process between elites and the public demonstrates the active participation of both parties (Boyle & Silver, 2005; Carroll & Carson, 2003; Parau, 2018). From an Islamic perspective, deliberation is a central principle in formulating policies that concern public welfare. The Prophet Muhammad stated:

"If they invite you to deliberate, then deliberate with them, because there is a blessing in deliberation." (HR. Al-Baihaqi).

Deliberation enables a more inclusive political process, allowing elites to engage the public in programs aligned with their vision and mission. Political participation serves as a mechanism to garner public support and votes. Strategies developed after establishing communication with local strongmen may generate new political polarizations at the local level. Independent participation can evolve into mutually agreed mass

mobilization, reflecting how communities balance traditional values with political opportunities to advance their interests. In Islam, effective leadership prioritizes the needs of the people over personal interests. The Prophet Muhammad affirmed:

"The best of your leaders are those whom you love and who love you; you pray for them, and they pray for you." (HR. Muslim).

Leaders who sincerely engage with the community and strive to meet their needs are more likely to gain acceptance and support. Therefore, building social networks and political relationships is not merely a strategy but also a demonstration of social responsibility. Political interactions not only generate new strategies but also foster models of social closeness between elites and constituents. At the structural level, many political elites occupy central positions in social organizations as part of their strategy to expand influence (Agustino, 2018). However, in Islam, leaders are cautioned against exploiting their positions for personal gain. The Prophet Muhammad stated:

"Whoever is appointed to be the leader of mankind and then closes himself from their needs, then Allah will close himself from his needs on the Day of Judgment." (HR. Abu Dawud).

In modern politics, elites must avoid the exploitation of position and prioritize community service. Social relationships must be constructive rather than purely transactional. Leaders are also expected to manage resources and policies with integrity. Besides direct engagement, political elites employ media networks to broaden their influence, shape public opinion, and communicate their vision and mission to a wider audience. Islam underscores the importance of integrity in information dissemination, as the Prophet Muhammad warned:

"Whoever says something about me that I did not say, let him prepare his seat in Hell." (HR. Bukhari).

Accordingly, elites must exercise caution when using media for political purposes; information must be truthful and non-manipulative to avoid misleading the public. In this context, compromise in politics represents a systematic and structured strategy aimed at minimizing major conflicts of interest (Meyer, 2008). This approach enables political elites to optimize their influence according to community needs. Awareness of the importance of robust social networks, supported by effective lobbying and negotiation, helps elites achieve desired outcomes. Therefore, political involvement should not be solely for acquiring power but should also reflect moral and social responsibility in crafting policies that benefit society as a whole.

CLOSING

The social interactions established by political elites in building voter networks are not merely electoral strategies, but also mechanisms of social exchange within political contestation. A central approach in this process is compromise, which functions as a tool for negotiation and political lobbying to reach mutual agreements with the public. The success of such compromises heavily depends on the communication skills of political elites in formulating a vision and mission that are not only appealing but also relevant to the electorate's needs. When executed effectively, compromise can significantly impact vote acquisition and serve as an indicator of the elite's political intelligence in maintaining electoral stability. In Islam, the strategy of compromise aligns with the principle of deliberation (*shura*), which emphasizes the importance of jointly discussing decisions for the benefit of the people. As Allah SWT states in QS. Ash-Shura verse 38,

those who decide matters through deliberation and allocate the sustenance provided are considered among the believers. The Prophet Muhammad's hadith further highlights that exemplary leaders are those loved by their people and who maintain positive relationships with them, while reminding that every leader will be held accountable for their leadership.

Based on this principle, political compromises should not merely serve short-term electoral interests but should also reflect trustworthy, fair, and responsible leadership values. Trust established through effective communication can counter transactional politics, reduce reliance on financial incentives, and uphold a democratic process marked by integrity. Therefore, a compromise strategy rooted in fairness and oriented toward the common good forms the foundation for long-term relationships between political elites and society, supporting the sustainability of an ethical and healthy democracy.

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