

Uncertainty Reduction in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election: A Narrative Review of Political Communication Trend

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia's electoral landscape often faces controversy and allegations of irregularities that lead to uncertainty among citizens. Ruminating from the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election which is considered the worst-case election in Indonesian political history because of many issues and incidents related to race, religion, and ethnicity that created a polarized and fragmented society, dismissed the national identity, and threatened the socio-political stability of the nation. Thus, we elaborate on political communication strategies implemented by political parties and government institutions during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election to emphasize how communication influences individuals' behaviours throughout human interactions to reduce uncertainty during the campaigns. Uncertainty Reduction Theory is used as a fundamental framework to explain how organizations should modify their communication methods to refrain from any potential threats. Drawing on a narrative review of 30 research articles subject from 2023–2025 regarding the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election, the results emphasize the utilization of digital media platforms for developing interpersonal relationships between all parties and voters during political campaigns. Results also divulge the digital primacy of social media and hybridization strategies become the central bridgehead for political communication that indicate sustained growth of digital political communication trend in Indonesia that marked a significant turning point in the role of digital media in shaping political narratives and voters' engagement. This study also underlines the adaptation of theoretical basis to practically design and evaluate communication campaigns, specifically uncertainty reduction theory (URT), which can provide succour to manage uncertainty among voters at times of political years.

Keywords: *Political communication, uncertainty reduction, interpersonal relationship, identity politicization, digital communication.*

INTRODUCTION

The election of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, also known as the General Election, occurs every five years after the legislative body is elected, is a democracy festival in The Republic of Indonesia. According to general census conducted by the Central Agency of Statistic of Indonesia (*Badan Pusat Statistik*) in 2020, the total population of Indonesia was 270,203,917 people. With massive rallies and enormous budget spent, Indonesia's 8th presidential election was held on 14th February 2024, which was the world's largest single-day election to elect a president and vice president, along with nearly 20,000 representatives to national, provincial, and district parliaments from a pool of a quarter million candidates (Jaffrey, 2023).

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The display of religious and ethnic chauvinism messages in political campaigns in Indonesia arose during Jakarta's 2017 Governor Election, which brought many negative sentiments among citizens. It was first fuelled by one of the election candidates, Anies Baswedan, also a former Governor of Jakarta (2017–2022), and then the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election candidates. During the governor's campaign, he abandoned his own moderate reputation to ally with hard-liner Islamist forces who accused the incumbent governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (famously known as "Ahok"), conducted a blasphemy. These supports have been proven to assist him in winning the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election (Rachman, 2023).

Research from the National Research and Innovation Agency (*Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional* – BRIN), the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election has been reported as the worst-case election in Indonesian political history (Badriyanto, 2017), because of many issues and incidents related to race, religion, and ethnicity, which obscured sense and reasonable. Research from Populi Centre revealed that some issues arose in the election regarding race, religion, and ethnicity, were an appeal to vote only on Muslim candidates and not to conduct *shalat jenazah* (prayer for the dead) to Muslims who favoured into the non-Muslim candidate. There were many banners written "*This Musholla (a prayer room) does not perform prayer to supporters and defenders of religion's blasphemer. Let us support Muslim's Governor*" across the city's streets and residential areas. Those media contents contained a lot of provocative and propaganda campaigns that brought up the issues of religion which divided the society. The situation caused by escalated issues has become segregated and intimidated by society (Lestari, 2017).

The phenomenon of divided voters in the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election was happened when a group of people took issues of religion and ethnicity as campaign materials to win one party. The issue of identity continued to be politicized with the emergence of instigation to not vote for candidates with different religions from voters (Sweinstani & Hasanah, 2017). This social turmoil became extremely escalated in the continuous wave of "*Aksi Bela Islam*" (Action for Defending Islam) rally in December 2016 with the basis of the solidarity of identity similarity. This identity politicization did not end immediately after the election; otherwise, segregation, polarization, and fragmentation of society remained due to differences in political choice (Kristimanta & Sweinstani, 2018).

The study found that online media in Indonesia experienced escalation in hate speech activities during the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election (Juditha, 2017). The Indonesian Election Supervisory Board (*Badan Pengawas Pemilihan Umum Indonesia* – BAWASLU) made "identity politics" as new indicator in the 2018 Election Vulnerability Index. They argued that the rampant religious discourses and politics after the presidential election in 2014 as well as the massive rallies along the Jakarta election indicates the strengthening of identity politicization ahead of the 2019 General Election (Herdiansah & Ismiati, 2017).

Identity politicization occurred during the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election has caused three significant effects: 1) increasing negative sentiments towards minority groups, especially Chinese and Christian Indonesians; 2) increasing the number of acts of persecution and discrimination carried out because of differences in religion, ethnicity, or political choice; and 3) causing public polarization on social media. Since the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election, the number of persecution cases has increased, resulting in the highest number of prohibition and intimidation cases carried out by vigilant mass organizations. It has brought dilemmas among Muslim communities in Jakarta, such as Chinese Muslims, either to select

leaders based on religion or ethnic groups (Wirman et al., 2022). The practice of identity politics focusing on displaying Islamic religious symbols and the emergence of radical Islamic movements around upper-middle-class Muslims in Indonesia resulted in vigorous campaigns and support for Anies Baswedan during the election. It highlights the need for effective strategies to prevent and address hate speech violations (Anggraeni & Adrinoviarini, 2020).

Having the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election as a case study of social dispute, this article aims to explore communication strategies performed in the 2024 Indonesia Presidential Election. The analysis employs URT to regulate how interpersonal communication can improve the relationship between every participant in political campaigns to prevent individuals from engaging in inappropriate self-disclosure and exposure from political instability during the campaigns that can cause behavioural uncertainty and that can lead them to participate in society's collision. The study is regulated based on the following objectives:

- Objective 1: To provide a broad overview or background output within the academic literature on political communication strategies on interpersonal relationship between voters and political candidates in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election.
- Objective 2: To describe and interpret the overview or background output within the academic literature on the trend of political communication by discerning research articles which focus on the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT), also known as the initial interaction theory, developed in 1975 by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese, is a communication theory from the post-positivist tradition. Communication theory that specifically investigates the initial interaction between people prior to the actual communication process (West & Turner, 2014). The main goal of the URT originator was to explain how communication was used to reduce the uncertainty between strangers during the first interaction.

According to Berger and Calabrese (1975), most people begin interaction in the entry phase, defined as the beginning stage of a communication encounter between strangers. The entry phase is guided by implicit and explicit rules, and norms. Individuals then enter the second stage, called the personal phase in which the interactants start to communicate more spontaneously and reveal more idiosyncratic information. The personal phase can occur during an initial encounter but is more likely to begin after repeated interactions. The third stage, called the exit phase, refers to the stage during which individuals make decisions about whether they wish to continue interacting with their partner in the future. Although not all people enter a phase in the same manner or stay in a phase for a similar amount of time, Berger and Calabrese believed that this universal framework explains how interpersonal communication shapes and reflects the development of interpersonal relationships (West & Turner, 2014).

Berger also describes three approaches to predict how others might react to messages using three strategies: passive, active, and interactive (West & Turner, 2014). First, a passive strategy occurs, when an individual unobtrusively observes others from a certain distance. Second, an active strategy exists when an observer engages in some type of effort other than direct contact to find another person. For instance, one person may ask a third party for

information about the other. Third, an interactive strategy occurs when the observer and another person engage in direct contact or face-to-face interactions. This strategy is the quickest route for reducing uncertainty. Although all strategies are critical to reducing uncertainty, Berger believes that certain behaviours, such as asking inappropriately sensitive questions, may increase rather than decrease uncertainty. Thus, people may need additional reduction strategies.

The Uncertainty Reduction Theory can be used as a fundamental framework of political communication strategies in Indonesian election campaigns to avoid race, religion, and ethnicity issues. URT is applied to explain the uncertainty arising from the relationship between an entity (both individual and government included) and the environment (Xing, 2023). This theory serves as a justification that political candidates can reduce self-uncertainty which result from a lack of relevant self-knowledge, meaning someone cannot describe, explain, or predict one's own behaviors, ideas, or emotions; as well as increase trust among voters by providing clear and transparent information throughout interpersonal communication. Research made by Grace and Tham (2021) used URT to lay down guidelines to reduce uncertainty in each phase of the crisis, explaining how organizations should modify their service protocols and communicative methods.

METHODOLOGY

This study applied a narrative review that is a method of appraising and synthesizing the existing evidence. It may also be categorized as synthesis research because the author can summarize and interpret existing knowledge from previous primary studies. It also allows the researcher to present their own unique perspective on the topic where results are presented subjectively, in a manner determined by the author (Theile & Beall, 2024). As distinguished from systematic review, a narrative review can address one or more questions with a much broader scope. The analysis presented in the narrative review can be discussed within the themes, methodology, chronology, or issues according to the research questions or objectives. The author may also present their own unique perspective or opinion on the topic provided that the guidelines are followed for the specific scholarly publication. Based on narrative review characteristics, the authors applied its method as a foundation of the study to identify specific issues of strategies and trend in political communication in the context of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election. The fundamental concept about narrative review is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Narrative review main concepts

Question/Objective Scope	Applicability Scope	Limitation	Strength
Broad overview or background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Social Sciences● Humanities● Management Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It does not follow strict eligibility criteria or specific regulation in searching evidence.● Informal and flexible; non-standardized.● The study selection is based on author-driven and subjective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It covers wide analysis.● There are more prone to bias and error.● There are high potentials on integrating studies with various research questions or objectives and approaches or methodologies.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The search strategy is not necessarily comprehensive and reproducible.● There are no traces on how conclusion and decision is made about pertinence of studies.● There are no traces on validity conducted of the included studies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● There are benefits that can be extended with other types of literature review.● Flexibility and useful for context, education, and hypothesis generation. |
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In this study, the authors utilized The PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram to assess the total number of the journal articles included in the review paper. Although, PRISMA is primarily designed for systematic reviews and meta-analyses, however, narrative reviewers can adapt elements of PRISMA, particularly the flow diagram and search documentation, to improve its transparency (Kulkarni, 2026). There are some guidelines for a systematic review provided by the Cochrane Handbook, ROSES, and the PRISMA statement that can help determine the protocol, and methodology to be used, but that kinds of standard guidelines do not exist for a narrative review, though some recommendations are available (Green et al., 2006). Thus, since there is no consensus on the standard structure of a narrative review yet, the design of the review depends on its author and the objectives of the review. However, a narrative review structure must respect the journal style and conventions followed in the respective field.

Since the PRISMA guidelines require a systematic set of inclusion and exclusion criteria, The articles selection in this study is based on the inclusion criteria of: 1) Published in the year of 2023 (before the election), 2024 (during the presidential election campaigns), and 2025 (after election); 2) Suited with the search queries of “government communication strategies during the 2024 Indonesian presidential election” and “the communication strategies of the 2024 Indonesian presidential election” as well as “The 2024 Indonesian presidential election communication strategies”; 3) Because of the key subject of this study focused on explaining political communication strategies during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election, the author proffered more scientific publications from Indonesia with criterion of Sinta indexed (Indonesia journal indexing from The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology of Republic of Indonesia) from Indonesia’s Garuda Online Database. The exclusion criteria consist of studies that were not peer-reviewed, or duplicates were excluded before the analysis, hence the literatures which published as books, book reviews and/or unmatched with the search queries also excluded from the study. The quality assessment was run with a peer-review approach involving two authors, where the two other authors extensively read the title and abstract of each article to determine which one to include in the full-text screening.

The search resulted 51 articles were reviewed and examined for relevance based on the article’s title, method, and findings related to the objectives. The search strategy in this study used terms from the categories and their synonyms, such as “Indonesian Election”, “2024 Indonesian Election”, and “Indonesian Political Campaign”, in English, and targeting peer-reviewed articles published from 2023 to 2025. Only relevant subject areas in social sciences and humanities were included in the study. After careful screening of the articles, it was chosen 30 articles corresponding to the review objectives in the following stages: all identified studies were assessed for inclusion or exclusion with inclusion/exclusion criteria

adapted as well. Studies published only in research journals; hence, literature published in books, book reviews, and/or with the search term in the reference list only, and conference proceedings, were excluded from the study. Based on these criteria and agreed upon by the researchers, 21 of 51 studies were further excluded, leaving a total of 30 studies for inclusion. Figure 1 was prepared based on The PRISMA flow diagram, as given in the PRISMA 2020 statement.

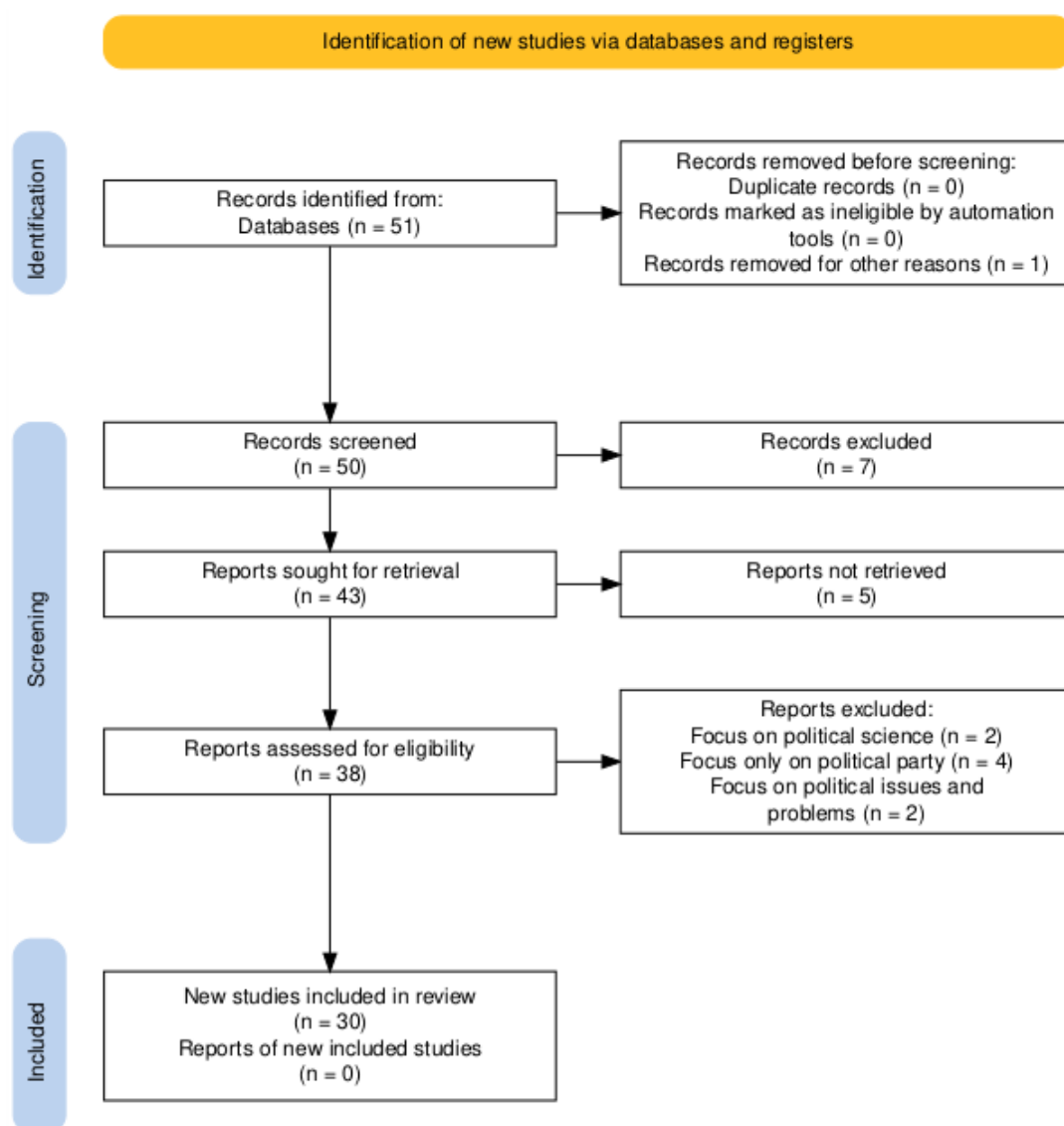


Figure 1: The PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for the included studies in the study

The articles were reduced one by one following strict eligibility criteria to ensure each of them belonged to the specific area of interest by carefully reading their abstracts, study objectives, and methodological procedures. With 30 studies have been identified, published in English, full-text, and available online, from year 2023 until 2025, there are two papers applying quantitative approach using survey technique and one has mixed method approach with primary method is survey supported by data qualitative from in-depth interview and documentary study, while 27 articles applies qualitative approach with method of participatory observation, in-depth interview, qualitative content analysis, framing analysis,

and discourse analysis, as shown in Figure 2 and Appendix. The extracted literature data highlights the qualitative methodology as a strong dominance in the study showed the need to interpret complex socio-political narrative in Indonesia. The dominance of qualitative content analysis suggests that most scholars are primarily focused on decoding the messages sent by the presidential candidates rather than measuring the broad-scale effects on the electorate as mostly examined in most quantitative research in which the results view online media as a primary communication tool in political campaigns and supported by direct communication with voters.

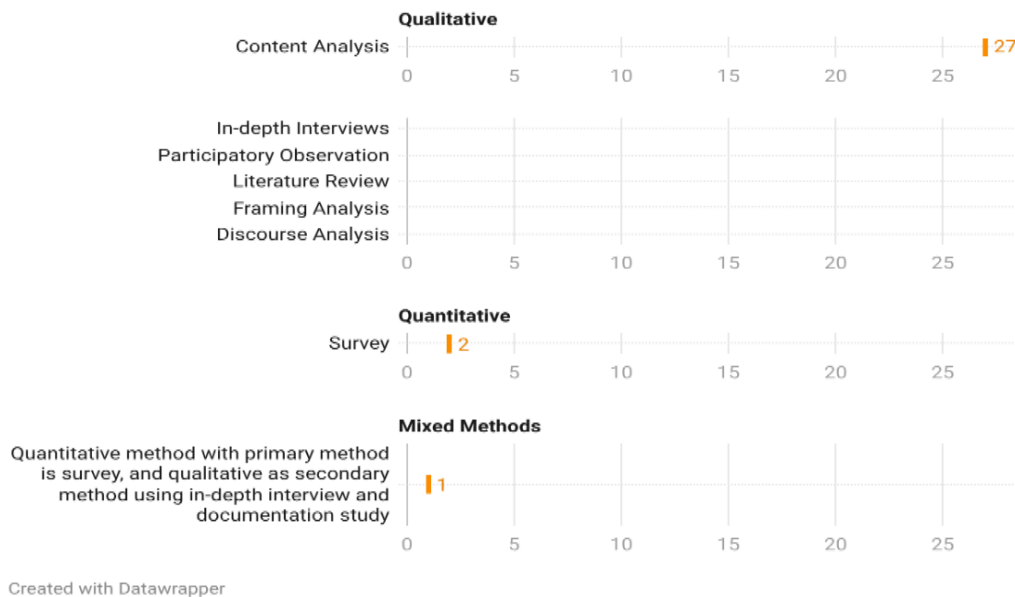


Figure 2: Methodological approaches of review articles

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As stated previously, Indonesia's electoral landscape often faces controversy and allegations that lead to uncertainty among the citizens. The controversy reached its peak in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election which is considered the worst-case election in Indonesian political history. Accordingly, this narrative review confers an ample analysis regarding the utilization of communication strategies to construct interpersonal relationship between voters and political candidates for anticipating any politicization turmoil in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election. By exploring the strategies, this study also exposed the trend of political communication in Indonesia by discerning research articles subjected to the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election.

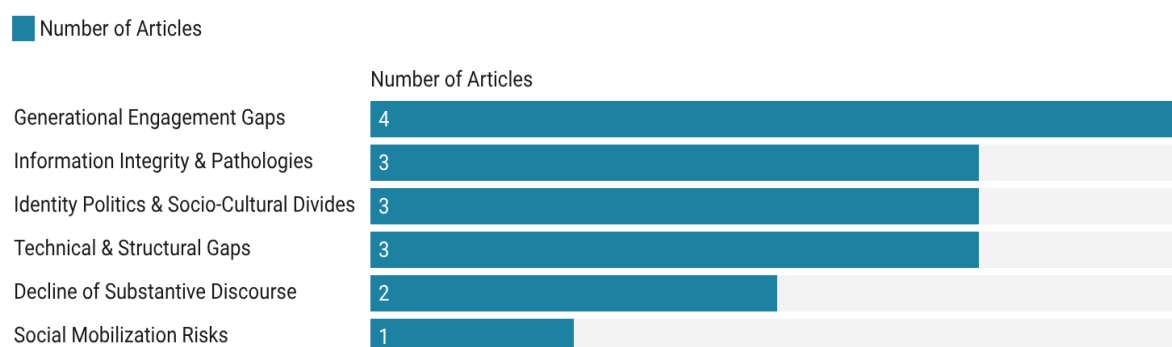
a. *Election Common Issues in Indonesia*

Indonesia's electoral landscape often faces controversies and allegations of irregularities that lead to cognitive and behavioural uncertainties among its citizens. Some situations that contribute to these uncertainties arose from political parties and their candidates, who often engage in intense campaigning, vying for voter support through rallies, advertisements, and social media outreach, and allegations of electoral fraud, vote-buying, and intimidation have marred past elections in Indonesia. It is a recurring issue in money politics, where candidates

utilize financial resources to sway voter opinions and secure electoral victory and remains a persistent challenge that erodes public trust in the electoral process.

The Indonesian government has taken steps to address these issues, improve the electoral process, and work closely with related government institutions, political parties, candidates, and other relevant parties to fulfil the need for ongoing reforms and vigilance to uphold democratic principles. During the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election campaigns, The Ministry of Communication and Information of Republic of Indonesia joined with other government institutions such as The Indonesian National Police and The Election Supervisory Agency, conducted some strategies to prevent hoaxes (Putra & Nugroho, 2024; Khairunnisa & Nugroho, 2024), such as 1) the National Digital Literacy Movement (*Gerakan Nasional Literasi Digital/GNLD*) to promote digital literacy to all societal levels; 2) moderated, curated, and removed contents that contain false information; 3) an Election Monitoring Desk to enforce laws against individuals who produce and disseminate hoaxes and hate speeches; 4) collaboration with mass media to prevent misinformation and ensure the dissemination of accurate information into voters; and 5) continuous evaluation and re-planning of communication strategies for improving electoral integrity and transparency.

Figure 3 shows some main issues raised up before and during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election campaigns. Most significant issue is shown in 4 articles that highlights generational engagement gaps which contribute an insight to each presidential candidate and its party to emphasize the challenge on capturing the interest of younger voters from millennial and Z generation, as well as building positive image in first-time voters' perception. These insights are beneficial for the candidates to establish an authentic connection with the voters. Additionally, there are five issues exposed from other articles divided into themes of information integrity and pathologies, identity politics and socio-cultural divides, technical and structural gaps, decline of substantive discourse, and social mobilization risks. Each theme brings forward issues categories that reveal specific shown in the articles as shown in Table 2. Recognizing the election issues before and during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election campaigns allowed the candidates and its parties planning the political communication strategies to avoid political turmoil.



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Figure 3: Election main issues in the 2024 Indonesian presidential election campaigns

Table 2: Issue categories in the 2024 Indonesian presidential election

Main issue	Issue Category	Source of Article
Generational Engagement Gaps	Millennial & Gen Z apathy; First-time voter perception; Authentic connection	Sompotan & Alvin, 2023; Elfandari, 2024; Mani et al., 2024; Febrianto & Purnamasari, 2023
Information Integrity & Pathologies	Hoaxes and false information; Misinformation on social media; Need for content moderation	Wildanu & Agasya, 2024; Putra & Nugroho, 2024; Khairunnisa & Nugroho, 2024
Identity Politics & Socio-Cultural Divides	Cultural divides; Identity over policy; Religious populism	Arrianie et al., 2024; Alyatalathaf, 2024; Putri et al., 2023
Technical & Structural Gaps	Digital literacy gaps; Geographical/archipelago logistics; Traditional-to-Digital transition	Hardiyanto et al., 2023; Putra & Nugroho, 2024; Anom et al., 2024
Decline of Substantive Discourse	Politainment shift; Image dominance	Kulau, 2024; Satriawan et al., 2025
Social Mobilization Risks	Volunteer fragmentation	Buana & Perdana, 2024

b. Uncertainty Reduction in Political Campaign: Building Interpersonal Relationship

Learning from the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election that widely caused society's dispute and collision, every pertinent involved in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election carefully planned and conducted political strategies into communication strategies to avoid the same faux pas. This study reviews some of the campaign strategies using the perspectives of Uncertainty Reduction Theory on how to reduce uncertainty and increase trust among the public. Communication strategies applied in each stage assist communicators in building trust and interest among the target voters, leading to vigorous interpersonal relationships between electoral candidates and voters.

The first phase was to build an interpersonal relationship between the campaign communicator and its participants in the entry stage. Communicators should increase communication frequency and leverage familiar protocols by adapting coalition-building strategies to bridge the cultural differentiation among voters. These cultural adaptation strategies mobilized supports across Indonesia's heterogeneous electorate (Arrianie et al., 2024). The selection of language on crafting messages campaigns by aligning their language with the concerns and demographic can enhance advantages, establish authority, and persuade voters, with emphasis on candidates' experiences and intellectual authorities to project trustworthiness and competence (Zamihu, 2024).

The implementation of this coalition strategy can be conducted in the 2024 Indonesia Presidential Election by developing a single narrative in public communication during campaigns, with creating the themes that usually already prescribed from main authorities, in this case is "The Indonesia General Elections Commission" (Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia). Crafting online political campaign slogans that resonates with a multi-generational audience can significantly influence voters' perceptions and engagement during elections. The slogans aid in shaping public knowledge regarding candidates' visions and missions (Rozi, 2023). The narrative is communicated through constructive interaction, collaboration, and intensive communication on digital media (Nugraha et al., 2022), and the optimization of call-to-action messages to maximize reach and impact.

Another campaign message that can attract spontaneous reactions among voters is a campaign song. One of phenomenal song of “*Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Gas*” effectively conveyed political messages and influenced public perceptions and opinions of the pair candidates, Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming. This highlights that modern political communication strategies should disseminate political messages with conformity to fully engage with voters (Purwanto, 2024).

Presidential candidates can use social media more effectively than traditional billboards and banners can. The use of social media during political elections can help lower intrapersonal relationship uncertainty. Referring to URT, social media can be used to increase communication frequency, especially between candidates and their potential voters, because social media has an extreme effect on its users. Two candidates, Prabowo Subianto and Ganjar Pranowo, successfully employed Instagram to shape political narratives and engaged with younger voters. Using Instagram, the @prabowo account is characterized by a strong spirit of nationalism and patriotic themes in its content, while @ganjar_pranowo account adopts a more societal approach, such as current issues that resonate with the public (Febrianto & Purnamasari, 2023). Anies Baswedan utilized “X” platform (formerly known as Twitter) in shaping public perceptions and engagement during elections. The hashtag of #nazarpemilu during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election campaigns originated from Baswedan’s supporters to bring hopes and promises. Even though the hashtag appealed to be religiously formed, it can play an effective role in spreading populist political communication among niche voters (Putri et al., 2024).

Utilizing social media communication strategies can enhance political parties and candidates’ electability, especially to attract Millennial and Z Generation audiences’ attention and participation in the election (Sompotan & Alvin, 2023). Thus, social media in political communication serves as a record at this stage that functions as a reminder and amplifies public messaging. Moreover, social media in political campaigns also assists in reducing uncertainty in intrapersonal relationships stages (Sheldon, 2009).

On the personal stage, political communicators and voters start to communicate more spontaneously and reveal more idiosyncratic information. Candidates’ political speeches during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election brought two-ways interactive communication between voters and candidates. Applying multimodal elements such as visual, audio, gestural components, and spatial elements in political speeches can enhance the visibility of campaign message strategies to shape the political branding of each candidate. Successful political branding involves deep understanding of the elements of appearance, personality, and messaging. All of these can aid candidates in crafting political campaigns that are more impactful (Fatikha & Suranto, 2024). Pranowo’s political branding on social media, particularly Instagram, is categorized into four main aspects: policy, person, party, and presentation (Purwanto & Mujab, 2024). He excelled in appearance aspects, particularly in the dress style and conveyed his major political messages focusing on desire (Fatikha & Suranto, 2024).

Anies Baswedan conveyed his speaking manners and emphasized the significance of achievement by highlighting his political messages through images, videos, and infographics to build his self-image as a leader who is vocal, critical, close to the people, experienced, competent, and deeply concerned with environmental issues and sustainable development (Dawam et al., 2024).

Prabowo Subianto managed his political branding into three brand hierarchy: (1) The house brand was “Prabowo Subianto 2024”; (2) The platform brands were “Humanism”, “Continuity”, “Bersama Indonesia Maju”, “Militarism”, and “Free Lunch”; (3) The product brand was “*Aksi Gemoy*”. These brand qualifications aim to build a strong public image by aligning branding efforts with societal perspectives to gain trust and emotional connections among voters (Wijanarko et al., 2025).

Planning and organizing political branding with multimodal elements can be practically applied by political parties and candidates to communicate spontaneously with voters. A deep understanding of their values and expectations is essential for developing an effective campaign strategy that aligns with political ideology to convey honest and ingenious messages to foster voters’ trust and support (Niazi, 2024). Thus, carefully crafted campaign messages embedded in candidate speeches, advertisements, interviews, and debates also influence voter behavior (Dabros, 2010). The important thing is to ensure that key messages receive media coverage to build a good image in the eyes of the public, which in turn can influence voters’ behavior.

The exit stage refers to the stage during which individuals make decisions about whether they wish to continue interacting with their partner in the future. In the context of political communication, communicators should gradually communicate with voters to build trust and interest to enhance voters’ engagement and participation in the electoral process. Learning from the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, voters in Indonesia have discovered some experiences and insights from their circumstances. Thus, presidential candidates are encouraged to attract and influence their voters by performing persuasive political communication using direct communication (Nasution et al., 2020).

Direct communication can assist candidates to gain insights and communicate with voters to help communicate their political communication strategies to all levels of society. This strategy should involve all community and religious figures such as clerics, clerics, preachers, and social figures. A presidential candidate, Ganjar Pranowo engaged with his volunteer’s community named “The Lampung Friends of Ganjar Pranowo (SaGa)” to facilitate two-ways communication between the candidate and the community. This political communication strategy can facilitate direct interaction, which leads to favorable public perception and enhances a candidate’s electability (Daud, 2023).

Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar collaborated with a youth volunteer movement called “*Ubah Bareng*” (Change Together) to engage volunteers’ movement into the candidates’ political campaigns, including gathered with the K-Pop-based community volunteer, as well as affiliated with Indonesian Football National Team. Implementing direct communication with the target audience during the electoral process would be beneficial for creating a more dynamic and responsive approach to mobilizing voters (Buana & Perdana, 2024). It has also been shown that adapting marketing strategies, either using traditional media or social media, is essential in the digital era to mobilize voters’ interest and sympathy for candidates and enhance voters’ engagement (Hardiyanto et al., 2023).

As seen in Table 3, digital platforms diversify the strategies available to political campaigns. The 11 journal articles highlight Instagram as a most-applicable campaign medium used by all three presidential candidates and volunteers’ communities. This indicates that the candidates focused on the personalization of politics that aims to create personal identity visually that capturing voters’ interest. Traditional media, such as live debate on the television and direct communication with the volunteers at the campaign events, were also utilized by

all candidates to establish intellectual authority and preventing volunteer fragmentation because direct interactions are still required to sustain them. Candidates' visualization using Artificial intelligence (AI) has been employed largely by Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabumi for building their political branding among young voters. Digital platforms such as X, YouTube and TikTok were employed simultaneously by the candidates for distinct communicative functions. On the other hand, platforms focused on text content such as X (Twitter) were rarely utilized, in which indicates media change due to the rise of social media.

Table 3: Summary of digital communication campaign strategies

Campaign Medium	Frequency (Article)	Communication Objective	Primary User
Instagram	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visual branding ● Personal identity ● Lifestyle building ● Capturing interest via hashtags 	Prabowo Subianto Anies Baswedan Ganjar Pranowo Volunteers' communities
X (Twitter)	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Real-time public engagement ● Transparency reputation ● Populist image building ● Information monitoring 	Anies Baswedan Ganjar Pranowo
YouTube	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multimodal speeches ● Volunteer documentation 	Prabowo Subianto Anies Baswedan
TikTok	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Politainment (Politic & Entertainment) ● Voters' engagement 	Prabowo Subianto
Traditional Media (TV; direct communication)	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Authority maintenance ● Broaden reach ● Establishing intellectual authority ● Trust building ● Preventing volunteer fragmentation 	Prabowo Subianto Anies Baswedan Ganjar Pranowo Volunteers' communities
AI Visualization	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political branding ● Personal branding 	Prabowo Subianto

c. Integrating Three URT Strategies on Political Communication Campaigns

Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) proposes three strategies to promote information acquisition and thus reduce uncertainty: passive strategy, active strategy, and interactive strategy. These three strategies can be implemented for persuasive communication during the 2024 Indonesia Presidential Election. Based on the literature's analysis using the theory, we can synthesize the most implemented strategies to establish interpersonal relationship between voters and the presidential candidates and reduce uncertainty during the campaigns as shown in Figure 4.

An active strategy indicates no direct interactions with the target, but some indirect ones, and therefore makes overt attempts to collect information because the information seeker often searches online or ask others, thus deriving knowledge, opinion, sense of worth, and information become the centre of this strategy. To ensure that the public understands and contributes to the success of the campaign program, the Indonesia General Elections

Commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum/KPU*) needs to inform voters about the election's messages, which include the entire process and stages of the election. The public is entitled to information regarding the current electoral process. According to Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, the Provincial General Election Commission's duty is to inform the public of all information regarding elections (Asrikhah & Anom, 2023). The KPU's communication goal in general elections is to encourage voters to engage in an event. Therefore, the KPU must be able to enhance its role by actively communicating at every stage, especially at the entry stage of the election process to generate self-awareness and public understanding of the importance of the election.

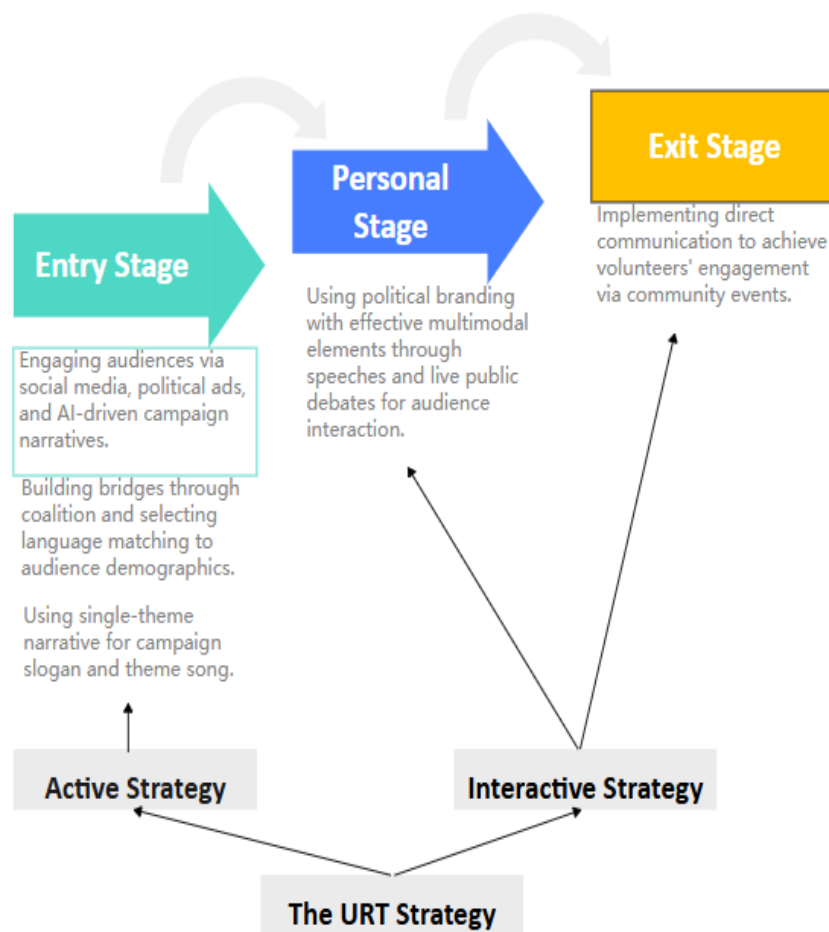


Figure 4: The URT strategy in interpersonal relationship

An interactive strategy involves communicating directly with the target and seeking information along the way. A better approach to this strategy is to seek reciprocated disclosures during a conversation, since the exchange of self-disclosure is in line with social norms. Overall, interaction strategies rely heavily on one's communication skills, requiring people to incur substantial face threats, and are therefore unfriendly to some people. Voter relations plans are a method for approaching voters (Liaw et al., 2022). Election candidate should be aware that resources are very limited. These resources included time, energy (volunteers) and money. Therefore, these limited resources should be used as much as possible to reach out to voters. Using many volunteers as human resources would be

beneficial for campaign teams, such as placing volunteers stationed at the movement centre for public reference. They can also be mobilized to the door of voters' houses to lobby votes (Liaw et al., 2022).

Based on the synthesize of literatures, the interpersonal relationship strategy in the political campaigns is planned and structured across three sequential stages: entry, personal, and exit, where each of them integrates specific communication strategies and tactical instruments. In the entry stage, the campaign emphasizes more active strategy to reduce uncertainty through coalition-building bridges which tailored by demographic-based language selection, intensive social media utilization across platforms such as Instagram, X, YouTube, and podcasts, AI-driven political advertising, and a single-theme narrative reinforced by campaign slogans. These tactics function to create message consistency, increase visibility, and establish initial cognitive familiarity with the audience. The implementation of active strategies in the entry stage of political campaigns allows voters becoming the observers and engage in some types of efforts from another person across platforms to discover potential information to broaden their perspectives on candidates. Simultaneously, media and content monitoring introduce an interactive dimension, enabling feedback loops, literacy campaigns, and election monitoring desks that facilitate two-way engagement.

In the personal stage, political branding employed by candidates in the political campaigns can perform multimodal elements, such as campaign speeches and live public debates that strengthen relational depth between voters and candidates through interactive communication, allowing audiences to directly evaluate candidate's credibility and competence. Lastly, the exit stage shifts toward sustained relational maintenance via direct communication, volunteer engagement, and community events that reinforcing interactive uncertainty management and consolidating long-term trust. The interactive strategy implemented in the personal and exit phase enables voters to engage in direct contact or face-to-face interactions with every respective party in campaign. According to Berger and Calabrese (1975), this strategy is the quickest route for reducing uncertainty. In conclusion, the progression from active to interactive uncertainty reduction strategies demonstrates a deliberate movement from information dissemination to relational consolidation and participatory engagement.

d. Trend of Political Communication in Indonesia

The review on the communication strategies in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election between 2023 and 2025 has fulfilled the initially proposed objectives. The study demonstrates that establishing and nourishing the interpersonal relationship between voters and the presidential candidates are very essential roles to reduce uncertainty during the political year. A synthesize of the findings organized the overall key themes associated with the trend of political communication in Indonesia into four foremost themes as shown in Table 4. The review identified digital branding and AI integration become the most cited and discussed trends surrounding political communication during presidential election, followed by trend of social engagement and mobilization of young voters using interactive contents on social media to personalize the communication strategies, building, and maintaining their credibility and trust with implementing information governance and integrity, and about communication personalization on campaign messages.

Table 4: Key themes of political communication trend in Indonesia

Primary Themes	Key Nodes	Authors
Digital Branding & Artificial Intelligence Integration	Artificial Intelligence, Visual Design, Political Branding, Personal Branding, "Aksi Gemoy".	Maulana et al., 2024; Hardiyanto et al., 2023; Febrianto & Purnamasari, 2023; Wijanarko et al., 2025
Social Engagement & Mobilization	Public Engagement, Hashtags #nazarpemilu, Volunteers communities, Youth Voters, Generation Z.	Arrianie et al., 2024; Praditama et al., 2024; Sompotan & Alvin, 2023.
Information Governance & Integrity	Digital Literacy, Hoax Prevention, Stakeholder Collaboration, Media Integrity, Law Enforcement.	Putra & Nugroho, 2024; Khairunnisa & Nugroho, 2024; Wildanu & Agasya, 2024.
Communication Personalization	Politainment, Live Streaming, Multimodal Speeches, Multimodal elements, Hybrid Communication, Campaign Songs.	Satriawan et al., 2025; Dawam et al., 2024; Syafii et al., 2023; Purwanto, 2024; Syah, 2024

Various studies highlight forms of digital branding and Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration in digital political communication strategies using social media as a primary platform to reach and influence voters in modern political campaigns, especially for beginner voters in Generation Z, therefore the politicians can develop effective communication strategies to target audiences and earn benefit from their point of view (Langemeyer et al., 2018). The phenomenon of digital branding fused with AI was booming in Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabumi campaign in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election that increasingly enliven conversations on various social media platforms (Wijanarko et al., 2025) and utilized the modern political communication strategies to disseminate political messages and engage with voters (Purwanto, 2024). This pleasant political message delivery successfully delivered them a victory in one-round election.

Trend of communication personalization in political communication employs multimodal visual elements suggesting that candidates should consider visual, audio, gestural components, and spatial elements, to enhance the visibility of their campaign message strategies (Syah, 2024). This trend of personalization at a personal and private level aids to convey emotional and candidates' personal impressions to be seen authentic and create closeness with the public (Russmann et al., 2019). It captures the process in which political ideologies are communicated visually to construct an individual's digital persona. These visual techniques are strategically employed by political parties and their candidates to disseminate political messages, foster civic engagement, and facilitate governmental communication with society (Abdullah et al., 2024). Digital platforms have served as powerful catalysts for civic mobilization and political participation that ultimately contributing to social engagement and mobilization. Nevertheless, public engagement in political campaigns should be guided by respect for pluralism and diversity of perspectives to contribute to a healthy and constructive debate, which is essential for strengthening democracy (Shaholli, 2025). Thus, each participant must adhere to information governance and integrity by implementing government policies to prevent any turmoil.

e. Suggestions on Reducing Uncertainty during Political Campaigns

Referring to the main issues emerge from the review shown on Table 2 are majority coming from the generational engagement gaps that caused young voters to become apathy. Issues such as hoaxes and false information and misinformation on social media also become the source of identity politics and socio-cultural divide. Those issues can pull triggers into society's collision during political events, thus knowledge acquisition regarding implementation of the uncertainty reduction theory contribution into political communication practice should be of major concern. To be precise, URT proffers guidelines to reduce uncertainty in each phase of the campaigns, explaining how political candidates and parties should modify their communicative methods (Grace et al., 2020).

Based on the three stages of interpersonal communication (Xing, 2023), in the entry stage, communicators should increase communication frequency and leverage familiar protocols. In the personal stage, communicators should recognize voters' needs and create interactive opportunities between them, and in the exit stage, communicators should make arrangements that define a supportive and constructive behavior during the campaigns. One of the main arguments of URT is the more the knowledge, the less the uncertainty. Thus, it is salient to reduce uncertainties, then knowledge acquisition should become a major concern by utilizing three strategies of URT to promote information acquisition. A passive strategy means merely inspecting someone without factual engagement, which makes it occasionally preferable to many individuals who want to acquire information yet prevent incurring face threats. Furthermore, an active strategy indicates no direct interactions with the target, but some indirect ones, and therefore make overt attempts to collect information. The information seeker often searches online or ask others, yet a more strategic effort to secure information is to construct the environment, which involves manipulating one's surroundings, watching how the target person responses to the context, and thus deriving knowledge of one's opinion, sense of worth, or individuality. Therefore, social media has become the significant tools to engage with the voters. An interaction strategy involves communicating directly with the target, seeking information along the way. Asking direct questions can be effective in gaining information, but it goes against common sense to question too much in an initial interaction, which is perceived as rude in many cultures. A better approach is to seek reciprocated disclosures during a conversation, since the exchange of self-disclosures is in line with social norms (Xing, 2023).

Berger and Calabrese (1975) pointed out that URT focuses not only on what someone might do (proactive process), but also on how people understand what another does or says (retroactive process). First, employ a hybrid media approach that combines social media and traditional media, focusing on real-time engagement with the public. Young voters aged 17 - 40 years old filled more than half of the eligible voters in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election. It placed the younger generation at the heart of Indonesia's democracy, signifying a dynamic shift in political engagement and the potential for future policy direction. On the other side, balancing social media with broadcasting media can significantly enhance public participation and balance information dissemination to facilitate public discussion on related issues during election. Second, combining the element of politics and entertainment into political messages, known as "politainment", has become a significant shift in Indonesia during the 2024 Presidential Election in Indonesia. As a political marketing strategy, politainment should be carried out simultaneously in an authentic and direct manner to attract young voters, especially Gen Z voters, which was largely driven by exposure to

attractive visual messaging. Using artificial intelligence (AI) in political marketing strategies can facilitate audience engagement and message retention, steer impactful communication, and potentially reshape electoral dynamics as well as influence public opinion. As a result, the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election campaigns implemented a delicate balance between leveraging digital platforms for public engagement while mitigating the risks of misinformation and societal divisiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study uncovers areas where URT can be employed by individuals to develop interpersonal communication during the political campaigns which means further articulate the theory by extending its borders. Theoretically, it summarizes existing knowledge regarding the framework of URT and creates bridgehead for future researchers who might want to advance the theory in the field of political communication. The evidence stated in this study is provided hints on where future studies could focus on. Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) can be applied as a framework for reducing uncertainty during political constellations. However, as URT is being applied to more types of communication beyond initial interpersonal one, its framework should be adjusted and refined accordingly with the wide range of circumstances. It is worth noting that the expansion of theory cannot exist singly without solid evidence, so that the feasibility of applying URT to other realms in communication should be tested scientifically, which is where future researchers might want to investigate. Example, to adapt the theory to political communication strategy to design and evaluate communication campaigns.

This study also features two implications on communication campaigns for managing the uncertainty. First, theoretically, this study emphasizes that Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) can be applied as a framework to reduce uncertainty reduction during political campaign, particularly the 2024 Indonesia Presidential Election campaign. Although, URT is being applied in interpersonal communication studies, its framework can be adjusted and refined accordingly with a wide range of contexts, including the political communication field. Second, in practice, this study offers insights into communication practitioners involved in government and political fields. They should plan communication strategies by developing interpersonal relationships between institutions and/or political parties and the target audience. It is not merely aiming for voters' attention, but also to persuasively communicate to enhance voters' engagement and participation in the electoral process.

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