

Framing ecological issues in local political contestations as part of political communication in the 2018 regional election

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the practice of political communication carried out by regional head candidates in the City of Kediri in the 2018 local elections in East Java. This paper focuses on conducting in-depth tracking of the framing of ecological issues in campaign practices carried out by regional head candidates in the 2018 local elections. This study aims to gain an understanding and knowledge related to the political communication practices of regional head candidates in responding to ecological issues in political contestation locally in East Java. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach that focuses on collecting data through interviews and documentation related to the political communication strategies of the 2018 Kediri mayoral candidates in communicating ecological issues to the public. The study results show that the political communication practices carried out by candidates in the 2018 regional elections have yet to make ecological issues a critical public issue. This is reflected in the campaign's content, which still focuses on socio-economic issues that prioritize aspects of infrastructure development for the community, not directing environmental conservation practices to support sustainable development.

Keywords:

ecological issues; east java; political communication; local election

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INTRODUCTION

Ecological damage and ecological conflicts are increasingly occurring at the local level. Several communities who experience negative impacts from the exploration and exploitation of natural resources (SDA) and environmental damage are carrying out struggle and resistance in order to ensure that the lives of residents are not increasingly threatened due to the decline in the supporting capacity of natural resources. Farmer groups who are

threatened by the water crisis and damage, women who increasingly experience difficulties in accessing resources, and communities around forests who are increasingly marginalized in forest management carry out a series of activities that demand the right to maintain natural resources while ensuring socio-economic life. Community culture does not experience degradation (Khalid, 2012).

As an effort to fight for the community's interests in preserving the environment and resources, political communication patterns from the community in encouraging and raising the issue of ecological conflict to public attention also determine the outcome of the community's struggle. Political communication carried out by the community regarding ecological damage and the impacts it experiences will be more effective in achieving goals if it can be integrated with formal political contestation agendas such as during post-conflict regional elections.

Regional elections that take place at the regional level are a political arena that can be utilized by both the community and regional head candidates to make ecological issues a strategic issue in political communication during the campaign period. The community can take advantage of the momentum of the post-conflict regional elections to conduct participatory dialogue with candidates regarding the issue of natural resource exploration and exploitation in the region. In fact, it is possible for the public to protest and demand the regional head candidate's commitment to preserving the environment and natural resources at the local level. On the candidate's side, political communications during the campaign period can also be used to gain support from the public through attention to ecological issues included in the candidate's political campaign materials.

This article is part of the results of research carried out in the City of Kediri, East Java in 2018 during the post-conflict regional elections with several concept updates. Theoretical and development of more comprehensive analysis. This article is intended to carry out in-depth tracking of political communication practices that take place in local political contests carried out by regional head candidates. Specifically, this research focuses on the extent to which political candidates (regional head candidates) mainstream ecological (environmental) issues in political communication practices (campaigns) at the regional level. The aim of this research is to gain knowledge and understanding regarding the forms and strategies of political communication of regional head candidates in responding to ecological issues in the 2018 post-conflict regional election campaign. The urgency of conducting this study is because there are still not many studies that discuss the phenomenon of political communication of regional head candidates that include ecological issues in campaign and political agenda.

To explore how the strategies of political parties and politicians raise ecological (environmental) issues in political contestation at the regional level, researchers borrow several frameworks. Theoretical relevant matters, such as 1) understanding ecological conflict from an Indonesian perspective, 2) political communication in political contestation at the regional level, and 3) campaign strategies for political candidates. First, ecological issues are often ignored by various parties because the implications of environmental damage whose effects are not immediately visible or immediately felt make it easy for various parties to ignore the issue. The issue of climate change (including environmental issues) was discussed again by the media when a young environmental activist, Greta Thunberg, delivered a speech with the opening sentence *How dare you?* very emotionally in front of world leaders at the UN Summit on Climate Change in New York, United States. In her speech, Greta said that so far world leaders have only been able to create environmental campaign advertisements on the political agenda without any sustainable activities that can save the earth from global warming. Environmental issues are often used by politicians as

gimmick politics with the aim of gaining popularity and increasing electability among young people (BBC News Indonesia, 2019).

Ecological issues tend to be ignored by politicians because politicians prioritize the interests of momentary economic pragmatism which is full of transactional economic and political nuances. Khalisa Khalid, a WALHI environmental activist, stated that there are still many people's representatives who lack commitment to the various environmental crises currently occurring in Indonesia (Khalid, 2012). Based on reports from *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF) in 2021 entitled *The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis* shows that young people in Indonesia are one of the groups in the world who face quite high risks related to the impacts of climate change. Moreover, in 2030, Indonesia will be in the demographic bonus phase where the youth population will increase sharply. Therefore, environmental issues (climate change) have once again become a national issue which is often cited by political actors on both national and local scales.

Second, citing the results of the 2023 Indonesian Political Indicators (IPI) survey which showed that almost all political parties only achieved a score below 5% regarding their priorities in the agenda of discussing environmental cases. This finding seems to strengthen politicians' arguments that they realize that environmental issues are important but have not yet become a party priority because they are not considered issues that can increase popularity, let alone electability. Include Ecological issues on the agenda of political parties and politicians still feel like they are abrogating obligations, and there is no visible realization of sustainability actions other than tree planting activities and other ceremonial actions.

The IPI survey findings are related to the low level concern political parties mentioning environmental issues seems to be trying to balance the opinion of a politician, Anies Rasyid Baswedan - the presidential candidate supported by the Nasdem Party in the 2024 election. Quoting his writings in the newspaper *Media Indonesia* (2023), he called for the current condition of the earth to be no longer 'climate change', but rather a 'climate crisis'. According to him, so far various commitments to resolve the climate crisis have been made with high targets, but their activation and achievement have not been as high as expected. Through his writings, Anies Baswedan wants to show that environmental issues-in this case climate change or the climate crisis - should be the main concern of politicians. The political agenda which so far still revolves around a political-economic perspective, should begin to list ecological issues that have had an impact in Indonesia in the last 10 years.

Anies Baswedan's opinion above seems to show that the alignment of political parties and politicians towards ecological issues creates the possibility that electability figures will increase. This is reinforced by the results of the 2021 IPI study show 82% of young people are worried about environmental damage, with 74% of them worried about the impact of pollution. The high level of concern of young people - who in fact are one of the largest voter groups in elections in Indonesia - regarding environmental issues is expected to encourage political parties and politicians in Indonesia to pay more attention to environmental issues in their political programs. Although, there are still candidates who only use ecological (environmental) issues as a means gimmick politics to be considered 'already have awareness and concern on ecological (environmental) issues'.

Environmental political anomalies from political actors are actually at odds with the facts on the ground related to the increasing public concern and attention to ecological issues. One indicator of this is the emergence of protest activities from the community related to environmental damage that occurred in various regions. This confirms that the public is actually smarter in responding to the environmental crisis through their social activism (Sigit, 2014).

The contestation of interests that accompanies ecological conflict takes place at several levels. As in the category of ecological conflict, it can take place at several levels, including: community conflict with the state, conflict between communities that transcend state boundaries, conflict between communities and multinational companies, and conflict between governments (Alao, 2007). There are several explanations related to the factors that cause ecological conflict. The classification of causes of ecological conflict is divided into three categories, namely: (1) scarcity and/or abundance; (2) gaps; (3) patterns of government policy making (Ratner et al., 2013). These three categories are intertwined to form ecological conflict. Meanwhile Alao (2007) looks more at factors such as availability in terms of quality and quantity; management politics; the complexity of the extraction process, as a cause of ecological conflict.

If ecological conflict is not immediately managed, it is possible for the conflict to expand from its starting point. Several factors influence the expansion of conflict, including (1) conflict is used to maintain income; (2) the emergence of victims due to contestation over resources; (3) there is no compromise on conflict resolution steps; (4) increasing number of parties involved in the conflict; and (5) the involvement of external parties in the ongoing conflict (Dahrendorf in Rosana, 2015).

Creating a medium for discussing environmental problems and finding solutions to resolve ecological conflicts is very relevant to develop. Political contestation actually provides good momentum to build spaces for dialogue between politicians and the public in establishing political communication that discusses ecological issues.

McNair (2017) a political communication academic from Australia defines political communication as communication practices that have political aims or "*purposeful communication about politics*". The classic definition of political communication is communication that is directed towards achieving an influence in such a way that the problems discussed by this type of communication activity can bind all citizens through sanctions determined jointly by political institutions (Susanto, 1980). Political communication has three orientation patterns, namely 1) orientation to power, 2) orientation to authority, 3) orientation to influence. Based on this definition, it can be concluded that political communication is communication that is deliberately carried out in the political sphere with political objectives without being separated from the ongoing political dynamics.

Defining political communication is an effort to examine the relationship between the three main elements of the ongoing political communication process, namely: (1) political organizations, along with the actors within them, (2) mass media; and (3) society. Interaction between These three components will influence the overall process and results of communication that takes place between components. Political communication is the main axis for political actions, behavior and processes for both political and non-political actors such as the public, journalists or certain interest groups. Political communication also includes how to construct sending, receiving and processing messages that directly or indirectly have a significant political impact (Graber, 2003).

Referring to this definition, the emphasis of political communication lies in the elements of content and message packaging that have the potential to have certain political effects, especially on society. Political communication can be used to promote specific issues. It is possible for regional head candidates to utilize environmental issues as one of the issues communicated in political contests in order to gain support as well as encourage public attention to ecological issues. This is similar to the statement that environmental communication is a symbolic medium for building public understanding on environmental issues (Pezzullo & Cox, 2021).

In Indonesia, political life or government is the result of the production of political interactions or conflicts that occur within a society or nation. With political interactions or conflicts, a government is a reflection of reality that is born from the resultant of various interests. It can be concluded that a government or political life is not born from a vacuum, but rather from a frenzy of interests which are ultimately won by one or some of the supporters of those interests (Nasution, 2007).

Political communication through various communication media that is currently growing and developing makes it possible to shorten the distance between political actors and society. The existence of online communication media is able to build interactive communication bridges between political actors and political leaders and their communities (Andriana, 2013).

As political actors who need public votes and support, regional head candidates are required to develop political communication in their efforts to convey political messages to their constituents. When talking about political messages used by political actors to achieve certain goals for a good personal image in the eyes of the public, then that is where the political marketing process (*political marketing*) happens. This process also involves a series of strategies and activities aimed at carrying out political *branding* against a particular candidate or political figure. Therefore, political communication strategies are an important part of every political campaign activity because the content and packaging of political messages that are good and right on target will provide benefits for the electability of certain candidate pairs.

The uniqueness of certain candidate pairs is the key to winning political contests in general elections or regional head elections. The uniqueness in question includes themes, slogans and tagline campaigns, attractive message packaging and selecting the right communication channels. The uniqueness offered by candidate pairs can also be observed from the issues they often bring up in their political campaigns, especially if these issues are the main issues that are of concern to the public as representatives of political audiences who have voting rights.

Quoting the opinion of Negrine (2008) who stated that political communication is the study of communication strategies used to influence public knowledge, beliefs and political actions. Process 'influence' in political communication is described as the process of conveying political information or messages from parties or politicians through certain media/channels to create effects such as knowing which political figures or parties will be elected and being involved in political activities (campaigns, political debates or direct elections). Therefore, researchers borrowed the linear communication model first initiated by Lasswell (1948) with the principle *Who says What in Which Channel to Whom with What Effect*. Lasswell's communication model is thought to only pay attention to the dimensions of the effects of receiving a message which indirectly indicate changes that can be measured and observed in the recipient of the message. This model is often used in political communication practices in Indonesia.

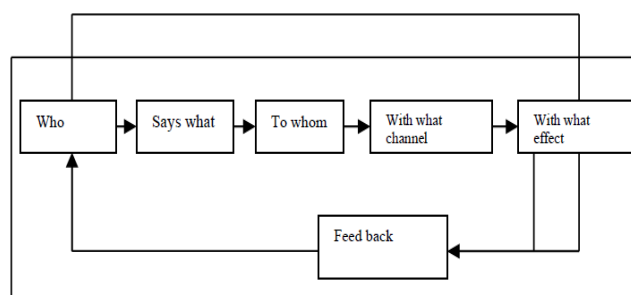


Figure 1. Lasswell's communication model

The use of Lasswell's communication model in this research focuses on the messages and communication channels (media) used by political candidates when campaigning. Referring to the opinion of Cangara (2016) political communication channels consist of (1) mass media which focuses on communication practices from source to audience, (2) interpersonal communication - communication practices that put forward relations or relations between one individual and another individual (between party members, between politicians, between candidates), and finally (3) organizational communication – political communication practices that combine interpersonal communication with mass communication. These three communication channels are often used by political parties and politicians with an emphasis on using mass media to amplify messages conveyed by politicians or political parties.

A study conducted by Yenrizal & Izomiddin (2019) regarding political communication strategies based on environmental issues in the 2018 Palembang regional elections shows that the incumbent candidate, H. Harnojoyo used SWOT analysis to formulate what current issues are of concern to the public. From the results of this analysis, it was found that environmental issues were a priority issue. However, the incumbent does not seem to be able to communicate ecological (environmental) issues to constituents, so it even gives the impression that environmental problems are just being used as a problem gimmick and does not provide concrete solutions in society. Other research, conducted by Hakim & Panuju (2019) regarding the political communication strategy of the PDI Perjuangan Surabaya DPC in the 2019 legislative elections concluded that the PDI Perjuangan implemented a transactional communication model. This model focuses on the communication process that takes place continuously between the sender of the message (legislative candidates/candidates) and the recipient (society/constituents). The transactional communication model prioritizes the use of mass media as the main communication channel. Information production through social media is also one of the characteristics of this model. The challenge with this strategy is the practice of money politics which often occurs during regional elections. Quoting a statement from political academic, Burhanudin Muhtadi, explained that the practice of money politics (*money politics*) is one of the factors causing a candidate's failure to become a winner in an election because it can obscure the essence of the message that the political party or candidate wants to convey.

Research related to other political communication strategies was carried out by Rachmiatie et al. (2013) who found that the seven political parties studied still used traditional communication channels such as recitations, religious holiday meetings, personal approaches and mass approaches. The political communication strategies carried out by most parties still rely on party political machines. Differences in communication strategies between parties or politicians are only based on different types of constituents. For example, PKS is more serious in using social media such as facebook, *twitter*, and other social media as political communication channels. In contrast to the Golkar party which persists with 'traditional communication methods' through mass organizations under the auspices of the party, *call center*, and campaigns. Likewise, the use of issues in political campaigns still prioritizes socio-economic issues, not environmental issues. Based on the results of several previous studies related to political communication strategies, it can be concluded that there is still not much (political) communication research that focuses on the extent to which political parties or candidates use environmental issues as an electoral political strategy, especially in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach to this type of research descriptive. Descriptive research generally describes in detail and in depth the social phenomenon being studied. The strength of descriptive research lies in the researcher's ability to describe phenomena and analyze them using relevant theories. To get an idea of how environmental issues are framed in political campaign messages, this research also uses discourse analysis. To help researchers analyze communication processes and political communication strategies partner candidates, this research borrows a linear communication model which focuses on the one-way process of conveying information from the sender of the message (political candidate) to the recipient of the message (society/constituent). Communication model used as an analytical tool to reveal (a) how candidates convey environmental issues in their vision and mission and political campaigns and (b) the extent to which environmental issues are included in the political campaign narratives of candidates for Mayor of Kediri in 2018.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation and interviews. In the observation stage, researchers visited the research location located in Kediri City, East Java Province. The observation activity began by taking photos of several candidates' outdoor campaign media with the aim of finding out the form of political campaign messages ahead of the 2018 regional elections. Next, to obtain information regarding the candidate's campaign narrative in the Kediri City regional elections, researchers met several figures who were part of political parties. Candidate pair. Of the various political parties, the researcher managed to meet three representatives from the parties who were willing to be involved in this research. After recording several visual products packaged in outdoor campaign media, the researchers then carried out an analysis with the aim of seeing to what extent environmental issues were represented in the campaign media.

The final data collection technique is to search the archives/documents of the candidate's vision and mission to see what political messages the candidate wants to convey to the audience (society) or their constituents and whether there are messages related to 'environment and/or ecology' listed in the work program. Candidate the vision, mission and outdoor campaign media materials were then analyzed using the discourse analysis method with the aim of finding out what the candidate's priority issues were in the 2018 Kediri City regional election winning strategy. After the data collection and analysis stage was complete, it was continued with the coding stage (verbatim data) which aims to group campaign themes that contain ecological (environmental) issues and how environmental issues are packaged and communicated to audiences and/or party constituents.

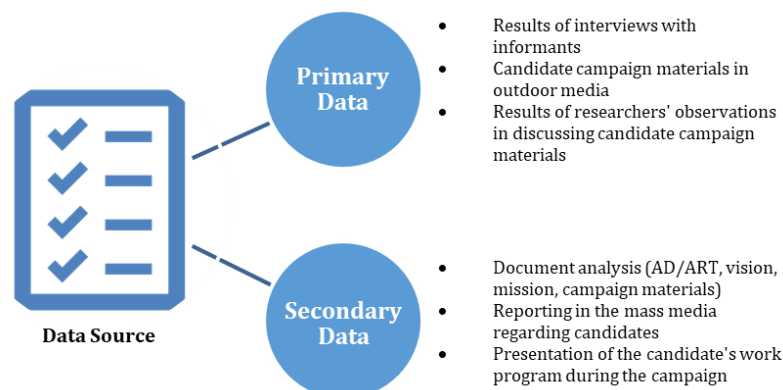


Figure 2. Stages of research data collection

After stagescoding Once completed, the researcher carried out data analysis using the interactive analysis technique Miles et al. (2019) which focuses on the data condensation dimension, where in this study data related to 'ecological or environmental issues in electoral political contestation' is the main unit of analysis. Finally, the researcher drew conclusions to answer the problem formulation related to the extent to which environmental issues were included as a priority issue in the 2018 Kediri City Regional Election political campaign.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Environmental Problems in Kediri City

Kediri City is one of the cities in East Java which has a very developed industrial sector. As a city that makes the industrial and service sectors the main support for the regional economy, the problem of environmental degradation is something that the City of Kediri cannot avoid. Air pollution, water pollution (wells and rivers) and the narrowing of productive land due to the expansion of industrial activity are consequences of the economic development pattern in Kediri City. Gudang Garam (GG), one of the largest cigarette companies in Indonesia, has made Kediri City its business development area, a company that has a negative impact on environmental quality, especially the city's air quality. Around 2006, issues related to air pollution as a result of the activities of the Gudang Garam cigarette industry began to become a concern for the people of Kediri City and parties who were concerned about the environment in Kediri City.

Apart from the cigarette industry, environmental problems in Kediri City are also influenced by the operation of the sugar cane company managed by PTPN. In Kediri City, especially in Pesantren District, there is the Pesantren Sugar Company (PG). There were indications that PG Pesantren was not good at managing liquid waste resulting from processing sugar cane into sugar. Several residents from the Majekan area, Islamic Boarding School Village complained about contamination of water from residents' wells which made the water dirty and smelled bad (Dwi, 2018). Water pollution, which is thought to be caused by liquid waste contamination from the Islamic Boarding School, has affected 50 heads of families in the Islamic Boarding School Village until the beginning of 2018. As a result of this pollution, several residents experienced health problems in the form of itching and also increased residents' expenses because they had to allocate funds to purchase clean water due to the unsuitability of the water from their wells. Refer to the document *Regional Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMD) Kediri City In 2018*, environmental issues that are a problem in Kediri City include, among others:

Table 1. Kediri City environmental issues in 2018

No	Environmental Issues	Description
1.	Industrial waste	There is still low awareness of entrepreneurs in managing their industrial waste. The city of Kediri is recorded as having <i>Small and Medium Industries (IKM)</i> a total of 102 batik crafts, 34 weaving crafts and 9 tofu industry entrepreneurs. Of this number, only 1 (one) IKM has one <i>Liquid Waste Management Installation (IPLC)</i> namely the Poo tofu industry.
2.	Critical land	The existing critical lands have not been completely handled, making them vulnerable to erosion, landslides and flooding.
3.	Decreased environmental quality	Decreased environmental quality (air and water) due to industrial activities, the large number of motorized vehicles and industrial and domestic waste.
4.	Green Open Space (RTH)	There are still lands in public facilities that have not been beautified with parks to increase green open space.
5.	Slums	People's lack of concern for the cleanliness of their environment has resulted in slum residential environments and inadequate drainage functions
6.	Household waste management	1) Limited land <i>Final Processing Place (TPA)</i> which does not accommodate the volume of waste production in Kediri City. For example, in 2017 the

No	Environmental Issues	Description
		volume of waste reached + 127,273 m ³ while TPA I covering an area of 2.6 Ha was already in good condition. <i>overload</i> . Likewise, TPA II is expected to be full by the end of 2018;
	2)	Lack of public awareness of managing household and environmental waste before it is disposed of in TPS or TPA;
	3)	The utilization of TPS for 3 R-based management is not yet optimal (<i>Reduce, Reuse and Recycle</i>).

Source: Kediri City RPJMD, 2018

The position of the Kediri City government looks very dilemmatic, even though it tends to be relatively lenient regarding pollution actions carried out by industrial players. An indication of the soft attitude of the Kediri City government is a reflection of the prioritization of economic interests over conservation interests. The positive impact on economic growth and improving the quality of life of the community, offsets the negative consequences of the decline in the environmental quality of Kediri City due to the pace of industrialization. Not only is air and water pollution faced by the government and people of Kediri City, the issue of poor waste management is also a challenge for political candidates elected in the 2018 Kediri City Pilkada. Quoting news from the official Kediri City government portal which explains that waste is a problem mainly in Kediri City. Therefore, the Kediri City government is trying to overcome this problem by building a waste pressing station. The aim of this program is not only to reduce the accumulation of waste in final disposal sites (TPA) but also to extend the economic life of the TPA. However, unfortunately, this program is 'less popular' with candidates, so that when the candidates convey their vision and mission in political debates, they do not appear to touch on environmental (ecological) issues in Kediri City.

Political Contestation in the 2018 Kediri City Election

In the 2018 post-conflict regional elections in Kediri City, 3 candidates participated, namely (1) Abdullah Abu Bakar-Lilik Muhibbah; (2) Samsul Azhar-Teguh Juniadi; and (3) Aizzudin-Sudjono. The Abdullah Abu Bakar-Lilik Muhibbah pair, who is the incumbent, is supported by PAN, the Nasdem Party, Democratic Party and PKS. The Samsul Azhar-Junaidi pair is supported by PDIP and Hanura while the Aizzudin-Sudjono pair is supported by PKB. Golkar, PPP, Gerindra. The results of the 2018 regional elections for the City of Kediri confirmed that the incumbent pair, Abdullah Abu Bakar-Lilik Muhibbah, won the local political contest by receiving support of 85,528 votes. Meanwhile, the Samsul Azhar-Teguh Juniadi pair only received 32,749 votes, followed by the Aizzudin-Sudjono pair who received 29,389 votes (KPU Kota Kediri, 2018).

The vote tally collected by the incumbent, Abdullah Abu Bakar-Lilik Muhibbah looks very significant, exceeding 50% of the total public votes contested in the 2018 post-conflict regional elections. A very convincing victory. Even though the incumbent pair received votes above the target, it seems that environmental challenges are still not a priority issue in the candidate's political campaign content. This is reinforced by the findings of Garnesia (2018) which show that of the 15 provinces in Indonesia, NTT and Maluku did not even discuss environmental issues at all in the gubernatorial election debate. Meanwhile, several other provinces have started to discuss environmental issues in gubernatorial election debates, although 5 of them only contributed less than 10 minutes of the total duration of the debate which was held in several rounds. West Java is the province that discusses environmental issues the most with a total duration of 36 minutes and 30 seconds. In 2nd and 3rd positions, West Kalimantan and East Kalimantan provinces with a total duration of more than 20 minutes.

One interesting thing about the 2018 post-conflict regional election contest in Kediri City is the shift in the parties supporting the incumbent. In 2013, the Abdullah Abu Bakar-Lilik Muhibbah pair was supported by PAN, Gerindra and PPNU, in 2018, this pair was supported by PAN, Nasdem, Demokrat and PKS. The transfer of support from the Demokrat Party and PKS to the Abdullah Abu Bakar-Lilik Muhibbah pair and PKB to the Aizzudin-Sudjono pair in 2018 from mayoral candidate Samsul Azhar triggered a relatively significant decline in the number of votes for the Samsul Azhar pair and contributed to the ballooning of votes obtained by Abdullah Abu Bakar-Lilik Muhibbah.

It can be said that the figure factor tends to be more dominant in attracting voters' votes compared to the ideological closeness factor between the parties supporting candidates and the voting public in Kediri City. The change in the formation of regional head candidates was ultimately dominated by pragmatic interests rather than congruent ideological awareness and considerations.

Kediri City Regional Head Candidate Campaign Message in the 2018 Regional Election

In political contestation, each participant has main ideas that they want to convey to the audience through several media used to convey and disseminate to a wide audience. In this research, the main ideas conveyed by regional head candidates are seen through: (1) Vision and Mission and the candidate's official work program, (2) Billboards/banners/posters, (3) social media. The articles below will track campaign messages from candidates contesting in the 2018 regional and Kediri regional elections.

The three couples competing in the 2018 Regional Election in Kediri City both socialized their vision and mission and communicated it through campaign media to be used as a reference for voters in determining their political choices. The comparison of the candidate's vision and mission is summarized in the table below (table 1 and table 2).

Table 2. Candidate vision

Name of Candidate for Regional Head	Everyone
Gus Aizudin - Mas Sujono	The realization of a more advanced, prosperous, healthy, educated, religious and safe Kediri city.
Mas Abu - Ning Lik	"The City of Kediri is Superior and Independent in Harmony".
Samsul Ashar, Dr. Sp.PD-Teguh Junaedi, S.E.	The realization of an advanced, comfortable, just, healthy, intelligent and prosperous Kediri city.

Table 3. Candidate Mission

Name of Candidate for Regional Head	Everyone
Gus Aizudin - Mas Sujono	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve public services that are easy, fast and cheap - creating independent, professional and competitive jobs - realizing cheap, fast and quality health services - realizing equal distribution of affordable and quality education - creating a pious, virtuous, honest and trustworthy society - creating a conducive, friendly and tolerant society - realizing good and clean governance - realizing equality for women and people with disabilities in development participation - realizing well-planned and integrated physical and social infrastructure development
Mas Abu - Ning Lik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - realizing quality and competitive human resources (HR) through superior education, health and social services based on religious and cultural values - improving the standard of living and independence of the community to strengthen the regional economy through assistance, protection and expansion of business

Name of Candidate for Regional Head	Everyone
Samsul Ashar, Dr. Sp.PD- Teguh Junaedi, S.E.	<p>opportunities, optimizing superior regional potentials, developing a creative economy with a conducive and fair business climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creating a safe and comfortable city of Kediri through spatial planning, infrastructure development and control of quality and environmentally sound space utilization - realizing clean, transparent and integrity governance by prioritizing excellent service based on information technology - realizing good, clean, transparent, accountable and humanist governance (bureaucratic reform and public services) - increasing access to affordable and quality 12-year free education - increasing access to free health services, nutrition, clean water and good and sustainable environmental quality - realizing access and participation of all citizens and all stakeholders so that they can be involved in the development process and determine the future of the City of Kediri together (Pomas) - realizing just social and economic rights for the citizens of Kediri City - realizing adequate and effective infrastructure development - creating job opportunities and a healthy and fair investment climate for all residents of Kediri City - realizing technology-based public services quickly - increase the area of green open space as optimally as possible - strengthening religious harmony and diversity

Of the 3 (three) candidate pairs in the 2018 Kediri Pilwali event, there was one candidate pair (paslon) who did not talk about environmental issues at all, namely the Gus Aizudin-Mas Sujono pair. If you look at the vision and mission points of candidate pair Gus Aizudin-Mas Sujono, there is no specific vocabulary or phrase that shows concern them on environmental issues. However, these candidate pairs chose to focus their campaign agenda on the issue of equal access to education, public services and health. Meanwhile, the other two candidate pairs paid attention to environmental issues by using the phrases "green open space", "spatial planning" and "environmentally sound development". For example, the Mas Abu-Ning Lik couple has a mission to develop the region using environmental insight, while the Samsul Ashar-Teguh Junaidi couple wants to increase the number of Green Open Spaces (RTH) in Kediri City.

Judging from the background of the supporting political parties, candidate pair Mas Abu-Ning Lik is supported by several parties such as PAN, Nasdem Party, Democratic Party and PKS Party, two of which have concern on environmental issues, namely PKS and the Nasdem Party. In fact, PKS, as an Islamic-based party, has a platform on environmental management and preservation, although in practice, it has not discussed the implementation of this platform in detail in its work program. Meanwhile, the Samsul Ashar-Teguh Junaidi pair received support from the party PDIP, PKB, and Hanura Party, which onePDIP and PKB also has a platform for activating environmental issues in society (Mayrudin et al., 2021; Pramestusi et al., 2022).

Apart from environmental issues, other issues such as the economy, education, health and access to public services are still considered important to appear in political campaign materials. This is demonstrated by the narrative vision of candidate pair Gus Aizudin-Mas Sujono who wants the people of Kediri City to have equal access to various things in order to create a quality, healthy and prosperous life (Document on the Vision and Mission of Candidate Candidate Gus Aizudin-Mas Sujono, 2018).

Table 4. Environmental issues in the vision and mission of the 2018 Kediri mayoral election candidates

Candidate Name	Work Program Related to Environmental Issues
Gus Aizudin - Mas Sujono Mas Abu - Ning Lik	There isn't any MISSION: (Point 3) Realizing a safe and comfortable Kediri City through spatial planning, infrastructure development, and controlling the use of quality and environmentally sound space. Featured Programs: Program 1 Subdistrict 1 RTH (Green Open Space)
Samsul Ashar, Dr. Sp.PD- Teguh Junaedi, S.E.	MISSION: (Point 3) Increase access to free health services, nutrition, clean water, and good and sustainable environmental quality. (Point 9) Increase the area of green open space as optimally as possible.

2018 Kediri City Regional Head Candidate Campaign Message in Outdoor Campaign Media

Apart from the official vision and mission, the mayoral and deputy mayoral candidates in Kediri City also use posters, billboards and banners to convey messages to the people of Kediri City. The following are several posters, billboards and banners that were scattered in Kediri City during the mayoral and deputy mayoral campaign period.

**Figure 3.** Candidate candidate campaign posters along the streets in Kediri City

Billboards, banners and posters were used by candidates participating in the 2018 direct post-conflict local elections to convey campaign messages in the form of concise and effective words to be conveyed and disseminated to the prospective voter community. This article examines the messages that the candidates want to convey through the text on billboards, banners and posters. The things conveyed by the candidates in the words on billboards, banners and posters are summarized in table 4 below:

Table 5. Analysis of the candidate pair's outdoor media visual (campaign) material

Things to observe	Findings
Visualization/ graphics	1. magnitude space (room) which is used to display photo images and candidate names couple Gus Aizudin-Mas Sujono, couple Mas Abu-Ning Lik, couple dr. Samsul Ashar,SP, PD-Teguh Junaidi, SE also provided a large portion of the candidate's personal photo and name. Self-introduction is something that is really emphasized.

Things to observe	Findings
	<p>2. serial number All candidates delivers <i>space</i> strategic (space) for bring up candidate serial numbers for the 2018 direct regional elections on billboards, banners and posters installed</p> <p>3. names and logos of supporting parties Candidates in Kediri City only include the names of the sponsoring political parties on large billboards, while banners and posters rarely include portions for the logos of the sponsoring parties.</p> <p>4. choice of appearance of each candidate The couple Gus Aizudin-Mas Sujono and Mas Abu-Ning Lik wore batik clothes combined with a peci (for men) and a headscarf (for women). Meanwhile, Dr. Samsul Ashar, Sp.PD-Teguh Junaidi, S.E. prefer to wear a short-sleeved formal shirt combined with a peci. Identities related to religious identity (Islam) and nationalist identity are choices used by candidates to display on billboards, banners and posters.</p> <p>5. the dominant color choice chosen by candidates in billboards, banners and campaign posters The Gus Aizudin-Mas Sujono couple tends to choose green as the dominant color in the billboards and banners used. For the Mas Abu-Ning Lik couple, they prefer purple combined with white as the dominant color on the billboards and banners they put up. Meanwhile, the Samsul-Ashar-Teguh Junaidi pair prefers to use red combined with white as the dominant color on billboards and banners.</p>
Text (words)	<p>1. Vision word The candidates' official vision became the words that appeared on billboards, banners and posters distributed in various strategic places in the Kediri City area. In the city of Kediri, the candidate's official vision tends not to be written in full and prefers to use concise, specific words. The Gus Aizudin-Sujono pair prefer the words KEDIRI TOTO, KEDIRI JOYO. For. The couple Mas Abu-Ning Lik chose the word MAKMUR (SUPERIOR AND PROSPEROUS IN HARMONY). Meanwhile, the couple Samsul Ashar- Teguh Junaidi put forward the word PROSPEROUS (PROSPEROUS WITH THE DOCTOR)</p> <p>2. Employment Agreement What is very clearly visible on the billboards of each candidate in Kediri City are the campaign promises they want to realize if elected. The Gus Aizudin-Sujono couple put forward promises: (1) SAKU INDEPENDENT (1 FAMILY 1 BUSINESS, capital 7 million/KK), (2) compensation Rp. 200,000,-/month for ages 60 years and over). The Mas Abu-Ning Lik couple presented their 8 priority programs namely ANTI-CORRUPTION, HONEST AND CARE. The couple Samsul Ashar- Teguh Junaidi emphasized their campaign message on the promise of HEALTHY AND SMART.</p> <p>3. Tagline Apart from writing down their vision and work promises, candidates who competed in the 2018 direct regional elections also wrote taglines which are used to attract potential voters. The couple Gus Aizudin- Sujono chose the word WAYAHE GANTI. Mas Abu-Ning Lik brought up the word PANGGAH AEE. The couple Samsul Ashar-Teguh Junaidi choose the word SULUH.</p>

Based on the visualization in the billboards, banners and posters put up by the candidates, it is very clear that the introduction of the candidate's profile and the supporting parties get a large portion visually. This pattern is used by all candidates. For message substance, candidates use banners, billboards and posters to introduce their vision and mission, work promises and specific taglines to be remembered by voters. The vision of creating regional progress and prosperity is the vision chosen by three candidates, although with different diction: (a) the Aizudin-Sujono pair with KEDIRI TOTO, KEDIRI JOYO, (b) the Mas Abu-Ning Lik pair with EXCELLENCE AND PROSPERITY IN HARMONY), and (c) the pair Samsul Ashar-Teguh Junaidi with MAKMUR BARGAIN DOKTER. Economic orientation is strong in the vision of all candidates.

There are differences in terms of emphasis regarding the job promises made by candidates. The Aizudin-Sujono pair brought up business assistance, the Mas Abu-Ning Lik

pair brought up an anti-corruption commitment, while the Samsul Ashar-Teguh Junaidi pair brought up health and education issues. Ecological issues do not appear to be a priority work program for all candidates.

Regional Head Candidate Campaign Messages on Social Media

In Kediri City, candidates contesting in the 2018 post-conflict regional elections have used social media as a campaign medium, especially in reaching potential voters online. In this research, the author tracked the candidates' social media on social media: Twitter, Facebook, and the candidates' personal websites to understand how social media was used to convey campaign messages for regional head candidates.

From the results of searches on social media used by regional head candidates in the 2018 post-conflict regional elections in Kediri City, several findings were obtained. First, related to the use of social media such as *Twitter*. Three pairs of candidates for mayor and deputy mayor for the 2018 regional elections in Kediri City did not utilize social media facilities (*Twitter*) as campaign media. The candidates have not used social media as a medium for conducting political communication with supporters and potential voters online. Second, the media use websites as a political communication mechanism carried out by candidates. During the 2018 post-conflict regional elections in Kediri City, none of the three competing candidates took advantage of the website as a medium for conducting online political communication. Based on information from an interview with one of the informants (DS, 44 years old), he explained that the choice of communication media channels by political parties and candidates during the 2018 Kediri regional elections was targeted at the character of the people of Kediri City who prefer conventional communication media - such as campaigns, dangdut concerts, distribution basic food supplies, and debates between candidate pairs.

Third, related to the use of social media *Facebook*. For this type of social media, the three candidate pairs in Kediri City both use social media facebook as a communication channel aimed at campaigning for himself. Utilization of social media facebook by candidates tend to use a one-way pattern (linear communication), namely informing the candidates' profiles, vision-mission-work programs, as well as agendas and work visits. There is very little two-way communication that provides space for the public to interact directly online with candidates. The lack of two-way interaction on social media between candidates and the public (audience) means that communication patterns are limited to information without building personal closeness which can actually increase the candidate's popularity or even electability.

It can be seen that the use of social media as a medium for political communication during the 2018 Kediri regional elections was not used massively by regional head candidates to seek public support. Social media is only used as a medium for conveying information (one way), but there is no visible utilization as a two-way communication channel between candidates and constituents. What happened in the Kediri City Election confirms the tendency of political actors not to utilize social media or online media to respond to specific issues as part of efforts to increase public support (Stier et al., 2018). One of the limitations of this use is based on the demographic of voters who tend to prefer conventional communication styles, although there are also those who use facebook as an information channel. Apart from that, the winning team from each pair of candidates admitted that being able to process information and convey it on social media required creativity and Skills good communication. Meanwhile, the winning team realized that if social media management was handled by older people, it would be difficult to package

political messages in a more attractive way on social media due to differences in communication styles between generations.

Ecological Issues and Political Communication Practices in the 2018 Kediri City Election

In the context of local political contestation, the 2018 regional elections in Kediri City were generally quite minimal in highlighting ecological issues. The regional head candidates who contested the 2018 post-conflict regional elections in Kediri City did not make environmental issues an important theme when carrying out political communications during the campaign. Issues related to social security, health, education and welfare were more strongly emphasized by all candidates contesting the 2018 post-conflict regional elections in Kediri City.

The pattern of message delivery has not yet moved away from the tendency to prioritize socio-economic messages compared to prioritizing ideological-indoctrinative messages. This pattern is exactly the same as the explanation presented by Noor (2009) who saw the emergence of pragmatism in political campaigns in Indonesia. For the people of Kediri City, environmental problems that tend to be of concern are generally associated with the activities of the Gudang Garam cigarette factory and the sugar factory operating in the Kediri City area. The issue of pollution and waste from the cigarette factory industry and the sugar factory industry is a common issue raised by residents of Kediri City.

However, the problem of PG Gula and PT Gudang Garam waste tends to be localized in affected communities, especially those whose areas are flowed by polluted rivers or areas where the air is polluted by factory fumes. Protests and complaints from affected residents sometimes appear and receive the attention of the mass media, however, the issue of environmental pollution is considered more of a problem for some residents and is not a general problem that has implications for the Kediri community at large. The localization of environmental problems limited to directly affected communities, in the researcher's perspective, has implications for the minimal use and negotiation of ecological issues in the 2018 Kediri City post-conflict regional election contest.

In negotiating ecological issues, there is a tendency for the community to rely more on local mass media to play an active role as mediators in conveying community complaints to the authorities. The problem is that the local mass media does not make ecological issues an ideological issue that is continuously discussed to the public through the media they own. The need for media management to improve the economic welfare of its workers makes local media choose economic, education and health issues. Political issues often appear in local media but are limited to showing which candidate pairs will compete in the 2018 Kediri regional elections, the supporting parties, or even the commotion that occurs between supporters of candidate pairs.

The above context ultimately creates a scarcity of opportunities for discussions and negotiations related to environmental issues. Residents in Kediri City also tend to follow the rhythm established by the candidates and use less ecological issues as an important theme to communicate to the candidates. Direct meetings with candidates are more likely to be used to strengthen narratives related to socio-economic problems and basic public services.

Based on the potential for disaster that occurred in Indonesia, ecological issues should have become the main issue in the post-conflict regional elections. If we refer to data collected by Walhi (2018) the potential for ecological disasters in Indonesia is increasing, from 83% in 2007 to 90% in 2012. This increase in ecological disasters is partly caused by increasing environmental damage.

The lack of discussion of ecological issues in the City's regional elections can be seen as a reflection of what is happening at the East Java provincial level. Environmental issues are still minimally discussed in the various regional elections taking place in East Java. Even though East Java is one of the regions with quite severe cases of environmental damage, even if we look back, a solution to the damage and losses caused by the Lapindo Mud has not yet found a clear path.

WALHI East Java's notes on the commitment of regional head candidates for East Java province assess that neither of the two pairs of candidates in the 2018 East Java gubernatorial election seriously discussed crisis issues and people's problems related to the environment, such as mining victim communities, communities facing confiscation of living space, and communities that experience a series of negative impacts from extractive industries and locality-based people's management areas (Setiawan, 2012).

The 2018 Kediri Regional Election provided a very clear picture of the lack of ecological issues as a priority issue in campaigns at the local level. It could be said that there was no significant development on this matter because what happened in 2018 was very similar to what happened in political contestation in the previous period in 2014 (Sigit, 2014). The inclusion of the phrase 'environment' in the vision, mission and political agenda of candidate pairs is still limited gimmick politics which seems to be used as a message to build a political image so that candidate pairs appear to care about the environment in which they are running as candidates. This can be seen in the lack of campaign media for candidate pairs that really delivers highlight on the environmental issues they carry.

The lack of attention from regional head candidates is accompanied by media reporting patterns that tend not to maximize their role as opinion *maker* on ecological (environmental) issues increasingly obscures environmental issues from everyday discourse. The role of the mass media is quite important in continuing to discuss environmental issues in their newsrooms. The focus of criticism on candidate pairs who minimally discuss environmental issues should be the main consideration in the reporting process. As *Theory Agenda Setting* (McCombs & Shaw, 1993) who believes that the issues that become media priorities (media agendas) tend to influence the priorities of issues that are discussed audience (audience agenda), namely issues that are considered important by the audience. The basic assumptions of this theory strengthen the findings in the field that ecological (environmental) issues are important when the mass media cover them in their reporting, but the opposite will apply when the mass media do not raise environmental issues in the news, then it could be that these issues are not part of the priority discourse being discussed by society so they are not seen the same once (McQuail, 2011).

On the societal side, computer-mediated communication activities (*computer mediated communication*) via social media aimed at candidate pairs tends to be minimal. The form of interpersonal political communication that should be easy to build through social media only ends up in one-way communication that is instructional in nature. Apart from that, based on observations of the people of Kediri City, they apparently prefer a model of political communication through open campaigns. This situation implies that there is homework that still needs to be done to build civic *culture* for society to actively utilize political communication media, including online media, to encourage public issues to be responded to by political actors (Dahlgren, 2005).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the 2018 regional elections in Kediri City, it can be summarized into several points. First, even though environmental issues have become one of the issues promoted by candidates, they are still not strategic issues on the democratic stage at the local

level. Some candidate activities before the election which focused on environmental issues also still seemed partial and normative, not prioritizing sustainability aspects, so they seemed more like ceremonial events rather than efforts to build public awareness of the environment. One candidate pair who is considered to have a fairly good concept of environmentally sound development is the Abdullah Abu Bakar-Lilik Muhibbah pair.

Second, the inclusion of environmental issues in the 2018 Kediri Mayor candidate's political campaign materials has not been implemented well. Campaign teams tend to choose more popular issues such as the economy, health, socio culture. These issues are considered easier for the public to understand, in contrast to ecological (environmental) issues which tend to be more difficult for the audience to understand. In fact, during field observations, researchers found that one pair of candidates touched on the problem of waste management in Kediri City, where, according to them, waste is part of an environmental issue that is close to people's lives.

Issues such as economic growth, prosperity and poverty alleviation are still the prima donna and are able to be communicated well by the candidates to the public in the momentum of the 2018 Kediri regional elections. Even though the communication model used by the candidates is still one-way, social and economic issues are looks more easily accepted by the people of Kediri City. This can be seen from the expression of support from the community for the candidate pairs when they presented work programs related to poverty alleviation (providing aid programs).

Third, the political campaign-communication methods carried out by candidates still use the conventional model (lectures, *blusukan*, and outdoor campaign media) that adapt to the character of the people of Kediri City. It is true that there are candidate pairs who use social media as a communication channel, but the form of communication tends to be one-way (linear). In fact, social media is considered to have the power to encourage certain issues to be read by the general public. However, in the context of the 2018 Kediri City regional elections, the role of social media is not yet visible in intensively reviewing ecological (environmental) issues in candidate pairs' campaigns.

Lastly, the spotlight is on the local mass media which still does not seem to realize that environmental issues are crucial issues and deserve to be featured in the news, especially during the election period. The role of mass media is still limited to transmitting information from candidate pairs, especially when it relates to socio-economic issues. That's how it is by using campaign methods that tend to be political communications. The lack of framing that integrates environmental issues with bigger issues, such as the threat to the right to quality of life, makes environmental issues feel 'distant' and less powerful in creating awareness and collective action among community members to work together with affected residents using various available political means and channels. , including during the post-conflict regional election momentum. The conclusions of this paper tend to strengthen previous research which saw a general tendency towards less use of ecological issues as strategic issues in political contestation at the local level.

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