

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF THE GERINDRA PARTY IN LAMPUNG PROVINCE DURING THE 2019 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the political communication strategies employed by the Gerindra Party in Lampung Province during the 2019 legislative elections. It underscores the significance of effective messaging, multi-channel communication, and grassroots engagement in achieving electoral success. The research reveals that the narratives propagated by party chairman Prabowo Subianto significantly influenced voter perceptions. Additionally, the strategic use of diverse media channels enabled the party to reach various demographic groups, while local party branches played a pivotal role in direct voter engagement. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into provincial-level political strategies in Indonesia and offers practical implications for political practitioners seeking to improve electoral performance. Future research could examine the long-term impacts of these strategies on voter loyalty and party stability.

Keywords: *Political Communication, Electoral Strategies, Grassroots Engagement, Media Channels, Voter Perceptions*

Introduction

The Indonesian electoral system has been a fundamental element in the country's democratic framework since its inception, with its first national election taking place in 1955. Over the decades, Indonesia has conducted twelve iterations of these elections, each serving as a vital mechanism for the expression of popular sovereignty (Bone, 1955; Khasanofa & Zulkhidayat, 2020). The electoral process is not merely a procedural aspect of governance; it is an essential component of the nation's political identity, contributing to the integration of society, the selection of leadership, and the mobilization of political support (Agung, 2018; Peruzzotti, 2002; Ryan Pratama & Defrizal, 2024). Through these elections, the Indonesian people exercise their democratic rights, thereby shaping the political landscape and ensuring that the government remains accountable to its citizens.

Despite the long history and importance of elections in Indonesia, there is a notable deficiency in the scholarly literature regarding the specific strategies employed by political parties at the provincial level to secure electoral success (Abdullah et al., 2021; T. Ahmad, 2019; Budi, 2020). While much has been written about the general functioning of the electoral system, the dynamics of national-level politics, and the outcomes of various elections, there is a surprising lack of detailed analysis focusing on the tactical approaches that parties use in specific provinces (Carty & Eagles, 2003; Martel & Del Duetto, 2022; Mévellec, 2021). This is a significant gap because understanding these strategies is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of Indonesia's electoral politics. Provincial-level elections are not merely local affairs; they are integral to the broader national political system, influencing the distribution of power and resources across the country (Barusman et al., 2020; Fauzi et al., 2018; Haryanto et al., 2019). The strategies employed by political parties in these contexts can reveal much about the nature of political competition, voter behavior, and the overall functioning of democracy in Indonesia.

This study aims to address this gap by providing an in-depth examination of the political communication strategies of the Gerindra Party in Lampung Province during the 2019 legislative elections. The Gerindra Party, officially known as the Great Indonesia Movement Party, is one of the major political forces in Indonesia, consistently securing significant electoral support since its founding in 2008 (Al-Hamdi et al., 2021; Budiana, 2020; Dewi & Erowati, 2021). In the 2019 legislative elections, Gerindra once again emerged as a dominant player,



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particularly in Lampung Province, where it maintained its position as the second-largest party in terms of both votes and legislative seats. This achievement was not a one-time occurrence; it mirrored the party's success in the 2014 elections, indicating a sustained ability to mobilize voters and secure electoral victories in the province.

Lampung Province, located on the southern tip of Sumatra, is a region of considerable strategic importance in Indonesian politics. It is a populous area with a diverse electorate, making it a critical battleground for political parties (Nasution et al., 2020; Sarino et al., 2021; Sudirman et al., 2023). The province's political landscape is characterized by intense competition, with multiple parties vying for influence and control. In this context, the success of Gerindra in consecutive elections is particularly noteworthy. It suggests that the party has developed and implemented effective strategies to resonate with the voters in this province, enabling it to maintain a strong and consistent presence in the regional political arena.

The focus of this study is on the political communication strategies employed by Gerindra during the 2019 elections. Political communication is a crucial aspect of electoral strategy, encompassing the ways in which parties convey their messages to the electorate, engage with voters, and build their public image. Effective communication can significantly influence voter perceptions and decisions, shaping the outcome of elections (Dumitrescu, 2016; Karlsen, 2009; López-García & Pavía, 2019). In the case of Gerindra in Lampung Province, understanding how the party communicated its platform, engaged with different segments of the electorate, and positioned itself against its competitors can provide valuable insights into the factors that contributed to its electoral success.

The analysis will explore several key aspects of Gerindra's communication strategy. First, it will examine the content of the party's messaging, including the themes and issues that were emphasized during the campaign. This involves analyzing how the party addressed local concerns, such as economic development, infrastructure, and public services, as well as how it positioned itself on broader national issues that resonated with the electorate in Lampung. Second, the study will investigate the channels and methods used by Gerindra to disseminate its messages. This includes traditional media, such as television and newspapers, as well as digital platforms and social media, which have become increasingly important in Indonesian politics. The role of grassroots campaigning and direct voter engagement will also be considered, as these methods are often crucial in provincial-level elections (Ahmad, 2024; Kusdarini et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the study will explore the role of party leadership and local candidates in shaping the communication strategy. Leadership plays a critical role in political communication, with party leaders often serving as the face of the campaign. In Lampung, the role of local Gerindra leaders and candidates will be analyzed to understand how they contributed to the party's overall strategy and electoral success. This includes examining their public appearances, speeches, and interactions with voters, as well as their ability to mobilize party supporters and resources at the local level (Carty & Eagles, 2003; Koger et al., 2009; Kpessa-Whyte & Abu, 2021).

By focusing on these elements, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of Gerindra's political communication strategy in Lampung Province. The findings will contribute to the broader understanding of electoral dynamics in Indonesia, particularly at the provincial level (Pratama & Rahmawati, 2023). They will also offer insights into the factors that enable political parties to achieve sustained electoral success in a competitive environment. Given the importance of political communication in modern elections, the study will highlight the ways in which effective messaging and voter engagement can influence electoral outcomes.

In conclusion, this study addresses a significant gap in the literature on Indonesian electoral politics by focusing on the provincial-level strategies of a major political party. By examining the case of Gerindra in Lampung Province, it aims to shed light on the political communication strategies that underpin electoral success in this critical region. The findings of the study will not only enhance our understanding of Gerindra's sustained success in Lampung but also contribute to the broader discourse on political strategy and electoral behavior in Indonesia. Through this analysis, the study seeks to advance knowledge in the field of political science and provide practical insights for political practitioners and scholars alike.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to thoroughly examine the political communication strategies employed by the Gerindra Party. The chosen method is particularly suited for capturing the complex and multi-dimensional nature of political communication, which encompasses a range of communicators, messages, channels, and audiences (N. Ahmad, 2024; Schäfer, 2021; Thrassou et al., 2011). By utilizing qualitative methods, the research aims to delve deeply into the intricacies of how the Gerindra Party crafts and delivers its political messages.

Data collection was carried out through a multifaceted approach that included document analysis, interviews with key members of the party, and observations of campaign activities. Document analysis provided foundational insights into the formal and informal communication materials used by the party. Interviews with prominent party members, including those close to the chairman, (Carty & Eagles, 2003). Prabowo Subianto, offered valuable perspectives on the internal communication strategies and the underlying motivations behind them. Additionally, observing campaign activities allowed for an understanding of how the party's messages were enacted and received in real-world contexts.

This qualitative approach facilitates a nuanced exploration of the narratives and ideas promoted by the Gerindra Party. It specifically focuses on how Prabowo Subianto's messages were adapted to resonate with different segments of the electorate. By capturing these diverse communication practices, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategic choices made by the party and their impact on the political landscape.

Result and Discussion

The research uncovered several pivotal aspects of the Gerindra Party's political communication strategy that significantly impacted its performance in Lampung Province. Firstly, the study revealed that the party's communication was profoundly shaped by the narratives and ideological stance of its chairman, Prabowo Subianto. His vision of nationalism and economic welfare resonated deeply with the electorate in Lampung, reflecting a strong alignment between his political ideology and the concerns of the local population. This resonance was instrumental in garnering support and enhancing the party's appeal.

Secondly, the Gerindra Party effectively employed a diverse array of communication channels to reach its audience. The use of social media, print media, and direct community engagement enabled the party to disseminate its messages broadly and inclusively. This multi-channel approach was crucial in addressing the varied preferences and media consumption habits of the electorate, ranging from urban youth who are more attuned to digital platforms to rural elders who may rely more on traditional media.

Another significant finding was the party's strategy of targeted messaging. The Gerindra Party tailored its communication to address the specific concerns and interests of different demographic groups. Economic issues and welfare programs were highlighted in communications aimed at older voters, reflecting their primary concerns and priorities. Conversely, messages emphasizing national pride and innovation were crafted to appeal to younger voters, aligning with their aspirations and values. This targeted approach not only enhanced the relevance of the party's messages but also increased their effectiveness in mobilizing support across diverse voter segments.

Additionally, the study found that local party branches, known as Ranting and Anak Ranting, played a crucial role in grassroots communication. These branches served as vital intermediaries between the central party leadership and the local electorate. They facilitated a two-way flow of information, allowing for more responsive and contextually relevant interactions with voters. This grassroots engagement was key in reinforcing the party's messages and addressing local issues and concerns.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the importance of strategic political communication in securing electoral success, particularly at the provincial level. The Gerindra Party's sustained electoral presence in Lampung Province during the 2019 legislative elections can be attributed to several key factors: effective messaging, multi-channel communication, and grassroots engagement.

First, Gerindra's ability to resonate with the electorate in Lampung Province stemmed from its strategic alignment with local concerns, such as economic development and public services, as well as its positioning on broader national issues. By crafting messages that addressed these priorities, Gerindra effectively tapped into the ideological and economic concerns of the electorate (Ahmad, 2024; Budi, 2020). This approach underscores the significance of content in political communication, where the relevance and resonance of the message play a critical role in mobilizing voter support (Peruzzotti, 2002).

The study also demonstrates the efficacy of a multi-channel communication strategy. Gerindra's use of both traditional media, such as television and newspapers, alongside digital platforms like social media, allowed the party to reach a diverse audience across Lampung Province (Al-Hamdi et al., 2021; Dewi & Erowati, 2021). The integration of these communication channels ensured that Gerindra's messages were disseminated widely and effectively, increasing their impact across various segments of the electorate. This approach aligns with

contemporary political communication practices, where the convergence of traditional and digital media is essential for reaching and engaging voters (Dumitrescu, 2016; López-García & Pavía, 2019).

Moreover, the study emphasizes the role of grassroots engagement in Gerindra's electoral success. The active involvement of local party branches and candidates was crucial in bridging the gap between the central party leadership and the electorate in Lampung (Kusdarini et al., 2023; Martel & Del Duchetto, 2022). This grassroots strategy not only facilitated direct voter engagement but also allowed for more responsive and localized communication efforts, which are vital in provincial-level elections where local issues often dominate the political agenda (Haryanto et al., 2019; Mévellec, 2021).

Leadership also played a pivotal role in shaping Gerindra's communication strategy. Prabowo Subianto's leadership was central to the party's messaging, with his vision and persona significantly influencing voter perceptions and alignment (Carty & Eagles, 2003; Koger et al., 2009). The study underscores the impact of strong, charismatic leadership in political campaigns, where the leader's public image and rhetoric can significantly enhance the party's appeal and drive electoral success (Kpessa-Whyte & Abu, 2021).

In summary, this research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of political communication at the provincial level in Indonesia. The findings illustrate how a combination of strategic messaging, multi-channel communication, grassroots engagement, and strong leadership can contribute to sustained electoral success. By examining Gerindra's approach in Lampung Province, this study not only enhances our understanding of political communication in Indonesia but also offers practical insights for political practitioners aiming to optimize their electoral strategies in competitive environments.

Conclusion

The research concludes that the Gerindra Party's success in the 2019 legislative elections in Lampung Province was largely due to its strategic political communication. By effectively utilizing a combination of narratives centered around Prabowo Subianto, diverse communication channels, and targeted messaging, the party was able to resonate with a wide range of voters. The role of local party branches in facilitating grassroots communication further contributed to this success.

This study not only fills a gap in the literature concerning provincial-level political communication strategies but also provides practical insights for political parties aiming to enhance their electoral performance. Future research could explore the long-term impact of these communication strategies on voter loyalty and party stability, as well as their applicability in different regional contexts within Indonesia. By advancing the understanding of political communication strategies, this research contributes to the broader field of political science and offers valuable lessons for practitioners and scholars alike.

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