

# Whom Should a Christian Vote? Facing Identity Politics from Biblical Perspective on Presidential Election

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## Abstract

Indonesia stands firm in its democratic values and respects its presidential election in 2024. However, the scent of the history of identity politics still lingers and threatens the harmony of voting. Even though identity politics seem to be a common and acceptable method, it bears danger, especially to Christians as a minority. This can happen through the burdens and biases of Christians to vote. Through descriptive literature methods of biblical perspective with contextual interpretation alongside political reviews and literature, this paper tries to answer the question of how a Christian should vote for their future leader amidst identity and political pressure. The Bible can be a clear guideline to show that such political events and methods had already occurred in the Old Testament and New Testament eras. The wisdom contained in the Proverbs that was intended for future young leaders, as well as the wisdom of Jesus Christ, can help shape the answer on how a Christian should vote for their future leaders. This paper finds that Christians as minorities should try to be objective following biblical standards and the quality of a leader, such as righteousness, multiple councils, servanthood, and accountability, rather than drowning in misconceptions of defensive and subjective votes based on religion-ethnicity sameness or popular opinion.

**Keywords:** Biblical Perspective; Christian; Identity Politics; Presidential Election; Vote

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is getting prepared for the presidential, legislative, and local elections in 2024. The country carries strong democracy values at heart and the successions of many general elections both for presidential and legislative as well as good track records on holding it. Although the objective of the presidential election is a success by confirming the most voted upcoming president, the definition for success from ethical and social perspectives remains questionable because of identity politics strategy accompanying it. Seeing back the popular presidential election in 2019 where ethnicities, religions, and racial issues arise strongly for both candidates proved that identity politics played a great role in their arsenal ([Ardipandanto, 2020](#)). There were massive narrations for both candidates and most of it directed on religion and ethnicities such as “anti-Islam parties”, “the Indonesia-Chinese people enemies”, and even “the God chosen parties”. How effective were these narrations? It was really effective. Recent studies shows using polls from Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting with Indonesia Survey Institutes positively shows that identity politics were significant in 2019 Indonesian general elections ([Hanan, 2020](#)). The poll data clearly shows that more than 95% of religions in Indonesia except Moslem were directed to one of the candidates, while Moslem itself divided into two fractions based on what strong religious organization that leads it. The same way as ethnicities; with Javanese and Batak sided polarly against other ethnicities and then each of them lean towards respective candidates they believed in ([Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting, 2019](#)). With more than 95% of Christians voting one of the candidates clearly shows that there were a major population scale factors that drive Christians voting direction. It is believed that the Christians are uniting as minorities to counter the candidates that brings greater role of Islam in their political endeavor ([Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019](#)). With

this reason as key factor it can be assumed that there were biases upon Christian's voters as minority. It seemed that they have no choice but to choose a leader that at least will not create more disparities inside the pluralism of Indonesia especially to the Christians.

What if in the next 2024 presidential general election the same identity politics strategy persists once more? Will the underlying reason that has been used by the Christians to vote pop up again and will that lead to the correct perspective of choosing the right candidate? Nevertheless, there are many factors that can be taken into account upon choosing the right candidates for president but if Christians are at the mercy of identity politics that may threaten them, how then they should vote as person with Christian values?

Identity politics is a seemingly common acceptable methods used in recent presidential general campaign however abusing this method to cover only majorities group will surely put burdens and biases for minority. In this context Christians as the minority will undoubtedly increase in bias when voting or else will be painfully confused on how to vote objectively. As a result, the nation will later be forced to accept a leader whom are voted not by suitable metrics of achievements and strategy but fear and self-interest. Upon this crucial danger and for the mind preparation ahead on presidential general election 2024 especially for Christians, this paper would like to uncover biblical perspective on how should a Christian vote for their leader under unfavorable identity politics pressure.

## **METHOD**

This paper will employ descriptive literature methods mainly using biblical perspective with contextual interpretation supplemented with political reviews and literature. A structured thinking framework will be shown to enhance understanding starting from identity politics definition and history, biblical leaders'

characteristics, up to voting consideration for Christians. To ease our approach of discussion, this paper will start with definitions and conditions of identity politics in Indonesia and compare it in parallel with the Bible. After then, the conclusive parts of action that differs from the Bible in relevance to nowadays Indonesia general elections will be summarized in each topic.

## **RESULTS**

### **The Reality of Identity Politics in Indonesia**

Identity politics is a political means that focuses to rally people's recognition or respect for the right of autonomy with the basis of an individual or group's shared attributes or interest (Das, 2020). Identity politics has these underlying presuppositions: resorts in subjectivity, advocating inadequacy towards whole society components, and divisive (Hekman, 1999).

Subjective because the ideas and the bargain that certain identity might matter more than the others usually are not based on the urgency of situations nor towards problem solving of something but rather to gather same-minded society which accepted the ideas to rally towards specific goals. The terms of advocacy will be rare in identity politics due to the intrinsic purpose of the one holding this identity politics is to take benefits from the identity victims or claim higher power position as the favorable supported identity. Therefore, identity politics will ensure that there are at least two parts of group divided. Which the other part should be having more of the favor and support depending on what is causing the identity war.

Indonesia have faced identity politics many times. The case of Meliana, a Chinese-Indonesian woman who complained about Islamic prayer call volume to a nearby mosque has triggered a riot on July 29th, 2016 in North Sumatra. The effect of this protest was severe: burned house and about 14 viharas burned. Although the prosecutors

were arrested, later on at January 2017, Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) issued a fatwa charging Meliana with the blasphemy of Islam saying that the complaint for azan was a blasphemy. She was detained by the police on June 2018, guilty, and sentenced 18 months in prison. This has brought so many debates as the high court of North Sumatra never relied on Meliana commentary recordings for evidence but rather using the signatures of 100 people from the Al–Maskhum mosque (Suryadinata, 2019).

With perhaps a little to no coincidence at near date of Meliana case was incited, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama as incumbent governor that was going for re-election was opposed with religious edict by MUI with reasons of blasphemy of Islam. Later movement called the “212” movement created massive demonstrations on December 2016. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama lost his election, and soon after put into trial in which he was sentenced for 2 years in prison (Nelwan, 2022). Both of these issues run down alongside the same major factors: religion, majority, and law. These cases ended-up with the victims ended up in jail with the law are burdening them with subjective evidence. It is subjective because the law for religious blasphemy requires a cause of disgrace towards that religion but the cause of disgrace as stated Presidential Instruction in 1965, Article 156(A) cannot be clearly defined. This paper will not probe deeper towards law revision or such but to put attention more that such law can be abused by some people of power to appoint some individuals or minorities as guilty for doing blasphemy such as the two cases discussed (Crouch, 2012).

Indikator as one of political indicator exit polling organization measured a change in rational behavior of voters upon the pop-up of this religious issue. They have found 73,4% of voters believed in Basuki Tjahaja Purnama due to their prowess in government organizing and real evidence of changes to Jakarta, however the voters does not meet that numbers on the voting sheets. It seemed that the

religious aspect have impacted so much even to elections and it drives a lot of people considerations for it (Muhtadi, 2017). It is found that upon this issues many Islamic organization are threatening their fellow Moslem of conviction, or expulsion from important religious rituals and these factors drives many of Moslem voters to vote the future governor that only have the same religion as them (Hamid, 2019).

On 2014 and 2019, presidential election that have been won by Joko Widodo also drawing attention from the public. As identity politics narrations were going wild on the media, surprisingly Joko Widodo averted the gaze of the public by refraining to tap in Moslem power but instead broaden the scope of identity politics as a plural entity of Indonesian people. His strategy to gather many parts of people as a “mental revolutionary” movement has attracted many people of Indonesia to aid his endeavor and thus creating the sense that pluralism can be a part of better identity politics (Mietzner, 2019).

These cases are the reality of identity politics in Indonesia whereas subjectivity can shift the power dominance from the victim to the host of identity politics, the division on the society is the results and driving factors that influence people’s behavior towards election and court law decisions. It has been proven that people are not voting based on what they are satisfied from but based on the on-going rallies of religious threats and opinions.

### **The Powerlessness to Reject Identity Politics**

Identity is very powerful that it renders some part of the society unable to act or even voice their opinions. There are mainly three reasons why the society become powerless in the face of identity politics. These three are conflict avoidance, alienation resistance, and also othering (Chatterjee, 2012). Conflict avoidance is the level of how uncomfortable the society has upon facing conflicts (Wolak, 2020). The higher the society feels uncomfortable towards being challenged or

confronted in the face of political arguments the more they will adhere to the popular opinion for the sake of avoiding conflicts. When identity politics sided with the majority, conflict avoidance is most likely to happen towards minority. As the result, the minorities will follow the majorities to avoid conflict or moving out silently. Although you can vote in silence that doesn't mean the scale could balance. Because the main narration that spreads will be in the favor of the host of identity politics rather than the victim.

The possibility of alienation is also strong in the face of identity politics. An alienation happens when the society itself started to give different unlikable responses towards some people with certain criteria usually towards gender, racial, religious, or skin color differences. Alienation itself perhaps still can be accepted for some people but the pain comes when alienation started to affect people efficacy on life (Ellis et al., 2015). For example, because some people had different beliefs, it is harder for them to be accepted at work or getting into certain education level or even cannot enter certain public areas. These boundaries are created as a mean to separate a certain type of people from the society.

Othring is also a common occurrence amongst society with different beliefs. Othring does not necessarily place a visible boundary or bringing up conflict but placing another label on others does not matter whether it is acceptable or not by the labelled. Often othering came with a blaming and renaming. Blaming narratives will works to point out that some groups is the cause of societal problems or issues with or without evidence while renaming usually put some individuals in a bad bucket such as renaming them as terrorist or what common in Indonesia: kafir (Dionne & Turkmen, 2020). On Indonesia presidential election in 2019, othering has been very effective and influential topic raised even in social media. The term kafir or unbeliever has been placed and evolved into broader dimension. Kafir

seemed not only talk about the unbeliever but widely used as label for opposite voters and it has been very effective to reduce tolerance and heightened the tense between voters to support one of the candidate (Widyawati et al., 2022). There is a high possibility that to avoid othering, most importantly if othering is being done to some people with the same religion (just different political perspectives), people will shift their vote and therefore put biases in the election.

The power of each of political identity will be in the favor if it's host who could control the media and the majority of people to agree and carry out their narratives leaving the minorities with silent choices and forced obedience. Moreover, this type of politics may not be considered crime as it is still in the stage of social conduct or behavior. In this context, putting Christians as a minority in Indonesia proved relevant. As they are fitting to the terms of othering that has been used in 2019 presidential election. Also, a very low bargain for these issues due to a very small portion of Christians are present at political stage or influential enough to impact the majority of people (Schröter, 2010). Christians are much likely to resort to conflict avoiding and accepting alienations.

### **Biblical Perspectives on Identity Politics and Leaders**

A famous part in the Bible conveys a message about identity politics. In the book of Esther, it is very clear that the Jews in her era are facing a very dangerous situation where Haman are using his power to exterminate all Jews in Persia by the time of King Xerxes reign (Biblica Inc., 2011d). Within the Book of Esther, chapter 6 verse 3 clearly stated that the Haman gets the idea of killing Mordecai's race after knowing who Mordecai's people were. Strong's lexicon clearly describes that the word (עַם מֶרְדֳּכָי), am maredokay which means "the people of Mordecai" means that Haman's hatred on powerful positions goes to Mordecai's race (King James Bible Dictionary, 2022a). This antisemitism behavior does not abrupt by itself, the hatred that

implanted in Haman's mind comes from the behavior of Jewish belief shown from Mordecai that he did not give respect to Haman's by bowing as he represents Jewish belief of not submitting to any beings apart from God ([Biblica Inc., 2011c](#)).

This is a strong opposition of culture whereas respect to a higher status person is required in that time. As Esther even cannot enter the King's chamber without being appointed by the king beforehand. Haman's hatred spreads to the Jewish nation because he sees Mordecai behavior might represent the whole nations response as well. History shows that the Gentiles hated Jews, and the Jews knew it because of their hard edged culture that cannot assimilate to many nations ([Shapiro, 2022](#)). In simple terms Haman concluded that this rejection is not of Mordecai's alone but all people like Mordecai will eventually do so even though the Scriptures never really mentioned that Haman's get the same treatment from other Jews. But this is a strong proof of stereotype also, a generalized belief about a particular race or groups. It means that cultural differences that comes from background beliefs or religions could lead to identity politics ([Vaara et al., 2021](#)).

There are two possible individuals that uses their influence to choose between assimilation or preservation. While Haman used his influence to persuade King Xerxes to exterminate the Jews, Esther used hers to advocate her race. Both people use their power and position to make bargain to the king and get what they wanted. If Haman win the bargain, then Esther will lose, and if Esther wins the bargain, then Haman will lose his position. In the end, Esther could use her position to outwit Haman with the help of God to arrange the scenario ([Biblica Inc., 2011f](#)). Indeed, there is a strong scent of identity politics that are in play in the book of Esther. Even the decision of Esther requesting of Haman's death, is this merely a spark of emotions, or a planned political strategy? In later Purim's tradition

commemorating this event we would know that the triumph over Haman's is actually a political belief that Jews has the necessities of self-defense against someone or some races that may considered as enemies ([Carruthers, 2020](#)).

Basing on the story from the book of Esther, the Jews are in the verge of being ended in Persia but they don't have power to go against such law. In such case, it seemed like they have chosen to avoid conflict but in actual they have no power to defend against the law anyway. Haman put his hatred unto Mordecai blindly also to his fellow Jews, making them as the subject of othering. Therefore, we can conclude that the identity politics in Esther era indeed provide the same societal impact as it is in Indonesia.

What we could also highlight in the midst of political war between Haman's side as the natives or majorities against Esther's side as the minorities is the quality of their influential behavior. Haman used his position and political influence to marginalize and exterminate the Jews for the sake of hatred and power gain. Meanwhile, Esther used her position, accepting the danger that lies if she broke the rules to advocate the safety of her race ([Biblica Inc., 2011e](#)). Although the societal impact is not changing, there are no resistance from the minorities, but we can be certain that having an influential delegates could help faced this issue. With a balance of power between each religion and race, a misuse of identity politics can be countered or even refrained. The Jews as the minorities in this context put in hope to Esther as their sole influential figures to help stand from such awful strategy of domination ([Green, 2011](#)). Political figures can play a role to suppress sensitive differential topic mainly on cultural differences and foster constructive vision and tolerance such as what happened in Singkawang after leadership recycling event ([Sahide et al., 2022](#)). Yes, an Esther figure need to be fought for and present for balance. The decisions for Jews and Mordecai to

support Esther by prayer and fasting was a significant symbol of them trying to uphold the balance of power through pushing influential figures unto the political stage.

Another benchmark of identity politics was in the book of Genesis on the tale of Joseph. Joseph is a Hebrew sold as a slave to the Egypt yet in the end the Pharaoh put trust and power unto him and thus making Joseph the second-in-command of all Egypt as minorities ([Biblica Inc., 2011h](#)). It is only until the next generation of pharaoh (after Joseph's death) that the abuse to the non-natives started to rise. The Book of Exodus chapter 1 verse 8 clearly started with a problem of differences with older generations whereas the new king did not recognize their past heroes, Joseph ([Biblica Inc., 2011g](#)). This is the pin point of Moses story, a very canon event where everything started when a political leaders did not understand the history of cultural assimilation and tries to tear that apart ([Nyabera, 2020](#)). The power that Joseph gained as a minority that time has brought prosperity and safety both for his kin and for the Egyptians. We can highlight once more the importance of a leader who could advocate the well-being of everyone in the society.

Joseph's leadership has been proven not only to the extent of saving nations from long drought and hunger but uniting the Hebrews and Egyptians. By the death of Joseph's father, Jacob, not only that the family of Jacob that lament but a large company consisting of important people in the Egypt followed the mourning. The mourning was so great and ceremoniously prepared that it brings attention to whole Canaan residents ([Berman, 2006](#)). Joseph paints a picture of a strong hyper assimilation which he brings from his early age until sitting on a high position. Written in the Book of Genesis chapter 37 verse 9 where it tells (והנה השמש והירח ואחד עשר כוכבים) (משתחיים לי) "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." The word (משתחיים)

mistahawim rooted from the word (התחנך) scahah which really means to prostrate, such political ambition painted unsuccessfully in his family ([King James Bible Dictionary, 2022b](#)). But we know later that such thing will happen when Joseph reigned as a king even though with his unique and different personality, he is able to unify the differences between the son of Israel of that time which is Jacob and the son of the Egypt which is the pharaoh, both under his political power. Joseph raise in power by being an assimilated Israel to Egyptians in a controlled manner in many occasions and important places ([Ahn, 2022](#)). This is a very great deed done by Joseph that create a perfect bonding between two nations that had a very different background and very different perspectives on daily life ([Biblica Inc., 2011i](#)). So, it would seem that a strong advocative figure like Joseph was able to combine such difference into harmony and this kind of leadership are needed to bring peace and prosperity to Egypt. Through both of these books we can recognize that identity politics is one method to utilize to gain support and power but to that being divisive or advocative that solely depends on the leader.

### **Biblical Perspectives on Choosing Leaders**

In the Bible the leaders are mostly elected by two ways: theocracy and monarchy. Theocracy in which that God himself choses the leader that He wanted. The prophet that reigns on that era will then anoint the person before they sit on the throne who will resembles God's divine will ([Levin, 2021](#)). We often see this in the books of Samuel and the book of Kings such as King Saul, King David, and King Solomon. The second method is monarchy where the throne is passed down to the king's generation mainly to the firstborn son. So, there was never really an official voting by the people to choose who will be king among them, by any means there will be no relevance towards Indonesian way of voting for a president or governor. However, there are some ways we can extract from the Bible for this matter, and that

is to know what kind of leader that is expected to be fruitful and brings many good things to their people.

If we are taking the view from theological lens perhaps leaders that are chosen by God will prove as the best choice, but there might be differences on the definition of God and how to connect His sovereignty towards election. Although ideal, that might not be possible to implement to Indonesia. Perhaps then, God may not need to choose directly for the people to enjoy the best leader available but we can have God's lenses and criteria on choosing a leader. We are going to probe to Bible to see what leadership criteria that are suitable in God's perspective. Although such theocratic values might have been inserted into Indonesia's democracy. This so called theocratic democracy is in the form of political figures are being backed by big religious organization meanwhile this big religious organization also support the political figures (Saiya, 2023). This has proven to be somehow destructive in the past few years by seeing commentaries that certain religion must vote and support certain people. The controls that this religion organization poses really extract other minor religion in the democratic system.

To further explore the Bible can take a look from the book of Proverbs which contain many wisdoms that still can be used up to this era. This book also mentions about the conditions and character of leadership that are needed to bring good times to the nation. The strongest feature are about being righteous and having multitude of councils (Biblica Inc., 2011n, 2011m). Righteousness in the Old Testament is written as (הַקְדָּוָה) or said as *sedaqah* where in Indonesia it is often understood as giving to the society. In this context righteousness are a standard to form a good and prosper nation, at the same time portraying the holiness of God (Idialu, 2021). Righteousness can strongly define as showing Godly character by giving back to the society for the sake of socio-economic prosperity. Law abiding means

that leader can be trusted with what is given and could give back service to the people without breaking their trust. Corruption is not righteous as even if the leader could give back to the society, they undermined the resources that has been given and may create problems economically. The structure and theology in the book of Proverbs are very well designed for novice leaders. It is functional as educational programs and leadership measurement indicators in Ancient Israel (Dunham, 2019). The concept of being righteous in Proverbs can be explored far and wide. Being right in the proverbs means to adhere to the rules, and the rules are God's standard (Finkbeiner, 1995). The rules can be translated as the law today, and therefore a leader should adhere to the law. Next, about the multitude of councils means that the leaders are willing to listen to experts of the field to solve matters. Some interpretation of multitude of counselors are to be put on recovery and adjustment phase for leaders (Godwin & Adeniran, 2020). As leaders might face ups and downs, and moreover crisis in their service, counselors play a great role to readjust, motivate, and direct leaders to achieve their vision. This could include the people's opinion also. It is important for people to see not only the leaders but who is at the backstage behind supporting the future leaders. In First Book of Kings chapter 12 verse 8, the son of Solomon, Rehoboam are rejected by his own people because he did not heed the council of his father (Biblica Inc., 2011a). Rehoboam could learn that he can learn from both parties' counsels and consider it based on facts and reality. In a way possible, with many counselors a leader gain many insight to solve troubles and to consider from, it will make them easier to move with more grounds rather than sporadically act and break something that cannot be rebuilt in the society (Peters et al., 2022). Leaders will need to avoid Rehoboam mistakes so they could continue great progression and hindered from breaking placed constructive society.

The New Testament also offers some reliable sources of leadership quality. Jesus Christ said that a leader should be wanting to serve, and this is the basis of servant leadership concept (Biblica Inc., 2011k). Another thing we should emphasize is that Jesus Christ never mentioned about the background of the leader itself. He never talked about race or religion, but Jesus do put attention on leadership qualities. In Jesus era, where the Roman empire reign, Jesus mentioned that a good citizen should respect their responsibility to the Caesar and as the same towards God (Biblica Inc., 2011l). Jesus was able to challenge the misaligned thinking of religious zealot while at the same time put a graceful truth in them (Sierra, 2021). A mixture of strict discipline of thought covered with gracious love could change people. While maybe it won't change all, certainly Jesus has brought many people to Him. Jesus put constructive way of teaching, either with parables or live lesson, but all of these needs a servant heart where a leader would like to step down and walk step by step with people, this has just proven to be effective to change people in some way (Chia, 2020). We can further conclude that Jesus was clearly put more attention for quality rather than physical background and attributes. He did not select the best candidates for his disciple yet He produces great apostles from them. Upon the anointing of David as the king of Israel the Bible also clearly state that God sees the heart (Biblica Inc., 2011b). Unseen quality by far holds so many important information and consideration as an aspect of choosing a leader.

Lastly this paper would like to take reference from the New Testament letter Romans. The letter also speaks about respecting the ruler because the ruler will protect their people and be accountable for it (Biblica Inc., 2011o). Romans chapter 13 verse 4 stated that the government (the one in political power) are God's servant for your own good. While Paul letter to Roman might harvest controversies since it is written for two separate races: the Gentiles and Jewish

congregants. At the same time Paul is correcting the Gentiles that they earned their power and will need to exercise accountability. In some sense, without accountability to gather all the people of difference there might be resistance, and resistance might lead to general loss (Gusha, 2020). This verse might speak in another way: if the government is a brutal and cannot be trusted, is it really God's resemblance of power? If not, then there is a hint to allow resistance. This is parallel in context of Romans chapter 13 verse 3 stated that good people should have lived in harmony with government and not otherwise. Accountability is one strong key phrase that are used in this message on a leader's quality. All in all, there are more than what we have excavated from the Bible about what to see within a leader's quality suitable for voting but this paper will limit its biblical research up to this point.

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on the theoretical framework that has been explained before this paper would like to bring answers for the problem stated. Through descriptive literature study this paper could provide the following subject as result and discussion.

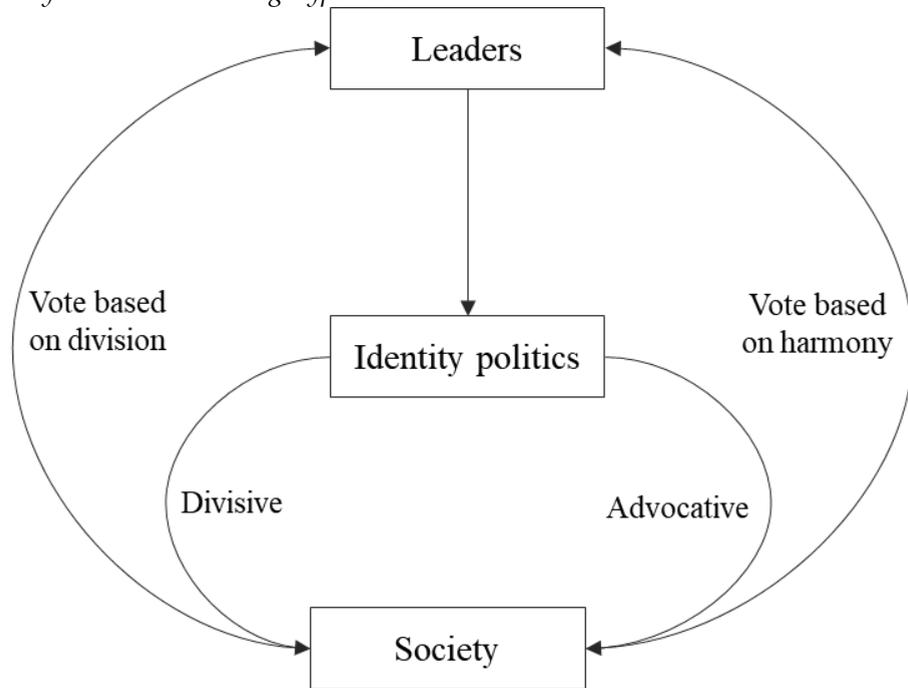
### **Identity Politics in Relevance to Leaders**

We have seen the nature of identity politics that has been used in Indonesia and from the Bible. The nature is defined not by the method but by the user of the method. Identity politics can be used disruptively both for dividing or advocating. If it is used to divide then the impact of identity politics will be received by the society whether they approve it or not. Conflict will arise but the society will resort to avoidance. The conflict arise usually cannot be hindered because both differenced parties are present in the same nation. Majority and minority terms inside the society will most likely to arise much higher

to create further disparities where the minority often suffer higher damage to life efficacy.

**Figure 1**

*Identity Politics and Voting Type Flow*



Source: Authors' analysis.

Followed by alienation and othering that will leave a scar to the unison of a nation that will last a life time. On the other hand, leaders can also utilize identity politics for advocative purposes thereby uniting the nation with a collaborative narrative. The negative divisive impact will be hindered. Both purposes will end up in society vote for future leaders but divisive identity politics will lead to a vote based on division and tension while advocative identity politics will lead to a voting situation based on harmony where people can avoid biases.

The society should realize and open their eyes upon the many narrations that are suddenly emerge or build in the media. The

provocative messages nearing election should be connected to the benefit of the leaders using identity politics as a method for their campaign. Most importantly if the narration goes sideways and endangering the minorities, the minority vote should not be wavering in terms of its objective quality. One thing for sure is that the valuation of leaders can start here, whether how they are using identity politics for harmony or division.

### Christians Responses on Voting Tension

Voting in the midst of tension for minorities in Indonesia (Christians in this case) are still protected by the law. Identity politics can shape how the society thinks and reacts towards the image of the leaders but the secrecy and objectivity in the voting rights are in the hand of the people. The Indonesian Election Supervisor (BAWASLU) ensure that the principles of voting will protect the voters and the government from fraud (Imron, 2016). These principles are direct, for everyone, freedom based, secret in the process, honest, and equal. So even though there are tensions that are coming from societal impact of identity politics it will not impact the principle of voting for every citizen.

Table 1

*Biblical Criteria for Christian's Voting*

<b>Biblical leader's criteria to vote</b>	<b>Relevant explanation to nowadays election</b>
Righteous	Abide to existing law Showing good will of not bending the law for self gain Cherising the law to protect whole society
Multitude of councils	Having governmental works experts in their team Cooperating with well-known constructive parties Willing to listen to the voice of the people

<b>Biblical leader's criteria to vote</b>	<b>Relevant explanation to nowadays election</b>
Servanthood	Oriented to work for the prosper of the society Willingness to blend in and be in the "field" Humility in public and structural level
Accountability	Provide clear records of works results for the public Responsible for the growth of society Do and finish what is promised

Source: Authors' analysis.

Based on this paper literature study we can conclude four objective quality of leaders that can be explored by the society to ensure better future of the city or nation. Righteousness can be conveyed into the track records of the future leaders that are abiding to the law in every aspect, referencing to it in all lawful matters. Leaders try to show good will of not taking advantages of the grey areas of the law code for their or their parties self-gain, instead portraying a humble way to expose gray areas in law that may put the society into turmoil from law bandits. Leaders are cherishing the existing law, that is, to promote equality before the law and protects their people rights and justice.

Christians should be able to look closely to the councils or the supporting team of the leaders. As a leaders should have a good advisory team as a form of good preparation on building the city and nation. Having renowned experts on the field is necessary as the team background. Leaders as well can be observed by their backings, any parties that are affiliated with them. Cooperating with constructive parties is one way to discern if the leader is heading on the right path of constructing will-versed strategy ahead. Some good acknowledged leaders have been known to listen well to the people's comment and critiques as well. Servanthood or servant leadership in simpler terms

talks about the orientation of leadership is to finish their work and bring prosperity to the people. A leaders bound to this perspective will practice humility in the field and their organization structure. The last thing that can be measurable for the Christians is the accountability of the future leaders. Assessing how they provide clear records of responsibilities for the growth of the society.

Another closer look from the Bible scriptures, this paper have found that Jesus Christ Himself respect the present government in his era, another part of the scripture also point out that ruler subjective appearance and difference is not considered a subject of leaders valuation (Biblica Inc., 2011f). But even so Christians might be trapped within the politic tension to vote based on solely this subjective appearance and therefore putting the wrong weight and purpose on their votes. Aside from objective ones, there is a voting that is based on division and might just put tension that creates misconception. The tension leads the minority to “defend” themselves by voting based on the identity sameness such as religion or ethnicities (Liddle & Mujani, 2007).

Table 2

*Misconception in Tension Voting*

<b>Tension on affected criteria</b>	<b>Relevant explanation to nowadays election</b>
Same religion	Have to be in the same religion
	Not to be in a certain religion
Same ethnicities	Have to be from the same ethnicities
	Not to be in certain ethnicities
Popular appearances	Seemingly knowledgeable
	Seemingly nice and humble
	Seemingly able to handle leadership position
Following the trend	Appear in many campaigns

Source: Authors' analysis.

Popularity and trend could also affect the society in tension from many influential people opinions and hype (Fukuoka & Na Thalang, 2014). The problem on this misconception is that in a plural nation like Indonesia the leaders to vote may held a very little sameness for some people. Not all of the available nominated leaders may have the same religion, ideas, or even ethnicities. Christians with misconceptions can be lured in with overflowing sympathies from a certain leader that has hidden agenda targeted on them. Therefore, Christians should hold high awareness on their decision making and setting the right preferences.

## **CONCLUSION**

After further research using descriptive literature methods mainly with biblical perspective alongside with political literatures and reviews this paper would like to answer the stated problem on how should a Christian vote in the midst of identity politic pressure. It is believed that Christians as minorities in Indonesia might be affected by divisive identity politic yet should remain in objective response to vote. There are four main criteria from the Bible that should be taken into account upon voting which are: righteousness, multitude of councils, servanthood, and accountability. Righteousness is a quality expected from young leaders from the Book of Proverbs, with the aim of being the one who can contribute to the prosperity of nation and selfless like Queen Esther that acts on behalf for her nation in crisis. In the same book, Proverbs writer also suggest that a person in power will need many perspectives and views from their counselors to ensure that right things are being done in the right way, avoiding Rehoboam's mistakes that has split the Israelites apart. Servanthood are delivered through Jesus's pathway of teaching and discipleship that focuses to improve unseen qualities through humble journey with people. Lastly, accountability is the main focus of Paul's

letter in Romans that pointed out government as a God's representative to bring peace and progress, which will result in constructive assimilation of society. While inside the tension of identity politics, Christians should watch out for subjective quality misconception in vote that is not promoting the foundation of their faith such as religion-ethnicities sameness or even just following popular opinions.

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Conceptualization: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Data curation: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Formal analysis: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Funding acquisition: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Investigation: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Methodology: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Project administration: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Resources: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Software: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Supervision: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Validation: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Visualization: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Writing – original draft: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S.; Writing – review & editing: E.S., L.H., M.N., A., & P.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Informed consent was not required for this study.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

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## **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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