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Intercultural Political Communication in Determining Presidential Candidates in the Indonesian Elections 2024

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ABSTRACT

² Indonesia is preparing to hold a presidential election in February 2024, with three men candidates so far fighting for the position in the world's third-largest democracy and its most populous Muslim-majority country. This study aims to find out how political parties find ways of coalition through intercultural political communication to determine each presidential candidate figure in the 2024 presidential election. The intercultural approach in the political communication process results in 3 big fights with their respective candidates. The Coalition of Change for Unity (KPP), which consists of National Democrat party (NasDem), Democratic party, and Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), carried Anies Baswedan as a representative for the theme Coalitions of Change. This step was then followed by 2 other political party coalitions which also determined their respective Presidential candidates. Furthermore, this study also wanted to find out what aspects made a coalition of political parties consider a potential presidential candidate to be carried out in the 2024 presidential election. This study was conducted utilizing Gudykunst and Kim's intercultural communication as well as the communication theory and political culture of Almond and Verba. Methodologies for qualitative interpretative research that make use of Milles and Huberman's interactional model data analysis procedures. The three coalition parties were specifically targeted by the research informants. The study's findings demonstrate that each coalition member adheres to Almond and Verba's flow of communication and political culture in terms of intercultural political communication. Specifically, parishioners and participants, whereas Gudykunst and Kim's suggested technique is used by party officials to conduct intercultural political communication

Keywords : ***Elections, Interculture Communication, Political Parties, Presidential Candidate***

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a diverse and populous Muslim-majority country and the world's third-largest democracy (Hefner, 2019). As the country prepares for the presidential election in February 2024, since general election is a form of post-reformation democratic process implementation that began in 1998 (Satriadi & Yusuf, 2020), the process of forming political coalitions has become a significant aspect of the political landscape. The complexity of forming a stable alliance is also influenced by the simultaneous implementation of the presidential election and legislative elections. Simultaneous implementation of the presidential and legislative elections requires parties to estimate the effect of presidential election support on party votes in the legislative elections (Fernandes, 2023). This situation means the parties will have to judge which candidate has the potential to win and influence the party's vote in the general election. In addition, understanding the communication process and the strategies for analysing and discussing information in the media is paramount (Hassan, Mahbob, & Allam, 2022).

The study focuses on three significant political party coalitions consisting of: First, the Coalition of Change for Unity (KPP), which consists of National Democrat party (NasDem), Democratic party, and Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) that endorsed Anies Baswedan to run for President candidacy; Second, the united Indonesia coalitions (KIB) consists of Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) as the only political party that has crossed the presidential threshold, followed by Golkar, PAN and the PPP had also officially announced Ganjar Pranowo as its presidential candidate; and the last, Greater Indonesia Awakening Coalition consisting (KKIR) consisting of Gerindra and PKB party which are likely to nominate Prabowo Subianto (Fernandes, 2023). These coalitions play a crucial role in determining their respective presidential candidates and shape the political landscape leading up to the 2024 presidential election.

In terms of party identity, the three parties from Change alliances (KPP) differ in terms of their platforms, such as NasDema nationalist party with its restoration tagline. Meanwhile PKS is more identical as an Islamic party and Democratic party with its democratic nationalist tagline. However, they were able to build a coalition through intercultural political communication by agreeing to support Anies Baswedan and carrying the subject of transformation. On the other side, The PDI-P's endorsement of Ganjar, from the perspective of political communication, Megawati's nomination of Ganjar draws attention and deserves appreciation. The announcement carries a "wow!" effect. Not many could have thought Megawati would announce her nomination of presidential candidate would coincide with the Idul Fitri 1444 Hijri holiday. One of the PDI-P's political identities is the "group think" phenomenon that places Megawati as the determinant, central figure (Heryanto, 2023). With the field narrowing down to three frontrunners, Prabowo Subianto then shaping up as the candidate to beat in the presidential and is no longer the dark horse of earlier surveys. Electability surveys put him either in the lead or in second place behind Central Java Governor Ganjar Pranowo (Tenggara Strategics, 2023). He acknowledged the critics who said that he would embarrass himself if he went down in history as four-time loser. To this, he said that he would never give up, as he was a soldier himself. "Never retreat is the spirit and attitude of the Indonesian Military [TNI]. I come from TNI. I was guided to build this spirit by [my] seniors in the TNI," said the former general (Tenggara Strategics, 2023).

Theoretically, political communication centers around the interactions among political actors, the media, and citizens, and it is characterized by its persuasive and strategic nature. Successful political communication plays a vital role in securing the support of voters and achieving victory for a prominent candidate in the upcoming election. On the other hand, mistakes or failures in political communication can have detrimental effects on a candidate's

reputation and put their political career at risk (Tajuddin, Joni, & Bahari, 2023). However, political parties in Indonesia often form alliances and coalitions to consolidate their support base and increase their chances of winning elections. Effective communication within these coalitions requires understanding and navigating the diverse cultural backgrounds and interests of each participating party. One aspect that emerges from the intercultural political communication analysis is the recognition of diverse cultural backgrounds within a political context. These perspectives provide valuable insights into the dynamics of political communication among major political parties in Indonesia. By analysing the coalition-building process, this research aims to shed light on the dynamics of intercultural political communication among the major political parties in Indonesia.

Research Problem

How political parties engage in intercultural political communication to form alliances and determine presidential candidates for the upcoming election. Also, the study aims to explore the use of an intercultural approach in political communication which allows for a better understanding and integration of diverse cultural perspectives within the political sphere.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To look into the intercultural political communication process, this research employs Gudykunst and Kim's intercultural communication framework, along with Almond and Verba's theories of political culture. These theoretical frameworks provide a solid foundation for understanding the complexities of intercultural interactions in the political arena.

Gudykunst and Kim's intercultural communication

Gudykunst and Kim's intercultural communication theory, also known as the Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (AUM), focuses on how individuals from different cultures manage communication in intercultural interactions. The theory proposes that people experience anxiety and uncertainty when they encounter unfamiliar cultural norms, values, and communication patterns (Nadeem, 2023). These feelings arise due to the fear of making mistakes, being judged, or experiencing discomfort in intercultural encounters.

According to the theory, individuals employ various strategies to reduce anxiety and uncertainty and promote effective intercultural communication. These strategies include seeking information about the other culture, engaging in mindfulness and self-reflection, adapting communication styles to fit the cultural context, and fostering empathy and understanding towards the other culture (Rajan, 2021). The theory emphasizes the importance of reducing anxiety and uncertainty to facilitate successful intercultural interactions.

When it comes to intercultural political communication in the context of the upcoming Indonesia election in 2024, Gudykunst and Kim's intercultural communication theory can be deployed to form alliances and determine presidential candidates (Arriani, *Komunikasi Politik Dramatisme dan Pencitraan Politisi Di Panggung Politik*, 2021). Here's how it can be applied: 1). Building Alliances: The theory emphasizes the importance of seeking information about other cultures. In the context of political communication, political parties or candidates can engage in intercultural communication by actively reaching out to different cultural communities within Indonesia. This involves conducting research, attending community events, and understanding the cultural norms, values, and concerns of various ethnic or religious groups. By demonstrating an understanding of diverse cultural perspectives and

adapting their communication strategies accordingly, political parties can build alliances with different communities and gain their support. 2) Candidate Selection: The theory also highlights the significance of adapting communication styles to fit the cultural context. In the context of selecting presidential candidates, political parties can utilize intercultural communication principles to identify candidates who have a demonstrated ability to connect with and understand different cultural groups. Candidates who exhibit cultural sensitivity, empathy, and an inclusive communication style may be preferred as they can effectively engage with diverse communities and bridge cultural gaps.

Additionally, the theory emphasizes the importance of reducing anxiety and uncertainty in intercultural interactions. Political parties can employ strategies to minimize potential conflicts or misunderstandings that may arise due to cultural differences. This can involve conducting intercultural training programs for candidates and campaign staff to enhance their intercultural competence, providing educational materials on different cultures and customs, and promoting open dialogue and understanding between diverse groups.

By incorporating Gudykunst and Kim's intercultural communication theory into intercultural political communication, political parties can better navigate cultural differences, form alliances with diverse communities, and select candidates who can effectively engage with and represent the interests of a multicultural society like Indonesia.

Almond and Verba's Theories of Political Culture

Almond and Verba identified three political cultures: parochial, subject, and participant. These cultures represent different levels of political awareness, engagement, and participation within a society (Arriane, Teori, Model, Perspektif, dan Komunikasi Politik, 2022). 1) Parochial Political Culture: Parochial political culture refers to a low level of political awareness and participation among citizens. In this culture, individuals have limited knowledge of the political system and exhibit minimal engagement with political institutions. They tend to prioritize local, or community matters over national politics. Parochial political culture is commonly observed in rural or remote areas where access to information and political resources is limited. Citizens with a parochial political culture may not feel connected to the larger political process and may have little interest in national political affairs. 2) Subject Political Culture: Subject political culture is characterized by citizens who possess a moderate level of political awareness but feel relatively powerless or detached from political decision-making.

Individuals with a subject political culture may have a basic understanding of politics but perceive themselves as passive recipients of political decisions rather than active participants. They may view politics as a realm dominated by elites or perceive their voice as inconsequential. Subject political culture can be prevalent among marginalized or disenfranchised groups within a society, such as minority communities or economically disadvantaged individuals. 3) Participant Political Culture: Participant political culture represents citizens who exhibit high levels of political engagement, knowledge, and active participation in the political system. Individuals with a participant political culture are well-informed about political matters, actively participate in political activities, and have a sense of efficacy in influencing political outcomes. They are likely to vote, engage in political discussions, join political organizations, and take part in social movements. Participant political culture is often associated with politically active groups and individuals who have a strong belief in the value of their participation and the potential for their voices to bring about political change.

These three political cultures serve as analytical frameworks to understand the varying degrees of political awareness, engagement, and participation within a society. It is important to note that these cultures are not mutually exclusive, and individuals may exhibit characteristics of multiple cultures simultaneously.

By studying and analyzing the prevalence of these political cultures within a specific context, such as the Indonesia Election 2024, political actors and scholars can gain insights into the dynamics of citizen-political system relationships. This understanding can inform the development of effective political communication strategies, mobilization efforts, and policies that aim to engage citizens across different political cultures and foster a more participatory democratic process.

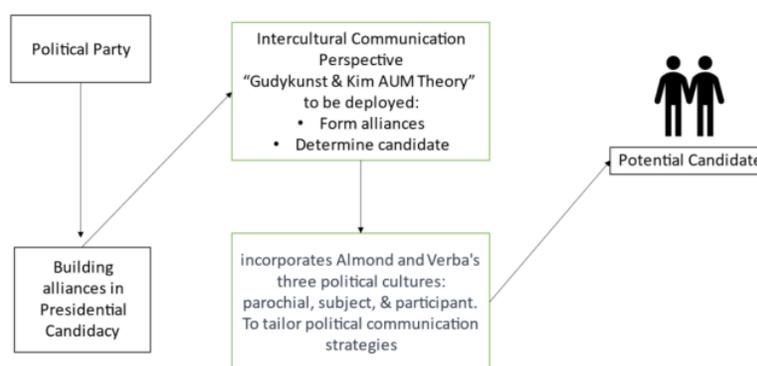


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework
Developed by researcher

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative methods with a phenomenological study approach to explore, reveal, describe, and understand the research problem from the perspectives of the groups and individuals involved (Ataro, 2020). Based on the research questions, the phenomena that will be interpreted, understood, and produced will be the object of research by the researchers in this study, especially the experiences and challenges that are felt well by the informants. The goal of phenomenological research is to understand the essence of social phenomena from the perspective of those who experience them (Creswell, 1998).

Data collection was carried out using in-depth interviews and participatory observation with research subjects consisting of key informants, namely political party (PP) figures, and political observers (PO). In-depth interviews will involve 6 political party (PP) representatives and 2 political observer (PO) figures.

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Table 1: Informants for in-depth interviews

No	Name	Gender (M=Male; F=Female)
1	PP (1)	M
2	PP (2)	M
3	PP (3)	M
4	PP (4)	M
5	PP (5)	M
6	PP (6)	M
7	PO (1)	M
8	PO (2)	M

MODEL OF DATA ANALYSIS

This study adopts Miles and Huberman's data analysis. It is the process of a systematic approach to analyzing qualitative data. It has a five-step process that involves collecting and organizing data, coding, and categorizing data, analyzing data, drawing conclusions, and verifying conclusions (Matthew B. Miles, 1994).

Step 1: The process is to collect and organize the data. This involves gathering the relevant data from the sources, such as in-depth interviews with research subjects, documents about Presidential candidacy based on survey result and political party statements in election 2024, or any observations occurred. The data has been organized into a format that is easy to analyze. Step 2: The second step is to code and categorize the data. This involves assigning labels to the data and organizing it into categories. There is a collection of data compiled and allows the drawing of conclusions. Presentation of data generated in the form of text, matrices, graphs, and charts. This helps to make the data easier to analyze and interpret.

Step 3: Analyze Data The third step is to analyze the data. This involves looking for patterns and relationships between the data. This can be done by looking for similarities and differences between the data, and by looking for relationships between different pieces of data to identify the key themes and insights from the data.

Step 4: Draw Conclusions The fourth step is to draw conclusions. This can be done by looking for patterns and relationships between the data, and by making inferences about the data. The results obtained are actions of the representative of political party to considers the potential candidate based on the brand equity. Step 5: Verification: The fifth and final step is to verify the conclusions that have been drawn from the data. This can be done by comparing the conclusions to other sources of data, or by conducting further research.

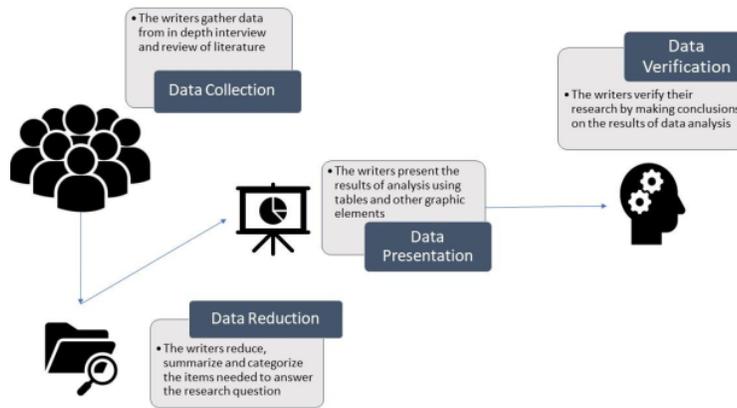


Figure 2: Data Analysis from Miles and Huberman 1994
 Data processed by researchers, 2022-2023

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the in-depth interviews with key informants from political parties and political experts in Indonesia revealed interesting insights into the promotion of a presidential candidate. By employing participatory observation and conducting interviews with representatives from six political parties and two political observers, this study aimed to gain valuable insights into the strategies and tactics employed in the promotion of a presidential candidate. The interviews revealed significant information regarding the role of political parties, the impact of media coverage and social media, and the challenges faced in the context of a highly competitive political environment.

These findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies used to promote a presidential candidate, contributing to our knowledge of the complex nature of political campaigning in Indonesia. The interviews conducted with key informants provided intriguing insights into the factors that shape the selection of a candidate for the upcoming Presidential Election in 2023. The informants emphasized the pivotal role played by political parties in the promotion of their respective candidates.

They highlighted the importance of party loyalty and unity, emphasizing that a candidate's alignment with the party's ideologies, policies, and values is crucial in garnering internal support. The informants emphasized the need for effective communication skills, as candidates must effectively convey the party's message and connect with the party's support base. Here is few information which gathered by the writers from informant's statements, talked about their factors in determining the candidate in Presidential Election 2023:

Table 2. In depth interview based on informants stated

No	Background/ Coalition representative	Response/ Informant's statements
1	Coalition of Change and Unity (KPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It is considered by His <u>Figure</u>, His <u>Popularity</u> and Electability" – PKS • "Character must have an ability to increase the <u>electability</u> of party votes: someone who can <u>lead and work</u>, and bring improvements in the future" – Demokrat

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referring to <u>electability</u>, there are a variety of factors both objective and subjective, that can be inferred from the names of the presidential candidate versions of survey institutes - Nasdem • SP (Surya Paloh) did not take anti-intolerant facets of intelligence and <u>public voice</u> into account when choosing Anies as a presidential candidate. - Nasdem
2	Coalition of Greater Indonesia Awakening Coalition consisting (KKIR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifically, for Gerindra, since the beginning this party was established to support Mr. Prabowo's struggle as the candidate of President of the Republic of Indonesia. Politics carried out by Gerindra is the embodiment of the values of Pak Prabowo's struggle. In depth, this can be seen in the book The Indonesian Paradox and its Solution, Indonesia Wins, Military Leadership etc. Therefore, fighting for Pak Prabowo as President is an obligation and a must for Gerindra". Parties will rationally support candidates who will increase their voter base (coat tail effect). Technically, that is the reason why the composition in the president and vice president election pays attention to many things such as Javanese-non-Javanese issues, santri-non-santri and even religious or political sects. - Gerindra
3	Coalition of United Indonesia (KIB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electability is more likely a quantity factor that may be gathered through pooling. Yet, for parties with a <u>strong ideological character</u>, like the PDI-Perjuangan, the qualification criterion for the <u>candidate's personal character</u> is a crucial element that must be in line with the <u>ideological character of the party</u>. PDI Perjuangan • Personality and <u>the party's branding strategy</u> are related. <u>Nationalism, democracy, Pancasila identity, and a unitary state</u> will be the symbols communicated through the branding, according to the PDI-P.
3	Non-party Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The topic of <u>candidate quality, performance, and capacity</u> has <u>not received much attention</u> from research institutes or survey organizations, which makes this discussion intriguing. In general, parties are more concerned with the element of fulfilling the minimal nomination standards (20%), the chances of the party chairperson getting nominated, and the likelihood that the Presidential candidate will prevail – Arya Fernandes, Director of CSIS • In terms of political candidacy, many parties have a strong Brand Equity with their own spectrum (<u>very famous/known/liked/until hated</u>) but <u>it is not reflected in their electability</u>. However, on the other hand, I believe that the <u>BE elements must have been considered from the electability of the candidate before other supporting forces are deployed</u>. The carrying capacity is the electability of the partner, the readiness of the machine for the bearer/supporter party, & logistical strength. I believe BE is something that has been seriously considered, but it is placed together with the electability factor of the candidate - Arif Suditomo, a Journalist and CMO of Media Group

Based on the response of each coalition's representative, and also the experts from non-coalitions above, it can be analysed with intercultural communication perspective. To analyse how each coalition might deploy intercultural communication strategies from Gudykunst and Kim's AUM perspective in determining a presidential candidate, here how it might be explored as an intercultural political approach:

Coalition of Change and Unity (KPP): a) The statements from PKS and Demokrat emphasize the importance of the candidate's figure, popularity, character, and ability to increase electability. These considerations align with the affective and evaluative components of the AUM theory, focusing on emotions, judgments, and values. b) Nasdem's statement acknowledges the importance of electability and suggests that survey institutes can provide insights into objective and subjective factors influencing it. This aligns with the cognitive component of the AUM theory, which emphasizes information and cognitive processes.

Coalition of Greater Indonesia Awakening Coalition (KKIR): a) Gerindra's statement highlights their strong support for Mr. Prabowo as a presidential candidate, based on his struggle and the embodiment of their party's values. This reflects the affective component of the AUM theory, as it focuses on emotional attachments and loyalty to a specific candidate. b) The mention of Javanese-non-Javanese issues, santri-non-santri, and religious or political sects suggests a consideration of cultural and identity factors in candidate selection, aligning with the intercultural communication perspective.

Coalition of United Indonesia (KIB): a) PDI-Perjuangan's statement emphasizes the importance of the candidate's personal character being in line with the party's ideological character. This reflects the evaluative component of the AUM theory, focusing on values and judgments. b) The mention of nationalism, democracy, Pancasila identity, and the unitary state as symbols communicated through branding suggests a focus on cultural and ideological elements, aligning with intercultural communication perspectives.

Non-party Expert: The statements from Arya Fernandes and Arif Suditomo highlight various factors considered by parties, such as minimal nomination standards, party chairperson's chances of being nominated, and electability. They mention the importance of electability, brand equity, candidate quality, and logistical strength. These considerations align with the cognitive and evaluative components of the AUM theory.

Overall, while some statements explicitly address intercultural communication strategies and cultural factors, others focus more on affective, cognitive, and evaluative elements. The deployment of intercultural communication strategies may vary among coalitions, with some considering cultural identity, ideology, and values, while others prioritize popularity, electability, and loyalty. Integrating intercultural communication approaches could enhance understanding and engagement with diverse cultural groups, ensuring inclusive and effective political communication during the candidate selection process.

In the context of the Indonesia Election 2024 with the three existing political party alliances, the Almond and Verba Political Culture framework (parochial, subject, and participant) can be used to tailor political communication strategies to win voters with their respective candidates. Here's how each political culture can inform communication strategies for each coalition :

Coalition of Change and Unity (KPP): a) Parochial Political Culture: Tailor the communication strategy to address the immediate concerns and tangible benefits for parochial voters. Use simple language and concrete examples to demonstrate how the coalition's candidate will directly improve their daily lives. b) Subject Political Culture: Emphasize the strength, decisiveness, and leadership qualities of the candidate. Highlight the candidate's ability to address specific concerns and present clear solutions to the subjects' perceived powerlessness. c) Participant Political Culture: Engage participants by emphasizing the coalition's commitment to democratic values, inclusivity, and grassroots participation.

Highlight the candidate's track record of collaborative decision-making and engaging with the public to address their concerns.

Coalition of Greater Indonesia Awakening Coalition (KKIR): a) Parochial Political Culture: Focus on specific issues that directly impact parochial voters' lives and use relatable language to convey the coalition's candidate as a strong leader who can address their concerns effectively. b) Subject Political Culture: Highlight the coalition's candidate as a strong and decisive leader who can guide the subjects and address their perceived powerlessness. Emphasize the candidate's vision and commitment to representing their interests. c) Participant Political Culture: Engage participants by demonstrating the coalition's commitment to democratic values and grassroots participation. Highlight the candidate's ability to mobilize and empower supporters and showcase their track record of engaging with the public.

Coalition of United Indonesia (KIB): a) Parochial Political Culture: Focus on tangible benefits and immediate concerns that resonate with parochial voters. Use straightforward language and clear examples to demonstrate how the coalition's candidate will improve their lives. b) Subject Political Culture: Emphasize the coalition's candidate as a strong leader who can address subjects' concerns and guide them effectively. Highlight the candidate's track record of decisive action and their ability to represent the subjects' interests. c) Participant Political Culture: Engage participants by emphasizing the coalition's commitment to democratic values, inclusivity, and grassroots participation. Showcase the candidate's dedication to collaborating with the public to address their concerns and highlight their history of grassroots activism.

It is crucial to remember that individuals can exhibit characteristics of multiple political cultures, and a comprehensive political communication strategy should consider a combination of these cultures. By tailoring their messaging to address the concerns and values of parochial, subject, and participant voters, each coalition can effectively engage with different segments of the electorate and increase their chances of winning their support in the Indonesia Election 2024.

CONCLUSION

In summary, Intercultural communication plays a crucial role in the context of political culture in Indonesia during the presidential candidacy for the Indonesia Election 2024. Understanding and adapting to the diverse political cultures of parochial, subject, and participant can significantly impact the success of political parties and their respective candidates in winning voter support.

In the case of the Indonesia Election 2024, intercultural perspective in political communication should take into account the different political cultures that exist within the country. Strategies should be tailored to address the specific needs and characteristics of each political culture, including providing political education and raising awareness for those with a parochial political culture, empowering and engaging those with a subject political culture, and mobilizing and energizing those with a participant political culture.

By recognizing and accommodating these different political cultures, political parties and candidates can foster a more inclusive and participatory democratic process. TopHere are some key takeaways and recommendations: a) Political parties need to tailor their communication strategies to resonate with different political cultures. This involves crafting messages and approaches that address the specific concerns, values, and aspirations of parochial, subject, and participant voters. b) For parochial voters, simplicity and concrete examples are essential. Parties should focus on addressing immediate concerns and demonstrating tangible benefits that the candidate can bring to their lives. c) Subject voters rely

on strong leadership. Parties should emphasize the candidate's strength, decisiveness, and ability to address specific concerns, making them feel empowered and represented. d) Participant voters value active engagement and commitment to democratic values. Parties should highlight the candidate's track record of grassroots participation, collaborative decision-making, and their alignment with the party's ideological character. e) A comprehensive communication strategy should consider a combination of political cultures to engage and persuade a wide range of voters. Parties should recognize the overlapping characteristics of political cultures and develop nuanced approaches that speak to different segments of the electorate. f) Effective intercultural communication requires clear and accessible language, relatable examples, and inclusive messaging. Parties should avoid using complex political jargon and foster an environment that encourages diverse perspectives and public participation. g) Continuous research and understanding of the evolving political landscape are crucial. Parties should stay informed about the changing needs and concerns of voters, conduct surveys, and engage in dialogue with the public to adapt their communication strategies accordingly.

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