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Symbolic Political Communication, and Trust: A Young Voters' Perspective of the Indonesian Presidential Election

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Abstract

Communication in political marketing plays an important role in political mobilization, building trust both in political actors and the government. Politicians construct their messages through careful branding as the power of the cultural symbols and signs conveyed through the brand are potent heuristic devices. This is particularly important in emerging democracies, where there is limited political knowledge and understanding. Therefore, this research explores how young voters understand the symbolic communication fashioned by political actors in Indonesia and how it relates to their brand. Indonesia is an interesting area for study; it is both secular and the world's largest Muslim democracy. Using a phenomenological approach, a total of 19 in-depth interviews with young voters were conducted to gain rich insight into perceptions of the

complexity of political symbolism, and trust among young voters. This study conceptualized political communication as a dual approach. The political brand promise is intrinsically linked to cultural references and conveyed through symbolic communication combined with a distinctive brand message. This builds trust, which then affects political participation. This conceptual framework provides insights into the importance of culture in branding which has implications for policy makers and actors in emerging and established democracies.

Keywords:

emerging democracies | Indonesian politics | political branding | political communications | young voters

Additional information

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