

The Role of Sufi Networks in Islamic The Political Precedence of Wong Cilik's Collective Historical Memory over the 2024 Election

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Abstract: This study explores the collective historical memory of wong cilik (Indonesia's underprivileged class) regarding the 2019 presidential election and investigates its implications for democratic participation in the 2024 election. Motivated by elite cooptation following the 2019 contest—specifically the alliance between former rivals—this research examines public perceptions of political ethics, fairness, and democratic trust. Employing a qualitative methodology with fieldwork in Surabaya, Sidoarjo, and Bangkalan, the study draws on interviews, surveys, and document analysis to reconstruct grassroots narratives. Findings reveal that wong cilik retain a rational and ethically oriented memory of the 2019 election, including concerns over elite domination and superficial representation. Despite disappointment, their commitment to democratic participation remains robust, driven by individual values, economic considerations, and social identification. Political preferences are shaped by multifaceted influences, and distrust toward elite behavior does not translate into widespread abstention. The study contributes to scholarly understanding of subaltern agency in democratic systems and underscores the strategic and ethical importance of genuinely integrating wong cilik voices into Indonesia's political process. Their historical memory represents not only a reflection of past grievances but also a foundation for future democratic consolidation.

Keywords: *Wong Cilik; collective memory; political ethics; democratic participation; Indonesian election.*

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 political race in Indonesia has ended. Despite claims of fraud and challenges over the election results, the procedure is thought to have gone smoothly. However, the background of this significant event is considerably more crucial to focus on. Considering that this country may learn a lot from the political articulation that took place. It is acknowledged that the situation was becoming more heated, and national strategic considerations overshadowed the event. Specifically, the risk of dwindling public confidence in the election outcomes and its consequences for Indonesia's transition to a more civilized democracy. Starting from the anomalous behavior that arose during the 2019 presidential election, which

was one of the genuine causes that could be advanced. Politicians who lose usually prefer to be out of power. Even if coalitions or political collaboration are formed, they are constrained to party institutions. At the same time, the running candidates are not included in the power structure. In the 2019 presidential election, the losing candidate pair entered the cabinet and became ministers of the elected candidate pair. Prabowo Subianto - Sandiaggo Uno joined the government coalition as Jokowi – Ma'ruf Amin's ministers. This occurrence is a new historical record in modern Indonesian and even global history.

Various parties criticized this political move. Disappointment is also suspected to among individuals who previously supported the Prabowo-Uno. Several justifications were advanced to defend this political decision. Among them is the aim to calm concerns about the nation's fragmentation as a result of the widespread use of identity politics throughout the contestation process (Simandjuntak, 2022). Furthermore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, national unity must be promoted (Sari, 2022). This argument does not change the public's perception of Indonesian political events as a practice of power sharing among the elites (see Sastramidjaja, Rasidi, and Elsitra, 2022). Meanwhile, the political arena as a field of struggle that instigates agendas and issues of ideological contests is becoming increasingly vague. This is strengthened by the fact that national political decisions are still laden with the accommodation of elite interests (see Muhtadi, 2022a; 2022b).

Many parties recognize concerns with public trust as a strategic issue that must be addressed and responded to thoughtfully since they significantly impact the quality of democracy in Indonesia. However, the current flow of conversations through various public media platforms does not appear to pay enough attention to this topic. Wong cilik, or lower-class people, remain a marginal problem in popular discourse (see Arifianto, 2022). The discussion regarding democracy in the run-up to the 2024 election seems to be colored by procedural contents (Dinata and Akbar, 2022; Wahdini, 2022; Voi, 2021; Amir, 2020).

Moving on to this reality, it is crucial and necessary to investigate national political contestation from the ground up. It is time for Indonesia's democratic progress to make room for the underprivileged's voices and aspirations to be more authentically mainstreamed. Their presence should no longer be solely represented or co-opted by political elites to gain electoral advantage. It is critical to place Wong Cilik's aspirations and interests at the center of the democratic process. In this framework, Wong Cilik can be understood more holistically, not just in politics, but also in sociological and cultural aspects. This is historically significant and relevant because the wong cilik who hold a sociologically-culturally subordinate position are also those who fall into the group of low social class and poor economy.

This study will look for patterns in the collective historical memory of Wong Cilik. Is it true that the presumption thus far holds that the Indonesian people, particularly the ordinary people, have a short memory pattern and readily forget events, some of which are even strategically important since they affect their everyday lives (see Kohar, 2021; Haba, 2011). This must render this country vulnerable to stagnant tendencies and slow to learn how to develop from numerous limitations, deficiencies, and mistakes. The disenfranchised community group or the underprivileged will bear the brunt of the consequences.

Previous research on the collective historical memory of Wong Cilik on Indonesian politics has been scarce. Most of them concentrated on political engagement, campaigning, and political marketing. For political participation, see, for example, Haris and Dardum's (2021) publications on the involvement of the Jember NU kiai. Amelia et al. (2020) discussed student political preference. Winarni, Agussalim, and Bagir (2020) and Kurnia and Al-Hamdi (2019) discuss the motivations for political support. Ristala (2019) discusses measures to

reduce friction among supporters. Fermana and Zetra (2022) and Tinarbuko (2019), in terms of media and political advertising for the presidential election, are examples of political campaigns and marketing, regarding voter perceptions, sentiments, and attitudes, Gautama (2020), Nasution, Harsono, and Triono (2020), Kurniawan and Susanto (2019), and Najib and Irsyad (2019). Regarding the use of social media in political campaigns, see Fadiyah and Simorangkir (2021), Sumarno (2021), Durrah, Anwar, and Siregar (2020), Panuju (2019), and Alvin (2019). Assidiq and Ambarwati (2021) discuss the campaign team's political approach. Another concern discussed in connection with the 2019 presidential election is identity politics and democratic issues. This is highlighted by Iswandi and Abdullah (2020) and Romli (2019). Meanwhile, research on the sociopolitical implications of the 2019 presidential election is still sparse. Indrawan, Ilmar, and Kusuma (2022) discuss the need for post-contestation political reconciliation efforts that show the potential for national division, and Hergianasari and Netanyahu (2021) discuss the transformation of radical movements following the 2019 presidential election.

The issue of the collective historical memory of Wong Cilik in the context of contemporary Indonesian politics, so far as the research team discovered, has not been carried out methodically and thoughtfully—several research and analyses on the primarily underprivileged focus on economic elements such as poverty. For example, Ganjar Nugroho (2001) raised the topic of wong cilik market resistance. People from disadvantaged backgrounds can develop resistance to uneven and diverse events and situations. One is the market condition (allocation-consumption), which puts them under pressure and forces them to battle. This can take the shape of a buying and selling strategy that permits the less fortunate to acquire access at a lower cost. Underprivileged persons may be attracted to actions that are legally categorized as violating or even going on a rampage through looting and damage in specific scenarios that are particularly restrictive towards achieving their basic requirements in life. This resistance can move disorganizedly, but the results may not be significant if done systemically. So far, the concept of collective historical memory has not assigned a distinct place to the role of the wong cilik in history. Some research on collective historical memory is being conducted, for example, by Damanik (2020) on plantation traces in Medan, Pangestu (2021), who investigates novels, and Yambeyapdi (2019), who examines the Papuan people's collective memory towards integration.

Then, considering the scarcity of scientific studies on the subject, this conversation is both timely and important due to its uniqueness and freshness. This research will also benefit from strengthening substantial democratization and improving public trust in the constitutional process that must be passed to realize the nation's ideals. The discussion here is restricted to two questions: (1) how Wong Cilik's collective historical memory of the 2019 presidential election is, and (2) what the precedent for the 2024 election is. This study was based on the notion that Wong Cilik is an important element of Indonesia's democratization that should not be overlooked or disregarded. Wong cilik, being one of the population groups with a significant number of individuals in this country, must receive space and affirmation in the academic and practical arenas through self-representation. They must be directly heard for their opinions. Their memories and understandings of the strategic political process for their lives must be assessed and valued. Wong Cilik has the ability and aptitude to speak about themselves here.

METHOD

This study adopts Dubois and Gadde's (2002) historical-design modification method, integrating fieldwork, literature review, and comparative analysis (Creswell, 2014; Roth, 2012; Keegan, 2009). Reality is interpreted qualitatively through primary data from *Wong Cilik* informants, while textual sources refine theoretical and practical insights.

Research centres on three East-Javanese loci—Surabaya, Sidoarjo, and Bangkalan—chosen for their contrasting electoral histories and socio-political cultures. Surabaya, a nationalist-secular stronghold, consistently favours the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P). Sidoarjo, dominated by *santri* traditions, reliably supports the National Awakening Party (PKB). Bangkalan, though geographically proximate to Surabaya, exhibits more fluid voting patterns. These sites create a microcosm through which constitutional democratisation and public trust can be viewed nationally.

Data are collected through context-focused observation, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and a supplementary survey. Interviews involve impoverished and non-impoverished residents; additional perspectives are gained from election officials, party elites, and community leaders. Literature study engages relevant archives, legal instruments, and scholarly works, enriching the empirical findings. Cross-case comparison among the three regions uncovers commonalities and divergences in the collective historical memory of the *wong cilik*.

A social-justice framework (Joshi, 2020) guides analysis, foregrounding questions of equity, representation, and rights. By triangulating multiple data types and situating them within East Java's diverse political ecology, the research constructs a methodologically coherent, empirically grounded narrative of how Indonesia's poor remember, interpret, and act within democratic processes.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Wong Cilik and Politics

The term '*wong cilik*' is a Javanese term that means '*ordinary people*' according to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Kemendikbud, 2017). *Wong Cilik* is also closely related to and understood as a subaltern community group in scientific discourse. This refers to concepts created in postcolonial debates about a position not clearly defined as other, against, or alternative to the dominant power. Asymmetric and unequal power interactions are established (Ayoob, 2002). Putting the subaltern in an unclear marginal position (Sharp, 2011; Hooks, 1990). Subaltern is also an idea that is closely related to the global project of capitalism and imperialism, both at the personal micro level as found in Michel Foucault's works and at the macro level as found in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Edward W. Said's works (Maggio, 2007; Spivak, 2010; Foucault, 1995; Said, 1979).

The term *wong cilik* is frequently related to Sukarno's concept of Marhaenism in Indonesian political history. Where he introduced the *Marhaen*, who were conceptualized as the poor, the weak, the people subjugated by the colonial power system. Unlike the Indonesian Communist Party's (PKI) propagandist, which associates the impoverished with the proletariat or workers, the concept of the marhaen does not merely view the disadvantaged as groupings of poor people who sell their labor (Kuswono, 2016). History also shows that, despite their limits as non-elites, ordinary people, grassroots, or the impoverished can participate in political participation to effect change cooperatively or through radical upheaval

(Adnan, 2014). It is in line with the conception of wong cilik in Javanese cosmology. According to Wasino, Hartatik, and Shintasiiwi (2021), Wong Cilik is often associated with *kawula*. However, in its meaning, wong cilik refers to a group serving the elite or *priyayi*. Meanwhile, *kawula* could serve both *priyayi* and wong cilik, where some wong cilik could refer to non-*priyayi* or ordinary people who were rich or economically established (like traders). The traditional definition of wong cilik seems closer to *kawula* in that relational structure where they have characterization of low social strata, weak, poor, or economically vulnerable. As European capitalism entered the archipelago, the concept of wong cilik as servants in traditional aristocratic relations experienced a shift. Even in its later developments, Wong Cilik was politically seen as having a place and, at the same time, a significant influence. Even though the mobilization of these forces does not always mean a guarantee of improvement in their lives, the symbolism of wong cilik in Javanese tradition can be found, among other things, in the figure of *punakawan* in the Indonesian wayang puppet play. The most prominent figure in the depiction of Wong Cilik here is Semar. Despite his marginal position, his existence is crucial for the continuation of power held by the elite group.

In short, the wong cilik are always associated with low-income categories of people. In the Islamic faith, poverty does not have to imply that people are beggars, but rather that they have not gotten care and attention from the rich to assist them in meeting their requirements. Because wealth is viewed as an entity that must be dispersed to those in need, it should not accumulate excessively in small groups of people (Mughni, 2015). According to BPS (2022), persons who are considered impoverished have a monthly per capita income of less than or equal to IDR 505,469. Because of their subaltern status, wong cilik are exposed to systemic exploitation and violence that marginalizes, ignores, and silences their aspirations and interests (Kaligis, 2014a). Wong cilik can be very sexy politically during the contestation momentum for electoral capitalization objectives, but once the political event is complete, they can be left behind and forgotten. Understanding the Wong Cilik as a notion in political history requires juxtaposition with numerous other concepts with similar implications. Wong Cilik. In the political context, terms such as marginal, *hoi polloi*, plebeian, proletarian, blue-collar worker, *marhaen*, and agricultural laborer are commonly associated with the phrase wong cilik.

Various theories about the Wong Cilik provide frameworks for understanding the social, economic, and political forces that lead to exclusion, disadvantage, and limited opportunities for specific social groups. These ideas explain the underlying reasons for marginalization and offer suggestions for addressing the issue. There are social stratification theory (Hess, 2001), intersectionality theory (Bottero, 2005), structural functionalism (Varshney, 1978), conflict theory (Williams & Timberlake, 1984), cultural capital theory (Emmison, 2003), critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), postcolonial theory (Moore-Gilbert, 1997), and feminist theory (Bryson, 2007). These theories provide a unique perspective on why marginalized people face exclusion and disadvantage. They contribute to the direction of research, policy, and actions to reduce social inequality and foster social justice. It is critical to acknowledge that no single theory can fully explain all aspects of marginalization, and that a comprehensive understanding frequently necessitates an intersectional approach that considers numerous causes and viewpoints. What is important to note is that wong cilik should not be understood in a minor context, as a party perceived to be weak, marginalized, and possibly overlooked or neglected. The underprivileged also have the imagination and power to navigate the course of history through the work of their agencies, especially in the political realm, in advocating for their rights (Deveaux, 2015).

Indonesia has held twelve elections since gaining its independence: one during the Old Order (1955), six in the New Order era (1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997), and five in the Reformation period (1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019). The election of 2024 will mark the thirteenth ever held in a postcolonial setting. Elections throughout the Old Order and Reformation period are often seen as the practices of democratic traditions. In contrast, many people doubted that elections during the New Order era were a practice that upheld democratic values (Macintyre, 1991). In the historical trajectory of these elections, political parties that use names synonymous with *wong cilik* have never been proven to receive significant vote support. For example, the Village People's United Party (PRD) participated in contestation during the Old Order. The gain was only one seat. The Women's People's Party, established in 1946, was even more tragic. If the women's category is considered part of the politically marginalized, this *wong cilik's* party also failed to gain public support until it disbanded following the election (Wieringa, 2002). Then, in the Reformation era, parties emerged from among the workers or laborers (SPSI and Labor Party) (see Singh, 2000). They also failed to enter parliament. Their low electoral vote share indicates the weakness of the struggle for the aspirations of *Wong Cilik* through the instrumentation of *Wong Cilik's* political movement (*workers qua workers*). A circumstance frequently compels them to negotiate with more dominant political forces to obtain incentives for political support (see Caraway & Ford, 2020). Even if it can be called the most successful experimentation in organizing *wong cilik* through functional wings of political parties, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) may hold the record for this, as its Peasant Front claimed to have 5.7 million members in the 1960s and its Workers Political Wing (SOBSI) to be supported by no less than 3.3 million members (Bourchier, 2015).

The term '*wong cilik*' as political jargon during the New Order era was echoed repeatedly by the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) in the 80s as a concept that could carry the spirit of Soekarno's Marhaenism ideology from the previous order (Kaligis, 2014b). The political move that commenced in the Soerjadi's PDI era (Rohmawai, 2016) could continuously be enjoyed until Megawati's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) era (Tomsa, 2008; Robison & Hadiz, 2004; see Eklof, 1997). The party continues to tout its political branding as inclusive of all socioeconomic classes (Horowitz, 2013). In actuality, other parties—including the United Development Party (PPP)—were also trying to identify themselves as those who share the goals of *Wong Cilik*. They claim to be a continuation of the objectives of the weak (Porter, 2002; Suryadinata, 1982).

The orchestration of defending *Wong Cilik* as a political campaign topic happens in every electoral contest. Not only did this happen in the Reformation era, but also during the Old and New Orders. It can be found not only in the candidates' formal vision and mission statements, but also in their political communication and marketing. The phenomenon of mutual mockery or sarcasm among candidates or political parties running for office might be an interesting reflection on how they strive to relate to the populace to obtain greater electoral support. During the Old Order, for example, the PKI published posters satirizing the monetary policies of the Masyumi Minister of Finance, Syafruddin Prawiranegara, of cutting the rupiah (*Gunting Syafruddin*). A message to the masses to choose the PKI against Masyumi, which was depicted as causing them agony. Masyumi, on the other side, advertised that choosing the hammer and sickle (PKI) was equivalent to ceding sovereignty to a foreign power (the Soviet Union). During the New Order, Golkar took up the issue of the threat to Pancasila if the PPP won. On the other hand, the PPP responded by informing the public that Indonesia would not become an Islamic state if they won. In the Reformation era, when political memes were so

easy to create in cyberspace, the political battle between Jokowi, who was called the '*Calon Presiden Wong-Cilik*' (the poor's presidential candidate), was pitted against Prabowo, who was called the '*Calon Presiden Culik-Wong*' (the presidential candidate who kidnapped people). In the opposite camp, the framing of Jokowi as a '*Calon Presiden Boneka*' (puppet presidential candidate) was also widely circulated in public spaces (Utomo & Aji, 2021; see also Setiawan & Tomsa, 2022; Ahmad, 2016; Ahmad, Wasino & Wijayanti, 2019). Ahead of the 2024 election, a populist package that raises the issue of siding with the interests of wong cilik is also being played again by the candidates (see Alayya, 2023).

As a result, the subject of Wong Cilik appears to be on the campaign menu at every election, both at the national and local levels. As the most significant population segment in this country (Heryanto, 2003), people experiencing poverty or people in need are an electoral niche that cannot be overlooked, let alone abandoned by anyone who wants to win in political contestation (see Choi, 2011). However, due to the clientelistic political structure, the position of wong cilik is frequently exploited solely for short-term electoral gains. Many formal and informal civil forces that should play the role of enhancing democratic ideals in politics prefer to be brokers who also benefit from material incentives from transactional behavior in general elections (see Pribadi, 2018; Aspinall & Sukmajati, 2016; Hefner, 2000). The local political elite often ignores or excludes the aspirations of wong cilik in political deliberation at the grassroots (Kusman, 2019). A fact that seems parallel to the decentralization of corrupt practices to the local areas following the collapse of the Soeharto regime (see Aspinall & Fealy, 2003).

Memory of the 2019 Presidential Election

It is not easy to provide a formal definition of historical memory. In practice, historical memory relates to the ability to transmit history socially, culturally, and politically through human groupings or communities. This historical memory is valuable because it allows us to observe how the past was framed, managed, maintained, and transferred (Helmsing, 2021). Readers can surely interpret historical events in a variety of ways. With its various interests, historical memory can become a battleground between current perspectives (Scott, 2021). However, collective memory is also known within a community group. Terms that can be viewed as a collection of shared memories, knowledge, and information from a specific social group have a strong connection to their collective identity (Roediger & Abel, 2015; Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, 2011; Hirst & Manier, 2008). Historical studies have suggested that this collective memory can be scientifically reconstructed. However, the built historical narrative may contain defects or errors (Guha, 2019). Historical facts that depict genuine occurrences are thought to be possible thanks to thorough proving attempts (Steinhauer, 2017). According to Patrick B. Finney (2014), historians should prioritize serious studies on communal historical memory as a new option for advancing historical studies. The propensity to focus on culture can be recaptured in historical memory studies.

The public has memories of the implementation of the 2019 presidential election, according to field studies related to the collective historical memory of Wong Cilik in three regencies/cities in East Java, Sidoarjo, Surabaya, and Bangkalan. This is demonstrated, among other things, by the amount of satisfaction with the democratic event expressed by all informants without exception. More than half of the interviewees from Surabaya and Bangkalan reported that they were sufficiently and extremely happy. Meanwhile, in Sidoarjo, the accumulation of people who indicated they were less than half or unhappy was greater than half of the informants. Facts that, when analyzed, show that the implementation of the

2019 presidential election has yet to meet the expectations of most Indonesians. The level of satisfaction stated appears to allow room for improvement in the next election.

There are indicators that the shortcomings in implementing the 2019 election remain. Even though Surabaya is one of the bases for PDI-P political support and the leading supporter of the regime currently in power, half of the informants stated that the 2019 presidential election was honest and fair. This could not erase the data, as some Surabaya residents stated there were fraud allegations. Meanwhile, in Sidoarjo and Bangkalan, the majority, while still less than 50%, believe that the 2019 presidential election was not conducted fairly.

The people's collective memory also confirms that the 2019 presidential election was clouded by fears of violence or friction throughout society, which might potentially jeopardize national unity and integrity. They appear to regard and consider the split between the two candidates' supporters as something crucial that must be avoided. The percentages in the three regions, ranging from 62.5% to 70%, indicate that most people have encountered and identified the possibility of segregation and horizontal conflict in the 2019 presidential election.

In response to the joining of contenders who lost in the 2019 presidential election into the power structure led by the winning contestants, it turns out that the people also have a logical-legalistic viewpoint. This means that the losing presidential election candidates chose to become ministers in the cabinet tasked with aiding the elected president/vice president rather than opponents outside the executive power system. According to the map of people's perceptions on this subject, most believe that unique political conduct is logically still allowed and does not disqualify or violate the rule of law, including the constitution. Even while some people, despite being in the minority, indicated that such activity is not permitted, the percentage range was 12.5% to 16.7%. A democratic system that presumes a balance of power through the presence of a sufficiently strong opposition, traditionally represented by the power lost in elections, has been overlooked.

Meanwhile, the practice of contenders who failed in the 2019 presidential election boarding the winner's political power ship to share power is under scrutiny from the standpoint of political ethics. Some people consider this behavior inappropriate and unacceptable, especially with the costly contestation process, which has sapped the nation's energies. When the losers and winners band together, it is not an exaggeration to question the importance and urgency of having the presidential election. In Sidoarjo, historically considered the foundation of PKB's political support, 33.3% said it was fair and not balanced. Surabaya and Bangkalan are still in the 63% range, indicating appropriateness.

When the informants were questioned whether they agreed or disagreed with the political moves or maneuvers of the two 2019 presidential election candidates, the distribution of the ethical viewpoints was seen in identical proportions. In Bangkalan and Surabaya, the proportion of those who agreed was higher than those who disagreed when asked to answer the above-mentioned political ethics issue. Although they still have equal support in Sidoarjo, the percentage has increased to 38.1%.

This quantitatively dominant proportion then revealed new information from the field, stating that not all people or supporters of each of the 2019 presidential election candidates felt comfortable and happy with the existence of a coalition between two parties that were previously political rivals to work together in one cabinet and government. Most informants, 65.6% to 78.3%, read it and identified serious disagreement within the community. Even when asked about disappointment among supporters of the two pairs of candidates, Sidoarjo and Bangkalan recorded percentages above 50% who claimed to identify that the two candidates'

supporters expressed their disappointment. While those in Surabaya remain the majority, the percentage is still less than half, at 46.9%.

Notably, the informants realized and estimated that the coalition's or political collaboration in government between the two pairs of candidates had a political impact, specifically, preventing the development of the threat of division and strengthening the bonds of unity among the nation's children. Aside from their initial reaction, several said that such political actions or strategies were not intellectually and ethically permissible.

Another issue that came to light was the interests involved in, or benefiting from, this political ploy. Surabaya and Bangkalan appear to concur that most citizens in both regions, more than 55%, believe their primary motivation is to serve the nation and its unity. For Sidoarjo, on the other hand, the majority (albeit not up to 50%) is motivated by a mix of noble intents to serve the nation and state and personal concerns as an elite. Sidoarjo made elite interests as commander for more than a third of the informants (38.1%).

When the question about these issues was linked to or related to representing the interests of the impoverished, similar proportions were determined from the maps of the three regions. Even though it was less than 50% in Surabaya and Bangkalan, the majority (between 40.66% and 4.7%) claimed that the political action aimed to fight for the interests of the impoverished. Meanwhile, in Sidoarjo, more than half, 57.1%, said that this political ploy did not consider the interests of the impoverished.

The foregoing presentation of field data is sufficient to provide an overview and context for the people's perception maps. The data also provides information on the reality of the Wong Cilik collective memory relating to political historical events in 2019. Furthermore, data from the field has been collected addressing crucial concerns from the 2019 presidential election events, with people's political participation in the approaching 2024 election. The question is whether the 2019 presidential election event, a one-of-a-kind phenomenon in politics, may serve as a precedent for people's political beliefs and conduct in the 2024 election.

It turns out that the events of 'political marriage' between rival presidential candidates in the 2019 election will not significantly impact people's desire to actively participate in democratic events such as the general election or the presidential election in 2024. More than 93% stated they will continue to vote. Most people in Sidoarjo and Bangkalan said the incident will not change their attitudes or behaviors toward participating in national democratic events as citizens. However, 62.5% of those polled in Surabaya said the case would influence their attitudes and participation in future elections.

When delving deeper into the determinant and most decisive elements that will subsequently impact the decision to participate in and exercise their right to vote in the 2024 presidential election, the majority responded that this was a factor of personal concerns. Some cited pragmatic factors in the form of 'money politics' as a deciding factor, and others considered party affiliation, although the percentage was relatively low. Similarly, individuals who specifically state their intention to vote for abstentions in the impending 2024 general election are in the minority, not exceeding 5%. Even in Surabaya, the percentage of abstentions is close to 0%.

Political Preference

The field data above becomes a reading material that can be elaborated theoretically on the political attitudes and preferences of Wong Cilik. That an anomalous event occurred in 2019 did not necessarily cause their trust to decline in the democratic political process in their

country. Regarding the factors that influence the political preferences of Wong Cilik, it can be stated that they are pretty diverse. Many people identify with a political party that shares their values and preferences. Voting behavior, policy support, and political participation are all influenced by political identification. Here, a political party frequently proposes a platform, a set of positions and policy goals campaigned for during elections and when in office. It is crucial to remember that political and party identification can shift over time due to changes in people's opinions or responses to shifting conditions.

Depending on political party identification, this preference can theoretically be explained from several angles: (1) Identification on a psychological level. People are more likely to identify with political parties that share their self-concept and beliefs. Individuals select political parties that give them a sense of belonging, and become a part of their identity; (2) Social identification. People choose their political party based on their social identity. Those who represent their social, cultural, ethnic, or religious group because it generates a sense of unity and shared interest; (3) Dissonance in cognition. Individuals can join political parties to alleviate cognitive dissonance, or mental discomfort caused by opposing opinions; (4) Socialization. Family, education, media, and peer groups shape individual political party affiliations. People are influenced by their upbringing and early exposure to political views and information (Hart, 2016); (5) Social influence. People choose political parties based on their beliefs and social network preferences. Peer pressure and social interaction can significantly influence a person's political decisions (Zaller, 1992); (6) Economic considerations. Individuals join the party based on their economic interests. Voters select the party they believe would best serve their economic well-being through taxation, job creation, and income distribution policies (Downs, 1957); (7) Rational choice. Assumes that people vote for and affiliate with political parties based on their self-interest. People make reasonable decisions when they vote for the party that best represents their political preferences (Shepsle, 1972; Page & Shapiro, 1992); (8) Valence issue. Individuals associated with those deemed competent in dealing with critical concerns such as the economy, national security, or public health. Voters prioritize party competencies over specific policy positions (Campbell, 1980; Johns, 2011). (9) Generational element. Their generation's experiences and events shape political affiliations. Historical events and societal changes can shape people's attitudes and objectives, causing them to identify with specific parties (Jennings & Niemi, 1981; Strauss & Howe, 1997).

These ideas regularly interact and overlap, and various circumstances typically impact political preferences. In addition, discrepancies in applying these theories in practice might be caused by the political environment, cultural variances, and the personal conditions of each individual. The research findings in the three regions show that the political considerations and preferences of wong cilik cannot be standardized, let alone dictated by the will of the elite. They define their own political decisions and their interests.

This phenomenon of Wong Cilik's agency exists in many countries. The range of movements by Wong Cilik to define and fight for their political aspirations is not unique to Indonesia. The paths they take may differ. Some employ constitutional channels through nonviolent advocacy initiatives, but the reality frequently leads them to use an armed approach to obtaining justice and their rights. Its articulation can manifest itself in various advocacy movements for minority and politically marginalized groups, such as the civil rights movement led by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Watson, 1993), the feminist movement (Mansoor, 2015), and LGBTQ+ groups. (Knight, 2018), the disability rights movement (Petronis, 2023; Scotch, 1989), the indigenous peoples' rights movement (Hodgson, 2002; Swadhikar, 2015), the migrant and refugee rights movement

(Lowry & Nyers, 2003), and the Black Lives Matter (Célestine, 2022; BLM, 2023). Their political expressions can also be seen in a populist agenda concerned with public interests. These include the five-star movement in Italy (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2016), the Podemos movement in Spain (Sinkkonen, 2015), the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela (Ramírez, 2005), and the yellow vest protests in France (Bynum, 2021).

Among workers, *Fight for 15*, which advocates for the fulfillment of fundamental rights and a minimum wage for them, is a phenomenal example of the Wong Cilik movement (Rolf, 2016; Brown, 2017). It also includes the history of earlier movements such as the May 1968 protests in France (see Silvera, 1971) or the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia (Smith, 2002). The movement of workers or laborers can be found in almost all countries. In the United States, there were known worker strikes such as the Railroad Strike, Haymarket Affair, Homestead Steel Strike, Pullman Strike (Urban, 2020), and the struggle of automotive workers (UAW) (Lichtenstein, 1980). In Poland, a movement of workers' solidarity was then able to overthrow communist rule there (Kubow, 2013). South Africa also witnessed how mining workers advocated for their political rights for greater economic equality (James, 1987). Then there was also the textile workers' movement in Bangladesh, which demanded improvements in wages and job security (Khanna, 2011).

Farmers have a long history of political struggle. For example, in France, there was the Jacquerie movement (Bessen, 2012). In Germany, there was even a peasant war (Engels, 1850), as also occurred in England (Schlauch, 1940). The issue of land reform also sparked a significant peasant revolutionary movement in Mexico in the early 20th century (Ouweneel, 1990). It was repeated later when the Zapatistas led the Chiapas rebellion (Harvey, 1998). In India, the Naxalite movement of the late 60s was well recognized for its fight against cruel exploitation (Dasgupta, 1978). Then Brazil has witnessed the birth of the most significant peasant movement in the world, known as the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), which advocated for land, the rights of rural workers and landless farmers (Carter, 2010). Meanwhile, in the Philippines, the Hukbalahap event marked the record of the farmers' movement fighting for their rights (Greenberg, 1989).

All historical records of the Wong Cilik movement in numerous countries demonstrate that this group's political influence cannot be ignored. Especially in electoral contests where majority support is required, the votes of Wong Cilik can be a determinant of victory and even a factor in changing the course of a nation's history.

CONCLUSION

The study affirmed that the 2019 presidential election has become part of Wong Cilik's collective historical memory. Among them is the emergence of fears of segregation, which could endanger the nation's unity and integrity as a result of varied political support choices. The memory of political marriage in government between two pairs of contenders who were initially adversaries is also essential.

As far as field data findings could show, Wong Cilik's political decisions are not influenced by mere emotion. They are informed and, at the same time, draw rational and ethical judgements about the elite's political moves following the 2019 presidential election. The apparent diversity in their evaluations does not significantly impact their decision to continue actively participating in the next election. Their trust in Indonesia's electoral democracy system remains high. Their views and critical attitude toward the flaws in previous electoral practices do not turn them into antipathy, or at least hopeless and distrustful of

democratic results. Their proposals for the upcoming elections are evidence of this. These findings will undoubtedly add to the theoretical development and practice of policy formulation in Indonesia. Through various forms of interaction and transformation processes, political maturity has steadily grown not only at the elite level but also at the grassroots level. This trend should be managed and strengthened further.

Finally, the democratic process in this country must continue to pay close attention to Wong Cilik's concerns earnestly. Isolation from Wong Cilik's political interests would entail unwanted precedents for democracy. Historical records in many countries, including Indonesia, must serve as a collective memory not to be lost. As an adage goes, whoever forgets history will fall into a similar repetition of mistakes or decline.

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