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# UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS OF 14TH MALAYSIAN GENERAL ELECTION THROUGH ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES: A NEW CHALLENGE IN ISLAMIZING POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING

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*Abstract*

*The results of the 14th General Election shocked many parties, especially the Barisan Nasional, which has dominated Malaysian politics for more than 60 years. Various studies and discoveries have been made to understand the context of this defeat from various angles of thinking and understanding. However, in the study of Malaysian politics Islamic perspective is also taken into account to balance the understanding between Western and Islamic understanding. Scholars have long used Western thought to explain political phenomena and how power is used in maintaining a political party. The purpose of this paper is to explain in detail the results of elections from an Islamic perspective. This is to differentiate the views given by Western thinkers and to provide a new framework based on the Islamic perspective taking into account the values and teachings of Islam itself. Therefore, this paper seeks to provide a different perspective on how new explorations can be translated into the context of political studies in the country.*

*Keywords: Politics, Islamic perspective, Challenge.*

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## INTRODUCTION

For more than 100 years, Western has dominated the human knowledge including the theories and ideas. They are widely American-centric and Eurocentric (Miike, 2007). The Western dominance has raised concern in the academic world, and it has paved ways for some critical and much needed comparative analysis (Khiabany, 2003) . The field of communication remains

highly dominated by Western knowledge particularly from America, and it is 'Western' bias (Ayish, 2003; Khiabany, 2003). Edward Said (1978) in his seminal book, Orientalism, mentioned that Islam and East had been seen as an object of academic discourse through the Orient perspective. There was the general patronising of Western attitude towards the Middle Eastern, Asian and North African societies. In Said's analysis, the West looks at these societies as static and undeveloped—thereby fabricating a view of Oriental culture that can be studied, depicted, and reproduced. Implicit in this fabrication writes Said, is the idea that Western a developed, rational, flexible, and superior society. As a result, Isma'il Raji Al-Faruqi (1989) said now we could see the aftermath, bifurcation of knowledge in the Muslim world, some having liberal and secular thinking while the others remain loyal to the ideological goals of Islam. According to Gerard Rednitzky (1981) in fact, Western philosophy and oriental philosophy contribute differently to human life. As such, there is a need to reconstruct the Western-dominated knowledge according to Islamic worldview. It is substantial and become the responsibility of Muslim scholars to consider. They ought to challenge the idea of separation of cultures and politics from religious elements that has been epitomised by the modern knowledge for many years not only in our daily life but the liberal secularism philosophy has also diffused into our system of education, economic, legal, religion and obviously in our political system. The Western philosophies went on to influence the corpus of knowledge in the Muslim world for many years until the late 20th century.

Muslim scholars saw the important of knowledge reformulation. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1978) was said to be the first to coin the concept of Islamization of the human knowledge. He concentrated his effort on the reformulation of present-day knowledge produced in the modern period of the West. He realised many institutions and nations, including education and politics, were greatly influenced by this spirit of the West. He lamented, making it worst, some local scholars who graduated from the West specifically from the United States brought together with them the Western understanding of the world. His criticism and writing on this subject have spread and enlightened many other Muslim scholars. Isma'il Raji al Faruqi (1989) said without the reformulation of the modern human knowledge the Muslims cannot benefit from them.

The Islamic revivalism of the late 20th century saw an increased influence of Islamic values in the modern world. As a response to the Western and secular trends, the transmission of Islamic knowledge, i.e. formal knowledge and spiritual knowledge start to occupy the supreme position in the Islamic world (Amit Dey, 2008) . One of the reactions over the global changes that constitute the modern Western worldviews is a stronger urge for the integration between religion and communication studies by Muslim scholars (Mohd Faizal, Sofia, Osma & Rozita, 2017). The most prominent Muslim scholar of this age on the Islamic communication concept is Hamid Mowlana. Many Muslim scholars became aspired by his model of 'Islamic communication'. He challenges the Western models of communication specifically Western notion of faith and knowledge. His work suggested all concepts involving human knowledge and history cannot be separated from exclusive servitude to God (Allah SWT). Even though his ideas and notions on Islamic communication are debatable and arguably by some scholars (Khiabany, 2003) ; still his ideas can be the main guidelines for scholars to study Islamic communication through the eyes of Muslim scholars.

Hasnun Jauhari Ritongan (2015) stresses; "The emergence of intensive study on Islamic communication has its reason. It seems that the thinkers of Islamic sciences have realized that conventional communication philosophies are unable to accommodate the aspirations of the Muslim in particular, even for human worldwide" There is no exception in Malaysia. Most research studies conducted were greatly Western-based orientated. The Western theories and concepts were profoundly used by local scholars to study the local phenomenon. For an instant, theories of mass propaganda, theories of partisan reinforcement and theories of political economy have dominated the school of thought in political communication studies in Malaysia. Hamid Mowlana (1987) said most of the early discussion among students of mass media and culture is the so-called theory of mass society. He refers it to three "M's: mass society, mass media and mass culture. Not all of them actually are suitable and applicable in Muslim dominated countries like Malaysia. On top of that, some scholars argued that most theories were designed to fulfil the environment of the west and their way of life. As such, it appears the communication theories are bias against other local cultures, especially on Islamic practices and beliefs perspectives.

Meanwhile, the Islamization of human knowledge in Malaysia is far from achieving its goal. The attempt to Islamize the social knowledge was poorly handled by scholars in the field. Dependency on the western theories and perspectives has closed their heart and mind in studying the relationship between Islamic values and human behaviour; no intense study on the humanity based on the truth and reality stemming from the vision of Islam (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2017) . As has been discussed above, some of the communication theories adopted by the local scholars are "culture-bound" and specifically developed to explain, predict and provide a sense of understanding of communication behaviours of western society, organisations, group families, and individuals (Mohd Yusoff, 1986). This abundance of Islamic perspectives in Malaysian election studies needs to be addressed by local researchers. Given the lack of a critical number of studies in this area has opened the opportunity to embark on this topic.

Among the earliest studies on Malaysian election is the work of two experienced scholars in communication studies: Syed Arabi Idid and Safar Hashim. Their first book entitled General Elections: A Political Communication Perspective was published in 1993 and marked the birth of Political Communication Studies in Malaysia. Their work focused on the role of media during election campaigns, and the effects of agenda-setting on issues, images of party leaders, information seeking and media use especially to the voters (Suhaimee, Ismail & Mohd Adnan, 2017). Additionally, most of the studies were dependence on Western theories emphasising more on individual freedom and liberty from oppression (Miike, 2007). In recent years, this approach has been challenged based on confusing cultural peculiarities of non-Western societies as significant components of communication theorisation (Khalil, 2016).

Contrary, to develop a complete Islamic Ontology, Al-Quran will be the primary source because it is divinely chosen and described as a way of life to human beings (Saad, Salim, & Zainal, 2009) . Islamic knowledge must be based on the primary source which is Al-Quran. Al-Quran has guided us for thousands of years, and historically the formation of Islamic civilisation is based on the Al-Quran and Hadith. Historically, based on works done by Muslim scholars, Islamizing knowledge is not new in Islam. It has been done a hundred years ago, such as in

medicine, science, astronomy, mathematics and especially in politics. For example, during the Abbasid period where Al Kindi, Al Fraabi and Ibn Sina have Islamized Greek philosophy; Al Battani Islamised Greek Astronomy; Ibn Qurrah Islamised Greek Geography; Al Biruni Islamised Indian astronomy and Ibn Kaladah Islamised Persian medicine.

Although as Yadave (1987. 1998), Curan and Park (2000), Thussu (2009) and Gunaratne (2009, 2010) said, 'there is a need to de-westernise communication and media studies", the researcher feels the call is too hasty. The research tends to agree with Malik (2002) notes that the Western tradition 'is not Western in any essential sense, but only through an accident of geography and history'. Thus, the conduct of the study will abide by what has been said by Zulkiple (2001) , 'the intention is to heighten the Islamic Communication discipline'.

As have been proposed by Miike (2007) , there are five approaches to de-Westernizing communication research based on qualitative traditions: deriving theoretical insights from Asian cultures; expanding the geographical focus of study; comparing and contrasting Asian cultures; pluralizing and historicizing theoretical lenses; and facing meta-theoretical and methodological questions (Miike, 2007; Murthy, 2012). Meanwhile, this study will solely focus on the Islamic principles, knowledge and understanding that have been discussed by Muslim scholars especially based on the works done by Hamid Mowlana. He offered a model challenges not only Western models of communication but also Western models of society (Khalil, 2016). One final aspect, the integrative theory of the mass media must be taken into consideration (Hamid Mowlana, 1987). The integration of western knowledge with local perspectives is necessary for several reasons such as changes in technology, globalisation, the production and distribution process, cultural message and values systems, and the most crucial element is education systems.

## MALAYSIAN ELECTION STUDIES THROUGH ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

The Islamic political system and democracy come from different origin and background (Yusof, Latiff, Ibrahim, Ali, & Jusoh, 2014). The fact is that Islam has played a significant role in our daily life long before independence. From a historical point of view, Islam contributed significantly in the development of democratic practice in Malaysia although Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohammad in his early administration believed that democracy is inappropriate for Asian culture. Meanwhile, some Western scholars describe Malaysia as a model of a "moderate" Islamic polity (Weiss, 2004) and changes in Malaysian politics involved Islamic perspectives.

There are few things need to be considered either historically and or politically when come to analysing the Islamic political landscape in Malaysia. The analysis shall include matters such as the political actors, party's hierarchies and stakeholders' relationships as well as the party's governance and policies. Meanwhile, it is often said religion as one of the main factors that weaken democratic practices. As such, religious practices can also be part of the attribution in the discussion. The role of Islamization in the process of democracy especially in Malaysian politics and election must be taken into account as well.

As repeatedly said, Islamization is not a new subject. It has been implemented and practised in many sectors in Malaysia. The integration of Islamic knowledge and the West benefit the society in general. According to Norazmi, Engku, Mohd, Roose & Nor (2013),

integration involves the process of reuniting acquired knowledge and divine knowledge. They argued that we could not separate these two elements. The separation may lead to secularism. Historically, secularism affects Islamic civilisation. In Malaysia, Islamization has been part of the state policy for an instant, Wasatiyyah during the tenor of Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Maqasid Syariah by Najib Tun Abdul Razak. The Malays notably benefited from such policies without denying the rights of other races. Their liberty as a person is constitutional. All persons must be treated equally before the law; no one shall deprive his life. Meanwhile, Islamization does not disrupt the states' development. Mohd Syakir Mohd Rosdi, Noor Husna Mohd Shafie (2016) said although there are many issues arising from the declaration of Malaysia as an Islamic State, it is undeniable that the development of IPE in Malaysia is increasing and becomes prominent.

Islamization is essential factors to the process of a society's shift towards appreciating Islam especially in socio-culture, education, socio-economic and socio-politics fields. Peoples are increasingly turning to Muslim values, ideas, communities and practices as references. It invited much debate among scholars. Islamization can happen at many levels - on a personal level, societal level or state level. And, looking at the Malaysian politics, two major political parties shared the same Islamic values. They are The United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and Party Islam Malaysia (PAS). PAS has always claimed that they are Islamic party, but looking at the number of political membership, UMNO has the majority Muslim members. However, both have very clear distinct stances regarding their political ideologies, Islamization and democratisation, and historically their political narratives are similar in promoting Islamic values and teaching. UMNO has never denied the priority of Islam as the basis for its political movement and struggles but they are more moderate compared to PAS, and the role of Islam in modernisation and industrialisation has become the main political message for UMNO.

Meanwhile, after 1974, the strain political relationship between UMNO and PAS has characterised the Muslim political environment in this country. UMNO and PAS have never agreed in many circumstances especially in implementing Hudud and the concept of an Islamic state. The tragedy of 14th Malaysian General Election has changed this intense relationship. The issue will be explained later in the next discussion.

UMNO as the leading Malays political party in this country has done many beautiful things through Islamization. There are, under the previous leadership, we see the establishment of International Islamic University, Islamic banking and insurance, more Islamic contents and programs produced and aired on television as well as in radio et cetera. The ability of UMNO to associate their political beliefs with Islamic practices in the conduct of national policies helped the Islamization process of all the government initiatives to materialise easily. And again, the Islamization process will not complete if the integration of knowledge and practices are not done correctly following the teaching of Al-Quran and Hadith as the primary source.

UMNO promotes democracy moulded upon universal Islamic values. They subscribe to the concept of Maqasid Syariah that contained all the universal elements like justice, human dignity, free will, magnanimity, facilitation, and social cooperation. Jaser Auda (2008) said all the values represent the link between Islamic Law and today's notions of human rights, development, and civility. Worth to note, everything in the universe has been created beautiful, with purpose and in proportion and measure, both qualitatively and quantitatively (al-Qamar 54:49). Politics has no exception. There come with purpose and reasons. Beware of what we

are doing as a proof of faith and piety to Allah SWT. He commands us to refrain oneself from doing bad things; always be conscious of our doing even on the smallest thing. Allah SWT says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

18. O you who believe! Fear Allah and refrain from disobedience to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allah since He is All-Aware of what you do. (Al-Hashr: 18).

Ibn 'Asyur, Muhammad al-Tahir (1998) said objective of politics is to serve all the interests of the community, whether the public interest or the interests of the individual in the scope allowed by Islamic law. Jaser Auda (2008), asserted the rational basis of Maqasid al-Syariah must be preserved for the interest of humanity. Allah swt in al Quran has clearly described the objective, intent and principle of Islamic law or Maqasid al-Syariah non others to assure human wellbeing by creating benefits and avoiding harms to them.

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

185. "(With this decree), Allah desires your wellbeing, not your discomfort." (Al-Baqarah: 185) For many years, in various ways and methods, UMNO and PAS are struggling in promoting, positioning and practising Islamic values in their political struggles to ensure the Islamic laws and practice is well suitable in this country. UMNO's Islamisation approach is to show their way is more Islamic than the opposition. On the later part, Islamization has become the integral component for the development of UMNO's political strategy. Communication delivery channels especially the media roles becoming very important to propagate the party's Islamization spirit and ideology. Besides, UMNO keeps changing their methodology on Islamization. For an instant, Mahathir Mohammad openly declared Malaysia an Islamic state on 29th September 2001 in his speech during the 'Majlis Perasmian Persidangan Perwakilan Ke-30 Parti Gerakan Malaysia' (Kamarudin Salleh, 2006: 79). In 2004 Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi launched 'Islam Hadhari' a renewal of the old concept, in tandem to the modern era needs. After that, a more moderate approach 'Wasatiyyah' was introduced by Mohd Najib Razak who believed that inclusiveness through the acceptance of differences in the way for a better Malaysia in which everyone has equal opportunities as what Allah SWT said;

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

21. We have sent you forth as nothing but mercy to people of the whole world. (Al-Ambiya': 107)

That is the reality of politic. As Fisher Ames (1758-1808) put it, "Politics is the science of good sense, applied to public affairs, and, as those are forever changing, what is wisdom to-day would be folly and perhaps, ruin to-morrow. Politics is not a science so properly as a business. It

cannot have fixed principles, from which a wise man would never swerve unless the inconstancy of men's view of interest and the capriciousness of the tempers could be fixed."

According to Esposito (1998), understanding twentieth-century Islamic politics requires an understanding of the character and legacy of both pre-modern Islamic revivalism, which addressed the internal weakness of Muslim society and Islamic modernism, which responded to the challenge of Western colonialism. History of Islam is a lengthy discussion, started with the birth of Prophet Muhammad s.aw until today. There are remarkable changes, reformation and modification of political systems in Islamic state due on the historical elements. Western colonialism plays an integral part in the later discussion. Even though there are some debates on the failure of the Islamic state but mostly due to civil war, poverty and also through knowledge and media invasion for an instant as what happened in Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt and Afghanistan. All these factors should be addressed carefully in order to understand more on Islamic movement as well as the role of a foreign power which came with hidden agenda and intention. They invaded and brought along secularism in human civilisation which has seen more harmful than the positive impact. We see how through knowledge the Jews invaded and destroyed human civilisation based on religion and spirituality (Norazmi, Engku, Mohd, Roose Nilawati Subki, & Nor Aini, 2013).

## A PROBLEM THAT WE NEED TO ADDRESSED

According to el-Sayed (2016), there are several factors that have influenced Muslim political and socio-economic systems such as global factors, events and trade, the expansion of the global market economy, privatization, labour migration, the use of multiple media and the internet, worldwide religious extremism and global violence including wars and terrorist attacks and Malaysia is no exception. Since September 11, the image of Islam has been portrayed negatively and poorly by the global media through very systematic, continually and consistency efforts through various activities and programs. It is startling to find that certain leaders in Western scholarship and media are the architects of Islamophobia and anti-Islam. They lewd act has not only aggravated political problems in the Muslim world such as poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and violence, but have also lead to severe outcomes concerning indigenous cultures, identities of Muslim, and the emergence of what is so-called Islamist terrorism (el-Aswad 2013: 44) .

All these challenges have influenced Islamic studies. They also influenced the way how political parties are conducting their political campaigns in an election. Changes in the political landscape and the growing political rivalry have affected the approach and strategy of the Islamist groups especially PAS and UMNO (Mohd Izani Mohd Zain, 2014) . In the last election, we have witnessed the tendency of Malaysia's political parties using Islam as part of their political communication content to win the heart and mind of the voters', especially the Muslim voters. The phenomenon is not a new thing in Malaysian politics. For example is PAS whose political discourse looks very much liberal now. We do not hear any more rhetoric of Islamic State and the implementation of Hudud law in the recent election manifesto but instead their communication strategy is focusing more on uplifting the aspirations of the Islamic faith as the official religion as enshrined in the Federal Constitution (ibid).

Besides than that, in GE13 (2013), for example, MCA produced negative advertisements attacking PAS on Hudud laws in this country. A series of political ads were advertised in the mainstream media to influence non-Muslim voters not to vote for PAS.

According to Mowlana (2007) communication in Islam always stresses akhlaq or ethics as a vital element which is distinctively lacking in many western communication models. Al-Ghazali refers akhlaq to the spiritual form of humanity. Al-Ghazali defined Islamic ethics or Ilm al-akhlaq as the way to acquire the well-being of the soul and to guard it against the vices. It is also a study on specific religious practices on the rightness or wrongness of Man's action. It is not for the sake of mere knowledge (Samee-Ullah Bhat, 2017) . Therefore, political parties must ensure positive political communication messages based on Islamic principles and values. The construction of the political messages should avoid being deceptive, fake, lies and defamatory in characters. The doctrine of responsibility, guidance and action within the Islamic principles of Amar bi al-Ma'ruf wa Nahy'an al-Munkar (Mowlana, 2007) must be observed, and avoid any unethical conducts for the sake of community (ummah). Islam emphasises on 'communal communication' rather than individualistic types of communication. Therefore, back in Malaysia, it is a challenge to the contesting political parties to reconsider to redevelop and restructure their campaign models and tactics following the Islamic practices. As references, Quran and hadith have established the foundation of the ethical concepts and standard. Also, the recognition of true God and submission to Him (Tawhid) among other things the 'servitude to oneness' concept is important. Rationalisation of the communication and messages contents will be ineffective and damaging if we ignore the lateral relationship between humankind and our horizontal relationship with Allah swt; it is a triangular communication process.

We can say that Islam is a communication-based religion. Allah created man with an essential function to communicate. Allah says in the Qur'an, "He has taught him to talk (and understand)" (Qur'an 55:4). Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used both written and oral communication as per the need and requirement (Khalil, 2016) . Islam communication school of teaching different from what the West believes. The Western knowledge was modelled upon philosophical speculation and metaphysical conjecture ignoring Truth and Reality of life and the World. As such, the worldviews have lost their true meaning and characteristic (Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, 2016) . According to Littlejohn (2008), the simplistic western communication model not emphasise 'what' kind of message but only on 'how' to encode and decode the message (Littlejohn, 2008).

Contrary to Muslim, we are obliged to what we said. The message that is delivered or received must be well monitored regarding its reliability and choice of words. The contents should not possess elements that are misleading in human's judgment, and it should be kept within the sender's and receiver's secrets (Khiabany, 2007). Communication messages can influence individuals and shape social behaviour which leads to significant attention paid by the media authorities in developing certain expected perceptions in society (Yusoff S.H, 2016) . This could happen during election campaigns; where voters were exposed to various kinds of messages that can be positive or negative messages. The content of the messages can directly or indirectly influence voters' behaviour and decision. Indeed, the political messages can be seen as a strong predictor that will affect the election outcomes.

Outrageously, the outcomes of Malaysia recently GE14 have something to deliberate. There appear many questions. Many researchers conducted studies. They debated the findings. How could a highly regarded government with 60 years of tremendous track record behind them fall? How could the opposition manage to make significant inroads? The whole country waited with bated breath, and the result defied all odds, what deem impossible became a reality. As Moniruzzaman Md (2018) put it, the results have defied all expectations and calculations. Neither the ruling party nor did the main opposing coalition expected it. The opinion polls and expert opinion like Ananthalakshmi (2018) , Welsh (2018) and the least would be hung parliament said Francis E. Hutchinson (2018) who also shared the same beliefs. However, Syed Arabi Idid (2018) commented Barisan Nasional in GE 14 has miscalculating the political campaign. The trending since June 2017 up to his second study before the 2018 poling day indicated that the support to BN were declining from 36 per cent in June 2017 to 31 per cent before GE14 polling day.

Why did it happen? There present certain elements that have changed voter's decision-making pattern during the elections. The one of which according to Tomas (May 5, 2018), there is a "Malaysian Tsunami" that turned out to vote against the ruling regime. Sharing the same mood Yang Razali Kassim (2018) said Mahathir Mohamad and Anwar Ibrahim political reconciliation has launched not just a Malay tsunami but a "people's tsunami" that toppled the old order. It was a titanic feat that finally, in a historic move, ended the 60-year dominance of UMNO. The road ahead for Malaysian politics will be one of evolution and change. The impact of this political tsunami creates many questions for researchers to explore especially how political parties conducted their political campaigns in last election.

The force was not new; there was a tsunami of change since the 2008 General Election. Badrul, Mujibu and Zaliha (2010) asserted that the post-Political Tsunami is more secular, 'colour blindness' or not communal. Lee (2010) argued that the nature of politics has shifted from communal based to multi-ethnic based. The nose-dive trend continues till GE13. Some scholars termed the change due to "Chinese Tsunami" factor. Junaidi, Rosmadi, Amir, Mohd Azlan, Mazlan and Ahmad Rizal (2014) claimed it was due to 'Urban Political Tsunami". Francis (2018) reinforced the fact that the coalition's. Dominance had been declining from 51.2 per cent in 2008 to 47.4 per cent in 2013 popular vote respectively. In 2018 GE14 it drops further to 33.80 per cent a swing of 13.58 per cent.

There must be a strong message flew spread convincingly around either for the wind of change or to retain the now-ousted government. How are the phenomena being created? What makes everybody aware and believe such a call? How can people in the Southern know such call in the North? How about in East Malaysia, how could they talk the same language and understand the signal from their counterpart in West Malaysia? They must be a medium with solid messages being used rampantly and effectively that can inspire the desire of choice among the public; the medium that shakes and shapes the voters' behaviour and caused the storm of change. However, yet again, why the influence of messages for change is not fairly disseminated and accepted? It is so selective, very geographic and circled in particular areas. How could somebody in certain areas get instigated while on the other part the influence is reduced?

As Moniruzzaman Md (2018) said, the seismic change has not only generated questions regarding the probable reasons and factors, but they also deserved a thorough analysis. The researcher believes there is a relationship between the phenomena described above and its communication practices. It is essential to study how all parties involved during the campaign period translated the philosophy of communication in the GE14, in particular, the roles of Islamic communication and its influences within the scope of humanity and truth.

There is a lot to learn from the recent GE4. There are many loopholes identified. We need to revisit the communication practices from the Islamic angle (Yusoff S.H, 2016) especially the electoral activities. In Malaysian, electoral activities are bound by the Elections Act 1958, Election Offences Act 1954, Election Commission Act 1957, Election (Registration of Electors) Regulations 1981, and Election (Conduct of Elections) Regulations 1981. Although the administration is under the ambit of the Election Commission Committee of Malaysia, values of the laws are based on common law practices. We have adopted the election laws generally practised in the United Kingdom since 1954 (Tey, 2010).

Demographically, there are approximately 62 per cent of Malays, Chinese forming the second major race at around 24 per cent, and the Indians, 8 per cent and 7 per cent of the population is Made up of non-Malay indigenous bumiputras of Sabah and Sarawak. Therefore, looking at the number of population, we can assume that most of the political contents offered by the contested parties will be based on Islamic perspectives and values. The contents should represent the majority number of voters in this country especially to the Muslim voters. Based on the study conducted by Merdeka Centre in 2010 proved that Malaysian youth aged 15 to 25 indicated that more than 70% wanted the Quran to replace the federal constitution; and almost 80% of the respondents saw themselves as Muslims first, above other ethnic or national identities.25 Even in the more inclusive Johor state, a 2017 survey of Johor residents by the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute indicated that 75% of Malay respondents were in support of hudud law for Muslims, and 90% of Malay respondents felt that increased Islamic religiosity was a positive development for Malaysia (Serina Rahman, 2018).

Therefore, the research will confine its study within i-compliance communication practices without any prejudice against western values. It does not mean the study is trying to de-westernise the communication theory. This is because western understanding of culture and society is based on individualism rather that communalism. These western approaches of communication underestimate the societal function of communication and ignore the role of social structure and culture (Yusoff, 2016). As Muhammad (2007) has mentioned, it is worth to remind that the application of Islamic perspectives does not mean as communal or religious activities. It should be seen and appreciated in the context of the fundamental shortcomings of methodology, limit and validity of the modern western human knowledge.

The study is guided by the discourse of the research with a specific parameter and objectives. The overall research framework should operate and be guided by Muhammad Fathi Ali Syair (1985: 45-48) four pillars of communication principles, i.e. the truth (as-Sidq), reality (waqi'iyyah), flexible (murunah) and comprehensive and universal (syumuliah). Communication principles herewith refer to Islamic Applications (i-Applications). Haron (2009) argued that media usage must be based on the Islamic principle of al-Amru bi al-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar (the commanding to the right and prohibiting for the wrongdoings). This principle is a benchmark towards the role of communication practices in ensuring the

conservation of five major elements in syariat al Islamiyyah (Islamic principles) which are the conservation towards Islam, mind, generation, soul and wealth. To clarify further, it means that the role of communication practices should be parallel to the context of Islamic principles. The purpose is to align every aspect of the research on the real concept of communication in the perspective of divine knowledge. The basis and intention of the research must always uphold the truth and avoiding bias and must suit human nature concerning physical and spiritual requirements as well as their intellectual and mind. The research must be comprehensive and universal enough in a sense it is not limited to religious purposes, but the scope widens to include all branches of human life. The most important is it meets the fundamental and universal necessities or priorities on which the lives of people depend.

There is a lot to learn from Malaysia GE14 concerning voters' behaviour.  It is hard to believe when voters having all their needs fulfilled went against the norm to bite the feeders. The country's economy is performing well with growth rate reported at 5.4%, and numerous national development projects were undertaken promising millions of job opportunities indeed people interest on though 1MDB issues were also declining. Meanwhile, the most promising opposition coalition was in disarray. Chinese support in several by-elections as indicators seems dwindling and is ebbing. On top of that as mentioned by Roff (1995)  the ruling party had proven itself as the mainstream political party involved in influencing and negotiating political development. So why as Moniruzzaman Md (2018)  put it, despite these apparent strong factors that were supposed to help the ruling party continue its grip on power, the political equation had changed, and the unexpected became a reality.

What influence the voters to behave that way? What factors do they consider to weight the 'good and bad, truth and lies' (GBTL)? As Graham E. Fuller (2010: 44-45)  termed it; "…the quality of heresy actually lies in the eye of the beholder. And the determination of what is 'right opinion' eventually emerges almost strictly as a prerogative of power." This paper has an assumption that there something missing in the current communication practices. It is an interesting note from Sharala Axyrd (June 5, 2018)  who has commented, "Social media presence can make or reshape the face of an election."  She elaborated that the Malaysian opposition coalition was the clear champion concerning social media maturity walking into the Malaysia 14th general election against the ruling party. They were actively leveraging on social media. Daniels (2010)  and Jebril, Stetka & Loveless (2013)  also shared the same opinion. The media play an indispensable role in the proper functioning of a democracy, and a democratic election is impossible without the media.

Syed Arabi Idid (2018)  one of the leading communication Gurus in Malaysia said that electronic and print media and other communication sources play a vital role in disseminating information. The information obtained from the traditional and the new media or interpersonal sources enable voters to make a reasoned decision when casting their votes during the election. Chang (2016) asserted, the members of public have been given more options in seeking for information during election. The public consume different forms of media to fulfil their thirst for information during election and thereafter making their choice to whom they want to elect and to which information they think reliable. Kaid, McKinney & Tedesco (2007) , Kavanaugh, Sheetz, Sandoval-Almazan, Tedesco & Fox (2016)  and Fourie & Otto (2011)  found that the voters are able to seek for adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process itself in order to make informed choices.

As such, it is significant to undertake the study to evaluate the scholarships against the phenomena. The focus of the paper from the broad spectrum of communication theories should zoom into probing what else lacking and what new alternatives for communication values available. The current communication practices seem to leave a lot of questions to answer.

## CONCLUSION

Islamic Political communication stimuli would be able to act as alternative values or approaches that are acceptable in particular by the Muslim and non-Muslim living in the multiracial society in Malaysia. The research would be able to create i-PCP that can be used as a basis to influence people and to win the election. The study would be able to identify some clues or indicator why the election result went against the norm. The findings would also be able to show new strategic campaign approaches or alternatives. Moreover, the findings would be able to determine either or no mediating variables and moderating variable should be omitted to get strong i-PCP and some mediating variables and moderating variable should be dropped to get stronger i-PCP. The research would be able to determine which mediating variables and moderating variable have a better influence over GE14.Last but not least, the findings would be useful as a reference or new tools for the next GE15.

## AUTHOR ARTWORK

All figures should be numbered with Arabic numerals (1,2,...n). All photographs, schemas, graphs and diagrams are to be referred to as figures. Line drawings should be good quality scans or true electronic output. Low-quality scans are not acceptable. Figures must be embedded into the text and not supplied separately. Lettering and symbols should be clearly defined either in the caption or in a legend provided as part of the figure. Figures should be placed at the top or bottom of a page wherever possible, as close as possible to the first reference to them in the paper.

The figure number and caption should be typed below the illustration in 9pt and left justified. For more guidelines and information to help you submit high quality artwork please visit: http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/authorsview.authors/authorartworkinstructions. Artwork has no text along the side of it in the main body of the text. However, if two images fit next to each other, these may be placed next to each other to save space, see Fig 1. They must be numbered consecutively, all figures, and all tables respectively.

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