

MULTICULTURAL POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**KOMUNIKASI POLITIK MULTIBUDAYA DALAM PENGELOLAAN KONFLIK SOSIAL****Abdul Rahman**

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The complexity of social conflict in multicultural societies is increasing due to the high dynamics of ethnicity, religion, and identity politics. In this context, political communication plays a strategic role in determining the direction of conflict escalation and de-escalation. This study analyzes how multicultural political communication strategies can mitigate, manage, and prevent conflict through message adaptation, inclusive framing, cross-cultural dialogue, and trust-building between political actors and community groups. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of political communication depends not only on the quality of the message but also on its alignment with the values, symbols, and local cultural identities that develop within the community. Communication strategies that are insensitive to the cultural context have been shown to increase the risk of misinterpretation and reinforce polarization. Conversely, strategies oriented toward cultural empathy can create a space for constructive dialogue and strengthen social cohesion. This study proposes the development of a theoretical model. Multicultural Political Communication for Conflict Management as a new framework that can be used to explain how political communication can function as a more effective instrument for conflict management in multicultural societies. These findings make an important contribution to the development of political communication studies and government communication practices.

Keywords: political communication, multiculturalism, social conflict, conflict management, cultural identity

ABSTRAK

Kompleksitas konflik sosial di masyarakat multikultural semakin meningkat akibat tingginya dinamika etnis, agama, dan politik identitas. Dalam konteks ini, komunikasi politik memiliki peran strategis dalam menentukan arah eskalasi dan de-eskalasi konflik. Penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana strategi komunikasi politik multibudaya mampu meredam, mengelola, dan mencegah konflik melalui pendekatan adaptasi pesan, framing inklusif, dialog lintas budaya, serta pembangunan kepercayaan antara aktor politik dan kelompok masyarakat. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas komunikasi politik tidak hanya bergantung pada kualitas pesan, tetapi juga pada keselarasan pesan tersebut dengan nilai, simbol, serta identitas budaya lokal yang berkembang dalam masyarakat. Strategi komunikasi yang tidak sensitif terhadap konteks budaya terbukti meningkatkan risiko misinterpretasi dan memperkuat polarisasi. Sebaliknya, strategi yang berorientasi pada empati budaya mampu menciptakan ruang dialog yang konstruktif dan mempererat kohesi sosial. Penelitian ini mengusulkan pengembangan model teoritis Multicultural Political Communication for Conflict Management sebagai kerangka baru yang dapat digunakan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana komunikasi politik dapat berfungsi sebagai instrumen manajemen konflik yang lebih efektif di masyarakat multibudaya. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi penting bagi pengembangan studi komunikasi politik dan praktik komunikasi pemerintahan.

Kata Kunci: komunikasi politik, multikulturalisme, konflik sosial, manajemen konflik, identitas budaya

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the world has witnessed an increase in the complexity of social conflicts in various parts of the world, especially in multicultural societies in the realm of ethnicity, religion, and identity. political entity. Data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) shows that in the year 2024, there will be 61 active armed conflicts involving at least

one country, up from 59 conflicts the previous year, and the highest number of conflicts since data collection began in 1946. Of these conflicts, 11 of them are classified as war (≥ 1,000 combat casualties per year). (UCDP, 2025) In addition, almost 160,000 deaths The results of organized violence were recorded throughout the year (UCDP, 2025). This condition reflects the escalation of global socio-political tensions that could exacerbate identity polarization and multicultural conflict.

On the other hand, these conflicts also fueled a refugee crisis and forced displacement. According to a report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) reached 75.9 million by the end of 2023, and 68.3 million These include conflict and violence (IDMC, 2024). (IDMC, 2024) This volume of displacement is a clear indication that social conflict is not just a security issue, but also a humanitarian factor that significantly impacts local communities.

Table 1.
Latest global data on conflict and internal displacement

Indicator	Amount and Source
Number of active armed conflicts (2024)	61 conflicts (UCDP, 2025)
The conflict reached war level within a year	11 conflicts (UCDP, 2025)
Deaths due to organized violence (2024)	160,000 people (UCDP, 2025)
Global number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) (end 2023)	75.9 million people (IDMC, 2024)
Number of IDPs due to conflict and violence	68.3 million people (IDMC, 2024)

Source: UCDP (2025); IDMC (2024)

This state of conflict and displacement demonstrates that modern social conflict is not merely local in nature, but is also closely linked to overlapping ethnic, religious, and political identities, reinforcing social fragmentation. In this context, politics becomes highly strategic. On the one hand, intelligently delivered political messages can be instrumental in reducing tensions, fostering cross-group dialogue, and facilitating reconciliation. However, on the other hand, political communication also has the potential to trigger new conflicts if cultural identities are used as a tool for mobilization or manipulation by political actors.

Communication challenges in multicultural societies are exacerbated when political actors fail to adapt their messages to the cultural backgrounds of each community. Insensitivity to local symbols, the use of narratives that ignore collective history, or a failure to understand traditional communication norms can lead to misperceptions and exacerbate tensions. Therefore, understanding how multicultural political communication strategies are implemented is crucial for mitigating social conflict and maintaining cohesion in heterogeneous societies.

Studies on political communication in the context of social conflict have focused on issues such as conflict framing, political propaganda, crisis communication, and political persuasion strategies. These studies generally emphasize how political messages are formed, packaged, and disseminated to influence public perception or mobilize political support in tense situations. However, the existing literature still tends to position conflict as an arena for

political competition, rather than as a space where communication is used to reduce tension and build social cohesion. This indicates a limited academic understanding of the function of political communication as a peacebuilding instrument, particularly in societies with high cultural, ethnic, and identity diversity.

Furthermore, research on multicultural political communication remains fragmented and fragmented. Most studies focus on only one phase of conflict—for example, the campaign period, the crisis period, or the post-conflict phase—without examining how these communication strategies operate continuously from pre-conflict, during, and after the conflict. On the other hand, integrated models explaining how political actors utilize cultural values, identity symbols, and multicultural communication mechanisms simultaneously to prevent and manage conflict escalation are still very limited. The absence of this comprehensive model has resulted in the absence of a well-established theoretical framework for understanding multicultural political communication practices in the context of heterogeneous societies. Therefore, this research plays a crucial role in filling this gap through a synthetic analysis of various cross-disciplinary findings.

Based on these research gaps, this study focuses on one main question: **"How are multicultural political communication strategies used by political actors to reduce, manage, and prevent the escalation of social conflict in heterogeneous societies?"**

This research aims to explore in-depth the communication mechanisms employed by political actors when confronted with complex social dynamics that have the potential to trigger conflict. Focusing on one central question allows this research to develop a sharper understanding of the role of multicultural political communication as part of the social conflict management process.

This study aims to identify and map various multicultural communication approaches used by political actors in the context of heterogeneous societies. By systematically reviewing the literature in the domains of political communication, cross-cultural communication, and conflict studies, this study seeks to integrate these findings to understand the mechanisms, determinants, and effectiveness of communication strategies used in efforts to reduce and prevent the escalation of social conflict. In addition, this study is directed at developing a new, comprehensive conceptual framework related to "Multicultural Political Communication for Conflict Management," which is expected to serve as a theoretical foundation for further studies and a practical reference for stakeholders.

Theoretically, this research makes an important contribution to the development of theories in cross-cultural communication, political communication, and conflict management. This research offers a new perspective that integrates cultural values, identity symbols, and communication strategies into a single model that can be used to explain the dynamics of relationships between political actors and multicultural societies in tense situations. Thus, this research expands the scope of political communication studies as not merely a tool for political competition, but also as an instrument for conflict mitigation and resolution.

From a practical perspective, this research has direct implications for public policy formulation, the design of local government communication strategies, and the development of culture-based conflict resolution programs. The resulting conceptual framework is expected to serve as a reference for political actors, community leaders, and policymakers in designing communication approaches that are more sensitive to cultural diversity and capable of strengthening social cohesion. The proposed model can also provide guidance for government institutions and civil society organizations in efforts to minimize potential conflict and strengthen community capacity to maintain social harmony.

2. METHODS

2.1 Type of Study: Narrative Review

This research uses an approach/narrative review because the nature of the topic being studied demands a deep understanding of complex social, political, and cultural dynamics. This approach allows researchers to construct an interpretive synthesis of various different academic traditions, including political communication, intercultural communication, conflict studies, and sociopolitical studies. Unlike systematic review which tends to emphasize procedural objectivity and very strict selection, narrative review provides space for a more reflective and integrative analysis, making it suitable for exploring how multicultural political communication strategies are implemented by political actors in highly contextual conflict situations. In addition, narrative review provides the flexibility to evaluate literature that is not only sourced from quantitative research but also from qualitative studies, ethnography, and case studies, all of which provide a more holistic picture of communication practices in heterogeneous societies.

2.2 Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted through several internationally reputable academic databases, namely Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected to ensure broad, up-to-date coverage of the literature and to generate sources from diverse disciplines and geographic contexts. The search process was conducted using a combination of keywords relevant to the research focus, such as “political communication”, “multicultural communication”, “ethnic conflict”, “intercultural political strategy”, “conflict management”, and “identity politics communication”. The use of various keywords is done in stages through Boolean operators (AND/OR) to expand and narrow search results according to needs. In addition, researchers also searched the literature using the methods now calling by identifying important references from primary articles to capture theoretical and empirical dimensions that may not emerge directly through search keywords.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria were established to ensure that the literature analyzed was strongly relevant to the research focus. Included articles included scientific publications, peer-reviewed studies discussing multicultural conflict, political communication strategies, conflict resolution, or culture-based mediation mechanisms were also included. Studies examining the role of political actors such as government elites, community leaders, religious leaders, ethnic figures, and political media were also included because these actors have significant influence on the dynamics of public communication in a multicultural society. Conversely, this study excluded articles that were operative in nature, not peer-reviewed, or simply discussed technical aspects of communication without considering cultural and identity dimensions. Studies that were overly descriptive without clear theoretical elaboration or unrelated to social conflict were also excluded from the analysis. Thus, these inclusion-exclusion criteria ensured that the analyzed literature was truly relevant and made a conceptual contribution to the research objectives.

2.4 Analysis Approach

Data analysis in this study was carried out using an approach thematic synthesis, namely the process of grouping and interpreting findings based on the main themes that emerged from the literature. The analysis process begins by identifying the core concepts in each article, then grouping them into broad categories such as multicultural communication strategies, characteristics of the political actors involved, conflict phases (pre-conflict, ongoing conflict, and post-conflict), and the forms of communication effectiveness and barriers found. After that, cross-theoretical concepts are integrated to provide a richer understanding of

political communication strategies in a multicultural context. Three main theoretical frameworks are used as analytical tools, namely Intercultural Communication Competence from Ting-Toomey who emphasizes the ability of political actors to manage cultural differences; Conflict Transformation from Lederach which highlights changes in the structure of social relations in conflict; and Political Framing Theory which explains how political messages are packaged to shape public perception. Integrating these theories yields a more comprehensive analysis, not only mapping the strategies used but also explaining the mechanisms by which these strategies operate in heterogeneous social contexts.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Characteristics of Social Conflict in Multicultural Societies

Social conflict in multicultural societies frequently arises from various sources, primarily including ethnicity, religion, identity politics, and competition for resources. Ethnic conflicts often stem from longstanding historical grievances among different groups, which are marked by attempts to navigate the complex interrelations that exist within a culturally diverse framework. The politicization of ethnic identities can exacerbate tensions, as political elites exploit cultural sentiments to consolidate power or rally support, thereby deepening the divides within society (Zirker et al., 2007) (Lan, 2011). Rothschild's analysis highlights how politicized ethnicity contributes to state destabilization and results in reactionary violence rather than constructive social change (Zirker et al., 2007).

Similarly, conflicts grounded in religious differences can emerge from divergent interpretations and practices within a faith or the dominance of a particular group in the public sphere. These conflicts, especially in spaces characterized by ethnic diversity, can be critically analyzed through their role in resource competition. As political divisions become entwined with cultural identities, competition over scarce resources, such as land and economic opportunities, intensifies these conflicts, making resolution increasingly challenging (Sudijanto et al., 2024; Nlewem & Akhagba, 2024).

Moreover, identity politics has surged over the past two decades, becoming a significant source of conflict in multicultural settings. By focusing on particular identities, political actors can mobilize support effectively; yet this often leads to fragmentation rather than unity. The mobilization of identity politics can be seen as both a symptom of broader social fragmentation and a catalyst for conflict, where competing groups vie for recognition and resources, and political legitimacy becomes tied to identity claims (Rudolph & Rudolph, 2003).

The interplay of these factors is intricately tied to cultural stereotypes, historical prejudices, and miscommunication between diverse groups within society, further complicating conflict dynamics. For instance, educational initiatives aimed at fostering intercultural dialogue frequently fail to bridge these divides, instead reinforcing entrenched group identities and leading to heightened competition and reduced social cohesion (Baytiyeh, 2018). Thus, the complex nature of conflict in multicultural societies cannot be understated; it is shaped not only by identity differences but also by the nuanced interactions of culture, power structures, and political communication methodologies.

In conclusion, understanding social conflict in multicultural societies necessitates a multifaceted approach. The discourse surrounding ethnic and religious differences, along with the critical factors of identity politics and resource competition, must all be taken into account. The influence of elite instrumentalism in exacerbating these issues further signifies a need for targeted interventions aimed at promoting mutual understanding and social cohesion among diverse groups (Kimemia, 2015; Thornton, 2019).

3.2 The Role of Political Actors in Managing Conflict

The involvement of various political actors in conflict management is crucial for effective resolutions in diverse settings. Politicians and local government officials contribute

significantly to this process by formulating policies and organizing formal mediation mechanisms. Their influence is often shaped by their political legitimacy, which in many contexts is heavily contingent upon their ability to resonate with local cultural values and norms (Pereira, 2019; . Engagement with local customs and traditions plays a vital role in how political messages are communicated and received. This relational aspect is particularly relevant when understanding the dynamics of trust-building and community resilience through governance and policy-making.

Furthermore, religious elites and traditional leaders often emerge as key figures in these processes, acting as moral authorities within their communities. They utilize culturally rooted approaches to conflict resolution, drawing upon religious teachings and historical practices to mediate disputes and ease tensions. Their roles are underscored by the necessity for cultural legitimacy; when these leaders manifest an understanding of community values, their mediation efforts are more likely to yield positive results (Mohammed et al., 2017; , Hartoyo, 2019). In contexts where traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are preferred, these authorities promote practices that are seen as culturally authentic, thereby ensuring community participation in conflict resolution processes (Orimaye et al., 2025).

Community activists and informal leaders bridge significant gaps in communication and understanding amidst conflicts due to their strong connections with grassroots dynamics. They typically possess an intimate knowledge of the social landscape and interpersonal relationships within communities. Research suggests that local actors who are perceived to comprehend and respect cultural identities play a pivotal role in fostering collaboration and mitigating tensions (Collins & Thiessen, 2019). Conversely, political actors lacking this cultural insight risk being viewed as outsiders, leading to mistrust and potential escalation of conflicts (Pereira, 2019; , Deekeling & Simangan, 2021).

Overall, the successful management of conflicts hinges on the interplay and collaboration among various political actors, including traditional leaders, religious elites, and grassroots activists. Collectively, these actors leverage their cultural authority and social capital to build trust, promote inclusivity, and facilitate effective communication, ultimately contributing to sustainable conflict resolution (Salim & Ruslan, 2021).

3.3 Identified Multicultural Political Communication Strategies

Through thematic synthesis, various multicultural political communication strategies have been identified that are employed during instances of social conflict.

Message Adaptation is the first prominent strategy. Political actors utilize this approach by modifying language, symbols, and narratives to align with the cultural norms and sensitivities of diverse audiences. This strategy encompasses not just verbal elements, but also non-verbal cues and symbolic rituals designed to resonate with targeted groups. Research highlights the importance of narrative adaptation in constructing inclusive political environments, which promotes understanding across different cultural contexts and encourages engagement from multiple stakeholders (Moffitt & Tormey, 2013; Roh et al., 2015).

Next, Inclusive Political Framing serves as a critical method for alleviating tensions between conflicting groups. By emphasizing unifying themes such as national identity or collective aspirations, political communication can redirect focus from divisions to shared values. This method has been emphasized in various studies as an effective means of fostering social harmony and reducing the saliency of differences, thus contributing to the reconciliation process (McGlynn, 2018; Magrath & Nichter, 2022; Stokke & Lybæk, 2016).

Culturally Sensitive Communication focuses on avoiding symbols or messages that may provoke conflict. Political figures frequently engage cultural mediators to articulate complex or sensitive messages. This approach underscores the need for a nuanced comprehension of cultural landscapes to navigate potential flashpoints effectively (Beall et al., 2021; Modood, 2021). The literature suggests that successful political messaging often relies on culturally

cognizant frameworks that resonate on both emotional and intellectual levels with diverse audiences, ensuring inclusivity (Grincheva & Lu, 2016).

The Intercultural Dialogue strategy involves organized mediation initiatives such as community forums or town hall meetings that reflect local traditions and foster consensus. Such spaces allow for open dialogue among various ethnic groups, promoting shared experiences and collaborative understanding (Pilecki & Hammack, 2013; Wiloth et al., 2022). This type of engagement has been linked to increased trust and a reduction in social fragmentation, as it encourages active participation from marginalized voices in the decision-making process (Conversi & Machin-Autenrieth, 2019).

Trust-Building Strategies also play a crucial role in enhancing relationships between communities. Effective practices include ensuring transparency in communication, recognizing historical grievances, and creating opportunities for authentic cultural representation. These strategies have been shown to facilitate trust among diverse groups, which is vital for effective governance (Rasse & Rasse, 2024; Gansefort et al., 2020).

Lastly, the Use of Local Media and Cultural Influencers represents an evolving strategy in political communication, where political actors leverage community media outlets and local figures to amplify their messages. This approach not only increases the credibility of the communication but also ensures that messages align with local cultural sensibilities, facilitating effective outreach and community mobilization (Venizelos, 2022; Frantz et al., 2021). Engaging local influencers allows for the dissemination of political messages in ways that are both relatable and resonant within the cultural framework of the audience (Geertse, 2015).

In conclusion, these multicultural political communication strategies—ranging from message adaptation to the use of local media—demonstrate the necessity of culturally informed practices that promote inclusivity and dialogue in conflict situations. Each of these strategies contributes to building bridges in multicultural contexts, ultimately fostering a more harmonious social landscape.

3.4 Barriers and Risks of Multicultural Communication

Multicultural communication is often hindered by several significant barriers, particularly arising from political and social dynamics. One of the most pertinent obstacles is the cultural bias exhibited by political elites. This bias can skew their perception and responsiveness to the needs of minority groups, leading to a lack of inclusive policymaking. Research suggests that the attitudes of political elites have a profound impact on broader societal tolerance and can exacerbate the marginalization of certain groups within the political landscape (Muller & Seligson, 1994). The dynamics are further complicated by power asymmetries, wherein dominant groups impose their political narratives, which frequently overshadow minority voices. This scenario creates a political environment that is inherently skewed and unresponsive to the diversity present within society (Chandra, 2005; .

Moreover, the phenomenon of ethnic outbidding—which occurs when political elites leverage cultural identities for competitive advantage—can transform multicultural political communication into a mechanism that fuels social fragmentation rather than reconciliation. Ethnic outbidding tends to manifest as parties within an ethnically diverse society adopt increasingly extreme positions to mobilize their base, consequently polarizing communities and deepening divisions (Martínez et al., 2023; Zuber & Szöcsik, 2015). This aligns with findings that show that when ethnic divisions are politicized, they often give rise to parties that engage in radical measures, which can destabilize democratic processes (Chandra, 2005; Somer & McCoy, 2018).

Sociopolitical contexts also play a critical role in shaping these dynamics. In societies where ethnic diversity is politicized, the absence of cross-ethnic coalitions can be observed, particularly under conditions of “split” demographics. Such environments are conducive to increased ethnic polarization, as minority groups frequently find themselves at a disadvantage

politically, hindering effective multicultural communication (Stroschein, 2011; Coakley, 2008). Furthermore, structural barriers—such as a lack of representation for minority demographics in leadership positions—exacerbate this issue, undermining the development of policies that might otherwise foster more inclusive political dialogue (Istiko & Sudiarto, 2025).

In conclusion, barriers to multicultural communication are deeply embedded in systemic biases from political elites, power disparities, and the manipulation of cultural identities for political gain. The intertwining of ethnic outbidding with these barriers emphasizes the need for a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play in multicultural societies. Acknowledging these complexities is essential for policymakers who aim to foster inclusive dialogue and bridge the divides that often threaten social cohesion.

3.5 Communication Strategy Outcomes

Effective multicultural political communication strategies are pivotal in fostering environments conducive to peace and social cohesion. Literature indicates that such strategies can yield positive outcomes by reducing tensions, enhancing inclusivity, and building social consensus among diverse groups. Specifically, culturally sensitive communication has been found to play a critical role in rebuilding trust among communities previously impacted by conflict. For instance, Kazanskaia examines strategies for conflict resolution within interfaith dialogue, highlighting approaches such as active listening and cultural mediation that can facilitate long-term reconciliation (Kazanskaia, 2025) (Kazanskaia, 2025). Similarly, Akintayo et al. emphasize that Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) strategies promote reconciliation by engaging diverse stakeholders in respectful discussions, which are essential for bridging communication gaps and establishing trust in racially and ethnically diverse communities (Akintayo et al., 2024).

However, the effectiveness of these communication strategies is highly context-dependent. They must be adapted to suit the unique socio-political environments, historical tensions, and cultural values of different regions. Mawardi points out that while multiculturalism serves as a framework for peaceful coexistence, the prevailing socio-political factors can exacerbate conflicts, emphasizing the need for contextually relevant approaches (Mawardi, 2024) (Mawardi, 2024). Unen supports this notion by stating that insider mediators, who understand the local context, are instrumental in fostering dialogue and mitigating conflict, as their involvement ensures that peace proposals are more aligned with community realities (Unen, 2023) (Unen, 2023). Furthermore, Kazanskaia's work illustrates through various case studies that strategies effective in one locale, such as those employed during the Good Friday Agreement, cannot simply be transplanted to another setting without considering the underlying socio-cultural dynamics.

Moreover, Shala et al. discuss how social norms significantly influence the outcomes of peace-focused communication, highlighting that maintaining a cohesive identity amidst conflict can complicate interpersonal relationships and communication dynamics (Shala et al., 2024). The complexity of these norms can either hinder or enhance efforts toward reconciliation, depending on the prevailing narratives within communities. Thus, building local frameworks that prioritize dialogue and mutual understanding is crucial for sustainable peace.

In light of these discussions, effective multicultural communication strategies must not only be informed by local contexts but also prioritize adaptable methods that resonate with community values. The intersection of trust-building, culturally sensitive dialogue, and institutional support emerges as a vital factor in transforming conflict-laden interactions into constructive and inclusive discourses.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Interpretation of Findings from a Political Communication Perspective

Research findings indicate that multicultural political communication strategies play a central role in shaping public perceptions and conflict dynamics. Communication patterns adapted from local values, identity narratives, and the use of cultural symbols have been shown to influence how community groups interpret conflict situations. When political actors implement these strategies, message adaptation By adapting language, symbols, and cultural norms, the public tends to be more receptive because the messages are perceived as relevant to their cultural experiences. Conversely, when political messages are inconsistent with local cultural values, resistance can occur, which can reinforce polarization and fuel tensions.

In the context of political framing, findings show that inclusive narratives focused on collective identity effectively reduce the salience of particular identities that can potentially trigger conflict. Framing that emphasizes nationality, solidarity, or shared goals can shift the audience's cultural orientation from an "us versus them" perspective to a perspective of coexistence. However, exclusive framing—for example, that used in political practice—can also be used to mitigate the potential for conflict. ethnic outbidding encourages identity-based mobilization and deepens social fragmentation. Thus, the quality and orientation of framing strategies have direct implications for conflict dynamics and social stability.

4.2 Integration with Theory

Research findings strengthen the relevance of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) in explaining how the effectiveness of political communication depends heavily on the actor's ability to understand prevailing norms, symbols, and cultural sensitivities in society. Politicians, religious figures, and traditional leaders with cross-cultural competence are better able to send messages that are received positively, minimize misinterpretations, and build trust between groups. In this context, ICC appears to be a crucial mediating variable between communication strategies and successful conflict management.

In addition, the findings are also in line with Conflict Transformation Theory, particularly the idea that conflict needs to be resolved not only structurally, but also through the transformation of social relations. An inclusive and culturally sensitive approach to political communication serves as an instrument of relational change, where communication becomes a vehicle for improving perceptions, breaking down stereotypes, and creating new conditions for more constructive social interactions. Community-based mediation, intercultural dialogue, and strategies trust-building is a concrete manifestation of this transformational mechanism.

The integration of theory is also seen in the use of Political Framing Theory which explains how political elites shape the way society understands conflict through the construction of certain narratives. Findings regarding inclusive framing and exclusive/identity-based framing shows that elites can amplify or defuse conflict through their choice of words, cultural symbols, and the construction of reality they present. Thus, framing is not simply a rhetorical technique, but a strategic tool that influences the structure of intergroup relations in multicultural societies.

4.3 Academic Implications

Academically, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of multicultural political communication models by identifying core strategies frequently employed by political actors in conflict situations. The results enrich the literature by demonstrating that a culture-based communication approach functions not only as an instrument of persuasion but also as a mechanism for social reconciliation. This research also fills a theoretical gap regarding the relationship between culture-based communication strategies and conflict resolution outcomes, which has been relatively underexplored in previous research.

Furthermore, this research emphasizes the need to integrate political communication perspectives with theories of intercultural relations and conflict studies. By mapping how communication strategies produce different effects in specific socio-political contexts, this research opens up new theoretical space for understanding the processes of perception formation, legitimacy, and social cohesion in pluralistic societies.

4.4 Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study can serve as a guideline for the government, political actors, traditional institutions, and civil society organizations in designing culturally sensitive communication policies. The government can adopt a strategy/culturally-informed messaging to ensure that public policies and political messages are received inclusively in a heterogeneous society. Political actors need to use inclusive framing in public communication to avoid polarization and encourage a more collaborative social orientation.

Traditional institutions and religious leaders can leverage their cultural beliefs to facilitate cross-group dialogue, while civil society organizations can develop communication literacy programs that strengthen intercultural understanding. Culturally sensitive communication strategies such as the use of cultural mediators, transparency of information, recognition of historical grievances, and representation of minority groups in political processes can increase trust and accelerate reconciliation processes in contemporary conflicts.

4.5 Limitations of Narrative Review

As a narrative review, this study has limitations primarily due to the lack of a systematic approach that would allow for empirical meta-analysis. Literature selection relies on the researcher's judgment, so potential interpretive bias cannot be completely avoided. Furthermore, the absence of quantitative data from comparative studies limits the generalizability of the findings to broader cultural and political contexts. Nevertheless, the narrative review still provides a comprehensive overview of strategic communication patterns in multicultural conflict.

4.6 Recommendations for Further Research

For future research, cross-cultural comparative studies are highly recommended to identify differences in political communication patterns across multicultural societies. big data analytics can be used to analyze conflict framing on social media more systematically, considering that digital platforms are the main arena for forming public opinion. In addition, this approach mixed-method will enrich understanding of the effectiveness of multicultural communication strategies by combining in-depth qualitative insights and quantitative empirical evidence on conflict resolution outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

This research confirms that multicultural political communication plays a strategic role in mitigating, managing, and preventing the escalation of social conflict in heterogeneous societies. The findings indicate that conflicts rooted in ethnicity, religion, and political identity are not solely triggered by differences, but rather by communication failures that are insensitive to cultural diversity. In this context, communication strategies such as message adaptation, inclusive political framing, intercultural dialogue, and approach trust-building has emerged as a key mechanism consistently used by political actors, religious figures, traditional leaders, and community activists to reduce tensions. These strategies have been shown to contribute to more inclusive public perceptions, increased understanding between groups, and strengthened social cohesion in multicultural societies.

However, the effectiveness of this strategy is largely determined by its alignment with local cultural identities and prevailing power patterns. Communication that is insensitive to the history, symbols, values, and social structures at the community level has the potential to create misunderstandings, reinforce stereotypes, and trigger conflict escalation. Therefore, intercultural communication competence is a crucial prerequisite for political actors in facilitating dialogue, building trust, and preventing polarization.

In conclusion, this study recommends the development of a theoretical model. Multicultural Political Communication for Conflict Management, a conceptual framework that integrates message adaptation, inclusive framing, intercultural dialogue, and trust-building strategies. This model is expected to provide new contributions to the discipline of political communication and serve as a practical foundation for governments and stakeholders in designing more effective communication interventions to maintain social stability in multicultural societies.

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