



A Journal of Culture, English Language, Teaching & Literature

ISSN 1414-3320 (Print), ISSN 2502-4914 (Online)

Vol. 23 No.1; June 2023

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‘God Protects Us’: Nationalism versus Religious Representation in the US and Indonesian Presidential Speeches

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Received: 02-02-2023

Accepted: 02-07-2023

Published: 30-07-2023

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Abstract: Presidential speeches may reflect the cultural identity of the nation and this corpus-based research investigates the religiosity reflection in the U.S. and Indonesian presidential speeches to reveal their underlying religious values. It built the corpus from the US presidential speeches (321,508 words) and the Indonesia presidential speeches (93,419 words) It applies Wordsmith 4.0 for the data mining. The findings show that both presidents used religious-related words, particularly 'god'. The US president has used 'god' in fixed expressions 'God bless you all' and 'May God protect our troops', while the Indonesian president uses the word 'god' including its synonym in Arabic 'Alloh' in a wider variety of expressions such as 'May god bless us all', 'May God protect us', 'the almighty God', and 'God's help' and 'Bismillah' (by the name of God), 'Alhamdulillah' (Praise be to Alloh), and 'Insyaallah' (God willing). However, the use of 'god' in presidential speeches has different underlying values: the American president demonstrates strong nationalism, while the Indonesian president shows the strong religious side of the Indonesian people. The research concludes that the US president expresses religiosity in a more implicit manner, being in line with the self-reliant attitude of American society. On the contrary, the Indonesian president expresses religiosity in a very explicit manner, reflecting a god-dependent attitude in Indonesian society.

Keywords: God, religiosity, presidential speech, nationalism, socio-cultural background

Abstrak: Pidato presiden menunjukkan identitas kultural bangsanya. Penelitian yang berbasis korpus ini bertujuan mengenali memahami bentuk ekspresi keagamaan dalam pidato presiden Amerika dan president Indonesia. Korpus yang digunakan disusun dari kumpulan pidato presiden Amerika (321.508 kata) dan presiden Indonesia (93,419 kata). Aplikasi Wordsmit 4.0 digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi kata-kata yang berkaitan dengan agama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa presiden dari kedua negara menggunakan kata-kata yang berhubungan dengan agama, terutama kata 'god' dalam berbagai ekspresi keagamaan. Kata 'god' digunakan oleh Presiden Amerika dalam bentuk pernyataan yang baku, yaitu 'god bless you all', dan 'god bless our troops', sedangkan presiden Indonesia menggunakan kata 'tuhan' dan sinonimnya dalam Bahasa Arab 'Alloh' dlm ungkapan yg bervariasi, antara lain 'May god bless us all', 'May god protect us', 'the almighty god', and 'god's help', Bismillah (dengan nama Alloh)', 'Alhamdulillah 'Puji syukur kepada Alloh)', 'Insyalloh' (atas ijin Alloh)'. Namun, pemakaiannya didasari oleh alasan yang berbeda. Presiden AS menggunakan kata 'god' sebagai bagian dari slogan utk menumbuhkan semangat nasionalisme, sedangkan presiden Indonesia menggunakannya utk alasan yang bersifat keagamaan, antara lain: sebagai doa, pengakuan akan keberadaan, kekuatan, dan kasih sayang Tuhan. Dari hasil penelitian disimpulkan bahwa Presiden Amerika mengekspresikan keagamaan secara implisit, lebih menonjolkan kepercayaan diri akan kekuatannya sendiri; sedangkan Presiden Indonesia sangat eksplisit dalam mengekspresikan keagamaannya, sejalan dengan rasa keagamaan yg kuat pada masyarakat Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Tuhan, keagamaan, pidato presiden, nasionalisme, identitas sosi-kultural

INTRODUCTION

Religious activity can be used to lobby the government, influence elections, or shape society. The response of political leaders has a significant impact on whether religious action is either successful or unsuccessful (Fowler et al., 2018). In Indonesia, religion is considered to be an important factor in influencing everyday interactions. (see Putra, et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the United States of America is the most religious country among the societies in the industrial countries (Welle, 2007). Because of this, we can infer that Indonesia and the US have a similar view on the significance of religion in life. However, the two countries differ in their policy toward the relationship between religion and state. The US law separates religion from the state, while

Indonesia does not have any regulation that separates religion from the state. This difference affects the ways the two countries express religiosity in the public domain or give meanings to those religious expressions when delivered in the public domain. Johnson, et al. (2021) acknowledge that faith and religious identities are mediated by social and cultural factors and, therefore, the way that these are expressed in contexts matters.

One of the important communications in the public domain is speeches by the country leaders, for example, the presidential speech. Political speeches, which are reshaped by functions and topics, are also a type of writing delivered by concerned authorities. Politicians do more than just speak; they engage with language and use it to communicate interpersonal meanings. As a result, speech becomes a rich, multifaceted phenomenon that can be studied from a variety of perspectives (Shakila, 2015). Considering the different socio-cultural backgrounds of the two countries, understanding how religious expressions are used and intended to mean in presidential speeches is important for the shake of multicultural understanding in the globalized world today.

Studies on religious identity have been conducted by several scholars from different points of view. Using extensive empirical data derived from presidential speeches and parliamentary debates, Polat (2018) conducted a critical study of AKP discourses on Syrian refugees. The speeches aim to recreate the Turkish nation along more Islamic lines by justifying Turkey's open-door policy for Syrians on the basis of religious solidarity and using religious images, lexical terms, and rhetoric. Within the sphere of US politics, Christian nationalism, as vocalized in Donald Trump's campaign speeches, was crucial in determining which Americans voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election (Whitehead et al., 2018). Hasan (2009) observes the rising consciousness of Indonesian Muslims to demonstrate their religious self in the public sphere. Kuipers (2017) in his study of 'Linguistic piety in Islamic Java' concludes that the Arabic language is highly valued by Muslims themselves as a sign of piety. Howell (2014) has compared the religion in late- or 'liquid' modernity in the North Atlantic Christian heritage countries to the Muslim world by focusing on a newly salient type of religious mobilization in Indonesia: mass audience religious revival (*dakwah*) ministries.

This article discusses the use of religion-related words in American and Indonesian presidential speeches in order to reveal the underlying values of religiosity expressions found in presidential speeches. A corpus for this purpose is specially created from the speeches of the American President and the Indonesian President during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Religious identity

Studies on religious identity have been a research interest in recent years due to the dynamic of Muslim society or growing identity conflict in pluralistic societies. Java, for instance, has grown from its traditionality into modernity, requiring Javanese Muslims to strengthen their identity of being Moslem in a global world. Kuipers (2017) focuses on four types of Arabic language usage in Java that reveal the piety among Javanese Muslims: 1) proper names 2) generic performance of a Qur'anic verse 3) situationally specific hadis performance 4) use of Arabic pronouns. Although this trend does not hold among all Muslim peoples everywhere, but rather than continuum is available as a resource for evaluating and interpreting in culturally specific ways, relative degrees of commitment and involvement of the speakers towards what they are saying in particular settings.

Hasan (2009) examines the transformation of Indonesian Islam towards the creation of new 'Islamic' public spaces and markets that open up a realm of opportunities for emerging Muslim youth, intellectuals, middle classes, and professional groups to seek visibility and legitimacy in the national public sphere. Through a study of relevant literature, observations, and in-depth interviews, it discusses the way Islam carves out a public space of its own, in conformity with the requirements of the Muslim faith and embodied in new Islamic language styles, corporeal rituals as well as spatial and bodily practices. It also examines the cultural process of religious commodification, occurring through the intensive commercialization of symbolic religious goods.

When seen through the lens of the concept of "public Islam," religiosity in Indonesia also takes on a new expression. This new form represents the individual Muslim's proactive reaction to the current modern technologies of digital media and the different venues that it offers. A study by Muslim (2017) demonstrates how the affordances of certain technologies—in this case, mobile technologies, and the WhatsApp application—contribute to the formation of the digital religion as well as the manner in which it functions. It is important to note that the case indicates that digital religion is not just a "natural" mix or confluence of individuals' religious desires with digital technology.

In modern Indonesia, urban Salafi activists have grown adept at adjusting both the content and the presentation of their Islamic dissemination, as researched by Chaplin (2018). In keeping with other movements of Islamic revival across the archipelago, Salafis are actively creating radio stations, online

social media services, and commodities that promote an Islamic identity. This activity is taking place in parallel with broader tendencies of Islamic revival. However, this type of activism is indicative of both a person's personal religion and their membership in a certain social class. This article offers a case study of how urban Salafi activists have become skilled at changing both the content and form of their religious propagation in contemporary Indonesia. However, because it is restricted to a small number of specific student-based foundations and industries like the YPIA and Yufid, it is in no way representative of the broader Salafi movement.

Another research on religious identity in the global world was conducted by Savitri Hartono (2018), specifying how Facebook serves as a platform for confirming and enhancing one's identity as a devout Muslim as well as for exchanging knowledge regarding appropriate Islamic attire for women, with or without reference to Muslim clerics. Modern Indonesian pious Muslim women may show their identity and piety and discuss their religion without worrying about a fatwa or other orders from religious leaders thanks to Facebook. In addition to being informed by their personal experiences and perceptions of Islam, they are also impacted by Muslim feminist discourses in Indonesia when forming ideas regarding appropriate Islamic wear. Facebook at least gives women the chance to remind one another of their religious obligations and to foster a sense of Muslim sisterhood.

O'Brian (2013) has demonstrated how a group of Muslim American youth uses specific kinds of interactions with hip-hop music to manage the cultural tension between religious piety and profane pop culture forms. He identifies three musical practices (quoting DeNora, 2000) through which youth work together to forge local solutions to the pop culture-religiosity dilemma. He also shows how these actions contribute to the ongoing production of a collective identity performance that blends religious commitment with youthful secularity –cool piety. This analysis reveals one means by which highly religious youth in America work to smooth the friction between their religious and youthful cultural obligations. More generally, his analysis establishes that specific modes of pop culture reception – and the bi-cultural identity performances and experiences they generate – can assist actors in negotiating situations of conflicting social and cultural expectations.

Driezen, et al. (2021) study how young Muslims in the super-diverse city of Antwerp negotiate the tensions between their religious identification and the broader cultural framework of individualism. Young Muslims in Antwerp face the challenge of presenting themselves as autonomous while maintaining

their religious identification. Based on 26 interviews with Muslim students in two secondary schools, they describe how presenting a dignified self to both non-Muslim and Muslim audiences requires a delicate balancing act. Drawing conceptually from cultural sociology, they explore how the respondents present themselves to various audiences by selectively employing elements from the cultural repertoire of 'religious individualism'. In their analysis, they examine four ways in which respondents employ this repertoire to rework the potential tensions and present themselves as agentic within their religious framework. They also discuss how negotiating a contested identity requires more taxing boundary work for girls, and how they challenge gender norms without denying their religious identification. Overall, their analysis demonstrates how young Muslims in a West European context engage in complex boundary work and creatively draw on the cultural repertoire of religious individualism to negotiate their multiple identifications.

Howell (214) conducted the comparative analysis of religion in late- or 'liquid' modernity beyond its place of origin in the North Atlantic Christian heritage countries to the Muslim world by focusing on a newly salient type of religious mobilization in Indonesia: mass audience religious revival (*dakwah*) ministries. These ministries each have one dominant form: either televangelism, or mass prayer rallies, but they may also use the other form of outreach in their ministries as well. Both types of ministry utilize the mass media (electronic media and book sales) and other forms of public advertising. The audiences of both kinds of mass revival ministries cut across each other and across other forms of the Islamic community. Thus, while these ministries inspire greater awareness of Islam as a global faith and intensify commitment to the idea of the *ummah* as a worldwide fellowship of Muslims, they make the 'lived' religious community more diverse and multi-layered. In so doing, paradoxically, they further problematize religious belonging, increasing the felt necessity for choice, as the choices of where and how to actualize community proliferate.

B. Christian Nationalism in America

Christian nationalism, an ideology characterized by the conviction that America is a Christian nation, may provide insight into how a sense of religious nationalism affects prejudice against immigrants. Research by (Al-Kire et al., 2022) examined the connection between Christian nationalism and negative perceptions of immigrant groups, as well as support for restrictive immigration policies. The findings indicate that Christian nationalism was a major and reliable predictor of negative stereotypes, discrimination, and dehumanization of immigrants as well as support for such policies. Other causes of anti-

immigrant sentiments, such as political ideology, nationalism, and religious fanaticism, did not significantly alter these impacts. Additionally, the association between Christian nationalism, the dehumanization of immigrants, and sentiments toward immigration policy were moderated by perceived threats from immigrants.

Davis (2018) examined the connection between respondents' adherence to Christian nationalist ideology and their approval of punitive social control methods. Even when adjusting for a belief in theological evil, the study shows that Christian nationalist ideology is a robust predictor of the death penalty and support for heavier criminal punishment. This implies that, regardless of a person's religious affiliation, convergence with his or her national identity enhances the desire to ensure a homogeneous society by harshly punishing those who violate social standards. The effect of Christian nationalism on people's perspectives on large-scale social issues, including reactions to criminal and deviant conduct, has far-reaching ramifications for the future of the United States.

Christian nationalism was highly apparent during Donald Trump's presidency. Barrett-Fox (2018) studied how conservative Christians believe they have a particular right to shape American law and policy, as well as to dominate others politically. At a July 2016 rally in Iowa, Donald Trump told the gathering conservative Christians that they have the ability to be powerful, that they are entitled to use that power, and that they are expected to use that influence in order to preserve the future of hegemonic Christianity. Because they had previously built a narrative in which he did not need to know their beliefs to appeal to their emotions, Trump could stumble when he spoke about God, exposing his lack of Biblical literacy or grasp of fundamental theology. Power promises are appealing to any group, but they are more powerful for a group whose self-concept is based on sentiments of fear and resentment over fading authority in a community that requires it to live.

The current US President, Joe Biden, is leading America amid the growing support for Christian nationalism, "an ideology that idealized and advocates a fusion of American civic life with a particular type of Christian identity and culture" (Whitehead & Perry, 2020, p. ix-x). This ideology significantly affects today's Americans' attitudes and behaviors, such as it drives many Americans to advocate for xenophobic policies, such as a border wall with Mexico, and be unwilling to acknowledge the injustices that ethnic and racial minorities experience in the United States. Therefore, in his speeches to appeal

to people's support, he negotiates between the desire to make America more religious, and awareness of the separation of state and religion.

There has been a related study conducted by Davis & Perry (2021) on the possible impact of Christian nationalism on a more subtle form of racism, namely, increased tolerance for racists themselves in comparison to other historically stigmatized groups. Racism is still more often practiced discreetly in the policies that white people are ready to support, despite what seems to be a rise of overt white racism and ethnocentrism in response to the rise of Trump and the Alt-right. However, as compared to other stigmatized groups, white Christian nationalists demonstrate higher tolerance toward racists than other whites. This impact is separate from the relationship between personal religion and lower relative tolerance for racists. In addition, this study shows that both time and gender moderate the relationship between white Christian nationalism and relative racism tolerance. White Americans who practice Christian nationalism have authoritarian tendencies, showing less tolerance for all groups while giving more tolerance to traditional racists who could help them in their efforts to impose societal control and coercion.

Prior U.S. research has found that religious conservatism is positively associated with anti-vaccine attitudes. (Corcoran, et al., 2021). They believe that one of the strongest predictors of anti-vaccine attitudes in the U.S. is Christian nationalism—a U.S. cultural ideology that wants civic life to be permeated by their particular form of nationalist Christianity. Corcoran, et al. (2021) examine the relationship between Christian nationalism and COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and uptake. Using a new nationally representative sample of U.S. adults, they find that Christian nationalism is one of the strongest predictors of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and is negatively associated with having received or planning to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Since Christian nationalists make up approximately 20 percent of the population, these findings could have important implications for achieving herd immunity.

METHOD

The research reported in this article is a corpus-assisted discourse study (CADS) research. It used Wordsmith 4.0 software (Scott, 2004) for the data collection and analysis.

A. The Corpus

The corpus is developed from 10 speeches of the American President and 10 speeches of the Indonesian President. The speeches are selected from the websites containing presidential speeches about COVID-19 in America and Indonesia during 2021-2022.

B. Data Collection

The procedures for the data collection are:

1. downloading the speech from the websites.
2. running Wordsmith 4.0 on the corpus to get a word list.
3. identifying religion-related words to be fed into Wordsmith 4.0. concordance tool.
4. obtaining sentences containing religion-related words

C. Data Analysis

The data analysis is conducted following these procedures.

1. Verifying the data
2. Classifying the religiosity data according to the religiosity dimensions: religious beliefs, religious exclusivity, external practice, private practice, and religious salience. (Pearce, et al., 2017)
3. Applying Stuart Hall's representation theory to interpret the data
4. Drawing conclusions from the research findings

The application of Stuart Hall's Representation Theory is described as follows. Religiosity representation through verbal expression, i.e., religion-related words, is connected with the authority that the leader holds in delivering state policies. The authority assigned to the country leader is inseparable from his personal character. With an understanding of the context of American and Indonesian governance, the analysis helps to reveal the forms and functions of religiosity representation found in presidential speeches.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Syntactic Analysis of Presidential Speeches

The presidential speeches during the COVID-19 pandemic generally adopt the 'suffering and hope for recovery' rhetorical structure. The president

acknowledged the sufferings the pandemic had brought to the people and then offered hopes for recovery through government-initiated activities. The suffering is, especially, a high rate of unemployment which has caused financial difficulties for many families throughout the nation. Therefore, the recovery focuses on creating jobs to decrease the unemployment rate. In their speeches, both the Indonesian and American presidents use words related to religion. The list of religion-related words is presented in Table 1.

Table 1:
Religion-related words in American and Indonesian Presidential Speeches

Religion-related Word	Indonesian	American
God	46	229
Allah	20	0
(Arabic) words ending with -llah	450	0
Hope	231	122
Bless	8	78
Protect	1	61

These words are classified into the fifth dimension of religiosity, i.e. Religious Salience (See Pearce, et al., 2017) which is an individual's commitment to religious beliefs.

The religion-related words are found in almost all parts of the speeches as Table 2 shows. However, there are different parts where the words are frequently, or seldom found in the speeches by the American President and the Indonesian president.

Table 2:
Parts of the Presidential speeches using religion-related words

Part of the speech	Indonesian	American
Opening	V	-
Body	V	V
Closing	V	V

The Indonesian Presidential Speeches use religion-related words in the opening, especially in the form of greetings. This opening part is formulaic, containing a set of expressions including address and prayer: *Assalamu'alaikum warohmatullahi wabarokatuh*. The most frequently used word indicative of prayer is 'May' which may combine with other words to produce various expressions of prayer such as 'May God bless us', 'May God protect us', and 'May Alloh grant them grace and mercy'. The choice of 'Alloh' rather than the more general word 'god' is a strong

indexical of Islam. Along with the growing spirit of pluralism in Indonesia, the greeting in Indonesian formal speeches is a combination of greetings originating from major religions in Indonesia: *Assalamu’alaikum warohmatullahi wabarokatuh* (Islam), *Shalom* (Christianity), and *Salam Kebajikan* and *Om santi santi santi om* (Hinduism/Buddhism). The American presidential speeches, however, hardly use religion-related words in the opening part. The opening part mainly uses time-bound greetings, i.e. good morning, thus, sounding more casual.

Among the words presented in Table 1, the word ‘god’ is the most strongly related word to religion. It is a universally accepted referent despite the different concepts or specific referents of God in the existing religions today. God is universally described to be loving, giving, and protective of human beings. American presidential speeches use a single word ‘god’ for less various contexts than the Indonesian presidential ones. Indonesian presidential speeches also show more variety of words referring to god, including the Arabic word *Alloh* or other borrowings ending in *-llah/lloh* (a contracted form of *Alloh*): “*Insya Alloh*” (god willing), “*Alhamdulillah*” (Praise be to Alloh), and “*Subhanalloh*” (Alloh the most refined). The use of the word “God” and its synonyms are presented in Table 3.

Table 3:
God or its synonyms found the presidential speeches.

	American Context	Indonesian Context
God	God bless us (May) God bless you all	(May) God bless us all. We must be grateful and thank God
	(May) God protect our troops	God willing
	With the grace of God ...	May God always protect us.
	Thank God ...	May Allah the Almighty ...
	Please, God, give solace to all ...	God, the Most Glorified, the Most High, ...
	may God ease the pain in the hearts of so many ...	beg for God’s help
	God willing	May God the All-Merciful and All-Gracious grant them grace and mercy.
	Doing God’s work for God’s sake, wear your mask.	May God protect Indonesia may God Almighty give His grace and guidance to all of us.

... honest to God ...	May Allah the Almighty God bless all the efforts we have done and the efforts we will do,
I hope to God ...	<i>Alhamdulillah</i> , praise be to God ...
Allah/...llah...	<i>Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.</i> <i>Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh</i>
	<i>Amin amin ya rabbal 'alamin.</i> <i>Wassalam'ualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.</i>
	Alhamdulillah (Thank God)
	Insya Alloh (God willing)
	Subhanalloh
	May Allah, the Most Glorified, the Most High, always protect the Indonesian people.
	May Allah <i>subhanahu wa ta'ala</i> the Almighty God always protect us all
Santi	<i>Om santi santi santi om.</i>

Table 3 shows that both Presidents use the words God in the expression of gratitude, prayer, and hope. President Biden quite frequently mentions God in his speeches even though the US separates Religion from the State. Meanwhile, the expressions containing God and its synonym (Allah) in the Indonesian presidential speeches are explicit and abundant, being in line with the fact that Indonesia does not separate religion from the state.

Adopting the view that language is a reflection of who its users are as a person and an outlet by which individuals can build their identities (see Bucholtz, 2014), this paper analyzes the choice of words to reveal how the Americans and Indonesians express their religiosity in the public sphere. Bucholtz uses the term 'social positioning', which has the meaning: the language that one uses or chooses to use serves as an indication to others of how we want to be seen. We have embedded beliefs and assumptions as to how we and other people use language.

From the above-presented findings, this paper infers different representations of religiosity by the presidents. The following parts discuss the interpretation of the perspectives of Indonesian and American people toward religiosity. For this purpose, the theory of representation by Hall can best explain this phenomenon because representation connects meaning and language to culture (Hall, 1997, p. 15), i.e., the production of meaning through language.

(p.16) Signs are organized into languages and it is the existence of common languages which enable us to translate our thoughts (concepts) into words, sounds, or images, and then to use these, operating as a language, to express meanings and communicate thoughts to other people (p.18) The relation between 'things', concepts, and signs lie at the heart of the production of meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what is called 'representation' (p.19).

If visual signs are called **iconic signs**, written or spoken signs are called **indexical** (Hall, 1997). Iconic signs bear, in their form, a certain resemblance to the object, person, or, event to which they refer. On the other hand, indexical bears no obvious relationship at all to the things to which they refer (p.20) Meaning does not inhere in things, in the world. It is constructed, produced. It is the result of a signifying practice - a practice that produces meaning, that makes things mean (p.24).

B. God-dependent vs. Self-reliant

The positioning as God-dependent or self-reliant is interpreted from the part of 'offering hope' in the rhetorical structure of the presidential speeches. The Indonesian president's speeches acknowledge explicitly the intervention of God's power in any undertaken effort for recovery. It reflects the fact that religion is part of Indonesia's daily life. A direct way of expressing God-dependent value is by asking God through the word 'beg'. A rather indirect way is by expressing hope through the word 'may' or expressing gratitude to god through '*Alhamdulillah*'. The following is an example that shows god-dependent positioning.

[1] Send prayers, beg for **God's** help to ease our burden so that the people, the nation, and the country, as well as the world, can soon be freed from the pandemic.

Among the many religion-related words, Arabic words are quite dominant: greeting, mentioning of God's attributes, and exclamations. It is in line with Kuipers' observation that Everyday Arabic greetings and sayings are now commonplace and sprinkled frequently into everyday conversation (2017).

[2] Despite the pandemic, *alhamdulillah*, thanks to the hard work of all elements, the COVID-19 case in Indonesia is under control. Therefore, this year's Ramadan, Muslims can perform obligatory prayers and *tarawih* prayers (evening Ramadan prayers) in congregation at the mosque. Ahead of Eid al-Fitr, it is also

permissible for you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to go back to your hometown, to gather with your parents, relatives, and beloved families.

Similarly, the American president also mentions God in such expressions as 'May god bless us', and 'May god protect our troops'. However, they carry a weaker indexical of religiosity. These expressions share a similar function as the national motto "In God we Trust" (United States Government Publishing Office, 2019a,b). Thus, it is more likely that the expression is a slogan of nationalism typically used by American politicians rather than pure religiosity of being god-dependent.

[3] Get vaccinated now. It's free. It's convenient. I promise you, it saves lives. And I, honest to **God**, believe it's your patriotic duty.

[4] Let me close again by saying **God** bless our doctors, our scientists, and all of you here at the NIH for what you're doing for the country and, quite frankly, for the world. You're the best. You're the very, very best. May **God** bless you all. And thank you for your patience in listening to me. Thank you.

[5] Let me end with this. This pandemic has been **God**-awful for so many reasons: the lost lives – as I said, over 660,000; the jobs, the businesses lost; the lost time in school for our kids.

[6] Thank you. And God bless you all. And may God protect our troops.

The god-independent or self-reliant positioning is strongly supported by one of the speeches in which the president did not mention even a single word 'God'. The speech has 1,381 words, in which all the statements delivered are to show the confidence that America can be self-reliant on available resources in making progress to cope with the problems. It clearly shows that Americans tend to be self-reliant, rather than god-dependent.

Using the word 'god' but remaining god-dependent may appear contradictory. The socio-cultural background of Americans best explains why they are not contradictory. The president is negotiating the desires of Christian nationalism with the law of separation between the state and religion. On one side, he is leading America amid the growing support for Christian nationalism which idealizes and advocates a fusion of American civic life with a particular type of Christian identity and culture (Whitehead and Perry, 2020: ix-x) but on

the other side he is aware of the restriction to express religiosity in the public domain. As a result, he uses 2 strategies, which are stance-shifting and detaching hope from god, as discussed in the following parts.

C. Stance Shifting

Being restrained by the law of religion-state separation, the American President adopted a stance-shifting strategy when expressing religiosity. In doing this strategy, the president withdraws himself from the public domain into his personal domain. This is done by recalling his personal experience or recounting another person's saying. By shifting his stance when making a statement related to religion, he should not be seen as a president who is representing America. Several signposts he uses to introduce a different (personal) stance are such statements as: '...a lot of this is just personal...' and "...as X used to say..."

[7] "Look, I'm – I'm not going to – a lot of this is just personal. Pope Francis has become a – I don't want to exaggerate – has become a – someone who has provided great solace for my family when my son died.

He has – he is, in my view – there's always been this debate in the Catholic Church, going back to Pope John the 23rd, that talk about how we reach out and embrace people with differences.

If you notice what – what the Pope said when he was asked when he first got elected Pope – he was traveling with the press, and they said, "What's your position on homosexuals?" He said, "Who am I to judge?"

This is a man who is of great empathy. He is a man who understands that part of his Christianity is to reach out and to forgive. And so I just find my relationship with him one that I personally take great solace in. He is a really, truly genuine, decent man."

[8] "Well, as my grandfather used to say: "With the grace of God and the goodwill to the neighbors," we'll be able to get a lot done."

[9] "And as my grandfather used to kiddingly say, "With the grace of God, the goodwill of the neighbors, and the crick not rising," that's exactly what we're going to do."

[10] "The folks there are doing God's work, as my mother would say,

D. Detaching Hope from God

In addition to stance shifting, the American President also tries to detach hopes from God. This strategy can also be called implication. There are many statements containing hope (i.e., intended as prayers), but the president does not explicitly relate it to God, e.g.:

[11] “When we do it that way, everybody does well, everybody wins.”

[12] “I said from the outset we’re the only country in the world that’s come out of crises stronger than we went into them. That’s what we’re doing here.”

As a result, the hope sounds like a positive consequence of the undertaken efforts. An exception is revealed by the following data [13] in which the president makes a statement of prayer explicitly mentioning God.

[13] “And please, God, give solace to all those people who lost someone.”

The best explanation this paper can give is that the suffering described in [13] is not about the financial problem due to unemployment. Although both losing jobs and losing someone may cause psychological problems, the intensity is different. The mental or psychological suffering resulting from losing the beloved is recognized beyond the reach of the government’s intervention. The government can bring the job back that gives “a little more breathing room and the dignity that comes from earning a paycheck –just the dignity of having a job” (Biden, 2022), but healing mental trauma is expected to come from transcendental assistance.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide information on how socio-cultural background affects the way religiosity is expressed in the public domain. In America, the separation between religion and the state restricts the freedom to express religiosity in public speeches. The president has to make the expression of religiosity implicit or use the expression of religiosity that also bears the sense of nationalism. This situation results in the strategy of ‘shifting stance’ that enables the American president to express religiosity in public, which is a negotiation between the religious aspiration of Christian nationalism and the spirit of American nationalism, i.e., reliance on the country’s strength. In

contrast, the Indonesian President can express religiosity in a very explicit manner since Indonesia does not separate religion from the state. The use of 'God' by the President is an overt acknowledgment of God's intervention in any undertaken efforts. Through the explicit expression of religiosity, the president appeals to the religious sense of the general Indonesian who holds the importance of religion in everyday life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is based on the research supported by the Department-Scheme Research Fund 2022, Faculty of Cultural Sciences - Universitas Gadjah Mada with contract no. 961/UN1.FIB/UP2M/2022.

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