

The Meaning of Political Messages in Carousel Posts on @ganjar_pranowo's Instagram Account during the 2024 Electoral Campaign Period

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the phenomenon of the 2024 elections, focusing on the digital political campaigns based on social media. The study focused on examining the meanings of political messages constructed by the 2024 presidential candidate, Ganjar Pranowo, by relating them to the philosophy of Javanese cultural leadership. This is due to the contrast between the results of the party's legislative elections and its vote acquisition in the presidential election contest. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative with the semiotic analysis method of Roland Barthes. The research subject consists of carousel posts on the Instagram account @ganjar_pranowo, while the research object is the meaning of Political Messages. The study found that the meaning of political messages is derived from the visible verbal and non-verbal messages. It also discovered the correlation between the meanings of 'Penguin' and 'Swastika' which were capitalized as campaign messages. Furthermore, the researcher interprets the message meanings as Javanese-centric leadership in Indonesia presidential, redefinition of the meaning 'Merakyat', the paternalistic side in 'wong cilik' politics, and the implementation of *Hastabrata* philosophy rooted in Ganjar Pranowo.

Keywords: *Political Messages; Political Campaign; Semiotics; Carousel Posts; Ganjar Pranowo; Paternalistic*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's 2024 general election requires voters to choose executive and legislative representatives, demonstrating the country's commitment to democracy. Candidates employ various campaign strategies to win over the electorate, including social media. Among the presidential candidates, Ganjar Pranowo stands out for his active presence on Instagram, using it to connect with young voters through content about family, common people, and tolerance (Rifandi, D., Armando, 2022). His familiarity with social media, even before his presidential candidacy, has significantly boosted his popularity among online users.

The 2024 election campaign, starting from November 29, 2023 to February 10, 2024,

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highlights the importance of digital campaigns. According to Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting, Ganjar leads among social media users, with 38% favouring him over other candidates (Mujani, 2023). Instagram's role in political campaigns is crucial, given Indonesia's large user base, which reached 104.8 million in 2023. Ganjar's Instagram account, @ganjar_pranowo effectively uses carousel posts feature to engage the public, showcasing personal and professional contents that build his political identity.

Ganjar's strategic use of social media aligns with the concept of *celebrity politicians*, where sharing personal life moments can garner public sympathy (Street, 2004). His Instagram content, managed by a team, includes varied posts aimed at shaping public opinion and political branding. This approach is reflected in his account aesthetic and well-thought-out posts, making it a powerful tool for his campaign.

This study elaborated the concept of Hastabrata, relating it to the meanings conveyed in each political message within Ganjar Pranowo's Instagram carousel posts. Hastabrata, a cornerstone of Javanese leadership philosophy, comprises eight principles derived from the natural elements; *Bantala* (earth), *Samudra* (water), *Dahana* (fire), *Maruta* (angin), *Angkasa* (sky), *Kartika* (stars), *Candra* (moon), and *Surya* (sun). These elements symbolize the virtues and behaviours a leader should embody, emphasizing wisdom, humility, and a deep connection to cultural values (Achmad, 2024). Ganjar Pranowo's campaign content often reflects these principles, integrating Javanese cultural values into his political messaging, which resonates strongly with the electorate familiar with the tradition.

This Writing is highly relevant to the study of content and engagement in the context of communication studies. It explores how political figures use social media platforms to craft and disseminate their messages, engaging with the public in new and dynamic ways. The research problem focuses on understanding the strategies behind Ganjar Pranowo's use of Instagram carousel posts during his campaign and their impact on voter engagement and perception. The objective is to analyse the effectiveness of these posts in building a political persona and mobilizing support

The importance of this writing lies in its potential to advance our understanding of communication science, particularly in the digital age. By examining Ganjar Pranowo's Instagram strategy, researcher gained insights into the evolving landscape of political communication, where social media plays a pivotal role. This study contributes to the broader discourse on media studies by highlighting how digital content can shape political narratives through digging the deeper meaning. It underscores the need for further research and their implications for democratic process and political participation.

Understanding the meaning behind Ganjar Pranowo's political messages is also crucial for mapping the Indonesian presidential context and its connection to culture, specifically Javanese culture. By analysing the semiotic aspects through the lens of Roland Barthes's theory, this research uncovered deeper layers of meaning and cultural significance. This understanding is essential for comprehending how cultural narratives and values are communicated and perceived in the political landscape, thereby advancing the knowledge in the field of communication studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Communication

Political communication encompasses all forms of symbolic exchange, including written and spoken words, images, gestures, body language, demeanour, and clothing (Nimmo, 2005). Meadow, as cited in Cangara (2018) defines political communication as any exchange of symbols or messages significantly shaped by or consequential for the political system. These definitions illustrate that political communication involves substantive elements of politics conveyed through symbols and signs.

Political communication is not merely rhetoric but includes language symbols and political actors (Subiakto, 2015). This distinction sets political communication apart from other communication disciplines such as organizational, development, business, and family communication, primarily due to its message content (Cangara, 2018). Therefore, political communication can be understood as a communication process that implicates political activities. Even when a communication process lacks explicit political content, it may still have implications for political activities, impacting the functions of the political system (Subiakto, 2015).

Mcnaair (2003) and Goran Hedebro (1982) identify several functions of political communication: (1) informing the public about political activities, (2) socializing policies and programs, (3) motivating politicians and supporters, (4) providing a platform for public opinion, (5) educating voters, (6) entertaining the public during campaigns, (7) fostering national integration, (8) creating an environment for change, (9) increasing political engagement, and (10) acting as a watchdog for good governance (Subiakto, 2015). Thus, political communication is an interdisciplinary field and grand theory, aiming to understand political realities as a communication process.

Political Messages

Political messages means a message intended for a political purpose or a message which pertains to an issue of public policy of possible concern to the electorate (Hasan, 2016). The origins of political messaging can be traced back to Aristotle's theories on rhetorical persuasion, emphasizing communicative ideology, emotional appeal, and core arguments (Subiakto, 2015). These foundational elements illustrate how political communicators strategically craft messages to sway public opinion and align perceptions with their agendas.

Hasan (2016) categorized political messages into several forms, including rhetoric, political advertising, and propaganda. Rhetoric involves persuasive language use to influence perception and achieve communicators' goals through interpersonal or public communication channels. Political advertising, akin to commercial advertising, aims to persuade audiences to support political entities or candidates. Propaganda, on the other hand, employs continuous messaging to construct favourable public opinion toward specific agendas, showcasing the potent impact of strategic communication in political contexts.

Additionally, the classification of political messages into verbal and non-verbal forms underscores their diverse communicative strategies. Verbal messages encompass language as a symbolic system, while non-verbal messages, categorized by Rakhmat (Wahid & Luhur, 2020), include kinesic (body language), proxemic (spatial relationships), and artifactual (personal appearance) forms. These non-verbal cues play a critical role in conveying emotions, status, and intimacy in political communication, influencing public perceptions and responses to political messages.

Political Campaign

Political campaigns are dynamic processes akin to theatrical performance, involving political actors who strategically communicate messages to influence public opinion and behaviour. Defined as organized endeavours to persuade target audiences through various forms of political messages disseminated via specific communication channels and media, campaigns aim to shape or reinforce attitudes, practices, and behaviours among the electorate (Hasan, 2016). These efforts encompass a wide array of activities such as mass gatherings, speeches, symbolic displays like banners and posters, rallies, concerts, and the distribution of party insignia, all aimed at engaging and persuading voters.

Central to the concept of political campaigns is the interaction between change agents (campaign organizers) and target adopters (audience), where the effectiveness of communication hinges on the ability to convey compelling messages that resonate with voters' concerns and aspirations (Cangara, 2018). Campaign messages, as outlined by Laswell's communication model, serve to articulate candidates' policies and visions, distinguishing them from their competitors and crafting a distinct public persona (Hasan, 2016). These messages are designed not only to inform but also to evoke emotional response and prompt behavioural changes among the electorate highlighting the strategic importance of effective communication in electoral campaigns.

Moreover, the nature of political campaigns is characterized by high costs, uncertainty regarding outcomes, and the mobilization of extensive efforts to sway voters, underscoring the competitive and sometimes theatrical nature of electoral processes (Hasan, 2016). The ability of campaign messages to clearly articulate policy stances and differentiate candidates is crucial in helping voters make informed choices and shaping the overall political landscape.

Semiotics

Semiotics, as articulated by Umberto Eco (in Dwinantika, 2020), offers a framework to study anything that can be used to deceive. Originating from the Greek word "semeion" meaning sign, semiotics involves the systematic exploration of signs and their interpretations. It encompasses social practices and cultural aspects, treating them as signs laden with symbolic meanings (Dwinantika, 2020). According to Barthes and Sobur, semiotics delves into how humanity assigns meanings to things, emphasizing that objects not only convey information, but also constitute structured systems of signs (Sobur, 2009)

Among many theorists, Roland Barthes brought a new complexity to the study of signs and symbols in semiotics. Barthes's semiotics consists of two levels of language systems. The first level treats language as an object, while the second level views language as a metalanguage (Anggoro et al., 2022). Barthes associates denotation with the closure of meaning, censorship, and political repression. Barthes' concept of connotation, on the other hand, refers to indirect meanings that are uncertain and open to various possibilities.

Barthes further integrates the element of myth into his semiology, linking it to ideological operations. Myths function to express and justify dominant values prevailing in a particular period, constructed from pre-existing chains of meaning. Thus, myths represent the second order of significance. Barthes also positions ideology within the context of myth. Both myth and ideology involve motivated relationships between the signifier and signified in a connotative sense. Myths arise influenced by tendencies within a social environment and consequently manifest as stereotypes about certain issues or phenomena. This perspective underscores how semiotics can reveal underlying ideological forces that shape and perpetuate cultural narratives and stereotypes.

Carousel Post Instagram

Carousel posts is an Instagram feature which is also known as slideshow activism. It has become a popular content format since Instagram introduced the feature ((Dumitrica & Hockin-Boyers, 2023). This type of content is akin to a slideshow or PowerPoint presentation. The carousel post feature allows users to upload multiple photos and/or videos in a single post, with viewers swiping left to see each piece of photo. Each carousel post can contain up to ten photos or videos, and users can add captions, hashtags, and mentions (Pratama & Malau, 2022)). The primary advantage of carousel posts is their effectiveness in summarizing moments into a single post before sharing them on social media.

Practically, carousel posts are often used as microblogs, providing educational content in a step-by-step manner that aligns with users' habits of swiping through content (Dumitrica & Hockin-Boyers, 2023). These posts initially attract attention with visually appealing designs and easily understandable text. Carousel posts allow content creators to explore various aspects of a topic or events, using each slide to highlight different perspectives. This approach creates a dynamic and engaging experience for the audience, making carousel posts not just a tool for sharing images and videos collectively but also a medium for facilitating more complex narratives and storytelling.

In the political realm, carousel posts offer a new way to understand and engage with political content (Dumitrica & Hockin-Boyers, 2023) While they are often likened to political infographics, there is a fundamental difference: infographics present all information in a single post, whereas carousel posts break down a larger narrative into smaller, interconnected slides. This method creatively involves user interaction, as viewers must swipe left to see the complete picture, thus offering a more immersive and nuanced exploration of political topics

METHODOLOGY

Research Conceptualization

This study employs a descriptive research design with a qualitative approach, as defined by Moleong (2009), which seeks to understand phenomena experienced by subjects holistically and naturally. By utilizing the concepts, the research aims to analyse the meanings [mythical, denotative, and connotative] within various symbols, signs, and emblems in political communication on social media, specifically through Instagram carousel posts.

Political communication, a broad discipline, involves all communication processes that provide context and impact political activities. A crucial element is political messaging, which includes substantive content by political actors, constructed by communicators and interpreted by audiences. This research focuses on how these messages are conveyed and perceived through Instagram carousel posts, an interactive format that presents multiple images or videos in a single post, enhancing content richness and audience engagement. During political campaigns, these posts are analysed to understand their structure, delivery, and deeper meaning.

The meaning of messages refers to the interpretation derived by the receiver, influenced by content, context, characteristics of sender and receiver, medium, and communication codes. The research ensures data validity through triangulation, comparing findings with relevant theoretical perspectives to enhance understanding and avoid bias. This comprehensive approach aims to provide insights into the complex interplay of symbols, signs, and messages in political communication.

Research Subject

The subject of this research is the carousel post from the Instagram Account @ganjar_pranowo, while the object of this research is the meaning of the political messages. The unit of analysis in this study is the paradigm and syntagm from 5 carousel posts that are chosen by a purposive sampling method. Researcher predetermined the highest engagement that was collected based on the total number of likes and comments in all the carousel posts that were uploaded during the campaign period from December 2023 - January 2024.

The results of the purposive sampling that has been carried out are the five carousel post contents with the following captions:

Table 1. Unit of Analysis

No	Upload Date	Engagement		Caption	Link
		Likes	Comments		
1	January 8, 2024	821,042	19,114	Selamat pagi.. Gimana kalo bikin give away jaket dari @timechineco pada mau ga yaa..?	https://www.instagram.com/p/C10cD08ybpq/?img_index=1

2	January 8 2024	601,232	9,671	Saat ngumpul bareng temen-temen Tim Pemenangan Muda ada remaja putri dari Kab. Malang yang curhat tidak bisa ngambil ijazah karena belum lunas iuran bulanan. Persoalan-persoalan seperti ini yang banyak jadi kendala anak-anak kita untuk melanjutkan pendidikan ke jenjang selanjutnya. Maka ke depan tidak boleh ada sekolah yang menahan ijazah apalagi karena persoalan SPP. Karena negara menjamin biaya pendidikan mereka. #ganjarmahfud2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C11EqhryvZz/?img_index=1
3	January 11 2024	481,773	10,327	Bu Waidah, maturnuwun nggih. Alhamdulillah semalem tidurnya angler, lelap banget. Salam buat ananda Fikri Haikal ya. Semoga kerjaannya lancar, rezekinya berkah serta ilmu yang selama ini didapat dari SMKN Jateng Boarding School bermanfaat. Saya ikut bahagia dia bisa bantu panjenengan membangun rumah ini. Sehat-sehat terus nggih bu. Maturnuwun juga untuk sedulur-sedulurku warga Kelurahan Slerok, Kota Tegal yang sudah gayeng menemani ngobrol semalam. #ganjarmahfud2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C18VkkZS6f2/?img_index=1
4	January 18 2024	443,863	12,083	Komitmen kami adalah menciptakan kepastian hukum agar pencegahan sekaligus pemberantasan korupsi berjalan optimal. Komitmen ini bukan sekadar angan-angan, karena kami telah membuktikan. Maka lahirlah tiga jari, tiga janji: - Taat Pada Tuhan - Patuh Pada Hukum - Setia Kepada Rakyat. #ganjarmahfud2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C2OLf9JsyQD/?img_index=1
5	January 19 2024	356,960	7,921	Lur, maturnuwun nggih. Wah, Nuswantoro Bangkit pancen ok. Guyub rukun, tua muda tumplek blek di Madiun. Pokoke jenengan sedaya kula dongakke sehat waras	https://www.instagram.com/p/C2QwTbotsR/?img_index=1

				lancar lan berkab rezekine. Seduluran selawase ya, lur. #ganjarmahfud2024	
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The 5 carousel posts present a visual display of the cover or front page as follows:



Figure 1. Carousel Post Unit of Analysis no. (1)

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C10cD08ybpq/?img_index=1



Figure 2. Carousel Post Unit of Analysis no. (2)

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C11EqhryvZz/?img_index=1



Figure 3. Carousel Post Unit of Analysis no. (3)

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C18VkkZS6f2/?img_index=1



Figure 4. Carousel Post Unit of Analysis no. (4)

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C2OLf9JsyQD/?img_index=1

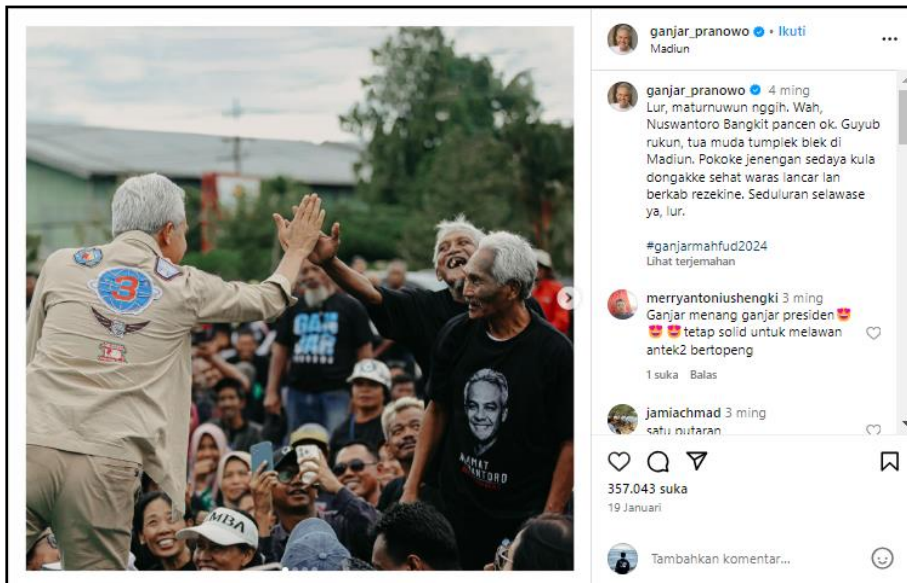


Figure 5. Carousel Post Unit of Analysis no. (5)

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C2QwTbotsR_/?img_index=1

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this research employs Roland Barthes' semiotic method to decipher the meanings within the communication texts, specifically the carousel posts on the Instagram account @ganjar_pranowo. This qualitative analysis involves several steps. Initially, the signifiers and signifieds within the selected posts are described. These meanings are then categorized according to Barthes' levels of significance: denotative, connotative, and mythological. This categorization is followed by a thorough examination of each post to uncover the underlying political messages conveyed through the visual and textual elements.

The analytical process involves matching the identified signifiers and signifieds with the theoretical framework provided by Barthes' semiotics. This includes interpreting the denotative meanings, which represent the literal content of the posts, and the connotative meanings, which involve the cultural and emotional associations. The mythological level explores the broader ideological implications uncovering how these posts contribute to constructing political narratives during the election campaign and reinforcing dominant societal values.

Finally, the categorized data are analysed to formulate arguments about the political messages embedded in the posts. The analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how @ganjar_pranowo's Instagram carousel posts convey political messages, utilizing Barthes' semiotic theory to reveal the complex interplay between images, text, and broader cultural contexts. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the political communication strategies employed on social media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Each of the carousel posts highlight 5 schemes of the meaning that integrate with political messages that are conveyed by Ganjar Pranowo through his Instagram Account.

Ganjar's Performance on the Third Debate

The third presidential debate served as a critical political moment for Ganjar Pranowo. Focused on defence, geopolitics, and international relations, this debate allowed Ganjar to showcase his deep understanding of these complex issues. He effectively communicated his vision for Indonesia's future, emphasizing practical solutions and strategic plans to enhance the country's defence capabilities and strengthen international alliances. Ganjar's insights into geopolitical strategies demonstrated his readiness to navigate the intricate global landscape, reinforcing his commitment to protecting national interests.

One of the photos in the first unit of analysis shows that Ganjar's position in the third debate was in the middle. The placement was explained directly by Hasyim Asy'ari, chairman of Indonesian election committee (KPU), confirming that the position was in accordance with the order and the order was adjusted to the first agreement to speak. In the debate, Ganjar Pranowo was the first to speak. Interestingly, Ganjar tended to appear as a mediator between the two other candidates who had opposing views. Ganjar in his debate session joked about his position which seemed to mediate Prabowo and Anies' conflict (D. Rahmawati, 2024). Correlates with a moderate attitude which is also a culture for some Indonesian people. This central position allowed him to engage directly with both the moderators and his opponents, reinforcing his status as a key contender in the political race. His confident presence in this central spot underscored his leadership qualities.

The caption on the first unit of analysis is written:

"Selamat pagi.. Gimana kalo bikin giveaway jaket dari @timechineco pada mau ga yaa..??"

Ganjar creates an impression of closeness and generosity by offering a jacket giveaway. This offer is not only about gifts, but also shows Ganjar's concern in providing the jacket for free. In Javanese culture, the ideal leader is one who is generous and pays attention to the welfare of his people, in accordance with the philosophy of the earth (*bantala*) which symbolizes shelter for all levels of society.

The use of modern terminology such as "giveaway" reflects the principle of *prasaja*, or simplicity and efficiency in communication approaches. (Carolina & Mahestu, 2023) explain that actions carried out on social media such as challenges and giveaways are formed on the basis of objects, imagination and abstracts that are carried out when carrying out actions which are determined by the interests and meanings to be conveyed through objects shared on social media, in order to continue social interaction.



Figure 6. Ganjar Appearances during the third debate

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C10cD08ybpq/?img_index=3

The jacket that Ganjar wore at the third debate was a Lennon Utility shirt series jacket produced by timechineco which was inspired by the uniform of the United States army during the Vietnam War (Luxiana, 2024). The hegemony of the United States makes this uniform a symbol of leadership, dominance, and strength. In the context of Javanese culture, ideal leaders are often expected to have firmness and strength which is likened to the element *dahana* (fire) in the *Hastabrata* philosophy. By wearing this jacket, Ganjar seems to want to show that he has these characteristics, which are very important in discussions regarding defence, security, and foreign policy. Moreover, one of his debate opponents was someone with experience at the Ministry of Defence, namely Prabowo Subianto.

Second correlation of meaning from Ganjar Pranowo Jacket is his concern about local products. Ganjar wearing local products in the presidential candidate debate, indirectly conveyed a strong message about the importance of supporting local products and being proud of local products. This refers to Ganjar who carries nationalist values. By supporting local products, Ganjar shows its commitment to improving the domestic economy and empowering local entrepreneurs.

Togetherness and Interaction with the Volunteer Community

In the denotative stage, the second carousel post show a series of photos about Ganjar gathered with the ‘Tim Pemenangan Muda’¹. The sequence of photos uploaded describe the activities included cycling sports and discussion forums. Verbal messages found from the caption which is written:

¹ Supporting team consisting of young people, initiated by Ganjar Pranowo to raise opportunities to win the election

“Saat ngumpul bareng temen-temen Tim Pemenangan Muda ada remaja putri dari Kab. Malang yang curhat tidak bisa ngambil ijazah karena belum lunas iuran bulanan. Persoalan-persoalan seperti ini yang banyak jadi kendala anak-anak kita untuk melanjutkan pendidikan ke jenjang selanjutnya. Maka ke depan, tidak boleh ada sekolah yang menahan ijazah apalagi karena persoalan SPP. Karena negara menjamin pendidikan mereka. #GanjarMahfud2024”

The caption uploaded contains messages that are strong and relevant to Javanese cultural values, as well as reflecting strategic meaning construction efforts in a political context. In Javanese culture, the values of caring and empathy are very important. It had the terms *tepa selira* (empathy) and *ngemong* (nurturing). The concept of *tepa selira* according to Budiyo & Feriandi (2017) is the ability to understand what other people feel.

Ganjar’s captions also reflect the value of *bapakism*, where a leader is considered a father figure who is responsible and cares about the welfare of his children. In this case, Ganjar emphasized that in the future, no school would withhold students’ diplomas just because of tuition fees, because the state guarantees their education. This message shows that Ganjar is committed to fight for educational rights for all children, which reflects the value of *ngayomi* or protection of its people.



Figure 7. Ganjar take a group photos with the community

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C11EqhryvZz/?img_index=2

Ganjar’s distance from community members during group photos shows the friendly and gayeng feel of the community. This meaning is based on the concept of proxemic messages conveyed through distance and space settings. Managing distance will reveal political actors’ closeness to other people (Wahid & Luhur, 2020). Other nonverbal messages can be seen from Ganjar’s expressions. When taking photos, he smiles more to show familiarity, and during discussions, he displays a flat expression that shows seriousness.



Figure 8. Penguin and Swastika symbols

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C11EqhryvZz/?img_index=3

The penguin icon in the white t-shirt worn by Ganjar Pranowo refers to the character from the film ‘Penguins of Madagascar’ named Skipper. In a denotative context, it seems as if Ganjar only wore the t-shirt because it seemed casual, relaxed, in accordance with its function for exercising. The findings point to the meaning of ‘Penguin’, especially in the animated film ‘Penguins of Madagascar’ which has become a blue film icon among Indonesian internet users (Rahmawati, 2024).

The connotation of the penguin as a symbol of the pornographic film world originates from digital images circulating on the internet, known as memes. Limor Shiffman in his book, ‘Memes in Digital Culture’, explains ‘internet memes’ as digital items with similar characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, which are created with mutual awareness, and are circulated, imitated, and/or modified via internet by many users (Damarjati, 2019). However, not all forms of digital items are memes. This meaning was then associated with Ganjar, who once expressed his positive response or his liking for pornographic films. He was given the nickname ‘Ketua² Penguin’ (Yoga, 2024). This nickname was given in connection with his statement on the #CloseTheDoor Podcast, namely the podcast channel owned by the famous (ex) magician and host Deddy Corbuzier. On that occasion, he showed his response to pornographic films, which is depicted in 43:48 - 44:21 (Corbuzier, 2019)

In the film ‘Penguins of Madagascar’, the Skipper character acts as the leader of the penguin team with a firm and strategic nature. The facts.net website outlines facts about Skippers which are related to leadership (Janes, 2024). The association between the meanings of Ganjar and Skipper can shift from a negative connotation as a pornographic film icon to a

² chief, leader

positive connotation with their similar characteristics and position as leaders. The word penguin then became one of the keys to Ganjar's campaign messages. The terms of campaign that contain penguin words such as (1) *Pasukan Penguin*, (2) *Penguin SeliweRUN*, and (3) *Operasi Penguin*.

On the other hand, the swastika symbol has over the decades become a controversial cultural icon. Quoting from the book 'The Swastika and Symbols of Hate', the swastika is an ancient symbol that has been hijacked and perverted, twisted into a graphic embodiment of intolerance. The swastika logo along with Japanese kanji arranged in the figure 8 can refer to the 'Tokyo Manji Gang' group in the anime series "Tokyo Revengers". The series had become a channel for the government's political campaign to implement new legal changes, namely the age of majority from 20 years to 18 years (Liu, 2022). This change encouraged Japanese youth to get involved in politics even though they were under the age of 20. These elements can be correlated with Ganjar Pranowo's efforts to inspire young people in politics. In line with the facts which reveal that generation Z has an important role in the Democratic Party.

Blusukan Campaign Model to Residents Homes

Ganjar Pranowo's blusukan, or impromptu visits to local communities, is a distinctive campaign model that highlights his commitment to understanding and addressing the concerns of everyday citizens. These visits are not merely symbolic but are strategic efforts to engage directly with the people, listen to their problems, and offer immediate solutions. This hands-on approach has been a cornerstone of Ganjar's political strategy, reflecting his grassroots-oriented leadership style. The verbal messages conveyed in this third unit of analysis can only be analysed from the caption:

"Bu Waidah, matur nuwun nggih. Alhamdulillah semalem tidurnya angler, lelap banget. Salam buat Fikri Haikal ya. Semoga kerjanya lancar, rezekinya berkah serta ilmu yang selama ini didapat dari SMKN Jateng Boarding School bermanfaat. Saya ikut bahagia dia bisa bantu panjenengan membangun rumah ini. Sehat-sehat terus nggih bu. Maturnuwun juga untuk sedulur-sedulurku warga Kelurahan Slerok, Kota Tegal yang sudah gayeng menemani ngobrol semalam. #GanjarMahfud2024"

This caption reflects several deep Javanese cultural values, such as *andhap-asor*, *tepa selira*, and *pakewuh*. The use of Javanese in greetings and thanks, such as "*matur nuwun nggih*," shows high respect and politeness as a potential leader (*andhap-asor*). This is a form of humility that is highly valued in Javanese culture. Where a leader shows appreciation and gratitude to his people. By directly thanking Mrs. Waidah (a local resident) and the people of Slerok Village, Ganjar showed a humble attitude and did not distance himself from his people.

The value of *tepa selira* is also clearly visible in this caption. Ganjar expressed his hope that Fikri Haikal's work would run smoothly, his fortune would be a blessing, and the knowledge gained would be useful. It shows genuine concern for the well-being and progress of another individual. Ganjar also expressed his happiness because Fikri Haikal was able to help build Mrs Waidah's house, reflecting a strong sense of solidarity and togetherness. This concern is not only individual but also collective, reflecting the philosophy of *gotong royong* which is highly upheld in Javanese society.

At the connotative level, the meaning shows that blusukan is one of the characteristics that Ganjar wanted to highlight. He seems to have created his own version of the blusukan campaign model. This model is what differentiates Ganjar Pranowo's style from other candidates in approaching citizens. In lined, General Secretary of Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) Hasto Kristiyanto explained the differences in the way Ganjar and Prabowo met the people

“Mr. Ganjar goes around on his own feet, he walks alone. While Mr. Prabowo met the people with the help of an Alphard car, he would meet the people like that, so he wouldn't be able to go on a visit,” (Akbar, 2024).

The blusukan campaign model emphasizes physical presence and direct interactions with residents. Besides, Ganjar also emphasized through the caption, that he was not just stopping by, but he was also staying (overnight) at a resident's house.

Ganjar's blusukan action of approaching people's houses, stopping, discussing, and even staying overnight can be interpreted as a form of closeness to 'wong cilik'³. Ganjar once explained that he was born from an understanding of the Marhaenism concept. The leader's behaviour in the context of Marhaenism must be able to bring wong cilik out of misery. This idea started from a figure who was Mr. Soekarno⁴'s Inspiration. He is a farmer named Marhaen. Activities like blusukan are the implementation of the Marhaenism concept that was demonstrated by Ganjar. Through his social media accounts, Ganjar consistently chooses diction or sentences that are close to the little people. The way he communicates shows that he has no distance from the people.

The capitalization of the meaning via social media in this unit of analysis shows how Ganjar utilizes modern platforms to implement the traditional values into his leadership style. This caption makes the carousel post not just a documentation, but also a narrative that shows how a leader can combine Javanese cultural values with modern communication strategies to reach and care for his people. Through this post, Ganjar succeeded in showing concern, adaptability, role modelling, as well as effective and culture-based communication that is relevant to several important elements of *Hastabrata* and a bit in line with a paternalistic leadership style.

Cultural Significance of Commitment and Promises

The setting that is the context for the fourth carousel uploaded is the PAKU Integrity event organized by the Corruption Eradication Commission. So, it can be seen that Ganjar has the intention to emphasize his commitment to integrity and transparency. Modern terminology used such as GASPOL, the description “Three fingers, Three promises”, ‘SatSet’ which is combined with traditional values and can be in line with the values of Javanese culture shows that Ganjar has a progressive and innovative future outlook that is constructed creatively to attract young people, while remaining firmly rooted in Javanese culture. The carousel post uploaded is followed by the caption:

³ Javanese term that refers to the common folk or ordinary people, typically from the lower socioeconomic strata.

⁴ The 1st President of Indonesia

“Komitmen kami adalah menciptakan kepastian hukum agar pencegahan sekaligus pemberantasan korupsi berjalan optimal. Komitmen ini bukan sekadar angan-angan, karena kami telah membuktikan. Maka lahirlah tiga jari, tiga janji:

- *Taat Pada Tuhan*
 - *Patuh Pada Hukum*
 - *Setia Kepada Rakyat*
- #ganjarmahfud2024”*

Verbal messages that can be analysed from the photo were the phrase *“Taat pada Tuhan”, “Patuh Pada hukum”, “Setia Pada Rakyat ”*. Which at the denotative level can be interpreted as a point of Ganjar’s commitment to corruption practices in Indonesia. This commitment is further supported by program implementation which can also be categorized as a verbal message. The program is called ‘GASPOL’ which is the acronym of *Gandakan Anggaran* (double the budget), *Sikat KKN* (eradicate corruption, colusion, nepotism), and *Poles Birokrasi Dengan Digitalisasi* (Polish the Bureaucracy with Digitalization)

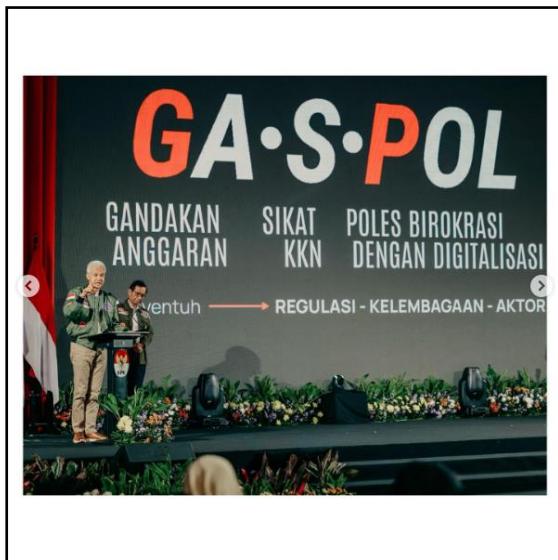


Figure 9. GASPOL Programme.

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C2OLf9JsyQD/?img_index=3

The acronym ‘GASPOL’ can be seen as a political gimmick or campaign message related to policy or vision. Reiterating the vision promoted by candidate pair Ganjar Pranowo - Mahfud MD *‘Menuju Indonesia Unggul Gerak Cepat Mewujudkan Negara Maritim Yang Adil dan Lestari’*. GASPOL is related to the meaning of fast movement - making Indonesia superior in a shorter time by basing itself on the demographic bonus. Gaspol in the current language trend means to do it quickly. Gaspol at the mythical level is a derivative slang language originating from the Dutch gas and vool, which was then absorbed into Indonesian to become gaspol. It is associated with the meaning of enthusiasm or doing something with enthusiasm.

Attention to detail to the color and arrangement of the words GASPOL, there is a red color that is clearly visible on the letters ‘G’ and ‘P’. This color difference motif refers to

Ganjar Pranowo's initials. The reflection of red and white in the composition of the Gaspol letters like the colors of Indonesia gives rise to the components namely GP, gaspol and Indonesia. Symbolizes Ganjar Pranowo's vision on prioritizing acceleration for the Indonesian nation.



Figure 10. Three Fingers, Three Promises

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C2OLf9JsyQD/?img_index=1

The term “Three Fingers, Three Promises” was created by making rhymes to strengthen his identity as presidential candidate number three. The three promises are (1) Obey God, (2) Obey the law, and (3) be Loyal to the People. Obedience to God shows that Ganjar as a leader shows strong integration of good morals and ethics. In Javanese culture, a leader who obeys God is considered to have a strong moral foundation to carry out his duties honestly and fairly. Ganjar's concern for his people is also reflected in his promise to uphold religious and moral values.

Obeying the Law reflects Ganjar's commitment to upholding the law and justice without discrimination. This is in line with the value of the Sun (*surya*) element in the Hastabrata philosophy, symbolizing optimism and enthusiasm. It is relevant that Ganjar as a leader shows confirmation that Indonesia is a country of law. So, society must obey the law as a binding rule. People's compliance to the law needs to be based on the behaviour of leaders who also demonstrate compliance with the law. Ganjar's promise shows that good leadership is based on legal principles which are the essence of concern for people's rights. Ganjar shows his concern for social justice and the welfare of all levels of society.

Being loyal to the people, showing concern for the people's welfare is the main priority that is a pillar of Ganjar's leadership. This reflects all the social values of society in Javanese

culture like *tepa selira* and *pakewuh*. Every human being is able to feel the feelings and burdens of other people and can find solutions that lighten these burdens. Meanwhile, *pakewuh* in its broadest sense is an attitude of respecting others without belittling oneself. The concept and meaning is the same as 'reluctant'. Being a leader with the principle of *pakewuh* means that the leader does not impose his will, but rather pays attention to the opinions of other people. In the paternalistic leadership style, Ganjar's bapakism culture is clearly expressed in the three promises. One side is authoritarian and has the authority to make equal policies and laws in society. On the other hand, a commitment to listening, understanding and fulfilling the aspirations of the people shows the character of a father who cares and pays attention to the needs and welfare of his people.

***“Saya Titip Nggih”*: Message to Volunteers**

The last unit of analysis shows Ganjar in a crowd. In that moment, Ganjar interacted directly with several volunteers, also conveying several messages ahead of the election time on February 14, 2024. The verbal message seen from the photo can be understood, especially from the second photo, namely the community name '*Nuswantoro Bangkit*' on the black shirt. Referring to these identities, the crowd in the carousel photo were a community of volunteers. The verbal message can also be understood from the caption accompanying the carousel post.

“Lur, Maturnuwun nggih. Wah, Nuswantoro Bangkit pancen ok. Guyub rukun, tua muda tumpek blek di Madiun. Pokoke jenengan sedaya kula dongakke sehat waras lancar lan berkab rezekine. Seduluran selawase ya, lur #ganjarmahfud2024”*

The caption shows the location of the campaign in Madiun. The language used tends to mean appreciation, showing Ganjar's prayers for the community of volunteers who have helped him so far. At the end, there is the sentence '*Seduluran selawase ya, lur*' which shows that Ganjar as a leader wants to embrace all volunteers. The tagline #ganjarmahfud2024 was embedded as a campaign message indicating that the upload represented the campaign activities carried out by the president-vice president candidate pair - number 03.

The use of terms such as '*lur*' (greetings), '*maturnuwun*' (thank you), and '*guyub rukun*' (togetherness) reflects Ganjar's efforts to build closeness with the volunteer community by using Javanese which is full of politeness values as a culture. This noble use of Javanese also shows that Ganjar as a leader pays attention to the choice of language, thus showing the connotation meaning of the *andhap-asor* (low profile) aspect of a leader, where Ganjar positions himself as part of the community and equal. The sentence "*maturnuwun nggih*" shows gratitude and appreciation to the volunteers, which is in lined with the value of *tepa selira*. In Javanese culture, sincere gratitude and appreciation for other people's help is a reflection of a personality that values togetherness and mutual cooperation. This statement also reflects the value of *pakewuh*, which prioritizes politeness and respect attached to his political communications. The mention "*Guyub rukun, tua muda tumpek blek di madiun*" describes the harmony and togetherness between various generations. Ganjar emphasized the importance of unity and cooperation between all levels of society. The philosophy of wind (*maruta*) in the aspects of *hastabrata* philosophy emphasized the point of togetherness.

News and media sources provide more information for researchers to understand the context and situation. Researchers obtained other texts related to the context of Ganjar interactions with volunteers in Madiun. Another statement was conveyed and describes that Ganjar Pranowo asked his supporting volunteers to work harder.

“Saya titip, titip nggih, njenengan (kalian) mungkin punya kelompok petani disampaikan ke petani, kelompok peternak, nelayan, ya toh. Ada kelompok keagamaan, pengajian, oh petani pitik, ya entuk (boleh), bakul (penjual) pecel ora popo (enggak apa-apa), ya toh,” said Ganjar (Aditya & Setuningsih, 2024)

The paternalistic aspect can bring out the authoritarian side of the leader’s character. The phrase *“Saya titip, nggih”* (in English: I entrust it, entrust it to you) shows that Ganjar feels he has strong control and authority over the people who are the target audience for his communication. This can create the impression that the leader not only provides direction but also expects obedience without questioning. Especially when the people answered Ganjar’s statement with *‘siap’*. Connotatively, the meaning of this answer refers to the volunteer’s submission to orders or encouragement from superiors. This meaning then can be interpreted as Ganjar’s attempt to influence his supporting volunteers to win him in the upcoming presidential election. This approach can cause people to feel that they have to follow leaders’ instructions without any room for dialogue or argument. This pattern can leads to authoritarianism as a dark side of paternalistic leadership.

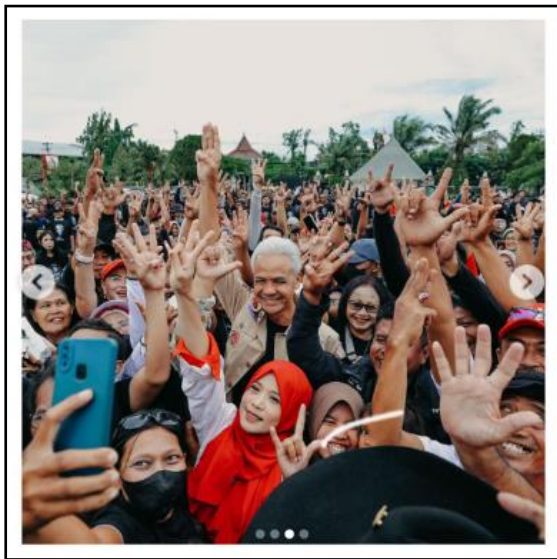


Figure 11. Ganjar doing Three Fingers Salute with volunteers

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C2QwTbotsR_/?img_index=3

In the third photo, Ganjar invited the volunteers to use the typical ‘three finger salute’ style as his campaign message showing his identity as presidential candidate number three. The three finger salute as shown by Ganjar, actually is nothing new. Previously, a similar movement had become popular through the film *“The Hunger Games”*. Three Fingers Salute on the films defined as a symbol of ‘solidarity in the midst of dystopia’ (Dzulfaroh & Pratiwi, 2023). In the book that is titled the same, the three fingers salute means gratitude, admiration, and goodbye to someone you love (Asih, 2023). The Three Fingers Salute later became a

universal cultural and linguistic symbol used by several countries as a form of demonstration. This also symbolizes a revolutionary pro-democracy attitude (Dzulfaroh & Pratiwi, 2023).

Ganjar's use of the Three Fingers Salute can be seen as a way to show solidarity and empathy for his people, which was an important aspect of Javanese culture. Leaders are seen as fathers and are expected to protect and be able to embrace the entire community. The use of this symbols shows Ganjar's firmness towards the values of freedom, democracy and respect for the people, especially those who support him. All these values and practices are in lined with the noble aspects of Javanese paternalistic leadership such as *tepa selira* and *manunggaling kawula gusti*

On the other hand, the use of this symbol can also be seen as a form of risky political manipulation or capitalization. In the context of paternalistic culture, leaders who are too dominant can be considered authoritarian, where the use of revolutionary symbols can become a tool to gain support without realizing the values. This double-meaning form could create the impression that Ganjar is using this symbol only for personal political interests, without having a real impact on his people. The use of 'Three Fingers Salute symbols that have strong connotations and conflicting meanings with international multi-conceptions may be considered inappropriate and/or meaningless if it is not balanced with real actions that reflect local values.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the meaning of political messages shown through carousel posts on the Instagram account @ganjar_pranowo during the campaign combined the humanist and political sides of Ganjar Pranowo. This meaning was then capitalized by utilizing social media as a means of campaigning and efforts to win in the 2024 presidential election. The meaning is reflected in a series of verbal and non-verbal messages that can be traced to describe the character of leadership based on Javanese culture.

In an effort to prioritize humanist aspects, Ganjar Pranowo's paternalistic side also looks strong and solid, which can be interpreted as an integral part of Javanese culture. This paternalistic capitalization is clearly visible in various moments and interactions with the people. He not only acts as a leader who is close to the people, but also as a father figure who can misleads with authority contrary to Javanese culture rooted in himself. Thus, Ganjar's paternalistic capitalization in his candidacy for president in 2024 is not just a political strategy, but is a manifestation of Javanese culture and values that are internalized in his leadership style. Ganjar's humanist side, which goes hand-in-hand with his paternalistic character, needs to be taken into consideration in conceptualizing the ideal leader in the eyes of the people. So, the humanist things that Ganjar shows through his social media are only building his image ahead of the election.

The *hastabrata* philosophy which is part of the *Jagad Pakeliran* philosophy shows a combination of humanist-political traits that are shown by his firmness, togetherness, knowledge, solidarity, optimism, calm, behaviour, and commitment.

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