Representation of Political Actor's Identity in Social Media  
(Analysis on Instagram accounts of Anies Baswedan, Ridwan Kamil and Ganjar Pranowo)  

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http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v9i2.3460  

Abstract  

The expansive range of internet access has affected the patterns on many online platforms or applications usage by Indonesian people for self-actualization. Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms which allows users to display images or short-duration videos accompanied by short text to express the message conveyed. Instagram is also a widely used platform by public figures, including regional heads. The three most popular are Anies Baswedan, Ridwan Kamil and Ganjar Pranowo who were analyzed in this research. This research used a qualitative method with data sources sourced from the contents uploaded on the Instagram accounts of the three figures which are then analyzed using communication theory about identity by Michael Hecht. The research result analysis showed that there are four levels of identity possessed by the individuals, namely the personal layer, enactment layer, relational and communal layers in the Subjective and Ascribed dimensions by the political actors based on the content uploaded in their Instagram account. In terms of Subjective and Ascribed dimensions, the three figures have the same identity, for example, they look optimistic, have a high work ethic, and have good relationships with many people. However, there are also some differences, for example, Anies Baswedan tends to be unresponsive to public comments while Ridwan Kamil and Ganjar Pranowo are very interactive.  

Keywords: Social Media; Instagram; Identity Communication Theory  

Introduction  

The development of various types of technology which facilitates the ease of communicating and exchanging information have brought changes in social interaction. The internet is one of these key changes in evolving interaction, including such evolution in Indonesia. Data released by internetworldstats.com until mid-2021 stated that internet users in Indonesia have reached 212,354,070 people or 76.8% of the population penetration.  

This extensive & broad range of internet reach has impacted the usage pattern of many online platforms or applications used by the Indonesians for self-actualization. Social media is one of the most accessible platforms in the world, including in Indonesia. From the results of a survey by the Indonesian
Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) released at the end of 2020, the majority of internet users in Indonesia access social media. Furthermore, Instagram is one of the social media with the highest number of users in Indonesia with 80 million accounts. This statistical data is very relevant because social media, especially Instagram, is one of the communication channels which widely used by communicators, in this case political actors, to introduce themselves and communicate to the public.

Anwar Arifin (2011; 159) stated that the internet may provide a way for political communication to reach millions of people. The mass media is always seen as having a strong influence in building opinion and knowledge for the public. Hence why political parties and political candidates are competing to introduce themselves using the cheapest but most effective communication media. Present day mass media are not just news on television or newspapers coverage, social media has become a new mass media in the era of internet. In this research, the focus of research is Instagram social media as the new media.

Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms which allows users to display images or short-duration videos accompanied by short text to express the message conveyed. Many political actors use Instagram as a channel for socializing and self-actualization as well as a channel for political actors to represent themselves. Among the many political actors who use social media for political communication, there are three regional heads who are very popular thanks to social media, especially Instagram, namely Anies Baswedan, the Governor of DKI Jakarta with 5.3 million followers, Ridwan Kamil, the Governor of West Java, with 14.9 million followers and Ganjar Pranowo with 4.2 million followers.

There are several previous research which discuss the use of social media by the political actors above, including research by Harera (2016) which subject was Ganjar Pranowo and Ridwan Kamil as political figures who are able to use twitter as a mass media. In this research, Herera only focused on two figures, which are Ridwan Kamil and Ganjar Pranowo in the Twitter as platform. Meanwhile, previous research on the use of Instagram have only focused on individual character research, for example; research by Azizah (2020) which only discusses speech acts in Ridwan Kamil's Instagram caption, Rahmah's research (2020) which explains the political communication of Ganjar Pranowo which was built through Instagram content, and Sari Meinia Mutiara's thesis (2020) which discussed the use of Instagram for Anies Baswedan's political communication.

This research compared the Instagram contents of the three figures from the perspective of communication theory about identity in contexts of individual, communal and public. The purpose of this research was to determine the representation of Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo and Ridwan Kamil.

**Literature Review**

**Instagram Social Media**

The internet is the beginning of the new media development as expressed by Owen (2008:1). The internet is supported by the innovation of increasingly sophisticated communication tools which accompanied by the development of world civilization. A very popular portion of the internet is social media. Currently, social media has become a very powerful tool for expressing opinions, views, and ideas as well as capturing aspirations for construction of opinion. Palmer and Koenig Lewis (2009) explained that social media is an online application which provides facilities for interacting, collaborating and sharing content.

Social media has become a trend as a communication channel in countries with direct election democratic systems since it proved to be effective in winning Barack Obama in the 2008 US presidential election (Grabrielle Grow & Janelle Ward, 2013). In the history of political communication in Indonesia,
referring to the journal written by James R Situmorang (2013: 78-79), Prabowo Subianto is a political figure who has used Facebook as the medium for campaign when he paired with Megawati Soekarno Putri in the contestation of the Presidential Election. At that time, the number of accounts which sent friend request to Prabowo Subianto’s account even exceeded the capacity. Especially since it had not significantly affected the vote acquisition at that time because traditional campaign through traditional media still dominated.

Dharma Tintri Ediraras et al (2012: 587), in their research, revealed that one of the Jokowi - Ahok campaign strategies was to use the internet as a political tool. The Jokowi – Ahok campaign team used instant messaging platforms such as Blackberry Messenger to send messages, as well as social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to form public opinion and recruit volunteers. Jokowi Ahok Social Media Volunteers (Jasmev) have become a role model for political parties or figures who would compete in the general election the following year. The election of the governor of DKI Jakarta in 2012 became a new history for political campaigns in Indonesia. The political campaign strategy using new media by the Joko Widodo and Basuki Tjahaya Purnama (Jokowi – Ahok) pair had a very significant impact which resulted in Jokowi Ahok pair to win in two rounds of voting ahead of the incumbent.

The Indonesia Digital Report 2021 released by hootsuite and we are social in 2021 stated that Instagram ranks as third social media with the highest number of users after YouTube and WhatsApp. Instagram users in Indonesia have reached 85 million accounts. Instagram focuses on posting photos and videos from its users. This uniqueness made Instagram differ itself from other social media in general. Moreover, Instagram often updates its system. Since its release in 2010, Instagram has frequently updated its existing features so that they become more extensive and more attractive. Instagram features includes followings and followers, uploading photos, Instagram stories, uploading short videos, uploading video reels, Instagram TV, cameras, effects, photo labels, geotagging, likes, comments, archives, close friends, social networks and live broadcasts. In short, Instagram may be regarded as a digital photo and video archive. Instagram is also used as a medium of entertainment, delivery of news and information. There are also users who use their Instagram accounts to share their daily activities. In fact, it is also used as a marketing channel, whether marketing products or marketing for public figures.

Communication Theory About Identity

Michael Hecht (in Littlejohn and Karen A. Foss, 2017: 131), explained that identity is an essential link between individuals and society, while communication is the link that allows relationships to occur. Identity is a code which consists of various symbols, words, or anything that is attached to a person which give rise to a certain meaning. This is not to say that once an identity is created, it never changes. Identity is never fixed when there is substance to a stable identity, but rather it is always evolving.

Communication is a tool to form identity. Identity is formed when social interaction occurs. From this process, views and reactions from other people are created. Identity is also formed from the way individuals express themselves and respond to others in an interaction. This is called the Subjective Dimension and Ascribed Dimension. The subjective dimension of identity is the individual's personal feelings, while the ascribed dimension is what other people say about the individual. The sense of identity consists of the meanings that are learned and acquired by the individual as a person. Then these meanings are projected to others whenever there is a communication process. This is the process of how the self-representation is formed.

The two dimensions above interact in four layers or levels, which are; personal layer, activation layer, relational and communal. The personal layer is the sense of being in a social situation. Identity in this layer is a variety of feelings and ideas about oneself, who and how the individual feels when involved in certain situations. Enactment Layer is the other’s awareness regarding an individual based on what they have done, what they have, and how the other individual acts. For example, appearance is considered to
be a symbol of identity, therefore, other individuals will define or understand that identity is reflected in the appearance of a person encountered in social interactions. The next layer is relational where individuals are represented because of their relation to other individuals. Identity is formed through interaction within a specific relationship. The fourth layer of identity is communal, which is tied to a larger group or culture. Individuals will adapt because individual identity is influenced by what is thought and carried out by the community around the individual. These four layers or levels are interconnected and do not stand alone.

Methodology

This research used qualitative research methods which focused on discourse analysis of social media content. Discourse analysis is a method for researching discourse in communication messages, both textually and contextually (Pawito, 2007: 170). In more detail, this research will disclose and analyse the representation of identity that the political actors wanted to show in their respective Instagram uploads. They were then described based on the framework of communication theory accordingly. The data sources which was used in this research are social media content from Instagram accounts of Ridwan Kamil, Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo.

Result and Discussion

The use of social media, including Instagram, has certainly become a popular phenomenon in Indonesian political communication. This social media platform which focuses on uploading photos and videos has become the choice of many political actors because the content creation is relatively easy. Instagram allows its users to be able to connect with each other, communicate, participate, share, and create content on the shared media. The three regional heads discussed in this research are regional heads at the provincial level who are very popular because they use Instagram as a communication channel to show their identity to the public.

Figure 1: Instagram Anies Baswedan
Anies Baswedan is the Governor of DKI Jakarta since 2017 who has an Instagram account @aniesbaswedan. This account was created on September 11, 2013 with a total of 3,769 posts. The @aniesbaswedan account is followed by 5.3 million accounts but he only follows 168 accounts. In his account biography, it is stated that his account is managed by a team, while posts made privately are marked with the AWB hashtag. This account has been verified as a genuine account marked with a blue verification mark. The @aniesbaswedan account is very active in uploading Anies Baswedan's activities related to his position as Governor in the form of photos, video reels and long videos in IG TV format. In fact, @aniesbaswedan also uploads an Instagram story every day. The @aniesbaswedan account, as seen from the number of viewers and likes, can be interpreted as getting some very favourable responses from the public. Viewers of the uploaded contents range from 30 thousand to 1.3 million. The likes received range from 20 thousand to hundreds of thousands, as well as post comments also numbers in the thousands. Although almost never replying to comments on the posts, the @aniesbaswedan account does not limit comments from the public.

The next regional head who is very popular on Instagram is Ridwan Kamil. Ridwan Kamil worked as Architect and Non-Permanent Lecturer at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) before serving as Mayor of Bandung in 2013. In 2018, Ridwan Kamil managed to win the election to take office as the Governor of West Java until 2023. The @ridwankamil account already has a blue verification mark which means it is confirmed as the authentic account belonging to Ridwan Kamil. This account joined Instagram on April 14, 2012 with a total of 7,385 photos and videos uploaded in its feed. This does not include IG TV videos and Instagram Story videos or photos which disappear within 24 hours of being uploaded.

![Instagram Ridwan Kamil](image)

**Figure 2: Instagram Ridwan Kamil**

When compared to other accounts discussed in this research, the @ridwankamil account has the most number followers at 14.9 million. However, @ridwankamil also follows many other accounts as many as 4,518 accounts. With Ridwan Kamil's large and active followers in Instagram, it's only natural that the videos he uploads were viewed by millions of other accounts. In fact, one of his videos which contains a parody of a video clip of a well-known music group in Indonesia have reached 14.4 million
viewers, liked by 1 million accounts and received more than 43,000 comments. Unlike the @aniesbaswedan account, the @ridwankamil account often replies to some of the account which commented on their uploads.

The last regional head who is also popular on Instagram is Ganjar Pranowo, who currently serves as Governor of Central Java for 2 terms since August 23, 2013. Before becoming Governor, Ganjar Pranowo was already a politician who had served as a Member of the House of Representatives since 2004. @ganjarpranowo Instagram account is also verified with a blue verification mark. He created the Instagram account since October 28, 2015. The @ganjarpranowo account so far has 4.2 million followers. What's interesting is that this account only follows 4 accounts, namely @lapak_ganjar, @laporgub.jtg and @alamganjar and @atikoh.s who is Ganjar Pranowo's wife.

![Figure 3: Instaram Ganjar Pranowo](image)

This account has 5,137 uploads in the form of photos and videos. Every day, Ganjar shares his activities in the Instagram story feature. Although the average upload is only seen by hundreds of thousands of accounts, there are some videos that were viewed by millions of accounts and more. One of them is his video about the Indonesian national football team from Central Java, which was viewed by 5 million accounts, received more than 300 thousand likes and commented by 2734 accounts.

**Identity Representation**

Most of the content in the @aniesbaswedan account is uploaded by a team. This apparent because Anies gave clear signature by adding the hashtag #ABW to his account biography so that the public could easily tell the difference. As seen from its content, almost all of Anies' uploads are his daily activities in leading the capital city of Jakarta. The personal layer displayed by the @aniesbaswedan account is a very serious person, as evidenced by the last 50 uploads from 17 December 2021 to 14 January 2022, in which there are only 2 uploads which were not related to his work, namely a greetings for the newly elected PBNU chairman and the only upload which he wrote himself about cats in his home. Anies also demonstrated his success as a leader, such as the upload on September 1, 2021 when DKI Jakarta received an award from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Naturally as a leader, his sense of optimism can
also be seen from his various uploads, including the August 19, 2021 upload about his hopes for the future of the children who live in Kampung Susun Akuarium.

At the enactment level, the public's view of @aniesbaswedan on Instagram tends to be positive, although there are some comments questioning the performance or partiality of Anies Baswedan as Governor of DKI Jakarta. One interesting thing is that there are accounts which indicated as fanatical followers of Anies who respond to Anies' uploads by tagging other parties. For example, it is shown in Anies' upload on January 1, 2022 at JPO Karet, many accounts tagged the account of @giring or @psi_id, which often have opposite views with Anies Baswedan.

As previously described, Anies Baswedan's uploads are dominated by content related to his work. Therefore, what can be seen at the relational level is that Anies is surrounded by people related to his work. It is very rare to find uploads of @aniesbaswedan with other parties in non-formal settings except for his family. The relationship which displayed is a cooperative relationship with all DKI Jakarta government officials at various levels or cooperative relationships with third parties for the development of DKI Jakarta or relationships with figures in the central government to other regional leaders.

At the communal level, @aniesbaswedan's upload shows that Anies is a very educated person. For example, it is shown in Anies' video on October 15, 2021 where he gave speech at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) Forum, he showed his ability to communicate in international forums. The religious impression can also be seen from the upload on July 21, 2021 when Anies Baswedan celebrated Eid al-Adha and became the imam for his family. However, Anies also wants to be viewed as having a high tolerance in religious life. For example, it is shown in the January 6 2022 upload regarding the inauguration of 6 worship places at the Pancasila University campus, the 27 December 2021 upload regarding the laying of the foundation stone for the Catholic church in East Jakarta, and the 7 November 2021 upload regarding the inauguration of the Puri Indah Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) Building.

Optimism is a personal layer which is displayed in the content uploaded in Ridwan Kamil's account. This can be seen from some of his uploads. For example, implied by the latest upload about the Ghozali phenomenon on January 13, 2022, uploads about the Cisumdawu toll road on January 8, 2022, and a video about handling covid on January 6, 2022. A particular content with an optimistic view was also uploaded on December 15, 2021 in which he featured an edited photo of Ridwan Kamil if he’s at 74 years old. The text that accompanies the photo contain Indonesia's optimism towards 2045. Moreover, the character with spirit of full determination can also be seen from the video upload on January 4, 2022 where Ridwan Kamil continues to walk in a room which represents his identity as a person who never stop trying. Ridwan Kamil is also a person who always motivates others, as seen in his upload on December 27, 2021, when he received an award as an Honorary Doctorate from Busan Dong–A University. Ridwan Kamil is also a person who has high empathy, as seen in his Instagram upload about his concern for disasters and upload about the Covid-19 pandemic on December 4, 2021 for example.

The enactment layer provides how evident @ridwankamil's followers responded in various uploaded contents. Even though he is a public official, Ridwan Kamil displays a lot of comedic content which tends to attract more public attention. For example, it is shown in the parody of a music video clip which has 14.4 million viewers and received 43 thousand similarly funny comments. It is rare to find contrary comments or hate speech on Ridwan Kamil's uploads. This can be interpreted that the activities, views, ideas and suggestion of Ridwan Kamil as a figure tend to be favourable by the public.

At the relational level, Ridwan Kamil is known as a person who has good and broad relationships. It can be seen how Ridwan Kamil not only builds relationships with politicians but also various parties such as athletes and various other professions. For example, it is shown in an upload on August 4, 2021 with a businessman Doni Salmanan who distributed aid to people affected by COVID in West Java, the
upload on July 24, 2021 together with weightlifting athletes from West Java, and a photo of Ridwan Kamil with a religious leader, Ustadz Adi Hidayat uploaded on June 22, 2021. Even within the entertainment world, Ridwan Kamil does not keep his distance, as can be seen from his upload with popular celebrity Dedy Corbuzier on January 31, 2021. In family relations, Ridwan Kamil is also well-known as the head of a happy family. There are several photos of moments together with his wife and children uploaded with happy expressions. For example, it’s shown in a photo celebrating Eid al-Fitr uploaded on May 13, 2021.

At a broader level, namely the communal aspect, Ridwan Kamil truly shows his identity as part of the Sundanese ethnic. This can be seen from some uploaded contents of posts and photo or video captions as well as Ridwan Kamil’s replies to incoming comments. For example, it is evident in the photo uploaded on November 17, 2021 about the invitation for vaccination. Ridwan Kamil also appeared to be very religious. Many of his post quotes were adapted from the holy verses of the Al-Quran, there are also photos of himself in mosques or religious activities and several times he shown mass prayer which he organized in his account, one of them was with Syech Ali Jaber on September 22, 2020.

The third account which is no less popular than the previous two accounts is a verified account belonging to the Governor of Central Java Ganjar Pranowo. In general, Ganjar's personal level is described as a person who carries out his routines in a relaxed and populist manner despite his status as the leader of a large province. For example, an upload on January 9, 2022, shows Ganjar who works with his laptop in a simple shop while enjoying his Sunday. The post also shows his work ethic which shows that Ganjar works without taking any holidays for the sake of the citizens of Central Java. Ganjar's "low profiles" identity which blends with the people in general is also shown in the upload on May 23, 2021, in which in the video, Ganjar Pranowo is seen enjoying a bowl of instant noodles. Ganjar also shows high empathy for the many disasters which have occurred. For example, it is shown in the upload on June 26, 2021, where Ganjar made a visit to entertain Covid-19 positive patients at several isolation locations.

Ganjar Pranowo at the enactment level seems to receive a favourable response from the public. Ganjar's relaxed communication style made many accounts which comment on his uploads to also use relaxed language, there is no perceived distance between the leader and the people he serve. Ganjar as a leader has succeeded in becoming a place for people to complain, which can be seen from the many comments on his uploads containing reports on problems related to public services.

In the relational level, Ganjar Pranowo looks very capable of mingling with all walks of life. Ganjar seemed to have good relations with various figures from various positions and backgrounds. In the upload on December 17, 2021, it can be seen that Ganjar is very close to the people of Blora which he visited. Ganjar's good relationship with religious leaders can also be seen from several uploads. For example, it is shown in the upload on December 3, 2021 when he visited the Pondok Pesantren Buntet Cirebon, and also visit to the Al Muayyad Islamic Boarding School in Solo uploaded on October 23, 2021. Ganjar also maintain relationship with the entertainment world. For example, it can be seen from his photo with popular celebrity Gading Marten or his video with Ndarboy Genk, a Javanese singer on the rise. In the midst of his full schedule, good relations in his family are maintained, as can be seen from his Instagram content, as shown in the upload on September 25, 2021, which is a combination of several memorable photos of him and his wife.

In terms of communal layers, it is very clear that Ganjar Pranowo is a figure who is identical to Javanese culture. The Javanese language is widely used in his interaction with many residents in many videos as shown in the upload on November 11, 2021. The clothes which he often used in official meetings are also complete traditional Javanese clothing with traditional Javanese headdress such as shown in the photo uploaded on December 16, 2021. In some of his uploads, Ganjar has shown his participation in implementing Pancasila values in the life of society and the state which are in line with the ideology of the political party that he is a part of.
From the description above, there are several differences in the representation of identity displayed by the three political actors discussed in this research, which include:

**Table 1: Analysis Identity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Anies Baswedan</th>
<th>Ridwan Kamil</th>
<th>Ganjar Pranowo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subjective Dimension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Serious</td>
<td>- Optimistic</td>
<td>- High work ethic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Professional</td>
<td>- Full of Determination</td>
<td>- Low Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Optimistic</td>
<td>- Inspiring to Others</td>
<td>- Simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Optimistic</td>
<td>- Humorous</td>
<td>- High Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- High empathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ascribed dimension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Public comments dominated with supports</td>
<td>- A figure who is liked by the public</td>
<td>- Casual communication style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Lack of response to public feedback</td>
<td>- Responding to public feedback</td>
<td>- Did not kept his distance from the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Presence of fanaticism of followers</td>
<td>- There is no fanaticism of characters</td>
<td>- Responding to public feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- More formal relationships for job accomplishment.</td>
<td>- Maintain relationships with all groups, whether directly related to his work or not.</td>
<td>- Maintain relationships with all groups, whether directly related to his work or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Educated</td>
<td>- The person who his family is proud of</td>
<td>- Religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Religious</td>
<td>- Sundanese ethnic</td>
<td>- Family romantics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Tolerant</td>
<td>- Religious</td>
<td>- Javanese ethnic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Nationalist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

Social media has become the latest channel which facilitates the process of communication and self-actualization for everyone who is connected to the internet network. With 202 million Indonesians connected to the internet, with accessing social media as their main activity, it is only natural that social media is a platform which are highly considered by public figures. Instagram is one of the most popular social media in Indonesia. Therefore, many public figures, including political actors, are trying to grab the public's attention through Instagram. The three public figures currently serving as the most popular regional heads on Instagram are Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo and Ridwan Kamil. The uploaded photos and videos of the three verified accounts were analysed using the communication theory of identity by Michael Hecht.

There are four levels or layers in showing identity by individuals, namely the personal layer, activation layer, relational and communal, these four layers are included in two dimensions, namely Subjective Dimension and Ascribed Dimension. In general, the uploaded contents of these political actors seem to show their respective identities. The style of photos, videos, narrations of each character's uploaded content has its own characteristics which become a representation of identity. For example, Anies Baswedan looks very serious and formal in almost all of his uploads, while Ridwan Kamil and Ganjar Pranowo look more populist and humorous. From the public's response, Anies Baswedan seems to have several accounts that support him so much that they seem fanatical, but neither Ridwan Kamil nor Ganjar Pranowo have the same. The four layers of identity described in this research are interconnected with each other so that differences in the representation of identity from two dimensions are found based on the communication theory of identity.
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