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Displaying Religious Image on Youtube: Ganjar Pranowo's Political Communication Strategy on Social Media

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Abstract

The dynamics of political communication are becoming increasingly attractive in today's digital era. Marked by the widespread use of social media by politicians, vlog (video blog) has been widely popular among youngsters. Its popularity increases once the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, took part in using the platform. Besides Joko Widodo, the Governor of Central Java, Ganjar Pranowo also used vlogs as a means of political communication. Using semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes, this research aims at revealing the image that Ganjar Pranowo wants to display through his vlogs. The study concludes how Ganjar wants to be perceived as a religious, popular, and contemporary person through the vlogs he uploaded on his Youtube channel. Religious image needed to be displayed considering that Ganjar is from a nationalist party (PDIP) while political opponents of President Joko Widodo (Ganjar's colleague at PDIP) are building the impression of Joko Widodo as anti-Islam. It was important for Ganjar to show himself as an egalitarian and a populist because he had an interest in the 2018 Central Java governor election. Ganjar utilizes a vlog to display him being up to date. This is important for Ganjar to attract sympathy from the millennials.

Keywords:

political communication, semiotics, vlogs, Youtube, Ganjar Pranowo

Introduction

Political communication in the digital era has experienced a number of changes and shifts. Conventional methods are not completely

abandoned, but the position of social media as complementary needs attention. Campaign and political advertising to get votes are always changing. If previously the outdoor campaign had an important position, along with the rapid pace of technological development, the use of television was increasingly massive. There is a shift from the highway to TV. This is in line with the increasing confidence of the political elites to shape public opinion in the mass media (Danial 2009).

If we look back, history records that during the New Order there was only one dominant party, namely Golkar (*Golongan Karya* – The Party of the Functional Groups). Two other parties, PDI (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* – Indonesian Democratic Party) and PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* – The United Development Party) are under the shadow of Golkar, and they often experience repression. At that time, it could be said that political communication was not very dynamic. The campaign is only limited to gathering people in the field to hear a speech by the campaigner, followed by a noisy disturbing motorbike parade.

After the New Order collapsed, political communication in Indonesia became increasingly fluid and attractive. Media that was previously very tightly controlled can move and speak more freely. People were also freer to voice their opinions. No wonder if after the collapse of the New Order, the media developed, as did political parties. After being suppressed for a long time, the community seemed to dissolve in euphoria. So, as mentioned earlier, the ways in which political parties and politicians gain public sympathy are changing, becoming more varied and creative. A number of media are categorized, ranging from billboards, newspapers, radio to television.

When talking about political advertising on television, we mark the PD's (*Partai Demokrat* - Democratic Party) "Say No to Corruption" advertisement as an iconic one. The anti-corruption ad was paradoxical when one by one the Democratic Party cadres who became the advertising

talents were arrested by the KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission). PKB (The National Awakening Party) was listed as the first political party to display advertisements on television (Danial 2009). Almost all major political parties, with large logistics, use television as a channel for delivering political ideas.

Television is still considered a powerful medium. In the American context, Vivian notes that almost every household in America has one television. On average, one television lights up for seven hours a day at home. The campaign manager of American presidential campaign in 2004 did not look for volunteers who would travel from door to door and do a personal contact for support. They raised funds to advertise candidates on television. In the state and in many local areas, television has emerged as the most effective and efficient media to reach voters (Vivian 2008).

After the era of television, the Internet (social media) is present as a complement. In the political sphere, slowly political advertising on television began to diminish. Social media is becoming increasingly needed in every political contestation. Any contents uploaded on social media show self-image and influence the relationships that exist with other parties (Watie 2011). Political actors have an interest in conveying their ideas through social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube). Some of them consider social media to be far more effective and efficient (unlimited reach, low cost).

Social media is a medium that facilitates its users to represent themselves, interact, network, collaborate, share with other users and form bonds virtually (Nasrullah 2017). Social media has a number of unique parameters that distinguish it from other media. The characters include network, information, archive, interactivity, simulation of society, user-generated content. Characteristics of social media are not too different from cyber media characters (Nasrullah 2017). Cyber media or second-era media have a number of characteristics that distinguish it from the

media of the first era. First era media characteristics: centralization of production (one to many), one-way communication, situation control, reproduction of social stratification and differences through the media, a divided mass audience and social awareness. Second media era, on the contrary, characterized by: decentralization, two-way communication, outside the control of the situation, democratization, raising individual awareness and individual orientation (Littlejohn and Foss 2008). If we look at it, the characteristics of democratization in cyber media/media in the second era are in harmony with the spirit of social media, a free space and without domination. It becomes an open, flexible and dynamic space.

Social media, in its development, is not just used for interaction among its users, but also used for the benefit of the broader business, public relation and politics. Companies, government offices and public figures are increasingly aware of the importance of social media roles and positions, because, as said at the beginning, social media forms an image. If they do not exist in social media, they will be considered left behind (not up to date). That is something bad for individuals and institutions. This is the inevitability of the digital era, an era where interaction on social media seems more important and meaningful than direct interaction.

There are a number of studies on political communication and social media (Zulhazmi 2018; Malik 2016; Sutanto 2014; Amalia 2016; Susanto 2017; Mohamed 2019). Those researches show that the use of social media in political communication activities is increasingly massive. Social media with its characteristics offers an acceleration for politicians to convey their political messages. Although political communication on social media is prone to distortion, this method is still an alternative in this digital era. In addition, another challenge in using social media is *netiquete*, or internet ethics (Fahrimal 2018).

An important marker of the use of social media for political interests in Indonesia was when Joko Widodo won the election of the

governor of DKI and Ridwan Kamil triumphed in the election of the mayor of Bandung (Wiguna 2014), while abroad marked by the success of Barack Obama to become US president. In Indonesia, the large number of internet and social media users is used optimally by politicians. Joko Widodo in Jakarta and Ridwan Kamil in Bandung are two examples of success. They were able to maximize the power of social media, produce creative content and draw the attention of audiences, especially young people. In the future, the use of social media in political contestation is predicted to be increasingly massive.

Indonesian politician who also used social media was Ganjar Pranowo. He was an incumbent governor who re-nominated himself as governor in 2018 Central Java governor election. Ganjar paired with Taj Yasin, son of K. H. Maimoen Zubair, a respected charismatic ulama. Ganjar was monitored to be actively using four social media: Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Youtube. Ganjar was regarded as one of politicians who successfully utilized social media (Harrera 2016). The fact about Ganjar on social media reminds us of Eliya and Zulaeha's research which highlighted Ganjar's political communication on Instagram (Eliya and Zulaeha 2017).

Ganjar – Yasin won the 2018 Central Java governor election. Both were supported by a number of parties, namely PDIP (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle), PPP, PD, Nasdem (National Democratic Party), and Golkar. Ganjar – Yasin defeated the Sudirman-Ida pair supported by Gerindra (*Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya* – Great Indonesia Movement Party), PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* – Prosperous Justice Party), PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional* – National Mandate Party) and PKB. Based on the results of the KPU (General Election Commission) recapitulation, Ganjar – Yasin received 10,362,694 votes (58.78%). While Sudirman – Ida received 7,267,993 votes (41.22%) (Rachman 2018).

Compared to Sudirman Said, Ganjar is indeed much more popular. That popularity was contributed more or less by Ganjar's position as incumbent. The Alvira Research Center survey shows that some respondents consider Ganjar – Yasin close to the people, famous, and have good leadership, although, Ganjar was considered less successful in terms of meeting basic needs, eradicating poverty, and providing employment. According to the same survey, the electability of Ganjar – Yasin was 58.8 % and Sudirman – Ida was 11.5 %. The floating voters reached 29 % (Rahmawati 2018).

There are many factors behind Ganjar – Yasin victory in the 2018 Central Java governor election. One of them is because Ganjar is considered more popular than his opponent. Popularity Rewards are influenced by Ganjar's activeness on social media. Besides Youtube, Ganjar is also active in a number of social media, such as Twitter and Instagram. Data shows, as of August 13, 2018, Ganjar Twitter followers are 1.06 million. Meanwhile, his Instagram followers are 509 thousand. That is, as a regional head, Ganjar is quite popular on social media.

This research first wants to see how Ganjar conducts political communication by utilizing Youtube (vlog). As can be seen on the Ganjar Pranowo Youtube channel, he first uploaded a video on Youtube on March 21, 2018. Until August 13, 2018, there were 202 video on Ganjar's Youtube channel, while his Youtube subscribers are 5,851. (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmhoZ5MJ3SiZVwOQlbWQVcQ/videos>)

Ganjar's Youtube contents are quite diverse. Besides "Ganjar Pranowo Vlog", his wife also presents hijab tutorial on her husband's Youtube channel with the name "Tutorial Hijab Atikoh". Muhammad Zinedine Alam Ganjar, son of Ganjar Pranowo, also appears in his father's channel. He talks about light things like the world cup and the story of everyday life as the son of a governor that was packaged in "Tiktalk bareng Alam". What Ganjar's wife and child display gives the impression that the

Ganjar family is a family that is fun, cool and follows trend. (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmhoZ5MJ3SiZVwOQlbWQVcQ/videos>)

The film “Anak Negeri” which contains the story of Ganjar’s childhood also displays the Youtube channel of Ganjar. The 1 hour 25 minutes long movie displayed in full and in the form of short fragments. The fragment is mixed with the video of Ganjar’s daily activities. Initially the video was not conceptualized in the form of a vlog, but since May 24, 2018 the concept of the video displayed by Ganjar was a vlog. (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmhoZ5MJ3SiZVwOQlbWQVcQ/videos>)

Why does a head of a region create a vlog with light themes? Research shows a link between vlog and youth culture. Youth culture is close to their passion for following trends, from fashion to culinary. They always want to look up to date. Utilizing social media is also a form of appearing today. That is what explains why most vlog makers and audiences are young people. Today’s vlog themes also reflect young people’s lifestyles. They used to make vlogs about make up tutorials, picnics, music, culinary, trying new items (cellphones, cameras etc.) and things that are close to the daily lives of other young people (Sari 2018).

The theme of Ganjar’s vlogs in his Youtube channel is varied. He for example, made a vlog of a visit to Ahmad Yani Airport and a toll road construction project, a picnic at the Slumpring Market, showing the atmosphere of going home and *Lebaran* day, visiting Sudirman Said’s house and many others. But the most watched vlogs in his channel are culinary themed vlogs. Here is the data on the number of Ganjar vlog viewers with culinary themes:

No.	Title	Viewer Number/ 8 August 2018
1.	<i>Kulineran Iga Pak Wid Boyolali</i>	3 K
2.	<i>Kuliner Nasi Grombyang H. Warso Pemasang</i>	1.4 K
3.	<i>Kuliner di Warung Sinongko Ungaran</i>	2.7 K
4.	<i>Sabur di Pasar Banjaran Kabupaten Tegal</i>	57 K
5.	<i>Kulineran Sate Bu Tomo Slawi</i>	10 K
6.	<i>Kulineran Sate Sapi Pak Kampleng</i>	2.4 K
7.	<i>Kulineran Tengkleng dan Sate Mbak Diah Sukoharjo</i>	3.6 K
8.	<i>Sarapan di Pasar Wanareja</i>	2.1 K
9.	<i>Kuliner Siang di Warung Pak Imron Tegal</i>	2.5 K
10.	<i>Kulineran Malam Soto Tauco Slawi</i>	2 K

Table 1. Number of spectators Ganjar Pranowo Vlog culinary theme (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmhoZ5MJ3SiZVwOQIbWQVcQ/videos>)

What Ganjar did reminds us of the *keplekilat* tradition in Java. *Keplekilat* means the penchant for tasting various foods or culinary hunting activities. Today, a number of youtubers consider themselves as culinary youtuber; Ria SW and Nex Carlos for example. Their channels are full of culinary tourism videos. Long before the culinary hunting trend was on Youtube, we knew the program *Wisata Kuliner* in Trans TV. Bondan Winarno became a pioneer of culinary television show host. Other TV stations then follow to show this theme until now.

Food, like a picnic, brings pleasure. Today's eating activity is no longer limited to eliminating hunger. There is recreational activity in dining. In a plate of food contains history, values, culture and symbols. Eat at a typical American fried chicken restaurant and eat kampong fried chicken in Sukoharjo's remote areas certainly present different meanings and consequences. This is what some politicians are aware of, such as Joko Widodo and Ganjar Pranowo. They eat at small scale shops and win. Their choice is not empty of meaning. There are many symbols in it. They are

sending messages and setting up certain images. This study aims to reveal the meaning of these symbols, specifically the image that Ganjar Pranowo wants to display through the vlog he uploaded.

The first step of the research is to choose the data is to select videos on Ganjar's Youtube channel. The researcher first focused on examining the video entitled "Ganjar Pranowo Vlog". There are 61 video titled "Ganjar Pranowo Vlog". Then I inventory the most watched vlog titles and sorted out the dominant vlog themes, and found that Ganjar made a lot of culinary – themed vlogs. These are the most watched videos which have many symbols in them and then I chose the one with the title "(Ganjar Pranowo) Sahur di Pasar Banjaraan Kabupaten Tegal". In the final stage, the selected vlog was analyzed using Roland Barthes's semiotic model to reveal connotations and denotations (Sobur 2016).

Ganjar Pranowo and His Image on Youtube

The vlog that has been chosen to be discussed in this study is titled "(Ganjar Pranowo) Sahur di Pasar Banjaraan Kabupaten Tegal". The Vlog briefly tells about the presence of Ganjar in Banjaraan Market, Tegal to eat *sahur* or the meal a Muslim eats before fasting (before dawn).

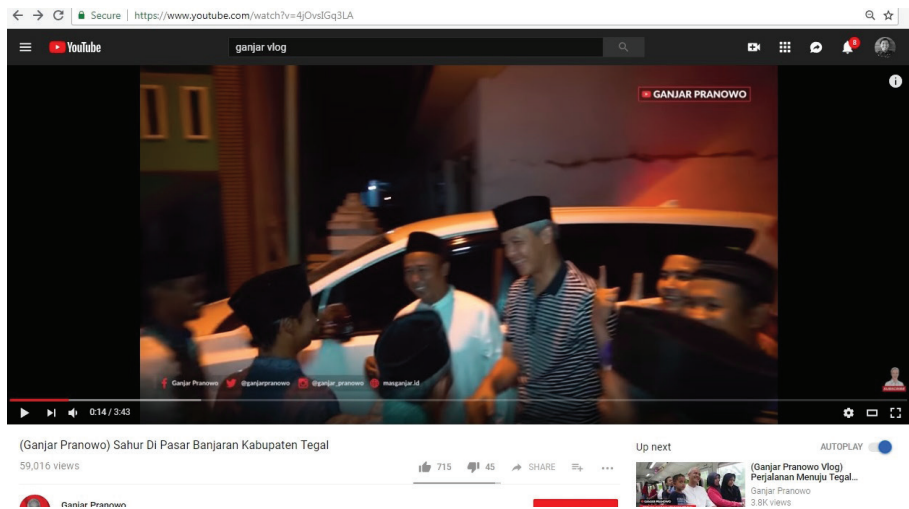


Figure 1. Vlog “(Ganjar Pranowo) Sahur di Pasar Banjaran Kabupaten Tegal” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jOvsIGq3LA&t=147s>)

Denotation:

Picture 00.10-00.15:

Ganjar gets out of the car, surrounded by many people who want to shake hands with him. Ganjar wears a black *peci* (a cap usually worn by Indonesian men either for formal or religious purpose), a green sarong, and a black and white striped t-shirt. The people who swarm him are wearing black *peci* as well. Two people behind Ganjar pointed their index fingers. There is no dialogue. The image moves in slow motion accompanied by music background playing softly.

Connotation:

Black cap and sarong, both worn by Ganjar and the people who surround him, are associated with Islam or *santri* (traditional Muslim students). Ganjar sent a message that although he is from PDIP who is attached to the nationalist and Soekarnoist labels, he was not anti-Islam. Anti-Islam accusations, we know, are often accused of President Joko Widodo by his political opponents. Joko Widodo is Ganjar’s colleague

at PDIP. So the Islamic attributes used by Ganjar and the people who welcomed him have a clear meaning that Ganjar is close to Islam and *santri*. The picture is saying that Ganjar is also loved by the people (Muslims), as evidenced by how enthusiastic the people who wear *peci* and sarong welcomed him.

PDIP relations with *santri*/Islamic parties became an interesting phenomenon in the 2018 simultaneous elections. PDIP seemed to learn from Ahok-Djarot's defeat in the DKI election when identity politics strengthened. PDIP then took strategic steps by conducting nationalist-*santri* collaborations in a number of regional head election matches. In Central Java Ganjar paired with Gus Yasin (PPP). While in East Java, Puti joined forces with Gus Ipul (PKB). Nationalist-religious composition was also seen in West Java (Ridwan Kamil-Uu Ruhzanul Ulum), although it was not PDIP, but the pair was nominated by parties supporting the government. The climax is when Joko Widodo is paired with K. H. Ma'ruf Amin in the 2019 presidential election.

The above facts can explain why Ganjar becomes attached to religious or Islamic symbols in the vlog. Next, we look at a picture that moves slowly (slow motion). Images that move in slow motion give a dramatic impression. The image demands more attention from the audience through its slow motion. The audience seems to be asked to pay attention to what is worn by Ganjar and to see how enthusiastic the people who welcome him and were fighting over to shake his hands.

Next are about two people behind Ganjar who point their index fingers. The reference of index finger is number one. In the Central Java governor's voting event, the Ganjar – Yasin pair got number one. So the two people who raised their index fingers were sending messages to choose Ganjar – Yasin in the 2018 Central Java governor election.

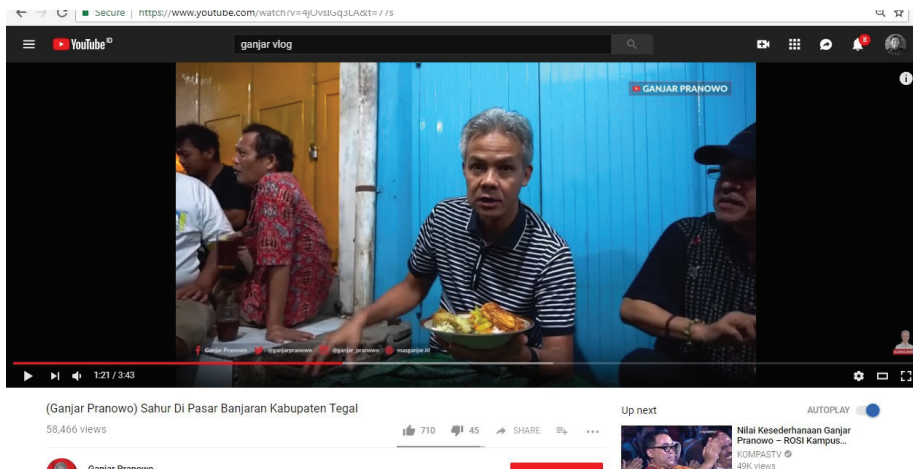


Figure 2. Vlog “(Ganjar Pranowo Vlog) Sahur di Pasar Banjaran Kabupaten Tegal” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jOvsIGq3LA&t=147s>)

Denotation:

Picture: Ganjar is eating at one of the stalls in Banjaran Market, Tegal. The location of the stall is in the store’s overhang. Ganjar wears green sarong and black and white striped t-shirt. He sat cross-legged together with other visitors, not separating himself with others. His plate looks full of side dishes.

Dialogue 00.45-01.35

Ganjar: *Sahur di Pasar Banjaran. Ternyata di sini tempat turunnya sayur dan buah-buahan. Ramainya minta ampun, pas jam-jam segini. Ini ada warung yang unenak e mas. (Menunjuk piring) ini tempe, terus oseng-oseng opo iki, ono atine. Terus kemudian ini ada timun, acar. Sama pabam ayam. Pabanya ini nendang.*

[Sahur in Banjaran Market. It turns out here is where the vegetables and fruits come down. It’s always very crowded during this time of day. This is a stall that sells very good food, *mas*. (Pointing at his plate) this is tempeh, then what type of sauté is this, it has chicken liver in it. Then this is a cucumber, pickles. And chicken drumstick. This chicken drumstick is kicking – very good]

Connotation:

Watching the “(Ganjar Pranowo Vlog) Sahur di Pasar Banjaran Kabupaten Tegal” first thing we look at is the clothing worn by Ganjar. The sarong is identical to *santri* and Islam. The sarong, a typical Indonesian outfit, is commonly used for Muslim male during worship. However, it is also common to find sarongs used in relaxed situation. By wearing a sarong, Ganjar displays a religious image as well as a leader who is not rigid (flexible). He could have chosen to wear regular trousers, but he did not. The choice of using sarong is not without meaning.

Collared t-shirt is a symbol of casual look. It is also often considered little formal than no-collar t-shirt. As a regional head, Ganjar could choose a more formal outfit, for example batik, or the long-sleeved white shirt he usually wears. You can also wear Muslim clothe/*koko* clothe because it's in the atmosphere of Ramadan. But Ganjar chose a collared black and white striped t-shirt. He seemed to want to dress in clothes worn by commoners. Populist images emerge from the choice of Ganjar's t-shirt.

According to Barnard, actually clothes have communicative functions. Clothing and makeup are artifactual communication. Fashion is classified as nonverbal communication (Barnard 2011). Every clothe we wear contains a message. Joko Widodo is an example of a public figure who is aware of clothing. As we can see, when Joko Widodo paired up with Ahok in the DKI regional election, he was popular with red checkered shirts. While in the 2014 presidential election, Joko Widodo- Jusuf Kalla was attached to a white long-sleeved shirt and black pants.

Clothing is defined as a cultural display because clothing shows the cultural background of the wearer. For example, we identify users of *blangkon* (Javanese hat for male) as Javanese, *koteka* (penis gourd) users as Papuans and so on. This means that clothing is related to culture. However, this reference cannot be interpreted rigidly, because it will lead to stereotypes. For example, we can not say that if one wears a *peci* or a *gamis* (long dress with long sleeves), one is definitely a Muslim.

Clothing is also defined as *our social and cultural skin* (Barnard 2011). That is, clothing is not something that is free of value. Politicians, for example, through their clothes display the image they want. PPP Chairperson M. Romahurmuziy appeared on a number of billboards with green turban wrapped around the neck, rolled-up white shirts, a watch, and a pair of jeans. Through a similar appearance, he wanted to portray himself as a young-minded *santri*. M. Romahurmuziy does not appear in the style of a conventional politician who is identical to a dark suit.

Eating on the roadside (store overhang) is a symbol of commoners' habit. During the campaign, Ganjar also ate in *angkringan* (small street food stall) with Gus Yasin, Sudirman Said and Ida Fauziyah in the framework of Sudirman Said's birthday. The choice of *angkringan* as a place to meet and eat is certainly not without reason. There is a message that you want to send to the public through the *angkringan* symbol: that they are popular and down-to-earth governor candidates. The same thing, at least we can also read in the vlog "(Ganjar Pranowo Vlog) Sahur di Pasar Banjaran Kabupaten Tegal". Of the many dining places available in Tegal, why was the stall in Banjaran Market chosen by Ganjar? From there we can describe what Ganjar wants to build. Being popular, simple and caring is a prominent image.



Figure 3. Vlog “(Ganjar Pranowo Vlog) Sahur di Pasar Banjaran Kabupaten Tegal” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jOvsIGq3LA&t=147s>)

Denotation:

Picture:

Seen in the picture is two stall managers were asked the impression of meeting Ganjar. They smile and claim to be proud to meet directly with Ganjar. The picture was set in a small stall, with people cooking, stove, frying pan, fried foods and coffee sachets at the background.

Dialogue 02.05-02.30:

Woman: *Selama puasa buka setiap hari, jam 10 sampai imsya'. Sangat bangga dan senang sekali bapak Ganjar bisa makan di warung kami.*

During the fasting month, we open every day, from 10 PM until imsya (a few minutes before dawn). Very proud and glad that Mr. Ganjar can eat in our shop.

Man: *Baru lihat langsung, belum pernah lihat langsung sebelumnya. Baru kali ini.*

Just saw (Ganjar) firsthand, never seen before. Just this once.

Connotation:

Recognition of the managers or owners of the shop where Ganjar is eating sahur is presented as a form of legitimacy of the people's love for Ganjar. That section also shows that as governor, Ganjar is not distant from his people. Close image with the people is quite often displayed by a number of politicians in recent years. President Joko Widodo popularized the term *blusukan* (impromptu visits to the people). He enters markets, stalls and places that seem to have only been visited by regional heads and presidents in the past when there was a campaign interest. The elitist impression of politicians and regional heads is trying to erode.

A statement from the people (grassroots) is a symbol that support for Ganjar also comes from the lower group. Moreover, the context when the vlog was uploaded was during the 2018 Central Java governor election. Ganjar can only display testimonials or support from opinion leaders, but to display a populist image, "the voice of the people" needs to be expressed. Considering the character of vlog that is closely related to young people, it is not appropriate to present the opinions of characters who are often full of jargon and praise, sloganistic and boring.

Conclusion

Vlog is a symbol. Vlog is synonymous with today's digital communication trend. Today, many Indonesian politicians use vlogs. Ganjar utilizes a vlog to display him being up to date. This is important for Ganjar to attract sympathy from the millennials (voters born between 1982-2004). Although some survey institutes claimed that Ganjar's always excelled from his opponent, but the number of undecided people were quite a lot. This fact needed to be responded by Ganjar to establish victory, one of them is by conducting political communication and building image via vlogs.

The conclusion of this study is that through the vlogs that he uploaded on Youtube, Ganjar raised a religious, popular and contemporary image. Religious image needed to be displayed considering that Ganjar is from a nationalist party (PDIP) while political opponents of President Joko Widodo (Ganjar's colleague at PDIP) are building the impression of Joko Widodo as anti-Islam. It was important for Ganjar to show himself as an egalitarian and a populist because he had an interest in the 2018 Central Java governor election. It is commonly known that Central Java is considered a PDIP base, a party known for its popular image and pro *wong cilik* (common people). Ganjar was a PDIP cadre and was carried by PDIP in the 2018 Central Java governor election. So in the vlogs he uploaded, the image of Ganjar was in harmony with the image of PDIP.

When drawn to the upper level, what Ganjar did by creating a populist-themed vlog was actually in line with what President Joko Widodo also did. Joko Widodo, for example, made vlogs when he had lunch with King Salman of Saudi Arabia, drank coffee at Kopi Tuku, played with his grandchild, drove with motorbike community in Sukabumi, practiced boxing and archery and others. Joko Widodo's vlogs show the humanist side, looking from the formal view as head of state. Joko Widodo also wants to present himself as a young, contemporary and time-sensitive.

This research is actually only limited to seeing Ganjar's political communication via vlogs. Subsequent research is expected to be able to explore other themes related to political communication in the digital era. There are many themes to explore, given the nature of the internet which is growing very fast and all communication studies are very dynamic.

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