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Jokowi: New Indonesia's Master of Politic of Symbols

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Abstract

The President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo or is popularly known as Jokowi, a political figure who utilizes political symbols in various situations. In many of his political manoeuvres, he has been using implied symbols. The study used literature study method applied to compare data from several global journals, which are summarized based on the author's experience, theories, and existing models. The results of this research concluded that *first*, the ability to utilize political networking cohesiveness. *Second*, the ability to influence as a leader to apply extraordinary political strategic. *Third*, the capability of employing symbolic politics as a way of communicating and political allies. As a conclude, President Jokowi carries out internal consolidation and a lot of underground political communication with various community organizations and political parties.

Keywords: Political Networking, Political Strategic, Political Communication, Indonesia Political Symbol, Politics of Symbol

1. Introduction

Joko Widodo, commonly known as "Jokowi," rose to prominence through a remarkable political journey. Born in the working-class city of Solo, he served as the Mayor of Solo from 2005 to 2012 before being elected as the Governor of Jakarta in 2012. As Governor, Widodo gained national attention for his hands-on, with his populism-reformist approach to governance, championing infrastructure projects and social safety-net program, called Bansos. Widodo's outsider status and image as a man from the people, with the term "*Rakyat adalah Kita*" (we are the people, - I am) helped propel him to the presidency in 2014, when he won a hard-fought election against the longtime political establishment figure Prabowo Subianto.

His extraordinary rise from the riverside slum where he grew up to become Indonesia's president shows how far the world's third-largest democracy has strayed from the brutal authoritarian era of previous decades. When his second and final five-year term ends in October 2024, President Jokowi is considered by some to be Asia's Barack Obama leaving behind a legacy of impressive economic growth and many of ambitious infrastructure projects, including plans to shift Indonesia's crowded capital to the border region in East Kalimantan at a cost of \$33 billion.

As president, Widodo has sought to cement his legacy through ambitious infrastructure initiatives, such as the plan to relocate Indonesia's capital city, as well as efforts to reduce poverty and inequality across the archipelago (Tyson & Apresian 2021). During the first days of his first term as President of Indonesia, Jokowi started building a reputation as a soft-spoken reformer and promised to fight poverty and inequality by harnessing Indonesia's extraordinary resources and tourism attractions to boost the economy of Indonesia, the largest country in the Southeast (Muhtadi 2015). He is also considered as a political lightweight by his rivals in Asia.

Taking the power as the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Jokowi, is known as a person who uses political symbols in various situations. In many of his political manoeuvres, he took the advantages of implied symbols of how good he is, which President Jokowi carried out internal consolidation and carried out a lot of underground political communication with various community organizations and political parties (De Ferrari 2017). During pandemic, according to Fealy (2020), President Jokowi may need assistants who do a lot of new things and work instead of acting in a way full of drama. Thus, he will easily consider replacing people who, according to him, are unable to solve problems and also people who like to create controversy in the public sphere.

When COVID-19 pandemic started to hit Indonesia, the country encountered the threat of the worst recession that confronted President Jokowi in 2020 (Fealy 2020). In the same year, his government faced many internal problems, from controlling the pandemic in the health sector to saving the economy, which was peppered with legal problems and corruption that ensnared several of his ministers. Two of his ministers resigned due to legal issues. First, Edhy Prabowo resigned from his position as Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, and then Juliari Batubara resigned from his position as Minister of Social Affairs.

Owing to this unfavourable situation, President Jokowi had to immediately act and make decisions after facing two serious challenges for too long because of the corruption case involving his two ministers, public trust in the government has also decreased. Apart from that, President Jokowi considers political considerations profitable by accepting proposals from community organizations and political parties. For example, consider certain positions that have been abandoned by previous officials affiliated with a particular political party. For example, the Gerindra Party lost Edhy Prabowo as Minister while Sandiaga Uno served as Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia, while Wishnutama was discharged.

President Jokowi also gave support to the National Awakening Party, the Ansor Youth Movement, and Nadhlatul Ulama to return as Minister of Religion. Tri Risma Harini, the most respected member of the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, immediately picked up Juliari's place. President Jokowi to applied symbolic politics as a way of communicating and an approach to observing the reactions of his political competitors and colleagues. The way President Jokowi acts always invites different views and beliefs from politicians in Indonesia, as seen in his first cabinet reshuffle during the second term of his administration.

With a lot of political moves he made, Jokowi was forced to face his enemies and political supporters who were trying to gain influence and apply pressure. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, an unnoticed cabinet reshuffle would cause unwanted uncertainty. Regarding the national capital called Nusantara, President Jokowi stated that the construction of *Ibu Kota Nusantara* (IKN) as the new National Capital of the Archipelago was a big step towards transformation towards an advanced Indonesia (Purwaningsih & Widodo 2020). The capital of the Archipelago will truly show the greatness of the Indonesian nation and reflect national identity, guarantee social, economic, and environmental sustainability, and build a forest city, smart city, and advanced city.

Jokowi also made progress on social development goals, increasing access to healthcare and education, and implementing programs aimed at reducing poverty and inequality (Purwaningsih & Widodo 2020). His administration's flagship initiative, the Universal Health Coverage (JKN) program, extended basic healthcare services to most of the Indonesia's population. However, Jokowi's presidency was also marked by significant controversies and policy failures. The plan to relocate Indonesia's capital from Jakarta to East Kalimantan, for instance, faced heavy public backlash due to its immense cost and potential environmental impact.

Jokowi believes that the National Capital of the Archipelago will represent a superior nation. Apart from that, the National Capital of the Archipelago is proof of Indonesia's commitment to tackling climate change. This is demonstrated by achieving and managing various indicators to achieve net zero carbon and 100% new renewable energy by 2060. This shows a transformation in smart, creative, connected and integrated work (Sahide 2022). However, when Jokowi left his post as president, many people, including those who supported him, accused the furniture entrepreneur of combining "oligarchy" and intending to maintain power by preparing his eldest son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, to run for the 2024 Presidential Election (Fatimatuzzahra & Dewi 2021).

At this point, the level of public satisfaction with President Jokowi's performance is still above 50%. However, disillusioned voices and a breakdown in relations with the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP) have reduced this level of public satisfaction. President Jokowi appeared to be very careful in his actions and often took advantage of the situation to make the best decisions even when receiving setbacks from Machfud MD as Coordinating Minister for Politics, Law and Security of the Republic of Indonesia during the contestation for the Presidential Election of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2024-2029 period, and appointed Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, the Chief of Democrat Party as Minister of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/Head of the National Land Agency of the Republic of Indonesia and Hadi Tjahjanto as Coordinating Minister for Politics, Law and Security of the Republic of Indonesia, replacing Machfud MD who had resigned from his post as the Coordinating Minister for Politics, Law and Security.

Currently, the level of public satisfaction with Jokowi turns out to be high, according to data released by several survey institutions. *Indikator* survey shows the figure reached 76.6%. Although this figure has decreased by 2% compared to before the election (Detik.com, 2024). Data from the *Indonesian Survey Institute* regarding public satisfaction with Jokowi is currently not much different from *Indikator* about 76.2% (Tempo.co 2004). Despite this high public satisfaction, Jokowi faced critical voices from academic groups from various universities in Indonesia, and from civil society groups, especially with regards to the controversy over the nomination of his son, Gibran, as running-mate to Prabowo.

Jokowi's relationship with his party, namely PDI P, also experienced a breakdown. Mahfud MD, Coordinating Minister for Politics, Law and Security, who has been long supporter of Jokowi also resigned. Facing this situation, Jokowi's skill and caution as a politician was visible. One of the steps taken by Jokowi was to invite Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono (AHY), Top Chair of the Democrat Party, which was previously known as the government's opposition, to step into the cabinet. This is interpreted as Jokowi's attempt to consolidate his power with Democrat Party which previously had launched criticisms on many of Jokowi's political moves and administration. AHY's appointment as Minister of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency in February 2024 has placed Democrat Party's in Jokowi's embrace.

This research aims to analyse President Jokowi's trait as the new master political symbols in Indonesia. However, Joko Widodo's presidency has not been without its challenges to faced criticism from political rivals who accuse him of autocratic tendencies and favoritism towards his own political network; this is reflected in the overwhelming political endorsement for his family members in political practice (Abdurrahman et al. 2021). Allegations of corruption scandals involving his cabinet ministers have also threatened to undermine his reformist image at times.

Beyond concerns about cronyism, Widodo has also drawn heavy criticism for perceived attempts to establish a political dynasty by grooming his son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, for a future leadership role. Gibran's successful bid for Vice President, after previously serving as mayor of Solo in 2020, the same city where Widodo himself once served as mayor, has fuelled allegations that the president is engaged in an undemocratic transfer of power between himself and his family members. This has resonated with segments of the Indonesian public who are wary of entrenched political elites perpetuating their hold on power (Tyson & Apresian 2021).

2. Literature Review

In simple terms, political networking is described as a relationship graph that shows the relationship between different objects that are politically symmetrical and asymmetrical (Mcclurg 2003; Slater & Simmons 2012). In political networking, political objects can choose their own path of connection (discretionary), group based on the bias of similar characteristics between political objects (assortative mixing), or form reciprocal relationships (Gupta & Chauhan 2023). In a political party, it is easy to see how its members form relationships, group them, and whether the relationships formed are reciprocal (Kahne & Bowyer, 2018). Apart from that, Kahne & Bowyer (2018) also explained that many interesting concepts can be found in political networking theory, such as modularity, efficiency, centrality, degree, and betweenness.

Having a political networking perspective instilled in oneself can help to see and predict the dynamics of world complexity more accurately (Kahne & Bowyer 2018). With better understanding, political networking can see how political views, interests, wealth, and hoaxes spread (Mcclurg 2003). In different circumstances, political networking sometimes acts not in accordance with its habits so that if it is not ideal, then political networking will move on the wrong path and is difficult to correct (Gupta & Chauhan 2023). In building a political network in which there are individuals and/or groups, symbols are needed for demonstrating the similarity of interests among individuals and/or groups who are members of one network.

Symbols also play a role in identifying a person or group that has different interests from other groups. Theoretically, symbols are important for organizing human interests for the fact that symbols serve to shape one's perception and worldview. In the arena of political contestation and/or power struggle, symbols play a role in shaping and/or building a person's or group's interpretation, such as self-image and so on. In politics, symbols also facilitate a person or group to identify themselves and show a different position from other parties. In other words, symbols can mobilize hostile political factions indicating that these symbols are also central elements in the struggle for power (Gill & Ferrandez 2020).

Political communication is communication related to political messages and political actors or related to power, government, and government policies (Himmelboim et al. 2012; Bode 2016). Kubin & Sikorski (2021) stated that people involved in political activities try to influence and encourage other people to carry out political activities at the level of infrastructure and superstructure relations. According to McNair (2017), political communication includes the exchange of symbols, words, images, movements, body attitudes, mannerisms, and clothing.

In a broader sense, political communication is the activity of exchanging messages carried out by a person, group of people, or institution to gain strength to defend the people, both as implementers of government and as members of social society who can influence policies in various parts of the power or government system (Miller & McKerrow 2010). It is also necessary to understand that political communication is a field that investigates communication behavior and activities that are politically charged, with political consequences, and influence political behavior and activities (Serazio 2017). Political communication can also be defined as a communication process that has an impact on political action (Medveschi & Frunza 2018).

3. Methods

The type of literature study in this research employed in this research is the narrative review model to compare data from several global journals, which are summarized based on the author's experience, existing theories and models. The research method is a qualitative, with examined secondary data made available as source data. By collecting, identifying, compiling, and analyzing the various information found, researchers make use of analytical descriptive techniques (Berger 2014). An automatic search engine is benefitted to search for reference journals, which considers several factors, such as the indexer's reputation, the publisher's reputation, suitability of content, and completeness of searchable journal data (Snyder, 2019).

At the reference journal selection stage, the quality of the reference journal, the indexer's reputation, and the publisher's reputation are considered (Creswell & Poth 2018). Data analysis is the process of systematically

searching and arranging data, categorizing it, and making conclusions from the data (Berger 2014). The author conducted literature research by getting related and relevant information from several international journals with previous research for assessing President Jokowi as Indonesia's new main political symbols which provides more details on the specific steps involved in the narrative review process.

Such as how the relevant journals were identified, the methods used to extract and synthesize the data from those journals, and the conceptual frameworks or analytical lenses that guided the literature analysis. After analyzing the data, the author continues by interpreting and synthesising the literature findings to answer the research problem formulation and reach conclusions and reports such as Figure 1 below:

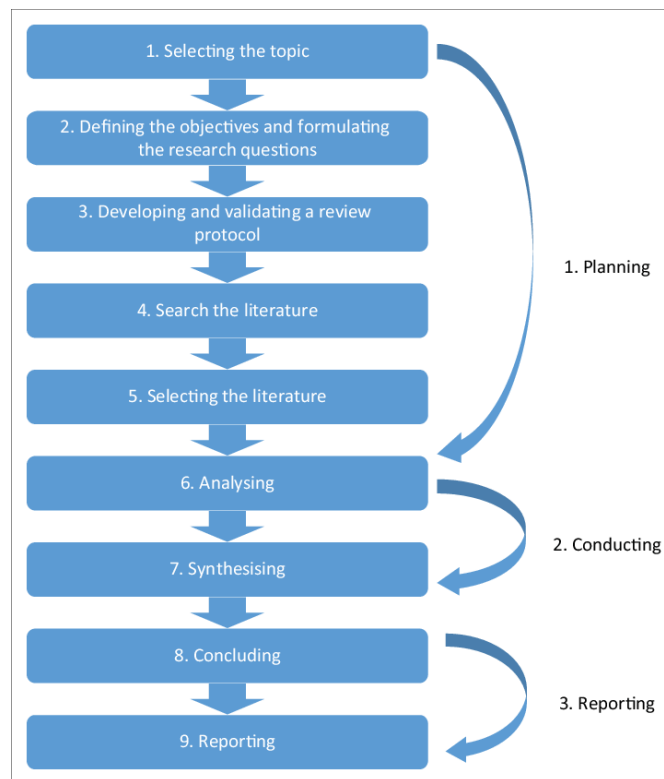


Figure 1: Steps of Literature Study and Analysis

Source: Berger, 2014

Data in this research were collected from secondary sources such as articles written by Aspinall (2013), Fatimatuzzahra & Dewi (2021), Muhtadi (2015), Raharjo (2016) and others, in addition to online media news sources such as Detik and Tempo. The researchers obtained data consisting of Jokowi's political strategies related to the way he consolidates power, builds self-image and how public satisfaction has been formed out of his political performance. The researcher then analyzed the data with various theories, such as political networks (Mcclurg 2003; Slater & Simmons 2012), and others, as well as political communication theory (Himmelboim et al. 2012; Bode 2016; Kubin & Sikorski 2021).

In addition, researchers also analyzed the data obtained with symbol and political theory (Gill and Ferrandez 2020). From the critical dialogue that is carried out simultaneously between the phenomenon and the theory, the researcher then tried to answer the problem and/or build conclusions regarding Jokowi's political strategy in using political symbols as a medium for political communication to build political networks on the one hand, and identify himself as having a different political position or interest from other parties in the future.

4. Result

A series of successes of President Jokowi that have been successfully carved in the implementation of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia are certainly inseparable from his own leadership style and model. This

leadership style and model is none other than charismatic. In the theory of charismatic leadership according to Klein & Delegach (2023), it is stated that a leader who is called charismatic is a leader who has followers who make heroic attributions or extraordinary leadership abilities when they observe certain behaviors. A charismatic leader has an unusual influence on his followers (Banks et al. 2017).

Kaluza et al. (2020) stated that followers of this charismatic leader believe that the leadership adopted by their leader is correct, obey their leader without question, have emotional involvement in the mission of the group or organization, believe that they can contribute to or the success of their mission, and have goals for good performance. Naturally, while we reflect on the past, we also recall President Soekarno's charismatic leadership style and model. The spirit of revolution that led to independence, the successful formation of the non-aligned movement (NAM) at the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in 1955, the unification of West Papua into the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and other notable accomplishments were all made possible by President Soekarno's leadership style and model.

This does not, however, imply that the charismatic leadership model and style is the sole one that is most suited for Indonesian leaders suited by Joko Widodo. The collaboration pact was not signed by 16 nations, despite his charismatic leadership. Because President Jokowi's measures encourage industry to downstream so that the natural resources exported would eventually have a high selling value, they are highly commendable. Indonesia is undoubtedly in a better position to control different global trade policies because of this circumstance. Furthermore, President Jokowi will make use of all the potential of both natural and human resources to optimize the benefits for Indonesia's trade sector in the rapidly expanding global arena.

Reducing economic inequality and economic growth will be President Jokowi's main priorities during his initial term (Davidson 2015). During this term, infrastructure would be a major concern and remain a key policy focus for the next five years. Research results from Sibarani (2018) concluded that President Jokowi stated that infrastructure and human resource development would be a top priority and acknowledged the failure to develop Indonesia's workforce and Indonesia's failure to attract investment from other Southeast Asian countries. Jokowi's presidency has had a mixed legacy, with both significant achievements and notable failures. On the positive side, he oversaw a period of steady economic growth, with Indonesia's GDP expanding by an average of around 4-5% per year during his time in office.

This was driven in part by his focus on infrastructure development, with major projects such as the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed rail line and the expansion of Indonesia's seaport and airport capacity, even though the projects have faced controversies among people due to their high costs and use of state budgets. Overall, Joko Widodo's legacy is a complex one, with both notable achievements and significant shortcomings (Tyson & Apresian 2021). While he oversaw a period of steady economic growth and made some progress on social development, his presidency was also marred by controversies, authoritarian tendencies, and failures to address pressing issues facing the country. Assessments of his tenure will likely continue to be shaped by these competing narratives.

President Jokowi is known for frequently making use of political symbols in various situations that he implied in many of his political manoeuvres. As a result, President Jokowi carried out internal consolidation and a lot of underground political communication with various community organizations and political parties so that tactically he was always successful in building political networks both at home and abroad (Abdurrahman et al. 2021). In carrying out a mental revolution to encourage the manufacturing sector it will be very important to overcome rigid labor laws that hinder investment with strong political support from *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (PDI-P) and the coalition of parties supporting the government has some insurmountable political obstacles.

In addition, President Jokowi has indicated that he would open new sectors accessible to international investment, but the details were not yet clear (Warburton 2016). The foreign investment coordinating body will clearly be upgraded to become an optimal ministry task. This will likely bring greater attention to key cabinet reform issues. Additionally, in recent months, the idea of moving Indonesia's capital from Jakarta to East Kalimantan, which had

been debated for decades, has gained significant momentum so it was likely that this policy would consume a lot of time, attention, and resources in Jakarta, and even disrupted reform.

In political networking, political centrality serves as most important factor which also shows the cohesiveness of the network. Political centrality is the main goal that must be aimed at if one wishes to change the culture of a political organization or prevent the spread of social ills within it. In other words, the survival of a political network is highly dependent on the political level of the network within it. Political degree is a term used to indicate how close the relationship between two or more parties is when forming political cooperation and consolidation to interact directly with other political objects in networking.

As mentioned earlier, the shortest path that connects the outermost objects of a network is called "betweenness." A high number of betweennesses indicates better control over the network, while a low number of betweennesses indicates no good control over the network. Modularity, or modularity, is a measure of how important a structure is in a network. A political network that is very modular means that the political network is easy to connect with other parties, while political networking that is less modular tends to be more difficult to connect with other political networks.

As a leader, President Jokowi's has earned very large influence extraordinary political strategic abilities to determine every step of infrastructure development, developments in global political and social economic conditions, progress in resources and technological innovations that are recognized by many countries in the world. He adopts very precise political strategic intelligence and has almost never failed in running the government so far. Political strategy is an art that involves the ability to utilize all available resources to utilize them and achieve goals by obtaining maximum and efficient profits. Mature democracies typically have outgoing presidents who support the incoming one. Usually, the endorsement comes from an incumbent president who is no longer eligible to run for office because of legal limitations.

For example, once Hillary Clinton won the Democratic Party's nomination for the 2016 election, President Obama of the Democratic Party was forced to support her. In Indonesia, which has only conducted four direct presidential elections, this has not yet evolved into a political ritual. As his second term ended, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), the former president of Indonesia and its sixth-elected leader, declined to support a candidate in the next presidential election. Given that a celebrity endorser is someone who has achieved notoriety and utilizes it to sell a product by utilizing it to appear with them, Jokowi, as president, falls into this category.

In addition to well-known actors and actresses, other categories of celebrities that serve as endorsers include athletes, politicians, corporate executives, artists, and members of the armed forces. But the focus of this piece is on Jokowi's presidential communication, not on his role as a celebrity advocate or influencer or its consequences. Political strategy is the art of using the means of battle to achieve war goals. Political strategy itself is a way that has been understood and planned to achieve certain political goals in the long term. Political strategic planning also includes a comprehensive analysis of the state of regional power, a clear picture of the final goals to be achieved, and the concentration of all forces used to achieve these goals (Purwaningsih & Widodo 2020).

To some extent, political strategy is utilized to achieve various political goals such as new regulations, new administrative structures, or deregulation, privatization, or decentralization programs (Kauppinen-Räsänen 2014). Experience shows that such actions are usually not well planned by parliamentarians and governments. Otherwise, many projects will fail. The absence of a strategic supervisory institution shows that there is no strategic planning within the scope of government and administration. In addition, political strategy is important for political campaigns and governments but also for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are active in politics (Knoll et al. 2020).

All non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including environmental groups, labor unions, human rights organizations, etc. To achieve long-term goals, there needs to be a political plan. Without a political plan, various changes or large projects would not happen at all. For example, an effective planning process is required for decentralization programs, such as implementing regional levels of government or regional autonomy. Authority,

organization, budget, and election of people's representatives are some of the elements that must be considered when making plans where overall planning for long-term strategies can be avoided (Aspinall 2013).

Mukti & Rodiyah (2020) explained that strategic planning in political change and processes consists of a comprehensive analysis of various states of power as well as a clear picture of the final goal to be achieved and the concentration of all forms of power to achieve it. It is not surprising that many projects fail if the legislature does not support the executive in implementing strategic policies but continues to question the objectives of these policies (Aspinall 2015). Often, these so-called "good" politicians are responsible for social conditions that cause millions of people to suffer, because they try to implement ambitious plans without strategy.

According to dramaturgical theory, society functions as the front stage in a play. Gray et al. (2024) stated that dramaturgy has also been used to understand organizational processes because "backstage" can influence provider's actions and society's experiences. Social interactions formed by people with various statuses and roles form the front stage (Argyle 2012). All the games on that stage are bound by their own motives and goals. Meanwhile, the front stage is the place where people see the actors in action. On the other hand, according to Kerrigan & Hart (2016) the activities and characters of actors that cannot be seen by the audience are called backstage, which setting and personal front are part of the front stage.

As for the settings in question, they are real things that actors use to play their roles. Dramaturgical theory analyzes the personal front in addition to the setting (O'boyle 2022). The personal front consists of various equipment used to communicate or introduce the actor's role to the audience. The equipment is adapted to the role played by the actor. Impression management theory and other theories originate from dramaturgical theory. Everyone tries to present themselves in social interactions. According to Indarti et al. (2020), in this impression management effort, people deliberately use communication to create the impression others want of them. This is in accordance with the dramaturgical theory mentioned previously, which states that actors play their roles on stage according to the goals they have set.

Self-presentation theories from dramaturgy and impression management produce methods that people use to present themselves and create an impression in the eyes of others. Types of self-presentation according to Hamid et al. (2022) are as follows: 1.) Ingratiation strategy with which people who want to be seen as good or friendly; 2.) Self-promotion strategy with which people who want to be seen as intelligent people; 3.) Exemplification strategy, people who want to be seen as a good organization or person to be an example or model for others; 4.) Supplication strategy, which is usually applied by organizations or individuals who cannot help society, where the individual shows himself as a weak party and a victim of the crisis; 5.) Intimidation strategy, which individuals apply as to be considered and strong capable of controlling the situation.

5. Discussion

President Jokowi as developed symbolic politics as a way of communicating and an approach to observing the reactions of his political competitors and colleagues. The current political socialization process uses social media in addition to broadcast media, print media and the internet. The next generation, which is dominated by young people, seeks information on politics and presidential elections, including profiles of presidential candidates, through tools such as smartphones, the internet, and social networks (Fulton & Kibby 2017).

Research results from Forgas & Williams (2016) illustrated that young people admit that searching for information on politics via social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and social networks, has a different sensation compared to getting one via the internet. President Jokowi benefits from the media to portray his image of all his abilities and personality of Indonesian presidents with Javanese culture, particularly the relationship between strategic presidential communication, character, and the way presidents utilize their authority (Abdurrahman et al. 2021; Tyson & Apresian 2021).

The communication style of Jokowi has been the subject of several research. claims, for instance, that Jokowi has a low-context communication style and appears to have a profoundly impactful communication style that is open,

domineering, gregarious, aggressive, and highly energetic. Social media is an ideal platform for conducting political campaigns because it is a cheaper communication tool than broadcasting and print media (Abdullah et al. 2021). On the other hand, the use of social media in political campaigns must be planned in accordance with programs that have been created by political figures to increase the credibility of the party or political figure.

Campaigns, in this sense, are persuasive activities carried out gradually, deliberately, and repeatedly over a certain period (Serazio, 2017). According to Fealy (2020), one way to do this by uploading photos in which he shakes hands with people, hands over free t-shirts or books, directly slips cash in envelope to people's palms and has a char with the crowd he meets which directly conveys simplicity, social harmony, and closeness to the people. Political communication is very strategic during the political process. Through political communication activities, various political structures, including the executive, legislative, judiciary, political parties, non-governmental organizations, interest groups, media, and citizens, continue to be involved in the process of exchanging meaning.

Political communication can include gathering interests, conveying, and receiving aspirations, negotiation, socialization, campaigns, lobbying, and much more. Political communication is simply about how public resources such as income, taxes, or earnings are distributed, who has the authority to create, make, and enforce laws, and what the government does (Goyanes et al. 2021). Conceptually according to Goyanes et al. (2021), there are three models of political communication, including:

- 1.) Systemic Model. This model is a complete political communication pattern consisting of interconnected parts. The theory underlying this model consists of a collection of statements relating to the relationship between dependent and independent variables which are considered to interact with each other.
- 2.) Process Model. The simultaneous transaction model is closely related to the dynamics of political communication. This model shows three components that influence the communication process because of its non-linear nature. In the end, a political communication process model will be built from this communication system.
- 3.) Effectiveness Model. A character's ability to be a good listener, the ability to send good messages or information, and the ability to use various media or audio-visual tools are all important components of effective communication.

Some scholars are interested in and have examined presidential communication in the context of Indonesian presidents with Javanese culture, particularly the relationship between strategic presidential communication, character, and the way presidents utilize their authority. The communication style of Jokowi has been the subject of several research. Jokowi, according to Mattingly & Yao (2022), has a low-context communication style and communicates in a way that is open, domineering, friendly, aggressive, and highly energetic, leaving a lasting impression. Raharjo (2016), on the other hand, looked at Jokowi's communication style and discovered that he mixes his approach as a doer and an influencer.

Anderson (2019) argued in his observation that Indonesia's political processes and structures are essentially distinct since Javanese culture predominates there. According to Anderson (2019), the Javanese people understand (political) power as something that is morally neutral, uniform, solid, and consistent in its overall magnitude. First, according to Anderson (2019), a fundamental idea of Javanese political theory is "Power is Concrete." Power is present regardless of who could utilize it. This is not a theoretical postulate, but an existential fact. The enigmatic, heavenly, and ethereal force that governs the cosmos is called power.

The next concept is "power is homogeneous," which suggests that all power has the same characteristics and comes from the same source. One person or group's possession of power is equal to that of any other individual or group. According to Anderson, the third notion of power in Javanese culture is "The quantum of power in the universe is constant," which holds that both the overall quantity of power contained in the universe and its expansion or contraction are fixed. Its overall number remains constant, even while the distribution of power in the universe fluctuates, since power just exists and is not the product of organization, riches, weaponry, or anything else; in fact, it precedes all of these and makes them what they are.

Using the concepts of political public relations, soft propaganda, and official communication, one might interpret President Jokowi's comments on his endorsement of the next presidential candidate from a different angle (Abdurrahman et al. 2021). The management process by which an actor for political purposes, through communication and action, seeks to influence and to establish, build, and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with key publics and stakeholders to help support its mission and achieve its goals is how political communication work. Jokowi was known for his savvy use of political symbols and communication tactics during his presidency. He often relied on "implied symbols" and "symbolic politics" to connect with the Indonesian public and project a populist image.

One of Joko Widodo's signature moves was his use of informal, man-of-the-people attire, such as his trademark checkered shirts and jeans. Nowadays, he wore long rolled sleeves more often, to show a worker, not the president. This was in stark contrast to the suits and formal wear traditionally favored by Indonesian political elites. By dressing down, Jokowi aimed to portray himself as a relatable, accessible leader who was in touch with the common citizen. Jokowi also made a point of frequently interacting with the public, staging impromptu visits to markets, villages, and other grassroots settings.

These "blusukan" events, as they were known, allowed him to be seen mingling with ordinary Indonesians, shaking hands, and addressing their concerns directly. This helped cultivate an image of Jokowi as a leader who was responsive to the people's needs. Additionally, Jokowi frequently invoked the legacy of Indonesia's founding president, Sukarno, tapping into nationalist sentiments and the country's revolutionary past. He would often make references to Sukarno's ideals of political sovereignty and economic self-reliance, framing his own agenda as a continuation of that nationalistic vision.

Ultimately, the legacy of Jokowi's presidency will be shaped not only by his policy achievements and failures, but also by the ways in which he leveraged political symbolism and communication to forge his image and relationship with the Indonesian people. It is important to note that Jokowi, who has built his self-image as a figure who is close to the people, humble, and tries to show his concern for the lower class, is a political symbol which explains why he is so popular. Jokowi is clearly aware of his popularity, as shown in various data that show that people's voting behavior in Indonesia is more determined by one's figures. In the 2024 political contest, Jokowi really took advantage of his popularity to support Gibran to run as a vice-presidential candidate.

When asked about his son running for the vice-presidential candidate, Jokowi's implicit message such as "*As a father I can only wish for the best [for Gibran]*" is perceived to be indication of his political support. On various occasions, Jokowi has also shown symbols that can be interpreted that his is in difference stance with the PDI P, the party that supported him. For example, when Jokowi was seen eating with Prabowo Subianto, the presidential candidate to whom Gibran is running-mate, Jokowi was also seen to be showing his closeness to Prabowo. Jokowi's support for Prabowo can also be traced back to the way the Jokowi placed some favour to the pro-Jokowi group led by Budi Arie who turned out to be clearly in support of Prabowo.

The party chaired by his youngest son, namely PSI, is also part of the coalition that supports Prabowo-Gibran candidacy. On the other hand, Jokowi's popularity is also widely recognized by several parties and therefore, without hesitation, support Jokowi's political agendas which consolidate and/or expand power and also leave a great legacy; parties such as PAN and PSI for example, claim themselves to be "Jokowi's Party" and/or "A Party Close to Jokowi" in hoping that they will get a positive effect from such popularity. Based on the analysis of Jokowi's presidential communication as politic of symbols, it can be described in Figure 2 below:

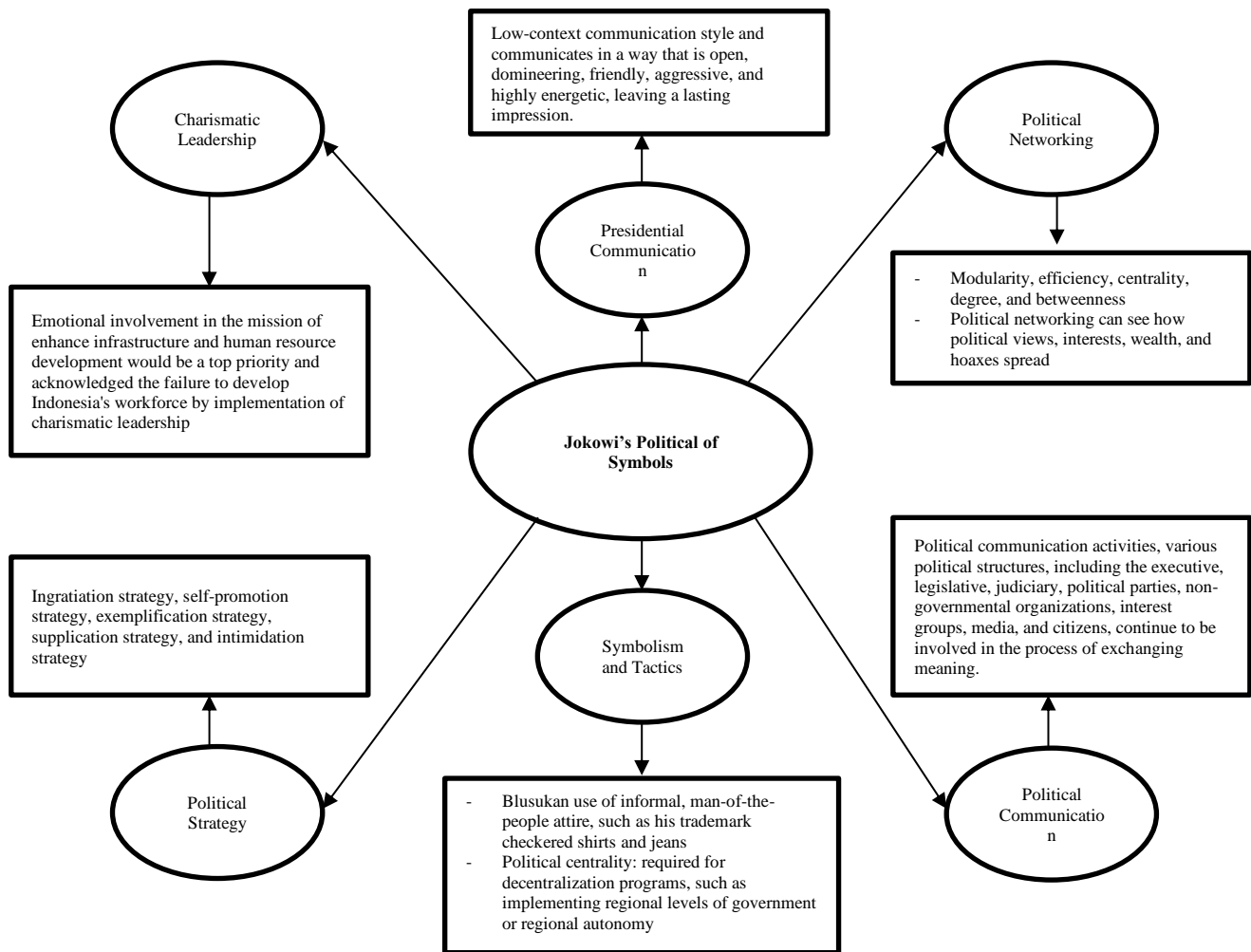


Figure 2: Analysis of Jokowi's Politic of Symbols

Source: Primary Data 2024

6. Conclusion

The results of this research conclude that President Jokowi as the new master politic of symbols has developed three identified main capabilities, namely: firstly, in political networking, political centrality is most important. It is the main goal of network cohesiveness in case one wishes to change the culture of political organizations or prevent social diseases from spreading; secondly, President Jokowi's influence as a leader is very large, and he has developed extraordinary political strategic abilities to determine every step of infrastructure development, development of global political and social economic conditions, progress in resources and technological innovation which are recognized by many countries in the world; thirdly, President Jokowi applies symbolic politics as a way of communicating and an approach to observing the reactions of his competitors and political colleagues.

One way to measure how well information is exchanged in political networking effectively and efficiently. Often, the level of efficiency of a network is determined by how rapidly information flows through its channels, also known as edges. The faster the flow of political information, the more efficient political networking will operate. As all power originates from a single homogenous source and the question of good versus evil comes before the question of power, "Power does not raise the question of legitimacy." Legitimate and illegitimate power are not synonymous. The reason this idea is utilized in this context is that Anderson's idea was thought to be among the most effective approaches to comprehend Indonesian politics. To achieve various political goals, such as new regulations, new administrative systems, or deregulation, privatization, or decentralization initiatives, strategic politics are employed.

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