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Strategi Komunikasi Populis sebagai Personal Branding Kandidat Presiden: Studi Kasus Pemilihan Presiden 2024 di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta
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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis strategi komunikasi politik populis yang digunakan oleh ketiga kandidat Presiden Indonesia pada Pemilihan Presiden 2024 di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY) dalam membangun *personal branding* politik. Penelitian berangkat dari kesenjangan kajian mengenai komunikasi politik populis yang selama ini lebih banyak berfokus pada tingkat nasional, sementara adaptasi strategi populis dalam konteks politik lokal masih relatif terbatas. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui studi dokumentasi terhadap materi kampanye, pidato, dan media sosial kandidat, serta wawancara mendalam dengan tim sukses dan relawan. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan tipologi komunikasi populis Jagers dan Walgrave yang membedakan *empty populism*, *anti-elitism*, dan *complete populism*, serta dianalisis menggunakan perspektif *Rational Choice Theory*.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketiga kandidat sama-sama menggunakan strategi komunikasi politik populis sebagai pilihan rasional untuk membangun kedekatan emosional dan simbolik dengan masyarakat, namun dengan karakteristik yang berbeda. Anies Baswedan lebih menonjolkan narasi perubahan, oposisi terhadap *elite* penguasa, dan citra pemimpin progresif melalui komunikasi partisipatif. Prabowo Subianto membangun citra sebagai pemimpin nasionalis yang dekat dengan masyarakat melalui *personal branding* "gemoy", simbol persatuan nasional, serta program-program populis. Sementara itu, Ganjar Pranowo menampilkan citra pemimpin merakyat melalui aktivitas yang dekat dengan masyarakat, penggunaan media sosial, dan identitas sebagai representasi *wong cilik* (rakyat biasa). Penelitian juga menemukan bahwa konteks sosial-politik DIY menyebabkan strategi populisme tidak diterapkan secara konfrontatif terhadap elite lokal. Ketiga kandidat mengadaptasi pesan populis dengan menghormati posisi Sultan dan budaya politik Yogyakarta, sehingga menghasilkan strategi komunikasi *dual track*, yaitu tetap menggunakan narasi pro-rakyat tanpa menegasikan legitimasi elite tradisional.

Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa populisme dalam Pilpres 2024 di DIY tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai strategi komunikasi untuk meningkatkan elektabilitas, tetapi juga merupakan praktik politik yang bersifat kontekstual dan adaptif terhadap karakteristik lokal. Temuan ini memperkaya kajian komunikasi politik dengan menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas strategi populis dipengaruhi oleh kondisi sosial, budaya, dan struktur kekuasaan daerah, sehingga praktik populisme di tingkat lokal tidak selalu identik dengan retorika anti-elite sebagaimana lazim ditemukan pada level nasional.

Kata kunci: komunikasi politik, populisme, *personal branding*, Pemilihan Presiden 2024, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, strategi komunikasi.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the populist political communication strategies employed by the three Indonesian presidential candidates in the 2024 Presidential Election in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) to construct their political personal branding. The study is motivated by a gap in the existing literature, as previous research on populist political communication has predominantly focused on the national level, while the adaptation of populist strategies within local political contexts remains underexplored. This research adopts a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through document analysis of campaign materials, speeches, and social media content, as well as in-depth interviews with campaign team members and volunteers. The data were analyzed using Jagers and Walgrave's typology of populist communication, which distinguishes between *empty populism*, *anti-elitism*, and *complete populism*, and further interpreted through the lens of Rational Choice Theory.

The findings reveal that all three candidates employed populist political communication as a rational strategy to establish emotional and symbolic connections with the electorate, although each adopted distinct characteristics. Anies Baswedan emphasized narratives of change, opposition to the ruling elite, and the image of a progressive leader through participatory communication. Prabowo Subianto cultivated the image of a nationalist leader who is close to the people through the "gemoy" personal branding, symbols of national unity, and various populist policy proposals. Meanwhile, Ganjar Pranowo projected himself as a grassroots leader by engaging directly with local communities, utilizing social media intensively, and positioning himself as a representative of the *wong cilik* (ordinary people). The study also finds that the socio-political context of the Special Region of Yogyakarta shaped the implementation of populist strategies, preventing overt confrontation with local elites. Instead, all three candidates adapted their populist messages by respecting the authority of the Sultan and the region's political culture, resulting in a *dual-track* communication strategy that combined pro-people narratives with the preservation of the legitimacy of traditional elites.

This study concludes that populism in the 2024 Presidential Election in the Special Region of Yogyakarta functioned not only as a communication strategy to enhance electoral support but also as a contextual and adaptive political practice shaped by local socio-political dynamics. These findings contribute to the literature on political communication by demonstrating that the effectiveness of populist strategies is influenced by regional social, cultural, and power structures, indicating that local populist practices are not necessarily synonymous with the anti-elite rhetoric commonly observed at the national level.

Keywords: political communication, populism, personal branding, 2024 Presidential Election, Special Region of Yogyakarta, communication strategy.