



Prabowo Subianto's Political Branding on Instagram in the 2024 Presidential Election

Galih Pratama^{1*}, Marlinda Irwanti², Mowafg Masuwd³

^{1*}Institut Ummul Quro Al-Islami Bogor, Indonesia. e-mail: galih.pratama@iuqibogor.ac.id

²Universitas Sahid Jakarta, Indonesia. e-mail: marlinda@usahid.ac.id

³University of Zawia, Libya. e-mail: masuwd@zu.edu.ly

Abstract

New media, especially Instagram, has emerged as a new chapter in the discourse of utilizing political marketing of an actor, such as the *@prabowo.gibran2* account. This research aims to discover Prabowo's political branding on Instagram and its relevance to George Herber Mead's symbolic interactionism theory. This research uses an interpretive social paradigm, and the research methodology uses virtual ethnography by accessing, researching, and analyzing media spaces, media documents, media objects, and user experiences. The research results show that Prabowo's political branding includes a free lunch and milk program as a policy, *joget gemoy* as a candidate person, and a new direction of downstream politics as a party, providing ideology, structure, and vision-mission. As for George Herber Mead's view of self, *joget gemoy* is a reflex action of the organism and a realization and presentation of self in social situations. Second, related to the view of mind, the encounter between thoughts and symbols related to two fingers in the form of a Korean hand heart and the definition of the situation: Gibran's appointment as vice president is a foresighted choice of segmentation and downstream. Third, related to the view of society, two discoveries about the proof of universal democracy, namely, the white shirt as a sign of Jokowi-Prabowo reconciliation and the reconciliation of political figures.

Keywords: *Political branding, Prabowo Subianto, Instagram, Symbolic Interactionism*

Abstrak

Media baru khususnya media sosial Instagram telah hadir sebagai babak baru dalam wacana pemanfaatan pemasaran politik seorang aktor seperti halnya akun *@prabowo.gibran2*. Tujuan dalam penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana branding politik Prabowo dalam media sosial Instagram dan relevansinya dengan teori interaksionisme simbolik George Herber Mead. Penelitian ini menggunakan paradigma sosial interpretif, metodologi penelitiannya menggunakan etnografi virtual dengan cara mengakses, meneliti dan menganalisis ruang media, dokumen media, objek media dan pengalaman. Hasil penelitiannya adalah branding politik Prabowo dengan program makan siang dan susu gratis sebagai *policy*, *joged gemoy* sebagai *person* kandidat dan

arah baru politik hilirisasi sebagai *party* yang mencakup ideologi, struktur dan visi-misi. Adapun pandangan George Herber Mead; *self*; 'joget gemoy' sebagai tindakan refleksi organisme dan 'joget gemoy' sebagai realisasi dan presentasi diri dalam situasi sosial. *Kedua; mind*, Perjumpaan antara pikiran dan simbol terkait dua jari berbentuk *Korean hand heart* dan *Definition of the situation*: Penetapan Gibran sebagai wakil presiden menjadi kejelian pemilihan segmentasi dan hilirisasi. *Ketiga; society*: Dua penemuan tentang pembuktian demokrasi universal yaitu Baju putih sebagai tanda rekonsiliasi Jokowi-Prabowo dan rekonsiliasi tokoh politik.

Kata kunci: Branding Politik, Instagram, Prabowo Subianto, Interaksionisme Simbolik

INTRODUCTION

In politics, communication is an attitude or behavior related to creating symbols by integrating oneself into the political and value system. Communication can also be a form of communication through symbols (Chandra Agustin & Evi Nur Fadillah, 2024). Activities like this connect two elements: the government as the holder of power and the community as voters. This political behavior aims to equalize meaning and perception (Soemarno, 2002).

Organizations, parties, or companies need public attention. The goal is to create a good impression as something profitable. The attention formed builds behavior that is often called image. Society's paradigm regarding the term image is usually negative because the image is a fragile commodity. However, the term image is a brand image that should be assessed positively for the organization's success (Muchtar, 2016).

Today's communication is closely related to media space. The author is interested in taking the new media angle. According to Littlejohn, as quoted by Fajar Junaedi, new media is *a new period in which interactive technologies and network communications, particularly the internet, will transform society*. Accordingly, new media brings change to society (Junaedi, 2011).

Social media is a form of technological development (Pratama et al., 2023). Heryanto adds that Instagram is one of the components of new media and has a significant role in increasing public pressure. The many discussions on Instagram have created a new public space (Heryanto, 2011). Instagram seems to have an honorable place at a time when conventional media is limited by the interests of its owners in business or political matters with state domination and intervention (Heryanto, 2018).

Political branding is an old technique that political contestants commonly use to gain popularity during a campaign. In his book *"The Marketing of the President"*, Newman highlights that political branding is very similar to branding in business. He states that to create a strong political brand, a candidate or party must understand the needs and desires of voters and consistently communicate messages that align with those expectations. Similarly, Lees-Marshment explains in his work *"Political Marketing and British Political Parties"* that political

branding involves the process of identifying and forming a political identity that can attract voters (Marshment, 2008). He emphasized the importance of market research, audience segmentation, and positioning in political branding strategies (Kustiawan, 2022). Although the meaning of politics itself is a challenge because politics is a dynamic and hot issue to cover, it is also a threat (Alfira et al., 2023).

The presidential candidate in the 2014 election, Prabowo Subianto, is often said to resemble the proclaimer Soekarno, as can be seen from his way of dressing and wearing a piece that depicts Soekarno, who was firm and tried to raise militant nationalist and patriotic ideas. Prabowo Subianto and Soekarno have many similarities, so in this case, the charisma embedded in Soekarno, who once ruled as the first president of the Republic of Indonesia, is reused as political capital for the presidential candidate (Amalo, 2015). Nevertheless, unfortunately, Prabowo had to accept defeat this year by pocketing 62,576,444 votes, equivalent to 46.85% (Maharani, 2014).

In the 2019 election contest, Prabowo ran again in the same style, displaying Soekarno's safari. Muttaqin (2020) said that Prabowo still had the same appearance, showing the soul of a fighter for justice for the people and the Indonesian nation like Soekarno. In 2019, Prabowo had to accept defeat with 68,650,239 votes, equivalent to 44.50% (Farisa, 2019).

In the presidential election to be held on February 14, 2024, Prabowo seems to have forgotten the symbols that were previously displayed. In terms of appearance or speech, he was known to be fierce, firm, and patriotic, like a proper former Lieutenant General of the Indonesian National Armed Forces. However, Prabowo Subiyanto has changed into a relaxed and entertaining person by demonstrating *joget* (which means ‘dancing’), which is interpreted by the audience as *joget gemoy*. *Gemoy* (which means ‘cute’ or ‘adorable’) is an invitation to young voters to do cheerful politics (Mubarrod & Syarwi, 2024). To clarify the differences made by the political contestation carried out by Prabowo Subiyanto, it can be seen in the social media images below:



Figure 1
Prabowo's 2014 Look



Figure 2
Prabowo's 2019 Look



Figure 3
Prabowo-Gibran 2024 Animation

History has recorded Prabowo Subianto's political career journey. In 2024, Prabowo Subianto faces a new chapter to advance again by partnering with a young regional head, Gibran Rakabuming Raka. This study will explore the issue of Prabowo Subianto on Instagram as political branding in the 2024 presidential election, which is analyzed using George Herber Mead's symbolic interaction theory.

The study of political science has received considerable attention among scholars and academics. This study categorizes it into two tendencies. The first tendency concerns the development of political communication influenced by the development of voters in society. The second tendency concerns Prabowo Subianto's political branding, considering he is running for president for the third time.

The first tendency is about political communication. Political communication is a way to create political construction by looking at a nation's conditions and changes. Research conducted by Annisa Mina Ramadhani was entitled “*Nasionalisme Versus Liberalisme Sebagai Komunikasi Politik Prabowo Dalam Pemilihan Presiden 2014*” (Ramadhani, 2015). This study uses a qualitative field research method by critically analyzing the discourse built by Prabowo Subianto in Yogyakarta. Nationalism and liberalism became the primary weapons in the discourse of the 2014 presidential election, which contained a brief meaning of a people's economy free from foreign interference. The results of the study concluded that the terms nationalism and liberalism were difficult for the people of Yogyakarta to understand, so this was the basis for Prabowo Subianto's not being elected in the 2014 presidential election.

In the same aspect, Alvin (2019) conducted research with the title “*Manajemen Citra Politik Prabowo Subianto dan Sandiaga Uno Melalui Akun @Prabowo dan @Sandiuno*”. This study uses the Simunjak typology method (2017) by analyzing the contents of Instagram accounts. In his research, he said that image is one of the components of political communication presented by Prabowo, not with the identity of a Retired Indonesian National Army General but by depicting a religious person through posts on the Instagram platform to attract voters from Muslims. In contrast, Sandiaga Uno presents as a former santri in the post-Islamism era, not as a businessman. Alvin's research is strengthened by Geoffrey's theory (1986), which states that image management is an effort to change one's self-image according to the needs of the individual (Alvin, 2019).

The second tendency is about political branding. Research conducted by Darmawan M. Arif entitled “*Komunikasi Politik Prabowo Subianto pada Akun Facebook (Analisis Percakapan Dalam Membentuk Personal Branding Militer)*”. This research uses the Rampersad approach model and includes conversation analysis that views interaction as a structural activity using three methods, namely adjacency pairs, turn-taking, and transition relevance place. Although his

conversation on online media is not a perfect interaction because it is not structured, such as having an opener and a close, the personal branding effort was quite successful because the clarification was conveyed about past accusations regarding human rights cases pinned on Prabowo Subianto in the military world (Darmawan, 2015).

Based on the search, this study has a novelty that can be considered in the results of this study: First, the symbolic approach in digital political marketing. This study adopts George H. Mead's symbolic interactionism theory in the context of digital political branding, which is still rarely used in political marketing studies on Instagram and political symbols used in Prabowo's campaign, such as *Joget Gemoy*, a two-finger symbol modified into a Korean hand heart, and downstream narratives, are studied as representations of social interactions that shape the candidate's political identity. Second, a virtual ethnographic study of digital campaigns on Instagram. The virtual ethnographic method in this study is an innovative approach to understanding how Instagram users respond and interact with Prabowo's campaign content and is different from conventional political marketing research that focuses more on surveys or media discourse analysis. This study is deeper in observing engagement dynamics such as comments, likes, and audience participation in spreading campaign symbols (Amin et al., 2024).

Third, the transformation of political branding through popular cultural symbols. Phenomena such as *Joget Gemoy* become a new form of candidate personal branding that utilizes elements of popular culture and humor to create closeness with young voters, and this concept shows how political branding has evolved from mere campaign promises to more fluid and acceptable digital cultural expressions in various levels of society. Fourth, the relevance to changes in voter preferences in the digital era. This study highlights how the pattern of political interaction on social media has shifted from previously elite-to-mass-based to more participatory and interactive. Prabowo's campaign shows a branding strategy that is not only based on work programs (such as free lunch) but also builds a more relatable political persona through symbols of social interaction on digital media.

Prabowo Subianto's political career journey in 2024 faced a new chapter to advance by partnering with a young man as a regional head, Gibran Rakabuming Raka. This study will explore Prabowo Subianto's optimism with all forms of communication strategies, actor political branding, appearance, programs, and various political discourses that will be played. Researchers will examine the use of new media, especially Instagram, academically and systematically by analyzing the meaning contained therein using George Herber Mead's symbolic interactionism analysis knife.

One of the Instagram social media accounts that has caught the public's attention is *@prabowo.gibran2*. This social media account is used as the official account of the presidential candidate pair Prabowo-Gibran, who already has many followers. Through this social media account, there have also been many positive responses from Instagram users, with the number of likes reaching 3,375 times (Sidauruk & Rosano, 2024). Therefore, this social media account must be researched to determine the effectiveness of political branding to succeed.

METHOD

As a basis for observing cyber media, the paradigm carried out in this study is the interpretive social paradigm. The interpretive paradigm in the form of text can be words, audio recordings, videos, magazines, books, and so on. From this text, someone can convey their message subjectively. Thus, researchers can observe the motives of their actions by studying social actions based on social interactions and subjective social meaning systems. This means that the interpretive paradigm allows human experience or reality to be multi-interpreted (Nasrullah, 2022).

This research was conducted using the symbolic interaction interpretivism approach. According to (Morissan, 2019), interaction studies ideas that give birth to cultural symbols, and meaning will be produced from all actions and attitudes. Thus, symbolic interactionism is a way of thinking about individual and group thinking. (Nasrullah, 2022). The methodology used in this research is the virtual ethnography methodology proposed by Christine Hine using critical analysis through four levels, namely: media space, media documents, media objects, and user experience (Hine, 2000). Critical analysis is the activity of analyzing a particular set of constructions that form reality, meaning that our self-perception of something is limited by a view that defines something as true and something else as false (Ayun Masfupah, 2021).

This study will analyze cyber media, focusing on the Instagram account of the official national campaign team (TKN) *@prabowo.gibran2*. This account has a lot of positive responses from Instagram users, with the number of likes reaching 3,375 times (Sidauruk & Rosano, 2024). The author, as an ethnographer, will analyze the data that appears on the surface of Instagram with two levels, namely the micro level and the macro level. The micro level is text in media space and media documents, while the macro level is context in media objects and experiences. However, the object and experience levels are not entirely in the macro space because the emergence of context departs from the text depending on interest in the subject.

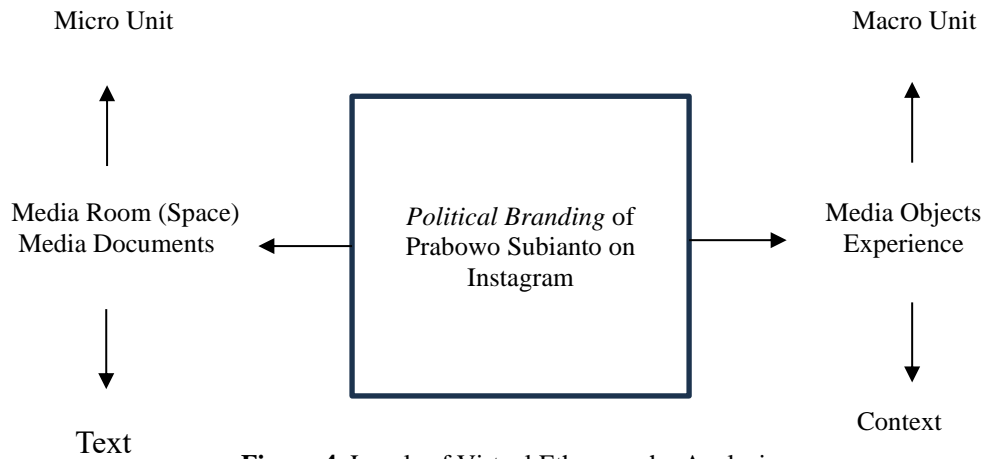


Figure 4. Levels of Virtual Ethnography Analysis
Source: (Nasrullah, 2022)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Below, researchers summarize several unique findings as the novelty of Prabowo Subianto's political brand in the 2024 presidential election.

a. Free lunch and milk

In this section, the researcher will examine the digital footprint in the @prabowo.gibran2 account regarding policy, which covers policies, issues, and work programs. Here is an explanation of a short video containing a free meal campaign:



Figure 4.1

Figure 5. Rosan Roeslani, as the Prabowo Gibran Winning Team, is Socializing the Free Meal Program

“Program pertama yang kita luncurkan adalah memberikan makan siang gratis dan susu gratis di sekolah dan pesantren untuk serta bantuan gizi untuk anak balita terutama dan ibu hamil, ini akan kita laksanakan melalui seluruh tim kampanye daerah yang berada di 38 provinsi dan juga relawan yang sudah berjalan pada hari ini, pada masa kampanye ini dan ini akan Insya Allah dilanjutkan apabila pasangan pak prabowo dan mas gibran ini terpilih menjadi presiden dan wakil presiden Indonesia 2024”

The review above is the content of a short video delivered by the chairman of the National Campaign Team, Rosan Roeslani. The third time Prabowo's candidacy in the Republic of Indonesia presidential election, this activity of distributing free lunch and milk is interesting. The reason is that this program has never existed in previous presidential elections, either Prabowo or other presidential candidates; the researchers see the taking of issues and policies like this as a new political brand enough to invite public enthusiasm, especially lower-middle-class people.

According to (Cangara, 2023), the first thing that needs to be considered in political marketing is political products. The researchers see the selection of political products, such as free lunch and milk, increasing new passion for politics in Indonesia. The second political marketing strategy is market segmentation; free lunch and milk awaken the lower middle class from today's political saturation.

The analysis of the campaign team's language use includes identifying key themes, such as improving child nutrition, reducing stunting, and supporting education. In addition, persuasive language, data visualization, and testimonials from beneficiaries can be analyzed to understand how the audience delivers and receives the message. User interactions, such as the number of likes, comments, and shares, also provide insight into the public response to the program.

The implementation of this program will involve many stakeholders, including the central government, local governments, schools, and local communities. Challenges such as budget allocation, distribution logistics, and food quality standards are important issues in its implementation. In addition, this program is also expected to impact the agricultural and livestock sectors, with increased demand for milk and other food products.

However, the program is predicted not always to run well because one Instagram user commented on the campaign video uploaded about the free lunch and milk program. The researcher saw that one comment showed less support for the program initiated by Prabowo because it had to absorb a relatively large budget. However, no one responded by liking, commenting in agreement, or commenting that contradicted him. This means the program requires in-depth study to become a program that all Indonesian people support.

b. Joged Gemoy

The third political marketing is a person. This includes the candidate and supporting figures displayed to the public or voters. Here is a digital footprint on Instagram that displays the figure of a candidate, Prabowo:



Figure 6. The Figure of Prabowo Candidate Who is Dancing Happily

The video above is a moment in the drawing of presidential and vice-presidential candidate numbers held on November 14, 2023. In the video, the researchers saw Prabowo coming down from the stage after opening the ballot number while showing his signature dance moves. The caption below the video is an Instagram caption that appears to be responding to the audience's response to Prabowo, who taunts and belittles him with a dance response that was taken into account.

If we look at Prabowo's career path in the military, the *joget* movement is nothing new. However, in the world of political contestation on the scale of the presidential election, it is a unique performance that is rarely found, especially in the previous chapter, it was explained that in the previous presidential election, Prabowo often displayed a patriotic statesman style that came from a firm retired commander.

Digital content, often featuring *Joget Gemoy* by Prabowo and Gibran, is widely distributed on platforms such as YouTube, SoundCloud, and TikTok. For example, a video on YouTube shows Prabowo dancing on stage after delivering a speech. In addition, a remix of the *Joget Gemoy* music was uploaded to SoundCloud by DJ AYRAP GLOWWING.

Identification of visual and audio elements, such as dance movements, facial expressions, accompanying music, and interaction with the audience, can create an entertaining and engaging atmosphere for the audience. Comments and responses from social media users also provide insight into public perception of the action. For example, comments on SoundCloud show enthusiasm and support for the Prabowo-Gibran pair.

This action often occurs in the 2024 Presidential Election campaign series, where Prabowo and Gibran try to get closer to various levels of society, including the younger generation. By showing a more relaxed and entertaining side through *Joget Gemoy*, they try to build a friendlier and more populist image.

This phenomenon also reflects modern campaign strategies that utilize digital platforms and popular culture trends to increase electability. A study examined the influence of *Joget Gemoy* content on the TikTok platform on Prabowo-Gibran's electability among Generation Z. The results showed that this kind of approach was effective in attracting attention and support from young voters (Martiza et al., 2024).

From some of the *joget gemoy* content that has been done, there have been several comments from Instagram users such as *@hanny_axelent*, who called on other users to vote for Prabowo as president with a jargon that is quite popular in cyberspace, namely "*All in Prabowo Gibran*". The user with the name *@hanny_axelent* took the role of a supporter whom the researchers highlighted because he received the highest number of likes with 559 from other Instagram users. This is an automatic feature on Instagram.

It is different from the comment written by an Instagram user named *@zahraa_sya1*. The researchers state that her comment contained question words that mocked Prabowo's dancing gesture. *@zahraa_sya1*'s comment as someone who is not a Prabowo supporter received less response from other Instagram users.

Regarding the aspect of the person in political marketing, Cangara does not only talk about the actor figure, but the supporting figure is also important to join in this dance gesture. There are many videos of Prabowo supporters in the Flash Mob CFC Sudirman Jakarta event. The followers or supporters doing the flash mob activity above are accompanied by music titled 'Oke Gas', which is heard, looks fun, and is uploaded to Instagram, especially among young people.

This is in line with the theory presented by Cangara regarding promotion—the need for jargon or slogans that stick in the public's minds. The presence of the *joget* movement accompanied by 'Oke Gas' music amid such hot political competition, the people seemed to be carried away by the atmosphere and even gave the name *joget* with the term *gemoy* as mentioned in the background section.

The researchers also tried to enter the comment space in the video upload of the flash mob activity above. The comment that the researchers highlighted succeeded in inviting the most likes and respondents from other Instagram users, with a total of 787 likes and 216 respondents. Comments on behalf of the user *@_hopiter46* connote mockery of presidential candidate Prabowo by calling him a *badut* (which means 'clown'). However, the researchers tried to trace the contents of the respondents to the comments, which invited pros and cons. This means that the *joget* movement received subjective assessments, both positive and negative, depending on the perspective of supporters or haters.

c. The Spirit of Downstream Political Direction

According to Nimmo, political direction is included in the party, which covers ideology, structure, and the vision-mission of candidates. The political movement downstream is a hot issue that political actors will echo.



Figure 7. Downstream Political Movement

“Hilirisasi merupakan kunci untuk Indonesia makmur, beliau (Jokowi) sering panggil saya, menhan, kalau kita tidak hilirisasi maka Indonesia tidak akan menjadi negara Makmur, selamanya akan menjadi UMR, upah murah selamanya”(Mikhael Gewati, 2023)

The above statement is an excerpt from Prabowo Subianto's speech at the Jakarta International Expo (JIExpo). The speech emphasized that Indonesia's prosperity begins with the people's welfare, which is the key. Still, foreign countries expressed concerns about the downstream policy's long-term viability because the nation's children will manage natural resources (SDA) in the future.

Analysis of digital content published by Prabowo and Gibran related to downstream policies, including speeches, interviews, social media posts, and official documents highlighting plans and strategies for downstream natural resources. For example, in his inauguration speech on October 20, 2024, President Prabowo emphasized the importance of downstream as an effort to increase the added value of SDA and achieve food and energy self-sufficiency. These results will create jobs and reduce dependence on raw material exports. In addition, the use of language that emphasizes economic independence and sustainability can be analyzed to understand how the message is conveyed to the public. User interactions on social media platforms, such as comments and likes, also provide insight into the public response to this policy.

The expression of support was conveyed in the comment column by the username @tatangsuherman1663, followed by two other users, @edizhangxiaoqing and @andrekancil5. The three comments above considered Prabowo's downstream program a proven friendship and

harmony. This indicates that Prabowo's political direction has received a positive response from Instagram users and researchers.

The downstream referred to in the image and speech above is in the form of defending natural resources so that they are not released to foreign countries. Likewise, the social security program, included in the downstream aspect, received a positive response from Instagram users. An Instagram user named *@fafa.abdelah* appreciated Jokowi's social security program, which Prabowo will continue by calling “*kreatif*” (which means ‘creative’). Encouragement for Prabowo was also conveyed in the comment column with the username *@roslichaa* with the term “*bravoo*”. The researchers considered the three points as Prabowo's political rebranding in the 2024 presidential election as a new path taken to gain many votes from constituents in cyberspace, especially on social media Instagram.

George Herber Mead's Perspective on Prabowo's Symbolic Interactionism on Instagram

a. Self

Mead considers the self to be an object for itself. An action is the result of intelligence that is united with experience. When an object is faced with an object, there is an organism that acts reflexively without self-awareness, only consciously. In social activities, the self or object will forget a little about its past experiences, which makes it difficult to involve its intelligence rationally. *Joget gemoy* is an example of a phenomenon that aligns with Mead's paradigm above. The researchers see themselves or objects being carried away by the atmosphere of the 2024 presidential election political activities.



Figure 8. Joget Gemoy is an Example of a Phenomenon that is in Line with Mead's Paradigm

The political atmosphere became relaxed and flexible due to Prabowo's dancing movements as a political actor. Reflexively, the experience of society, the audience, and constituents seemed to forget their past about Prabowo, who was firm as a military man and patriotic as a statesman. In context, Prabowo is an actor and object on Instagram. The *joget*

gemoy movement has garnered many responses among Instagram users, both supporters and non-supporters. One of the responses came from a user named @apkrnw, a supporter who invited other Instagram users to support by clicking the like button on his comment. He managed to garner 24,815 likes.

It differs from the second response with the username @anand_siregar, who responded to the *joget* gesture with the term *gemoy* by typing “*makin cinta sama Prabowo, larinya benar-benar gemoy*” (which means ‘more in love with Prabowo, his running is really cute’). The media objects presented on Instagram seem to prove Mead's theory that other people will give meaning to an object by reflexively forgetting the meaning of the previous object in the past.

Self-realization in social situations, Mead brings the concept of symbolic interactionism with the nature of "I" and "Me". "I" is a non-reflective individual action, meaning that an action is done consciously involving intelligence and experience to glorify a masterpiece. "Me" is a reflective action limited by ethics, aesthetics, and values that produce meaning by being agreed upon collectively in the process of social interaction.

The researchers conducted a virtual search on Instagram social media regarding the practice of *joget gemoy* both by Prabowo as an actor and his supporters as voters. Prabowo showed his *joget* movements after speaking in a debate forum. The researchers saw the action as a response to Prabowo as an object to glorify his masterpiece regarding the content of the debate discourse.

Next, regarding self-presentation, this concept belongs to Erving Goffman, who continued Mead's thoughts about self. According to him, self-presentation is related to the behavior of actors who, with this behavior, can control the behavior of others as feedback and goal setting. In Figure 4.3 above, the researcher sees self-presentation from supporters with a collective dance action packaged with aerobics. This shows the harmony between political reality and Erving Goffman's theory that Prabowo's behavior with his dance can successfully control public enthusiasm.

b. Mind

Mead's paradigm, when an individual sees a symbol, it will enter the central nervous system; from here, the mind plays a role in absorbing the symbol into meaning. Symbols in the form of objects or things enter the mind organism system, producing ideas that then become behavior. If there is an element of response in the self through the intelligent organism from past experiences, then in the context of the mind, the organism in the central nervous system responds mentally and with attitudes to produce meaning and behavior.



Figure 9. The Gesture of Two Fingers Pressed Between the Thumb and Forefinger is a Form of Love

The image above shows a two-finger gesture in which the thumb and index finger are attached to form a love shape. This kind of gesture is not uncommon among young people. Researchers see the gesture above as symbolic interactionism that has its meaning from a presidential candidate, Prabowo.

The two-fingered heart-shaped hand gesture, popularly known as the Korean Hand Heart, is an expression of love and gratitude through body language conveyed to fans (timlo.net, 2024). When political actors and presidential candidates do a body language movement like this, the researchers interpret that perhaps it is not only a feeling of love that Prabowo conveys but also an invitation to vote for him in the presidential election contest because, in addition to being in the form of love, it also contains two fingers shown to the public, the number "two" is Prabowo's serial number in the presidential election.

The two-finger clenched movement forming a love or Korean hand heart that is displayed invites a positive response from Instagram users. According to Mead's concept of mind, this is a symbol that enters the audience's minds, especially in the Instagram media space. On the one hand, it symbolizes Prabowo's love for supporters, but in another context, the researchers, as Instagram users, see it as an invitation to support to choose number two. An Instagram user with the name *@hendisatria* even said in his comments that Prabowo showed his positive aura, followed by another Instagram user named *@ramli_alami* who conveyed a two-finger salute as a symbol of an invitation to support other Instagram users. This is a construction of the audience's mind that cannot be limited.

c. Definition of the Situation

William Isaac Thomas first introduced the concept of definition of the situation about an actor who has the power to change his definition. The change in question is to eliminate

other people's stimulus to the actor's representation in the past. Here are some interpretations of symbolic interactionism in the Prabowo Subianto presidential election contest:

Gibran, the mayor of Solo and the vice-presidential candidate accompanying Prabowo is known to be relatively young, still under forty years old. Researchers see the significance of netting the voices of young people, especially since he has a visionary idea, namely the journey towards a golden Indonesia.

“Ini angka tinggi karena anak-anak muda semua, anak-anak muda yang ingin menjadi bagian dalam perjalanan Indonesia Emas, Gibran pun mengucapkan banyak terima kasih terhadap Prabowo yang telah memberikan ruang kepada anak muda seperti saya, ruang untuk menjadi bagian dalam perjalanan menuju Indonesia Emas” (Walda Marison, 2024)

The above statement was delivered by Gibran at Istora Senayan, Central Jakarta, right on the day of voting for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The press release above is sufficient to prove that Gibran is projected very maturely to pocket the votes of the youth with his ideas towards a ‘Golden Indonesia’.

Not only that. Prabowo appointed Gibran as his vice-presidential candidate as a sign of the direction of Jokowi's downstream politics because it is known that Gibran is the eldest son of President Jokowi. As explained in the previous section regarding downstream, downstream is a continuation. Prabowo Gibran will continue the good things done by Jokowi for ten years. The strategic issues that are always campaigned are the management of natural resources and social security.

On another issue, the *Definition of the situation* that the researchers interpret is a “*sejuk dan aman*” (which means ‘peaceful and safe’) campaign. After all, Prabowo-Jokowi were political opponents in two consecutive presidential elections. Therefore, the 2024 presidential election defines Prabowo as a friend by holding his eldest son as a sign of reconciliation.

The campaign of breathing peace and coolness has become a symbol of Prabowo's politics today by collaborating with Jokowi's eldest son and the discourse of down-streaming Jokowi's programs. The symbol invited a response from an Instagram user named @ratusayoga, who said that Prabowo's peaceful campaign “*bikin rakyat bahagia*” (which means ‘makes people happy’) and Prabowo's smile “*bikin murah rezeki*” (which means ‘makes easy sustenance’). This is in line with the thoughts of William Isaac Thomas, where actors have the power to change themselves. Prabowo transforms himself with coolness and

peace. This stems from the political rivalry between Jokowi and Prabowo in the two previous presidential election contests.

d. Society

As a student of George Herber Mead, Blumer contributed to the development of symbolic interactionism theory about the process of the meaning of a symbol. Blumer put forward three sharp arguments. First, meaning is something hidden in an object. Second, objects do not mean anything except humans themselves interpret them. Third, meaning is a social construction created from interaction activities (Arisandi, 2014).

In the first chapter, the researcher explains Prabowo's political journey over the last ten years. Prabowo often dresses like the first president, Soekarno, which has a patriotic and nationalistic meaning because of the background of both of them as accomplished military men. In the 2024 presidential election contest, Prabowo took off the clothes above. Prabowo often wears white clothes like Jokowi, even though he still wears Soekarno's clothes. This symbol of Prabowo's figure shows something almost similar to Joko Widodo, and there is a firmness in it (Asriadi, 2021). The researchers see that in addition to downstream Jokowi's programs, Prabowo also continued Jokowi's style of dress, which was used by Prabowo both when serving as Minister of Defense and in the political campaign process.



Figure 10. Event Welding diversity, Mr. Prabowo attended Mr. Erickthohir's Invitation to Celebrate Christmas with BUMN

According to political psychologists and personal branding experts, color has meaning because it can affect a person's mood and give an impression. White is a sacred, noble, and clean color (Natasya, 2019).

Referring to Blumer's theory related to interaction activities, the white shirt worn by Prabowo could have occurred because of a fairly intense interaction process with President Jokowi during one period serving as Minister of Defense. The author tries to apply Blumer's

theory about the meaning of the white shirt symbol because of the intensity of interaction between Prabowo and Jokowi.

Instagram users are seen interpreting the symbol in the white shirt worn by Prabowo. The white shirt depicts the “*bapak pemersatu bangsa*” (which means ‘the father of nation’s unification’), said Instagram user @yayat2268. This was complemented by Instagram user @jumawanhadi751 by saying “*inilah nilai persatuan dan kesatuan dari Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*” (which means ‘This is the value of unity and integrity of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika’).

The Jokowi-Prabowo reconciliation with the white shirt symbol above successfully created peace and coolness in the presidential election contestation in society, which was proven on Instagram social media.

Mead assumes that universality is an expression of the unification of attitudes from different organizations in the name of society. In this unification, there will be power over other organizations, which can be called a political expression of government toward a society regulated by function, not power.



Figure 11. The Moment Sujatmiko Gave his Support to Prabowo

The picture above is an interesting phenomenon. A prominent party figure named Budiman Sujatmiko gave his support to Prabowo. Budiman Sujatmiko has been a long-time political opponent in Prabowo's political career. He entered Prabowo's winning line for a reason.

“Setelah dua puluh lima tahun membaca paradoks Indonesia yang ditulis Prabowo semangatnya sama dengan aktivis yang memperjuangkan Indonesia, tolong pak Prabowo majukan kesejahteraan umum dengan mengembangkan koperasi, desa, jaminan sosial untuk rakyat Indonesia. Saya yakin bahwa Prabowo akan mampu menyatukan kelompok nasionalis”(Muchammad Dafi Yusuf, 2023).

The author sees Mead's assumption as very relevant to the political phenomenon above, the dynamic democratic performance carried out by Prabowo. The unification of two large organizations has united in the name of activists; for Mead, this is a form of universality of democracy. The emergence of a political figure named Budiman Sujatmiko has surprised the public, especially in the virtual world of Instagram. As the researchers have explained in the previous section, Budiman Sujatmiko has been in the Jokowi presidential winning wagon for two consecutive terms. Today, he changed course and moved to Prabowo's winning team.

An Instagram user named *@nurmasjitahali* made a rather ticklish comment. The researchers see that the comment is negative and touches on the issue of human rights. This makes it possible that Budiman Sujatmiko is a 98 activist who is identical to the issue of human rights violations. However, it differs from the comment on behalf of *@deanamalia25*, who optimistically supports Budiman Sujatmiko's statement that there are improvements, especially in the issue of human rights. This kind of dynamism shows universality in democracy.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the virtual analysis above on the topic of symbolic content in Prabowo's political movement, the researcher found that there was a newness in Prabowo's political branding as the relevance of Nimmo's theory of political marketing, including First, free lunch and milk programs. This is the political marketing related to policy. Second, *joget gemoy* is a candidate who must appear unique and enter the minds of the community as a brand. Third is a new direction of downstream politics; this political branding is related to the candidate's ideology, structure, and vision mission.

The second study is on the meaning from the perspective of George Herber Mead. Divided into three parts: first, self, *Joget gemoy* as a reflex action of the organism, and *Joget gemoy* as the realization and presentation of oneself in a social situation. Second, mind. The encounter between the mind and the symbol related to the two fingers in the form of the Korean hand heart and *Definition of the situation*: The appointment of Gibran, Jokowi's eldest son, as vice president, is a careful selection of segmentation and downstream. Both enter the minds of the people. Third, society. Two discoveries about universal democracy prove that white clothes signify Jokowi-Prabowo reconciliation and the reconciliation of political figures who were initially political rivals but then became supporters.

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