

POLITICS THROUGH FASHION: JOKOWI, SEMIOTICS, AND THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT. This study explores the complexity of Jokowi's political fashion as a visual marker of status, identity, and political power, along with the digital technology advancement. The purpose of this article is to analysed details about Jokowi's political power through fashion, which is related to five specific moments during the 2019 political campaign until his current leadership. The authors classified two typologies of clothing, including white and black shades of casual clothes and Indonesia's traditional clothes. Roland Barthes's semiotics theory and methods helps us to interpret series of symbols on Jokowi's clothing. This is a qualitative research with document analysis procedure, including electronic material contain text and images (Jokowi's Instagram archives) related to the main issue. Research shown that clothing wasn't just an everyday business for Jokowi, but it is also tools that brands his personal identity. Public attention is often stolen when he incorporates local elements in his fashion style. The value of diversity (*Kebhinnekaan*) in Jokowi's traditional clothing appearance couldn't be separated with his identity as a president, as political figure, as Jokowi.

Keywords: Politics through Fashion; Jokowi; Semiotic Analysis; Instagram.

POLITIK DALAM BUSANA: JOKOWI, SEMIOTIKA, DAN ERA MEDIA SOSIAL

ABSTRAK. Studi ini mengeksplorasi kompleksitas politik dalam busana Jokowi sebagai penanda visual akan status, identitas, serta kekuatan politik seiring dengan kemajuan teknologi digital. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kekuatan politik Jokowi secara detil melalui fesyen yang dikenakannya, dikaitkan dengan lima momen spesifik selama kampanye 2019 hingga kepemimpinan saat ini. Penulis mengklasifikasikan dua tipologi pakaian, yaitu pakaian kasual bernuansa putih dan hitam serta pakaian tradisional Indonesia. Teori dan metode semiotika Roland Barthes membantu penulis untuk menafsirkan rangkaian simbol pada pakaian Jokowi. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan prosedur analisis dokumen, termasuk data elektronik berupa teks dan gambar (arsip Instagram Jokowi) yang berkaitan dengan pokok permasalahan. Riset menunjukkan bahwa pakaian tidak hanya sekadar bisnis sehari-hari Jokowi, tetapi juga alat untuk mencap identitas pribadinya. Perhatian publik kerap tercuri ketika ia memasukkan unsur lokal dalam gaya busananya. Nilai kebhinekaan dalam penampilan busana adat Jokowi tidak lepas dari identitasnya sebagai presiden, sebagai tokoh politik, sebagai seorang Jokowi.

Kata kunci: Politik dalam Busana; Jokowi; Analisis Semiotika; Instagram.

INTRODUCTION

Visually displayed politics through fashion are believed to be able to reflect particular meanings or messages. As a leader and political figure, Joko Widodo, or Jokowi, often steals the public's attention with his fashion sense. At various momentums, Jokowi managed to reap multiple discourses through his variety of iconic clothing. The authors realize that Jokowi's ability to perform his image in public spaces is one of his most significant political power.

This practice has emerged since his leadership as the Governor of DKI Jakarta. Highlighting Jokowi's appearance in the 2019 general election, the authors find his politics through fashion at that time was a clever strategy he did to win. Referring to Jokowi and Ma'ruf's campaign, many scholars begin to ask how fashion become an important political statement. Nowadays, during his second period of leadership as President of Indonesia,

Jokowi appears with relatively consistent vibes of clothes. Still, he is often seen wearing a casual plain white shirt, without any pattern, accompanied by his iconic 'slightly bent upwards' sleeves style. Jokowi also wears a variety of Indonesia's traditional clothing when attending several state events.

At first, politics through fashion was initiated by the interaction of local authorities with the Dutch colonial, which was crucial at that time. Then, the political paradigm in clothing is finally produced by the interaction between community who compete with each other in the leaders' supervision towards Indonesia's independence (Roces & Edwards, 2010, p. 101). These events further demonstrate the increasing complications (turning point) of the practice of politics through fashion in Indonesia. Clothing or clothes that are mixed and matched into fashion then classified as namely a form of communication carried out by humans through various alternative objects. Such as clothing, jewelry, and various other attributes.

According to Veblen (1899) in Yangzom (2016, p. 2), the efforts of political actors to build a positive image through clothing have been debated by classical philosophers. This happens because while showing clothing as a form of expression of wealth or power, it can also strengthen social stratification lines in society. The attachment between fashion and politics is commonplace. The authors believed that clothing could speak in various units of language beyond words only expressed by individuals through verbal-linguistic elements. The means of communication through clothing blends are universally applicable and have almost no limitations in their implementation.

If the authors try to classify, there are at least two types of Jokowi clothing combinations often worn on certain occasions: white-black shades of casual clothes (in the form of shirts and trousers) and Indonesia's traditional clothing. These two fashion typologies are (almost) always written in Jokowi's fashion style principle. Related to this issue, the authors notice that Jokowi uses social media, particularly Instagram, as a political tool by displaying different content to expose his power through fashion. Using Instagram, Jokowi tagged the eminence presence of virtual reality that opens up his opportunities to attract public attention on massive scale behind his political fashion sense.

Semiotics or often known as semiology (by Saussurean), is a study that examines matters related to the interpretation of meaning, communication, signs or sign processes, and symbolism. In general, semiotics includes the study of signs or epistemology regarding the existence and actuality of signs in human life. In understanding semiotic theory, experts explain that everything that is seen can be interpreted or classified as a sign or symbol.

Along with development in the 20th century, the thinking and use of symbols often became a public concern and afterward shifted as a research topic among academics. In this regard, Roland Barthes, well-known expert in semiotics, brings a new perspective to the study of semiotics in the form of clothing. He gave suggestions regarding a fashion study system based on language and its interpretation.

The tripartite method or three structures for analyzing the meaning of clothing was introduced by Barthes (1983) quoted from Owyong (2009: 194), first is the technological structure or actual form based on the clothing itself, second is the iconic structure or depiction of the clothing, and third is the verbal structure or description of clothing in the form of language or words.

When highlighted using the semiotics theory and method point of view, clothing no longer stands alone when faced with a specific moment.

The system of language and meaning behind clothing also dramatically influences the message to be communicated. Semiotics nailed to examine matters related to the interpretation of meaning, communication, sign processes (semiosis), and symbolism. Understanding the semiotics theory, experts believe everything seen can be interpreted or classified as a sign or symbol.

Barthes' concept of semiotics is called *two orders of signification*, which involves the primary sign as *denotative* and the second sign as *connotative*. The significance of the first stage or *denotative*, namely the most accurate meaning of a sign. The content is an adrift meeting depiction that includes a *signifier* (expression) and a *signified* (content) in a sign against reality. Denotation can also be understood as something that is described by a sign against a particular object (Wibowo, 2013, p. 21).

Following Barthes' argument, connotation as the significance of the second stage is how symbols are described subjectively. Connotation works to describe an interaction at the meeting between a sign and the feelings or emotions of the reader (subject), accompanied by values and culture. The connotation, in this case, is related to the concept of *myths* which sees culture as an element in understanding reality. *Myths* are often known with a specific understanding that dominates individual mindsets according to the era or current moment. Thus, prejudice can be formed from individual attitudes based on the myths that influence them (Wibowo, 2013, p. 22).

From the semiotics theory point of view, the style of dress is one of the essential components. When Jokowi's appearance (body) is supported by various elements as well as other factors, such as clothing, character and behavior, facial expressions, speech, and so on, it can result in the visual image produced, as well as increasing the physical ability to control the surrounding environment individual self. This makes Jokowi's style of dress an indicator of others individuals' assessment of them, which is done intentionally or unintentionally.

On the other hand, Jokowi's sensational fashion appearances often trigger public discourse in social media. The presence of digital technology, especially gadgets, provides a broader experience of reality for each individual when using social media as a means to package the 'real' reality. According to that, the reality of an event can then cause or affect components that come from external sources, including audiences, the public, communicants, message recipients, or netizens. Social media can package reality in the real world using a track record in photos or videos. In this case, of course, the reality exposed on social media is easily manipulated by the individual who spreads it, and it is also easy to trigger different meanings by the public.

Clothing and all components contained in social media can reflect Jokowi's strength. It is like trying to project the desired image, knowing that the public can read the meaning in the signs, namely how to dress, body position, gestures, and facial expressions. The authors figured the meaning and importance of appearing in public spaces through social media could leave different discourses.

Based on similar issues, the authors explore the relationship between clothing, historical time, politics, gender, class, and religion in Indonesia using qualitative research conducted by Jean Gelman Taylor (2007). In his study, Taylor (2007) discusses the relationship of clothing variations to political and religious transformation, reflecting contemporary debates on identity, gender, and state constitutions. Taking a historical approach, he argues that politicians who campaigned in Indonesia's national elections 'tailored' their clothes to appeal to certain constituencies. He also sees clothing as a very strong marker or symbol of the dynamic transition of political life in Indonesia since Dutch colonialism. Clothing is often classified as traditional, in contrast to the universality of Western attire.

However, some parts are incomplete or have not been discussed relevantly based on the situation behind the implementation of political actors' fashion politics. The literature written by Taylor (2007) has not fully provided an understanding of what happened after the fashion political strategy was carried out in social media. There is still a missing link referring to developing a new identity based on certain symbols in clothing. Not to mention when the practice involves a meeting of cultures, discourses, and meanings related to the leadership of a figure adored by the community.

After conducting significant research and reviewing the literature on the main issues, it is clear that fashion and politics in Indonesia have intriguing complexities to study, especially in terms of symbols, meanings, and impacts. Therefore, this study aims to verify more detail about Jokowi's political power through fashion practice, which is related to five main momentums during the political campaign in 2019 until his current leadership (post-winning as president of Indonesia in the second period). The authors assume that the continuity of Jokowi's fashion style carried out by him during the second period could be found as a manifestation of his great political power.

Instagram helps the authors present relevant data, including Jokowi's online track record in the digital space. The focus of this study is to analyze our main issue using Roland Barthes' theory and semiotic method. Then, the authors oriented by the

phenomenon concerned to analyze and present the data framed in this research.

Limiting the timeline in this research, the authors display Jokowi's politics through fashion on Instagram into five main momentums. *First*, the exact moment when Jokowi was wearing a white-black casual attire at the end of his general election campaign was uploaded in April 2019. *Second*, highlighting the moment of the Indonesian independence ceremony, precisely on August 17th, 2019, when Jokowi wore traditional Balinese clothes. *Third*, the authors re-discovered the white-black attire during the Covid-19 pandemic when Jokowi visited several places, including the Wisma Atlet as an emergency public hospital and several other places leading to a new normal situation.

Fourth, the People Consultative Assembly moment, known as the MPR RI annual meeting, on August 14th, 2020, when Jokowi displayed his political power through the traditional clothing of Sabu, Rajua NTT. In the *fifth* and final case, the authors focus on examining the exact moment when Jokowi returns to attend MPR RI annual meeting on August 16th, 2021, in traditional Baduy clothing from Banten. The narrowing of the research object, divided into five particular momentums, is based on two typologies of Jokowi's casual-formal and traditional clothes. These moments were randomly selected according to some of Jokowi's most prominent social media appearances during his second term in seat.

The analysis pattern in this study begins with the implied meaning of Jokowi's appearance on Instagram using the Barthes' semiotic method. Based on these five particular moments, the authors try to match the symbols in Jokowi's clothes with several historical points that frame the related political situation. The meeting of meanings and signs, political matters, as well as discursive practices on Instagram afterward is divined to provide new input as a result of this research.

METHODS

This research is based on semiotics method according to Roland Barthes analytical framework, where semiotics takes part in qualitative. The particular method was deemed appropriate because qualitative analysis in semiotic research is systematic and flexible, revealing the meaning behind the implied messages conveyed through the media (Wibowo, 2013, p. 27). Semiotics in this case, also acts as a paradigm that can operate on the level of the signifier, the signified, or both refer to the value contained in the sign.

Document analysis in this study involves skimming, reading, and interpretation process. The

kind of content that acts as the primary data obtained using a document review as well as previous research, in which meaningful and relevant text, images, or other data are identified. Jokowi's posts on Instagram should be concerned as secondary sources and evaluated against other sources of information. Furthermore, the authors adhere to an interactive analysis model in analyzing and presenting data with several stages, such as reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions.

M Y T H	L A N G U A G E	II. Signifier	II. Signified
		The equivalent of clothes worn by Jokowi	The visual meaning of clothes
	III. Sign / I A. Signifier		II A. Signified
	The practice of politics through fashion according to Jokowi's content on Instagram		Moments happening in the layers of reality
	III A. Sign		
Political interpretation			

Picture 1. Semiotic Analysis Framework based on This Research

Formulated in Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the framework in this research is categorized in two orders of signification (see figure 1). Barthes relates interaction between signs, interpreted by denotation and connotation terms. Barthes' analytical model explains the significance of the first stage is a relationship between the signifier as a marker (in this study in the form of clothes worn by Jokowi) and the signified or signifying (in the form of context or content) as a sign to external reality (Wibowo, 2013, p. 21). The following stage is the denotation, the most tangible meaning of a sign or depiction of Jokowi's political fashion practices through his uploads on Instagram.

Furthermore, the significance of the second stage, referred to as connotation by Barthes' could also be understood as an interaction that occurs when the first sign (a sign I) meets emotions, cultural values, and other external influences from the reader. In this case, the layer of reality formed when Instagram media users or netizens saw Jokowi's fashion display. Jokowi's fashion moments are highlighted based on these layers of reality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Brief Description of the Research Object

As previously stated by the author, Jokowi often uses Instagram as a media to display political practices through fashion. It has a blue tick symbol, located right next to the @jokowi username, indicating that the account has been officially verified by Instagram

as an authentic media platform to President Joko Widodo. As of April 2022, Jokowi's Instagram account has uploaded more than three thousand pieces of content, with over 46 million followers, and increasing over time. As seen on his Instagram, Jokowi does not follow any other accounts. In the bio column, it's literally stated that the account is indeed official. For the record, it is managed by the President's Digital Communication Team.

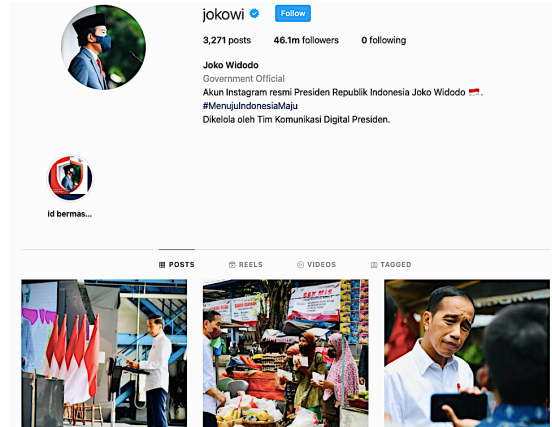


Figure 2. A Screenshot of Jokowi's Instagram main page, username account @jokowi; taken on April 2022.

In every post, Jokowi tries to convey the situation that is currently happening, accompanied by caption as a short statement that helps the audience, to understand or to 'read' the current situation. At the same time, the process that occurs behind every content provides a means for Jokowi to express himself. Mostly, he often uploads at least more than two photos or videos to describe particular momentums. The content is normally related to one another. His Instagram account then described and analyzed based on the five momentums as follows.

White and Black Clothing Typology

Based on grounded theory research according to qualitative inquiry, the authors extracted and analysed data from documents that have proven theoretical relevance with the main issue. Therefore, the initial content coding of the documents was based on the implied meaning behind Jokowi's fashion and the implications on political level.

To simplify the research framework, the authors decided to determined two groups of search terms, which are; (1) Jokowi's white and black clothing typology and (2) Jokowi's traditional clothing typology, as key words related to the subproject (main issue). These two groups of terms (clothing typology), were chosen based on the frequency of use that is quite often displayed in public. This can be proven by analyzing photo uploads on Jokowi's Instagram since his first period.

Politics through Jokowi's Fashion	
Semiotics Theory and Methods (Spec. Roland Barthes)	
The implied meanings behind Jokowi's fashion political practices, analyzed through documents and content on Instagram.	
The Typology of White and Black Clothing	The Typology of Traditional Clothing
Political Interpretation	

Figure 3. Theory Utilized according to two groups of Clothing Typology

Casual White and Black Clothes

The typology of white and black clothes worn by Jokowi can be observed in the first and third moments. In the first moment, i.e., during the 2019 election campaign in Jayapura, Slawi, Central Java, Bandung, and Jakarta, Jokowi wore white and black clothing consisting of a plain white shirt, loose black trousers, and a pair of local sneakers. This fashion match signifies Jokowi's phase one politics through fashion. In reality, these outfits often signify Jokowi's working visit during the campaign.



Figure 4. Jokowi's White and Black Clothing Typology as seen on his Instagram post in April 4th 2019

Semiotics Analysis on Casual White and Black Clothes

i. Signifier I

Plain white collared shirt, loose black trousers, and a pair of local black sneakers.

ii. Signified I

Among the Anglo-Saxons, white is associated with purity, light, and freedom from evil intentions and thus refers to harmless things (Allan, 2009, p. 629).

Black trousers are a symbol of formality in public appearances. It is evident from the appearance of significant modern figures, such as President Clinton, wearing a black suit combined with loose trousers and appearing at a news conference in 1993 (Rubinstein, 2019, p. 53).

Sneakers are often identified as comfortable, safe, and suitable footwear for all situations, especially when going out on the field (outdoor activities). The postmodern era also views heterogeneity in the use of sneakers, meaning that the use of sneakers has spread across cultures, classes, ages, races, and ethnic groups (Kawamura, 2016, p. 4).

iii. Sign I = Signifier II

Uploaded on April 1st, 4th, 9th, and 13th 2019.

iv. Signified II

As seen on the election campaign of the President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia. Including the election campaign in Jayapura, Papua and Slawi, Central Java.

v. Sign II

When interpreted symbolically, a white shirt and black pants represent the impression of a simple, populist, and honest leader. Jokowi desires to build an image of a leader who embraces the upper class and regular civilians. It is even attached to the context of Jokowi's (and Ma'ruf's) leadership, which wants to provide a different and better performance than the previous period. The two slightly rolled-up sleeves give the impression of a leader willing to work directly in the field.

The use of local sneakers is one of Jokowi's iconic fashion statements. In this case, the author assumes that sneakers are not only footwear worn for comfort reasons but can similarly be a gender statement, displaying a solid identity as a gentleman in society. Plus, the black sneakers that Jokowi often wears give the impression of a leader's simplicity because these shoes simply come from a local brand from Bandung, called *Nah Project*, which retailed at an affordable price.

White and Black Clothes during Pandemic

In the third moment, the typology of white and black clothing was displayed in Jokowi's work visit during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in March and May 2020 at Wisma Atlet, Central Jakarta, Central Jakarta MRT Station, and Commercial Center in Bekasi. The authors analyze Jokowi's style at that time had a sustainable relationship with the health context in a pandemic situation.



Figure 5. Jokowi's Mask Appearance during Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia as seen on his Instagram post in March 23rd 2020

Semiotics Analysis on White and Black Clothes during Pandemic

i. Signifier I

Plain white collared shirt, loose black trousers, and a pair of local black sneakers. They were combined with a **mask (both medical and non-medical) and a pair of medical gloves**.

ii. Signified I

Masks are tools utilized to cover the nose and mouth. A medical mask is a tool designed for single use, used to protect oneself from the transfer of potentially infectious body fluids between individuals, exposure to dust, dirt, viruses, or disease (Institute of Medicine of The National Academies, 2006, p. 1-3). During the pandemic, masks became a dress code obligation for citizens, especially in Indonesia.

As explained by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies (2006, p. 6), non-medical masks are made of cloth (woven, spandex), consist of various colors, can be reused after being washed and decontaminated, used to reduce the transfer of droplets to other people.

iii. Sign I = Signifier II

Uploaded on March 23rd 2020 and May 26th 2020.

iv. Signified II

As seen on Jokowi's working visit during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in March and May 2020.

v. Sign II

When classified separately, the white shirt, which often signifies positive culture (especially

in the medical world), can symbolize Jokowi's sympathy as Indonesia's leader for patients, doctors, paramedics, and others involved in handling related matters. Meanwhile, the black-coloured pants define Jokowi's grief, along with the impacts of pandemics, including the number of fatalities, uncertain state conditions, and some critical situations referring to various fields, including economic, political, and socio-cultural.

Jokowi's mask appearance during a visit to Wisma Atlet has become a symbol of shield for himself and Indonesian society.

Masks, a new fashion statement, brought quite a drastic change in the appearance of individuals. In line with the principle of protection, Rubinstein (2019, p. 330) mentions the notion of protecting the personal self, which assumes that it is acceptable for someone to manipulate style and colour to make their clothes a place of refuge to feel safe. By wearing masks, the public is consciously invited to normalize the conditions of creating distance through 'masks' in the context of a pandemic (Rubinstein, 2019, p. 331).

The *#kerja-nyata* culture that he has applied since his leadership in the first period reflects his daily dress style, especially what he tries to show on social media. A pair of sneakers as footwear, which is known to prioritize utilitarian functions and practicality, is the right choice for Jokowi's appearance.

Traditional Clothing Typology

The appearance of traditional clothes is also part of Jokowi's political fashion practice. In this case, the author explicitly highlights three moments of Jokowi's appearance when he modelled traditional clothes.

Attending the ceremony to celebrate the 74th anniversary of the Republic of Indonesia, Jokowi wore traditional clothing from the Klungkung region of Bali Province. The traditional clothes worn by Jokowi are all in black, red, and yellow. The combination of these three colors is believed to symbolize the Trinity, namely Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, interpreted as birth, life, and death. As the country's leader, Jokowi wears traditional luxury Balinese clothes from Klungkung, complete with all his attributes, including a crown-like headdress, *Udeng* or *Gelungan*. In addition, to show his power and authority as president, Jokowi is seen trying to display the image of a wise leader and a protector of the people.



Figure 6. Details of Jokowi's Luxurious Traditional Balinese Clothes

Semiotics Analysis on Traditional Balinese Clothes

i. Signifier I

Main clothes: black velvet shirt; *Kamen* or *Songket* (a cloth with a typical Balinese batik pattern); *Saput* (worn on the outermost layer after the *Kamen*); *Umpal* (a small colourful shawl, worn on the outermost layer at the waist); black slippers.

Accessories: *Udeng* or *Gelungan* (as a head covering with Balinese patterned cloth); *Badong* or brooch; and *Keris* (a complementary accessory tucked into the back of the *Kamen* and *Saput*).

ii. Signified I

Main clothes: Velvet was one of the clothing materials typically worn by kings, adopted European styles in the late 1800s, and became the kingdom's main fashionable fabric (Faiers and Bulgarella, 2017, p. 195).

Using *Kamen* as a subordinate is accompanied by a knot or fold from left to right (counterclockwise). The knot means devotion, obedience, or *Dharma* for a man.

Based on traditional Balinese philosophy, there is no meaning that refers explicitly to footwear (slippers). However, using slippers at an official event means showing respect and decency from an individual who wears them.

Accessories: The gold-coloured *Badong* or brooch worn by Jokowi as an accessory on the chest symbolizes majesty or luxury.

Based on historical track records, the philosophical meaning contained in a *keris* refers to resistance against evil spirits and often seen as a symbol of Hinduism.

iii. Sign I = Signifier II

Uploaded on August 17th 2019.

iv. Signified II

As seen on the 74th anniversary ceremony of the Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia, at the Merdeka Palace, Central Jakarta.

v. Sign II

Traditional Balinese clothing with a choice of black velvet material, decorated with a few gold accents, can communicate Jokowi's status as a leader who has a high position. His identity can be recognized only from the equivalent of extravagant clothing. Perhaps his position as president can be reflected in his choice of luxurious velvet clothes, worn as a top. However, the *Kamen*, scarf, and *Umpal* that he wore as subordinates could describe modesty, self-control of worldly desires (such as corruption), and *Dharma* that should be remembered and maintained.

The use of black glossy slippers combined with traditional clothing from Klungkung, Bali, is one of Jokowi's appearances with different footwear, apart from the use of sneakers. Slippers as footwear, part of Jokowi's fashion style, can be interpreted as a complement to the Tri Angga concept in using traditional Balinese clothing. Based on Balinese philosophical customs, there is no meaning that refers explicitly to footwear (slippers). However, if analyzed at a glimpse, the authors can conclude that using slippers at an official event means the embodiment of respect and courtesy of someone who wears them. It is because not only clothes from the top of the head to the body are considered, but also the use of proper footwear as the supporting organ of the body.

Traditional Sabu Clothes

At the fourth moment, Jokowi wore the Sabu regional dress from East Nusa Tenggara to attend the 2020 MPR annual meeting. *Hi'i*, or blankets made from woven sarongs typical of the Sabu tribe, slung across Jokowi's shoulders crosswise and used as subordinates to resemble a sarong. Wearing *Hi'i* at the 2020 MPR annual session symbolized collaboration and contribution to healing one another, mainly throughout the pandemic.

As part of intercultural communication, clothing can obtain positive interpretations of meaning to solve problems due to internal factors (from within the country) and external factors such as pandemic. The authors argue that as a material cultural heritage, the traditional Sabu clothing worn by Jokowi can raise individual awareness to resolve conflicts through

visual intercultural communications, which is carried out in modern way using the Instagram social media channel. Jokowi wore various accessories, such as *Lehu Kètu* or *Kewahu Kètu*.



Figure 7. Details of Jokowi's Traditional Sabu Clothes from East Nusa Tenggara

Semiotics Analysis on Traditional Sabu Clothes

i. Signifier I

Hi'i (a blanket derived from a typical woven sarong of the Sabu tribe); *Lehu Kètu*, or *Kewahu Kètu* (a head covering made of woven or batik cloth); the *Wonahi'da* necklace and the *Rate Mela*; pocket belt.

ii. Signified I

Hi'i (or *hig'i*, *hij'i* in the Sabu language) is a rectangular, fringed blanket or cloth with various motifs wrapped around the hips or worn crosswise to cover parts of the body. *Hi'i* has several meanings referring to NTT traditional traditions, including a sign of class and social status, a depiction of stories and myths based on customs, and a tribute to special guests. Moreover, the *Hi'i* worn by Jokowi has rose flower motifs. According to Nicodemus Rihi Heke (Regent of Sabu Raijua), the beauty of rose flower motifs in NTT culture symbolizes the beauty of unity (Sutriyanto, 2020).

According to Duggan (2001), the headscarf worn by Sabu men reminds them of ancestral stories passed down from generation. Besides, *Lehu Kètu* is also a symbol of the identity of Sabu men. If a man dies, his hair and head cover must be returned to his origin. Over time, *Lehu Kètu* can symbolize glory and gold for the wearer. *Lehu*, tied like a three-pillar crown, can reflect social class and power (like a leader or king).

The gold-colored necklace consists of two types, *Wonahi'da*, and *rate mela*, which are accessories

worn only by certain people (determined based on their height), showing how important an individual's self-esteem is, including awareness of himself as a worthy person (Billy & Wardhani, 2020).

The gold-colored belt or belt for the people of NTT is believed to be a symbol of a sincere, sincere, and clean heart for every individual who wears it. Belts are also a sign of holiness for noble human beings who have compassion for one another (Billy & Wardhani, 2020).

iii. Sign I = Signifier II

Uploaded on August 14th 2020.

iv. Signified II

As seen at the annual MPR meeting of 2020.

v. Sign II

As a leader, Jokowi portrays a man from the Sabu area who loves the noble culture preserved for generations. When associated with a crown, *Lehu Kètu* has a very significant value. Using *Lehu* allowed Jokowi to become an elite. The character and legitimacy of a leader can diverge to show and justify the practice of power or authority he holds

Jokowi wore two types of necklaces and a pocket belt that complemented his attire. The author assumes that the various accessories are a manifestation of the power he has. This is reinforced by the statement of Rubinstein (2019, p. 5) which before the nineteenth century, clothes worn by most political and religious figures, who were in power, automatically stated their position in society. The validity of the interpretation can be supported by examining the meaning of the accessories components he wears.

The *Wonahi'da* necklace are strong statements of Jokowi's prestige status as an elite and also a leader. In addition, the pocket belt while being a reminder of sincerity because of the Covid-19 pandemic situation, which has brought many changes (negative and positive) in the life of the Indonesian people, is framing the relevant moment. As accessories are designed to impress, one's appearance will look far superior, indicating that the wearer has greater access to the power source (Rubinstein, 2019, p. 159).

Baduy Traditional Clothes

Marking the fifth moment, Jokowi wore a set of traditional Baduy clothes, called *Jamang Sangsang*. It consisted of a *Komprang* top, *Katung*, and a pair of black pants. As a footwear, he wore simple black strappy sandals. However, sandals have more value than shoes in some religious beliefs. According to Beer (2004, p. 227) in Kawamura (2016, p. 31),

ordained Buddhist monks rarely wear shoes, but when they do, they wear wooden or leather sandals for protection.

While footwear is for physical protection, it can also be interpreted as psychological protection through protective charms. Some of these function under Islamic teachings, where images of the Prophet Muhammad’s sandals are a recurring design motif in jewelry, leatherwork, or even carved wooden doors (Kawamura, 2016, p. 30).



Figure 8. Details of Jamang Sangsang, Baduy Traditional Clothes wore by Jokowi on August 16th 2021

Semiotics Analysis on Traditional Sabu Clothes

i. Signifier I

Katung (a loose-fitting shirt); strappy sandals; *Telekung, Koncer, or Roma* (a headband made of woven cloth typical of the Baduy tribe); *Koja or Jarog* (an accessory in the form of a light brown bag made from the bark of the terep tree).

ii. Signified I

One set of traditional Baduy clothing, *Jamang Sangsang*, consists of a *Komprang* shirt and pants. Baduy people usually wear these clothes day-to-day. The application of color is firmly rooted in the traditions and way of life of the Baduy people. Black and white is the only color of Baduy’s traditional clothing because the duality of black and white is believed to be the basis passed down from generation that can protect and symbolize the spiritual world, especially in West Java.

Telekung a headband worn to cover the top of the head, is an attribute that is able to distinguish the inner Baduy people (tangtu people) and the outer Baduy (panamping people) when performing special rituals or pilgrimages.

Meanwhile, *Koja* or *Jarog* is an accessory or feature that cannot be separated from the Baduy

traditional clothes, a light brown bag made from the bark of the terep tree. These bags are usually used to carry or store the equipment needed by people day-to-day, such as a *golok* (sharp object) used as a tool for work.

iii. Sign I = Signifier II

Uploaded on August 16th 2021

iv. Signified II

As seen at the annual MPR meeting of 2021.

v. Sign II

Analyzing the meaning of Baduy traditional clothing worn by Jokowi, the authors highlight the principle of nationalism as the primary tool in overcoming the implications of Covid-19. This can be related to the meaning contained in the use of the traditional clothing of the Inner-Baduy people (*orang Tangtu*), which prioritizes a lifestyle under their traditional rules of behavior, and customary rules their ancestors set.

Jokowi, as a representative of the local community with a high position, seems to have the same influence as the meaning of the inner Baduy traditional clothing, rejects the influence of outside culture or extreme modernization, and wants to invest thoughts that uphold domestic culture. However, his position as president has made Jokowi see the influence of outside culture as something that is not always negative. Occasionally renewal could be seen as a good thing to improve people’s life quality. This meaning is symbolized by the traditional clothing of the Outer-Baduy tribe (*orang Panamping*), which is not too strict in dressing and makes it easy to accept other cultural elements without losing the characteristics of the original culture.

Lynne Hume’s (2013) study views the message communicated based on clothing in the context of religion or belief as that the wearer chooses to follow a particular set of ideological principles and practices. In other words, clothing serves to distinguish one person from another. Religious communities from other beliefs also operate within religion to distinguish hierarchies, power structures, gender differences, ideas of decency, roles, customs, group identities, beliefs, and ideologies (Kawamura, 2016, pp. 30-32).

Footwear serves physical and material protection, but many forms of footwear also serve spiritual protection. Jokowi, as a Muslim, of course, has complete obedience to the religion he adheres to. In Islam, feet, as a gift from God but also a source of disgrace to men and women, need to be hidden and covered. However, despite his beliefs, his clothes at that time (dominated mainly by Hindu-Buddhist

influences mixed with Old Javanese layers) did not affect his dress choice. It is because he underlies his appearance in terms of culture or the plurality of Indonesia.

Accessories as a Symbol of Status

At some moments, the authors observe the use of the presidential badge in Jokowi's fashion style. Based on Government Regulation (*Peraturan Pemerintah*) number 42 of 1958, the presidential symbols of Indonesia are the star, rice, and cotton. In the center of the badge is the red and white flag, containing the symbol of *Garuda Pancasila*.

The symbol of *Garuda Pancasila* is interpreted as unity and integrity, deriving from the Indonesian nation's motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which is a symbol of unity in diversity. In comparison, the symbols of stars, rice, and cotton symbolize the positions of Indonesia's president and vice president. Not a coincidence that the presidential symbol is placed under the *Garuda Pancasila* because the interests and integrity of the state remain prominent.

The use of the presidential badge can essentially be interpreted as one of the markers of the identity of a state leader who is officially recognized and has authority or power over a country. Jokowi unraveling these accessories gives a signal or sign to the public of his inherent position as president. For this reason, when campaigning, his identity is not limited to political candidates but holds the position of a state leader. It was also shown when he visited several areas to get in contact with residents. His status certainly cannot be underestimated because the power possessed is at least much greater than the opponent's candidate. In addition to status markers, when worn at other times, the presidential badge can provide insight into particular messages that universally represent Jokowi's personality and the state's interests.

Clothing as Personal Identity

In this case, the authors find the relationship between fashion and identity in Jokowi's various appearances. How Jokowi represents himself in public is proof of the matter according to fashion and clothes as a form of expression of identity, especially political identity. When the public views the politics of Jokowi's fashion statement as a regular everyday business, the authors believe it has more definition. Related to this, the practice of political dress is not random. Authors believe that there is a complex fashion scheme behind various moments.

Jokowi's ability to combine clothes, footwear, head coverings, accessories, and other body ornaments is a crucial marker of the ideological values, status, and political aspirations that he wants to communicate.

The capacity to explore the confluence between fashion and political power is part of Jokowi's figure.

Locality Components in Clothing

Jokowi often uses the momentum of 'local' performances as a promotional event to support the nation's work, especially youths. The reputation of the local brand fashion industry in Indonesia became profitable or recognized because people considered the fashion style he displayed very eye-catching. This was just one of the *'Jokowi effect'* impacts.

Jokowi's appearance in the first moment was when he wore black sneakers as a collection of Bandung youth local brand called *Nah Project*. When displayed on Instagram, Jokowi's fashion style has a significant influence in addressing Indonesia's fashion culture. The essence is that the expansion of the fashion industry will indirectly help construct the economic system. The new trend in local dress by Jokowi seems to create more subtle political constituency. It is considered that clothing and jewelry can universally act as indicators of status, power, authority, and identity communication tools that have a broader reach in society.

Clothing and Diversity Values

Responding to the identity displayed through the practice of political dress, the author assumes that Joko Widodo also emphasizes the power of national unity. He supports plurality and tolerance in Indonesia by applying the value of diversity. Through a historical moment marked by the motto *'Bhinneka Tunggal Ika'* on the national emblem, Jokowi introduced nationalism into fashion. This can be proven when Jokowi frequently wears traditional clothes from various regions. He consciously promotes the use of traditional suits representing equality of ethnicity, race, and religion.

As a political leader, he left a message of Indonesian diversity, presented to the public through modern communication, which is contemporary fashion. Traditional clothing can be worn on various occasions with different supporting accessories. Jokowi is trying to perpetuate the concept of tolerance which is expected to break the ropes of distinction. If defined further, Jokowi wears traditional clothes to project the image of Indonesia nationally in front of the global world.

The authors argument is in line with what was stated by Burman and Turbin in Roces and Edwards (2010, p. 37-38), that clothing and fabrics play a role in the social configuration and transformation of ideology, culture, and institutions; both for individuals, the industrial sector, even a nation. Influential leaders use dress as a strategy to advance their agenda, highlighting the political significance

of clothing on the individual to the national level. Jokowi chooses to cast his identity through fashion styles beyond personal identity to create and become an icon of national unity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, the authors are able to conclude that the political fashion practice carried out by Jokowi on Instagram has various interpretations of implicit meaning. This statement refers to all of the momentum, which the authors analyze based on Roland Barthes's theory and semiotic method. Political semiotics in clothing shows Jokowi's performance as a state leader and political figure, considering identity as a crucial issue. Jokowi, together with the parties behind the political practice of dress, are reasonably aware of the momentum, after which they plan in such a way what outfits need to be displayed in front of the public in order to strengthen their identity.

Adoration and pride in local clothing products as the outcome of the Indonesian youth's creation are gradually becoming a strategy for Jokowi to encourage the progress of the economic system while creating political constituencies. Putting aside the interpretation of meaning based on each component of the clothing worn by Jokowi, traditional clothing is defined as a means to preserve and strengthen the value of Diversity.

Ultimately, the authors realize the imperfection of this research that can be improved afterward. Although Roland Barthes' theory and semiotic method have succeeded in answering the main questions, in this case, they have not been able to help the author to examine more deeply and sharply explicit linguistic elements in the form of comments expressed by the public on Instagram social media.

Therefore, the authors suggest future explorations focusing on mass debates, such as comments on social media sites, as a response related to the political practice of wearing political figures and state officials. Exploring the realm of netizen polemics when highlighting the appearance of specific figures in politics on a virtual stage may be a reference for relevant theoretical study questions.

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