

Political Communication on the Ninja Road of Gibran-Kaesang

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ABSTRACT

Gibran Rakabuming Raka and Kaesang Pangarep are the sons of President Jokowi who carry out ninja political communication. The purpose of this study is to reveal the ninja political communication carried out by Gibran and Kaesang and why they did it. The disclosure of this ninja political communication uses the political discourse analysis (PDA) method. Two types of Gibran and Kaesang's ninja political communication patterns emerge, namely how to achieve political office and how they can participate in the election. Four cases that show this ninja political communication are, first, Gibran became the Mayor of Solo. Second, Gibran participated in the 2024 presidential election. Third, Kaesang became the General Chairperson of PSI. Fourth, Kaesang is prepared to be able to participate in the 2024 regional elections. From the results of the discussion related to the political communication of the ninja path of Gibran and Kaesang, it can be concluded that this model of communication requires the subjects involved, namely the president's child, the president, political parties, law enforcement officials, and the community or political parties that challenge the rules that hinder the nomination and political parties that want to support the nomination or make him the general chairman.

Keywords: *Gibran-Kaesang, Political Communication, Ninja Way*

INTRODUCTION

Gibran Rakabumi Raka is the first child of President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) who was born in Solo, on October 1, 1987, and Kaesang Pangareng is the second child who was born on December 25, 1994. Gibran was initially known to the public because of the Chilli Pari catering business and the martabak markobar culinary business in Solo. Meanwhile, Kaesang Pangarep first appeared in the public discussion because of his failed relationship with a woman while studying at the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), Marketing Department with a Communications Interest (Kompas.com, 2023). Kaesang also pioneered a culinary business by selling Sang Pisang banana nuggets (National.kontan.co.id, 2019).

Gibran, who was still around 36 years old, initially focused on the catering and culinary business, suddenly stepped into politics to become a candidate for Mayor of Solo through the PDIP by sacrificing the Deputy Mayor of Solo who had initially been nominated by the PDP PDIP Solo as a candidate for Mayor of Solo. The process continued until he was elected Mayor of Solo. It didn't stop there, during the 2024 presidential election, Gibran was initially prevented from running as vice president because of age requirements, suddenly he was able to run because the requirements were changed by the Constitutional Court (MK) so that Gibran could run until he was finally elected as Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia 2024-2029.

While Kaesang, who is still 29 years old, initially focused on his Sang Pisang business, suddenly stepped into politics by becoming the General Chairperson of the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) replacing Giring Ganesha after two days earlier Kaesang was declared a member of PSI. Gibran admitted that the shortcut to achieving the position of General Chairperson of PSI was a privilege he received because he was

the son of President Joko Widodo (Dirgantara, 2023). It didn't stop there, ahead of the 2024 regional elections, Kaesang, who was hampered by the age requirement of 30 years when registering, was initially able to participate in the contest because the requirement was changed by the Supreme Court (MA) to be 30 years old when inaugurated. This became a polemic in society until finally, the Constitutional Court (MK) issued a Decision on the results of a judicial review stating that the age requirement of 30 years for regional head candidates was when registering, not when inaugurated. One day after the Constitutional Court's decision, the DPR moved quickly to revise the Regional Election Law, one of the clauses of which would change the age requirement for regional head candidates to 30 years old when inaugurated, but this was not continued due to strong public pressure and large demonstrations from the community.

The political path that suddenly becomes part of the political process from regional to national, accepted as part of a political party either as a member or as a general chairman, nominated and nominated as a political leader candidate, supported by many parties, and successfully occupying political positions with the help of various parties such as government officials, legislative officials, judicial officials, or the like to obtain privileges starting from requirements, nomination, support, nomination, campaign, debate, to being determined as an elected candidate is what is called ninja path politics.

Previous research that specifically discusses Gibran and Kaesang's ninja street politics has never existed. A study on ninja street politics was conducted by Naufal et al. in 2024, but discussed the Ninja Street Politics banner which was studied using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. In its conclusion, the study stated that in terms of connotation, the Ninja Street Politics banner can be interpreted as the shadow of privilege from Jokowi. Meanwhile, the mythical meaning of the PSI Ninja Street Politics banner is tyrannical politics that have been built secretly, structured, and planned for a long time and the ideology of the socialist order.

The purpose of this study is to reveal how the ninja way political communication pattern is applied by Gibran and Kaesang in politics in Indonesia to be able to pass the contestation requirements, occupy political positions, and positions in political parties as well as to find out why the ninja way political communication occurs. The disclosure of Gibran Kaesang's ninja way of political communication uses a descriptive qualitative method by utilizing the theory of political discourse analysis (PDA).

RESEARCH METHODS

To reveal the ninja way of political communication of Gibran-Kaesang and get an answer as to why this ninja way of political communication occurs, the researcher uses the Political Discourse theory. Analysis (PDA). PDA can be concluded as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which is specialized in the study of politics and various things that influence and surround it (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). The key word that must be held is that PDA is a choice of political discourse study based on CDA theory and practice. PDA integrates arguments in CDA (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). Therefore, the details of important characteristics of CDA, namely action (text), context consisting of history, power, and ideology (van Dijk, 1997); (Ruth, 189 CE) also become important characteristics of PDA by adding the word politics to each of these characteristics so that they become political action (text) and political context (political history, political power, and political ideology).

The first characteristic is that political action is understood by van Dijk (1997) as the text and speech of actors or writers (politicians) or political institutions, such as the president, other members of the government, parliament, or political parties. In other words, PDA is political communication and rhetoric. In addition to discussing political discourse from the perspective of the creator or writer (politician), PDA also examines the recipients in political communicative events, such as the public, people, citizens, masses, and other groups or categories (van Dijk, 1997). These actors (writers and recipients) will build their political discourse in the public space. PDA can broadly involve all groups, individuals, organizations, or institutions, which take part in the political process or are actively involved in political discourse.

The second characteristic of PDA is the political context. Political discourse, in addition to discussing the text from the author and how the text is received by the recipient, will also discuss the context of the emergence of the text (van Dijk, 1997). The context of this political discourse is related to events and meetings about political communication. From these events and meetings, the time, place, circumstances, events, intentions, functions, targets, laws, or political implications are also explained (van Dijk, 1997).

The integration of political texts and contexts will clarify more specific meanings related to political intentions and goals, such as making or influencing political decisions, namely decisions related to collective action, distribution of social resources, establishment or change of official norms, regulations, and laws, and so on (van Dijk, 1997). This integration also leads PDA to discussions about political processes (such as government, legislation, opposition, solidarity, agenda setting, and policy), political systems (such as democracy, communism, or socialism), political ideologies (such as liberalism or capitalism), and political relations (such as power, inequality, hegemony, and oppression) (van Dijk, 1997).

In the discussion of the political context, PDA will not be separated from the pattern of interdependent relationships between politicians or politics with the media. Politicians need media as a place to pour out decisions to be reported and the media needs politics and politicians to access political information and publish it as news (Wodak, 2009). Furthermore, Pierre Bourdieu (Wodak, 2009) sees the relationship between three interdependent fields, namely politics, media, and economics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The political behavior of Gibran and Kaesang by utilizing the power possessed by their fathers to facilitate their political path to be able to contest, occupy positions in parties, and achieve the desired power is ninja political communication. Political communication is understood as the communicative activity of leaders, media, citizens, and groups of citizens with language and symbols that have many effects on individuals and society, as well as results related to state or community public policy (Perloff, 2018).

Political communication carried out is certainly not limited to normative matters such as following the rules and support on paper, but also pragmatic matters related to how to participate in the contest and the winning system in the field. Ninja political communication will always be related to power, either power as a goal or as a way to enter or an effort to gain legitimacy to participate in the contest. Power as a goal is to achieve political positions, such as those achieved by Gibran as Mayor of Solo and the

elected vice presidential candidate in the 2024 presidential election while Kaesang is the General Chairperson of the Indonesian Solidarity Party. Meanwhile, ninja political communication to gain legitimacy to participate in the contest is when Gibran received privileges after the registration rules were changed by the Constitutional Court and Kaesang also received privileges after the regional head election contestation rules were changed by the Supreme Court.

Gibran and Kaesang are not potential young people who have many achievements, nor are they famous, viral, and have many followers, or party cadres who are intensively building a political career towards the highest level of political office so that they have a level of fairness to be glanced at by parties to be nominated as regional leaders or made party leaders. So, Gibran and Kaesang were nominated to advance to compete in Indonesian politics and were interested in joining the party solely because they are the sons of Joko Widodo who is the president of the Republic of Indonesia.

The President in Indonesia is legally the holder of the highest executive power with extraordinary powers because he can appoint and dismiss officials such as the Chief of Police, Attorney General, Chief Justice, Chairman of the Corruption Eradication Committee, Chairman of the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center, Chairman of the Audit Board of Indonesia, Head of State Intelligence Agency, Commander of the Indonesian National Armed Forces, and even ministers and deputy ministers. With such strong power, the president has the prerogative to determine who is appointed, from what elements, for how long, and so on. This will certainly be a very strong magnet for anyone with an interest, whether personal, group, or class interests, to approach.

If these officials do not have high integrity, of course, it will be very easy to accept all directions given by the president even though they are heading in a negative and counterproductive direction. Meanwhile, a president who has excessive power will be easily tempted to use it for personal, family, or group interests.

This ninja political communication of Gibran and Kaesang is carried out with three models. First, if Gibran or Kaesang fulfills the requirements to be able to participate in the political contest, Jokowi with his power, either directly or through loyal officials, will orchestrate the heads of political parties, most of whom are also ministers (presidential assistants) to provide support and carry them in the contest.

Second, if Gibran or Kaesang have the opportunity to occupy an important position in the party, Jokowi will conduct political communication so that the certainty of achieving the position becomes a reality. Third, if Gibran and Kaesang do not meet the nomination requirements, Jokowi through his power will ensure that the laws and regulations can change so that his children can meet the requirements to participate in the contest.

Four cases will show in detail the ninja way of political communication between Gibran and Kaesang, namely:

Case 1: Gibran's Ninja Path to Becoming Mayor of Solo.

The polemic began when PDIP Solo had recommended Achmad Purnomo as a candidate for Mayor of Solo (www.tribunnews.com, 2020), but it turned out that there was a maneuver from Gibran who visited the Chairman of PDIP Solo who was also the Mayor of Solo FX Rudyatmo to ask about the registration mechanism for the mayoral election. After that on September 23, 2019, Gibran registered as a PDIP cadre. The journey continued by asking for Megawati Soekarno Putri's blessing in Jakarta on October 24, 2019 officially registering as a candidate for mayor of Solo on December

12, 2019, and officially being nominated by PDIP as the Solo Mayoral Candidate on July 17, 2020.

This fact provides the fact that cadres who build their careers from the bottom until they can be recommended as regional head candidates are defeated by candidates from outside or who have just registered as members to get recommendations to be nominated and can contest. The requirement for newcomers in political parties to get recommendations is the child of a president.

During the Solo Mayoral nomination, Gibran, who was a young newcomer to Solo politics, was immediately supported by the party and was finally able to win the Solo Mayoral election with full support from President Joko Widodo. President Jokowi's popularity in Solo was truly utilized for Gibran's victory. Jokowi's power as president was maximized to be able to orchestrate party leaders who also served as assistants to the president as ministers. This was reinforced by the emergence of the candidate Bagyo Wahyono - FX Suparjo (BaJo) who was indicated as a puppet candidate so that Gibran could still compete without fighting an empty shell and could win the contest easily.

So, the subjects involved in Gibran's ninja path politics to become Mayor of Solo are:

Gibran: Young man, has an interest in politics, wants to move to seek party support, becomes a member of PDIP, and has a father as President of the Republic of Indonesia.

Jokowi: President of the Republic of Indonesia, Gibran's father, wants his son to enter politics, member of PDIP, favorite cadre of Megawati Soekarno Putri, General Chairperson of PDIP.

Megawati Soekarno Putri: General Chairwoman of PDIP, who promoted Jokowi from Mayor of Solo, Governor of Jakarta, and President of the Republic of Indonesia, and has the highest authority to determine the candidate for Mayor of Solo that PDIP will nominate.

Case 2: Gibran's Ninja Path to Vice President

The Constitutional Court (MK) of the Republic of Indonesia has finally granted the lawsuit filed by Almas Tsaqibbirru Re A, a student from Surakarta, regarding the judicial review of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections against the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The material being tested is Article 169 regarding the requirements to become a presidential and vice presidential candidate, especially Letter Q which reads "at least 40 (forty) years old".

The applicant argued that the editorial changes to the article were based on Constitutional Court Decision Number 90/PUU-XXI/2023 to make the age limit for presidential and vice presidential candidates 40 years old or holding a position elected from an election/regional election. The decision became very controversial because Gibran's uncle, Anwar Usman, is the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court and the material that was decided was truly in Gibran's interests to be able to run in the 2024 presidential and vice presidential contest.

The orchestration steps of party leaders to support Gibran are increasingly intense by exploiting the legal problems of party leaders as ministers. Airlangga Hartarto as Coordinating Minister for the Economy and General Chairperson of the Golkar Party was summoned by the Attorney General's Office regarding the alleged corruption case of granting crude palm oil (CPO) export facilities on Monday, July 24, 2023 (Tirto. id,

2023) and Minister of Trade Zulkifly Hasan, who is also the General Chairperson of the National Mandate Party, whose case is related to the imported sugar case (Money.kompas.com, 2023) is being discussed in the media. In the end, the two-party chairpersons expressed their support for the Prabowo Gibran pair.

Not only the process of support from parties obtained through pressure from law enforcement institutions. The process of accepting Gibran as vice president from Prabowo Subianto also gave rise to the backstage drama that showed Prabowo's relationship pattern as an assistant (minister) to President Joko Widodo. Prabowo was asked to immediately announce definitively who his vice president would be because the Constitutional Court would also soon announce its decision regarding the lawsuit on the upper age limit for presidential candidates requested by the applicant to be limited to a maximum of 70 years.

Investigative information from the Bocor Alur podcast stated that Prabowo finally accepted Gibran as his running mate on October 22, 2023, because if it was not announced immediately, the Constitutional Court would decide that the maximum age limit for presidential candidates would be 70 years old. A day after Prabowo held a press conference and stated that his running mate would be Gibran (Nasional.kompas.com, 2023), the Constitutional Court on October 23, 2023, read out its decision rejecting the lawsuit of the two brothers Almas Tsaqibbirru and Arkaan Wahyu, regarding the minimum age limit for presidential and vice presidential candidates (www.bbc.com, 2023). In its decision, the Constitutional Court stated that the age requirements for presidential and vice presidential candidates as stated in Article 169 letter q of Law 7/2017 concerning Elections had been examined and tried by them. Therefore, the Constitutional Court stated that the three lawsuits "lost the object of the case and therefore could not be accepted".

So, the subjects involved in Gibran's ninja street politics as a vice presidential candidate are:

Gibran: Young man, who has an interest in politics, wants to move to seek party support, has just become a member of the PDIP, and has a father who is the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

Jokowi: President of the Republic of Indonesia, Gibran's father, wants his son to enter politics, member of PDIP, favorite cadre of Megawati Soekarno Putri, General Chairperson of PDIP.

Anwar Usman: Uncle Gibran, brother-in-law of Jokowi, Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court (MK), wants to help change the rules for presidential and vice presidential candidate nomination requirements

Almas Tsaqibbirru Re A: Students who conducted a judicial review at the Constitutional Court regarding the requirements for nominating presidential and vice presidential candidates and it was granted

Case 3: Ninja Path of Kaesang, General Chairman of PSI

Kaesang officially joined the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) on Saturday, September 23, 2023, and only needed 2 days since officially getting his membership card to become the General Chairperson of PSI (bbc.com, 2023). PSI made Kaesang the General Chairperson because Kaesang is the son of Jokowi, the President of the Republic of Indonesia. PSI, which has been a loyal supporter of President Joko Widodo from the start, wants to benefit from the electoral effects of President Joko Widodo's popularity. By appointing Kaesang as the General Chairperson of PSI, they hope that President Joko Widodo will give him all to help increase his electorate during the 2024

legislative elections in the hope of entering Senayan and being able to play a greater role in the 2024 presidential election.

When he became the Chairman of PSI, Kaesang tried to approach Gen Z, who were the majority voters in the 2024 election (katadata.co.id, 2023), which was 66.28 million of the total permanent voter list (DPT) for the 2024 Election, which reached 204,807,222 voters. The approach was carried out by choosing the diction of young people, namely by bringing up the jargon of ninja politics and cheerful politics. According to Kaesang, ninja politics is (Detik.com, November 12, 2023) politics that aims to achieve regional to national political power with silent movements and clean political rhetoric. All political processes are carried out cheerfully.

So, Kaesang's ninja politics is a record that has not existed in Indonesia or even in the world that someone who has only been a member of a party for two days can become the general chairman. So, the subjects involved in ninja politics to become the general chairman of the party are:

Kaesang: with the criteria of being young, wanting to get involved in politics, and the son of the president

PSI: A political party with a small number of votes that wants to achieve an electoral surge so that it can enter Senayan, its party system makes it easy to change its general chairman, and ideologically it does not have a strong character so it is easy to become a follower of power.

President Joko Widodo: A president, Kaesang's father, wants and approves of his son entering politics, and building political communication with political parties that are willing to place Kaesang as general chairman even through unfair means.

Case 4: Ninja Way of Changing Regional Head Law

Without much fuss on social media, online news, or civil society discussions, suddenly the rules related to regional elections changed the age requirements when inaugurated. This rule was changed by the Supreme Court with the Supreme Court (MA) ruling Number 23 P/HUM/2024 ordering that the minimum age requirement for gubernatorial candidates (30 years old) and mayoral or regent candidates (25 years old) which previously had to be met at the time of nomination be changed to having to be met at the time of inauguration of the elected candidate.

The Supreme Court granted the lawsuit of the General Chairperson of the Garuda Party, Ahmad Ridha Sabana, who requested additional interpretation regarding the age requirements for regional head candidates, as stated in Supreme Court Decision Number 23 P/HUM/2024 on May 29, 2024. The lawsuit requested a change in the age requirements for gubernatorial and deputy gubernatorial candidates, which previously had to be 30 years old since the determination of the candidate pair, to 30 years old after the inauguration of the elected candidate.

After this decision was made public, the public suspected that this was Jokowi's agenda to advance his second child, Kaesang Pangarep, to be able to pass the requirements to participate in the contest. This change is indeed very beneficial for Kaesang Pangarep because, with this change, he can register as a regional head candidate in terms of age requirements.

BRIN researcher Aisah said that it is very reasonable for the public to suspect that this rule change is only to accommodate Kaesang Pangarep so that he can register for the 2024 political competition (Bbc.com, 2023). The process of changing various laws, especially those related to political contestation, should be carried out long before the

regional election process is underway. Don't be like now, the law was changed when the 2024 regional election entered the stage of fulfilling the requirements for support for individual candidate pairs until next August.

The process of making laws should be seriously and thoroughly considered by policymakers so that they can conduct a thorough evaluation through legislative channels related to technical rules for implementing elections that are not only criteria regarding age but also requirements for adequate political experience. Sudden changes without basis, without in-depth research on why they must change now, and through shortcuts in the Constitutional Court for the context of presidential elections and the Supreme Court for regional elections show the interests of political lust that justifies any means.

Apart from the political dimension, Bivitri Susanti also criticized the legal reasoning in the Supreme Court's decision which she said was unreasonable. Bivitri explained that the KPU focused on carrying out its duties in implementing the election, namely from the registration process to the determination of the candidate pairs. The KPU did not take a role in the inauguration process of regional head candidates.

In 2020 during the West Sumatra regional elections, PSI cadre Faldo Maldini filed a judicial review lawsuit regarding the age requirements for regional head candidates but was rejected by the Constitutional Court (MK). Constitutional Court Judge I Dewa Gede Palguna in his consideration stated that the age limit related to certain positions or legal acts can vary depending on the nature of the position or legal act and the authority of the legislator. The Constitutional Court judge also strengthened his argument by stating that there was no fundamental reason in the development of the state that caused the Court to inevitably have to change its position.

The case of changing the requirements for achieving the position of the regional head is very close to the privilege enjoyed by Gibran with the change in the requirements for vice presidential candidates. This repetition provides the fact that it turns out that the actions of the oligarchy of power who collaborate with the lawmakers to adjust the rules according to the needs of the oligarchy and power are still carried out without guilt and shame even though they are strongly opposed and criticized by civil society.

The move to change the rules to suit momentary interests and family benefits will damage the development of a democratic system. This bad precedent could continue to repeat itself in subsequent leaders if there is no mass movement capable of pressuring the rulers to shrink from acting arbitrarily.

So, the subjects involved in ninja politics to be able to register in the regional election contest are:

Kaesang: with the criteria of being young, wanting to get involved in politics, and the son of the president

PSI: A political party with a small number of votes that wants to achieve an electoral surge so that it can enter the Senayan, its party system makes it easy to change its general chairman, and ideologically it does not have a strong character so it is easy to become a follower of power.

President Joko Widodo: A president, Kaesang's father, wants and approves of his son entering politics, and building political communication with political parties that are willing to nominate Kaesang as a regional head candidate.

Garuda Party General Chairman Ahmad Ridha Sabana: Plaintiff of the Law on the requirements for regional head nominations to the Supreme Court (MA)

CONCLUSION

Ninja way politics were carried out by Gibran-Kaesang to gain the position of Mayor of Solo with a nomination ticket from PDIP, nomination until being elected as vice president by changing the requirements through the Constitutional Court, gaining the position of General Chairperson of PSI, and changing the requirements to be able to participate in the contest by changing the rules through the Supreme Court.

All of this could succeed because Jokowi, as their father, is a president who has the power to influence the legal apparatus (MK and MA) to change the contestation rules, and political party leaders to provide support for their nomination as mayor and vice president, and political parties that are willing to voluntarily provide the position of general chairman.

Some steps that can be taken for Gibran-Kaesang's ninja politics are:

Through the power held by the family (father), the actor will try to open up political opportunities for his son.

If the first step is not achieved, the father will utilize law enforcement apparatus to change the rules (laws).

After the law was changed, the party chairman who was given legitimacy by law to run for office would receive indirect legal intimidation. This intimidation forced the political party chairman to recommend the nomination of the president's son.

Because of his father's power, small parties such as PSI, which needed figures to increase the party's electability, met his interests so that they were willing to make the president's son the party chairman.

During the nomination process, state instruments, both apparatus and programs, will be used to gain public sympathy in the hope that their child will be elected.

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