

## Value representation in political branding, why political party needed it?

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**Abstract:** In an increasingly competitive political landscape, political branding plays a crucial role in shaping a party's image and attracting voter support. This study explores the significance of value representation in political branding and why political parties need it to strengthen their identity and increase electability. Using a qualitative approach, this research analyzes how the values upheld by a political party influence public perception, foster voter loyalty, and differentiate the party from its competitors. This finding shows that the success of political imaging depends on how well the party's values align with the cultural values embraced by society. These cultural values must be represented in the branding strategy. A strong and authentic value representation enhances credibility, trust, and appeal, making a political party more relevant and sustainable in a dynamic political environment. Therefore, a deep understanding of value representation is essential for building a compelling and long-lasting political brand.

**Keywords:** Political branding, Social media, Value representation.

### 1. Introduction

This research starts from the idea that every political party must be able to carry out the values it adheres to *way of life*. be it from party activities, party policies or the actions of its cadres. The values of political parties will become the color of the basis of the way of thinking about the state which differs from one party to another. The values espoused by this party must be reflected in various political communication media, including social media. This reflection on social media enters the realm of representation. Durkheim's sociological thinking states that the world cannot be known by itself, but only through representation can estimates of the world be made, both individually and collectively [1]. Based on this idea, representation can be used to identify political parties. The public can see political parties not just from the party logo, but from the values summarized in the ideology, vision and mission, policies that make political parties have a spirit/soul that is inherent in the hearts of their voters.

Representation is a widely studied concept in fields such as neuroscience, psychology, mathematics education, and political science. This concept refers to the ways in which information or ideas are expressed or communicated. Representation is the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a social group. Representation involves the use of language, signs, and images that represent something [2, 3].

In this research, value representation is the focus that will be explored. This is because values can be an important part of political communication. Based on a sociological approach, value has many definitions, but most can be classified into two groups: (1) 'value' as something that is directly attached to or ascribed to a preferred object and (2) 'value' as an (inherent) belief or conception that constructs something as something more liked or desired [4]. This definition simply states that values can be seen as a level of visibility (both explicit and implicit) and a level of belief. The value representation examined in this research will refer to the display of value at the level of visibility, both explicitly and implicitly.

In political communication social media can help the democratic process by allowing everyone to share information and create what is known as shared awareness. This shared awareness is important to make communities and the general public aware of their problems. With mutual understanding and awareness, an issue can become a public agenda to be raised and discussed in public spaces [5, 6].

The study of representation related to social media and politics refers to three main domains, namely a) Social media and politics [7-13]. Social media and representation [14-23]. Self-Representation and Online Identity [24-30]. Meanwhile, studies regarding value representation have not been explored as a technical concept and theory.

Pich and Newman [31] in research about the *Evolution of Political Branding: Typologies, Diverse Settings and Future Research in the Journal of Political Marketing* argued that Political branding has developed into an established and dynamic sub-discipline of political marketing. Political branding research continues to push boundaries by critically applying consumer-based branding theories, concepts, and frameworks to the world of politics. Recently, political branding experts have divided the research into various categories such as companies, candidates, leaders, local-regional, internal or external. Despite these developments, there is still limited research on alternative or different typologies of political branding and there are still under-researched areas. Ideology (values), campaigns outside the election period, political movements, comparative and longitudinal studies, ecosystems, citizens/goals, events, sub-groups/wings, political group movements, support, and populism. In addition, further research should adopt a multidisciplinary approach and consider using theoretical lenses (concepts, theories and frameworks) from other disciplines such as marketing, psychology and social sciences [31]. Findings indicate that the values espoused by parties are an area that needs to be explored a lot, so that research on the representation of these values will be linked to the political branding process conceptually and theoretically.

Social media is important because it has changed how people interact with each other. This change occurred since social media was able to become a new space where people were free to express their thoughts, activities and experiences. Apart from that, people who actively use the internet or can be called netizens, can comment on each other, like and share uploads on social media. Social media is able to eliminate the limitations of space and time. The development of social media has become a new means of interaction.

Social media is a medium that can be a bridge for organizations or agencies to the public. Political parties can make social media a political communication medium that is more interactive than conventional media. Conventional media such as newspapers, television and radio have a tendency to communicate in one direction. Apart from that, costs incurred by parties can be reduced if they use social media compared to conventional media.

The average population using social media in Indonesia spends 3 hours 17 minutes every day on social media. The number of active social media users will grow by 12.6 percent in 2024, up 21 million from 2022. In Indonesia, social media has now become one of the most important aspects of daily internet use. Indonesian people are gradually switching from desktops to mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets. Indonesian people are quickly switching from desktop computers to mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets Indonesia Social Media Statistics [32].

Hasfi [33] revealed that the character of new media, in this case the internet, determines changes in political communication patterns, including direct (*direct*), cheap (*low cost*), speed (*speed*), interactive, and decentralized which deconstructs political communication from one direction to become two way, *top down* become *bottom up* and elitists become non-elitist; secondly, the new character of the internet brings positive changes to the political communication process and becomes an alternative media for the public to express their public opinions more openly and freely.

All organizations, politicians and political parties need to adapt to changes in society and improve their leadership capabilities. Choosing the right communication channels can help strengthen your political reputation and have a positive impact on voters. The current study shows that in contrast to political advertising, (a) public relations, (b) media, and, (c) social media play an important role in

achieving higher political performance. In particular, public relations and social media are the main determining factors for providing a significant positive effect on the "offering" of political products that focus on people's needs [34]. Posts on social media will be searchable, documented and shared easily by the public. This will make it easier for parties to communicate with the public. Social media is the media that is most easily accessed by society because almost every individual has a gadget to carry out their social activities. When compared to conventional media, social media is cheap media and has a wide segmentation reach.

The online-based nature of social media makes this media easily accessible to anyone and anywhere. The global reach of the internet makes its connectivity very efficient and flexible to be used as a means in the political communication process [35].

Social media is one way for people to get to know more about what political parties, party leaders, party cadres who are regional leaders or cadres who sit in the legislature are like, whether in terms of their character or their policies. If a political party does not represent the values it adheres to, it will create confusion between the values it adheres to and the implementation of these values, so that it can be considered mere jargon, without any realization.

Politicians must adapt their communication strategies to influence public opinion. Advertising is a waste of time and money. People need action; they need to participate in the conversation. Politicians need to adapt and understand these changes in their political sphere. They need to embrace the dramatic expansion of social media and its ability to drive media at no cost; it's a way to keep voters interested. They need to recognize the weakening of political advertising, a passive, outdated and very expensive tool of political communication. Voters need their politicians to act; they need them to tell them what they will do to help them and lead their families and communities to prosperity [34].

The use of social media has been carried out by political parties in Indonesia such as PDI Perjuangan, PSI, Gerindra, Golkar, PAN and other election-participating parties. The social media used is very diverse, such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, Tiktok and even threads. This is because the development of social media has different characteristics from one to another. Research conducted by Antoniadis [34] suggests that political parties use Twitter to promote their agenda, share political and professional viewpoints, and engage in social interaction, especially in disseminating short, temporary news.

The use of social media has transformed political campaign marketing, allowing candidates to fortify and build their political brands in marketing and campaigning themselves to win elections [36].

**Table 1.**  
Official Tiktok Account of Political Parties Contesting Elections in Indonesia.

Party	Tiktok Account	Followers	Total Like	Total Video
PDI Perjuangan	@dppdpdiperjuangan	1,359,514	21,168,904	3,030
PSI	@psi.id	605,194	20,062,374	1,074
Gerindra	@partaigerindra	385,518	6,214,211	231
Golkar	@golkar.indonesia	254,001	11,558,192	1,247
PAN	@amanat_nasional	345,071	10,162,783	740
PKS	@pksejahtera	100,776	1,899,690	881
Hanura	@hanura.official	94,265	22,720	153
Demokrat	@pdemokrat	84,911	1,323,297	705
PPP	@dpp.ppp	78,213	329,163	954
PKB	@dpp_pkb	52,353	797,640	657
Nasdem	@partinasdem	34,300	439,699	742
Perindo	@partaiperindo	27,472	437,492	2,172
Partai Buruh	@labor party	16,194	159,238	580
PartaGelora	@partaigeloraid	16,908	241,581	1,095
PKN	@kitapkuid	6,549	37,058	162
Garuda	@partaigarudaofficial	1,951	22,441	104
PBB	-	-	-	-

Source: processed from tiktok.com on January 17 2024.

The data above shows that political parties have social media and use it as a communication channel to the wider community. On social media, dialogue occurs between netizens and politicians through comments and also symbolic interactions in the form of likes on posts. Even though not all politicians have a high-quality engagement rate, the use of social media is the main choice in communicating politicians' activities, views and thoughts.

This research will focus on TikTok as a social media used by PDIP. If compared to other social media, TikTok is the most influential platform during the general elections in Thailand in 2023 [37].

TikTok social media has advantages over Instagram and other social media, this advantage lies in the algorithm *For Your Page* (FYP) where this algorithm makes users always receive video recommendations based on the video categories they have watched before. This makes social media accounts get far more likes than the number of followers, as evidenced by the PDI Perjuangan account which got 21,168,904 likes or almost 20 times the number of followers, namely 1,359,514 followers. Of all the participating parties, only the Crescent Star Party does not have an official TikTok account.

Social media and websites are the main terraces for parties in the digital realm. However, because of the superiority of social media in being able to communicate in two directions (providing faster feedback and responses), social media is superior in terms of impression and reach to the public.

Politicians' use of social media can be understood as a way to produce a visual flow of professional and personal practices in which the authenticity of everyday political life takes center stage. Through the daily dissemination of photographs taken, politicians can strategically build self-managed 'galleries', where their work practices and glimpses of their personal lives can be seen. This is a characteristic of celebrity culture, where actors 'must constantly alternate between presenting their stage personas, hiding or revealing private personal information, and creating intimacy and authentic self-presentation with their followers [38, 39].

Apart from the features offered by social media, political actors also play an important role in attracting people to engage in political discourse. This is because political actors who share information on their social media have the potential to attract users to get the latest political information. This was also acknowledged by the respondents that they expressed their opinions on posts shared by political candidates on social media [40].

Political parties, as very strategic political instruments in the democratic landscape, should be the subject of betting on the relevance of political ideology which at a macro level contributes to the direction and goals of the political life of the nation and state. Political parties have a very important position (status) and role in every democratic system. Parties play a very strategic liaison role between government processes and citizens. Marhaenism as Soekarno's political principle became material given to all PDIP cadres. This means that the principles of Marhaenism which are based on Marxist analysis as a critical view of the socio-economic inequality of society due to liberalist-capitalist political economy should also become PDIP's political guidelines. Because as the antithesis of liberal-capitalism, the position of Marhaenism is inherent to socialism [41].

PDI Perjuangan is very synonymous with the slogan of the little people party, this is supported by the Articles of Association (AD) and Bylaws (ART) Results of the 2015-2020 congress Chapter III Article 9 c which states "Forming Party Cadres with a Pioneer Spirit, and Having the Understanding, Ability to Explain and Implement Bung Karno's Teachings in Community, National and State Life."

The marhaenist values adhered to by the PDIP, both institutionally, cadres and members, through the slogan of the "*Wong Cilik*" party, should be represented not only in social reality but should also be visible on social media. This is because the current development of the digital world can expand the reach of communication without knowing the boundaries of space and time. Social media can enable political parties to reach a global audience and interact more personally. Political parties can share thoughts, policies, and ideologies so they can influence public opinion.

The representation of values espoused by parties is very important to research. This is because the values expressed in slogans or taglines must be able to be understood and interpreted with the same meaning between the communicator and the communicant. Otherwise, the Party will only be a political

brand that will differentiate one party from another but will have no visible value. This will obscure the value of the party's struggle so that the direction, foundation and goals of the party are not understood by the public.

This research is research on messages (text) that are produced, so the limitations of this research are that it does not discuss feedback or responses from the audience, this research also does not discuss the aims and objectives of the message creator.

## 2. Research Method

Qualitative content analysis is a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data. This is done by classifying parts of the data, as a form of coding framework categorization. This method is suitable for all data that require interpretation. Data can be verbal or visual data and can be data obtained for research or data originating from other sources [42].

In this research, qualitative content analysis will be used as the method used. Qualitative content analysis is defined as a set of rigorous and systematic procedures for rigorous analysis, testing, replication, inference, and verification of the content of written data [43].

The focus of qualitative content analysis is on latent meaning, namely meaning that is not immediately obvious, while quantitative content analysis focuses on real, literal meaning [42, 44-47].

The research approach used is an analytical framework. An analytical framework in qualitative design means that the procedures used in interpreting data comply with a predetermined structure identified in the literature. This involves creating categories of information (open coding), selecting one of the categories and positioning it in a theoretical model (axial coding), and then developing a story from the interconnections of these categories (selective coding) [48].

Encoding (*coding*) is analysis. In addition, the concepts of transparency and validity in qualitative research require clear and thorough coding to demonstrate the validity of the data. coding allows researchers to continuously check the unity between their results and goals [49].

The object of research in this research is the PDI Perjuangan tiktok social media account @dpppdiperjuangan. This account is the official account of PDI Perjuangan with a blue tick. The time period for the research was carried out during the presidential election campaign, namely 28 November 2023 to 10 February 2024. The research focused on the 50 uploads with the most viewers.

#	Author's Avatar author/meta.avatar	Author author/meta.name	Text	Diggs diggCount	Shares shareCount	Plays playCount	Comments commentCount	Bookmarks collectCount	Duration (seconds) video/meta.duration	Create Time createTimeISO	Video url webVideoUrl
1		@dppdpiperjuangan	Not a Bull If You're Afraid to Fight !!	200000	138800	35500000	4400	145300	15	2023-08-28 09:49:42	https://www.tiktok.com/@dppdpiperjuangan/video/7272199874794376453
2		@dppdpiperjuangan	ready to fight, the election is coming, ready to be the choice	1800000	146100	24300000	45600	142600	23	2023-08-16 16:58:44	https://www.tiktok.com/@dppdpiperjuangan/video/7267857418925640965
3		@dppdpiperjuangan	let's get moving	1800000	273900	27200000	111700	185800	28	2023-08-12 09:08:27	https://www.tiktok.com/@dppdpiperjuangan/video/7266251880475495686
4		@dppdpiperjuangan	ready to win a hat-trick, let's work together to safeguard each stage of the election	4383	69	46100	224	155	38	2024-02-17 18:50:16	https://www.tiktok.com/@dppdpiperjuangan/video/7336536874682535169
5		@dppdpiperjuangan	Mahfud MD conveys his determination to continue fighting for democracy and justice	4868	32	56400	117	241	398	2024-02-17 18:12:41	https://www.tiktok.com/@dppdpiperjuangan/video/7336527088662383874
6		@dppdpiperjuangan	prepare to win the election hatrick, keep up the spirit	7484	112	89600	425	311	15	2024-02-17 17:15:01	https://www.tiktok.com/@dppdpiperjuangan/video/7336512200187710727
7		@dppdpiperjuangan	The presidential election is not determined by the quick count results	1137	4	22300	68	39	0	2024-02-17 14:04:54	https://www.tiktok.com/@dppdpiperjuangan/video/7336463369551072518
8		@dppdpiperjuangan	The Ganjar-Mahfud winning team forms an audit team	1039	18	16300	43	51	46	2024-02-17 09:00:00	https://www.tiktok.com/@dppdpiperjuangan/video/7336275925572635911

**Figure 1.** Some of the results of the tiktok account scrapper @dppdpiperjuangan from tiktok scapper using apify.

### 3. Discussion

The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) claims to be the party of the “little people”. This statement was first made by the chairman of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) Soerjadi in 1980 as a form of defense for the common people. In its development, the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) changed to the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) led by Megawati Soekarnoputri and still echoed as the “wong cilik” party.

The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) is a major party in Indonesia. After successfully electing Joko Widodo as the winner of the presidential election in 2014 and 2019, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle failed to elect Ganjar Pranowo as the winner in the 2024 presidential election.

**Table 2.** Percentage of Votes Gained by Presidential Candidates Nominated by the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle.

Election year	Name of the president and vice president couple	Vote acquisition		Results
		Number of votes	Percentage	
2024	Ganjar Pranowo-M. Mahfud MD	27.040.878	16.47 %	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2019	Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf Amin	85.607.362	55.50 %	1 <sup>st</sup>
2014	Joko Widodo-Muhammad Jusuf Kalla	70.997.833	53.15 %	1 <sup>st</sup>

Source: Bps.go.id [50]

The findings of this study, which are the result of uploads on the social media platform TikTok during the presidential campaign, do not consistently represent the “Wong Cilik”. “Wong Cilik” literally can be interpreted as a little people, commoners, common people. Term “Wong Cilik” which is taken from Javanese language terminology, has Eastern philosophical values. So Javanese culture is one of the *asian value*. *Asian value* is a concept that emphasizes the importance of cultural values, traditions, and communities in social life, often promoting harmony and balance between individuals and society [51].

The image of a “*Wong Cilik*” representative who tends to be successfully built by Joko Widodo does not seem to be done by Ganjar Pranowo. Uploads to the @dpppdiperjuangan account as the official account of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle during elections do not portray it as the party of the commoners. Ganjar Pranowo tried to be the antithesis of Joko Widodo, even though Joko Widodo's image as a “commoner” was already ingrained. When trying to be a different character, it is not easily accepted and does not fit the party's image.

Uploads to this account during the presidential election period focused on election outreach and support from party elites, but the value factors of the “*Wong Cilik*” have begun to be neglected. The values of the “*Wong Cilik*” such as attitude, ethics, belief (religiosity), modesty, patience, humility, loyalty, caution in action and hard work.



**Figure 2.**

Thumbnail of the video uploaded to the @dpppdiperjuangan account.

So when the term *wong cilik* is used by the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle as the party's positioning, the values of “*Wong Cilik*” must appear in the *branding* process. Representation of internal cultural values *political branding* can increase the connection between political parties and voters (*brand alignment*). Cultural values that appear on social media can become the identity of political parties (*brand identity*) which will be *positioning brand* (brand position in the minds of voters) as well as being a differentiator from competitors. Cultural values represented on social media can strengthen *brand value* in the minds of voters. The cultural value in this research is the value of *little people*. Term *little people* itself is used by the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle as *positioning* party in the minds of voters.

So that the use of the term *wong cilik* cannot only be judged as materially poor/powerless people. However, the meaning of this little person should also be seen from the eastern value (*Asian/Eastern Value*) such as values, norms, behavior that exist in the lives of young people. Process *political branding* must look at cultural values in depth, not just at a normative level. So when it's done *political branding* then these values will be represented on social media.

The meaning that emerges from posts on the TikTok social media account @dpppdiperjuangan shows that the concept of little people is only limited to poor and lower middle-class people. Their appearance is just an extra and has no role in the video.

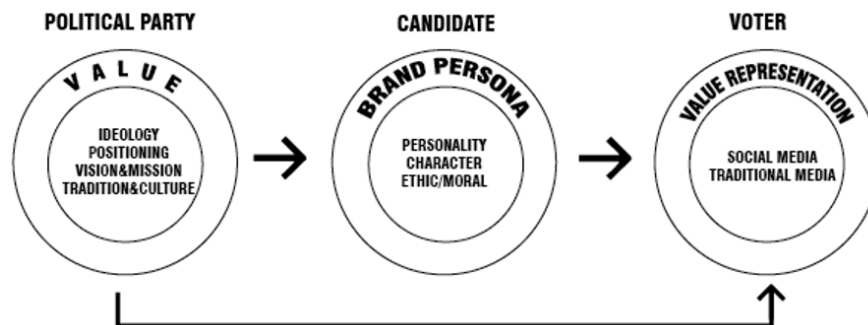
The message conveyed was very one-sided and the little people interpreted it from the party elite's version. “*Wong Cilik*” himself does not appear. The character and values of the little people do not

appear dominantly, posts are dominated by political elites from the PDIP. This means that the party is still carrying out branding on social media only as a campaign promotion medium without prioritizing the main message, namely that the party is the little people.

Value representation is how the values espoused by this party can appear in posts on communication media, in this case social media. The values that emerge come from the party's positioning, ideology, vision and mission. This will strengthen the political party's brand and make this value a differentiation.

The representation of this value can be seen in terms of audio (voiceover, music, speech, instrument), visual (gesture, mimic, graphic, animation, meme) and text (titling, caption, subtitle). However, this meaning is considered not only what is visible but also the meaning behind the post. So there is linearity between ideology, party positioning, vision and mission, slogans and uploads on social media.

Campaigns based on emotional appeals can provide a close bond to potential voters. This emotional appeal can be in the form of hopes, fears, worries, pride and can strengthen the connection between candidates and potential voters [52]. Cultural Values: Candidates who understand the cultural values of their electoral district tend to be successful [53, 54].



**Figure 3.**  
Value Representation Model in Social Media.

Values are the most important thing in political branding because values are the foundation of party identity. Political parties have values taken from party ideology, party positioning, vision and mission, traditions and culture. Political parties determine brand personas as the embodiment of their values. Brand persona is the process of personifying or characterization of a brand as a person, which reflects the personality, values and attributes you want to associate with the brand.

Political brands can increase their presence on social media by adopting an online brand persona as part of their political brand's story [55]. So that political parties can formulate ideal cadres and candidates based on their values. Candidates who appear on social media must match the brand persona and this must be represented on the party's social media.

Several things that arise as a result of the lack of representation of value from uploads on social media can affect the visual level. Personal perception and image of the candidate, the candidate can be judged as not having a character that represents the values of the little people. So the visual appearance will affect the credibility of the proposed candidate [56, 57].

The values of political parties must be represented on social media, the representation of these values must be consistently built on social media. This consistency will strengthen the political brand in the minds of consumers. If the representation of values is carried out holistically and consistently, brand alignment will be formed between political parties and voters.



#### 4. Conclusion

Value representation is something that political parties must pay attention to in managing their brands. Political Branding must be able to align party values into posts on social media. This alignment will strengthen the party's values in the minds of potential voters.

Congruence in values between parties and voters. When voters find that a party or candidate has the same values, voters will support that party. Parties or candidates who are able to share the same values will increase voter loyalty [58, 59].

#### Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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