

The Dynamics of Political Communication in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Network Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the dynamics of political communication in Indonesia through a Systematic Literature Network Analysis (SLNA). The research aims to understand the development and patterns of political communication within Indonesian scholarly literature. SLNA combines the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA protocol to analyze article content, and Bibliometric Analysis (BA) to examine keywords, publication years, journals, and thematic networks. The study covers literature indexed in the Scopus database from 2014 to 2023. Literature mapping was conducted to identify connections among key concepts, theories, and existing research findings. The results show a clear evolution in the focus of political communication studies in Indonesia, ranging from historical perspectives during the independence movement to contemporary issues such as political communication during the COVID-19 pandemic by the executive branch, legislative communication trends, and identity politics. The study identifies specific research trends and highlights thematic shifts over time. It suggests the need for further studies to explore underexamined areas and encourages deeper analysis of the impact of new media and digital technologies on political processes in Indonesia. Overall, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Indonesia's political communication landscape and serves as a foundation for future research in the field.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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bibliometric analysis, covid-19, identity politics, indonesia, political communication, political discourse, scopus, systematic literature network analysis (SLNA)

INTRODUCTION

Political communication in Indonesia has experienced significant transformation over time. With the advent of political reform and press liberalization, there has been a shift toward the professionalization of political public relations (Dhani et al., 2015). This development aligns with broader democratization processes, including increased freedom of speech and expression (Rani, 2020). The rise of digital media, especially social media platforms, has played a pivotal role in shaping political discourse (Oeldorf-Hirsch et al., 2023). These platforms not only facilitate public criticism of the government (Umran, 2014) but also contribute to greater political awareness among citizens (Zempi et al., 2023). Overall, political communication in Indonesia continues to evolve in parallel with the country's democratic transition and the strengthening of its political institutions.

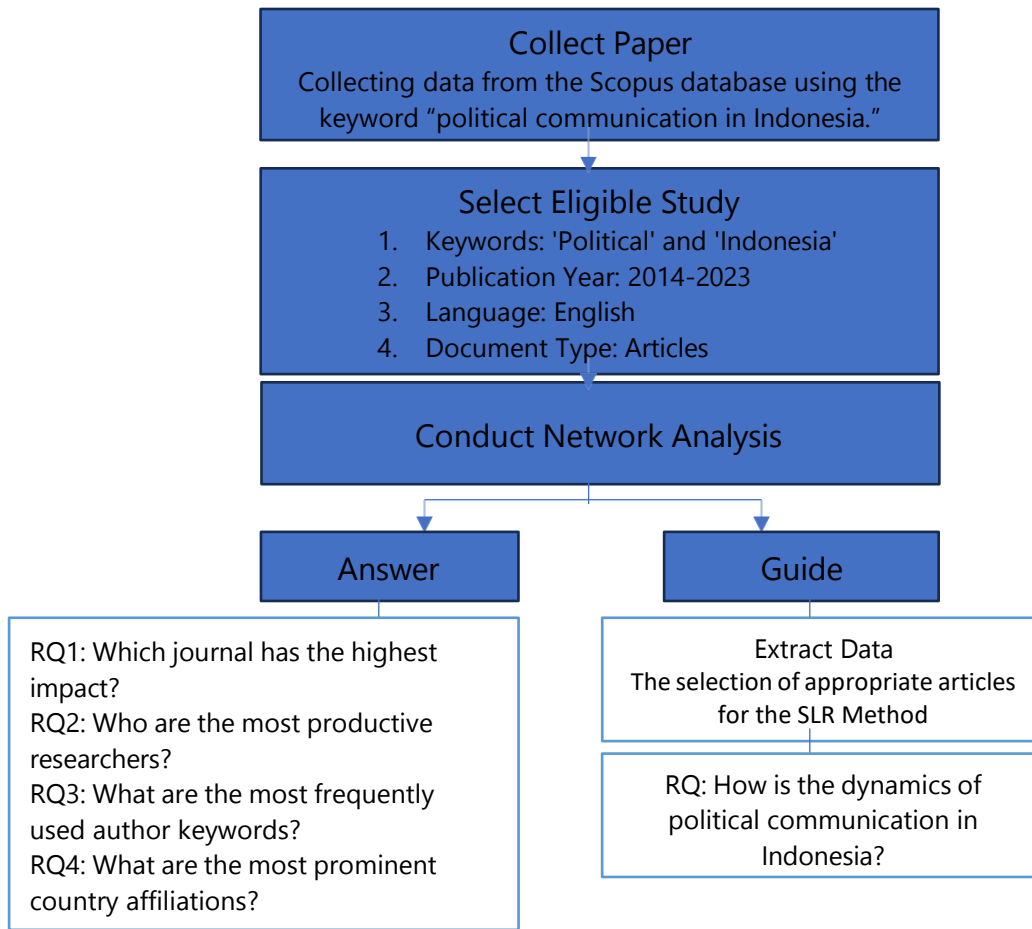
This study employs a literature review approach to explore the dynamics of political communication in Indonesia. A commonly used method is the Systematic Literature Review (SLR), which can be integrated with Bibliometric Analysis (BA) to form the Systematic Literature Network Analysis (SLNA). Although promising, SLNA remains underutilized due to its complexity and limited methodological familiarity. The approach requires specific software tools, such as OpenRefine for data cleaning, Bibliometrix (R package) for quantitative analysis and visualization, Mendeley for reference management, and VOSviewer for mapping bibliometric networks (Waltman et al., 2010).

Data for this study are sourced from Scopus-indexed publications between 2014 and 2023. Science mapping techniques—citation analysis, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, co-word, and co-authorship analyses—are applied to uncover key trends and relationships.

While numerous studies have explored political communication, few have used bibliometric or SLNA approaches, particularly in the Indonesian context. Most existing research focuses on global perspectives or social media. Previous studies have identified the United States, China, and Russia as leading contributors to political communication research (Saravanan et al., 2023), with growing attention to topics like political discourse, identity politics, and online campaigning (Subekti et al., 2023). This study aims to fill this gap by providing a focused bibliometric analysis of political communication literature in Indonesia, enhancing the understanding of its research landscape and informing future academic and policy discourse.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs the Systematic Literature Network Analysis (SLNA) method, which combines Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and Bibliometric Analysis (BA). This integrative approach allows for a comprehensive mapping and evaluation of the knowledge structure regarding political communication in Indonesia. The procedure follows the framework proposed (Strozzi et al., 2017) as illustrated in Figure 1.



Source: Strozzi et al., 2017

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of SLNA

Through this framework, the study aims to provide a comprehensive insight into the development of political communication in Indonesia by utilizing network analysis methods and focusing on the designed research questions.

Table 1 Article Selection Criteria

Criteria	Include	Exclude
Keywords	"Political" and "Indonesia"	-
Publication Year	2014-2023	Before 2014
Language	English	Non-English (e.g., Chinese, Arabic, etc.)
Document Type	Article	Book, Editorial, Review, etc

The next step involves analyzing and visually representing articles based on keywords, relevant authors, journals, and thematic relationships. The development of international publication trends in political communication in Indonesia is explored using Bibliometrix software. A total of 629 articles, selected based on the criteria in Table 1, were analyzed.

Data analysis covers the period from 2014 to 2023, with 629 documents studied. A total of 2,049 authors contributed, with 118 single-authored documents. 99 sources were used, citing a total of 43,076 references.

International collaboration is notable, accounting for 32.11% of all documents. The average document age is 3.44 years, reflecting a focus on recent information. The annual growth rate is 43.12%, indicating significant research development during the period. On average, each document involved 3.56 co-authors, demonstrating a relatively high collaboration rate. Additionally, each document had an average of 10.65 citations, indicating strong recognition and relevance in the academic community. Overall, the analysis provides a comprehensive view of trends, collaboration, and the scientific impact within the studied period.



Figure 2 Article Selection Criteria Data from Bibliometrix Software

The description of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) in Figure 3, the PRISMA diagram, illustrates the process of identifying and including new studies in the review. The process begins with the data collection, which includes the database (629 records) and registrations (4 available records). A total of 200 duplicate records were removed, while 100 records were excluded by automation tools. An additional 200 records were excluded for other reasons before the screening process. From the 31 reports assessed for eligibility, 10 were included as new studies in the review. These reports were then included in the analysis, resulting in the final inclusion of 10 new studies.

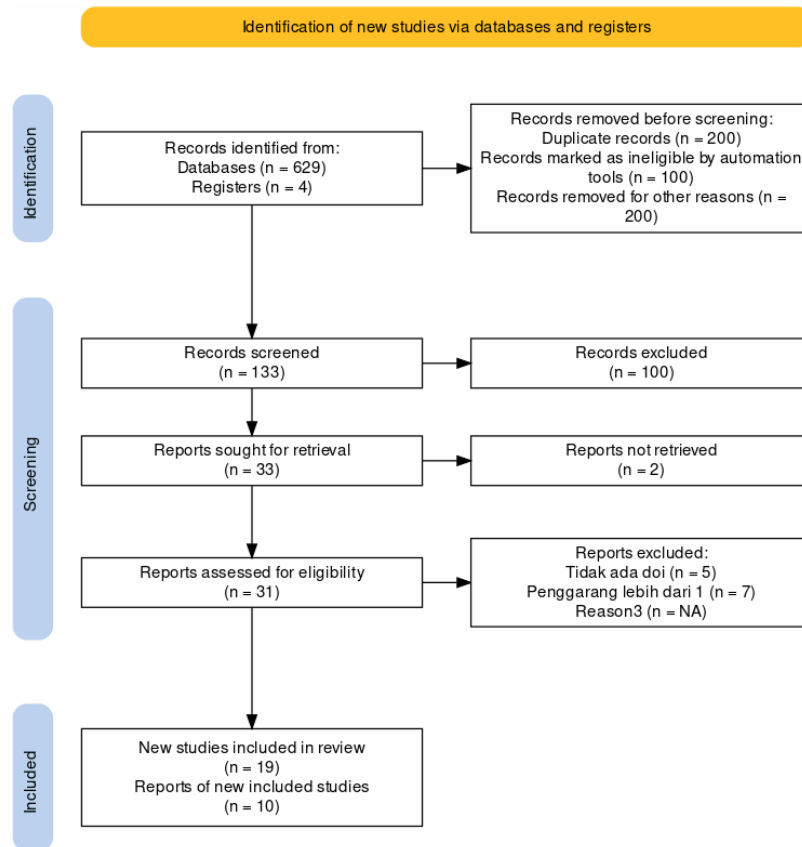


Figure 3 Software PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of the SLR Stages

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Journal Impact Analysis

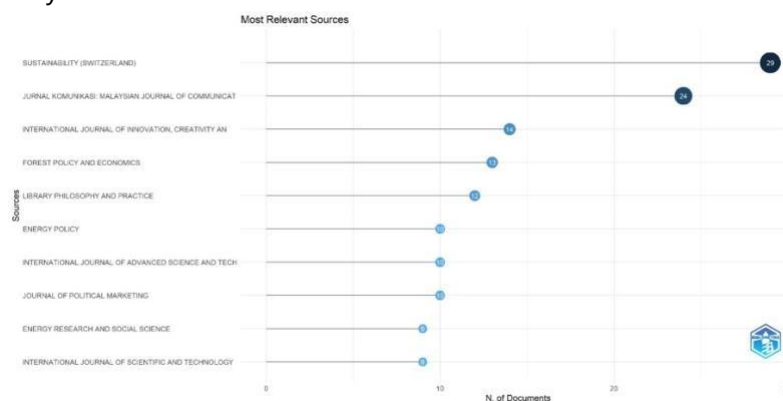


Figure 4 Journal with the most articles processed using BibliometriX

Figure 4 shows journals with the highest article contributions. "Sustainability (Switzerland)" leads with 29 articles, followed by "Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication" with 24 articles. Other notable journals include "International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change" (14 articles) and "Forest Policy and Economics" (13 articles). This analysis provides insights into the distribution of articles across journals and highlights dominant research topics.

The Local Citation Network (LCN) and co-occurrence keyword analysis help identify revolutionary research and emerging trends (Strozzi et al., 2017). Figure 5 illustrates the most locally cited works, with "Sustainability (Switzerland)" standing out with an h-index of 11 and a g-index of 18, reflecting its high impact and citation frequency.

Element	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start
SUSTAINABILITY (SWITZERLAND)	11	18	1.375	366	29	2017
FOREST POLICY AND ECONOMICS	8	13	0.889	185	13	2016
ENERGY POLICY	7	10	0.875	179	10	2017
LAND USE POLICY	7	9	0.700	303	9	2015
WORLD DEVELOPMENT	7	9	1.000	157	9	2018
GEOFORUM	6	7	0.600	199	7	2015
MEDIA, CULTURE AND SOCIETY	6	7	0.600	141	7	2015
RENEWABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY REVIEWS	6	6	1.200	332	6	2020
DEMOCRATIZATION	5	7	0.556	91	7	2016
ENERGY RESEARCH AND SOCIAL SCIENCE	5	9	1.000	182	9	2020

Figure 5 Local Citation Network with BibliometriX

Most Productive Researchers

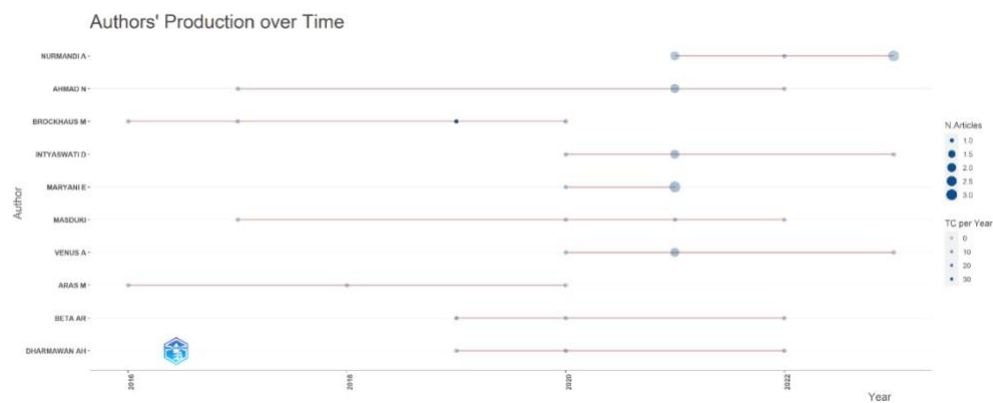


Figure 6 Most Productive Researchers with BibliometriX

Figure 6 highlights the most productive authors, with Ahmad N and Beta AR contributing significantly to the literature. Ahmad N showed a notable increase in productivity, especially in 2021, with an average citation rate of 3.5 citations per year per article.

Author Keywords and Research Clusters

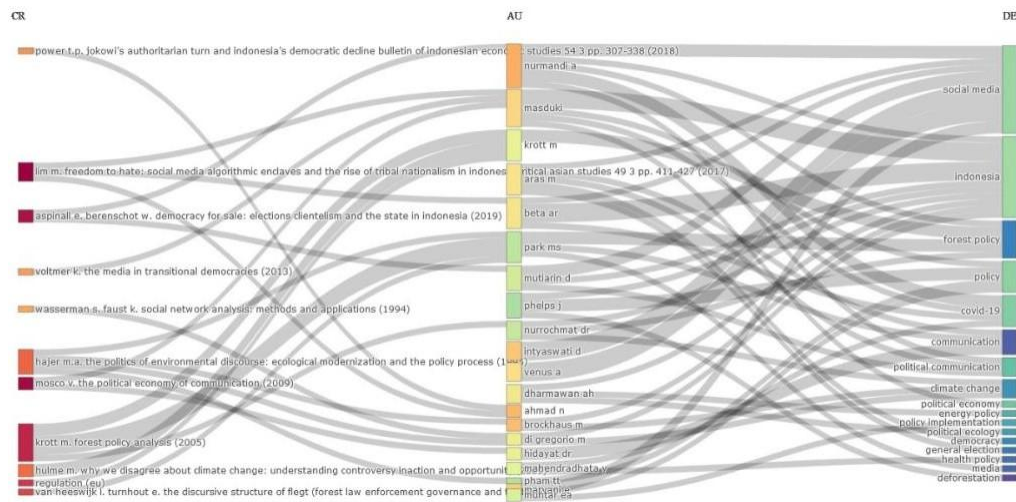


Figure 7 Citation Source Network, Authors, and Keywords Analysis from Bibliometrix

The most productive authors identified in the data are Ahmad N and Beta AR. Ahmad N demonstrated significant publication frequency over several years. In 2017, he published one article with 6 citations (TC), yielding a TC per year (TCpY) ratio of 0.750. His productivity surged in 2021 with two articles totaling 14 citations and a TCpY of 3.500. Even with only one article in 2022, his TCpY remained high at 0.667.

Beta AR, another highly productive author, published one article in 2019 with 29 citations and a TCpY of 4.833, reflecting substantial contribution that year. In the subsequent years, Beta AR maintained productivity by publishing one article each in 2020 and 2022, with TCpY ratios of 0.800 and 1.333, respectively. Both Ahmad N and Beta AR made significant contributions to the academic literature during the analyzed period.

Additionally, the citation network, including sources, authors, and keywords, is illustrated in Figure 7, highlighting the journals cited by these authors, where the codes CR represent cited journals, AU refers to the authors, and DE represents author keywords.

Figure 8 reveals the top co-occurring keywords, forming three major clusters: 1) Environmental Policy, 2) Human Issues (with a focus on COVID-19), and 3) Governance Approach. Social media emerged as the primary communication model for political communication.

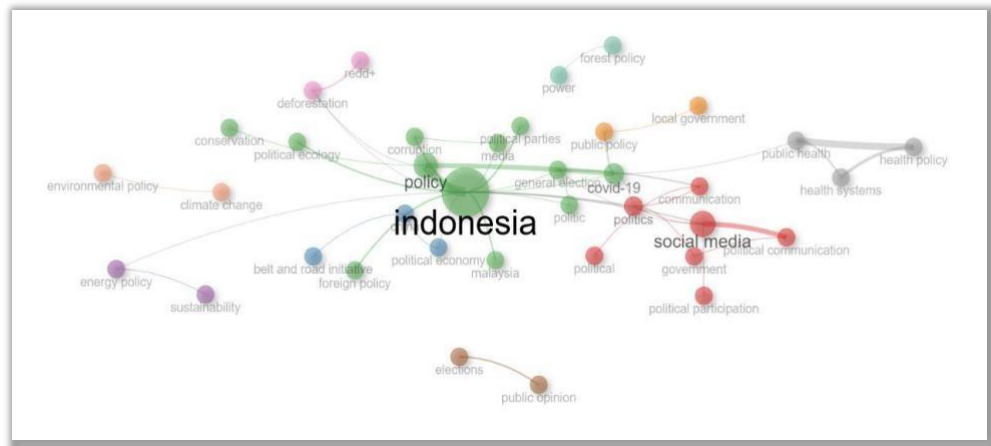


Figure 8 Most co – occurrence keyword author BibliometriX

Prominent Country Affiliations in Political Communication

Next, looking at the author affiliations across countries in Figure 9, the author affiliation data shows the distribution of contributions from different countries in the generated scientific literature. Out of a total of 121 articles, the majority (101 articles) are single-country publications (SCP), while the remaining 20 are multi-country publications (MCP). Indonesia is the most active contributor, with 109 articles, indicating a significant dominance in the research. Other countries like the USA, China, and Australia also contributed, with the USA having the highest MCP ratio at 0.356, indicating a high level of international collaboration. Similarly, Australia and the United Kingdom have MCP ratios of 0.367 and 0.633, respectively, reflecting intensive collaboration in multi-country research. Higher MCP ratios tend to indicate close international cooperation in advancing knowledge and scholarly literature on a particular topic.

Country	Articles	SCP	MCP	Freq	MCP_Ratio
	121	101	20	0.224	0.165
INDONESIA	109	95	14	0.202	0.128
USA	45	29	16	0.083	0.356
CHINA	35	28	7	0.065	0.200
AUSTRALIA	30	19	11	0.056	0.367
UNITED KINGDOM	30	11	19	0.056	0.633
NETHERLANDS	16	4	12	0.030	0.750
CANADA	15	11	4	0.028	0.267
GERMANY	15	8	7	0.028	0.467
MALAYSIA	13	7	6	0.024	0.462

Figure 9 Author Affiliation Across Countries with BibliometriX

Literature Analysis

Scopus is one of the largest reference and abstract databases for scholarly literature worldwide. It is crucial in the academic and research domains as it helps researchers conduct studies, discover current literature, and understand trends across various disciplines. The database provides access to high-quality international journal references. Scopus journals are ranked in quartiles, from Q1 to Q4, with Q1 representing the highest tier. The following table presents an analysis of literature from different quartile levels:

Table 1 Paper Qualifications SLR

No	Title	Year	Citations	Journal Rank
1.	Political Power Shift in the House of Representatives of North Sumatra Province, Indonesia: A Political Communication of Post-election, Studies in Media and Communication.	2022	3	Q4
2.	Populist political ideation and communication of gubernatorial candidates in Indonesia's 2018 gubernatorial elections: Anti-establishment views, secular nationalism and Islamism as ideational-populist elements, Asian Journal of Comparative Politics.	2022	2	Q3
3.	Regional Legislative's Political Communication under Supervision of COVID-19 Pandemic Control Program in West Java Province, Indonesia, Croatian International Relations Review.	2021	6	Q3
4.	Blunders of government communication: The political economy of COVID-19 communication policy in Indonesia, Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik.	2020	3	Q3
5.	The use of Arabic terms as a form of cultural hegemony in political communication by Muslim fundamentalist groups in Indonesia, Journal of Indonesian Islam.	2020	3	Q1
6.	Corpses that speak: Revolutionary violence and political communication in Indonesia, Politics, Religion and Ideology.	2018	2	Q1
7.	Celebrity Politicians Digital Campaigns And Performances Of Political Legitimacy In Indonesia's 2019 Elections.	2022	4	Q1

8.	The Role of Political Communication Through Mass Media on Political Efficacy Among College Students.	2020	1	Q3
9.	The role of cognitive elaboration in social media political information consumption and persuasion.	2023	0	Q2
10.	Media Control in The Digital Politics of Indonesia.	2021	4	Q1

Political Communication in Indonesia: Between Power Interests, Political Identity, and Digital Legitimacy

This discussion examines the state of political communication in Indonesia, with insights drawn from the literature review, and highlights its evolution over time, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Political communication in Indonesia has undergone significant shifts, with growing importance placed on digital platforms and media in shaping political discourse and maintaining legitimacy.

At the executive level, communication strategies are primarily focused on consolidating political power and sustaining economic stability. As noted by (Masduki, 2020), government communication often favored pro-market policies and manipulated data to project a controlled image, emphasizing stability over transparency. These strategies highlight the intersection of political communication with economic and power interests, revealing an ongoing effort to maintain a favorable image amidst political and social pressures.

In parallel, legislative bodies such as the Regional Representative Council (DPD) also played an active role in political communication, particularly through oversight functions and information dissemination. As observed by (Hkikmat, 2021), the DPD coordinated with local governments and related agencies to respond to public concerns, acting as both a monitor of executive actions and an information conduit between the state and citizens. This reflects a dual role in political communication, showcasing the complex dynamics between state institutions and their attempts to address public concerns.

Beyond the institutional roles, political communication in Indonesia has been strongly influenced by historical contexts and political culture, stretching back to the colonial period and through the New Order era. Figures like Sukarno and Bung Tomo utilized political rhetoric to inspire resistance, while the New Order regime effectively used symbolic representations to maintain state authority (Peters, 2018). These practices have laid the foundation for modern political communication strategies that continue to draw on cultural symbols and narratives to assert power and influence.

Since the Sukarno era, where symbolism and political speeches were used to evoke the spirit of nationalism, to the New Order period under Suharto which utilized state symbols and state ceremonies to consolidate power, political communication in Indonesia has always revolved around the use of cultural narratives and symbols to create connections with the public (Peters, 2018). The narrative continues to be used in contemporary political campaigns, where

politicians, as noted by Aspinall (2016), exploit nationalism symbolism and religious ideology to garner public sympathy. Additionally, cultural symbols have also become important tools in identity politics, which are now used by populist leaders to garner voter support (Rakhmani & Saraswati, 2021). Aulia and Sakinah (2025) show that the use of political symbols in Indonesia is not only carried out through traditional media but also increasingly intensively in digital campaigns, with political signs and symbols playing a significant role in conveying ideological values and shaping public perception. Warburton (2018) adds that the use of symbols and nationalist narratives is part of populist campaigns that continue to strengthen communication strategies in the face of an increasingly polarized population. Jokowi, as a modern leader, for example, has successfully used cultural symbols to communicate his closeness to the people, as discussed by Arbay & Pasha (2024), with symbols of simplicity and blusukan projected to strengthen his political image. All of this shows that although times and communication methods have changed, the strategy of using cultural symbols and historical narratives remains key to strengthening political legitimacy and increasing influence in contemporary Indonesian politics.

The role of media, especially digital platforms, has become increasingly central in recent years. The rise of political celebrities, social media influencers, and religious leaders has shifted the landscape of political communication. Political elites have leveraged platforms like Instagram and Twitter to construct personal brands and amplify their political messages, often blending entertainment with political discourse (Beta & Neyazi, 2022). This use of social media not only facilitates direct communication with the public but also plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and building political legitimacy, particularly during times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the manipulation of cultural and religious symbols by groups such as FPI and HTI illustrates the continued relevance of identity politics in shaping political discourse. These groups have utilized terms like jihad and khilafah to advance their agendas, underscoring the strategic use of ideological language in shaping political narratives and building support (Nurhajati & Fenton, 2020). This highlights how political communication in Indonesia is intertwined with the broader cultural and ideological struggles within society.

The dynamics of political communication in Indonesia, especially with the rise of digital media, reflect a shift from traditional forms of communication to more personalized and direct interactions between political figures and the public. This evolution, alongside the enduring influence of historical, cultural, and ideological forces, makes political communication in Indonesia a complex and ever-changing phenomenon that continues to shape the political landscape.

CONCLUSION

Dynamics of political communication in Indonesia from 2014 to 2023, based on the SLNA study, show a significant shift in actors, media, and communication strategies used. Political communication is no longer limited to formal institutional channels but has rapidly expanded into the digital space and social media, opening new opportunities and challenges in building

political legitimacy. At the executive and legislative levels, communication strategies are dominated by efforts to maintain power and political stability, often accompanied by populist approaches and the use of specific ideological symbols. The political narratives built often overlap with market interests, religious identities, and the construction of images through visual media. This communication pattern reflects a systematic effort to influence public perception, considering electoral dynamics and societal fragmentation. Additionally, the emergence of new actors in political communication, such as political celebrities, religious figures, and social media influencers, enriches yet complicates the political communication landscape. The phenomenon of religious term manipulation by certain groups also shows how identity politics still plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and building support bases. Future research should delve deeper into the influence of digital-based political communication on shifts in voter behavior, the role of media influencers, and how identity politics may evolve and impact political stability in Indonesia.

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