

CONSTELLATION OF POWER BEHIND COMMUNICATION  
PRESIDENTIAL IN INTOLERANCE ISSUES: CRITICAL  
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT IN  
THE CASE OF MELIANA IN TANJUNGBALAI

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**Abstract:**

Presidential communication has a role in carrying out the political function of the president as head of state or government. In practice, presidential communication pays attention to efforts to maintain power with ideological dominance through direct statements of the president, media quotes, or official social media accounts. This power is related to how the president manifests statements, attitudes, and actions as a practice of power carried out by political leaders. In the package of identity politics that is getting stronger, cases of intolerance are suspected to be very influential on the way the president conducts political communication. This study will focus on efforts to uncover hidden ideologies in presidential communications that contain power practices in cases of intolerance in Indonesia. Through a paradigm with an approach, this research uses Van Dijk's critical analysis method to find the presidential communication text related to the Meliana case in Tanjungbalai and to understand aspects of the president's cognition and social context in several related statements. This study concludes that the president's communication strategy has a double meaning behind the foundation of constitutionalism, embracing conflicting groups to get resources from their supporters and opposing groups. The president also used a political strategy to raise the issue in Tanjungbalai in what Walter Benjamin called a state of emergency with security and nationality but at the expense of marginalized groups.

**Keywords:** Presidential Communication, The Practice of Power, Identity Politics, Constitutionalism, Politics of Exception, State of Emergency.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Presidential communication plays an essential role in implementing the president's political function as the head of state or head of government in a constitutional system. In practice, presidential communications pay attention to efforts to maintain power by ideologically dominating through direct statements of the president in speech broadcasts, mass media quotes, or official social media accounts. This power is related to how the president manifests statements, attitudes, and actions as a practice of power carried out by political leaders. Furthermore, the practice of power is also related to maintaining and maintaining the value system that is the consensus of a society/nation (ideology) as the way that is believed to be the most considered good in achieving the state's goals. Presidential communication has become a crucial element in the powerful practice that works in the modern political system. Ryfe (2005) adopted Richard Neustadt's view of persuasion as a strategic power that power possesses. Neustadt's thinking boils down to the idea that presidential communication is a helpful bargaining instrument for acquiring presidential power (Ryfe, 2005, p.4). Neustadt's view is to make it clear that the president has predetermined interests. Presidential communication is a strategic political weapon that has calculated the risks and benefits to be gained.

The phenomenon of presidential communication is an area of discussion that can be seen in various performances on several more specific themes. Several studies on the piece c communication discuss the rhetoric and strategies of presidential communication (conducted by Smith & Smith, 1994; Denton & Holloway, 1996; Ryfe, 2005; Farnsworth, 2009); presidential news construction (Kurtz, 1998), presidential relations with the media (Hess, 2000; Spragens, 2003; Walcott & Hult, 2008), head of government communication strategies concerning political scandals and terrorism (Canel & Sanders, 2006, 2010), Presidential Public Relations (Kioussis & Strömbäck, 2010; Eshbaugh-Soha, 2011). At the same time, Makeschin (2010) discusses the symbolic role of the president as a political communicator in the eyes of traditional constituents with religious preferences. Others discussed presidential powers and communications, emphasizing gaining public support for dealing with congressional leaders (Buchanan, 1978; Kernell, 1986).

Ideology (nationalist and religious). Meanwhile, from a review of previous journals and publications, the results of research that are used as references are related to intolerance and the role of Government communication at the regional level in building social harmony ( Al Kafi, 2014; Sagita, 2018; Lift, 2010). Ahmed's (2009) research, which uses Kenneth Burke's AWK method to assess the response of the Bangladeshi government to the strengthening of Islamic extremism, is a comparison of this research in terms of processes. In contrast to Ahmed, this study uses the method of critical discourse analysis by Teun van Dijk, focusing on the individual president's personal communication on the issue of intolerance. Meanwhile, Setijadi's research (2017) on the dynamics of the 2017 DKI Pilkada, which describes the strengthening of religious identity as a political commodity by the winning team of one candidate, becomes a model for analyzing presidential communications in the interest of maintaining security stability and internal political consolidation of power which consists of supporting political parties with various platforms.

In dishes become cases of intolerance in Indonesia, Indonesia's democracy has experienced a setback in at least the last seven years, especially in the aspect of civil liberties has become the weakest point that has led to the deconsolidation of democracy in the third largest democratic country in the world (Naipospos and Halili, 2014). This fading of civil liberties is associated with intolerance towards minority religious groups (Mujani, 2005). This phenomenon is read in the SETARA Institute's notes, which state that within 12 years (2007-2018), there were 2,400 incidents of intolerance with 3,177 actions. In addition, there were 398 disturbances in places of worship, such as permits were blocked, refused, and their other piece permits revoked, damaged, demolished, sealed, and converted (Halili et al., 2019). This report is a special note that although normatively, the state guarantees and affirms its commitment to protecting freedom of religion/belief, the president's communication has never been expressly manifested in the form of statements of attitudes and actions that defend marginalized groups.

This study will focus on efforts to uncover hidden ideologies in presidential communications that contain power practices. The president's communications in sin several rest statements quoted by the mass media are different, thus showing the existence of a dual attitude of the president as a representation of the state towards the same problem, namely intolerance. In the package of identity politics that is getting stronger, cases of intolerance are suspected to be very influential on the way the president conducts political communication. The political constellation in the government body consists of supporting parties that incidentally have a constituent base of majority religious groups and communities. As a result, the president's communications must have a high degree of caution to ensure the stability of the government.

Tanjung Balai case, which was sparked by a complaint by a Chinese resident named Meiliana about the sound of the call to prayer being too loud, led to riots at the local level. The mob not only pelted the Meiliana family's house with stones but also burned and damaged temples and pagodas. In the ongoing legal process, Meiliana was sentenced to 18 months in prison on charges of blasphemy charges sentence imposed is the same as that for the perpetrators

of the attack and the burning of houses of worship. The case garnered public attention and became the focus of the mass media. State officials, community leaders, and human rights activists have voiced their positions in this case. However, President Jokowi as a representative of the state, seems to be looking for safety when dealing with the power of the masses who are urging Meliana to be punished.

In the case of Meliana, there is no clear statement from the president that shows a fair side to the victim as part of a minority group in the local area and nationally. President Jokowi's ambiguous attitude is suspected of having two goals, objectively having the aim of safeguarding the domestic security situation from the turmoil that will be difficult to control regarding the issue of SARA; subjectively related to efforts to maintain his reputation in the elite political circle and the popular prestige of the president among the wider community, so that politically it has the 'power of persuasion to strengthen political position in the constellation of power and the contestation of national leaders his succession. In Walter Benjamin's view, the practice of power, which is manifested in presidential communications, should be a means to the ends of justice. Therefore, specifically, research will answer two things. First, the construction of the president's statement behind the messages conveyed in intolerant cases, especially the Meliana case in Tanjungbalai in 2016, as well as what factors influenced and "pressured" President Joko Widodo so that he seemed indecisive in handling cases of intolerance; second, the constellation outside of formal state power that influences President Joko Widodo's attitude when conveying messages regarding cases of discrimination.

**Political Communication Theory.** The meeting between communication and politics occurs at two points: talk and influence or influencer. Some communication experts write that politics is communication or politics can be referred to as communication, in the sense that communication includes politics because most political activities are carried out through talk as a form of communication. On; the other hand, some political scientists also write that communication is politics or communication can be referred to as politics, in the sense that politics includes communication, because almost all communication aims to influence as one of the political dimensions (Arifin, 2014: 12). Like communication, politics is a process. Like communication, politics involves conversation. Here, speech means how people exchange symbols - words (written and spoken), pictures, gestures, gestures, temperaments, and clothes (Nimmo, 2005: 8).

McNair (2003) defines political communication as purposeful communication about politics, which includes: first, all forms of communication carried out by politicians and other political actors intending to achieve specific goals; second, political communication is addressed by these actors to non-politicians, such as voters and newspaper columnists; third, communication about these actors, and their activities, as contained in the news, editorials and other forms of media regarding. Communication and politics are phenomena that are present in every practice of power. As Adrian Leftwich (1984) emphasizes in Heywood (2004): 'politics is at the heart of all collective social activity, formal and informal, public and private, in all human groups, institutions, and societies. According to Heywood, three distinctly different conceptions of politics can be identified. First, politics has long been associated with formal government institutions and the activities that take place in them. Second, politics is generally related to public life and public action, as opposed to what is instead of private or private. Third, politics has been linked to several contributions of power, wealth, and resources, which occur in all institutions and at every level of social existence (Heywood, 2004).

In the perspective of power relations in political communication, Denton & Woodward in McNair (2011) emphasize that the purpose of several communications related to the discussion of the allocation of public resources (income), the authority of officials (who is given the power to make legal, legislative, and executive decisions), and official sanctions (what actions are rewarded or punished by the state). With this conceptualization, it can be understood that political communication can be explicitly identified based on how indicator, its content, and its

objectives, including oral and written political rhetoric and political actors as individuals and as state administrators. It means that political communicators represent group interests to seek influence through communication to obtain an allocation of public resources and authority (to create, implement, and impose legal sanctions). Rogers & Shoemaker describes opinion leaders as certain individuals who can influence one's attitudes and behavior informally by the leader's will through the fostered social relationships. This ability is often associated with credibility, attractiveness, and power (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971:199). The media reproduce the awareness of individual communicators into the collect community's collective consciousness and forms a dominant opinion in the public sphere in the discourse battle. Thus political communicators also become opinion leaders who enable them, with a certain regularity, to convey opinions on policy issues to all parties who become audiences (Nimmo, 2003).

The idea of dominant opinion in the discourse battle aligns with the Teun A. van Dijk (Dijk's8) thought on the discourse of power and domination, whose central element is the ease of access and communicative events. According to van Dijk, discourse is like other social power resources, where access is not evenly distributed. Even van Dijk categorizes access, namely active access and passive access. He gave an example of dynamic access to debates between members of parliament in the courtroom. According to him, the member of parliament has active access. While passive entry, he gave an example of a note-taker or secretary in the courtroom; who has access to information but does not speak unless asked to speak. In this sense, presidential communication in President Joko Widodo's statement shows power with active access as a political communicator and an authority as Head of State. In this capacity, the president also has effortless access to all aspects of life, political systems, and other social systems ( including access to information systems and media) within the scope of the Republic of Indonesia.

**Critical Theory.** Critical Theory ( Critical Theory ) is a school of thought that launches a strong critique of modernism. Magnis-Susseno calls the critical theory a form of human liberation from all the shackles of exploitation and oppression (Sindhunata, 2019). The criticism is mainly made on the negative consequences of economics and politics generated through the application of positive science, incredibly logical positivism (empiricism). Critical theory wants to open up intellectual space to critically agree on the social, postmodern society's social, political, economic, and cultural problems gives for solving these problems. In this way, critical theory intends to restore the dialectical dimension of Marx's teaching, which was reduced to 'Marxism' according to Engels (Magnis-Susseno, 1992).

The critical theory uses Marxist concepts such as exploitation, alienation, ideology, and class consciousness to understand the dynamics of marginalization. In reinterpreting Marx, Horkheimer, through Traditional and Critical Theory, invites his colleagues to use theory as a mode of criticism to understand and ultimately change the organization of society. The first dimension of this new critique is to historically examine how social structures have shaped and marginalized certain groups. Second, Horkheimer believed that critical theorists should conduct interdisciplinary social research, analyzing politics, economics, sociology, and its story, among other disciplines, to holistically understand the relationship of domination in a society (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). In this way, the critical theory uses marxism as a theory to understand inequality in a community.

In various critical theories thinking, three essential characteristics form the core of the critical theory. First, the critical tradition tries to understand the accepted systems, power structures, and beliefs (or ideologies) that dominate society. Furthermore, the necessary theory, which from the beginning has taken sides with the values of justice and humanity, first builds a crucial awareness of society intellectually. The critical theory understands the social reality that shackles and cages the capitalist system, which despises and is full of injustice (Sholahudin, 2020). Second, critical theorists are generally interested in exposing oppressive social conditions and criticizing the structure of domination reproduced from false human consciousness through perpetuated ideology (as Marx called it), reification ("to deify something", as Georg Lukacs does).

Hegemony (called A. Gramsci), one-dimensional thinking (H. Marcuse), and metaphysics of existence (Derrida) (Sholahudin, 2020). Third, the critical tradition creates awareness to combine theory and action. As Horkheimer does not separate theory and praxis (Sindhunata, 2019). Normative theories act by blending influencing society and marginalized groups to achieve change.

Various schools of thought in critical theory arise because of the dialectical process that shows the interests of each character. The Frankfurt School theorist most interested in the psychoanalytic dimension of social criticism was Erich Fromm. In his work entitled *The Development of the Dogma of Christ* (1931), Fromm shows that psychoanalysis will sharpen Marx's critique of ideology (Sindhunata, 2019). Fromm's thought about ideology as a form of social rationalization is based on mental or material fiction attempts to mediate the ideological concept proposed by Marx and Freud (Sutikna, 2008). Theodor Adorno focuses on the relationship between the environment and humans. Adorno's thinking about 'total negativity' assumes that modern humans have sacrificed their lives for instrumental technological rationality (Sunarto, 2016). Another critical theoretical scientist, Friedrich Pollock, with his thoughts on state capitalism which is believed to easily help democracy free humankind from the injustices of traditional capitalism to dominate domestic and international markets outside the boundaries of formal law (Olson, 2018). Another early generation figure was Walter Benjamin, with his ideas on how two opposing traditions of legal theory known as positive law and natural law each evaluated legal violence. In Benjamin's view, violence is natural and has no meaning but is a material or instrument that can achieve legal goals when the time is right (en 2018).

Jürgen Habermas, the last figure of the Frankfurt School, covers a contemporary embodiment of the critical theorization. Habermas's thoughts were heavily influenced by the radical traditions of Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse. Habermas developed the Theory of Communicative Action (TCA) to complement the weaknesses of Marx's historical materialism. As a macro-sociological theory, historical materialism is considered to have two weaknesses for critical projects. First, completeness does not guarantee explanatory power; second, careful examination of standard essential explanations, such as ideological theory, requires a different social theory (Bohman, 1999). Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action succeeded in developing a two-level social theory. On the one hand, it includes an analysis of communicative rationality in which rational potential is built into everyday conversation; and views of modern society and modernization on the other hand (White, 1989).

In the study of communication, adherents of the critical tradition are generally interested in how messages reinforce emphasis in society. In addition to being interested in social action, critical theorists also focus on discourses and texts that promote certain ideologies, form and maintain power understand and undermine certain groups or classes' interests (interests). Critical groups take a more philosophical approach, emphasize the broader social structure in which communication occurs, and focus on the issue of "who controls a communication system" (Severin and Tankard, 2005: 18-19). The essential part that must be understood in the praxis of critical theory is that this theory must be understood as a set of loose theoretical frameworks, all of which aim to criticize domination with the ultimate goal of social change. Therefore, there are many concepts that critical theorists use to evaluate society, depending on the focus of their analysis.

Questions of privilege and power are considered necessary in communication theory and are themes of the critical tradition (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009: 68-73). Prominent identity characteristics regarding skin color, nationality, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, regional issues, income levels, and other aspects of individual identity will create social differences that are considered very important by adherents of critical traditions. Critical theories are concerned with how these differences accumulate power, pressure, and privilege due to certain forms of communication in society, thus making the critical tradition important in today's study of communication science.

Social in society. This study wants to dismantle the mechanism of domination in presidential political communication as a symbolic dimension built by the government (president, head of state, head of government, state actor) who tend to be giddy, doubtful, and indecisive in responding to incidents of intolerance and violence with religious backgrounds as irregular phenomena. For this reason, a critical paradigm and critical theory are needed to uncover the hidden context and ideology behind the president's political communication through texts and talks in social and political contexts. Therefore, the use of critical theory in this research is a surgical tool against various hidden intentions that political communicators often carry out through manipulating, influencing, and coercing to obtain a specific allocation of power.

To uncover the explicit and implicit factors in the text of the president's communication on the Meliana case, a conceptual framework is needed to dissect both in terms of the text and its content. The researcher chose the critical theory because it provides a comprehensive perspective in outlining the intent and purpose behind the president's political communication. The nature of the critical tradition that considers all problems inseparable from the dimensions of social structure is an advantage that helps answer research questions more specifically and sharply. Therein lies the strength of the critical theory, namely seeing phenomena from the point of view of realism, trying to find more substantial answers and not only being satisfied with positive facts on the surface.

**Walter Benjamin's Critique of Power.** Walter Benjamin was one of the early Frankfurt School and other great figures of the 1920s and 1930s including Theodor Adorno, Friedrich Pollock, Leo Lowenthal, Herbert Marcuse, Siegfried Kracauer, and Erich Fromm (Ferris, 2008). Long before he came into contact with Marx's thoughts, Benjamin grew up to be a rebellious teenager when, at the age of 14, his parents sent him for two years of experimental education at the Haubinda school in Thuringia (Caygill, Coles & Klomowski, 2012). The Haubinda School is a progressive counter-cultural institution founded in 1901 where Gustav Wyneken, known as an educational reformer, was on the teaching staff at that time. Wyneken advocates youth solidarity to achieve spiritual and intellectual independence naturally. For Wyneken, this can be a way to achieve a cultural revolution in society (Ferris, 2008). After that, Benjamin also studied the type of philosophy known as neo-Kantianism, a late 19th-century development of critical tradition theory inherited by Immanuel Kant.

Benjamin's critical philosophical thought was influenced by figures such as George Lukacs through his book *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), which was Benjamin's experience with marxism. Furthermore, Benjamin's criticism grew stronger and found a form after meeting two other figures on different occasions. First, Bertolt Brecht, the Marxist playwright and poet best known for his theory of theatrical alienation, is also a radical political thinker. Second, Theodor Adorno, co-founder of the Institute for Social Research (better known as the Frankfurt School), practiced Marxist-influenced social and cultural criticism. After their first meeting in Frankfurt, Benjamin and Adorno met again early in 1928 in Berlin and remained friends until Benjamin's death (Ferris, 2008).

The difference between Brecht and the Frankfurt School lies in different understandings of how social change should be produced. Brecht seeks immediate answers by exploring the Effect of Alienation (*Verfremdungseffekt*) as a means of experiencing the material conditions in which art and culture are made. Brecht intends to change existing media such as theater, opera, etc., no longer functioning to support institutions (social and political) or merely consumptive of art but to make art a medium that influences social change. Brecht's aim was to re-function institutions from places of entertainment to become organs of mass communication. In this way, Brecht intends to make changes directly by involving the segments of society that benefit the most. Brecht's radical political thought was influential in the years of his friendship with Benjamin. As for Adorno, this approach exemplifies the reductive thinking shown by vulgar Marxism. In contrast, the Frankfurt School remained committed to the intellectual development of criticism as a source of social and political change. These two pulls of influence provided insight for

Benjamin to develop a more idiosyncratic Marxism that combined elements of the Brecht and Frankfurt Schools. Benjamin has a distinct understanding of how to achieve goals. For Benjamin, criticism makes this goal significant, but this same goal cannot always be realized through criticism (Ferris, 2008).

Like most neo-Marxist Frankfurt School thinkers who credit Kant as the first critical philosopher, Benjamin agrees with Kant's notion of subject autonomy in shaping knowledge. In the view of the Frankfurt School, everything is the result of autonomous human subjective knowledge (Sindhunata, 2019). However, in particular, Benjamin makes a difference to Kant's idea of basing knowledge on the a priori human mind. Beyond Kant's theory of a priori categories, Benjamin values human experience more like knowledge. This view then influenced Benjamin in his criticism of power. This can be seen in Benjamin's expression of political thought in Lukacs' influence on historical materialism. Lukacs' approach views history as a condition of material existence rather than an ideological position promoted by the controlling classes of society. Benjamin uses these conditions to expose and critique the ideology at work in these positions by initiating a project that aims to reshape what history is (Ferris, 2008) fundamentally. History for Benjamin is not just an ideological narrative. Still, it must have material evidence of how a society or culture is organized and how that evidence mediates political and economic forces. In this view, Benjamin clearly demands material evidence that manifests through experience after experience in human history in which the controlling classes rule.

Benjamin argues that power can be understood by entering into the problem of the conditions of possibilities for the reality of power itself to capture its distinctive character, existence, and influence on humans. Based on this thought, Benjamin understands that power is always present as an experience in all dimensions of humanity (Dua, 2007). Benjamin also emphasized that the most fundamental experience of management is an experience of originality and an idea that touches and enters the realm of human history that longs for justice. So, the condition of the possibilities of power is the human aesthetic experience of justice or, more concretely, just power (Dua, 2007).

In an essay entitled *Critique of Violence* (1921), Benjamin positions the task of criticism: showing the relationship of violence to law and justice. Here, criticism is understood not as an assessment but as a means to understand law and justice. Benjamin's analysis begins by giving two thoughts on violence. The first is called natural law. According to natural law, violence occurs as something that cannot be avoided by humans (in the sense that violence is something that humans naturally possess). As a result, its significance can only be judged according to the final result it produces (Ferris, 2008). Natural law refers to the divine law that frees up space for human movement in a total social area intending to obtain the purification of life. Thus, in principle, divine power is pure power. This concept of power explicitly separates justice and injustice, good and evil (Dua, 2008). The second is called positive law. This law rejects the use of goals to justify violence (Ferris, 2008). Benjamin saw the law as an attempt to ensure that political decisions (jointly) are carried out consistently, especially in everyday situations. However, the practice will be different when the community is in an emergency. In such cases, society needs a political leader who can make drastic decisions, which can be extreme against the law itself (Dua, 2007). Thus Benjamin views power as a pure means that allows humans to be as creative as possible. Benjamin's political theory is a pure means not to establish and assert power but to deconstruct it. Benjamin finally put power as the ability to make decisions or separate.

**Practices of Power and Power Relations.** The concept of power does not always have a single meaning because it is influenced by the assumptions and perspectives used and has an understanding constantly evolving based on space and time (Maliki, 2010). Power constantly contains worrying qualities and becomes a frightening specter because it can cause bad luck for major people (Dua, 2007). The discussion of political science about power is always closely related to the concept of the use of power in various forms such as influence, persuasion, manipulation, coercion, force, and authority. These forms are seen in every struggle of the social

pressures of society (including the state) to obtain and maintain power, exercise power, influence other parties, or even oppose the exercise of power.

One easy-to-understand concept of power can be referred to from Wilby Robson (1954) in Surbakti (2010). According to Robson, power is the ability to influence others to think and behave according to the influencer's will. In Robson's view, power is a form of interaction between those who influence and those who are influenced, or one influences, the other obeys (Surbakti, 2010). In Gramsci's view (Simon, 2004), this interaction occurs in a civil society social relationship that manifests in various organizations that make up civil society and the state apparatus. Gramsci's view, as quoted by Simon (2004), states that, in power relations, civil society consists of a complex network of various social power relations that dominate each other, such as conflicts between investors and workers, domination of the apparatus with a coercive monopoly on civil society, local domination, regional domination. Racial domination, bureaucratic, and other forms of domination where a specific power is exercised in the form of organizations and institutions.

Power in the prospective state's perspective existence of a structure monopolizing the legal use of physical coercion against groups of people living in areas with clear boundaries. Thus, according to Surbakti, the state is a grouping of people based on similar typical biology but on the similarity of power structure that governs them (Surbakti, 2010:52). It shows the concept of the state as a political society with its four elements consisting of population, fixed territory (definitely), government, and sovereignty, which act legally with coercive power to establish common consensus and maintain the universal conditions of social order. The state is perceived as a coercive force that is effective and permeates the vital joints of people's lives. Still, on the other hand, the state is seen in a neutral face because the formation of the state is very dependent on the real forces in society itself.

Where there is power, there is resistance to it. Mutual dominance between social forces in society to class struggles and social movements. This conflict affects the character and form of state institutions and civil society organizations, resulting in that struggles are not merely instruments of the ruling class but reflect the balance of power in society. This process is known as positional warfare (Simon, 2004, p. 111). This positional war does not rule out the possibility of violent resistance and opposition to the coercive organs of the state. The link between coercion and the state is also underlined by the description of Philip Bobbitt (2002) in Heywood (2004), who argues that the state is an 'institution of war'. The picture above shows the position of the government in the structure of a country, namely being the 'center to regulate' (Heywood, 2004). According to Heywood, the government becomes the executor of state power to regulate in a broad sense, namely to the governor exercising control over other people. Therefore the government cannot be understood separately from the society it governs.

This study clarifies what Simon (2004) calls a war of positions, or what Philip Bobbitt (2002) emphasizes as a state as a 'war-making institution'. President Joko Widodo's statements at the beginning of the riots in Tanjungbalai, wringer by complaints from a Chinese Buddhist named Meliana, show an ideological position that is at odds with the attitudes and actions of the majority community in Tanjungbalai who destroy houses of worship and places of residents. The president's attitude to take firm action against the rioters with the background of the SARA issue is a declaration of 'war' against 'other ideologies' contrary to the state's ideology. The same thing is also seen in the president's statement that he does not want to intervene in Meliana's legal case, even though many observers think that the legal issue is unfair because of the pressure from the majority masses.

These two diffln responding to the same case (cases of intolerance), these two different attitudes refer to the president's position as head of government whose function is to maintain public order and take collective action, including rolling over other people or groups. In addition, because the government operates in a political system involving parties, elections, pressure groups, and the media, the president appears to be cautious in responding to people's pressure to exercise political control on a national, local Tanjungbalai scale in Indonesia.

## METHODS

This research method uses a critical paradigm with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is used to investigate, find, describe, and explain the quality or features of social influences that cannot be explained, measured, or described through a quantitative approach (Sugiyono, 2016, p.15). Critical Necessary research sex examines conditions revealing the hidden structures in texts and ideologies portrayed by the mass media. The social influence in question is a phenomenon experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc., holistically, and using description in the form of words and language, in a particular natural context and by utilizing various natural methods (Moleong, 2014, p.6).

Critical discourse studies discuss how texts used by one party or group create discourses that reproduce social dominance, namely the abuse of power by a group against groups that are dominated and trying to fight against the abuse of power through discourse (Van Dijk, 2009, p. 63). In this study, Van Dijk's discourse analysis framework examined the presidential communication text related to the Meliana Tanjungbalai case. In addition to looking at social irregularities, Van Dijk's analysis also examines mental representations and the processes in language users when producing and understanding discourse and taking part in verbal interactions. And the extent to which they are involved in the exchange of knowledge, ideology, or beliefs of certain social groups (Van Dijk, 2009, p.64).

This research seeks to reveal the irregularities behind the president's political communication in responding to the problem of intolerance in Indonesia. By analyzing the text of the president's communication published in the mass media, the researcher wants to know the intent and purpose of the statement concerning the president's position as a public official and pandal actor. The researcher believes that the observed attitudes and statements of the president are ' virtual reality ' that have been shaped by historical processes and social, cultural, and political-economic forces. The researcher believes that the president's direct statement in the Meliana case in Tanjungbalai results from the formation of social, cultural, and political-economic forces. The reason for choosing this qualitative research is based on the stability of the researcher according to his background knowledge and research experience. In addition, the nature of the problem to be investigated is also a reason.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Double Faced Communication as a Power Strategy.** Presidential communications in the case of intolerance in Tanjungbalai that are the focus of this research are: first, in a statement that shows President Joko Widodo 's firm stance when he stated: "...there is no place for those who are unable to tolerate in our country, let alone with violence." He wanted to show this firm stance by ordering the National Police Chief to use coercive measures to take firm action against the perpetrators of intolerance. Second, the form of presidential communication in the same case, but with different tendencies, namely hiding behind the constitutional basis by not intervening in the legal case that befell Meliana, rather than fighting for justice for victims of conflicts and riots with SARA nuances.

Presidential communication is closely related to the practice of power exercised by political leaders to gain, maintain, or increase relative power over the people they lead. Power as a political element can be seen in the roles played by national leaders, heads of state, and other political leaders in manifesting statements, attitudes, acts, and facts, as w well as setting prior cities and implementing programs. Power in the context of state administration is also related to the interest of maintaining and maintaining the value system that is the consensus of a society/nation (ideology) as the way that is believed to be the most considered good in achieving the goals of the state through persuasion, mediation, and coercive efforts.

In addition, the involvement of the role of social groups outside the government, such as NU and Muhammadiyah, is also a method used in the ideological struggle. The relationship between the Government, NU, and Muhammadiyah in the context of intolerance shows a complex network of power relations that dominate and influence each other and then form the mainstream discourse regarding the issue of intolerance. Power and social domination are often organized and institutionalized, allowing for more effective control and enabling common forms of power reproduction (Dijk, 2008). The relations of these institutions form a social force to (within certain limits) exercise control over the actions and ideas of (members) of other groups, thereby limiting freedom of action, influencing knowledge, and intervening in the attitudes or ideologies of others. These social forces can be in the form of the government, religious organizations, and mass organizations, including the social power network (alliance) of the three (Government, NU, and Muhammadiyah) on the one hand; or manifest in the majority group in a particular area such as the majority of Muslims in Tanjungbalai as the opposite side.

Power is dynamic and conflictual in the public sphere when social groups compete for state attention or control (Dobratz, 2012). In a firm attitude, the presidential authority, through coercive means, namely the state police institution (Kapolri), shows itself as the dominant force with the necessary resources to resolve conflicts between the groups it dominates. The practice of power and how power is maintained shows the struggle of the dominant ideology by the government through the use of power. The representation of the struggle for shared values and norms involves using high authority from the president, for example, by assigning the National Police Chief.

Normatively, this statement is needed to calm the public, prevent the spread of riots and provide direction to the officers on duty in the field. In plain view, this attitude manifests state power in ensuring that security guard the law is *cau*. And security gives given red citizens while maintaining the Pancasila ideology as the national ideology (dominant ideology). However, another statement regarding the court's verdict against Meliana, where no one can intervene, shows the opposite of the intended firmness. The construction of the president's statements on various occasions regarding the case of intolerance that befell Meliana in Tanjungbalai shows a double-faced presidential communication strategy. In the view of the critical paradigm, the differences in attitudes that appear in the president's communication show, in disguise, the president's political intentions to negotiate power against influential forces that are pressing.

The president's firmness in his statement to take action against the perpetrators of intolerance is not shown by his attitude and actions regarding legal justice for victims of intolerance. When faced with various critical voices regarding the 'unfair' punishment for victims of acts of intolerance, the president tends to distance himself from legal policies regarding the court's verdict against Meliana. The president's statement regarding legal issues in the Meliana case shows a 'safeguard' attitude. On the one hand, condemning the perpetrators of intolerance, but at the same time not willing to openly defend the victims of intolerance under the pretext of 'cannot intervene in decisions'. This statement shows that the president's communication is normative by fully respecting the Judi judiciary's process and authority.

The president's communication in media statements uses the technique of 'self-victimization' equating his case with Meliana and communicating to the public that he is also a 'victim' who must accept the judge's verdict in the case of forest and land fires. The president emphasized that even a Head of State can be found guilty by the court. This statement fortifies President Jokowi from the public's view that the court's decision against Meliana is unfair. Jokowi considers his position correct not to interfere with court decisions in the Meliana case. Such presidential communication efforts are a strategy to avoid public pressure that demands the president to act consistently regarding the issue of intolerance in Tanjung Balai. Instead, the president equates his legal position with the victim of intolerance by showing that he has an equal status with other citizens before the law.

The two statements both hide behind the foundations of constitutionalism and democracy, intending to embrace opposing groups. On the one hand, the firmness of attitude in the president's statement is addressed to the audience who sympathize with the Meliana case; on the other hand, the normative statement not to intervene in court decisions is addressed to the majority group. In Heywood's (2004) view, constitutionalism in a democratic society is nothing more than an outer shell that hides the dominance of the 'power elite' or 'ruling class'. The democratic process forces governments to respond to popular pressure, either because political parties beat each other to gain power or because pressure groups make unrelenting demands on the ruling political elite. The president's actions can be understood in his position primarily as a political actor and communicator who resolves conflicts by compromise, conciliation, and negotiation. In *Defense of Politics* (1962), Heywood cites Bernard Crick's view, where politics is seen as 'the solution to the order problem that chooses conciliation over violence and coercion. Conciliation of competing interests or groups requires that power be spread widely throughout society and divided according to their respective claims for the welfare and survival of the whole society (Heywood, 2004).

Observing the president's communication in the case that happened to Meliana in Tanjungbalai cannot be separated from the power relations in civil society forming the state, which consists of a network of various social forces that fight and dominate each other. This relationship is evident when approaching the contestation of the succession of national leadership in which social, political, economic, and ideological forces initially separated themselves into an increasingly consolidated and concentrated political power. Then compete with each other until one of the combined social forces wins so that they can unite various social, political, and economic goals and interests. Until finally created the hegemony of a strong social group against other lower groups (Simon, 2004). This power relation is also seen in nominalized texts/phrases such as 'all', 'majority', 'minority', indicating the whole, most, and a small part of a certain amount; it does not just apply to one or two people. This rhetoric places the position of the conflicting parties no longer specifically on individual A and group X but in two broad categorizations that represent local and national socio-cultures, namely the majority group and the minority group. This shows that the president's interpretation of the Meliana incident in Tanjungbalai has a political dimension. Therefore, the narrative presented by the president is normative. The aim is to avoid the after-effects of the case and avoid personal accusations against the president (accusations of the president being pro-PKI or the issue of the president being anti-Islam).

The president's communication that seems ambiguous, indecisive, and tends to be 'safe' can also be observed by looking at the political constellation that has occurred since the 2014 Presidential Election (Pilpres) to the political dynamics of the 2017 DKI Jakarta Governor Election (Pilgub). The Anies-Sandi pair in the 2017 DKI gubernatorial election was very thick with religious symbolism, even building closeness with religious figures and the mass organization Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) led by Habib Rizieq, which was at odds with one of the governor candidates as political opponents (Aryojati, 2017). The prominence of primordial identity was strengthened when one candidate pair was caught in a case insulting the Koran QS Al-Maidah [5]: 51. This massively succeeded in raising the religious spirit of Muslims and sparked a wave of pressure from several Islamic organizations in Jakarta and outside Jakarta in several demonstrations of peace. This phenomenon shows the strong relationship between religion (Islam) and politics (the state) as a symptom of identity politics. It shows that religious identity can be used pragmatically to exploit religious sentiments at local and national levels.

Meanwhile, the legacy of the 2014 Presidential Election (Pilpres) divides the national political map into two forces, namely the Red and White Coalition (KMP), consisting of a coalition of the Golkar Party, Gerindra Party, PKS, PAN, PPP, and PBB, which carries Prabowo Subianto-Hatta Rajasa; facing the Great Indonesia Coalition (KIH) in which there are PDIP, PKB, Nasdem Party, Hanura Party, and PKPI which champion the Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla pair. The

two camps are politically concentrated in a relatively balanced position of power (Romli, 2017). This composition makes President Joko Widodo's leadership position threatened with instability in controlling parliament. Meanwhile, the KMP, as a rival political force, is dominated by Islamic parties that have ideological voters at the grassroots. This means that, apart from dealing with Islamic parties as political opponents, Joko Widodo's camp also deals directly with the Islamic voter base.

The meaning of SARA and intolerance events in Tanjungbalai with a security scheme to maintain stability so that the wheels of the economy and social life continue to run is considered appropriate and perfect. However, a settlement at the grassroots level has not yet reached a common ground. The process of delegating authority at the lower level is often problematic due to the clash of interests at the regional level. It is understandable given the intense public pressure, which is allegedly very dominant at the local level. In the Meliana case, there was a battle of discourse and ideology that confronted the issue of tolerance and diversity on the one hand, in contrast to the domination of the majority who urged the disaddress law enforcement against people or groups who were considered to 'blaspheme' sacred symbols and therefore forced the apparatus to make Meliana as a suspect in the blasphemy case.

The majority insistence in Bryan Turner's view (199,3), as quoted by Dobratz (2012), is a social practice (juridical, political, economic, and cultural) that defines a person as a competent member of society and which has consequences for the flow of resources to people or social groups. . That is, this kind of social practice forms the collective identity of the community so that it affects the distribution of power in society. Social practices manifest in social movements as organized efforts to encourage/push or resist change in society that rely, at least in part, on non-institutionalized forms of political action (Marx and McAdam 1994: 73).

The impact in the Meliana case was strengthened when the reproduction of messages related to complaints against the sound of the wild call to prayer was rolled out through chain messages and social networks. At that time, there was a mobilization of resources that formed awareness of the collective identity of the majority group. Collective identity is a shared definition of a group based on shared interests, solidarity, and member experiences (Dobratz, 2012). According to Taylor & Whittier in Dobratz (2012), This collective identity model can be applied to various social movements to engage in multiple actions that challenge the dominant political and social system.

Therefore, the Palace's concern was that strengthening collective identity would generate quite strong resistance from the Muslim majority group to the president's communication message. In conflicts with SARA nuances with the division of the majority versus the minority, the role of the majority group is feared to trigger a wider conflict and attack the government due to dissatisfaction with court decisions or due to intervention by the president. The impact of the dissatisfaction of the majority will lead to a crisis of government legitimacy. In addition, Joko Widodo's interests as a political actor have also influenced his 'carefulness' in carrying out presidential communications in cases of intolerance. This concerns Joko Widodo's reputation among the political elite and approval among the wider community, which is a determining factor in ensuring that he gets political resources from his supporters and embraces the majority group that has been in plain view of the opposition.

**Law, Power, and Communication of the President.** One of the president's communication strategies in the Meliana case is to place the issue in a disperse of legal neutrality. It is called discourse because what the president says is a language practice that public officials in Indonesia always use. Public officials often take refuge in Indonesia's discourse as a state of the law when dealing with cases involving personal or oligarchic interests. However, in practice, 'rule of law' has been applied inconsistently. The manifestation of this discourse in legal action differs from case to case according to the interests and actors being protected.

The use of the reason for the neutrality of the law, as reflected in the statement that the judge also hammers the president,' departs from the argument that the law is above power. Law

is believed to be able to control and regulate the exercise of power. In cases where the law does not address power, at least it has some autonomy relative to the practice of power. In other words, the law is not an instrument of power.

In the idea of natural law, power is an instrument of justice. Justice as a goal can be pursued (Dua, 2007). Goals thus become the normative basis for the practice of power, including the use of force. Natural law views that humans are driven by a kind of natural desire, namely the desire to achieve trans-historic good, namely goodness that is cross-historical, intergenerational, and universal (Abbott, 2020). Justice is one of those universal goals. Violence as an instrument of power can be used to achieve justice. Benjamin criticizes the natural law view that violence is a natural (Benjamin, 2004) datum. Violence is a raw material, a natural fact of life, and, therefore, can not be interpreted in terms of justice, legitimacy, or legality (Abbott, 2020).

Positive law rejects natural law arguments; power becomes valid as the goal is good, namely achieving justice (Dua, 2017). The positive law argument is that there is no natural good which is the universal goal of man. Therefore, there is no basis for humans, especially institutions and those in power, to use violence to achieve that goal. There are no universally legitimate means. To achieve real truth, therefore, in the perspective of positive law, both means and ends must have an acceptable moral basis. Power as a means of justice or an instrument to achieve other goals must have legitimacy. It can be accepted and supported if power is accepted and obeyed because it has a normative foundation. Positive law in the form of law and its supporting apparatus is the normative basis.

This idea was criticized by Walter Benjamin, who rejected both natural law and positive law arguments. In Benjamin's view, both legal perspectives lead to the same thing, namely the use of legitimate means. Natural law discusses the purpose of legitimizing means; positive law emphasizes legitimate means in achieving goals. These two legal perspectives trap political institutions in using violence and human oppression.

Law, therefore, does not overcome power. Law is the basis for the legitimacy of power and, at the same time, an instrument of power. In practice, power transcends the law. When dealing with power, the law experiences powerlessness (Dua, 2017:63). If the law operates under the control of power, its function as a means of achieving justice cannot be trusted. In the name of law, the state and the institutions of power take action, especially through instrumentation, to support the power itself. Thus, it is naive to rely on legal orchestration as a path to justice.

The use of law as an instrument of power is mainly carried out by the state and officials who represent the state through the state of exception mechanism. Carl Schmitt put forward this terminology sovereign state overstepping the law in the interest of the public's safety. Schmitt even referred to sovereignty as the right to declare exceptions. What is meant by exception is state policy to state that a public issue must be handled in a way outside the normal process of democratic laws and regulations. Exception conditions normal politics of exception. The second refers to placing a matter above the regular rule of law. In security studies, state actions are called extraordinary measures (extraordinary measures) (Barry Buzan, 1998). Fast procedures characterize this action, wide-scale policies, violations of the game's rules, and democratic principles, removing the role of the public game's rules as the main instrument.

The rationale behind the politics of exclusion is what Walter Benjamin calls a state of emergency. Benjamin even argues that a crisis is not an exception but a (Doxtader, 2001). The difference between these two orders is very clear. Exceptions refer to policies, including the use of force, that is temporary due to a momentary need to respond to circumstances deemed to be dangerous. The rule is a mechanism that is durable, settled, practiced, and reproduced continuously by the holder of power. The state of emergency is a form of control because it is practiced repeatedly by the holder of power or the state.

In many cases, a state of emergency can involve another dangerous situation where the power holder declares that the state is in an existentially threatened condition. This threat must be immediately responded to with swift action even though it must use violence and violate

justice. Emergency claims depart from the definition of insecurity (perceived insecurity) by power holders, although real threats do not show a strong degree of emergency.

The politics of exclusion are thus to raise an emergency or emergency status issue. Restrictions on public freedoms and emergency status issues are often at the expense of marginalized groups. For security, national safety, stability, or other emergencies, the state suspends freedom and delays the fair law on citizens. The most affected victims in emergency politics are those who do not have access to power.

The communication process plays an important the declaration of conditions requiring exceptions and authorizing the exercise of power over the law. In the communication process, language and discourse are used to announce that certain developments place public safety at a certain level of risk. Crucial officials form facts about existential threats that pose risks through language utterance status of risk status determined through open public discussion and sufficient time. This soft risk is determined by using the general assessed.

In the Tanjungbalai case, the president's communication actions demonstrate the submission of the law by power. The process and content of communication are not used at the event. Instead, they become a means of protecting the president's power. The president achieved not meet what he meant by protections. First, the communication process is not used to deconstruct into and reconstruct. Deconstruction into dissecting lies behind the discourse on insulting religion, who and what forces support this discourse, and how many such the discourse on insulting religion is supported or rejected. Deconstruction allows the Meliana case to be seen as part of human interaction, not as an object of legal provisions.

The aim is to reconstruct a new meaning in the Tanjungbalai case discourse. The president can propose a new discourse out contemporary the discourse on insulting religion. The discourse that can be developed is that the Meliana case is common in neighboring life. 'Complaints about neighborly living' can be developed as a counter-discourse to the claims of 'religious insults'. If the discourse of 'neighborhood complaints' becomes dominant, then riots and the destruction of Buddhist houses of worship become a 'deviation against the culture of tolerance', which is claimed to be the core 'gene' in the body of the Indonesian nation.

The president did not dismantle and develop alternative discourses in the communication process but agreed with the dominant discourse, namely blasphemy. The president does not make legal breakthroughs to achieve justice but uses legal reasons to protect his power. Meliana's sentence is a 'road to safety' used by the president to escape the pressures of the context of a power struggle with his opponents. As described earlier, Meliana being a suspect resulted from strong pressure from several leaders of the Al-Makhsun Mosque together with some local Islamic organizations. In addition, the North Sumatra Province MUI Fatwa stated that Meliana committed blasphemy in Tanjungbalai City and asked the Police to follow up on the law enforcement process against Meliana immediately.

To legitimize the application of the law but ignore justice, the president consciously or unconsciously places the Tanjungbalai case as a state of exception in Schmitt and Agamben's terms or a state of emergency in Benjamin's words. Although it does not explicitly state the issue of emergency, the narrative developed by the president shows a tendency towards the politics of exclusion that characterizes the state of emergency. This appears in two ways. First, the president saw that the Meliana case could spread social unrest to other places and threaten wider social stability. Thus, the Tanjungbalai case is an existential threat to social cohesion, which is the foundation of the Indonesian nation-state. A special policy should handle this type of threat. Second, this policy is handled by direct assignment of the National Police Chief to handle riots indicating the specific scale of action that characterizes an emergency. Complaints about the sound of the call to prayer and the riots that followed were thus raised by the president through a communication process to the emergency position justifying the violation of justice even though the scale of the riots was local and was still able to be controlled by the state apparatus.

The relationship between power and legal position becomes interesting to analyze through the president's statement as a legal 'victim' in a fire case cannot be seen as a form of the rule of law overpower. It can be interpreted that the use of the discourse of equality in law is a strategy of power. The president lets the law work to protect power even if it violates justice. Violation of justice is justified by the president's success in placing the Tanjungbalai case into a state of emergency. The emergency logic built is as follows. The Tanjungbalai case was a riot caused by blasphemy. Blasphemy is a sensitive issue and threatens public peace and even the existence of the Indonesian nation. Therefore, extraordinary actions must be carried out through law enforcement, even though the way the law is enforced violates the sense of justice. Thus, the law is used by power in two ways. The first direction is to punish the perpetrators of the riots who cause huge losses. At the same time, punishing Meliana with a verdict is unfair if it is measured from the losses caused and the impact on public security. The ultimate goal is the preservation of presidential power. Thus, power is using the law, although it appears to be subject to legal equality on the surface.

## CONCLUSION

In general, this study president's communication through messages conveyed concerning the case of intolerance in Tanjungbalai shows a gap or inconsistency. The analysis of the text of the president's speech shows a double-faced presidential communication strategy. Using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, this study finds that the roots of inconsistency come from two dimensions of the president's public communication: the dimensions of social cognition and the wider, broader text. The inconsistency of statements and actions develops from the psychosocial dimensions that Van Dijk calls self-schemas, person schemes, role schemes, and event schemes. On the social context dimension, the strengthening of the ideology of Islamism in Indonesian politics and the legacy of leadership succession at the local and national levels created political divisions between Jokowi's supporters and opponents. Anti-Jokowi groups and opposition political forces mobilize Islamic identity by continuously reproducing the image of Jokowi as a figure who does not represent Islam and even tends not to side with the interests of Muslims. Therefore, all public issues and issues related to Islamic groups must be handled with extreme care and control, not to strengthen identity politics that would jeopardize the president's power.

The way the presidential actor responds to the context by not intervening in the law is the president's strategy to avoid the context trap, namely the anti-Islam discourse reproduced by the president's opponents and opposition. By distancing himself from the case and leaving it to the legal process, the president sends the message that he must stand above all groups. By developing a presidential communication strategy with multiple meanings, the president accommodates various interests in the context. It defends the minority but also protects the interests of the Muslim majority. However, implicitly, the statements and messages above are individual political strategies to negate labeling efforts and, at the same time, reduce the expansion of identity politics.

One of the president's communication strategies to free himself from contextual pressures is to elevate messages to a normative level. The trick is to create what Ernesto Laclau calls a political frontier: the p: then dry between 'friends' and 'enemies', between 'Indonesians' and 'non-Indonesians'. The message conveyed that 'Indonesia is tolerant', then those who riot and destroy minority assets are 'not Indonesia'. Presidential communication is also carried out by building a hegemonic position by articulating plural and competitive identities and subjectivity. An articulation becomes a hegemon when it can absorb the various articulations in which the hegemon operates. By abstracting the message, majority and minority, stability, hegemony absorbs political antagonism but does not negate antagonism itself. Thus, the position of hegemon here is not in the sense of dominative but accommodative.

As part of the discourse of tolerance, the president develops a hegemonic discourse through abstraction to prevent dislocations that threaten political stability and guarantee the legitimacy of power. As a result, the president's power politics strategy has positioned Meliana as a victim of

injustice. The president does not make legal breakthroughs to achieve justice but uses legal reasons to protect his power. Thus the president has failed to exercise what Walter Benjamin calls power as a means, not an end. The president's political strategy is nothing more than exercising power without deconstructing power in Benjamin's concept of power. It makes the president unable to escape the trap of worldly power, which is full of ambition and tends to want to dominate through the legitimacy of positive law.

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