

Anies Baswedan's Rhetoric amid Political Polarization for COVID-19 Handling in Jakarta, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Political leaders worldwide used a diverse model of communication during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rhetoric becomes an important aspect to comprehend the particular elite communication model. This article discusses Anies Baswedan's political rhetoric in COVID-19 handling wherein some cases contradict central government policies. Given the increasing political polarisation in Jakarta, Baswedan has become one of the most controversial actors in the national political arena. We use a political rhetorical analysis approach to understand Baswedan's political actions and rhetoric. Furthermore, we determine that Baswedan's model of rhetoric political communication is consistent and different from most political elites whose deliberative style is more dominant. Baswedan appears to employ a different type of rhetoric when countering the central government's opinion and gaining public support. In the former, Baswedan primarily applies the type of bureaucratic rhetoric, which tends to be more technical. Conversely, Baswedan tends to choose the rhetorical style of advice when narrating the idea of handling the COVID-19 outbreak. Moreover, the COVID-19 outbreak provides important momentum for Baswedan to improve his image as an elite political personality and as the governor of Jakarta. Our study significantly contributes to understanding rhetoric as an important model for elite political communication in the face of crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and comprehending rhetoric's impact on the elite and society.

Keywords: *Political rhetoric, Anies Baswedan, political polarisation, COVID-19, Jakarta.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, rhetoric has become a global trend of elite political communication models in various situations. The COVID-19 pandemic era has witnessed a distinct trend of elite communication in Indonesia, particularly in Jakarta. In the case of Jakarta, some elites use science as the basis for their policies, whereas others ignore it. The attitude of elites who tend to ignore and reject scientific claims contributes to public distrust. Unfortunately, elite political rhetoric impacts increasing polarisation (Ajzenman et al., 2020; Green et al., 2020; Mietzner, 2020). In Brazil, the crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic reveals that the typical attitude of leaders triggers polarisation in society (Ajzenman et al., 2020). The same case occurs in European countries, such as Serbia, where the rhetoric of leaders who ignore science impacts polarisation. The current trend of public opinion is gradually being replaced by scientific consensus in which science plays a key role in enhancing the credibility of elites. Additionally, various scientific claims can trigger societal controversy and polarisation (Hart & Nisbet, 2012; Ajzenman et al., 2020; Green et al., 2020; Mietzner, 2020). This polarisation represents divided political groups and a communication crisis between elite political groups. This situation can be exacerbated if polarised parties are initiated as a result of competition during elections and continue to increase during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis (Gollust et al., 2020).

Rhetoric becomes an integral part of elite communication in times of crisis, where science is the basis of the rhetorical narrative developed by the elite. A pandemic is probably one of the most severe forms of crisis. It is beyond the control of any actor and is inherently complex due to the range and depth of the effects and the need to understand the capabilities required to mitigate the impact (Kahn, 2020). The government's poor response during a crisis is a communication flaw that may lead to different responses from various parties (Gollust et al., 2020). In addition, several other studies have concluded that in times of crisis, this polarisation is used as a political instrument to encourage fundamental changes in a country (McCoy et al., 2018).

The existence of political polarisation has an impact on health behaviour (Iyengar et al., 2019; Montoya-Williams & Fuentes-Afflick, 2019). In those studies, strengthening the polarisation occurred between two different parties, for example, in Green et al., 2020; Iyengar et al., 2019 studies. Both reported an increase of sharp polarisation between Republicans and Democrats in America. While the research of Ajzenman et al. (2020), Ortega and Orsini (2020) demonstrated the failure of the President of Brazil to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. In this research, theories have been constructed about the differences and causes of the collapse of public health. Specifically, Ortega and Orsini (2020) raised theories about the notion of 'government by exception' and 'strategic ignorance'. The article mentions the rhetorical weakness of the opposition. However, those studies lack pivotal rhetoric from the opposition side. The presence of rhetoric from the opposition is needed as a counterweight, especially when the pattern of leadership begins to shift towards strengthening authoritarianism.

Polarisation in times of a crisis can hinder an individual's effective response to crisis situations (Green et al., 2020). Countries with populist leaders overlook the risks associated with crises, such as the early phases of the COVID-19 outbreak. One of the causes of the state's failure to deal with the pandemic is political polarisation (Mietzner, 2020). In previous studies, experts have revealed that polarisation during a pandemic cannot be separated from the presence of media. On the one hand, the media can divert coverage of the pandemic, and on the other hand, it can strengthen the position of elites (Allcott et al., 2020; Faris et al., 2020; Prior, 2013).

The general public's lack of awareness about the pandemic has impacted their attitudes in responding to it. Polarisation occurs when the media and political leaders send different messages about crises, leading to uncertainty and a decline in public confidence. Additionally, divergent communication during a health crisis might widen the scope of issues. In general, the rhetorical character of an elite exhibits a paradoxical pattern. This paradoxical rhetorical character occurs in democratic and nondemocratic countries, and during elections and crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In such cases, the political character and crises will determine the communication patterns of elites in a region or country. Thus, this article examines the political rhetoric of the governor of Jakarta Capital City, Baswedan, in responding to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and discusses the debate on COVID-19 handling between the central government and the Jakarta province government.

LITERATURE REVIEW OR RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Political Rhetoric

Rhetoric can be achieved as a speakers' ability to influence audiences (Turner & West, 2007). Rhetoric is a form of mental or emotional energy communicated through speech or writing to influence a situation wherein speakers interact (Rapp, 2002). Rhetoric is applying reason to

imagine for the better moving of the will. According to contemporary rhetoricians such as Campbell, rhetoric is art or talent by which discourse is adapted to its own end (Kock, 2009). Additionally, Brummett, (2003) states that rhetoric is the manner in which words influence people. In this study, rhetoric is defined as the method of influencing or persuading the audience through language. The main purpose of a speaker's rhetoric is to persuade the audience. Audiences are persuaded only when the speaker's rhetoric is successful. In the ancient classical definition, rhetoric is the art of public speaking, which may succeed if conveyed powerfully (Charteris-Black, 2011). Strong rhetoric found in the world of politics is a two-way communication wherein the communicator attempts to influence the communicant to gain support, response, and sympathy. The ability of rhetoric increases legitimacy and is related to efforts to carry out grand strategies to achieve certain goals (Goddart & Krebs, 2015). Furthermore, Hendrikus, (2015) defines rhetoric as the art of communicating through talent and technical skills. Rhetoric itself requires dialectics, such as discussion, talk, and debate. Rhetoric is at the core of democratic leadership (Kane & Patapan, 2010, 2012). Numerous elites rely on their rhetoric when communicating in front of the masses and believe that it is an effective method to disseminate their political ideas.

However, rhetorical style alone is insufficient; the public demands reliable and accurate information from elites while they convey messages in their rhetorical style. Rhetoric with accurate information increases the credibility of elites (Ihlen, 2020). In democratic countries, information is an important aspect of the public sphere where elites and masses may effectively communicate. Consistent with Aristotle, rhetoric is explained as a dialectic that refers to an individual's persuasive ability used for good or bad purposes (Rapp, 2002). Several studies have concluded that rhetoric is at the core of democratic leadership with consequences between self-serving power seekers and public ideals (Kane & Patapan, 2010, 2012), promoting unity or fostering social divisions (Green et al., 2020).

Other studies have argued that rhetoric is a political communication model that can influence public opinion formation, as citizens generally use it as a source of information to understand political issues (Karlsen, 2015; Aalberg & de Vreese, 2016; Reinemann et al., 2016; Valentino et al., 2018). Additionally, in the political context, many scholars conclude that rhetoric is a communication strategy for elites to maintain power (Riaz et al., 2016) and support the veracity of an ideology (Crines, 2014). Amid digital media's development, rhetoric promotes specific political ideas or thoughts (Finlayson, 2020). Digital media has sided with political elites by disseminating their political ideas and quickly gaining support from the wider community.

Polarisation During The COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted many countries worldwide. In dealing with the pandemic, different countries have applied varied strategies. However, Lilleker et al. (2021) notes four common themes. First, a crisis exacerbates the personalization trend. Second, the mass media plays a vital role in disseminating information to the public; however, tensions between the political and media spheres are still common. Third, social media plays an extremely positive role, but the information that is spread is often unaccountable. Thus, social media is described as the cause of the infodemic. However, social media is still considered crucial to uniting the community. Therefore, it is recommended that social media should improve their contribution to distributing more valuable information. Finally, a systemic polarisation may hinder messages of unity and calls to gather around a flag to be obeyed.

Hence, polarisation became the root cause of misinformation being widely distributed and tensions over actions becoming prominent. This, in turn, has led to crises and political instability, creating conditions that exacerbated the negative impact of the pandemic (Lilleker et al., 2021).

Kahn (2020) has identified two leadership models during which the crisis has been identified. The first is the Prominence Model Politician. Politicians take advice from experts but retain the ultimate decision-making authority and public communications role. The former can lead to a personalization of leadership, involving the assumption of personal control and asking the public to put complete trust in a leader adopting a presidential character or even a monarchical independent political system (Webb & Poguntke, 2013). Trust can be a factor in the performance of certain leaders as well as the public's perception of their character (Van Zoonen & Holtz-Bacha, 2000). Therefore, during a crisis, the extent to which a leader is able to unite the nation depends on their immediate performance but also on the level of support they command and the long-standing perception the public holds of them in terms of their integrity and competence (Renshon, 2000). The second is the Expert Appointee Prominence Model. In this second model, politicians delegate key decision-making and public communication responsibilities to experts while still providing political support for decision-making. This second model involves a wider range of speakers—people selected for their specific roles, skills, and competencies. Even when the politician stands out, experts can be leveraged to increase the credibility of the government's response capabilities, implemented measures and public requirements. In a pandemic, one would expect this model for virologists to be in the limelight, but certain measures would require the presence of other government agencies and groups (Kahn, 2020).

Our writings contribute to the broader literature for understanding elite rhetoric, especially during crises. In Indonesia, political polarisation had strengthened before the pandemic. Some studies even mention increased political polarisation in Indonesia, which continues to worsen (Warburton, 2019, 2020). This, in turn, impacts the government's performance, leading to a poor response in handling the COVID-19 pandemic (Mietzner, 2020). However, in Indonesia, no specific research has examined elite rhetoric during the pandemic. The political character and crisis situations in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta, are the special characteristics that distinguish this research from previous studies. Additionally, it is important to determine the extent to which elite rhetoric has impacted COVID-19 handling and increasing political polarisation in Indonesia. Therefore, this article can enrich the existing literature. In the next section, we describe Baswedan's political journey and the development of political polarisation in Indonesia. This section explicitly discusses Baswedan's involvement in developing political polarisation in Indonesia. Furthermore, Baswedan's rhetorical style in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in an atmosphere of political polarisation in Jakarta is discussed to determine the effectiveness of the rhetoric in overcoming the increasing polarisation and political constellation.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study is content analysis with an analytical approach to political rhetoric developed by Alan Finlayson (2019), as it offers a rhetorical conception of political thought and ideology. We collected data from social media, such as Baswedan's social media, the DKI Jakarta provincial government's official social media, and other related news media, for the 2020 period. The research primarily focuses on the political context, information, and statements from Baswedan. It uses the corpus linguistics

methodological toolbox to analyse policies, opinions, and texts during the COVID-19 pandemic (Baker et al., 2008). Corpus linguistics employs an extensive collection of texts as its raw data and computationally identifies its organising properties. Data analysis starts from source criticism; only data that are accurate and relevant to the problem under study are considered. Source criticism was performed by employing the triangulation method and conducting interviews with informants. Interviews were conducted with four informants, three university professors, and a practitioner.

This paper adopts Aristotle's triangular rhetorical situation framework (logos, ethos, and pathos) to examine how the speaker, audience, and objective of communication interact in the rhetorical strategies used to persuade others regarding the validity and legitimacy of claims during the public controversy. Aristotle's (384–322 BCE) rhetoric theory has been the mainstay for 2500 years (Krishnan et al., 2020). Furthermore, research results are also discussed using Nimmo's rhetorical type theory (Nimmo, 1978) and Fisher's narrative paradigm (Fisher, 1985).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Baswedan and the Root of Political Polarisation in Jakarta

The increase in polarisation in Indonesia can be traced to the presidential election in 2014, which brought together the two pairs of presidential candidates, Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla, with Prabowo Subianto and Hatta Rajasa. Prior to the 2014 presidential election, there were indications of significant political polarisation (Aspinall, 2014). In 2019, both candidates met again in a political scenario similar to the previous battle wherein Joko Widodo was supported by nationalist and moderate Islamic groups, military actors and conservative Islamic groups supported Prabowo Subianto.

Amid increasing political polarisation, Baswedan's leadership as governor of Jakarta encountered several major problems that led to criticism of his governance. Cases of reclamation, flooding, closure of night entertainment centres, cultivation of Mona's trees, and the policy of structuring Jakarta were several challenges faced by Baswedan. The latest challenge faced by Baswedan was the spread of the COVID-19 virus, which caused the untimely demise of many residents of Jakarta. In Indonesia, Jakarta is the province with the most COVID-19 cases. From March to November 2020, Jakarta led the highest number of COVID-19 cases. Jakarta was even the first province to confirm a COVID-19 case in Indonesia. The government, under the leadership of Baswedan, has undertaken several efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 in Jakarta. Amid these problems, not infrequently, many parties attempted to overthrow his leadership. Alternatively, the community expects the presence of a leader who can solve these problems. In the next section, this article explains the political narrative developed by Baswedan using several rhetorics through several policy implementations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Baswedan's Rhetoric Amid Polarisation in COVID-19 Handling

a. Corpus of Social Restriction

Political polarisation related to managing COVID-19 has already occurred starting with the choice of social restriction policies. Baswedan made it clear while responding to a number of inquiries that he wanted the central government to take quick steps and formulate effective policies to handle the COVID-19 outbreak. Baswedan has on several occasions offered options that need to be undertaken, one of which is to enforce a lockdown or regional quarantine.

Several observers also encouraged a complete lockdown of areas within a month. However, a Jakarta parliament member opposed the lockdown option presented by Baswedan (Setiawan, 2020). Baswedan's suggestion to enforce a lockdown was based on factual conditions surrounding Jakarta's unchecked spread of the COVID-19 virus. If the lockdown occurs, then at least, according to parliament, the provincial government must prepare a fund of 5 trillion rupiahs to cater Jakarta's residents needs. This lockdown option was then responded to by the Minister of Home Affairs, who stated that the lockdown was under the central government's authority and the provincial government had to consult with the central government regarding restrictions (Setiawan, 2020).

Curbing the spread of COVID-19, especially in Jakarta, is the government's top priority amid the increasing number of positive cases. Initially, the government prepared a regional quarantine scenario, which was finally decided by the central government with the implementation of large-scale social restrictions, the first stage of which took effect on April 10–23, 2020. To break the chain of COVID-19 transmission, the Jakarta government implemented a restriction policy in several sectors, except for the food, energy, health, communications, finance, logistics, retail, and strategic industries.

Social restrictions were extended to the next stage due to the increasing number of cases. The third stage of restriction is expected to be a determinant for entering the "new normal era," namely, the new life order of society. However, following the end of the third phase, instead of implementing the new normal according to the central government's discourse, Baswedan chose to impose transitional restrictions (Mustakim, 2020). These transitional restrictions continued till the end of June 2020. Baswedan employed a policy which slightly differed from the central and other regional governments. Baswedan stated that Jakarta has specific conditions in which the decisions issued have been based on various considerations, especially from experts in virus affairs. Based on a survey conducted by mass media, the implementation of restrictions on the transition period has led to a community polemic. A total of 47.5% of respondents stated that the policy was appropriate for a short time, whereas 43.8% considered that the policy of reducing social restrictions was ineffective. Numerous workers lost their jobs, which reduced their income, and small and large entrepreneurs suffered dramatic losses. Community compliance with restrictions is still considered weak.

Several polemics arose between the elite of the central government and the provincial government of DKI Jakarta. This is a response from several parties to Baswedan's political actions as the Governor of DKI Jakarta in dealing with COVID-19. Since the beginning, before COVID-19 was declared as a pandemic, Baswedan has undertaken several steps to curb the spread of the virus in Indonesia. In an interview with the Australian foreign media, Baswedan explained the readiness of Jakarta long before the virus in Wuhan had occurred (Mustakim, 2020). However, the provincial government's actions in Jakarta are hampered by the Ministry of Health through Minister Terawan holding a coronavirus test (Damarjati, 2020). In connection with this, the following is a snippet of Baswedan's online interview with the Australian media:

The pandemic has had serious health, social and economic impacts. Every day we hear news of incidents and deaths. I must honestly say that we are more frustrated than the Ministry of Health. This should drive policy for us to do what we have to do. I have to limit the interaction of people in this city. So let me give you an idea of what we've been through so far. When we heard that

there was a case in Wuhan in early December, early January on January 6th we had started to hold a meeting with all hospitals in Jakarta to inform them that at that time we called Wuhan Pneumonia, there was no COVID yet, and then we prepared a number hotline for all hospitals in Jakarta, we have one hundred and ninety hospitals in Jakarta. If you have a case like this report, it to us and then we start monitoring patients with symptoms of Wuhan pneumonia.

Based on Baswedan's statement, transparency of information from the Minister of Health might create panic within the community. Furthermore, Baswedan informed the audience that the Jakarta government is nearly ready to cope with the pandemic. The difference in attitudes between the central government and the Jakarta government result from a polemic developed due to a series of political polarizations that were formed long before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another indication of polarisation was when Baswedan emphasised that the government needs to undertake prompt measures to overcome the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic by enforcing a strict lockdown. It was one of the options that triggered a public debate between the central government and the Jakarta provincial government, as stated below:

...there is a need for government policies to close down activities. It is necessary to carry out a lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Jakarta needs a lockdown because it is the centre of the spread of COVID-19.

In a similar manner, on April 2, 2020, when reporting the COVID-19 situation in Jakarta to the Vice President, Baswedan stated as follows:

... case fatality rate is 10%, the global figure is 4.4%. This is very worrying. The 401 cases were infected by COVID-19. The situation in Jakarta is very, very worrying, we submitted a letter to Mr. President to take extreme restriction measures (regional quarantine) (CNN Indonesia, 2020; Rahman, 2020).

b. Corpus of Social Aid

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted on middle- and lower-class communities. In Jakarta, given a high rate of positive COVID-19 cases, most people have been economically affected by the pandemic, especially the poor and vulnerable groups. The central and local governments provided social aid to these groups to support their economic needs during the pandemic. This social assistance was provided in the form of basic food and cash, which was distributed to the beneficiary residents of Jakarta. Food items and cash were distributed only among those who were deprived of the basic necessities during the implementation of restrictions.

The Jakarta provincial government claimed to have an implementation rate of 100% with respect to the distribution of social aid. This implies the rapid response of the provincial government in providing social assistance during the pandemic. However, there were several polemics between the Jakarta provincial government and the central government regarding

the social assistance provided to the citizens of Jakarta. There were at least two main problems with the aid.

First, data from the central and provincial governments regarding the number of beneficiaries varied. Data for social assistance that are claimed by the Jakarta provincial government come from Integrated Social Welfare Data, which are added with the data from cheap food, the Jakarta Smart Card, and the Jakarta Elderly Card (Wijaya, 2020). Adding other data sources is necessary because the data record only 8%–10% of individuals affected by COVID-19, although many business fields were also affected.

Second, there are double recipients of social assistance. These two issues have sparked numerous debates among the ministers regarding Baswedan's claim. Previously, Baswedan was considered incompetent in managing social assistance in Jakarta. The criticism came from several of Baswedan's central officials, including the Minister of Finance, Minister of Social Affairs, and Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture. In response to the criticism, Baswedan stated the following at a television talk-show event:

... from the beginning, we have identified ... especially the most vulnerable groups. If the beneficiaries are seen individually, then in one family, they will get a lot of social aid from the government, so we divide it per family. These are the beneficiaries. Social restrictions in Jakarta began on April 10, 2020, while social assistance from the centre began on April 20, 2020. The distribution of basic necessities began on April 9, the day before the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (LSSR) implementation. So, after ten days, we, the Jakarta Provincial Government, have helped the poor to avoid a food crisis. Jakarta will be in trouble if that happens. There are 10 vacant days between 10 and 20 April, if there is no aid, there will be food shortages. It is also not a double because it's been consumed for a week, so it is not double... double if two donations are given on the same day, it is double. Those in the field know exactly... and we both know that social assistance is not an individual but the KK (head of the family). There is a coordination meeting chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs, there is a Coordinating Minister, and there is a Minister of Social Affairs and a relevant Minister. I report that the Regional Government started distributing today (April 9, 2020) before the food crisis occurred. If the problem is understood in the field, understood technically, and understood in detail, there is no problem. We are responsible, both constitutionally and morally ... to ensure that the citizens of Jakarta are met with food needs.

Some points from the contents of Baswedan's statement are as follows: First, Baswedan clarified a number of problematic social assistance data. According to him, the social assistance data were derived from meetings with related ministers, which were calculated based on the number of families rather than the number of individuals. Second, Baswedan clarified the dual recipients of social assistance from the DKI Jakarta provincial government and the central government through the Ministry of Social Affairs. Baswedan stated that there were no double recipients of social assistance because the distribution was not performed at the same time. Third, Baswedan claimed that the implementation of the social assistance distribution was successful. Fourth, Baswedan indirectly stated that the Jakarta government was aware of the data because they knew precisely the conditions on the ground, technicalities, and details compared to the central government. In this case, the social

assistance polemic is a series of central government attitudes, often different from the DKI Jakarta provincial government led by Baswedan. The polemic between the two camps is a political polarisation that remains strong even after the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic.

c. Corpus of State and Public Apparatuses

Amid the crisis caused during the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, all individuals were affected, including civil servants, economically and socially. The following is Baswedan's message to civil servants in Jakarta after the day of Eid on May 30, 2020, which was broadcast by the Jakarta Information and Statistics Communication Office (Pemprov DKI Jakarta, 2020):

... all workers who serve the Provincial Government, including 120 thousand outsourcing workers, their contracts are not terminated. The provincial government continues to maintain its role as a job provider for the people in Jakarta. Another assistance is trimmed so that the incentive for all civil servants can be maintained, the value of the social assistance cut is 2 trillion, equal to 23% of the incentive budget, but I need to emphasise that it is those who are underprivileged, totaling 1.2 million people, who receive Our social assistance programs are people who are currently experiencing economic difficulties.

All civil servants, I remind you that our job is to protect the people, people's safety is the number one priority. Under any circumstances, our attitude must be clear; number the people instead of themselves. I ordered civil servants to act as knightly state administrators, who were tough, who were resilient, who could not fail to face trials.

Several points from the contents of Baswedan's statement can be interpreted as follows: First, Baswedan invited all Jakarta civil servants to be actively involved and effectively perform their duties and roles as state servants during the pandemic. Second, Baswedan conveyed Jakarta's financial condition and informed about policies related to the reduction of civil servant allowances intended for vulnerable groups in the form of social assistance. Third, Baswedan requested Jakarta's civil servants to exhibit their human side by showing sympathy and concern for vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. The speech delivered by Baswedan shows a persuasive style of communication in which the ethos side is extremely strong, colouring the contents of his speech. Baswedan built the humanity side of his audience to empathise with some community groups affected by the pandemic by volunteering to reduce the monetary benefits of civil servants.

Alternatively, when Baswedan reported on the increase in the COVID-19 case in Jakarta, he often presented data and opinions from experts in every argument he delivered to the public. The following are some excerpts from Baswedan's speech at a press conference toward the end of the third stage of the LSSR and preparations for the Transitional LSSR (Pemprov DKI Jakarta, 2020).

... we, together with epidemiologists, continue to monitor the development of COVID-19 in Jakarta”... and we in Jakarta always rely on the views of scientists, the views of experts, and work together specifically with those related to the field of medicine and the field of public health.

Baswedan's Rhetoric Types and Impacts

In several corpus discourses on handling the COVID-19 pandemic in Jakarta, Baswedan as the governor of Jakarta is involved in a verbal combat with several parties, including those with a political purpose and those who act on behalf of the public interest. In other words, in leading Jakarta, Baswedan encountered numerous critics from elites and the public. Reconciling and fulfilling varied demands directed at him, especially amid the COVID-19 pandemic and political polarisation, acts as a challenge to Baswedan's leadership. From the three-discourse corpus in the previous section, Baswedan's rhetoric demonstrated the existence of political polarisation at the elite level, showing a political narrative that seeks to restore his image and gain public sympathy. Therefore, the narratives developed by Baswedan appeared to be more deliberative than confrontational, motivating than condemning, and more of a narrative of mutual interests rather than personal or group interests. Baswedan performed his political rhetoric style consistently in every forum.

To understand the narrative of Baswedan's rhetoric, this study relates it to the context and role of Baswedan in several of his speeches. He played at least two important tangible and intangible roles. Tangible and intangible roles appear to be governor, state servant, and person-in-charge of handling the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas the other role is of a presidential candidate for 2024 and a politician. These two roles work alternately in various situations played by Baswedan through his political narratives during the COVID-19 pandemic in Jakarta.

Meanwhile, in terms of its rhetorical style, the arguments that Baswedan presented tend to be an amalgamation of ethos and logos, which is combined with pathos. Ethos refers to the attractiveness of a speech, which is based on an assessment of the character of an orator or speaker, honesty, authority, expertise, formal qualifications, experience, and performance. The audience will admire, respect, and believe the speech the orator conveys as they are considered a powerful and reliable leader. While delivering his speech, Baswedan often started by presenting the current conditions and contexts, facts and steps undertaken by the government, the government's targets, the importance of the involvement of experts and the public in handling the COVID-19 pandemic, and expressing appreciation and gratitude to those at the forefront of handling the pandemic. In several official forums, Baswedan delivered to Jakarta residents an image of the future of Jakarta during the pandemic. The present and future context is the time-space that Baswedan always presents in his speeches.

Meanwhile, in terms of rhetorical genre, Baswedan's rhetoric is included in the deliberative type, which focuses on efforts to persuade the audience to be involved in several actions. In general, Aristotle mentions three types of genres in rhetoric, namely, epideictic rhetoric, which focuses on the type of discourse praising or criticising ceremonial situations; judicial rhetoric, which focuses on the legal investigation; and deliberative rhetoric, which focuses on the political action with the type of discourse on calls for collective action, profit, and losses (Finlayson, 2012; Martin, 2014). Similar to Baswedan's rhetoric, Jakarta residents are invited to take part or be involved in joint actions to handle the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the persuasions can be observed in the form of real action, namely, the collaboration between the central government and citizens or entrepreneurs to help Jakarta residents

directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the poor and vulnerable. The provincial government initiated this through the Large-Scale Social Collaboration program. This is a voluntary movement undertaken by Jakarta residents to provide social support to their community.

Referring to Nimmo's rhetorical type approach, Baswedan tends to use different types of rhetoric when countering the opinion of the central government and gaining public support. Baswedan primarily applies bureaucratic rhetoric in the former, which tends to be more technical. This can be observed from his statements relating to the data on social assistance recipients and the data on COVID-19 cases, thereby offering an impression that Baswedan understands the details of the technical problems he faced. Meanwhile, when narrating the idea of handling COVID-19, Baswedan tends to choose the rhetorical style of advice. This can be observed from his statements relating to the demand for data transparency.

When viewed from the narrative paradigm, that departs from the assumption that humans are creatures of storytelling and good stories are effective for persuasion (Turner & West, 2007). Hence, the ability to deliver good stories is vital for leaders. Baswedan's explanation of the initial conditions of the pandemic by referring to the Wuhan incident can be interpreted as an effort to build a compelling and persuasive narrative for raising public awareness. If the general public believes this narrative is coherent and authentic, it will succeed. People judge narratives or stories through the principle of coherence. Coherence is the relationship between one part of the story and another. Baswedan often mentions numbers based on local data.

The importance of relying on science policymaking is urgently required in the pandemic phase. From the study results, it can be deduced that there is a contradiction between the central and local governments. This contradiction is dynamic and dialectical. Dialectics witness the interaction between certainty and uncertainty in relationships (West, Turner & Zhao, 2010). The link between Baswedan and the central government is represented as a link between fellow government institutions that have superior and subordinate relationships. However, differences in views that emerge can potentially increase individual or group tension. The impact of Baswedan's choice of rhetoric can be observed from two sides, the elite side and the community side. From the elite side, Baswedan seemed to have succeeded in building his credibility when conveying the role of the provincial government in handling COVID-19 in Jakarta. The communication model in Baswedan's leadership during the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic impacted his popularity and increased his electability. A political analyst stated that Baswedan had a straightforward communication style, mastered the stage with regular grammar, and was skilled at diverse political momentums. Ahead of the presidential election in 2024, this political moment will be a stepping-stone for Baswedan to show himself as a worthy presidential candidate. Meanwhile, according to Ahmad Najib Burhani, the Jakarta public considered several of Baswedan's policies in handling the COVID-19 pandemic to be successful and helped restore his image and popularity (Burhani, 2020).

Regarding the impact on society, the polarisation and rhetoric of leaders can positively and negatively impact society. Polarisation increases public distrust and delays the performance of public services. Alternatively, the conceptualization of conflict shows that, realistically, conflict might have implications for discomfort, but antithesis is essential and can lead to a solution to a social problem.

The situation we studied in Jakarta was similar to other studies in America. One such study points to polarisation in elite communications during the COVID-19 pandemic, with democrats discussing the crisis more often and emphasising the pandemic as a threat to the health of Americans and workers, whereas republicans place more emphasis on China and business (Green et al., 2020). Learning from the failures of other countries, efforts to end polarisation demand emergency action (Ortega & Orsini, 2020). The central and regional governments must collaboratively and synergistically work to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts. Furthermore, careful science communication is critical to maintaining public support for science-based policies (Kreps & Kriner, 2020). Thus, rhetoric can be an attempt to conduct criticism more elegantly. However, the rapid production of new knowledge is required to provide certainty to policymakers (Yin et al., 2021). For example, the criticism and rejection of knowledge, as well as disharmony between central and local governments in Brazil, were key factors in the country's failure to handle the COVID-19 pandemic (Ortega & Orsini, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This article explained Baswedan's political rhetoric in the midst of a crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and political polarisation. Although the crisis affected all aspects of human life and caused numerous problems, elite political narratives showed political polarisation. In Indonesia, particularly Jakarta, political polarisation has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We included the corpus of social restrictions, social assistance, and state and public officials. This research revealed that polarisation was caused by at least three factors: differences in lockdown and social restriction options, information on social assistance beneficiaries, and emphasis on handling. We determine that Baswedan emphasises COVID-19 as a threat to public health, highlighting the importance of lockdowns and the scientific approach in his rhetoric, whereas the central government places greater emphasis on economic resistance and resilience.

We find Baswedan's type of political communication consistent time by time and different from most political elites, where the deliberative style is dominant. Baswedan seems to use a different type of rhetoric when countering the opinion of the central government and when gaining public support. In the former, Baswedan mostly applies the type of bureaucratic rhetoric, which tends to be more technical. Meanwhile, when narrating the idea of handling COVID-19, Baswedan tends to choose the rhetorical style of advice. Besides, the crisis became an important momentum for Baswedan to improve his image as a political elite personally and as the Governor of Jakarta. Our study significantly contributes to understanding rhetoric as an important model for elite political communication in responding to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and understanding rhetoric's impact on the elite and society.

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