

Analysis of the Use of the Term 'Widow' and Its Impact on the Electability of the Rido Candidate Pair in the Jakarta Regional Election Through the Shannon-Weaver Communication Model

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ABSTRACT

The candidates for Governor and Deputy Governor of DKI Jakarta 2024, Ridwan Kamil and Suswono (RIDO), utilized the Shannon-Weaver communication model. The controversy began with Suswono's statement suggesting that "wealthy widows marry unemployed young men," followed by a similar remark from Ridwan Kamil. This study explores how the use of sensitive language can influence public perception and the electability of political candidates. Using the Shannon-Weaver model, the study identifies five stages of communication: information source, encoding process, channel and noise, receiver, and destination. The analysis results reveal that semantic noise and socio-cultural contexts sensitive to gender issues significantly contributed to negative perceptions among the public. Criticism from various organizations and public figures amplified this negative impact, which was reflected in the decline of RIDO's electability, ultimately leading to their defeat in the 2024 Jakarta election. This study highlights the importance of careful word choice in political communication and how semantic noise can affect message effectiveness. The Shannon-Weaver model, although initially designed for technical communication, can be adapted to analyze the complexities of contemporary political communication, particularly regarding the use of language with sensitive gender and social dimensions.

Keywords: Widow; Shannon-Weaver; Electability; Perception; Semantics

INTRODUCTION

The Shannon-Weaver mathematical communication model, developed in 1949, provides an important foundation for understanding the process of message transmission from the sender to the receiver. This model emphasizes that there are three levels of issues in communication processes: technical (accuracy of symbol transmission), semantic (correct interpretation of meaning), and effectiveness (impact of the message on behavior). While this model is useful in explaining the technical aspects of communication, the issue of semantics, or the interpretation of the message, often presents its own challenges, especially when a word or phrase carries complex socio-cultural implications (Chandley & Munday, 2020).

At the semantic level, Shannon-Weaver reminds us that meaning is not inherent in the message itself. Meaning is formed through an interpretation process involving factors such as context, experience, and the socio-cultural background of the message receiver (Radford, 2005). When a word or phrase carries high social sensitivity, the potential for semantic noise, which is part of the noise, becomes greater. This can lead to a gap between the meaning intended by the sender and the interpretation formed by the receiver.

The controversy began when Vice Governor candidate (CAWAGUB) Suswono introduced a program for orphan cards with a joking tone. The atmosphere, initially filled with laughter at the Nyi Ageng Serang Meeting Hall in South Jakarta on October 26, 2024, quickly turned into a national controversy. The declaration of support from the mass organization Bang Japar (Kebangkitan Jawara dan Pengacara) for the RIDO couple marked the beginning of a series of polemics that affected their campaign journey. He then continued with a discussion about the widow card, where he suggested that "wealthy widows should marry unemployed young men," linking it to the story of Siti Khadijah and Prophet Muhammad SAW when he was only 25 years old (Lesmana, 2024).

Although it was met with laughter from the audience, including the General Chairperson of Bang Japar, Fahira Idris, the statement quickly sparked harsh criticism on social media. The hashtag #widow even became a trending topic on social media X (formerly Twitter) on the same day, with various mainstream media outlets such as Detik.com, CNN Indonesia, Tempo, and Media Jakarta reporting on the incident (Muhid, 2024). Strong reactions came from various social organizations. GP Ansor DKI Jakarta condemned the statement for being disrespectful to Prophet Muhammad SAW and threatened to report Suswono to the police if no apology was issued. Meanwhile, the Betawi Bangkit Community Organization took further steps by reporting Suswono to the DKI Jakarta Election Supervisory Agency (BAWASLU) (Fajriyadi, 2024).

Criticism also came from academics and women's activists. Annisa Alfath, a researcher from Perludem, criticized the statement as objectification of women. Similarly, Felia Primaresti from The Indonesian Institute called it a reflection of

patriarchal thinking that dominates society (Nur, 2024). After two days of silence, on October 28, 2024, Suswono issued an apology via a video on his personal Instagram account. He admitted that his joke was inappropriate and unwise, while emphasizing that the joke was not part of the RIDO program. RIDO's spokesperson, Cheryl Tanzil, also sought to clarify by stating that the statement did not represent their program (CNN Indonesia.com, 2024).

Although Suswono apologized, Bawaslu DKI Jakarta continued the legal process by summoning Suswono twice on November 6 and 7, 2024. However, by the election day on November 27, Suswono had never attended the summons (Iswinarno & Muflih, 2024). The controversy reached a climax when Ridwan Kamil, during a campaign in East Jakarta on November 16, 2024, made a joke about widows being "taken care of and nurtured both physically and emotionally" by his campaign team. This statement immediately drew criticism from various parties, including former Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Susi Pudjiastuti, who emphasized her pride as an independent widow (Agung, 2024).

Anies Baswedan also condemned Ridwan Kamil's statement through a video circulating on social media. In the video posted on the "Langkah Anies" account, he stated that such jokes were inappropriate and hurtful, while reminding the public to use more accurate terms like "single mothers" (Langkah Anies, 2024). A week later, on November 21, 2024, Anies expressed his support for the Pramono-Rano couple. Facing growing criticism, Ridwan Kamil eventually apologized on November 22, 2024. He acknowledged that his word choice was incorrect and explained that the intensity of the campaign sometimes led to poor diction.

However, the impact of this controversy was reflected in the quick count results from various survey institutions on election day, November 27. Despite receiving support from almost all political parties and endorsements from President Prabowo Subianto and former President Jokowi, the Ridwan-Suswono (RIDO) pair ultimately lost in the Jakarta election, obtaining 39.40% of the vote. The Pramono Anung-Rano Karno pair won the Jakarta election with a single round victory, securing 50.07% of the vote (Nurul, 2024). Political analysts provided diverse assessments of this defeat. BRIN's lead researcher, Siti Zuhro, assessed that the statement about "widows" had created a negative perception among the people of Jakarta. In line with that, political observers Ari Junaedi and Karyono Wibowo noted that the campaign blunder related to the widow issue significantly contributed to RIDO's defeat, especially since it was delivered as a joke, which worsened their image in the eyes of the public (Winarto, 2024).

The use of the word "widow" in the 2024 DKI Jakarta Regional Election campaign by the RIDO pair (Ridwan Kamil-Suswono) is a case that will be used in this paper to summarize from several sources, illustrating how a word choice can have significant political consequences when it intersects with social sensitivities. Analyzing this case can help us understand how semantic noise in the Shannon-Weaver model operates in the context of contemporary political communication,

particularly regarding the use of language with sensitive gender and social dimensions (Khan, 2024). Although the Shannon-Weaver Model was originally designed for technical communication, it has evolved to analyze the meaning-making process in political communication while maintaining its systematic and measurable framework, making the RIDO case an example of how this model can be enriched to understand the complexities of contemporary communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The model proposed by Shannon-Weaver states that communication is a linear process consisting of elements such as sender, encoder, channel, decoder, and receiver. The meaning-making process begins with the sender (encoder), who initiates an idea into a message. The message is then transmitted through a channel to the receiver (decoder) for interpretation. Once this process is completed, the sender faces two possibilities: if the message is understood well, it is considered effective communication (Lanius, 2022).

It should be understood that the linear process in this model has an issue with the presence of disturbances (noise). For example, if the message cannot be interpreted as intended, it contributes to the failure of creating effective communication (Kim, 2017). Some disturbances that can be identified include physical factors, which involve external environmental factors hindering the message transmission process. For example, the sound of construction equipment or loud conversations. Then, psychological factors, which involve internal factors like the emotional state of individuals involved in communication. Semantic factors also contribute to misunderstandings due to the use of language and meaning formation. Therefore, it is important to understand the context of using jargon, technical terms, or slang to ensure clarity in the message being sent. The final factor is physiological or disturbances originating from the physical conditions of the sender and receiver, such as fatigue, hearing impairments, or other physical conditions that hinder the communication process (Oliinyk, Bigunova & Selivanova, 2020).

Through understanding disturbances, we see that they disrupt the sender's ability to send the message effectively. The dominant role that the sender holds gives them the position to use language that may not be understood by the receiver (Sholle, 1988). This shows that the model does not provide enough space for both parties to engage in interactive communication. It also dominates the choice of channel for sending the message, limiting the space for interaction, which is an important part of communication, as it helps clarify and develop meanings so that the message becomes comprehensive. The receiver is forced to accept the message as expected by the sender. If this process happens repeatedly, it can lead to misunderstandings between both parties (Kubota, 2023). Moreover, this dominance overlooks the sender's credibility in determining the effectiveness of communication. The involvement of the receiver is influenced by various factors such as motivation, attention, and emotions (Kubota, 2023). For example, a message sender who is perceived as an authority in society has the freedom to present their message as an

absolute truth. In this context, the Shannon-Weaver model, which illustrates how a message flows unidirectionally from sender to receiver, fails to show how the receiver also has an active role in enriching the process of message interpretation while focusing on the sender as the source of information.

Additionally, this model focuses solely on technical factors, sidelining semantic understanding and effectiveness in the communication process. Technical factors refer to the importance of accuracy in the message transmission process through the channel and its interpretation. The need for a deeper understanding of the meaning formation process cannot be illustrated without considering factors beyond disturbances and language. Therefore, understanding semantics that focuses on the use of language and symbols according to the cultural context of both the sender and receiver is essential. For example, when the sender uses jargon to convey a shared understanding between both parties, it helps reduce distractions in the meaning formation process. Context in language use also plays a critical role in meaning-making because of the cultural backgrounds embedded between the sender and receiver, which influence message interpretation (Özkula, 2021). In communication, ambiguous messages often cause confusion and misinterpretation. Özkula's research highlights that meaning is often influenced by social, cultural contexts, and the personal experiences of the receiver (2021). For instance, words or symbols that have a positive meaning in one culture may be interpreted negatively in another (Denham, 2004), showing that this model does not provide space to understand how meanings can shift during communication, especially when disturbances occur. Therefore, effectiveness should be considered, as it refers to the extent to which the message achieves its intended goal—whether the message is understood as the sender intended and influences the receiver's behavior as expected. The receiver does not only process the message based on its content, but also considers trust in the sender.

Holliday (2020) emphasizes that the sender's credibility is key in building the receiver's trust in the message. For example, in a health campaign, information from a trusted doctor is more likely to be followed than from an unclear source. The Shannon-Weaver model is not flexible enough to explain how the sender's credibility can shape the receiver's perception of the message. Recent research has introduced alternative models emphasizing circularity and feedback loops, such as relational and dialogic approaches. These models prioritize mutual understanding and meaning negotiation rather than message fidelity (Beraldo et al., 2022). Such critiques highlight the inadequacy of the Shannon-Weaver model in handling the complex interactions between meaning, feedback, and interpretation. This perspective emphasizes the social-political dimension of communication, showing how meaning is shaped by and shapes power relations. It underscores the importance of clarity and accuracy in encoding messages to minimize potential disturbances. Furthermore, meaning is not neutral; it is filled with power dynamics that reflect and reinforce social hierarchies, with dominant ideologies influencing both the message content and the framework within which the message is

interpreted (Beraldo et al., 2022). While not part of the original model, feedback is crucial in meaning-making.

Feedback allows the sender to understand whether the receiver has interpreted the message correctly, enabling adjustments and clarifications if needed. This perspective critiques the Shannon-Weaver model's failure to account for power asymmetries in the communication process. Recent critical studies challenge the sender-receiver paradigm as overly simplistic, arguing that meaning emerges through dialogic interaction rather than one-way transmission (Bavelas et al., 2014). The dialogic model highlights the co-construction of meaning, where participants actively shape and reshape interpretations through feedback and interaction. The rise of digital communication and networks complicates the application of the Shannon-Weaver model. Modern communication is characterized by interactivity, multimodality, and decentralization, requiring a more sophisticated framework to understand the complexities of meaning-making in digital contexts. This development calls for a reevaluation of traditional models to accommodate the dynamics of emerging communication.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the impact of communication models on digital communication practices, focusing particularly on the effectiveness of the Shannon-Weaver model in contemporary contexts. A case study approach is adopted to provide a detailed analysis of communication practices in digital environments, specifically within social media platforms and virtual communication tools. The sample for this study consists of 30 participants who are regular users of social media and digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Zoom. Participants will be selected using purposive sampling, ensuring that individuals actively engaged in digital communication environments are included. The selection will also ensure diversity in age, educational background, and communication frequency to provide a comprehensive understanding of how different groups utilize digital communication tools. Participants will be divided into three groups based on their frequency of use: high, medium, and low frequency users, which will allow for a comparison of communication practices across different user engagement levels.

Instrument and Procedures

The primary instruments for data collection in this study include semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews will involve open-ended questions designed to explore participants' perceptions of digital communication, their experiences using communication models (particularly the Shannon-Weaver model), and the challenges they face in virtual communication. This flexible format allows for

probing deeper into responses and encourages participants to share their thoughts in their own words. In addition, a series of FGDs will be conducted with small groups of participants to foster collective discussions about digital communication practices. These discussions will provide insights into shared perceptions and the impact of communication models in the context of social media and digital communication tools. Observation will be conducted by watching participants engage in digital communication through platforms such as WhatsApp or Zoom. This will allow for analysis of communication patterns, feedback loops, and the effect of noise on message delivery and interpretation in real-time communication. Document analysis will involve examining relevant messages, posts, or communication logs from social media platforms to identify patterns of communication that align with or challenge the assumptions of the Shannon-Weaver model. The data collection process will begin with an initial orientation session to explain the study's objectives to the participants. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews will be conducted individually, with each session lasting about 30 to 45 minutes. FGDs will be scheduled for groups of five participants, each lasting around 60 minutes. Observational data will be gathered as participants engage in natural communication activities on digital platforms. Document analysis will be carried out on a voluntary basis, where participants may choose to share excerpts from their digital conversations.

Data Analysis

Data analysis will be carried out in several stages. First, all interviews and FGDs will be transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions will then undergo an open coding process, where recurring themes related to communication models, feedback, noise, and message interpretation will be identified. These codes will be grouped into categories based on the frequency and relevance of the themes. The coded data will then undergo thematic analysis, where key themes such as perceptions of the Shannon-Weaver model in digital communication, the role of noise, the importance of feedback, and variations in communication practices across user engagement levels will be examined. A cross-case analysis will be performed to compare communication patterns across high, medium, and low frequency users, allowing the study to determine if the Shannon-Weaver model remains effective or if newer models are better suited to explain communication dynamics in digital environments. For any quantitative data gathered (such as participant demographics or frequency of use), descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data and provide an overview of the sample characteristics. The findings from the thematic analysis will be interpreted within the context of communication theory. Comparisons will be made between the Shannon-Weaver model's effectiveness in traditional communication settings and its applicability in modern, digital communication contexts. The study will also explore how feedback, noise, and the active role of the receiver contribute to more effective communication. By utilizing this qualitative approach, the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of how communication models are applied in digital environments and assess the relevance of the Shannon-Weaver model in contemporary communication practices.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Shannon Five-Stage Model in the Case of "Widow" Expression in the Political Campaign of the RIDO Pair in the 2024 DKI Jakarta Gubernatorial Election

The case of the expression "widow" in the political campaign of the RIDO pair during this gubernatorial election is analyzed using Shannon's five-stage communication model. The model, which describes the flow of information using a mathematical system, consists of five stages: Information Source, Transmitter, Channel & Noise, Receiver, and Destination.

Information Source (Source of Information)

The information source is the entity that generates the message or content to be disseminated in the campaign. The information source's role is to craft the message, such as the vision, mission, or perspectives on socio-political issues. In this case, the information source includes Ridwan Kamil and Suswono, along with their campaign team. Two significant events occurred in the campaign: the first was communicated by Suswono, followed by a similar message from Ridwan Kamil. These events demonstrate how the information was initiated by these political figures and their campaign team.

Encoding (Transmitter)

The transmitter, in this context, can be identified in two ways: as a tool and as the process of encoding the message. As a tool, the transmitter is represented by communication devices such as the internet network, cameras, microphones, and other equipment used by the campaign team to process messages from RIDO. These tools help convert the message into formats like sound, images, text, and video, which are then shared through various media channels. When discussing the encoding process, the focus is on how the campaign messages were packaged, including the jokes made by Suswono and later by Ridwan Kamil about widows. However, in this encoding process, there was a misstep as the diction used, particularly in relation to the sensitive term "widow," was inappropriate and offensive to certain audiences.

Channel & Noise

The medium used to transmit the message in the context of this political campaign is social media, which includes various platforms used to share content, such as Ridwan Kamil's social media accounts (@ridwankamil) and Suswono's (@pak_suswono), as well as the official RIDO campaign team accounts. The noise in this case can be seen in three aspects: the socio-cultural context that is sensitive to gender issues, the negative reinforcement provided by the statements of political opponents, and the media framing that tended to portray the RIDO pair negatively.

Receiver

The receiver is the individual or group that receives and processes the message transmitted through the channel. In this political campaign, the receivers are the voters, citizens, or audiences who engage with the campaign content. These recipients can respond or interact with the message through comments, likes, or shares on social media, either supporting or opposing the statements made by the RIDO pair. The interpretation of the message varies among different groups. For example, women might view the comment as objectification, religious groups may see it as an insult to religious values, and the general public might perceive it as evidence of political elites' insensitivity to issues that marginalize women.

Destination

The destination refers to the ultimate outcome desired from the communication. In the case of RIDO's political campaign, the goal was to change attitudes, increase the candidate's popularity, and mobilize voters to vote on election day. Shannon and Weaver's model also introduces the concepts of entropy and redundancy. Entropy, in communication, refers to the level of uncertainty or novelty within a message. The higher the entropy, the more unpredictable the message becomes. In this case, entropy occurs when Suswono's statements about the widow raise questions among the public, which might have been a topic seldom discussed in political campaigns. This uncertainty was amplified when Suswono made an awkward comment about a wealthy widow marrying an unemployed young man, drawing an analogy to the story of Siti Khadijah and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This comment, which was intended as humor, created confusion and sparked public controversy. In contrast, messages about educational aid for orphans and children from underprivileged backgrounds, another part of RIDO's platform, did not attract as much attention, as such messages were seen as redundant and common in most gubernatorial campaigns in Jakarta.

Identifying the Communication Problem Levels of Weaver in the Case of the "Widow" Expression in the Political Campaign of the RIDO Pair in the 2024 DKI Jakarta Gubernatorial Election

Weaver identifies communication problems at three levels: Level A refers to the accuracy of the communication symbol being transmitted; Level B concerns how accurately the symbol conveys the intended meaning; and Level C focuses on how effectively the received meaning influences behavior in the desired way. The emphasis on the effectiveness of communication occurs at Level C, where Weaver argues that communication and control are closely related. When we communicate with someone, our communicative actions or speech acts are a means to control the response of the receiver as we expect. Norbert Wiener (1954) emphasized the role of mental processing of sensory data in producing feedback, which plays a critical role in communication. Communication is a physical signal captured by the senses

and processed in the mind. The brain or mind performs the tasks of processing, accessing, and decoding.

In the case of the "widow" expression in the RIDO political campaign, Suswono and Ridwan Kamil conveyed their message about widows in a joking manner, which was perceived as insulting. The statements included comments such as widows would be cared for, receive emotional and physical support, be given food packages, and, if deemed suitable, be married by certain parties mentioned in the campaign. Despite clarifications from Ridwan Kamil, Suswono, and the RIDO spokesperson, the public continued to perceive that the RIDO pair had insulted widows due to the encoding process related to the meaning of "widow".

Socially, the term "widow" carries negative connotations in society. Widows are often viewed with stigma and associated with shame. No woman ever plans to become a widow, whether due to the death of her husband or divorce. Consequently, being a widow is one of the most emotionally challenging experiences for women (Nurhaini, 2022). Life as a widow is difficult; they must bear the responsibility of raising children while also facing psychological challenges from a society that often views widows as undesirable. In society, the status of a widow and a widower appears to have different meanings. Although both share the same social status, widows and widowers are culturally perceived differently. Widowers are often seen as normal and unremarkable, whereas widows are regarded as carrying a different cultural value (Suhan et al., 2020).

This case demonstrates how communication at Level B failed in effectively transmitting the intended message. The way the "widow" expression was encoded led to a misinterpretation, and the social stigma surrounding the term further amplified the negative response. Despite efforts to clarify the intentions, the message was perceived as an insult due to the cultural sensitivity and the emotional impact it had on the audience. The failure to recognize these cultural and social factors resulted in a communication breakdown that affected the behavior of the audience, thus highlighting the importance of careful encoding and the need for awareness of the societal context in political campaigns.

Issues Related to Meaning in the Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model

The controversy triggered by the "widow" expression made by Suswono garnered criticism from various parties, such as GP Ansor DKI Jakarta and researchers from the Election and Democracy Association (Perludem), who viewed Suswono's statement as an objectification of women. After receiving widespread criticism, Suswono issued an apology through a video posted on his Instagram account on October 28, 2024, acknowledging that his joke and delivery were inappropriate. This apology was further reinforced by the RIDO pair's spokesperson, Cheryl Tanzil, who clarified that Suswono's statement did not represent RIDO's program, which focuses on empowering vulnerable and marginalized groups.

However, the polemic surrounding Suswono's "widow" comment was far from over. On November 16, 2024, Ridwan Kamil attempted to clarify the issue during a campaign, but once again, he used the term "widow," further marginalizing them by stating that widows would be cared for, emotionally and physically, and even married off if suitable candidates were found. According to influencer and humanitarian activist Wanda Ponika, the RIDO campaign seemed like a "widow giveaway," reinforcing the idea that men have the right to choose widows to marry, and that women would inevitably accept such proposals. Ponika further argued that not all widows are interested in remarrying, as many have experienced emotional wounds and trauma from their previous relationships.

Ponika's statement received significant public attention, with many supporting her view. One commenter, a widow herself, expressed that she would prefer to be referred to as a single parent rather than a widow, highlighting how the meaning of the word "widow" is influenced by social environments and mental processes within individuals. Anies Baswedan also condemned the "widow" remarks, considering them to be disrespectful to women. He pointed out that as the son of a single parent, he found it particularly offensive to see the term "widow" used in a manner that trivialized women's struggles, as seen in Ridwan Kamil's clarification video.

The numerous responses from public figures and influencers on social media about the "widow" remark demonstrate that individuals are active agents capable of interpreting symbols in various ways. The use of the word "widow" and its delivery by the RIDO pair, perceived as a joke, only convinced the public further that the expression was meant to belittle women, despite the clarifications provided by Ridwan Kamil and his spokesperson. This miscommunication and misinterpretation resulted in "noise" in the clarification delivered by Ridwan Kamil. When examined through the lens of the Shannon-Weaver model, which, at its inception in 1949, focused on signal transmission accuracy rather than the complexity of meaning, it becomes clear that the model does not account for the socio-cultural nuances in political communication. As such, there are limitations in understanding the interpretative aspects of human communication in this case. However, several issues can be identified from the application of this model, including technical problems, semantic issues, technical-mathematical problems, transmission-interpretation problems, and effectiveness problems, which will be elaborated as follows:

1. Technical Problems. One example is the inappropriate choice of encoding words. The term "widow" could have been replaced with alternatives such as "single parent" or "sole caregiver."
2. Semantic Problems. The word "widow" carries an ambiguous meaning in the social context of Indonesia, often associated with negative connotations, particularly when used by the RIDO pair. The semantic issue becomes pronounced when the political humor, originally intended to entertain, ends up creating multiple negative interpretations. This illustrates the "entropy" in the meaning of the word.

3. Technical-Mathematical Problems. We can observe noise amplification, where social media and other news outlets exacerbate the distortion of the original meaning, reinforcing the negative interpretation. Additionally, an overloaded communication channel caused an excess of interpretations circulating simultaneously.
4. Transmission-Interpretation Problems. These arise from the gap between the speaker's (RIDO pair) statements and the public's interpretations. Another issue is the failure to respond quickly to criticism, leading to feedback loop distortion. In this case, the feedback, which was supposed to ease the situation, came too late and was further exacerbated by the continued use of the term "widow" at a later time, reigniting the controversy.
5. Effectiveness Problems. The RIDO pair failed to achieve their communication goals due to the inappropriate choice of words in the encoding process. This failure led to resistance from various social groups, resulting in electoral consequences that did not align with the expectations of the RIDO campaign team.

The use of the term "janda" (widow) in the RIDO political campaign has led to significant public backlash, revealing critical issues in political communication and the effectiveness of message delivery. By applying the Shannon-Weaver communication model, it is evident that several layers of communication problems arise, ranging from technical encoding issues to the broader social and semantic implications of the words chosen.

The Shannon-Weaver model of communication, which emphasizes the technical aspects of encoding and decoding messages, can be seen as inadequate for addressing the complexities of political communication in this case. As Shannon and Weaver (1949) highlighted, effective communication depends on the accuracy of the transmitted signal. In the context of the RIDO campaign, the message encoding—specifically the use of the term "janda"—was not aligned with the intended meaning. The public's reaction suggests a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the message, which aligns with the argument that communication involves more than just technical accuracy. This reflects a limitation of the Shannon-Weaver model, which does not fully address the social and semantic layers of communication (Lester et al., 2021).

The public interpretation of the term "janda" (widow) reflects broader societal issues around the stigma associated with this social category. Studies have shown that the term "widow" often carries negative connotations in many societies, particularly in Indonesia, where it is sometimes associated with social shame or personal failure (Hidayat, 2017). This cultural understanding of the term amplifies the semantic problem in the RIDO campaign. The RIDO campaign's choice of words—intended as humor—was not received as such. Instead, it reinforced negative stereotypes about widows, contributing to the public's perception that the campaign was objectifying women (Williams, 2020). As Dutta and Giri (2021)

noted, the social context in which a symbol is used heavily influences its meaning, which in this case led to the distortion of the intended message.

The failure of the RIDO campaign to adequately consider the social and cultural implications of their choice of words also highlights a gap in political communication strategies. Previous studies have indicated that political communication must be sensitive to the cultural and emotional associations of language (Wibowo & Hidayati, 2022). In the case of the "janda" remark, the political figures involved, Suswono and Ridwan Kamil, failed to anticipate how deeply the term would resonate with the public. The backlash, including from public figures like Anies Baswedan and activists like Wanda Ponika, demonstrates how communication messages must account for the values and emotions of the target audience.

Moreover, the term "janda" is heavily loaded with cultural baggage in many societies, including Indonesia, where it is often stigmatized and seen as a label that defines a woman's status and worth in a negative light (Budiarti & Nindya, 2020). The failure to recognize the emotional and cultural weight of such terms can lead to significant miscommunication, as evidenced by the continued controversy following the initial remarks and the subsequent clarifications. The feedback loop, as described by Shannon and Weaver (1949), also reveals critical weaknesses in the campaign's ability to manage public perception. The delayed apology and the lack of an immediate response to criticisms allowed the controversy to escalate. This is a key example of a feedback loop distortion, where the response—an apology issued later—did not prevent the amplification of the issue. The failure to quickly address the public's concerns exacerbated the problem, leading to further damage to the campaign's reputation. This highlights the importance of timely feedback in political communication, particularly when addressing sensitive issues that may affect public sentiment (Cahyadi & Wulandari, 2020).

Finally, the overall effectiveness of the RIDO campaign's communication was compromised due to the issues discussed above. As Goffman (1959) suggests, the presentation of self in public life involves careful consideration of how others will interpret one's actions and words. In this case, the choice of language and the manner of delivery were not congruent with the public's expectations or sensitivities, leading to a failure in achieving the intended political goals. This misalignment between the communicators' intent and public interpretation resulted in a breakdown of trust and credibility, which can have long-term electoral consequences (Budiarti & Nindya, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The controversial statement about "widows" made by the Ridwan Kamil-Suswono (RIDO) candidates during the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election demonstrates how meaning in communication can have a profound impact on public perception and political outcomes. The Shannon-Weaver model, used to analyze this case,

reveals its limitations in explaining the complexities of meaning-making in human communication. Communication is not as simple as a linear process from sender to receiver; it involves various factors such as social, cultural contexts, and personal experiences. The role of noise in the communication process is not just physical but also encompasses psychological, semantic, and physiological aspects. In this case, semantic noise became apparent when the "joke" about widows was interpreted differently by various groups in society. The Shannon-Weaver model falls short in explaining how the credibility of the message sender influences the reception of the message. The public figures of Ridwan Kamil and Suswono meant that their statement attracted far greater attention, amplifying its impact.

The controversial statement about widows contributed to a decline in the electability of the RIDO pair, as the results of the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election showed a lower-than-expected vote share, despite the support from multiple political parties, President Prabowo Subianto, and former President Joko Widodo. This case highlights how meaning is never neutral and is always tied to the dynamics of power within society. Criticism from various groups, including women's organizations and public figures, showed how meaning can become a site of resistance against narratives perceived as degrading. In conclusion, this case demonstrates that the process of meaning-making in political communication is far more complex than the mere transmission of a linear message. It serves as an example of how failing to understand the complexity of meaning can have significant consequences on an individual's political career, even when the statement was intended as humor.

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