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Correspondence Address:
FSPISI Yogyakarta
Email : asepiyogya@gmail.com

Representation of Identity and Politics in the Song "Ojo Dibandingke" at the 77th Indonesian Independence Day State Ceremony at the State Palace

Ela Yulaeliah^{1*}, Asep Saepudin², Sukotjo³, Yves P Cuenza⁴, Ahza Al Amal Ulhage⁵

¹²³⁵Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, Indonesia

⁴University of the Philippines

Abstract: The purpose of this research is to analyze the representation of identity and political image in the song "*Ojo Dibandingke*" during the 77th Indonesian Independence Day commemoration in 2022 at the State Palace. The song "*Ojo Dibandingke*" is a popular dangdut koplo song from 2022. The song was created by Abah Lala, an artist from Banyuwangi. Hall's (1977) representation theory, particularly the constructionist approach and the encoding-decoding model, is used to read how the meaning of the lyrics is produced by the creator (encoding) and interpreted by the users (decoding). A qualitative method with a case study approach was conducted to gather data through webography, documentation, literature review, interviews, and observation. Several interesting points regarding the presentation of the song "*Ojo Dibandingke*" include: the song "*Ojo Dibandingke*" is sung by a child who is still underage, dangdut koplo music is not typically performed at state events, and there are altered lyrics that praise the president's name. This research indicates that the use of the song "*Ojo Dibandingke*" in the 77th Independence Day celebration at the State Palace was not merely an aesthetic choice, but a cultural representation practice laden with political and symbolic meaning. The presence of this song was not just an aesthetic presentation, but an arena for negotiating cultural and political identity in public space.

Keywords: Ojo Dibandingke, lyrics, representation, identity, politics



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1. Introduction

Music and songs are one form of expression for a creator or cultural community to convey ideas, thoughts, values, and even traditions within society. Every rhythmic flow, melody, instrument, and even song lyrics reflect the expression presented by the songwriter or artist through various aesthetics. The created lyrics or poetry can represent human beliefs or aspirations to convey meaningful feelings or experiences (Swara, 2022) through artistic expression, functioning as pleasure, self-actualization, or entertainment.

Apart from being a tool of expression, music or song lyrics can also serve as a medium of representation for their creator within a cultural community. Song lyrics can function as emotion and a collective cultural product (Masui & Miyamoto, 2025). Music and lyrics can also have meanings beyond their textual meaning, such as reinforcing the identity of a person or group, personal style, local content, and even moral values upheld in a region. Therefore, music is not only personal expression but becomes a representation of a cultural community in a place where its existence is very important. Undoubtedly, music and songs play an important role in human life, as a representation of the meaning of local culture through the construction of rhythm and lyrics (Laksono, 2020). Such music is usually presented at festivals, state ceremonies, or in digital recordings to understand its symbols. Thus, music/songs do not only speak of aesthetics but reveal the surrounding socio-cultural context. This is also what happened with the performance of the song "Ojo Dibandingke" by Abah Lala at the State Palace.

On August 17, 2022, Indonesian performing arts were stirred by the presence of the song "Ojo Dibandingke" performed at the 77th Indonesian Independence Day commemoration at the Jakarta State Palace. This song was sung by a child singer named Farel Prayoga from Banyuwangi. Farel is a regional artist from Java who was specifically brought to Jakarta to perform this song. "Ojo Dibandingke" was performed at the State Palace during the entertainment session after the official ceremony for the 77th Independence Day. The performance of "Ojo Dibandingke" at the Jakarta State Palace had an extraordinary impact on Indonesian society, including artists, the song's popularity, and the political sphere in Indonesia. The song suddenly went viral everywhere. Farel, the singer, became sought after for performances in various places and was even invited to various television stations. "Ojo Dibandingke" seemed to become an everyday song for Indonesian society, especially in the performing arts world, and more specifically in dangdut music stages.

There are several issues with the performance of the song "Ojo Dibandingke" at the State Palace, including: First, why was the song "Ojo Dibandingke" performed at

the State Palace. Second, why was a regional song from Banyuwangi elevated to the national level. Third, there is no correlation between the song lyrics, the singer, and the context of the State Palace. Why does it seem forced? Fourth, at the end of the song, there was a lyric change where the words "Hanya Ada Kamu" were replaced with "Hanya ada Pak Jokowi." This is certainly interesting to question—why was the lyric changed?.

There are several interesting points in the performance of "Ojo Dibandingke" at the State Palace. Some notable phenomena to question include: First, this song was already popular before and became even more popular after being performed at the State Palace. It is certainly interesting to examine how the song was represented before and when performed at the Merdeka Palace. Second, this song is a regional song from Banyuwangi using the Javanese language. This is certainly part of regional representation elevated to the national level, which is interesting to explore for various reasons. Third, the lyrical content of this song is for adults, telling a story of betrayed love. However, it was sung by Farel, who is still a child, even a teenager. At first glance, the content of the lyrics and the singer are not correlative, requiring further investigation as to why this could happen. Fourth, at the end of the song, there was a lyric changed by Farel while singing it, where the words "Hanya Ada Kamu" (Only You) were replaced with "Hanya ada Pak Jokowi" (Only Mr. Jokowi). The meaning of the replacement lyric seems unrelated to the original and even appears forced. This is certainly interesting to question: why did the lyric change occur?.

Based on these issues, the aim of this research is to analyze how the representation of identity and political image occurred in the song "Ojo Dibandingke" during the 77th Independence Day commemoration in 2022 at the State Palace. This research is urgent because the presence of a musical performance cannot be separated from its contextual background. Music does not exist in a vacuum but is influenced by social and even political situations before and during its performance. Music and politics have been interconnected for centuries (Mack, Brianna N. & Martin, 2024). Therefore, this topic is very important and urgent to address.

There are six previous writings that discuss the song Ojo Dibandingke, including: (Fuadi, 2023); (Hamka, Nur'afia, Musyarrafah, & Halifah, 2023); (Setiawan, 2022); (Ramadhan, 2022); (Malang Pos, 2022); and (Pratama, 2023). Their discussions generally focus only on aspects of communication, function, and the song's general context. Meanwhile, this study focuses more on analyzing the representation of identity meaning and political image in its lyrics. Pratama's work is the closest to this writing. The differences are as follows: (1) Pratama examines the song Ojo Dibandingke from a communication perspective, whereas this writing analyzes it from musical and

non-musical aspects (text and performance) as representation and cultural symbols; (2) Pratama discusses Ojo Dibandingke without focusing on a single context, while this research focuses solely on one context: the 77th Indonesian Independence Day celebration in 2022 at the State Palace in Jakarta; (3) The correlation between the musical (textual) elements and the performance in the song Ojo Dibandingke has not been thoroughly explored by Pratama; (4) Regarding the function of music, particularly for entertainment, this aspect is still absent from Pratama's discussion. Therefore, it is evident that none of the topics are identical to this research, even though the material object is the same, namely the song Ojo Dibandingke.

The theory of representation by Stuart Hall (1980) is the main foundation of this research. According to Hall, representation is the use of language as a means to convey meaning to others. Representation plays an important role in the process of forming and exchanging meaning among members of society within a culture. In the study of representation, encoding refers to the process of how a message or representation is formed, while decoding relates to how the message is understood by the audience (Hall, 1980). Hall states that there are three ways audiences interpret media messages. First, dominant reading, where the audience accepts the message according to the intended meaning of the creator. Second, negotiated reading, where the audience interprets the message selectively, adapting it to personal views or specific contexts. Third, oppositional reading, where the audience rejects or opposes the conveyed message and provides critical responses to the meaning intended by the creator (Hall, 1997).

Hall's theory of representation is used to discuss how meaning is formed and conveyed through various media and communication practices in society. This process includes the encoding stage, where the creator of the representation attempts to select, process, and package certain meanings into symbols and signs. According to Hall (1997), meaning is constructed through representational systems and established by codes linking conceptual systems with the language system used. Simultaneously, the audience or recipients of the message engage in decoding, interpreting the representation based on social context, personal experience, and respective cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the theory of representation emphasizes the important role of mass media in shaping and influencing how representations are understood by society.

Hall further argues that concepts of cultural representation are dynamic and can change over time. Meaning and interpretation of symbols and signs in representation can shift according to social, political, and cultural developments. Moreover, the identity presented in representation plays a crucial role in shaping individual or group

identity within society. Hall's theory of representation is used to analyze how the song "Ojo Dibandingke" is presented, received, interpreted, and even criticized as a means of conveying messages and meaning to the public. The analysis is focused on textual analysis of the lyrics and visual analysis of the performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Ojo Dibandingke

The song "Ojo Dibandingke" has a very significant influence on society, even extending to the realm of education and children's morality. According to Fuadi, the virality of the song "Ojo Dibandingke" affects children's behavior, yet within the spectrum of Islamic education, it is considered necessary (Fuadi, 2023). However, he emphasizes that comparison should be made in a positive context to assist in performing acts of worship. Meanwhile, Hamka focuses more on linking this song to Early Childhood Education, particularly for children aged 4 and 5 (Hamka, Nur'afia, Musyarrafah, & Halifah, 2023). According to him, the song "Ojo Dibandingke" can influence children's behavior due to their frequent exposure to it on YouTube and TikTok channels. Naturally, every child possesses musical intelligence—the ability to feel, distinguish, transform, and express musical forms, including the song "Ojo Dibandingke." The popularity of this song among children can undoubtedly shape their character at an early age (Hamka, Nur'afia, Musyarrafah, & Halifah, 2023).

The song "Ojo Dibandingke" also influences English language learning in schools, especially among first-grade students. Although its impact is not highly significant, the learning method of imitating the song can help students understand English better (Hardiani, Hanifa Febriana, Simatuang, 2023).

Aris Setiawan highlights "Ojo Dibandingke" as a phenomenon of regional music in Javanese, or what is termed "village music," that has risen to become "city music" (Setiawan, 2022). According to Setiawan, the song's popularity, reaching Jakarta and even the Presidential Palace, is due to technological factors. The presence of technology, especially through social media, provides equal opportunities for every musician to compete and have the same chance of success. Jakarta is no longer the central hub of the music business, as regional musicians and their songs can now penetrate Jakarta through social media platforms. This is precisely what happened with "Ojo Dibandingke," which originated as a regional village song and suddenly soared to fame in Jakarta and even the Presidential Palace. Ultimately, this village music has been elevated to a higher class.

The popularity of this song extends beyond Indonesia, even reaching neighboring countries such as Malaysia. "Ojo Dibandingke" was notably sung by Malaysian football

supporters after their victory in Group AFF of the 2022 World Cup (Din, 2022). This, too, is inseparable from the impact of technology and the growing influence of social media in society.

Another study conducted by Pratama focuses more on exploring the meanings of the song "Ojo Dibandingke" from a communication studies perspective (Pratama, 2023). According to him, the popularity of "Ojo Dibandingke" has sparked various interpretations in society. This aligns with Barthes' view that once a work is presented to the public, it becomes open to public interpretation. From a communication standpoint, "Ojo Dibandingke" is not merely an aesthetic piece but has given rise to diverse interpretations—cultural, social life, heartbreak, self-awareness, and even political meanings. These are the myths of our present time. This is reinforced by the online media Malang Pos in its article titled "2022 Ojo Dibandingke 2023." It turns out that the inspiration from "Ojo Dibandingke" has also entered political discourse. In 2022, the political climate was urged not to be compared with 2023, or even 2024, as the battle of public narratives ahead of the 2024 elections grows increasingly palpable (Malang Pos, 2022). Certainly, candidates continue to try their luck in the political contest by producing narratives to win sympathy and charm the public. Narratives are continuously produced, especially on social media, to gain public sympathy ahead of the 2024 elections.

2.2 Text Analysis

Traditionally, analyzing musical performances has been a research topic where audio recordings are often used as representations of musical works (Lerch et al., 2020). In text analysis, three important points are: the importance of reader interpretation, the layered translation work by the reader, and creating textual understanding by non-readers (Murray, 2022). In analysis, there is a strong correlation between document similarity and song similarity, indicating the potential use of text as a source for music recommendation (Hyung et al., 2014). The importance of understanding a text through analysis can open a broader paradigm about problems in human life (Kumala, 2020). Meaning is obtained through the analysis of narrative codes that show the role of multiple texts, even if conveyed in song lyrics, with simple and easily understood diction and arrangement (Saifudin & Noviana, 2023). The data analysis technique is to dissect each musical element in the song separately, observe the role of each element relative to others, and how these musical elements are recombined in interrelated relationships (Gautama & Sudarman, 2022).

A musician or songwriter usually has an urge to share experiences, ideas, or views with others. Music serves as a means to express a person's feelings and identity, both

physical and emotional. Therefore, it is not surprising that many musicians raise various themes in their works as reflections of past events. Music is often used to evoke empathy for certain situations. Thus, music can influence listeners, encouraging them to act or even change their way of life. Song lyrics are an important element in music because through lyrics, a songwriter channels messages and expresses themselves to listeners. Lyrics composed of words and sentences can create an atmosphere and foster specific thoughts, thereby generating diverse meanings for each listener. Song lyrics are a form of expression about something a person has seen, heard, or experienced directly. In conveying that experience, a poet or songwriter utilizes wordplay and language style to present uniqueness and particular appeal in the created lyrics or poetry.

3. Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. A case study is qualitative research that explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems through detailed and in-depth data collection involving diverse or multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2013). The case in question is specifically the moment the song was performed publicly on August 17, 2022. Although focusing on one case, it is possible to intersect with other cases as supplementary research data.

The data in this research are the song lyrics and the performance video from the 77th Independence Day on August 17, 2022. The lyrics referred to are the original lyrics by Abah Lala and the lyrics from the performance on August 17, 2022, which had undergone changes. The performance video referred to is the live performance video widely circulated on social media, such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, etc. Additionally, oral and written data are used for other supplementary data. This data was obtained through interviews, literature study, reviews, articles, and personal documentation.

Data collection techniques were conducted in several stages, including: observation, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents, and various reports (Creswell, 2013); (Denzin, Norman K, and Lincoln, 2009); (Tjetjep, 2011). The researcher carefully observed the case of the "Ojo Dibandingke" performance through social media, especially YouTube. This was done because the song was performed only twice at the Jakarta State Palace. Careful observation was conducted for approximately two years. Observation was not only focused on the musical performance but also on the lyrics during the performance and the context developing before and during the performance of "Ojo Dibandingke" at the State Palace.

After gaining confidence regarding the various phenomena that are the research object, the researcher conducted a literature study to obtain references related to the research object. The literature search was conducted both online and offline. Online, the researcher searched for references from journal articles, magazines, or newspapers, including the Garuda web portal, *kompas.com*, *pikiran-rakyat.com*, *malangposcomedia.id*, etc. Offline, the researcher searched at the Ethnomusicology Department library, the Central Library of ISI Yogyakarta, and the Postgraduate Library of ISI Yogyakarta.

Data collection through interviews was conducted directly with Abah Lala as the creator of "Ojo Dibandingke" and with Farel Prayoga as the singer. A direct interview with Abah Lala as the song's creator is very important for understanding the text and context of the song from the creator's perspective. An interview with Farel as the singer is crucial for understanding the context of the song both before and during its performance at the Merdeka Palace on August 17, 2022. Interviews were also conducted with figures, scholars, and artists who understand the musical elements and surrounding cultural context.

All field-collected data were then compiled in the research laboratory. The next step was analysis, selecting appropriate oral, video, and audio data relevant to the research topic. This was done to ensure the data used was valid and met research needs. The analysis technique focused on text (lyrics) and visual (performance) analysis. The text referred to is the lyrics of "Ojo Dibandingke" both before and during the performance. The lyrics originally created by Abah Lala are full of meaning and themes of the songwriter as part of the creator's expression. These lyrics are in Javanese. The visual analysis referred to is a careful observation of the performance by the singer, musicians, and audience on August 17, 2022, at the State Palace in Jakarta.

4. Results and Discussion

The Song "Ojo Dibandingke" as a Popular Song

The song "Ojo Dibandingke" was created by Abah Lala, an artist from Banyuwangi. Abah Lala, whose real name is Agus Purwanto, was born in Boyolali, Central Java, on October 28, 1986. Among Abah Lala's famous works is "Cendol Dawet," which is widely used as an interlude or "senggakan" in dangdut koplo songs. Abah Lala gained wider recognition and reached the peak of his popularity when he created the song "Ojo Dibandingke" in 2022. This song was inspired by the life experience of a friend who often failed in his romantic relationships because the parents of his beloved would constantly compare him to other men they deemed more established. All the love and sacrifices for his beloved meant nothing, which saddened Abah Lala seeing his friend's romantic fate. It can be said that this song carries deep meaning and feels

direct/straightforward, as the lyrics of "Ojo Dibandingke" were created based on a true story, honestly and straightforwardly woven into song lines/lyrics.

"Ojo Dibandingke" is very popular in the Indonesian music scene. This song was arranged by Bagus and produced using the DAW computer program Logic Pro. This is a breakthrough in utilizing technology for artistic advancement (Rustiyanti et al., 2021). MIDI is one of the methods used by composers to create their works (Fitriani & Saepudin, 2022). For every concert, Abah Lala's music is often accompanied by a dangdut group he formed named Grup MG 86. The song was later covered by several well-known singers such as Deny Caknan and other dangdut singers, and even by Farel Prayoga, who uploaded it on social media, especially YouTube. The song "Ojo Dibandingke" was released on April 26, 2022, via the YouTube account Abah Lala Official and successfully captured the attention of Indonesian society. This is evident from the number of views of "Ojo Dibandingke" on YouTube, reaching 3,200,000 views, counted from 2022 until now. The song has received 54,000 likes and 176,000,000 subscriptions (Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muorVCNOG0>). This indicates that the song "Ojo Dibandingke" has become popular among the public.

The phenomenon of the popularity of "Ojo Dibandingke" on social media indicates that this song has met public taste due to its creative product. Taste can be formed and developed from an artistic community as a form of resistance from lower-class culture against upper-class culture (Wardhana, 2021). This is understandable because, besides the large Javanese population, the moment captured is significant as it was performed at a state event, even though it was already popular beforehand. Indonesian society, previously as enjoyers of dangdut music, felt entertained and connected with the performance of this song. Below are the complete original lyrics of the song "Ojo Dibandingke":

<i>Wong kok ngene kok dibanding-bandingke Saing-saingke, yo mesti kalah Tak oyak'o nanging yo ora mampu Mung sakuatku mencintaimu Mung sakuatku mencintaimu Kuberharap engkau mengerti Di hati ini, hanya ada kamu</i>	<i>Sopo wonge sing ra loro ati Wis ngancani tekan semene Nanging kabeh ora ono artine Ra ono ajine</i>
<i>Jelas bedo yen dibandingke Ora ono sing tak pamerke Aku ra iso yen kon gawe-gawe Jujur saanane</i>	<i>Reff; Wong kok ngene kok dibanding bandingke Saing-saingke, yo mesti kalah Tak oyak'o nanging yo ora mampu Mung sakuatku mencintaimu Kuberharap engkau mengerti Di hati ini, hanya ada kamu</i>

When explaining a piece of music, it is necessary to understand that music within the context of its society. Therefore, it is insufficient to study music solely from an acoustic perspective; one must also connect the music with societal issues or the background behind the music itself (Nakagawa, 2000; Nettl, 1964). This study employs analytical tools, using textual and contextual analysis as its primary lenses. In this case, the text is the song "Ojo Dibandingke," and the context encompasses everything that underlies the creation of the song and its function within society. For textual analysis, the theory from Karl-Edmund Prier SJ is used. According to him, musical form is an idea manifested in the arrangement or organization of all musical elements in a composition, including melody, rhythm, harmony, and dynamics. This idea unites the notes and the sections of the composition that are played one by one as the framework or musical form (Prier S.J., 2015).

Musical form refers to a collection of notes containing melody, rhythm, and a harmonious and/or contrapuntal structure that creates a contour (Senen, 2017). The form of the song "Ojo Dibandingke" consists of three parts (A-A-B), starting with a main motif and a literal repetition. The musical phrase consists of two sub-phrases: a question phrase (antecedens phrase) and an answer phrase (consequens phrase). Below is a section-by-section analysis presented in notation as follows:

	<p>The introduction, serving as the opening of a song, is presented only once without repetition. This part is the beginning of a song, typically filled only with music playing the melody of the song. In "Ojo Dibandingke," the introduction is performed directly with music and vocals.</p>
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Part A:

	<p>Section A can be referred to as the verse or the introductory part of the song before it moves to the chorus, presented with two repetitions. The first repetition is sung from measure 13 to 28, then proceeds to Section B (refrain/chorus). In the second repetition, it is sung only from measure 21 to 28 before moving to Section B (refrain/chorus).</p>
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Part B:

1 1 2 3 1 3 5 6 5 6 1 1 6 5 6 2 2 2 1 2 3

Piano

Wong ko nge ne kok di ban ding ban ding ke... sa ing sa ing ke... yo mes ti ka lah...

5 1 1 2 3 1 3 5 6 5 6 1 1 6 5 6 2 2 2 1 2 3

Piano

tak o yak o A ku yo o ra mam pu... mung sak ku at ka... men cin ta i ma...

9 3 3 2 3 2 1 7 1 6 6 4 3 4 2 7 7 7 1 2 7 1

Piano

ku ber ha rap eng kau me nger ti... di ha ti i ni... ha nya a da pak Jo ko wi

Section B is presented with two repetitions. This section is called the refrain or chorus and represents the essence of the song "Ojo Dibandingke."

Fraser antecedens

13 1 7 1 5 4 4 3 4 3 1

Piano

je las be do... yen di ban ding ke

17 3 3 3 6 6 7 1 3 2 2 6 6 4 3 2 1 2

Piano

A ku ra i so yen kon ga we ga we... ju jur sak o no ne

21 1 7 1 5 4 4 3 4 3 1

Piano

so po wong e... sing ra lo ro a ti

25 3 3 6 6 7 7 1 3 2 2 6 6 4 3 4 5 5

Piano

na nging ka beh o ra o no ar ti ne... ra o no a ji ne

29 1 1 2 3 1 3 5 6 5 6 1

Piano

wong ko nge ne kok di ban ding ban ding ke...

33 1 1 2 3 1 2 1 6 5 6 1

Piano

tak o yak o... A ku yo o ra mam pu...

37 3 3 2 3 2 1 7 1 7 6 5 4 3 4 2

Piano

ku ber ha rap eng kau me nger ti... di ha ti i ni...

The question phrase is presented twice in the song "Ojo Dibandingke." This question phrase features notes that sound unresolved, giving the impression of being incomplete or stopping with a "comma." It typically involves a Dominant chord.

Frase consequens

2 2 2 1 2 1 2 4 4 3
o ra_ o no sing tak pa mer ke_
2 2 1 2 1 2 4 4 3
wes ngan ca ni te kan se me ne_
1 6 5 6 2 2 2 1 2 3
sa ing sa ing ke_yo mes ti ka lah_
1 6 5 6 2 2 2 1 2 3
mung sak ku at ku_men cin_ ta i mu_
7 7 7 7 1 2 7 1
ha nya a da pak Jo ko wi

The answer phrase is presented twice in the song "Ojo Dibandingke." This answer phrase usually resolves to a Tonic chord and can be described as stopping with a "period."

Repetition

1 1 2 3 1 3 5 6 5 6 1 1 6 5 6 2 2 2 1 2 3
Wong ko nge ne kok di banding ban ding ke_ sa ing sa ing ke_yo mes ti ka lah.
5 1 1 2 3 1 3 5 6 5 6 1 1 6 5 6 2 2 2 1 2 3
tak o yak o A ku yo o ra mam pu_ mung sak ku at ku_men cin_ ta i mu.
13 1 7 1 5 4 4 3 4 3 1 2 2 2 1 2 1 2 4 4 3
je las be do_yen di ban ding ke o ra_ o no sing tak pa mer ke_
21 1 7 1 5 4 4 3 4 3 1 2 2 1 2 1 2 4 4 3
so po wong e_sing ra lo ro a ti wes ngan ca ni te kan se me ne_

In this part, there is a literal repetition in measures 1 –4, which is repeated in measures 5 – 8. Additionally, measures 13–16 are repeated in measures 21 –24. This repetition aims to intensify an impression or emphasize a message.

Based on the notation tables above, it is known that the song "Ojo Dibandingke" is also musically a song with a short presentation (only three sections), namely A-A and B. This song has an introduction, verse, and refrain or chorus, starting from the vocal introduction, then the verse and refrain or chorus. The song contains many motif repetitions, making it easy to listen to and memorize for music lovers. This is one of the factors contributing to the song's popularity in Indonesian society, among other factors. A simple song, not too complex and complicated, will make it easier for people to grasp the song.

"Ojo Dibandingke" as a Representation of Local Values

A song emerges because it is formed and follows the conditions of the environment where its creator resides. This means a song appears as a representation of the creator's self or others who already have their own cultural roots (Hakim & Rukmanasari, 2023). The locus and arena where the songwriter is located will determine the type of work presented because the work is a result of their cultural representation. This is very normal and common in various new works, as the environment where the artist resides is a very abundant resource for creating artistic works (whether in the family, community, or natural environment). Ultimately, the work produced is a reflection of the songwriter's personal identity as well as a reflection of local values and the cultural identity of its owner (Macaryus, Sudartomo, dan Wicaksono, 2019).

The song "Ojo Dibandingke" is a song that reflects the values of Javanese tradition. This is evident from the language used, which is Javanese, along with a distinctive musical presentation. Abah Lala chose the dangdut koplo genre using Javanese language in the creative idea for "Ojo Dibandingke" because, at that time, Javanese-language dangdut koplo was very popular among Indonesian society, especially in Java. Javanese was used in making "Ojo Dibandingke" because it is the mother tongue of the creator, and at that time, Javanese-language dangdut koplo songs were indeed very popular/had many fans. It is no wonder that "Ojo Dibandingke," created by Abah Lala, could achieve its popularity in 2022. This song represents Abah Lala as an owner of Javanese culture, conveyed through the lyrics of "Ojo Dibandingke."

"Ojo Dibandingke" was created inspired by the love story of Abah Lala's friend, who had a repeatedly failed love story. His friend was always compared to another man who was also courting his girlfriend, who was seen as more established by her parents. He felt all his affection and sacrifices for his girlfriend meant nothing in the eyes of his prospective in-laws. This evoked feelings of sadness and sympathy from Abah Lala seeing his friend's romantic fate. In fact, he believes the act of comparing someone should be avoided because it can cause feelings of inferiority and lack of confidence in the person being compared. In this case, it will certainly lead to serious problems (Pratama, 2023). From this story, the idea emerged to create a song with lyrics containing his friend's outpouring of heart, which was then titled "Ojo Dibandingke" (don't compare). The content of this story represents Javanese culture, narrating a concern in the region due to the behavior of people who view wealth as a measure of success in matchmaking. Music, in this case, is used to convey social messages to society (Marlita et al., 2022).

In response to the above, it appears that artists, through their creative frameworks, create works depicting their imagination (Yudiarti, 2009). In the creative process, one is inseparable from the social environment, freedom of expression, ideology, social, cultural, political aspects, and even style (Ramdani et al., 2024). Specifically in the process of creating music or songs, determining the theme is done earliest, as the theme is the main issue or thought. The theme of "Ojo Dibandingke" falls into the theme of romance between two adults that always fails because they are constantly compared to others considered better and more established (Interview with Abah Lala, June 6, 2024).

"Ojo Dibandingke" can also be a song that affirms Javanese cultural identity, both for Abah Lala as its creator and even for Javanese society as the cultural owners and performance enthusiasts. The identity in question includes personal identity, regional or tribal identity, and cultural identity. Cultural identity is always in the process of formation, never final, and continuously negotiated (Hall, 1990). This means the song is a representation of personal, regional, and even Javanese culture conveyed through language, lyrics, and melody to become a message delivered through rhythmic and melodic arrangement. Musical elements, through the choice of campursari and dangdut koplo genres, depict the character of Javanese society as simple, warm, and open to popular entertainment. Music, in this case, serves to convey cultural meaning. This music becomes a code of local culture that symbolically marks the social origins of its creator and audience. This symbolism arises from the various signs provided by "Ojo Dibandingke," be it in its music, lyrics, or story.

"Ojo Dibandingke" in the 77th Indonesian Independence Day Celebration

Before "Ojo Dibandingke" was performed at the State Palace, the song had already gone viral. Looking at the data, the version performed by Denny Caknan and Abah Lala had been watched over 18 million times on the DC Production YouTube channel by Friday, July 22, 2022 (Harian Jogja, July 24, 2022). The version of "Ojo Dibandingke" performed by Filla Talia, uploaded by One Nada Record on July 7, 2022, two weeks later on July 19, 2022, had been watched over 1.4 million times (Solopos, July 19, 2022), and as of July 7, 2024, had been watched over 61.9 million times. The song was also performed by Farel and Filla Talia at the One Nada concert, watched over 5 million times on YouTube (Tribun Jogja, August 1, 2022). Meanwhile, the version uploaded by Aneka Safari Record on July 11, 2022, as of July 7, 2024, had been watched over 109 million times.

The performance of "Ojo Dibandingke" at the palace on August 17, 2022, based on its virality data, had been watched 5.3 million times on President Joko Widodo's

YouTube account as of July 7, 2024; 1.4 million times on Official INews; 6.8 million times on Puang Alang; and 14 million times on Kompas TV. The author observed the comments via sampling and found no negative ones; all were positive. There were 4.9 thousand comments on President Joko Widodo's YouTube account; 1.2 thousand on Official Inews; 1 thousand on Puang Alang; and 21 thousand on Kompas TV. Furthermore, the performance of "Ojo Dibandingke" at the Jakarta State Palace by a child who was viral on social media at the time (TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) had an extraordinary impact on Indonesian social life, affecting artists, the song's popularity, and even the political world in Indonesia.

Figure 1. Farel singing at the State Palace
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cmaa4PRvT>)

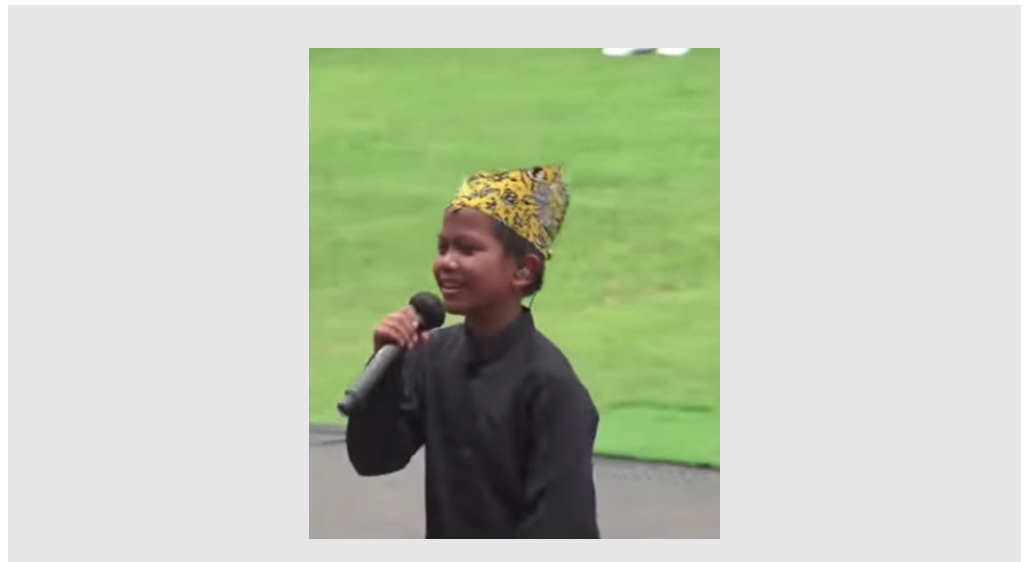


Figure 2. The invited guests dance in front of the honorary stage
(Photo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cmaa4PRvTQ>, 2022).



Farel sang while being accompanied by the genre of koplo dangdut music, which was very popular among the Indonesian public at that time, in a karaoke/minus one style (a method where one instrumental or vocal track is removed) (interview with Farel Prayoga, June 7, 2024). The musical accompaniment was taken from the song "Ojo Dibandingke," which Farel had previously performed accompanied by the band / dangdut group Aneka Safari Banyuwangi (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTuVdVPfDr>). The vocals were then removed from this musical accompaniment, a technique known as minus one.

The song "Ojo Dibandingke" suddenly went viral, along with its singer. Farel was frequently invited to perform live at various events and on numerous television stations. Similarly, the song "Ojo Dibandingke" seemed to become an everyday anthem for the Indonesian people, especially in the performing arts world, and more specifically in dangdut performances. At that time, the state palace seemed to be "shaken" by the melody of Farel's voice and koplo dangdut music, so much so that everyone present (including the President and the First Lady) at the event joined in dancing. Even several ministers and other guests moved from their seats to the area near the stage where Farel was singing, continuing to dance. The atmosphere became lively and far from the solemnity typically associated with state events.

Table 1. Song Lyrics at the 77th Indonesian Independence Day Celebration in 2022

<i>Wong kok ngene kok dibanding-bandingke Saing-saingke, yo mesti kalah Tak oyak'o nanging yo ora mampu Mung sakuatku mencintaimu Mung sakuatku mencintaimu Kuberharap engkau mengerti Di hati ini hanya ada Pak Jokowi</i>	<i>Sopo wonge sing ra loro ati Wis ngancani tekan semene Nanging kabeh ora ono artine Ra ono ajine</i>
<i>Jelas bedo yen dibandingke Ora ono sing tak pamerke Aku ra iso yen kon gawe-gawe Jujur saanane</i>	<i>Reff; Wong kok ngene Kok dibanding-bandingke Saing-saingke, yo mesti kalah Tak oyak'o nanging yo ora mampu Mung sakuatku mencintaimu Kuberharap engkau mengerti Di hati ini hanya ada Pak Jokowi</i>

Analysis of the Meaning of the Song "Ojo Dibandingke" in the 77th Indonesian Independence Day Celebration

Building upon the previous explanation that the song *Ojo Dibandingke* is highly popular in society and interpreted across various aspects of life—including in children's education (Fuadi, 2023); (Hamka, Nur'afia, Musyarrafah, & Halifah, 2023), the realm of popularity (Ramadhan, 2022); (Putri, 2022); (Setiawan, 2022); (Din, 2022); (Hardiani, Hanifa Febriana, Simatuang, 2023); (Saraswaty, 2023), and even interpreted within the political sphere (Pratama, 2023)—the political meaning is further emphasized in a piece by (Malang Pos, 2022). It conveys that a public narrative war is underway ahead of the 2024 elections, making *Ojo Dibandingke* in 2022 versus 2023 noteworthy given the intense political climate in Indonesia during that period. Consequently, a lyric change occurred in the song *Ojo Dibandingke*, where the original line "hanya ada kamu" (there is only you) was replaced with "hanya ada Pak Jokowi" (there is only Mr. Jokowi). This is viewed as part of the public narrative war leading up to the 2024 election contestation. This reasoning holds because the overall meaning of the song's lyrics shifts as a result. The initial meaning of the song contained deep disappointment because a loved one kept comparing the speaker to another man who was seemingly better in every way. However, the altered lyrics produced a new meaning: even though the speaker loves their partner, the partner no longer holds significant meaning because Pak Jokowi now exists. In this context, initially, the partner held immense importance in the speaker's life, being the sole idol, but ultimately became insignificant due to the presence of a new, far more impressive idol figure attached to their heart: Pak Jokowi. The meaning (position) of Pak Jokowi in the song's lyrics is so great that even the one deeply cherished partner could be displaced by the charismatic appeal of Pak Jokowi.

The replacement of two words in the song's lyrics can carry a very clear meaning and purpose, where the lyrics praise and glorify the name of a currently ruling national leader at a state national event. This, of course, contains ideological and political weight (Yulaeliah, 2024). It can be said that changing one word in one line of the song can alter the song's entire meaning. Initially, "*Ojo Dibandingke*" contained a meaning of romantic failure, which shifted to a meaning of praise within a political-laden power structure (Soedarsono, 2003). This means the song carries a new, different representational meaning from its original creator.

According to Hall (1997), representation is the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged within a culture through the use of language, symbols, and signs. Representation not only reflects reality but also shapes the way we view that reality itself. In his view, media and cultural texts (including music) play a crucial role in

constructing and negotiating identity, values, and ideology. The use of the words "only Pak Jokowi" in the context of "Ojo Dibandingke" constitutes a cultural representation that is constructing Jokowi's identity, values, and politics through music and lyrics. The song's meaning has shifted from its original meaning (by Abah Lala), which initially represented the figure of disappointment in a romantic situation, to a political meaning in building the identity image of a political figure.

In further analysis, Hall also introduced the concepts of encoding and decoding in the media communication process. Encoding is the process of meaning formation by media producers (in this case, the song's creator) through language, symbols, and specific aesthetic elements. Decoding is the process of meaning interpretation by the audience, which can occur in three main positions: dominant-hegemonic position (full acceptance of the intended meaning), negotiated position (partial acceptance with adjustments based on the audience's context), and oppositional position (rejection or reinterpretation of the meaning produced by the producer) (Hall, 1997). Using this framework, "Ojo Dibandingke" can be understood as a cultural text that produces and circulates specific social meanings, which are then reinterpreted by its listeners. As a result, this song gives birth to political meaning and the identity of a figure after being interpreted by users in a different context.

The encoding process in this song is carried out by the creator and singer through several main elements: language and lyrical diction, such as: "Wong ko ngene kok dibanding-bandingke, saing-saingke yo mesti kalah" ("Why compare someone like me, if forced to compete I will surely lose"). This contains expressions of insecurity and a plea for self-acceptance, characteristic of the cultural concept of part of Javanese society. The use of the Javanese language strengthens the authentic, egalitarian, and emotional impression, which is close to people's lives. In the context of cultural representation, regional language becomes a symbol of identity as well as resistance to the domination of national and global culture (Hall, 1997). This is the true meaning of societal life reflected in a song.

In addition to the semantic emotional message, this song contains a moral and social message: every individual has their own value and should not be compared to others. This message is encoded through the words "Ojo Dibandingke," which means "don't compare." Thus, the dominant meaning constructed is an invitation to accept oneself as is and reject social standards based on comparison. In the last verse, the lyrics, which should have been "Kuberharap engkau mengerti, di hati ini hanya ada kamu" ("I hope you understand, in this heart there is only you"), were changed to "Kuberharap engkau mengerti, di hati ini hanya ada Pak Jokowi." The name "Jokowi" is the president or leader currently in power in Indonesia. In this case, there is a form of

"stolen language" used (the words "there is you" replaced with "there is Pak Jokowi"), thus resulting in a change of meaning (Barthes, 1972).

The decoding process by the audience, the listeners of "Ojo Dibandingke," interprets the contained meaning according to their respective social, cultural, and emotional backgrounds. Based on Hall's (1997) decoding concept, three patterns of meaning reception emerge: (1) Dominant Reading, where most listeners accept the song's meaning as intended by the creator, i.e., the message about sincerity and self-acceptance. They consider "Ojo Dibandingke" as a reflection of genuine feelings from someone who loves unconditionally even while feeling "inadequate" compared to others. Listeners in this position fully accept the song's message. (2) Negotiated Reading, where some audiences understand the song's core message but negotiate its meaning. They interpret the song not only about love but also as a form of self-motivation to not feel insecure or give up in facing social comparisons. This position shows selective interpretation, where listeners adapt the song's meaning to their personal life experiences. (3) Oppositional Reading, where some audiences reject or critically interpret this song. They see the lyrics "dibanding-bandingke" as a symbol of social criticism against a societal system that judges people based on economic status, appearance, or achievements. Listeners in this position view the song as a form of resistance against social hegemony, not merely an outpouring of romantic feelings. Resistance to Cultural Hegemony: This song can be read as a form of counter-hegemony against modern culture that demands perfection and comparison. By emphasizing the changed message from "Kuberharap engkau mengerti, di hati ini hanya ada kamu" to "Kuberharap engkau mengerti, di hati ini hanya ada Pak Jokowi," where "Jokowi" is the president or leader in power in Indonesia at that time, the song rejects the competitive and materialistic logic dominating contemporary society. It instead emphasizes strengthening the identity of the ruling figure to maintain their legitimacy in society.

"Ojo Dibandingke" as a Representation of Identity and Politics

A song or music serves various functions: as an affirmation of cultural identity (Rokhani, Umilia, Salam, Aprianus, Adi, 2015; Yuliantari, Ans Prawati, Bulan, Yuliana Jetia, Handoko, 2025), a medium for advocacy (Budiman, Arif, Yanuar, 2025), a shaper of masculinity (Saepudin, Asep, Djohan, Sunardi, 2023), and a practice of domination (Saepudin et al., 2024). Similarly, "Ojo Dibandingke" garnered extraordinary public attention, making it appealing across various social strata. This popularity seems to have been attempted to be utilized by Jokowi to gain appreciation and affirmation of his self-image identity from the Indonesian people by inviting and having it sung at the State Palace during the 77th Independence Day celebration in 2022. Traditionally,

state ceremonies at the State Palace are always conducted formally and solemnly, with strict rules and protocol. Even if there is entertainment at state events, what is usually presented are student choirs from various high schools or universities across Indonesia. These choirs perform regional songs from the archipelago accompanied by a Western and ethnic orchestra played by selected students from art universities. In this case, only children who are accomplished or selected in vocal and musical arts can participate in the entertainment segment at the state palace. This entertainment is also packaged formally so that the solemnity of the event remains until it ends. However, in 2022, the state ceremony for the 77th Independence Day celebration was held in a very different atmosphere than usual, especially at the end or during the entertainment segment after the performance of regional songs by the choir and orchestra. The entertainment was closed by the singing of an 11-year-old child at the time, named Farel Prayoga from Banyuwangi, performing the song "Ojo Dibandingke."

Broadly, performing arts have three primary functions: 1) as a ritual medium, 2) as a personal expression, typically for personal entertainment, and 3) as an aesthetic presentation (Soedarsono, 2002). Soedarsono adds that the development of performing arts is influenced by three factors: political, social, and economic (Soedarsono, 2003). It is also stated that creating music with a message within it requires an idea containing the meaning from its supporting human context. Performing arts in various countries worldwide have their respective functions (Soedarsono, 2002). Based on Soedarsono's opinion, "Ojo Dibandingke" in this context is no longer presenting the aesthetic values of musicality and song but contains political meaning related to packaging Jokowi's image and identity in the hearts of the people. The audience, which initially had the song's first meaning from Abah Lala, suddenly and simultaneously changed to a meaning of identity affirmation and political image-building to foster public trust in the ongoing and upcoming leadership.

"Ojo Dibandingke" is a song with Javanese lyrics, sung at the state palace within the frame of an official state event previously considered sacred. However, at that time, the sense of sacredness felt from the beginning of the event changed into a very relaxed atmosphere, even arguably boisterous/lively, as if there was a performance in an open field. The purpose of creating an event like this, presenting a Javanese-language dangdut koplo song, which is unusual in rule-filled state ceremonies, was certainly prepared by the event committee. In this case, there was an authority that arranged and intended to package the event that way. As conveyed by Farel, he initially did not believe it when asked to sing at the state palace at that time. After an explanation from his management, showing written proof, Farel believed and immediately went to Jakarta (interview with Farel Prayoga, June 7, 2024). The selection of "Ojo Dibandingke" was also not his choice but a request from the state

palace committee, likely because the song was viral on social media at that time (Ramadhan, 2022). This means there was significant consideration regarding public popularity utilized by state officials to strengthen their image.

The lyrics of "Ojo Dibandingke," performed by Farel in Javanese, had a lyric change in the last verse, thereby altering the meaning and function of the song. The lyrics "only you" were replaced with "only Pak Jokowi," becoming a forced language replacement. Here, there is a diversion of the song's lyrical purpose to achieve personal goals, one of which is as praise to maintain power. This is related to Farel's statement that the one-word lyric change in the last verse of "Ojo Dibandingke" sung at the palace at that time was not his improvisation but a request from the ruling authority at the time (Interview with Farel Prayoga, June 7, 2024). Thus, the song "Ojo Dibandingke" sung by Farel at the 77th Independence Day celebration in 2022 at the State Palace had an added function: initially functioning only as an aesthetic presentation and entertainment, it gained an additional function as a performance containing political elements.

This is a form of poetic license, where the one who has the right to present the diction is the writer, and one should not change words or sentences in the poem or lyrics without the writer's permission. However, looking at the case of changing one word in the lyrics of "Ojo Dibandingke" with the chronology explained above, it appears that there was an influence on how the work (song) was presented due to elements of sociological politics (political content). Because poetic license exists, if there is a change of words or sentences in a song or poem, it is best to seek permission from the creator or state that the song has been arranged by someone. The political element in the song certainly aims to align with its intended message.

Thus, language is linked to power, as language is used to seize power or maintain the status quo (Karman, 2017). According to Miriam Budiardjo, politics encompasses various activities within a political system (state) concerning the process of determining the system's goals and implementing those goals. It is also interpreted that politics is the interaction between government and society in making and implementing binding decisions about the common good of people living in a certain territory (Surbakti, 2024).

Politics is fundamentally a tool to achieve power and an effort to maintain power already gained, whether by individuals, groups, communities, or governments (Batabyal & Beladi, 2025). The goals of politics vary according to the scope of power and the planned order. Politics broadly is used to maintain community security, protect human rights, and prosper society; and individually, politics is used to build charisma, strength, trust, to evoke sympathy and full confidence in an idolized figure (Yulaeliah, 2024). In politics, besides utilizing political science itself, it is also necessary to employ

art, especially performing arts, to achieve targeted and aspired goals. As happened in the performance of "Ojo Dibandingke" at the state palace, where an element of praise politics was inserted into one of its lyrics, this is proof of utilizing art for political purposes. This means the relationship between music and politics persists even if only as an effect (Mack, Brianna N. & Martin, 2024).

The performance at the 77th Independence Day celebration was packaged unusually because, in the ceremonial sequence, there was a change at the end of the event: the presentation of the dangdut koplo song "Ojo Dibandingke," which caused the atmosphere in the state palace at that time to no longer be sacred but became a boisterous, lively, and free atmosphere. However, the song sung by Farel Prayoga was no longer original because some lyrics were changed according to the wishes of the ordering party who was in power at that time. This is very interesting when linked to the political situation in Indonesia at that time, which was approaching the simultaneous presidential and legislative elections. There was political uproar in Indonesia at that time (Prasetyo, Nugraha, 2022). In fact, that period had already entered the election stages, namely the registration and verification period for election participants, both parties and individual candidates for the Regional Representative Council (DPD), which took place from July 29, 2022, to December 13, 2022. Affirming a positive identity and self-image for a presidential candidate was, of course, very important then because party coalitions would nominate presidential and vice-presidential candidates for the upcoming election. This is an ideological advertisement to influence the thoughts and decisions of the public in choosing (Dewi, 2024) the presidential candidate in the next election, using "Ojo Dibandingke" as one of the communication tools and means to achieve its goals. The song Ojo Dibandingke as a means of communication and achieving its political goals.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the performance of the song "Ojo Dibandingke" at the 77th Indonesian Independence Day anniversary at the State Palace not only presented artistic aesthetic values, but also carried meanings of political identity and self-image. This self-image was constructed in a constructionist manner through the selection of a currently popular song and the alteration of lyrics, which created space for new interpretations of the song within a political context. The replacement of the phrase "there is only you" with "there is only Pak Jokowi" served as part of a representation aimed at producing a positive image and identity widely recognized by the public.

As a result, the meaning in "Ojo Dibandingke" is not singular but has multiple meanings (a second meaning). Through the encoding-decoding model, this research

found that the public responded to the practice of "Ojo Dibandingke" at the State Palace in various ways, ranging from full acceptance, appreciation accompanied by criticism, to rejection that deemed popular music inappropriate for the formal context of the State Palace. This difference in perception shows that cultural representation in state events is always an arena of negotiation and contestation. Thus, the popular song "Ojo Dibandingke" can be understood as a medium revealing how culture, music, lyrics, and political figures interact in shaping self-identity and positive image within societal culture.

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Narasumber:

Agus Purwanto atau Abah Lala, Pencipta lagu “Ojo Dibandinge” (38 Tahun), Dukuh Bendolegi, Penyanyi lagu “Ojo Dibandingke”, Desa Ciuntang, Kecamatan Musuk Kabupaten Boyolali Jawa Tengah.

Farel Prayoga (14 Tahun) Dusun Sumberjo, Desa Kepundungan, Kecamatan Srono, Banyuwangi.