

Political Framing: TikTok as Media in Shaping Public Opinion on Presidential Candidates in the 2024 Indonesia Presidential Election

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ABSTRACT

The 2024 Presidential Election in Indonesia shows how Tiktok has become a strategic medium in building political image and influencing public opinion. This study aims to analyse how the candidates Prabowo Subianto, Anies Baswedan, and Ganjar Pranowo used Tiktok to convey their political narratives. Using a qualitative approach and Entman's framing analysis 1993, this study examines the narratives built by each candidate. Prabowo accentuates the image of nationalism and militaristic leadership, Anies focuses on progressive reform and intellectualism, while Ganjar shows a populist and humanist approach. Tiktok has become a powerful tool to shape public opinion, creating a dynamic and engaging political space. However, the freedom to share content on Tiktok also opens up opportunities for polarisation and controversy. The platform has now transformed into a powerful arena of political contestation and significantly influenced public opinion in society.

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INTRODUCTION

The 2024 General Election in Indonesia is one of the most dynamic and controversial political moments in modern Indonesian politics. The various phenomena that surround this electoral event have drawn a lot of public reactions, including elites, experts and the public. The three presidential and vice presidential candidates are Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka, Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar, and Ganjar Pranowo and Mahfud MD (kpu.go.id, 2024). They are considered to be able to attract public attention, because they are considered to have a strong support base and diverse campaign strategies, the background of the candidates is also one of the big reasons that encourage public interest in this election. In this case, social media is one of the important platforms in encouraging their campaigns, especially Tiktok which plays a central role in shaping public opinion and influencing voters' political preferences (Devi & Sinduwiatmo, 2024; N. Wulandari & Lexianingrum, 2024).

Based on its ability to spread video content quickly and virally, Tiktok should be an important medium for politicians to reach a wider range of voters, especially young voters (Hindarto, 2022; Khasabu et al., 2023; Moir, 2023). Prabowo Subianto, known for his nationalistic rhetoric, utilised Tiktok to emphasize his image as a leader who is firm, authoritative, experienced and inclusive. Meanwhile, Anies Baswedan, who is often regarded as an intellectual and reformist figure, used Tiktok to convey his vision and programme design in a progressive manner. On the other hand, Ganjar Pranowo, who is popular among young people such as millennials and generation Z, utilises the characteristics of Tiktok to present a populist image, sympathetic and close to the people. The use of Tiktok by the three candidates is not only limited to disseminating campaign content, but also involves active participation from the public as Tiktok users who support or criticise them. This certainly creates a unique political communication ecosystem, where public opinion is not only formed from the message conveyed, but also formed from the narrative that is built (Sarihati et al., 2022). Of course, it involves many actors, such as candidates and victory teams and the community itself (Malonda, 2020).

Tiktok is one of the most popular social media today and is widely favoured by politicians as a means of conveying their political messages to the public packaged in a content made in the form of videos containing narratives and made creatively following existing developments (Cervi et al., 2023; Kamindang & Amijaya, 2024). Tiktok, which was originally just a social media platform created for entertainment purposes (Rahardaya & Irwansyah, 2021), has expanded its function as a platform for political interests such as displaying content related to the introduction of presidential candidate pairs, issues about candidate pairs, and political party issues (Cervi et al., 2021). Due to the high interest in politics, social media has shifted not only as a medium for entertainment but also as a medium for

political information and communication that helps politicians' networks to connect to the wider community not only in Indonesia but even Indonesian citizens abroad can be reached (Kamindang & Amijaya, 2024).

Of course, this is fuelled by strong political communication by the candidates. Political communication is one of the drivers of the implementation of political activities. It includes all forms of communication used by political actors to influence people's views, attitudes and participation towards political issues (Dwitama et al., 2022; Sumarni, 2024; Triwicaksono & Nugroho, 2021). On the other hand, as the electoral process has progressed, various political framings have been created, either naturally or deliberately formed as a form of response to phenomena that intersect directly with politics in Indonesia, especially in this election. These framings are not only aimed at shaping a positive image for the candidates, but also contributing to negative attention. The goal is to shape various perspectives and public opinions (Devit & Ridwan, 2023; Wulandari, 2023).

Through Tiktok, some content is intended for certain purposes, for example, such as increasing the positive image of candidates as well as negative images such as spreading the good or bad of elites and politicians as a form of competition, which began to appear before and during the campaign period. In this case, the content is aimed at each pair of presidential and vice presidential candidates, causing various public reactions that are used for certain interests. It is undeniable that Tiktok has become a battlefield prone to controversy and polarisation. Content that is provocative and contains hoaxes triggers pro and con reactions in the community.

On the other hand, the controversy surrounding the use of Tiktok in political campaigns reflects a broader debate about the involvement of social media in democracy. Some see social media as providing a platform for previously marginalised voices and enabling a more inclusive and democratic political participation (Singh et al., 2012; Tucker et al., 2017). However, there are also concerns that the involvement of social media in politics may further polarise, spread disinformation and undermine the integrity of democracy (Ferreira & Santos, 2024; Lubis & Efendi, 2024). Previously, methods like this have also been carried out in general elections in the United States in 2020 and the Philippines in 2022 which used social media, one of which was Tiktok as a media in influencing public opinion. Judging from some posts on Tiktok, each presidential and vice presidential candidate in Indonesia has also used Tiktok as a platform in shaping their image and getting closer to the people. It is inevitable that Tiktok contributes to shaping public opinion in the society.

THEORY FRAMEWORKS

Political Communication Theory

Political Communication Theory examines how political messages are produced, disseminated and received by society. McNair (2017) states that political communication includes various forms of communication used by politicians, the media and the public to achieve certain political goals. This theory emphasises the importance of understanding the dynamics of interactions that occur between political actors, media and audiences in the political communication process (Arriane, 2021). This is also driven by the development of digital media technology which is still considered to have expanded the scope of politics, allowing political messages to be delivered quickly, directly and personally to the public. It also allows for faster and more interactive feedback from the public.

Framing Theory

Framing theory focuses on how the media and certain social actors select and emphasise certain elements of reality to form certain interpretations in influencing society (Goffman, 1974). Framing involves the selection and emphasis on certain aspects of an issue to frame how the issue can be accepted and understood by the public. Entman (1993) sees that framing runs on defining problems, interpreting causes, evaluating morality as well as recommending solutions, thus greatly influencing how the public perceives and responds to an event or political issue. The resulting effect of framing is that it seeks to influence the views of an individual including in assessing and responding to an issue (Devit & Ridwan, 2023). This theory is important to understand how the media seeks to shape political reality by highlighting certain aspects through the information conveyed as well as on how political actors who utilise framing as a step in directing public opinion in accordance with their interests.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing Analysis

Framing analysis is one of the main concepts in communication studies that helps explain how the media influence the way audiences understand an issue. Robert M. Entman (1993) defines framing as the process of selecting certain aspects of reality to make them more salient in a communicated text (information; news; message), in such a way as to promote a particular interpretation. In other words, framing can be understood as a technique of presenting reality in a way that does not completely ignore the truth, but subtly alters it through a process of selection and emphasis on certain issues. This process involves strategies to accentuate, select, and logically link facts into the news reality, so that the news becomes more interesting to the audience (Sobur, 2015).

In Entman's perspective, framing is not only about accentuating information, but also about excluding certain information that has the potential to shape public perception. Furthermore, framing analysis focuses on how news is socially constructed, by taking certain social phenomena as the main concern of the mass media. Framing is a technique of framing an event to reveal the point of view adopted by the media in compiling, packaging and delivering news. This process involves decisions about which elements will be marginalised, disguised, or even omitted, as well as which elements will be highlighted or emphasised to the public (Eriyanto, 2011; Launa, 2020). Framing as an interpretation scheme allows the media to organise, classify, relocate, and shape individual self-images (Launa, 2020). The purpose of framing is to direct the public's interpretation of news; that is, to make a complicated and complex world easier to understand (Durham, 1998). It is important to emphasise that framing is not only about what is included or highlighted in a news text, but also about what is omitted or disguised, as both have an equally important role in shaping public perception (Entman, 1993).

According to Entman, framing has four main interrelated functions; First, framing defines problems by determining what is of concern, who the causative agent is, as well as its impact which is often measured through prevalent cultural values. Second, framing diagnoses causes by identifying factors or forces that create problems. Third, framing makes moral judgements by evaluating the causative agent and its consequences, thus providing a normative perspective. Fourth, framing suggests solutions by offering and justifying a particular course of action along with predicting its impact. These functions provide a framework for understanding how an issue is framed so as to create certain perceptions in the minds of the public. Entman also reiterates that while a text (information; news; message) may include these four functions, it may not; it is how these elements are designed to influence public opinion that matters.

METHOD

The research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis to examine political framing in shaping public opinion through Tiktok content during the 2024 Presidential Election in Indonesia. Data were collected through manual observation of videos posted on candidates' official accounts or other accounts with relevant content that highlighted political narratives, such as nationalism, progressive reform, and humanism. The focus was on visual and verbal elements in relevant videos, spanning the election campaign period from November 2023-February 2024.

The analysis was conducted through Robert Entman's (1993) framing analysis approach, which includes four analytical tools: Define of Problem, Diagnose Causes, Make Moral Judgements and Suggest Solution. This framing analysis is used to explore how elements in videos on Tiktok are used

to frame issues and shape the image of candidates. Through this approach, this research examines how the political narratives conveyed in Tiktok content are designed to influence public opinion, especially among young voters as the dominant users of the platform. This qualitative approach was chosen because it allows in-depth exploration of political narratives that are difficult to measure quantitatively. We see that Tiktok as a video-based platform offers a unique context for understanding dynamic and participatory political communication strategies, specifically the use of Tiktok as a political framing tool in the 2024 Presidential Elections.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The 2024 Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections is one of the biggest phenomena in Indonesian politics, signalled by the many differences from previous elections. Various controversies have haunted the process of running this election, from the popularity of the presidential and vice presidential candidates which is considered far greater than the previous elections to the controversy of changing the age requirements for presidential and vice presidential candidates approved by the Constitutional Court which has attracted a lot of public attention, especially international media (Cnbcindonesia.com, 2023; Strangio, 2024; Bbc.com, 2023). This news is conveyed through various media, including social media. Tiktok is one of the social media that contributes to spreading various kinds of political phenomena that occur, especially in the 2024 elections. The development of social media along with massive digital transformation has changed the way political communication is carried out, various kinds of information can be spread so quickly in just one time.

Tiktok, which was originally better known as an entertainment platform with light and creative short video content, suddenly expanded into an intense political battlefield. This is where the presidential candidates, Prabowo Subianto, Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo utilised this platform as a step in their political promotion, including in the process of image building and directing public opinion. Tiktok allows candidates to interact with voters, especially from young people as the biggest users on this platform (Hernandez Pomona, 2022; Moir, 2023). Tiktok's features, which allow content to spread quickly and virally, also provide a strategic advantage for politicians in delivering their political messages effectively. However, the use of Tiktok by candidates is not always received positively by all parties. Some see this as an opportunistic way to gain political support, Tiktok is only used as a place to provide 'content' that is tailored to the wishes of certain parties. In other words, Tiktok, which is part of social media, often displays information that is considered to only please supporters and even has the tendency to spread hoax information while polarising the public on political issues and becoming a place to conduct negative campaigns (De Boer et al., 2012; Dimitrova

& Matthes, 2018; Haselmayer, 2019). This kind of criticism is often raised by political observers who are sceptical of new ways of political campaigning, while obscuring the realities that occur such as acts of irregularities and fraud in the course of elections.

On the other hand, each candidate and their supporters perceive this as an advantage, as it can reduce campaign expenditure (Syafrudin & Casmana, 2022). With technological innovations in social media, politicians are directly compelled to adapt to technological changes and voter preferences, particularly young voters who form the largest user base of platforms like Tiktok. Tiktok enables the public not only to act as passive consumers who merely receive information from existing content but also to become producers and disseminators of content. This creates a new dynamic where political narratives are no longer shaped solely by political elites or campaign teams but also by society as users who can create and share politically related content. This phenomenon is often referred to as user-generated content, where the public is positioned as customers who can create content regarding the "products" they receive (Apriliansyah, 2024; Oladipo, 2022). In this context, society acts as customers who receive information in the form of political phenomena or narratives disseminated by politicians and their campaign teams. These political narratives can then be responded to by creating content that also relates to such narratives. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Tiktok also serves as a battleground rife with controversy and debate, often leading to polarisation. Provocative content and hoaxes are frequently found on this platform, inevitably sparking both support and opposition among the public.

In the context of political communication, the use of Tiktok by Prabowo Subianto, Anies Baswedan, and Ganjar Pranowo, as competing candidates, can be seen as part of their efforts to control political narratives and build their desired public image. Political communication is a systematic effort by political actors to convey specific messages to the public with the aim of shaping public opinion and garnering political support (Pranawukir et al., 2023; Sarihati et al., 2022). On the other hand, to achieve success, political communication alone is deemed insufficient. A method is required to present political narratives in a favourable manner. These narratives are framed through political framing, which is expected to influence public interpretation and reactions by highlighting or omitting certain aspects. In this election campaign, framing is employed by each candidate to showcase their strengths, minimise their weaknesses in public, and highlight particular issues deemed critical for their target audiences (Madinah & Nur, 2024; Zulham et al., 2024).

We observe that the three candidates did various ways to attract public attention by framing themselves into various approaches. For example, Prabowo wrapped himself in nationalistic issues

and related to the stability and security of the country. Anies, on the other hand, took a more intellectual and progressive approach. On the other hand, Ganjar chose to approach more populist and humanist issues. Through these approaches, narratives are formed that are expected to emphasise their strengths in which Tiktok functions in disseminating these narratives in the hope of influencing public opinion in society.

If we look at how these three candidates frame themselves in the public, the main goal is how they try to shape their image as a figure that seems to be needed by the society. From Entman's framing approach; (a) *Define of Problem*, during the election campaign, each candidate used Tiktok to define various state problems according to their political narratives. Prabowo often highlighted the lack of national stability and threats to the country's sovereignty from outside influences, which was portrayed through militaristic content and speeches that emphasised the importance of decisive leadership. Anies often raises issues of social and environmental justice, policy inequality, and the lack of government innovation, visualised through policy discussions and interactions with academics. Meanwhile, Ganjar defines the problem as a lack of closeness between leaders and the people, with content featuring direct dialogue with the people and daily activities as a way of listening to their aspirations. On the other hand, this framing is also linked to the analysis of existing social issues, (b) *Diagnose Causes*, in this case, for example, Prabowo attributes the lack of national stability to weak defence policies and the lack of courage of previous leaders. Furthermore, Anies diagnosed social inequality as a result of systemic failures in governance and lack of policy innovation. Ganjar himself sees the weak realisation of people's aspirations due to the lack of empathy and direct attention from leaders to the needs of the people.

The two previous approaches indirectly contribute to moral judgements on how to deal with the consequences of existing social issues so as to provide a normative perspective, in this case through the framing approach (c) *Make Moral Judgements*, Prabowo emphasises the value of patriotism and loyalty to the country through content that highlights his integrity and courage. Anies emphasised justice, inclusiveness and social responsibility, visualised through interactions with the middle class and policy discussions. Ganjar promotes the value of empathy and closeness to the people, portraying himself as a simple leader who cares about the needs of the small community, to refer to the last framing approach (d) *Suggest Remedies*, which acts as a solution provider by offering and justifying certain handling steps coupled with predicting their impact. The three candidates, in this case, provide offers through their various program designs; such as Prabowo offering to strengthen national defence through improving the quality of the military and strategic policies such as food security. Anies promotes data-driven bureaucratic reforms to create inclusive and sustainable change, and Ganjar

offers pragmatic solutions such as improved infrastructure and public services, with an approach that emphasises his closeness to the people. Of course, through this framing, the three candidates endeavour to shape a narrative that suits the characteristics of their target audience. Tiktok has become a strategic arena to build a political image and influence public opinion in the 2024 Presidential Elections.

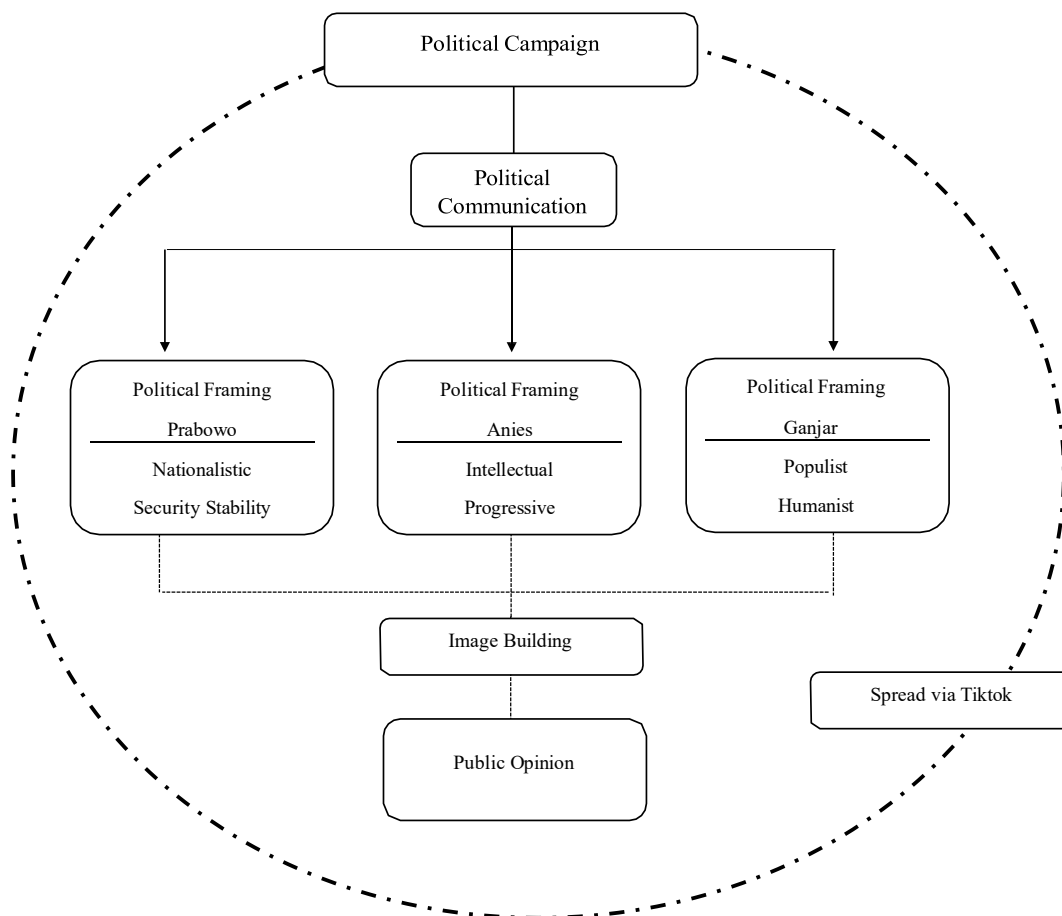


Figure 1. The Relationship between Political Communication and Political Framing in Building Image and Influencing Public Opinion of Presidential Candidates in the Presidential Election Campaign

The chart above illustrates how their efforts to succeed the campaign through political communication carried out by each candidate using different political framing approaches. This aims to convey the social issues they want to convey and how these issues are disseminated through Tiktok, which can simultaneously build their political image to influence public opinion in society

Table 1. Political Framing in Political Campaigns on Tiktok by Presidential candidates in the 2024 Presidential Election

Candidate	Political Framing	Constructed Narrative	Form of Content on Tiktok
Prabowo Subianto	Nationalism and National Security	Described as a firm and experienced leader. Prioritises national stability and security through strengthening the military	Content featuring Prabowo in military activities, making stern and passionate speeches, showcasing Prabowo's toughness, also highlights his achievements in defence and security during his time as a minister.
Anies Baswedan	Intellectualism and Progressive Reform	Described as a reformist and idealistic leader validated by his intellectual abilities.	Content that explains the vision and mission from Anies with rational and relevant data and arguments. Discussion content regarding policy analysis that discusses complex social and environmental issues is the most dominant with intellectuals, such as academics, practitioners and students.
Ganjar Pranowo	Populism and Humanism	Described as a simple leader who is close to the entire community, favouring the interests of the small people.	Content featuring Ganjar's daily interactions with the community, conducting various activities and showing openness to citizens' aspirations by listening to complaints and providing solutions. In addition, he is close to young people (Gen Millennial and Gen Z)

Source: processed by author, 2024

Based on the table above, each candidate tries to adjust their Tiktok content based on the narratives they have built. Even though the content is also created by the community, the narratives that are formed still refer to the political framing that they have tried to create. Prabowo himself often focuses on aspects that intersect with militarism, nationalism and decisive leadership. Prabowo frames himself as the sole candidate capable of maintaining the stability and security of the country, supported by his military background as well as the minister of Defence and Security of the Republic of Indonesia (Menteri Pertahanan Republik Indonesia) with narratives that emphasise the need for a firm and strong leader amid increasingly complicated global challenges. Through Tiktok content, this

framing can be examined through visuals and narratives that often highlight Prabowo's military achievements, along with calls for unity under his leadership. Furthermore, what Anies does in his political framing is always based on intellectual sides, which is one of the strongest driving factors as well as an attraction for certain groups, such as academics. He is always associated with a solutive and visionary figure, considered capable of bringing change in government. This framing often prioritises ideas about reform, innovation, social and environmental justice which are represented through discussion activities in Tiktok content that intersect with Anies. Through this framing, he tries to attract public sympathy through vital issues such as human rights, environment, education and highlights various programme designs that are considered proactive in these issues.

Similarly, Ganjar frames himself as an inclusive leader who is responsive to the people. By focusing on his simplicity, openness as well as his closeness to the people shown through various contents that show direct interaction with the people, this approach is considered to be able to provide Ganjar's another perspective, namely a *down-to-earth* leader. Framing has a big impact on how public opinion will be formed and influenced during the campaign (Kurniasari & Aji, 2018). Well-framed content can shape positive perceptions of a candidate even in the midst of controversy or criticism. However, on the other hand, framing can also be used to exacerbate and intensify polarisation through negative narratives, such as political polarisation (Kim & Zhou, 2020). This framing can also be done by highlighting weaknesses or controversies involving political opponents. Therefore, framing will greatly affect how a person's image is in front of the public (Kurniasari & Aji, 2018). In the 2024 presidential election, framing will affect how the image of the candidates in the eyes of the public (Devit & Ridwan, 2023). At least based on the studies conducted by us, the political framing carried out by candidates, whether carried out by the victory team or the community, has turned out to be one of the contributions in shaping their image as well as public opinion in society. Tiktok is clear evidence of how this platform can be used as a medium to spread various kinds of framing through the narrative content created, either in a positive form that benefits the candidates, or vice versa in a negative form that harms them.

Table 2. Campaign Image Formed on Tiktok by Presidential Candidates in the 2024 Presidential Election

Candidate	Narrative of Fame	Campaign Image
Prabowo Subianto	Nationalistic, Inclusive	1. Positives: Has a militaristic character that is tough and decisive, an experienced figure, and labelled as an adorable figure (<i>Gemoy—Menggemaskan</i>) because he is considered to

		have a carefree attitude behind his stern nature and empathetic with the people.
		2. Negative: Related to the issues of human rights violations, especially in 1998, and related to militaristic issues.
Anies Baswedan	Intellectual, Reformist	1. Positive: Has a reformist character by always fighting for change, being closed to academics, and being labelled as a father figure (<i>Abah</i>) because he is considered to have a calm and intellectual fatherly manner. 2. Negative: Related to the issues of religious-based identity politics and problems in Jakarta as a former governor in Jakarta
Ganjar Pranowo	Popular, Populistic	1. Positive: Has a populist character who is often considered as the second Jokowi figure, is considered to have contemporary behavior and is familiar with the community, especially the Millennial Generation and Gen-Z. Labeled as a handsome, young, lively and social figure among young people. 2. Negative: Related to the issue of being a Party Puppet and various problems in Central Java such as the Agrarian Conflict Case (Wadas) as a former governor in Central Java.

Source: processed by author, 2024

Tiktok is also a place where sensitive and controversial issues can be exploited to influence public opinion. Through massive and patterned dissemination, the narratives used in Tiktok content have influenced people's perspectives; this has led to the polarisation of political issues in society. For example, the emergence of narratives about Prabowo on certain policies that have caused disagreements, such as the Free Lunch programme and Prabowo's plan to continue some of President Joko Widodo's advanced programmes (Budilaksono, 2024; Pasha, 2024), or criticism of Anies for handling issues in Jakarta that are still considered not well fulfilled and the identity politics narrative being related to him (Farisa, 2023; Maruf, 2023). Similarly, Ganjar often faces various attacks related to his policies as Governor of Central Java and his relationship with Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle or also known as PDI-P, which is rumored to be a Party Puppet (Sinambela, 2023)

Narratives like this are processed in such a way in Tiktok content with the aim of shaping certain perceptions among voters, especially for young voters who are the dominant users of Tiktok. The narratives spread through these contents directly create an 'echo chamber' among the public as Tiktok users; a condition where they only believe in narratives that support their own perspectives. In other words, they are reluctant to see or hear different ideas. In short, people are only willing to support

narratives that are considered in accordance with what they believe, especially when it comes to the candidates they support. As a result, this has the potential to trigger divisions when the narratives circulating are at odds with their beliefs (Nguyen & Vu, 2019). Thus, for the phenomena that occur, the political framing created has led to various complex political dynamics. This shows that Tiktok is not just a campaign tool but a battlefield for political narratives, where each candidate seeks to use Tiktok to attract sympathy while mobilising the masses to gain vote support through the formation of public opinion. Tiktok allows candidates to communicate directly with the public, especially their voters. However, it cannot be denied that Tiktok also opens up space for issues that can deepen polarisation, especially political polarisation that has the potential to cause social conflict in the midst of society.

CONCLUSIONS

Tiktok plays a role as one of the drivers in shaping public opinion in the 2024 presidential election in Indonesia. The candidates, Prabowo Subianto, Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo have utilised Tiktok as a medium to convey their political messages, build their image, and attract voters, especially young voters. Each candidate uses Tiktok with different interests, according to the framing and narratives they build; Prabowo with his image of nationalism and militaristic, Anies with intellectualism and progressive reform, and Ganjar with a populist and humanist approach.

TikTok has been transformed into a field of intense political contestation through political narratives that are formed and spread massively and quickly. Political framing that is built from narratives on Tiktok not only affects the positive and negative perceptions of candidates. However, at the same time forming a dynamic and participatory political communication ecosystem, where people are not only passive consumers, who only receive information, but also producers who create content that helps shape public opinion in society. On the other hand, the freedom given by Tiktok in disseminating political narratives through existing content directly opens up space for polarisation and controversy, especially when negative framing or provocative content is used to influence public opinion, causing potential divisions among the society.

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