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Deanship of Scientific Research

Identifying Political Conversation on X: A Social Network Analysis of Presidential Candidate Debate Event in Indonesia

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Abstract

Objectives: This study investigates the dynamics of conversations on Twitter during the televised debate of Indonesian presidential candidates for the 2024 General Election. The focus of this study is the presidential debate during the campaign period.

Methods: This study reveals the issues, actors, and network relationships in conversations about the presidential debate on Twitter with social network analysis.

Results: An interesting finding in this study is that the influential actors in this conversation are event-based political influencers. This is a good sign of increased political participation from the public. Reflecting on the current political conditions in Indonesia, influencers related to politics, both issues and political influencers, cannot be underestimated. There are positive and negative sides to influencers who talk about politics.

Conclusions: Further research is expected to highlight influencers' adverse effects and potential on political engagement. In the future, there will be more event-based political influencers and issue influencers from various backgrounds and industries to participate in voicing political issues. Further research is expected to examine conversations related to politics in Indonesia on platforms other than Twitter and examine how structural mechanisms related to outdegree activity and indegree popularity can maintain influencer communication networks.

Keywords: Indonesia; Political Influencer; Presidential Candidate Debate; Social Network Analysis; Twitter (X)

تحديد المحادثة السياسيَّة على X تحليل شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي لأحداث مناظرة المرشَّحين الرئاسيين في إندونيسيا

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ملخّص

الأهداف: تبحث هذه الدراسة في ديناميكيات المحادثات على مِنَصَّة تويتر في أثناء المناظرة التلفزيونيَّة للمرشَّحين الرئاسيين الإندونيسيين لانتخابات عام 2024.

المنهجيَّة: تكشف هذه الدراسة، عبر تحليل الشبكات الاجتماعيَّة، عن القضايا والجهات الفاعلة والعلاقات الشبكيَّة في المحادثات المتعلِّقة بالمناظرة الرئاسيَّة على تويتر.

النتائج: من النتائج اللافتة في هذه الدراسة أنَّ الجهات الفاعلة المؤثِّرة في هذه المحادثات هم مؤثرون سياسيون مرتبطون بالأحداث. وهذه علامة إيجابيَّة على زيادة مشاركة الجمهور السياسيَّة. وبالنظر إلى الوضع السياسي الحالي في إندونيسيا، لا يمكن التقليلُ من شأن المؤثِّرين المرتبطين بالسياسة، سواء من حيث القضايا أو كونهم مؤثِّرين سياسيين. وهناك جوانب إيجابيَّة وسلبيَّة لهؤلاء المؤثِّرين الذين يناقشون القضايا السياسيَّة.

الخلاصة: من المتوقع أن تسلِّطُ الدراساتُ المستقبليَّةُ الضَّوءَ على الآثار السلبيَّة للمؤثِّرين وكذلك إمكاناتهم في تعزيز المشاركة السياسيَّة. وفي المستقبل، يُتَوَقَّعُ ظهورُ عدد أكبر من المؤثِّرين السياسيين القائمين على الأحداث، ومؤثِّري القضايا من خلفيات وقطاعات مختلفة؛ للمشاركة في التعبير عن القضايا السياسيَّة. كما يُتَوَقَّعُ أن تتناول الدراساتُ القادمةُ المحادثاتِ السياسيَّةَ في إندونيسيا على مِنَصّات أُخرى غير تويتر، وأن تدرس كيف يمكن للآليات الهيكليَّة المتعلِّقة بالنشاط الخارجي (outdegree)والشعبيَّة الداخليَّة (indegree) أن تُسهم في الحفاظ على شبكات الاتصال الخاصة بالمؤثِّرين.

الكلمات المفتاحيَّة: إندونيسيا، المؤثِّرون السياسيون، مناظرة المرشِّحين الرئاسيين، تحليل الشبكات الاجتماعيَّة، تويتر (إكس).

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is listed as the third largest democracy in the world. Indonesia has held a democratic party that is predicted to be the most significant general election in the world in 2024. The momentum of the Presidential Election in Indonesia, which is held every 5 years, is permanently colored by the presidential and vice presidential candidate debate. This event is one of the most awaited events in the democratic party of the General Election in Indonesia, which takes place every five years.

Before the existence of social media, the presidential and vice presidential candidate debate was the most followed, watched, controlled, and sought-after event by television viewers. Previous findings found that the most important thing to know about a debate event is the impact and content of the debate event (McKinney & Carlin, 2004). Debates can stimulate public discourse even after they take place. Each debate event has generated solid public reactions to the candidates' vision, mission, and programs, leaving an impression on voters (Alexander, 2010; Friedenberg, 1993; Gastil, 2008).

Public debates need to be conducted continuously. This is intended to provide voters with a comprehensive understanding. Survey results show that in the previous period, debates only influenced 10-15% of public preferences (Armstrong, 2024; Dixon, 2020). Previous studies have discussed the importance of holding debates. Previous findings even suggest that debates regarding political contestation should have a more modern format and structure and involve the audience more. Thus, the debate will be more meaningful, more accessible, and more transparent and accountable (Benoit, 2013; Campbell & Jamieson, 1990; Hart & Jarvis, 1997; Jamieson & Birdsell, 1990).

Pew Research Center found that the presidential and vice presidential candidate debates attracted a large television audience. Unfortunately, the presidential debate rating has fluctuated over the decades. Voters consider the helpful debate, but it does not necessarily determine their choice (Desilver, 2024). Pew Research Center shows that most voters in the 198 and 2016 US elections felt that debates helped them decide which candidate to vote for (Desilver, 2024). In 2016, 63% of voters said that debates helped them in their decision-making process. However, in 2012, only 10% said they decided during or after the debate (Desilver, 2024; Richter, 2024; Statista, 2024; Zandt, 2024). Other research states that the holding of debates cannot be separated from social media. Social media influences becoming a place for discussion for debate viewers. Many presidential debate viewers use social networking sites such as Twitter to continue the discussion (Boulianne & Larsson, 2023; Kaylor, 2019; KhudaBukhsh et al., 2022; Murdani et al., 2022; Rodrigues, 2020; Schill & Hendrick, 2017).

Voters who already have a choice can change their choice after comparing each candidate's program during the debate. In addition, voters who base their choice on specific issues and policies can change their vote choice after witnessing the candidate's views on specific issues and policies (Lindemann & Stoetzer, 2021; McKinney & Rill, 2009; McKinney & Warner, 2013).

The CSIS report states that the debate is a new factor that will become a trend for future Indonesian politics. A survey conducted by CSIS found that 49.8 percent of voters admitted to having watched the first presidential debate. The presidential debate has the potential to influence voters' final decisions. Interestingly, some voters who have yet to decide are still waiting for the next round of presidential and vice presidential debates before making their choice. Thus, public interest in participating in the presidential debate is very high (Fernandes, 2024).

Based on the voting time, when the CSIS survey was conducted, 75.2 percent of voters admitted to having made their choice after the first debate. More specifically, 5.8 percent chose after watching the presidential and vice presidential debates. Even as many as 12.5 percent of voters who have not yet decided their choice admitted that they are still waiting for the next round of the presidential and vice presidential debates before making their choice (Fernandes, 2024).

The presidential and vice presidential debates will affect three conditions: electoral volatility, a high proportion of swing voters, and a high proportion of undecided voters. Factors such as debates and campaign mobilization can encourage voters to maintain their initial choice or change their vote to another candidate (Fernandes, 2024).

Although the influence of debates in changing public preferences is small, debate events are still used by each candidate's team to influence public perception. If the question is whether debates matter, then the answer is essential. Academics are still researching the effectiveness of debates in influencing voter interest. Since the advent of social media,

debates have not only resonated on television, but their excitement has also moved to social media. Twitter is among the most popular platforms for Indonesians to voice political issues. Even in the 2024 Presidential Debate, the excitement increased with the joint viewing of the debate held by several media via live streaming on YouTube. The impact of this joint viewing is like engagement in video reactions.

During presidential candidate debates, Twitter has become the digital platform of choice to change citizen participation from passive to active (Fontenla-Pedreira et al., 2023; Freelon & Karpf, 2015). During the debate, Twitter users (X) can upload short tweets containing various events that take place in the debate, reactive comments, and coloring with emotions (Berman et al., 2019). As in the 2016 presidential debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, Twitter users shared funny comments that checked facts about the presidential candidates. During the debate, Twitter became a place for the public to express their opinions directly (Robertson & Dutton, 2020). Debate viewers watched television while commenting on social media, thus forming public opinion and leading media coverage (Freelon & Karpf, 2015).

No scientific research has been related to the conversation about presidential candidate debates on Twitter regarding the 2024 presidential election. Therefore, political polarization has occurred (Berman et al., 2019; Jennings et al., 2017; Rizoiu et al., 2018; Robertson et al., 2019). In the last ten years, political participation in Indonesia has been dominated by participation through digital platforms such as social media. Public participation can be seen in the freedom of social media users to express their opinions regarding government policies. In the context of politics, the most widely used public space is Twitter (Juswil et al., 2022; Sumartias et al., 2023; Syahputra, 2021; Zakky et al., 2019).

In analyzing the network structure, efforts are needed to find influential actors in shaping public opinion in conversations related to the presidential election. Actors, better known as influencers, must be measured for their success with proper analysis (M. Zhang et al., 2023). Through communication network research, it is possible to determine the preferences of political messages that the public prefers, whether it is the candidate, the framing of the message, or the format of the message (Cassell, 2021; Daud, 2021; Farkas & Bene, 2021; Peng, 2021). However, the presidential and vice presidential candidate debates regarding the General Election in Indonesia are only a tiny part of the political dynamics of the 2024 General Election. In general, debates can strengthen voters' choices for a particular candidate or change voters' choices.

This study investigates the dynamics of conversations on Twitter during the televised debate of Indonesian presidential candidates for the 2024 General Election. This study analyzes the network structure related to the presidential candidate debate event during the 2024 General Election. Besides, this study attempts to identify the issues, actors, and network relationships in conversations. The text mining process was done from 01 December 2023 to 14 February 2024. Therefore, the data collected was based on Twitter activity during that period. This problem limitation is used to focus the data collected through the Gephi application. The study's objective was to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the structural features of the networks of the Indonesian presidential candidate's debate on Twitter (X)?

RQ2: Who is the actor of the networks of the Indonesian presidential candidate's debate on Twitter (X)?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Televised presidential debates have been held in over 84 countries worldwide (Rahro et al., 2024). Moreover, televised presidential debates are broadcast in countries with low democracy index scores. Even authoritarian governments broadcast presidential debates (Budzyńska-Daca & Hinton, 2018). Televised political debates are a political communication style that aims to promote candidates to voters. Televised debates are intended to provide voters with an ideal source of information. Debates can be understood as an ideal form of communication because each party has an equal opportunity to convey their point of view (Denton et al., 2019).

A televised debate is a public interview. In this event, candidates are asked to debate on topics scheduled in the debate. Debates are considered an essential process in the democratic process. However, some argue that debates are merely a tool for politicians to communicate with voters and gain their support (Budzyńska-Daca & Hinton, 2018). In debates, the media plays a role in this political event. Broadcast debates remain essential for democratic interaction between voters and candidates (De Liddo et al., 2021). The purpose of presidential debates is to persuade and change public opinion (Jalilifar

& Alavi-Nia, 2012).

The presidential candidate debate is part of a political debate that illustrates the characteristics of political discourse. Debates have distinctive characteristics, such as antagonistic political activism, the use of persuasive language, and the emergence of controversial issues. In addition, politicians participating in debates use persuasive techniques to convey their proposals and achieve their goals (Carlin, 1989; McKinney & Carlin, 2004).

The presidential debate has attracted the attention of several academics. Research on presidential debates has found that events can help or harm presidential candidates. However, performance in presidential debates is a concept that takes time to understand. The winner of a debate does not change voter preferences. Previous research has found that winning a debate only results in a narrow victory in post-debate polls (Schrott & Lanoue, 2013).

In the 2024 General Election in Indonesia, the debate was held five times with different themes. The first debate was themed on Governance, Law, Human Rights, Eradication of Corruption, Strengthening Democracy, Improving Public Services, and Community Harmony. The second debate was themed on the Economy, People's Economy and Digital Economy, Finance, Tax Investment, Trade, Management of the State Budget and Regional Budget, Infrastructure, and Urbanism. The third debate was themed on Defense, Security, International Relations, and Geopolitics. The fourth debate was themed on Sustainable Development, Natural Resources, Environment, Energy, Food, Agrarian, Indigenous Peoples, and Villages. The fifth debate was themed on Social Welfare, Culture, Education, Information Technology, Health, Employment, Human Resources, and Inclusion (Yuniarto, 2024).

Previous research that discussed the substance of political influencer content found two significant themes: formal political themes, such as political forms, education, or characters on screen. Second, political lifestyle, such as touching on any issue they believe is of collective concern and impacts the wider community. Regarding the presidential debate event broadcast nationally on television, previous research found that the debate's winner did not influence voters. However, the debate event changed the perception of people still unsure who to vote for. This is due to the effect of exposure to political information about candidates that matches their preferences (Flamino et al., 2023; Harff & Schmuck, 2024; Harris et al., 2023; Hernandez, 2018; Juárez-Gámiz et al., 2020; Martin et al., 2024; Nyangulu & Sharra, 2023; Riedl et al., 2023; Rodríguez Bolívar, 2015; Sehl & Schützeneder, 2023).

Twitter is a social media that is still relevant for studying political participation, especially in terms of participation in political campaigns. This is because Twitter has a broad social and cultural influence and a wealth of structural data that can be collected. However, it should be remembered that Twitter cannot be directly analogized to public opinion because the Twitter algorithm makes it very possible for an echo chamber to occur (Barberá & Rivero, 2015; Colleoni et al., 2014). Besides, previous study found that internet data can be aggregated to track political candidates' performance during a presidential campaign. The wisdom of crowds' theory is here exploited to a fuller extent using a unique combination of data sources and methodology (Berman et al., 2019; Jennings et al., 2017; Pain & Masullo Chen, 2019; Soares & Recuero, 2021).

In the context of political campaigns, researchers often only pay attention to hashtags whose success indicators are through trending topics. In fact, the role of accounts that can influence other accounts needs to be considered. These accounts are better known as influencer accounts. Influencers play an important role in information communication, and the widespread use of social media makes measuring influencers on social media platforms a major challenge (M. Zhang et al., 2023; Y. Zhang & Mac, 2023).

There are classify social media influencers into four categories of social media influencers: (1) the topics they cover, such as mold, excellence, and nourishment); (2) the origin of their ubiquity, such as whether they are celebrities who are already well-known outside of social media but use it as a unique tool or influencers who became well-known through their activities on social media); (3) the estimation of their reach or notoriety, such as the number of followers or subscribers, sees, likes, and retweets; and (4) their legitimate status about their trade show, such as influencers with companies, specialists, and unadulterated buyers (Goanta & Ranchordás, 2020).

In political context, previous studies have found subgroup of social media influencers, namely Political Social Media

Influencers (PSMI) or political influence. Political influencer have some characteristics: (1) users who gotten to be popular on social media; (2) self-created individual brands; (3) frequently convey self-produced political substance through which they reach and possibly impact a scattered audience." (Abdulmajeed & El-Ibiary, 2020; Bause, 2021; Neubaum, 2022; M. Riedl et al., 2021; Winter et al., 2021; Winter & Neubaum, 2016).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with the Social Network Analysis (SNA) method. SNA is a method for knowing the relationships between actors in a social network. Network data-based research has several differences from other social sciences; However, this research is also widely developed in sociological and psychological research, and the development of SNA research has experienced ups and downs. The SNA method is becoming a trend again in the social sciences along with developments in communication technology. This research focuses on two main aspects, namely nodes (actors) and edges (relationships), while social science focuses on attribution data such as perceptions and attitudes. SNA research can determine the main structure of social networks by identifying key actors in a network. Therefore, the problem in this research is how to tell stories through visualization of presidential candidate debate event network data for the 2024 Indonesian presidential election (Mbaru & Barnes, 2017).

This study was conducted using the Twitter API via ASIGTA in data collection. Searches on Twitter were conducted using the "debit capres" (presidential candidate debate) keyword. The text mining process occurred from 01 December 2023 to 14 February 2024. This period was chosen because of the official campaign period for Indonesian presidential candidates and the period of the Indonesian presidential and vice presidential debate. The results of the data crawling then produced a total of 13,986 tweets (N = 13,986) for analysis. Therefore, the data collected was based on Twitter activity during that period. This problem limitation focuses on the data collected through the Gephi application.

This research focuses on two main aspects: the structure and density of the 2024 Indonesian presidential candidate debate network and key actors (key players) in distributing digital messages in the network. Several stages are carried out to analyze the network: problem limitation, data collection, data processing, and data analysis.

Data collection in this research used the Gephi text mining application with the help of ASIGTA Software, using several keywords to obtain accurate research data. A text mining application aims to collect data using relevant keywords, namely "debat capres" (presidential candidate debate) on Twitter. After the data is collected, the next step is data processing.

Data processing in this research begins with the stage of filtering relevant data. In the context of this research, the data used is data that has at least one relationship with another actor, meaning that actors who do not have a relationship or relationship with other actors are deleted or eliminated. This step was taken because the main focus of this research was actors and relationships. The next stage is data analysis, after selecting data relevant to the context of this research based on the 2024 Indonesian presidential candidate debate.

The data analysis stages in this research went through two stages: First, visualizing group network types using the Yifan Hu algorithm. This algorithm was chosen because the data obtained in this research was quite large, approximately 100 thousand nodes. This relatively large data is best visualized using the Yifan Hu algorithm (Gephi.org, 2011). Second, analysis of key actors (key players) in the presidential candidate debate event. These two stages of data analysis produce network types, density, and centrality of actors in the network. Based on the data analysis stages above, the following is the design analysis of this research:

Table 1. Draft Network Analysis for the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Candidate Debate

Level of Analysis	Analysis Unit	Information Output
Network Structure Level	Network Size	The number of actors and relations gathered in the network
	Relationship Type	The type of relationship formed in the network
	Relationship Patterns	Relationship patterns formed in a network
	Density	The density of communication networks in a network

Level of Analysis	Analysis Unit	Information Output
Actor Analysis	Degree Centrality	The level of popularity of an actor in the network
	Closeness Centrality	The level of closeness of an actor to other actors
	Betweenness Centrality	Actors who are intermediaries in the network
	Eigenvector Centrality	How closely related are the important actors in the network

The final result of this research is a system-level (network) and actor-level (actor centrality) analysis. Network analysis has three units of analysis: relationship types and relationship patterns. In comparison, the actor level has four units of analysis: degree, closeness centrality, betweenness centrality, and eigenvector centrality (Zhang & Luo, 2017). This research data was then analyzed using a storytelling approach and graph theory to communicate information on the network to make it easier for everyone to read and understand.

There are four formulations of actor centrality in graph theory. First, degree centrality is used to find accounts that have the greatest influence on disseminating information on Twitter by looking at the number of direct relationships an actor has with other actors. The higher the degree of centrality value, the more ties or relationships an actor has with other actors (Carnia et al., 2021). There are two types of identification of the existence of actors in a network, namely indegree and outdegree (Soumokil et al., 2013). Indegree is a message that leads to the actor (contacted by another actor), while outdegree is a message that leads to the outside of the actor (contacts another actor). The second analysis, Closeness Centrality, is used to find the most influential accounts by looking at how close the actor is to other actors based on the shortest distance obtained. Third, Betweenness Centrality is used to find the most influential accounts in disseminating information based on the extent to which they are needed to link information dissemination on the Twitter social network. The Betweenness centrality normality value is 0-1, where closer to 1 is the best. Fourth, Eigenvector centrality is used to find the most influential accounts by identifying the influence of these accounts throughout the network, not just their influence on directly connected nodes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results in this study are a dataset obtained from engineering digital text mining on Twitter social media using the ASIGTA application. The data that has been collected is then visualized through the Gephi application to see the networks and actor roles that are formed in the presidential candidate debate conversations on Twitter (X). Based on the analysis that has been carried out, there are several findings, including:

Network Structure Analysis

In network analysis, the analysis carried out is to visualize the interaction patterns of Twitter (X) users regarding the keyword "presidential candidate debate," which is trending on Twitter (X). In network analysis, there are two measurement indicators, namely network size, relationship type, relationship pattern, and network density for "presidential debates".

Based on Figure 1, the size of the network that has been collected is 13,654 actors and 13,986 relations, with the Yifan Hu layout making it easier to see the network structure formed within the main network. It can be seen that several clusters have formed in the presidential candidate debate conversation network on Twitter (X). These clusters represent certain groups that are affiliated with the presidential candidate or the political party they support. Like the pair Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar, who are in the light blue cluster, then Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka, who are in the green cluster, as well as Ganjar Pranowo and Mahfud MD in the black cluster.

The clusters above show that there are similarities in interests and messages between Twitter users (X) so that they are gathered in the same structure. The extent of distribution and level of effectiveness of a message expressed digitally can be seen through the network structure, as in the Table 2.

In Table 2, we can see the structure of the communication network in the "Presidential Candidate Debate." In this network structure, it is known that the number of actors is 13,654, and relations are 13,986. In this case, relations describe

the lines of relationship between one actor and another, while actors are the positions of users who interact with each other in the network (Mulyani et al., 2022). Apart from that, the type of relationship formed is directed or one-way. This type of relationship has the characteristic that communication messages are unidirectional (Eriyanto, 2019), with a radial communication pattern. The characteristic of radial communication patterns is that there are actors who act as centers in the communication network (Rogers & Kincaid, 1981), in the context of this research, actors such as Anies, Prabowo, and Ganjar are the centers of their respective networks.

The type of relationship that is in the same direction can also be seen from the network density value of 0.001, which has a very low network density. The density value ranges from 0-1; the closer it is to 1, the higher the network density. High network density is characterized by two-way communication between actors (Eriyanto, 2014). Apart from analyzing network structure, researchers also analyze actors in the network. This analysis was carried out to determine the position of key actors in the Presidential Candidate Debate network.

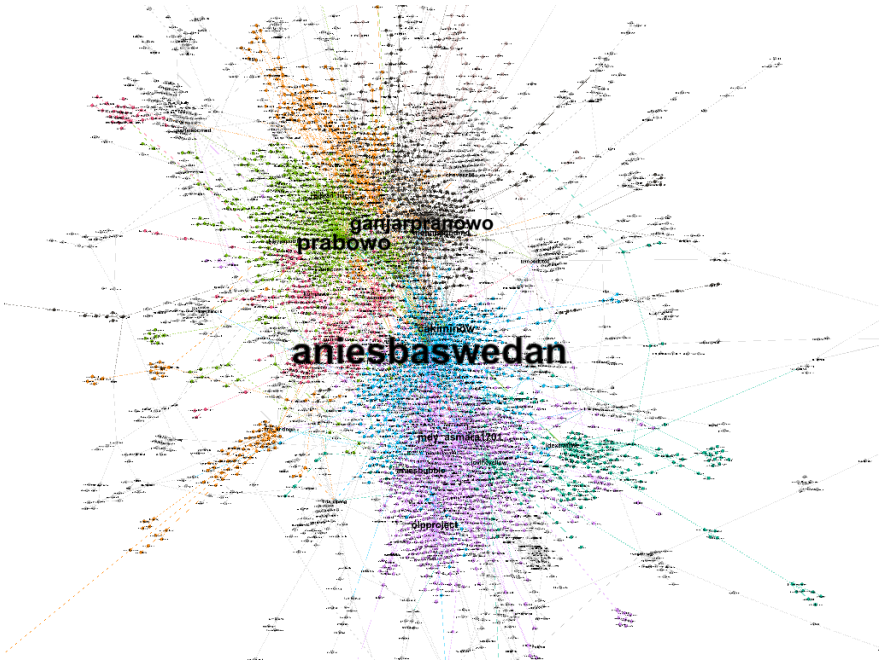


Figure 1. Sociogram of conversations related to the presidential candidate debate on Twitter

Table 2. Conversation Network Structure Related to the Presidential Candidate Debate on Twitter

Analysis Indicator	Result
Size	13.654 (actors) 13.986 (relations)
Relationship Type	Directed
Relationship Pattern	Radial
Density	0,001
Clusters	6

Actor Analysis

To find out the position of the dominant actors in the presidential debate conversation network on Twitter. Identification of actor positions in a network can be done using the network centrality approach, which has three measurement indicators, namely: (1) Degree Centrality, (2) Closeness Centrality, and (3) Betweenness Centrality (Carnia et al., 2021).

Degree Centrality

Degree centrality is to find out the popular actors in the network. Popular actors are actors who have the most relationships in the network (Bakry & Kusmayadi, 2021).

Table 3. Centrality of Levels Related to Presidential Debate Conversations on Twitter

Actor	Profile	Score
aniesbaswedan	Presidential Candidate	321
prabowo	Presidential Candidate	217
ganjarpranowo	Presidential Candidate	196
cakiminnow	Vice Presidential Candidate	114
mdy_asmara	Anies's Buzzer	103
olpproject	Anies's Fanbase	97
aniesbubble	Anies's Fanbase	84
mohmahfud	Vice Presidential Candidate	78
gibran_tweet	Vice Presidential Candidate	62
idextratime	Football News Account	59

The data on Table 3 shows that the popular actors in the Presidential Candidate Debate conversation are involved in the 2024 Presidential Election contestation, starting from Anies, Prabowo, Ganjar, Muhaimin, Mahfud, and Gibran. Likewise, with the fanbase and supporters of each presidential and vice-presidential candidate.

The interesting thing in this finding is the football news account that emerged as the main actor in the presidential candidate debate conversation, such as @idextratime. This emphasizes that football fans cannot be separated from politics; this is also what underlies the decline in Ganjar Pranowo's electability because he was involved in the cancellation of the U20 World Cup in Indonesia and caused football fans to be angry and disappointed with Ganjar (Kompas, 2023). This is in line with Asyhary's (2024) findings; one of the factors in Ganjar Pranowo's declining electability was his statement rejecting Israel's involvement in the U-20 World Cup, which ultimately resulted in the cancellation of this event in Indonesia (Asyhary, 2024).



Figure 2. Tweet about Presidential Candidate Debate Debat Capres on Football News Account @idextratime

Closeness Centrality

Closeness centrality is to find out how close the relationship is between one actor and another actor, this centrality value ranges from 0-1 (Eriyanto, 2014). In the communication network context, closeness is assessed by how strong the interaction between the two is through interactive communication (Bakry, 2020).

Table 4. Closeness Centrality Related to Presidential Debate Conversations on Twitter

ACTOR	PROFILE	SCORE
mdy_asmara	Anies's Buzzer	1.0
gibran_tweet	Vice Presidential Candidate	1.0
idextratime	Football News Account	1.0
danhilanzar	Prabowo Success Team	1.0
kikysaputri	Komika	1.0
ismailfahmi	Media Activist	1.0
partaisocmed	Political and Social Account	1.0
abu_waras	Anies's Buzzer	1.0
detikcom	Press Account	1.0
kompascom	Press Account	1.0

In the 2024 General Election contestation, some things did not happen in previous elections. Standup comedians, better known as Komika, are among the Key Opinion Leaders in the Twitter world regarding political conversations. Komika Kiky Saputri (@kikysaputrii) is one of them.

Kiky Saputri is the comic whose tweets are most awaited. He is known to speak out about politics in Indonesia actively. Kiky Saputri is increasingly known for her programs that air on television and often roast officials. He also actively comments on various political issues on Twitter.

Kiky Saputri received much attention because she also commented on the results of the 2024 presidential candidate debate held on December 12, 2023. On her Twitter (X) account, Kiky Saputri made a tweet about the debate held by the three presidential candidates. Kiky tweeted that Anies Baswedan was the "King of Rhetoric." Kiky's tweet received very high engagement. This tweet also became news material for several fellow journalists, whose engagement also increased the news agency's name.

Kiky Saputri's tweet regarding Anies Baswedan received high engagement with 2.6 million views, 3,190 reposts (retweets), 278 quote retweets, 22,500 likes, and 1,078 bookmarks. The sentence tweeted by Kiky Saputri is as follows.

"Mr Anies Baswedan The Real King of Rhetoric. All the words are well structured and often rhyme. Every violation of the law must be punished. Because lawlessness can be contagious, and over time it can be considered right."

Kiky Saputri also tweeted about Vice Presidential Candidate Pair 3, Prof. Mahfud MD, regarding Prof. Mahfud's method in the debate. This tweet got 2 million views, 3,870 reposts, 310 quote retweets, 32,100 likes, and 733 bookmarks.

"Focused on Prof.'s attitude. Mahfud. "He is the oldest and most senior but seems to respect his interlocutor by several times using the phrase "Dear and ending with greetings." Thank you, sir, for teaching us how to debate politely and remain civilized," tweeted Kiky.

The following is Kiky Saputri's tweets regarding the presidential candidate debate that received the highest engagement on Twitter.



Figure 3. Kiky Saputri's Tweet with Highest Engagement about Presidential Candidate Debate

Betweenness Centrality

Betweenness centrality is an actor who acts as a message intermediary that connects actors and other groups (Bakry & Kusmayadi, 2021). Intermediary centrality is measured based on how many messages pass through him in the network.

Table 5. Intermediary Centrality Regarding Presidential Debate Conversations on Twitter

Actor	Profile	Score
detikcom	Press Account	224
mdy_asmara	Anies's Buzzer	156
kompascom	Press Account	149
tirta_cipeng	Media Activist	97
aesculapiusw	Account	91
idextratime	Football News Account	82
kompastv	Press Account	76
ilctalkshow	Press Account	56
kumparan	Press Account	50
chavez	Account	45

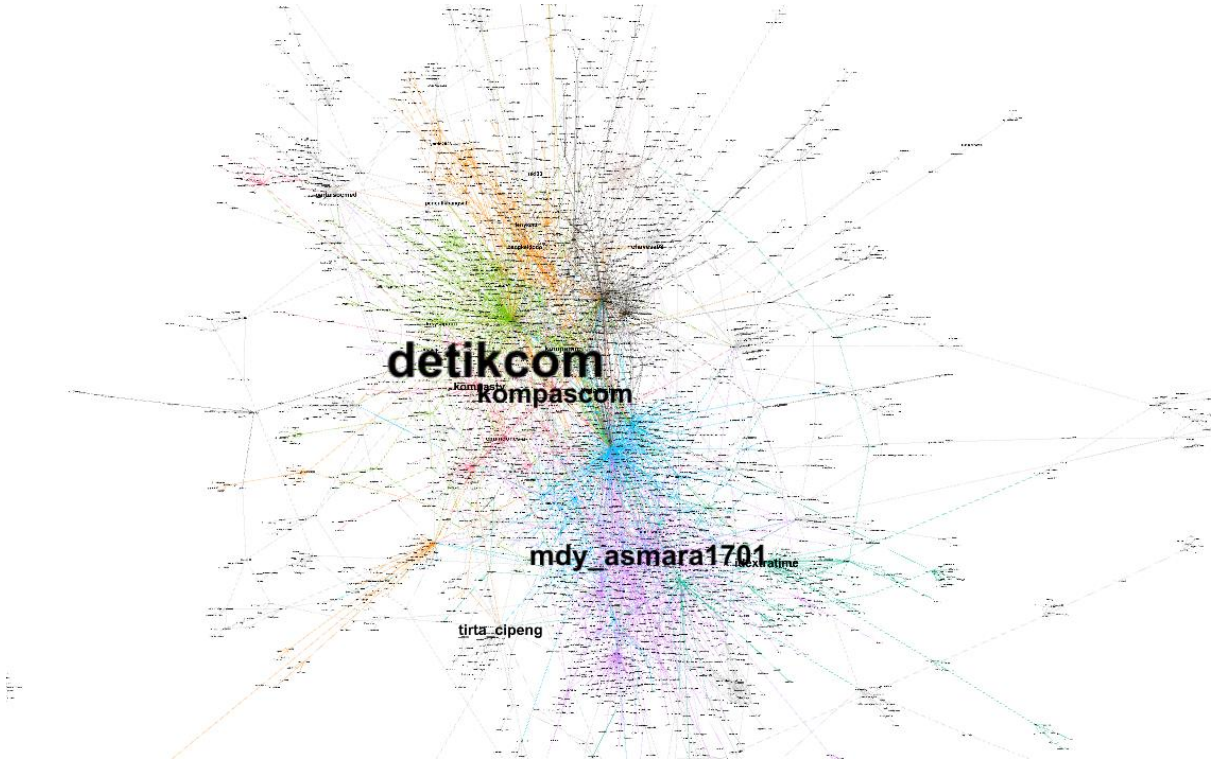


Figure 4. Sociogram of Mediating Actors about Presidential Debate Messages on Twitter



Figure 5. Tirta's tweet (@tirta_cipeng) about Presidential Candidate Debate

One of the influential intermediary actors is Dr. Tirta (tirta_cipeng) (Figure 5). He is a doctor, businessman, and influencer. As of July 2024, he had 586,100 followers. Tirta openly stated that he supported the presidential candidate pair and candidate number 1, Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar. Even though Tirta declared himself a supporter of candidate pair 1, he still reminded his followers that social media Twitter is an echo chamber. In Indonesian society, the term echo chamber is better known as bubble. According to Tirta's assessment, Twitter is the home of candidate pair 1; if there is a debate on Twitter, it only represents a small portion of voters in Indonesia.

Discussion

Based on the findings related to the keyword "presidential debate" in the 2024 General Election contest from start to finish on Twitter, researchers found that Anies Baswedan was the presidential candidate with the highest conversation. Then followed by Prabowo and Ganjar Pranowo. Several factors cause Anies to get the most conversations. One of them is that Anies Baswedan has the highest followers on Twitter (X), with 4.9 million followers. Anies is also diligent in sharing his activities on social media, Twitter (X), with an average view of hundreds of thousands of visitors. Regarding the debate moment, Anies also received the highest engagement due to several things, such as the social assistance plus program, continuing the ideas and programs of the presidential candidate pair number 3 (Ganjar Pranowo), the use of sign language in the opening of the debate, discussion of sexual violence against women, plans to create the Ministry of Culture.

The high conversation about Anies Baswedan on Twitter (X) is also inseparable from his supporters, both from Anies Buzzer to Anies Fanbase. Among them are @mdy_asmara, @olpproject, and @aniesbubble. In addition, the characteristics of Twitter (X) users who are, on average, highly educated make. However, Twitter must be recognized as a small echo chamber or bubble. Although Indonesia has 24.69 million active users, Twitter cannot represent Indonesian society. According to the We Are Social report, Twitter is ranked 6th as Indonesia's most widely used social media. WhatsApp still occupies the first position, followed by Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Telegram (We Are Social & Meltwater, 2024).

Indonesian people rarely use Twitter because they use social media to fill their free time, connect with friends and family, see what's trending, find inspiration related to something to buy or do, and create content (We Are Social & Meltwater, 2024). This is different from Twitter's function, which is a microblogging social media widely used to express the opinions of its users.

However, the decline in Twitter users in the 2024 Election contest is also inseparable from the 2019 General Election. In the 2019 election contest, the public felt that social media, especially Twitter, was unhealthy because of the many hoaxes on Twitter. In the end, many Twitter users muted certain words such as "General Election", "Election", "Presidential Candidate", "Vice Presidential Candidate", and words related to the general election. The impact in 2024 was that Twitter users decreased. However, in 2023, Twitter was confirmed as a social media place for opinions and became a social media with the most educated users (Newman et al., 2024). Twitter is dominated by users who are predominantly male. Then, it has users with higher education (bachelor's/master's/doctorate), as much as 41%, compared to other social media users (Newman et al., 2024). For the lowest education, Twitter users are also the fewest, namely only 11%. Social media users with the lowest education are found on Facebook and Tiktok, with a proportion of 17%. In addition, Twitter users also have other characteristics such as interest in news, politics and concerns about fake or hoaxes (Newman et al., 2024). Thus, Twitter is a social media that can be used as a reference when discussing politics.

The presence of Idextratime as an actor in the conversation network related to the presidential candidate debate proves that there is an anomaly in the conversation network related to politics. This has never happened before. Previous research viewed this phenomenon as a dynamic phenomenon. In other words, the influencers in this conversation are influencers who depend on momentum or are called event-dependent influencers (Liang & Lu, 2023).

Likewise, Kiky Saputri works as a comedian. She entered the conversation network related to the presidential candidate debate because she has roasted the political conditions in Indonesia several times. Kiky's popularity is also supported by her program on a private television station.

The findings in this study indicvent bate that accounts that usually do not appear in political conversations now appear thanks to the presidential candidate debate event for the 2024 General Election. Previous research referred to this phenomenon as political influencers that exist because of a particular event and the context is also specific (F. Liang & Lu, 2023).

This is in accordance with previous research which urges that political influencers can be narrowed in context to discover the role and changes in political conversations on social media. In the context of the presidential debate, Idextratime and Kiky Saputri can also be classified as issue influencers. Issue influencers are individuals who play a critical role in shaping public opinion related to political issues (J. L. Tang, 2023). Issue influencers can be defined as someone who can

significantly impact communication networks and make effective connections with other influencers to jointly take action and amplify social influence (J. L. Tang, 2023).

Based on the perspective of Connective Action Theory (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Mirbabaie et al., 2021), relationships and coordination between change activists are crucial to continuing activism and mobilizing more people. In addition, social network analysis is a suitable method for understanding the dynamics of digital activism. The social network approach emphasizes the relationships between actors and how the structural process of their relationships can be formed until the characteristics of the actors shape the dynamics of the network (Diani & McAdam, 2003; Monge & Contractor, 2003).

Previous research on network activism involved all participants (Ma & Zhang, 2022). However, previous research has not discussed coordination between influential nodes or actors much. Research in a non-political context states that collaborating with various influencers can produce synergy and a stronger effect in shaping audience choices (Vrontis et al., 2021).

In the political context, social media is used as a digital public sphere for digital activism. However, digital space has dangers, such as restrictions and surveillance (Yousef & Mokadi, 2024). Previous research has found that social media can be used as a strategic tool for digital diplomacy to foster better international relations (Alhossary et al., 2023).

This study provides several literature contributions to social media influencers, public opinion, and digital activism in Indonesia. This study presents a theoretical framework of the issue of influencer position related to political conversations ahead of the 2024 Election, especially regarding the presidential candidate debate. The term issue influencer in a political context arises because the influencers in this conversation are not political influencers.

Political influencers or Political Social Media Influencers can be defined as content creators who endorse political positions, social causes, or candidates through media or content produced by these influencers. Political influencers must be analyzed through a prism of political elements, platforms, and influence (M. Riedl et al., 2021; M. J. Riedl et al., 2023). In addition, political influencers can also be understood as users who are known on social media and build their own personal brand, regularly sharing self-produced content that discusses politics (Bause, 2021).

The characteristics of a political influencer's content are divided into two main topics. First, formal political topics, such as political processes, institutions, and actors. Second, political topics based on lifestyle, such as issues that the influencer thinks are important to many parties and have an impact on more people (Suuronen et al., 2022).

Based on their communication behavior, political influencers can be divided into two roles: initiator, who creates content and amplifier. Most political influencers play the second role, namely amplifying information. In other words, political influencers bridge the source of information with the public. Previous research has shown that individuals play a limited role in disseminating content. The mainstream media carries out the role of an initiator (F. Liang & Lu, 2023).

In addition to issue influencers, the phenomenon that occurred in idextratime, kikysaputri, and tirta cipeng can be categorized as event-based Political Influencers. Event-based political influencers can be understood as most political influencers depend on an event (F. Liang & Lu, 2023). In the context of political influencers, there are two roles based on the communication behavior they carry out: initiators who start content and reinforcements who spread information (F. Liang & Lu, 2023). Previous research states that most political influencers are amplifiers in spreading information. In other words, political influencers bridge information sources and the general public (F. Liang & Lu, 2023).Like other influencers, some things must be highlighted from an influencer's content. Political influencers are likened to micro-influencers who focus on displaying authentic, open, and honest content. Political influencers do this to build differentiation from the content they create compared to mainstream media (Sehl & Schützeneder, 2023). With this differentiation, the impact is to influence public opinion.

Influencers will only succeed if they know how to surf the algorithms' recommendations created on each platform (Duffy & Meisner, 2023). Influencers' success in influencing their followers must be distinct from the platform they use. Simply put, the platform used by influencers can determine their influence (Jhaver et al., 2021). Unfortunately, the measurement of influencer influence varies widely. It is measured by the number of followers, information diffusion,

engagement, and the amount of income they generate, not by their effectiveness in changing public opinion. Influencers, whether political influencers or not, are faced with various issues related to ethics, such as honesty, trustworthiness, credibility, and security (Abidin et al., 2020; Jhaver et al., 2021).

Previous studies have found that connective action has shown the effectiveness of influential actors in mobilizing and motivating other users. However, many influencers are identified based on the number of their followers, social status, and political influencers (Dash et al., 2022; Janssen et al., 2022; Mirbabaie et al., 2021).

It should be noted that the influence of opinion leaders is only sometimes stable (Cha et al., 2010; H. Liang & Lee, 2023). In addition, influencers can participate in political issues even though they come from different backgrounds, such as fashion and sports. This study proves that influencers and accounts that are not related to a political issue can be potential opinion leaders in developing issues in communication networks.

This study also proves that the power of influencers cannot be categorized only by how many followers they have. Influencers are about something other than how much content is retweeted or liked. Moreover, the quote retweets made by Twitter users need to be considered as the power of the influencer. How much engagement they get also does not guarantee that the influencer can significantly impact a political issue because every account can amplify political issues (Bakshy et al., 2011; W. Tang & Iyengar, 2011; Tyler et al., 2022).

This study is in line with previous studies that in political conversations, there must be press accounts and political influencers (Dash et al., 2022; Harris et al., 2023; Suuronen et al., 2022; Woolley, 2022). However, an exciting finding in this study is that there are football accounts that become issue influencers related to the presidential debate conversation. The opinions made by football accounts can then be successfully disseminated from their followers, football lovers, to accounts that are not their followers. Issue influencers with an extensive network size and a high level of liking for tweets to be retweeted or liked.

Users who have influence often become the guardians of a conversation by creating authentic content. This content then triggers the spread of information with other accounts related to the same issue (Mirbabaie et al., 2021). Besides, quote retweet is a strategy that influencers can use to join a political issue. Previous research found that rationing is an innovative strategy influencer can use to involve themselves in mainstream political media. Rationing occurs when replies get more likes than original posts on social media. Influencers are not only news anchors or political commentators but can interpret political discourse for their followers (Harris et al., 2023).

In the future, more social media influencers from various backgrounds and influencer industries are expected to be involved in political issues. No matter how small the impact of an influencer, their opinion can significantly influence the formation of public opinion. In addition, it must be realized that politics influences all aspects of life. This must be echoed to all Indonesian people, not only in the online realm on Twitter but also on other social media, such as offline realms. In addition, the many conversations about politics on social media are one of Indonesia's implementations of political education.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the dynamics of conversations on Twitter during the televised debate of Indonesian presidential candidates for the 2024 General Election. The focus of this study is the presidential debate during the campaign period. With social network analysis, this study reveals the issues, actors, and network relationships in conversations about the presidential debate on Twitter. An interesting finding in this study is that the influential actors in this conversation are event-based political influencers. It is a good sign of increased political participation from the public.

This study has limitations, such as focusing on the conversation only during the presidential candidate debate in the 2024 election on Twitter. Further research is expected to examine conversations related to politics in Indonesia on platforms other than Twitter. Besides, this study only focuses on the influential actors or influencers of this conversation. Further research can examine how structural mechanisms related to outdegree activity and indegree popularity can maintain influencer communication networks. It is hoped to examine influencers who fall into the nano influencer category and their

strength in conversations related to politics.

In the context of politics, researchers cannot guess when an influencer issue will emerge and how specific an issue influencer's power is. Further research can be conducted qualitatively with in-depth interviews to determine the motives of issue influencers involved in a political conversation. Further research is also expected to interview followers of issue influencers regarding their perceptions of the issues echoed by the issue influencer.

This study has implications for campaign practitioners, reflecting on the current political conditions in Indonesia, social media influencers related to politics, both issues and political influencers, cannot be underestimated. There are positive and negative sides to influencers who talk about politics. Further research will highlight influencers' adverse effects and potential on political engagement.

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