Analysis of Political Polarization Discourse on Social Media Ahead of the 2024 Election

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Abstract. This study intends to investigate the polarizing discourse that has developed on social media before the 2024 elections. This study used a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach, data retrieval in research derived from digital text mining data using WordStat to translate the data clearly by grouping topics, word frequency, and text tweets. The results of this study indicate that political polarization can take on a variety of shapes. The results of the frequency-intensity analysis divide the form of polarization into the fragmentation of support groups. The study shows that the topic produces an identity group based on the condition of the sentiment and issues that develop, and the categorization of tweets produces a form of political polarization that is not only divided into two large patterns but also based on the category that was made. These results contribute to the study of political polarization discourse, particularly in analyzing digital data on social media. They fill a research gap on political polarization in the virtual sphere.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis · Political Polarization · Social Media · Elections

1 Introduction

In the age of new media, when the media has become a place where information can be shared, the audience is no longer just a passive receiver of the information that is given to them. The media does not limit itself to merely informing but also engages the public in constructing discourse within the context of democratization [1]. Democracy is the same thing as the development of public space as a place for mediation between the public and the government, where the public is the private manager of public opinion [2]. The internet and new media have the potential to produce a political discourse that can polarize the public [3].

Polarization is characterized by sociocultural developments that retard the public's response to political issues. Polarization results from a solid devotion to a culture, ideology, or candidate that can increase the division between groups [4]. Polarization can cause a group to seek information that validates their beliefs and rejects information that contradicts their understanding, such as motivated reasoning theory. In addition, polarization might be the outcome of a shift in the framing of political communication

brought about by the speech of discussion - critical discourse in the virtual public sphere [5].

The concept of a virtual sphere is one of the distinguishing features of traditional media and new media adaptations, such as social media with interaction columns. So that the idea of a "virtual public sphere" [1] can be established, the public can respond, criticize, and even send in data. Political polarization on social media can result from problems that gain prominence on social media, hence dividing public opinion [4]. 68% of people trust information from social media as a reference source. In 2017, it was predicted that there were 132.7 million internet users in Indonesia, with 92 million using social media [6].

Social media has been used in Indonesia to argue and exchange opinions [7]. Social media is vital in life, including political determination and dialogue [8]. Political polarization has indeed occurred in Indonesia's electoral process and strengthened at the regional level. Some voters in these elections seem to be split into two camps that do not agree on anything [9]. Multiple variables, including the cultural component, influence the discourse of political polarization in Indonesia. In addition, there are several other causes of political polarization in Indonesia, ranging from the identity of the candidate to the character and ideology of the party, which can also be the cause of the public being polarized in providing support, where the public will choose based on the background of the party that delegates the candidate to the leader.

In recent years, the concept of the virtual sphere has been examined, such as the virtual sphere conversation in research conducted by Papacharissi [3], which demonstrates the existence of new public spaces produced by the internet and technology directed toward political conversations. Virtual sphere discourse can strengthen democracy and facilitate democratic discussion and the exchange of ideas and perspectives. Other research indicates that involvement and contact in the virtual realm result from data transfers geared toward economic profit [10]. In line with previous research, this study demonstrates that the internet is a site for virtual engagement in reaction to reality [1]. Virtual sphere discourse can strengthen democracy and facilitate democratic discussion and the exchange of ideas and perspectives. Other research indicates that involvement and contact in the virtual realm result from data transfer geared towards economic profit. In line with previous research, this study demonstrates that the internet is a site for virtual engagement in reaction to reality.

2   Overview of Literature

Habermas first developed the concept of the public sphere in 1962 with the perspective that it should highlight rational characteristics and the freedom of the people to express their ideas and concepts [11]. Habermas (1987: 200) explains that each person has the same and equal right to enter the public sphere with the guarantee of freedom and without fear of pressure from any party [12]. According to Habermas' concept of the public sphere, the public sphere was constructed by the bourgeoisie against the regulatory structure of civil society and governmental regulation [13]. Currently, the public sphere is adapting to the emergence of the internet as a new medium to reflect the reality of the virtual sphere. The public is open to having dialogues [14], as social media significantly shares progressive views and ideas more broadly and diversely.

Traditional media, such as television, radio, and conventional publishing media, such as newspapers, do not include the virtual domain. The virtual sphere provides a forum for the public to discover new means of interaction and to discuss political, economic, and social issues [1]. Fragmentation of dialogue and polarization are consequences of chronic critique in virtual space [10]. One virtual public space provides a forum for political discourse and can strengthen democracy [3]. The efficiency of the virtual sphere can also be affected by an institution's or government's policies because each government has distinct formal and unwritten regulations [15].

3   Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach [16] by analyzing text using WordStat tools [17]. The function of WordStat as qualitative data analysis software is to interpret social media cloud data. Collecting data from October to December of 2022. Data collection using the search terms "Anies Baswedan," "Ganjar Pranowo," and "Prabowo Subianto." By adopting the viewpoint of [18], we employ Wordstat to analyze text-mining data. Wordstat facilitates data interpretation in qualitative research by categorizing topics, word frequency, and tweet text. This strategy is compatible with a virtual sphere approach based on the translation and interpretation of Wordstat data.

4   Result and Discussion

4.1   Positive and Negative Sentence Frequency Analysis

Our study shows the fragmentation of political perspectives influences political polarization on social media. The study revealed the frequency with which the names Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, and Prabowo Subianto were mentioned. Anies Baswedan has a high positive frequency but a dominant negative frequency of 100, whereas Ganjar Pranowo has both a low positive and negative frequency, see Fig. 1. These findings imply that the frequency of positive and negative phrases builds the discourse of political polarization [19], with social media playing a significant role in establishing political discourse.

The results indicate a communication pattern that leads to a form of polarization based on the frequency intensity of the three names mentioned, with a significant positive frequency for Prabowo Subianto and a dominantly negative frequency for Anies Baswedan. According to Nasrullah [1] explain that polarization cannot be demonstrated, the intensity of positive and negative social media frequency reveals polarization. According to Gustomy [9], political polarisation can result from strengthening positive and negative public opinion dominance, which can polarise two sides. Positive and negative discourses become fragmented based on the public's disposition towards each name. Positive sentences are associated with the desire to select the future president, and each has its own words, such as "Calon Presiden," "Presiden RI," and "Jadi Presiden," as well as varying intensities. Negative statements are based on the challenges of each individual's name and preferences. It has the potential to polarize Indonesian society based on their political opinions regarding every candidate they support or oppose.
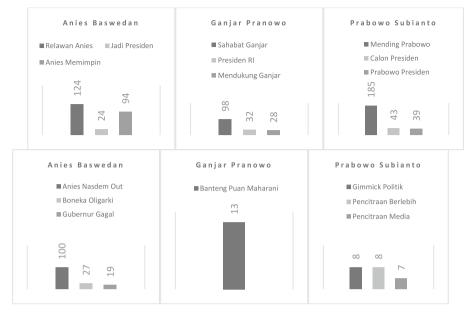
Fig. 1. Positive and Negative Sentence Frequencies

4.2 Topic Analysis

The classification of themes about Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, and Prabowo Subianto that came from using categorized keywords revealed an exchange of ideas and political viewpoints. These data imply that polarizing discourse contacts constitute the groups of Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, and Prabowo Subianto, as determined by Susanti's [20] conclusion that identity groups influence interactions. See Table 1, for the themes and keywords associated with each name. The resultant topic also includes a frequency, depending on the number of tweets and retweets containing the topic's keywords.

Keyword-based topic analysis reveals that polarization shapes images and public opinion. Referring to Jati [21], political polarization can be established based on identity background. These findings imply that identity background influences subjects that are the outcome of the management of the developing issue of identity. Several elements, such as identity, reputation for performance in prior leadership, philosophy, and policies of the supporting party, might contribute to the formation of political division. The issue of discussion regarding Anies Baswedan is the public's dissatisfaction with his leadership as governor of DKI Jakarta and the party's choice to declare Anies Baswedan's candidacy as a presidential candidate with a distinct philosophy from the party. While Ganjar Pranowo garnered public acclaim for his leadership of Central Java, the frequency of positive criticism of Ganjar Pranowo's accomplishments was greater than that of the other two.

Meanwhile, Prabowo Subianto's image as an electable presidential contender has improved. Annas [4] that strengthening public issues can lead to political polarization,

Table 1. Topics Formed

	Topic	Keyword	Coherence	Eigenvalue	Freq
Anies Baswedan	Tenggelamkan Nasdem	Tenggelamkananiesnasdem; Goodbyenasdemanies; Aniesgabenerpembohong;	0,647	10,36	1419
	Gubernur DKI Jakarta	Berhasil; Anies Boneka Oligarki; Kursi Gubernur DKI; Kursi Presiden Ri;	0,698	11,18	722
Ganjar Pranowo	Merapatkan	Mendukung; Kegiatan; Sahabatganjar; Untuk; Ganjarpranowo; Sahabat; Mendatang; Periode;Figur;	0,653	6,97	1439
	Gubernur Jawa Tengah	Gubernur Jateng; Diwakili Puan Maharani; Fokus Menjadi Gubernur Jawa Tengah; Simbol Banteng; Pelayanan Publik;	0,703	6,89	299
Prabowo Subianto	Posisi	Posisi; Elektabilitas; Mendingprabowo; Capres; Jadi Presiden;	0,783	9,89	664
	Elektabilitas	Prabowo Subianto; Calon Presiden; Partai Gerindra; Elektabilitas Tinggi;	0,980	10,29	119

this is in line with the results of this study, which show that political polarization is caused by how public opinion shapes the topic of a developing problem and that the issue can be a firm commitment that gives the community its identity, which in turn affects the polarization of society.

4.3 Tweet and Retweet Analysis

Categories of tweets produce a political polarization that is not solely focused on positive and negative fragmentation. The public has its approach to social media usage. Takikawa [22] observed that the political orientation of each Twitter user is reflected in their tweet copy. This conclusion examines how tweets and retweets from Twitter users might be categorized. The examination of tweet and retweet findings is tagged as Support, Interactivity and self-expression, Branding and Community, and Polarized and In-Group, see Table 2. Each name in the Interactivity and Self-Expression category includes the tweet category.

This study demonstrates that the classification of texts dictates the limits of interpersonal connections. Himelboim [23] generates an information flow network when people and groups tweet, retweet, and reply. According to these findings, the information network categorizes the text. We divide the Support tweets category into compelling tweets

Table 2. Tweet Category Analysis

Tweet	Retweet	Followers	Category
RT @An_Kiiim: Yang Ingin Pak Anies Baswedan jadi Presiden RI 2024, kasih tanda ❤https://t.co/Mkkbhvu G06	755	821	Support
RT @ChusnulCh: Anies adalah Gubernur 0 persen, yang cuma indah di kata-kata dan rencana.Setuju dengan Penyataan pak @gembong_warsono	461	1882	Interactivity and Self-Expression
Loyalitas tanpa batas…Dukungan Ulama, Tetua Adat serta para Tokoh di Sumbar untuk Pak Ganjar Pranowo. https://t.co/HEvDqko1JR	15	3572	Interactivity and Self-Expression
Mas Ganjar Pranowo adalah pilihan terbaik untuk meneruskan kerja nyata Pak Jokowi setelah 2024.Selain tidak pernah melakukan politisasi agama dan selalu berkomitmen menjaga kebhinekaan Indonesia, kinerjanya juga sudah teruji di Jawa Tengah. https://t.co/8NXpF7m8Ci	7	9862	Branding and Community
Krn partai pendukungnya pun dipimpin Pak Prabowo, bukan partai mak banteng, yg mendukung krn kepentingan pribadi.. https://t.co/EKBf0Ut1BK	5	1521	Polarized and in-group
@OposisiCerdas Makin kesini makin aneh pak Prabowo, apa gak pernah mendengar keluhan rakyatnya ya	2	918	Interactivity and Self-Expression

describing a support type. Interactivity and self-expression According to Smith [24], the retrieval and distribution of messages are factors in online interaction. Interactivity and Self-Expression As a form of interaction and self-expression of social media users demonstrating interest in a topic, the retrieval and distribution of messages factors in online exchange. The Branding and Community category relates to tweets rebranding a person or organization. In contrast, the Polarized and in-group category focuses on tweets that establish a group through praise and criticism. By tweet category, examining these findings examined the emerging form of polarisation on social media.

5   Conclusion

This study found that political polarisation is created through social media interactions. In the discourse of presidential candidates in the 2024 elections, positive sentences tend to support Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, and Prabowo Subianto, but negative sentences tend to take the shape of thoughts on negative issues that develop about each name. In addition, the topic generates a form of public sentiment based on differing perspectives regarding the performance and contributions of each participant. The classification of tweets according to categories, namely Support, Interactivity and Self-Expression, Branding and Community, and Polarized and in-group demonstrates that political polarisation develops in various ways, depending on the user's perspective. This study demonstrates that Twitter has become a virtual venue for public discourse ahead of the 2024 elections. However, our study was constrained by the early and brief data retrieval period. Thus, subsequent studies can utilize data collected over a longer time and closer to the 2024 elections to enhance data coverage.

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