Engaging democracy or reinforcing base? A thematic analysis of Desak Anies

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ABSTRACT

Background: Introduction: In the 2024 election, Anies Baswedan used YouTube as a platform to live-stream his campaign titled 'Desak Anies,' with an open discussion. The campaign aimed to restore democracy and bring political discourse to the public. **Purpose:** This research mapped the interactions of netizens in the comment section of the live-streamed "Desak Anies" broadcast on his official YouTube channel. Methods: It employed thematic analysis. Data was collected using the 'Google Apps Script' tool, capturing YouTube comments from 13 episodes of 'Desak Anies.' The dataset included only direct comments, excluding replies, with a total of 6,996 comments. **Result:** The comments were mapped into three main themes: supportive comments, which were the most numerous; hateful comments, which were the fewest; and neutral. **Conclusion:** This study found a large number of supportive comments, with minimal opposition, indicating that "Desak Anies" strengthened Anies Baswedan's existing support base but failed to attract new supporters. Thus, it creates the echo chamber effect and filters bubbles, preventing the campaign content from reaching broader viewers. **Implications:** Social media campaigns, such as "Desak Anies", could potentially engage audiences. However, they often reinforce existing political beliefs, creating echo chambers that limit democratic discourse. Despite the campaign's intention to foster political engagement, it strengthens existing support for Anies Baswedan and hinders the outreach to undecided or opposing voters. This suggests that digital platforms may inadvertently stifle true democratic deliberation by limiting exposure to diverse perspectives.

Keywords: 2024 election; desak Anies; thematic analysis; filter bubble; echo chamber

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a part of ongoing research on the role of social media in Indonesia's democracy. The result of the election, with the victory of candidate pair 02 in a single round, left different impressions among the supporters of each candidate pair. Some felt happy, while others were sad; some expressed relief, while others conveyed disappointment. Based on a survey on public satisfaction in the 2024 election conducted on April 7-9, 2024, LSI reported that 59% of voters for candidate pair 01, Anies-Muhaimin, expressed dissatisfaction with the 2024 election results, and so did 67% voters for candidate pair 03, Ganjar-Mahfud. On the other hand, 86% of them for the elected president and vice president pair, Prabowo-Gibran, stated that they were satisfied with the 2024 election results (Rahayu, 2024).

The frustration of the losing side led some of them to claim that this year's election failed to meet democratic goals. In fact, the success of an election is crucial for the quality and sustainability of a country's democracy, as elections serve as a fundamental mechanism for political trust and citizen engagement. When elections are perceived as free and fair, they can enhance the sense of legitimacy in the democratic process and build greater public satisfaction with democracy (Daoust & Nadeau, 2023).

The success of elections in the digital age also increasingly hinges on the effective utilization of digital platforms. These platforms have transformed political campaign strategies worldwide by enabling direct interaction between political actors and voters. This shift facilitates more personalized and emotionally resonant campaign experiences (Minaeva, 2024). Social media platforms, in particular, build interactive communication. They allow political candidates to engage directly with the public and even shape voter opinions (Moekahar et al., 2022; Suryasuciramdhan et al., 2024).

In addition, several conceptual frameworks promote the significance of social media platforms in political contexts. One such concept is the Networked Public Sphere, which supports the transformative capacity of digital platforms in democratizing the dissemination of information. Social media has greatly expanded public access to political information and enhanced civic engagement in political processes. These platforms offer inclusive spaces for individuals to engage in political dialogue, organize collective actions, and amplify diverse voices (Sjoraida et al., 2024).

The concept of virality highlights social media's capacity to disseminate information rapidly and engage a wide audience. Viral content can substantially enhance a candidate's visibility and interaction with the electorate. For example, during the 2019 Indonesian presidential election, viral social media campaigns enabled candidates such as Jokowi-Amin to reach a broad audience (Damayanti et al., 2021).

This study seeks to challenge the perceived effectiveness of social media as a political campaign tool by shifting the

focus to how audiences receive and interpret messages the political actors convey, rather than solely examining the strategies employed by the messengers. The overarching framework guiding this analysis will be further elaborated in the discussion section. This research adopts a critical paradigm, which studies power structures, social inequality, and transformative change (Cranton, 2015).

First and foremost, the reception of political messages via digital platforms is supported by several theoretical frameworks. Firstly, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), proposed by social psychologists Richard Petty and John Cacioppo, (Littlejohn et al., 2017). This framework offers a comprehensive understanding of how individuals process persuasive messages. ELM identifies two routes of persuasion. Firstly, the central route involves careful consideration of message content, requiring motivation and focus to process the information. In contrast, the peripheral route relies on superficial cues such as the source's attractiveness rather than message substance (Schumann et al., 2019; Sibona & Cummings, 2017; Vaughan-Johnston et al., 2022).

Another concept that supports the reception of political messages is Parasocial Interaction (PSI), introduced by Donald Horton and Richard Wohl (Merskin, 2020). It refers to the one-sided, illusionary relationships individuals form with public figures. This concept has become significant in the context of political communication, particularly as social media platforms facilitate the personalization

of politics. Through PSI, individuals develop imagined connections with political figures, enhancing their emotional engagement and influence in the political sphere.

The next concepts are Selective Attention and Selective Exposure. It explains how audiences engage with political messages. Selective Attention refers to the tendency of individuals to focus on specific information sources while ignoring others, thereby shaping their perception of messages (McLeod, 2023; Murphy et al., 2016). This tendency contributes to the formation of Echo Chambers, where individuals consume information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs.

Similarly, Selective Exposure, as explained by Oh et al. (2024) and Festinger (1957), posits that individuals prefer information that reinforces their existing perspectives while avoiding contradictory content. The proliferation of digital media has amplified opportunities for selective exposure, which allows users to curate political content aligned with their beliefs (Burghartswieser & Rothmund, 2021; Dylko, 2016). This environment enhances ideological selectivity, further contributing to the development of echo chambers (Dylko, 2016). The psychological mechanisms underlying echo chambers are rooted in both selective attention and selective exposure, creating environments where audiences are exposed to information that confirms their existing beliefs.

Furthermore, these concepts contribute to theories and online phenomena that can limit or even cancel the use of social media as

a prominent tool in online campaigns. First, the Limited Effects Model in social media platforms is a concept that is worth its place in this paper. It stated that the use of social media platforms allows campaigns to engage with voters in a personalized manner, often through content that agrees with their existing political views (Park et al., 2020). It is futile to make a democratic room only for facilitating the room for supporters to support each other's beliefs and to leave the other beliefs little to no room for changing what is already believed.

The echo chamber effect itself refers to environments where individuals are predominantly exposed to information corresponding to their pre-existing beliefs. The concept of Selective Attention provides a foundational understanding of how echo chambers form. Meanwhile, Selective Exposure is also instrumental in explaining the psychological underpinnings of echo chambers. The Echo Chamber effect that occurred due to social media algorithms is also supported by another concept, Filter Bubbles. It describes a digital phenomenon where algorithmic content curation on social media platforms creates personalized information and gains experiences that can limit exposure to diverse viewpoints. The filter bubble effect is driven by algorithms that recommend content aligning with users' past preferences, hence exposing the users to more content that strengthens their existing political beliefs (Philips et al., 2024).

YouTube, as one of the social media platforms, has emerged as a prominent tool for political campaigns, especially in Indonesia. A 2022 survey by Populix revealed that YouTube is the most widely accessed social media platform in the country, with 94% of users engaging with it—outperforming other platforms in user activity (Anika et al., 2023). This extensive reach positions YouTube as a strategic medium for political communication and campaigning.

The interactive nature of YouTube is further affirmed by its comment section, a space for social interaction. McMillan and Hwang (2002) argue that digital media environments offer users broad content and sophisticated navigational tools. Social media platforms, with features like comment sections, exemplify how these tools raise communication and engagement among users. These interactive spaces promote user interaction in shaping media environments (McMillan & Hwang, 2002). Talukder's analysis of YouTube comments on viral videos demonstrates the diversity of interactions, ranging from informative discussions to emotional expressions, which reinforces McMillan's conceptualization of media as a platform for social engagement where users share knowledge, emotions, and cultural insights (Talukder, 2023). Building on this theoretical background, this study focuses on the "Desak Anies" campaign as a case study of digital political mobilization in Indonesia.

This case study examines the presidential campaign of Anies Baswedan, a former governor of Jakarta. Initially running as an independent candidate, Anies later received backing from the NasDem Party (Anom et al., 2024; Dewa

et al., 2024). His campaign utilized traditional and digital media to communicate his political vision and gain public support. One notable aspect of his strategy was the live-streamed YouTube campaign series, "Desak Anies".

"Desak Anies," a discussion program featuring Anies Baswedan, targets young voters by addressing issues relevant to the 2024 election (Prasetyo, 2024). Broadcast live on his official YouTube channel, "Anies Rasyid Baswedan," the series comprises episodes named after the locations where they were recorded. By integrating interactive engagement through YouTube's platform, "Desak Anies" exemplifies the strategic use of digital media in contemporary political campaigning.

"Desak Anies" promotes a new campaign model by increasing active public participation, especially from Generation Z, while gradually building their political engagement (Wahyudi & Firdaus, 2024). According to Maspul (2024), this campaign challenges traditional top-down campaign approaches and rebuilds a democratic government by involving the people in decision-making. Besides, the researcher also chose 'Desak Anies' as it is a political campaign series broadcast live and recorded.

Similar research that discussed social media platforms in political campaigns has been conducted before, one of which is the Social Media Analytics in Political Campaign Strategies (Sheikh, 2024). This research explores the relationship between social media and politics, focusing on the impact of digital media on political communication

and engagement. The examined literature encompasses diverse dimensions, including the logic of connective action in contentious politics, the role of social media during uprisings, and the evolving landscape of election campaigns with platforms like Twitter. Moreover, Akbar et al. (2020) suggest that in the 2020 United States presidential election, Joe Biden and Donald Trump were exposed to social media political campaigns on Twitter. The research found that the role of social media in political campaigns has become an important part of it and is an effective means of smoothing the campaign process and producing tangible results (Akbar et al., 2021). Similar research was conducted by Taimur Khan et al. (2023) to identify several crucial factors that influence how voters make decisions during elections. One of the key findings of this study is the pivotal role that political campaigns play in increasing voter awareness and information.

Indonesian political endeavors using social media are getting more massive each and every year. The latest presidential election has also opened many research opportunities for academics to process. Ahead of the impending 2024 Presidential Election, the topic of presidential candidates was frequently debated in all Indonesian media. Ganjar Pranowo and Anies Baswedan were political actors who planned to run in the 2024 presidential election. Both of them utilized Twitter to foster political discussion while expanding their fame (Fatikha & Suranto, 2024). The similarities will be used as a literature review for the author in making

this manuscript.

This analysis underscores the transformative role of digital platforms in shaping political campaigns by fostering direct voter interaction and facilitating personalized communication strategies. While much of the existing literature has highlighted the positive impact of social media in political campaigns, this study critically examines its limitations. Specifically, it explores how phenomena such as echo chambers, filter bubbles, and selective exposure can undermine authentic political engagement, despite the technological affordances of these platforms.

RESEARCH METHODS

Data was retrieved from the comments section of the live recording of the "Desak Anies" campaign event that aired on Anies Baswedan's YouTube channel during the campaign period. Of all the "Desak Anies" events, the researchers included 13 episodes broadcast with different regional backgrounds.

The researchers successfully mapped out netizen comments from the comment sections of the episodes. The dataset included all comments from each episode accessible after the live broadcast. This data was collected on February 20, 2024, before they were removed from the live event history when authors re-visited the channel on July 30, 2024.

Figure 1 shows the data collection process, using the web scraping method "Google Apps Script", allowing the researchers to retrieve YouTube comment data. The limitation applied to the collected dataset was that the researchers only included comments from the "Desak Anies" event, whose live broadcast history was saved on the Anies Baswedan YouTube channel. After the dataset was compiled, data cleaning was conducted to focus the research further. After the first researcher used "Google Apps Script" to collect data, the data was then cleaned by removing reply comments, likes, and the time the comments were made and edited, leaving only initial comments for the authors focus on. As a result, the total data obtained after the limitations amounted to 6,996 comments. The collected and cleaned dataset would be the sole main focus of the research, emphasizing thematic analysis and discussions on theme classifications among the authors and other significant theories.

In this study, the researchers employed thematic analysis, a method with the primary goal of separating, mapping, and summarizing the data, followed by identifying recurring themes and patterns from the data (Nairn & Matthews, 2024; Sanjaya & Nasvian, 2024). Thematic analysis was chosen because it simplified the research process, particularly in identifying themes from the collected data. The separation and summary of the identified data then served as a reference for the researcher in the results and discussion sections.

The next stage in the pre-processing phase was carried out in six steps according to Nowell et al. (2017): (1) data familiarization, (2)
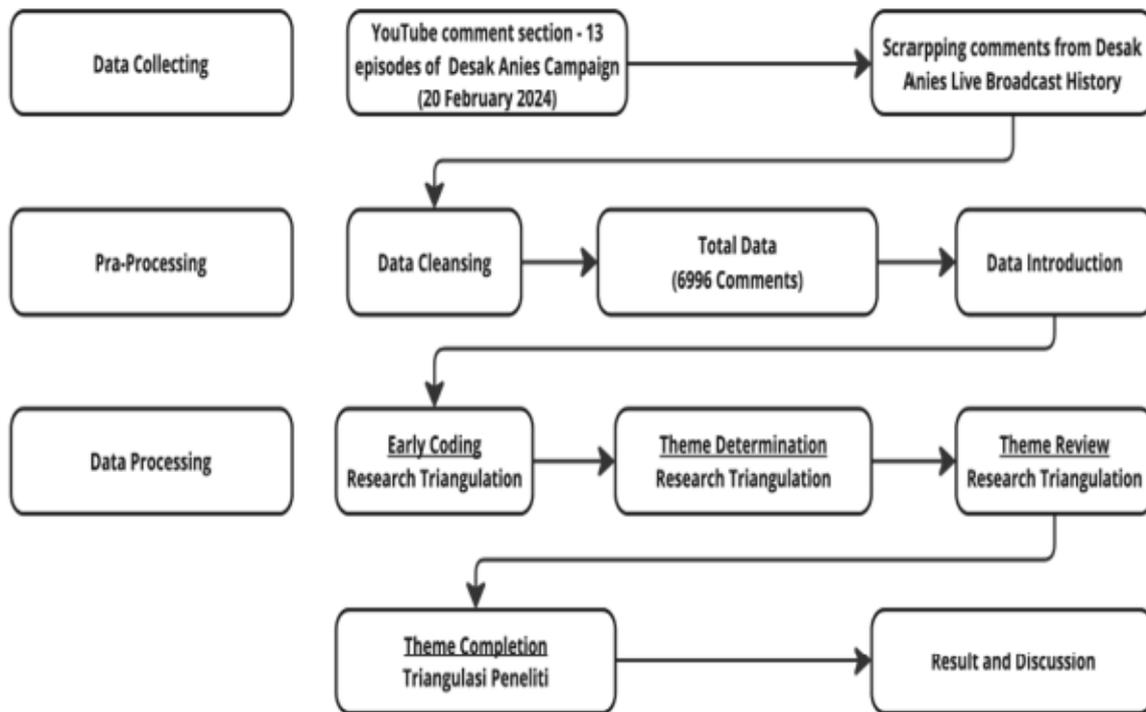
Source: Research Processed Results, 2024
Figure 1 Research Methods

initial coding, (3) identifying relevant themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) refining themes, and (6) describing and analyzing the results. Research triangulation was conducted in the second to fourth stages. In the initial coding and reviewing themes, the researchers conducted discussions about the themes to be shared as part of investigator triangulation. This type of triangulation involves multiple researchers or observers in the study to reduce individual bias (Denzin et al., 2024). By having different investigators analyze the data, the study can benefit from varied perspectives, which can lead to more credible findings (Denzin et al., 2024). These stages involved identifying relevant keywords and/or phrases for mapping.

Furthermore, the theoretical triangulation was also conducted, where the researchers employed several theories and perspectives to interpret the data. This triangulation could explore various dimensions of the data (Denzin et al., 2024).

The researchers then processed the cleaned data and separated them into predetermined themes. The grouping by the first researcher was completed manually for several months, resulting in four main comment classifications and a total of 20 sub-branches of classification. During the classification process, the researchers had back-and-forth discussions to avoid bias in the processed data. All comment divisions were then discussed in the next section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher mapped out netizen comments in the comment section of the live-streamed 'Desak Anies'. A total of 6,990 data points were collected and categorized into 4 themes: Support for Anies, Hate Anies, Neutral, and Unusable Data. Unusable data contains empty comments that cannot be studied, such as emojis or symbols, that do not show any tendency towards any candidates. The researchers included comments that belonged to the other three categories and agreed to be classified as support for any candidate pairs. The other unusable comments were those containing advertising links and content links completely unrelated to the campaign. The division of the comments into themes was referred to as branches, and the division of the branches belonged to sub-branches.

In this section, the researchers describe the findings from the three themes. The first theme discusses comments in support of Anies,

which are the highest, totaling 5,530 comments or 79.05% of the total data. The support theme is divided into 3 branches, with a total of 15 sub-branches. The second theme discusses comments against Anies, which are the fewest, totaling only 161 comments or 2.3% of the total comments, and are divided into four branches. Lastly, a total of 1,154 comments or 16.4% belong to neutral, which are further divided into two branches, with one of the branches divided into two sub-branches. The first theme to be discussed is the comments that support Anies.

Throughout all 13 episodes from 13 different regions, the results were consistent. No region or episode of Desak Anies garnered a higher number of negative comments compared to positive ones. Therefore, the author decided to classify the comments based on sentiment rather than region.

Figure 2 shows that the majority of netizens' comments on the 'Desak Anies' event are in support of Anies Baswedan, with a total of 5,530
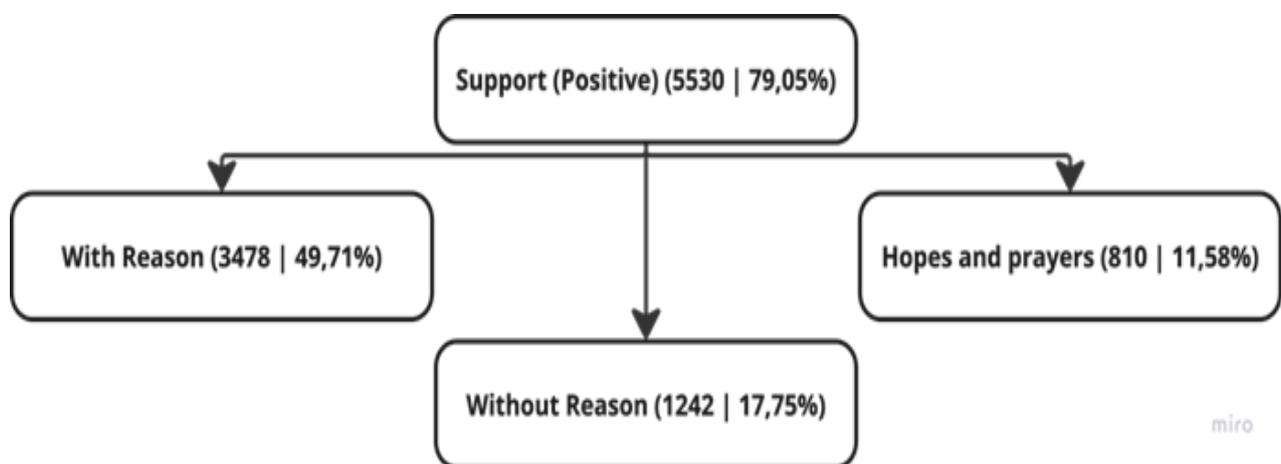
Source: Research Processed Results, 2024
Figure 2 Supportive Comment Data Map

comments out of 6,996 (79.05%). This figure suggests that the netizens watching 'Desak Anies' express their support for the values and goals promoted in the campaign, not only because of the new campaign concept offered but also due to many other aspects.

The researchers also mapped the branches from the support theme, which were generally divided into three branches: Reasoned Support, with a total of 3,478 comments; Unreasoned Support, with 1,242 comments; and Prayers and Hopes, with 810 comments. The division allowed the researchers to distinguish between partisan supporters (unreasoned Supportive Comments) and active commentators (reasoned Supportive Comments). The researcher separated reasonable and unreasonable comments simply by identifying the reasons for the support given. Reasonable Supportive Comments were followed by reasons. However, if the comments only contained support, without any reasons, they were considered unreasonable and included in the appropriate classification. Meanwhile, the theme hope and prayer refers to the support given in the form of expectation and prayer expressed for the goodness of Anies and his pair, Muhaimin.

The active audience support branch, which included 3,478 comments, accounted for almost 50% of the total comments. The researcher's mapping of active audience comments resulted in ten distinct sub-branches, each focused on a specific aspect of the comments.

The first sub-branch is 'engagement with campaign ideals'. A branch that classifies comments on the contextual content of the campaign shows episodes, which usually contain substantive criticism and suggestions regarding what Anies Baswedan explains in the show. Apart from that, they also write complaints and suggestions related to the general theme of the episode to Anies and the committee, which shows indirect interaction with the campaign content and the running of democracy targeted by the event organizers.

Furthermore, the second sub-branch is 'Anies' attributes', which refers to the comments praising the physical and psychological attributes they see in Anies Baswedan. This classification shows the occurrence of parasocial interaction, where the audience feels a strong connection between them and the actor based on parasocial factors. The other sub-branch is 'Anies' political experience'. However, this classification of understanding is not based on a particular region, such as Jakarta, which has experienced Anies' leadership, but only describes how they view Anies' political performance heretofore.

Another classification is 'advice to Anies' and 'aspirations to Anies'. Two sub-classifications of comments that are similar to 'engagement with campaign ideals' with slight differences. This comment classification does not provide their aspirations and suggestions contextually based on what is discussed during the event, but randomly throws them into the comments column, even though what they say is completely unrelated to the context of the

episode they watched. These comments contain complaints from viewers regarding problems they experience in their respective regions, as well as their concerns about the current state of the country.

The 'For Change' comment classification shows that this sub-branch has been successfully achieved by the main message of the campaign of candidate pair 01, which is for change. Candidate pair 01, Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar, echoed the main message, Indonesia towards change. Comments that have the same desire are to carry out a coup against the status quo and make changes that will create a more advanced Indonesia. Moreover, this classification goes into the next sub-branch, which is for a 'better future for Indonesia'. Comments that contain statements that Anies Baswedan and the pair 01 can lead Indonesia to a better future. Although these two sub-branches sound similar, they have different focuses. Researchers have discussed and decided to separate support that focuses on 'change' from the comments column because this is the main slogan of Anies and the 01 campaign team, even though they both want to move towards a better future for Indonesia.

The support classification with a negative tone is in the 'hate other candidates' and 'skepticism towards the fairness of the election' sub-branch. Anie's supporters made statements that denigrated the other pair. This shows polarization in the comments column of the live broadcast of "Desak Anies", where the support given not only voices support for Anies but also hatred towards other couples. The campaign had occurred for several months, and so had the "Desak Anies" show. The audience expressed their disappointment with the election process, which they thought was unfair and was interfered with by the ruling government. Therefore, they perceived the election fraud. Comments often led to insults to the election organizers, that they were bribed and untrustworthy. They also advised Anies and his partner to always be careful and act against the fraud they believed existed.

Observing the 10 sub-branches, each sub-branch indicates different messages conveyed by the audience. The comments on ideal campaign interaction were the most numerous, suggesting that the 'Desak Anies' event successfully fulfilled its initial objectives. Engagement with the campaign, which has the most comments out of all the existing sub-branches, with a total of 1,245 comments, indicates the viewers' alignment with the ideal campaign presented in 'Desak Anies.' They expressed their support for what Anies did in each episode.

Swing voters' comments were almost completely absent during the researcher's comment classification. Comments indicating swing voters did not reach 10 comments, which made researchers include this classification in support of Anies, who hates other candidate pairs. This indicates that the support commentators are loyal supporters of Anies Baswedan, and not the swing voters who supported other

candidates before.

There are a total of 1,242 unreasoned Supportive Comments out of the 6,996 data points analyzed. This dataset was then divided into three sub-branches: Regional Support Claims (467 comments), Support Solely because of Anies Baswedan (696 comments), and Youth Declaration of Support (79 comments). This classification does not provide any reasons for their support, but only states support, with the classification mentioned above. This classification of unreasoned Supportive Comments is grouped as partisan supporters. The nature of partisan support is influenced by personal connections, ideological alignment, and social identity, and it plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and political legitimacy. In democracies, partisan support is linked to satisfaction with democracy and trust in political institutions, with higher support observed among those ideologically aligned with the government (Erhardt, 2023).

The difference between the two branches is supported by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Littlejohn et al., 2017). This model promotes the distinction between how people process and respond to persuasive messages they receive into two types: the central route and the peripheral route. Message recipients who follow the central route tend to react to the message with outcomes that are organically aligned with the purpose of the persuasive message they received, reflecting reasoned commentators. Meanwhile, message recipients who follow the peripheral route tend to be passive towards the message received and focus on other cues outside of the message, which is well-represented by the unreasonable comments from partisan supporters.

The final branch discussed in the support theme is the prayers and hopes for Anies, with 810 comments (11.58%). This branch is further divided into two sub-branches: those who hope Anies becomes a good president, and those who pray for Anies in other aspects. Hope Anies becomes a good president is a sub-classification where supporters comment on their hopes for Anies to become a good and right president for Indonesia. Furthermore, their wishes are also expressed around the hope that Anies will not only make promises during the campaign, but will be followed by action from Anies and the 01 pair for what was promised if he later becomes president.

Still in the sub-classification of hopes and prayers, supporters also conveyed their support by praying for Anies' health and safety, and hoping that he would always be successful during the election period. This phenomenon occurs because supporters have developed a close emotional bond with Anies as their idol. This is explained by Parasocial Interaction as proposed by Horton & Wohl (1956).

When fans develop a parasocial relationship with a public figure, they feel a strong emotional bond that drives behavior similar to what they would do for a sibling, friend, or family member, such as praying

Table 1 Examples of Supportive Comments

Name	Comment	Translation	Type of Comment
@neriiman4162	keren cadas debat sema-lem pak. jawaban yg mantap jiwa. no 1. is the best.	The debate last night was so cool, sir. Great answers. No. 1 is the best.	Reasoned Support
@dinkhaerudin	Salut, pak Anies sudah besarkan hati seorang guru dan dosen yg mereka berdua masih minim dari perhatian pemerintah ⬜⬜	Salute! Anies has encouraged teach-ers and lecturers that both are still lacking in govern-ment attention ⬜⬜	Reasoned Support
@gilangsetiawan9225	ALL IN NO.1 ,AMIN ⬜	ALL IN NO.1 ,AMIN ⬜	Unreasoned Support
@m.asrenkasfunnuri5256	Tetap Amin⬜⬜⬜	Still Amin⬜⬜⬜	Unreasoned Support
@endahwahyuni1627	Smoga pak Anies n team selalu sehat2.....dan Alloh az-za wa jalla Ridho dng bp Anies menjd RI1 2024	Hopefully, Anies and team are al-ways healthy.... and Allah the Almighty blessed Pak Anies to be RI1 (presi-dent) 2024	Support Hope and Prayers
@sriendang5634	Semoga bpk Anis jadi presiden R I yang di cintai rakyatnya Aamiin	Hopefully, Pak Anies becomes the president of RI that the people love, Amiin.	Support Hope and Prayers

Source: Research Processed Results, 2024

for their idol's success, health, or well-being. Furthermore, parasocial bonds can be strengthened by how an idol is portrayed in the media, which fosters the assumption among fans that their idol or favorite public figure deserves their prayers. Table 1 displays examples of the Supportive Comments, each of which contains three different types of support.

The Supportive Comments belong to many divisions of themes. This supports the statement mentioned above that social media has successfully expanded public access to political information and can increase political participation among the public. The very diverse Supportive Comments also prove that the use of social media as a political campaign platform

can create inclusive access for the audience to participate in open and free discussions, which is harder to do in a traditional political campaign.

Hate Comments: Only a small portion of the comments given by netizens on the 'Desak Anies' videos are negative or directly against Anies. There are 161 comments out of the 6,996 (2.30%). This figure suggests that even though Candidate Pair 01 Anies-Muhaimin receives significant support, a small portion of netizens express rejection or hatred towards them.

Anti-Anies netizens can be viewed from various aspects and reasons, divided into 4 branches, with the examples can be seen in Table 2. The first sub-branch shows hatred towards

**Table 2 Examples of Hate Comments**

Name	Comment	Translation	Type of Comment
@anastasiajemanu954	Pa Anis hanya vokaal tuk bicara,tuk kerja nol,kosong alias bulat telur	Pak Anis vocal for talk only, zero for work, or round/zero as an egg	Hate Anies because of his political career
@J.prasetyo	Dapat salam dari survei indi-kator politik prabowo gibran sudah melewati the magic of number 51,8% 0□□2□□□□ gak usah capek2 mas anies.,buat kampa-nye besok, 02 siap adu ke-hebohan besok dijakarta.	Hello from a political indicator survey of Prabowo Gibran, who has passed the magic of number 51,8% 0□□2□□□□ no need to sweat, Bro Anies, for tomorrow's campaign, 02 ready to compete in excitement tomorrow in Jakarta.	Hate Anies and support others
@Orangsuc1467	Semakin anis so merasa paling cerdas so merasa yang paling suci kok saya jadi malas untuk dukung anis lagi	The more Anies feels smart pants, the more he acts saintly, which makes me unwilling to support him again	Hate Anies
@kucinglovers9915	All in Prabowo	All in Prabowo	Support other candidates

Source: Research Processed Results, 2024

Anies because of his political career. They write critical questions directed at Anies and express perceptions of unprofessionalism in his political career. This sub-classification does not specifically refer to Jakarta residents, who have directly experienced Anies' leadership, but is spread randomly in the comments column. Hate Anies is a comment that arbitrarily badmouths Anies without any specific reason, while support for other candidates shows comments of praise and their support for other candidate pairs. Finally, the sub-classification of 'hate Anies' and 'support for other candidates' is a classification of comments that combines the context of hatred towards Anies and compares him to other candidate pairs narrated better.

These four branches naturally appear with much fewer comments compared to the Supportive Comments. The data obtained, although varied, was dominated by comments indicating hatred towards Anies, and not support for other pairs. The sub-branch of comments
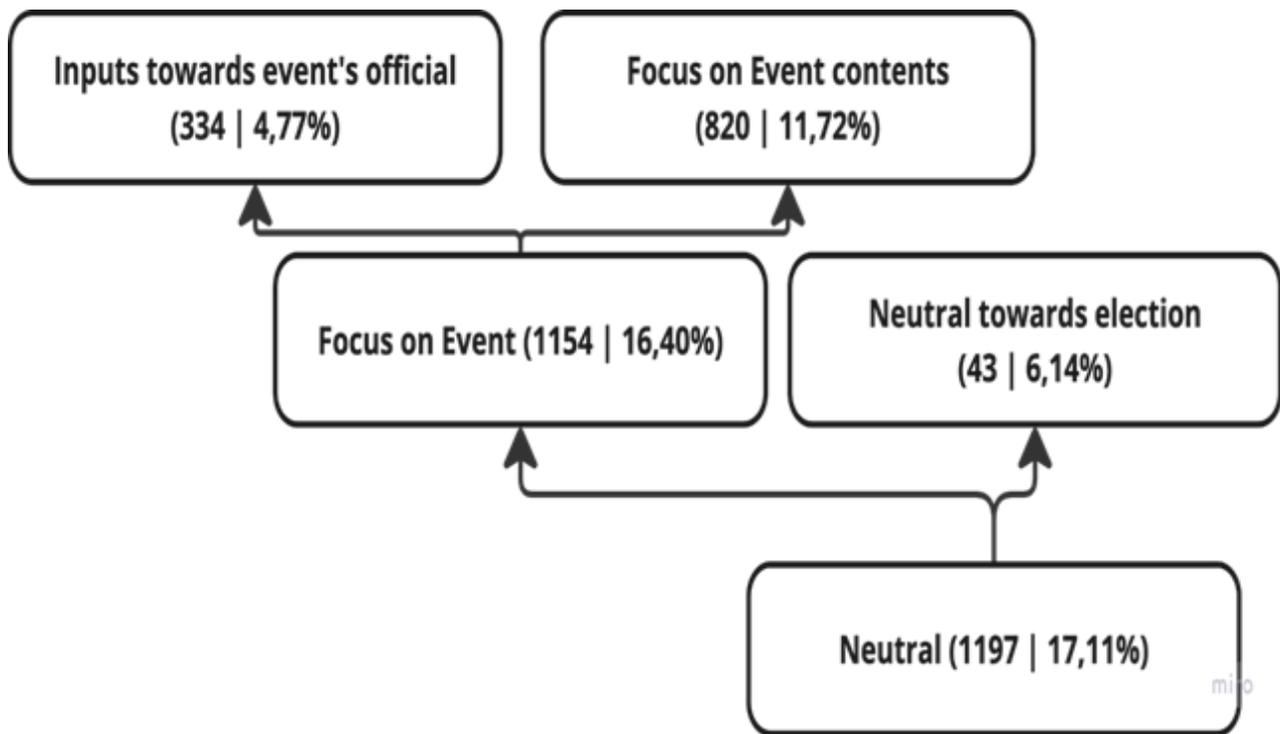
Source: Research Processed Results, 2024
Figure 3 Neutral Comments Data Map

expressing hatred towards Anies Baswedan due to his political career is supported by survey data from the National Strategic Network (NSN) in 2022, that public satisfaction with Anies in DKI Jakarta was consistently below 40 percent in the last year of his term and even dropped further to 30.3% (Huda, 2022).

The minimum volume of negative comments shows that the "Desak Anies" content on YouTube can reach audiences beyond Anies' supporters. However, the lack of negative comments and the many positive comments resulted in the echo chamber effect and filter bubble. This gives researchers the view that the online political campaign event "Desak Anies" only serves as an 'internal communication' platform for Anies' supporters.

The next theme is neutral comments.

Figure 3 shows that fewer than one-fifth of netizen comments are neutral. Within this theme, 1,197 out of 6,996 total comments (17.11%) are categorized as neutral.

The Focus on the Event branch, with a total of 1,154 comments, shows that the majority of neutral netizens are more interested in other aspects of 'Desak Anies' or the event organizers. This is also supported by the 'Desak Anies' campaign event being held in various cities across Indonesia, each with a different atmosphere. In the figure above, the researchers divided the "Focus on Event" sub-branch into two different sub-branches, input towards the event's official, which contains comments of suggestions and input to the event organizers, but is dominated by comments of complaints about the unsatisfactory live broadcast, such

Table 3 Examples of Neutral Comments

Name	Comment	Translation	Type of Comment
@anastasiajemanu954	yg main alat musik keren □ semoga viral □□	The one playing a musical instrument is cool □ hope it gets viral □□	Focus on event content
@feliaintania5446	Siapapun yang jadi presiden , apapun pili-hannya dukung indonesia mencapai indonesia emas 2045	Whichever candidate becomes the president, whatever the choice, (please), keep supporting Indonesia to achieve golden Indonesia 2045	Neutral towards the election
@ninceadnina2246	MC nya tolong □□□	The MC, please □□□	Input towards the event's official

Source: Research Processed Results, 2024

as due to technical constraints (unclear audio, cut-off video, and others). In addition, the audience also commented on the performance of the presenters, which was considered less satisfactory.

The 'Focus on the Event' content itself is a classification of comments that focus their attention on aspects of the event that occurred during the live broadcast. With the many different cultural backgrounds displayed from episodes with different backgrounds, the audience can tend to focus on things outside the main message of the campaign, such as objects in the background, event audiences in interesting places, and cultural performances that are broadcast. This can also be explained by the concept of Selective (McLeod, 2023; Murphy et al., 2016), where viewers can choose to focus on contexts other than the main

message of the 'Desak Anies' campaign event. This is influenced by several factors, such as personal interests, prior knowledge, and other external distractions. Table 3 presents examples of the neutral comments.

Another form of neutrality appeared in the comments on the election, where some viewers expressed indifference regarding who would become the next president. These comments indicated that they have decided not to take any sides in the ongoing election, and decided to wish for the best for Indonesia in the future, regardless of who will be the eventual winner of the event. Success of Desak Anies and Election Results

The three themes of comments show that 79% of netizens expressed their support through "Desak Anies", with only a few expressing oppositions. The goal of restoring

democracy and engaging in political discussion was also successfully achieved, according to the campaign engagement theme branch. However, despite the success of "Desak Anies" in promoting democratic values and political discussion, Anies was unsuccessful in the 2024 election. Although it is not directly correlated with the broadcasted "Desak Anies" campaign, the research found that most of the viewers were already supporters of Candidate Pair 01 Anies-Muhaimin from the beginning, as evidenced by the high level of support and minimal opposition from the comments on the "Desak Anies" campaign event. Therefore, this finding shows the weakness of social media as a political campaign platform.

It has been argued that online campaigns on social media enable direct interaction among political actors and voters. Nevertheless, the interactions within the "Desak Anies" campaign did not foster the intended demarcation. Instead, they appeared to strengthen the existing beliefs by strengthening parasocial interaction between Anies and his supporters. When the campaign content meets and fulfils the audience's attention, what belief is there to be changed? Thus, instead of shaping voters' opinion, "Desak Anies" merely emphasized the existing ones, firming and polishing its shape. Furthermore, the repeated support by the audience pushed the campaign further from the opposite views, making it harder to shape a new opinion and gain new voters, at least in the online campaign. In addition, the event video was uploaded on Anies Baswedan's personal YouTube channel, making it even harder to reach the audiences that support other candidates and hold other views and beliefs. This phenomenon can be understood through the concept of the echo chamber effect and filter bubbles, trapping the existing beliefs and preventing others from making moves and challenging the supporters' status quo. The interaction dynamics in "Desak Anies" reflect the reproduction of power structures within digital political spaces, where existing ideological dominances are reinforced rather than challenged, limiting democratic deliberation.

CONCLUSION

The "Desak Anies" campaign, a digital political initiative spearheaded by presidential candidate Anies Baswedan during the 2024 Indonesian presidential election, is a compelling case in the use of social media for political mobilization. The campaign effectively leveraged YouTube's live-streaming capabilities to engage with Anies Baswedan's existing supporter base. Through a series of structured dialogues and interactive content, the campaign successfully reinforced the emotional and ideological alignment of loyal followers. However, despite its stated objective of promoting democratic discourse and political inclusivity, the campaign fell short in attracting new or undecided voters. Instead, it inadvertently deepened pre-existing political

loyalties, thus limiting its transformative impact on broader public opinion.

This phenomenon reflects a critical challenge in digital political communication: the echo chamber effect. By relying primarily on platforms like YouTube, where content is often algorithmically curated to align with users' previous viewing patterns, the campaign facilitated an environment in which audiences were repeatedly exposed to ideas that mirrored their own. While this strategy proved efficient in reinforcing support and boosting engagement metrics, it simultaneously restricted opportunities for cross-ideological dialogue. As a result, the digital campaign, rather than expanding political conversations, effectively narrowed them.

Closely related to this is the concept of filter bubbles, where users are algorithmically shielded from dissenting viewpoints. The findings of this study suggested that "Desak Anies" contributed to the formation of such bubbles, where supporters were continually presented with content that affirmed their political beliefs. Although this may enhance the perceived legitimacy of the campaign within its core audience, it also risks causing political polarization and reducing the possibility of ideological negotiation or change. These digital dynamics challenge the utopian view that social media inherently democratizes political discourse.

Furthermore, the campaign highlights the influential role of parasocial interaction, a psychological phenomenon where audiences form one-sided emotional relationships with public figures. Anies Baswedan's presence, conversational tone, and direct engagement during the "Desak Anies" episodes contributed to strengthening the emotional connection between him and his supporters. This form of engagement can enhance loyalty and trust, but it also further entrenches existing opinions, making it even more difficult to sway undecided or oppositional voters.

Despite these limitations, the campaign space was not monolithic. The presence of neutral and critical comments within the comment sections of the "Desak Anies" videos indicates that social media retains potential as a pluralistic platform. These interactions demonstrate that, while echo chambers and filter bubbles dominate the digital landscape, there remains room for dissent and open dialogue. This suggests that with intentional design and inclusive messaging strategies, online platforms can serve as arenas for meaningful political discourse.

Given these observations, future political campaigns must learn from both the successes and shortcomings of "Desak Anies." To mitigate the effects of ideological isolation, campaign teams should consider diversifying their digital outreach across multiple platforms, employing content strategies that appeal beyond their base, and facilitating interactive forums where diverse viewpoints are welcome. Such approaches would better utilize the democratic

potential of social media, not merely as tools for mobilization but as genuine spaces for political deliberation and consensus-building.

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