#tundapemilu2024: Indonesia Twitter Social Activism Movement

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Abstract. Welcoming the 2024 elections, social media has become a new battle-field for discussion on the issue of postponing the elections. Its issue is echoed by accounts that reject the plan to postpone the elections. This research used a critical approach to the role of Twitter social media in shaping a social movement with the hashtag of #tundapemilu. Twitter users typically connect their tweets to specific topics with hashtags, giving other users a voice to follow these topics and take part in public discussions. The results showed that the hashtag movement of #tundapemilu on Twitter social media is one of the social movements that aims to convey criticisms and complaints felt by all Indonesian people to the government, with the hope that the government can make decisions quickly and precisely on the problems experienced by Indonesian people nowadays. Twitter social media can be used as a tool for the formation of a social movement and also faster in presenting information about government. Thus, it can spread public opinion and form such opinions.

Keywords: Postpone Elections, Social Movement, Twitter Activists, Social-Media

1   Introduction

Welcoming the 2024 elections, social media has become a new battlefield for discussion on the issue of postponing the election. The issue was first declared publicly by investment minister, Bahlil Lahaladia, in January 2022. The reason raised for the postponement of this election is to maintain the stability of the country's economy from the past Covid-19 pandemic crisis [1], [2]. This speech was re-echoed after getting support from several parties, such as Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB), Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), and Partai Golongan Karya (Golkar). The leaders of these parties agreed on postponing the 2024 elections and the approval of some businessmen to extend the presidential term. The reason is that to restore socio-political and economic stability affected by the Covid-19 pandemic still takes time [3], [4]. This election discourse is getting stronger after there is big data proposed by Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, as the Coordinating Minister for Maritime and Investment. He mentioned that there are 110 million citizens who want the 2024 elections to be postponed. The reason is to maintain the socio-political and economic conditions of the State [4], [5].

However, various forces are actively involved in the online debate over election delays. As numerous studies have shown, Twitter is often used as a tool for activist protests against governments around the world, [6], [7], [8]. A situation has been described on the joint use of cyber forces as a tool to neutralize and suppress the narrative of opposition activism since 2019 in Indonesia [9]. Cyber army that conducts suppression of hashtag protests of activists #MahsaAmini anti-Iran's non-democratic regime [8] related to the use of hashtag bots of #Strongerin, and #Brexit in conversations of UK referrals to leave the European Union [10], Seiber terror attacks on anti-corruption academic activists in KPK case context of narrowing digital public space in Indonesia [11]. Cyber forces manipulation of public opinion around controversial policies on Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB), policies of the Omnibuslaw on job creation [9], Political buzzers were hired to counter the protests of the ForBALI (Benoa Bay reclamation) movement against real estate company of PT. Tirta Wahana Bali Internasional deprives local communities to develop luxury resorts on artificial islands [12], owner of real estate company of PT. Agung Sedayu Group, who are trying to bribe activists protesting the forced eviction of Ciliwung [13]. Online activist campaigns are targeting the government, including election escorts [14], which impact on the information ecosystem and the narrowing of civic space [9], [14], [15]. It aims to shape the public's understanding of elections [16]. Election observers openly raise their voices in the postponement debate as active communicators, translators of information, and opinion makers [17]; [18]. Whereas, deliberate and strategically organized attempts at skepticism undermine the electoral order by building echo chambers and pretending to be credible scientific resources [19].

In this paper, the researchers discuss the hashtag movement of #tundapemilu2024 as Indonesia's Twitter social movement. This paper provides observations on the hashtag movement used by Twitter activists in criticizing #tundapemilu issue of postponing the 2024 elections.

2   RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a critical approach, regarding the role of Twitter social media in shaping a social movement of #tundapemilu. Twitter users typically tether their tweets to specific topics with hashtags, giving other users a voice to follow these topics and take part in public discussions [20]. Following previous research by [21], [22], [23] become several references for the researchers in selecting #tundapemilu, #pemilu2024, #jokowi3periode hashtags to identify Indonesian-language tweets related to the issue of postponing the 2024 elections as Twitter regularly detects and suspends social bot accounts. Then, the researchers employed crawling of data available on Twitter.

This research type is qualitative in a Case Study research, which is included in the type of descriptive case study. A discriptive case study refers a study that describes a case and requires researchers to start research with a descriptive theory to explain clearly the results of the study. In the research conducted process, the researchers described the situations and events that occur in this case. According to Neuman in Mulyana [24], descriptive research shows a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting, and relationships [25].

3   DISCUSSION

3.1   Co-opted Digital Public Space

The existence of social media that is not bound by space and time and is able to present information in a diverse, precise, fast, and interesting manner can be a positive point in using it. Thus, do not be surprised if then social media applications is widely used in daily routines [26]. Along with the increasing use of social media, the manipulation of public opinion on social media occurs in the context of an increasingly narrowing digital public space. In Indonesia, social media has long been believed to provide a free public space for civil society groups to realize their agendas, raise public awareness about abuses of power, as well as fight for civil and political rights [27].

According to Sastramidjaja, Indonesia's digital public space has experienced tighter cyber controls and increasing online bullying, which threatens citizens' freedom of expression online [9]. The Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE), as the Indonesia's cyber law, has often been utilized to criminalize online expression and thus silence critics. SAFENet, a civil society organization engaged in digital rights, has documented 287 cases of citizens, journalists, and activists prosecuted for violating the ITE Law from its enactment in 2008 to 2019; and twenty-four of these cases occurred in 2019 [28]. The ITE Law has also been used to the target websites, allowing the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology to block or shut down websites without going through legal proceedings. Besides targeting websites containing illicit content, such as pornography or pirated material, the government has stepped up efforts to block websites found to contain "provocative" content and promote "radicalism" since 2016, often Islamic websites and Papua-linked websites known to be critical of the government [29].

Correspondingly, the use of cyber forces as a tool to neutralize and suppress online opposition narratives and activism has increased since 2019. This corresponds to a global pattern. According to a global inventory of organized social media manipulation, carried out annually since 2017 by researchers from the Oxford Internet Institute, cyber troop operations are becoming more widespread every year. The results of the study stated that cyber troops are "government actors or political parties tasked with manipulating public opinion online"; As such, they "knowingly distribute misleading information through social media networks" [30], 2021, often through computational propaganda, or "the use of algorithms, automation, and big data to shape public life " [31]. In 2020, eighty-one countries utilized cyber teams to spread propaganda on social media.

The Oxford Internet Institute ranks Indonesia in the "moderate" category, where cyber forces are "more consistent in form and strategy, engaging full-time staff members employed throughout the year to control the information space", "often coordinating with different types of actors, as well as experimenting with different tools and strategies for the manipulation of public opinion". The results of this study are not in line with other studies [32], which shows that Indonesia has started to shift to the category of high cyber force capacity, where a number of staff and large budget expenditures on psychological operations or information warfare, are often funded by the state.

The criminalization cases increase of public expression and opinion on social media, allegedly has a connection with the role of buzzers that aims to manipulate public opinion to align with the interests of political clients [33]. Bazzer's involvement is demonstrated in a way, they create specific narratives designed to grab the attention of the online public and evoke an emotional response and then circulate these narratives on social media as widely and quickly as possible, often with the use of semi-automated "bot" accounts set to bombard social media at strategic times with content that distributes narratives through posts that are easy to digest and share, such as one line, memes, short videos, and accompanying hashtags [34].

3.2   Digital Interactions Related to Hashtag of #tundapemilu

In digital interactions related to postponing elections on Twitter as mentioned in the previous discussion, there is a hashtag of #tundapemilu that is the hashtag for the postponement debate on Twitter. Twitter's narrative war involves activists concerned about elections "allegedly hijacked by a handful of elites" for their own personal gain. Resistance must be voiced as a form of criticism of government policies that do not favor the interests of the people [34].

The debate continues, with the hashtag of "Postpone Elections" or #tundapemilu appearing on social media of Twitter. The issue of postponing elections continues to be debated. At the end of March 2022, internet citizens protested on social media of Twitter by making tweets accompanied by the hashtag of "Postpone Elections" (#tundapemilu). The hashtag has been on the trending topic list on Twitter since the morning of March 30, 2023 and the hashtag of "Postpone Elections" (#tundapemilu) has been used by more than 10,000 tweets. Even #tundapemilu on Twitter not only lasted for one day, but the hashstag on March 31, 2023 at 22.39 WIB was still exist on the list of trending topics on Twitter until 15,700 tweets.
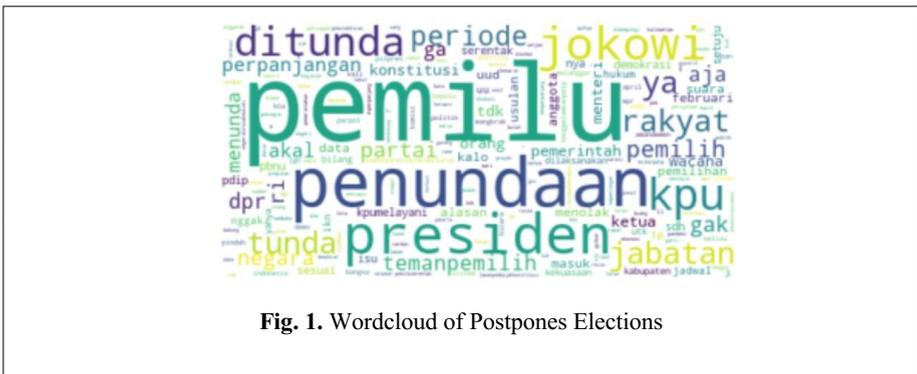
Fig. 1. Wordcloud of Postpones Elections
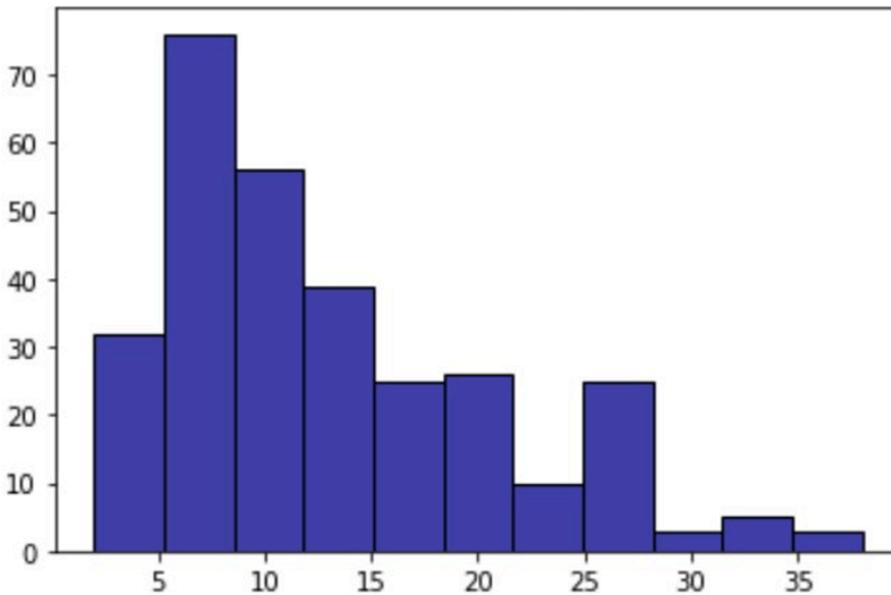
Fig. 2. Graph of tweets on Twitter

At midnight at 00.19 WIB, entering April 1, 2022, the hashtag of "Postpone Elections" (#tundapemilu) was still on the list of trending topics on Twitter until 16,900 tweets. Tweets related to #tundapemilu contain complaints experienced by people who use Twitter, as well as public criticisms of the government in office, the President of Indonesia, namely Mr. Joko Widodo and against the House of Representatives *(DPR)*. Besides tweeting the hashtag of "Postpone Elections" (#tundapemilu) on social media Twitter, it also circulated hundreds of "memes" or images written to support the expression of the image, which talked about the failure of President Joko Widodo's (Jokowi) leadership. The tweets and memes with pictures of President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) mostly touched on the issue of cooking oil, the new national capital *(IKN),* the increase in fuel prices, to various issues of alleged corruption in the palace environment.

In the case that is currently viral on social media, especially Twitter, regarding the social movement hashtag of "Postpone Election" or #tundapemilu causes all levels of Indonesian society who use social media, particularly Twitter, contribute tweets with their Twitter accounts and do not forget to use the hashtag of "Election 2024" (#Pemilu2024). Not only the public, but it is known that even the Twitter account of former Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, Jimly Asshiddiqie, with his Twitter account named @JimlyAs also wrote on his account which read, "The issue of postponing elections & extending the term of office should be suppressed immediately. More strictly forbidden and nagged by educating. Don't even continue to be given wind like this," wrote @JimlyAs.

The emergence of criticism from various segment of Indonesian society through social media platform of Twitter has positioned anti-government activists as agents of

social control. As conventionally known, activist serve the function of controlling matters that run contrary to the principles of justice within society. This role is fulfilled by offering critiques, suggestions, and solutions to social issues affecting both the local populace and the nation at a large. Activists function as a "check and balances" mechanism, plays an important role in changing, regardless or societal strata or economic status.

5   CONCLUSION

According to the explanation above, it can be concluded that the hashtag of #tundapemilu movement on Twitter social media is one of the social movements that aims to convey criticisms and complaints felt by all Indonesian people to the government, with the expectation that the government can make decisions quickly and appropriately on the problems experienced by Indonesian people nowadays. Twitter social media can be used as a tool for the formation of a social movement and also faster in presenting information about government to spread and form public opinion.

Through Twitter social media, the information disseminated can directly arrive and spread widely in the community or all users of social media. Basically, the social movement was formed by the expectation of the community through the Twitter social media by the people use, so that issues that occur within the government will be in the spotlight of the community. Moreover, the social movement here means a movement born from the community in an effort to demand changes in government policies that are considered contrary to the constitution.

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