

THE PRE-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2024: UNCOVERING THE CONSISTENCY OF RELIGIOUS POLITICIZATION

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Abstract

Social media is an effective communication tool for facilitating political campaign activities. However, social media promotes the enormous politicization of religion, such as the controversy surrounding the mixing of politics and religion in Indonesia's 2017 and 2019 general elections. This study aims at responding to the causes of social media supporting the consistency of the politicization of religion in the Pre-Presidential General Election 2024 by employing the politicization of religion in the past as a reflection of the current phenomenon. The research was conducted using a qualitative strategy and multimodal discourse analysis as an instrument for data analysis. Data was collected from the Twitter account @aniesbaswedan from October to December 2022 and previous studies. The research results indicate that the nuances can demonstrate indicators of the consistency of the politicization of religion through multimodal content, such as text, images, video, audio, and animation. The multimodal aspect can frame politics with an intriguing blend of religious attributes to obtain responses from netizens. Media convergence also stimulates interactive communication between netizens with others. In conclusion, politicians implement religious symbols to increase netizens' response in its campaign.

Keywords: *presidential election 2024; religious politicization; multimodal discourse analysis.*

Abstrak

Media sosial merupakan media komunikasi yang efektif untuk memfasilitasi aktivitas kampanye politik. Namun, media sosial juga menjembatani fenomena masifnya politisasi agama seperti kontroversi percampuran politik dan agama di pemilihan umum pada tahun 2017 dan 2019 lalu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merespon penyebab media sosial mendukung konsistensi politisasi agama pada pra-Pemilihan Umum Presiden 2024 berkaca dari fenomena politisasi agama sebelumnya sebagai

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refleksi fenomena saat ini. Metode penelitian dikerjakan dengan pendekatan kualitatif dengan menggunakan multimodal discourse analysis sebagai alat analisis data. Data dikumpulkan dari akun Twitter @aniesbaswedan bulan oktober sampai desember 2022 dengan teknik crawling serta mengambil studi-studi sebelumnya sebagai bahan perbandingan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa indikator konsistensi politisasi agama dapat ditunjukkan dengan nuansa yang disimbolkan melalui konten multimodal, meliputi; teks, gambar, video, audio dan animasi. Fitur multimodal mampu mem-framing politik yang dikemas dengan bauran atribut agama secara menarik untuk menarik respon netizen. Selain itu, media konvergen menstimulasi aktivitas komunikasi secara interaktif dari netizen dengan netizen lain melalui kolom komentar. Singkatnya, simbol agama dimediasasi oleh para politikus sebagai upaya meningkatkan respon netizen untuk meningkatkan jumlah pendukung.

Kata Kunci: *Pemilu presiden 2024; politisasi agama; analisis wacana multimodal.*

مستخلص

وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي هي وسيلة اتصال فعالة لتسهيل أنشطة الحملة السياسية. ومع ذلك ، تعمل وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي أيضاً على سد ظاهرة التسييس الهائل للدين ، مثل الجدل حول الاختلاط بين السياسة والدين في الانتخابات العامة لعامي 2017 و 2019. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الاستجابة لأسباب وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الداعمة لاستقرار تسييس الدين في الانتخابات الرئاسية العامة قبل 2024 ، مما يعكس الظاهرة السابقة المتمثلة في تسييس الدين باعتباره انعكاساً للظاهرة الحالية. تم تنفيذ أسلوب البحث باستخدام منهج نوعي باستخدام تحليل الخطاب متعدد الوسائط كأداة لتحليل البيانات. تم جمع البيانات من حساب @aniesbaswedan من أكتوبر إلى ديسمبر 2022 باستخدام تقنية الزحف وأخذ الدراسات السابقة كمواد مقارنة. تظهر نتائج الدراسة أن مؤشرات استدامة تسييس الدين يمكن إثباتها من خلال الفروق الدقيقة التي يرمز إليها المحتوى متعدد الوسائط ، بما في ذلك ؛ النصوص والصور والفيديو والصوت والرسوم المتحركة. ميزة الوسائط المتعددة قادرة على تطير السياسة المليئة بمزيج مثير للاهتمام من السمات الدينية لجذب ردود مستخدمي الإنترنت. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تحفز الوسائط المتقاربة أنشطة الاتصال التفاعلي من مستخدمي الإنترنت مع مستخدمي الإنترنت الآخرين من خلال عمود التعليقات. باختصار ، يتم التوسط في الرموز الدينية من قبل السياسيين في محاولة لزيادة استجابة مستخدمي الإنترنت لزيادة عدد المؤيدين.

الكلمات الرئيسية : انتخابات 2024 الرئاسية: تسييس الدين: تحليل الخطاب متعدد الوسائط.

A. Introduction

Controversy about politics and religion has permanently colored the presidential election in Indonesia, especially the 2024 presidential election.¹ Some figure nominated the community as a candidate has started campaigning through various religious groups, namely; institutions, organizations, and communities on social media.² However, practicing religious

¹ “Jokowi Tolak Politisasi Agama Di Pilpres 2024, Partai Kakbah Setuju?,” n.d.

² Mochammad Sigit Satrio and Mauzi Kurnia Bagus Sunandar, “Perancangan Kampanye Etika Berkomunikasi Di Media Sosial Dalam Menyongsong Tahun Politik 2024,” in *SINASTRA: Prosiding Seminar Nasional Bahasa, Seni, Dan Sastra*, vol. 1, 2022.

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politicization in elections triggers many conflicts in society.³ An admixture of religion and politics is suspected to be one factor in the split group public becoming two strongholds. In the 2019 presidential election, religion's politicization impacted Islamic revivalists and traditionalist-moderate groups. Group Islamic revivalists are supported by FPI (Front Pembela Islam), exs-HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia), and Alumni 212 with carry enforcement *khilafah* and *syariah*.⁴ Temporary traditionalist Islamic groups tend to behave moderately and are pro-government. Meanwhile, Meanwhile, religious symbols are still used in political practice by several figures on social media,⁵ like Anis Baswedan.⁶ This fact confirms that the politicization of religion on social media experiences consistency, negatively impacting Indonesian sovereignty.

Previous studies regarding the politicization of religion in social media tend to describe the communication process⁷ and its impact on practice. First, a study by Shamsuddin Harris explained that the politicization of religion by Islamic organizations and preachers (ulama') causes a decline in the aim of substance Islamic teachings.⁸ Religion is only used object socialization and legitimacy party politics for purpose politics. Second, the study of the politicization of religion tends to discuss a consequence of practicing. One of them is the emergence of exacerbating spiritual polarization sovereignty of a country because of differentiation between the group of society.⁹ Public groups would be fragmented because of different views and options in party politics.¹⁰ Progress technology is a massive factor in the politicization of religion, with religious symbols published on social media without

³ Rogers Brubaker, "Religious Dimensions of Political Conflict and Violence," *Sociological Theory* 33, no. 1 (2015): 1–19.

⁴ Syahrir Karim, "Polarisasi Politik Islam Di Tengah Pandemi Covid-19 Dan Peta Politik 2024," *PROSIDING SENASPOLHI* 1, no. 1 (2021).

⁵ Rita Marchetti et al., "Right-Wing Populism and Political Instrumentalization of Religion: The Italian Debate on Matteo Salvini's Use of Religious Symbols on Facebook," *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 2022, 1–28, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/18748929-bja10052>.

⁶ Aryadillah Aryadillah and Fifit Fitriansyah, "Strategi Kampanye Politik Anies Baswedan Dalam Membangun Citra Politik Pada Pemilihan Presiden Tahun 2024," *Jurnal Public Relations (J-PR)* 3, no. 1 (2022): 87–92.

⁷ Ignacio Siles et al., "Populism, Religion, and Social Media in Central America," *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 2021, 19401612211032884.

⁸ S Harris, "Politicization of Religion and the Failure of Islamic Parties in the 1999 General Election," *Elections in Indonesia*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315028446-4/politicization-religion-failure-islamic-parties-1999-general-election-syamsuddin-haris>.

⁹ Sabrina Krys et al., "The Politicization of Religious Communities: Effects on Intergroup Differentiation/La Politización de Las Comunidades Religiosas: Los Efectos En La Diferenciación Intergupal," *International Journal of Social Psychology* 35, no. 1 (2020): 116–47.

¹⁰ Bridget Welsh, "Malaysia's Political Polarization: Race, Religion, and Reform," *Political Polarization in South and Southeast Asia: Old Divisions, New Dangers*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020, 41–52.

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limitation.¹¹ Achmad Noor explained handling politicization of religion that is with actualizing digital literacy to society.¹² The studies earlier indicated that the consistency of the politicization of religion on social media has not yet been elaborated comprehensively.

From the gap research above, this research aims to complete the deficiency from previous studies. This research focuses on how the politicization of religion on social media is still sustainable in the pre-presidential election of 2024. The problem of the politicization of religion has relevance to the existence of the use of social media in society. Ilkka Koiranen et al confirmed that preference party politics actively utilized social media to support politics.¹³ Social media encourages the dissemination of discourse politics with religion rapidly without limitation. Social media visualizes practices and political identity through religious symbols through; images, videos, and audio. Dimas Subekti explained that Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook are the most popular social media for campaign politics.¹⁴ Consequently, studying this aims to answer indicators of sustainable politicization of religion from symbols, discourses, and communication on social media.

The argument from this study underlined that every symbol on social media has a particular meaning.¹⁵ Signs on the symbols can be found in every text, image, audio, and video that carries out an ideology.¹⁶ The purposes of symbol are indoctrination through constructed discourse.¹⁷ Doctrine through religious symbols in various political content on social media significantly impacts audiences. Sumanto Al-Qurtuby explained that the impact

¹¹ Muhammad Akhyar Hasibuan, Katimin Katimin, and Anang Anas Azhar, "The Politicization of Religion on Facebook Social Media in Elections Governor of North Sumatra in 2018," *International Journal Of Education, Social Studies, And Management (IJESSM)*, 2022, 130–43. N H Susanto, "Politicization of Religion and the Future of Democracy in Indonesia in Populism Theory," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 2019. Muhammad Mahsun et al., "Women Candidates, Social Media, and The Politicization of Religious Identity and Women Islamic Organizations in Indonesia's 2019 Election," in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Democracy and Social Transformation, ICON-DEMOST 2021, September 15, 2021, Semarang, Indonesia*, 2022.

¹² Noor Achmad, "Politisasi Agama Di Era Digital Dan Penanganannya," *PROSIDING SENASPOLHI 1*, no. 1 (2018).

¹³ Ilkka Koiranen et al., "Ideological Motives, Digital Divides, and Political Polarization: How Do Political Party Preference and Values Correspond with the Political Use of Social Media?," *Telematics and Informatics* 46 (2020): 101322, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2019.101322>.

¹⁴ Dimas Subekti, Achmad Nurmandi, and Dyah Mutiarin, "Mapping Publication Trend of Political Parties Campaign in Social Media: A Bibliometric Analysis," *Journal of Political Marketing*, 2022, 1–18.

¹⁵ Olu Jenzen et al., "The Symbol of Social Media in Contemporary Protest: Twitter and the Gezi Park Movement," *Convergence* 27, no. 2 (July 2020): 414–37, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856520933747>.

¹⁶ Mohammed El-Nawawy and Mohamad Hamas Elmasry, "The Signs of a Strongman: A Semiotic and Discourse Analysis of Abdelfattah Al-Sisi's Egyptian Presidential Campaign," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 22.

¹⁷ Donald Holbrook, "The Terrorism Information Environment: Analysing Terrorists' Selection of Ideological and Facilitative Media," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 33, no. 4 (2021): 697–719.

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of the politicization of religion would form a negative image of religion itself.¹⁸ Religion will lose its sanctity and holiness because it is perceived as a tool for political campaigns to obtain power in government.¹⁹ In addition, politicization impacts the fragmentation of citizens' integrity due to identity politics based on religion.²⁰ Therefore, social media is a channel for influencing the perceptions and ideologies of individuals regarding politics and religion.²¹

The research method uses a qualitative approach analyzed by multimodal discourse analysis. Multimodal discourse analysis is a study to uncover meaning through text, images, audio and other semiotics by adjusting socio-cultural or historical contextualization. Data was collected from the @aniesbaswedan Twitter account from October to December 2022 and was strengthened by previous research references. The data collection results obtained 137 data from Twitter which were then classified using NVivo software based on criteria that intersect with keywords; religion and politics. The final result of the data obtained is 12 tweets in the form of text, images/photos and nuances of the published content.

B. Discussion

1. *Highlights of Politicization of Religion Controversies in Indonesia*

The involvement of religion in political activities in Indonesia cannot be isolated from the fact that religion and politics are fundamental aspects of the lives of humans. Norms, teachings, doctrines, texts, discourses, and other religious symbols express religious attributes. The purpose of incorporating religion into politics is to enable religious teachings to control political activity and accomplish the desired outcomes. Efforts to use/involve religious characteristics in political activities are referred to as the politicization of religion, which seeks to strengthen group identity and social cohesion.²² In a state system, implementing religious politicization activities is a form of democracy.²³

¹⁸ Sumanto Al Qurtuby, "Sejarah Politik Politisasi Agama Dan Dampaknya Di Indonesia," *MAARIF Journal* 13, no. 2 (2018): 43–54.

¹⁹ Rhys H Williams and Nicholas J Demerath III, "Religion and Political Process in an American City," *American Sociological Review*, 1991, 417–31.

²⁰ Andi Ahmad Yani Gustiana Kambo, "Political Identity and Religious Prejudice in a Post-Conflict Society: A Case Study of Poso, Indonesia," *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University* 56, no. 3 (2021).

²¹ Majid KhosraviNik, "Social Media Techno-Discursive Design, Affective Communication and Contemporary Politics," *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 11, no. 4 (2018): 427–42, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40647-018-0226-y>.

²² Ate Altınordu, "The Politicization of Religion: Political Catholicism and Political Islam in Comparative Perspective," *Politics & Society* 38, no. 4 (2010): 517–51.

²³ Ani Sarkissian and İgü Özler, "Democratization and the Politicization of Religious Civil Society in Turkey," *Democratization* 20, no. 6 (2013): 1014–35.

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In Indonesia, the politicization of religion has developed since the era of the exploration of Dutch Colonial, legitimizing religious doctrine government to the public for opposing colonialism as a form *jihad* (fighting on the road God). Meanwhile, in the early days of independence, party politics with religious overtones Partai Masyumi (Islam), Partai Kristen Indonesia, and Partai Katolik. In the early 1960s, Islamic political groups failed to reach power because President Soekarno froze them. Furthermore, during the New Order era, the government issued policies on "political de-ideologization" and "religious de-politicization" which aimed to prohibit the existence of religious-minded political parties. Even so, the government uses religion to legitimate various development infrastructure programs. Ex-presidents Gus Dur and Megawati were victim examples of the politicization of religion due to activists. The politicization of religion assumes that "cacat" or disabled people and women, can hold the position of the head of state is not. In the reform era, the democratic system was promoted by freeing political parties based on religion as a form of freedom of expression.²⁴

As observed in the DKI Jakarta Governor Election in 2017²⁵ and the Presidential Election in 2019,²⁶ controversies surrounding the politicization of religion in Indonesian general elections have been commonplace. During the DKI Jakarta Governor Election, Ahok (Basuki Tjahaja Purnama) was accused of religious politicization. It was deemed the darkest form of religious and political activity at that event. Due to the support of right-wing Islamic parties such as the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS), Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), and Front Pembela Islam (FPI), the Anies Baswedan couple won the election.²⁷ Anies Baswedan and his supporters from radical-fundamentalist groups employed religious materials (sacred verses) with propaganda and doctrinal undertones in their campaign strategy.

Chontina Siahaan and Manotar Tampubolon stated that the involvement of the politicization of religion also emerged in the contest for the general presidential election in 2019. The contestation of the politicization of religion aims as a weapon to defeat the

²⁴ "PARTAI POLITIK BERNUANSA AGAMA DI ERA REFORMASI PARTAI POLITIK ISLAM INDONESIA MASYUMI," n.d.

²⁵ Susanto, "Politicization of Religion and the Future of Democracy in Indonesia in Populism Theory."

²⁶ Roni Efendi Zainuddin, Jamal Mirdad, and Salmy Edawati Yaacob, "SIy Sah Shar'Iyyah and the Politicization of Religion in the 2019 Indonesian Presidential Election," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 22, no. 2 (2022): 357–84.

²⁷ Yayah Khisbiyah et al., *Kontestasi Wacana Keislaman Di Dunia Maya: Moderatisme Ekstremisme, Dan Hipernasionalisme* (Pusat Studi Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2018).

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opposing camp.²⁸ The religious identity used by the Presidential Candidates and Vice Presidential Candidates in 2019 is to use the identity of clerical and Muslim symbols illustrated by the use; *sarung, jubah, sorban, tasbih*, and other religious rituals. In addition, Islamic community organizations also participate in contesting the politicization of religion, such as; Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, FPI, PA 212, FUI, HT and others.²⁹ This involvement causes the emergence of identity politics based on religious groups (beliefs), leading to social conflict. In the end, identity politics engender two opposite camps, namely "kecebong", the nickname for supporters of President Joko Widodo and those not supporters of Jokowi, known as "kampret".³⁰ These phenomena construct the democratic state system, inseparable from controversies and social conflicts.

2. Campaign the @anesbaswedan Twitter Account

One of the political figures who will become a presidential candidate in the general election in 2024 is Anies Baswedan. As reported by Kompas.com, the candidate Anies Baswedan was declared by the group volunteer Anies on November 2, 2022 in Jakarta. Anies Baswedan shows readiness for Becomes candidate president at the election General 2024. Democratic National Party (Nasdem), in an orderly manner, officially supports and carries Anies Baswedan at a party in Democracy 2024.

As for the issue of Anies Baswedan's politicization of religion quickly spreads to the whole community due to access to social media. Social media has an essential role in dissemination related to political campaigns. Social media is a communication tool with easy accessibility and personal reach. According to Philip N Howard et al., social media becomes part of political communication for persuasively encouraging doctrine.³¹ Through social media, the ideology and understanding of each political party can become hegemony for the general public.

As with Anies Baswedan, his Twitter account is a means of publicizing all activities that tend to lead to campaign activities. The campaign on the Twitter account

²⁸ Chontina Siahaan and Manotar Tampubolon, "Electoral Manipulation In Indonesia's 2019 National Election," *Journal of Positive Psychology & Wellbeing* 5, no. 4 (2021): 1943–55.

²⁹ Riki Ronaldo and Darmaiza Darmaiza, "Politisasi Agama Dan Politik Kebencian Pada Pemilu Presiden Indonesia 2019," *Indonesian Journal of Religion and Society* 3, no. 1 (2021): 33–48.

³⁰ Wahyu Gunawan et al., "Indonesian Presidential Election 2019: Democracy without Conflict?," *Central European Journal of International & Security Studies* 13, no. 4 (2019).

³¹ Philip N Howard, Samuel Woolley, and Ryan Calo, "Algorithms, Bots, and Political Communication in the US 2016 Election: The Challenge of Automated Political Communication for Election Law and Administration," *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 15, no. 2 (2018): 81–93.

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@aniesbaswedan includes several elements such as; text, images, audio and video, where each part has an implicit meaning, as in the picture;



Figure 1: Pictures of activity



Figure 2: Picture of activity



Figure 3: Picture of activity

As in the picture above, Anies Baswedan's Twitter account publishes or takes pictures of activities with several groups and social organizations. Pictures 1 and 2 illustrate that Anies Baswedan gave a speech in front of the audience. The image describes, "Anies Baswedan, It's time for restoration of Indonesia", which means that Anies Baswedan could give change and restoration in Indonesia's future. The interpretation picture implies that the public expects Anies Baswedan to be president next due to capability finishing problems in Indonesian society. The representation of the meaning also refers to supporting the inhabitant public or member group in a manner totality. The member of the community assumes that Anies Baswedan can conduct Indonesian restoration. The definition of restoration is a form of effort to restore and repair the source nature has been broken.

Furthermore, picture number 3 describes the words "Anies Baswedan Presidenku" It means that the public in these activities considers Anies to be president for the 2024-2029 period. Additionally, in fig number 3, the text listed in the caption photo mention, "*sebuah tanah yang melahirkan dan membersarkan begitu banyak pejuang di negeri ini, yang Insyallah akan kita pertahankan sama-sama kedepan*". It implies that Anies Baswedan invites residents of the Minang ethnic group to support him in the election of President in 2024. The text shows a compelling invitation on the basis that it is about the importance of continuing the struggle of heroes from the Minang ethnic The activity reflected in Figures 1, 2, and 3 that is a form of political campaigning with a religious and cultural approach. Images and text represent implicit political meanings as a campaign tool.

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Figure 04: Pictures of activities



Figure 05: Picture of activity



Figure 06: Pictures of activities

In another post, Anies Baswedan published his activities with scholars, preachers, and several other religious organizations. As shown in figure 04, the Twitter account displays prayer activities at the #jakartabersholawat event. The post displays two photos consisting of a photo of Anies Baswedan with KH. Syukron Ma'imun, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Assegaf, and several other religious leaders. Figures 05 and 06 describe Anies Baswedan helping the people who attended the activity. The connotative means of the picture describes Anies Baswedan's approach to several scholars persuasively. Approach to the clergy and preachers as a means to gain the votes of their followers (*jama'ah*). Meanwhile, this assumption is reinforced by the narrative text, which shows an atmosphere of joy from Anies Baswedan for holding activities with religious leaders and the community.



Figure 07: Text and religious symbols



Figure 08: Text and religious symbols



Figure 09: Text and religious symbols

In the next post, pictures 07, 08, and 09 describe symbols of religion. Religious symbols are presented with signs, such as; mosques, religious actors (*da'i*), Muslim clothing, and religious activities. Religious nuances become an emphasis on the images displayed in the post. The representation of the meaning contained in that Anies Baswedan wants to show good relations with various religious groups and leaders. In addition, the connotative meaning

contained in the image aims to form a religious atmosphere in every political activity. The religious atmosphere is an effort to foster a sense and condition of being religious in all political activities.

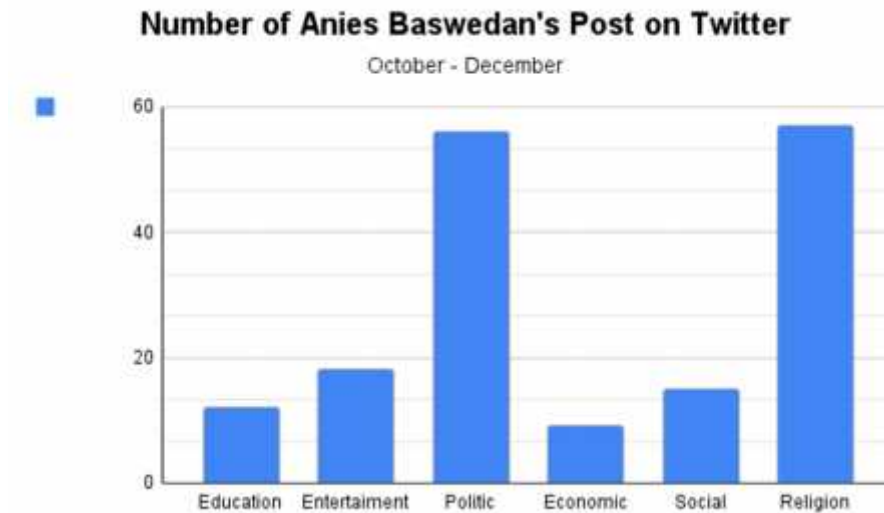


Figure 10: Anies Baswedan's Twitter content graphic

Additionally, religious impressions dominate Anies Baswedan's Twitter account's nuances. The previously mentioned chart determines this. Crawling results indicate that religion-related keywords dominate all content on the Twitter account @anesbaswedan. Religion comprises 59 content, politics 57 content, social content 17, entertainment 19 content, education 14 content, and economic content 13. Based on the volume of content published, the Twitter account @aniesbaswedan demonstrates religious and political undertones.

The analysis results indicate that messages from the Twitter account @aniesbaswedan contain a mixture of religious and political symbols. The first religious symbol can be seen in the published photos of Anies Baswedan's religious activities. The image also depicts several photographs of Muslim worship sites, including mosques and recitation halls. The politicization of religion is also reflected in texts that convey the significance of worship rituals. The publication of all religious and political content is continuous and uninterrupted. This admixtures between politics and religion are how a campaign on the @anesbaswedan account appears.

3. Reflections on Anies Baswedan's Campaign in the 2017 General Election

Anies Baswedan was the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia from 2014 to 2016. Then, Anies Baswedan was elected Governor of DKI Jakarta for the 2017 to 2022 period, winning over his opponent, namely Ahok (Basuki Tjahaja

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Purnama) - Djarot. Anies Baswedan's victory as Governor of DKI Jakarta has caused much controversy. Elis Nugraha Septiana et al. explains that Anies Baswedan's victory is supported by the Islamic community Front Pembela Islam (FPI) and Alumni Mujahid 212. Anies Baswedan's method campaign incorporates the influence of Muslim figures like Rizieq Shihab, Bachtiar Nasir, Arifin Ilham, and other Muslim activists.³² Besides that, Front Pembela Islam (FPI) and Mujahid 212 report Ahok regarding the religious blasphemy problem in Surah Al-Maidah verse 5. Front Pembela Islam (FPI) and Alumni Mujahid 212 cultivate public opinion regarding the prohibition of non-Islamic religious leaders.³³

A study from Abdillah Halim stated that Anies Baswedan's victory in the 2017 DKI Jakarta Governor Election brought religion-based identity politics on social media. Documentation that can be proven includes circulating various photos, videos and texts containing religious elements.³⁴ Political actors massively propagate religion-based identity politics in a virtual space called cyber warfare. Cyber warfare influences each other's discourses, opinions and issues of netizens, leading to divisions and the formation of two camps of party supporters. The media's alignment with certain parties in disseminating information also fosters the practice of identity politics. They were ignoring media neutrality results in the loss of media independence in presenting educative information to the public. On the other hand, Anies Baswedan and his companion appear to be silent readers or contributors to the ongoing politicization of religion and identity politics. Anies Baswedan tends to focus on work programs if he is elected as the leader of the City of Jakarta.

The phenomenons of excessive politicization of religion had an impact on identity politics and reduced the democratic system in Indonesia. The victory of the Anies Baswedan couple in the 2017 DKI Jakarta Governor Election became a stimulus for the development of radical Islamic movements, conservatives and Islamism in Indonesia with the emergence of middle-class Muslim groups. This group has a fundamental ideology that was constructed to realize an Islamic state (*khilafah*). The practice of politicizing religion has the potential to be re-implemented in future regional head elections. Because of seeing evidence, religious symbols can be acquired as a winning weapon for political actors, especially through social media.

³² Elis Nugraha Septiana, Ridho Al-Hamdi, and Adibah Dhivani Gusmi, "Aksi 212 Dan Kemenangan Anies-Sandi Pada Pemilihan Gubernur Jakarta 2017," *JISPO Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 10, no. 2 (2020): 211–30.

³³ Mochammad Irfan Achfandhy, "Konstruksi Wacana Dan Realitas Portal Berita Online," *Islamic Communication Journal* 6, no. 1 (2021): 59–76.

³⁴ Abdillah Halim, "Fatwa Dan Politisasi Agama (Analisis Wacana Penggunaan Fatwa Pada Pilkada DKI Jakarta)," *An-Nuha: Jurnal Kajian Islam, Pendidikan, Budaya Dan Sosial* 5, no. 2 (2018): 231–59.

4. Consistency Factor The Politicization of Religion on Social Media

Based on the multimodal discourse analysis above, the results of the data collection above found that religious symbols or attributes tend always to be used for presidential election campaigns on social media. This was also reflected in the 2017 general election, where religious symbols circulated massively on social media. The factors for the continuation of the politicization of religion on social media are classified into two, namely;

a. Multimedia Content

Social media is a multimedia platform combining various content, including audio, video, images, text and animation. Social media allows all freely published content to be recorded, played and displayed through multiple electronic devices such as computers and smartphones. One of the multimedia platforms is social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, known as social media.³⁵ In the context of this study, the role of social media is as a means of communication from politicians to the public as a form of campaigning.

The owner of the @*aniesweden* account, utilizes social media to convey messages to the public. However, the media does not always depict events realistically. Some mass media and social media have a significant role in shaping, framing and constructing certain ideologies to influence audiences.³⁶ As for its relation to ideology, the media consisting of audio, video, text and images has an implicit meaning. Meanings are conveyed through symbols as ideological practices from media editors to audiences. Therefore, Althusser explained that the media is an arena for ideological battles from various groups in power (dominant) to build public obedience.³⁷ Thus, multimedia content practices on the Twitter account @*aniesbasweden* are a form of implementation of ideological practices by combining religious and political symbols.

The analysis of the @*aniesbasweden* account, combining text and symbols, shows combining religious and political aspects. The mix represents Anies Baswedan's branding effort to the public. The image to be displayed is a religious-humanist image representing religious and socialist political figures. In addition, the photo that presents Anies Baswedan with religious leaders manifests the relationship between politics and religion,

³⁵ Akshi Kumar, Saurabh Raj Sangwan, and Anand Nayyar, "Multimedia Social Big Data: Mining," *Multimedia Big Data Computing for IoT Applications: Concepts, Paradigms and Solutions*, 2020, 289–321.

³⁶ Robert M. Entman, "Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power," *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (2007): 163–73, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00336.x>.

³⁷ Ahmad Rudy Fardiyan, "KEKUASAAN SIMBOLIK DI MEDIA SOSIAL: STIGMA TERHADAP KRITIKUS PEMERINTAH," *SOSIOLOGI: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Ilmu Sosial Dan Budaya* 17, no. 1 (2015): 21–30.

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symbolized in a semiotic perspective. The videos, audio, images and texts that are constructed, also shows identity politics. Identity politics exploits religious, ethnic or other identities for political gain. In this context, identity politics is built on religious aspects in which religion is used as an identity in political activity. Therefore, to realize all activities of politicizing religion, social media is an alternative communication tool with multimedia access and can reach all people personally.

b. Media convergence

In addition to multimedia content, social media is a manifestation of the media convergence process. Media convergence is the second indicator of the cause of the lasting politicization of religion because convergence is the merger or mixing of conventional media with new media (internet). The role of conventional media, such as newspapers, magazines, television and radio, has been replaced by social media.³⁸ As a result, social media has become the primary reference for the community in seeking information, business and so on. This phenomenon is then associated with political aspects that implement political communication in campaign activities through social media.

The politicization of religion is increasingly massive due to media convergence. The advantage of media convergence is that communication is actualized interactively. Interactive communication is communication that is carried out in two directions between the sender of the message and the recipient of the message.³⁹ Interactive communication is manifested through the comment, like and subscribe fields. From this column, somebody can determine the level of communication activity on the social media account's channel. Several political parties in campaigning then utilize the phenomenon of convergence. Besides bringing political messages, campaigns through social media also collaborate on religious messages. This is because the segmentation of social media audiences (consumers) in Indonesia is very sensitive to religious material.

As in the analysis results from Twitter @aniesbaswedan, the politicization of religion develops due to media convergence which facilitates audiences in accessing media personally. Social media tends to target individuals or individuals rather than

³⁸ Gracie Lawson Borders, "Integrating New Media and Old Media: Seven Observations of Convergence as a Strategy for Best Practices in Media Organizations," *International Journal on Media Management* 5, no. 2 (2003): 91–99.

³⁹ Jokhanan Kristiyono and Nafis Dwi Hermawan, "Analisis Komunikasi Interaktif Brando Franco Dengan Penontonnya Dalam Live Streaming Di Kanal YouTube Windah Basudara," *JCommsci-Journal of Media and Communication Science* 6, no. 2 (2023): 11–19.

conventional media directly. This media mix is considered more effective in massively spreading political and religious ideology. In addition, media convergence has caused social media to become the main reference medium for the public to access information. This is because social media is easier to access without any limitations, plus social media is faster to get up-to-date information. Therefore, convergence on social media platforms is fertile ground for actualizing the politicization of religion in political campaign activities.

5. Debate on the Politicization of Religion by Academics

In response to the consistency of Anies Baswedan's practice of politicizing religion, the politicization of religion continues to be debated by academics who support and oppose it. Some scientists consider that the exercise of religious politicization is a natural thing. Islam is present in society as a guide in controlling the order of life, covering economic, social, cultural and even political aspects. Charles Glock and Rodney Stark explained that religion is a multidimensional view of life, namely experiential (feeling), ritualistic (practice), ideological (belief), intellectual, and consequential (ethical).⁴⁰ Religion also regulates the political and ideological aspects of a nation. Salahuddin Wahid, a figure from Nahdatul Ulama, explained that the politicization of religion had pushed the Indonesian nation to achieve its independence.⁴¹ Evidenced by the Jihad Resolution incident on October 22, 1945, religious enthusiasm encouraged the youth to fight against the invaders. In addition, the politicization of religion also brought societal changes with the enactment of the Law on Marriage and the Religious Courts in Indonesia.

Muslim figures such as Hasan Al-Banna, Rashid Ridha, and Sayyid strengthen the argument above, which states that religion is a complete teaching. Religion regulates all activities of human life, both political aspects and the state system. This group considers that a state must conform to Islamic religious education and be guided by Islam following the Al-Quran and Hadith.⁴² Therefore, mixing religion and politics becomes necessary in state practice.

On the other hand, some scientists assume that the politicization of religion tends to lead to opposing views. Religion is exploited and manipulated to achieve the objectives of

⁴⁰ Riaz Hassan, "On Being Religious: Patterns of Religious Commitment in Muslim Societies1," *The Muslim World* 97, no. 3 (2007): 437.

⁴¹ "Gus Sholah: Politisasi Agama Boleh Untuk Kepentingan Bangsa," n.d.

⁴² Rais Dzulfikri, Kurnia Alfi Rianti, and A Fauzan Hidayatullah, "Filsafat Sebagai Ruang Introspeksi Dalam Menyikapi Isu Politisasi Agama," *Jurnal Tapis: Jurnal Teropong Aspirasi Politik Islam* 16, no. 1 (2020): 53–64.

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political interests, namely, gaining authority. Meanwhile, the practice of politicizing religion tends to legitimize secularism. This causes the sanctity and sacredness of religion to be reduced because of the political interests of a group or individual. Politics is considered a dirty practice that is irrelevant if you mix religion with politics. This negative view is based on the various negative impacts arising from the practice of politicizing religion, which results in the growth of the seeds of understanding, fundamentalism, conservatives, terrorism and radicalism. Overdose on the politicization of religion causes differentiation or division between groups, creating hatred and hostility towards political opponents who are only concerned with group or personal affairs rather than the benefit of the people.

C. Conclusion

The problem with the consistency of the politicization of religion appears because of the social media platform. Social media is not only understood as a medium or means of conveying information from the sender to the recipient but also plays an active role in the success of the politicization of religion by political figures, *ulama'* and religious groups. The consistency of the politicization of religion in the 2024 Pre-President election is reflected in Anies Baswedan's campaign activities in the 2017 DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election. The 2017 practice of politicizing religion has stimulated the development of radical, conservative Islamic movements and Islamism in Indonesia. Anies Baswedan's achievement through the politicization of religion has the potential to be implemented once again in the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. The politicization of religion remains controversial among academicians, who divide it into two camps: those who oppose it and those who support it for various reasons.

The justification for the consistency of the politicization of religion on social media is that it is supported by social media features that make it simpler for internet users to access information. First, multimedia content manifests collaboration, including audio, video, images, text and animation on social media. Content on social media has a significant role in framing and constructing certain ideologies to influence audiences so that communication can reach all people personally. Second, is media convergence, namely the mixing of conventional media with internet media embodied in social media. Communication is actualized interactively between the sender of the message and the recipient of the message through the comment, like, and subscribe fields. Multimedia content and convergence to facilitate the politicization of religion are increasingly developing in contesting the Pre-Presidential Election in 2024. However, this research needs to be expanded from the

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perspective of research outcomes, which tend to contribute to social media. From another perspective, recommendations for additional research would investigate the consistency of politicization from historical, social, economic, and other viewpoints.

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