

Manipulation of Information in the 2024 Election in Indonesia: Political Dynamics in the Post-Truth Era

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Abstract

Information manipulation overshadows the conduct of the 2024 General Election. Even the manipulation of information in various forms has increased in dissemination since one year before the 2024 elections. Social media platforms become a means or medium used to disseminate information manipulation. Using the concept of information manipulation proposed by Vilmer et.al (2018), this study explores information manipulation that occurs in 2022 - 2023 which will be associated with individual and collective levels that cause manipulation. This research is qualitative research with a descriptive method supported by secondary data (literature) such as books, journals, research reports of competent institutions, mainstream media news, and several accounts on social media that show the tendency of information manipulation practices. The results of this study show that the use of visual information and narratives of hope and hatred is becoming a mainstay in information manipulation content. Visual information is easy to understand and remember, while narratives of hope and hatred easily arouse emotional sentiments and provoke so as to enhance the message conveyed to shape public perception to bring down political opponents and degrade public trust in the General Elections Commission (KPU) as the organizer of elections. This condition will affect political dynamics and if left unchecked has the potential to pose a serious threat to national security and resilience.

Keywords: *information manipulation, elections, political dynamics.*

1. Introduction

The onslaught of information manipulation has again overload various social media platforms in the political year, since the eve of the 2024 General Election. Due to technological developments in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and developments in the era of society 5.0, social media has become one of the most intense methods of disseminating information manipulation. Nurasih, Rasidin & Witro (2020) said that communities can have almost unlimited interaction through social media. This factor is the cause of the continued growth of social media users to communicate and disseminate information (Maulana, 2017).

In research conducted by Khalyubi and Perdana said that manipulation of information in the context of elections is a form of election manipulation, one of which is the phenomenon of hoaxes. The results of this study also mention some literature that

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discusses election manipulation has an orientation to win the five-year democratic party, especially related to electoral malpractices carried out by organizers, voters, and also participants or contestants (Khalyubi & Perdana, 2021).

The same thing was revealed in the article "Law Enforcement for the Spread of Fake News (Hoaxes) in the Implementation of the 2019 Election in terms of the Concept of Election Justice" which stated that hoaxes disseminated in the 2019 Election had an impact on damaging the integrity and credibility of the election and political actors participating in the election, including also harming democratic values (Elcaputera & Dinata, 2019).

Schedler (2002) states that the entire "manipulation menu" is involved in electoral manipulation which could have been made possible by fraudulent actions by voters by spreading disinformation (misinformation) and preventing individuals and groups from mobilizing masses to support parties or candidates. This is called pre-voting fraud by Schedler (Javid & Mufti, 2020). This opinion indirectly shows that the manipulation of information produced, especially in the dissemination of fake news, is a form of election manipulation in the form of information. Therefore, all resulting information interference is a form of fraud that can be used as an indirect political tool to influence voters.

Information manipulation does not only occur in Indonesia but also in other countries such as the United States, France, and also Venezuela (Forelle et al, 2015). France and Venezuela are two countries where election manipulation is carried out by disseminating contextual words through fake news. Emmanuel Macron, the French presidential candidate, has been attacked with a series of issues over links to Saudi Arabia's funding of him ahead of polling day, including the opening of illegal accounts in the Bahamas (Ireton; Posetti, 2018).

In Indonesia, the phenomenon of information manipulation for the benefit of power politics began to be used in the 2014 Presidential Election (Pilpres), increased its escalation during the 2017 DKI Jakarta Provincial Head Election (Pilkada), and continued to the 2019 Presidential Election (Pilpres) (Salam, 2018; Utami, 2018). One of the cases of information manipulation that became a trending topic was the manipulation of information about the alleged attack on activist Ratna Sarumpaet at Husein Sastranegara Airport, Bandung, West Java. News that caused an uproar in the mass media and social media. Indirectly, this false reporting case also involved a number of political actors, especially from the Prabowo Subianto – Sandiaga Uno couple's camp who reacted to the actions experienced by Ratna Sarumpaet (Khalyubi & Perdana, 2021).

The manipulation of disseminated information also attacks the credibility of election organizers. There have been 35 cases of information manipulation that attacked the KPU, one of which was the issue of the existence of seven containers of ballots from China that had been voted at Tanjung Priok Port, North Jakarta (Mahsun & Mufrikhah, 2019). There is also manipulation of information on behalf of the public as voters by disseminating the issue of plans to deploy people power in a number of places involving political actors and carrying ethnic identity as a reaction to the rejection of the results of the 2019 Presidential Election (Gunawan, 2019).

According to some researchers, manipulation of information distributed by interested parties can take the form of content whose content is positive (support) for the contestants it supports. The goal is to gain public sympathy. As for other contestants, the manipulation of information is aimed at dropping and lowering its elasticity. It can even commit character assassination. However, generally information manipulation content is produced and disseminated to bring down political opponents and sympathizers. In a polarized society like in Indonesia, the content of manipulation of information about politics is often used by politicians and public figures for certain purposes (Mahsun & Mufrikhah, 2019). The concept of election manipulation plays the role of information to deceive and make the recipient of the information side with the information maker. It

deals with winning election contests (Javid & Mufti, 2020; Martin & Picherit, 2020; Schedler, 2002).

Information manipulation, including hoaxes, is referred to as post-truth's biological child because post-truth is seen as a period that ignores facts and hoaxes, namely information or fake news (Haryatmoko, 2017). By Willber (2017), post-truth is associated with nihilism, skepticism, narcissism, and post-modernism by rejecting universal truth as its principle. Reality and truth are tied only to individual interpretation.

This research focuses on the invasion of information manipulation in the context of political dynamics in the post-truth era ahead of the 2024 elections in Indonesia to oversee efforts to improve the quality of election administration. In the Oxford Dictionary the phrase 'post-truth' is defined as a time or era when facts were often ignored or had little influence on the formation of public perception or opinion compared to emotions and impersonal beliefs. Simply put, post-truth is a time when lies can be disguised as truth by playing on people's emotions and feelings.

The implementation of the 2024 election needs to be aware of the increasing emergence of manipulative content in the form of deepfakes for political propaganda. Deepfake is a form of artificial intelligence (AI) or artificial intelligence that can process photos, illustrations, to videos by adding audio that resembles real objects. In short, information manipulation content in the form of deepfakes that is raised is no longer only in the form of writing or statements but directly as if the character is speaking. With the development of increasingly sophisticated technology, AI can produce new imitation products that are genuine aka fake (fake) which is quite convincing, as a result people find it difficult to distinguish true content from artificial or artificial ones to obscure facts to build public opinion. The emergence of deepfakes is feared to worsen the phenomenon of information manipulation, especially in the political year, along with the massive use of social media (Saptoyo & Erdianto, 2023).

There are two reasons for this study, namely empirical reasons and theoretical reasons. The empirical reason for this study is the condition leading up to the 2024 elections the increasing number of political-related information manipulation attacks that spread through social media platforms. Data from the Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society (Mafindo), manipulation of information circulating in the January-September 2023 period, there are 1,731 contents. This number increases compared to 2022 (January – December) there were 1,608 pieces of information manipulation content (Utami, 2023). Reflecting on the implementation of the previous two elections 2014 and 2019, this condition will affect the quality and integrity of the implementation of the elections. The theoretical reason for this study is the increasingly massive condition of information manipulation ahead of the 2024 election due to the influence of the post-truth era. Information manipulation has a great effect on people who daily use various new media channels to obtain information which is likened to a tsunami wave of information. Information manipulation content that often contains identity politics and SARA has the potential to disrupt security such as the emergence of social conflicts due to mutual suspicion between communities. If it drags on, this condition threatens the unity and unity of the nation. Trust in misinformation also threatens the survival of democracy. Even lies that are continuously disseminated can also eliminate public trust in the government, so the continuation of development is hampered because the government is difficult to gather support from the public (Golose, 2019).

The questions to be answered in this study are: 1) What is the form of manipulation of information related to politics circulating in society? 2) What causes hoaxes?, 3) Who are the actors involved in spreading hoaxes?

2. Literature Review

Wardle & Dreahkshan (2017) explain the concept of information manipulation refers to an information disorder such as hoaxes and several things including disinformation, mal-information, and misinformation. Hoaxes or fake news are included in misinformation when information is misshaped and hurts or harms others unintentionally. While disinformation is misinformation that is deliberately shared to harm other parties. While mal-information is information properly shared to cause damage, where the process of transferring or transferring information is designed from private to public domain.

Another researcher Alvaro Lopez-Martin et al in their journal article entitled "La Desinformación, En Auge: Un Análisis De Los Bulos Sobre Política Española" wrote that the phenomenon of information manipulation is closely related to political activity (Lopez-Martin, 2023). In the context of the Spanish elections, Martin writes that the participation of countries is a serious obstacle to the future of any country given that its impact can have adverse effects on the creation of currents of opinion that are largely contrary to the rule of law and the preservation of rights and freedoms, as seen in the holding of previous elections. To neutralize its impact on society, it is important to know the mechanisms of the creation and dissemination of information manipulation.

Furthermore, research from Khalyubi and Perdana (2021) links information manipulation as part of the concept of election manipulation. This research focuses on discussing election manipulation related to the production of hoaxes during the 2019 election in Indonesia. This study explains the phenomenon of hoaxes with the concept of election manipulation in the form of election implementation information. Alberto Simpser's (2013) view as revealed in this study states that election manipulation in the form of information plays an informative role in increasing the influence of political actor groups on citizens as voters. Not only that, hoaxes as part of election manipulation are not only intended to attack political opponents to influence voters but also have implications for efforts to delegitimize public trust in election organizers, especially the General Elections Commission (KPU). In short, election manipulation can alter or threaten to alter any form of the electoral process.

Research on information manipulation was conducted by Situngkir (2017) with the title "Spread of Hoax in Social Media". In this study, it is discussed how the spread of information manipulation as a gossip oppidan on Twitter from experiences and observations that occur in Indonesia. This study also discusses the factors of the spread of gossip on social media and looks at the epidemiology of the spread of information manipulation before and after it is clarified in conventional mass media. The results of the study concluded that Twitter as a microblogging service is an effective medium for spreading news from people to people at a speed comparable to conventional mass media. Information manipulation has a large population reach of five to six tweets and has the potential to become exponentially larger unless conventional media stops its spread.

A similar study titled "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election" conducted by Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) concluded that the structure between social media platforms is very different from mainstream media technology. Information uploaded on social media can be conveyed to the public without going through filtration by third parties, fact-checking or evaluation, and editorial considerations. During election time, the average American adult reads and remembers one or more sequences of information manipulation articles. The exposure of pro-Trump articles is higher than pro-Clinton articles. The effectiveness of exposure to information manipulation to change the way people vote determines how much impact the results of this election will have.

Steve Tesich was the first to come up with the term post-truth in an essay in *The Nation* magazine (1992). Mair (2017) explains that post-truth is a term that describes the condition in which lies are produced as part of political tactics. The lie is made in such a way that it seems to be an alternative fact acceptable to society. People can accept these

lies not because of limited information, but because there are other factors (Goloese, 2019). According to Vilmer et al (2018), two factors cause information manipulation to occur, namely individual and collective factors. Individual factors are caused by (1) confirmation bias (belief in the information that supports the initial concept or preference), (2) authority (the party conveying the information), (3) preference (admired figure), and (4) illusional correlation (tendency to link two unrelated things). Collective factors are caused by (1) a crisis of trust in conventional media, (2) a crisis of trust in the government, especially in law enforcement, (3) digital disillusionment (information overload) due to advances in information technology. Various information is received from various sources, mainstream media, and sites whose managers are anonymous so that the public does not want to check the validity of the information received (britannica.com, 2019). In short, the community will receive information that strengthens their beliefs rather than trying to test these beliefs (Golose, 2019).

Meanwhile, Made Yaya Sawitri and I Nyoman Wiratmaja (2021) in a journal article entitled "On the Brink of Post-Democracy: Indonesia's Identity Politics in the Post-Truth Era" wrote that as a country with linguistic, religious, ethnic and cultural diversity, Indonesia is very vulnerable to identity politics games. Lies produced during the post-truth period exploit emotional sentiments and provoke interest groups to act on primordial impulses that support specific political interests. Negative turmoil related to identity politics occurred until the chaos of the circulation of information manipulation was feared to lead to post-democratic chaos.

3. Research Methods

A qualitative approach with a descriptive method is the method used in this study. This method is done by describing or describing the data that has been collected by the researcher. According to Bogdan and Taylor, qualitative research is one of the research procedures that obtain descriptive data from the behavior observed by researchers, speech, and/or writing. With a qualitative approach, it is expected to be able to obtain the results of in-depth studies of behavior, speech, or writing from individuals, groups, communities, and organizations in certain situations and conditions from a holistic, comprehensive, and intact perspective. Generally, qualitative approaches are used for research on social life, social activities, history, and others (Margono, 2009).

Research data is obtained from secondary data sources (literature) in the form of books, journals, research reports of competent institutions, mainstream media news, and social media that show the tendency of information manipulation practices. Data in the form of numbers is not a form of research with a quantitative approach, but as data that is narrated to strengthen the facts and substance of research. Multidisciplinary is an approach in this research with a variety of disciplinary perspectives to examine one topic and problem with several disciplinary objectives (Tress & Fry, 2005). The author reviewed reports of information manipulation through turnbackhoax.id pages produced by the Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society (Mafindo) in 2022 and 2023. This period was chosen because ahead of the 2024 elections, social media activity to seek political support is increasing. While the 2019 data is only for comparison.

4. Data and Analytics

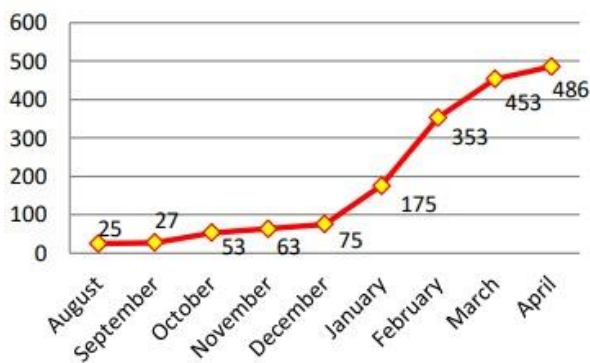
1. Manipulation of Information related to Politics in Indonesia

The spread of information manipulation is increasingly rife when dealing with political problems because politics is closely related to conflicts of interest (Susilo et al, 2019). The Insight Center in the 2021 Indonesian Digital Literacy Survey said that manipulation of information related to politics often dominates information ahead of election

celebrations. This condition is exacerbated by political polarization, namely the post-truth scourge, bubble effect/filter bubble, echo-chamber, death of expertise, and a brain system that works more emotionally (croc brain) (Nugroho, 2022). ELSAM Research Director, Wahyudi Djafar stated that in practice in Indonesia, information manipulation is oriented toward politics, ideology, and religion which correlates with intolerance and extremism: violent views and actions (Djafar, 2017).

Information manipulation affects all election processes, including campaigns on social media. The massive use of technology has caused changes in the form, method and arrangement of campaigns during the 2019 election. This difference was seen in the 2014 and 2019 elections (Khalyubi & Perdana, 2021). In the 2014 election, it was limited to involving conventional media so the campaign was arranged more technically including limited meetings, face-to-face, and dialogue, socialization with mass media (print and electronic), television and radio broadcasts, campaign props, and candidate debates. Meanwhile, in the 2019 election, the role of social media began to be involved so that campaign regulations were regulated more broadly, including campaign rules on social media and regulations related to advertising facilities in mass media funded by the KPU (Perdana & Wildianti, 2018). The expansion of rules has an impact on vulnerability in campaigning on social media, especially in the form of campaign bans. While the rules of campaigning on social media are considered unable to limit the spread of information manipulation in cyberspace. Although campaigns have been restricted, the problem of spreading information manipulation continues to be found (Cornelis, 2019). In addition to regulation, the duration of the campaign (202 days) in the 2019 election also triggered the high spread of information manipulation. Campaigning is the desire to influence the beliefs and behavior of others with communicative appeal (Paisley & Rice, 2012). Thus, the majority of information manipulation appears at the campaign stage during elections.

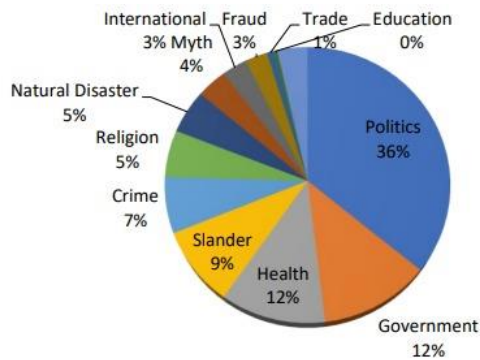
The findings of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia there were 1,710 information manipulation content in the 2019 election from August 2018 to April 2019. This period is considered a crucial stage in the implementation of the election, including the preparation of the Permanent Voter List (DPT), registration of President-Vice Presidential Candidates, to dispute resolution of the determination of legislative candidates and Presidential Candidates - Cawapares. A very drastic increase occurred in February-April 2019 along with the 2019 elections.



Graph 1. Manipulation of Politically Related Information in the 2019 Election

Source: Ministry of Communication and Information (2019)

Graph 2 illustrates the distribution of information manipulation content during the 2019 election period, which was dominated by political issues 36% and government issues 12%.



Graph 2. Topics of Information Manipulation in the 2019 Election

Source: Ministry of Communication and Information (2019)

The 2019 presidential election contestation is a repeat of the 2014 presidential election, but the frictions that occur are sharper and louder. The 2014 Presidential Election is believed to be the main root cause of friction in society, then continued with the 2017 DKI Jakarta Provincial Head Election (Sirait, 2019). In the 2019 Presidential Election, polarization is increasingly visible with the majority of black campaigns, attacking each other between contesting candidates. The campaign period was supposed to be a place to convey the vision and mission as well as the excellence of the Presidential - Vice Presidential Candidate pair turned into a campaign with hate speech and fake news. Black campaign content is deliberately created and reproduced by labeling political opponents as evil. The creator puts the black campaign at the center of conditioned framing.

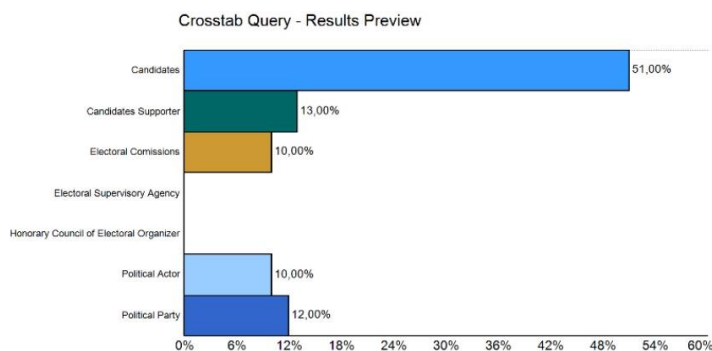
In the book *Combating Information, Manipulation: A Playbook for Elections and Beyond* (2021) categorizes parties involved in information manipulation, (1) Political parties, using information manipulation to discredit the opposition. His trick is to manipulate political discourse to fit his campaign agenda; (2) Hate groups, using information manipulation to advance their social or political agenda by inflaming hatred and fostering political polarization, silencing and intimidating and provoking acts of violence to prevent majority voters from supporting a particular group or to suppress political participation; (3) Foreign governments, usually manipulating confidential information (e.g. using fake accounts) or open with state-supported media. Information manipulation as a tool of statecraft and geopolitics and can also be used to influence the outcome of elections in countries that are strategically important to advance government interests, shape public perceptions of countries abroad; (4) Domestic government, manipulation of information is used to influence people's attitudes and suppress the participation of certain groups such as activists, journalists, or political opponents. Governments use overt and covert manipulation of information to achieve political ends. Governments can also easily enforce censorship as a form of information manipulation; (5) Commercial actors consisting of social media platforms, public relations firms, or strategic communication firms. Manipulation of information as part of business and partnering with other actors to disseminate information manipulation content for profit; It could be that this group has a certain political agenda or economic interest supported by the government or other political actors so that information manipulation can be used to influence people's attitudes to be in line with the goals of their supporters.

To influence people in making their political choices, information manipulation makers use social media as a channel for massive dissemination to shape public perception or opinion. For people with low literacy levels, they are vulnerable to various forms of manipulation of this information. This can be seen from the ease with which people disseminate information without considering and checking information and not knowing the real source (Maulana, 2017; Witro, 2020). Based on data released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2019, Indonesia is in the bottom 10 countries that have low literacy rates, ranking 62 out of 70 countries. This is

based on a survey conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). However, the results of research by the National Library (Perpusnas) in 2022 show that Indonesia's Reading Preference Index (IKM) has increased from 59.52 (in 2021) to 63.9 (in 2022) (Kasih, 2021; Rizaty, 2023). Digital literacy is not just how people can use the internet, but how people can analyze, evaluate, and produce messages (Susilo et al, 2019). Another factor is the lack of influence and determination of mainstream media due to declining public trust in conventional media. People often view conventional media as politically biased or because of ownership so social media becomes mainstream (Djafar, 2017). Departing from that mode, public opinion is formed. In the post-truth era, emotions and beliefs are the basis for forming perceptions or opinions, while rationality and objective facts are ignored (Golose, 2019).

Broadly speaking, information manipulation in the 2014 election and the 2019 election has differences, especially about targets. This was revealed by Khoirunnisa Nur Agustyati, Executive Director of the Association for Elections and Democracy (Perludem) in the discussion activity "Collaboration to Counteract Hoaxes Ahead of the 2024 Elections" held by the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Indonesia on February 17, 2022 in Jakarta. According to him, in the 2014 election, the distribution of information manipulation was aimed at (1) changing public perception of certain candidates, (2) attacking certain candidates, (3) the main purpose of knocking each other down between candidates. In short, the manipulation of information is mainly shown to the contesting party. While the purpose of information manipulation in the 2019 election was expanded, (1) Changing people's minds about election organizers; (2) Attacking election organizers; (3) Nurturing "public emotions" in previous elections so that they are not effective in reducing or increasing electability (Saptoyo & Galih, 2022).

Graph 3 indirectly describes that information manipulation in elections connects various parties such as election organizers, participants to supporters of candidates who are minor representatives of the general electorate.



Graph 3. Parties targeted for manipulation of politically related information in the 2019 Election

Source: Khalyubi & Prime (2021)

Information manipulation in various types is a form of media dysfunction, especially social media which is used to accelerate the flow of information for users. But the problem is that the spread of information manipulation is not followed by strict supervision and good public literacy. Balzacq, Leonard, and Ruzicka in Gunawan & Ratmono (2018) stated that the spread of information manipulation in cyberspace is part of political commodities, especially related to the clash of political escalation ahead of the election agenda. Manipulation of information during elections also affects the dynamics and contestation that has been built (Khalyubi & Perdana, 2021).

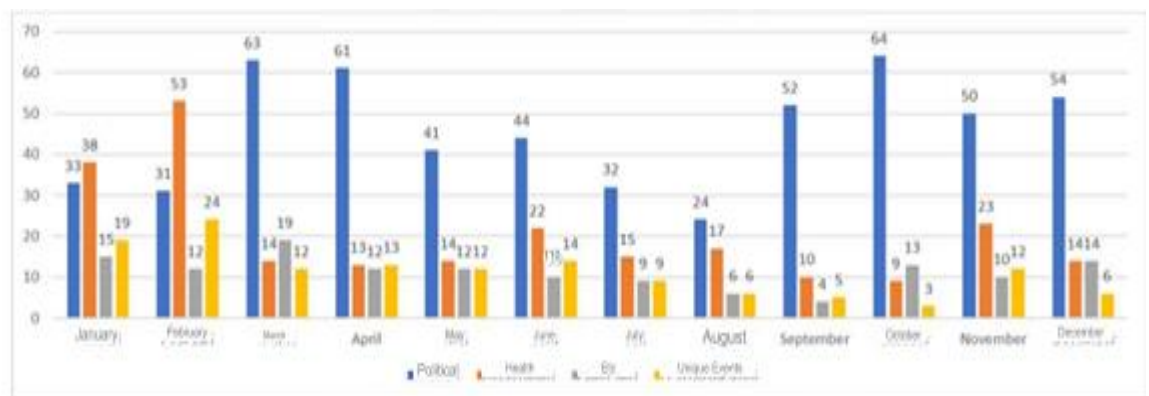
In the perspective of security stability, the dissemination and consumption of various forms of information manipulation is a threat. Manipulative content that is disseminated

is often related to sensitive issues of ethnicity, religion, race and between groups that have the potential to pose a threat of security disturbances such as social conflicts. This phenomenon also degrades public trust in the government which makes it difficult for the government to garner public support, thus hampering national development (Golose, 2019). This claim is corroborated by the results of a study by the Indonesian Telematics Society (Mastel) released on April 10, 2019, showing that the impact of information manipulation greatly disrupts community harmony by 81.9 percent and hinders development by 76.4 percent. The results can be interpreted or indicate that the manipulation of information poses a serious threat to state security. Donny Yusgiantoro of the Defense University said that the manipulation of information already endangers parts of national resilience. This symptom causes the condition of national resilience to be disturbed (Dwi, 2021). Meanwhile, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2014-2019 period, Bambang Soesatyo called fake news and hate speech a terror for democracy that does not only occur in Indonesia (DPR, 2019). These claims indicate that information manipulation is no longer considered a symptom or phenomenon because it can be a threat to national security and security.

2. Manipulation of Information Related to Politics in the 2024 Concurrent Elections

Executive Director of the Association for Elections and Democracy (Perludem), Khoirunnisa Nur Agustyati predicts that the complexity of the 2024 election will be greater because the Legislative Election, Presidential Election, and Regional Head Election (Pilkada) will be held in the same year, while still using the same regulation, namely Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning Elections. One of the things that is considered crucial is related to campaign rules on social media that only regulate the number of accounts. In fact, according to him, a lot of manipulation of information circulating on social media is not an account registered with the KPU to represent contestants or political parties (Saptoyo & Galih, 2022).

The Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society (Mafindo) recorded findings of information manipulation in 2022 that there were 1,608 contents carried out with quantitative content analysis mapping to understand trends in information manipulation based on issues, forms, modes and channels of dissemination. Of these, political themes were dominated by 549 findings (32.3%) and health themes 242 findings (14.3%). Health topics dominated in January - February when a new variant of "Omicron" Covid-19 emerged in Indonesia. But since March, the trend shifted towards politics until the end of the year.



Graph 4. Information Manipulation Topics in 2022

Source: Mafindo (2022)

Entering 2023, one year before the 2024 elections, manipulation of information related to politics still continues its dominance. Mafindo found that there were 1,731 pieces of information manipulation content during January - September 2023 (Utami, 2023). This

number is higher than in 2022 (January – December) with a total of 1,608 contents. Conditions like this also occurred during the 2019 election. Data from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia found that there were 1,731 pieces of information manipulation content related to the 2019 election, where the amount of content continued to increase until the implementation of the election.



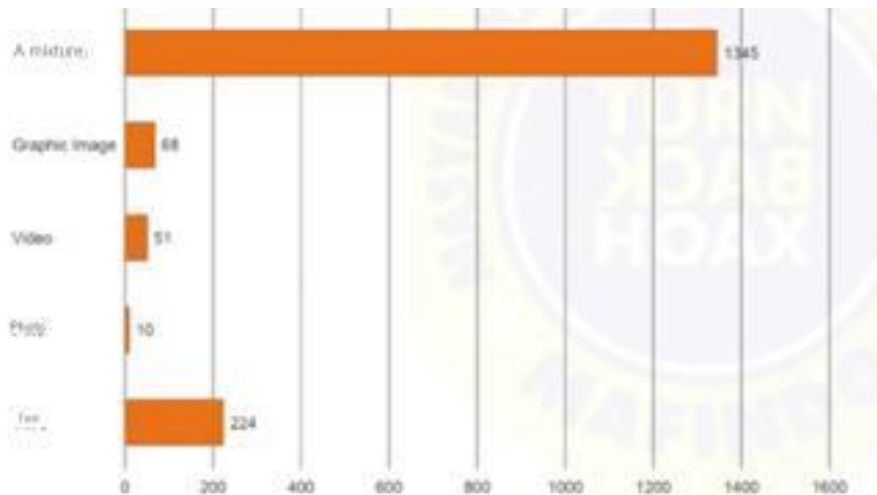
Graph 5. Manipulation of Politically Related Information in the 2019 Election

Source: Ministry of Communication and Information (2019)

This condition showed that the phenomenon of information manipulation is closely related to political activity, as Lopez-Martin argues (2023). Likewise, the claims of Balzacq, Leonard, and Ruzicka in Gunawan & Ratmono (2018) which states that the spread of information manipulation in cyberspace is part of political commodities, especially related to the clash of political escalation ahead of the election agenda, as well as the opinion of Susilo et al (2019) who stated that the spread of information manipulation is increasingly rife when dealing with political problems because politics is closely related to conflicts of interest.

a. Forms of Information Manipulation

In 2022, information manipulation is dominated by mixed forms (a combination of images/videos with text) with a total of 1,345 or 79.2 percent.



Graph 6. Politically Related Information Manipulation Tools in 2022

Source: Mafindo (2022)

The mixed form still dominates in 2023. Data from the Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society (Mafindo) noted that in the first quarter of 2023, of 664 politically related information manipulation content, 603 (91 percent) of them were in mixed form (a combination of images/videos with text). For manipulation claims, information is sometimes embedded in captions or text in images/videos. This means that the form of

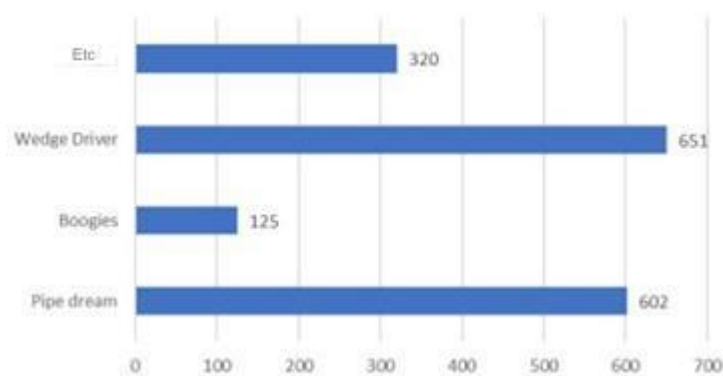
information manipulation in 2023 still follows the same pattern as in 2022 by relying on visual information (Pratama, 2023).

This finding is in line with the findings of Mafindo which noted a drastic increase in the Youtube platform as a means of disseminating information manipulation. In 2022 (January – December) only 99 pieces of content were found. Meanwhile, in 2023 in the first quarter (January – March), 214 information manipulation content was found on the Youtube platform. In the era of increasingly sophisticated technological developments, an observer of digital communication from the University of Indonesia, Firman Kurniawan, predicts that information manipulation content in the form of deepfakes (AI) will be widely used in the 2024 election by creating false content that impersonates or acts on behalf of certain political figures (Saptoyo & Erdianto, 2023). Deepfake is a form of artificial intelligence (AI) or artificial intelligence that is able to process photos, illustrations, to videos by adding audio that resembles the original object so that people find it difficult to distinguish from the original. In October 2023, a deepfake content uploaded on a number of social media accounts showed President Jokowi as if he was giving a speech in Mandarin. The video search results are identical to the video previously uploaded on The U.S – Indonesia Society YouTube channel on November 13, 2015, but President Jokowi does not use Mandarin (Haryanto, 2023).

From this description indicates that the use of visual information is the mainstay to convey information manipulation. Information manipulation content creators realize that people prefer content in the form of visual information rather than text (writing). Hollingworth (2023) in Search Engine Journal said that there are seven reasons content needs visuals (images or videos) including (1) Humans are visual creatures so that they can obtain and store information faster, better, and longer because it is easy to digest and remember; (2) Visuals create connections because the right visuals can build strong connections so that the audience stays to watch, read, and hear; (3) Visuals encourage engagement. When more engagement means more leads. Most people will see an image of a page before recognizing and reading the text. The opinion of Wilbur Schramm (1954) in Arifah & Anggapuspa (2023) states that engagement is very important in interpersonal communication because the content of the message will be well received if the audience has high awareness.

b. Narrative Type

To exploit readers' emotions, information manipulation content narrates most hate and hope. This can be seen from the dominance of the wedge driver type (651 content, 38.3%) which shows that information manipulation narratives in 2022 tend to have ulterior motives to arouse negative sentiments towards certain parties. The second position is occupied by the pipe dream type (602 content, 35.5%) which has the characteristic of giving false hope (too good to be true).



Graph 7. Narrative Type
Source: Mafindo (2022)

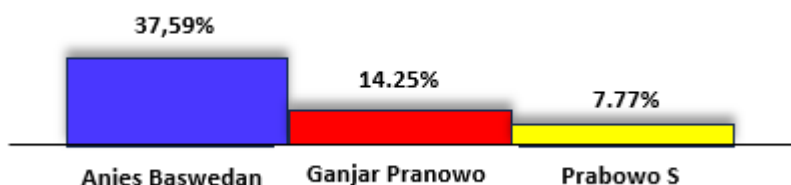
In 2023, things are still not much different, the majority of information manipulation is still narrating about hope and hatred to trigger emotional reactions from readers. There are 262 pieces of content (39%) pipe dream type narratives. While the type of wedge driver (247 content, 37%). Although the type of wedge driver has decreased compared to 2022, there is not too much change from 38.3 percent to 37 percent. This shows that the tendency of people to enjoy information that emphasizes sentiment towards the object of information manipulation. As revealed by Sawitri & Wiratmaja (2021) that lying is produced during post-truth to exploit negative sentiments and provoke interest groups to act on primordial impulses that support certain political interests. Black campaign content is deliberately created and reproduced by labeling political opponents as evil figures (Sirait, 2019).

This also happened during the 2019 election which attacked Joko Widodo as the Presidential Candidate and incumbent. The political research institute Digitroops recorded ten pieces of information manipulation content that attacked the Vice Presidential Candidate and the most horrendous on social media during the 2019 Election. Of the ten contents, six of them target Joko Widodo, namely (1) Jokowi is accused of being the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) which has been accessed 173,110,667 times; (2) Jokowi is anti-Islam, accessed more than 28 million times; (3) Jokowi will remove the adhan, seen by 52,428,745 accounts and accessed 98,229,910 times; (4) Jokowi legalizes same-sex marriage; (5) Jokowi offered Bogor to China; (6) Jokowi allowed foreign workers to flood Indonesia (Arigi, 2019).

c. Targets of Information Manipulation

The 2024 election will begin campaigning on November 28, 2023. However, the fact is that various social media platforms have been flooded with various information manipulation content, both positive (support) and negative (bringing down political opponents). As research and development data from the Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society (Mafindo) from turnbackhoax.id recorded 540 pieces of information manipulation content related to politics in various forms in the period January - October 2023. From this data, it shows that more than 50 percent of the majority of content contains attacks directed at 3 Presidential Candidates. The same condition also occurred during the 2019 election, where the results of research from Khalyubi & Perdana (2021) showed that information manipulation attacks were mainly aimed at candidates who reached 51 percent.

Anies Baswedan was the first person to be the target of information manipulation, both whose content was positive meaning giving support to the former DKI Jakarta Governor and negative (dropping credibility). There are 203 contents for Anies Baswedan, 77 contents for Ganjar Pranowo, and 42 contents for Prabowo Subianto. While the manipulation of information for Vice Presidential Candidates is not very significant. Muhaimin Iskandar only found 3 contents, Mahfud MD (14 contents), and Gibran Rakabuming Raka (9 contents).



Graph 8. Frequently targeted candidates
 Source: Processed from Mafindo R&D Data

This finding is in line with the type of narrative often used in information manipulation. In 2022 – 2023, the type of wedge driver (harboring ulterior motives to arouse negative

sentiment towards certain parties) does not show a change in numbers ranging from 38-37 percent. This condition shows that narratives containing personal sentiments are still a mainstay for character assassination on objects of information manipulation where content creators place black campaigns to be a central part in conditioned framing (Sirait, 2019).

Several information manipulation content attacking candidate Anies Baswedan summarized by the Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society (Mafindo) from turnbackhoax.id describes Anies Baswedan as a corruptor, fraudster, and adherent of extreme Islam. Most of the content of the attack on Anies narrates Anies being involved in a Formula E corruption case, Anies having a debt of IDR 50 billion to Sandiaga Uno, and Anies adhering to extreme Islam associated with the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) group and terrorism. These contents use visuals at different moments and have nothing to do with the title and content of information manipulation content.

5. Conclusion

The use of visual information is the mainstay of manipulative content creators to perfect the message conveyed. Visual information creates a huge difference in the value of content to influence how people digest and understand the content, and remember the message conveyed. Even visual information is also able to make the audience endure to watch, read, and hear because it has communicative appeal. Visuals also affect how that content appears in organic search and how people react to that content (engagement). Engagement is considered very important in interpersonal communication because the content of the message will be well received if the audience has high awareness (Arifah & Anggapuspa, 2023).

In an era of increasingly sophisticated technology use, the 2024 election needs to anticipate manipulative information in the form of deepfakes for political propaganda. Deepfakes are feared to exacerbate the phenomenon of information manipulation because the invasion of information manipulation greatly affects the mindset and accumulates into patterns of action. Because it is a borderless interaction, various manipulations of information are spread massively through social media and social networks aimed at shaping public opinion or perception in the virtual universe.

In the post-truth era, this condition is used by certain parties to disseminate various information manipulation content by utilizing personal sentiments. Public expectation and hatred are the narratives most often used in information manipulation content to bring down political opponents and character assassination on objects of information manipulation content. Even the manipulation of information is also aimed at delegitimizing public trust in election organizers, especially the General Election Commission.

If protracted, this condition has the potential to pose a serious threat to national security and security. Threatening the survival of democracy. High political tensions cause political stability to be disrupted, and the absence of security and legal certainty in Indonesia which results in disruption of the economy and hampering the sustainability of national development. Information manipulation content that often contains identity politics and SARA can lead to social conflicts due to mutual suspicion between communities. Even the worst can threaten the unity and unity of the nation.

To realize safe, peaceful, honest and fair elections, the General Elections Commission as the organizer of the election must coordinate with various stakeholders such as the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia (Polri), the State Cyber and Encryption Agency (BSSN), and the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology to secure cyberspace. The General Elections Commission also needs to increase synergy and collaboration with the public and media to increase literacy, critical thinking and public

sensitivity to various forms of information manipulation so that it is not easily exploited through manipulation of hatred, hope, and fear. Social media is also expected to be concerned and play an active role in anticipating the spread of information manipulation content.

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