

DIGITAL POLITICAL STAGE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE HYPERREALITY OF PRABOWO–GIBRAN’S SOCIAL MEDIA GIMMICK CAMPAIGN IN THE 2024 ELECTION

Moh. Adil Saputro

State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya
adilsaputro007@gmail.com

Ajeng Widya Prakasita

State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya
ajeng.widya.prakasita@uinsa.ac.id

M. Basuki Rahmat

State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya
basuki.rahmat@uinsa.ac.id

Vany Fitria

University of Toulon, France
vany-fitria@etud.univ-tln.fr

Abstrak

Platform digital telah mentransformasi model kampanye politik dan menciptakan ruang di mana batas antara kenyataan dan ilusi menjadi kabur. Penelitian ini menganalisis strategi gimik media sosial yang digunakan oleh pasangan Prabowo-Gibran dalam Pemilu 2024, dengan menyoroti bagaimana gimik tersebut tidak sekadar menjadi alat komunikasi politik, tetapi juga membangun *hiperrealitas*. Dengan menggunakan kerangka teori *simulacra* dan *simulasi* dari Jean Baudrillard, penelitian ini mengungkap bagaimana strategi komunikasi politik melalui gimik di media sosial dapat membangun citra yang *hiperreal*, di mana elemen-elemen kampanye menjadi lebih "nyata" daripada realitas politik yang sebenarnya. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang diperoleh dari publikasi PT Indonesia Indikator dengan menggunakan analisis konten. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa gimik politik bukan sekadar strategi untuk menarik perhatian pemilih, tetapi telah berkembang menjadi instrumen hegemonik yang membentuk realitas baru yang terlepas dari realitas sesungguhnya. Dalam konteks ini, demokrasi menghadapi tantangan serius, ketika representasi politik lebih bergantung pada daya tarik visual dan narasi media sosial, maka substansi politik dapat tergeser oleh ilusi semu yang dirancang untuk menggiring dan mengendalikan opini publik.

kata kunci: *Gimmik, Hiperrealitas, Kampanye Politik, Kampanye Digital, Prabowo Gibran, Pilpres 2024.*

Abstract

Digital platforms have transformed political campaign models and created spaces where the boundaries between reality and illusion become blurred. This study analyzes the social media gimmick strategy used by the Prabowo-Gibran pair in the 2024 election,

highlighting how the gimmick is not only a tool of political communication, but also builds hyperreality. Using the theoretical framework of simulacra and simulation from Jean Baudrillard, this study reveals how political communication strategies through gimmicks on social media can build a hyperreal image, where campaign elements become more "real" than actual political reality. A descriptive qualitative approach was used to analyze the data obtained from the publication of PT Indonesia Indicator using content analysis. The results of this study show that political gimmicks are not just a strategy to attract the attention of voters, but have developed into a hegemonic instrument that forms a new reality that is independent of the real reality. In this context, democracy faces serious challenges, when political representation relies more on visual appeal and social media narratives, then political substance can be displaced by pseudo-illusions designed to drive and control public opinion.

Keywords: *Gimmicks, Hyperreality, Political Campaigns, Digital Campaigns, Prabowo Gibran, 2024 Presidential Election.*

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Introduction

This research describes a study of the hyperreality of political campaigns in the digital era. In this context, hyperreality is understood as a separation between reality and representation, in which constructed images appear more ideal than the actual conditions. Hakim (2022) states that political practices mediated by social media allow politicians to curate strong and emotional images that often blur the line between fact and reality.

In the digital era, political candidates can easily create narratives that obscure objective facts, using fake news, provocative memes, and manipulative videos to shape perceptions that support certain agendas. The main challenge for voters is distinguishing reality from constructed political imagery, given the overwhelming and often contradictory flow of information. Media education and digital literacy are essential for helping voters assess the reliability of information sources (Ichsan, Irawan, & Safira, 2023). In the context of the 2024 Election, the Prabowo–Gibran pair strategically utilized social media, relying on creative gimmicks such as memes and short videos to attract the attention of younger generations. Various forms of digital content—ranging from memes, short videos, interactive infographics, carousel posts, storytelling reels, micro-podcasts, and augmented reality (AR) filters, to user-generated content—were employed to expand message reach and increase public engagement (Dhanesh, Duthler, & Li, 2022). However, the impact of these strategies on public

perception requires critical analysis to understand their implications amid disinformation and the post-truth era.

Prabowo, as a political figure with a military background, is known for his authoritative and firm character. This military background has shaped his image as a leader associated with discipline and strong leadership. However, this image shifted during the campaign process, in which Prabowo was portrayed as a more humanistic, relaxed, and humorous figure. This was constructed through symbols such as the “Gemoy” persona and the playful dances he performed throughout the campaign. Meanwhile, Gibran, as a representative of the younger generation, appeared with a style that follows contemporary youth trends on social media. These visual messages functioned as strategic instruments and tools aimed at influencing constituents (Priyowidodo & Indrayani, 2024).

The Prabowo–Gibran campaign team made deliberate efforts to construct new character portrayals for both candidates, aiming to create an image that is more relatable and integrated with young voters. This character construction is commonly referred to as political gimmickry. The strategy involved the creation of various political gimmicks identified by the researcher, including the “Prabowo *gemoy*” persona, the “dancing” performances, as well as the catchphrases “oke gas” and “sorry ye.” (Sihabudin, Laila, Kharis, Rismayanti, & Fatimah, 2023).

Meanwhile, Gibran employed a more distinctive political image by using a strategy that did not confront criticism directly but instead engaged with humor, reflecting a relaxed and non-conventional youth style. Criticisms such as “Samsul,” “Belimbing Sayur,” and “Si Asam Folat” were reframed as gimmicks to strengthen his representation and stimulate light, humorous discussions on social media (Susetyawidianta & Geraldly, 2024). The use of these gimmicks aimed to build an emotional connection with voters, creating narratives that are more engaging and memorable.

This research is grounded in strong scientific reasoning and supported by empirical data and relevant factual evidence. The scholarly rationale includes the importance of understanding the phenomenon of hyperreality in political campaigns, as discussed in the study “*Dinamika Perubahan Sosial dan Politik di Era Digital*” by Anggita Nur Fadilla et al., which highlights how social media influences political communication and public participation. These findings are relevant to the research on “*Hyperreality in Political Campaigns: An Analysis of the Prabowo–Gibran Social Media Gimmick Strategy in the 2024 Election*,” which

examines the use of gimmicks and image manipulation through social media (Fadilla, Agustina, & Syafikarani, 2024). The campaign of the Prabowo–Gibran pair utilized visual and symbolic elements to attract attention—particularly from young voters—thus creating a polished reality shaped by the phenomenon known as hyperreality.

The Hyperreality approach explains how social media constructs a new political reality that blurs the boundary between facts and representation, shifting substantive discussion into a game of imagery and symbolism that influences voter loyalty (Indrajat et al., 2020). An analysis of digital campaign strategies provides insight into how candidates and political parties build narratives, manage public image, and respond to rapidly changing political dynamics. By utilizing analytical data, campaigns can identify trends and adjust strategies in real time, thereby maximizing their impact. The case study of the Prabowo–Gibran campaign illustrates how social media gimmicks create an appealing constructed reality, further blurring the line between factual truth and simulated representations. Through the lens of Jean Baudrillard’s concept of Hyperreality, this research not only reveals the dynamics of the campaign but also enriches academic understanding of the role of media in shaping social and political realities and its implications for democracy.

Content analysis of Instagram and TikTok posts needs to be clarified by incorporating secondary data from PT Indonesia Indicator, particularly to map message distribution patterns, conversation volume, the types of content that contribute most to engagement, and the dynamics of public perception formed on these platforms (Indrajat et al., 2020). In this context, hyperreality is understood as the public’s exaggerated perception of reality—or a constructed reality that is artificially produced. In contemporary political campaigns, social media plays an increasingly important role as a communication channel between candidates and voters. This research focuses on two primary social media platforms used in the Prabowo–Gibran campaign: Instagram and TikTok (Majid, 2023). These platforms were selected due to their popularity among young voters and their strong capacity to disseminate visual and audiovisual content in ways that are engaging and highly viral.

This research is expected to provide an important contribution to understanding the dynamics of political campaigns in the digital era, particularly within the context of elections in Indonesia. By analyzing the strategy of Hyperreality and the social media gimmicks employed by the Prabowo–Gibran campaign team, this study aims to reveal how political images

are constructed and communicated to voters through digital platforms. Furthermore, it investigates the impact of these strategies on voter perceptions and their potential implications for the broader democratic process. Thus, this research is not only relevant to the context of the 2024 Presidential Election but also offers valuable insights for understanding future trends in political campaigning.

Research Methodology

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach as explained by Sugiyono, which aims to deeply understand phenomena within their natural contexts, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument (Sugiyono, 2013). The main focus of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of how images, narratives, and emotions are mobilized and constructed within the digital campaign, and how these processes significantly contribute to the phenomenon of the representation crisis in the context of Indonesia's digital democracy.

This study uses a content analysis approach to identify various forms of political gimmicks and to examine their implications for democratic dynamics within the Prabowo–Gibran campaign. The research data were obtained from two sources: (1) secondary data from analytical reports by PT Indonesia Indicator, which provide mappings of content, conversation volume, and public discourse trends in the digital sphere; and (2) primary data from direct analysis of TikTok and Instagram content, the two platforms that served as the main spaces for distributing visual and audiovisual campaign messages. The combination of these data sources enables the researcher to capture the patterns of production, dissemination, and reception of political gimmicks more comprehensively—both at the macro level of the digital landscape and the micro level of content interaction.

Three key elements are analyzed in this research: (1) Place, referring to the social media platforms that serve as the distribution spaces for political gimmicks; (2) Actors, referring to the individuals involved in this study, including the Prabowo–Gibran pair, their campaign team, and netizens; and (3) Activity, referring to digital interactions such as likes, comments, shares, and content reproduction, which constitute the core analytical components of the research.

Forms of Hyperreality in the Prabowo–Gibran Social Media Gimmick Strategy

The phenomenon of hyperreality in the Prabowo–Gibran campaign becomes particularly evident through the use of symbolic, narrative, and visual communication elements that are strategically designed to leverage algorithms and trending dynamics on social media. Their campaign does not merely convey conventional political messages; rather, it constructs a new hyperreal style—one in which political imagery no longer represents objective reality but instead builds a new reality constructed through symbols that are continuously reproduced and made viral (Pramana, 2024).

This strategy involves the use of political gimmicks that are significantly mediated by social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, portraying Prabowo as a humorous, warm, and approachable figure for young voters, while Gibran is presented as a representation of a relaxed young leader who is not easily provoked and appears capable of handling challenges with composure. These elements form part of a systematic effort to build an attractive and viral political image, one that replaces substantive narratives with visual performances that are easier for younger audiences to consume through digital platforms. Several forms of political gimmicks that generate hyperreality are explained below.

No.	Candidate	Political Gimmick	Objective	Impact
1	Prabowo	“Gemoy”	To make the candidate appear more relaxed and relatable to young voters	Went viral on social media; attracted public attention
2	Prabowo	“Prabowo’s Dance”	To soften the impression of rigidity and formality, presenting a more human and relaxed side	Strengthened his image as a “people’s leader”
3	Prabowo	“Oke Gas”	To create appeal through a catchy song	Built stronger connection with young voters
4	Prabowo	“Sorry Ye”	To present a humble and humorous persona	Fostered a sense of closeness with young voters
5	Gibran	“Samsul”	To respond to criticism in a relaxed,	Went viral and sparked

			non-confrontational manner	lighthearted discussions
6	Gibran	“Belimbing Sayur”	To respond to criticism in a relaxed, playful way	Went viral and attracted informal public discourse
7	Gibran	“Si Asam Folat”	To respond to criticism in a humorous and calm manner	Became viral content and generated light social media conversations

Table 1.1 List of Gimmicks
Source: Author’s abstraction, 2024

Based on the table above, it can be understood that the Prabowo–Gibran pair employed various forms of political gimmick strategies as tools to build public attention and establish effective political communication through social media. These strategies specifically targeted young voters who are active and responsive to digital content, particularly on TikTok and Instagram. The gimmicks function not only as campaign tools designed to capture attention but also as mediums for constructing political imagery packaged in visual, symbolic, and emotional forms to create psychological connectedness with the audience.

The definitions of the gimmicks used in the Prabowo–Gibran political campaign are as follows: First. The “Prabowo *Gemoy*” gimmick constructs Prabowo’s image as a relaxed, friendly, and relatable figure for young voters. This visual narrative differs from the traditional perception of Prabowo as a military figure characterized by seriousness and firmness. Through this gimmick, the *gemoy* image becomes a second-order simulacrum that constructs a new reality in which the candidate is no longer seen as formal or rigid (BBC Indonesia, 2025), but instead as a figure who appears close to the younger generation. This phenomenon aligns with Baudrillard’s theory, wherein simulation not only represents reality but also replaces it with an image that is more readily accepted by society. As a result, “Prabowo *Gemoy*” went viral on social media, shaping a more positive public perception and attracting sympathy from young voter groups (Fuadi, 2024).



Figure 1.1 Karikatur *Gemoy* Prabowo–Gibran

Source: Shopee, 2023

Second. The “Prabowo’s Dance” (*Joget Prabowo*) gimmick aims to eliminate the perception of rigidity and formality commonly associated with the candidate. By presenting Prabowo in videos where he is shown dancing, the campaign constructs a more human and down-to-earth persona—one that may not typically appear in formal political activities. Within Baudrillard’s framework, this represents a second-order simulacrum, in which the dance does not directly represent the candidate’s actual personality but instead creates a new version of him that appears more familiar and approachable to the audience (Medista & Marianata, 2024) . In this sense, the simulation works effectively on social media, increasing engagement and shaping a positive perception of the candidate as someone who is flexible and adaptive to younger generations.



Figure 1.2 Prabowo’s Dance

Source: Detik.com, November 2023

Third. Oke Gas: The campaign song “*Oke Gas*” serves as another form of appeal that utilizes energetic and optimistic symbolism.¹ Within Baudrillard’s framework, this represents a third-order simulacrum in which the representation no longer refers to any original reality but instead creates its own autonomous reality. This representation loses its original referent and becomes a standalone sign, producing meanings that are no longer connected to any clear origin or objective reality. The “*Oke Gas*” song was frequently used in various campaign activities and circulated widely on social media—particularly TikTok and Instagram—to reinforce Prabowo’s image as an active and dynamic leader through an energetic musical presentation (Susetyawidianta & Gerald, 2024).



Figure 1.3 “Oke Gas” Song
Source: Spotify, January 2024

Fourth. Sorry Ye: This gimmick represents a relaxed and humorous response to criticism directed at the candidate pair (Susetyawidianta & Gerald, 2024). In Baudrillard’s theory, it can be categorized as a second-order simulacrum, in which the representation conceals or masks the underlying reality (Baudrillard, 1994). This approach not only constructs an image of humility but also builds a persona that is closer and more relatable to young voters. By utilizing humor and a non-defensive tone, this strategy effectively diminishes negative sentiment and enhances the political appeal of the candidate pair on social media.

Fifth. Gibran’s Response Gimmicks: “Samsul,” “Belimbing Sayur,” and “Si Asam Folat” illustrate how political criticism and attacks can be transformed

¹ Ibid

into opportunities to build closeness with the public (Susetyawidianta & Geraldy, 2024). These gimmicks employ a relaxed and humorous approach to responding to criticism, creating an image of the candidate as someone who is easygoing, not easily provoked, and capable of handling challenges with composure. By reframing criticism directed at him and wrapping it in humor, the campaign successfully generated viral phenomena on social media, where lighthearted discussions about these gimmicks replaced negative narratives toward the candidate (Fuad, 2024).

Within Baudrillard's theoretical framework, this relaxed response represents a third-order simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1994), in which the representation creates its own reality without any genuine referent. In this case, the simulation engineers a new reality in which serious criticism is transformed into a lighter and more entertaining issue, thereby blurring the originally negative impression.



Figure 1.4. Gibran's "Samsul" Gimmick

Source: (Liputan6.com, January 2024)

By linking this phenomenon to Baudrillard's theory, it can be argued that the various forms of gimmick strategies used by Prabowo and Gibran create hyperreality through symbols and narratives deliberately designed to dominate public perception (Baudrillard, 1994). These gimmicks function not only as campaign tools but also as mechanisms for constructing a "new reality" that is more appealing and advantageous for the candidates. The reality formed through these gimmicks replaces traditional political reality with a hyperreal version that is more easily accepted by social media users, thereby shaping public perception and fostering emotional connections with voters. Ultimately, this strategy produces a candidate image that is not only politically relevant but

also culturally resonant, making the campaign more effective in attracting attention and garnering public support.

Furthermore, the success of these gimmick strategies cannot be separated from the role of social media algorithms, which actively reinforce the hyperreality being constructed (Asri, 2023). In this context, social media serves as a space where simulations can be replicated, made viral, and internalized by audiences on a massive scale. Content such as the “Prabowo Dance” videos or the “Samsul” memes spreads not only through official campaign accounts but also through user-generated content created and circulated by netizens in various creative formats (Asri, 2023). This process creates a snowball effect, where these hyperreal symbols become increasingly accepted as part of popular political narratives, even though they do not necessarily reflect the candidates’ objective realities (Rumah Pemilu, 2025).

The repetition and visual appeal of these gimmicks also play a crucial role in shaping public perception. According to Baudrillard, hyperreality becomes more deeply rooted when images or simulations are continuously reproduced until they appear “more real” than reality itself (Baudrillard, 1994). For instance, the phrase “Prabowo Gemoy,” which initially emerged as a humorous expression on social media, has now become a lasting political image associated with Prabowo, extending beyond the campaign context. Similarly, the term “Belimbing Sayur,” which began as a critique, was transformed through effective campaign strategy into a humorous icon portraying Gibran as calm, relaxed, and unprovoked.

The impact of this strategy can also be seen in how the public develops emotional attachment to candidates through symbols they repeatedly encounter and consume. The simulacra produced by these gimmicks allow candidates to appear closer and more relatable in the public imagination. In the long term, this process strengthens the constructed political image, making it difficult to separate from the media-shaped reality, and positions hyperreality as a central element in the dynamics of modern political campaigning (Puadi, 2024).

Social media gimmick strategies, as demonstrated in the campaign of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming, carry significant implications for the quality of democracy in Indonesia (Puadi, 2024). Gimmicks such as “Prabowo Gemoy,” “Prabowo’s Dance,” “Oke Gas,” and “Sorry Ye,” which collectively generated high levels of engagement on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, illustrate how politics has entered an era of hyperreality, where

public perception is shaped more by symbols, imagery, and entertainment than by substantive political discourse (Silalahi, 2023). On one hand, these strategies successfully generate broad public engagement—particularly among younger generations—by presenting political figures as more relaxed, relatable, and seemingly “human.” On the other hand, this approach has the potential to diminish spaces for more serious and substantive discussions about critical issues that directly affect citizens’ lives.

The impact of hyperreality-based campaigning on the quality of democracy can be viewed from two perspectives. First, from the positive side, political communication expert Asari Puadi argues that *“The use of social media in the Prabowo–Gibran campaign has proven effective in reaching young voters who were previously apathetic toward politics. Through political gimmicks and creative content produced by the campaign team and its supporters, the campaign succeeded in generating high engagement across digital platforms. This reflects a positive aspect of digital democracy, in which social media is able to expand political participation and bridge communication gaps between elites and the public, especially younger generations.”* (Puadi, 2024)

From this viewpoint, we can understand that such strategies open political access to segments of society—particularly young people—who may have previously felt alienated from traditional political discourse. By leveraging platforms like TikTok, which dominates youth interaction with total engagement numbers reaching into the millions, gimmicks such as “Prabowo’s Dance” successfully attracted the attention of the 17–24 age group, a demographic that is typically difficult to reach through conventional political narratives. Entertaining and easily accessible content creates a sense of closeness between candidates and the public, fostering participation through shares, comments, and even the creation of derivative content such as stitches or remixes. In this context, gimmick-driven strategies can be seen as enhancing democracy in a new way—introducing political ideas in formats that are more digestible for a digitally native society (Pramana, 2024).

However, from the negative perspective, this strategy can also create distortions within the democratic process. A hyperreality-driven approach tends to prioritize image and entertainment over substantive policy discussions or the candidates’ visions and missions. For instance, the overwhelming public response to gimmicks such as “Prabowo Gemoy” and “Sorry Ye” indicates that audiences are more focused on humor and the candidates’ relaxed personas rather than on concrete programs aimed at addressing national issues.

With total engagement exceeding 20 million on TikTok and 1.8 million on Instagram, this strategy contributes to the perception that social media popularity serves as a primary indicator of campaign success—regardless of the depth of discussion surrounding substantive issues such as education, the economy, or human rights. This aligns with the perspective of campaign team member Ahmad Fuad, who noted that *“One of the negative impacts of relying too heavily on gimmicks is that it appears less educational for voters”*. (Fuad, 2024). As a result, politics risks devolving into a mere contest of popularity rather than functioning as a forum for deliberating meaningful and relevant solutions.

The hyperreality approach can also lead the public toward a reality that lacks substance. In this context, Jean Baudrillard’s concept of hyperreality is highly relevant in explaining how political gimmicks create simulations that are often more appealing than the political reality itself (Baudrillard, 1994). The portrayal of politicians as “cute” or humorous figures in TikTok videos can obscure more complex political realities, such as a candidate’s track record or the major challenges facing the nation. When the public becomes more preoccupied with discussing “dance clips” or humorous “quotes” rather than paying attention to debates or candidate speeches, the democratic space for healthy dialogue and constructive criticism becomes increasingly narrow (Fuad, 2024).

This phenomenon requires the public to become more critical in consuming political information in the digital era (Esposito, 2024). Several steps can be taken to address these implications. First, it is essential to enhance media literacy so that citizens can distinguish between content that is purely for entertainment and content that provides substantive political insight (Elizamiharti & Nelfira, 2023). By understanding that social media gimmicks are part of a broader political communication strategy, the public can use them as an entry point for learning more deeply about the candidates, rather than becoming trapped in the excitement of viral content.

Second, public participation in the democratic process should be directed toward actively demanding transparency and accountability from candidates. For instance, after being exposed to a gimmick such as “Prabowo Gemoy,” citizens can critically seek additional information regarding the candidate’s vision on strategic issues such as economic empowerment or infrastructure development (Elizamiharti & Nelfira, 2023).

The role of educational institutions, civil society organizations, and independent media is crucial in providing a balanced space for both entertainment-

driven content and substantive political discussions. These institutions can organize discussion forums, candidate debates, or critical reviews of campaign programs to provide the public with more comprehensive information. Additionally, monitoring social media algorithms is necessary to ensure that platforms like TikTok and Instagram do not solely promote viral content but also provide adequate exposure to more serious political discourse (Prabowo, 2023).

Overall, while social media gimmick strategies offer innovative ways to bring politics closer to the public, their long-term implications for the quality of democracy require careful attention (Prabowo, 2023). A healthy democracy demands a balance between creative public engagement and substantive discussions about policy and future visions. In this regard, the responsibility for maintaining the quality of democracy does not rest solely on candidates or campaign teams but also on the public as critical voters who are aware of their political rights.

Public Sentiment Toward the Prabowo–Gibran Gimmick Strategy on Social Media

The analysis of public sentiment toward the Prabowo–Gibran campaign's gimmick strategy on social media—particularly on TikTok and Instagram—reveals a complex dynamic, though it is largely dominated by positive responses. The use of gimmicks and hyperrealistic visualizations in the campaign successfully triggered intensive public discourse, with sentiment distribution varying across platforms.

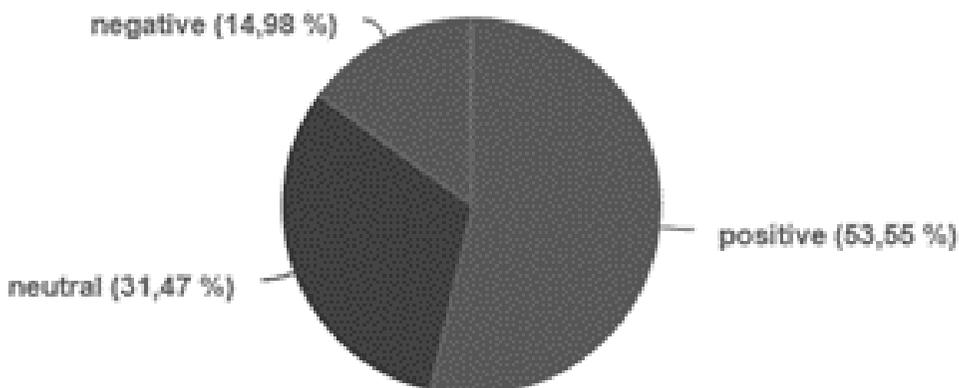


Figure 1.5. Public Sentiment Chart on TikTok
Source: Intelligence Socio Analytic (ISA), PT Indonesia Indicator, 2025

Data from Intelligence Socio Analytic (ISA), PT Indonesia Indicator (September 2023–April 2024), indicate that on TikTok, positive sentiment reached 53.55%, neutral sentiment 31.47%, and negative sentiment 14.98%. The predominance of positive sentiment can be attributed to effective communication strategies, the utilization of viral trends, and content that is visually and emotionally engaging. Content presented in a relaxed and creative manner successfully garnered appreciation from the majority of users. The significant proportion of neutral sentiment (nearly one-third) reflects either informative interactions without strong emotional expression or audience ambiguity in response. Meanwhile, negative sentiment, although present in the form of criticism and resistance, remains relatively low, indicating that negative narratives were not dominant on this platform (ISA, 2025).

The high level of positive sentiment on TikTok is closely linked to the platform’s algorithm, which prioritizes engaging and viral content for display on the For You Page (FYP). This algorithm creates a repetition effect that reinforces the hyperreal image of the candidates (e.g., “Prabowo Gemoy,” “Prabowo’s Dance,” “Samsul,” etc.), shaping a dominant positive and emotional perception in the public’s mind (Nugraha & Lazuardi, 2022). The evolving socio-political dynamics also influence sentiment patterns, making TikTok a space for massive expression of public opinion.

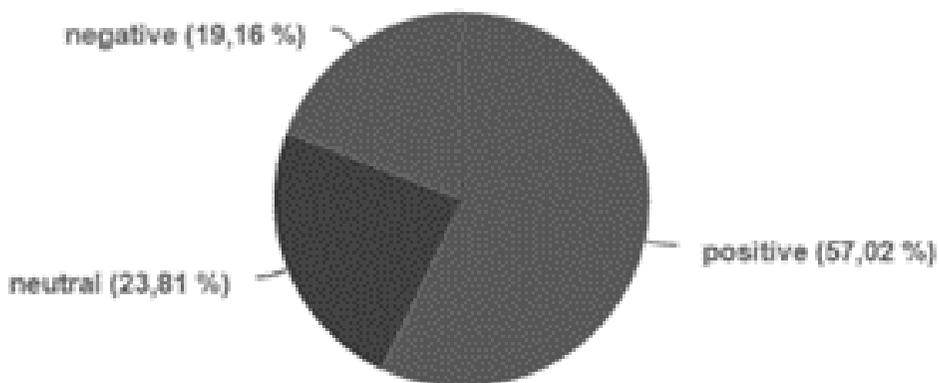


Figure 1.6. Public Sentiment Chart on Instagram

Source: Intelligence Socio Analytic (ISA), PT Indonesia Indicator, 2025

Data from Intelligence Socio Analytic (ISA), PT Indonesia Indicator (September 2023–April 2024), show that on Instagram, positive sentiment was

recorded at 57.02%, while neutral sentiment stood at 23.81% and negative sentiment at 19.16% (ISA, 2025). The higher proportion of positive sentiment on Instagram indicates the effectiveness of visual and storytelling-based communication strategies that align with the platform's audience psychology. However, the higher negative sentiment compared to TikTok suggests that Instagram users tend to be more expressive in voicing opinions, both positive and negative. This reflects Instagram's more personal character, which encourages active visual interaction.

In comparison, Instagram exhibits a tendency toward more extreme sentiment (higher positive and higher negative) than TikTok, with a lower proportion of neutral sentiment (Sari & Wiyono, 2021). This suggests that interactions on Instagram are more expressive, prompting users to actively share opinions through comments or reposts. Social media algorithms, on both TikTok and Instagram, play a crucial role in reinforcing the candidates' political images. High engagement with content portraying Prabowo as a humanized figure and Gibran as a flexible young leader demonstrates the audience's preference for relatable narratives over conventional political communication (Elizamiharti & Nelfira, 2023).

The data-driven strategy in this campaign also demonstrates how patterns of user interaction can reinforce the candidates' political image. High engagement with content portraying Prabowo as a more humanized figure and Gibran as a flexible young leader indicates that audiences are more attracted to relatable narratives than to conventional, rigid political communication. Moreover, social media algorithms play a significant role in determining the reach and speed at which content spreads (Susetyawidianta & Gerald, 2024).

Based on the sentiment charts above, it can be concluded that, despite the presence of criticism, this gimmick-based campaign strategy successfully dominated social media conversations, significantly increasing the candidates' popularity. Through a combination of political gimmicks, image dominance, and diverse public sentiment, the Prabowo–Gibran campaign demonstrates how social media can serve as a powerful tool for shaping political hyperreality.

The trend of dominant positive sentiment on social media—specifically 53.55% on TikTok and 57.02% on Instagram—indirectly reflects a correlation with the electoral performance of the Prabowo–Gibran pair, who secured 58.59% of the vote in the 2024 election. This phenomenon indicates that public perception in digital spaces can significantly contribute to shaping real-world

electoral support. This analysis provides valuable insight into how images and symbols are employed to create campaign narratives that are both effective and, at times, controversial.

Conclusion

This study reveals the phenomenon of hyperreality in the political campaign of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming during the 2024 election, which was constructed through social media gimmick strategies. Using Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra and simulation, the research demonstrates how representations generated through these gimmicks not only reflect reality but also create a new reality that dominates public perception. Empirical data obtained through social media engagement analysis, in-depth interviews, and supporting documents indicate that this digital campaign effectively shaped a candidate image that was more appealing and relatable, particularly for young voters who dominate platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.

Hyperreality in this campaign was manifested through various gimmicks, including "Prabowo Gemoy," "Prabowo's Dance," "Oke Gas," and "Sorry Ye," which were designed to create a new image of Prabowo as relaxed, humorous, and close to the younger generation. These gimmicks replaced the traditional image of Prabowo as a strict and formal military figure with a lighter, more humanized narrative. Meanwhile, Gibran employed gimmicks such as "Samsul," "Belimbing Sayur," and "Si Asam Folat" to transform political criticism and attacks into opportunities that reinforced his image as a relaxed, flexible, and unprovocable young leader.

This hyperreal image was further strengthened by social media algorithms, which enabled the massive and viral dissemination of content. TikTok, due to its algorithmic characteristics, became the primary platform for trend creation, while Instagram reinforced visual narratives through more aesthetic and segmented interactions. Engagement data indicate that data-driven strategies were highly effective in understanding audience interaction patterns, allowing the campaign team to design content that was relevant and continuously captured public attention.

However, this strategy also carries significant implications for the quality of democracy. By focusing on symbols and images, hyperreality-based campaigns tend to shift public attention from substantive policy issues to emotionally charged and entertaining narratives. While this approach

successfully increased political participation, particularly among younger generations, it also poses a risk of distortion in the democratic process, where social media popularity is prioritized over in-depth discussion of strategic issues.

Overall, this study shows that the digital campaign of Prabowo and Gibran is not merely a political communication tool but also a strategic creation of a new reality that effectively dominates the digital space and shapes public perception. By understanding these dynamics, the research provides important insights into the role of social media in modern political campaigns and underscores the importance of media literacy in maintaining the quality of democracy in the digital era.

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