

***Roasting Online Towards the 2024 Elections:
Frame Analysis in Indonesia's Political Activism of Komika on Instagram and Twitter***

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Abstract

Political fanfare has gotten louder in advance of the 2024 general elections in Indonesia, including social media. Political memes are one criticism that has attracted a lot of responses from social media users. This study focuses on how *Komika* on social media construct and launch critical discourse that is both specifically related to the election and other relevant political discourse. This study investigates how memes are used to disseminate information about political figures and discourses surrounding the 2024 election at the grassroots level using discourse framing analysis. We use a deep memetic frame, combining Ervin Goffman's framing analysis with recent analysis of internet culture, and linking Arlie Russell Hochschild's deep story concept. This research use the term in Stand-up Comedy, *Roasting*, to describe the meme-activism toward the 2024 election. The object of this study was the viral upload of four *Komika*, Bintang Emon, Adjis Do'a Ibu, Karim Sudjatmiko, and Abdur Arsyad on Twitter and Instagram platforms. This study focused on context of the meme and central theme to understand the issues raised, explain the views of the creator to his audience, and how memes can build a deeper understanding of the issues framed. As a result, the four *Komika* have different approaches to building framing. Bintang Emon are more focused on "riding the waves" related to issues that have gone viral, while Adjis Do'a Ibu criticizes certain figures who have been pinned on the label of oligarchs and dynastic politics. The same tone appeared on Karim Sudjatmiko that attack a certain political figure, and Abdur Arsyad also 'humiliated' political figures for political strategies that accentuate identity.

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Introduction: Research Background

Throughout the welcoming 2024 general election in Indonesia, political figures and internet citizens (*netizens*) shared tons of content on social media platforms to influence the voters' decisions. Social media brought a direct and interactive environment in communicating ideas, publicly showcase, and promoting the user's political view, also engaging every *netizen* in the political conversation. Several pertinent topics of discussion related to the political party, the candidates, and social issues are thrown to the platforms and develop as a boisterous conversation.

Twitter and Instagram have become two of the most social popular platforms that accommodate conversation in the 2014 and 2019 general elections (Fadillah, D. et.al., 2019; Kholid, A., et.al., 2015; Beta, A. R., & Neyazi, T. A., 2022). Although that those two social media are not the most popular platforms in Indonesia (We Are Social, 2023), but Instagram and Twitter still become the destination for Indonesian *netizen* to access the digital platform, based on the same research by We Are Social Media: to finding information (1st main reasons), keeping up-to-date with news and event (5th), also sharing opinions (14th).

Since 2022, the conversation related to the 2024 General Election in social media is increasing. The one thing that is also common during the situation is the use of memes as the tools of political activism. Richard Dawkins in his book (1976, 192) coined meme as a tool for forwarding culture for inter-generation, expressing mannerism or ideas that comes in the form of videos, GIFs, edited pictures, or texts. Memes are influenced by one another, establishing the meme culture that uses script or *keying* to give meaning to the social interaction. Erving Goffman (1967, 11) sees the meme performance on the key point of actors that shows the anonymity but could spread the story into viral.

The actors behind the memes' activism in the period of 2024 General Election in Indonesia are coming from various figures, one of them is the Stand-up Comedian (*Komika*). The *Komika* shared their political intent and the tendency to challenge norms, established themselves not just as an entertainer, but also provocateur, eye-opener, or questioner. This meme 'questioning' or audits the political power and challenges the groupthink, 'provocate' the idea, and inspiring the netizens to see things differently as a 'eye opener'. The use of memes by *Komika* also reflected the form of "roasting" for the 2024 Election in Indonesia. Roasting is a form of 'insulting' comedy about certain people (Toplyn, 2016). In this case, the roast that is conducted by Indonesian *Komika* is conveying criticism or suggestion to whom has power: government, political party, and also political figures. But all of these criticisms are not always delivered in an offensive way. Roasting could be an agenda to attract the attention or interest of the mass audience to be more 'literate'.

Stand-up comedy scene also introduces every *Komika* 'persona', or a representation that *Komika* want to be recognized on the stage (Raditya Dika, 2018). The persona of *Komika* could have appeared in various forms, ethnic, economic status, educational background, and also political perspective. and this persona will support the jokes that are delivered by every *comic*. In Indonesia, there are several *Komika* that are close to political issues and have a criticism persona, of which three of them are Bintang Emon, Adjis Doa Ibu, and Abdur Arsyad. Beside their famous name on the stage, those three *Komika* are also well-known on social media platforms for their political perspective, especially in Instagram and Twitter. They are also part of the most popular *Komika* that trigger or follow the discussion of 2024 General Election and bring the satire memes on social media as their political activism tools.

This research article aims to contribute to understanding how Komika on social media construct and launch critical discourse that is both specifically related to the election and other relevant political discourse, by analyzing their content in social media. It highlights the representation of messages in every memes content that is delivered by the *Komika*. This article analyzes contents of the three *Komika*, using the perspective of Kozinet's (2010) netnography with recent analysis of internet culture. The novelty of the research lies in its analysis of how *Komika* use memes content as their 'languages and tones' to express their political view, balancing the entertainment side and their criticism in comedy roasting. This research contributes to enriching the literature of complex social phenomena in comedy culture in the middle of society, the role of stand-up comedy in behalf of the controversial side of comedy roasting that blurred the line between jokes (and delivering funny) with offensive point of view. This study also investigates how memes are used to disseminate information about political figures and discourses surrounding the 2024 election at the grassroots level using discourse framing analysis.

The existing research related to meme and political movement were far focused on American-European phenomena and online forum. The occurrence of social media activity in Southeast Asia are become an highlight to develop the media studies related on meme and activism, especially in Indonesia. Existing academic literature highlighted several meme factories, using the social media platform such as Twitter (Faliha & Putri, 2022; Pusanti & Haryanto, 2015; Dewi et.al, 2017), Instagram (Rahma et al., 2022; Pratiwi, 2022), Facebook Group (Suswandari et.al., 2022; Septiawan, 2022), also independent web media such as 1cak (Muftitama, 2023; Sofian & Gaddafi, 2022). Still, this study sheds an important light on the use of memes on Twitter and Instagram as the favorite platform for Stand-up comedians in Indonesia to spread their political ideas (Meydiawati & Alamiyah, 2023; Wibowo & Mirawati, 2013; Septian et al., 2019).

Methodology

This research uses a construction paradigm using the framing analysis method. The object of this study was the viral upload of three Komika, Bintang Emon, Adjis du'a Ibu, and Abdur Arsyad on Twitter and Instagram platforms. The sample developed from *Komika* that actively posted memes related to the 2024 General Election and translated that as a basis of this project. Our initial collection size focused on three figures of *Komika* from Twitter and Instagram. The collection started with what we knew, documented and recorded memes from every *comic's* personal account. To collect the sample, researchers focused on scrolling back through the post, tracking the Komika engaged with the material and what themes were prevalent in the memes and other content being shared.

Theoretical Framework

Deep Memetic Frame, Political Activism in the Comedy Stages

Meme might appear as a cheap, shallow, or insignificant thing on the surface. But, internet meme nowadays are distinctive product of digital culture that assigned for specific meme. The meme become a tool for social and political activism (Milner, 2013; Burroughs, 2013; Bennett and Sergeberg, 2013). It takes a part on the participatory culture that established in internet platform, bring the ideology of cultural-collectivism. The memes-activism serve a wide variety of social, cultural, and political purpose, but still a lack of significant strand of research has looked into the use of memes. As meme are close to political discourse lately,

this research aimed to focus on the roles ascribed to meme in the political situation in Indonesia.

The use of humor in political context has traced since the times of Aristophanes, Plato, and Socrates (Corbeill, 1996). Political humor appeared as a part of social movement, because the humorous behavior itself is a form of warrant attention. In a superiority theories perspective, humor activism are seen as a tool for social correction (Duncan, 1962: 187). Humor arises out of desire to feel superior from another, to discipline the situation by laughter by mocking the action of other and openly ridiculing them. The memes appear as one of cultural jamming. It has been seen as noise in the system. Memes are developed to sabotage the conversation, “interpret” an existing text. The interpretation here just not translate the text, but try to bring another ideas to ‘correct’ the discourse. Meme brings the true logic using the rhetorical appropriation. Meme popped up to offer alternative interpretation that represent another voice in political discourse, using parodies, satire, hoaxes, and other form of comedy. The aim is to attack the fundamental mechanism in a society. Memes challenge the communication using entertainment way.

Memes are contagious patterns of cultural information that circulate rapidly and spread broadly. It becomes effective in a particular sociocultural context. Political meme brought any political ideas that easily understood and imitated. Messaging the humor, the reinterpretation of memes can become meaningful and rational political critique and activism (Lasn, 1999: 107). Liesbet van Zoonen (2005: 63) also argued that memes and other parodic-satirical comedy that exist are equivalence the fan practice and political practice. In democratic system perspective, the appears of meme-activism are representing the exchange between the domains of entertainment and politics, two sides that commonly thought to be impossibly equal.

Ervin Goffman's Frame Analysis and Deep Story Concept in Internet Culture

Ervin Goffman define the frame as something that can define and redefine a context. Goffman’s version of frame analysis rely on more sociological and cultural approach, examines the three aspects: the cognitive, the interactive, and the situational aspects. The analysis of these three aspects intends to describe the social dynamics of the roasting online situation by Indonesian *Komika*. The Goffman’s frame analysis is described in the question of ‘What is it that’s going on here?’ (Persson, 2018: 198). The actor of communication in social interaction try to answer when she or he enters a situation by reading the chain of events, who the other people are, and their actions.

Ervin Goffman assumed that individual most of the time reads and interprets the situation. Goffman’s build the concept of frame analysis in social construction, and it relates that situation is seen as the ‘social facts’ that influenced by norms, laws, habits, and other different forms of durable collective association or institution. The data reflected the understanding about something in a specific way and how the communicators base the behaviour and thinking on such knowledge. In terms of online roasting for 2024 election, the meme content describes how the *Komika* as a hub user in social media platform (a.k.a. influencer) spread their political stance in online social networks.

This study also adopts the concept of deep stories (Hochschild, 2016), because the political idea behind the roasting content reflect collective worldviews through making and sharing memes as one of the everyday acts of communication. The deep memetic frames concept

become the base to understand the worldview of *netizen* as online community, and this approach built the interpretation of content frames. The interpretation sees the frame analysis as a inter-memetic discourse of interpretation, identification, and ideological orientation, answering how political views of *Komika* framed the 2024 election through memes.

Result and Discussion

Several standup comedy artists consistently create content on digital platforms. They produce a variety of content in the form of photos, videos, or text. The content is also varied. There are several comics who actively create comedy content with political themes on social media. This research focuses on four comics, namely Bintang Emon, Karim Sujadmiko, Abdurrahim Arsyad, and Adjis Doa Ibu. The four comics use different platforms and package content.



Picture 1: A screenshot of Bintang Emon



Picture 2: A screenshot of Karim Sujadmiko's video



Picture 3: A screenshot of Abdurrahim Arsyad's upload



Picture 4: An upload by Adjis Doa Ibu

Picture 1 is a screenshot of Bintang Emon. The video in image 1 was uploaded on August 16 2023 via the Instagram platform with the video reels post type. This post received 246,788 likes, 3,860 comments, and has been shared 7,573 times¹. This video is approximately one minute long, showing Bintang Emon wearing a ushanka hat. This video is also accompanied by close captions in Indonesian.

Bintang Emon starts the video by expressing his feelings about the existence of billboards for legislative candidates (candidates). Bintang felt strange and also nervous about legislative candidates who said that "*I am ready to serve the country, I am ready to fight corruption, I am honest and trustworthy*". Bintang questioned why these legislative candidates are self-claiming, narcissistic. Then he said that he did not know who the fathers of these legislative candidates were. Then, he made an analogy with a friend who borrowed money, who was initially sweet when borrowing the money and then became unfamiliar when the debt had to be paid. Bintang Emon said what about the candidates he didn't know who he was, then said he was honest and trustworthy. Will this legislative candidate also disappear when he is elected?

Approaching the 2024 General Election, legislative candidates from various political parties in Indonesia have started campaigning by making various billboards. Usually, on campaign billboards, a political member will include the slogans of his political promises. Through this video, in the context of the general election period, Bintang Emon conveys his aspirations as a people regarding the phenomenon of many billboards for legislative candidates which contain political promises. Conveying his aspirations and also political participation was carried out by means of stand-up comedy by presenting various jokes. Bintang Emon brings the analogy of a friend who borrows a debt and initially acts sweetly and then forgets about the debt he has. An analogy might occur with the promises made by legislative candidates with their various political promises.

Picture 2 is a screenshot of Karim Sujatmiko's video uploaded on May 24 2023 via the Instagram platform with the video reels post type. This post received 63,469 likes, 1,557 comments, and has been shared 16,500 times.²

Karim Sujatmiko starts the video by showing himself reading information in the Bintang garden. Then he said, "Bull, this animal is vaccinated because it is above the law", then several people appeared and they danced together. In this post, Karim Sujatmiko wrote the caption "Is the Javan bull an animal whose strength comes from Java? (confused emoticon)".

This short video is full of political satire. Starting from the choice of animal descriptions read by Karim. The bull is the logo of one of the major political parties in Indonesia. This political party is also currently proposing a candidate for president of Indonesia. Impunity is a condition that often occurs in Indonesia, where many cases occur, but because of their position and power a person can easily escape legal prosecution.

Picture 3 is a screenshot of Abdurrahim Arsyad's upload. This poster was uploaded on the Twitter platform on August 2 2021. This upload received 56 likes, 1,734 comments, and was shared 321 times.³

¹ Dilihat pada 5 Oktober 2023, 09.11 WIB

² Dilihat pada 5 Oktober 2023, 09.32 WIB

³ Dilihat pada 4 September 2023

Abdurrahim Arsyad uploaded a poster containing a picture of two Indonesian athletes who won gold medals at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in badminton. This poster also features flag ornaments, medals and pictures of two athletes in expressions of victory. This poster also contains a photo of Abdur who starts off carrying two toy guns. At the bottom of the photo, he wrote his full name Abdur Arsyad and the description Sie Kekinan XII IPA 4 Class of 2008 SMAN 1 Kupang. In this upload, Abdur wrote the caption "Once again, thank you Miss Greysia and Miss Apriyani. Thank you very much! (thank you emoticon)".

This post was a form of satire against officials in Indonesia regarding the victory of Indonesian badminton athletes at the 2022 Tokyo Olympics. Many officials made posters congratulating the two Indonesian athletes and also included photos of themselves which even though they had nothing to do with the victory of the two athletes.

Figure 4 is an upload by Adjis Doa Ibu. The Twitter post in image 1 was uploaded on December 19 2022. Adjis posted a meme depicting himself and several world soccer players. In the meme, Adjis wrote "Campeon del mundo Argentina!", "Adjisdoaibu is a candidate for electoral district 2 Buenos Aires, Balvanera subdistrict, Chacarita, Palermo, Puerto Madero, Villa del Parque". Then, Adjis also wrote that "this is a rival poster for politicians in a country".

Negative Partisan and Nonpartisan Category

Based on framing, these four comics can be segmented into two types of partisans, namely negative partisans and nonpartisans.

1. Negative partisans are those who openly criticize certain parties or individuals without having special support or relationships with political parties (DeJong et al., 2022). The comedy content created by Karim Sujatmiko and Adjis Doa Ibu is classified as negative partisan. In the content created by Karim Sujatmiko, he openly criticizes certain parties, with the symbols and labels used for humor having similarities with the instruments of certain political parties and figures. Adjis Do'a Ibu criticizes certain figures who are labeled oligarchs and dynastic politics.
2. Nonpartisan, nonpartisan individuals who are not part of the "political establishment" (Jankowski et al., 2023). Bintang Emon and Abdurrahim Arsyad are non-partisan. Bintang Emon is more focused on 'riding the wave' regarding issues that are currently viral. Meanwhile, Abdur Arsyad participated in 'embarrassing' political figures because of political strategies that emphasize identity.

Although these four comics have different ways of attacking which are packaged in their jokes. All these comics have something in common, namely that they position themselves as people. They frame themselves as conveying the aspirations of the people. All the jokes they produce convey the people's anxiety about government politics with various ongoing issues. They bring many people's points of view about social facts, such as there is no trustworthy and honest legislature, there are parties that have immunity from the law and so on. The actions carried out by these four comics are a form of political participation and also a political movement among the community. Where humor activism is seen as a functional tool for social correction (Duncan, 1962: 187).

Comics take advantage of viral and trending issues to increase public tension. Disseminating their ideas on social media is done by maximizing social media features and functions that can reach the widest audience. The form of content they create is generally easy to digest even though the issues they bring up are not completely light. This comedy with a political theme is packaged according to content trends that can be easily accepted by the online community.

Countering the Narrative of Satrio Piningit

The concept of deep memetic framing pointed out the narrative in organizing citizen understanding of the political system, their place in it, and the interest of their actor. In this study, the narrative of *Satrio Piningit* as ideal image of leader has its cultural and political power to transform emotion and it is intrinsic to political performance (Darmawan, 2007: 20). As the political culture in Indonesia still in dominance of Java-centric, the image of *Satrio Piningit* or *Ratu Adil* (The Fairest Leader) will always appeared in every political election.

The narrative of *Satrio Piningit* always related with seven images (Darmawan, 2008: 41-42), related on *Satrio Kinunjuro Murwo Kuncoro* (pious), *Mukti Wibowo Kesandung Kesampar* (resilient), *Jinumput Sumelo Atur* (a devout Moslem), *Lelono Topo Ngrame* (helpful), *Hamong Tuwuh* (charismatic), *Pambukaning Gapuro* (leaders to follow), *Pinandhito Sinisihan Wahyu* (reflect the god's verse). All of these images are commodified as the attributes of every politician in political campaign.

The roasting content from the four *Komika* are countering the narrative of *Satrio Piningit* that always be attributed with political figure. The message to 'fight corruption', 'honesty', and 'bring back the Indonesia's glory' are shouted by the political figures to evokes emotion that mobilize followers. But, *Komika* bring counter-argument with cultural idioms that laughing on tevery *Satrio Piningit's* image, that there is no political figure that 'really fight the corrupt culture', 'totally honest', or 'could bring back the golden age of Indonesia'. This counter-narrative amplified on the supporter that have a same framework to see the politician, trolling the elites and carrer politician. The *Komika* solidified their status as an non-partisan and negative partisan, or generally speaking as an outsider of political bonds. *Komika* represents the civil society to air their resentments by laughing at the elites.

Conclusion

As a result, the three *Komika* have different approaches to framing. Bintang Emon focuses more on 'riding the wave' regarding issues that have gone viral, while Adjis Do'a Ibu criticizes certain figures who have been labeled as oligarchy as well as dynastic politics. Meanwhile, Abdur Arsyad participated in 'shaming' political figures for political strategies that accentuate identity. Karim Sujatmiko openly criticizes certain parties, with symbols and labels used to be funny. However, these four comics have something in common, namely that they position themselves as people. They frame themselves as conveying the aspirations of the people. All the jokes they produce convey the people's anxiety about government politics with various ongoing issues. They bring many people's points of view about social facts.

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