

## **Strategy Comparison of TikTok as Political Campaign Platform of Partai Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) and Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Ikhwanul Muslimin movement that started in 1928 in Egypt has brought a change in the political science as well as the political condition of a lot of muslim countries in the world. Indonesia and Malaysia, which are notorious for being one of the biggest muslim countries in the world, are also the ones that are affected by the growing Ikhwanul Muslimin movement. The movement in the end created a political power which created political parties with an ideology and orientation to the values that Ikhwanul Muslimin holds. In contemporary periods, in Indonesia and Malaysia there are political parties that derived from the Ikhwanul Muslimin movement which is the Partai Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) and Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS). The study case is trying to compare how the two parties which derive from the same movement do its campaign to win the elections in both countries.

**Keywords:** TikTok, Partai Islam Se-Malaysia, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Ikhwanul Muslimin

## **INTRODUCTION**

TikTok is a social media platform that allows users to create, share and watch short videos. In a relatively short time, TikTok social media was able to attract the attention of quite a lot of digital citizens so that it became one of the most popular applications today. Initially, TikTok was developed in 2012 by ByteDance, a technology company from China founded by Zhang Yiming. This application was first launched in China under the name Douyin in September 2016, and interestingly, within a year ByteDance then expanded the reach of the TikTok application to the global market. With a creative and dynamic short video format, most social media users think that the TikTok application is more comfortable to use compared to other social media. Even though various serious controversies have arisen along the way, TikTok has managed to develop from a small application into a major force in the technology and social media industry, and this shows how quickly technological innovation can change the digital landscape.

In a political context, the large number of TikTok users is apparently being used by political parties as a medium to communicate the political ideas they offer to voters during elections. In other words, campaign activities carried out by political parties are not only carried out directly, but also indirectly, namely through social media. We can see that currently, all political parties definitely have social media accounts as a source of information containing the party's identity.

## **Interactions**

The Ikhwanul Muslimin that started in Egypt in 1928 started strong as a religion and humanitarian movement that focuses to help people, creating hospitals and helping disabled people while also preaching islam to the people. (Jarir, 2019) In the face of colonialism by the UK, the movement started to change course into a political movement to end colonialism by ending the reign of UK in Egypt. (Jarir, 2019) At the core of its ideology, Ikhwanul Muslimin believes that the state must be islam and based on islam or based on the law of sharia (Hadi, 2004).

The movement of Ikhwanul Muslimin does not stop in Egypt, in the end the movement has affected a lot of muslim countries around the world including Indonesia and Malaysia as one of the biggest muslim countries in the world. Indonesia is the biggest muslim country in the world, the rise of an islamic party is not to be denied. (Khoirnafiya, 2017) Islam has become a core value in the creation of Indonesia as a state and a country and also one of the most important political spectrum in Indonesia. Indonesia's political environment is also affected a lot by islamic values and policies to accommodate the high muslim population in Indonesia. (Khoirnafiya, 2017) Muslim also became one of the majority in Indonesia as also became a reason why Islam has become a promising power in Indonesia to its political ground. In the contemporary period, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) in Indonesia has held its ground as one of the biggest political parties in Indonesia. PKS holds values such as social justice, welfare, and moral values which are affected by the point of view of islam. Although Indonesia still holds firm its belief in Pancasila, Sharia law does not practice as in general or become its core values as a state, which is why Indonesia is still a republic and not an Islamic state.

In Malaysia, Malaysia also suffers from colonialism from the UK which also became one of the main reasons for the movement in Egypt. The Ikhwanul Muslimin movement created an Islamic political party “Hizbul Muslimin”, which then split and became the creation of Partai Islam Se-Malaysia in the contemporary period. PAS still holds firm its idealism in keeping the sharia values as its political ideology and policies.

In the face of modernization, while still keeping the same values of Islam the two parties face a challenge to keep up to socialize and introduce its value and ideology to people in social media. (Abdillah, 2014) One of the most growing communities of social media is TikTok which is a platform that lets people share photos and videos in a quite long duration. This study case is trying to analyze how these two political parties try to socialize and introduce themselves to people in TikTok and how they gain votes in the elections from using TikTok as a social media platform.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study involves qualitative methods such as gathering journals or books that are relevant to the matter of the topic. The methods to analyze the topic is using comparative politics as well as Islamic populism theory as its basis to identify the similarities between the two parties. The methods also try to break down the ideology or changes between the two parties in the face of modernization and the growing community of social media. How the two parties try to become relevant in the contemporary periods as well as keeping their votes and ground in their own respective countries during elections using campaigns through social media. As a data source, we track and extract information from videos on the PKS and PAS TikTok accounts. The video that we compare between the two parties is from 2022 to 2024. This is because in that year the political context began to strengthen considering that Indonesia and Malaysia held elections between 2022 and 2024.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Campaign is one of the ways for political parties to socialize their values, beliefs and ideologies to people in political contestation in elections. (Brady, 2006) Through campaigns, people are able to know the candidates that will represent them in political matters. This affects the policies that are created and will affect them as a citizen in a state of a country. In the modern period, campaigns have faced some issues such as social media as a community which is used by a lot of people. (Abdillah, 2014) Technologies such as the internet, phone, etc. have been altering the social life of people. (Bossetta, 2018) The accessibility of technology has never been so easy and convenient as before. Almost every person now can't be separated with their technology and also social media. (Bossetta, 2018)

TikTok is one of the most promising social media that has been growing a lot in users lately. This has caused almost every person in general to use TikTok as one of their social media platforms. This has put an interest from political parties to widen their methods of socializing to the social media platform such as TikTok. The transition of campaign to social media does have its own problem, not every social media has the same features and utility. (Bossetta, 2018) X or Twitter started off as social media that focuses more on posts that are

based on texts, Instagram, TikTok and etc. focuses more on pictures and Videos, WhatsApp, Line and WeChat focuses more on private messaging and group chats but not any social media focuses on everything. But each of them has a big community of users that differentiates to every person's orientation.

TikTok as a social media platform right now has 1 Billion active users monthly which is very large and shows a promising fact for political parties to broaden their socialization through the platform. In 2024, the number of TikTok users in Indonesia will reach 127.5 million users, and in Malaysia it will reach 28.68 million users aged 18 years and over. Other data shows that the TikTok application is ranked first as the social media with the largest number of users in these two countries. PAS has a TikTok account with outstanding 7,602 followers, while also showing an engagement of 20,8 thousand likes on its account. PKS on the other hand have a larger base of followers of 112 thousand followers and also gaining engagement of 2,1 million likes. This proves that TikTok has become a promising campaign ground for the political party to socialize and gain support from people through the platform. (Cervi et al., 2023) TikTok as a photos and videos based social media, has its own strengths and weaknesses for political parties to socialize their ideas and ideology through the platform. The lack of texts in the platform creates a challenge to create creative ideas to present their ideas and ideology in other forms of media, because politics is usually presented by texts or speech in order for the people to gain deeper thoughts and thus makes people agree and support them. (Cervi et al., 2023) But now with the rise of TikTok as one of the leading markets in social media platforms, political parties need to adapt and overcome to be able to spread their influence in the platforms to gain supporters and voters and be able to win the election.

In the face of the challenge, TikTok as a campaign platform for political matters created a new horizon of political campaign such as Politainment or an abbreviation of political and entertainment. (Cervi et al., 2023) Politainment is a rising factor because TikTok as a social media platform is based on views and likes and most of the contents that are posted in TikTok are having minimal or even no interaction with the viewers at all. This caused a question because most of the political campaigns are an interaction which includes deliberation or participation between the campaigners and the constituent. (Cervi et al., 2023)

The Ikhwanul Muslimin movement in Egypt, causes the Islah movement in Malaysia that became the origin of Partai Islam Se-Malaysia. Under the rise of the movement, Hizbul Muslimin rose and became an islamic party in Malaysia. Under UK colonialism, Hizbul Muslimin rose as one of the opposing powers against the UK government in Malaysia. (Kamil & Majid, 2019) In the end, Hizbul was disbanded by the UK government. But the Islah movement that opposed the government was drawn to UMNO and then created another party once they had differences in the ideals. UMNO as an islamic party focused on more progressive, modern, and secular. Partai Islam Se-Malaysia has been more conservative and focused on the islamic ideals. This has caused the original supporter from the Islah Movement to go to the PAS because PAS has the more identical ideas to the original idea of the Islah Movement.

In Indonesia, Ikhwanul Muslimin's influence also played a big part in the creation of Indonesia as a state. Under the occupation of Japan's reign, Masyumi rose as one of the Islamic parties in Indonesia under the leadership of Muhammad Natsir. Muhammad Natsir created Masyumi and was involved in the efforts of Indonesia to gain its independence. The influence of Ikhwanul Muslimin does not stop there, as for Indonesia fighting for its independence, Egypt also became the first state that announced its recognition of de facto Indonesia's Independence. In the first election that happened in Indonesia after its independence, Masyumi came out on top as the second highest voted party in the election. This shows that Islam really influences Indonesia as a state and a country.

But in a later period, Soekarno as the first president took a turn and became more fond of the idea of a more secular and communist state. This created dissatisfaction from Muhammad Natsir and a lot of Muslim party against the government of Indonesia in how it respects Islam and its influence in the country. In the much later period, the coup that happened in 1965 and the sudden change of regime into Soeharto does not change the treatment towards the Muslim party, instead Soeharto minimize the number of party in the elections and then put much more dissatisfaction to how Indonesia treats Islam and its beliefs in its government.

In the new order of government under Soeharto, Masyumi or Ikhwanul Muslimin was an idea getting banned from existence due to its danger of threatening the existence of Pancasila as a national principle. The beliefs of Islamic principle or the law of sharia are feared to have more negative effect because Indonesia isn't an Islamic state. The law of Sharia feared to be forcing people of different religions to do the biddings of Islam which could have ended in a separatist movement. Separatist movement would be a threat against Indonesia as a whole country and state, which is a negative effect that the government couldn't afford to have.

In 1998, the period of reformation because of civil unrest and disbelief against the new order regime with the hyperinflation happening in Indonesia. Its unstable state gave the chance for Ikhwanul Muslimin's rise to exist once again in Indonesia's politics. The rise of Ikhwanul Muslimin started with the existence of a group of students in universities called Tarbiyah. The Tarbiyah is a community that exists to give student spaces to learn Islam and preach. These Tarbiyah students then declare a creation of a unification of students named Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (KAMMI) to oppose the new order regime of Soeharto and forces Soeharto to plead and step down from the seat of presidencies. Later after Soeharto pleaded and stepped down from the seat of president, KAMMI then created a political party called Partai Keadilan (PK) which later transformed and became the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera or PKS. Although PKS have seemed to not put Islamic values as its identity as a political party, the ideas and values of the party are derived and influenced much by Islamic values and also the values that Ikhwanul Muslimin brings. The Ikhwanul Muslimin influence in PKS, brings to the values that justice and welfare are also the values that Islam comes with. That Islam is not just a religion or beliefs for the people, but an idea and a way of life that could be altering people's life through political means.

Both Indonesia and Malaysia are democratic countries filled with a large Muslim community. They need to be represented and their ideas and values by a huge part in both countries' political ideas and decisions. PAS and PKS as political parties influenced by the

Ikhwanul Muslimin movement, brings identical ideas and beliefs between both parties. But in today's period, modernization and globalization are a challenge for both parties to keep existing and relevant for the people to support and vote for both parties in elections.

In the 2024 elections, KPU or Komisi Pemilihan Umum which responsible for the elections in Indonesia, states that most of the voter which are assigned in the Daftar Pemilih Tetap (DPT) or the list of voters was a generation Z and millennials that takes 52 percent of the list. In the face of changing eras and rising challenge of the next elections, PKS make a change in its branding such as changing the logo of their party to be more modern and minimalized. The change of the logo and brand are done to make PKS more appealing to people outside of its constituent, because PKS was supposed to be a party which holds the value of conservative Islam and fundamentalism slam and focusing on constituent which holds the same value. But with the current change, PKS hopes to be able to appeal to the later generation without discarding the basic islamic value. PKS itself states that they want to be more open with the later generation which are generation Z and millennial with also appointing younger person in their party's strategic positions with appointing a young doctor, Gamal Albinsaid.

In their changes, PKS also active to campaign in social media platform such as TikTok. In their TikTok verified account, they keep active with posting their campaign videos which has memes that are trending or their party's opinion towards policy created by the government or current political situation or event that are happening. PKS also doing their presidential candidate's campaign in their TikTok account. PKS presidential campaign includes posting their candidate, Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar event and schedule along in the campaign period such as answering people's question regarding their policy and opinion in many political matters also promoting their main campaign program; "Desak Anies" and "Slepet Imin" and also their performance in the elections debates that are held by KPU.

Different from PKS with its changes, PAS in Malaysia still kept its fundamentalism of Islam in the body of its party. This was proved by PAS's consistency to criticize the Malaysian Government's policy which they think are becoming too liberal and threatening their islamic values. They also criticize people's behavior which the usage of English language by the Malaysian people which they think as a practice are comes from the British colonization era. In their social media account, most of their post was PAS's critic towards the government and the monarchy and also their party's chairman opinion or their legislative representative in the Malaysian legislative board meeting.

## **CONCLUSION**

Indonesia and Malaysia are a democratic nation with Islam as the majority of their people's belief and religion. The large numbers of islamic people in both of these countries creates a lot of interest from a lot of islamic movements to influence its people which includes the Ikhwanul Muslimin. The influence of the Ikhwanul Muslimin to Indonesia and Malaysia was proven by the creation of PAS and PKS as a party for their both respective countries. But along with the changing of an era and generations, gives a challenge to both of the parties to keep up in order to not losing its constituent and voters, keep winning the elections and be in the government to

keep materializing their ideals into policy and also being relevant to the Islam and Muslim people and even people outside of Islam and Muslim.

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