



Dynamics of Collective Memory in Political Rebranding in the Digital Era (Qualitative Content Analysis of “Gemoy” on X in the 2024 Election)

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Abstract. This study investigates the usage of the term “gemoy” in the political context, particularly in relation to Prabowo Subianto, and how this term emerged and evolved in conversations on social media platform X, from post-2019 Election to the lead-up to the 2024 Election. Qualitative content analysis method is employed to comprehend the public’s response to the usage of the term “gemoy” as part of Prabowo’s political rebranding, as well as the criticisms that surfaced in the context of society’s collective memory regarding Prabowo’s controversial track record, especially concerning past human rights violations. Findings indicate that while there is a positive response to these rebranding efforts, particularly from Generation Z, criticisms regarding the use of “gemoy” as an attempt to divert attention from more fundamental substantive issues, and resistance to Prabowo’s political rebranding, remain significant, particularly from X users. However, it’s noteworthy that X users do not dominate the population in Indonesia, and the popularity of platform X is influenced by various factors, including its ability to meet its users’ preferences in terms of fast and concise communication.

Keywords: political rebranding, collective memory, Prabowo Subianto, 2024 election.

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INTRODUCTION

Prabowo Subianto is running as a presidential candidate for the third time in the 2024 General Election (Pemilu), after previously contesting the 2014 and 2019 elections with Joko Widodo (Jokowi) as his opponent. In the 2009 elections, Prabowo Subianto ran as a vice-presidential candidate alongside presidential candidate Megawati Soekarnoputri. The issue of human rights violations during the

New Order era, including the invasion of East Timor in the 1970s (Ulum, 2020) and the kidnapping and forced disappearance of a number of activists in 1996-1998 (McGregor, 2017), became a barrier for Prabowo in the previous two elections. Even though Prabowo's camp, the Gerindra Party, continues to deny accusations of human rights violations, this record remains a major obstacle for Prabowo, especially during the 2014 elections. In the 2014 elections, Jokowi supporters created campaign images in the form of avatar templates containing the number "2" with the text "I stand on the right side", meaning "I am on the right/correct side" (Gunawan, Suranti and Fathoroni, 2020). The avatar template showed support for Jokowi and efforts to oppose Prabowo, who has a record of human rights violations as a presidential candidate. Jokowi won the election by promoting a human rights agenda and being supported by thousands of human rights activists (Wieringa, 2020). Meanwhile, in the 2019 elections, some human rights activists expressed disappointment with Jokowi. However, the accusation of Prabowo as a human rights violator remained an issue on social media, especially Twitter, which has now changed its name to X (Sudinta, Almarwan and Basuki, 2024).

Efforts to oppose Prabowo in the presidential election by bringing up his connection to human rights violations show the existence of a collective memory in society regarding past events. Collective memory is the ability of a group of individuals to remember a shared event in the past. It involves negotiating meaning between past events and group members. Group members may remember the event with specific details or interpretations, leading to differences in memory among members (Michaelian and Sutton, 2017). Therefore, collective memory is seen as an active process, not a static collection of knowledge, closely related to the concept of identity, both personal and social (Orianne and Eustache, 2023). Collective memory is also influenced by the current conditions or context of the society that forms and maintains that memory (Yasseri, Gildersleve and David, 2022).

In other words, collective memory actively interacts with the social environment. Various factors, such as technology, culture, politics, and social developments, influence these interactions. In the collective memory of Indonesian society, events associated with Prabowo, such as the invasion of East Timor in the 1970s and the kidnapping and forced disappearance of activists in 1996-1998, have been included, albeit with various interpretations. The current condition or context of Indonesian society also influences the collective understanding of Prabowo's role in these events. Politics, media, and perspectives on human rights (HAM) can influence how events are interpreted and remembered (Salman, Purwasito and Rais, 2023).

In the 2024 election, Prabowo's supporters are trying to change the collective memory regarding Prabowo's political identity as a human rights violator. This opportunity is open because of the use of social media. Collective memory is influenced by communication between members of society and social systems such as media and art. Digital technologies, particularly social media, can influence collective memory by enabling the sharing of narratives, which can lead to changes in how people remember and interpret their collective memories (Orianne and Eustache, 2023). This opportunity is also open because voters in the 2024 election are different from the two previous elections. In the 2014 and 2019 elections, Prabowo was portrayed as an "Asian Tiger" and a nationalist figure similar to Bung Karno through his firm and fiery appearance when making speeches. Apart from that, Prabowo is also often seen in safari clothes and a black cap like those worn by

President Sukarno (Amalo, 2015). Thus, the 2024 election could be an interesting moment to see changes in voter preferences and political dynamics in Indonesia.

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Approaching the elections in February 2024, the segmentation of young voters will no longer only include millennials or Generation Y but also Generation Z. The millennial generation is the generation born from 1981-1996, while Generation Z is the generation born from 1997-2012 (Setiawati, 2023). The presence of Generation Z, who have no experience of living under the New Order, opens the door for Prabowo's supporters to provide new meanings and narratives, thereby changing the collective memory regarding human rights violations. Collective memories about historical events or past tragedies can form political narratives that can be used to attack or support certain figures/candidates. The issue that always arises before the election is Prabowo Subianto's alleged involvement in the 1998 activism fraud. This collective memory haunts his candidacy for president.

Prabowo supporters' efforts to change collective memory include using the term "gemoy". Gemoy is a slang term used by young people. The word 'gemoy' comes from the word *gemas* or *gemes*, undergoing an internal change where the initial syllable, *gem*, remains unchanged, but the following syllable, *mas* or *mes*, changes to *moy*. The word 'gemoy' means funny or adorable (Panuntun and Hayati, 2020). Prabowo's supporters use the term *gemoy* to depict Prabowo as an adorable and funny figure. Gemoy contrasts with the image of someone who violates human rights, perceived as angry and fierce. Thus, the term *gemoy* can show that Prabowo has changed because he is "no longer as angry or fierce as before, after losing twice in the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections" (Febryan and Ramadhan, 2023).

Efforts to change the collective memory regarding the connection between Prabowo and human rights violations by providing new narratives and meanings about Prabowo as an adorable figure show political rebranding. In this context, political figures are positioned as brands that market their products or services (Bigi, Treen and Bal, 2016). Politics as a brand shows the relationship between information and political attitudes, which are stored in a voter's memory and can be accessed when activated (Billard and Moran, 2019). This accessible memory of a voter shows that when a voter has a positive view of a political figure, the voter tends to support that figure in the election. This effort to instill a positive view of political figures in voters' memories involves the political branding process, where politicians or political parties use marketing communication strategies to create a

different and attractive image or identity in the minds of voters (Billard and Moran, 2019; Farkas and Bene, 2020). Political branding is also related to rebranding politicians or political parties in changing public perceptions regarding their identity or party to build a new political image (Nwarisi, Igwe and Kalu, 2021).

In the 2024 election, Prabowo and his supporters are trying to reposition themselves as a political brand that offers a new political identity, specifically a cute or adorable figure, with the aim of changing public perception about their political identity being linked to human rights violations. The *gemoy* narrative is also a political gimmick, “a trick or strategy aimed at attracting attention, encouraging debate, and driving electoral change” (Michaels, 2021). Political gimmicks can also refer to the use of attractive but potentially superficial or insubstantial political strategies or promises aimed at gaining voter sympathy or support without a clear and sincere implementation or sustainability plan (Lubis and Puspitasari, 2021).

Rebranding and political gimmicks are part of political marketing communication strategies, where politicians or parties attempt to instill an attractive and distinct image or identity in the minds of voters, hoping to gain greater public support. This marketing communication strategy includes changes to the message and visual identity (Billard and Moran, 2019), such as shifting the focus of political messages from formal, policy-oriented content to more informal and personal topics, and intensifying the personalization aspect of politicians by using social media, which provides extensive opportunities for visual communication (Farkas and Bene, 2020).

This change in message and visual identity was demonstrated by Prabowo's supporters through the use of the label *gemoy*, which was juxtaposed with videos of Prabowo dancing and Prabowo being visualized as an animated character. In an upload on X in August 2023, Prabowo's supporters used the label *gemoy* in a video of Prabowo dancing with dangdut singer Via Valen. In September 2023, videos with a *gemoy* narrative showed a combination of footage of Prabowo dancing on various occasions, including when he returned to the podium as a speaker at the Studium Generale event at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM). In the same month, a video showing Prabowo being interviewed by journalist Najwa Shihab circulated on social media. The video shows Prabowo answering Najwa with the statement, “there is an answer,” while moving his hands and head, and “I have crossed out those two candidates,” while moving his hands again. In October 2023, the Gerindra Party uploaded a video showing Prabowo asking, “what is *gemoy*?” accompanied by a video compilation of Prabowo and his supporters dancing.

Gemoy narratives, including videos of Prabowo dancing and animated characters, aim to influence voter perceptions and behavior. Prabowo is depicted as cool, inviting reactions from users on X. Some agree with the narrative that Prabowo is cool, while others reject it. Despite the mixed reactions from social media users, this rebranding is part of an effort to change his political identity as a human rights violator so that Prabowo receives greater public support.

Research on Prabowo's branding in the 2024 Election conducted by Asbari *et al.*, (2023) and Mulyadi (2023) highlights the importance of adapting to modern political dynamics influenced by social media and digital trends. Research by Asbari *et al.*, (2023) discusses Prabowo Subianto's rebranding efforts as a

presidential candidate in the 2024 presidential election in Indonesia. This research focuses on the rebranding efforts carried out by Prabowo's support team, changing Prabowo's image from one associated with strong masculinity to one that is more moderate and youthful. Even though Prabowo's support team has focused on rebranding efforts, research by Asbari et al. (2023) does not discuss the *gemoy* narrative. Meanwhile, Mulyadi's research (2023) discusses Prabowo Subianto's personal branding strategy on social media, especially in preparation for the 2024 Election. This research focuses on the transformation of Prabowo's image and identity to become more relaxed, cool, and down-to-earth, as an effort to approach young voters and utilize social media as a major platform. However, this research does not explain that the transformation of Prabowo's image and identity is related to the community's collective memory regarding allegations of human rights violations.

This research aims to investigate the use of the word "gemoy" in a political context, especially in relation to Prabowo and the emergence of the term in conversations on social media ahead of the 2024 Election. This research also describes the public's response to the use of the term "gemoy" as part of Prabowo's political rebranding, especially in the context of social media, specifically on X. This research also aims to understand the criticisms that have emerged against the use of the term "gemoy" as part of Prabowo's political branding strategy in the context of collective memory.

This research uses three previous studies on political rebranding as references, namely the rebranding of Narendra Modi on Twitter (Pal, Chandra and Vydiswaran, 2016), the rebranding of Justin Trudeau (Marland and Nimijean, 2021), and the rebranding of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok (Dermawan, 2021). These three studies discuss how politicians manage their image through various media, including social media (Twitter and YouTube), the construction of messages and narratives in reconstructing or strengthening politicians' political images and identities, and the importance of adapting to technology and new media in modern political communication. Research conducted by Pal et al. (2016) focused on constructing Modi's branding online via Twitter, research by Marland & Nimijean (2021) discusses changes in Trudeau's branding influenced by political scandals and his policies, while research by Dermawan (2021) identifies Basuki's rebranding efforts through vlogs after a reputation crisis. Thus, this research has a different focus from the three previous studies because it focuses on the transformation of Prabowo's branding or rebranding from a human rights violator to being cute or adorable.

This research is important in the context of politics and general elections because it reflects the dynamics of Indonesian politics, which involves political rebranding efforts by candidates and their supporters. This research provides an understanding of the political strategies used to change the image and political identity of Prabowo, a presidential candidate accused of human rights violations. By utilizing the term *gemoy* and a political rebranding approach, this research illustrates how political marketing communication practices are used to influence public perceptions and change collective memory regarding political candidates.

To address this, we analyzed content uploaded on X. We then discuss the findings with the concept of collective memory. Of the three previous studies, the Modi rebranding research uses the same method as this research, namely analyzing

content on X. The previous study focused on the pattern of retweeting and favoritism of Modi's messages on Twitter, while this research focuses on user posts on X.

Through content analysis on social media X, this research provides insight into how society responds to the political strategies used, as well as how the dynamics of collective memory develop in a modern political context driven by digital technology. More broadly, this research strengthens the understanding of the relationship between politics, media, and society in the context of general elections. By exploring the political strategies used by candidates and political parties, this research makes an important contribution to our understanding of how democracy and political processes work in today's digital and globalized era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative content analysis method. The qualitative content analysis used in this research follows a conventional inductive approach. This approach is characterized by searching for patterns and themes in data-based or text-based data that are not influenced by pre-existing theories or concepts. This approach is particularly useful for generating new insights or understanding phenomena in areas where research is limited (Graneheim, Lindgren and Lundman, 2017; Assarroudi *et al.*, 2018).

Assarroudi *et al.* (2018) explain the first step for conducting qualitative content analysis using a conventional approach, namely collecting textual data that is relevant to the research objectives. In this research, we collected three types of X content related to *gemoy*. The first type of content is content that uses the keyword *gemoy* in the period 2020 January to July 2023. The purpose of using this content is to find out the change in the meaning of *gemoy* from something funny to being identified with Prabowo. We found around 255 contents that used the word “gemoy” during this period. The second type of content is content that uses the keyword “gemoy” and is uploaded by parties supporting Prabowo during the campaign period, from the registration of presidential and vice-presidential candidate pairs, namely October 2023 to February 2024. The purpose of using this content is to find out how Prabowo camp used *gemoy* branding in its campaign. We found 33 contents from the Prabowo camp during this period. The third type of content is content that uses the keywords “Prabowo” and “gemoy” in the period from August 2023 to February 2024. The purpose of using this content is to find out the public's response to the identification of Prabowo as a *gemoy* or cute and funny figure. We collected 30 posts with the phrase “Prabowo” and “gemoy” during this period.

In collecting data, we used the search feature or search bar in X. The steps taken to collect content included writing down keywords, such as “gemoy” and “Prabowo gemoy”, and setting the search according to the required date, month, and year. Search results display the top uploads and the latest uploads. This research only uses search results that appear in top searches because these results show the most relevant tweets or uploads in keyword searches. Twitter (X) determines relevance based on factors such as the popularity of a tweet, the number of interactions or shares through retweets and replies, and the keywords contained in it.

Assarroudi et al. (2018) and Graneheim et al. (2017) explain that the next step is to familiarize yourself with the data by reading it thoroughly and re-reading it to gain an in-depth understanding of its content. Next, the researcher carried out open coding, identifying and coding meaningful data units. At this stage, codes are generated inductively from the data itself without trying to fit them into a pre-existing coding framework or theory. Coding helps researchers identify patterns or themes from data. Researchers examine codes to understand similarities and differences, and make comparisons to identify patterns in the data. This step is important for the next stage, developing categories. Researchers grouped codes that had similarities into more general categories. These categories are also derived directly from the data. The next step is finalizing the categories or ensuring that the categories represent the data accurately. This may involve merging categories, dividing them into subcategories, or redefining their scope. Finally, researchers validate categories and themes by reviewing the data, ensuring that the data is well-supported and represents the data set accurately. Researchers interpret findings in the context of research questions, drawing conclusions and implications.

Elo *et al.*, (2014) explained that qualitative data analysis also involves testing the trustworthiness of the data by examining each stage of the analysis process, including data collection, preparation, organization, and reporting results. Validity is related to tests such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity. The data in this study were tested using credibility and dependability. In the credibility test, we engaged with the data in depth through months of involvement and continuous observation from October 2023 to February 2024. This was to check the consistency of the findings and ensure they accurately represented the participants' perspectives and experiences. In the dependability test, involving fellow researchers in the data analysis process can help verify the consistency of the findings. Regular discussions between team members about analysis results help identify differences in interpretation and resolve discrepancies.

RESULT

Gemoy: From Kpop Idols, Cats, to Prabowo

Based on searches using the keyword “gemoy” since 2020, the association of “gemoy” has become widespread, encompassing dogs, illustrations, small children, babies, Korean artists who are not Kpop idols, Hollywood artists, knick-knacks, clothes, fat bodies, and Prabowo Subianto. We also found that *gemoy* references to Prabowo have appeared since 2020. However, in 2020, *gemoy* references to Prabowo were only found in one or two posts in June, August, September, October, and November, i.e., not massively. Researchers found more “Prabowo gemoy” posts in 2021, with appearances in March, April, May, June, July, August, and November. In 2022, uploads using “Prabowo gemoy” became easier to find, and in 2023, “Prabowo gemoy” became even more prevalent.

Researchers also found that *gemoy embeddings* against Prabowo have appeared since 2020. However, in 2020, *gemoy embeddings* against Prabowo were only found in one or two posts in June, August, September, October and November, i.e. not massively. Researchers found more “Prabowo gemoy” posts in 2021 with appearances in March, April, May, June, July, August and November. In 2022,

uploads using "Prabowo gemoy" will become easier to find on In 2023, "Prabowo gemoy" will become easier to find on

The association of *gemoy* with Prabowo cannot be separated from posts about his cat named Bobby, which succeeded in attracting the sympathy of netizens, especially on X. In 2021, we discovered that *gemoy* was also attributed to Bobby. If we look at posts from the previous year, Prabowo had uploaded photos featuring Bobby since the end of the 2019 election campaign. During the 2020-2021 period, researchers found posts indicating that netizens missed Bobby. In searching with the keyword "Bobby gemoy," we found posts about Bobby on Autobase accounts specifically for cats, pets, and animals.

Autobase accounts on X take advantage of the automatic direct message feature on Twitter or X, allowing users to send messages that are then uploaded as tweets automatically. These accounts are often used as platforms for anonymous discussion and sharing of opinions, facilitating interaction in communities with similar interests (Dwiwina and Putri, 2021).

Another finding that shows the connection between "gemoy" and Bobby the cat is Prabowo's upload in November 2022. At that time, Prabowo uploaded a photo of Bobby with the words "Happy weekend, Twitter friends!" which engaged many Twitter (X) users. X users interacted with the uploaded content by wishing them a happy weekend, uploading photos of their cats, or commenting on Bobby's increasingly chubby body.



The data above shows that the *gemoy* association with Prabowo actually originated from netizens. This usage, which initially came from one or two accounts, spread and increased until it became massive in 2023. The spread of "Prabowo gemoy" can be linked to Henry Jenkins' concept of spreadability. Jenkins *et al.*, (2018) explain that spreadability is the ability of content to be easily shared and spread on social media, influenced by users' active decisions about its relevance and how to spread it. However, researchers cannot prove whether the increase in the use of "Prabowo gemoy" in 2023 is purely the result of X users' aspirations or whether someone is driving it through the use of bots or buzzers.

Social media bots are automated programs that imitate human behavior, such as posting or liking content, often with malicious intent, such as promoting certain ideas or interfering with political debate (Martini *et al.*, 2021). Meanwhile, buzzers are individuals who amplify an issue or discourse so that it can be accepted and captured by society as a thought construct (Handini and Dunan, 2019).

The use of bots in "Prabowo gemoy" posts only started to appear before the 2024 campaign. Besides that, in the period leading up to the 2024 election campaign, parties supporting Prabowo also started using "gemoy" in their posts. Prabowo, who is paired with President Joko Widodo's first son and Mayor of Solo, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, is supported by four parties: Gerindra Party, the Golkar Party, the Democratic Party, and the National Mandate Party (PAN). Prabowo-Gibran is also supported by a number of non-parliamentary parties: the Crescent Star Party (PBB), Gelora Party, Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI), Garuda Party, and People's Adil Makmur Party (Prima).

Table 1. Exmple of Gemoy Content

No	Party Name	Number of “Gemoy” Content	“Gemoy” Content	Example Content
1	Gerindra Party - @Gerindra	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short sentences with added emoticons, photos, or video links. • The response to “Prabowo is gemoy” is like Prabowo's question about the meaning of <i>gemoy</i>. 	
2	Golkar Party - @golkar_id	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short sentences equipped with emoticons, hashtags, videos, or news links. • The sentence contains a rhyme, an invitation to vote for Prabowo-Gibran, and an invitation to dance. • The response to “Prabowo gemoy” shows that the term emerged from the people. 	
3	Democratic Party - @PDemokrat	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long sentences complete with photos and quotes from Edhie Baskoro Yudhoyono. • A quote stating that the Democrats chose the <i>gemoy</i>. 	

4	National Mandate Party (PAN) - @Official_PAN	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short sentences equipped with emoticons, hashtags, photos, videos, or images. • An invitation to participate in the gemoy dancing challenge with the hashtags #joetgemoy and #gemoychallenge, and an invitation to have fun. • A response to “Prabowo is gemoy”. • The use of rhymes and slang words such as “gaspol”. • Use of Prabowo-Gibran cartoon images created by AI. 	
5	Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) - @psi_id	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences with emoticons and videos. • The content contains an invitation to dance and engage in exciting politics, and a response to “Prabowo is cool”. 	
6	Gelora Party	0	-	-
7	Star Moon Party (PBB)	0	-	-
8	Garuda Party	0	-	-
9	Adil Makmur People's Party (Prima)	0	-	-

Source: Researchers data (until 10 February 2024)

Based on the data above, there are four categories of political parties that use “gemoy” in X content. First, political parties that use “gemoy” to increase their party’s visibility during the campaign period, such as the Golkar Party and PAN. Golkar and PAN were the ones that uploaded the most gemoy content. Both parties invited people to dance gemoy and used gemoy rhymes. The use of the term gemoy, which is far from conveying the political vision and mission, shows the position of gemoy as a political gimmick or trick that is shallow and insubstantial for electoral purposes (Michaels, 2021; Lubis and Puspitasari, 2021).

Second, political parties that explain “gemoy” as a term used by the public, such as the Gerindra Party and PSI. Third, parties that use “gemoy” to publicize their party activities, such as the Democratic Party. Prabowo's camp is united in explaining that the term “gemoy” was born from society and was not created by Prabowo's team. Additionally, they denied that the term “gemoy” portrayed

Prabowo as a candidate who lacked ideas. On the contrary, these parties also use “gemoy” to make the general election to elect the country's president something exciting and enjoyable with dancing. Fourth, parties that do not upload “gemoy” content, such as Gelora Party, PBB, Garuda Party, and Prima.

Based on the explanation above, the use of the word “gemoy” initially had an association with adorable things, such as cats. However, the word developed into a wider phenomenon, including Prabowo, and then became part of the political campaign ahead of the 2024 elections. This association initially emerged organically from netizens, but there is also the possibility of bot or buzzer interference in the increasingly massive spread one year ahead of the 2024 elections. These findings also show how parties supporting Prabowo use the term “gemoy” as a campaign tool. Of all the parties supporting Prabowo, Golkar and PAN use it the most, even though it appears that its use tends to be more as a political gimmick than as a means to convey a political vision and mission, highlighting a superficial and insubstantial approach to electoral campaigns.

Prabowo Gemoy's conversation at X

Data uploaded in the period from August 2023 to February 2024 shows that responses to gemoy were divided into two categories: positive and negative. Positive responses in conversations on X indicated that voters found gemoy familiar and relatable. Gemoy is often used as a comparison with other political figures who may seem more serious. For example, one X user uploaded a photo of Prabowo as an animated character and a video of themselves supporting Prabowo with the caption: “Om Gemoy!! Politics should be full of joy, not tension.”

Users who responded positively to “gemoy” also demonstrated the acceptance of the younger generation, especially Generation Z, towards Prabowo's gemoy nature. Some people, particularly Generation Z, view gemoy as something positive and entertaining. They expressed feeling closer or more connected to political figures who seem cool and relatable. For example, X users revealed that gemoy can influence voter choices, particularly among the younger generation who are more receptive to the images and messages conveyed in political campaigns. For some X users, a gemoy image can be a determining factor in choosing a particular candidate.

On the other hand, there is criticism of using gemoy as Prabowo's political branding due to his track record while serving in the military. Critics argue that Prabowo, with a history of human rights violations including genocide, kidnapping, and murder under the guise of serving the state, should not be described as adorable or gemoy. They consider gemoy branding an attempt to obscure Prabowo's alleged human rights violations. One user posted: “You know how screwed we are as a generation when a group of people old enough to vote are willing to vote for a war criminal just because he changed his name to gemoy.”

This criticism also stems from the perception that Prabowo's branding as a cool figure is inconsistent with his stance on issues such as the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the rejection of the Rohingya in Indonesia. There are at least two main issues that concern X users, specifically the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the rejection of the Rohingya in Indonesia. X users suspect that Prabowo wants to normalize relations between Indonesia and Israel, despite Indonesia's support for

Palestinian sovereignty and lack of diplomatic relations with Israel. Regarding the anti-Rohingya issue, Prabowo is seen as using the presence of Rohingya refugees in Indonesia as a security problem.

These issues are significant because both the Rohingya and Palestinian situations involve severe human rights abuses. Rohingya is one of the ethnicities that has experienced genocide in the world, while Israel's attacks on Palestine also show Israel's efforts to carry out genocide against the Palestinian people. Segal and Daniele (2024) stated that genocide is a systematic and deliberate act aimed at destroying an ethnic, racial, religious or national group, either in whole or in part.

Another criticism is that the use of gemoy as a political gimmick diverts attention from substantial issues, such as preferring to dance rather than attending debates. X users who rejected the gemoy branding also compared it to the father figure branding of the opposing candidate, Anies Baswedan. Anies's branding as a father is considered more substantial due to the phenomenon of fatherlessness in Indonesia. The hashtag #AbahNational became a trending topic on X on January 1, 2024, along with the nickname "Park Ahn Nice" from netizens. Fatherlessness refers to the absence of a father's role in caring for children, both physically and psychologically, due to various factors such as divorce, busy work schedules, or death (Hidayah, Ramli and Tassia, 2023).

Critics also argue that the gemoy strategy imitates the approach used by Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr. when he was elected president of the Philippines in 2022. Criticism was directed at users who called Prabowo gemoy and voters who chose him based on this branding. Those who rejected Prabowo labeled such users as stupid.

Based on the explanation above, during the period from August 2023 to February 2024, responses to the use of the term gemoy in Prabowo's political context were divided into two patterns: positive and negative. Positive responses came from users who found gemoy relatable and engaging, while negative responses focused on substantial issues and criticisms of Prabowo's past and political strategies.

DISCUSSION

Appropriate political marketing communications can attract support by creating a positive image for Prabowo. The use of the term "gemoy" aims to show Prabowo's human side and target the younger generation, thereby reducing negative views about his track record. The positive response from the younger generation, especially on social media, shows the success of political rebranding in influencing perceptions of Prabowo.

These appropriate political marketing communications may include candidate personality, microtargeting, social imagery, use of images, and use of social media. Kissel and Büttgen (2015) explained that a candidate's personality, conveyed through appearances on social media, helps create a positive image. The use of the term gemoy and content that depicts the human side with dancing and adorable animated characters on social media is an effort to build a positive political identity for Prabowo. This is consistent with the idea that a positive image can be formed through a human and familiar appearance on social media.

Fariza, Pawito and Rahmanto (2023) explain that political figures reach certain groups of voters to build a positive image. This also relates to efforts to create associations between candidates and selected segments of society to attract voters. Social image can be done by referring to shared values or identity. In this case, choosing Generation Z and millennials as the target audience is the right step because both generations have a large influence on public opinion, especially on social media. They tend to be more open to political messages that use more relaxed and entertaining language and communication styles. In addition, the use of familiar language and entertaining content can help build positive associations between Prabowo and Generation Z and millennials. The term “gemoy” avoids rigid political connotations and introduces a warmer and more familiar image.

Kissel & Büttgen (2015) explained that the use of images and videos can create a positive image for a candidate or political party on social media. In this context, Prabowo's use of adorable animated characters and dancing on social media is the right effort to create a positive image that is entertaining and familiar among the younger generation. The use of adorable animated characters and dancing on social media also creates a strong visual appeal for the intended target audience.

Fariza & Rahmanto (2023) explained that the use of social media such as X helps political figures reach a wider and more segmented potential electorate. Consistent and coordinated messaging that increases virtual and mobile presence can help political figures interact with potential voters and build a positive image. Generation Z and millennials tend to be active on social media like X. By using social media platforms like X, consistent and coordinated messages can increase Prabowo's presence in the virtual realm. The use of short videos, memes, and easily shareable content will increase the visibility of the campaign among Generation Z and millennials. More active interaction with potential voters via social media can also help strengthen the positive image that has been built.

Rebranding can be a powerful tool for politicians to improve their image in the eyes of the public and win votes. Effective rebranding can help politicians connect with voters on a personal level and create a more positive image. Maryani (2015) explains that a positive response to political rebranding can help politicians distance themselves from negative associations and create a more positive image in the public's mind. The positive response to the political rebranding was that Generation Z saw the term "gemoy" as something entertaining and showed Prabowo's human side, which was previously identified with accusations of human rights violations. This positive response could also help Prabowo connect with voters on a personal level, increase engagement, and strengthen support.

Although there was a positive response to gemoy, this political rebranding also invited criticism and resistance from users. Credibility and trust in politicians are crucial. In Prabowo's context, the negative response arose from the assumption that this political rebranding was inauthentic or simply a political tactic. This change in Prabowo's image is different from what was depicted in the previous election. At that time, Prabowo was portrayed as a presidential candidate with a firm and highly nationalistic attitude, consistent with his military background.

Negative responses also emerged in the form of rejection of the rebranding due to its incompatibility with his controversial track record, especially regarding past human rights violations. Rebranding also provides an opportunity to attack

Prabowo through comparisons with the opposing candidate, Anies, who uses different branding. On the other hand, Prabowo's use of the term “gemoy” is considered to betray his long-standing beliefs, particularly accusations of being a human rights violator.

Criticism of gemoy as Prabowo's attempt to divert attention from more fundamental substantive issues also shows that the collective memory of society, especially X users, about Prabowo's human rights violations, such as the invasion of East Timor and the kidnapping of activists in 1996-1998, still influences their perceptions and attitudes towards Prabowo in the 2024 Election. Michaelian and Sutton (2017) explained that collective memory influences people's perceptions in several ways. It shapes how individuals and groups remember, interpret, and share events, people, and places. The community's collective memory of human rights violations that occurred in the past tends to make X users maintain their negative perceptions of Prabowo. These issues have become part of a strong political narrative in society and were the main obstacles for Prabowo in the previous two presidential elections.

Orianne and Eustache (2023) explain that collective memory is not just a passive reflection of the past but is actively constructed and reconstructed through social interactions, shared experiences, and cultural artifacts. This is influenced by various factors, including media, social norms, and individual bias. In the digital era, collective memory is greatly influenced by the internet and other digital technologies, including social media, which influence the way individuals create, store, and remember information. In this context, the narrative and interpretation of Prabowo's accusations of human rights violations that occurred in the past can be influenced by various factors, including interactions via social media, social norms, and individual bias.

Yasseri, Gildersleve and David (2022) explain that collective memory also plays a role in forming social identity. Different groups remember historical events differently, which can influence how they view their place in the world and how they understand their shared history. X users who have a collective memory of Prabowo's human rights violations tend to view him with a negative attitude and are skeptical of his political rebranding efforts. This influences how they view their place in the political world and how they understand their shared history.

The collective memory of Prabowo's human rights violations plays an important role in shaping the perceptions and attitudes of society, especially X users, towards him. This collective memory is not only influenced by past experiences but also by social interactions, media, and other cultural factors. As a result, Prabowo's political rebranding efforts through gemoy may be hampered by the strong collective memory of his controversial track record, which creates distrust and resistance among X users.

Although there are efforts to change the image through gemoy branding, substantial issues related to Prabowo's track record remain the main concern of X users. A comparison between responses to gemoy and the collective memory of Prabowo's human rights violations shows that past issues are still an important factor in politics and influence how society views and assesses a potential leader. The collective memory of Prabowo's human rights violations also creates concerns among X users about his track record and integrity as a potential leader. Some X users remain skeptical of Prabowo's efforts to improve his image through political

rebranding via gemoy. They feel that gemoy is inconsistent with his controversial track record, which creates distrust of his integrity as a leader.

Even though the collective memory of Prabowo's human rights violations still dominates on X, X users do not dominate the population in Indonesia. X's popularity in Indonesia is influenced by a combination of social media use, market share, competition, user preferences, and changing trends. According to the We Are Social report in early 2024, the number of social media users in Indonesia reached 139 million people, or 49.9% of the total national population. Of that number, X users are only 79.9 million, or around 28.78% of the total national population. X's popularity in Indonesia is still below competing social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Telegram (Annur, 2024). In fact, X is still unable to compete with TikTok, which is the social media most widely used by Generation Z as a source of information (Widi, 2023)

X's popularity in Indonesia can also be attributed to its ability to meet user preferences. X allows users to send instant messages, follow other users, and stay up to date on trends and news. X, with its real-time updates and ability to reach a wide audience, has become a popular platform for political discourse and activism. However, X requires users to have the ability to read, write, participate in conversations quickly, and understand issues relevant to industry news and trends. These capabilities are needed because X is a text-based social media that facilitates fast and concise communication between users. X encourages users to craft messages that are to the point, making it an efficient medium for sharing news, opinions, and updates. X has a dynamic environment for real-time communication and discussion, enabling the rapid dissemination of information and ideas. It functions as a public square where individuals, organizations, and public figures can interact directly, contributing to its role as an important platform for political discourse, news dissemination, and social movements (Recuero, Bonow and Gruzd, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The use of the term "gemoy" can be seen as an attempt to change Prabowo's image and attract the attention of voters, especially from the younger generation, by highlighting the candidate's human and entertaining side. Even though there is criticism and resistance from some parts of society, especially regarding its incompatibility with Prabowo's controversial track record, this strategy still has the potential to influence voter perceptions and decisions, particularly in the context of shifting public attention from past issues to the current political campaign's images and messages. On the other hand, some X users still focus on substantial issues such as Prabowo's record of human rights violations. This condition shows that successful political marketing communications must also be able to address substantial issues related to a candidate's track record and integrity.

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