Discourse Network Analysis on Delaying Elections in President Joko Widodo's Era

Neli Elislah

Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia
Corresponding author, ✉ neli.elislah@ui.ac.id

Abstract

The postponement of elections became an issue that was widely discussed during President Jokowi's presidency, resulting in increased public distrust of politicians and politics itself and created political cynicism. Meanwhile, public distrust and political cynicism greatly influence public policies created by political leaders. Through discourse network analysis, this study wants to see the relationship between the discourse on postponing elections and the relationship between discourse and public policy. The novelty of the previous research on postponing elections lies in the theory of political cynicism which is very relevant in explaining the process of forming policies on this issue. Using the DNA method, the unit of analysis for this study was statements from actors taken on the news sites kompas.com and detik.com, during (January-April 2022) which were then identified using the DNA Analyzer software version 2.0, and visualized using Visone. The issue of postponing elections produces conflict discourse, it is also explained that conflict discourse often occurs in controversial policies, bringing the public to a high level of distrust, directly proportional to the political cynicism that occurs. Finally, the neutral discourse that was present reminded political leaders to focus more on pressing problems because the impact of political cynicism also made it difficult for political leaders to make decisions.

Introduction

Since January 2022 the discourse on postponement of elections has become an issue that has been debated a lot by public in Indonesia, the debate has been present in various spaces, starting from the news media, television, social media, scientific forums and involving many actors, experts, government officials and citizens. There are many reasons put forward by political elites to support the issue of postponing elections or extending the term of office of the President of Indonesia, such as the country is currently in economic recovery due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (Anggraini, 2022), appart of that, the political elite said that the large election budget could burden the Indonesian state's economy and should be allocated to other more urgent public programs. Of course, the discourse on postponing the election has produced pros and cons among the public and

even the political elite themselves. There are several reasons for rejecting the postponement of the election because it is contrary to the reform mandate and the potential for Indonesia to return to the era of authoritarianism, namely the orde baru (New Order) (Setiawan, 2022). The idea of postponing elections in Indonesia was first voiced by the Minister of Investment/Head of the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) Bahlil Lahadalia on January 10, 2022 and continuing for four months (January-April), the issue of postponing the elections continued to roll on until finally President Jokowi asked his ministers to stop discussions about postponing the elections or extending the term of office of the President (Permana, 2022). The large number of online media over-reported the news for various reasons "pros" and "cons" of the discourse has made the issue of postponing the elections even more controversial.

The excessive attention given by the media to discourse and political actors in the issue of postponing elections has resulted in negative perceptions undermining public trust in politicians and the government. The discourse on postponing the election is considered to reflect the interests of the oligarchs and the decline of democracy for Indonesia, academics have requested that the discussion regarding postponing the election be ended immediately (Bramasta, 2022). Criticisms flooded the proposal to postpone the election until finally the discourse of extending the term of office of the president was repeatedly raised by the media and President Joko Widodo's firm stance is demanded by the public to end the growing discourse conflict related to the postponement of the election (Farisa, 2022). Reports from various media have raised the motive behind the postponement of the 2024 election related to the interests of political elites who gain access to power and maintain the status quo (bbc, 2022). Political trust is one of those terms that refer to how citizens feel about their government, it overlaps with trust, system support, and legitimacy on the positive side and with cynicism, political discontent, and alienation on the negative side (Citrin & Stoker, 2018).

Citizens' trust in politics is a core issue of democracy, a high and continuous level of political cynicism will threaten the credibility and legitimacy of the government. Here, apart from political leaders, the media are also under pressure. When people have little faith in their government or hold cynical political views, there are concerns over trust in government, perceptions of electoral fairness, and the accuracy of political information (Barthel & Moy, 2017). When people's distrust of politicians increases, political cynicism will also increase because politicians' attitudes are considered to be polarized and less responsive to voters' concerns (Shehata, 2014). Political cynicism is a frustration of the perception that politicians make important decisions based on their personal interests and strategic planning rather than the true interests of the electorate (Schuck et al., 2013). Shehata (2014) says that the more citizens are exposed to gaming media frames during election campaigns, the more cynical and less politically interested they become over time increasing cynicism and distrust of institutional and political interests (Shehata, 2014).

In several studies, the media's overfocus on negative news by employing aggressive interviewing techniques, focusing on political actors and scandals instead of content, paying excessive attention to crime, and presenting politics as a kind of game also helps to increase political cynicism (Jones-Jang et al., 2021; Schuck et al., 2013; Shehata, 2014). The impact of political cynicism can also make it difficult for political leaders to pool resources to solve societal problems (Leifeld, 2013). Thus, the cynical climate of society sometimes forces political leaders to make decisions such as weak policies and avoid pressing societal issues that are controversial but pressing (Porter, 2007). Overall, the literature on cynicism and media use suggests that voters foster political cynicism through media coverage that promotes a perceived gap between voters and their political representatives (Schuck et al.,

2013). Given that political cynicism can affect people's relations with governing institutions and how they process information, the extent to which media presentation and content affect people's level of cynicism has become an important field of study (Jones-Jang et al., 2021).

Through discourse network analysis, this research can see the relationship between discourse that is currently being discussed and the relationship between discourse and public policy. Discourse networks have been studied extensively in several studies. Discourse networks are often used to describe the relationship between discourse and public policy (Eriyanto & Ali, 2020). Policies made by the government do not exist in a vacuum, but exist in a certain context, therefore discourse networks are useful for mapping emerging discourses, actors proposing discourses, and discourse connections (networks). Topics that are often raised in research on discourse networks range from political issues to environmental issues (Ghinoi & Steiner, 2020). This includes the issue of public debate, namely the postponement of elections. Research conducted by Khatami (2022), which describes how digital activism communication patterns in public debate on the issue of "Three Periods of President" with data taken from capture tweets on Twitter Social Media with the keyword "Three Periods of President" (Khatami, 2022).

This research wants to map what discourses are developing related to the issue of Postponement of Elections in the era of President Jokowi, the dominant actors, and the relations between discourse and actors. Despite the critical nature of the problems of democracy, pandemics and economic recovery, academic literature discussing discourse networks on postponing elections is still rare. Therefore, this research question can be described as follows: *"How was the discourse that developed regarding the postponement of elections during Jokowi's presidency, the dominant actors, and the relations between discourse and actors?"*. To answer this question, this study uses the Discourse Network Analysis (DNA) method. This research will provide novelty to map the discourse that is developing related to postponing elections, which affects public trust and is associated with the theory of political cynicism to see the impact of controversial discourse which involves many actors in it such as political experts and political elites who have the power to influence public policy. So that it is expected to be able to explain the novelty of studies regarding postponing elections that were previously carried out.

Discourse Network

Discourse is a certain set of ideas, concepts and categorizations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a certain set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social reality (Hajer, 1995). Understanding discourse is important and useful because discourse represents policy debate, reflects political conflict, and can encourage further polarization or lead to shared understanding (Bosman et al., 2014; Kern & Rogge, 2018). Discourse represents the debates and underlying policy interests by those who aim to directly or indirectly shape policy (Brugger & Henry, 2021). Policy debates greatly impact political outcomes, pre-parliamentary agenda setting to the realm of political decision-making, therefore one must be concerned about how political discourse can be measured (Leifeld, 2017). Meanwhile, political discourse is a network phenomenon because the statements of actors contribute to and depend on each other's discourse in interesting ways.

Network analysis is a method of relational data analysis, which focuses on interrelationships between actors, in an effort to describe power dynamics, information flow processes, or the formation of coalitions between agents (Scott, 2013). Discourse network analysis combines the two methods by mapping agents with general statements,

or themes (Steinfeld, 2016). Discourse networks are needed to describe the structure of political discourse and conclude its generative process using techniques from the network analysis toolbox (Leifeld, 2017). Discourse networks are a way to understand the process of policy debate which in turn also serves to predict public discourse.

Discourse Conflict

When the policy discourses of the actors are unable to adjust their discourses and produce discourses that contradict each other, in this condition, discourse conflicts occur where the two dominant discourses contradict each other (Eriyanto & Ali, 2020). The policy process can be understood as a struggle for meaning, in which it is not free from conflict, in simple policy refers to simple disputes that can be easily resolved by investigating the right facts, while controversial policies are policy conflicts that are persistently difficult to resolve, related to values, belief, ideology, and others (Muller, 2015). In controversial policy debates, the parties usually disagree on the facts or data that are relevant for policy choices, the underlying frameworks are conflicting interpretations.

Election Postponed

Holding regular elections is a very important basis of democratic practice, however, the case for postponing elections is often made in emergency situations (James & Alihodzic, 2020). Postponement of elections has been implemented in other countries, as the coronavirus pandemic spreads in 2020, between 21 February and 18 August 2020, elections in at least 70 countries and territories around the world have postponed some elections. But over the same time period, plans for national or subnational elections in at least 54 countries continued (International IDEA, 2020). The discourse on postponing elections due to the Covid-19 Pandemic has become a controversial issue that is hotly debated and has resulted in conflicts among political leaders in various parts of the world and even Indonesia.

Political Cynisim

A cynic is one who displays a tendency to distrust the sincerity or goodness of human motives and actions, usually expressed in ridicule, sarcasm, and faultfinding in people he or she does not trust (Oxford English Dictionary, 2022). Cappella & Jamieson (1996) define political cynicism as a generalized distrust of certain political leaders or groups to the political process as a whole – a process that is considered corrupting those who participate in it and which attracts corrupt people as participants (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996). Furthermore, political cynicism is that individuals have certain negative perceptions about politics that generate negative feelings, based on the belief that political actors, political institutions, and the entire political system are immoral and incompetent (Dekker & Meijerink, 2013). Political cynicism is a kind of political judgment that leads to negative, starting from the public's distrust of politicians and politics which leads to political behavior.

Political cynicism increases along with people's distrust of politicians, because politicians' attitudes lead to polarization and are less responsive to voters' concerns (Shehata, 2014). The media is most to blame when political cynicism increases, because it is considered to focus more on scandals and political actors than on content and presents politics as a kind of game (Schuck et al., 2013). Political cynicism has the potential to hinder basic democratic processes by reducing electoral participation (Jones-Jang et al., 2021; Shehata, 2014). Thus, a cynical climate forces political leaders to make weak decisions in order to avoid controversial issues (Porter, 2007). Given that political cynicism can influence people's relations with governing institutions and how they process information, the extent to which media presentation and content affect people's level of cynicism has become an important field of study.

Methodology

This study uses the Discourse Network Analysis (DNA) method. This method is a combination of discourse analysis and network analysis. Discourse analysis describes developing ideas, while network analysis describes the positions of actors and networks (Leifeld, 2017). In this research, DNA is applied to map the discourse that developed regarding the postponement of elections in the era of President Jokowi and the dominant actors who proposed the discourse. The unit of analysis for DNA research is statements from actors. These statements are obtained from direct comments, news, social media posts, and many more (Eriyanto & Ali, 2020). In this study, the discourse conveyed by actors is limited to discourse issued by online media. To collect statements from actors, researchers used online media, namely "Detik.com" and "Kompas.com". The researcher collected all the news in both online media by applying the keyword "Postponing Elections" for four consecutive months (January 10 2022 - April 10 2022). The reason for the specified timeframe or period is because the discourse on postponing elections in Indonesia was first voiced by the Minister of Investment/Head of BKPM Bahlil Lahadalia starting on January 10 2022, continuing for four months (January-April) the issue of postponing elections continued to roll until finally President Jokowi asked ministers to stop discussions about postponing elections or extending the term of office of the president (Permana, 2022).

News is collected and then filtered based on the criteria of whether it contains statements from actors regarding the postponement of elections. Relevant news is then identified for statements. One news article has more than one actor (such as the source interviewed), then, the researcher checks the actor's statements on "Detik.com" and "Kompas.com" whether there are similarities. On the same day, "Detik.com" and "Kompas.com" also released similar statements from the same official, in this case, one of the statements in the online media was deleted, because the unit of analysis in DNA is a statement rather than the number of news articles. Online media news is one of the tools used by researchers to find statements that show actors and discourse (concepts).

Then identify the discourse (concept) and actors. The statements collected are categorized or grouped based on the discourse (concept) and actors. Discourses (concepts) are grouped, the same concepts are grouped into one. All statements are input into the DNA Analyzer software version 2.0. After input is complete, the data is processed using VISONE software, this software maps actors and concepts in the network. In addition to network visualization, this software also presents network description data, including degree, connectedness, proximity, and eigenvectors (Eriyanto & Ali, 2020).

Result

This research examines the discourse that developed regarding the postponement of elections in the era of President Jokowi and the dominant actors who proposed the discourse. The researcher collected all the news in both online media "Detik.com" and "Kompas.com" by applying the keyword *"Penundaan Pemilu"* (Postponement of Elections) for four consecutive months (January 10 2022 - April 10 2022). There are a total of 374 news articles collected from the two online media. The news was then filtered with the criteria of whether there were any statements from the actors regarding the postponement of the elections. Finally, based on the selection of news relevant to the research objective, a total of 173 news articles were found, 94 of which were retrieved via site: Kompas.com and 79 of them were retrieved via site: Detik.com.
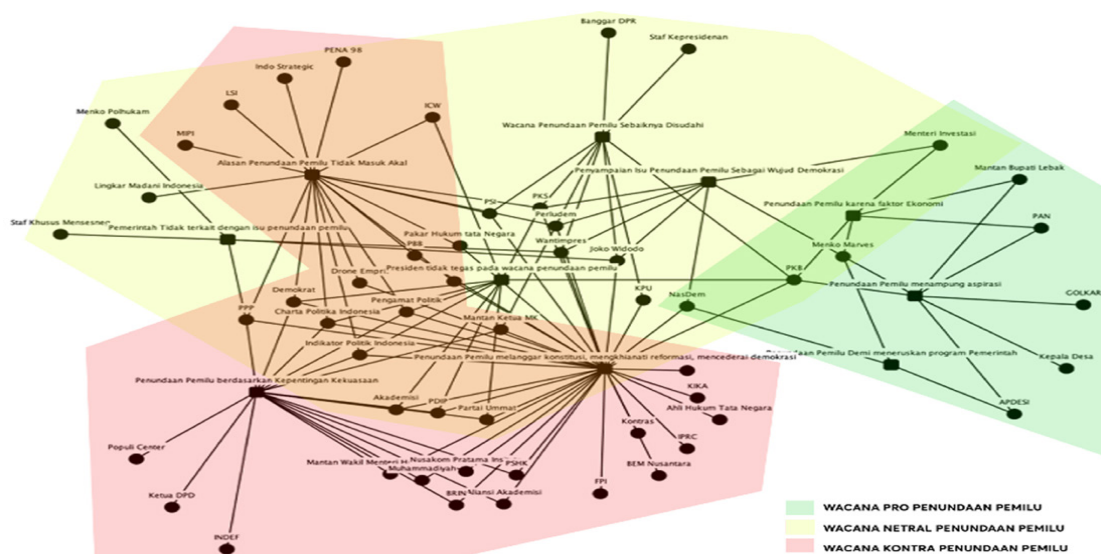
Relevant news was then identified for statement taking, at this stage the researcher entered 173 existing news articles into the DNA software version 2.0., then the researcher coded the statements of each news article and eliminated statements that were repeated in each news article, so that a total of 284 statements that had been collected were analyzed. Each statement that has been collected is categorized based on concept, actor and organization. Concepts are categorized into 10 groups, namely:

Table 1. Discourse Concept Categories and Postponement of Elections
(processed by the author)

Description	Concept	Amount
Cons	Reasons for postponing elections make no sense	36
Netral	Government not related to the issue of postponing the elections	12
Cons	Postponement of elections based on the interests of power	52
Pros	Postponement of elections for the sake of continuing the government's program	3
Pros	Postponement of elections due to economic factors	7
Cons	Postponement of elections violates the constitution, betrays reform, harms democracy	100
Pros	The postponement of elections accommodates aspirations	16
Netral	The president is not firm on the discourse of postponing the elections	27
Netral	The Discourse of Postponing the Election Should Be Ended	20
Netral	Submission of the Issue of Delaying Elections as a Form of Democracy	11

While the actors are grouped into 53 categories according to person or 16 categories according to the organization including, President, Government Officials, Political Parties, Islamic Organizations, Community Organizations, NGOs, Local Government Officials, Research Institutions, Academics, Students, DPD, DPR, Political Observers, Activists, State Institutions. After completing the input, the data is processed using VISONE software, this software maps actors and concepts in the network. In addition to network visualization, this software also provides network description data, including degress (popularity), betweens (how far between actors or concepts connected to other actors or concepts), closeness (proximity). There are several discourses that point to the pros and cons in postponing elections, the pros discourses include 1(Postponing elections due to economic factors, the postponement of elections accommodates aspirations, and postponement of elections for the sake of continuing the government's program) while contra discourse includes 2(Postponement of elections based on the interests of power, postponement of elections violates the constitution, betrays reform, harms democracy, and the reasons for postponing elections do not make sense) and among them the pro and con discourse that is developing is 3(the President is not firm on the discourse on postponing elections, the government is not related to the issue of postponing elections, conveying the issue of postponing elections as a form of democracy, and the discourse on postponing elections should be ended).

Figure 1. Discourse Compatibility and Conflict of Election Delay Actors

(source: processed by the author)

The dominant actors in the pro-postponement of elections discourse include (Political Parties: PAN, Golkar, PKB, NasDem); (Local Government: Former Regent, APDESI, Village Head), Government Official (Minister of Investment, Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs). Pro-discourse on postponement of elections is dominated by central to regional government officials, and several political parties. Basically, each actor has in common (concept) the pro-postponement of elections presented to the public, namely the economic condition in Indonesia is still at the recovery stage due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (Postponement of elections due to economic factors). The next reason is because political elites capture the aspirations of the people through BIG DATA analysis sources to postpone elections (Postponing Elections for Accommodating Aspirations). The next reason is the public's desire for sustainable policies and many programs and national development that are still delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Postponing Elections for the sake of continuing Government Programs).

Dominant actors in the counter-postponement of elections include (Academics; Research institutions; Islamic organizations; Regional Representative Council (DPD), community organizations; NGOs; Political parties: (Democrat, PPP, PKS, PBB, PSI, PDIP, Ummat Party, NasDem). Discourse that is often present in rejecting the postponement of elections is that postponing elections violates the Constitution, betrays reform, harms democracy, as many as 100 statements related to the discourse on postponing elections are unconstitutional discourses because they violate the existing constitution, namely the 1945 Constitution and should not be changed arbitrarily, besides that related to postponing election discourse that betrays reform, and has the potential to bring back authoritarianism such as the New Order era and tarnishes democracy, and tarnishing democracy for impeding an important element of a democratic country, namely elections and for using democratic reasons to perpetuate the discourse on postponing elections. The three discourses are grouped into one concept group because the three are interrelated, besides that the actors also convey the three discourses often together in one statement.

The dominant actors in this counter discourse are dominated by political parties, Islamic organizations, community organizations, academics.

The next dominant counter discourse is (the reasons for postponing the election make no sense), the dominant actors in voicing this discourse include Research Institutes, NGOs, Academics, who are trying to explain that the urgency related to the economy and the postponement of elections is currently not needed, beside that, the aspirations of the people voiced for the postponement of the election were not proven by producing various other survey results to match the BIG DATA that the pro-postponing election political elites echoed. The last counter discourse is (Delaying elections based on the interests of power), this counter discourse is dominated by political parties including Democrat, PPP, PKS, PBB, PSI, PDIP, Ummat Party, community organizations, Islamic organizations, academics, students.

The dominant actors in the neutral discourse between the pros and cons are (President Joko Widodo; Presidential staff; Minister of State Secretary, Menkopolhukam, Wantimpres), these actors provide many related discourses that the government is not related to the issue of postponing elections and the discourse on postponing elections should be ended and not whether taken or not taken seriously, and conveying the issue of postponing elections as a form of democracy and not to be banned. Apart from that, the neutral discourse regarding the postponement of the election is also related to the President's indecisiveness in responding to the discourse on postponing the election presented by the political elite around him, this discourse is also dominated by many actors, including actors who dominate the contra and pro discourse regarding the postponement of the election.

Table 2. Description on the Popularity of Actors and Issue Concept

Name	Variable	Degree %	Closeness %	Betweenness%
APDESI	Person	0.862	1.12	0.095
Constitutional Law Expert	Person	0.431	1.61	0
Academics	Person	1.293	1.729	0.337
Academic Alliance	Person	0.862	1.687	0.172
BEM Nusantara	Person	0.431	1.61	0
BRIN	Person	0.862	1.687	0.172
House of Representatives	Person	0.431	1.239	0
Charta Politika Indonesia	Person	1.724	1.867	1.015
Demokrat	Person	1.724	1.867	1.015
Drone Emprit	Person	0.862	1.751	0.31
FPI	Person	0.431	1.61	0
GOLKAR	Person	0.431	1.103	0
ICW	Person	0.862	1.415	0.11
INDEF	Person	0.431	1.228	0
IPRC	Person	0.431	1.61	0
Indikator Politik Indonesia	Person	1.724	1.867	1.015
Indo Strategic	Person	0.431	1.262	0
President Joko Widodo	Person	1.724	1.795	1.948
KIKA	Person	0.431	1.61	0
KPU	Person	0.862	1.667	0.253

Name	Variable	Degree %	Closeness %	Betweenness%
Heads of Villages	Person	0.431	1.103	0
Chairman of The Regional Representative Council	Person	0.431	1.228	0
Kontras	Person	0.431	1.61	0
LSI	Person	0.431	1.262	0
Lingkar Madani Indonesia	Person	0.431	1.262	0
MIPI	Person	0.431	1.262	0
Former Lebak Regent	person	0.862	1.12	0.043
Former Chairman of The Constitutional Court	Person	1.293	1.61	0
Former Minister of Law and Human Rights	Person	0.431	1.61	0
Former Deputy Minister of Law and Human Rights	Person	0.862	1.687	0.172
Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment	Person	1.724	1.285	1.013
Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs	Person	0.431	1.12	0
Minister of Investment	Person	0.862	1.228	0.164
Muhammadiyah	Person	0.862	1.687	0.172
NasDem	Person	1.293	1.708	2.141
Nusakom Pratama Insitute	Person	0.862	1.687	0.172
PAN	Person	0.862	1.12	0.043
PBB	Person	0.862	1.751	0.31
PDIP	Person	1.293	1.729	0.337
PENA 98	Person	0.431	1.262	0
PKB	Person	2.155	1.918	9.065
PKS	Person	2.155	1.918	2.372
PPP	Person	1.724	1.918	2.765
PSHK	Person	0.862	1.687	0.172
PSI	Person	1.293	1.819	0.976
Administrative Law Expert	Person	0.862	1.751	0.31
Ummat Party	Person	1.293	1.729	0.337
Political Observer	Person	1.724	1.867	1.015
Perludem	Person	1.293	1.819	1.116
Populi Center	Person	0.431	1.228	0
SMRC	Person	0.862	1.751	0.31
Presidential Staff	Person	0.431	1.239	0
Presidential Advisory Council	Person	0.431	1.12	0
Reasons for Postponing Elections Make No Sense	Concept	7.759	1.795	1.948

Name	Variable	Degree %	Closeness %	Betweenness%
Government Not Related To The Issue of Postponing The Elections	Concept	2.155	1.751	9.894
Postponement of Elections For the sake of continuing the Government's program	Concept	1.295	1.334	0.756
Postponement of Elections based on the Interests of Power	Concept	7.759	1.687	6.821
Postponement of elections due to economic factors	Concept	2.155	1.429	2.008
Postponement of elections violates the constitution, betrays reform, harms democracy	Concept	14.655	2.501	28.98
The postponement of elections accommodates aspirations	Concept	3.017	1.459	5.648
Submission of the Issue of Delaying Elections as a Form of Democracy	Concept	3.017	1.61	3.307
The president is not firm on the discourse of postponing the elections	Concept	4.31	1.667	2.616
The Discourse of Postponing the Election Should Be Ended	Concept	3.876	1.708	4.422

Visone software makes it possible to identify the most central argument in a discourse debate, in this case the frequency of statements is shown from the degree level or the arguments that appear most often in the discourse on delaying elections will have a high percentage degree (see table above). "Postponing elections violates the constitution, betrays reform, harms democracy" gets a high percentage, namely (14.655%), then "The reasons for postponing elections make no sense" (7.759%) and "Postponement of elections based on the interests of power" (7.759%). The most frequently raised discourse regarding postponing elections during Joko Widodo's presidency was counter discourse. Meanwhile, the actors who most often appear in voicing discourse on postponing the election are political parties (PKB and PKS) with each having a degree level of 2.155%. Actors with a high degree can coordinate actors effectively in networks, these actors act as intermediaries in social networks.

The closeness in the table shows the relationship between actors with one another, the number of shared arguments reflects the closeness of the actors or each other (the more shared arguments, the closer the actors are to each other). There are 3 political parties, PKB, PKS, PPP which have a high degree of closeness in this discourse, respectively (1.918%), they hold high power in the interrelationships between actors. Betweenness is used to identify the importance of discourse ideas in connecting gaps, betweenness is a node as a representative of the 'gatekeeper' is how many times each actor needs a certain actor to reach other actors. The level of betweenness in the election postponement discourse network is the PKB political party with a percentage (9.065%). While the concept that has high intermediary is "Postponing elections violates the constitution, betrays reform, harms democracy" with a percentage of (28.98%), this concept relates to the many actors and discourse circulating regarding postponing elections.

Discussion

Discourse of Conflict: Between the Pros and Cons of Postponing Elections

For four consecutive months (January-April 2022) the discourse on postponing the election has become an issue that has been widely reported by online media which involves many political actors in it. The discursive space contains various discourse coalitions within it, groups of actors who share the same social construction and who seek to influence policy processes by imposing their views of reality on others (Leifeld, 2013). Several political actors proposed a discourse on postponing the elections on the grounds that Indonesia's economic conditions were still in the recovery stage due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and capturing aspirations from the public to postpone elections and continue sustainable policies such as programs and national development which were still delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. . However, the discourse on postponing the election also produced many counter discourses. The counter discourse that developed related to the issue of postponing elections which was previously raised by political elites was considered to have violated the constitution because it was not in accordance with the 1945 Constitution, betrayed the struggle for reform in completing an authoritarian regime or the new order, and results in harming democracy by delaying elections which are the basis of a democracy in Indonesia. When the discourses of the actors cannot be combined and produce contradictory discourses, the researcher divides the two discourses into pros and cons. Hajer (1995) said that in fighting over discourse, there will be competition between actors (Hajer, 1995).

When controversial policy conflicts exist, such as postponing elections, conflicts will be difficult to resolve. In controversial policy debates, each actor has opposing positions so that it will be difficult to compromise (Muller, 2015). The issue of postponing the election resulted in a discourse of conflict between actors. When two dominant discourses on issues conflict with each other, there will be a condition of conflict discourse. The dominant actors who dominate pro-discussion in postponing elections are officials from the central to regional governments, and several political parties. Meanwhile, the actors in the counter-delaying election discourse are dominated by academics; research institute; community organization; NGO; and several political parties. In the discourse that is against the postponement of the election, the statements of the actors lead to a discourse of conflict. The actors of this counter discourse consider that the actor who conveys pro discourse on postponing the election has an interest in pursuing power to be reluctant to step down from office, maintain the status quo and continue unfinished oligarchic agendas.

Political Cynicism in Neutral Discourse on Postponement of Elections

The neutral discourse regarding the postponement of the election is related to the lack of firmness of Indonesian President Joko Widodo in responding to the issue of postponing the election presented by the political elite around him, this discourse is also dominated by many actors, including actors who dominate the contra and pro discourse regarding the postponement of the election. When people's distrust of politicians increases, political cynicism will increase because politicians' attitudes tend to be polarized and less responsive to voters' concerns (Shehata, 2014). The neutral discourse voiced by the public is the impact of the public's distrust of political elites in political conflicts as a result of the issue of postponing elections, so that a discourse emerges demanding the President to be more assertive in determining policies. Cappella and Jamieson (1997, 166) define political cynicism as, generalized distrust of certain political leaders or groups to the political process as a whole – a process that is perceived as damaging to those who participate in it

and that attracts corrupt people as participants (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996). It's so easy for the government, parliament, and other political elites to betray the people's mandate, by changing the constitution in the name of people's aspirations and fabricated data, causing people's distrust of the country's leaders.

When people have little faith in their government or have cynical political views, concerns arise over trust in government, perceptions of electoral fairness, and the accuracy of political information (Barthel & Moy, 2017). As political cynicism increases, it sometimes forces political leaders to make decisions such as lax policies and avoiding pressing but controversial societal issues (Porter, 2007). In the case of controversial policy conflicts such as postponing elections, political leaders have a tendency to remain neutral in expounding discourse on issues. Dominant actors in neutral discourse between pro and con discourse include (President Joko Widodo; Presidential staff; Minister of State Secretary, Menkopolhukam, Wantimpres), voicing neutral discourse regarding the postponement of the election, namely related to the government not related to the issue of postponing the election; the discourse on postponement of elections should be ended and not addressed or not taken seriously; and conveying the issue of postponing elections as a form of democracy in speaking and expressing opinions. The neutral discourse put forward by the actors is to avoid conflict caused by the issue of postponing further elections. Political cynicism is a frustration of the perception that politicians make important decisions based on their personal interests and strategic planning rather than the true interests of the electorate (Schuck et al., 2013).

The issue of postponing elections tends to be overly reported by the media as well as exaggerated by political leaders. The amount of news (374 news) that appears about the postponement of the election for four consecutive months on two online media sites (Detik.com and Kompas.com) with news containing repeated statements by political actors indicates how often this issue is reported by the media. The media is often blamed when political cynicism increases because it is seen as focusing more on scandals and political actors than content and presenting politics as a kind of game (Schuck et al., 2013). Excessive coverage by the media regarding postponing elections is also a cause of political cynicism in society, public distrust in political leaders so that the government ultimately makes it difficult for political leaders to solve other more urgent problems. Verstraete and Bambauer (2017) further noted that the most damaging feature of productive mis-/disinformation in today's news ecosystem is cynicism (Verstaete & Bambauer, 2017). Because the impact of political cynicism can also make it difficult for political leaders to gather resources to solve people's problems (Leifeld, 2013). Thus, public pressure due to an issue encourages political leaders to focus on issues that are widely discussed. However, neutral discourse in postponing elections is also present to remind political leaders and the public to focus more on more pressing issues such as economic recovery due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that the issue of postponing elections during Jokowi's presidency was colored by discourse conflicts between pros and cons discourses presented by political leaders. When controversial policy conflicts exist, such as postponing elections, conflicts will be difficult to resolve. The statements of the actors in the contra discourse lead to conflict discourses. The actors in this counter discourse consider that the actors who deliver pros discourses regarding postponement of elections have an interest in pursuing power to be reluctant to step down from office, maintain the status quo and continue unfinished oligarchic agendas. Discourse of conflict in postponing elections presents a real conflict among political actors who blame each other, while this conflict between political

leaders also results in people's distrust of politicians and politics itself.

This study found that the discourse on postponing elections tends to be over-reported by the media as well as exaggerated by political leaders. The media, as one of the parties, is often blamed when political cynicism increases because it is considered to be more focused on scandals and political actors than content and presenting politics as a kind of game. This political cynicism, sometimes forces political leaders to make decisions such as lax policies and avoiding pressing but controversial societal issues. This research also shows the efforts of government actors to present a neutral discourse. The demands for a neutral discourse raised were related to the President's indecisiveness in deciding the issue of postponement of the elections presented by the political elite around him. The neutral discourse put forward by the actors is aimed at avoiding conflicts caused by the issue of postponing further elections, and focusing on more pressing issues related to recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic.

References

Anggraini, T. (2022, March 2). *Menunda Pemilu dengan Dalih Ekonomi*. Media Indonesia. Menunda Pemilu dengan Dalih Ekonomi Sumber: https://mediaindonesia.com/opini/475025/menunda-pemilu-dengan-dalih-ekonomi

Barthel, M., & Moy, P. (2017). The media and the fostering of political (dis)trust. In K. Kenski & K. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication* (pp. 581–594). Oxford University Press.

bbc. (2022, March 1). *Penundaan Pemilu 2024: Seruan kalangan elit politik, apakah mungkin terealisasi? - BBC News Indonesia*. Bbc.Com. https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-60561290

Bosman, R., Loorbach, D., Frantzeskaki, N., & Pistorius, T. (2014). Discursive regime dynamics in the Dutch energy transition. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, *13*, 45–59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2014.07.003

Bramasta, D. B. (2022, March 5). *Soal Wacana Penundaan Pemilu 2024, Pengamat: Kepentingan Oligarki Halaman all - Kompas.com*. Kompas.Com. https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2022/03/05/133000365/soal-wacana-penundaan-pemilu-2024-pengamat--kepentingan-oligarki?page=all

Brugger, H., & Henry, A. D. (2021). Influence of policy discourse networks on local energy transitions. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, *39*, 141–154. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2021.03.006

Cappella, J. N., & Jamieson, K. H. (1996). News Frames, Political Cynicism, and Media Cynicism. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *546*(1), 71–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716296546001007

Citrin, J., & Stoker, L. (2018). Political Trust in a Cynical Age. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *21*(1), 49–70. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050316-092550

Dekker, H., & Meijerink, F. (2013). olitical cynicism: Conceptualization, operationalization, and explanation. *PCS–Politics, Culture and Socialization*.

Eriyanto, & Ali, D. J. (2020). Discourse Network of a Public Issue Debate: A Study on Covid-19 Cases in Indonesia. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, *36*(3), 209–227. https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2020-3603-13

Farisa, F. C. (2022, March 5). *Jokowi Dulu Bilang Isu Perpanjangan Masa Jabatan Presiden*

Tampar Mukanya, Kini Sebut Itu Bagian Demokrasi. Kompas.Com. https://nasional. kompas.com/read/2022/03/05/11102971/jokowi-dulu-bilang-isu-perpanjangan-masa-jabatan-presiden-tampar-mukanya

Ghinoi, S., & Steiner, B. (2020). The Political Debate on Climate Change in Italy: A Discourse Network Analysis. *Politics and Governance*, *8*(2), 215–228. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v8i2.2577

Hajer, M. (1995). *he politics of environmental discourse: Ecological modernization and the regulation of acid rain*. Oxford University Press.

Hetherington, M. J. (1998). The Political Relevance of Political Trust. *American Political Science Review*, *92*(4), 791–808. https://doi.org/10.2307/2586304

International IDEA. (2020, September 1). *Global overview of COVID-19: Impact on elections*. International IDEA. https://www.idea.int/news-media/multimedia-reports/global-overview-covid-19-impact-elections

James, T. S., & Alihodzic, S. (2020). When Is It Democratic to Postpone an Election? Elections During Natural Disasters, COVID-19, and Emergency Situations. *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy*, *19*(3), 344–362. https://doi.org/10.1089/elj.2020.0642

Jones-Jang, S. M., Kim, D. H., & Kenski, K. (2021). Perceptions of mis- or disinformation exposure predict political cynicism: Evidence from a two-wave survey during the 2018 US midterm elections. *New Media & Society*, *23*(10), 3105–3125. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820943878

Kern, F., & Rogge, K. S. (2018). Harnessing theories of the policy process for analysing the politics of sustainability transitions: A critical survey. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, *27*, 102–117. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2017.11.001

Khatami, M. I. (2022). Discourse Network Analysis (DNA): Digital Activism in the "Three-Term President" Debate on Twitter. *Jurnal Audience*, *5*(1), 80–94.

Leifeld, P. (2013). *Reconceptualizing Major Policy Change in the Advocacy Coalition Framework: A Discourse Network Analysis of German Pension Politics*.

Leifeld, P. (2017). Discourse Network Analysis: Policy Debates as Dynamic Networks. In J. N. Victor, A. H. Montgomery, & M. Lubell (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Networks* (1st ed., pp. 301–325). Oxford University Press.

Muller, A. (2015). Using Discourse Network Analysis to Measure Discourse Coalitions: Towards a Formal Analysis of Political Discourse. *World Political Science*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/10.1515/wps-2015-0009

Oxford English Dictionary. (2022). *Cynicism*. Oxford English Dictionary. https://www.oed.com/start?showLogin=false

Permana, R. H. (2022, April 7). *Timeline Wacana Penundaan Pemilu: Digaungkan Para Menteri, Ditutup Jokowi*. Detik.Com. https://news.detik.com/berita/d-6020931/timeline-wacana-penundaan-pemilu-digaungkan-para-menteri-ditutup-jokowi

Porter, J. (2007). Using Structural Equation Modeling to Examine the Relationship Between Political Cynicism and Right-Wing Authoritarianism. *Sociological Spectrum*, *28*(1), 36–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/02732170701675128

Schuck, A. R. T., Boomgaarden, H. G., & de Vreese, C. H. (2013). Cynics All Around? The Impact of Election News on Political Cynicism in Comparative Perspective. *Journal of Communication*, *63*(2), 287–311. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12023

Scott, J. (2013). *Social Network Analysis* (Fourth Edition). Sage.

Setiawan, B. (2022, March 17). *6 Alasan Ini Menunjukkan Penolakan Penundaan Pemilu 2024*. Tempo.Co. https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1571881/6-alasan-ini-menunjukkan-penolakan-penundaan-pemilu-2024

Shehata, A. (2014). Game frames, issue frames, and mobilization: Disentangling the effects of frame exposure and motivated news attention on political cynicism and engagement. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 26(2), 157–177. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edt034

Steinfeld, N. (2016). The F-campaign: a discourse network analysis of party leaders' campaign statements on Facebook. *Israel Affairs*, 22(3–4), 743–759. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2016.1174385

Verstaete, M., & Bambauer, D. (2017). Ecosystem of distrust. *First Amendment Law Review 16*, 129–152.