POLITICAL MUSIC IN THE 2024 INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: EXPRESSION AND COPYRIGHT CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the use of music in the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. Although the election was completed on February 15, 2024, the use of music as a campaign tool took place massively. This study tries to observe how music can influence public opinion to determine the direction of choice and how the public responds to the use of music in politics, in which musicians are seen as tending to be politically affiliated with or support certain candidates. Thus, a survey method was used to obtain these data. Through the approach of political involvement theory and supported by interviews, it can be seen how musicians have strategies for creating political songs. The results showed that some musicians chose to hide their names so that there would be no backlash among their fans, while others felt afraid that their candidate would lose and affect their careers. This study provides a comprehensive picture of the condition of music in Indonesia that is in contact with the politics of the 2024 presidential election and becomes a kind of roadmap for the use of music in the world of politics in the future.

Keywords

lyrics, political choices, presidential elections, propaganda, copyright, musical expression

INTRODUCTION

The presidential election in Indonesia is not merely a matter of practical politics. It involves many elements, including music. Music with the theme of the presidential election, especially the call to vote for a particular candidate, is widely spread on social media. He (2023) explained that music is a pretty effective means of boosting the electability of candidates, in this case, presidential candidates. Music is thus a form of agitation for the public (Turino, 2008). A real example is the creation of a song entitled *Lek Ra Kowe, Aku Ora Wae* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awOxJefU5jk), specifically intended for presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo. Not long after it was launched, the song went viral and, of course, had a significant impact on influencing public opinion and mobilizing the masses.

In line with this, the song *Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas* by Richard Jersey (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwYRwOj9RdA) is seen as capable of enhancing the emotional connection among Prabowo Subianto's supporters. *Amin Aja Dulu* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRxewHJMjHI) has become a recurring anthem during Anies Baswedan's campaign rallies. Looking further back, 2014 witnessed the creation of the song *Salam Dua Jari* by the band Slank (Putra et al., 2017), which was specifically composed to support the presidential candidate Jokowi. However, this phenomenon is not limited to grassroots support or independent musicians. The former President and Chairman of the Democratic Party's Supreme Council, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), also chose a unique way to express his support for Prabowo Subianto. In his performance, SBY delivered the song *Kamu Nggak Sendirian* by Tipe-X (Ayu, 2023a), symbolizing solidarity and cooperation within a political context. Similar cases can also be observed on a global scale.

In the United States, candidates also use music during presidential campaigns as part of their campaign identity (Blankenship & Renard, 2017). For instance, Barack Obama utilized *Yes We Can* by will.i.am as his iconic campaign song (Ford et al., 2010), while Donald Trump frequently used *M.A.G.A. Theme* and *Y.M.C.A.* by the Village People—although the latter sparked controversy due to the band's disagreement with its use (Greenberg, 2020). On the contrary, Joe Biden chose *We Take Care of Our Own* by Bruce Springsteen (Schrader, 2023) and *Can't Put It in the Hands of Fate* by Stevie Wonder (Kreps, 2020). In Europe, a similar phenomenon can be observed. A notable example is Emmanuel Macron's campaign during the 2017 French presidential election, where Macron used *Oxygène* by Jean-Michel Jarre (A. Setiawan, 2023). In India, Narendra Modi employed various patriotic and nationalist songs, such as *Modi Aane Wala Hai* (Jha, 2014). Meanwhile, Jair Bolsonaro used Brazilian rock and patriotic songs in Brazil to reflect a tough and nationalist image (Evangelista & Sá, 2021).

There are inherent conflicts behind the excitement and influence of using music in politics. When a song is used to support a particular candidate, it automatically creates opposition, leading to societal polarization (Mack & Martin, 2024). In this case, music, which ideally serves as a bridge to connect people, can instead become a divisive force. Copyright issues also emerge as a critical aspect. Has the creator permitted its use when a song is created or performed for political purposes? (Schwender, 2017). In many instances, songs are commercially utilized in campaigns without the creator's consent or compensation, violating economic rights. Copyright issues in the context of political music are not only relevant in Indonesia but also globally. For example, in the United States, artists such as Neil Young, Bruce Springsteen, Adele, Rihanna, Pharrell Williams, Tom Petty, and The Rolling Stones have protested the use of their songs in political campaigns—especially during Donald Trump's presidential campaign—when they felt that such use did not align with the message or values they intended to convey through their music (Hussein, 2024).

Cases where artists oppose using their songs in a political context highlight the need to understand and respect the decisions and copyrights of music creators (Zim, 2023). In this study, several musicians deliberately hid their names in the political music they created. In addition to preventing backlash among fans who are not politically aligned, it also has implications for the copyright of the music, which becomes anonymous so that the creator cannot claim royalties if their song is widely accessed and goes viral. Furthermore, the issue of political music copyright in Indonesia is becoming increasingly attractive to review because it brings together idealism and market demand: idealism to support a particular candidate and risks losing the market if the candidate they support loses. Therefore, many musicians are neutral or create political music while hiding their identities. However, using music in politics also opens the door for collaboration between musicians and candidates. In this way, music plays its role as political music, and there is an effort to politicize music (Goehr, 1994). Such collaborations can amplify the reach of political messages and create a stronger momentum. For example, when a well-known musician or band endorses a candidate, it can significantly influence public opinion and enhance the candidate's image in the eyes of music fans, or, conversely, it may have the opposite effect (İmik Tanyildizi, 2020).

In a society increasingly connected through social media and digital platforms, political songs spread rapidly and reach a wide audience (Mehring, 2020). This indicates that music is not merely a matter of melody but also an effective political communication tool in the digital age (Way, 2019). In politics, the messages conveyed through music are often emotional and can deeply influence public opinion (Blankenship & Renard, 2017). Although political music is becoming more prevalent in Indonesia, in-depth research on its influence and impact, particularly in presidential elections, remains scarce, if not nonexistent. Most studies tend to focus on general political campaign strategies without addressing the specific role of music (Iyanu and Oluwafemi 2022; Saraswati 2018; Ulfa, Purnomo, & Kasiwi 2020; Isrofillah 2024; D. Setiawan & Sukresna 2022). Yet, music possesses a strong emotional appeal and can reach various layers of society (Bakhtiyor, 2021). Many important aspects remain unexplored, and there is limited academic research on political music in Indonesian presidential elections. For example, how do political songs influence voter behavior? How are these songs used to shape the image of candidates? And to what extent can they mobilize the masses to support or oppose a presidential candidate?

Therefore, research on political music in the context of Indonesia's presidential elections is finding its urgency. By studying political songs during presidential campaigns, emerging trends in the use of music as a campaign tool can be identified. This analysis could include the most effective music genres, common lyrical themes, and public responses to these songs. Consequently, this research enriches academic literature and provides practical insights for politicians, musicians, and communication experts in designing more effective and ethical campaign strategies, especially regarding copyright issues, in the future. This research also holds significant novelty in both scientific and practical contexts. In addition to being one of the first comprehensive studies exploring the relationship between music and presidential election politics in Indonesia, it seeks to develop an analytical model that can be used to predict the effectiveness of political songs. This model considers various variables, such as the artist's popularity, music genre, and lyrical context, which can influence public reception and the political impact of a song.

METHOD

This study uses a content analysis method (White & Marsh, 2006). It analyzes the tendency of political music content that appears when the presidential election takes place. Three political songs affiliated with each candidate will be selected in this context. The selection is based on the number of viewers or virality. The results are three songs that can attract public attention from each candidate. The first song is *Amin Aja Dulu* [just the Anis and Muhaimin couple for now], intended for the Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar couple. The second song is *Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas* [step on the gas, Prabowo and Gibran are the most fitting couple], intended for presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto and his deputy Gibran Raka Bumi Raka. Finally, the third song is *Lek Ra Kowe Aku Ora Wae* [if not you, I better not choose], intended for presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo, paired with Mahfud MD. The song's writing order is adjusted to the candidate's serial number, Anies number 1, Prabowo number 2, and Ganjar number 3.

Interviews were then conducted with music practitioners (Jamshed, 2014), namely, musicians involved in political music. One of these musicians is Pambuko, a pop and ballad musician who has been making political music for almost 15 years in the interests of mayoral, gubernatorial, and presidential elections. Next is Iyon DD, a Banyuwangi pop music maestro who has been involved in political music for over 20 years. When the interview was conducted in September 2024, Iyon DD had just completed one of his musical works for one of the regent candidates in Banyuwangi. From Pambuko and Iyon DD, it can be learned the reasons they came into contact with political music, how they position themselves so that there is no backlash from their fans who disagree, or whether a particular strategy is carried out when making political music.

In addition to the sources of political music musicians, this study also interviewed politicians who have been intensively using music as a campaign medium. She is Ratna Cokroaminoto, a young politician from one of the major parties in Indonesia who is also a musician. From Ratna, it can be seen that many musicians have contributed their songs to the presidential candidate pairs supported by her party. Ratna is responsible for selecting them, and not all songs are approved. Many musicians asked that their names not be written as creators for many reasons. Finally, the researcher interviewed music and political observers, namely, Joko S Gombloh and Amin Abdullah. Joko S Gombloh is a music critic and observer who has been reading a lot about the phenomenon of political music in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Mohammad Amin or Amin Abdullah is a researcher who wrote the book *Music is Politics* (2021). From both of them, the map of the development of political music in Indonesia can be seen, as well as how music is used as a space for agitation and propaganda. Moreover, both of them also observed the critical position of copyright in political music.

This study also uses a survey method aimed at the public (Jansen, 2010). The survey was conducted to see the public's tendency to choose a particular presidential candidate (Gül, 2023). The survey address can be accessed at https://bit.ly/KuisionerMusik Politik2024. Several fundamental questions were asked to voters with demographic backgrounds:

- How big is the role of music in influencing your choice in the 2024 Presidential Election?
- Do you think the use of campaign music by presidential candidates effectively attracts young voters?
- Which musicians do you know who are loyal to creating music for political interests?

The answers to the survey are the basis for a more detailed explanation in the discussion and analysis results. The results will be able to be known in detail how the public views and perceives the ecosystem of the use of political music in the 2024 presidential election. More importantly, it measures the extent to which the public is mobilized to support a particular candidate through the political music they listen to.

Experimental methods were used in this study to challenge one of the musicians who created political music (Silva, 2022), Pambuko, to create a new work in the form of a song specifically for his chosen presidential candidate. This experimental study was used to see the musical tendencies created by Pambuko, including those related to emotional nuance elements and the appeal to reach his fans. After that, the researcher analyzed the tendencies of the lyrics, and how Pambuko's song could be enjoyed and influence the public's view to support one of the candidates when sung. This study did not go as far as publishing Pambuko's song to the broader public to see the public response, considering that the presidential election was over and the winner was known. The musical work was used solely for analytical purposes in this study.

The basic concept of this research refers to the theory of political involvement from Teorell (2006), which explains that every person or group can participate in political activities through various channels. This is reinforced by Glimmerveen, Ybema, & Nies (2022) that the channel can be many things, and one of them is music. In other words, the election of presidential candidates is not only an effort to attract public sympathy but also a place for the emergence of new works of art (Kirchberg et al., 2023), with the same source and idea, namely, the presidential election. Yildirim & Guler (2022) view music as one of the forms of artistic expression that has the most potential to influence public opinion in conveying political message narratives, mobilizing, and moving the hearts of voters. The 2024 presidential election is a measuring point for the extent to which political music is used and how much impact it has on raising the candidate's image in the eyes of the public.

The perspective of cultural expression, as expressed by Susanti, Susrijani, & Sudhiarsa (2020), is used to investigate the role of music in building political identity in Indonesia. This is closely related to public behavior in using cultural elements, namely, art [music], in determining the direction of their partisanship. Psychologically, music has a significant role in constructing a person's thoughts. Political music, thus, emerges because the public feels represented by their voice and partisanship through the lyrics and emotional impressions expressed (Donegani, 2004). He (2023) stated that music is a bridge that conveys musicians' voices to determine their political direction, although various risks accompany it. This study is the first to comprehensively examine the symptoms of the use of political music in the presidential election in Indonesia, and it is possible that it can be a roadmap for seeing the tendency of the use of political music in the future.

RESULT

On Wednesday, 14 February 2024, the presidential election in Indonesia was held with three competing candidates, namely, Anies Baswedan with his deputy Muhaimin Iskandar, Prabowo Subianto with Gibran Rakabumi Raka, and Ganjar Pranowo with his deputy Mahfud MD. Afifah & Efendi (2024) observed the framing carried out by digital media on the three pairs and how each candidate tried to attract public sympathy in various ways. Several months before, each candidate campaigned ahead of the voting, forming a creative team tasked with spreading the candidate's messages in multiple ways, one of which was music. Campaign songs emerged for each presidential and vice presidential candidate. Social media was flooded with musical works that tried to stir the public's hearts to vote for the candidate being campaigned for [in other words, sung]. In the end, the election was won by the Prabowo-Gibran pair with 58.83% of the vote. Anies Bawedan-Muhaimin with 24.37% and Ganjar-Mahfud with 16.8% were next in succession (Mantalean & Farisa, 2024).

Previously, this study sorted songs widely found on social media, spread, and commented on by the public. As a result, more than 200 songs were collected. Then, ten songs from each candidate were selected that were the most viewed based on monitoring on *YouTube*; here are the songs along with the number of viewers.

No	Song Title	Creator	Link	Number of Views
1.	Amin	Mothemess	https://youtu.be/2FMQCVgYrko?si=XGG1Xsh9i2XZjUyi	246.165
2.	Amin	Muhammad Amrullah	https://youtu.be/5bicWjPyVKU?si=fWPkxAjZR1U3WO2N	190.152
3.	Amin Aja Dulu (Official)	anonymous	https://youtu.be/qRxewHJMjHl?si=bxM_mZGduEtZRtHv	943.458
4.	Amin Number 1 - Pejuang Perubahan	Yana Zein	https://youtu.be/ozaf0GmpE3A?si=WCcpaM6gvHlG7N7G	14.998
5.	Aminkan	Yana Ry	https://youtu.be/8gcZCp6Ykg0?si=Dil__3WZ1J1Cfmjl	144.637
6.	Anies Presiden	Refly Harun/Ogie Cherista	https://youtu.be/MhLRFklVbao?si=_nx9_IfMkUaVv6tj	383.020
7.	Anis Baswedan Capres Jedag Jidug	Septian Ncs	https://youtu.be/tPj4-dXNwh8?si=bJRmWLmC0h5zR88I	48.788
8.	Anis Baswedan For Presiden	Refli Kande	https://youtu.be/_wNBBXmncUo?si=HZvvQfaDYdL1JYS3	755.477
9.	Kemenangan Anis-Muhaimin	Kelana Remaja	https://youtu.be/esPhLAy79rA?si=sErKyFGq1mvr6JK7	36.220
10.	Untuk Anies Dan Cak Imin Untuk Perubahan Yang Lebih Baik	anonymous	https://youtu.be/dRpxIVd9AMw?si=3bKErGV4pmopvyEK	488.350

Figure 1: Table of the top ten political songs for Anies Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar. Overview by the authors.

No	Song Title	Creator	Link	Number of Views
1.	Doa Untuk Pemimpin Negeri	Aan Story	https://youtu.be/4Ejb4HiP-eE?si=m-EUMYPcj-0c65F8	1.125.352
2.	Kami Bersamamu (Prabowo - Gibran)	Suryanto Siregar	https://youtu.be/MZT88LJTLxU?si=mfcn72KKzX1prVIk	36.503
3.	Lagu Prabowo Gibran Pro Rakyat	anonymous	https://youtu.be/xaSaDRAimyU?si=wIHgJ4bqpRkEF40o	1.129.719
4.	Laskar Abdi Negara (Prabowo)	Leonardo Ricci	https://youtu.be/Ajaxr8hsVUs?si=ZW8y1leBEipz4chk	150.702
5.	Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas (Official)	Richard Jersey	https://youtu.be/jwYRwOj9RdA?si=ajRQYXRPXmIww26K	35.921.438
6.	Prabowo Gibran	Tangnga Djara	https://youtu.be/8IXUBOxm_Zc?si=XxmXfcZnhdPzbget	97.359
7.	Prabowo Gibran – Pemersatu Bangsa	Dudy Justice	https://youtu.be/PJMjWE3FKYs?si=OdbBh2KJiLotwLDW	13.786
8.	Prabowo Gibran Maju Satu Putaran	anonymous	https://youtu.be/MBoPjz1cDsg?si=F5-8nf9DT0hM47zI	248.221
9.	Prabowo Gibran Memang Istimewa	anonymous	https://youtu.be/RBkN9I9RUpA?si=pg6KWyrKJNwsgCaq	1.533.365
10.	Prabowo Gibran Pasti Menang	Buy Akur/Ceceng Roman	https://youtu.be/qBc0BwDaTto?si=9YW8LuurFxYwxxhg	1.442.095

Figure 2: Table of the top ten political songs for Prabowo-Gibran. Overview by the authors.

No	Song Title	Creator	Link	Number of Views
1.	Bantenge Metu Kandang	Yonanda Frisna Damara	https://youtu.be/f2K8GM6xfck?si=2uK9RW1Egm_vybWo	308.587
2.	Bersama Ganjar Mahfud	Fery Hudaya	https://youtu.be/A3fCKyXY1jg?si=GqGqYvZzMBxcnM0L	210.024
3.	Ganjar Mahfud Untuk Indonesia	Sigap	https://youtu.be/CML7biIk9e0?si=CpIgZVTa4rKjPwkO	84.154
4.	Gue Ganjar	Brando Susanto	https://youtu.be/RzWWGar9oGw?si=qJ9GavJYR3t5Syp3	176.316
5.	Lek Ra Kowe Ora Wae	Kang Seger / Mr Ajur	https://youtu.be/awOxJefU5jk?si=_6w0z0zXlVmbRBtD	621.241
6.	Presiden Pilihan Kita	Fadil & Djion	https://youtu.be/VUVVYuw7ddo?si=vPl_ITtulJSfcwps	22.278
7.	Salam M3tal (Official)	Bimbim Slank	https://youtu.be/I8qaf-D1p5k?si=vXx8IgT2kuL15MiD	479.464
8.	Salam Satu Suara	Dinar Gumilang	https://youtu.be/lpIrEh-V75w?si=DV38qm3T9iG3DcV8	48.017
9.	Suara Rakyat Suara Tuhan	Marijon Damanik	https://youtu.be/jQPb2yn3TMY?si=YufTBKrsEDjs4VxR	63.000
10.	Tas Tes Ala Ganjar Mahfud	Bening Ayu	https://youtu.be/LhGEk_9jnT8?si=qi4FAUJhANeZ90E-	245.730

Figure 3: Table of the top ten political songs for Ganjar-Mahfud. Overview by the authors.

Based on the details of Figures 1–3, it can be seen that the viral campaign songs from each candidate are *Amin Aja Dulu* for Anies Baswedan, *Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas* for Prabowo, and *Lek Ra Kowe Ora* Wae for Ganjar Pranowo. Through YouTube, it is known that these songs are the most played and talked about among similar campaign songs from each candidate. The data in Figures 1–3 were taken one week before the presidential election, precisely on February 7, 2024, at 19.45 WIB. Researchers observed the number of viewers who accessed each candidate's campaign songs. The results show that *Lek Ra Kowe Aku Ora Wae* was watched 621,241 times, while *Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas* recorded a much higher number with 35,921,438 views. The song *Amin Aja Dulu* attracted attention with 943,458 views.

Thus, the song *Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas* emerged as the most viewed, followed by *Amin Aja Dulu*, and lastly, *Lek Ra Kowe Aku Ora Wae*. These results align with the rankings of each candidate's [winning] vote shares in the 2024 presidential election. Given this correlation, the basic assumption is that access to music can serve as a benchmark for gauging public participation. A high number of viewers can be interpreted as an indication of public interest and support for a presidential candidate. Music plays a crucial role in shaping the image and attracting voters' attention, where a song's popularity can reflect the strength of public support for a candidate (Abubakar Siddique & Sidal, 2022).

In the context of the 2024 Presidential Election, viral campaign music demonstrates that the success of these songs is closely tied to their ability to communicate political messages effectively and emotionally. The song *Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas*, for example, not only highlighted the Prabowo-Gibran candidate pair but also succeeded in creating a solid and memorable identity among the public. This song was performed in a rap or hip-hop rhythm with a fast, energetic tempo and lyrics that were easy to understand. Additionally, a specific dance movement was created for this song, which the other two candidates' songs did not have. This further enhanced the song's appeal and the public's engagement in the campaign to support the related candidate. On the contrary, the role of social media as a primary distribution platform was equally important (Dimitrova & Matthes, 2018). The dissemination of campaign song content through social media expanded its reach and increased interaction with voters (Quevedo-Redondo et al., 2023). Social media algorithms that favor viral content facilitate rapid dissemination (Chalke & Mishra, 2023), enabling political messages to reach a broader audience quickly. As political music observer Joko S Gombloh stated (personal communication, August 4, 2024), campaign strategies through music, when packaged and distributed effectively, can significantly impact election outcomes.

Hermawan and Latief Najmuddin (2024) explain that Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka, as presidential and vice-presidential candidates, were the most active in disseminating their campaign videos through social media, especially *TikTok*. They utilized this platform intensively to reach young voters and active social media users. Their campaign videos, including campaign music, successfully captured the attention and participation of a large audience. As a result of this activity, social media users became highly familiar with the Prabowo-Gibran campaign. Through *TikTok*, they created an emotional connection with the audience using catchy and relevant campaign music (Wiratno & Rozi, 2024). This familiarity made their campaign messages more memorable and fostered a sense of closeness with the candidates they supported. The effective use of social media in disseminating campaign music underscores the importance of digital platforms in modern political strategies (Wen, 2023), where the speed of information dissemination and the ability to reach a broad audience in a short time are key to gaining voter support (Fujiwara et al., 2024).

This study also conducted a public survey through the link (https://bit.ly/Kuisioner MusikPolitik2024) on July 25, 2024. Several questions were posed in the survey, including: 'How significant is the role of music in influencing your choice in the 2024 Presidential Election?' Of the 500 respondents who completed the questionnaire, 32% (160 people) answered very significant, 20% (100 people) answered significant, 17% (85 people) answered moderately significant, and 16% (80 people) answered less significant. The remaining 15% (75 people) were supposedly not influenced at all. These results indicate that music, primarily when disseminated systematically through social media, can influence public perception and political choices, particularly among young voters and active social media users.

Additionally, the survey asked, 'Do you think the use of campaign music by presidential candidates is effective in attracting young voters?' The survey results showed that most respondents, 58% (290 people), found campaign music very effective in attracting young voters, while 20% (100 people) considered it effective. 10% (50 people) of respondents felt that campaign music was moderately effective, 5% (25 people) considered it less effective, and only 7% (35 people) believed that campaign music was not effective at all. These findings suggest that using music in political campaigns has strong appeal and high relevance among young voters, who are likelier to engage with music-based content shared on social media.
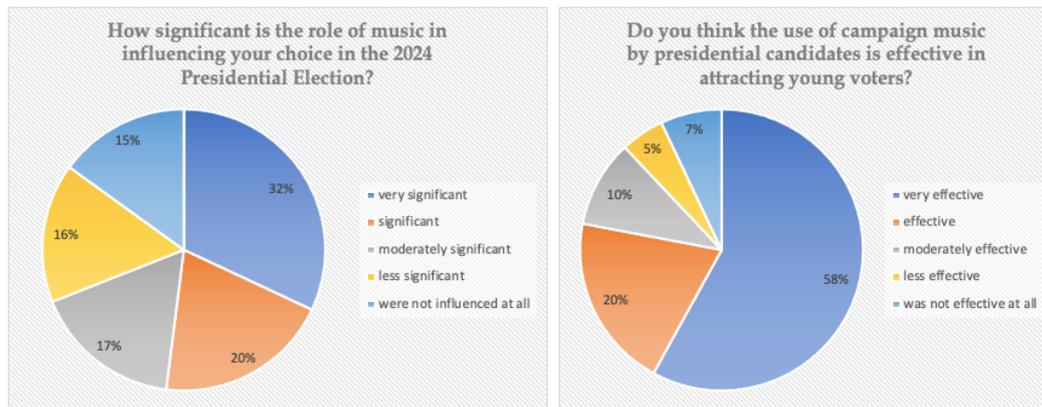
Figure 4: Survey results conducted with the public from July 25, 2024, to August 1, 2024. Depictions by courtesy of the public designers.

Ayu (2023b) explains, supported by data from the Indonesian General Election Commission—*Komisi Pemilihan Umum* [KPU]—that over 50% of voters in the 2024 presidential election are dominated by young people. With the increasing influence of young voters, music-based campaign strategies have demonstrated their effectiveness in capturing the attention of this demographic (Hallam, 2010). Radovanović (2022) explained that almost all young voters are very dependent on content or anything that has the potential to go viral on social media, including political music. This study reveals that Prabowo-Gibran's campaign song *Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas* was the most viewed, accessed, shared, and commented on. The song dominated social media users, especially on the *TikTok* and Instagram platforms.

Joko S Gombloh believes that the virality of the song in the 2024 presidential election is due to the social media algorithm factor. The algorithm regulates how content is recommended based on the interests of users and what they have previously watched or seen. In other words, as stated by Anderson et al.(2020), social media algorithms work based on interactions built by users in the digital realm, from which tendencies and even the direction of public support for specific presidential candidates can be read. This is further strengthened by a filter bubble that filters or limits further interaction of social media users with content that is not in the same breath or does not match previous interaction recommendations (Chitra & Musco, 2020). Therefore, the song *Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas* has succeeded in becoming election music that is not only the most viewed but also the most commented on and shared content. Sharing music will form a new filter bubble, listened to by people who have the same frequency of friendship on social media, and so on. The incident was like a snowball, which initially rolled small but gradually grew bigger and bigger. In the end, tens of millions of users accessed the song *Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas*. This is in contrast to the two songs for other presidential candidate pairs.

Moreover, according to Cinelli et al. (2021), this is even more complete when there is a social media echo chamber, where when someone likes a specific content, they are not recommended to see content that is not in line or not on the same frequency. Thus, the most watched music has the potential to determine the direction of public support for a particular candidate. When users are continuously exposed to content that aligns with their political views or choices, they will likely feel more confident in their decisions and disregard opposing information. In this context, campaign songs that successfully attract attention and are widely shared serve as tools to reinforce political identity and create

communities around presidential candidates. In other words, the song *Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas* not only becomes popular but also symbolizes solidarity among its supporters, encouraging them to support the campaign through social media actively. This phenomenon illustrates how music functions as a tool for propaganda or political communication (Okoro, 2020) and strengthens social networks and support for candidates in an increasingly fragmented digital era (Ackermann & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2022)

MUSICIANS WITH COURAGE

In the context of the Indonesian presidential election, the support of musicians for specific candidates often garners public attention. One notable example is Slank, a legendary Indonesian music group that boldly supported Joko Widodo (Jokowi) as a presidential candidate in 2014 (Hayat & Hasrullah, 2016). This support was not merely a statement but was realized through a grand concert titled *Salam Dua Jari* on July 5, 2024, in Jakarta (Putra et al., 2017). In this concert, Slank encouraged their fans (known as Slankers) to support Jokowi actively. The event became a significant moment, energizing political enthusiasm, especially among the younger generation, who are devoted listeners of Slank's music (Rully et al., 2023). Slank's support for Jokowi in 2014 exemplifies the power of music as a tool for mobilizing public opinion.

Figure 5: Jokowi stood delivering a speech at the Salam Dua Jari concert initiated by the band Slank in Jakarta, 2014. Depiction by courtesy of the public designers. (https://asset-2.tstatic.net/tribunnews/foto/images/preview/20140705_200141_joko-widodo-di-konser-salam-2-jari.jpg)

On the contrary, musician Ahmad Dhani, a member of the group Dewa 19, also took a bold step by supporting Prabowo Subianto in the 2014 presidential election (Hayat & Hasrullah, 2016). Ahmad Dhani used the music stage to voice his opinions and introduce Prabowo's vision to the public. Through song lyrics and concert performances, Dhani expressed his support and encouraged his fans to become familiar with Prabowo and his programs. This support added a dynamic element to the political climate of the time, where various societal elements, including musicians, sought to engage actively.

Through concerts, musicians create spaces for fans to discuss, share views, and increase their engagement in the electoral process (Behr, 2022). This makes music an integral part of political campaigns that rely on emotional appeal and social connection. However, the support given by musicians also carries risks. According to Amin Abdullah (personal communication, August 14, 2024), author of the book *Music Is Politics* (*Musik Itu Politik* [2021]), when musicians take political stances, they must be prepared to face backlash from fans who may disagree with their political choices. Slank and Dewa 19, for example, have experienced varied reactions from the public. For some fans, a musician's support for a particular candidate can strengthen their connection with their favourite band. In contrast, for others, it becomes a reason to distance themselves from the music they once loved. Musicians' support in presidential elections is about whom they choose and how they use their influence to encourage political engagement among the public (Street et al., 2008).

Yons DD (personal communication, September 4, 2024), a pop music maestro in Banyuwangi, said that for decades, he has been creating political music but has never listed his name as the music creator. This was done because he knew that the political choices of his music fans were diverse. He had an experience when he was invited to perform on the stage of a particular candidate. Fans who did not have the same political choice often criticized him, and some even came to his house to protest. When researchers visited his home in Banyuwangi, Yons DD had just completed political music work for a regent candidate in his city. Next, he submitted the job to the customer and changed the creator's name to someone else's. The name of the other person in question was a particular figure who was close to the regent candidate. As a result, when the candidate won the election, the figure received a specific position or treatment. The awareness that is creating political music can cause division among his fans causes musicians like Yons DD not to think too far regarding copyright mechanisms when his music is widely sung and accessed by the public on social media. Yons DD allowed this research to include the results of his political music work, and the music can be accessed at the link (https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=pKQuq0Mm20U).

Pambuko (personal communication, August 1, 2024), a renowned ballad musician with extensive experience in creating political music, highlights the dynamics musicians face when they openly support a presidential candidate. Pambuko observes that while public support from musicians can enhance political awareness and voter mobilization, it also comes with significant risks. Musicians who support a particular candidate openly must be prepared to face both positive and negative consequences depending on the election outcome. When a candidate supported by a musician wins, there is potential for receiving benefits from the government. For example, Slank member Abdee was appointed as a commissioner of a state-owned enterprise after Jokowi's election (Idris, 2021). This illustrates how political support can open new opportunities for musicians, such as public positions or government projects. Their involvement in politics brings financial advantages and enhances their public image as individuals contributing to governance.

Figure 6: The appointment of Abdee as a commissioner of an Indonesian state-owned enterprise has garnered widespread public attention. The image above is a headline from one of the media outlets. Depiction by courtesy of the public designers (https://infografis.okezone.com/detail/772461/abdee-slank-jabat-komisaris-telkom)

However, musicians supporting a losing presidential candidate often face more severe consequences. Ahmad Dhani serves as a notable example. After expressing his support for Prabowo Subianto, Dhani encountered various legal issues that led to his imprisonment. Although the issues he faced were not always directly related to his musical activities, his position as a supporter of an opposing presidential

candidate made him highly vulnerable to politicization (Banjarnahor, 2019). This illustrates how political support does not always lead to positive outcomes for musicians and can even jeopardize their freedom. This is also a serious consideration for many musicians contemplating involvement in politics.

Figure 7: The cover of a newspaper reporting the detention of Ahmad Dhani, a famous musician. (https://www.tagar.id/Asset/uploads/799112-ahmad-dhani.jpeg, depiction by courtesy of the public designers.)

Meanwhile, Ratna Cokroaminoto (personal communication, August 4, 2024), a musician and politician, emphasizes that the risks faced by musicians in politics often serve as a deterrent for them to take a stance. Musicians supporting an unsuccessful presidential candidate will likely encounter difficulties securing performance permits. The ruling government may use its power to hinder musicians' access to the stage through stringent licensing or unexplained delays (Wallach, 2005). Thus, these events illustrate how the political and musical worlds are often interconnected (Goehr, 1994), significantly impacting musicians' careers.

Musicians who support specific candidates may also experience a decline in their fan base (further in-depth research is needed on this matter). Some fans feel alienated when their favorite musicians take political stances that conflict with their own views (Pedelty & Keefe, 2010). This creates a dilemma for many musicians who wish to express their opinions while maintaining a positive relationship with their fans. In this context, a musician's support for a presidential candidate is not merely a personal choice but also a strategic decision that can impact their career. On the one hand, they have the opportunity to contribute to social and political change; on the other hand, they must be prepared to face risks that may affect their career.

In a survey conducted for this research, Slank and Ahmad Dhani ranked highest in the category 'Which musicians do you know are involved in the 2024 presidential campaign?' Slank received 34%, while Ahmad Dhani received 28%. In the 2024 presidential election, Slank supported the pair Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD, while Ahmad Dhani remained loyal to Prabowo Subianto, who was running with Gibran Rakabuming Raka. The Prabowo–Gibran pair was viewed as a continuation of Jokowi's administration (Ubaidillah, 2023), and due to supporting the Prabowo–Gibran pair, which aligned with the government, Abdee Negara, the guitarist of Slank, decided to resign from his position as a commissioner of a state-owned enterprise (Uly & Sukmana, 2024). This decision highlights the

direct impact of musicians' political involvement on their careers outside the music industry, demonstrating the real risks they face when taking an explicit political stance.

Thus, few musicians or music groups, like Slank and Ahmad Dhani, take the bold step of openly showing political support. Some musicians and music groups interviewed in this study chose to remain neutral or not to express political support openly. This choice ensures that their music careers continue without political controversies. Maintaining good relationships with fans with diverse political views is a top priority for some musicians. The supporters of their passionate fans support the existence of musicians, and for many musicians, deciding to still be in political music by supporting a particular candidate is quite risky. Given that not all fans have the same political direction. Thus, in this context, most musicians take a neutral stance to maintain a good relationship with their fans from various backgrounds.

This is also evident in their marketing and publicity. More neutral musicians only discuss their work and performances but avoid political opinions. Artists in this scenario tend to hold concerts for music and entertainment without adding political messages to the concerts. In this way, they do not risk adverse reactions from fans in response to political opinions that may conflict with their fans (Obiegbu et al., 2024). By not taking sides with any candidate or political party, they quickly perform at various events that the government or individuals may hold. On the contrary, neutrality also brings many problems. Musicians who do not express political opinions are sometimes seen as not brave enough or not caring about whatever is happening in society or politics. Neutrality in a polarized society can turn into indifference. Therefore, many musicians try to balance their careers and stay relevant to fans who want to be involved in important issues.

COPYRIGHT CHALLENGES

The political song phenomenon in Indonesia often leaves several issues, one of which is copyright. From this study, it is common to use many songs within the political campaign process, including those involving the presidential election, without crediting the creators. The practice of outright purchasing political music is shared, meaning that musicians sell their works once without receiving royalties or long-term benefits from the ongoing use of the songs (Ratnawati, 2019). While outright purchase provides immediate financial gain for musicians, they forfeit the rights to future recognition and potential earnings. According to Amin Abdullah (personal communication, August 14, 2024), this situation reflects the weak bargaining position of musicians in the political music industry.

On the contrary, in political music collaboration contracts, the desire not to credit the creator often becomes a requirement frequently requested by the musicians themselves. Many musicians conceal their identity as creators due to the potential negative impact it might have on their fan base. By avoiding the publication of their names, they hope to maintain neutrality and prevent polarization among supporters with differing political preferences. This stance reflects musicians' concerns about the long-term consequences of their involvement in politics, both professionally and personally.

Pambuko (personal communication, August 1, 2024) underscores the importance of maintaining idealism in creative work. Despite frequently receiving offers to compose campaign songs, Pambuko prefers not to associate his name with such works. For him, direct involvement in politics could undermine the reputation and integrity he has established with the public. He believes that distancing oneself from specific political identities is a prudent step to protect his artistic work and values. Pambuko accepts offers to create political music solely for financial considerations. Many musicians feel compelled to compromise their idealism to meet their livelihood needs in an economically unstable environment. He acknowledges that while music has the power to convey messages, the practical need to earn a living often takes precedence. This compels him to make pragmatic decisions to engage in projects that may not fully align with his values.

The event appears contradictory because, despite Pambuko's emphasis on maintaining idealism, he still engages in the political realm for financial reasons. This contradiction reflects the dilemma many musicians face in today's industry, where the demands to adapt to economic realities often conflict with the artistic principles they uphold. Ratna Cokroaminoto (personal communication, August 4, 2024) adds that, in many cases, musicians find themselves in situations where deciding to create

political music becomes a difficult choice between preserving artistic integrity and meeting financial needs.

Nevertheless, musicians also create music for political campaigns while choosing not to credit their names or request royalties. This 'nameless' music is often a strategic decision to distance themselves from political identification that might provoke varied public reactions. In this way, they can appeal to audiences without causing controversy that would most likely harm their reputation. Many of these artists post their work through social networking sites independent of their own. That way, the public can still enjoy their music without directly linking them with political stances. This method forms a sort of 'anonymity' for them to participate in campaigns and not take advantage of fans or their reputation.

Ratna Cokroaminoto (personal communication, August 4, 2024), who has been involved in music and politics for more than ten years, regularly receives submissions of special political music whose origins are usually unclear to her, including for the 2024 presidential election. Suddenly, these works appear without any indication of credibility. Thus, whether the song reflects the personal inspiration of its creator is unknown. The complexity of the political music ecosystem in Indonesia can be seen from the many works that do not have a clear identity, adding to the challenges faced by stakeholders in assessing the quality and validity of copyright. Of the seven musicians and five bands interviewed in this study, they circulated their anonymous musical works in the hope that the political message they were trying to sing would reach a wider audience without knowing that the music was their work. This reflects the condition of musicians in the Indonesian political music landscape, who negotiate between idealism and pragmatism. Business and reputation considerations often hamper a desire to participate in social or political change.

Anonymous music is generally composed in styles that musicians do not typically perform. Musicians will adopt different musical strategies and, in turn, seek music that is out of their comfort zone. The music is anonymized, so the public does not know who the composer or arranger is. In this way, musicians can innovate without fear of their audience and backlash about political connotations. Sometimes, they take other works as a foundation and compose genres and texts accordingly (Brown, 2008). However, anonymity means that through this, musicians sell the rights to their political music; in this way, they will never be able to claim recognition or royalties for these works, which may be a substantial financial loss. This has successfully delivered the intended political messages, but the consequences of such a move are relatively intricate. According to Dy (2022), this becomes even more complicated because, in political music, the uncertainty of copyright and recognition adds difficulties for musicians between their artistic contribution and material gain.

EXPERIMENTATION

This research challenges Pambuko, who has been in the world of political music for over 15 years, including in the context of presidential elections, and those years made him understand the dynamic political environment and shaped his artistic approach to the market's wants or needs. However, in the intervening period, with all the copyright issues and usages of music without giving credit to him, he felt compelled to reflect upon his creative process and the impact of his works.

This study gave Pambuko complete freedom to determine the genre of music he wanted to produce. Without genre restrictions, he had ample space to experiment and find the sound that best suited the message he sought to convey. This allowed him to express his ideas more personally and deeply so that the music produced reflected his personal views and feelings about the current political situation. Apart from the kind of music, Pambuko was also left free to choose the person to whom the song would be addressed. Total authority was accorded to him to decide on which presidential candidate he felt his musical work deserved to support. This decision was made from Pambuko's point of view so his songs might bear moral and political weight in concert with the precepts he held so dear.

However, given the autonomy to do with his song as he liked, Pambuko chose not to share the music he produced beyond this research. He preferred the music to remain in the research confines and not be included in a publicity campaign for a large audience. This decision was compelled by the need to retain control of his art and what he was trying to depict concerning the message, while at the same time preventing exposure so as not to stir up the public (or fans) into dangerous reactions. Pambuko

also granted full permission to the research team to use the song exclusively within the context of this study. This means the song will become an integral part of the study, demonstrating how political music can function within a specific context without engaging in broader campaign dynamics. In doing so, Pambuko ensures that his contribution remains within the boundaries he considers safe and aligned with his values.

The song performed by Pambuko, titled *Kiprah Prabowo*, can be accessed at the following link (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okhRh8FRnro). The lyrics are as follows:

Hei mari-mari	[Hey, come on, come on]
Hei berdemokrasi	[Hey, let's practice democracy]
Memilih wakil rakyat	[Choosing a representative]
Miliki jiwa sehat	[With a healthy spirit]
Hei mari-mari	[Hey, come on, come on]
Hei mendekat ke sini	[Hey, come closer here]
Sudah teruji kiprahnya	[His track record is proven]
Prabowo namanya	[Prabowo is his name]
Wakil rakyat yang merakyat	[A representative who is close to the people]
Wakil rakyat jalankan amanat	[A representative who fulfills the mandate]
Mari kita menangkan	[Let's win]
Prabowo Presidennya	[Prabowo as President]

Figure 8: Lyrics of the song entitled Kiprah Prabowo created by Pambuko. Depiction by courtesy of the public designers.

The song highlights Prabowo's figure as a presidential candidate. Pambuko chose to use instruments such as guitar, violin, drums, keyboard, and bass guitar in its musical composition. The choice of the ballad genre reflects a desire to convey the message with a more reflective tone, aiming to touch the listeners' emotions and build a personal connection with the endorsed candidate. An analysis of the lyrics of *Kiprah Prabowo* reveals Pambuko's effort to position Prabowo as a figure whose political track record is 'proven.' Phrases like 'Hei mari-mari, Hei berdemokrasi' invite listeners to actively participate in the democratic process while embedding the idea that voting for Prabowo is a rational and healthy choice. The lyrics appear to be designed to inspire political participation, with a clear focus on a single figure, Prabowo.

In the verse shown ahove, Pambuko emphasizes Prabowo's qualities as 'Wakil rakyat yang merakyat' (a representative close to the people) and 'jalankan amanat' (fulfills the mandate). These phrases highlight two key aspects: Prabowo's connection with the people and his integrity in carrying out political responsibilities. The words 'merakyat' and 'amanat' are chosen to emphasize that Prabowo not only has political experience but also maintains a close and relevant relationship with the needs of the general public. However, from a critical perspective, these lyrics can also be seen as a form of glorification that overlooks the diversity of opinions regarding Prabowo. The overwhelmingly positive lyrics, without any critique or reflection on the controversies or challenges Prabowo has faced, suggest that the song functions more as a propaganda tool than as an invitation for listeners to think critically. The lyrics of *Mari kita menangkan, Prabowo Presidennya* (Let's win, Prabowo as President) directly urge listeners to vote for Prabowo, reinforcing the song's primary purpose as a political campaign tool. While the lyrics are designed to influence the audience emotionally, their effect depends on the public's reception. This doubtless will make the listeners inclined toward Prabowo, closer to this song, while the opposite side would consider this song indoctrination.

CONCLUSION

This conclusion profiles musicians' strategic roles in political campaigns in Indonesia, especially during presidential elections. The support of the musicians for some presidential candidates shows how music could act as a tool of mass mobilization. Thus, musicians may constitute political opinion in their fans and spaces of public discussion through their popularity and influence. This way, music also crosses the level of mere entertainment into critical socio-political dimensions. One of the key findings of the research is that musicians' involvement in politics essentially endows strategic advantages on the politicians they support. The contribution of musicians increases the visibility of the

candidates and helps the candidates establish effective relationships with the electorate through music. For instance, the 2014 'Salam Dua Jari' by Slank successfully drew public attention to itself and that of the media to boost support for Jokowi. Music allows politicians to connect with the electorate actually and impactfully and have their voice reached, especially by the younger generation.

It also reflects the darker side of musicians involved in politics: supporters of losing candidates are often subjected to legal and social persecution. An example is Ahmad Dhani's support for Prabowo Subianto in 2014, and in 2019, he was embroiled in a series of legal issues that were believed to have been influenced by his position as a supporter of the opposing presidential candidate. This reveals real political risks for musicians engaging in campaigns, and such risks sometimes spill into areas of their lives well beyond the music. Another significant finding is the decision of some musicians to remain neutral in politics. While the study finds that political support gives strategic advantages, many musicians do not choose to make their political opinions public. It's a way to avoid backlash from different political views of fans or just to keep the careers stable. The decision to remain neutral would suggest that musicians understand the risks of tagging along with political involvement, hence opting only for their music as one way to keep good relations with diverse fans.

This paper further discusses the social implications of the involvement of musicians in politics. Political support can estrange their fans, which leads to the shrinkage of one's fan base if the political view of the musician does not correlate with the greater majority of their fans. Conversely, political support bolsters and solidifies a musician–fan relationship if their political views are constant. Thus, political support by musicians has complex effects, which can be both positive and negative depending on the context given for any social and political situation. Accordingly, the current research identifies the fact that musicians' engagement with politics is a two-edged sword; on the one hand, musical artists' political support has the capacity to give a sufficient boost to political campaigns and help raise the political participation of the common public. On the other hand, it creates major risks for the careers of musicians, in view of backlash from the fans, copyright and legal consequences, and pressure from opposing parties. These find important connotations in the dynamics that music and politics share in Indonesia and in the challenges that musicians face in deciding to take an open political stand.

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