

## The Effort of the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu RI) in Preventing Black Campaign on Digital Media During the 2019 Election

Hilda Indah Bahirah<sup>1</sup>, Anwar Ilmar<sup>2</sup>, Restu Rahmawati<sup>3</sup>, Putrawan Yuliandri<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Political Science, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Department of Communication Science, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta, Indonesia

e-mail: [hildaib@upnvj.ac.id](mailto:hildaib@upnvj.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>; [anwar.ilmар@upnvj.ac.id](mailto:anwar.ilmар@upnvj.ac.id)<sup>2\*</sup>; [restu.rahmawati@upnvj.ac.id](mailto:restu.rahmawati@upnvj.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>;

[putrawanyuliandri@upnvj.ac.id](mailto:putrawanyuliandri@upnvj.ac.id)<sup>4</sup>

\*Corresponding author

### ABSTRACT :

This research is motivated by the black campaign phenomenon that has occurred since the 2014 election and the 2017 DKI regional election, and has become increasingly widespread in the 2019 election. Bawaslu is a state institution that has the duty to monitoring the implementation of the campaign which is often filled with black campaign practices. In its implementation, Bawaslu often has difficulty to prevent the spread of black campaigns on social media. This research aims to see what makes Bawaslu unable to be optimal in preventing black campaigns on social media. This research uses a qualitative approach and the type of research used is descriptive-analytical. The concepts used are participatory supervision strategies and Michel Foucault's theory of power and knowledge. This research uses data collection techniques through interviews and literature studies in the form of books, news, and previous research journals that are relevant to this research. The results of the research show that there are determinant factors that make Bawaslu not optimal in preventing and supervising black campaigns on social media, such as the weak participatory supervision strategies made by Bawaslu. There is a power relationship that occurs between Bawaslu, social media and hoax. Because the presence and spread of hoax on social media is still stronger than the prevention efforts carried out by Bawaslu. This is because social media platforms have community standards which limit the movement and supervision of Bawaslu in dealing with hoax issues.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 21 December 2024

Revised: 9 January 2024

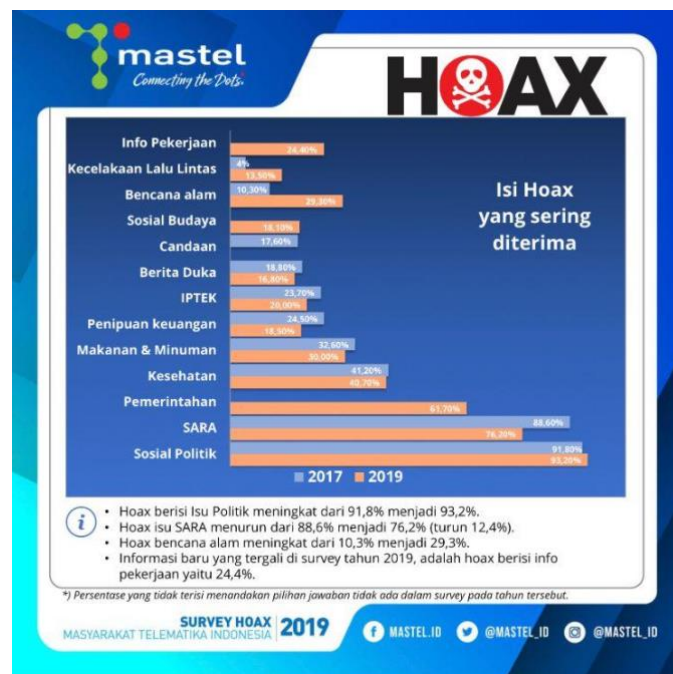
Accepted: 31 January 2024

### KEYWORDS

hoax, participatory supervision strategies, power relations, social media

## INTRODUCTION

General Election, as a platform for democratic celebrations that should ideally be conducted directly, openly, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly, are often marred by the proliferation of campaigning that denigrates political opponents, commonly known as "black campaign". The phenomenon of black campaign on social media has been a trend since the 2014 General Elections and the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial Election. The most prevalent form of black campaign involves the spread of false news or hoaxes. Hoaxes have been on the rise from one election to another. According to a survey by the Mastel (Masyarakat Telematika), during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, 91.8% of hoaxes had a political content. In the 2019 general elections, the percentage of politically charged hoaxes increased by 1,4% compared to the 2017 gubernatorial election, reaching 93,2% (Mastel Living Enabler, 2019). This situation illustrates that the phenomenon of black campaign on social media has become rampant during election periods.



Source : (Mastel Living Enabler, 2019)

**Figure 1 The Results of the 2019 Hoax Survey**

In the 2019 general elections, the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) made efforts to prevent black campaign on social media by optimizing the use of social media accounts and information technology applications. One of these efforts included creating various videos posted on the Instagram account @Bawasluri regarding the anti hoax and anti hate speech campaigns, which were conducted in collaboration with the Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society (Mafindo) and the General Election Commission (KPU). Bawaslu also developed infographics to encourage individuals to be more mindful in using social media and to report content containing hoaxes and hate speech (Idrus, 2019).



Source : (Instagram @BawasluRI, 2019)

**Figure 2 Videos and Infographics in Black Campaign Prevention**

Bawaslu also collaborated with various stakeholders on social media, including partnerships with the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo), the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN), and various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google. Despite these collaborative efforts, the impact on reducing the prevalence of hoaxes and hate speech on social media remains insignificant. This is confirmed by the Mastel Survey data mentioned earlier, which indicates a high incidence of hoaxes (Mastel Living Enabler, 2019). This is confirmed by the data from the Mastel Living Enabler survey mentioned above, which indicates a high incidence of hoaxes (Mastel Living Enabler, 2019). One of the other issues pertains to the rules and mechanisms for taking down hoaxes on social media platforms. Bawaslu cannot directly take such actions but is limited to submitting requests to platform providers. Bawaslu received reports of alleged violations during the 2019 election campaign on social media, involving a total of 5,013 accounts. Bawaslu requested the takedown of accounts on various social media platforms, including 63 accounts on Instagram, 64 accounts on Twitter, and 66 accounts on Facebook. The outcome was the takedown of only 42 accounts across different platforms (Siregar, 2020).



Source : (Instagram @BawasluRI, 2019)

**Figure 3 Violations of the 2019 General Election Campaign on Social Media**

Efforts by Bawaslu through account and content takedowns related to black campaigns are considered suboptimal and do not address the root of the problem (Ardianto, 2022). This is suspected to be due to digital companies appearing unwilling and not serious about removing posts that could cause concerns in society, especially during the democratic process (Purnawan, 2022). This research aims to investigate the issue of the suboptimal nature of Bawaslu's efforts in preventing black campaigns on social media. Several studies have been conducted previously, especially regarding the use of social media as a tool for black campaigns during elections, and the obstacles faced by Bawaslu in preventing them.

The misuse of social media for political purposes is often employed by certain parties to provoke and discredit their opponents through what is known as black campaign (Amilin, 2019). Black campaign is typically rampant during election contests, one of them is dissemination of false news (hoaxes). According to Maqruf (2020), the low level of digital literacy among the Indonesian population is one of the significant reasons why social media usage tends to lean towards negative activities, such as spreading hoaxes. Sari et al., (2021) observe that the widespread circulation of hoaxes on social media reflects the condition of Indonesian society which has yet to establish good control and literacy in using digital media.

The ease of use of social media is also identified as one of the contributing factors to the widespread circulation of hoaxes. This practical aspect is evident in the rapid dissemination of messages or content, where a single post on social media can quickly spread (Febriansyah & Muksin, 2020). The issue of hoax circulation and Bawaslu's prevention efforts on social media is not solely related to the low literacy of the public and the ease of using social media. For example, Wahid & Qohar (2018) argue that internal factors within Bawaslu, such as structural, substantive, and cultural factors, serve as obstacles for Bawaslu in preventing the circulation of hoaxes on social media.

Doly (2020) offers a different perspective, stating that the factors hindering Bawaslu in preventing the prevalence of black campaigns and hoaxes on social media are related to the unclear definition of black campaigns in Law No. 7 of 2017, limited human resources, inadequate tools and facilities, and the still weak cultural awareness of the community regarding the use of social media. This aligns with Sinaga's (2021) study, which emphasizes that the unclear definition of black campaigns, limited human resources, and budget constraints are also factors hindering Bawaslu. Similarly, Nasution et al., (2022) also note that Bawaslu faces limitations in terms of budget and time to gather campaign violation data. In contrast, Siregar's (2018) research attributes the prevalence of hoaxes on social media more to Bawaslu's prevention efforts in taking down accounts deemed to be in violation.

This research acknowledges that the issue extends beyond mere takedowns, as the spread of hoaxes on social media is highly pervasive. In other words, when Bawaslu attempts to propose the takedown of one account, a thousand other accounts can emerge on the same day. Bawaslu lacks the authority to directly intervene in the media, which is a key factor contributing to the suboptimal oversight by Bawaslu. This study aims to complement and enhance previous research that examined Bawaslu's efforts in preventing black campaigns on

social media during the 2019 elections and seeks to dissect the relationship between Bawaslu, social media, and hoaxes.

Strategic planning is the science of tactics and methods used to achieve desired goals (Tim Prima Pena, 2006). In the context of politics, elections are one of the activities that require relatively complex strategies. Therefore, it's essential to remember that the political aim of these strategies is to achieve the desired objectives (Arifin, 2011). One of the organizers of elections, Bawaslu, also devises a strategy to create quality and integrity in elections. Bawaslu's oversight strategy is one way to prevent violations by taking actions, steps, and various efforts. Bawaslu's efforts involve stakeholders through collaboration and participatory supervision programs, as outlined in the Regulation of the Election Supervisory Agency of the Republic of Indonesia Number 15 of 2015 regarding the Strategic Plan of the Election Supervisory Agency of the Republic of Indonesia for 2015-2019 (Bawaslu RI, 2019a).

The term "participatory supervision" was introduced by Bawaslu RI because it was considered highly appropriate as one of the efforts to strengthen the institution of oversight and election monitoring (Susanto, 2015). As an institution responsible for performing preventive, monitoring, and enforcement functions, Bawaslu can be said to play a pivotal role in ensuring the integrity of the electoral process (Bawaslu RI, 2019a). This undoubtedly requires support from various parties to carry out every oversight activity, including encouraging all segments of society and other state institutions to actively participate in overseeing various stages of the electoral process.

Bawaslu has undertaken various efforts in participatory supervision, including: (1) Establishing technology-based monitoring (Gowaslu); (2) Managing social media; (3) Election Monitoring Citizen Forums; (4) Participatory Election Monitoring Movement (GEMPAR Pemilu); (5) Saka Adhyasta Pemilu; (6) Community Service; and (7) Oversight Corner (Pojok Pengawasan). These efforts serve as complements to the oversight activities conducted by state institutions and other agencies (Nurkinan, 2018).

One of the scholars who has discussed the concept of power is Michel Foucault. Foucault's thoughts are quite distinct from those of other experts on power. According to him, power is dispersed everywhere, so it is no longer solely in the hands of the state apparatus but is possessed by every individual (Kamahi, 2017). Foucault doesn't define power as something that subjugates one thing to another, but rather, power is always in motion and omnipresent, often unbeknownst to those subject to it. In Foucault's concept, power isn't primarily concerned with who has power and who is subjected to it. Instead, it's about understanding how power operates and by what means it is exercised.

Foucault believed that power is more about strategies and the relationships between individuals, which he referred to as power relations. This means that wherever there are structures and relationships among people, there exists power. According to him, power often takes the form of the hegemony of knowledge within each individual. In simpler terms, knowledge can control everything, including an individual. Knowledge, without the imposition of binding rules or regulations, can more easily influence someone's actions and even their

perspectives. From this perspective, it can be seen that knowledge can have more power compared to coercive forms of power.

For Foucault, knowledge is a discourse whose truth is often circumscribed by a form of power. This means that knowledge as a form of power is a part of the discourse regime. Through discursive practices, it becomes evident how something is accepted as truth. Truth is not something that descends from the heavens, nor is it an abstract concept. Instead, truth here is produced because every form of power produces its own truth by leading the audience to follow the established truth. According to Foucault, power and knowledge mutually influence each other. There is no exercise of power without the formation of knowledge. Conversely, at the same time, there is no knowledge that is not related to power. In other words, there is no neutral and pure knowledge because power is always present within it (Foucault, 2017).

Based on the information above, the researcher will use Michel Foucault's approach to dissect why the media appears to be more powerful than Bawaslu in regulating the spread of hoaxes.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used is qualitative with a descriptive-analytical method. Descriptive-analytical is a method that serves to describe or provide an overview of a researched object through data or samples that have been collected as they are, without making generalizable conclusions (Sugiyono, 2019). This research was conducted from December 2022 to July 2023 at the Bawaslu RI office. The subjects in this study are four individuals: Fritz Edward Siregar, Ferdinand Eskol Tiar Sirait, Nurul Amalia, and Dedy Helsyanto.

The data collection techniques in this research involve in-depth interviews and literature study. The primary data source is derived from interviews. Secondary data sources come from books, scientific journals, theses, and various websites related to the current research. The data analysis technique in this research utilizes the Interactive Model by Miles & Huberman (1984), which is divided into three components: (1) Data reduction; (2) Data display; and (3) Conclusion drawing/verifying.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Bawaslu Efforts to Prevent Black Campaigns on Social Media

In the 2019 general elections, one of the tasks and authorities of the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) was to undertake efforts to prevent electoral violations by collaborating with other state institutions such as the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo), the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN), the National Police (Polri), and the General Election Commission (KPU). For instance, Bawaslu, together with Kominfo and KPU, attempted to monitor content on social media. Bawaslu assisted Kominfo in conducting social media patrols to clarify several hoax issues related to the 2019 general elections that had gone viral on social media. Bawaslu also collaborated with the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN) to

promote education among the public on responsible social media use (BSSN, 2019). In partnership with Cyber Polri, Bawaslu formed a specialized team tasked with identifying content on social media that could be associated with black campaigns.

Bawaslu's collaborative efforts extend not only to various state institutions but also to various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Google, and Twitter. This is particularly crucial as black campaigns in the form of hoaxes are prevalent on social media. Bawaslu partnered with Google through the creation of the "Pintar Memilih" website, aiming to provide information about the elections. They also conducted roadshows at several campuses in Indonesia to advocate for the importance of young voters' involvement in the 2019 elections and to impart knowledge related to misinformation on social media during the electoral process.

Bawaslu also established collaboration with YouTube and Twitter. With YouTube, Bawaslu conducted training on reporting content on the platform and ran YouTube ads featuring campaigns against hate speech and misinformation. In collaboration with Twitter, Bawaslu sought assistance in the removal or takedown of negative content deemed to violate electoral laws (Fernandez, 2019). Apart from Google, YouTube, and Twitter, the most intensive collaboration was forged between Bawaslu and Facebook. At that time, Facebook was one of the social media platforms where the highest number of hoax news and black campaigns were found. This argument is supported by Mafindo's data, which showed that Facebook was the most widely used social media platform for spreading hoaxes, accounting for 49.54% (Kominfo, 2019). Bawaslu's collaboration with Facebook included the implementation of the "Laju Digital" program. This program involved providing digital literacy training to Bawaslu personnel in 15 major cities/districts in Indonesia (Siregar, 2023).

Facebook also assisted Bawaslu in taking down negative content that violated electoral laws, creating Facebook Ads for anti-disinformation and anti-hate speech campaigns, and establishing a fast reporting mechanism. This means that when reporting through Bawaslu, only one step is needed to determine whether the content can be taken down or not.

Bawaslu also collaborated with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as Perludem and Mafindo. For instance, they created videos and infographics on anti-hate speech and disinformation campaigns, which were then posted on social media. Perludem and Mafindo conducted roadshows at several campuses in Indonesia to enhance the readiness of young voters for the 2019 elections in the digital era and held live seminars on misinformation/disinformation circulating on social media at that time. Mafindo also provided fact-checking training to several Bawaslu members and established a team of fact-checkers to assist in examining hoaxes related to the 2019 elections (Helsyanto, 2023). Based on these efforts, social media campaign monitoring was conducted using two methods: active monitoring by Bawaslu in collaboration with state institutions and participatory supervision by the public, including direct reporting (Bawaslu RI, 2018a).

## Participatory Supervision Strategy

The enhancement of public participation programs has been incorporated into the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN), and Bawaslu has materialized this initiative by establishing a platform called the Center for Community Participation. The manifestation of the Center for Community Participation is divided into seven forms. Firstly, there is Information Technology-Based Supervision (Gowaslu). The purpose of creating the Gowaslu application is to increase the number and accumulation of reports from the public. This application was developed to facilitate the reporting process when violations are found during elections, especially to monitor black campaigns, including on social media. Before the existence of this application, the public often encountered campaign violations, both on social media and in the real world, but lacked access or understanding of the reporting mechanisms to Bawaslu. According to Siregar, the Gowaslu application is considered a way for the public to report violations in detail. Gowaslu can also expedite follow-up actions and serve as a control tool for Bawaslu on social media (Siregar, 2023).



Source : (Play Store Gowaslu Application, 2019)

**Figure 4 Gowaslu Application Display**

The utilization of Gowaslu can be said to have not been optimal. This was acknowledged by Fritz Siregar, a commissioner of Bawaslu RI for the 2017-2022 period, through an interview on March 24, 2023, stating that the implementation of Gowaslu is still not effective in encouraging public involvement to become agents of participatory oversight (Siregar, 2023). This is also supported by information available on the Play Store that the Gowaslu application has only been downloaded by 10 thousand users. This figure is relatively small compared to the total number of registered voters in Indonesia. As a rough simulation, assuming that one Gowaslu application account is owned by one user, with the number of registered voters



remaining at 192,866,254 during the 2019 elections, the number of users utilizing Gowaslu is no more than 1%. This can also be seen from various complaints submitted by users of the application on the Play Store.



Source : (Play Store Gowaslu Application, 2019)

**Figure 5 Example of a Complaint Against the Gowaslu Application**

The Gowaslu application has also not been designed to provide political education to voters, especially regarding issues of election violations and fraud. This application only provides a platform for the public to report any suspected election violations. All voters are assumed to already understand how to determine election violations for each case or observed event, even though the reality in the field is very complex. The aforementioned weaknesses indicate that the utilization of Gowaslu is still not sufficiently effective in encouraging public involvement to become agents of participatory monitoring. Fritz also acknowledges that the Gowaslu application still has several constraints, limitations, and errors in its implementation. This is because the Gowaslu application only facilitates voters to report suspected election violations online, but there is no detailed and long-term plan on how to design the application as an instrument to bridge the interaction between Bawaslu and voters in substantive participatory monitoring (Siregar, 2023)

The second monitoring effort by Bawaslu is carried out through Social Media Management. Social media is utilized as a platform for socialization, knowledge transfer, and skill development in election monitoring from election supervisors to the public. The goal is to encourage public involvement in election monitoring and prevent violations. In the context of the 2019 elections, Bawaslu actively used various social media platforms to prevent and monitor violations, especially the spread of black campaigns. The content posted on these platforms includes photos, news, or memes about Bawaslu's activities. Other content includes videos of activities or socialization/publication, seminars on anti-hoax and hate speech campaigns, positive campaigns related to election stages, duties and authorities, monitoring activity publications, links to news on the official Bawaslu website, Bawaslu regulations, and Bawaslu's monitoring focus (Bawaslu RI, 2019b). Essentially, the social media management carried out by Bawaslu has not been significant enough to prevent the occurrence of black

campaigns on social media during the 2019 elections. This argument is also supported by Fritz Siregar's statement that Bawaslu's efforts still lag behind the rapid spread of black campaigns, compounded by the low level of social media literacy among the public. Therefore, this phenomenon remains very difficult to curb its growth and spread (Siregar, 2023).

The third participatory oversight is carried out by forming the Electoral Monitoring Citizens' Forum. This forum is established because many citizens still do not understand their rights and obligations in participating as citizens. This program is expected to foster public awareness of political processes. In the 2019 elections, this citizens' forum was initially created to enhance public participation in election monitoring. In reality, the program has not progressed as planned. The program has not been well-monitored, especially by the Provincial Bawaslu to ensure whether the citizens' forum is genuinely operational in each region according to its objectives. Fritz stated that the existence of these citizen forums has not been optimal enough in mobilizing the community to participate in participatory oversight, especially regarding the prevention and monitoring of black campaigns on social media. However, according to him, at that time the most important thing was for the public to know where they should report if they find any campaign violations, whether in the real world or on social media (Siregar, 2023).

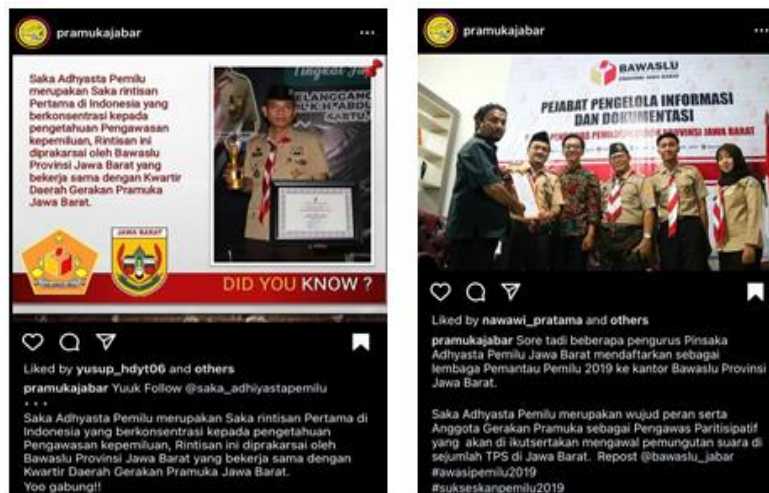
Bawaslu has also established the Participatory Election Monitoring Movement (GEMPAR Pemilu) to realize participatory oversight. This movement aims to raise public awareness about elections and increase political participation in all voter segments. The goal is to prevent election violations and create a conducive atmosphere for a safe, peaceful, orderly, and smooth election process. The target of the Participatory Election Monitoring Movement is to be carried out evenly across all provinces in Indonesia, considering that many people lack awareness to participate in participatory election monitoring.

The GEMPAR program also has weaknesses, similar to Bawaslu's previous programs. Bawaslu acknowledges that, in practice, this movement has not been carried out in-depth and comprehensively, especially in remote areas. This is because Bawaslu's focus is not only on participatory oversight but also on other matters. Bawaslu's budget of Rp. 8.3 trillion is considered insufficient to support this program, as funds also need to be allocated for employee expenses and other necessities (Antony, 2018). This argument is also supported by Fritz Siregar's statement that the budget allocated to Bawaslu in the national budget is limited, not to mention it has to be divided between staff expenses and other costs. For instance, the budget for preventing and monitoring campaigns is small, which makes the activities less effective (Siregar, 2023).

The fifth participatory oversight program is carried out through the Scout Work Unit (Saka) Adhyasta Election. This activity aims to enhance practical knowledge and skills in prevention and oversight to cultivate awareness of participation in election monitoring. The goal is to effectively strengthen cooperation between Bawaslu and the Scouts at all levels, increase public participation in election monitoring, and provide specialized election monitoring education for Scout members. The target of establishing Saka Adhyasta Election is distributed evenly up to the district/city level. During the 2019 elections, this movement was

only formed in 6 provinces and 1 district, namely Bengkulu, West Java, South Sumatra, DKI Jakarta, West Sulawesi, Jambi, and Tasikmalaya District (Bawaslu RI, 2019a). This was because in some other regions, the majority of residents and Scout groups rejected collaboration with Bawaslu. There were concerns that the Scouts would enter the political arena, and they did not want that to happen (Siregar, 2023).

In practice, participatory monitoring carried out by the Scout movement is no longer driven to prevent black campaigns but is more involved in monitoring the voting and vote counting on the election day. At that time, the West Java Scout Movement deployed a total of 1,657 members as a form of participatory monitoring in 27 districts/cities in West Java (Bawaslu RI, 2019a). Fritz acknowledged that movement only runs smoothly in West Java Province, the first province in Indonesia that focused on election monitoring knowledge. Bawaslu West Java collaborated with the West Java Regional Scout Council to carry out participatory election monitoring, and it has been accredited by Bawaslu RI as the West Java Regional Monitor (Siregar, 2023).



Source : (Instagram @Pramukajabar, 2019)

**Figure 6 Bawaslu Province West Java Collaboration with West Java Scouts**

Community Service is also considered by Bawaslu as a participatory oversight program. Community service in this context involves the university or college world participating in the electoral oversight agenda. For example, through programs such as Community Service Programs (Kuliah Kerja Nyata or KKN), internships, research, seminars/public discussions, election monitoring, and so on. These activities, in reality, have not focused on preventing and monitoring electoral violations, especially black campaigns, except for the internship program. According to Fritz, Community service activities are more about providing materials and public discussions on topics related to election monitoring. The community service program through the internship agenda also has limited significance in preventing and monitoring campaigns on social media. This is because the number of interns is relatively small, so it does not have a significant impact amid the rapid spread of news and content on various social media platforms (Siregar, 2023).

The seventh effort is the "Pojok Pengawasan" (Monitoring Corner), a separate room or a stand that is mandatory in all Bawaslu offices. The monitoring corner can be utilized as a space for community participation and expression. The presence of the monitoring corner can also serve as a center for election monitoring information. The monitoring corner aims to provide actual and accurate data and information on election monitoring (Bawaslu RI, 2019a). The establishment of monitoring corners is aimed at increasing community involvement in participatory monitoring. This is because the more people involved in election monitoring, the more potential violations can be reduced. The more potential violations can be reduced, the smaller the opportunity for violations and fraud to occur. In essence, the formation of the monitoring corner is considered a good innovation in efforts to enhance participatory oversight. In practice, challenges are still encountered in implementing participatory monitoring through the monitoring corner, such as the lack of awareness among many people to come directly to the Bawaslu office and seek more in-depth information about elections and their monitoring (Bawaslu RI, 2018b). According to Fritz, when it comes to preventing and monitoring black campaigns, especially on social media, it will certainly be difficult for most people to do so, because they are not willing to even find out about elections, let alone participate in monitoring (Siregar, 2023).

### **Analysis of Bawaslu Supervision on Social Media**

In the 2019 elections, Bawaslu made various efforts to prevent violations, particularly black campaigns on social media. The phenomenon of black campaigns remained prevalent. This was due to two determining factors that hindered Bawaslu's effectiveness: the weakness of Bawaslu's participatory oversight strategy on social media and the power relations between Bawaslu, social media, and hoaxes. Ironically, in the midst of the current strategic role of social media in shaping public political knowledge due to its involvement, connectivity, and mobilization aspects that encourage political participation (Zempi et al., 2023)

In essence, participatory oversight is created by Bawaslu as a collaborative platform between Bawaslu and the community to enhance preventive and monitoring functions. The goal is to encourage greater public involvement in overseeing the conduct of elections and to increase their awareness of the importance of preserving behaviors that can undermine the foundations of democracy, ultimately promoting quality and dignified elections. Among the seven participatory oversight measures undertaken by Bawaslu, only the utilization of Gowaslu has been relatively successful in engaging the public in participatory oversight, although Gowaslu is not primarily geared towards prevention; its nature is more reporting-oriented. In its utilization, Gowaslu also faces numerous challenges as its system often encounters issues, such as login difficulties and incomplete data for certain regions.

Similarly, the other six participatory oversight programs were not initially focused on preventing and monitoring black campaigns, especially on social media. This is because these programs were more concentrated on providing education through the establishment of forums, community movements, or the provision of a space at Bawaslu offices for the public to visit, with the aim of obtaining information about elections and oversight.

Participatory oversight programs mainly focus on disseminating information about the importance of community involvement in monitoring the conduct of elections, with the hope of raising awareness and encouraging citizens to actively safeguard Indonesia's democratic processes. Fritz Siregar, a member of Bawaslu, acknowledges that the participatory oversight programs implemented during the 2019 elections were not significantly successful in effectively engaging the public in monitoring the elections. The primary achievement for Bawaslu during this time, particularly through the Gowaslu application, was ensuring that the public knew where to report if they encountered election violations, such as black campaigns (Siregar, 2023). Upon receiving reports of alleged election violations, Bawaslu must initially report them to the relevant social media platforms to request content removal, as Bawaslu lacks the authority to directly intervene in such matters.

After the takedown request process, approval by social media platforms is not guaranteed immediately. This indirectly indicates that the presence and dissemination of hoaxes on social media are more potent compared to the preventive efforts carried out by Bawaslu. Bawaslu cannot do much to address the spread of hoax content, leading to an imbalanced power relation between Bawaslu and social media platforms. This is because social media platforms have community standards that dictate the operation of discourse on social media, including the spread of hoaxes. Community standards are rules created by social media platforms to outline what is allowed and not allowed in the use of the respective social media platform.

The existence of Community Standards significantly limits Bawaslu's ability to take action against accounts that violate these standards. This limitation is not commensurate with the rapid spread of black campaigns. Internet-based campaign dissemination tends to involve cyber operations that occur over time, with different actors, and varying durations (Suprayitno et al., 2023). This is because cyberspace has structural elements that provide actors with opportunities to operate in ways that are unconventional in conventional domains (Harknett & Smeets, 2022).

If related to Michel Foucault's theory of power and knowledge, the relationship between Bawaslu (Election Supervisory Agency) and social media platforms is clearly categorized as a power relation. This is because there are structures and relations among people. Those who possess power will determine internal rules and are not dependent on external sources. In the context of the 2019 elections, Nurul Amalia acknowledged that social media platforms were the sole entities with the power to set standards for how their platforms operate. This made it extremely challenging to prevent the spread of hoaxes. This argument is also supported by research conducted by TIFA published by the Media Regulation and Media Regulator Monitor (PR2Media) titled "Regulation of Illegal and Harmful Content on Social Media," which shows that social media platforms have not been practicing content regulation (moderation) based on the context of Indonesia. Social media platforms often perceive content that violates regulations as falling into a gray area, thus often resulting in no further action being taken (Wendratama et al., 2023).

Digital media companies are often criticized for utilizing their readers' data to distribute news or information. An example of this is the social media platform Facebook. Ross Tapsell views Facebook as a media force like never seen before. This is because Facebook not only controls the survival of media and marketing businesses but also dictates how many people worldwide receive news and information through its algorithms (Tapsell, 2019). In other words, Facebook can control the information they present to their readers through algorithms. This aligns with Foucault's theory of power, where the practice of power in society often takes the form of the hegemony of knowledge over every individual.

The knowledge Foucault refers to is discourse, and its truth is often circumscribed by a form of power. Truth doesn't emerge spontaneously as an abstract concept; rather, it is produced because it is believed to control and more effectively influence actions and perspectives, guiding individuals to adhere to the established truth. In the context of the 2019 elections, knowledge in the form of discourse, such as hoaxes, can indeed influence and shape public perceptions of information they encounter. If information is repeated, it can subconsciously lead people to think and assume that the information is true. This aligns with Foucault's theory of power, asserting that individuals often unconsciously submit to a knowledge they encounter. Ultimately, knowledge can wield more power than coercion or pressure, as seen in social media platforms having more influence than Bawaslu in controlling the spread of hoaxes, even without exerting direct pressure or oppression.

## CONCLUSION

In the 2019 elections, the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), tasked with overseeing the elections, made various efforts to prevent black campaigns and hoaxes on social media. Bawaslu's efforts were not undertaken in isolation but involved various stakeholders, including other state institutions, social media platforms, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the public. The suboptimal role of Bawaslu in preventing black campaigns on social media can be attributed to several determining factors, such as the weak participatory oversight of Bawaslu on social media and the power relations between Bawaslu, social media, and hoaxes. Researchers observe that the weakness in Bawaslu's participatory oversight is due to the fact that, among the seven programs implemented by Bawaslu, only the utilization of Gowaslu is directed towards overseeing black campaigns on social media. Gowaslu also does not fall into the category of prevention; it serves as a tool for public reporting. Gowaslu appears to facilitate voter reporting but does not provide a detailed overview of the reporting process. The other six participatory oversight programs mainly focus on educating the public on the procedures for reporting violations.

The process of takedown requests by Bawaslu does not always result in immediate approval from social media platforms. This is due to the existence of community standards on the part of the platforms, which hinders the effectiveness of Bawaslu's oversight. The full authority of social media platforms in setting standard rules, such as flagging and taking down accounts, becomes a constraint. This authority should ideally be used to quickly respond to black campaigns and the spread of hoaxes. Ironically, digital media companies tend to misuse

this power, using reader data to convey pre-set messages through algorithms. This is where the hegemony of knowledge through the spread of hoaxes occurs, often making people unwittingly accept information without thorough validation. This indicates that social media platforms have greater power in regulating the spread of hoaxes compared to Bawaslu, even without specific pressure or suppression.

There is a need for new regulations that can at least encourage transparency and accountability for social media platforms in content regulation, such as flagging and content or account removal. Content regulation or control can still be left to social media platforms, with the condition that the government can regulate and oversee these practices. Social media platforms must be prepared to be fined if they fail to regulate the rapid spread of hoax content. The regulations should also require social media platforms to publish annual reports on the number of reports they receive and the actions they take in response, including the resolution of content reported by Bawaslu during elections.

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