

THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN THE 2017 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION OF JAKARTA

Rina Hermawati¹, Nunung Runiawati²

¹Department of Anthropology Universitas Padjadjaran Jalan Bandung-Sumedang KM 21 Jatinangor, Indonesia,

²Department of Public Administration Universitas Padjadjaran Jalan Bandung-Sumedang Km 21 Jatinangor, Indonesia.

E-mail: rina.antrop@gmail.com, nruniawati@yahoo.com

Article History: Received on 10th February 2019, Revised on 7th April 2019, Published on 23rd April 2019

Abstract

Purpose of Study: The media have an important role in the introducing process of candidates of local leaders. Various opinions on the candidates may be formed and spread to the public through the media. The media are able to organize realities from various events occurred so that they become the discourse that supports or rejects the candidates.

Methodology: The media's construction of the candidates is determined by three main factors, namely the media's partiality towards capitalism/capital owners; quasi-support for the public and support for the public interests. The relation between the media and capital owners may make the news report of the media unbalance and tend to be on the side of certain candidates. The news narrative, the terms used, and the resource persons invited are adjusted to the interests of the media to make certain candidates win.

Results: The media wars occur in every election for local leaders. One of the elections for local leaders that involved the media war is the Jakarta Election 2017. The media war occurred not only in offline such as printed matter media and online media but also in social media like Facebook and Twitter. Social media were filled with the issue about diversity against obedience to religion which was followed by some hate speech, hoax news, and insults from those who were not of the same opinion. Through this discourse, the political image of the candidate was constructed.

Implications/Applications: The political preference of voters was often unconsciously influenced by the dominance of discourse and opinion.

Keywords: *election, media, voters, Jakarta, gubernatorial*

INTRODUCTION

The mass media, both print, and online media, have an important role in the political aspect. Generally, the role of the media can be summarized into four categories, namely to broadcast, to educate, to entertain, and to influence. The role of media is becoming stronger along with the development of information technology which has given birth to various forms of popular social media like Facebook and Twitter.

General elections and elections for local leaders which have been held in Indonesia since 1998 certainly need some facilities to provide information as much as possible on the development of the elections and the candidates nominated in the elections. Almost every form of mass media has been chosen by politicians to introduce the candidates they nominate, including the vision, mission, and programs proposed by the candidates.

The General Election in 2014 has shown us how our mass media, both the print and online media, split into two opposing sides. One side supported Jokowi, while the other side supported Prabowo. Likewise, in Jakarta Election 2017 the print and online media were split into three sides; Agus-Silvi, Ahok-Djarot, and Anies-Sandi. The tension heated up in the second round as it split into two sides, the sides of Ahok-Djarot and Anies-Sandi.

News reports and political talk shows in the mass media were framed to support one of the candidates at that moment. Moreover, the split of the mass media into the pro-and-contra sides of the candidates appeared in the share of advertising revenues from the campaign. The result from Satu Dunia Foundation research that monitored the advertisement of candidates revealed the mass media, particularly the television, which supported certain candidates, would provide a bigger portion of advertisement for the candidates they supported. The convergence of the media also spread to the domain of social media. The users of social media, both Facebook and Twitter, were divided into the pro and the contra to the candidates. The big role of the media has become one of the interesting studies related to its role in political marketing in each of elections, including the election of local leaders.

This study will observe how the media has played a role in winning the 2017 candidate of Governor of the Jakarta by using Peter Berger's theory (1966) of the social construction of reality. Peter Berger perceived that social reality exists in its own and the structure of social worlds depends on the humans who become its subject. Therefore, he has the opinion that social reality objectively exists (such as that in the functionalist perspective), but its meaning comes from and by the subjective relationship (individuals) with objective values (a symbolic-interactionist perspective). (Kuswarno, 2009; Yarullin et al., 2016)

Berger and Luckmann in their book entitled *The Social Construction of Reality* stated that one lives their lives by developing repetitive behaviors, which they called habits. Habits enable someone to automatically overcome a situation, the social construction of reality in this article is used by the writers for discussing how voters construct their decision to choose the candidates based on what the media presented and informed on candidates figure.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative method approach with the research strategy of a case study. A case study is a study that focuses on empirically and analytically on a certain phenomenon to produce thick, detailed, and holistic elaborations (Fateminasab, 2014; Klandermans, Bert dan Suzanne Stagenborg, 2002). A case study research is bounded by time and place, and the case is studied in the form of a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 1993). In order to obtain the case of the election for local leaders, the writers observed the news report of the mass media on the simultaneous election in 7 provinces, 18 cities, and 76 regencies in Indonesia, among others, Jakarta, Cimahi City, Bangka Belitung, West Papua, Banda Aceh, Yogyakarta City, and others. Among those elections for local leaders, the Gubernatorial Election of Jakarta is the most interesting to be reported by the mass media due to the case of blasphemy.

Data collection technique was conducted by observing some news on the 2017 Election for Local Leaders of the Jakarta in the print and online media, including social media like Facebook and Twitter. Besides that, the writers used the data resulted from surveys in the Gubernatorial Election of Jakarta conducted by Indikator and Lembaga Survey Indonesia. The data were processed and analyzed descriptively by using the theory of social construction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In terminology, according to Marshall McLuhan, the medium is the message (Budiman, 1999). It means that the media deliver the message of their organization to the public. As a tool for delivering the message through news, opinion, or general description of many matters, the media have an ability to play a role as the institution that is able to shape the public opinion. The mass media basically can be divided into two categories, namely the print media and the electronic media. (Ardianto, Elvinaro dkk, 2007; Muyambiri and Chabaefe, 2018; Saravani et al., 2017)

It is because the media are in the middle of social reality which is laden with various interests, conflicts, and a variety of complex facts. Louis Althusser has written that the media, related to the power, occupy a strategic position, particularly due to the assumption about their ability as a means of legitimacy. The mass media, like institutions of education, religion, art, and culture, is part of the power tool of the state, which ideologically works to build the public's obedience to the group that is in power. Antonio Gramsci (Irvani and ShekarchiZade, 2014; Tinarbuko and Sumbo, 2009) perceived the media as space where various ideologies are represented. It means, at one side the media may become a means to spread the ideology of the power holder, a means of legitimacy, and the control of the public's discourse. However, on the other side, the media may also become a means to resist the power. The media may become a means to build the dominant culture and ideology for the interests of the dominant class, and at the same time, the media may become an instrument of struggle for the oppressed to build a counter-culture and a counter-ideology. Although Althusser and Gramsci criticized each other, both thinkers agree that the mass media are not a free, independent thing, but they are related to social reality. Various interests prevail in the mass media. Besides the ideological interests of the public and the state, other interests hide in the mass media, such as capitalism interests of capital owners, interests of employment sustainability for employees at cetera. In such a condition, it is impossible for the mass media to stand statically in the middle; the mass media will dynamically move amidst the whirlpool of interests. This reality makes the bias of news unavoidable.

The role of the media in political campaigns is very important. Hardly any political parties or candidates do not use the media in socialization and campaigns. In the case of some political parties and candidates, the largest cost and budget are allocated for the advertisement expenditure in the media. It is because the media is perceived as an effective and massive means for informing and introducing a candidate and his/her programs.

Yasraf Amir Piliang stated that in the age of information, the political image of a leading figure is constructed through the printed and electronic media—aside from their capability, leadership, and achievement—seems as if it is the mantra that determines political choices. Through this *electronic mantra*, political perception, view and attitude of the public are constructed and even manipulated. Nowadays politics has become the politics of imaging that celebrates the image rather than political competences. Most activities of political campaigns in the mass media have shifted the importance of the elaboration of political education, such as the candidates' vision, mission, and programs. The role of the mass media is very important in the process of introducing the candidates nominated by the parties in order that they are widely known by the public, especially Indonesian people, with the hope that they will be elected and become the president or members of parliament for legislative candidates. Some efforts of imaging are conducted by political actors participating in general elections and elections for local leaders by presenting their superiority and by boasting the vision, mission, and work programs that will be conducted by using the media as the tool to lift the political actors and as the media campaign.

Media and Social Construction

The term “social construction of reality” was introduced by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their book entitled *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociological of Knowledge* (1966). They described the social process through actions and interactions, in which individuals continuously create the reality which is collectively owned and experienced in a subjective way. Peter L. Berger and Luckmann's theory and approach of the social construction of reality have been revised considering that variables or phenomena of the mass media have become very substantial in the process of externalization, objectivation and internalization which subsequently are known as “the social construction of the mass media”. The substance of the social construction of the mass media lies in the fast and wide circulation of information so that the social construction occurs very fast and it is equally distributed. The constructed reality also shapes the mass opinion; the mass tends to be a priori and the mass opinion tends to be cynical.

The process of the social construction of the mass media (Bungin, 2003) goes through the following:

1. The stage of preparing the construction material which is affected by three factors: a). The mass media's partiality towards capitalism/capital owners; b) quasi-support for the public. This support is in the form of empathy, sympathy, and some participation towards the public, but in the end, they sell news in the interest of the capitalist. c). Support for public interests. The form of support for the public interests in its true meaning is actually the vision of every mass media. However, recently the vision has never shown its identity, but its slogans are still heard. Therefore, in preparing the construction material, the mass media position themselves in three matters above. However, generally, their partiality towards the capitalist interests has become very dominant considering the mass media are the production machine of the capitalist, in which whether they like it or not, the mass media must make a profit.
2. The stage of the distribution of the construction. Generally, the distribution of the social construction of the mass media uses one-way model, in which the mass media present the information while their consumers do not have any other choice but to consume the information. The basic principle of the distribution of the social construction of the mass media is that all information must reach the readers as fast as possible and as accurate as possible based on their agenda. What the media consider important also becomes important for the readers.
3. The stage of the formation of the construction of reality;
 - a. The stage of the formation of the construction of reality is conducted through three stages which occur in a generic way. The first is the construction of the reality of justification; the second is the willingness to be constructed by the mass media; the third is as the consumptive choices. The first stage is the construction of justification as a form of the construction of the mass media built among the public that tends to justify any things presented in the mass media as the reality of truth. In other words, the information of the mass media is the attitude authority to justify an event. The second stage is the willingness to be constructed by the mass media, which is the generic attitude of the first stage. One's choice to be the reader of the mass media is due to their choice to be willing to be constructed by the mass media. The third stage is to make the consumption of the mass media as the consumptive choice, in which someone habitually depends on the mass media. The mass media are the inseparable part of life. At a certain level, someone thinks they are not able to do their activities if they have not yet read the newspaper.
 - b. The formation of the construction of the building image desired by the stage of construction. The building of the construction image built by the mass media is formed in two models: 1) the good news model and 2) the bad news model. The good news model is the construction that tends to construct the news like a good news report. In this

model, the object of the news report is constructed as something that has a good image so that it seems to be better than the real goodness existing in the object itself. Meanwhile, the bad news model is the construction that tends to construct badness or tends to give a bad image to the object of the news report so that it seems to be worse and wickeder than the real badness, ugliness, and wickedness existing in the object of the news report itself.

4. The stage of confirmation is the stage when both the mass media and the readers give argumentation and accountability to their choice to be involved in the stage of the formation of the construction. For the media, this stage is needed as part of the explanation why they are involved and willing to be present in the process of social construction. There are some reasons which are often used in this confirmation: a) modern life requires ever-changing personalities who become part of the production of the mass media, b) the closeness to the mass media is the lifestyle of modern people, in which they like popularity, particularly as the subject of the mass media themselves, and c) although the mass media have the ability to construct the reality of the media based on their subjectivity, the presence of the mass media in one's life is the limitless source of knowledge which can be accessed at any time.

The Media and Jakarta Election 2017

The Jakarta Election 2017 is one of the most talked-about elections for local leaders, both in the printed media and the online media. Unfortunately, the media owner's closeness to political parties that supported one of the candidates has made the role of the media tend to be not neutral. As proposed by Althuser and Gramsci ([Indikator Politik Indonesia, 2017](#); [Ortiz-Salgado and Alfredo, 2018](#)) the interests of capital owners may become one of the factors that determine to whom the media will take the side. Three big political parties, namely the Golkar Party, the Nasdem Party, and the Hanura Party that officially supported Basuki Tjahaya Purnama or better known by his nickname Ahok in the Election for Local Leaders of the Jakarta, had a special closeness to two big mass media in Indonesia. The two big mass media are Media Group and Visi Media Asia. Media Group is close to Surya Paloh, the leader of the Nasdem Party and Visi Media Asia is close to Aburizal Bakrie the elite of the Golkar Party. Media Group has the network to the printed media, television, and online news portal. Meanwhile, Visi Media Asia has two televisions network and one online news portal.

The media's closeness to political parties has enabled them to construct the news report on the candidates according to the interests of their capital owners. The construction of the candidates' image is started to be built here by using the good news model for the candidates supported by the media and the bad news model for their political opponents. The news they presented tended to benefit certain candidates so that it clearly appeared that the media were split into two sides, namely pro-incumbent and contra-incumbent. The pro-incumbent media presented positive news reports containing the achievements of the incumbent when he led the region, such as their success in building reservoirs and low-cost apartments, resolving the problem of street vendors at Tanah Abang, et cetera. As a result, the terms used by the media varied. The pro-incumbent media used the terms "relocation" and "river normalization" to replace the term "eviction in urban villages". On the contrary, the contra-incumbent media used the term "eviction of the citizens". The use of these terms was not coincidental but it was a frame to neutralize public's resistance towards the eviction of the citizens. In order to strengthen their argument, the media conducted the confirmation stage by inviting resource persons according to the interests of their capital owners. The pro-incumbent media invited resource persons from the pro-incumbent circle to convince the public that the incumbent governor deserved to be retained for the next period. On the contrary, the contra-incumbent media actively criticized the leadership and policies of the incumbent as well as showed the public his failure in managing the governance. The figure of the incumbent was described as a rude one, and he often used abusive language, while the non-incumbent was described as a friendly and polite one. Resource persons, they invited also came from the circle which opposed the incumbent.

This media war was exacerbated by the case of blasphemy. In order to counter the issue of blasphemy, the incumbent side brought the discourse of diversity. The media built the construction that the incumbent side was a tolerant and rational group that respected diversity which opposed a radical, intolerant, and irrational group. Meanwhile, the contra-incumbent side brought the discourse of the obedience to religion, in which voting for the leader who comes from the same religion is obligatory for a Muslim. The incumbent side was constructed as a secular and rude group. This war of discourse did not only occur in the print and online media but also in social media which was followed by hate speech, hoaxes, and insults from the opposing side.

This war of discourse is part of discourse politics. Discourse can be defined as ideas, notions, system of thinking, and image that form a culture. In this case, the discourse politics aims to form the truth claim of a matter. A French philosopher, Michel Foucault, said that power cannot be separated from knowledge. Michel Foucault added that power produces knowledge. In this case, every power always relates to the dominant knowledge at that time. In other words, if someone wants to have the

power they must win the war of discourse. Through the production of discourse and opinion, we can form a new reality. In living our lives, we are often unconscious that our selves are influenced by the dominant discourse and opinion.

Repeated news reports by the media eventually built the public's opinion on the governor candidates and influenced their behavior in electing the governor. The support from social media users may become the indicator which candidates would win the battle.

The most recent result of the survey conducted by Lingkaran Survei Indonesia (LSI) indicated that the war of discourse between the incumbent side and the non-incumbent one had been won by the non-incumbent side. Of the users of three surveyed social media, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, LSI Denny JA stated that Anies-Sandi led among the users of Facebook with 47.58 percent and Instagram with 49.99 percent. Meanwhile, Ahok-Djarot led only at Twitter with 53.34 percent. On the whole, among the active users of social media, Anies-Sandi led with 46.20 percent while Ahok-Djarot 43.10 percent. Among the passive users of social media Anies-Sandi led with 54.60 percent, Ahok-Djarot gained 37.40 percent. LSI stated three factors that made Anies-Sandi lead at social media. The first, most users of social media wanted a new governor. The second, the users of social media believed that Ahok had committed blasphemy. The last is because most users of social media were not comfortable with the status of Ahok as the accused in the case of blasphemy.

Anies-Sandi's leading at social media was followed by their victory in the second round of the Election for Local Leaders of the Jakarta Special Capital Region. It affirms the important role of social media in determining the political preference of voters. The media have become one of the causes in the formation process of the occurring social construction of reality.

CONCLUSION

The media play an important role in forming the social construction of the public. The utilization of the media in presenting information and news reports on the 2017 Election for Local Leaders of the Jakarta and gubernatorial candidates shows the hegemony of the media and their partiality towards the candidates, and they used it for campaigning. The construction of reality was also built by the candidates and their supporters through the discourse constructed in various media. The news report presented by the media had also constructed the voters in casting their votes. The candidates who control the media will win the election for local leaders. In the future, regulation is necessary to control the media.

REFERENCES

- Ardianto, Elvinaro dkk (2007). *Komunikasi Massa*. Bandung. Simbiosis Rekatama Media.
- Budiman, K. (1999). *Feminografi*. Yogyakarta. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Bungin, B. (2003). *Pornomedia: Sosiologi Media, Konstruksi Sosial Teknologi Telematika dan Perayaan Seks di Media Massa*. Jakarta. Kencana.
- Creswell, J. W. (1993). *Research Design Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan Mixed*. Yogyakarta. Pustaka Pelajar. Penerjemah Achmad Fawaid.
- Fateminasab, A. (2014). Investigating the challenges and barriers of convergence between Iran and republic of Azerbaijan. *UCT Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research*, 2(1):18–24.
- Indikator Politik Indonesia (2017). *Peta Elektoral Pilkada DKI*. Jakarta. Putaran Kedua.
- Iravani, M. R. and ShekarchiZade, A. R. (2014). A social work study of effective cultural, social economic factors on work stress: A Review. *UCT Journal of Management and Accounting Studies*, 2(1):5–7.
- Klandermans, Bert dan Suzanne Stagenborg (2002). *Methods of Social Movement Research*. USA. University of Minnesota Press.
- Kuswarno, M. S. (2009). *Fenomenologi*. Bandung. Widya Padjadjaran.
- Muyambiri, B. and Chabaefe, N. N. (2018). The Finance – Growth Nexus in Botswana: A Multivariate Causal Linkage. *Dutch Journal of Finance and Management*, 2(2):03. <https://doi.org/10.20897/djfm/2634>.
- Ortiz-Salgado, R. and Alfredo, G.-C. (2018). Enfoque decolonial y producción de conocimientos en dos universidades estatales chilenas. *Opción*, 34(86):481–516.
- Saravani, S., Marziyeh, A., and Jenaabadi, H. (2017). The Relationship of the Dimensions of Perceived Teaching Style with Students' Mathematics Achievement and Self-Efficacy. *IEJME*, 12(2):349–358.



Tinarbuko, T. and Sumbo (2009). Iklan Politik dalam Realitas Media. *Jogjakarta & Bandung*.

Yarullin, I. F., Prichinin, A. E., and Sharipova, D. Y. (2016). Risk Management of an Education Project. *International Electronic Journal of Mathematics Education*, 11(1):45–56.