BEING POWER AND POWERLESS: DYNAMICS ON INDONESIAN WOMEN'S MINISTER

Daniel Susilo[1*], Rahma Sugihartati[2]
[1]PhD Candidate in Social Sciences, Majoring Communication, and Media Studies, Airlangga University, Indonesia,
[2]Associate Professor at Information and Library Sciences Department, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Airlangga University, Indonesia.
Emil: *daniel-16@fisip.unair.ac.id

Abstract

Purpose of study: This paper aims to re-questioning the positions of Indonesia's woman ministers in the internet citizen's perspectives on responding to the news related to those woman ministers.

Methodology: The current study used a qualitative research design. The multimodal analysis has been used as a key to implement analysis on a conversation on the internet. Using the pattern of Herring, the researcher has used the data from the Facebook comments section on the official web page of Detik.com, the pioneer of Indonesia's online news site from 1 January – 31 December 2017. Digital Discourse Analysis has been used to analyze those digital actions then coded, and classified.

Result: The obtained results show that there is a prominent separation between the ministers who own political powers and those who are considered not possess strong power in Indonesia's political arena.

Implications/Applications: In observing those digital actions, this article will utilize limited mapping on Facebook commentary section on the official web page of Detik.com, the pioneer of Indonesia's online news site.

Keywords: Women in Politics, Indonesian Women Minister, Digital Discourse Analysis, Dynamics on Indonesian Women's minister, Internet citizen's perspectives.

INTRODUCTION

Several discussions on the position of women as "the others" can be traced into the statement of Simone de Beauvoir in his book, The Second Sex and inspired Kristeva and Butler to develop the third wave of feminism (Butler, 1988; Card, 2003; De Beauvoir, 2016; Hutchings, 2009; "Julia Kristeva and literary theory," 2013). This article will discuss how women as "the others" create domination and power to become the media darling. This article specifically discusses Khofifah Indar Parawansa, former Indonesian women minister who served as Minister of Social Affair and now elected as the first women governor of East Java.

Previous research conducted by Shaham (2018) shows the debate of Muslim societies about women's participation in politics, especially in Muslim majority countries. Rinaldo (2010) on her research of two Indonesian Islamic organization found that the rising pietism of Indonesian Muslims has a strong correlation with the practicing of politics. The pious Indonesian Muslim women consider family as the priority than public activities such as becoming a politician (Rinaldo, 2010; Sakai & Fauzia, 2016).

Comparing with other Southeast Asian countries, Indonesia is considered as the leader of women's participation in politics (Al Uyun, 2014; Fleschenberg, 2011; Good, 2004). The highest political supreme of Indonesia, the president seat, in 2001 has been taken by women, Megawati Sukarnoputri, a daughter of Indonesian founding father, Sukarno. Compared with other Southeast Asian countries, only Indonesia (Megawati Sukarnoputri), Philippines (Cory Aquino and Gloria Arroyo), and Thailand (Yingluck Shinawatra) who had women as their head of government (Executive). This shows the acceleration of women's awareness and opportunity to reach the highest position in politics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Redefining "the other"

Lacan, the French philosopher, criticized the Freudian concept about women as others and felt jealous of men's biological appearance (Sofe Ahmed, 2012; Zepf, Ullrich, & Seel, 2016). Lacan introduces "women as the others" and the conception of the symbol of women who became powerless (Grigg, 2008; Tambling, 2013; Žižek, 2009).

The concept of otherness on women studies has been criticized by Butler (1990) about the flexibility of "gender". Women and femininity are not always interlinked with each other, and become a woman in politics can be considered as a "masculinity" act (Rosenwasser, Rogers, Fling, Silvers-Pickens, & Butemeyer, 1987; Wille, Wiernik, Vergauwe, Vrijdags, & Trbovic, 2018).

The concept of "women as the other" inspires the second wave of feminism (Brookey & Cannon, 2009; Butler, 2006; Thompson, 2008). Women took the role as a complementary of the political area (Susilo, 2017; Yao & You, 2018) has been criticized by the feminist as a dichotomy to make women powerless and never have bargain power about her position (Ayu, 2017; Fida & Karam, 2019; Thomas & Ehrkamp, 2013).

Issues on Women as Politician

Previous researches about women as politicians shows the propensity of women that likely to implement policies and invest in public interventions linked to traditionally female concerns, such as childcare, water provision, health, and environment (Braga & Scervini, 2017; Clots-Figueras, 2011).Women politicians are being classified and got labeled as low-qualification politicians (Collette, 2006; Krook, 2010) and Women as an object of political preference, also mentioned by the scholars to reach a popular vote in democratic nations. (Parawansa, 2005; Susilo, 2016)

Women considered as incapable to work in "hard" political areas (Collins, 2006; Cumley, 2014). The increase of women politicians has significantly changed the tendency of media reports. Previously, the media focused on men politicians and their masculinity. After the increase in the number of women politicians, the focus shifted towards women who entered practical politics. Politics area which was claimed a masculine area (active and thinker) is opened by the women (alleged in feminine, soft, and feeling).

METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

Digital Discourse Analysis as Tools to Understand Netizen's Act

Society 5.0 as a transformation of societal systems in digital society brings plenty of challenges (Wang, Li, Yuan, Ye, & Wang, 2016). On one hand, due to the uncertainty, diversity, and complexity of human behaviors, human-in-the-loop systems bring new problems for system modeling; on another hand, the immense big data introduces both opportunities for the government to promote timely societal management and public services, and difficulties to discover the targeted information rapidly and accurately (Wang et al., 2016). Society 5.0 triggered by the high rising of communication technology brings the different characteristics of the citizen on the internet world (widely known as "netizen"). Netizen becomes critical and integrating their daily life into a digital medium, such as a political issue. On the research of Chao, Yuan, Li, & Yao (2017), it shows the trend of political trust and engagement are being built on social media and another digital platform.

This rapid society changing impacted on how the scholar researches people and their perception of politics and politician. Discourse and political discourse on society are not only explained by critical discourse analysis. People are creating meaning through dyadic communication with like, comment, and share the online news or status on social media. Facing the term of discourse also became a subject of multidisciplinary discussions and to gain relevance in linguistics (Gredel, 2017).

Multimodal Analysis of Digital Practice and Material

The key to implementing the analysis of a conversation on the internet are using the multimodal analysis (Herring, 2013). Using the pattern of Herring, the researcher has used the data from Facebook commentary section on the official web page of Detik.com, the pioneer of Indonesia's online news site from 1 January – 31 December 2017.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Women Politician: Tracing Privilege from Man

Women became a subject of Politics in Southeast Asia can be traced from how women sometimes used as "tools" from man to control politics or to reach recognition from the other male politicians (See David, 1989; Eagly, 1995; Mama, 2017; Nagel, 1998; Paludi & Denmark, 2018). Cory Aquino used the family name of her late husband when she showed up to lead the People Power and EDSA Revolution in the Philippines and recognized by Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Metro Manila. Megawati Sukarnoputri, adopting her father's name, Sukarno to reach legitimation as a politician, leader of the party, and becoming Indonesian president. The same patron also used by Khofifah Indar Parawansa before she entered the politics, she is adopting her husband's name, Indar Parawansa as her surname. Based on coding and analysis on the comment section on data, some netizen aware if Khofifah adopting her husband's name. Netizen is aware that Khofifah as the woman still imagined by her husband on politics.

Data analysis also shows how netizen criticized Khofifah's action as Minister of Social Affair visiting Male Muslim Clergy (*Kyai*) in Tebuireng, Jombang, and East Java in October 2017. Khofifah forms *Tim 17* (Team 17), consists of 17 *Kyai*as her legitimator before she declares her running into 2018 East Java Gubernatorial election. Even the news did not explicitly state about 2018 East Java election, 85% of netizen commenting related Khofifah vision to be running in the 2018 East Java election.

Netizens with political preferences towards Jokowi, Indonesian running president, 92% of them tend to approve Khofifah acts for seeking legitimation from the *Kyai*even when she still served as Minister of Social Affair. Different reactions from a netizen who associated his personal political preferences towards the oppositions, 100% of the questions the Khofifah's motive as active minister visiting *Kyai* in East Java. About 37% of the comment section from netizen affiliated with opposition attacked Khofifah's identity as women.

Politics is still considered as man arena, shown by acts of Khofifah who asked legitimation from *Kyai*. She considered as powerless and renegotiating power with a man *(Kyai)* to get power and support from the man. Privilege from a man also

has shown how Khofifah still uses her husband's name for her surname even when her husband passed away in 2014.

Maudlin Politician: Media Focus on Women's crying

Khofifah as Minister of Social Affair has a value point to become "media darling" with activities and programs from the ministry. Especially related to social work, Khofifah easily became newsmaker or just shown or television or captured in news.

Detik is an Indonesian leading online news portal used the word "crying" in the title and mentioned her position as the minister. A big photo of Khofifah was crying showed as the main illustration of the situation.

Figure 1: Illustration used by Detik.com

The picture above shows Khofifah as the maudlin woman who hugs women as a victim and looked crying. This picture, in relation to the title, creates a perception in the reader's mind that Khofifah as women minister looks maudlin. The journalist put a lead on the news does the same accentuation style with Khofifah's position as minister re-mentioned again on the lead. The reporter used the word: "*takkuasamenahan air mata*– **Can't hold her tears**" for highlighting Khofifah acts as a minister who cried. Khofifah described as a weak minister, powerless with her gender as woman who cannot handle her emotions.

In the body text of news, the reporters still focusing on how maudlin Khofifah is. Press report Khofifah's crying when she leads the pray for the boy who killed in a cupboard. In the relation between Susi's news and Khofifah's news, they have a similarity: online media portrays the women minister as a weak person. With much "crying" word, the journalist wants to create and infiltrate the reader's mind the idea of women in politics (ministry) is a weak person.

This fact indicated our media have the main idea to ask: women are not suitable to work in politics. Politics becomes a masculine area, not suitable for the feminine person. Media still used traditional conventional packaging to portray women as the politician in the media, women still in her weakness completed with her attribute glossy lip, shining hair and another domestic quality.

On another way, netizen focusing discussion on the comment section on how maudlin is Khofifah as a minister with a more abusive word: *Menteri Cengeng* – Mawkish Minister, to offend Khofifah's news reporting. A netizen who is anonymous became powerful to judge women in their misogynistic view and perspective.

Women as a gender identity still experienced oppression in media construction. Active masculinity reinforced by patriarchal culture in the media industry makes femininity and women powerless when facing the onslaught of the construction.

CONCLUSION

The effort of creating media based on sensitivity gender must be accelerated to make sure the rapidity of sustainable women participation in politics. Women as a politician can't be labeled as unnatural or uncommon, in one way she got empowerment but on another side, she became powerless because of the misogynistic perspective of netizen. Politics may not refer to masculinity, but if the media still reports women politician as a weak person, it will strengthen the stereotype.

The rapid trend of viewers and readers of online news in Indonesia can be summed up as the future of the media industry that concerns us. The future is how media do not become the judge for women, and educating netizens with true discourse and more women affirmations based on sensitive gender perspective.

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