

Indonesia Digital Public Sphere: An Alternative and Counterhegemonic Space for Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of corona virus disease 2019 (Covid-19) has created a global health crisis that has had a deep impact on the way we perceive our world and everyday lives. Mass Media is playing an important role in the Covid-19 response and has always constituted the necessary infrastructure for modern public sphere. The public sphere is where citizens communicate about the rule of their society. Digital public sphere has distributed essential information, diverse forms of knowledge and argumentation about facts, problems and possible solutions. The focus of current research was: how are rubric, categorization, and ideology in the construction of social reality about Covid-19 on digital platform media as counterhegemonic space? This is qualitative research and using constructivism paradigm. Through Murray Edelman's framing analysis method, digital media has recently been thought of as national, media specific, and as part of cultural domain. Digital public sphere improves most people's ability to form their own opinions, debating issues of collective interest and making their own choices of actions on the basic of knowledge about their society. As counterhegemonic space, digital public sphere encourages people to share their view against hegemony through the use of persuasion while raising awareness.

Keywords: *Counterhegemonic, Covid-19, Digital, New Media, Public Sphere*

1. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge we have faced since World War Two. On 12 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that a novel coronavirus was the cause of a respiratory illness in a cluster of people in Wuhan, Hubei, China, which was reported to the WHO on 31 December 2019 [1]. The Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia is part of the ongoing worldwide pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) [2].

On 2 March 2020, Indonesian president Joko Widodo announced the first cases in the country, a dance instructor and her mother in Depok, West Java [3]. Both of them had held a dance class at a restaurant in Kemang, South Jakarta on 14 February, which was attended by more than a dozen people. One of whom was a Japanese, who was later tested positive for the Covid-19 in Malaysia [4]. After Malaysia reported the case, the government of Indonesia began to trace anyone who has had close contact with the Japanese and the infected Indonesians [5].

Since then, confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Indonesia began to increase slowly. By 8 March, a total of 6 people who had attended the dance class were infected by the Covid-19, including one case of repatriated Indonesian from the *Diamond Princess*. Several Covid-19 cases in West Java and Jakarta were found to have a link with the cluster [6].

Review of data, however, indicated that the number of deaths may be much higher than what has been reported as those who died with acute Covid-19 symptoms but had not been confirmed or tested were not counted in the official death figure [7].

Indonesian government has retracted its recommended list of Covid-19 Rapid Tests (RDT) effective as of July 14, 2020. The Indonesian government has issued Government Regulation No. 72/2020 on the amendments to the development of work competence through the pre-work card program. Instead of implementing a nationwide lockdown, the government had approved large scale social restrictions (Indonesian: *Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar*, abbreviated as PSBB) for some regencies and cities [8].

Unfortunately, every information and government policy regarding Covid-19, is not just accepted outright by the people of Indonesia. They are looking for other sources

of reference information, to strengthen their perception of Covid-19. The choice of media has become an alternative, especially accessing information from digital media platforms.

Innovations in technology, particularly in digital media, increasingly are changing the way people use media, entertainment & information services. Digital media networks could nudge their users to be more discerning with relatively straightforward interventions. More than this, the very fabric of daily life is being altered. People are interacting and connecting with each other in different ways. Their sensibilities and psychologies are changing. Blurring boundaries between private and professional lives and the hunger for immediate information are driving online connection time. Trust in individual relationship with digital media has become an increasingly prominent issue.

Media have an important role in the social changes by powering the public sphere. Digital media plays a really important role in shaping our own ideas and establishing our position in society. Internet and especially the digital media, allows the individuals to discuss and express their thoughts in public regarding events which have a wide public interest. The public sphere or the public space where takes place debates that have a wide interests in public and where is developed a critical reflections toward the governmental policies is strictly related with the media and technology.

Purveyors of news can make their message feel true through a few simple tricks, which discourages us from applying our critical thinking skills, such as checking the veracity of its source. For similar reasons, misinformation will include descriptive language or vivid personal stories. It will also feature just enough familiar facts or figures, such as mentioning the name of a recognized medical body to make the lie within feel convincing, allowing it to tether itself to our previous knowledge. This is poured in digital public spaces such as YouTube which can be accessed by all publics. By presenting public actors from various cross-communities, this digital public space is truly a counterhegemonic space for Covid-19. Through Murray Edelman's framing analysis method, focus of the research examined in this study was: how to rubric, categorization, and ideology in the construction of social reality about covid-19 on digital platform media YouTube as counterhegemonic space.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. New Media

With the coming of the new media, people who have long been on the receiving end of one-way mass communication are now increasingly likely to become producers and transmitters. The distinction between information producers and consumers will become increasingly difficult to draw [9][10].

S.Jodoin compares traditional and new media in the following five aspects [11]:

- a. *Transparency*. Traditional media set out the level of transparency and present the content in portions. The new ones expand the limits of transparency, leak documents; however, the distribution of unverified information renders the processes unreliable and uncontrollable.
- b. *Dissemination and sharing*. Traditional media prepare and distribute information, while the new ones provide access to the content of various nature.
- c. *Freedom of information*. Traditional media activity is regulated by law, code of ethics, and professional standards. The new ones declare absolute freedom, which, as they put it, helps build a more humane and more just society. Any attempt to limit activity is perceived as an attack on freedom of speech.
- d. *Autonomy*. Traditional media are characterized by hierarchical structure, subordination and role distribution. In case of the new ones, regulation is scarce, and individual self expression is promoted.
- e. *Influence*. In the centralized hierarchy of mass communication, the greatest influence comes from the owners of the means of information production and dissemination, whereas in the digital era anyone can have influence on others.

2.2. Digital Media

The emergence of digital media competency as a desirable skill set is due to several factors. First, the development of prosumer electronics or equipment that hovers between producer and consumer regarding functionality [12]. This equipment (e.g., audio recorders, video cameras, digital SLR/mirror-less cameras), in conjunction with inexpensive software and applications, made digital media production more accessible for inexperienced content creators.

Second, the Internet become faster and more ubiquitous with the development and extension of mobile and Wi-Fi networks [13]. Additionally, the development of powerful smartphones (since 2007) and tablets (since 2010) [14] contributed to the growth of a digital media ecosystem on the Internet. Online content is increasing at an exponential rate, for example, 300 hours of video is uploaded to YouTube server every minute [15]. All these factors created an opportunity for the users to shift from consumers of digital media to producers [16].

2.3. Digital Public Sphere

Habermas's original conception includes three important elements. First, the public sphere was formed through discussion, often mediated. Second, it represented a new space of discussion for many who had previously been excluded. Last, ideas presented in the public sphere were considered on the basis of their merits, and not on the social standing of the speaker. The "public" of the public sphere represents the idea that the people taking part in such discussions are acting not as private citizens, but in a

public role by speaking in public and discussing issues of relevance to the wider public, issues of governance. They have the potential to affect public opinion and public policy.

Since Habermas's original work, there have been various reformulations of and additions to the idea of the public sphere, and in fact the literature on the public sphere has become quite large [17][18]. The possibility for multiple public spheres is relevant here, given the large number of people who use the Internet.

2.4. Counterhegemonic

Gramsci recognizes that counterhegemonic resistance necessarily involves struggling over the hearts and minds of people, their attitudes, beliefs, and emotions about the [19]. Any revolution, he writes, "presupposes the formation of a new set of standards, a new psychology, new ways of feeling, thinking and living". AsFischman and McLaren point out, Gramsci's framework acknowledges that both ideology and counter-hegemony are understood as embodied, felt and lived [20].

Gramsci here makes a distinction between the "people-nation" that "feels" and the intellectuals who "know" and suggests that one does not really know without feeling, just as one does not really feel without knowing; feeling, understanding and knowing are all entangled together[21].

For counterhegemony, then, this "feeling" is necessary in understanding how people make sense of their world and their daily lives, and most importantly, how they resist subaltern consciousness[19].

3. METHODS

By using constructivist paradigm, the research approach used in this problem is to use a qualitative method. According to Bogdan and Taylor, qualitative methods as procedure of research that generates descriptive data in the form of the written word or spoken of people and behavior that can be observed. This approach is directed at the individual and background in holistic (whole). So in this case should not be isolated individual or organization into variable or hypothesis, but need to see it as part of a unit [22].

Edelman maintains that we perceive and conceive in the light of narratives seeing is "based on expectations and imagination" and politicians of any persuasion "protect fantasies from challenge"[23].

a. Categorization

Categorization in Edelman's view, is the abstraction and function of the mind. Various events, people and groups were given meaning in a framework or scheme. With this framework an individual puts every event, event, person, or groups in a structured and coherent storyline. Categories help humans understand diverse and unrelated realities the order becomes a reality that has meaning [24].

b. Rubrication

Rubrication is not just a technical issue or standard procedure for delivering news, but it is part of the process of classification of events in certain category. Rubrication can determine how to explain events. Rubrication emphasizes on the process of categorizing an event. An event is placed in a specific classification and rubric is not in the classification and other rubrics, is an indication of the occurrence of elements deliberate in choosing certain perspectives and certain categories [24].

c. Ideology

According to Edelman, the use of categorization is implied in words arrangements, defenses, elections, and so on, are not just considerations language, but is an extension of certain ideology. All of these categories and classifications are not showing the actual reality, and not a complete representation of a fact. But only ideological battles by parties who behind the media [25].

The unit of analysis in this study is the text produced by Deddy Corbuzier's YouTube program with episodes: *Corona Hanya Sebuah Kebohongan Konspirasi!? (Tonton Sebelum Video ini ter take down)*. This episode premiered on April 19, 2020, had 10,231,162 views, and received 312,000 likes. The duration of content in this episode is 1 hour 8 minutes 9 seconds. The data collection is done through study literature, document and transcribe entire texts program and looking for data references from related research institutions. These designs focus on data collection, analysis, and writing, but they originate out of disciplines and flow throughout the process of research: types of problems and ethical issues of importance.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Categorization, Rubrication, and Ideology

Categorization can mean a simplification process an event. With the function of the individual mind using an order scheme complex reality become interconnected, simple, and understandable. Complex and multidimensional realities will be simplified into structured and one dimensional reality. In this concept, the category can be a tool for simplifying the various events observed [24]. Categorization is a major force influencing the mind and public awareness. According to Edelman, category is finer than propaganda.

Perception involves categorization [26]. To place an object in one class of things rather than another establishes its central characteristics and creates assumptions about matters that are not seen. To see a person as a "welfare official" highlights some of his or her activities, assumes others, and masks still others that are not part of the welfare official role, even though he or she may perform them.

Table 1: Why Young Lex?

Why Young Lex?	
DeddyCorbuzier	Young Lex
Yeah, why Young Lex? Because Young Lex is a person who, maybe you don't know, but he really likes conspiracy theories.	

It should be clear, then, that beliefs and perceptions based on problematic categorization are not the exceptions. In every significant respect political issues and actors assume characteristics that are symbolically cued. From subtle linguistic evocations and associated governmental actions we get a great many of our beliefs about what our problems are, their causes, their seriousness, our success or failure in coping with them, which aspects are fixed and which are changeable, and what impacts they have upon which groups of people [27].

Table 2: Covid-19 in the Media

Covid-19 on the Media	
Deddy Corbuzier	Young Lex
The danger is there, but the fear spread by the media is insane. Now open the media application, all contents are about Covid-19.	And it was stuffed with one bullet, one way, we couldn't fight. Because the way to fight we have to research. What research is, we have to observe.

Table 3: PSBB Regulations

PSBB Regulations	
Deddy Corbuzier	Young Lex
Wow, PSBB regulations. Now, guests when visiting the house must be at certain hours. What's the difference between you visiting day or night? That's what I don't understand.	But it's still not according to its purpose right? The purpose is for the disease, why can't we make the crowd outside, if the crowd in the room will be more dangerous.
Yes, no more than 5 people	
Because our government is also confused, for example, yesterday GoJek may bring passengers, now it cannot carry	The ministers have different opinions also

passengers.	
Governors and ministers have different opinions.	

People learn to explain chronic problems through alternative sets of assumptions that are inconsistent with one another; yet the contradictory formulas persist, rationalizing inconsistent public policies and inconsistent individual beliefs about the threats that are widely feared in everyday life [27].

Table 4: Masks during Covid-19

Masks during Covid-19	
Deddy Corbuzier	Young Lex
Airplanes are dangerous, cigarettes are dangerous, but if it makes money and generates taxes, it continues.	I've read the tweet "HIV AIDS has been there a long time ago, but nobody uses condoms. When it comes to corona, you all use a mask, but you don't use a condom."
I'm okay with masks, but the news is confusing, masks should never be worn by healthy people, masks are only used by medical personnel and I got the information from the government and WHO. A month after that, suddenly everyone had to wear a mask.	

Explanation has any necessary bearing on the "facts." Either may in some sense be valid. But validity is neither a help nor a hindrance to the people of these explanations as rationalizations for individual beliefs and public policies. Because individual competence or inadequacy doubtless depends upon subtle links among social conditions balances that vary with the individual and are little understood, there is always "evidence" of a sort for either view; and because both explanations depend upon un-provable premises about society and the individual, the observer's values and interests play the crucial part in the acceptance of one or the other view[27].

Table 5: Covid-19 will hit the poor hardest

Covid-19 will hit the poor hardest	
Deddy Corbuzier	Young Lex
	<p>My mother told me about the situation there, where people can't eat, it's Jakarta, we don't know in the sub-urban areas of Bekasi, Depok, or Tangerang.</p> <p>Well, if this continues, what is feared of is riots, loot. While in our country there were riots in 1998, and this did not rule out the possibility that this would happen again.</p>

Table 6: New habits are created

New habits are created	
Deddy Corbuzier	Young Lex
	<p>First, everything will be at home, you will make dependency through mobile phones, create a lot of work at home, new habits are created, which you will hang out to buy food, you will be online, everything will go online. Okay do not have to go to the movies again, Netflix can be rented per day for IDR 28,000. And is there anyone who wins from this situation? So many wins.</p>

Table 7: Video Conferencing and Meeting

Video Conferencing and Meeting	
Deddy Corbuzier	Young Lex
<p>Once, I created content with the zoom application, the participants disconnected from one another, there was no closeness, I</p>	

<p>couldn't see the participants directly</p>	
<p>Yes, there is a gap, where there are no human contacts. Yes, human contact is dumped there, not to mention the delay, our internet is like this.</p>	

Political and ideological debate consists very largely of efforts to win acceptance of a particular categorization of an issue in the face of competing efforts in behalf of a different one; but because participants are likely to see it as a dispute either about facts or about individual values, the linguistic (that is, social) basis of perceptions is usually unrecognized. The authoritative status of the source of a categorization makes his or her definition of the issue more readily acceptable for an ambivalent public called upon to react to an ambiguous situation [27].

Table 8: Data Being Ridden

Data Being Ridden	
Deddy Corbuzier	Young Lex
<p>And apparently, no one has died of pure corona. Surely people with diabetes, heart disease, and asthma. Corona itself doesn't exist yet.</p>	<p>Interesting if the data is ridden, huh?</p>
<p>What is the purpose?</p>	<p>The goal is to spread fear for people, to make us obedient to them and to the plan behind it, aren't we obedient? Yes..</p>
<p>Yes, and the numbers that come out, come on man, we don't talk about Indonesia, we talk about the world, who knows the original death rate because of Covid-19. So far, we say that the death rate was reduced. Who knows if the number of deaths due to Covid-19 is</p>	

exaggerated?	
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Table 9: Vaccine Business

Vaccine Business	
Deddy Corbuzier	Young Lex
The danger is, what coming after Covid-19? From the vaccine, what are the vaccines, who made them, why they were made, how quickly they were made, whether or not this is a business, what purpose?	
If the vaccine already exists, I don't necessarily want to be injected. Now making a vaccine can be fast. The process of making the vaccine should have taken years. Now everyone is competing.	My fear is, in the future vaccines are required, every house is checked
How about public places, if you enter public places, you must have a vaccine card.	We are controlled by life, it's crazy, I'm going to live in the forest, leave all this, make a camp.
Entering the mall must have been vaccinated	I shoot the head of that mall officer
Make sense because its becomes normal	If all the wrong things are done together and done by many people, it will be normal, what the media provides, all is fear

Recent work in phenomenology brings an enhanced appreciation of the power of language, especially in ambiguous situations. Maurice Merleau-Ponty points out that just as the gestures of an actor playing Lear present Lear, not the actor, to his audience, so a term is the thought it evokes, not a tool for expressing a preexisting thought. In the act of speaking or writing, people create ideas in themselves of which they were not aware before they were expressed; and in responding to others' language, auditors and readers similarly engender cognitions in themselves, thereby communicating [27].

Table 10: Bill Gates is There

Bill Gates is There	
Deddy Corbuzier	Young Lex
Global, World Wide Conspiracy, because I have watched a lot of Youtube shows lately, read books on global conspiracy to vaccine conspiracies, that this is selling vaccines, that people will be labeled one by one, Bill Gates is there	There is a chip
Yeah, there is a chip, Bill Gates will also influence people later, we cannot be free either, and social distancing is enforced because the satellite cannot capture people's data if people are too close, but, this is a theory	

Table 11: Cold-Flared Flu

Cold-Flared Flu	
Deddy Corbuzier	Young Lex
	There is also a video stating that this virus is actually a flu virus which is added by more chemical fluid so it is more easily spread
What is it called? so the flu is maligned, made in a laboratory, made into a vicious virus to attack people	Like, until now, there is no cure for the flu and the virus was put in the flu, that's it

The basic processes are: personification of fears and hopes, so that particular public figures symbolize them; perception of real human beings as objects; condensation of diverse issues and observations into a single symbol, promoting cognitive confusion; categorizations that unconsciously evoke elaborate structures of dogmatic belief; and resort to one set of cognitions to justify conforming behavior and to a contradictory set to rationalize the failure of authorities[27].

4.2. Counterhegemony and Ideology

In general, affect is the “missing term” that might explain why certain ideologies take hold and not others or how [28] through affective investments, ideologies are internalized and naturalized [29] and thus to subvert them dominant affective investments have to be replaced by other affective connections that are subversive. Without these novel affective connections that provide the link between the personal and the political, the individual and the public, the leaders and the subaltern, counterhegemony would fail. As Reed writes, “Counterhegemonic leaders, then, must be mindful to align themselves with the subaltern in a way that resonates with their passions (emotional lives and understanding) as well as with their lived experiences. The understanding of subaltern feelings and how they are embodied in ideology is central to the very unfolding of counterhegemonic practices.

When Gramsci emphasizes on the intellectuals, as leaders of counterhegemony, must be able to feel, understand and appreciate people’s psychology. The intellectual, in order to know something politically and socially, not merely abstractly or philosophically, must understand it with feeling and passion [30]. Passion, in other words, is necessary for counterhegemony; similarly, feeling is an important component of hegemonic status quo. These forms of emotionality of politics function as practices that stipulate how individuals and social forces are connected.

5. CONCLUSION

With the coming of the new media, people receiving transparency, dissemination & sharing, freedom of information, and influence. Video sharing services (YouTube) has resulted in a growth of the digital media ecosystem on the Internet and the rise of User Generated Media. Digital mobile devices became symbols of the freedom of movement, the possibility for multiple public spheres is relevant here, given the large number of people who use the Internet. Allowing for multiple publics, with different interests, allows for smaller and thus workable, yet still global, public spheres through the Internet. Counter publics are identity-based groups that are in opposition to the public sphere. Counterhegemonic resistance necessarily involves struggling over the hearts and minds of people, their attitudes, beliefs, and emotions about the world. Counter-hegemony is necessary in understanding how people make sense of their world and their daily lives, and most importantly, how they resist subaltern consciousness.

Through Murray Edelman’s framing analysis method, digital media has recently been thought of as national, media specific, and as a part of cultural domain. Digital public sphere improved most people ability to form their own opinions, debating issues of collective interest and make their own choices of actions on the basic of knowledge about their society

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