




Indonesia's Next Top Model: The Reproduction of Docile Bodies

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Abstract. This research is aimed to investigate the reproduction of docile bodies in *Indonesia's Next Top Model (INTM)* and it uses content analysis methods to reveal the practice of body politic particularly in fashion models. The data are collected by investigating *Indonesia's Next Top Model* cycle 3 in 2022. The data are analyzed using Foucault's theory of discipline and punishment which inscribes the concept of docile bodies. The result shows that *INTM* reveals the modern practice of body politic. Through the enactment of technologies of the bodies, subjugation is practiced in some programs under the notion of discipline and punishment. Indeed, the ideal body as required by fashion's modelling determines the power relation in the fashion industry. Therefore, the process of being the best model as required by industry subjugated the body not only physically but also mentally. Body is subjugated through the physical activities on the runway and photo shot challenges. Further, panopticon, through the eye of the camera, becomes modern tool for disciplining the body. All practices are potentially aimed at the commodification of the bodies. At last, the gender issues aimed at shaping the glocal mindset to fit the global mindset of the desired body that hegemonizes women's ideal body which contributes to the local mindset of establishing the domestication of women as well. It is the hidden agenda for the sake of male visual pleasure.

Keywords: docile bodies, body politic, fashion, Foucault, technologies of bodies, Indonesia's Next Top Models

1 Introduction

The flourish in modeling is closely associated with the glamorous lifestyle and trend. Therefore, *Indonesia's Next Top Model (INTM)* as one of TV programs is highly appreciated by Indonesian viewers. However, people are unaware that this program positioned the model's body as the body that should be controlled. Indeed, the practice of controlling the body required docility not only physically but also mentally. The docile bodies implied the subjugation of the body. As coined by [1], the term "docile body" is used to describe a body "subjected, used, transformed, and improved" on behalf of social systems through "disciplines" and "constant coercion" (180–81). The main notion of this term implies a certain situation that positioned the body to be subjugated under a certain discipline and coercion in a certain discourse. Therefore, the docile bodies can be identified as an essential discourse in the context of the model's body. The models are constructed to meet all the requirements that are designed by the fashion industry. At this point, a subtle power relation is practiced by giving them the chance to explore the model's best performance. In fact, it reveals that the best performance is designed to meet the standard of industrial life. In the broader context, it supplies more demand for the construction of ideal bodies as desired by the global fashion world.

Being famous as one of the TV programs under *America's Next Top Model*, *Indonesia's Next Top Model (INTM)* is adopted and aired on *Netverse*. This program achieve a rating of 8.2/10 based on *imdb.com*. Eighteen contestants at the age of 18–29 years old are chosen in the audition held by *Netmedia*. Yet, as the reality show program, the daily life of the contestant in the quarantine house is highlighted as well. To a large extent, some events created in this program involve some challenges not only on the stage but also off the stage. Indeed, it underlined the situation that all the participants' activities are under surveillance. Therefore, I argue that *Indonesia's Next Top Model (INTM)* reveals the modern practice of body politic. [1] in [2] stated that body politic is "a set of material elements and techniques that serves as weapons, relays, communication routes, and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge." At this point, the process of turning the body as the object of knowledge under the notion of disciplining the body in the context of the model's body is the practiced of body politic that aimed to produce the docile body.

Indeed, the emergence of a different cluster of fashion models' bodies seems to evoke an appreciation of the variation establishment of ideal bodies. It reveals the recent phenomena of the Plus-size model, catwalk model, photo model, underwear model, and body part model. Even though it seems that they are given different spaces to reveal themselves, all of those bodies are subjugated to meet the fashion industry's requirements. Therefore, it highlighted the notion of body as a site of struggle. At this point, body is a site in which all the struggle to subjugate or resist the establishment of power-relation in different contexts. In line with [1] (1979; 25–26) in [3], body is immediately involved in the political field in which the power dynamics have immediate access of control over it. They invest it, train it, torment it, and force it to

execute tasks, participate in rituals, and emit signs. The body is invested with power and dominance primarily due to its use as a force of production; however, its constitution as labor power is only possible if it is enmeshed in a system of subjection. The political investment of the body is linked to its economic use according to complex, reciprocal relations. The link between the shifting requirements and conditions of a rising industrial society and its power practices of discipline and punishment, which permeate a wide range of social institutions, is the focus of Foucault's explanation of power in *Discipline and Punish*. A variety of institutions, such as the army, the prison, the schools, and the factories. Power does not simply function through exclusion or repression in its modern incarnations; rather, power functions as micro-physics, as capillary-like strategies and tactics that operate on a micro-level in and through everyday practices. Power is not possessed by or locatable in individuals or a specific space. Therefore, power spreads in every situation that positioned the existence of power relations. As the power over the body required subjugation towards the body, the reproduction of docile bodies involves some series of practices. To a large extent, the body is essential in the context of observing power relation in modeling/fashion in which it relates to gender as well.

Body has become an essential object of research with diverse focuses. Synott has argued that the body has been and still is, constructed in almost as many ways as there are individuals. Each new age seems to create and reconstruct the body in its own image and likeness. Further, Benson in [4] stated that the body has become an arena where the differences in gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class are formed and manifested as humans are embodied subjects. In line with Foucault concept of docile bodies that produced by discipline inferred that there is a mechanics of power that define how one may have a hold over other's bodies with techniques, efficiency, and speed. Therefore, the discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, docile bodies. At this point, [5] argued that in the context of fashion exhibition, body can be identified as pictorial, audio-visual, sculptural, and digital. While 'pictorial' represents the body through figurative two-dimensional rendering, 'sculptural' depicts the representing the human body in three-dimensional form; 'audio-visual' – represents the body through audio-visual methods; 'performative' – represents the body through implied action or dramatization; and 'digital' – representing the body through new media. Therefore, the digital bodies of the models of *Indonesia's Next Top Model* reveal the importance to discuss the hidden agenda behind the reproduction of the docile bodies.

To probe all the hidden meaning behind the context in *INTM*, the content analysis is the method used in this research. It probes the existence of documents. The data are collected from the video about *Indonesia's Next Top Model (INTM)* program from *youtube*, *tiktok*, and *website*. Other essential references such as articles, news, journals, and books are taken to support the analysis. The critical analysis is done by investigating the context and relating it to the issue of the modern practice of power relation to produce docile bodies in the context of *INTM*. Newcomb (1987) in [6] stated that critical analysis is often conducted in a tradition of cultural studies to analyze media messages. Therefore, the hidden message of the reproduction of docile bodies is probed from the context by investigating *INTM* cycle 3. At last, the data are analyzed using Foucault's grand theory of body politics to reveal how the power relation inscribed the glocal idealized femininity through bodies' docility.

Some research about bodies has been conducted in the context of fashion and body. [7] research on *Bodies of Fashion and the Fashioning of Subjectivity*. This research explain how fashion may usefully be theorized in terms of specific habits of coordination by which affects, memories, sensations and desires are transmitted between bodies in varied spatial, temporal, material, and affective encounters. This research didn't point out on the body that subjugated. While [8] 2020 examined *The Body Politics in Ballet Training in Zimbabwe*. They argued that ballet training is possibly fashioned to dominate and subjugated bodies, meanwhile, the power discourses may not be necessarily negative as it is possibly productive and beneficial to the subjugated body. This research tried to probe from different points of view which highlighted the modern practice of body politics in Indonesia's fashion model. People are probably unaware that the glamorous life of the model's recruitment through the *INTM* is aimed at reproducing docile bodies as required by the fashion industry.

2 Findings and Discussion

The glorification of modeling life is not only done to reveal the life of the models but also it depicts the designed models of perfect life for fashion models. In the following analysis, I explore the various ways of the enactment of power over the body in which the concept is pointed out as the body politic. The body politic is practiced to produce the docile bodies in the power relation that positioned the model's body as a site of struggle in which the dominant idea of fashion industries is enacted. Therefore, through the *Indonesia's Next Top Model (INTM)*, it can be seen the clear depiction of the desired body through the commodification of the model's body as the manifestation of power-body-relation in modern practice. To a large extent, it is intentionally practiced to fit the global standard of the ideal body for the male gaze pleasure but on the local attribute of practicing domestication under the patriarchal mindset.

2.1. Desired Body, Commodified Body

The desired body of models is reproduced under the requirements of fashion industries. The digital bodies of models in *Indonesia's Next Top Model* highlighted the essential concept of subjugation for being ideal, not only the body should fit all the fashion style but also the shaping of a talented manner that fit the social norm. Indeed, it was already started in the early round of audition in which it required the standard of dazzling height at about 168-178 cm. The interesting thing is that the audition started to present the variation standard of beauty but highlighted the concept of revealing *the best of you*. On the one hand, it provides equal space for all the ethnic in Indonesia; on the other hand, it is trapped to the Western standard of ideal beauty and height.

The commodification of *Indonesia's Next Top Model (INTM)* program has been run through some projects of the show. The reality show has been part of the program in which it broadcasted the activities of the contestants such as morning activities, runway and photo shoots, and sometimes dinner activities. Indeed, the technologies of the body are practiced through some series of programs that constitute the project of body subjugation and body formation. As usual, the morning of the participants' pro-

gram started with the consumption of healthy food to maintain their health as well as their ideal body. Further, they also do regular exercise to keep the ideal body shape. Through some series of required challenges, their bodies are disciplined and trained to produce a healthy body. In line with [1] idea that technologies of the body, particularly his notions of the docile body and surveillance, have advanced understandings of the production of sporting bodies and are especially useful for examining the unacceptable or fat body. Throughout his writings, he views the body as a privileged site for the enactment of power struggles. Therefore, all of these activities highlighted the construction of standard healthy life which is needed to maintain the ideal body. It employs some series of maintaining the body to be fit and ideal as required by the fashion industry.

The other enactment of body politic in constructing the ideal body is the make-over program. Make-overs are done to give some effects on the participants. In contemporary understanding, make-over is done to fit the body with the style and standard as required by the dominant. In episode 25, all the eight finalists got a second makeover, except one which they consider to be excellent in the photo session. Participants are required to act 'beyond transformation'. It highlighted the notion of body transformation as well as the subjugation towards the body. Therefore, body transformation becomes the essential technique of the punishment as the elimination session requires the judgment in the runway and photoshoot session.

Further, *Indonesia's Next Top Model (INTM)* reveals an interesting program such as a confession room as well. It is designed to provide a space for the participants to share all their experiences, their feelings, and their sadness. As adopted from the confession room in the church, anyone in this room is required to be honest in sharing their feelings. They can confess their sadness, doubt, and anxiety as it is aimed at maintaining the participants' mental health. However, the confession room in *INTM* is undoubtedly not a secret room as all of the secrets in the confession should be confidentially protected. This room is commodified as it is broadcasted for public consumption, even it becomes the highlighted material for the program. The embodiment of the psyche is subjugated under the reproduction of knowledge in relation to mental health issues in the confession room. To sum up, it can be highlighted that the room is a means to produce knowledge under the power-body relation that positioned the contestant's body as the source of knowledge.

Further, all the designs programmed by airing contestant's activities is the enactment concept of panopticon. Panopticon as one of the essential notions in the reproduction of docile bodies reveals the modern practice of high-level supervision through the camera and the program in *INTM*. The awareness of the subjugated body to be docile in every situation to some extent is started from the panopticon. As argued by {1} in [9], the panopticon is an 'archaic' idea that involves 'someone in the center – an eye, a gaze, a principle of surveillance – who will be able to make its sovereignty function over all the individuals'. The direct impact of the panopticon towards the body reveals self-regulation. In the context of dancers, mirror is used by the student to surveillance their postures as 'panoptic eyes that control the docility of everybody in the room' (Prochnow 2012, 11) in [10]. In the context of dancers, the mirror is essential for the panopticon. Meanwhile, the camera and lens become powerful panoptic media for the context of *INTM*. The feeling of being super-

vised in every situation unconsciously shaped the idea of being docile. Yet, the docility under the commodification of model's body is constructed under the notion of global idealized femininity.

2.2. The Reproduction of Glocal idealized femininity

The challenging ideas in *Indonesia's Next Top Model (INTM)* are designed to provoke the participants' ability in runway and photo shoots. There are almost twenty different challenges along forty episodes. However, the challenges are designed to impose the traditional gender construction that positions women as the second sex, that employs domestication and objectification as well. The technologies of the body are practiced to shape the healthy and desired body that fits the ideal standard of model's body. *INTM* with all the process of reproducing the docilities of model's body inferred the relationship of body and gender issues. In line with [11], modeling came to epitomize dominant characteristics of western femininity, fetishization of the body, manipulation, and moulding of the body, the discipline and labour associated with beauty and body maintenance, the equation of youth with femininity and feminine lifestyle. Therefore, the hidden agenda behind the construction of the idealized body inscribed the glocal idealized femininity. Entwistle (12) stated that indeed, modeling is a prime site to examine the ongoing reproduction and negotiation of discursive and embodied gender regimes: modeling practices constitute one important arena for reproducing discourses about gender, in imagery often criticized by feminists (Bordo, 1999; Wolf, 1991), and these representations result from mundane everyday work on the part of models, their agents and other key figures (photographers, editors, etc.). Further, this event inscribed the attempt to re-feminize as well as to construct the universal heteronormative standard of the idealized feminine body that fit the requirements of the fashion market but indeed for the pleasure of the male's gaze.

In some cases, the model's body should be disciplined to reduce weight by extreme cuts off daily consumption. Even, sometimes they have to consume wet cotton to prevent them from starving which destroys their body. It can be clearly seen that the circle of life in the fashion and modelling world is a kind of commodification. [12] stated that models are frequently undressed or underdressed in semi-public spaces and their bodies are routinely measured, touched, groomed, and sometimes treated as mannequins in garment construction. In fact, daily exercise is practiced disciplining the body. The impact is focused not only to shape the ideal body but also to reproduce the knowledge of a healthy body under the dominant control. As coined by [13] in the research about running body, all participants ran a long distance are watched after, disciplined, and under constant supervision. Therefore, it is possible to imagine the well-disciplined running body as a site of control where dominating ideas about what it is to be a runner and what defines proper running is in place. Body armor is strengthened. [13]. At this point, the running body and model's body are positioned as the site of struggle. It refers to the notion of Foucault's work with his influential argument that disciplinary processes are central to the production of bodies (1965; 1977; 1978). Yet, the global uniformity of the model's body is shaped to some extent of events that required the surveillance of the participants.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, an interesting phenomenon *Indonesia's Next Top Model* cycle 3 which was broadcasted in 2022 as the media to probe the modern practice of body politics to reproduce the docile bodies. The digital bodies of Indonesia's series program reveal the reproduction of docile bodies under the Western minded of the ideal body. Therefore, the desired body is commodified through some series of challenges. Further, the challenges are identified as the modern practice of body politics such as employing the concept of panopticon through the confession room and video reaction. In a nutshell, the programs are designed to subjugate bodies under the notion of ideal femininity on the local mindset of preserving the patriarchal culture that positioned women as the second sex which is inscribed through the model's bodies.

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