Festive and Viral

Outlining the Islamist and the Leftist in Indonesia's 2019 Election

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One of the most significant phenomena is the emergence of political identity that moves participation further from the conventional political platform. The Occupy Wall Street movement and the Arab Spring are suitable examples for postmodern politics which characterize by unstructured movement that was no longer based on traditional political party system. In Indonesia, a non-conventional political participation guided by self-actualization and identity driven motive, is performed by various groups of society–from religious movement which took the center stage of political discourse in Indonesia to youth leftist movement who run a campaign on Golongan Putih (an apolitical movement that suggest youngster to disassociate with any political group). Despite the difference in political values and goals, this plethora of movements shared the same platform in the landscape of social media. By using the postmodern paradigm, this article aim to illustrate how postmodern politics has shaped political identity and political participation in Indonesia. Authors conducted literature review toward social medias and relevant articles and also did informal interview with purposeful sampling toward the youth leftist movements. This article find that in Indonesia's 2019 election, in postmodern politics, the leftist and the Islamist in Indonesia are facing the paradox of profanity, whereas political participation is shaped in daily basis: always changing and superficial.

The year 2019 will be remembered as another seasonal storm in Indonesia's political arena. National election won by Joko Widodo is tainted by the popular political segregation, religious metanarrative, and the prolonged of the election manipulation or vote rigging issued by Prabowo's coalition. In addition, four days before the election, a documentary entitled "Sexy Killers" released by Wacthdog Documentary, an independent film production. The film depicted a coal industry in Indonesia and environmental degradation that resulted from the mismanagement. The film catch nation-wide attention since it explicitly mentioned names of political figure that running in the 2019 election. Many of young Indonesia's then voiced *Golongan Putih* (political apathy) as they are disillusioned, both by the regime and the opposition.

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The two opposites polar in Indonesia's political view then challenged by the third (*Golongan Putih*). While the first two polar related to the political figures (Joko Widodo and Prabowo), the third is voicing another popular participation: leftist movement in Indonesia. Despite the difference in agenda setting, these events symbolized the trend of postmodern politics that emerged in global level and characterised by extensive discourse in social media. Robinson (2007,p. 94) depicts postmodern perspectives as a rapid changing of symbolic interaction in political system. In 2019, the using of religious metanarrative and the reemergence of *Golongan Putih*, symbolized the popular political discourse in social media that remain as essential study to understand identity politics in Indonesia. Therefore, this article Emphasise s the two issues in portraying how identity plays as important factor shaping political participation.

Another interesting point that need further analyse from the two cases is the apparent gap between political ideas and its practice. This is also another characteristic of postmodern politics when the interpretation of (political) values is rather subjective. A good example of postmodern politics phenomena is Arab Spring (2010) and the Occupy Movement (2012), where the people involves in the movement are having their own subjective interpretation of the movement and often led to oblivious agenda setting and goals. To understand this phenomenon, this article will elaborate the conception of identity politics in postmodern conditions by following two objectives; (1) to describe

how postmodern condition shape identity politics, and (2) to analyse how social media (as the platform of postmodern politics) transformed today political participation. This research follows the procedure of qualitative method to expound the connection between concepts and information gathered. The data gathered through comprehensive literature review on the case of popular political participation in 2019 election, media monitoring and informal interview with the youth leftist movements. In validating the data, authors compared extensive literature studies on social media with results from interview (jotings and transcript).

Identity in Postmodern Era

Identity is defined as a character, feeling, or viewpoint, which can be separated to different groups or people. In the study of identity, Anthony Giddens has a solid impact in setting up fundamental legitimacy to clarify the development of non-customary political personality that moves from the conventional ideology and political practice. Giddens plans his thoughts dependent on two principles; (1) the prescient nature of society as clarified by Durkheim and (2) Weber's perspective on the significance of individual stories. Giddens then combined the two perspectives and provide a bridging hypothesis between the two traditional polarities in humanism. The two contending thoughts collaborate in the structuration idea which stressed the connection among society and people. According to Gidden, in the process of structuration, the human agency (micro level activity) and the social structure (macro level forces), influence one another (Giddens, 1991). Further, the interaction between macro and micro level are shaping the pattern of individual behavior. He also stated that the structure of society basically affected by the behavior of its individuals. He also expressed that the structure of society essentially influenced by the conduct of its people (lifestyle). Based on this reflective relation, Giddens argues that the social condition occurs today is the repetition of modernity that undergoes some changes (Giddens, 1991).

Though Giddens' perspective on late-modernism has set to be a prominent theory in social and political study, still it faces numerous critics. Stjepan Metrovic is a humanist known for his direct hostility toward Giddens, started the polemics. Metrovic (1998, p. 7) reprimands Giddens' view which he supposes is far too rational, as for Giddens, emotion has always been the part of traditional value structure of so-

ciety that has no significant role in the formation of modern political lifestyles. Gidden's perception of political participation was also challenged by the reemergences of emotional feature in current social and political discourses. He then proposed a study on self-identity which explains two basic pattern of political identity: (1) the fluidity of changing identity to the point of a daily basis, and (2) the ability of an individual to reflect on the conditions of society. Self-identity, according to Giddens, is a person's own reflexive understanding of their biography (Giddens, 1991, p. 53). However, the capability of reflexive understanding is challenged by the development of cyberspace, that distorted the ability of individual reflection upon the Self and social context is somehow lost in oblivion. Today communication does not provide fixed identity but offers the possibility of constant recontextualization (Prosman, 2011, p. 23). With this changing pattern of interaction, political identity is no longer the result of one's rational choice. Cyberspace undeniably brings significant change to social construction and brought up the term of postmodernism. However, Gidden consistently disagreed on the term postmodern society–he insisted the term of late-modernism to describe the current situation. In his argument on identity, he shows hesitance to move further from advancement, made his reflexive speculations continually being tested to clarify the present phenomena, which lie in the surge of postmodernism.

The peculiar case of post-truth is one indication that irrationality has replaced rationality that highly valued in modern society. Public opinion is no longer driven by logic, but personal preference. This phenomenon leads to the next consequence of the loss of reflexive process in the forming of one identity. Another view on identity by Bernea (2003.p, 84) provides an alternative reading of the current actuality. An identity which is resulted from the lacking of authenticity leads to the natural discontent of pseudo-identities. This blurry reading of the text (of Self and social phenomenon) brings a huge impact to the changing of social norms. Without the existence of moral consciousness, the social system of society is fragmented; generate social conflict based on emotional ties and subjectivity. Therefore, identity requires a new reading. Goffman predicts this condition by argues that the Self, awaits individuals in every situation and every situation is multi-situated activity system (Goffman in Allan, 1997.p, 6). The virtual realities, as a multi-situated activity, bring the greatest impact on identity in the term of atomism. Lyon (in Hossain and Karim, 2013, p.172) depicts

atomism as the substitution of social ties by a feeling of vulnerability and loss of course. A representation of today character, caught in the fantasy of connectedness in a detached reality.

Changing Platform in Political Participation

The advancement of technology has carried an unfathomable political mode. In Indonesia, the enthusiasm of youngsters toward alternative ideologies and the emergence of religious metanarrative in political discourse, is likely to occurred as social media provide, not only political parties but also individual, a political platform to expressed theirs political view. However, the term postmodern politics is nothing new. Formed in the 1960s, the emergence of political subjectivity bring postmodern politics as an alternative platform of identity politics that promotes anti-rationalism, feminism, environmental movements, non-discriminatory movements in lesbian and gay, as well as movements against abortion. These movements emphasis on transforming the public sphere and transform social institutions on the basis of their subjectivity (Best and Kellner, 1991, p.72). In any case, just in the late twentieth century, when the internet is available for all, identity politics has turned postmodern politics in a global level.

The transformation of communication technology has produced new pattern of social forces. Nowadays, political debate "cyber stage" is open for participants from various backgrounds. More positive result of the open "cyber stage" is giving a chance to marginal identity to voice their narratives. The successful LBGT movement is a good example of how social media has generated a basic transformation in the narrative of sexuality. Another example can be seen in the vegan movement as a political action to counter the mismanagement of food companies and modern food production system. These various narratives present simultaneously in social media as the main platform of current political identity. Best and Kellner (1991) also mention that "*There is another mode of affirmative postmodern politics, perhaps the dominant form of politics today, known as "identity politics" that often has emancipatory aspirations but which usually falls short of advancing systemic change and new forms of radical struggle*". It refers to individual perception of their personal preference, cultural and political background, which they expressed by engaging activism or mode of political participation. In twenty first century, the political expression is widely shared in social media.

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This virtual political space is a milestone in today's postmodern movement. There are two main forms of disseminating ideas in social media: activism and art performance. The existence of the internet enables the activist from around the world to spread their ideas by sharing, posting, or sounding their petition. This is how the social media changed global activism operates: by gives way to the alternative narratives of many difference agendas. Here are few examples: *truthout. com* that voiced the liberal social narrative, *rainforest.arkivert.no* who speak out and concern toward the burden of environmental protection, *fear.ink* that discusses various issues of Islamophobia, to *mipex. eu* who pay attention to the process of integration of refugees with the community.

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In addition to the website, networking between the activists also play significant role in the form of civic organisation. Within a virtual basis, youth organisations are able to have members from various countries (de Jong, et al, 2005.p, 210). Through networking, the political movement has created innovation, disseminating ideas, and promotes grass root engagement toward political and social problems beyond the boundaries of nationality. This new political platform brings specific character to the political movement today, which creates a new form of non-hostile civil disobedience in shaping public opinion and convoy policy change. A civil disobedience can be performed by cyber-based organisations known as "electronic civil disobedience". These tactics conduct by hacking certain websites, or by flooding a certain company with millions of emails (Pickerill 2001.p, 146). This new pattern of civil disobedience is very effective in spreading ideas and building awareness among the wider community. Such tactics transform the internet infrastructure from a means of communication into an instrument of action (Wray, 1998).

Another form of political movement that generated from postmodern politics materialized in the form of art–especially street art. Gravities draw by Banksy, for example, are able to raise social awareness from anti child labor movement to war criticism. The streets are chosen as political battleground to challenge the hegemonic ideas of power, economy, to social and cultural life. After Trump won the presidential election, the streets in the United States are filled with gravity protesting Trump's anti-immigration policy. Also the gravity in the walls of public buildings in Berlin during the WTO meeting in mid-2017, is the political statement made by anonymous political agent.

The spirit of street art captured the essence of force within postmodern politics. They are the cutting edge in methods, attacking corporate hegemony and their ideology (Suzuki, 2013,p. 6). Street art is a symbol of resistance to the control of political parties and corporations that shackled society's consciousness. Street art, by definition, is grassroots movement who trying to expose various forms of abuse of power that occurred. It seeks to expand the consciousness of the average citizen to the harsh realities of our time. By doing their "city guerillas", they mean to break barriers between high and low culture, in order to show our common humanity (Suzuki, 2013, p. 6-7).

Global activism and street art has showed a new process of political articulation, transmission and dissemination of political ideas to various audiences that has bring new sensibilities into everyday political practices (Featherstone, 2007, p.69). Aronson (1999, p. 5) defined it as postmodern political design, whereas a juxtaposition of elements within the unifying structure of the stage frame creates a referential network within the mind of the viewer that extends beyond the immediately apparent world. These two forms of political movement speak the same language–the language of political identity that reflects in the "politics of everyday life" (Gidden, 1991). Identity politics, which was originally a counter-culture movement in the '60s, has evolved into a global movement capable of shaking the hegemonic order. Suzuki (2013, p. 8) reveals that activism and postmodern political movement seeks to change society by making us aware of our shared humanity through street theaters and orchestrated absurdity.

Festive and Viral: Profanity in Political Participation
In the age of postmodern politics, political participation is polarised into "the sacred" and "the profane". The sacred is refers to the hardliner radical movement, while the profane refers to mundane and non-ideological movement. Both have the same right to expresses their political view on the "cyber stage". In other words, postmodern politics brings its own relativity. This condition allows post-truth and personal biased appear in the political discourse and more often, interpretation is entirely cut off from its any original meaning (Brann, 1992.p, 6). This condition of postmodern political has become two sides of the same coin: on one side, it can become a very resourceful social power, but on the other side, it lack of meaning and commitment. Arab Spring, Occupy Movement, the use of reli-

gious metanarrative and the youth leftist movement in Indonesia, are facing a similar dilemma.

Arab Spring and Occupy Movement are bringing the awareness of how political profanity has become the strength also weakness in postmodern political movement. With social media as their platform, both of these movements managed to gather a large number of supporters. The demonstration in Tahrir Square, for example, there are more than ten thousand people who join the rally for Democartisation in Egypt. For those who watched from the television, this demonstration indicates a major shift in the narrative of Egyptian political power. However, when the news tried to provide depth report on the event by interviewing the activists, a profane reality burst to the surface since most of the protester did not have solid ideas and solutions (about what kind of government system they really wanted)–they were on the streets for a very simple reason: to be part of a historic movement (Bayat, 2009,p. 215). The absence of a strong agenda setting in the Arabs Spring gives way for political parties to represent and revive the authoritarian regime. Occupy movement is also bear the weakness of postmodern politics, though it echoes in various parts of the world, there is no significant change in the current capitalist system. Gidden (1999) mentioned that the condition of profanity is a direct consequence of the stagnant political party system. The public disappointment to political parties has bred the anti-ideological form of political participation.

Indonesia is also gravely affected by the changing form of political participation. The changing nature of political participation has given the way to the *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI) in shaping Indonesia's political agenda. The anti-blasphemy campaign against the former Jakarta governor, Basuki Tjahja Purnama (Ahok) in 2016 via the symbolic 212 rallies is one of the examples. By narrating the anti-Chinese sentiment and religious metanarrative, FPI has succeeded in brought back their popularity. With massive rally in social media by FPI and its supporters, the North Jakarta High Court's condemned Ahok for two years in prison for the sacrilege against Islam over remarks he made in September 2016 that supposedly offended the Al-Maidah (51) of the Quran (Setijadi, 2017,p.1). Mietzer and Muhtadi (2018.p,13) highlight the driving motive of the campaign is because they "have lost their access to formal power and have no other recourse than the Internet and the street". Therefore, to stay in the spotlight, the FPI perpetuating their agenda by responding to the current social and political situation, for

example, the anti-Ahok protest in 2016 and later, anti-Buddhist sentiment in 2017. The same pattern of religious metanarrative also re-emerged in the 2019 national election. Political group are divided between the Islam Populist linked to Prabowo's political coalition and the nationalist which supported the incumbent, Joko Widodo. Islamic symbolism are used by both coalition, however, since the FPI is joined the Prabowo's coalition, the religious metanarrative (such as The Ulama as Prime Leader and anti-Chinese sentiment) are significantly used in their campaigns.

On the other hand, after the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, left ideology also turn to social media in disseminating their ideas. In March 2016, the leftist movement in Indonesia held "*Belok Kiri Festival*" and gained wide attention from the younger generation. The festival, which intended as bold political statement from the leftist as part of their struggles against hegemonic and dominant system, has different meaning to some of the attendance. Ranging from high school to college students, some of them view the festival in a very carefree manner. Most of them took a selfie and uploaded it on social media. One of the attendance mention that his motive to attend the festival is to "*mengisi waktu sama teman*" (spending spare moment with my friend), while other attendance mention his motive "*pingin cari tahu aja acara apa*" (just want to know what is it all about). The "only to be seen on the scene" behavior that can be found amongst the Tahrir Square demonstrators, also clearly visible at the Festival. Another turning event in the leftist narrative in Indonesia resurfaced only few days before the election. The release of "Sexy Killers", a documentary film on environmental degradation in Indonesia's coal mine industry has reshaped, mostly young generation, their ideas of political participation. The film played as the third wave in the Indonesian's divided political view. It bring strong message on political disillusionment on how government deal with environmental issues. It also shaped the third non-official voter: *Golongan Putih* (the political apathy). While the nationalist Joko Widodo supporters tend to restrain their opposition with Prabowo's supporter – the *Golongan Putih* did not. They are clearly voicing their political statement by opposing, not only the incumbent, but both political coalition running the Indonesia's national election in 2019.

Despite the difference symbolism, the leftist and the Islamist in Indonesia are successful in delivering theirs agenda. However, in postmodern politics, both are facing the paradox of profanity, whereas

political participation is shaped in daily basis: always changing and superficial. There is always a self-image and personal preference embedded in every political decision. This is clearly the side effects of non-ideological movement, when traditional political values can no longer be the basis of political participation. Therefore, in understanding the recent phenomena, we have to deal with the ugly truth – that there is no guarantee for solid political support, since identity is always struggle and reconstruct almost in daily basis. The FPI agenda and the leftist successful campaign illustrate in the paradox of subjectivity: it is powerful yet hard to grasp. As Best and Kellner (1991) stated, that "*postmodern politics is open and evolving, and will itself develop in response to changing and perhaps surprising conditions*".

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Conclusion

The current study of political identity stands on the ground of post-modernism. While Giddens's modern view is still very relevant to measure the social dynamics, however, there is a fundamental change in communication patterns that turns reality into virtual mirrors. The similar condition also exists in the context of the youth movement. When modernity has a steady structure by provides templates form of lifestyle, the transformation of the postmodern society rests on the individual's subjectivity in imaging the lifestyle. Faced with these changing conditions, a new synthesis form is needed to grasp the basic social relations patterns of our current era. Both views, of course, have advantages and limitations, and it is possible that through the understanding of both can emerge a new construction as what Hegel calls "differentiated unity". The dynamics of social science provide space for the existence of new constructs that are born out of social and historical context. By taking the example of the dynamic form of political participation in 2019 Indonesia's national election, it is expected that the changing in social paradigm can be clearly outlined.

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