

Beyond the Binary Logic of Populist Articulations in 2019 Indonesian Election

A Post-Structuralist Analysis of 'Sexy Killers' Documentary

Luthfi Hamzah Husin, Nuruddin Al Akbar

This study seeks to highlight the emergence of Sexy Killer documentary as an important tool in an effort to encourage the rearticulation of democracy in a more substantial direction. This study is important in the middle of the trend of re-Democratisation that is taking place but is moving in a symbolic direction without meaning (the battle between the fantasy figures of 'cebong' and 'kampret'). Furthermore, the rearticulation of democracy towards symbolic direction tends to be a binary opposition so that the society is preoccupied by discursive war in public space but in a non-substantial sense and more in negative labeling war (insults) without meaningful antagonism (eg. debates about welfare, direction of development and others). This shallow trend of democratic articulation is crucial to be changed because the trend of rearticulation itself has actually a positive spirit that has the potential to trigger a more meaningful political change after previously the meaning of democracy has been frozen into merely soulless electoralism (and ultimately logic of money politic). Even though the presence of 'Sexy Killer' itself appeared in several days before the election, it was

Luthfi Hamzah Husin, Nuruddin Al Akbar. Beyond the Binary Logic of Populist Articulations in 2019 Indonesian Election: A Post-Structuralist Analysis of 'Sexy Killers' Documentary. *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 13, no. 4: 411-431.



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able to provide an opportunity for the emergence of new non-binary subjects (which are then wrongly associated to non-voting behaviour). One important thing is that the new subject (although trying to be labeled negatively) is able to emerge into the public domain and no longer be reduced in the 'cebong' and 'kampret' binary dichotomy. Moreover, the new subject is arguably able to rearticulate a more substantive meaning in politics (for example highlighting development that is not environmentally friendly).

Key words: binary opposition, Indonesian election, meaning construct, populism, post-structuralism.

The politics of contemporary Indonesia seems to be increasingly moving towards (or at least adding to) the new 'vocabulary' called 'cebong' and 'kampret'. This term has been spreading since before and during the 2019 Indonesian election even today. The terms 'cebong' and 'kampret' mark the crystallisation of the new movements in Indonesian politics, which were previously seemed to be stagnant and absence of antagonistic debates. Even if there is a debate, it is more than just conveying a vision and mission, in which, although it seems textually to have a difference between one candidate and another, it seems to have nothing to do with Indonesian politics in general.

In this non-antagonistic politics, the thing that then works is a mere logic of economism (even then in a very limited sense which in contemporary Indonesian political dictionaries is known as money politics). The work of Aspinall and Sukmajati (2015) is one of the important markers of the world academics that captures the political spirit that works in contemporary Indonesian politics after the reform era. Those who have money and capacity to utilise the money more are expected to dominate the democratic game over the other political opponents. It can be said that money politics is one of the most important vocabularies when discussing Indonesian politics before 2014 (since Jokowi's election marked the era of populist politics in Indonesia) to this day.

Another important vocabulary that exists prior to post-2014 Indonesian politics is clientelism (see for example Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019). Similar to money politics, in the non-antagonistic political space, a patronage link can be used to leverage one candidate in an election. The network here has various meaning but is usually derived from old networks, such as primordial or institutional structure. For

ininstance, networks of customs, religions and/ or more modern networks such as women's Family Welfare Empowering groups (*Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* or PKK). The logic that works in clientelism politics is that those who have network or are supported by a strong network have a convincing opportunity to win. There is no room for the antagonism of ideas in this kind of political space. Politics only talks about who has a strong material or cultural base so he will win the fight. A classic logic that perpetuates the practices of elitism and the stagnancy of existing and established political institutions. Even though material and cultural factors are inevitable in politics, it becomes the only and, at the same time, the static way in understanding politics and nothing can be expected from this kind of approach. Progressive politics will not work in this kind of political structure, as there is no possible meaning construct at all in the political space which claims to be democratic, with all its institutional and procedural arrangements, because what happens is only a person who has large capital can dominate the executive or legislative without the need of struggling and constructing a different idea from other candidates. In fact, this contest of ideas is actually the spirit of democracy - at least in terms of Habermasian and Mouffean (Norman, 2001).

This political landscape was shifted in 2014 when the term of 'populism' became a new vocabulary in Indonesian politics. Populism can be placed as a trajectory of rearticulating politics (and democracy) in Indonesia. Populism in Indonesia has its own logic, that is, regardless of the background of the candidate (how much capital he or she has), he or she must offer a program that is in accordance with the will of the people (Djani *et al.*, 2017). Joko Widodo (known as Jokowi) is a representation of the political trends that emerges at the national level and also in a number of regions, where all the candidates start to offer populist programmes. Jokowi, for example, when he and Basuki Purnama or Ahok competed in the Jakarta gubernatorial election, built the image that he was standing with the community facing the "depravity" of the bureaucracy which was considered unfriendly to Jakarta's very typical urban conditions (Hiariej, 2018). In an effort to build the impression that he is serious about his commitment, he is often broadcasted visiting various places and chatting with the people so the impression of his programmes were really not just a political promises.

The same trend continued to emerge when he climbed his career as the President of Indonesia who in 2014 was paired up with Jusuf Kalla

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against Prabowo Subianto and Hatta Rajasa. Prabowo himself was a figure who supported Jokowi's nomination as the governor of Jakarta and used the logic of populism. When competing with Jokowi in the 2014 presidential election, Prabowo also actually used the same logic of populism but at a more 'radical' level. He promised to change the political structure that he considered not in line with the Indonesian constitution (Mietzner, 2015b). In contrast to Jokowi, who built his populist articulation through programmatic politics *an sich*, Prabowo adopted a more 'classic' style of populism by not only promising 'radical' programmes for people but also built a binary dichotomy between the elites and the people including himself, although he actually came from Indonesian elites (Aspinall, 2015; Mietzner, 2015b). It was this binary opposition that marked the beginning of the emergence of political antagonism in Indonesian politics. The candidate dares to draw boundaries between the programmes he offers with other candidates who are considered deceiving the people.

The explanations above, if it is related to the contemporary Indonesian politics after the reform era, can actually be seen as an opportunity to reap 'blessing' and not 'disaster'. Political antagonism based on this substantial idea actually becomes the spirit of democracy and was unfortunately absent in the practice of post-reform democracy. Transition and consolidation of democracy only works as a 'transplant' of institutional and procedural arrangement (hardware) but does not change the way the democratic value works (software) at all. Instead of conceiving discursive contestation as a part of democratic practices, money and network contestation happened without meaning contestation at all. With the existence of populism, it brings a new 'vocabulary' in contemporary Indonesian politics, as it re-calls ideas back to the Indonesian political space and forces every candidates to adopt the new vocabulary and distinguish him or herself through, what Gramsci calls 'war of position' (Laclau & Mouffe, 2000).

When referring to the idea of Laclau (2018) and Mouffe (2018) on populism, in which they put their political trajectory of radical democracy, in fact the "direction" of Indonesian democracy has seemingly headed to the 'right' path. However, what happens in the next phase of radicalisation whose spirit is to rearticulate the rule of the old political game actually moves in a 'shallow' direction and at some extent turns to be destructive to the future of radicalisation of democracy itself. As mentioned at the beginning, the emergence of the '*cebong*' and '*kam-*

pret' dichotomy is a new trend in which there is a siltation of political antagonism from substantive and discursive contestation into a rhetorical contestation that is occupied by meaningless construct, connotative meaning and ideological fantasies.

The terms of '*cebong*' and '*kampret*' mean analogies of figures and groups supporting certain political pairs (in this case Jokowi-Ma'ruf and Prabowo-Sandiaga) by labelling and symbolising with certain animals. '*Cebong*', in Indonesian, refers to tadpole and '*kampret*', in Indonesian, refers to fruit bat. This use of dictions was built to insult or curse different opponents. '*Cebong*' is associated with lower IQ as they usually gather in a small pond together, while '*kampret*' is often associated animal that has a habit of sleeping in reverse which reflects its reverse mindset. This labeling made them not clear in seeing reality, as they reduces all political articulations by mocking the opponent to be a fool. It can be said that the two dictions actually has the same centre meaning of stupidity. In other words, there is no difference between these political articulations as both of them has the same meaning substantively.

The antagonism that is built from the emergence of the '*cebong*' and '*kampret*' trends is very hegemonic because it changes the antagonism of ideas to the antagonism of labeling on people and groups. In this case, the target is another candidate and interestingly it also extends to all individuals in the public space who are considered as part of their opposing candidate supporters. '*Kampret*' itself was labelled to the supporters of Prabowo-Sandiaga supporters while '*cebong*' was associated with the supporters of Jokowi-Ma'ruf. Previously the term '*Ahokers*' also appeared which is meant to label the supporters of Ahok. But in the national context, '*Ahokers*' is eventually melted in the '*cebong*' group.

In this atmosphere of increasingly personal nuances of antagonism, populism ideas are eventually deflected into symbols that do not at all represent the interest of popular itself. In this kind of condition, even though there are debates containing arguments war about the candidates' vision and mission, there is not much contested meaning since the superficial articulation of populism dominates contemporary political space. It needs to be stressed here that the occurrence of 'siltation' on populist politics does not only occur in Indonesia. At global level, the idea of populism is even synonymous with negative meanings because it is related to the development of racist right-wing

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politics both in Europe and the US, especially when Donald Trump took office in the US presidency. The term 'post-truth' then became a popular term to define this populism, which is mainly portrayed by a binary antagonism between native and foreigner, such as Trump's accusations that Obama and Hillary are traitors of the nation for creating ISIS or China is the actor behind global warming (Sim, 2019; Cushion & Thomas, 2018). One could argue, therefore, the political antagonism is nowadays reduced to be more imaginative hoaxes than the more substantive antagonism.

Given the above explanation, in this article we argue that the populist turn in contemporary Indonesian politics actually opens up a space for democracy that is more substantive, unless the rearticulation does not end in a 'shallow' antagonism. It becomes more severe when the public is forced to become part of the subject in that superficial binary logic as discussed before. The disciplinary idea seems strongly playing here. In the context of this 'stagnation' of political articulation, the emergence of a documentary produced by Wachdoc Image entitled 'Sexy Killers' deserves a serious study. This is not to mention that the documentary can function as a tool for re-articulating democracy to be an actual substantive and radical democracy. Certainly, more documentaries and hard works are needed to make that trajectory. Notwithstanding, at least, this documentary is one of an entry point to criticise the binary dichotomy and offers a whole new perspective that is not fully captured in the binary logic, even at some extent dismantling the binary logic by deconstruct their fixity of meaning constructs so that there is no such thing as substantial antagonism. This study itself is limited to the study of the narrative discourse and political articulation contended in the Sexy Killers documentary which has the potential to 'subvert' the existing hegemonic structure of meaning.

Material and methods

A post-structuralist approach in criticising populist articulations in 2019 Indonesian election

This study is focused on examining the narrative discourse constructed in the Sexy Killer documentary which has the potential to subvert the binary structure of meaning, which now becomes a new logic in contemporary Indonesian politics. Following the post-structuralist tradition, Derrida especially provides an interesting approach to see the potential for subversion that can be produced by a documentary. Derrida

himself departs from Saussure's structuralist assumption of signifier and signified in language (Joseph, 2004). Where signified refers to an abstract idea or meaning while a signifier refers to a concrete marker or a medium that represents the abstract idea at the material level (in this case language, through writing/ expression) (Joseph, 2004). For instance, when we talk about chicken, the word 'chicken' is the signifier of an abstract idea/ picture of a chicken. For Saussure, this relationship between signified and signifier takes place steady/ static and apolitical. In contrast to Derrida (2016), who departs from this kind of thought, he is always suspicious on the signification system and also includes a more political analysis in seeing the sign relations with that meaning. In Derrida's analysis, the relation of signifier and signified is possible to be deconstructed (so that it is not fixed) with a reason to avoid the totality of language that might reduces the complexity of 'being'.

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To understand Derrida's ideas above, we can illustrate more simply with an examples of love. Love is an abstract concept but illustrates the existence of a special relationship between one and another. However, we can see in the modern era that there is a dominant signifier in describing the astract concept, such as the symbol of 'heart'. Furthermore, the symbol of heart is materialised to be a chocolate with a package illustrated by a heart picture. In this context, we can understand that the meaning of love has been transformed by the dominant signifier named chocolate. It does not stop until there as this dominant signifier ultimately influences the meaning of love itself which was previously spiritual (from heart to heart mentally) into relations that are material in nature - one must prove his love by giving chocolate. Anyone who does not give chocolate is considered not to have a deep sense of love for someone he or she loves. Or at least, he or she is considered lacking in showing his or her love to others. Perhaps, today love is not just conceived as chocolate but is also transformed into another new meaning constructs.

Derrida does not talk much about the idea that is related to the practical politics. Other figures also known as exponents of post-structuralists, namely Ernesto Laclau and, especially, Chantal Mouffe, are two academics who brought Derrida's ideas to their project of radical democracy. For Laclau and Mouffe, Derrida's ideas becomes an important tool to open rearticulations in politics and within liberal democracy. Laclau and Mouffe (2000) themselves consider that this rearticulation is the spirit of politics itself which cannot be quelled,

whereby political antagonism for both is seen to be inevitable and even good for opening of the space for all apolitical articulations to create change continuously. Trespassing the Saussurean tradition, the idea of 'never-completed sign' of Derrida is fruitful to understand the nature of meaning construct, which is always limited, hegemonic and even contested (Laclau & Mouffe, 2000). Furthermore, this meaning construct is then analysed by observing the fixity of 'moments' (discursive articulation) from 'elements' (non-discursive articulation) that signify the centre of meaning, or in Lacanian psycho-analysis tradition was called as '*point de capiton*' or nodal point (Andersen, 2003). The fixity of moments, as Derrida points out, will never fully capture the whole undecidable elements, which consequently makes surplus of meaning and dislocations. This conditions enable every dislocated element to dis-articulate and even rearticulate the established the centre of meaning constructed in a hegemonic political articulation.

The concept of the 'never-completed sign', which Derrida discusses and then is used in Laclau and Mouffe's radical political project, becomes relevant in reading contemporary Indonesian politics and the potential for subversion contended by *Sexy Killer* documentary. As emphasised in the introduction, post-reform Indonesian politics is widely identified with extraordinary progress in the installation of democratic institutional and procedural arrangements. Elections, for example, are no longer under the authority of the Home Ministry but under a more independent commission. The idea of the separation of powers has been undergone by strengthening the legislature. However, various institutional reforms have no impact on the face of Indonesian democracy where the game of money politics and clientelism dominates the logic of electoralism both at local and even national level.

With the emergence of the idea of populism, although in limited scope, at least it is able to provide a new colour/ new political logic, in which democracy is not only a matter of periodic elections but also how the ideas are raised during the campaign manifested to the benefit of the wider community (popular). However, the idea of populism itself, which is conceived as the open door for any political articulation to emerge in the table, is eventually reduced to become practices of personal cults and collective emotionalism, while the radical narratives that encourages the real political change of the system disappears from the public discussion, in this case the last Indonesian election. Instead of enabling the agenda of radicalisation of democracy, the bi-

nary opposition of 'cebong' vs. 'kampret' has downplayed it by reproducing personal issues or hoax news. Nevertheless, as the emergence of populism ideas that began to shift the old logic of money politics and clientism, this static and artificial populist articulations can actually be transformed (be rearticulated) in such as stated by Derrida that the structure of meaning will not be inevitably stable. It is impossible for the logic of 'cebong' and 'kampret' to be fully dominate whole narratives.

Furthermore, yet we follow Derrida's notion about the undecidability, it does not necessarily mean that the meaning construct will automatically change itself. There is a 'political guerrilla' that must be done by the undecidable elements to change the established structure. In this context, Laclau and Mouffe emphasise the importance of understanding politics as the art of changing the 'freezing' (and singularity) of the discourse to be more dynamic, including the emergence of the 'Sexy Killers' documentary. Interestingly, this documentary is aired through social media platform, YouTube, as a work of popular art.

In the history of contemporary politics, it can be said that the position of popular art has become a kind of important tool for maintaining public sanity. The emergence of documentary such as 'Inconvenient Truth', which was later used by Al Gore in campaigning the issue of Global Warning in the US, turned out to be successful in changing the ignorance of some US people about the reality of environmental damage which was also caused by industries there. At a more local level, we can also observe how a simple documentaries produced by Joshua Openheimer entitled 'The Act of Killing' and 'The Look of Silence' were able to encourage a more critical debate about what happened with the case of 65 and even were able to challenge the dominant articulation narrated by the Old Order production's films about The Movement of 30th of September – Indonesian Communist Party (*Gerakan 30 September Partai Komunis Indonesia* or G30SPKI). In other words, making art as a politics or politics as an art has a successful examples in the past. Indeed, it is difficult to compare the success of 'Inconvenient Truth' with 'Sexy Killers', but what we want to underline here is that the documentary is one of the manifestations of politics as an art itself, which has subversive potential to shake up the hegemonic and binary articulation of 'cebong' and 'kampret' that now dominates public and academic discourse.

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Results and Discussion

Political rhetorics in the binary logic: technocratic populism vs. ultra-populism

CEJISS
4/2019

When referring to Lim's work (2017) which highlights the latest Jakarta gubernational election, where Anis Baswedan-Sandiaga Uno defeated Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) - Darot Saiful Hidayat, we can actually see the nuances of siltation on populist discourse since that time. On one hand, it was often to see dictions of insult, such as '*bani taplak*' (the sons of table cloths), '*kaum bumi datar*' (flat earth people), '*onta*' (camel), '*babi*' (pig), 'Chinese infidel', which were more nuanced in the way each of political camp articulated their meaning construct, including the term of '*Ahoker*' for labelling the supporters of Ahok (Lim, 2017). Although, on the other hand, more substantive nuances of political antagonism were still present at the time by the presence of discursive war between the contested camps. This political polarisation leads to, what Hadiz & Robison (2017, p. 489) calls, 'confrontations between varieties of populism' in the nowadays Indonesian politics, such as guided populism, distributive populism and conservative Islamic populism.

Drawing on this political landscape, Mietzner (2015b) generally categorises the two contested camps by labelling 'technocratic populism' and 'ultra-populism'. On one hand, technocratic populism refers to Jokowi's populism which tends to be soft since it does not mention who the opponent is and focuses more on the narration to solve the problem of society technocratically (Mietzner, 2015b). On the other hand, as also argued by Hadiz (2017, 2018), ultra-populism, which later intersects with conservative Islamic populism, presents as a more antagonistic narrative because it is also wrapped in religious (Islamic) identity with the main narrative at the time was anti-Ahok as a representative of 'minority-infidel' leadership. The 'anti-infidel' discourse in this context must be read more carefully because, in political practice (especially during the 212 movement), they actually displayed a friendly attitude towards Christian couples, for example, who were about to get married and obstructed during the action. In other words, 'infidel' here connotes a special infidel that, in the definition of Islam, fights against Muslims. In the context of Ahok, his the technocratic projects were considered not friendly to the urban poor and Muslims in general. In other words, there were nuances of injustice which was actually tried to be sued though in the wrap of religious narratives (Djani & Tornquist, 2017). Accordingly, political antagonism in the sense that

it is more substantial works in the context of the 2017 Jakarta gubernational election. Notwithstanding, there was also the phenomenon of 'siltation' on the antagonism with the emergence of increasingly personal fetishism trends, which Ahok with *Teman Ahok* (Friends of Ahok) appeared on one side and Anies Baswedan and Rizieq Shihab on the other side, and the appearance of negative labelling (insults) that do not have the connection of meaning with more substantial debates.

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The 2017 Jakarta gubernational election has become crucial moment to understand the 2019 Indonesian election. Besides the adjacent time between the two elections, it can be said that Jakarta is also the representation of Indonesia politics not just a capital city in general. Moreover, media coverage was so massive in highlighting the Jakarta case and unfortunately participating in reproducing the binary construction in its superficial nature. The results of the election were shocking, as Ahok, who was actually a strong figure because he was juxtaposed with the big name Jokowi and was famous for his populist achievements at that time, was defeated. On the other hand, the challenger candidate, Anies-Sandiaga, was supported by Prabowo Subianto who was Jokowi's rival in 2014 Indonesian election. Given the facts earlier, the antagonism that has undergone silently does not stop with the appointment of Anies as the governor of Jakarta, but it continues on a larger scale in the 2019 Indonesian election, in which Jokowi and Prabowo again competed for the position of president. Unfortunately, this populist articulation between technocratic populism and Islamic populism is not improved but is getting worse, where the binary logic of 'cebong' and 'kampret' has dominated public discourse and neglected more substantial populist issues. Hence, it is not surprising that there are not substantial difference in the vision and mission carried by the two candidates. This condition has transformed the actual political antagonism that is considered to be radical to be more superficial and even destructive antagonism. There is no room for alternative articulations whose political ideas are more substantive in such hegemonic binary dichotomy.

The myths of 'Cebong' and 'Kampret': Efforts to dominate the centre of meaning

Following the arguments of Barthes (1976 & 1977), the hegemonic articulation constructed in the last Indonesian election is eventually transformed into a new and more connotative meaning. As discussed

earlier, the two political camps construct the fixity of their each meanings through rhetorical articulation, in which the Jokowi-Ma'ruf camp tends to construct the meaning of technocratic populism while the Prabowo-Sandiaga stronghold constructs the meanings of economic and Islamic populism. Both of these populist articulations contradict each other to maintain dominance in the center of meaning against the threat of rearticulation conducted by political opponents. In this case, meaning contestation occurs and takes place in two stages. First, as the preposition developed by Derridean (Laclau & Mouffe, 2000), there is always an inability to articulate meaning to capture the whole elements. It is this never-completed signification that makes each meaning indirectly reproduce surplus of meaning, where the political actors in each camp do not only construct the fixity of meaning through discursive articulation, but also, at the same time, they constitute the meaning constructs of 'the elements' beyond 'the moment' passively. This inevitable condition is often referred to be 'constitutive outside' (Laclau & Mouffe, 2000). Therefore, this latent inability makes any meaning construct always has a potential surplus of meaning that can trigger dislocation conditions. Second, furthermore, the logical consequence of the inability of the meaning structure to interpret the whole elements is the existence of meaning limitations that allow elements in dislocated conditions to actively engage in dis-articulation and rearticulation processes. These two stages of the contestation of meaning make each articulation has to maintain and dominate the center of meaning and, at the same time, destroy and deconstruct the dominance from the opposing camp. In such condition, ideological myths and fantasies then work.

Therefore, in the context of the battle of meaning, the fixity of the meaning construct that was originally denonative eventually turned into a new connotative meaning. The structure of the populist technocratism meaning constructed in Jokowi-Ma'ruf's rhetoric, for instance, transformed into a new signifier for '*cebong*' as a result of dis-articulation and rearticulation of the opposing camp. By way of contrast, the fixity of the economic and Islamic populism meaning on Prabowo-Sandiaga's rhetoric was re-articulated to become a new signifier for the meaning of '*kampret*'. '*Cebong*' which etymologically in Indonesian means tadpole becomes a new meaning construct for Jokowi-Ma'ruf supporters, especially on social media, as a form of insults from Prabowo-Sandiaga's camp, while '*kampret*', which means in Indonesian is

fruit bat, is made as a new meaning for supporters of Prabowo-Sandiaga. The use of 'cebong' and 'kampret' dictions is then very widespread and is commonly used by both sides in conducting disarticulation and rearticulation of the centre of meaning constructed by the opposing camps (CNN Indonesia, 2018).

The 'cebong' and 'kampret' jokes in the contestation of meaning later became myths and ideological fantasies that reduced the substance and real programmatic debate. One could argue, in the polarised political climate and the binary opposition, one can easily pout all political articulations from their opponents simply by saying 'cebong!' or 'kampret!' (Triwibowo, 2019). The connotative meaning that is not at all related to denotative meaning but can damage the effectiveness of the opponent's meaning construct effectively. The battle between 'cebong' and 'kampret' eventually forced political articulation in the 2019 Indonesian election, which had been polarised from the beginning, becoming limited to figures of animal fantasies. The articulations of populism built by the two camps were reduced to the battle of fantasy animals which kept trapping voters in the binary opposition. Therefore, it is no wonder if one of those who criticises Jokowi-Ma'ruf, for example, will soon be judged as 'kampret', and *vice versa*, someone who criticises Prabowo-Sandiaga will be judged as 'cebong'. The hegemony of articulation in political contestation is now exacerbated by the existence of connotative meanings which also reduce political debate and the real problem of populism politics.

Reduction of meaning that occurs as a result of the extreme polarisation and the binary logic in the last Indonesian election eventually marginalised important issues which were actually excluded in political discussion of the two candidates. Hegemony of binary articulation occurs, especially coupled with the existence of connotative and ideological fantasies, as if it forces other political articulations to merge into one narrative of the two: 'cebong' or 'kampret'. This triggered the stagnancy of alternative political articulation and the lack of emancipatory articulations on issues that were considered minor and did not sound promising during the electoral process, especially a few months before the voting day.

Sexy Killers: Deconstructing the established meaning at the last minutes

In the midst of the hegemonic of binary dichotomy, a documentary produced by Watchdoc entitled 'Sexy Killers' was posted on YouTube

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platform just four days before the voting took place. Some social media platforms and not a few of the mainstream media were stirred up with the documentary video with duration of less than one and a half hours followed by a drastic increase in the number of viewers (Kompas.com, 2019a). The emergence of new articulation with the use of social media like this basically succeeded to break the deadlock of binary opposition narrative in the 2019 election. The 'Sexy Killers' documentary, generally speaking, departed from energy and environmental issues in Indonesia by raising contradictions of development ambitions accompanied by high energy needs with negative impacts on the environment. As for the highlighted case, environmental pollution due to coal mining activities in Kalimantan Island becomes the main study along with the dynamics of business interests and the actors behind the mining. The title 'Sexy Killers' was chosen to personalise that coal mining is hitherto a very attractive business for all political actors, which on the other hand contributes to the 'killing' of environmental ecosystems including humans at the same time (Watchdoc Image, 2019). This 'Sexy Killers' meaning construct makes a new fantasy figure beyond the construction of the previous hegemonic figures, '*cebong*' vs. '*kampret*'.

In the documentary video, the structure of meaning about 'Sexy Killers' is constructed in many story plots in various places and cases where the effects of environmental pollution occur. The spread of coal mining on Kalimantan Island in the past two decades, for instance, directly had negative impacts on agriculture, plantations and fisheries, especially for the community of farmers and planters around the mine and also the Steam Power Plant (*Pembangkit Listrik Tenaga Uap* or PLTU). Among the adverse effects on agriculture and plantations is the scarcity of clean water which affects the decreasing amount of agricultural and plantation production. The functional shift of land use from agriculture to mining is also in the spotlight where land conflicts between industry players and local residents becomes a new problem. In one plot, it is described that functional shift of land use often sacrificed local residents by intimidation and criminalisation. In addition, the other damage caused by coal mining in the upstream sector is the large number of ex-mine excavated ponds that are not reclaimed. Former mine ponds, which were narrated to be more than 3500 ponds, have killed at least 32 people in East Kalimantan Province in 2011 to 2018 (Watchdoc Image, 2019). Particularly, this documentary video also cites one of the record of presidential candidate debates, which

shows normative answers of the two candidates regarding the reclamation of these former excavated ponds.

Another example, this documentary video also highlights the pollution and destruction of ecosystems and marine life, where coal barges pass by to supply PLTUs in several places, such as Batang Regency, Central Java Province, and Buleleng Regency, Bali Province. Taking the case at Buleleng Regency as for example, a constructed environmental issue is a decrease of fish catches around Bawang Bay, Bali Province, because of coal spills to the sea and destruction of coral reefs due to anchors of the barges. Another environmental impact that occurred there is a decline in coconut production in the plantation sector because of the air pollution caused by coal burning at the PLTU. The different case of air pollution occurs around the Donggala PLTU, where the surrounding community is vulnerable to acute respiratory infections, asthma, coughing and even lung cancer.

Populist articulation with environmental issues, which were not considered as the main menu in the meaning contestation between the narrative of *'cebong'* and *'kampret'*, is finally used to deconstruct the fixity of meaning construct built in the framework of binary opposition discussed earlier. *Sexy Killers* documentary explicitly exposes business interests including political actors involved in coal mining and power plants which ironically are in the two camps that are competing. It is stated in *Sexy Killers* documentary that there are important actors in the Jokowi-Ma'ruf camp involved in the coal business, such as Luhut Pandjaitan with Toba Sejahtera Group that covers several coal mining companies such as Toba Bara Ltd. in Kalimantan Island (Watchdoc Image, 2019). By looking at this business groups, next actors who became political elites in the Jokowi-Maufuf campaign team are exposed. On the other hand, important actors in the Prabowo-Sandiaga camp including the involvement of Sandiaga Uno's companies are also exposed. There are an emphasis and patterned information selection in arguing that the actors behind the coal mines, who contribute to the environmental pollution, are actually interconnected both from the Jokowi-Ma'ruf camp and the Prabowo-Sandiaga camp. The documentary clearly shows this connection by demonstrating the fact that a number of shares of Saratoga Investama Sedaya Ltd. owned by Sandiaga Uno was once sold to Toba Bara Ltd. owned by his opposite, Luhut Pandjaitan. Another fact, sibling from Erick Tohir, the leader of the Jokowi-Ma'ruf National Winning Team, named Garibaldi Tohir,

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is one of the owners of the Sandiaga Uno's company, Adaro Energy Ltd. (Watchdoc Image, 2019). These business relationships exposing as explained in Sexy Killers documentary video seem to explain that, although at the surface '*cebong*' and '*kampret*' are seen to fighting, in some contexts of economic interests, they are actually the same. The emergence of this kind of rearticulation in the last days leading up to the election certainly shook the binary articulation that had been taken for granted by the voters.

Given the issues discussed in the video above, Sexy Killers documentary has succeeded in dis-articulating the binary mindset of '*cebong*' vs. "*kampret*" by re-articulating an alternative populist meaning related to energy and environmental issues, which were previously neglected by the hegemonic articulation from the two existing political camps. This process of rearticulation is the beginning of a resistance against the binary narratives that occur throughout the electoral process by deconstructing the fixity of meaning construct of each political camp. The connotative figure named 'Sexy Killers' is constructed as a counter-narrative on two existing fantasy figures constructed in the 2019 election, '*cebong*' and '*kampret*', which excluded other political articulations.

Seen in this light, there are three important implications of the rearticulation process that occurred. First, Sexy Killers documentary has released the voters from being trapped in the binary opposition mindset that reduces not only alternative articulations, but also substantive and programmatic political debates between the two camps. Sexy Killers documentary has brought the voters to a more realistic meaning construct, in which real environmental problems occur and are neglected regardless of the choice of '*cebong*' or '*kampret*'. Second, Sexy Killers documentary has destabilised the meaning construct of the two candidates and replaced it with new meanings of 'Sexy Killers', which signifies the fact that basically each political camp has people who are involved in environmental pollution and join hand in hand for business interests. There is a drastic deconstruction of the crux in the binary opposition, which has previously been seen to be diametrical and insulated to be more fluid and free-flowing. Third, given the deconstruction on the deadlock of articulation, Sexy Killers documentary allows the emergence of other articulations outside of the binary logic that have been reduced. Sexy Killers documentary has constructed the meaning of energy and environmental issues in which this ar-

ticulation has become a new populist discourse from the grassroots by positioning 'cebong' and 'kampret' as political economic elites who basically capture the Indonesian politics.

Sexy Killers' effects: Re-defining non-voting behaviour?

In the midst of the previous meaning constructs of binary opposition, all forms of political articulation were canalised into two groups and any political behaviors outside of the two choices are often considered to be negative, one of which is the so-called '*golongan putih*' (white group) or the abstentions. Anti-abstention campaigns are often voiced by both political camps that compete with different meaning constructs. In the Jokowi-Ma'ruf camp, for example, there was an artist influencer named Ernest Prakasa (2019) who called on his Instagram account: 'Jokowi could lose' two weeks before the voting, this emerged as the electability of Jokowi-Ma'ruf decreased on several survey results in the last few months before the election (Kompas.com, 2019b). Non-voting behaviour is finally associated as a new signifier for the cause of Jokowi-Ma'ruf's defeat and the victory of radicals, so that this kind of behaviour is seen as negative and even seen as a part of a political agenda that threatens them.

On the other hand, the Prabowo-Sandiaga camp also constructs the same meaning that non-voting behavior will bring Jokowi to be re-elected as a president, and that, according to their populist articulation, will damage the nation's economy. Since a few years ago, the hashtag of *#2019GantiPresident* (*#2019ToChangeThePresident*) became viral on social media and was accompanied by political movements and declarations in various regions. Accomplishing the meaning that abstentions is a dangerous behaviour for the survival of the nation for the Jokowi-Ma'ruf camp, and dangerous for economic sovereignty and Muslims for the Prabowo-Sandiaga camp, makes all forms of articulation that exceed this binary logic are reduced. Therefore, the level of voter participation in the 2019 election increased dramatically compared to the trend of increasing abstentions since the reform era (Tempo.co, 2019). This shows that the magnitude of the populist articulations, which were constructed by each camp, and at the same time the reduction of alternative articulations.

However, the emergence of the Sexy Killers documentary video in the last days before the election has deconstructed the meaning of non-voting behaviour which was predominantly co-opted by the two

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narratives to be more open. Centre of meaning the environmental issue behind the energy business that was exposed has destroyed the fixity of the existing meaning so that it raises alternative perspectives and discourses in seeing public issues. Institutionally, the rearticulation process carried out by the documentary has deconstructed the established structure of power between political institutions and actors by allowing new definitions of non-voting behaviour. In the midst of judgment and allegations of binary logic as followers of '*cebong*' or '*kampret*', people or voters who are not in both are often associated with non-voting behavior which is often seen as a lower-political awareness, not intelligent behaviour and even part of the scenario of the opponent. Sexy Killers documentary deconstructs the way most of us in defining non-voting behavior earlier to be a form of political entity that exists in the society, especially those who are fed up with the binary opposition narratives that dominate the political discourse during the electoral process. Non-voting behavior is ultimately seen as a form of criticism on the two political camps who are hostile in the fantasy and connotative spaces, though, seen in the environmental populist point of view, they sit intimate in mining business affairs and together ignore the environmental issues.

Apart from the actual implications of the abstentions in the electoral processes, the rearticulation carried out by Sexy Killers has provided new spaces for the public to rethink the meaning constructs that are naively presented in public space. Therefore, as a consequence, it is not surprising that this documentary has been poorly portrayed by dominant political exponents, such as the response of Luhut Pandjaitan, or other political exponents who have benefited from an established structure of meaning (CNN Indonesia, 2019).

Conclusion

It cannot be denied that the public space in Indonesian democracy has been dominated by the binary opposition narratives in which political polarisation is divided into two fantasy figures: '*cebong*' and '*kampret*'. This diametric conflict departs from the original programmatic and political antagonism sentiment based on populist issues, such as Islamic populism, economic populism, pluralist populism or anti-radicalist populism, becoming more connotative and fantasy antagonism. This narrative of articulation is then reinforced by the presence of some prominent scholars' views, who has predominantly been known

in the literatures of Indonesian politics, that establishing the binary opposition logic (see for example Aspinall, 2015; Hadiz, 2017; Mietzner, 2015b). Alternative populist articulations are excluded and indirectly marginalised by the dominant centre of meaning, which was maintained and at the same time contested by each camp.

Through post-structuralism approach, every meaning construct is always viewed critically as a static, limited and hegemonic. Therefore, the impasse of political articulation which is mostly coloured by populist rhetoric from the both political camps can be seen as a hegemonic discourse. *Sexy Killers* documentary, as discussed earlier, dismantles the peculiarity of the structure of meaning in the populist rhetorics of each political camp and deconstruct a new structure of meanings. The partition in binary logic of '*cebong*' vs. '*kampret*' was deconstructed into a new signifier for a much more connotative meaning, where '*Sexy Killers*' becomes the nodal point. At this point, the populist discourse is re-articulated by re-positioning the sign of '*cebong*' and '*kampret*' as economic political elites, who both of them become '*Sexy Killers*' that threaten the environment and the people.

To conclude, this article argues that the process of political articulation in a non-binary framework after the 2019 election needs to be strengthened, particularly populist discourses originating from the grassroots, such as the environmental issues that are often ignored by mainstream populist articulations. Furthermore, this process of rearticulation enables every alternative articulation to emerge as a manifestation of a real populist movement that is associated with popular sovereignty. This is important considering that the populist articulations constructed by contesting political elites tend to be merely oriented on electoral incentives and the game of electoral democracy, so populist discourse is more trapped in rhetorical games and meaningless connotative fantasies.



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