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Silencing in Indonesia

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Ideological Background

- Indonesian politics has been under the long-shadow of the idea of power in Javanese Culture which highly valued the notion of 'hierarchy,' 'politeness,' 'omnipotent' (*sakti*), and 'grandioseness' (*kemegahan*) for the ideal character of a leader and for a vision of collective destiny (Anderson, 1972).
- In addition to that, there is '*sesengkeran*' concept (it's a kind of a forbidden room belongs to the nobleman where the secret lies and no one allowed to enter) in Javanese culture which quite influential in the way how politicians making-sense political practice.
- Pride and dignity matter

The Nature of Democracy

- *Parrhesia* (speak the truth frankly)
- *Isegoria* (equal right of speech)
- *Isonomia* (the equal participation of all citizen in the exercise of power)

(Foucault, 1983)

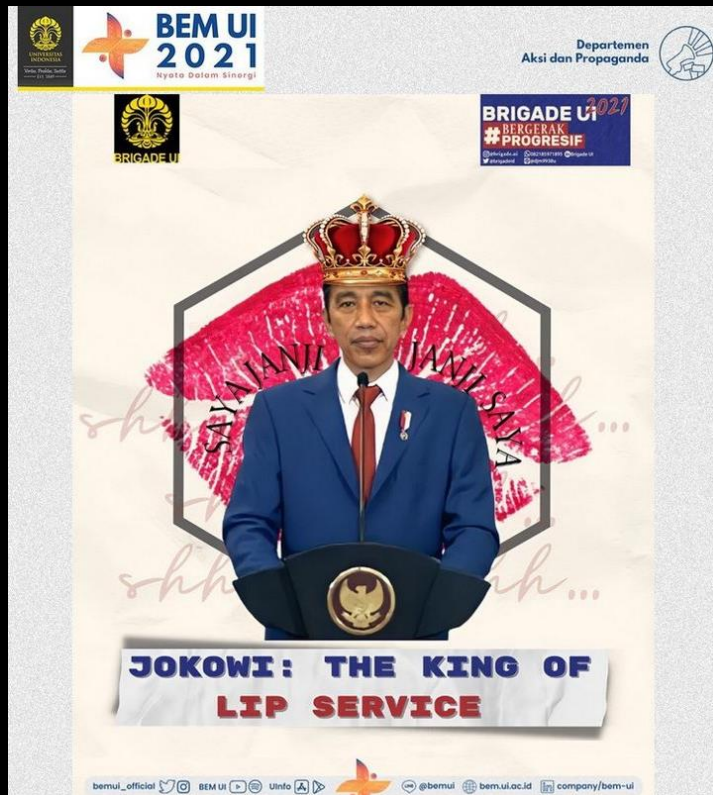
Democratic Challenges in Indonesia

- Rhetorically pro-equal right of speech, but practically maintain hierarchy and 'manners before substance'.
- Rhetorically underline the important of data and facts, but practically disturbed by critical or evaluative feedbacks.

Legal Tools for Silencing

- Information, Technology and Electronic Law
- Anti-Demafation Law

Moral-Based Silencing



Role Model Method

- It targeted famous or prominent pro-democracy figure by means of creating fears and worry for others whom willing to speak up in the internet.
- Examples:
Bintang Emon (Comedian & Influencer)
Haris Azhar and Fatia Maulidiyanti (Human Rights Activist)

Algorithmic Silencing

- This method was used to redeem public opinion and micro-narrative in social media by instrumenting manufactured online troops, allowing the pro-govt gets more likes and higher exposure for algorithmic recommendation (Rakhmani & Muninggar, 2021)
- This was part of larger practice of computational-propaganda in Indonesia which employed human, bots, or combination of both (Bradshaw Et. Al., 2020).
- Example:
Peringatan Darurat Protest
Gus Miftah Mockery

Conclusion

- The practice of silencing is deeply rooted to the political culture in Indonesia that remain persists even to the digital age.
- It is very dependent on the type and the scale of the narrative.
- Yet, the digitalization itself has gives larger benefit for silencing practice, since it create gray space between the real and the digital for the govt to arbitrarily interpret certain content as hoax or politically provocative.
- In a nutshell, “you are allowed to post and upload, but to some degree, we will drown your content, or, if necessary, we will take it down or send you digital troops.”

Reference

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- Inayah Rakhmani & Muningggar Sri Saraswati. 2021. Authoritarian Populism in Indonesia: The Role of Political Campaign Industry in Engineering Consent and Coercion. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40(3)