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Research Article

THE DISTINCTION AMONG POLITICAL HUMOR MEME CREATORS IN THE POLITICAL FIELD OF THE 2019 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE JOKOWI-AMIN PAIRING ON TWITTER

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ABSTRACT

Political meme creators play an important role in conveying political messages, shaping public opinion as well as the practice of decision making through the political memes produced. Political memes circulating on various social media during the campaign period of the 2019 Presidential Election 2019 largely contain hate speech, hoax and character assassination. Nearing the grand campaign for the 2019 presidential election, political memes were popping up everywhere, containing humorous narratives in conveying political messages and support to the 2019 Jokowi-Amin pairing, which were distinct when compared to political memes in general. This study aimed to explore distinct actions by political humor meme creators around the grand campaign for the 2019 presidential election for the 2019 Jokowi-Amin pairing on Twitter. This study used a qualitative approach with the case study method. Primary data were obtained from observations and in-depth interviews with political humor meme creators who produced political humor memes nearing the grand campaign for Jokowi-Amin. Secondary data were sourced from digital materials (political memes, political humor memes, videos, and digital media). The results showed that the distinct behaviors displayed by these political humor meme creators influenced by habitus and capital aspects which aim to describe tastes and form classes in their social structure. Tastes are not only limited to consumption patterns of food, clothing and culture, but also include political ways of political humor meme creators who use humorous narratives in political memes to show their social class by not resorting to hate speech in winning the Jokowi-Amin pairing.

Keywords: Distinction, Political humor meme creators, Political humor memes, Twitter

Introduction

The era of advanced technology has significantly transformed how political campaigns for presidential elections are carried out by political communicators. Development of communication and information technology affected the course of the 2019 presidential election contestation to a great degree. Winning teams, candidates and sympathizers chose to use social media as a channel for conveying messages and political support because it is deemed as effective, fast, convenient, and capable of reaching a broad audience anytime and anywhere (Insan, 2020). Meme creators are one of the political communicators that hold the power to shape as well as influence public opinion. Political communicators play a major role in the continuity of political communication activities, especially in the effort to shape public opinion in society (Gantiano, 2018).

Meme creators emerge as an important actor in conveying political messages and support in amusing ways, even though at times the memes they produced are destructive. It is also observed amidst the noisy 2019 presidential election campaigns on social media.

The noise coming from both Jokowi-Amin and Prabowo-Sandiaga's support camps on social media was definitely hard to miss. Their campaigns were rife with hate speech, disinformation and character assassination, ultimately giving birth to the *Cebong Vs Kampret* polarization. Furthermore, destructive political memes and the hashtag #2019GantiPresiden and #2019JokowiLagi are circulating on social media, including Twitter. Polarization and conflict arose due to differences in choices and support for the Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates competing in the 2019 presidential election.

There was an indication of excessive use of social media during the campaign period of the 2019 presidential election, as evidenced by the ascent of identity politics which greatly divided people, the alarming number of political agendas contrary to Pancasila, the worrying racial politicization, and black campaigns which has invaded the private domain, disregarding ethical considerations of propriety and morals (Latief, 2019).

Campaigns for presidential elections in the digital era have turned into a battle of political symbols and narratives, which is manifested, among others, in political memes on social media. Management of social media owned by political communicators contribute to the establishment of their positive image in the public eye (Aryansyah, 2022).

Memes containing destructive narratives are constantly produced and distributed on a daily basis by political meme creators from both camps on Twitter. As a result, Twitter has become an arena of faceless conflict during the 2019 presidential election campaign. Moreover, the conflict also spilled to the offline world shown by the donning of t-shirts with hashtags #2019GantiPresiden and #DiaSibukKerja printed on from the Prabowo-Sandi and Jokowi-Amin camps, respectively.

This situation and conditions draw people in and trap them in false consciousness where the use of political memes filled with hate speech, character assassination and disinformation is thought to be the way to win the presidential election contest. This situation can hinder social change in a better and positive direction.

The creators of these negative political memes have actually never been revealed. The following are several examples of political memes containing hate speech from both supporting camps.





INI KALAH MELULU





Nearing the grand campaign of the Jokowi-Amin pairing, political humor memes that invite the public to attend the Jokowi-Amin pairing's grand campaign at Gelora Bung Karno on Saturday, April 13, 2019 were circulating on Twitter. The infamous tagline on these memes was "Siap Putihkan GBK". In fact, these memes had on several occasions occupied the Trending Topic on Twitter because they were deemed somewhat as a breath of fresh air to the presidential election campaign which has so far been full of hate speech.









The distinction in political humor memes is what set political humor meme creators apart from political meme creators in general who often use hate narratives. This distinctive behavior is also characterized by how open they are in regard to their identity online or offline. Political humor meme creators have social media accounts that can be accessed by anyone.

The act of setting themselves apart, in Bourdieu's view, is called distinction. "Distinction are differences that exist in social structures based on agreements contained in these structures" (Bourdieu, 1991).

"The three consumption structures that differentiate class are food, culture and presenta-

tion of clothes used, physical care, use of household assistants and use of bathroom equipment" (Bourdieu, 1984).

From the above description, we can see that distinction occurs based on agreements contained in social structures and it aims to indicate an individual's class in the social structure and space. The consumption structures that become the basis for a person to carry out acts of distinction are food, clothes and culture.

This journal discusses the act of self-distinction of political humor meme creators around the grand campaign of the 2019 presidential campaign for the Jokowi-Amin pairing on Twitter with Pierre Bourdieu's perspective.

Materials & Methods

This study used a qualitative approach with the case study method. Prior to conducting observations and interviews, it was first informed to the key informants, which were creators political humor memes, the aim and objectives of this research. To achieve the research objectives, in-depth observations and interviews were conducted with the makers of political humor memes as the primary data. Secondary data were obtained from digital archives namely political memes, political humor memes, video, and images related to this study. Primary and secondary data collection was carried out from October 20, 2022 to June 19, 2023. Before the analysis was carried out, the data obtained was reduced and coded according to the theoretical concepts used in this study. Data analysis and interpretation were performed after data processing was completed.

For sampling, non-probability sampling with purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling was chosen because only these political humor meme creators were producing political humor memes ahead of the grand campaign for the 2019 presidential election. Digital tracking and searches have been carried out to prove that only political humor meme creators from the Jokowi-Amin support camp were producing political humor memes ahead of the grand campaign for the 2019 presidential election.

Results

In Pierre Bourdieu's view, habitus is a disposition system that lasts a long time dan can be moved; a structure that is structured and structuring. It is spontaneous and unplanned in nature (Bourdieu, 1977).

From our study, it was found that the political humor meme creators committed the act of distinction driven by habitus and modal aspects that exist in the creators of political humor memes. Habitus is experience, education, upbringing, external and internal environment.

Creators of political humor memes have extensive organizational experience, making them able to sort and choose the diction to be used in providing political support. They are also able to position themselves in an organization to avoid conflicts. Distinct family upbringing and diverse social experience of the political humor meme creators prime them to live in difference. Therefore, when differences in the choice of presidential candidates materialized, to the political humor meme makers this is not something that should be debated and questioned.

Political humor meme creators did not deliberately use the concept of humor in providing support to Jokowi-Amin. They incorporated humor instead because they saw no point in using hate speech in supporting the Jokowi-Amin pairing. To them, differences in political affiliation are normal and should not be exaggerated. Even though humor meme creators did not intentionally create political humor memes, However, the idea of producing political memes with a humorous tone cannot be separated from the historical and social background that shape them.

Meanwhile, the capital aspects play a role in driving the act of distinction by the political humor meme creators. The concept of capital promoted by Bourdieu is a strategy to maintain the existence and strength of an individual. Capital is a resource that must be owned by an individual and it is an one's resource to achieve a goal in its social structure and space.

Bourdieu himself divides capital into three basic forms, "... Capital exists in 3 basic forms, namely economic capital which can be directly converted into money and can be formed into institutionalized property rights. Cultural capital which can turn into economic capital at the same time can be formed into education. Social capital presented in the form of a degree" (Bourdieu, 1986).

However, Bourdieu also mentioned the existence of symbolic capital, "Symbolic capital is another way to embed the product of belief, power, position held, title obtained and embedding wealth from people who have prestige by an individual to gain legitimacy from his social relations" (Bourdieu, 1977).

In an effort to win the Jokowi-Amin pairing ahead of the grand campaign for the 2019 presidential election, meme creators have 4 capital, namely economic capital in the form of ownership of communication equipment including cell phones and laptops. The communication devices used are a representation of social class, namely the upper class. Their cultural capital is their education as a fine arts graduate, their job as the Head of Creative Brand Communications, organizational experience, and designing skills.

Their social capital is the network and relationships with fellow activists when they were members of the organization in college. The network continues to develop and is maintained even though the creator of political humor memes is no longer active as an activist. They also have relationships with followers on social media, considering that these creators are active online in winning the Jokowi-Amin pairing through their memes.

Furthermore, the symbolic capital of these politic humor meme creators is their bachelor's degree in fine arts and design which gives them the ability to design political humor memes ahead of the grand campaign for the 2019 presidential election for Jokowi-Amin.

From the description of the results of the study above, the act of distinction in political humor memes is influenced by their habitus and capital. Political humor memes produced by meme creators aim to reconcile the conflict situation enveloping a large portion of society at that time due to different choices of presidential candidates. They produced political humor memes themselves with being affiliated to anyone. In their view, hate speech through

political memes is rampant during the Indonesian nation's five-yearly democratic celebration.

Therefore, ahead of Jokowi-Amin's grand campaign for the 2019 presidential election, creators of political humor memes decide to use humorous narration for political messages and support for the first of the two candidate pairings. Twitter and the chat group application, WhatsApp, are their apps of choices to upload and distribute political humor memes for the first time on April 9, 2019 with a message inviting them to join Jokowi voters.





The next humor meme batch contains the invitation to attend Jokowi-Amin's grand campaign at Gelora Bung Karno on Saturday, April 13, 2019 with a tagline "Siap Putihkan GBK". These political humor memes represent various imaginary communities that exist in everyday life.





These political humor memes went viral, becoming Trending Topics on Twitter with the number of tweets reaching 25.4 thousand tweets on April 11, 2019 (Tribunnews.com).

This kind of political memes were again produced by the creators of political humor memes for the election day, on April 17, 2019, carrying a tagline "Siap Putihkan TPS".





For the voting D-day at polling stations, humorous meme creators created memes calling for people to reunite and forget the differences in presidential candidate choices which have always been the root of conflicts that occur in society.





During the quick count version of the vote count, meme creators also produced humorous memes congratulating the quick count version of victory for the Jokowi-Amin pairing.



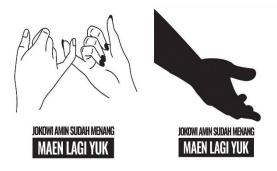


When the General Elections Commission officially announced the victory for the Jokowi-Amin pairing with 84,301,927 votes or 55.17% of the total votes and declared Jokowi-Amin as the President and Vice-President for the 2019-2024 period, political humor memes again made a number of humorous memes containing congratulations to the Jokowi-Amin pairing.





Memes calling for peace are memes produced by creators when the Jokowi-Amin pairing was officially appointed as President and Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2019-2024 period. The main goal of these memes was peace for the two support camps who have often been involved in conflicts both online and offline.



There is a multiply effect of political humor memes where many netizens ended up using humor to support Jokowi-Amin. The multiply effect of these political humor memes eventually spread across various social media and significantly alleviated the conflict between the two supporters.

Humorous meme creators choose political humor in providing support because it is less likely to offend any party. Not only that, humorous messages are more effective and easily accepted by all groups, given the rise of hate speech during the 2019 presidential election on various social media platforms.

Discussion

Distinction displayed by political humor meme creators cannot be separated from their habitus and capital aspects.

The habitus of meme creators is shaped by upbringing and education in the family, external environment and their life experiences. The creators of political humor memes are used to living in differences both in their family and social circles. For them, differences are not a problem, let alone the difference in the choice of presidential candidates. As a result, these creators chose polite narration packaged in humor in support of the Jokowi-Amin pairing.

The explanation above is a description of habitus as a structure. As a structured structure, habitus forms a framework for thinking, perception, representation and the actions of a meme creator which makes habitus a structuring structure (Adib, 2012).

The principle of respecting every difference that the creators of political humor memes uphold makes them refrain from using hate speech in support of the Jokowi-Amin pairing. The framework of thinking forms awareness and guides the actions of political humor meme creators in certain social conditions which eventually become a principle in politics. However, despite being shaped by certain social conditions, habitus is transposable; in other words, a long-lasting structural system that generally functions as an arrangement of practices and representations that can be adjusted objectively based on the goals needed to achieve what is desired simultaneously. (Bourdieu, 1977).

Even though the idea of conducting a polite campaign comes from the creators of political humor memes themselves, it cannot be separated from the structure that shapes their habitus. Therefore, habitus can lead to certain goals and actions even though they occur unconsciously to achieve the results of the intended goals, including without having specific proficiency to achieve such results. Regular patterns do not make habitus adhere to special rules. Therefore, habitus is a state of body and a state of incorporated history, in addition to a state of mind (Adib, 2012).

Habitus essentially is a combination of social structure, capital and reflectivity. It is evident that habitus is shaped by the influence of the social environment, individual interactions with their social world and access to resources. Habitus is not only limited to an individual's habits, but also includes their preferences, mindset, perspective in looking at a problem and how they interact with their social environment. All of these things exist in the creators of political humor memes that drive them to

commit acts of distinction through their memes. "The definition of habitus explains that an actor is formed by history, experience and the actor's journey in his field" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

As stated above in our results, the capital possessed by meme creators is economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital. Economic capital here comes from the wealth and material resources owned by the creators of political humor memes, namely the ownership of cell phones and laptops. Cell phones and laptops these days are essential technological resources.

These devices are the devices commonly used by the upper class. Both devices as part of the creator's economic capital indicate the social class of political humor meme creators.

These devices enable them to access information and communicate with their social structures as well as participate in political activities with groups supporting Jokowi. In addition, these devices allow them to access political news and social media on which developments in political dynamics during the 2019 presidential election campaign were typically posted.

As for cultural capital, meme creators have education, experience, knowledge, and skills as part of their journey, life experience and socialization with their social environment. With organizational experience, interaction with fellow political activists grants experience, knowledge about the world of politics, political maps, political systems, power structures and how a political process takes place. With their educational background and work in graphic design, meme creators have the necessary ability to create political humor memes that are different compared to typical political memes which employ cheap, underhanded tactics such as hate speech, hoax and character assassination

With cultural capital in the form of education and work experience, meme creators leverage digital technology information as tools in carrying out political activities. They have realized that technical acumen in the digital era has had a big impact on presidential election campaign activities. Thus, they chose to campaign

and channel online support via Twitter by producing and distributing political humor memes. The online domain holds tremendous potentials in mobilizing the mass to act in the offline world (Nasrullah, 2017).

The cultural capital also includes political culture where cultural capital helps in understanding political culture prevailing in Indonesian society. Meme creators understand that Indonesia is known for its eastern customs that put ethics, manners, and mutual respect first in social life. Therefore, they are very careful in choosing the diction and political messages in the humorous memes they produce so that they do not conflict with the ethics, norms of decency and courtesy that apply in Indonesian society.

Social capital is valuable for political humor meme creators in committing acts of distinction. It includes social networks and relationships owned by humor meme creators. Social networks and relationships make it easier for meme creators to distribute the political humor memes they produce. In addition, networks they have fostered since their organization days with fellow activists make them more thorough, observant and careful in determining political steps, in this case, supporting Jokowi and using humor in expressing support.

Humorous memes uploaded by meme creators and their social relations have received a positive response not only from Jokowi's support groups but also from the wider community. This was marked by the many responses of liking, commenting, sharing the upload and re-uploading the political humor meme which made the meme go viral because it was continuously re-uploaded using hashtags until it reached 25,000 uploads on Thursday, April 11, 2019, two days before the Jokowi-Amin's grand campaign at GBK (kelanews.com).

This viral phenomenon amused people and brought meme creators into the spotlight, as evidenced by the growing followers on their social media accounts, which then lead to reposting of the memes. This shows that the distribution of political humor memes containing hopeful messages and encouraging political support is increasingly widespread among the public. It also reinforces Bourdieu's view that

social networks and relationships as social capital have an important role for meme creators to influence decision making of Jokowi supporters, especially at the grass root level and also the wider community in general, as well as a form of affirmation to the public so that they do not fall prey to the domination of political memes that contain hate speech. "Social capital resulting from interactions in a social network structure is a potential resource" (Navon & Noy, 2022).

Many followers of meme creator's social media accounts which are also Jokowi supporters asked the meme creator to make humorous memes that represent their situations and conditions. This request cements the legitimacy and position of meme creators as a Jokowi supporter who do not employ hate speech material for the 2019 presidential election campaign.

"Positioning is one part of the process of social capital" (Basu&Bundick, 2017).

"This positioning is related to how the possibility of a certain affordability motivates the process of social capital as well as how users use this affordability to position themselves and others by encouraging accumulation" (Navon&Noy, 2022).

The position of meme creators as creators who support the Jokowi-Amin pairing results in their credibility and reputation. When an individual or group has a good reputation and credibility, then they would naturally have a great influence in making a political decision. Likewise, meme creators have good reputation and credibility by never uploading identity political narratives, political memes containing hate speech, hoax news and narratives containing elements of character assassination on their social media accounts.

Symbolic capital is the last on this list. Meme creators' symbolic capital refers to their artistry in incorporating humorous visual narratives and symbols while raising the reality that exists in the general public. The choice of humorous style in the campaign is able to shape and change people's perceptions of the Presidential Election campaign process which has always been synonymous with hate speech.

When destructive political memes are dominating, pressuring and attacking Jokowi's supporters, then through humorous memes, meme

creators employ language and visual symbols as an alternative way to mobilize support without hate speech. They provide space for social transformation where political messages and support no longer need to be conveyed with hate speech and the political vortex of hate speech no longer dominates and makes humans a political puppet for the purpose of hate speech. "Symbolic capital has been described as a form of 'meta-capital', representing the material order of the social world" (Gilleard, 2020).

Meme creators understand the norms, propriety ethics and manners inherent in the Indonesian nation, including political culture, political values and political practices which enable meme creators to understand political dynamics and political strategy. The use of visual symbols and humorous narratives in political humor memes does not violate the norms and customs that apply in society, while at the same time entertaining the public on social media. With the symbolic capital possessed by meme creators, consensus can be presented regarding what is considered good and what is not in political communication activities.

The multiply effect of political humor memes occurs because memes themselves are an identity that easily spreads from one person to another, "Digital artifacts that contain information on content characteristics and attitudes formed on awareness among fellow users are then produced, uploaded, distributed via the internet by a large audience of users" (Shifman, 2014).

Findings

Referring to Pierre Bourdieu, acts of distinction are divided into three consumption structures, namely food, culture and clothes. From the three consumptions, tastes and class of an individual can be deduced that set them apart in their social structures, as stated by Bourdieu, "Class taste and culture become something that is manifested to shape class. This principle is the basis for classification to choose everything that is formed and chosen together, both physically and psychologically" (Bourdieu, 1984).

However, in this study, we can see that the acts of distinction by the humorous meme creators are not aimed at setting themselves apart

in terms of food, culture and clothes, but in taste in politics. This political taste is demonstrated by the use of humor and polite campaigns in providing support to the Jokowi-Amin pairing. Through their taste, the political humor meme creators demonstrate their social class as a Jokowi supporter.

Normally, tastes and classes are shaped based on mutual agreement, both physically and psychologically. However, in this case, meme creators actually shape the taste and class of Jokowi supporters, considering that they produce political humor memes themselves without any requests from any party and without any ties to any political party. This was then followed by other Jokowi-Amin supporters who created political humor memes with the same concept so that the good taste of the Jokowi-Amin support group was reflected.

Reflection

Political humor memes made by meme creators indicate acts of distinction in political practices. The ability to grasp the meaning and purpose of the presidential election campaign is an awareness of the meaning of democracy which guarantees the freedom to choose in a political contest. Democracy requires differences in order to develop and prosper.

Democracy does not mean freedom to use hate speech and character assassination under the disguise of democracy, freedom of opinion and speech. Therefore, the ability to distinguish becomes valuable in order to think rationally and avoid the trap of false consciousness. Despite different choices, agreeing to disagree on different choices is a middle way for a democracy that continues to grow and develop.

Conclusions

The taste of political humor meme creators in this study is a taste in politic indicated by the use of humorous narratives in political memes made by political humor meme creators. These humorous memes can be a good example of good taste and offer educational value to society. Through them, political humor meme creators attempt to raise awareness among the public that messages and political support can be conveyed humorously without losing the essence and political support itself.

In the context of this study, we found that certain taste and class are not always exclusive to the upper class, middle class and lower class. The humorous narratives used by meme creators can be accepted by all walks of life regardless of class and social status. The message behind these political humor memes is peace for all because people have the right to feel and enjoy peace on this earth.

Political humor memes by meme creators leave a digital footprint that can be accessed anytime, anywhere and by anyone. This could be an example for the wider community for future and upcoming political contestations in conveying political messages and support.

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