



# CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING IN PHOTOS OF ANI BAMBANG YUDHOYONO IN HER ACTIVITIES AS FIRST LADY THROUGH SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS IN NEWS PHOTOS

By

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## ABSTRACT

Photo is an analog form of a reality, as the first order of a few messages that substance and has no place in developing the second-order message of all structures. The photos on the electronic media is visual studies that have messages that can be constructed. The photos on the activities concerning the study of semiotics Ani Bambang Yudhoyono in May 2009 - May 2011 can be constructed into meanings. The method of this study, used Roland Barthes semiotic analysis. The paradigm used in this study is the constructivist paradigm. Study of semiotics that is in use in this study is the method of text analysis to analyze the semiotics of Roland Barthes's on the photo activity occurred between Ani Bambang Yudhoyono with supporters around. The results of this study indicate that the text image of Ani Bambang Yudhoyono divided according to their respective areas of authority, such as relation between Indonesia and other countries, relation between the mother country with the bureaucrats, relation between the mother country with her family, relation between the mother country with the people of Indonesia..

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language operates as a symbol that interprets or represents meaning. Meaning is a function of language that the perpetrator wants to communicate which is referred to as a sign [1]. Signs represent concepts, ideas, or feelings of various forms that allow a person to read the decode. Decode means the process of interpreting meaning. Signs are studied in a semiological or semiotic discipline. Furthermore, to understanding something, the concept of representation can be used. The concept of representation is present in cultural studies. At the end, the shift in cultural studies in the social sciences and humanities tends to emphasize the importance of meaning. In this context, culture is described as a continuous process of production and exchange of meaning.

When the process stream shows the mastery of meaning on the source of the message, the semiotic method actually reverses the role of mastery of meaning on the recipient side of the message. All sides will establish a link called intertextuality. Intertextuality involves textual materials from many varieties, becoming cultures and seeking new text directions that the creator of the text in question is unaware of [2]. Various interrelated language signs the form a text. The term "text" comes from the Latin word "texture" which means knitting. So that the text can be interpreted as knitting from various language signs that give a meanings. This meaning then gives a representation. According to Norman Fairclough, representation can ideologically reproduce social relations that contain exploitation and domination [3].

Representation is the relationship between concepts and language. Both, allow the reader to point to the real world of an object, reality or to the imaginary world of a fictitious object, human or event. Such a perspective, Hall divides the representation system into 2 (two) parts, namely mental representations and language [1]. Mental representations attribute are subjective and individual. Everyone has differences in organizing and classifying concepts, as well as establishing relationships between them. Language is part of the representation system. The exchange of meanings is not possible when there is no access to a common language. Signs are often used for words, sounds, or impressions that carry meaning.

Modern civilization has created a new form of domination through power and knowledge [4]. This thought was strongly influenced by Nietzsche who said that "the desire for truth and knowledge cannot be separated from the desire for power". Nietzsche argue, the world is the will to rule, and nothing else [5]. Based on this, Foucault then questioned the forms of modern tradition, knowledge, rationality, social institutions, and subjectivity that appear neutral and objective [5]. According to Foucault, it turns out that this is a construction of power and domination. His thinking is considered to be in line with the development of post-structuralism and postmodernism. Although Foucault did not want to be included in any categorization. The power for Foucault argue is not something that just exists [5]. Power is a relationship that works in a certain space and time. He does not define what power is, but looks at how it is practiced, accepted and seen as truth. Power does not only work through mere intimidation and violence, but also through rules and normalization. So that there is no knowledge without power, and there is no power without knowledge.

The discourse describe from Dhona is related to who has the right (status) to state the statement, where the statement comes from, and what position the statement giver occupies [6]. For example, a President is the most entitled to say the country is in a state of "Standby One". MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia) is a non-governmental institution that has the right to label food, whether halal or haram. The Film Censorship Institute is an institution that has the right to cut, eliminate and prohibit films that are considered dangerous in the educational process.

Where there is an affirmation of power, there is resistance. In Foucault's understanding, social power has a considerable influence. Man is only a manifestation of an external, causal network of power. Power is ultimately immanent in every social relationship. For Foucault, all social relations are power relations. Here it is clear how social networks then place their resistance to the practice of power. In symbolic semiotics, this is the target to explaining photographic evidence. Photographic evidence as a text in activities that support the development process of a culture, including those owned by a First Lady (President wife). Semiotics as an approach lies in the attempt to symbolically explain each photo of a related event.

The Semiotic-Symbolism approach model can be applied to the study of photos of the President wife (First Lady). This research was conducted on the study of news photos of Ani Bambang Yudhoyono. She is the wife of the 6th President of the Republic Indonesia. He passed away on June 1, 2019. This research was carried out as a tribute to her. She is one of the President wives who consistently wears batik in every official state activity. Batik is a typical Indonesian clothing recognized by UNESCO. Ani Bambang Yudhoyono in his visit activities both at home and abroad uses batik. In this phenomenon there are signs of symbolism which is a form of construction. A form of construction that was successfully built by others who saw it.

From the introduction, the main problem in this study what is the meaning of the First Lady in the signs on the news photos of Ani Bambang Yudhoyono activities. This article argues that news photos about Ani Bambang Yudhoyono activities are cultural products, which create various meanings. This phenomenon is a representation of various realities that display various dynamics. Therefore, this study aims to see how the construction of meaning in Ani Bambang Yudhoyono photographs in his activities through semiotic analysis in news photos. The theoretical studies used include social construction theory and photojournalism.

Barthes argues that semiology should study how humanity interprets things. Interpreting (to signify) in this case cannot be mixed with communicating activities (to communicate) [7]. Interpreting means that the objects want to communicate, but also constitution a structured system of signs. Barthes sees significance as the total process of a structured arrangement. Signification is not limited to language, but also exists in non-linguistic things. Finally, Barthes considered social life to be a form of significance. Whatever form it takes, it is a system of signs in itself.

News images or photos in the media are called photojournalism. Henri Cartier-Bresson, one of the founders of a prominent photo agency known for its Decisive Moment concept. He explained that photojournalism is telling a story with an image, reporting with a camera, recording in time, which all takes place instantly when an image reveals a story [8] The photos produced and published in the mass media are photo press (news photos). The emphasis is on the recording of authentic facts. For example, photos depicting fires, accidents, evictions. The photos want to tell something that will then make people act. Photojournalism talks more about things related to the influence of images on the viewer. A good photojournalistic photo is one that has a clear message of an event, made with authentic



technological capabilities. It can be said that photojournalism is a medium of presenting information in the form of visual evidence of various events that are conveyed to the widest possible community with a fast tempo and time.

A photo is an icon of reality that is depicted. Barthes supports this view. The image is not reality, but at least it is a perfect analogy and it is exactly perfection [7]. Photographic images are the "reality of analogous perfection" i.e. no-code messages [7]. By analogy or even "objectivity" is a photo of a denotative message. In press photography, messages are created according to professional, aesthetic or ideological norms that contain many connotation factors. Barthes concluded that in photography there are 2 (two) messages, namely without code (analogue photography), and the other with code. For Barthes, a "message connotated based on a no-code message" is a paradox in photography. The message of photography can always be connotated. The public can say opinions, immediately, clearly and implicitly. On the one hand, the photograph is an object that has worked, chosen, arranged, constructed, treated according to the aesthetic professional or the ideological norm that has so many factors of connotation. On the other hand, the same photo is not only felt, accepted, read, connected more or less consciously by the people who consume it as a traditional thing in signs. Each sign presupposes a code that one should try to build a paradox on each photo.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research on photos of Ani Bambang Yudhoyono activities, Roland Barthes semiotic analysis was used. Use social constructs to help read every meaning in the photos, either negatively or positively. The photos on the activities concerning the study of semiotics Ani Bambang Yudhoyono in May 2009 - May 2011. The paradigm used in this study is the constructivist paradigm.

## 3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Social reality is constructed through by language. Language is a system of signs or configurations of markers. Signs in photography are a specific language that shapes their own reality. So that photo readers do not only produce a construction of reality in the photo message in the form of lines, curves, and colors, or the results of selection which then become the construction of certain signs. Semiotic theories basically try to explain these constructions in the reality of photography. Peter L. Berger argues that the reality of everyday life has both subjective and objective dimensions. Human beings are instruments in creating objective social reality through the process of externalization and internalization. The process of externalization is about how to influence it, while the process of internalization is a reflection of subjective reality. Society is a product of humans, and humans is a product of society. Both humans and society have a dialectic between the two. Society is never as the final product, but remains as a process that is being formed [7].

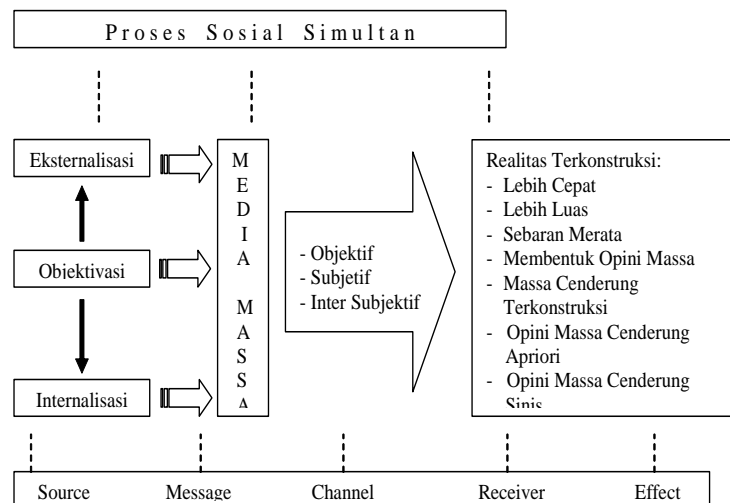
Social construction is the formation of knowledge obtained from the results of social discovery. Social reality is sociologically formed so that it is a science (sociology of knowledge) to analyze how a process occurs. In this case the understanding of "reality" and "knowledge" is separated. They acknowledge objective reality, by limiting reality as a "quality" related to phenomena that are considered to be beyond one's own will. Because this phenomenon cannot be eliminated. Meanwhile, knowledge is defined as the certainty that phenomena are real, and have special characteristics in our daily lives [9]. In reality, social reality does not stand alone. It requires the presence of a person both inside and outside of this reality. Reality has meaning when the social reality is constructed and interpreted subjectively by others. So as to establish this reality objectively.

A reality or event occurs in 3 (three) stages, namely, (1) the externalization stage; as the effort to pour human self into the world, both mentally and physically. (2) objectives; as the result of externalization in the form of physical or mental objective reality. (3) internalization; as the process of reabsorption of the objective world into consciousness, so that the subjectivity of the individual is influenced by the structure of the social world. These three processes are constantly dialectical to each other in the individual, in order to understand reality [10].

The construction process takes place through dialectical social interaction. There are 3 (three) forms of reality that are entry concepts. Among others, objective reality, subjective reality, and symbolic reality. (1) Objective reality; It is a complexity of the definition of reality (including ideology and belief) as well as the routines of actions and behaviors that have been established in a pattern, all of which are lived by individuals in general as facts. (2) Symbolic reality; It is all symbolic expression of what is lived as "objective reality". For example, the text of media industry products, such as news in print or electronic media, and those in movies. (3) Subjective reality; It is the construction of the definition of reality that individuals have and is constructed through the process of internalization. The subjective reality that each individual has is the basis for involving themselves in the process of externalization. The process of social interaction with other individuals in a social structure. Through the process of externalization, individuals collectively have the potential to objectify, giving rise to a new construct of objective reality [11].

Reality is defined as the quality contained in reality, which is recognized as having a being, which does not depend on our own will. Meanwhile, knowledge is defined as the certainty that realities are real and have specific characteristics. Peter L Berger and Luckmann's approach to social construction of reality has been revised. Now by looking at the phenomenon of mass media that is very substantive in the process of externalization. Subjectivization and internalization known as "mass media social construction" [12]. According to this perspective, there are 4 (four) stages in the mass media social construction process occurring through: (1) The stage of preparing construction materials, which includes the alignment of the mass media with capitalism, pseudo-alignment with the community, and alignment with the public interest. (2) Construction distribution stage; The basic principle of mass media social construction distribution is that all information must reach the audience precisely based on the media agenda. What is considered important by the media is also important for viewers or readers. (3) The stage of the formation of reality construction; The formation of construction takes place through the construction of the reality of justification, the willingness to be constructed by the mass media and as a consumptive choice. (4) Confirmation Stage; Confirmation is a stage when the mass media and the audience give arguments and accountability for their choice, to be involved in the construction process.

In reality, social reality stands alone without the presence of individuals. Whether this is an individual inside or outside of this reality. Social reality has meanings that are constructed and interpreted subjectively by other individuals. So as to solidify this reality objectively. Individuals construct social reality and reconstruct it in the real world. Establishing that reality is based on the subjectivity of other individuals in their social institutions [12].



**Figure 1. Mass social media construction process [12]**

The author categorizes Ani Bambang Yudhoyono news photos based on 4 (four) categories, namely: (1) photos that are categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between Indonesia and other countries, (2) photos that are categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between the First Lady and the bureaucrats, (3) photos that are categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between the First Lady and her family, and (4) Photos that are categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between the First Lady with the Indonesian people.

For the first, taken from google.com, here are (Figure 2) photos categorized based on the meaning of relations between Indonesia and other countries. From the photos in figure 2, it can be concluded that (1) The form of relations between Indonesia and other countries, is clear when Ani as a representative of the Indonesian state which stands on an equal footing with the super power country: the United States, which is represented by Michelle Obama. (2) The relationship between Indonesia and the US is seen in every gesture of Ani who is always in the central position, who is always surrounded and accompanied by many people around her, thus making Ani the center of attention at the event, compared to Michelle Obama. (3) On the regional side between fellow APEC countries, Indonesia blends in parallel as one in joint photo activities with other countries. A unified form of state power will make a great power compared to the power of individuals.





**Figure 2. Photos that are categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between Indonesia and other countries [13]**

Then second, here are the photos (figure 3) that are categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between the First Lady and the bureaucrats.



**Figure 3: Photos that are categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between the First Lady and the bureaucrats [13]**

From the photos in figure 3, it can be concluded that (1) The form of a power works in accordance with existing regulations and normalization. Ani has always been the most authoritative guest of honor in various state activities, such as giving speeches, or beating gongs as a symbol of the start of an event. (2) Power is everywhere, whatever Ani does is always the priority. Wherever she went, she was always accompanied by his subordinate bureaucrats, such as Ministers, Ministers' wives, and bodyguards who maintained his security and comfort. (3) The influence of power is also seen when Ani is always a leader. Such as meeting leaders, leaders of exhibition visiting groups, or coaches of state social activities. Third, the following are photos categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between the First Lady and her family.



**Figure 4: Photos that are categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between the First Lady and her family [13]**

From the photos in figure 4, it can be concluded that (1) Ani's influence was seen when accompanying President SBY to carry out state activities. Ani looks more dominant in each activity. In terms of criticizing, giving input, or fostering children, while President SBY looks more quiet, observant, and wise. (2) On the relationship between mother and child, Ani and her eldest son Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono. Even though Agus is an Infantry Captain, he still respects and obeys Ani's orders. What Ani advised became a mandate for Agus as a devoted child. (3) The maternal instinct is seen when Ani hosts and welcomes the arrival of relatives from her child. Ani gives advice to them like a mother to her own child. Ani also gave the same treatment to Agus, Ani's eldest son. Fourth, the following are photos categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between the First Lady and the Indonesian people.



**Figure 5: Photos that are categorized based on the meaning of the relationship between the First Lady with the Indonesian people [13]**

From the photos in figure 5, it can be concluded that (1) The relationship between Ani and the people, is clearly seen when Ani mingles with the housewives. Ani looks more dominant with the appearance of an educated First Lady. Every thing Ani said made her the center of attention as a source of information for the people. (2) The relationship between Ani and the people, can be seen when the people who are not bureaucrats, can come to visit the state palace. Ani holds full power to guide them from one room to another. (3) The form of appreciation between Ani





and the people is seen when Ani wants to respect the teachers, heroes without merit. Ani gave a sign of merit for them, which was represented in the form of an award given by the state to the people.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Barthes considers photography to be asymbolic, reduced by language and cultural codes that are the result of reconstruction. Humans create objective social reality every day. They recognize objective reality, with the limitations of reality as a form related to phenomena that are considered beyond one's own capabilities. In reality, social reality cannot stand alone without someone inside or outside of that reality. Reality will become meaningful, when the social reality is subjectively constructed by a person. So as to make this reality objective. Photos of Ani Bambang Yudhoyono activities are a form of the reality of the formal life of a First Lady in carrying out her daily duties. Through symbols, myths, body language, lip movements, eye gaze, clothing, or people around them. She became the main figure who created various emotional meanings that could ultimately produce her figure as the First Lady. Those who are responsible for exercising their power in social functions, economic functions, cultural functions, political functions and others.

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