

The Political Economy of Media in Reporting the Individual Candidate Bagyo Wahyono-FX Suparjo in the 2020 Surakarta City Election

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ABSTRACT

The 2020 Surakarta City Regional Head Election was in the spotlight of Indonesian newspapers *Solopos* and *Radar Solo* as the attraction of election is the presence of independent candidates, Bagyo Wahyono-FX Suparjo, who are competitors to the Gibran Rakabuming Raka-Teguh Prakosa pairing who were promoted to become a political party. With the difference in political caste between the two candidates, this study aims to dissect the practice of messages presented by two local newspapers in Surakarta, *Solopos* and *Radar Solo* towards the independent candidates. This study deployed Norman Fairclough's critical analysis method with approaches and paradigms of Vincent Mosco's political economy media theory. The results concluded *Radar Solo* tended to favor Gibran Rakabuming Raka in terms of choices and sentences presented to the audience. Meanwhile, *Solopos* chose a more neutral stance for both candidates. Messages presented by *Solopos* and *Radar Solo* need to provide a balanced space for the Bagyo Wahyono-FX Suparjo pairing. Various factors, such as the lack of optimal use of the Bagyo Wahyono-FX Suparjo pairing of media as a means of campaigning and the lack of a personal campaign agenda, influence this balance. Another significant finding is that there is a design and a more significant political interest behind one's appearance, which makes the dynamics of the Surakarta City Election run in vain.

Keywords: *Election, political communication, newspapers, candidate, discourse analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

The Surakarta City Regional Head Election (Regional Election) in 2020 presented an exciting rivalry. The two pairs running for mayor and deputy mayoral candidates have different political castes. The first candidates running for the 2020 Surakarta City Election: Gibran Rakabuming Raka-Teguh Prakosa, were promoted by a large coalition of political parties, Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDI-P), Golkar, Gerindra, PKB, PPP, and PSI. Meanwhile, the rival pair Bagyo Wahyono-FX Suparjo came from the independent route (nonparty).

Meanwhile, the pairing of Bagyo Wahyono-Fransiskus Xaverius (FX) Suparjo is the candidate from the first independent line in the election of Surakarta City since 2005. Bagyo Wahyono is a tailor by profession and his companion, FX Suparjo, is a teacher with electric welding skills. It is interesting to highlight the Surakarta City Election because one of the candidates participating in the election is the son of President Joko Widodo. An event can be said to have news value if it meets aspects of actuality or novelty, proximity, which involves the element of proximity to the reader; fame, which involves popular figures or famous places; and the impact of an event on people's lives (Fazri & Hartati, 2018). Of course, the news about the Regional Election in Surakarta fulfills the element of attraction and arouses public interest. Regional Election is a means for the community to select prospective regional leaders so that they are interested in knowing more about the ideas and ideas of the

candidate leaders they will choose. In another aspect, the Regional Election is an embodiment of democratic values. Countries that adhere to a democratic system, such as Indonesia, must have a strategy for choosing a leader using democratic principles (Rusdi, 2020).

Through the principles of democracy, space for citizens to exercise their political rights and take part in realizing the face of democracy is created. Tomas Mayer stated that democracy is not just a decision-making procedure, but democracy is a value system. (Rusdi, 2020) The use of democracy as a political system is based on the principles of freedom and equality for all. Democracy guarantees every citizen to be elected and choose according to his conscience. The presence of individual candidates in the Regional Election reflects the community's active political participation and breaks the patronage of democracy, which political parties and oligarchs of political parties dominate. The spirit of the birth of regional head candidates from the individual path to compete in the Regional Election opens opportunities for voters to measure candidates from the public who are considered by the public to be more qualified than just figures promoted by a handful of political parties elites (Desriadi, 2017).

According to this view, one institution that plays a role in building dignified democratic practices is the mass media. The mass media has great power in every event of a democratic party, both in national elections and regional elections. Media power can wrap up the candidate's image and provide space for the candidate to advertise and campaign. In a situation of political rivalry in the general election, there will be fierce competition involving more than one candidate, each of which is promoted by a political party (Ahmad, 2022).

The researcher believes that the 2020 Surakarta Regional City Election practically did not give birth to a field of intense competition and rivalry from the start. When the election candidates began, the mass media could already predict that the Bagyo Wahyono-FX Suparjo pair could not keep up with their political opponents (Wahyuningsih, 2021).

Media institutions have seen the inadequacy of the independent candidates, Bagyo Wahyono-FX Suparjo, who are falling behind in being a candidate for regional leader. Several preliminary studies used as references for the preparation of this research have shown that the mass media tend to represent particular economic, political, and ideological interests through discourse and texts in the news to the public. The mass media play an essential role in producing beliefs, prejudices, and dominance over social contexts. Research shows that the mass media plays a dominant role in presenting discourse to the public, primarily through the news of political events such as general elections and local elections.

Departing from this, this study aims to explore the representation of the candidates Bagyo Wahyono-FX Suparjo in the 2020 Surakarta City Election through Daily Solopos and Radar Solo in terms of political and economic power behind the candidate's coverage.

LITERATURE REVIEW OR RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Political Economy of Media

The political economy of the media looked at how the capital of investors engaged in the media industry. The goal of owners is the capital, of course, to get profits which can then be reinvested for the development of the media. In Vincent Mosco's perspective, political economy is the study of social relations, especially power relations, that shape the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources (Fuchs & Mosco, 2016). More broadly, political economy studies observing the situation and continuity of social life. This study explains how society organizes, manages its affairs, and

adapts, or fails to adapt, to unpredictable societal changes. In this context, survival means people produce the products they need to reproduce or improve their living and well-being to keep their societies going. According to Vincent Mosco, the characteristics of the political economy of media include social change, ideology promoted by the press, ideal and appropriate concepts, real actions in daily practice, especially with the aim of practical interests reflected in steps, and class struggle (Briandana et al., 2020; Litschka, 2019). Media is seen as a fundamental integral part of society's economic, political, social and cultural processes. This further places media within the framework of the production and reproduction process. Therefore, the media is seen as a means of capital accumulation. According to this view, the media as an economic, political, social and cultural unit is also in harmony with aspects of education, family and religion. This research defines communication as a social exchange process whose product is a sign or manifestation of social relations. Political economy is institutional analysis. The focal point, for example, concentrates on how communication is socially constructed, how social forces contribute to the formation of communication channels, and what sets of messages are transmitted through particular channels. Communication is not only the transmission of information but also the social construction of meaning.

Lee Arts argued that media and capitalism have a reciprocal relationship. Capitalism needs mass media for two reasons: to create consumerism and to grow an ideology that is in line with capitalism. Instead, the media need capitalism as a profit-seeking entity and set up a crypto market framework within which such companies operate (Klikauer, 2018). Meanwhile, in conducting a study of the political economy of the media, there are three entrances to explain the application concept of the political economy of communication, namely (Mosco, 2009; Singarimbun et al., 2019).

1. *Commodification approach*. Commodification is closely related to changing goods and services and their use values into products or commodities that have exchange values in the market. Within the framework of commodified media, it consists of three elements: the commodification of content, the commodification of audiences, and the commodification of workers.
2. *Spatialisation approach*. Spatialization is closely related to how the media presents its products in front of readers within the limitations of space and time. In this case, the institutional structure of the media also determines the role in fulfilling the network and the speed of delivery of media products to the public.
3. *Structural approach*. Structuring is understood as the process of forming a structure through social agents. Structuration concerns the relation of ideas between societal agents, social procedures, and social practices.

The political economy communication approach seeks to explain the influence of capital and the state on media content in the context of the systems that govern it. Furthermore, it operates because media organisations are linked to ownership and power relations that affect production, distribution, and consumption relationships in the media sector (Wasco et al., 2011). For this reason, mass communication is a field in which property and power relations must be studied. All material and intellectual resources, including communication resources, are distributed by power. The struggle for resources is shaped by power. The political economy approach to communication examines the relationship

between political, economic, and communicative systems and the institutions and organizations that shape them with history (Yaylagül, 2020).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis, introduced by Norman Fairclough (1995), is an interdisciplinary approach to studying discourse that views language as a form of social practice and focuses on ways of social and political domination reproduced textually or orally. In critical discourse analysis, discourse is understood as more than just the study of language. Even though the language is still used as the unit of analysis, the language here is used to see the power imbalance in society (Nurul Aishah et al., 2018; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2018; Fairclough, 1995).

CDA Norman Fairclough sees the text as having context either based on the "process of production" or "text production"; the "process of interpretation" or "text consumption" or based on socio-cultural practices. Thus, we cannot separate from the context to understand discourse (script/text). To find the "reality" behind the text, we need to explore the context of text production, consumption, and socio-cultural aspects that influence text production. In Fairclough's explanation, there are power relations, class relations, social struggles, and hidden agendas in every discourse (Guo, 2019; Qazi & Shah, 2018). The Fairclough CDA model is appropriate to use in this research. One of the advantages of Fairclough's CDA model is its contribution to social and cultural analysis and combining traditions of text analysis in a broader societal context. Fairclough's main focus is language as a practice of power. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to studying discourse that views language as a form of social practice and focuses on how social and political domination is reproduced textually and orally.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a critical paradigm. Vincent Mosco's media political economy theory was applied to see how the Solopos and Radar Solo packaging news about Bagyo Wahyono-FX Suparjo. The researcher looked at aspects of the text, text production and consumption, and sociocultural with Norman Fairclough's theory of critical discourse analysis of news messages delivered by Solopos and Radar Solo. The researchers deliberately present Fairclough's critical discourse theory because the researchers will use this model to dismantle the political economy interests hidden behind the discourse on the candidacy of Gibran Rakabuming Raka and Bagyo Wahyono in the Solopos and Radar Pos. Four news stories are analyzed in this research, namely two in Solopos and two in Radar Solo.

In text analysis, Fairclough (1995) sees it on three levels. The first is representation - what is analysed at this level is how events, people, groups, situations, and the state are displayed and described in the text. In the practice of discourse, the focus is placed on the production and consumption of texts. According to Fairclough (1995), at least three aspects build discourse practice. First is the individual side of journalists, the news writer itself. Second, in terms of the relationship between journalists and organizational structure both with fellow editorial members and with other fields such as marketing, advertising, distribution, etc. Third, news production work practices or work routines start from news search, news writing, and editing until it appears as writing in the media. Meanwhile, sociocultural practices are based on the assumption that the social context of those outside the media influence how the discourse that appears in the newsroom media or journalists is

not a sterile empty field or box but very much determined by factors outside himself. The sociocultural practice wants to describe how the existing forces in society interpret and spread the dominant ideology to society (Nurul Aishah et al., 2018)

Researchers see the reporting of Solopos and Radar Solo as research objects because these two media represent the media in Surakarta. Both media are also classified as conglomerate media in Indonesia. Solopos is a Surakarta local media owned by PT Aksara Solopos; most Akasara Solopos are owned by PT. Jurnalindo Graphic Literature. Jurnalindo Aksara Grafika was founded by four entrepreneurs: Sukamdani Sahid Gitosardjono (Sahid Group), Ir. Ciputra (Ciputra Group), Anthony Salim (Salim Group), and Eric Samola, which publishes the *Bisnis Indonesia Daily*. Joining this media group are the *Harian Jogja* and the *Monitor Depok*. Meanwhile, Radar Solo is owned by PT Surakarta Intermedia Pers, part of the Jawa Pos media group controlled by Dahlan Iskan, Erik Samola, and Gunawan Muhammad (Tempo Group) families. Citing data from *Media and Concentration in Indonesia*, Jawa Pos in 2012 housed 141 newspapers, 12 television, one radio, two magazines, 11 tabloids, one online media, and many more.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Analysis of Text

Three news stories sent by Solopos and Radar Solo are used as the object of this research. The first text is entitled "Gibran Rp21 M, Bagyo Rp1.9 M", published by Radar Solo on Saturday, 26 September 2020, on the first page. The main message of the title is that Gibran Rakabuming's assets are worth Rp21 billion, and Bagyo Wahyono's assets are Rp1.9 billion. Radar Solo's choice to place news of the wealth of candidates competing in the 2020 Surakarta City Election as the main report confirms that information on the wealth of candidates is important and deserves to be presented to its readers. In addition, Radar Solo sees that the main market niche for its readers is in the City of Solo. Hence, it seeks to provide information about the Regional Election in Surakarta City.

From the narration presented by Radar Solo, there was an attempt to explain the objective and balanced coverage of the candidates Gibran Rakabuming Raka and Bagyo Wahyono. This news is reflected in the headline, which contains the names of each candidate. The balance that Radar Solo tries to maintain can be seen in the number of paragraphs to tell the list of the wealth of each candidate. Both Gibran and Bagyo are represented through four sections to detail their wealth. In the news headline, Radar Solo used pronouns representing Gibran Rakabuming Raka and Bagyo Wahyono, respectively. Gibran is not defined as the son of Indonesian President Joko Widodo in the narrative featured in the news. Radar Solo chose to place Gibran's diction as a *Martabak* cake entrepreneur. Meanwhile, Bagyo Wahyono is represented as a tailor and designer. Although the pronoun shows a balanced relationship, the word entrepreneur has a higher sense of language than tailor man.

On the other hand, the choice of the title Radar Solo by placing the value on each candidate's wealth forms a different perception in the eyes of the reader. At first glance, without describing the background of Gibran Rakabuming Raka as a royal family breed, the reader can see that Gibran's wealth is far greater than that of Bagyo Wahyono. Comparing the candidate's wealth in the rivalry that was followed by the two pairs of candidates in the regional election could shape the public's or voters' perception that Gibran's figure is far superior to Bagyo's.

In addition, the researchers looked at Radar Solo's choice of the title "Gibran Rp. 21 billion, Bagyo Rp. 1.9 billion" it can be said that information bias. This matter can be seen from Radar Solo's choice to put forward the title of the candidate's asset value instead of choosing to place other facts, such as the amount of debt the candidate has. If Radar Solo decides to put the value of debt as the title, it will create a different perception in the eyes of its readers.

Meanwhile, Solopos, at the same time, published a news story titled "*ABY Terkaya, Wiwaha Tak Punya Rumah*". It means ABY's Richest and Wiwaha Has No Home. The news is on the front page but not positioned as a headline. Solopos chose a wider spectrum in candidate wealth news. As the letters of a name that corresponds to the formation of Arif Budiyo, the candidate for Regent of Klaten, the term Solopos indicates the figure of ABY.

At the same time, Wiwaha is a nickname for the Candidate for Deputy Regent of Sukoharjo, Wiwaha Aji Santosa. In other words, the comparisons presented by Solopos are not head-to-head between candidates in one electoral district because ABY is a candidate in the Klaten district and Wiwaha is a candidate in the Sukoharjo district.

Even though Solopos has a majority readership in the city of Surakarta, the newspaper decided not to put a title that describes the rivalry of the two candidates in the city of Surakarta in its main narrative. According to the researcher's analysis, the choice to set a title that does not raise the rivalry between Gibran and Bagyo is to avoid Gibran's already strong dominance in terms of public perception. However, in the news narration presented by Solopos, there is a sentence that describes the wealth of Bagyo Wahyono that is far less than Gibran's. The emphasis on the wealth of Gibran Rakabuming, who is said to be the second richest election contestant in Surakarta, has blinded Bagyo Wahyono's position to be marginal.

The next news item that becomes the object of analysis is entitled "*Batasi Dana Kampanye Rp19,7 M*". This article provides a perspective on each candidate's campaign budget limits to Rp19.7 billion. Radar Solo published the news in the Monday, September 28, 2020 edition.

In the news section, there is a narrative of campaign innovations carried out by candidate Gibran Rakabuming Raka who travels to villages with virtual campaign boxes. In addition, Radar Solo also recounted the activities of the volunteer team of Bagyo Wahyono, who visited the homes of prospective voters. Radar Solo is trying to present the same space to Gibran and Bagyo in offering information about the campaign activities.

Radar Solo made a narrative representing candidate Bagyo Wahyono mobilizing volunteers for campaign activities to visit people's homes. According to Bagyo Wahyono, 5,000 volunteers are ready to see people's homes, with a target of 2,000 houses per day. Meanwhile, Gibran is represented in holding more creative and innovative campaign activities. Radar Solo builds the impression of a close relationship between candidates and potential voters. Bagyo and Gibran conduct direct socialization by reaching out to the community. Meanwhile, in the same edition, Solopos chose to place the main photo of Gibran Rakabuming Raka's campaign activities which carried out socialization using a virtual box. On the other hand, in this edition, there is no news related to Bagyo Wahyono's campaign agenda published by Solopos.

From the analysis, the news of Solopos and Radar Solo during the 2020 Surakarta City Election campaign, which compared the rivalry of the Gibran Rakabuming Raka-Teguh Prakosa and Bagyo Wahyono-Suparjo pairs, did not formally present a war of ideas between

candidates. The reporting during the campaign period mostly contained campaign narratives carried out by the two pairs of candidates with a balancing view from the organizers, the Regional General Election Commission, and the Regional General Election Supervisory Agency. The reports on *Radar Solo* and *Solopos* did not describe the intense rivalry in the election of candidates for regional leaders at the local level. *Solopos* and *Radar Solo* tried to maintain neutrality and did not want to create a discourse that could influence the public's view of each candidate.

News Production and Consumption Analysis

The news narrative that *Solopos* and *Radar Solo* presented is consistent with the attitude of the journalists involved in preparing the discourse or narrative that will be presented to the public. Journalists certainly have their point of view to assess each candidate competing in the 2020 Surakarta City Election. Compared to previous elections, the working mechanism of journalists at *Radar Solo* and *Solopos* is different from what it used to be.

For example, in the regional election of 2015, *Radar Solo* assigned one journalist to follow the issues of each candidate. In 2020, *Radar Solo* did not do that. Journalists tend to monitor the issue of the Gibran-Teguh pair because their campaign activities are more intense than Bagyo-Suparjo. As for the Bagyo-Suparjo pair, only a few issues were being guarded due to the lack of activity.

Another thing that makes the 2020 Surakarta Regional Election dynamics less stinging can be seen in the choice of sources from *Solopos* and *Radar Solo* during the election campaign. Practically, *Solopos* and *Radar Solo* presented a few key opinion leaders during the election campaign period who could provide input or criticism of the program promoted by each candidate.

In several news analyses conducted by researchers, most of the sources used by the two media during the election campaign came from the candidates and internal organizers. Campaigns in political marketing will use various media, strengthening the narrative through opinion leaders from political, economic, social, religious, and other organizations as influential political agents and actors. Most of the sources used by the two media during election campaigns came from candidates and internal organizers. In terms of political marketing, a good campaign uses the narratives of opinion leaders from political, economic, social, religious, and other organizations as agents who can shape voter opinion.

In this regard, the Chief Editor of *Radar Solo*, Marsudi Nurwahid Prpto, thought that opinion leaders and observers had been given space before the campaign period began. Whereas during the campaign period, more activities were raised by the mayoral candidates to maintain objectivity. Meanwhile, the Managing Editor of *Solopos*, Syiful Arifin, assessed that some opinion leaders chose not to comment during the election period, especially regarding the involvement of Gibran Rakabuming Raka. He is the son of Joko Widodo, the President of the Republic of Indonesia. Opinion leaders don't want to offend the President's family.

The researchers carried out the results of the analysis and deepening. The Bagyo Wahyono-Suparjo pair, who came from the individual line, needs to improve as a candidate for the regional head. The presence of independent candidates is generally a form of resistance to the domination of political parties in presenting candidates for regional leaders. Bagyo-Suparjo did not do that. Bagyo-Suparjo legitimizes the victory of candidates supported

by political parties. Regional Elections are merely fulfilling democratic procedures so as not to give the impression that there is only a single candidate.

In fact, the two media in Surakarta: Solopos and Radar Solo, fully understand the inadequacy of the Bagyo-Suparjo pair as candidates for a regional head. They have a lack of political base in Surakarta City. They also rarely carry out political activities. The pair's success in fulfilling the administrative requirements as candidates from the individual route raises suspicions.

In the view of journalists as discourse makers, Bagyo Wahyono must have the criteria to be a qualified regional head candidate. This view was strengthened by the political behavior of the Bagyo-Suparjo pair during the Surakarta City election campaign, which tended to stay away from mass media coverage.

Generally, political actors who fight for the regional head seat will take advantage of the mass media, especially candidates not known to the public, to socialize and gain public sympathy. If seen from the perspective of Mosco's structuration (Mosco, 2009), social movements focus on changing the status quo, particularly concerning societal power relations. Whatever the issue, be it gender, race, environment, or politics, such movements usually vary in the makeup of their participants. The social movement makes communication very important. Bagyo-Suparjo at all does not present himself as a figure of a reforming social movement representing the lower middle class. Not all of them are taking advantage of the opportunity to appear against the domination of political party hegemony.

The existence of a dominant political power in Surakarta was a consideration for Solopos and Radar Solo to be "afraid" to investigate the information more deeply. This situation is supported by the silence of the Bagyo-Suparjo pair. According to the Managing Editor of Solopos, Syifaul Arifin, the choice to release the news on the Bagyo-Suparjo couple without further investigating the actor behind it is indeed a dilemma. It's just that, as local media are hit hard by meeting with political figures involved in the regional election quite intensely every day, the decision to only present news on the surface is the safest editorial choice.

In this situation, it can be seen that Solopos and Radar Solo were carried away by the flow of political designs built by the dominant and hegemonic enormous political forces. The media, which should have been part of the birth of an honest and open democratic process, ended up being carried away by deliberately distorting democracy which harmed the public in the context of obtaining accurate and educated information.

For the media, information about a prominent political design to win the candidate Gibran Rakabuming in the 2020 Surakarta regional election was widely heard. However, their choice is to let this information only become unconfirmed rumours or intentionally not confirmed because they consider the risk factors for the sustainability of the media business and the security of journalists. Solopos and Radar Solo, as local media, have an interest in the sustainability of their business and continue to maintain business interest relationships with local governments, entrepreneurs, local political party leaders, and most importantly, the future mayor who is elected.

Sociocultural Analysis

The Surakarta regional election, when viewed from its history, has never been separated from the domination of the candidates promoted by the PDI Perjuangan (PDI-P). Not only in regional elections, but PDI-P is also very dominant in legislative elections. In other words, the

party with the symbol of a bull with a white snout has a strong supporter and voter base in Surakarta and its surroundings. PDI-P always won in the three previous regional elections, namely 2005, 2010, and 2015. PDI-P domination in Surakarta City is reflected in the dominance of up to 30 parliamentary seats in the Surakarta City (DPRD), which PDIP has always controlled since the 1999 election era.

Solopos and Radar Solo fully understand the dominance of the PDI-P in Surakarta, the party led by Megawati Sukarno Putri, former president of the Republic of Indonesia and daughter of Soekarno, the founder of the Republic of Indonesia. Thus, the media's perspective on the regional election event is more directed at the candidates endorsed by PDI-P rather than political parties or other candidates coming from independent paths.

Solopos and Radar Solo admit that the 2020 Surakarta City regional election's appeal lies in determining the candidates supported by PDI-P. The PDI-P's internal excitement in looking for pairs of candidates to be carried in the regional elections is more often the main focus on the front pages of Solopos and Radar Solo.

As a political party with roots in Surakarta, the dynamics that occur in PDI-P are much more interesting in the framework of mass media coverage, both Solopos and Radar Solo. This situation also indicates that more than the existence of individual candidates who appear as competitors in the regional election arena is needed to attract media attention.

Muchus Budi Rahayu, a social observer and the Head of the Detik.com Editorial Bureau for Central Java & DIY, explained that the political choices of the people of Solo are indeed stronger for the PDI-P. As seen in the following excerpt:

"There was a kind of joke in Solo, the road markings were given a PDIP uniform, and they won. It seems that Solo voters don't want their city to be polluted if the PDIP loses in their city. If he loses, it's like an embarrassment to his nationalism" mentions Rahayu

This situation is reinforced by Joko Widodo's strong political roots in the city of Surakarta. As the first mayor to be directly elected in two election periods, 2005 and 2010, Joko Widodo has very strong political supporters. This condition also influenced voters' perceptions of the figure of Gibran Rakabuming, Joko Widodo's son, who became a political rival to Bagyo Wahyono. This condition also influenced the perspective of media such as Solopos and Radar Solo towards the emergence of Bagyo Wahyono-Suparjo in the Surakarta City Regional Election. As a candidate from the individual route who does not have a strong political basis, the media also needs help exploring the attractive side of the respective partner in terms of political roots.

The strong dominance of PDI-P was also emphasized by a political analyst from Sahid University, Dr. Algooth Putranto. From a broader perspective, Central Java is the basis of PDI-P. The grip of PDI-P is getting stronger with the figure of Joko Widodo. In other words, when the regional head candidate from the PDI-P won the Surakarta City Election, that dominance became clear evidence.

On the other side, the emergence of Bagyo Wahyono as a candidate from the individual path, said Algooth, raised many questions. The man who works as a tailor already has enough support to become a candidate for Mayor of Surakarta through an independent route. Not half-hearted, he pocketed 38,831 votes to advance in the regional elections. The requirement to run through the individual path in the regional election in Surakarta City is

enough to have 35,870 supporters (Rofiq & Wibowo, 2020). Many considered that the presence of the pair Bagyo Wahyono and F.X Supardjo as a challenger to the president's son was the result of an arrangement so that it would appear that Gibran-Teguh would not fight an empty box.

"In Surakarta, Bagyo-Parjo is not clear, nor is he an informal figure. If the map is 'dig' in Surakarta, he also doesn't dig [has power]. They will not go there if they are called Islamic hardliners. Among Catholics, its representatives are also common. You know why it pops up. Of course, it's suspicious. He makes me believe that Bagyo-Parjo was designed. The puppeteer introduced it because it didn't make any sense," said Rahayu

DISCUSSION

Reports of Radar Solo and Solopos do not describe the intense competition in the election of regional head candidates at the local level. Solopos and Radar Solo are trying to maintain neutrality and do not want to create a discourse that can influence each candidate's public views.

Solopos and Radar Pos perpetuate the political hegemony of the PDI- and Joko Widodo by not trying to investigate the two candidate pairs. The two media outlets did not question the fact that Gibran's candidacy previously drew criticism because, in the internal PDI-P regulations, there is a minimum requirement of three years as a cadre to run as a regional head. Meanwhile, the eldest son of President Joko Widodo is known to have just registered as a PDIP cadre in September 2019, which means he has only been a member of the PDI-P party for four months. Apart from that, Solopos and Radar Solo were not critical of Bagyo Wahyono's candidacy, which they knew was "fabricated" so that Gibran Rakabuming would not appear as the only candidate, alias against an empty box.

This matter further proves that Solopos and Radar Solo have chosen to play it safe so that the continuity of the business going forward is maintained. They did not want to disturb the dominance of Gibran, the son of the President. As Mosco (2009) says, economic interests influence news support's color and choice.

The competition for the candidates for Gibran and Bagyo in the Surakarta City regional election is said to be a symbolic or pseudo-competition that was created to fulfill the election procedure in Surakarta. This view of pseudo-competition arose because of the emergence of the Bagyo-Suparjo pair as individual candidates, not purely as a form of social resistance against the domination of political parties in regional head elections.

Rusdi (2020) mentions that four aspects are the background for the emergence of individual candidates in the elections in Indonesia. First, as a form of public distrust of candidates from political parties. Second, there is public political awareness of regional change. Third, avoiding internal conflicts with political parties, and fourth, creating cheaper political costs. The presence of Bagyo-Suparjo as a non-political party candidate needs to fulfill these four elements. The nomination of Bagyo-Suparjo does not represent the wishes of the people of Surakarta for change. The presence of Bagyo-Suparjo was even questioned by many people regarding who was the mastermind behind it. Reflecting on the study of Harahap and Sirait (2022) in the City of Padangsidempuan, the presence of candidates from the individual route raises expectations from the public for candidates who are more qualified than candidates promoted by political parties. Thus, the presence of individual candidates can

increase support, increase community participation, and create an accommodative and democratic regional election (Harahap & Sirait, 2022).

In terms of the quality of candidates, Bagyo-Suparjo is far from being a visionary figure and has a strong leadership spirit to appear as a candidate for the regional head. Suppose the electorate wants a change in their area by placing their hopes on independent candidates (Murti Samadi & Rukmi, 2022). Solopos and Radar Solo saw the main factor that made the election rivalry less intense. The independent candidates did not make many breakthroughs and needed a campaign strategy that would attract public attention. Solopos and Radar Solo considered that the campaign strategy of the Bagyo-Suparjo pair was inferior to that of Gibran-Teguh. Candidate Gibran issued various campaign innovations to capture public votes; on the other hand, Bagyo-Suparjo had yet to have any main campaign activities that would attract media attention.

Another thing that makes the 2020 Surakarta City Election dynamics less stinging can be seen from the choice of sources placed by Solopos and Radar Solo during the election campaign period. Practically, Solopos and Radar Solo presented a few key opinion leaders during the election campaign period who could provide input or criticism of the program promoted by each candidate. In several news analyses conducted by researchers, most of the sources used by the two media during the election campaign came from the candidates and internal organizers.

Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel (2021) say that whatever the media is used, journalism must function to create a forum where the public is reminded of the issues that matter, encouraging citizens to make judgments and take a stand. Thus, journalism must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise. Democracy is ultimately built on compromise. This forum was built on journalism principles: honesty, facts, and verification. Forums that are not based on facts will fail to inform the public. A debate involving prejudice and mere suspicion will only inflame the anger and emotions of the people. Debates that only raise the extreme sides of the prevailing opinion do not serve the public but ignore the public. Equally important, these forums should cover all community sections, not just the economically powerful or the demographics that are attractive to advertising targets (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021). From this aspect, Solopos and Radar Solo do not fulfill this element.

CONCLUSION

Solopos and Radar Solo represent the two candidates for mayor of Surakarta in the same format. They support the couple Gibran Rakabuming Raka and Teguh Prakosa. This can be seen from these two media composing news texts and narratives. They highlighted Gibran more than Bagyo. They seem to want to perpetuate their election, Gibran

Solopos and Radar Solo also ignored principle number 6 of the nine elements of journalism sparked by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel (2001); journalism must provide a forum for criticism and comments from the public. These two media have proven not to provide room for opinion leaders to criticize the nomination process for the unfair candidate. Recognition by the leaders of Solopos and Radar Solo who did not want to "ruin" relations with the local Surakarta elite, including their families Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia, with consideration on the continuity of the media business. This proves that there is economic and political power that controls the newsroom.

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