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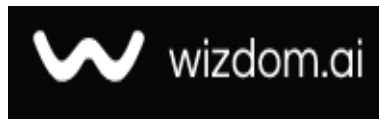
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The Sheath Warrior Returns: Identity and Ideology of the Nation

Kembalinya Pejuang Bersarung: Identitas dan Ideologi Bangsa

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Abstract

This research focuses on non-verbal communication of sarong worn by Ma'ruf Amin as the candidate of Vice President of Republic Indonesia for the period of 2019-2024 who had been declared by the public election commission (KPU) on June 28, 2019. To analyze the meaning of sarong, the researchers use semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce. The findings indicate that sarong denotatively means a piece of cloth which is sewn at its end to become a kind of tube to cover part of man's body especially his stomach and below. Furthermore, sarong has very deep meaning, they are showing self-identity, local culture, the symbol of resistance to the culture of the west, it shows sincerity, complex way of thinking, flexibility, elegance, smart thinking, and excellent morality.

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Introduction

Presidential public election 2019 is considered the most unique public election in Indonesia (bbc.com, 2019). Why is it so? First, the public election has two contestants, one of whom has been three times joining this competition but unfortunately he has not been successful yet. Second, this public election is a competition between Islamic cleric and non-clerical contention. On the one hand, Prabowo's coalition always declares a coalition who gives honor to clerics. However, Prabowo has his own chemistry to Sandiaga Uno instead of one of clerics proposed by his followers. On the other hand, Jokowi prefers choosing the senior and reputable cleric, Ma'ruf Amin.

There are three basic reasons why Jokowi preferred Ma'ruf than other prospective candidates. First, Ma'ruf is not an ordinary person. He was the Chairman of MUI (Indonesian Ulema Council). It is the biggest Islamic organization in Indonesia who has the authority to issue the certificate of *halal*. Anybody wanting to open a new line of business either goods or services should apply for certificate of *halal* to assure that the product is safe for Moslems (Kompas.com, 2018). Second, Ma'ruf is the senior and great Ulema. Third, Jokowi is the member of Nahdiyin (NU), the biggest Islamic organization in Indonesia and in the world (Mustaqim, 2015). Base of a survey of Alvara Research Center published by Kompas, NU is the biggest organization of Moslem in Indonesia, reaching 69.3% and the second is Muhammadiyah (14.5%) and the third is Indonesian defense front (FPI) for 9%, Al Wasliyah 1.1%, and Persis 0.4%.

His decision to choose Ma'ruf is really surprising. His decision is below the expectation of public. The public is expecting someone who is already familiar and is credible but Jokowi has a privilege to decide his partner to challenge Prabowo and Sandi. His choice is announced lastly (Jawapos.com, 2018).

Identically, when someone is going to be assigned a president, let's take an example of the president of the United States, one thing journalists and attendees are wanting to know is the new president but the appearance of the First Lady (Batampos.co.id, 2017). The appearance of the First Lady is identical with the one shown by Ma'ruf Amin as the assigned vice president for 2019-2024. It is not only because of his character of being conservative, traditional, or even primitive (Solihin, 2014). The purpose of this research is to find out the meaning of sarong as represented by Ma'ruf Amin, the vice president for 2019-2024 period using semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce.

Methods

It is a descriptive qualitative research with semiotics as the data analysis. Semiotics is used to analyze signs especially the sign of sarong worn by Ma'ruf Amin. Semiotics is used to explore how humanity defines things. The meaning of things does not deliver information but also constitute system of sign. Semiotics in this research is semiotics of triadic (three basic elements) of Charles Sanders Peirce (Sobur, 2006; Piliang, 2008; Copley & Jansz, 1997).

Result and Discussion

Whenever possible, Ma'ruf always wears sarong. He prefers wearing sarong and sandals instead of shoes and *peci* (hat) for his head. It seems it is difficult to see him without any of these properties. Ma'ruf always wear these things when he has to attend any kinds of occasion including a meeting to declare the elected president and vice president 2019-2024.

The question is that why does Ma'ruf always wear sarong instead of international clothes? Is there any message he is going to deliver to public? Is it just an ordinary habit he has been doing since he was a student of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school). In this part, it is a discussion of non-verbal communication of Ma'ruf Amin in term of his artifact especially his habit of wearing sarong. The discussion starts from defining meaning of clothes using semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce (1995) where meaning is divided into two parts; denotative and connotative meanings. Denotative meaning is the real meaning which can be found out in the dictionary but connotative meaning is the hidden meaning or figurative meaning.

Denotatively, sarong is just a piece of long and wide clothes (1 meter wide and 2 meter long) where its end is tailored so that it becomes a tube. It is usually to cover part of the body (stomach and below) by bandaging it on his stomach. This kind of clothing can be easily found in mosques and other venues. It is not only for formal events but for relax situation; in mosques and in public places such as markets, at home, etc. it has many functions; it can maintain warm body when it is cold. It can also be a wide bag to carry things. It can be table cloth. It can be for formal and informal occasions. Ma'ruf wore sarong when he had to attend the meeting at KPU office to declare Jokowi-Ma'ruf as president and vice president. Ma'ruf wore green sarong for bottom and white coat for his top and scarf for his neck and at last, he wore black *peci* (hat) for his head.

Connotatively, sarong means many things. Sobur said that communication without words and language is one of the non-verbal communication, a sign with no spoken language and no word (Sobur, 2013: 122). Non-verbal

communication according to Burgoon (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009:159) are kinetics (the movement of the body), paralanguage (voice), self appearance, haptics (touch), proxemics (distance), chronemics (time), and artifact (object). Non-verbal communication shown by Ma'ruf belongs to artifact i.e. clothes he usually wears.

Sarong in Indonesia is identical with the culture of Islam. Sarong, for part Indonesian people, is really honorable since it shows high quality of politeness. It is unavoidable that the majority of Indonesian people wear sarong to pray in mosques. Sarong for most people is a multi-season clothes; it is suitable in any venues. It is also acceptable to be implemented at home, in mosque, in parties, and in other public places where people gather.

Jokowi and Ma'ruf are extraordinary persons. They are very unique in dressing. Jokowi is identical with white long sleeve shirt, while Ma'ruf is familiar with sarong for his attire. Jokowi wears white shirt with folding sleeves and black trousers. He does wear shirt and tie only in a certain occasion. Basically he has his own style.

The researcher observed and searched for this phenomenon via researching articles in journals to see the message Ma'ruf is going to deliver. First, sarong means identity as part of the identity of the nation. Gus Dur said that Islam did not come to Indonesia to change Indonesia culture with the one of Arabic. It does not change 'I' into 'anna', 'you' into 'antum', 'brother' into 'akhi'. We have to prevent our own culture. We should absorb his teaching but it is not necessary to adapt his culture (Arabic culture). Sarong and *Peci* are identical with Islam of Nusantara (Indonesia). Moslem in Indonesia do not wear long dress (cloak) to replace shirt and trousers and a piece of small cloth to cover his head. Indonesians are mostly Moslem but we still have to stick on our own culture. Furthermore Soekarno, the first President of Indonesia said "if you are Hinduism, don't be an Indian, if you are Moslem, don't be an Arabic, if you are Christian, don't be a Jewish. You should be Indonesians who have our own culture. Indonesians should be faithful to the religion but not the culture where the religion was born.

Sarong is a very simple clothes but it varies in style and details. It shows that our ways of thinking in the society should bring benefits for other. We should learn from sarong. It is flexible as we have to be flexible in getting along with different people with their different culture. We have to keep the difference as a competitive advantage as Indonesia has thousands of islands and languages, faiths, and culture.

Second, sarong shows identity of self. Ma'ruf is from *pesantren* and sarong is always with him anytime and in any places. Ma'ruf said that *santri* are the backbones of national unity and integrity. He also said that *santri* (student) can be a president or vice president. He wants to say that he comes from moderate Islamic groups from an old, conservative, and out-of-date *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school).

Sarong becomes the identity of Moslem in Indonesia. Neyla Hamadah, a columnist, said that sarong is not made stretchy, zipperless, and buttonless. It indicates simplicity. Simple means flexible and stuffy in building relationship. Sarong is also flexible in use and function. Its style shows the complexity of thinking.

According to Imam Suprayogo, the Professor of UNIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in a national Seminar on Sarong Nusantara held by *Lembaga teknis Masjid* PBNU on April 6, 2017 at PBNU Building Jakarta said that Sarong is a symbol of the elegance of the wearer as it is put on for worshipping and it shows the nobleness.

Littlejohn & Foss (2009) said that some communication theories focus on the communicator who always bring his identity in the middle of his culture in a broader scope. Communication itself is a means to build self-identity. Stella Ting-Toomey (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009: 132-133) explained that self-identity is built from social interaction. Self-identity is built from social identity where it takes place in a family and it becomes the social identity. Moreover, self-identity is a unique characteristics of every human being.

Sarong symbolizes the struggle against destructive modernity and domination of the western culture and they become the trigger of the decline of morality (Soewandi (2004). It is known as 3 R (*Renggut, Resah, Rusak* or ripped, restless, and crumple). The phenomenon can be seen around us such as free sex, homosexual, abortion, porn, euthanasia, narcotics, etc which are raising rapidly in the West and it is also spreading out in Indonesia (Soewandi, 2004: 73). The coming of Ma'ruf Amin symbolizes the resurrection of Islam from conservatism and stagnation. It is to show to western countries that Indonesians have our own dignity. We want to show the west that we have our own dignity and noble values (Soewandi, 2004).

Compared to other candidate of President and vice president, the way of clothing of Ma'ruf Amin is completely different from that of Jokowi, Prabowo, and Sandiaga Uno who tend to wear a coat and trousers and a tie when they attended the debates. Ma'ruf, on the other hand, is very consistent on his attire, i.e. sarong instead of trousers and a scarf to replace a tie.

The choice of Ma'ruf Amin, the senior Ulema of Indonesia, needs to clarify that Indonesia does not give attention to Ulema. It is to prove that there is no criminalization of ulema. The identity of Ulema is sarong not long dress like Arabic costume. Sarong is more Indonesia as religion is already a part of Indonesian culture. The sarong reborn means back to the original Indonesian culture. We have to put off any western attributes and the attributes of "others" that is indicated by the decline of Indonesian culture.

Sarong in political setting is used to show that Jokowi is more Islamic than the other contestant. He is a silent man

who chose ulema as his vice president. He is successfully warding the black issues that he is a leader who is anti-Islam, anti-ulema, and pro-capitalist. His choice is, of course, really surprising as well as appreciating his decision.

Conclusion

Sarong is not only an accessory but it has a deep meaning. Sarong is a means of showing self-identity of the wearer that he belongs to the biggest Islamic organization (NU), and it indicates that he is one of the most senior and has powerful authority (MUI). Sarong is not only a piece of cloth to cover a part of the body but it also symbolizes the original culture from Indonesia which is as well-known as batik which was appreciated and recognized as cultural heritage by the United Nation. Sarong becomes the identity of Moslem Nusantara as sarong becomes the most wanted clothes for most of *Santrias* sarong is flexible in use and function. Sarong also symbolizes the resistance to destructive modernity. Sarong is also manifestation of lush that is contradictory with the Indonesian culture. Aside from the symbol of self-identity, sarong symbolizes simplicity, flexibility, intelligence, and morality.

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