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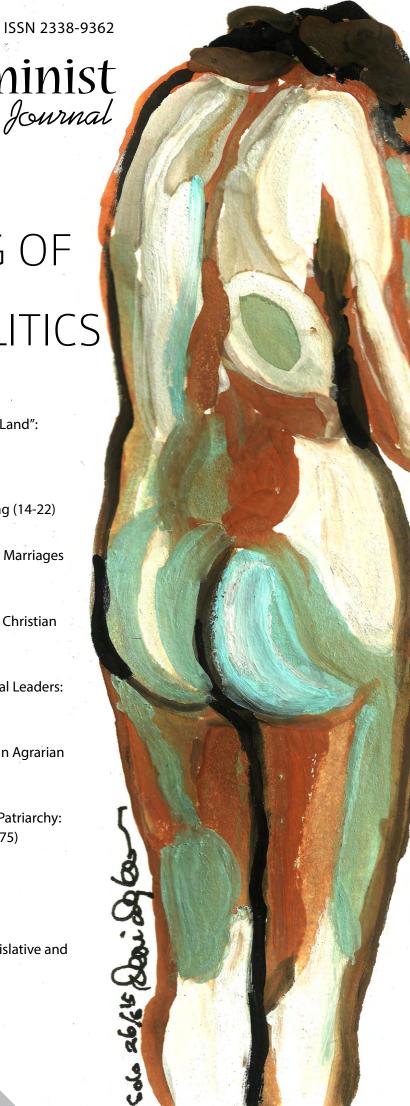
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# Feminist Ethics Against the Stigma of Theocracy-Patriarchy:

# Reflections on the 2014 Presidential Election

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## **Abstract**

Feminist politics is a perpetual investment in a just civilisation. For a long time feminist politics has known that a structure of injustice is inherently located within the sociological body of a patriarchal system. Feminist politics needs more than just voluntary efforts for democracy. Rather, strong conceptual tools are needed that will enlighten the dialectic transport of communication in a democratic system. Any feminists should watch and guard, as well as, cynically and radically, monitor the progress of the newly-elected president—whether he will bring a mandate of equality or not. A short-term strategy has been invested to block the NewOrder regime from taking control; and a long-term strategy shall be invested to guarantee a system of equality in the new cabinet.

Keywords: ethics of feminism, women, theocracy-patriarchy, presidential election.

# **Introduction: Ethical Position**

Is politics a tool for women? If the intended changes are implemented in the mission of equality and enlightenment, then the involvement of women is for strategic purposes. Moreover, there will be a demand for political ethics to create feminist changes. These changes include shifts in political civilisation towards respect for human rights and supporting the powerless. These complaints are very political because historically, women have encountered powerlessness. This affirmation encourages female participation in Indonesian politics of today. The foundation is very empirical. Various discriminatory policies still dominate our politics. At all stages of public policy making, the female voice is still considered as a hindrance on

the orchestration of male politics. The findings of the Human Development Index, indicates a stagnation in the development target results (IPM, Bappenas, 2014). In a global comparison, there has not been an improvement in health and equality, the quality of legislation is not in favor of women, and cultural and religious doctrines impede on female public access. All of these are political problems designed imperceptive of the citizen rights.

In environments where intolerance and violence still happen - in places of refuge and conflict areas - female conditions are even worse replete with concerns for the future of their families. An insulting theocratic stigma, limited economic movement, decisions on the role of the country - all of these produce debilitating

conditions and an ethos of republicanism as a basis for a life together. However, in many records of injustice and human rights violations there is a growing demand to continue to strive for change, although aware of the strong sociocultural constraints. Female politics has arrived with this ethical purpose: change for growth.

# The Construction of Election Politics & **Political Feminist Volunteers**

We have gone through a safe election process but without the cultural aspects. Yes, because the political battle takes place within a patriarchal culture. Behind the candidates, a true power structure is lined up: feudalism party, retired generals, oligarch investors, patriarchal ideologues and doctrinaire parties. But also the culture behind this political battle, really is not an open and democratic culture: these elections are mainly primordial campaigns modelled on religious sentiment, race and slander. There is, however a positive phenomenon: public participation outside the political party of "political volunteers". But this phenomenon is seen more as counter-politics to the party "establishment". We must read these political volunteers as "political feminists" at a minimal level, as cynicism to the patriarchal construction of our party. At least, there is horizontal energy which connects within the civil society to look after the common interest of change. This of course, is not a unified energy from an ideology or a feminist party. But, this political horizontalisation is seen by those "political volunteers" as equal to the feminist politics: power de-hierarchisation.

A critical evaluation of "horizontal politics" is required to provide us with a less critical view of the facts of power such as the distance between "political volunteers" and "patriarchal party construction" that once again presents the formalism of political reality. This means that presidential voluntarism will return to the every-day real politics construction of power pragmatism. There is a hope to see "affirmative" actions from the president towards the "tacit" demands of political volunteers of equality, non-feudalism, pro-human rights, environmental ethics, understanding of LGBT, and all the substantive democratic needs. But even here the election issues begin. The dimming of the ad-hoc "volunteer factor" would pave the way for oligarchy and hierarchical interests that have been employed as "big strategies" for winning the elections since the beginning. Here, the distance between the "ethical position" and the "pragmatic position" will slowly become widespread in "everyday politics". The problem is simple in that it is impossible to extend or move the euphoria field to the formal political room, the room that is controlled by the "elite oligarchy".

This factor is very structural, because from the beginning, politics requires capital infrastructure that is provided outside of the voluntarism of the civil society. The contrasting political competition is not absolutely final, the post-election pragmatism will organize interests preceding the imperative of "public ethics" that has become the basis of participation for political volunteers. Here, we are faced with the same problem: "election" is not always in line with "decision". This universal dictum is now being tested at the beginning of the institutionalisation of the new government with their commitment human rights, pluralism, minorities, the environment, and so on. The political infrastructure of the last election was strongly marked by "extra civil activities". Particularly that political involvement had a minimal influence. In fact, on a number of occasions the President gave a press statement that nuanced a "warning" so that the ABRI was neutral. This security and intelligence infrastructure was also influential post-election, especially when the General Elections Commission started to count the votes. In this very indicative nuance there is still a feeling of a condition that will justify the public cynicism, that the organisation of an election is also followed by intelligence activities of the country's apparatus. This factor will be noted as an indication that, behind the civil politics of the 2014 election, there was a strong feeling that the lobby and retired military were influential factors in determining the leadership of civil politics.

A condition of "post-praetorian" emerged after the institutionalisation of civil politics that

has continued in the 15 years after reformation. This means that there are still potential workings of a New Order political culture in the current political era of reformation. This condition was evident in the political tension in the days leading up to the voting on July 9, 2014. The various exaggerated issues were quite reasonable considering the political rivalry between the two parties of the presidential candidates, Prabowo-Hatta and Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla, as well as the intelligence confrontation on the human rights issue and the military secrets in the cases of "Kidnapped Activists" and the "Stepping Down of Suharto". In these situations it was clear that political issues became patriarchal issues. That politics has been taught in society as "war", "intrigue" and "slander". The black campaign became one of the objects of the campaign because there wasn't a distinctive idea that either of the sides truly owned.

The debate between the candidates was far from the standard debate of the two presidential candidates. The wealth of ideas and intellectual maturity did not appear in the series of five public debates. The standard concepts of public policy and country progress cannot be clearly examined because it was very obvious that both presidential candidates did not organically understand what strategic concepts had to be raised. A number of programs have distinct formal political documents about the visionsmissions of the presidential candidate in their campaign material, but are still hesitant to show authority in the forum debates. This means that the formulation of a successful team is different to the capacity of conceptual understanding the presidential candidates. The main problem here is that a conceptual thought, that the presidential candidate has not conceived himself, will then be difficult to discuss when that thought is showcased as the "commitment" to the constitution.

Commitment is complete knowledge. Commitment is a structured concept. Commitment becomes a promise because it is intended to be visible. From this perspective, it is very likely that "female interests" will be forgotten, because to understand "justice" from a female perspective, it is clear that there is a requirement for authentic conceptual understanding from the president. Mentoring is possible, but authenticity must come coherently from the thoughts of the leaders. It is clear that feminist concepts were rarely discussed in the debates leading up to the 2014 Presidential election. The uproar happened because of the issues of the black campaign, with the downside that a focus towards "political women" was not considered by the press. It can only be felt that there was a "feminine" nuance on Jokowi, and a "masculine" on Prabowo. But this impression is a public impression. Not a conceptually inherent impression of each of the political candidates, moreover from a broader perspective, on each of the parties, and culture from the supporting parties.

But the "feminist politics" perspective came precisely from the volunteer political profile of Jokowi's side, including the public leaders' profiles, NGO activists and art workers who were voluntarily involved in the support for Jokowi. While "patriarchal politics" were used on the coalition parties supporting Prabowo who came from a party based on religion and Golkar, which is considered as posing as the New Order. But once again, this impression does not by itself show the "feminist political structure" in the program on Jokowi's side. This means that an evaluation that is radically intended to test the leadership and Jokowi's governance program must be proven via comprehensive observation. In other words, the increase support of female voted for Jokowi (55%) compared to Prabowo (45%), still influences the personal support because of "cultural" reasons and the rise of "rational" thought, that sees the program of "feminist politics" on Jokowi's side. The "New Order" figure on Prabowo and his military background, as well as the human rights record that continues to be questioned, indeed conveys a cultural contrast with the civil figure of Jokowi. But of course, it's not that aspect that decides the visions of feminist leaders.

## The Female Perspective

If you are an eco-feminist for example, what is your opinion on the campaign proposals of the two presidential candidates? Prabowo intended

to produce 25 million hectares of rice fields. Jokowi was critical of this in stating that, first there is a need to build five dams so that there is a source of water for these rice fields. There was a naïve debate between the two of them that was witnessed by an eco-feminist. That means that the two presidential candidates would have had to work together to clear the forest in order to shape their programs. If you live near the forest and Prabowo needs half of the forest, it will be converted into rice fields. Then Jokowi needs half to be used as a source of water, to build dams. And you subsequently lose your "authentic life." Maybe this sounds extreme, but this is a criticism from the feminist perspective: radical for equality.

This principle applies to the integrity test of the feminist perspective on the other programs of the two sides. But once again, this opportunity has been limited in past political debates because the political issues of this campaign were really dominated by public rhetoric and the black political campaign. The only thin line that became the influential for the public was that Jokowi represents a relative political atmosphere that is more "democratic" compared to Prabowo. And this suggestion quite possibly projected Jokowi as a figure that will participate more in feminist, equality and social justice politics. There certainly was an interest in female politics in the 2014 election. What was most pressing was the eradication of misogynistic regulations, particularly a lot of Local Government Regulations that overtly obstruct female public activities. This problem is not just the revision of the legal perspective towards the female body, but also all the cultural infrastructure that confirms feudalistic and patriarchal politics. On this issue, women's interests are aligned with the democratic struggle interests to achieve equal citizen rights and respect for pluralism of life views.

There is no political change without change in the way that a country administers justice for all citizens. In fact, there is no change in the way that a country understands equality if there is no political partiality for female politics which continues to be weakened by the illiterate knowledge structures towards feminism. So, with the main theme of "equality and enlightenment", female politics was made important in the 2014 election. A president, from the women's political female perspective, must also be a feminist. That is, they must understand about justice and human equality and understand that knowledge is grown organically from the personal character and their leadership record. A high standard of feminist ethics is the political imperative that is required to examine to what extent future democratic results will bring about changes in the way we are a country, in the way we organise our public policy, in the way we attend to different citizens experiences, in the way we respect citizens sexual orientation and in the way we treat the female body.

Politics from the female perspective is all of the power orientations which understand that "personal is political". So, it is not only because the main public issues of development or strategic issues are in the area of security and macro-economy. The descent from these strategic issues must be felt in the everyday experiences of women with their legal access, financial access, local politics access, body security, availability of health infrastructure, sustainable environment and so on. If this imperative is announced as a condition of female participation in today's politics, since the beginning we know that it is impossible to entirely demand that capacity from the presidential candidates. The feminist political logic is in fact, too foreign for our political culture here. The political origin of parliament members is from both human resources in our bureaucracy that is too low in terms of knowledge and awareness of "women's political justice".

The population of women in our public institutions is still counted as a part of the population of "a person with female gender", and not the population of "political women". The perspective on the development of gendered perspectives was proposed a long time ago by the UN, but this perspective saw that local policy makers were still controlled by the oligarchy-patriarchy perspective. Power is only divided up amongst the elite scheme, with the result that access to resources and justice was not overseen by the voters. Female

public participation intends to end political oligarchy that is the exclusive source of power for policy makers. Oligarchy controls politics in the drafting of laws. Oligarchy controls politics with a controlling process on the law-makers. A parliament's political openness in the process of making laws is the main interest of female politics. In this context, female participation in choosing the leader of a country is participation to produce clean legislation, which is undertaken fairly. It is minimal in the sense that "making clean and fair laws", female politics can exercise its democratic participation.

# The Press and Public Ethics: "Losing Nalar" Hannah Arendt

All of these political issues of the 2014 elections were really determined by public opinion on the competition at the front, which the media of each of the sides organises. There is a flaw in the press division. There are claims of partiality to show "both the black and white" between the Prabowo side and the Jokowi side. But the press is less thorough in showing the "inside structure" of both of the sides. If the press takes sides, then it is valid to do a whole ethical contrast between the two parties to show the conclusions to the public. The impression that all the main media provides "protection" to the Jokowi side was a consequence of the attack of the black campaign that was considered to come from Prabowo's side. But at the same time with this "fortifying" attitude, fortifying is also another aspect on the Jokowi side, so that it seemed that Jokowi was flawless. That oligarchy also worked on Jokowi's side and that a feudalistic culture was wiped out on Jokowi's side inevitably disappeared from press criticism. Also that the issue of human rights violations was on Jokowi's side was not talked about as intensively as was the case on the Prabowo side. Capital power was also found on both sides but it also was not discussed proportionally in the press.

Of course, with the ethical responsibility of the public, the imbalance must be noted as a weakness of the professionalism of institutions protecting democracy. That there was euphoria to produce "reformation vol 2", under no

circumstances should result in no criticisms from the press to the presidential candidates. At the point of evaluation of public opinion, we cannot count the frequency and the amount of the black campaign on both sides' of the media, besides the explanation of transparency and objectivity in all the flaws of the two sides. But, in the 2014 elections, the press lost their rational balance because it was directly involved in "duel politics" that is considered as "duel ethics". Taking sides is not considered as an ethical demand, even though the two dueling sides did not completely contrast in terms of ethics. This setup emotionally divides the public which simultaneously creates stigma in the way we care for future democracy. Namely, that the press hasn't been able to engage the public political tension to become critical discourse which then presents quality perspectives as a means for public reasoning in democracy.

An important lesson is that of a circular oligarchy which also controls mass media institutions. The press as a "profession" must have a third eye that is a thinking eye, to evaluate in depth their personal perspectives when politics becomes the game of the media oligarchy. Connected to public ethics is professional ethics which is the principle that the press is only responsible for themselves. A responsibility that surpasses the political euphoria that carries away the tide, is the crowd alone. The press' responsibility in itself means a responsibility to educate themselves, as a manifestation of the public's decision. The public decision must be taken with a degree of criticism. By being smart, the press becomes the caretaker of the public's health. We can learn from the criticism of Hannah Arendt - a female philosopher, while covering the trial of the Nazi leader, Adolf Eichmann - who made the critical conclusions of the mental condition of the murderer. Arendt challenged the public opinion that was euphoric with revenge and unbiasedly explained the real political conditions that Eichmann was in a state of "mental deficiency". Eichmann's crimes were a result of his inability to think (Arendt, 1977). In this type of political situation, a person is no longer a political subject but simply a function of the mechanism of power. This trivalisation

of humanity makes crime banal. Arendt's journalism was able to see the hidden condition from the anthropology of crime. In this radical perspective Arendt highlighted an important teaching that, the public needs to think (Arendt, 1958). And the press should let them do that.

The press' responsibility is to take a critical position in how it influences the public with strategic issues. The maturity of the press is measured in the depth of the political mind to read politics "between the lines". There is always a reason that the press' support of a presidential candidate isn't a "blank cheque". But in the conditions of the last election, the press was precisely at the forefront of giving a "blank cheque" to the political parties because direct involvement in the partisan campaign became the mouthpiece of the two sides. Because of this, when there was a contestation of a "split nation" in this election, this is in fact what happened, due to the divide in public opinion via the "split press". Understanding the politics of the 2014 election in the construction of public ethics demands the press position to really go away. Not a neutral attitude, but a critical attitude to witness the real conditions from a political contest. The press and public ethics is the most reliable democratic guide in a period of political translation like this.

Public ethics supports politics in the longterm. Elections are a routine process every five years. Because of this, the press' integrity of investment is a long-term investment to develop the critical ethos as the main lesson to becoming responsible citizens. This republican ethics revives the cynicism that there is always an unseen ambition behind the politics of popularism that is often disguised as ambition. Feminism is a sensitive perspective towards the most disguised patriarchal conditions that have the potential to occupy the power hierarchy when politics returns to the formulistic characters. The press and criticisms are a feminist project. There is an acuteness to find the oligarchy construction surpassing the euphoria of voluntarism which is highlighted in the political construction of "friend-foe", which really is not a true contrast. Forming of opinions and constructions like this often shape the power game that starts from a historical background of revenge, capital transactions and ambition from a hegemonic group.

Feminist perspectives must focus on the longer history to enable criticisms to overcome the pitfalls of patriarchy in every strategic political event, such as elections. This means that euphoria on political events cannot shut down critical reasoning to oversee the return of a feudal culture, political hierarchy and capital hegemony for determining public issues and policies. These press and feminism conditions should overcome the construction of "friendfoe" which in fact contains patriarchal interests. The "friend-foe" metaphor by itself, actually isn't a feminist metaphor. Public ethics and critical journalism only grows in conditions of "adequacy of mind", which is the condition that carefully walks on the small process of democracy and is still prone to slide down by oligarchy interests in the two sides who compete at the front.

## Theatre of Ambition

The last election was exciting with the confrontation between the two sides because this was the first time our democracy was tested at the front in a condition of "friend-foe". The failure of the Democratic Party Convention led by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono - who was also the President of Indonesia - brought forward a third presidential candidate to strengthen that front. But, behind this confrontation, stood real political ambition. Well before the war of the black campaign, we understood that there was an elite political translation between Megawati and Prabowo, in what was known as the "Batu tulis Pact". Apart from the various conditionality interpretations which declined that transaction, it was clear that public interests are only determined by such political trade-ins. That the leadership shift had already been determined by the elite, preceding the development of civil society dynamics, such as the real constituents of democracy. The civil law aspects of an agreement requires an obligation from the creator. The pacta sunt servanda principle applies in the private contract between them. The integrity of each of the parties is measured in the fulfillment

of the ethical demand of that obligation - who is a liar, who is honest, can easily be checked with the civil law norms and the moral public norms.

Apart from these issues, there is something behind this agreement. There is the neglect of political openness. Also, there is the public right to not be bound by an agreement with unknown consequences from the beginning. So, we catch a power privatization game that is based on elitist political ambition. This construction explains the heated political rivalry between the two sides in the 2014 election. In this election, we truly witnessed two events on the same stage. On the front stage, there was excitement, but also tension. On the back stage, there was planning and a strategy of ambition. The public was involved in political emotion, but did not observe political ambition. These two sides were working on an ambitious strategy which benefits all of the abilities of their demagogy to seize public opinion. Populism slogans were said on all stages. Old doctrines like devotion were heard via the microphones in front of the masses. But how can the public truly distinguish between Prabowo populism and Jokowi populism, between Prabowo's version about Sukarnoism and Jokowi's version?

contradiction in the character ideology between Prabowo and his deputy Hatta Rajasa, can easily be read with Hatta Rajasa's understanding about the "meaning of democracy". With one of them understanding it as a "toll", while the other explained it as a "value". But it could also be read about the inconclusiveness of the Sukarnoism idea in Jokowi's vision about "mental revolution", with his deputy, Jusuf Kalla understanding it as a "pragmatic-economic" concept. Political ambition has already surpassed conceptual clarity. Again, this election felt like a vehicle for ambition in the political theatre, rather than a contest of sharp minds in indicating the political direction for the next five years. This problem will quickly be felt when policy making is faced with the harsh reality of limited political choices on both a local and global scale.

of populism will ideology immediately faced with concrete matters in political arrangement such as the APBN, which is heavily burdened by political energy subsidies. Furthermore, international agreement especially in the extractive sector, must be respected by the governments if they want to participate in the rationalist system of the global economy. Similar applies to a local level, where politics is still dominated by arrogance of the regional autonomy which is a cartel and old political oligarchy. It is clear that the contents of the ideology that underlie the visions-missions and political candidates program was not coherently conceptualised in the competing ideological paradigms. Conversely, political ambition can be seen plainly in the various public statements put forward by the key figures from both sides. The point is that the political competition for the election is still over-controlled by political strength, whether it be the motive of revenge, or the sheer thirst for power. There is a friendly debate in the mass media. But this is mainly about past quarrels, rather than the conceptual debate.

Feminist interests go beyond the political presentation in the theatre of ambition. Female political participation clearly identifies the game of political ambition. And only because of utilitarian reasons does the feminist political voice tend to be in favour of the Jokowi side. But it must be remembered that Jokowi figuration is "ad hoc" in this election because the political dichotomy directly presents the civil and military figure in those two sides. This means that when a feminist political test proposed radically to Jokowi side, then it is immediately apparent that there is an unspoken partiality. There are still shades of feudalism in PDIP, Jokowi's main coalition party. The ranks of retired military personnel in Jokowi's side that is still overshadowed by human rights issues, is certainly not the choice of feminist politics. Jusuf Kalla is also not an ideal feminist politics figure. Indeed there is a construction that is prepared by a number of activists and civil society figures to put Jokowi towards the feminist political paradigm. But of course, this strategy is still too simplistic because there is a need for authentic glue to investigate the feminist values in the mind of a political figure that is in a political environment which is still patriarchal.

## **Conclusion: Feminist Ethics**

The theatre of ambition is the stage for five years. Feminist politics is an investment in civilisation. From this train of thought we have evaluated the 2014 election. For a long time feminist politics has known that being a woman and experiencing unfairness is one sociological packet that is managed by patriarchy. The need for political change is not only required in the field of participation, but more so in the sharpness of discourse in reading these unjust structures. This is why we need to strive for strong theoretical understanding, so that the political euphoria that swept the field was not feminist conceptual tools, but rather the tools of thought and surety about more radical justice. Feminist politics also understands that efforts to manage that justice in critical moments such as the election, is required as a "short term strategy", in order to prevent the inclusion of authoritarian characters in politics. But feminist politics still looks at long-term politics, with the strength of democratic institutions that are truly focused on the ideas of human equality and enlightenment.

Cultural conversation is important to feminist politics. Cultural conversation about values, ethics and respect to different life perspectives. In this cultural dimension, feminist politics fosters an environment that allows for horizontal political participation to maintain the characteristics of a "political society" and to not transition towards a "political country". This demarcation between cultures and countries must be protected so that the voluntarism of "political volunteers" for previous elections, does not change to become "small tickets"

from those who truly follow the "Theatre of Ambition". We are embroiled in a weakening political battle. Embroiled in a stage which we do not completely know about. An expectation of this change has moved the community to "initiate" the formation of new power, in the spirit of volunteerism that is ideologically anonymous. This is a new political experience. Where there is an important lesson, there is a public reason and political common sense will always be reactivated when politics are in a state of emergency.

For feminist ethics, political concern is a concern for the opportunity to celebrate solidarity. Political intentions driven by feminist ethics surely requires ethical and authentic honesty. Honesty to measure yourself if that solidarity experience grows uniquely from an awareness of the "feminist movement", or if it just happens because of the "friend-foe" euphoria. This reflective question will take in the new atmosphere or a new government. But more than that, the reflective question that is posed on the feminist movement itself: to what extent do we have authenticity in translating feminist ethics into the political policy of the 2014 election? We still have to take care of democracy. Especially after a number of main institutions - the press, campus, organizations argue and generate an uproar of public opinion. This post-election pedagogy is a pedagogy to take care of the body and political thoughts that are lingering from the patriarchal arguments. Feminist politics will still be involved in tidying up. But this time not because of the construction of "friend-foe", but because of the responsibility to continue civilisation.

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