



## The representation of women in COVID-19 discourses: The analysis of Sara Mills' critical discourse on media coverage

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### Abstract

The article aims to map the representation of female figures in the mass media in the COVID-19 discourses. This study is scoped into a female figure known as Siti Fadilah Supari (SFS). SFS's representation starts from her inauguration as an educated woman who has an authority to speak in the medical field. A descriptive qualitative approach was used; the data source was lingual phenomenon in all of SFS's articles in the COVID-19 discourses published in *Kompas* and *Republika* newspapers on May 26 and 27, 2020. Data were collected using observational method with indirect conversational technique. Then, the data were analyzed using the framework of the Sara Mills' model of critical discourse analysis. The results showed that the Subject-Object Position reveals that SFS is always in the object position and displayed by other parties. Furthermore, from the Reader Position, it reveals the existence of *Republika*'s partiality to the SFS which is based on the sympathy of the Islamic public, while *Kompas* describes SFS as a violator of the law. It is concluded that women's representation in the media is not yet sovereign and independent because there is no framing of SFS as a female figure who has the authority of medical science to talk about COVID-19.

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**Keywords:** Representation; Female Figure; COVID-19 Discourse; Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis; Media Coverage.

### 1. Introduction

Since it has been declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), the worldwide mass media line has started to be dominated by the reports about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The mass media play an important role in reporting the development of the COVID-19 transmission in a certain community (Hamzah et al., 2020; Hellewell et al., 2020; Holmes et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Peeri et al., 2020; Rasmussen et al., 2020; Roy et al., 2020; Van Bavel et al., 2020; Wu & McGoogan,

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2020). In a way, this condition indirectly builds an interrelationship between the spread of COVID-19 and the mass media. For instance, in the United States, the massive update of COVID-19 news has reduced the frequency of inequality reports in the media and has increased the democratic index (Ripolles, 2020). While in Vietnam, COVID-19 coverage in the mass media has managed to educate the public, so that the risk of transmission could be minimized to the lowest level (La et al., 2020; Mukherjee, 2020; Nicola et al., 2020; Tesso, n.d.; Yang et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, one of the COVID-19 issues that filled the mass media line was news about Siti Fadilah Supari (henceforth SFS), a former Minister of Health in the era of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. As Minister of Health at the time, SFS was claimed to have succeeded in stopping the spread of the H5N1 virus (strain virus influenza which can be infected poultries and humans) in Indonesia through policies that she had set independently and in conflict with WHO (Republika, 2020).

SFS began to be reported when she was concerning her statement about COVID-19 that criticized government policies and seemed to oppose the flow information in several mainstream mass media. According to SPS, the spread of Covid-19 is also seen from political strategy of US and WHO to dominate the world. The criticism was conveyed through an interview with Deddy Corbuzier, a well-known youtuber in Indonesia, at the Central Army Hospital (RSPAD- Rumah Sakit Pusat Angkatan Darat) Gatot Soebroto. Learning from her experience in dealing with the spread of the H5N1 virus from 2003 to 2004, where information circulating in the dominant mass media is raw and not comprehensive. This situation is consistent with the findings of research by which explain the low validity of information about the spread of viruses and infectious diseases that are published in the media (Cowling et al., 2013, 2013; Fishman et.al, 2016; and Uittenhot, 2012). Therefore, to become an educational instrument related to infectious diseases, the media requires escort from health experts and serious briefings from the government (Siddhapura, 2016; Tchuente & Bauch, 2012). That way the media can provide a positive role in overcoming the spread of viruses and other infectious diseases (Collinson et al., 2015; Cui et al., 2008).

Regarding the information dissemination of COVID-19, the SFS criticism that made her name reappeared (after being silent while in prison) was supported by actual studies related to the issue of COVID-19 in the media. The findings of Andrade (2020), Azim et al. (2020), De Zen (2020), and Shahi et al. (2020) show that there are many hoaxes, rumors, misinformation, conspiracies, and knowledge gaps in the information related to COVID-19 circulating in various media. The situation presupposes the chaos of information about COVID-19 that circulates so it needs to be strictly verified (Abd-Alrazaq et al., 2020; Mejia et al., 2020; Woods, 2020). SFS criticism also found its momentum in the findings of Depoux et al. (2020), Gao et al. (2020), and Holmes et al. (2020) that fully trust in COVID-19 news circulating in the mass media leading to not only in anticipatory missteps, but also has the potential to cause new problems in the form of panic, mental disorders, and various other paranoid symptoms.

In Linguistics and Communication Studies repertoire, SFS coverage in the midst of the increasingly massive issue of COVID-19 can be looked at from a gender perspective. SFS's status as someone who has the authority to argue medically is an important asset for her to get a privilege to exist in the news. This makes SFS's status different from most women who appear in the media. The women who usually appear in the media are divided into 3 types. First, women are represented inferiorly as found in the Ottosson & Cheng (2012) study. Second, women are represented paradoxically, that is independent on the one hand but still bound by norms on the other hand as portrayed in the study of Hamzehei (2014). Third, women are represented as independent and free figures as found in the studies of Holmes et al., (2020).

In addition to the strength of her medical scientific authority, the case of SFS reporting from a gender perspective also has another complexity. This is closely related to the political situation in Indonesia

during the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. SFS criticism is directed at many policies taken by the government in handling the spread of COVID-19. Theoretically, oppositional criticism pretends to corner SFS in terms of reporting. However, outside of the dominance of the media built by the government, there was a lot of support for SFS (Republika.co.id, 2020; Kompas.tv, 2020). The complexity between the media alignments with the authorities and the context of readers who support SFS has made SFS reporting case COVID from a gender perspective more interesting than other previous Linguistic and Communication-Based studies.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. SFS and COVID-19 in Indonesia

SFS, whose full name is Dr. Siti Fadilah Supari, Sp. JP (K) was born in Surakarta, Central Java on November 6th in 1949. She is a lecturer in Cardiology at the University of Indonesia and a cardiologist at Harapan Kita Heart Hospital. On October 21, 2004, SFS was appointed by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as Minister of Health in the United Indonesia Cabinet for the term of office 2004-2009. She became one of the four women ministers in the cabinet. The most memorable event from SFS's experience as the Minister of Health was her struggle in dealing with the bird flu virus, also known as H5N1 virus. She poured the story in a book entitled *Saatnya Dunia Berubah! Tangan Tuhan di Balik Flu Burung* 'Time for the World to Change! God's Hand behind the Bird Flu' (SF, 2008; Supari, 2019). In the book, she described her courage against the conspiracy of WHO and the United States in utilizing viruses sent from various countries. SFS's decision to make her own vaccine and to not send samples of the bird flu virus from Indonesia to WHO became the beginning of her success in handling the bird flu virus in Indonesia. After retiring from the position of Minister of Health in 2009, SFS was appointed as a member of the Presidential Advisory Council for a term of office from January 25 2010 to 20 October 2014. On June 16, 2017, SFS was sentenced to four years in prison by the Corruption Court for the procurement of medical equipment in anticipation of Extraordinary Incidents (KLB – Kejadian Luar Biasa) in 2005. The determination of SFS as a suspect is an oddity for some Indonesians. For them, SFS is categorized as a political victim because of her courage to oppose WHO and US policies in the process of overcoming bird flu in Indonesia.

When the Republic of Indonesian government announced the first case of COVID-19 on March 2, 2020, SFS was still a prisoner in Pondok Bambu Detention Center. She has kept an eye on the policies launched by the government in dealing with the virus, starting from social distancing, physical distancing, large-scale social restrictions, to the prohibition of going home for immigrants. In SFS's view, government policies are too much guided by the protocol established by WHO. As the situation is getting worse with the increasing number of positive cases confirmed COVID-19 in Indonesia this prompted SFS to make a public speech. She conducted an interview with a YouTuber, Deddy Corbuzier, to convey her ideas and voiced her opinions contradicting the government's policies.

As of May 31, 2020, the development of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia were still serious with 26.473 positive cases, 1.613 deaths, and 7.308 recovery. This precarious situation led to community initiatives to issue an online petition demanding the release of SFS from prison to help deal with COVID-19 in Indonesia. On the same day, the petition was signed by more than 35.000 people (change.org). This shows the high level of public sympathy for her. The achievements of SFS dealing with bird flu have been discussed in various mass media. SFS is unique and specific, because she is one of the most talked about women in the handling of COVID-19 in Indonesia. For this reason, the SFS case in the mass media is interesting to study from a gender perspective. In Indonesia, SFS and COVID-19 can be the basis for identifying current women's representation.

## 2.2. *Media as a Social Construction Tool*

The concept of mass media as a tool to construct social situations in accordance with the wishes of certain parties is rooted in arguments (Berger & Luckmann, 1991) which describe the existence and objective conditioning of reality by individuals to be internalized into the community. The creation and conditioning is carried out intensively and the pattern that looks objective makes the conditioning unreadable for the laity. Constructed reality is created through the externalization, objectification and internalization phases. It is no longer neutral because in going through these phases, it has been covered with various tendencies and pretensions (Sobur, 2001).

Mass media use language as a tool to create social reality (Flora, 2014; Muslich, 2008; Sudibyo, 2001). This is in line with Saussure's postulation on the systematic and fragile language system that makes it oscillate and unstable. Certain parties then take advantage of the confusion of speakers and speech partners in interpreting language to carry out their interests. The mass media can neatly use language to convey information that forms the concept of understanding to the readers. Thus, the use of language in the mass media becomes one of the study domain for critical discourse analysis (Eggins, 2004). The hegemony and subtle tilt of media opinions can be traced to the analytical features found in various theories and approaches of critical discourse analysis. The main target of the analysis of existing lingual data is to map trends and paradigms which in terms of discourse analysis are called ideologies.

## 2.3. *Mills's Critical Discourse Analysis*

Responding to the reality of the marginalization and subordination of women in the mass media, critical discourse analysis has a new and specific approach known as the critical discourse analysis of feminism. This approach and model of analysis was first introduced by Mills (2004). The intention of Mills's model discourse analysis is to see patterns of representation of figures or actors in the news that are used to influence the meaning that appears to the public. With her specific approach, Mills has a slight distinction with the general principles of critical discourse analysis. Mills rather directs the language analysis feature to the position of various social actors, ideas, and events in the news. These positions ultimately determine the shape and meaning of the text that appears in the community. A subject that is positioned high in the news will form a space of domination for other subjects who do not have much space in the news. The unfair and objective division of positions ultimately shapes the reality of meaning among readers.

Observation of the discourse analysis of Mills's model in the first stage is mapping the subjects and objects in the news. Position as subject and object in the news contains certain ideological contents that can marginalize the position of women in reporting (Eriyanto, 2001). The position of the subject will place a party as an interpreter of events, while the position of the object will place the party as an interpreted entity. Referring to this reality, the position of the subject is always superior to the position of the object. In the second stage, Mills's model discourse analysis maps the position of the readers (Fauzan, 2014; Ghofur, 2016; Perwitasari & Hendariningrum, 2014; Prasetyo, 2016; Surwati, 2011)). Mills argues that the reality of reporting cannot be separated from the process of identifying news producers about the audience segment. Departing from the argument that the text is the result of negotiations between the writer and the reader, Mills is of the view that producers tend to display news that is favored by their readers. The reader cannot be positioned only as a recipient, but rather determines the tendency of a message. Thus, Mills's analysis comprehensively correlates between text, writer, and reader.

The framework of the Sara Mills model of critical discourse analysis in providing lingual data can be seen in the following table (Eriyanto, 2001, p. 211).

**Table 1.** Sara Mills' Model Critical Discourse Analysis Framework

Level	Analysis Objectives
Subject-Object Position	a. How events are viewed. b. From whose point of view the event was seen. c. Who is positioned as the narrator (subject) and who is the object being told. d. Does each actor and social group has the opportunity to present themselves and their own ideas or is displayed by other groups/people.

### 3. Method

The approach used in this research is descriptive qualitative (Corbin et al., 2015; Silver & Lewins, 2014). The series of studies carried out emphasize the process and depth of comprehension of the data, while the results of the analysis are presented and discussed in detail and comprehensively. The data of this study are lingual phenomena in the news about SFS which are related to the context of the spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia. There are two sources of data, the first is from the news published in the *Republika* (Republika.co.id) and *Kompas* (Kompas.com) mass media related to the issue of SFS; and the second is from Deddy Corbuzier interviews about handling COVID-19 in video entitles “*Siti Fadilah, Sebuah Konspirasi*” [Siti Fadilah, a conspiracy] which was uploaded in his youtube account. The data were collected using the method of providing linguistic data on the ability to engage in competent free speech. Researchers committed into comprehensive and repeated readings of the data, carried out an inventory of data, classified data, until all data are contained in a data card. The data were then analyzed using the critical discourse analysis feature of Mills's (2004) model. Critical bases at the analysis stage include the context of events identified based on place, social and cultural settings.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Mills (2004) assessed that the representation of women in the news could not be seen from the aspect of production that involved news producers only. Furthermore, data analysis must involve aspects of consumption that involve news readers. According to Mills (2004), the reader segment in practice plays an important role in determining the representation of women in the news produced. Based on these arguments, the analysis of the representation of SFS as a female character that is widely discussed in the vortex of the COVID-19 issue is divided into the analysis phase of Subject-Object Position and Reader Position, each of which is described as follows:

#### 4.1. Subject-Object Position Analysis

Subject-Object Position Analysis aimed at identifying the SFS position in the news. This analysis is used to map the SFS as an interpreter of events or as an interpreted entity. Referring to this reality, the subject's position is always superior to the object's position. The position of Subject-Objects in the SFS coverage in each data source in each mass medium is shown as below.

##### 4.1.1. *Republika*

There were 2 (two) *Republika*'s perspectives in representing SFS. The first perspective is the transfer of SFS to Pondok Bambu Detention Center which is classified as COVID-19 red zone, and the second perspective is the polemic interview conducted by SFS with Deddy Corbuzier at the Gatot Soebroto

Army Hospital. The news perspective presented in the *Republika* news headlines can be seen in table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Perspective on SFS Coverage in *Republika*

News Labels	Date	Title
MMR1 News	May 26, 2020 [06:43 GMT +7]	<i>Siti Fadilah Diminta Tak Ditempatkan di Rutan Pondok Bambu</i> (Siti Fadilah were Asked Not to Be Placed in Pondok Bambu Detention Center)
MMR2 News	May 26, 2020 [09:15 GMT +7]	<i>Ditjen PAS: Siti Fadilah Dapatkan Perawatan Layak di Rutan</i> (DG PAS: Siti Fadilah Gets Proper Care at the Detention Center)
MMR3 News	May 26, 2020 [09:55 GMT +7]	<i>Ini yang Dilanggar Deddy Saat Mewawancara Siti Fadilah</i> (This is what Deddy violated when interviewing Siti Fadilah)
MMR4 News	May 26, 2020 [19:26 GMT +7]	<i>Deddy Corbuzier Jelaskan Alasan Wawancara Siti Fadilah</i> (Deddy Corbuzier Explains the Reason for Siti Fadilah's Interview)

From the data presented in table 2, the first perspective is found in MMR1 News and MMR2 News. MMR1 News schematically explained the protest of one of the members of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Representatives, Didik Mukrianto, over the transfer of SFS to *Pondok Bambu* Detention Center. According to him, the government neglected SFS services in handling Bird Flu by positioning SFS in a risky situation. The location of *Pondok Bambu* Detention House in the red zone of COVID-19 clearly endangers SFS who is over 70 years old and vulnerable to infection. While MMR2 News schematically explained the response of the Head of the Public Relations and Protocol Section of the Directorate General of Corrections, Rika Aprianti, regarding the health condition of SFS which was classified as good. In her argument, the risk of transferring SFS to *Pondok Bambu* Detention House has been minimized properly. SWAB test results conducted on SFS and other occupants showed negative results of COVID-19.

The second news perspective is in MMR3 News and MMR4 News. The MMR 3 News schematically contained the Head of the Public Relations and Protocol Section of the Corrections Directorate General, Rika Aprianti, about the regulations violated by Deddy Corbuzier when interviewing SFS. She mentioned that the officers were aware of the interview through a video uploaded on Deddy Corbuzier's social media. On the other hand, the MMR4 News schematically contained Deddy Corbuzier's clarification of the interview with SFS that allegedly violated the law. In his explanation, Deddy stated the reason for the interview to provide information about COVID-19 based on the view of the SFS who had successfully overcome the Bird Flu virus (H5N1). According to him, the opinion of SFS who has had a lot of experience in handling virus is very important to spread to all Indonesian people.

The results of the analysis of the *Republika* perspectives above explained that SFS occupied the function of the object represented by different subjects in each news. The position of the Subject-Object in the *Republika* can be seen in the following Table 3.

**Table 3.** Position of Subjects-SFS News in *Republika*

News label	Subject	Object
MMR1	Didik Mukrianto	SFS
MMR2, MMR 3	Rika Apriyanti	SFS
MMR 4	Deddy Corbuzier	SFS

Based on the Subject-Object Position, as in Table 3, SFS automatically has the status of an actor who is not given the opportunity to present herself. In reporting about herself, she is displayed and described by others, both directly and indirectly.

These findings can be proven through MMR1 data where SFS was presented by Didik Mukrianto, a politician who is a member of the Republic of Indonesia DPR Democratic Party faction. Didik Mukrianto presented SFS as a figure who contributed to Indonesia. With her work in dealing with Bird Flu during her tenure as the Minister of Health, SFS should be given relief in serving her sentence in prison. The SFS representation by Didik Mukrianto can be seen in the following quote:

*“Her scientific discipline and experience must not be muted and denied only because of her status. For the greater good of this nation, it should be the opposite,”* (MMR1)

The finding above is also supported by MMR2 and MMR3 data where SFS presented by Rika Aprianti who serves as the Head of Public Relations and Protocol of the Directorate General of Corrections. Rika confirms that SFS’s health condition when she were transferred back to Pondok Bambu Detention Center. SFS is reported in a good health and under medical examination supervision. In addition, she also confirmed that SFS received good medical care in *Pondok Bambu* Detention Center. Representation of SFS by Rika Aprianti can be seen in the following quote:

*“That Siti Fadilah during her criminal offense at the Pondok Bambu Detention Center has received good health care with the medical team and health facilities provided by the Pondok Bambu Detention Center, except for matters that must be referred to hospitals outside the Detention Center (RSPAD).”* (MMR 2).

While responding to Deddy Corbuzier’s interview process which she sees as a form of violation to various regulations, Rika represented SFS as a collaborator in violating the law. SFS has arranged the interview planning in such a way that it is not known to hospital guards. Rika's representation can be seen in the following quote:

*“The duty officer did not have time to ask, because when he was about to ask what the interests and needs of the guest were, the door to the room was locked from the inside. Even nurses who want to enter the ward to give medicines are also prohibited from entering by her (Siti Fadilah) family concerned.”* (MMR 3).

In MMR4 News, SFS was presented by Deddy Corbuzier. Deddy explained his interest in the SFS analysis of the Bird Flu virus that she had successfully overcome while serving as Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. Deddy acknowledged the intelligence of SFS and regarded the information she had as valuable knowledge and could be referred to in the process of handling COVID-19 in Indonesia. The SFS representation by Deddy Corbuzier can be seen in the following data:

*“The information she has is useful information for our government, for our community, which must be conveyed.”* (MMR4).

#### 4.1.2. Kompas

In contrast to *Republika*, the results of the study show that *Kompas* only carries one perspective of reporting on SFS, the interview process he conducted with Deddy Corbuzier at the *Gatot Soebroto* Army Hospital. Perspectives that manifest in the *Kompas* news discourse can be seen in the following table 4:

**Table 4.** Perspective on SFS Coverage in Kompas

News Label	Date	Title
MMK 5	May 26, 2020 [11:01 GMT +7]	<i>Dirujuk ke RSPAD karena ASMA, Siti Fadilah Wawancara dengan Deddy Corbuzier</i> (Referenced to RSPAD because of ASMA, Siti Fadilah had An Interview with Deddy Corbuzier)
MMK 6	May 26, 2020 [12:49 GMT +7]	<i>Wawancara Deddy Corbuzier dengan Siti, Ditjen PAS: Pintu Dikunci dari Dalam</i> (Deddy Corbuzier's Interview with Siti, DG PAS: The Door Is Locked from the Inside)
MMK 7	May 26, 2020 [21:41 GMT +7]	<i>Wawancaranya dengan Siti Fadilah Dinyatakan Salah Aturan, Ini Respons Deddy Corbuzier</i> (His interview with Siti Fadilah was stated to have violated the rules, This is Deddy Corbuzier's response)
MMK 8	May 26, 2020 [14:09 GMT +7]	<i>Saat Wawancara Siti Fadilah dan Deddy Corbuzier Berujung Polemik...</i> (The interview of Siti Fadilah and Deddy Corbuzier ended in a polemic...)

From the data presented in Table 4 above, the news perspective that carries SFS representation is described sequentially. MMK5 News explained that the interview between SFS and Deddy Corbuzier began with the recommendation of referring SFS who was diagnosed with sthma to the *Gatot Soebroto* Army Hospital to undergo further diagnosis. It was during her treatment that Deddy came to visit and conducted interviews. MMK6 News explains the ignorance of hospital guards about conducting interviews with SFS as a patient. This is because the door to the room is locked from the inside by SFS family members. Known a few days after the interview took place, MMK7 News confirmed Deddy's interview with SFS violated at least 4 articles in the Minister of Law and Human Rights Regulation No.M.HH-01.IN,04.03 concerning Management and Service of Information and Documentation at the Directorate General of Corrections, Kemenkumham Regional Office, and Correctional UPT. In the MMK7 News, Deddy gave clarification about the interview he had conducted purely to disseminate information on handling COVID-19 from SFS which he considered to have competence and capacity in this matter. MMR8 News summarizes all the events told on MMK5-MMR7 News. With the similarity of perspectives on 4 news data sources, the information conveyed by MMK5-MMK8 News has many similarities and reflects the existence of news reports.

The results of the analysis above show that SFS occupies the function of the object represented by different subjects in each news. The Subject-Object Position in *Kompas* mass media can be seen in the following table:

**Table 5.** Position of Subjects-SFS News in Kompas

News label	Subject	Object
MMK 5, MMK 6, MMK 8	Rika Apriyanti	SFS
MMK 7, MMK 8	Deddy Corbuzier	SFS

Based on the data in Table 5, the results of the study show that SFS has automatically got the status of an actor who does not have the opportunity to present herself. This can be proven from the discourse that in reporting about her. SFS is displayed and described by others, both directly and indirectly.



These findings can be proven from MMK 5, MMK 6, and MMK7 data where SFS presented by Rika Apriyanti who serves as the Head of Public Relations and Protocol of the Directorate General of Corrections. The representation came after she learned that the interview had been planned well in advance. SFS did the trick so that the interview was unknown to the hospital guards. One way she did this was by locking the door of his room from the inside, so that other guests and nurses could not enter. Rika Apriyanti's representation of SFS can be seen in the following quote:

*“The duty officer did not have the chance to ask because when he was about to ask what the interests and needs of the guest were, the door to the room had been locked from the inside, including when there were nurses who wanted to enter the ward to give medicines and were prohibited from entering by the family concerned.”* (MMK5, MMK 6, MMK8).

These findings are also supported by MMK7 and MMK8 data, which show that SFS is displayed by Deddy Corbuzier. In his narration, Deddy ruled out the fact that SFS as a corrupt convict who had harmed the nation's money. Deddy looked forward to empathy and sentiment by assessing SFS as an elderly who is in her 70s. In this age range, SFS should be treated differently from other prisoners. In addition, Deddy presented SFS as a savior figure for Indonesia and the world when the Bird Flu virus struck. For her services, many people know SFS as a heroic figure. Indonesian people should embrace the knowledge and experience possessed by SFS to handle the spread of COVID-19. Deddy Corbuzier's representation of SFS can be seen in the following quote:

*“So I beg you, please, pity on Ms. Siti Fadilah, she is over 70 years old. Regardless of whether or not she is a corrupt, it is not my business and I would not put my hands on it. But what I know is that the news about her saving Indonesia, stopping the world pandemic at the time of SARS was on the news and that is a wellknown fact.”* (MMK 7, MMK 8).

## 4.2. Readers' Position Analysis

As the two major media in Indonesia, *Republika* and *Kompas* have different reader segments. In the analytical framework proposed by Mills (2004), differences in the position of readers in the two mass media affect the news produced. In this context, the SFS representation in the two mass media is also influenced by different reader segmentation. Descriptively, the position of the reader influencing each media's representation of SFS is described as follows.

### 4.2.1. *Republika*

*Republika*, which was officially released on January 4, 1993, is a manifestation of one of the Indonesian Muslim Scholars Association (ICMI) programs established during the president of Suharto government (Hasrullah, 2001). The founding of *Republika* was based on a very thick expansion factor of Islamic da'wah. Indonesian Muslims inspire the founding of *Republika* as a mass medium to convey their aspirations. That context made Erick Thohir, a Mahaka Group owner occasion declared *Republika* as an Islamic newspaper (Kasman, 2010). With a strong religious basis, Ekasari (2015) outlines the segmentation of *Republika* readership consisting of Moslems and Islamic values, education, loyalty, democraticism, moderation, inclusiveness, tolerance, intellectualism, family caring, and urban society.

The position of a reader who has the character above causes *Republika* to build SFS representation in two perspectives. On the one hand, SFS is represented as a meritorious figure and contributes to Indonesia (MMR 1, MMR4), on the other hand the reality of herself as an inmate held at home *Pondok Bambu* prisoners (MMR2) and violating the rules in the activities of his interview with Deddy Corbuzier remain raised (MMR3).

The findings show that *Republika* avoided narratives that portray SFS unilaterally because the style was not relevant to its readership segments which were democratic, moderate, and inclusive. The portrayal in these two perspectives also avoids the clash between the Islamic reader segments and the intellect. Implicitly, the Islamic reader supports SFS for his narrative about COVID-19 which is contradictory to the government's statement. While intellect readers tend to be anti-concealment of the facts and legal facts inherent in SFS.

#### 4.2.2. *Kompas*

*Kompas* began to operate on June 28, 1965 at the initiation of the Catholic Party, chaired by Frans Seda (Kasman, 2017). The *Kompas* mass media live in three Indonesian leadership orders (Old Order era, New Order era, Reformation era). Its initial appearance was filled with the spirit of resistance against the Indonesian Communist Party to build the existence of *Kompas* as a large media (Ishadi, 2011; Sen & Hill, 2006). In the early days of its journey, *Kompas* underwent many obstacles, ranging from banning to banning. In its relatively long journey, *Kompas* has a vision of providing enlightenment for Indonesian people who are democratic and dignified and uphold human values. *Kompas* is associated with supporting government policy. The reading segment consists of middle to lower socioeconomic strata and does not have a strong religious ideological background.

The findings show that such a reader position underpins the monoperspective SFS representation in *Kompas*. There is no form of support or sympathy for SFS as a figure who has served the Indonesian people. The four discourses on SFS in *Kompas* carried the same spirit and tendencies, namely the portrayal of SFS as a woman who violated regulations in the Detention Center by conducting interviews without the permission from the officers. *Kompas* shows a counter attitude towards SFS clearly and frontally. The results showed that based on the analysis of the SFS Subject-Object Position occupying the object function represented by different subjects in each media coverage, both in *Republika* and *Kompas*, SFS has the status of an actor who is not given the opportunity to present herself.

From the aspect of gender analysis, the SFS representation in the *Republika* and *Kompas* mass media shows that there is no portrayal of women's sovereignty in the Indonesian mass media. *Republika* and *Kompas* do not represent SFS based on her scientific authority in the medical field. For example, SFS is a cardiologist and senior lecturer at the University of Indonesia is not represented in the text and that is the fact. This reality is the main capital for SFS as a woman to break down the marginalization of women. Viewed from Holmes et al., (2020), these two mass media still represent women in marginal positions as found in the study of Ottosson & Cheng (2012).

*Republika* and *Kompas* take framing which carries the SFS tendency and emphasis as a prisoner figure. Therefore, the realities that seemed positive about SFS remained limited by the legal facts inherent in him. SFS representations in the *Republika* belong to the paradox category as found in Hamzehei's (2014) research. On the one hand, she is portrayed as a woman who renders services to the nation, but on the other hand, the depiction is limited by narratives portraying her as a convicted woman. In contrast to *Republika*, SFS as a woman in *Ko* is portrayed negatively and inferiorly as there are studies in (Hellewell et al., 2020; Ottosson & Cheng, 2012). *Kompas* did not mention the other side of SFS as a woman who had served Indonesia. The narrative developed and reinforced repeatedly about SFS is that she is a female prisoner who is undergoing legal prosecution because she has committed violations in the form of conducting interviews with Deddy Corbuzier.

The ideological background owned by *Republika* and *Kompas* then determine their position in responding to the SFS statement that discords government's policy. In the midst of the vortex of the COVID-19 issue, the SFS representation in *Republika* and *Kompas* was influenced by the ideology they professed (Fairclough, 2005; Van Dijk, 2009). In her statement during the interview with Deddy Corbuzier, SFS gave a lot of criticism to the government regarding the policy of handling COVID-19 in

Indonesia. According to her, the Indonesian government did not have independence and firmness in responding to the pandemic. The Indonesian government should have its own steps, and not simply believe in the recommendations given by WHO.

As a media that carries the spirit of Islam, *Republika* provides subtle support to SFS. This relates to government policies in the form of restrictions on religious activities in mosques which offend some Muslims. The SFS argument which is counter to government policy then positions Muslims in the ranks that support themselves. Meanwhile, *Kompas* which focuses on supporting government policy represents SFS in one perspective. The absence of religious ideological background makes Kompas free to build negative narratives and put aside positive narratives about SFS. Kompas wants people's perception of pure SFS to be in the corridor of legal reality, not based on partisan emotional and sentimental issues.

Based on the description above, it can be emphasized that the portrayal of female figures in the Indonesian mass media has not yet reached the level of independence and authority they have in certain fields. In the case of SFS in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic discourse, the mass media did not highlight the scientific values that she has in the medical field. The mass media also does not frame news about the long experience that SFS has gone through in the medical world. The mass media tends to package SFS's efforts to voice their arguments as unlawful acts. This analysis reinforces Mills (2014) argument about the dominance of women in mass media coverage. SFS as a female character does not get a portion to present herself. Shee is represented by others who have the potential to reduce the full representation of her (Mills, 2004).

## 5. Conclusions

The SFS Subject-Object Position occupied the object function represented by different subjects in news, both in *Republika* and *Kompas*. In addition, the Subject-Object Position analysis also shows that SFS is automatically an actor who is not given the opportunity to present herself. However, the appearance of the news between *Republika* and *Kompas* was different. That difference can be observed through the perspective used by each media. *Republika* used 2 (two) perspectives in representing SFS, namely (1) SFS transfer to *Pondok Bambu* Detention Center which was classified as COVID-19 red zone and (2) was an interview polemic conducted by SFS together with Deddy Corbuzier at the *Gatot Soebroto* Hospital. News perspective about SFS is the interview process she conducted with Deddy Corbuzier at *Gatot Soebroto* Army Hospital.

Meanwhile, the position of the readers the two media represented SFS differently. The difference can be identified through the description of the background of reporting on SFS. The *Republika* avoided narratives that portray SFS unilaterally because the style was not relevant to its readership segments which were democratic, moderate, and inclusive. The portrayal in these two perspectives also avoids the clash between the Islamic reader segments and the intellect. Implicitly, Islamic readers support the SFS for its narrative of COVID-19 which contradicts government statements, whereas intellectual readers tend to be against concealment of the hidden facts and legal realities inherent in SFS. In contrast to *Republika*, the SFS representation in *Kompas* is monoperspective. The background position of the reader causes no form of support or sympathy for SFS as a figure who has served the Indonesian people. The four discourses on SFS in *Kompas* carried the same spirit and tendencies, namely the portrayal of SFS as a woman who violated regulations in the penitentiary by conducting interviews without the permission of the officers.

Thus, the portrayal of female figures in the Indonesian mass media has not yet reached the level of independence and authority they have. The mass media tends to package SFS's efforts to voice their arguments as unlawful acts. This analysis reinforces Mills's argument about the dominance of women

in the mass media coverage. Associated with the context of the current situation, the reality of the representation of women figures far from the positive tendencies cannot be separated from their criticism of government policies in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The context of this situation that cannot be denied in the presence of negative representations about SFS in the mass media. Given this context, negative representation is present because SFS is not only seen as a woman, but also a woman who seeks to oppose the nation authority in handling the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 6. Ethics Committee Approval

The author(s) confirm(s) that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country (Date of Confirmation: January 14, 2021).

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## Kadınların COVID-19 söylemlerinde temsili: Sara Mills'in medyada yer alan eleştirel söyleminin analizi

### Özet

Makale, COVID-19 söylemlerinde kitle iletişim araçlarında kadın figürlerinin temsilini haritalamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Siti Fadilah Supari (SFS) olarak bilinen bir kadın figürünü kapsıyor. SFS'nin temsili, tıp alanında konuşma yetkisi olan eğitilmiş bir kadın olarak göreve başlamasından itibaren başlar. Tanımlayıcı niteliksel bir yaklaşım kullanıldı; 26 ve 27 Mayıs 2020 tarihlerinde Kompas ve Republika gazetelerinde yayınlanan COVID-19 söylemlerinde SFS'nin tüm makalelerinde veri kaynağı dilsel fenomendi. Veriler, dolaylı konuşma tekniği ile gözlemsel yöntem kullanılarak toplandı. Ardından, veriler Sara Mills'in eleştirel söylem analizi modeli çerçevesinde analiz edildi. Sonuçlar, Özne-Nesne Konumunun, SFS'nin her zaman nesne konumunda olduğunu ve diğer taraflarca görüntülediğini gösterdi. Ayrıca Okuyucu Pozisyonundan, Republika'nın İslami halkın sempatisine dayanan SFS'ye taraf tutmasının varlığını ortaya koyarken, Kompas SFS'yi yasayı ihlal eden bir kişi olarak tanımlıyor. Kadınların medyadaki temsilinin henüz egemen ve bağımsız olmadığı sonucuna varıldı, çünkü SFS'nin tıp biliminde COVID-19 hakkında konuşma yetkisine sahip bir kadın figürü olarak çerçevelemesi yok.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* temsil; kadın figürü; COVID-19 söylem; Sara Mills'in eleştirel söylem analizi; medya kapsamı

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