

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

Hearing the name of South Korea frequently lead people to illustrate a country which located in East Asia that is identified with a great number of development ranging from the economy, technology, to the current issue related to its expansion of Hallyu wave over the world. Some products invented by this country have also been globally known, such as Samsung, Hyundai, LG, and even skincare products like Innisfree, Some by Me, Klairs, and many others. Besides, South Korea's fascinating modern atmosphere combined with its dense traditional culture has attracted millions of people to make it a tourist destination. However, behind all the glitter of the beautiful stories about South Korea, it still holds a problem regarding the issue of gender equality. In 2018, based on the data from the World Economic Forum, South Korea gender disparity index ranked 115 out of 149 countries with the gender gap index was 0.657 (Kim S. H., 2018).

Figure 1.1: 2018 Global Gender Gap Index



Source: Global Gender Gap Report 2018, World Economic Forum

The gender disparity index ranking was calculated by the country's reproductive health, empowerment, and labor market participation. The figure above shows that although South Korea leads in the sector of technology and economy, there is still a huge gap between men and women. This situation is contrary to developed countries such as Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, whose gender gap index is directly proportional to the country's progress in various sectors.

One of the reasons of the low South Korea's disparity index is because it still adheres to a very strong patriarchy system. It constructed a system of gender roles that place the position of men is far above women. It grants men the superiority to take control of women. Countries that adhere to a patriarchy system tend always to put men first and give second priority to women, which often leads to the negative impact where women are placed as objects of male sexuality. Women under patriarchal hegemony were not given equal rights to men; thus they often suffered from sexual harassment. Men in high

position who commit acts of sexual harassment caused the victims to become powerless to fight and were unable to complain or request assistance.

Korean Societal Trends reported that the total number of sexual harassment in South Korea in 2016 reached 29,357 cases, including rape, indecent assault, and illegal filming (spy camera). This number indicates that 56.8 incidents per 100,000 people, occurring at a rate of 80.4 per day and 3.4 per hour (Jung E. J., 2018). Come to the worst, sexual harassment also possibly occurs in family environment. National Police Agency of South Korea reported that in 2017 more than 1.16 million cases of family violence and abuse were recorded. This number was increased 74% over 4 years. However the arrest was made in only 13% of cases (Institute, 2019). Again, in 2016, over 7000 Korean women found their compromising videos on adult websites (Yasinta, 2018). The recorded video was then broadcast by irresponsible people on the paid online websites. They were taken from spy cameras that were placed in some public space and even private space such as hotel rooms and toilets. Some perpetrators have been caught but surprising facts shows that the perpetrators of sexual harassment not only come from those who have low levels of education and income, but also from people with high levels of position including state officials, judges, and politician.

Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family balance Assistance Act (EEO Act) is one of the policy that has been legislated sin 1990s to prevent and reduce the acts of sexual harassment (Han & Jun, 2015). However, the strong patriarchal system in South Korean culture, the fear of the victims, and added with the lack awareness of the society have made the cases of sexual harassment look invisible which is as the result, the EEO Act cannot be implemented properly.

These sexual harassment cases are like a chunk of the iceberg in which only the upper part is seen. Many efforts have

been made to promote awareness. However, there are still many parties who do not care and consider things like this are trivial. There is a complexity in a case of sexual harassment so that it is not easy to report, handle, and process legally. As a result, cases that occurred in reality were more than those that had been reported to the authorities. Most of the victims decided to remain silent for the incident. This situation happens considering that victim-blaming still becomes a trend than victim-helping.

Furthermore, at the end of 2017, a movement titled ‘#MeToo’ was widely discussed on social media. Alyssa Milano, a Hollywood actress, made a tweet to encourage women who ever been experienced sexual harassment to reply with “#MeToo”. This hashtag is a form of solidarity for victims of sexual harassment to share their personal stories. Alyssa’s action was a response to sexual harassment that happened to one of her best friends, Rose McGowan, who was sexually abused by an American Film Producer Harvey Weinstein. Unexpectedly, her tweet went viral and gained much attention from the world (Hosterman, Johnson, Stouffer, & Herring, 2018).

The #MeToo movement addresses women who have experienced sexual harassment in their environment and invited them to bravely speak up and dare to fight it (Evans, 2018). It has brought the issue of sexual harassment back to the surface, and the increasing number of victims reporting on indecent acts committed by men especially in the workplace has made the government take decisive action to protect victims and rise the sentence period of imprisonment by releasing new policy. #MeToo has grown into a new hope in South Korea to eliminate sexual harassment, and it is expected to be resolved with the implementation of the new policy. Therefore, in this thesis, the researcher will elaborate on the advocacy strategies launched by #MeToo movement which ultimately succeeded in holding the

government accountable to provide more protection to victims of sexual harassment.

## **B. Research Question**

Based on the background above, the research question of this research is formulated as follows: ***“How did #MeToo Movement advocate the sexual harassment policy in South Korea?”***

## **C. Theoretical Framework**

To answer the question above, the researcher will use the theory of the Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN). Before understanding the meaning of Transnational Advocacy Network, firstly the researcher will explain what advocacy means.

According to Tomatimasang, advocacy comes from the English language ‘to advocate’, which means to defend. It can also mean to propose or to promote, to create something new that has never existed, or to make a change in an organized and systematic way (Azizah, 2014). In its application, advocacy raises issues in the community that receives less attention from the government. Different from traditional actors, the actors of the advocacy groups have limited participation in the decision making process; thus some efforts are needed to draw the attention of the government to the issues they raise. The main objective, as Azizah said in her book titled *Advokasi Kuota Perempuan di Indonesia*, is nothing but to create changes in public policy.

Azizah also assumed that the advocacy process is not similar to a revolution that aims to seize political power and change the structure and social system as a whole, but to change the system and structure of society that can be done by creating changes in public policies gradually (gradual and incremental

changes) . Therefore, it can be concluded that advocacy is an effort to encourage or to improve public policies in accordance with the desires and interests of those who insist on the change (Azizah, 2014).

Generally, only government or traditional actors who have the privileges to formulate a policy, in this case, the actors of the advocacy group often have a disruption to enter into a state's domestic political arena. When relations between civil society and government are not smoothly accessible, this group forms an international network where the actors interact with one another and work together to change the state behavior or international organizations, which came to be known as Transnational Advocacy Network.

According to Keck and Sikkink, Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) is a group of actors that work on an international scale on an issue and is united by shared values (Keck & Sikkink, 1999). It is characterized as voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange. In recent years, the emergence of myriad issues ranging from human rights, gender, environment to land miles have derived TAN's actors to carry out various advocacy strategies. The actors including international and domestic NGOs, research and advocacy organizations; local social movements; foundations; the media; churches, trade unions, consumer organizations, intellectuals; parts of regional and international intergovernmental organizations; and parts of the executive and/or parliamentary branches of governments (Keck & Sikkink, 1999). The methods TAN used when conduct the advocacy are often based on ongoing current and specific issues which will attract and grant a huge influence from society on every campaign they made. They actively seek ways to bring up and raise the issues to attract attention from the government, so that the actors are able to involve in the decision making process.

Transnational networks seek influence in the same ways as political groups or social movements. The pressure resulting from this transnational advocacy network movement will be deemed capable of having the power to influence when some of the conditions for changes in policies made by 'targets' can be from countries, international or regional organizations, to the private sector such as corporations, and the conditions in which the network has been able to influence the behavior of the destination country. Nevertheless, since the transnational network is not traditionally strong, they tend to use advocacy means, in other words, they process information, strategies, and ideas to alter or modify state policy.

To carry out this Transnational Advocacy Network, there are four strategies that can be applied to reach the goal of the movement that is Information Politics, Symbolic Politics, Leverage Politics, and Accountability Politics. Information Politics is a strategy to produce information quickly and credibly which is politically useful and can bring significance influence. In symbolic politics, the strategy is conducted by using symbols, events, or stories that can represent the issues. Next, in Leverage Politics, powerful actors are needed to assist the weak group in order to influence the state practices. The last strategy is Accountability Politics where the community or the members of the network pushed the government to be responsible for the issue they have been agreed with.

By using all the four strategies above, the researcher tries to analyze the advocacy process carried out by #MeToo Movement towards victims of sexual harassment in South Korea. In the Information Politics strategy, the activists of #MeToo Movement who are also the victims themselves spread the information to the public, about how terrible sexual crime is, the impact on the victims, and how it can even destroy the victim's future. They provide not only facts but also testimonies as well as the total number of victims. Similar to how this movement boomed in the United States, the activist of #MeToo

Movement in South Korea also use social media as a platform to conduct their campaign in the purpose of gaining people awareness concerned about this issue.

In the Symbolic Politics strategy, the activists carry out several symbolic methods such as performing demonstrations or creating a tremendous event to commemorate certain days. One of them is the momentum of International Women's Day in South Korea on March 8, 2018 which was marked by protests against the government against sexual harassment and assault whose was attended by 70,000 women of all ages and from all over the country. This demonstration is expected to drive the government to act quickly in order to protect victims and punish perpetrators of sexual harassment.

In The Leverage Politics strategy, the author examines that #MeToo Movement will try to bring a policy change by using powerful actors. After So Ji Hyeon confessed about her sexual harassment experienced to the public, a number of victims who previously remained silent become bravely speak up. She was not only a victim but also a prosecutor. Her confession has attracted the attention of President Moon Jae In in which made him release a statement that sexual harassment cannot only be resolved through legal action, but the people together also have to change the culture and the attitude.

Then, in the Accountability Politics strategy, the activists could push the government to take responsibility towards the issue happened and urge them to change or amend the regulation to address sexual harassment. The government has a great responsibility to provide protection and security for victims. Later, with the society and the oldest non-profit women's rights activist group in South Korea, Korea's Women Hotline, and the society, together they oversee and monitor the policies in accordance with agreed values.



The actors of #MeToo Movement in South Korea together with the Korean Women's Hotline Organization, increasingly intensified campaigns against sexual harassment and trying to propose laws to protect victims of sexual harassment. In addition, after #MeToo movement became a boom in South Korea, the perpetrators reported were not only from ordinary people but also famous artists and actors were involved in this crime, especially in cases of sexual harassment. The pressure from the community made them finally resign from the world of entertainment and are willing to abide by all applicable legal processes. By carrying out these advocacy strategies, the main objective is the creation of laws that can protect victims and also eliminate the indecent acts of sexual harassment.

#### **D. Hypothesis**

#MeToo movement advocated the sexual harassment policy in South Korea by:

1. Giving information and spreading awareness to people regarding sexual harassment in South Korea, showing the number of victims and the necessity of the issue to be raised, inviting the society to eradicate sexual harassment through social media such as Twitter and The Blind.
2. Using hashtag as a symbol of the movement and International Women's Day momentum in March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to perform a demonstration and raise a protest against sexual harassment in the center of Seoul.
3. Attracting the attention of powerful actors like President Moon Jae In.
4. Pushing the government to take the responsibility to protect the victims by releasing new regulation.

## **E. Scope of Research**

In order to avoid the topic from being expanded and out of context, limitations of the research regarding the advocacy strategies of #MeToo Movement in influencing the policy change regarding the issue of sexual harassment in South Korea are needed. The limitation of time of this research is from 2018-2019 when the term of #MeToo Movement initially reached South Korea, and advocacy strategies were being conducted.

## **F. Research Methodology**

The researcher used the type of descriptive qualitative research to examine, analyze, and elaborate on the advocacy strategies of #MeToo Movement in influencing the policy change regarding the issue of sexual harassment in South Korea which later will be resulted in new policy that released by the government. The data and information were from secondary data obtained through library research. The materials were found from textbooks, journals, scientific writings also various data from online sources such as articles, e-news, e-book, and other relevant sources to this research.

## **G. Writing System**

**CHAPTER I**, examining the information that contains background, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, scope of research, research methodology, and writing systems.

**CHAPTER II**, explaining the definition of sexual harassment, the types of sexual harassment and elaborating the facts about sexual harassment that happened in South Korea

**CHAPTER III**, describing the information about #MeToo Movement and discussing the situation in South Korea before and after #MeToo Movement

**CHAPTER IV**, describing the process of #MeToo Movement advocacy in accordance with TAN strategy in the form of the Information Politics, Symbolic Politics, and Accountability Politics and also elaborating the result after the strategy is conducted.

**CHAPTER V**, containing the conclusion and recommendation from the entire thesis as a whole.