The Concept Of Political Communications In The Digital Era For A Wider Public Service

Erwin Riduan

Faculty of Law, Sultan Agung Islamic University, Semarang, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The understanding and practice of Indonesian political communication in the digital era aim to explain and provide new thoughts on the development of the concept and practice of political communication in the digital era. How the functions and processes of political communication in the digital era do its role to reach a wider public, so that the Internet network including social media which is already known in the wider community is utilized. This article is written by using literature study method with qualitative-descriptive analysis techniques. The findings of thought, understanding, and practice of political communication in the digital era in Indonesia are a new phenomenon that has not appeared in the previous era. The use of the internet can help the practice of political communication become wider, more precise, and on target. Hopefully, this article can provide broader insights with a new understanding of the concept development and practices of political communication in the digital era.

Keywords: Political Communication, Social Media, Digital Age.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the study of political communication attracted more people's attention and starts to be carried out by many communication and political science experts in this country. Likewise, the practice of political communication that is reported in the mass media and new media (internet), such as newspapers and weekly news magazines, as well as online media are interested to follow, especially close to the president and vice president election and members of the 2019 national and regional legislatures with the headline "2019 Concurrent Elections". Various reviews and survey results on national political issues from the political communication perspective have been carried out by the media and experts. Those reviews can be a part of the political education function.

The national politics grow continuously towards democratic political maturity that is currently supported by the development of information and communication technology. By utilizing the internet and new media, the practice of political communication is mostly carried out through online media. However, the concepts and theoretical thoughts that become the basis of thinking for politicians and national figures are still based on concepts, standard thoughts, political science literature, and communication science. The use of internet media in political communication becomes a new interesting phenomenon for a recent study.

Approaching the reformation era, the phenomenon of democratic growth and development in this country is in a positive direction and has put the principles of a democratic state stronger. Those principles are public sovereignty, opinion freedom, rule of law, and the enforcement of human rights. In the power concept, the pillars of a democratic state are upheld through the roles and functions of the legislature,

executive, and judiciary. As well as a political convention, the fourth pillar is also upheld, namely the role of the free and independent mass media. A democratic building that is formed in a political system run and is connected through the process of political communication between the political supra structure and the political infrastructure.

Gabriel Almond explains that the political structure is divided into political infrastructure (society/people/public, the political life atmosphere of society/people's/public, political sector: society/people/public); and political supra structure (government political structure, government sector, the atmosphere of government, political sector: government.[1]

These two kinds of political structures connected with political communication become important essence for the functions and roles of the legislative, executive, and judicial institutions as well as the mass media. According to Almond, political communication is one of the four input functions of the political system. The other functions are political socialization and recruitment; articulation or formulation of interests; and aggregation or combination of interests. In the political communication approach to the political system, political communication has moved all functions in the political system.[2] Political communication is like the blood circulation in the body, not the blood, but what is contained in the blood that makes the political system alive. Political communication as blood, which flows political messages in the form of demands, protests, and support (aspirations and interests) to the heart (center) the political system process; and the results of the process are summarized in output functions, streamed back by political communication as the feedback of the political system. In this way, political communication makes the political system alive and dynamic. That is the importance of political communication function in political practice.

The practice of political communication nowadays, in the reform era and entering the digital era by growing the internet network massively to remote areas in this country and globally has made the practice of political communication wider and increased its substance. In the past two decades, the practice of political communication still relied on conventional mass media, with limited sizes and limited public segment. Then, this situation change, that is by expanding of the internet network it reaches all national and even global public. The question that needs to ask is "How is the concept of political communication in today's digital era? And how is its practice?"

The purpose of this paper is to provide new thoughts on the development of practices and concepts of political communication that has entered the digital era. How the function and process of political communication in the digital era are, so that to reach a wider public, the internet network including social media has been utilized in the wider community.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses sources of writing on the theme of political communication in the digital era which come from printed literature and online media with qualitative-descriptive analysis techniques. It is hoped that this writing can provide a broader insight and new understanding of the political communication practices development in the digital era.

This research approach used qualitative methods with descriptive qualitative analysis techniques. Data were collected from the results of literature studies related to the main problem. The qualitative descriptive method provides a deep and broad explanation of the writing main problem so that the deep descriptions can answer the phenomena formulated in the research problem.

1. Rusadi, Kantaprawira. Sistem Politik Indonesia-Suatu Model Pengantar. Bandung: Tribisana Karya. 1977. p. 54.
2. Alfian. Komunikasi Politik dan Sistem Politik Indonesia. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama. 1993. p. 1.

3. DISCUSSION
New Media and the Digital Age

Alvin Toffler called the new era today as The Third Wave, which means that human civilization has entered an era in which information is much important than the previous era. In this new era, new media such as the internet have emerged. Rahardjo[3] said that the existence of new media cannot be separated from the rapid development of information and communication technology. Journalism activities with the presence of the internet have utilized its network to search; process and transmit information or news as journalism products. People call journalism activities via the internet as a form of online journalism or digital media. This means that journalism products are spread through internet networks to the world. The presence of the Internet has also become a new figure, as a new media, in which according to Martin Lister in his book "New Media: a critical introduction", it has several characteristics: digital, interactive, hypertensive, virtual, networked, and simulate.

There are several definitions of new media, one of them has been explained by Denis Mc Quail in his book Mass Communication Theory (1987: 16-17). Mc Quail called new media as telematics media that is a different electronic technology device with different uses. These new electronic media devices include several technology systems, transmission systems (via cable or satellite), miniaturization systems, information storage, and retrieval systems. And also the image display system (using a combination of text and graphics flexibly, and the control system (by computer).

Denis Mc Quail explained that telematics media or new media has several main characteristics, namely: (1) The communication process in the form of decentralization, the providing, and selection of news is no longer depend on the communication supplier. (2) The communication technology system has a high capability, transmitting via cable and satellite. The transmission is able to overcome communication barriers due to other transmitters. (3) Reciprocal communication (interactivity), the recipient can choose, exchange information, reply, and be connected with other recipients directly. (4) Form, content and usage are flexible.

The new media, in the form of the internet with a global network, has provided a platform that can be used by everyone called social media. Social media has been used to interact, full of symbolic codes that connect individuals with others virtually and at the same time allow the exchange of messages in the form of text and images. As a result, the message displayed more attractive so that it can give a stimulus for others to comment on. Interactions between one person and others that occur on social media can be done both personally and impersonally and can be done in a short time by connecting a large number of people at once. This personal or impersonal relationship and mass relationship are important features of interactions carried out through social media. Not only that, the virtual reality constructed through social media also can be reproduced mechanically so that it experiences an acceleration in the process of spreading with much faster speed than spreading messages through conventional media such as newspapers, television, and radio. Also, the meaning of symbols of manipulation technology on social media is different from the meaning of the symbol in the real world. The social media that are known and popular among the public community are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Path, and others.

In a popular meaning, the characteristics of new media [4] with a focus on online media are more advantageous than conventional media, including (1) online media is multi-media, which can contain or present news/information simultaneously in the form of text, audio, video, graphics, and images.; (2)

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3. Turnomo, Rahardjo. "Isu-isu Teoristis Media Sosial", in Fajar Junaedi (ed). *Komunikasi 2.0 Teoristis dan Implikasi*. Yogyakarta: Mata Padi Pressindo. 2011.

4. Asep Syamsul Romli. *Jurnalistik Online: Panduan Praktis Mengelola Media Online*. Bandung: Nuansa Cendekia. 2012.

Actuality, online media contain actual information because it can present easily and quickly; (3) Fast, once the information is posted or uploaded through online media, everyone can access it immediately; (4) Update, the process of updating information can be done quickly, both in terms of content and editorial, for example, typos or spelling mistakes, and in online media is impossible to find the word "revision" that often appears in print media. Information is also given continuously; (5) Wide capacity, web pages can accommodate very long manuscripts; (6) Flexibility, loading and editing manuscripts can be done anytime and anywhere, and also the publishing schedule (update) can be done anytime; (7) Broad, all people in the world which has internet access can reach the information; (8) Interactive, with facilities for comment columns and chat rooms; (9) Documented, information stored in the "data bank" (archive) and can be found through "links", "related articles", and "search" facilities; (10) Hyperlinked, connected to other sources (links) related to the information presented.

Taken from the definition of new media connected by global internet network, so the products of the electronic system in telematics use digital. Lately, through the internet, society has entered a digital era that simplifies people's lives and helps their daily life for various needs. The field of political communication has utilized the internet with new media and social media these days to socialize politics and campaigns.

The Meaning of Political Communication and Democracy Value

Lord Windlesham defines political communication as the delivery of political messages intentionally by communicators to the communicants. They aim to make the communicants behave in a certain way.[5]

Whereas Garing Allen Smith[6] defines political communication as a process negotiating the community orientation through interpretation and classifying the interests from power relationships and the roles of the community around the world. Issues can be settled by politics and politics is settled by communication.

Fagen defines political communication as all communications happen in a political system and between those systems to their surroundings that is including the study about communication networks (organization group, mass media, and special network) and determinant of socio-economy of the communication patterns in the related system. Dan Nimmo gives limitation to political communication, which is the communication activity that is reputed as political communication based on actual and potential consequences regulating human behavior towards conflict.[7] Prof Miriam Budiardjo[8] defines political communication as one of the functions of a political party, which is to aspirate various opinions and aspirations of society and regulate the interest aggregation and interest articulation in a certain way, to be fought as a political policy.

To move the process of political communication in a democratic country, the role and functions of a political party become significant and strategic. The existence of a political party in a democratic political system plays an important role. The political system to be fought is not only as institutional but the implementation of the democratic values in society and country.

To implement a democratic country and society, it needs some values to guide and give guidelines for the implementation of democracy purposes. Some values have a certain meaning in socio-political life. Prof. Miriam Budiardjo MA, a professor of Political Science, Faculty of Socio and Political Science, University of Indonesia, states that the authentic values toward democracy life are:

5. Onong U Effendy. Dinamika Komunikasi. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya. 1992. Page 158.
6. Zulkarimein. Komunikasi Politik Suatu Pengantar. Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia. 1990. Page vii.
7. Dan Nimmo. *Komunikasi Politik-Komunikator, Pesan dan Media*. Bandung: Remaja Karya. 1989. Page 10.
8. Miriam Budiardjo. *Pengantar Ilmu Politik*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama. 1982.

(1)   Value to settle the dispute with peace and institutionally;

(2)   Value to guarantee the changes with peace in a changing society;

(3)   Organize the well-regulated leader's changing;

(4)   Delimit the harshness to a minimum;

(5)   Acknowledge and account for pluralism appropriately.

(6)   Enforce justice.

Those democratic values can be inspired and oriented in the attitude and behavior of the society and political party, once those democratic values have been well realized. Where a political party can do its function of political socialization. Thus, it is assumed that a political party is capable of holding a role as a socialization agent of democratic values. There are some phenomenon becoming obstacles to developing the democratic values that a clandestine operation, or a chronic one.

Firstly, it is the universal democratic values, in which the most important is the existence of political and socio pluralism, even culture and role of a political party to grow democracy values, such as by doing political socialization (political communication actions) and targeting the outreach, that give comprehension towards the general elections to bring out the National and local leaders democratically. The actuality says numerous political parties do not acknowledge this pluralism utterly.

Secondly, the political parties in a democracy political system, such as in Indonesia, are understood as a non-populist phenomenon. We must admit there are countless political parties only reach out during the legislative and presidential elections. Whereas the political party is a political institution in terms of political infrastructure that has access to society directly. In their political dialog, they fight to get legal power through the general election mechanism. According to Kaare Strom[9] that in a healthy and fair political practice, democracy is a fair competition between the existing political parties. It cannot be imagined if democracy is developing properly in a single-party system as we always see in communist countries, such as Soviet Russia and East Europe until the end of the 1980's decade.

Thirdly, the movement of opposition parties is limited. Whereas they are significant to push progress in democracy. The hegemonic (and authoritative) rulers during the New Era regime did not give any opposition party a chance to do its role, until May 1998. There was formal multi parties' phenomenon, through Acts of Political Party but as de facto, there was no equality in giving the rights to grow and it caused party domination, which was Golongan Karya (Golkar). Two other parties were Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) and Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI). In other words, democracy implies a fair multi parties system by the political dynamic process to get and hold power.

The institution of a political party becomes a medium of the political communication process. That is why it needs the right strategy to meet the political communication goals, such as to foster the prominence and stabilize the institutional of a political party. It means, the prominence of a politician and stabilization of his/ her political-institutional (political party) in political communication. Besides, the ability and support of an institution are needed to arrange the political messages, decide the method, and choose the right political media. 20 years ago, they still relied on conventional media, such as radio, television, and newspaper; but today, in a reformation era yet a digital era, they are using online media and social media to do their political communication.

The truth is, a strategy in political communication is the entire conditional decision at present towards

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9. Pawito. "Media Massa dan Pengembangan Demokrasi di Indonesia-Di Sekitar Periode Pemilu 1999". Jurnal Penelitian Pers dan Pendapat Umum, Vol. 5 Number 1. Jakarta: BPPI. 2001. Page 84-107.

the acts to meet the political goals in the future. As such, foster the prominence (the leader of a political party or politician) and stabilize their political institutions (political party) will be the right decision of political communication to meet their political goals in the future.

Political Communication Practices in the New Era

The reign of New Era, with President Soeharto as the central prominence, had built a strong political communication. The concept of political communication used a symbolic interaction approach, especially one of its genre, which was the dramaturgic approach of Erving Goffman.[10] By that approach, they tried to reconstruct the personal concept of Soeharto as a President while reigning and apart from the tension of his old personal concept. The personal concept of Soeharto had been built for decades, confirmed by his cabinets, the National Army of Indonesia (used to be ABRI), MPR, and the institutions of other countries, mass media, including the books that flattered like *Manajemen Presiden Soeharto*, and all his people. To strengthen his social role, Soeharto used mystification. Various formal ceremonies, formality, and impressive titles were used to build his charisma, such as by keeping his social distance to society. The "*Laporan Khusus*" was broadcasted by TVRI was like strengthening the picture of low profile Soeharto. It succeeded to impress people to see him closer. But the *Reformasi* movement in 1998 destroyed the characters of Soeharto. People started realizing that everything was a fallacy. Everything has changed. The personal concept of Soeharto as the number one figure in Indonesia wasn't believed by the majority. His political communication had been destroyed.

The Root of Political Communication in Indonesia

Discussing political communication as a part of social science that is bound by historical and cultural factors. It means political communication is dependent. Since the 1950s, the concern of the experts of social and political science towards Indonesia has been shifted. Western experts are commonly disappointed about the growth of political communication in the newly independent countries, which is always outside their wish. For example, the democracy assumption is no more than the parochial of Western experts. It means, the universalism of the democratic process does not apply, due to the local characteristics (historical and cultural factors) cannot be avoided. Even these factors build the real identity of political communication. The study towards politics is even growing, concerning political culture.

Pancasila as a Nation ideology is a state of mind of political communication in Indonesia. Indeed, Pancasila is motivated by the social philosophy of Indonesia (collectivism and socialism of economic philosophy). It is a general characteristic of Eastern society that is different from the Western.

How does political communication play a role to build democracy in Indonesia? The founding fathers of the Republic of Indonesia were interested in democracy and values that in Pancasila, democracy is designed to become one with collectivism and social justice. Therefore, the philosophy of political democracy is built above the philosophy of social collectivism and socialism economy (sovereignty), which is citizenship is guided by the inner wisdom in the deliberation/ representation.

The concept of the sovereignty of people is typical Indonesia (found by local genius), which can combine the Eastern and Western values; on the other hand, the old values with the new ones. According to Anwar Arifin[11], in the entire manuscript of the Constitution 1945 (original), there is no term of democracy. In effect, the existing words are "citizenship" and "people sovereignty". Taken from the concept of citizenship and people sovereignty reflects or has meaning as "democracy". In the process of political communication,

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10. Deddy Mulyana. Komunikasi Populer-Kajian Komunikasi dan Budaya Kontemporer. Bandung: Pustaka Bani Quraisy. 2004. Page 2.
11. Anwar Arifin. Komunikasi Politik-Pradigma, Teori, Aplikasi, Strategi Komunikasi Politik Indonesia. Jakarta: PT Balai Pustaka. 2003.

it needs to be moved by supra-political structure and infra-political structure that is reciprocally moving to the democracy life.

The Practice of Political Communication in the Digital Era

Lately, the process of political communication has been changing. In this globalization era and the existence of the internet makes people around the world access and use internet networks for political communication massively. The dominant factor that becomes the developing motor and social changing is the information and communication technology advances. Marshall McLuhan pictures the condition of the world as the global village. The new electronic media, such as the internet, have changed the way to think, feel, and behave. People and the world's society, including citizens of Indonesia, are in the middle of the revolution/ social change that has totally never been understood.

The process of political communication in this Reformation era lately has been different than the one before the internet was invented. Internet technology was invented by the 21st century, which was the fall of the communist government of Uni-Soviet; and the time when democracy started to be known in East Europe, including Russia and other areas in Asia. The Internet was accessible and started to be known in Indonesia was about 1998. Indeed the fall of the New Era was influenced by the internet, though limited but able to collect people to do reformation, a National changing movement.

According to Hafied Cangara,[12] the idealist technologists, who were developing technology, were sure that the new media, such as the internet, would broaden the new values to strengthen democracy to the entire world faster, especially to build a more transparent government.

Internet stands for *International networking* or *inter-connection networking*, which means a global computer network connecting millions of computers around the world, in such a way that every connected computer can communicate or do exchange data without being limited by distance, time, and place. The Internet is analogized as the web to cover the globe and contains connected nodes each to others.

Numerous advantages of internet media are: (1) break the boundary of any zone, space, and time; (2) broaden the access to get global information; (3) improve the ability to ally freely; (4) threaten the established order, such as the autocracy government; (5) have fast growth and incomparable distributing. Thereby, the process of political communication through internet media is in ultimate strength to spread information to the world without significant impediment.

The legislative election in 2009 was the loudest with internet campaigns. For the first time, some legislative candidates had their media that were managed virtually. They had blogs made by themselves and their team. The contents were various, such as picturing their profile, political programs, and promises.

Media groupings known in Indonesia are (1) publication media/ blog, such as BlogSpot, blogger, and WordPress; (2) Microblog, such as Twitter, and Plurk; (3) Media sharing, such as Flickr, YouTube, and Slideshare; (4) Social Media, such as Facebook, Myspace; (5) Collaborative Media, such as Wikipedia, WikiLeaks; (6) Discussion Forum, such as Kaskus; (7) Conversation Media, such as Google Talk, Yahoo Messenger, Skype; (8) Review Sites, such as Goodreads and Yelp.

In practice, political communication has used online media for the campaign. Though it is not too massive maximizing social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The tendency to use this new media is relevant to the awareness of the candidates of the effectiveness of online media, and the trend of internet accessing by people is increasing.

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12. Hafied Cangara. Komunikasi Politik. Jakarta: Rajawali Press. 2009. Page 392.

The power of social media to influence society is exclusively based on the social aspect. It means interaction and participation in the campaign are a part of the process of political communication to society. The campaign is the message delivery from the sender to the society. The exclusive social network services can share content, web community, and social media internet forum. As long as social media users use Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, so the political candidates will keep interacting with supporters and accept their contribution and volunteer.

The existing mainstream media, such as newspapers, tabloids, and magazines; yet electronic media, such as television and radio; so internet is coming in the middle of society and directly influencing various political activities.[13] It has been inevitable. The process of political communication cannot ignore the internet as the most effective way due to its strength that any others are lack of.

4. CONCLUSION

The process of political communication lately using the internet has left conventional ways or methods. However, the substantial, which is the political message and communicator or actor in political communication, keep being the significant factor like they used to be. Thus, the concept of political communication is still the same although the communication media is using the internet, which is online media and social media.

The political communication used in New Era could give us valuable lessons, on how they kept a reigning regime to take into custody of their power by using self-branding as if they are close to their people.

The changes begin after the invention of the internet, which brings some strengths that cannot be expected before. The political messages can be spread over so they are limitless, as well as the target audience. The weakness is for those who do not have internet access, so the political messages won't be received. In social reality, the internet gives more advantages for political communication to reach their goal, which is creating a democratic and transparent society.

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13. Hefri Yodiansyah. Komunikasi Politik Media Surat Kabar dalam Studi Pesan Realitas Politik pada Media Cetak Riau Pos dan Tribun Pekanbaru. Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi, Volume 5, No. 1, June 2017. Page 11-30.

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