
**SHAPING A PUBLIC OPINION AS A POLITICAL
COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE IN DIGITAL
DISRUPTION ERA**

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Abstrak

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The image of political actors and political parties is deemed good or bad when obtained by rising public opinion. Political communication skills are a difficulty, especially in the middle of digital disruption era. This research employs a qualitative method with a literature analysis. The result of the research is that public opinion is produced from the consumption of speech that is witnessed, including the political concerns they witness. The importance of preserving public opinion is a prerequisite for political actors and political parties to attain a common vision and objective. This has been demonstrated by public opinion, which believes that the president of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, is rumored to be a communist. Public opinion is like a wild ball; if it is not managed, it will be harmful. The case turned out to be not only fake news because it was not founded on empirical facts, but it was also suspected that the matter was rolling

because of political objectives.

Introduction

The advancement of technology nowadays has resulted in people easily accessing information from numerous parties, including the media. The flow of information has resulted in the community also taking part. As humans who are sensitive to everything that happens in the environment, it is not surprising that individuals might accept, reject, question, and even criticize existing knowledge or policies based on the information they have gained. In this case, politics is also an interesting issue among the public, therefore numerous perspectives and views related to politics are also getting increasingly diverse in their existence. The current flow of information can be argued to be inevitable; many people are acclimated to the information moving around them, without exception to existing political issues.

Very strong media control by a handful of people will produce a scenario of uneven information flow, which will further damage democracy in the country concerned. In developing nations such as Indonesia, history has proved how unequal information flows are related to democratic challenges, especially control over the path of power and public engagement in the political process (Birowo, 2004: 128–129).

Political interaction, including political communication, is a subject that becomes a variable in political activity, including political travel, political visits, and political policy making. The development of political communication as an area of study can be traced back to early research in the realm of mass communication (Chaffe & Hochheimer, 1985). According to Ryfe (2001:408), it was from the methodological and theoretical commitments of these early works that a stance for political communication in the history of academia was created.

Of course, in the development of the discipline of political communication, there are also other scholars who take a different

approach, such as those who use a variety of critical and cultural theories that have challenged the assertion that the focus of political communication is campaign communication alone, for example Miller (1998), Hartley (1992), and Fiske (1996). In Ryfe's more comprehensive exploration, he believes that early research in social psychology, political science, and mass communication provided a set of terms that continue to mark the boundaries of the field of political communication, namely "attitude," "opinion," "belief," "politics as a process," and "media influence" (Gazali, 2004: 56–57).

Riswandi is explained in Indrawan's paper (2017: 173).. Political communication is related to political dialogues that take place within the framework of dispute and consensus. Differences in opinion that occur in the public are processed through conversations to reach consensus. In this situation, an interpersonal political communication process operates in the group. In relation to the preceding, the opinions that emerge are also previously present from a political discussion, so that differences in opinion exist, requiring further confirmation or communication by those who disagree, so that political communication can flow smoothly.

The processes that occur in political groupings and policy actualization do not always go according to popular expectations. Individuals' faults in policy and governance can make it difficult for the public to trust the policies and messages presented. The crisis of public trust is a serious problem because it will become a developing public attitude. The vision and aim of a government agency or an entity in attaining goals and mutual agreement (good will), particularly in a varied society, is to build public opinion.

Indonesia, as a democratic society, gives a position for people who are free to voice their thoughts, even through virtual public places. So it is no longer shocking if there are various viewpoints from the public that respond to difficulties in their environment or even political concerns. A discussion, debate, or exchange of information between people or persons in a group is not the only means to establish a public opinion.

Public opinion is highly important in a democratic country like Indonesia because no government can accomplish success if

the government does not care about public opinion because the objective of a democratic government is fully for the benefit of the people (Pethe, 2018). A law or decision issued by the government that is in line with public opinion will be more easily accepted and well executed by the people (Rusi et al. 2020: 633).

In today's digital era, public opinion or opinion formed from political information is no longer a novel item in public communication. The rise of technology and freedom of access to digital information can create dynamics for political communication used by political practitioners. So that the ultimate political institution's job and strategy appear intensive in terms of communication, collaboration, contribution, and other positive things to influence public opinion.

Initiatives to gain public opinion are surely made through many sorts of communication and interaction efforts. Reading and understanding the community is a difficulty for communication in the field and political involvement. This conversation is vital to find out about efforts to rebuild the image and acquire good public opinion in the setting of politics and diversified public relations.

Some relevant research has been conducted by various researchers, such as Zamri's research (2020) entitled "Komunikasi Politik di Era Media Sosial" which shows that changes in community behavior in the digital era are very clear, such as the ethics of using the internet. including how political actors use language and disseminate information in the media. Hanafi (2019) conducted another study titled " Membangun Opini Publik Terhadap Partai Politik (Studi Kasus Pilkada Jabar 2018)" which explained that there are efforts in the West Java community to build a public opinion format towards political parties, namely raising the awareness of the general voting public to be able to dig up information and assess the competence of prospective leaders and supporting political parties. In short, the two studies above have substantial differences with this research, which has an emphasis towards the issues of political communication in shaping public opinion in the digital disruption era (digitalization).

Research Method

The type of data used in this research is descriptive qualitative research utilizing a library research approach. Library study is undertaken since many scholars have conducted field searches connected to this issue but have not reached the level of a complete conclusion. Data sources are gathered from primary data, meaning, data that has a significant relevance and relationship to this research so that it can reinforce the conclusions as a consequence of the research. Thus, data collecting approaches are carried out via documentation techniques.

Through this study approach, the results obtained are more comprehensive and can address the issues of political communication and engagement in shaping public opinion in a heterogeneous society. Data analysis techniques entail obtaining useful data and minimizing the data obtained. After that, the data is processed and presented as research results.

Result and Discussion

Everything is easily related to one another in this age of globalization. In the past, people utilized their mouths and lips to interact with others, but now people can also use digital media. Political communication is a topic of interest not just for communication and political experts, but also for politicians participating in various political parties and society in general. With the information technology that continues to increase, the general people gets more information, and not a few also contribute information and criticism of politics in Indonesia. Information and opinions are not just obtained or supplied by persons participating in politics, who understand politics and political means, or by political observers; they are universal, meaning they are obtained or given by anybody, regardless of social class, religion, age, money, and so on.

Public opinion is also often claimed to be a political force and the bedrock of democracy. Public opinion is one sort of effect of political messaging in the communication process that begins with politicians and is changed into political messages from the public to politicians via the mass media (Tabroni, 2012: 83-84). In keeping with this, public opinion can be said to be a political force. Positive political governance can also be seen in good public opinion.

Likewise, unfavorable political dynamics can be seen in the results of public reviews, which lead to negative public opinion.

Political communication is concerned with political conversation that takes place within a framework of dispute and consensus. Different opinions in the public are processed through dialogues to reach consensus. In this scenario, an inter-personal political communication process applies in the group (Riswandi, 2009: 88).

According to Anwar Arifin, "public opinion" is the same opinion voiced by many people, which is produced via active discussion as an answer to topics and problems impacting the public interest. The problem is common throughout the mass media. Public opinion is basically the opinion of the ordinary individual in society as a result of the conversations described previously to address an issue, especially those circulating in the mass media. Therefore, public opinion will only be established if there are issues developed by the mass media (Arifin, 2011: 193).

Opinion is an expression of attitude regarding a controversial matter (Wahdaniyah, 2019: 35). Opinions arise as a result of debates regarding important matters that give rise to various opinions. Meanwhile, attitude is the inclination to respond to a certain problem or scenario. Public opinion will always go hand in hand with political communication, where the role of public opinion is quite considerable in the political communication process since the political communication process will not occur without establishing public opinion. Along with the right to freedom or independence, one of the collective rights is the right to freedom of expression.

The Importance of Public Opinion in Political Communication

One of the purposes of political communication is the creation of public opinion. This is supported by the fact that humans are currently living in an era of openness and transparency, such as in Indonesia. Political communication carried out by political elites will not run ideally without forming public opinion. Political actors' popularity will not rise unless they receive considerable public support. Therefore, political communication and public opinion have a close relationship because both support each other. Public opinion is directly tied to politics, especially in an age of openness like this reform era in Indonesia. This is also true in practically every other

section of the world, where transparency and freedom of information are vital.

However, what is highlighted about public opinion itself is that when a person or group of people seeks to construct public opinion, they should know how the political flow or the actual situation is; this is wanted so that the attitude of the audience concerned can be favorable. Mass media and digitalization are the channels that most quickly impact public opinion in the creation of public opinion related to politics. This is because public opinion has the potential to modify the existing political structure.

This is backed by Emory S. Bogardus's argument in "The Making of Public Opinion" that public opinion is the product of the integration of perspectives based on conversations in a democratic society (Olii, 2007: 20; Kurniawan, 2021: 78). Thus, the good and bad of public opinion are created by political acts that are thoroughly reviewed by the public, including netizens who submit evaluations and judgments of the government and the democracy they see.

Case Study: Public Opinion on the Issue of Jokowi as a Communist

The subject of Jokowi being a communist is frequently disputed in the society, one of which is on social media. The growth of information and communication technologies also affects the formulation of public opinion on the topic, especially with the availability of new media, namely the Internet. One example is social media. With the notion circulating that Jokowi is a communist, it affects his policies. Because this information will reach a big number of individuals and will have a bad impact on their politics or vice versa. It was once argued if Jokowi was a communist. The propagation of issues generates a public opinion that is not necessarily the truth. There could possibly be linkages with political objectives about the emergence of the issue.

Jokowi is a politician who has had a very significant career in politics in terms of his career path. Jokowi initially won the election of Solo City (2005), followed by the re-election of DKI Jakarta Governor (2012). After his term of office of nearly 2 years, he stood for president again with his partner JK (Jusuf Kalla) in 2014 and won the presidential election. And, ultimately, a few

months ago, when presidential voting for the following cycle began, Jokowi won the election once more.

But with this topic, Jokowi did not really want to respond to issues emerging in the community. And with the issues and events that occur, there is no news that can indicate that Jokowi is a communist (Ma'unah, 2020: 7).

The spread of these concerns is quite damaging for the community if they are not factual and not established. Because in the end, they obtain inaccurate and erroneous information. The major issue that needs to be anticipated early on in connection to the propagation of fake news is its power to form public opinion. The potential of social media to allow community participation in responding to news that is not founded on facts and is not compiled according on news journalistic ethics will lead to the construction of public opinion that is negative to all parties. Public opinion that has been circulating in the community will become more "wild" when there is a polemic opinion based on each community's point of view. This polemic will have the ability to spread and be able to rally the public to prove their beliefs, even though it risks creating conflict in society. Such is the existing capability of digitization.

Conclusion

Public opinion is vital to the political constellation and the wheels of government's success in functioning according to their vision, mission, and common goals. Public opinion can be established from the political upheaval and democratic behavior experienced. As long as the public witnesses constructive labor and contributions to society, a good public opinion will be developed, and vice versa, a bad public opinion will be established if political players make mistakes in establishing policies. The communication abilities of political players are a challenge. The digital disruption era adds a new dimension. Digitalization, particularly social media, has enabled knowledgeable and capable netizens to respond to developing challenges, including political issues.

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