Political Communication Through New Media In Local Elections In Indonesia[*]

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Abstract
New media is one of the supporting facilities for the development of democracy in Indonesia. In the current era of globalization, people are required to be able to adjust to advances in technology and information to support the delivery of people's aspirations through new media. The new media is the right step to carry out political communication in the midst of society, even more so at this time it is not possible for politicians to be able to communicate and campaign directly to the public given the implementation of the New Normal and the continued spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. This study aims to determine political communication through new media related to the elections in Indonesia and how the role of new media related to political communication activities carried out at this time. The research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research method. The results showed that the presence of new media in Indonesia drastically changed the course of politics and democracy in Indonesia. In addition, political communication through new media such as the internet and social media in the elections in Indonesia is considered as one of the effective and efficient breakthroughs considering the current conditions in the Republic of Indonesia are unstable due to the Covid-19 pandemic and obliging all people to remain compliant with government regulations.
Keywords: Political Communication; New Media; Local Elections in Indonesia

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Abstrak

Media baru merupakan salah satu sarana penunjang pengembangan demokrasi di Indonesia. Di era globalisasi saat ini masyarakat dituntut untuk dapat menyesuaikan diri dengan kemajuan dibidang teknologi dan informasi guna mendukung penyampaian aspirasi masyarakat melalui media baru. Media baru merupakan langkah tepat untuk melakukan komunikasi politik ditengah masyarakat terlebih lagi saat ini sangat tidak memungkinkan bagi para politisi untuk dapat berkomunikasi dan berkampanye secara langsung kepada masyarakat mengingat penerapan New Normal dan masih adanya penyebaran pandemic Covid-19 di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui komunikasi politik melalui media baru terkait pilkada di Indonesia dan bagaimana peran media baru terkait aktivitas-aktivitas komunikasi politik yang dijalankan saat ini. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Kehadiran media baru di Indonesia mengubah secara drastis perjalanan politik dan demokrasi di Indonesia. Selain itu, Komunikasi politik melalui media baru seperti internet maupun media sosial dalam pilkada di Indonesia di nilai sebagai salah satu terobosan yang efektif dan efisien mengingat saat ini kondisi di Republik Indonesia sedang tidak stabil karena pandemic Covid-19 dan mewajibkan seluruh masyarakat untuk tetap patuh terhadap peraturan pemerintah.

Kata Kunci: Komunikasi Politik, Media Baru, Pilkada Di Indonesia

A. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization and the rapid development of media facilities, the multimedia aspect is a very appropriate means for conducting political communication. Technology will not be separated from how political actors in Indonesia carry out a process related to political communication. The technology is linked through an application that is now called new media. The existence of this new media must be in accordance with the implementation of democracy as a political principle for most countries in the world. Digitalisation is part of technological progress, has provided an opportunity for the birth of the internet (international connection networking). This concept itself can be understood as an international network that has a relationship with one another. Another term that we often hear is globalization which has cross-border (international) meaning. The internet has become an integral part of globalization due to the rapid development of information technology[6].

The internet when viewed from the physical form in the form of a spider's network that surrounds the globe. The network is located from points that are related between one point and another[7]. Another analogy from the internet is a large and broad digital city. Within the city, every resident has an address, where the address is used as a means of exchanging information. The internet can also be analogous to a building or library in which a lot of information (databases) is stored that is very complete. Of course all of these analogies are digital or multimedia. A number of advantages of the internet are that there are almost no restrictions regarding space and

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[7] Dezelan, T. & Vobic, I. (2016). *Revolutionizing Political Communication Through Media Social*. IGI Global.

time. Everyone can express and use the internet very easily. In addition, the global nature of the internet makes access to information very easy. The internet also increases the ability of people to be able to gather and hold opinions freely, so that sometimes freedom can threaten a government characterized by autocracy. the internet also has advantages in speed, which allows information to develop and spread massively[8].

The internet can be said as an oasis for democracy. For countries that have authoritarian or monarchic systems of government, the internet is a threat. The internet can disseminate political information, both general and confidential. Therefore, the internet can be used by marginalized minorities, even the opposition of a government, to fight for their political rights. Moreover, in places where conventional media are instead a container of government policy. That is why the internet plays a very important role in political communication. As a tool in political communication, the internet can be used for party campaigns, even campaigning for presidential candidates to a number of regional head candidates and in general to convey political information for political purposes. The effectiveness of the internet in conveying political messages, both from the bottom up, and vice versa, makes it an important role in the process of political communication[9].

The purpose of this research is to find out how political communication through new media related to the elections in Indonesia and how the role of new media related to political communication activities carried out at this time. In fact, currently, in the New Normal era after the Covid-19 pandemic, almost all political activities are carried out through cyber media. This condition is of concern to the author to examine this research in-depth. Through this research, the writer tries to review the process of political communication that is carried out through new media in the multimedia era like now so that it can have a positive impact on political activities in Indonesia.

Literature Review

Based on communication science, social media can be considered as part of new media[10]. Powell calls the new media a movement of change that applies technology as a tool for communication and change in society. The definitive equation about the concept of new media shows that the strength in a new media is the mastery of technology (especially the internet) that can bring change in society[11]. New media has become a foundation in the development of political communication in the multimedia era. Political communication always runs in accordance with freedom of democracy,

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[8] Evangelista, R. & Bruno, F. (2019). WhatsApp and political instability in Brazil: targeted messages and political radicalization. *Internet Policy Review*. 8(4).

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especially freedom of opinion. Then, political communication that occurs in this globalization era shows the strengthening of democratic freedom which leads to freedom of speech in virtual communities or virtual communities. Thus, communication habits in humans begin to experience fundamental changes[12].

Social media like Instagram, Whatsapp, Twitter, Line, We Chat, Path, VK Contact, and Facebook, for example, have their own role and impact which is quite massive in increasing public pressure. The large number of conversations on social media sites like that shows the emergence of new public spaces. When conventional media are limited by the business and political interests of their owners, online media, especially social media sites, have a place of respect as a channel for shared awareness and express political aspirations[13]. Activists, politicians, pressure groups and interest groups, journalists, and bureaucrats are increasingly accustomed to using the internet to do their daily work[14]. A very interesting contemporary phenomenon, because it uses it in a static or dynamic context. That is, even if they are not actively using it, at least they have used it. Lots of information, such as the dissemination of ideas, ideas, invitations, to the form of protests and demands for a policy, for example, obtained through the internet. The process was carried out faster than through television or print media. Relationships among people, including connectivity between the political superstructure and political infrastructure, continue without being limited by space and time[15].

The use of the internet for various political activities is now increasingly prevalent in Indonesia. There are at least two factors that make this possible. First, it is an increasingly democratic political system in Indonesia. After the reformation, the development of the press, as well as the freedom to gather, associate, and express opinions are increasingly increasing. As a result, anyone in this reform era is free to use the virtual world as an articulation of ideas, ideas, thoughts, even demands and pressure on the government or authorities. This condition raises a public space that is in cyberspace. Strengthening democracy occurs not offline, but in cyberspace. The second factor, is the development of Information and Communication Technology in the mass media. The wider scope of this development in the mass media provides an easy access for the community[16]. People are used to, even often, using search engine applications such as Google as the main source of information. At present it is very easy for the public to obtain information about elections and post-conflict local elections because many print, television and radio media in Indonesia are now

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[12] Heiss, R. & Matthes, J. (2019). Stuck in a Nativist Spiral: Content, Selection, and Effects of Right-Wing Populists' Communication on Facebook. *Journal Political Communication*. 37(3). 305.

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integrated online. This makes information circulating in the community easily accessible, including information with political content[17].

Political communication through new media has colored political developments in Indonesia especially when it will welcome the elections almost most political parties use information technology advancements to campaign[18]. For example, several major parties in Indonesia such as PDIP, Gerindra, Nasdem, Democrats, Hanura, PKB, PKS, etc. have already had Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Youtube accounts. Political communication through new media such as social media is considered effective by most people. Through effective political communication candidates from each party can attract the attention of the public and increase their electability[19]. The public can learn in detail about the political parties that carry prospective candidates in the elections in Indonesia and can find out the history and experience of candidates nominated by a political party[20].

B. **METHODS**

The research method used in this study is qualitative research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from the person being observed. The descriptive research method was chosen because it can explain the problem in this study. This research was conducted in Indonesia by reviewing political communication through new media to welcome the 2020 elections. Qualitative methods can help writers to describe an event systematically, factually, and accurately related to objects and research subjects that the writer will examine[21]. Descriptive research is a form of research aimed at describing existing phenomena, both natural phenomena and man-made phenomena. Phenomena can be in the form of forms, activities, characteristics, changes, relationships, similarities, and differences between one phenomenon and another[22]. Descriptive qualitative research is research to solve problems that will be investigated by describing the subjects and objects to be studied. The subject and object can be in the form of institutions, communities, individuals, etc.). The analysis conducted must be in accordance with reality on the ground, in a factual sense and in accordance with reality[23].

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C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Political Communication Through New Media

Political communication is one of the important breakthroughs for political parties to increase the electability of prospective candidates who were promoted in the regional elections in a number of regions. A number of political parties supporting each other are competing to increase the electability of their proposed candidates and try to succeed in their victory in the elections. At this time in various countries are being hit by the Covid-19 pandemic so that the need for appropriate steps in the upcoming elections in Indonesia. The right step can be in the form of using new media as a means of political communication in the midst of the community and campaigning well to increase the electability of candidates in the upcoming elections.

A number of names began to color the upcoming regional election contestation in Indonesia such as Gibran Rakabuming who is the son of the President of the Republic Indonesia (Joko Widodo) in the stretcher by the PDIP party to advance in the Solo Regional Election, Rahayu Saraswati Djojohadikusumo who is a niece of the Republic of Indonesia's Defense Minister (Prabowo Subianto) advancing The South Tangerang City Election was carried out by Gerindra Party, Siti Nur Azizah, who is the daughter of the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia (KH. Ma'ruf Amin) in the South Tangerang City Election, carried out by the PDIP party, Bobby Nasution who is the son-in-law of the President of the Republic Indonesia (Joko Widodo) was carried by Nasdem for the Medan regional election, to Munafri Arifuddin who is the nephew of the Former Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia (Jusuf Kalla) carried by the PDIP Party for the elections in the city of Makassar.

Various names of the candidates are always actively coloring social media and the current news related to the upcoming elections in Indonesia. All efforts in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic continue to be made in order to attract the attention of the community one of them by using social media such as Facebook and Instagram the young generation continues to carry out political communication and get closer to the entire community from various elements. Supporting and contradicting indeed often occurs, especially from netizens who actively use social media as a means to obtain information. However, this did not dampen the intention of the candidates for the election to go ahead and innovate.

In the New Normal era, people must obey government regulations to maintain distance and health as long as the Covid-19 pandemic still exists. The use of new media is considered effective in the new normal era and has a positive impact on the prevention of Covid-19 in Indonesia. The public does not need to gather in groups to attend the campaign, just simply access the internet and see news and campaigns from prospective candidates who will advance in the upcoming elections. Information technology through new media or social media can make it easier for people to get detailed and clear information. However, the information obtained must be filtered first to avoid hoax news that often circulates among the people.

The use of social media as new media in the midst of the new normal era is considered effective and very helpful in political communication. Some applications such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook are best utilized to attract people's attention. In this globalization era, people from various walks of life can access the internet very easily and practically. Almost all groups have accounts in social media applications, both old and young, competing actively in cyberspace and showing their expressions and opinions through social media. Social media can support the development of the times and expand community interaction from various countries in the world.

Social media can be considered as an ideal tool and information base to find out public opinion about policies and political positions, in addition to building community support for politicians who are campaigning. Numerous studies show that politicians around the world have adopted social media to build relationships with constituents, engage in direct dialogue with the public and form political discussions. The ability to create a dialogue space between politicians and the public and attract the interests of novice voters or young voters makes social media increasingly important for politicians[24].

Before using social media, politicians already used the internet to the campaign. The internet can be a potential way in breaking down oppressive mass democratic politics that voices from the bottom up, which is often with the power they have, used by the authorities for the benefit of their groups. The internet is expected to be a medium for interactive two-way information flow between politicians and their supporters. The internet promises to provide the broadest forum for the development of interest groups and as a means of channelling opinions[25].

2. Social Media as Part Of New Media

Social media as part of new media indeed presents a new perspective related to how humans interpret the flow of information in this globalization era. Social media does provide information, which for modern humans is part of primary needs, it's just that the accuracy and correctness of the information requires further verification. The difference with conventional media, where there is a rule of law surrounding every flow of information that is displayed, in the context of social media it does not exist at all. So, no wonder the terminology hoax news appears, fake news, false news, and others. Moreover, social media is online[26].

The nature of social media is online, alias really needs the internet. This makes it very easy for users to participate. Participation in this case means the ease of sharing

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[24] Chan, M., Chen, H.T., & Lee, F. L. F. (2017). Examining the roles of mobile and social media in political participation: A cross-national analysis of three Asian societies using a communication mediation approach. *New Media & Society*, 19(2), 2003.

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and conveying information, the ease in creating content, messages, or content that will be delivered to the public, and commenting on the input received, where all of this happens quickly without restrictive restrictions. Social media that relies on this internet network can provide connections to more than one billion people worldwide. Facebook then succeeded in mapping the pattern of social relations between its human users. This means that Facebook is a media that is able to create a new system of information exchange. The inevitable consequence is that this situation changes the way of life of many people[27].

The role of technology, especially the internet, is the keyword for changes that occur through social media. Internet technology is a possible factor. As an online media, this technology can be easily accessed anytime, anywhere, and by anyone. Global internet coverage enables high connectivity and interactivity. This makes the internet an efficient means of communication. Including for social media, where there are more and more users, not including service providers such as Facebook to Instragram. The increasing number of users has an impact on conventional media, of course, because access to information will be more quickly obtained by the public through social media. These differences in characteristics, audiences, and forming factors between social media and mainstream media have brought significant changes in communication studies[28].

In the context of studies on political communication, internet technology has a very significant impact related to the dissemination of political information flow, both top down and bottom up. The use of social media, which uses internet technology, makes everyone able to communicate politics whenever he wants. Political content is easier to find in public social media accounts, because access is very open. Society has freedom in communicating politics, such as giving comments related to political policies formulated by political elites. Therefore, there are two levels of communication simultaneously, namely communication at the interpersonal level and communication at the mass media level. Such conditions lead to a message that is decentralized because producers can be both consumers and vice versa; communication takes place in two directions between producers and consumers in the management of messages outside the control of state formed democracy and oriented towards individuals[29].

Viewed from the side of the political elite, social media is now the main place for their political communication with the public. Various policies, policy proposals, statements, and other comments related to political issues, can be done through social media. In addition to being very open and easy access, the costs incurred are also lower than using the mainstream media or holding public meetings physically. Aside from being centralized (through one direction), using mainstream media also requires a large amount of money. The results of using social media are very significant because

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[27] Coelho, P., M.,F. (2017). Social Media: A New Way of Public and Political Communication in Digital Media. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*. 11(6). 151.

[28] Evangelista, R. & Bruno, F. (2019). WhatsApp and political instability in Brazil: targeted messages and political radicalization. *Internet Policy Review*. 8(4).

[29] Dezelan, T. & Vobic, I. (2016). *Revolutionizing Political Communication Through Media Social*. IGI Global.

they can reach every level of society, including getting responses from them. This fact shows a phenomenon, namely the use of social media to be an effective media for use in the study of political communication[30].

The impact of the existence of social media also requires political parties, the government, to the DPR to immediately respond to all input. Currently the community has the opportunity to communicate directly with the above institutions, to opinion, comment, and even convey their demands. For this reason, an understanding of the impact of new media, especially social media, is needed as follows:

a) Provides an opportunity to be able to communicate more and be able to give ideas, information, and opinions.

b) Open new opportunities to communicate directly with people even though it can pose a risk such as the development of negative information. Communication becomes more personal and can take place without going through intermediaries.

c) Improve communication and information quickly and accurately with various current issues.

d) Opening opportunities to grab people's attention effectively and efficiently.

e) Opening opportunities to reach new supporters from young groups or ages who are not touched by the media that is usually used by an organization.

f) Through blogs and social media open communication globally.

g) New media allows organizations to obtain data or information quickly about how the public opinion of government organizations, non-governmental organizations, to political parties[31].

The internet has become part of the process of political communication that allows the public to speak more freely without fear of censorship by the editors or parties outside the editorial staff, especially government officials. And it should be recognized and understood that the development of communication and information technology through the internet has increasingly confirmed the dominance of the media in human life. Social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube, and the like are new media that gather people in global villages[32].

Politically, social media has proven its role in a variety of political activities. An example is Donald Trump through his campaign on various internet-based social media. The ability of social media in gathering mass is indeed very large, for example in the case of the former leader of the Corruption Eradication Commission in 2007-2009, Bibit Samad and Chandra Hamzah who have been supported by many people on

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[32] Husain, S., Sajid, A.R., & Jullandhry, S. (2018). Politics-media-youth nexus: Analysis of Pakistan's general elections 2013. *Journal Cogent Social Science*. 4(1). 9.

Facebook[33]. In addition, the scope of political contestation in Indonesia also does not want to lose. We see how the presidential candidates in the 2019 elections, namely Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto seek public support through social media, as one of the main media of their campaign[34].

Besides that, how massive was the use of social media in the political battle of "regional head elections such as the presidential election", in the 2017 Jakarta regional head election? Specifically in the contestation, the use of social media is related to the Ahok case. When Ahok was accused of blasphemy, a large-scale demonstration and mobilization emerged in Jakarta. Information related to this is of course conveyed through new media platforms, so that the active participants can reach hundreds of thousands of people. Political consultants are now starting to use cyberspace as a vehicle for conducting political campaigns. In the future, political campaigns will play in the realm of cyberspace. Traders have also started this method through the concept of marketing their products through a new media called E-Commerce. These political consultants mimic this way by carrying out the political branding of their clients[35].

Another example of the use of new media in politics is the use of social media as a means of campaigning. How to campaign like this is done by a pair of candidates for Governor Ridwan Kamil (Kang Emil) and Ruzhanul Ulum when running for the 2018 elections in West Java. This couple effectively uses social media to campaign. In his campaign, the candidate for governor publishes their activities and programs more than ten times every day on social media, such as Facebook and Instagram[36].

Social media can also be a place for stakeholders to meet in separate political activities in space and time. These stakeholders, such as the authorities, officials, politicians, parties, other political groups, and also the community. Social media allows the formation of cyber democracy, which is where social media can be used to support all political communication activities. For example, authorities who want to convey public policy, politicians or parties who want to carry out imaging or campaigns for general elections, and people who want to criticize a policy or rule made by the authorities. All this interaction is carried out in cyberspace.

D. CONCLUSION

The internet in the context of political communication is the main media in enhancing technological development, especially new media, in this case social media. Its online nature makes this type of media easy to reach by anyone and anywhere. The global reach of the internet makes connectivity very efficient and flexible to be used as a means in the process of political communication.

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[34] Sujoko, A. (2019). Komunikasi Politik Gerakan #2019Ganti Presiden. *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*. 9(1). 42.

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[36] Hasfi, N. (2019). Komunikasi Politik Di Era Digital. *Politika, Jurnal Ilmu Politik*. 10(1). 97.

Political communication through new media such as the internet and social media in the elections in Indonesia is considered as one of the effective and efficient breakthroughs considering the current condition in the Republic of Indonesia is unstable due to the Covid-19 pandemic and requires all people to remain compliant with government regulations. In this new normal era, many politicians use social media to carry out political communication and interact directly with the public. This is one of the steps taken to stay afloat and increase the electability of the candidates who will advance in the upcoming local elections.

The presence of new media in Indonesia has drastically changed the nation's political and democratic journey. In the New Order era, freedom of speech was a very restricted matter, and even tended to not be discussed. However, when in the era of globalization like now there is almost no longer a limit for every citizen or community can easily voice their opinions and expressions. In the multimedia era, as it is today, opinion is an essential part of human life. Opinions often have political content. On this basis, political communication in this era continues to experience very significant developments, because in quantity it has been done massively.

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