



Political Communication Strategy of Ethnic Minorities to Ethnic Majority in the 2019 Regional Head Election of West Sulawesi Province

Musra Awaluddin; Hafied Cangara; Andi Alimuddin Unde; Hasrullah

Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

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Abstract

Political communication is very supportive in influencing voters' alignment with politicians in general election activities. Every politician must have an effective communication strategy to be able to win elections. This study aims to analyse the political communication strategy of ethnic minorities to the ethnic majority in the election of regional heads of South Sulawesi Province. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Sources of primary data were obtained from interviews with informants, and to support the primary data were studied from documents related to this research. The results of this study indicate that the political communication strategy of ethnic minorities can be seen from both good and bad sides, both in this case, namely with the aim of improving natural and social conditions, it is considered bad by the community because political communication is used only for election purposes. Ethnic minorities are expected to be more adaptive to their political activities, and not leave a bad impression on society.

Keywords: *Communication Strategy; Election; Ethnic Culture*

Introduction

To realize political goals, communication has an important role as a connecting instrument in political activities. Political communication has become an interesting discussion for many people, especially in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0. Where it is known that the development of the print media industry, television, gadgets, social media, and the increase in *online* activities make communication activities important in the political process.

Politics is not only about the ability to govern the country or make public policies but requires communication skills, especially so-called political communication (Efrisa & Jerry, 2018). The media in this case helps to disseminate it to the public, while influencing the political attitude of the public. Based on this political phenomenon, it can be concluded that even if a political figure from a minority circle, has a low level of popularity, lack of accessibility can also win the battle in political contexts, if able to display the greatness of communication and use the media to then highlight his qualities and win public sympathy.

Furthermore, Dan Nimmo (2006) affirms that "political communication is communication that refers to political activity". Thus, political communication is all politically nuanced activities carried out by political actors in competing in the General Elections. For this reason, political communication is a factor that greatly influences the victory of a candidate in a political arena.

While Hafied Cangara (2014), in *Political Communication (Concepts, Theories and Strategies)*. Hafied Cangara (2014) mentioned, making the definition of political communication emphasize more on the symbols or messages conveyed in political communication are significantly formed or have consequences for the political system, (Efrisa & Jerry, 2018).

Ethnic politics is a marking of political activity in a broader sense and theorization of the discovery of experiences of injustice experienced with members of certain social groups. Ethnic politics is not just self-organizing within the scope of ideology or party affiliation, it is more likely to carry out emancipation or liberation from situations of marginalization that specifically include the constituency (membership) of the group in a broader context. Ethnic politics is more of a political act or policy that tries to establish commonality among its members and establish differences as a line of demarcation with other groups or institutions.

Based on previous studies Lawrence Bobo and Franklin D. Gilliam Jr, Anirudh Ruhil, Melissa J. Marschall 2013, Preston, Nelson 2013, Keller 2013, Perry 2013 an overview of the practice of Ethnic Politics and Minority Politics in the United States and in South Africa was obtained. The picture also reflects the practice of Ethnic Politics and the existence of minorities in Indonesia. For example, the research of Lawrence Bobo, et al (2013) found a correlation between elected mayors and the level of political participation and the level of political confidence of minority groups. It was also discovered by Preston, Nelson that when a minority becomes Mayor, then political support from the legislature weakens. While Keller found that Black Mayor spends more welfare-related policies than White Mayor.

Meanwhile, in the 2010 Ilyas Lampe research, Dea Rizky Amalia (2019) obtained an overview of the use of ethnic identity, and the manipulation of ethnic identity. What a political communication for "migrants" seeks to conform to using indigenous identities such as attempting to learn the Kaili vernacular and using local customary clothing on certain occasions. So that the prominence of identity as "Palu people" is carried out in political communication, both to politicians and audiences who come from native ethnicities or regional sons. Meanwhile, through research, Sirait et al (2020) explained, about the influence of political modalities in the victory of candidates in legislative elections.

Indonesia as a multi-ethnic and multicultural country. To date, there are more than 500 ethnicities that speak more than 250 languages. Each of these ethnicities does not stand as a closed and independent ethnicity but is mutually exclusive and interdependent. Based on this fact, Indonesia has indeed fostered the practice of ethnicity politics which revolves around the practice of conflict ethnicity both at the national and local levels. Lampe in his research found that the practice of implementing local politics in Indonesia always leads to ethnic conflicts that lead to sara conflicts.

Ethnic Politic is about minority strategy. Minority groups need certain strategies to survive during majority groups. When a minority group lives in the middle of a majority, the problem is when they (the minority group) are in a disharmonious relationship and are in the shadow of conflict with other larger groups. This can then make minority groups always overshadowed by terror and insecurity (unsecured). In the context of this understanding, the minority group is always at a disadvantage when dealing with the majority group in relation to the allocation and distribution of these authoritative values to provide an advantage to the group.

West Sulawesi Province is one of the regions in Indonesia that is very heterogeneous, so the use of ethnic symbols, especially tribal in the implementation of regional head elections and legislative

elections is very thick. The variety of ethnicities in West Sulawesi Province fosters the practice of using ethnic politics.

Etnis politics, in addition to being used to gain support, is also used as capital to attack other candidates through the *Black Campaign* method. Ethnic issues have always been used as a *Black Campaign* space. The majority ethnicity in Mamuju Regency is Mandar with a total population of 49.15%. As an ethnic majority, candidates with Mandar ethnicity flocked to use ethnic modalities to gain the support of fellow ethnic mandar to win political contestation. Likewise, the candidates of the Toraja tribe as the second largest majority ethnicity often take advantage of the ethnic approach by utilizing ethnic similarities. However, ethnic minority candidates such as Bugis, Kaili, Javanese, Makassar and Chinese are often attacked by *Black Campaign* with the label of ethnic immigrants and not regional sons who do not fully understand the problems and needs of the community. Ethnic immigrants are only considered as ethnicities that only use economic capital to control the area. The issue of regional sons and not regional sons is a political commodity that is always contested in every election and in West Sulawesi Province.

West Sulawesi is one of the new autonomous regions because of the expansion of the province of South Sulawesi. West Sulawesi has a very strategic geographical and administrative location because it is *the center of point* for the administration and development of Sulawesi part barat. West Sulawesi has an empirical fact, which is an area that is often used as a practice of ethnic politics, especially ethnicity from every democratic party reposition.

Method

This research uses a *qualitative approach*. The choice of qualitative methods because this research is carried out through the process of finding, understanding, explaining, and obtaining an overview of the phenomenon of political communication related to political communication of ethnic minorities in the electability of DPRD members in the majority ethnic areas in each Regency in West Sulawesi. The focus of this study is to analyze the political communication strategy of ethnic minorities to ethnic majorities in the 2019 regional head election of West Sulawesi Province.

Primary data were obtained from people who had information and knowledge related to the problem and focused on research on political communication practices and ethnic identity in West Sulawesi. Secondary data are data that researchers obtain or collect from various existing sources (researchers as second hand). Secondary data can be obtained from various sources such as the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), books, reports, journals, and others. For the needs of research data analysis, the Spiral Model data analysis technique proposed by Creswell (2016) will be used, the initial stage is data collection, both primary and secondary data and data in the form of text and images, In the second stage, a reading process will be carried out and make *memoing* As a reflection of a number of answers to research questions, in the third stage, a description of the data that has been recorded is carried out, classifying, and interpreting all data based on context and categories and the last stage, representing and visualizing by making conclusions that can be made in the form of matrices, tree diagrams, and then compiling propositions from the research results.

Result and Discussion

The strategy for communicating ethnic minority policy is based on the idea that people should educate themselves about the mass population as a whole. This strategy is called "simple power" and serves as a tool for getting the legislative branch to emulate the communication process.

In the DPRD West Sulawesi Province, there are five members of the legislative branch who represent minorities. As a result, they are tasked with developing and implementing a strategy for political communication. This strategy is aimed at the general public, and it has the potential to secure the support of the majority with a wide range of policy options by emphasizing the mission, program, and goals within the mass population.

The strategy of aiding seeds or seeds, fertilizers and business capital as well as building infrastructure is a strategy to build trust and the public has high hopes for legislative candidates who they consider to have the ability and have a place of position and authority. So that people believe that all aspirations can be conveyed and they are left behind to be able to live properly as other people feel on Earth Manakarra.

Legislative candidates can directly target groups that are considered as potential voters during elections, although in a different way, by using the principle of youth closeness which is considered the most effective strategy. In addition, they believe that by choosing proximity, no votes are wasted because it is easier to approach and talk to the group about candidates from their profiles and programs.

Every candidate for legislative member has paid attention to the political communication strategy of ethnic minorities by approaching through local languages in conducting conversations with them, this is done at their location of residence but is also usually done at the point of location where the candidates for legislature carry out socialization and self-introduction.

The media serve as the conduit for political communication that is currently being used as a strategy for the benefit of minorities. This type of media analysis is carried out in a setting that is strategically designed and is used by the public at large. Minority-led legislation employs media strategies to ensure that the public receives the information they need. Media coverage tends to take place in a variety of settings, including the kitchen (pasar-pasar), the living room (persimpangan lampu merah), the dining room (bola kaki), and the main location. In addition, several legislative bodies employ this strategy in the classroom or workplace, including in Tapalang, Kalukkuang, and Mamuju Utara, as well as in the present location.

Given the limited campaign funds, banner and poster media and business cards are tools or media that are quite affordable and appropriate for the public. This is the main strategy that is right on target, such as on electric poles, on the walls of people's houses and there are also cars and trishaws or motorcycle taxis or public transportation around markets and schools. This is considered very objective in that minority legislative candidates actually use this media as an alternative to their long-term campaigns for the electorate.

Conclusion

The political communication strategy of ethnic minorities can be viewed from a positive and negative perspective. Positively, political communication is carried out by inviting and exemplifying political practices that are loaded with group interests in order to improve social and environmental conditions. Some people view it negatively because it contains political material and creates the impression that politicians exploit public names for their own political gain. To avoid negative perceptions from some people regarding the use of state symbols in conveying politics, ethnic minorities as political communicators are expected to be more adaptive in carrying out political activities.

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