

The Use of Media by Indonesian Government Regarding Policy in Handling Covid19

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ABSTRACT

The use of media as political communication is indeed effective. Moreover, in this digital era, accessing information is carried out using existing media or new media. Because it is undeniable that people have switched to something instant and easy. Given these conditions, the media is very effective if used as a one-way propaganda tool to convey government political policy. By using The Bullet Theory, it is considered suitable to dissect how the media can become one-way propaganda in the delivery of policies related to the handling of Covid-19 by the Government of Indonesia.

Keywords: media, policy, covid-19, one-way propaganda

A. Introduction

The media is a tools that can be used to convey information to the particular intended party. The media has a special feature where the media must produce and distribute knowledge in the form of information, views, and culture. The effort is a response to the collective social needs of society and individuals. The media is a channel connecting certain people with others, namely from the sender to the recipient of both individuals and audiences. Media is public, which can be enjoyed by anyone. Audience participation in the media is actually voluntary, but because humans are social creatures, indirectly the public will always want to be involved to participate (McQuail, 1987).

Media as a tools of political communication can be used to starts propaganda. In the context of propaganda, the work system of the media will be effective in channeling what the propagandist wants. Because the media has a place in the public environment, it becomes a strategic thing, because the purpose of the persuasion is the manipulation of psychology of the general public (Dr. Gun Gun Heryanto, 2018). Thus it can be concluded that political propaganda through the media actually becomes an effort to package issues, goals, influences, and political power by manipulating public psychology.

The world has recently experienced an extraordinary event that has caused some changes in the global social order system. Indonesia and the world are struggling to defend against the Covid-19 pandemic threat. COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new coronavirus that was not previously identified in humans. Coronavirus is a group of viruses found in animals and humans. COVID-19 is known to most easily spread through close contact with people infected with COVID-19. Coughing or sneezing of an infected person makes a splash and, if too close, the virus can enter through breathing (WHO, 2020). With a high risk of transmission of this virus, it is

only natural that prompt and appropriate handling by various parties is needed. especially the Indonesian government as the highest responsibility of the Indonesia.

In handling pandemic cases faced by the Government of Indonesia at this time, the media acts as a propaganda effort, in the form of a delivery tool related to the handling policy of Covid-19 in Indonesia. The media is considered as the fourth power in a government or other terms The Fourth Branch of Government (Sparrow, 1999). So that the media in this case is used as a medium for political messages, power and deliberately continuously produced and distributed by the media to influence audiences, with the hope that the results of Indonesian society can meet the propaganda goals of the Indonesian government.

B. Theory

The Bullet Theory is a theory that discusses the assumptions "The theory suggests that the mass media can influence a very large group of people directly and uniformly by" shooting "or" injecting "them with appropriate messages designed to trigger a desired response". In other words, the media can be said as a "needle" that injects a message into the mind of the audience because it causes a change in the behavior and soul of the audience towards the message. Where this injection is very effective against a large group of masses. Therefore this theory refers to members of the mass media audience as passive targets who will be persuaded by the persuasion that is in the mass media.

In hypodermic needle theory it is said that the media is very active and powerful, while the audience is passive. So that the media will easily hit or penetrate the target. This theory is contrary to the theory of uses gratification which states that the audience is active to choose which media should be chosen to satisfy their needs, so that the audience may reject the information provided by the media, if they feel unnecessary (Santoso & Setiansah, 2010).

Basically this theory is based on assumptions not on research findings but based on the assumption of "human nature" (Nwabueze & Okonkwo, 2018). This opinion is in line with the three assumptions put forward by Davis and Baran:

Because people's actions are not influenced by social ties and are guided by uniform instincts, individuals attend events (such as media messages) in the same way.

Human nature inherited by people and their isolated social conditions make them receive and interpret media messages in a uniform way.

Thus media messages such as the symbolic "bullet" that attack each eye and produce direct, direct, uniform and therefore strong effects and thoughts.

Based on the preliminary presentation above, the author would like to analyze more deeply about the use of media by the Government of Indonesia related to the policy of handling the Covid-19 Pandemic, as a one-way propaganda effort, using the theoretical basis of The Bullet Theory with the contents contained in it.

Use of media by the Indonesian Government

Living together in a community is already a human destiny. Humans as social beings have a basic need, namely communication with others. Meanwhile, the communication process can be interpreted as "Information Transfer" or messages (messages) from the sender of the message as a communicator and to the recipient of the message as a communicant. In general, according to Dan Nimmo communication is a process of social interaction that people use to arrange the meaning which is their image of the world (on which they act) and to exchange that image through symbols (Efriza & Indrawan, 2018).

Broadly speaking, in a communication process there must be elements of similarity in meaning so that an exchange of thought or understanding takes place, between the communicator (message spreader) and the communicant (message receiver). The purpose of the communication process is to achieve mutual understanding between the two parties. The role of communication is very important for humans in their daily lives, in accordance with the functions of communication that are: persuasive, educative and informative (Ruslan, 2016). Inevitably with the rapid development of technology today, almost all information or persuasion of the general public, placing mass media and other types as the main channel in its communication. Included in the realm of politics.

The digital age introduces a new form of communication that is faster, more practical, and certainly wider in scale. In the context of a broader scale, the context of political content in everyday community communication is common to convey. The process is known as political communication, which can currently be done by anyone, not knowing their age, position, religion, ethnicity, background, and politics, especially in an era of openness like this reform era in Indonesia. So it is with almost all corners of the world, where transparency and freedom in the context of information become the main thing (Indrawan, Dampak Komunikasi Politik dan Opini Publik Terhadap Perilaku Masyarakat, 2017).

If previously political communication was only dominated by the strength of its characters, in the era of globalization and very high interconnectivity as it is today, the multimedia aspect is a very appropriate means for conducting political communication. Technology can not be separated from how political actors in this era carry out processes related to political communication. The technology is dominated by the mass media or later often called the mainstream media or embodied through a medium that is now called the new media (new media) (Indrawan, Efriza, & Ilmar, KEHADIRAN MEDIA BARU (NEW MEDIA) DALAM PROSES KOMUNIKASI POLITIK, 2020).

This has become a new path for interested politicians. Call it the Government of Indonesia as the actor. The media is deliberately set as a one-way propaganda tool regarding policies made by the government, related to handling the Covid-19 pandemic. This statement is relevant to the theory put forward by Nwabueze and Okonkwo. According to an explanation from The Bullet Theory put forward by Nwabueze and Okonkwo, this situation indeed feels relevant in today's digital age, because the average person can access news through their gadgets (tv, laptops, iPads,

cellphones, smartphones, etc.) Even, it cannot be separated from the use of social media which is increasingly high, causing the higher possibility of the public being exposed to one-way propaganda issued by a media.

Indonesian Government Policy Regarding Covid19

On this topic if related to the case of the Indonesian government using the media as a one-way propaganda tool for delivering policies related to the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. This theory is still relevant in several respects. Because the use of technology is very high at this time, coupled with pandemic conditions that force each individual to protect themselves by staying indoors or often referred to as stay at home, then the media is the only media that is very effective. The media can be said as a "needle" that injects messages into the mind of the audience because it causes changes in the behavior and soul of the audience of the message. Where this injection is very effective against a large group of masses. As has already been said that the success of propaganda is directly proportional to the possibility of using media to access information, which allows the higher effectiveness of one-way propaganda from media which is on the agenda setting of the Indonesian government. In addition, the current condition of society is also relevant to what is in the bullet theory. The public is actually no longer considered as a party that passively accepts incoming information and reacts quickly, but as an active party capable of filtering, sorting and selecting incoming information and will be trusted later.

So it can be said that on one hand the people will only access the news or information that they want. However, according to the writer, in an "extraordinary" event, which can threaten their safety, they will tend to be a passive society in receiving information conveyed through the media, whether news, television, social media etc. And tend to act immediately according to the instructions conveyed in it, on the pretext that they can be saved.

Like the Covid-19 pandemic which has touched various regions in Indonesia, where initially hundreds of people were positively infected by this virus, with rapid spread, until now it has reached the thousands. This incident led the Indonesian government to issue several main policies in handling the spread of the Covid-19 virus through the media, namely, the formation of a task force, and an appeal for Social Distancing.

In the first policy, many people responded poorly because President Jokowi was considered late and slow in handling this pandemic, especially in the absence of a real policy, many people saw other countries as a comparison, where the conditions of other countries had been very responsive by holding lockdowns, and actions it is considered more real for the community (Damarjati, 2020).

Regarding the second policy, which is an appeal to conduct social distancing or reduce social contact with other people in the crowd, to Physical Distancing or reduce physical contact that is close together, where it takes time to raise public awareness to do so, proving that the community status is active not directly affected by media coverage of government policies, due to consideration of the need to travel for work, and indeed the existence of a community that does not care about the facts of the reporting (ignorant). This can be proven by the large number of media that

show the number of visitors in tourist attractions is still high, even though this appeal has been out before.

To help socialize health protocols to the public, the Indonesian government also works together with art-creative workers or influencers. With this activity it is hoped that what the Indonesian government wants to deliver its policy to the community is successful. Because the government itself considers that the influencer is a party that has a large influence on society. More specifically the influencers have their own community and fans, so that hopefully fans will be able to follow what the influencers are doing (Tirto.id, 2020). This is clear evidence of the political communication carried out by the Indonesian government regarding the handling of Covid-19 with one-way propaganda as in the previous presentation.

However, when viewed from outside the context of reporting on Indonesian government policies, the Indonesian people actually became passive society proven on the same day as the news about the first Covid-19 virus case in Indonesia, many masks and hand sanitizers were sold out on the market. The community immediately responded quickly and experienced panic over reporting how the corona virus can be transmitted, so that many Indonesian people directly anticipate it by buying two items that are justified by WHO (World Health Organization) as an international organization that is trusted and given the mandate to handle health problems as prevention so as not to contract the virus. Even masks and hand sanitizers are becoming a rare item and the prices are increasing dramatically, due to booming demand. The public response to health protocols such as wearing masks, washing hands with soap to no crowding which is currently the key to stopping the spread of Covid-19 has increased (kumparan.com, 2020).

Besides that, the Indonesian government's policy regarding Covid-19 is the existence of PSBB. PSBB is a limitation of certain activities of residents in an area suspected of being infected with Covid-19 to prevent the possibility of more widespread spread. In detail this policy contains restrictions on activities related to the community at large. A number of activities that involve the public are restricted, such as offices or institutions that are closed, restrictions on religious activities and restrictions on public transportation.

But there are demands that require the community to always be active outside or many other reasons behind it, in fact many people are still ignorant of the PSBB establishment. An example occurred some time ago when there was a mass crowd at the closing of a restaurant located in Sarinah, Jakarta. Then, passengers who burst and jostling at Soekarno Hatta Airport. Then, a crowd of people who were shopping at markets and supermarkets without the application of physical distance before muslim holiday "Eid" (Kompas.com, 2020).

Data obtained from BPS (Badan Pusat Statistik) Indonesian statistic agency survey by netting as many as 87,379 thousand respondents showed the results of the public response to the existence of policies related to Covid-19 issued by the Indonesian government. Quoted from the daily Kompas.com, where the survey results are categorized based on the gender of the respondent, there is a policy to conduct physical distancing, only 77 percent of female respondents always do or

regularly keep a distance, while in male respondents only 67 percent are disciplined in carrying out the policy . For other policies such as maintaining hygiene by regularly washing hands with soap, the data shows that 52 percent of female respondents feel worried / very worried about their health, while the male respondents who feel the same are only 44.67 percent.

Uniquely from this data, it can be concluded that the respondents' neglect of policy is dominated by male respondents and also young age groups. They neglected the health protocol because they felt the threat or vulnerability to Covid-19 was still far away. This group only feels the danger of Covid-19 if a family member or someone close to them is sick or dies from Covid-19. They can only realize the danger, if it has been affected health and economically. In addition they will also be more compliant to run the protocol if they know the long-term benefits of their behavior (KOMPAS.COM, 2020).

On the other hand, according to the authors of non-adherence of young people, men and society at large to the health protocol is influenced by the delivery of information by the government. The government's attitude which is often fickle, to the point of view of experts, triggers confusion among residents. That uncertainty becomes even more apparent when differences arise between rules and field practice. In addition, if observed from a psychological point of view, it is also influenced by the development of their thinking abilities. In their age, the part of the brain that functions in long-term and rational decision making is immature. Therefore, special communication is needed to young people about the dangers of Covid-19. As for the group of men caused by the assumption that the role carried by a man himself is to be someone who is strong, and has high immune resistance. Until they feel it will be less likely to contract the Covid-19 virus. Men also feel they are themselves safe, thinking that there will be a female figure who is identical to the responsibility of the role of the person who will take care.

C. Conclusion

The existence of anxiety felt by the public because of seeing the news about the Covid-19 virus continuously, to make them a lot of hoarding food everyday, is the clearest evidence of how The Bullet Theory can still be considered relevant today. Although in certain cases such as the Indonesian government's policy, The Bullet Theory does not really meet the criteria of events in Indonesia. Because when viewed from the available data, the Indonesian people are actually not very responsive to the handling policy of Covid-19 which is reported to the media, instead the public is more responsive to other news. But it cannot be denied that in the end, the public will not be able to be separated from the influence of the media, because the media is one component that can construct thoughts and audience stands in seeing a problem. Because indeed the media is an effective media to convey propaganda.

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