

THE ETHICS OF POLITICAL  
COMMUNICATION  
“CRITISM FOR POLITICAL ACTORS  
IN INDONESIA”

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A B S T R A C T

**D**emocracy often used as a “shield” by political actors, that in the era of democracy, the political elite is free to communicate political messages to his constituents with the aim to obtain support in reaching the coveted power with the use of any communication channels, with the contents of the message in accordance with the desire of political actors and by any means. Political actors often do not understand that they are a “public figure”, where they become a learning tool for the community in terms of political education.

In fact, political actors often do political communication using the political language that are far away from the moral values in accordance to the nation’s culture. Ethic is a value and a moral norm that becomes a foundation in regulating behavior of an individual, including communication behavior. Therefore, ethics should be the moral demand which is used as a guide and handbook for political actors. As a moral demand, the ethics of political communication require actors doing political communications that hold on to the prevailing system of values in society. The nature of ethics serves; (1) to inquire the norms adopted deemed valid. Investigate what basic norm it is and whether it is the basics to justify obedience demanded by a norm towards norms to be able to deal. ; (2) the ethics of asking questions about legitimacy, meaning that the norm that is unable defend itself from critical question will be disenfranchised; (3) the ethics also questions the right of every institution such as parents, schools, a country, a religion and to give instructions or restrictions that must be obeyed; (4) Ethics give the provision for human beings to take a rational attitude towards all the norms.; (5) The ethics become a tool of a rational and responsible thinking for an expert and for anyone who does

not want to be swayed by the existing norms. Political actors in Indonesia should be doing political communications that refers back to the nation's identity, where Indonesia has noble values that are capable of maintaining unity in the community. Thus, will produce political communications that is cool, brightening, peaceful, harmonious and brings social change for the community.

**K E Y W O R D S :** Ethics, Actor, Political Communication, Political Communication, Democracy

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

### **Background**

The hope to see Indonesia far from the frenzied political activity seems to required quite a long time and continuous efforts. The challenge faced is not just about the lack of knowledge in the society about the basic concepts of politics, but challenges also emerge from political actors who have not been able to provide political education to the society, whether through political communications or through political behavior that comes from the actors. Often, we still see the political actors, that in this case are the elites of the party as well as officials of the executives and the legislatives, that do not use the choices of political language according to the communication ethics that is supported by local values become the identity of the nation of Indonesia. It should be the political actors aware, that they were a reference for people to learn about a political system or value system, in other words, on the principle of the transfer of knowledge of political actors to the community, it means that there is a learning process that ideally is presented by the political elite to the community.

The reality which we can discover from the media, the political actors tend to forget the ethical dimension of communication, in this case, first, the political actors forget the action dimension of communication. Communication actors should be responsible for the information provided, it means communication actors or political elite should pay attention to news sources or reliable sources of information. In other words, in the dimension of communication actions of political actors should spread the message of peace is not quite the contrary. i.e. spread the provocative message and contain elements of spreading hatred. Second, the political actors should pay attention to utilization of media regulations in political activity, either through the mass media or social media. Surely we often see, that political communication efforts undertaken by the political actors have exceeded by presenting information of a political party or other political messages in massive through the media. Should be understood that press freedom is currently exists in Indonesia should remain accompanied

with a sense of responsibility by firmly upholding the values integrity. Third, the ethical dimensions of communication is related to the purpose of political communication, it should be understood that enforcement of democracy in the principle same as the purpose of communication, there is interactions between political actors with their constituent, with the other words, political communication was built with the ethics of communication will produce political participation from society.

If we review the conceptual aspect of ethics according to K. Bertensin Tabroni (Journal of communication Vol. 10:2012) began when humans reflect the ethical elements in spontaneous opinions. The need for reflection it felt, among others because the ethical opinions are not uncommon in different to the opinions of others. For that ethics is required, i.e. to find out what should have been done by human beings. According to Bertens (2011:17) ethics is the science that discuss morality or about human beings as far as having to do with morality. In other words, ethics is the study of moral behavior. Simply, Poedjowijatnasaid that the target of ethics specifically to human actions done intentionally. In other words, according to the ethics Tabroni (Journal of communication vol. 10:2012) Ethics investigating all basic of moral norms. In ethics usually distinguished between descriptive ethics and normative ethics. Descriptive ethics gives an overview of the moral awareness of symptoms, from the norms and ethical concepts. Normative ethics don't talk anymore about the symptoms, but rather about what really should be a human action, in normative ethics, norms assessed and every human being determined. Ethical definition released Bertens, according to Ngorang (Journal of politics vol. 12:2016) has three main sense: as a value system embraced by a community group, as a code of ethics that uphold high by a group of a particular profession, and as a moral philosophy that critically interpret the usage of a discourse in the field of science. The ethics of political communications touch on three fields of this understanding. As a system of values, the ethics of political communications related to the view of life and value system that embraced by a society. The use of smooth and coarse language in the guidelines for a community is already a shared knowledge (commons sense) in that society. Therefore, in order for harmony in society existence and developed well, then, the use smooth and coarse language has become taken for granted.

Johannesen in Corry (Journal of Tarumanegara: 2009) argued, in a political perspective needed four guidelines of ethics, that is: (1) cultivate the habit of being fair with choosing and showing facts and opinions openly, (2) give priority to the common motivation of personal motivation on, and (3) embed the habit of respecting differences of opinion. Furthermore, Nilsen (Johannesen, 1996), said that to achieve ethical communication, it should be noted the following properties: (1) respect for the person as a person regardless of age, status or relationship with the speaker, (2) respect for the ideas, feelings, intentions, and integrity of another person, (3) attitude like allow, objective,

and openness of mind that encourages freedom of expression, (4) respect for evidence and rational consideration of the alternatives, and (5) listen carefully first before stating approval or disapproval.

According to Corry (Journal of Tarumanegara: 2009) the ethics of communication in the implementation, among other things, can be known from polite communication. This is also a reflection of our personality politeness. Communication likened veins liaison life, as one of the expressions of the characters, the nature of character of a person to interact each other, and identify ourselves and work together. We can only understand each other and understand what thought, felt and desired people through communication that is expressed using a variety of channels, whether verbal or non-verbal. Message delivered through communication, can positively impact could also be vice versa. Communications will be more positive, if the participants knowing and mastering the techniques of communication to communicate well, and ethical. The ethics of communication, not only related to said good words, but should also from the sincere intentions expressed from calmness, patience and empathy we in communicate. Such forms of communication will generate two-way communication is characterized by respect, concern and reciprocal support from Parties that are communicating.

## **Methodology**

This research uses the descriptive method with a qualitative approach, a descriptive method aimed to explore the subject of study with more deep or in detail. Rahmat declared descriptive methods (2009:15), descriptive research aims to gather actual information in detail, identify the problem or check the environment condition. The description of this research will be conducted systematically and analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques. Qualitative analysis is expected to produce a depth description of speech, writing, and behavior that can be observed from an individual, group, organizational and community in the settings that examined from the point of view of an intact, comprehensive and holistic. (Bogdan and Taylor in Ruslan, 2003:213).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

For now, political actors in Indonesia are currently into the public spotlight, not on the issue of its performance but about the ethics of their political communication covered in the mass media, online media, or in social media. For example, political communication is done by one of Governor in Indonesia, his political communication style tends to be harsh by using the language that cannot be relied upon and hetend to doesn't provide the motivation for his citizens, and the last he must deal with religion issues, although some observers declared the case more touched him more flavored political problems. In

addition, there are other political actors from Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (A Party) and Partai Gerindra (A Party) which both of them currently lead in the middle of houses of Parliament. It is regrettable that political communication that do tend to conduct provocations and leads to the hate speech. It seemed like they forget, that now they are the representation of the people of Indonesia because both of them are in the House of Parliament and elected by the people. If we look back there are a few actors of political communication that has its own characteristics and written in the results of the study of an expert political communication, Dr. Hadiono Afdjani, M.M., M.Si in the e journal of politics that mention that the fifth President Republic of Indonesia every mad like rebuked her victim. Such as, when was attending the event with a number of her relatives in the restaurant of a luxury hotel in Singapore. In that event, there is one guest rebuked vociferously in public due to his arrival was not invited. In addition, she is also known as revengeful. In the debate of the 2004 presidential candidate, for example, because she has grudge with another candidate, she proposed the terms to the organizers of the event for she did not want to attend. In her communication, according to the author, she could not be effective. She prefers to silence or smile than talk. During speech, her voice seemed flat, barely there body language at all. She read each words rigidly, as if frightened gaze off of the text of the speech in front of her. Ironically, in any talks with the people of a nearby with her, she talk more about shopping than on problems relating to the nation and the country. In dealing with criticism, she looks like an allergy criticism.

Communication involves interactions among community members. Norms or rules are required to control the goals to achieve order in society. One of the efforts to realize the orderly society is the ethics of communication, its mean i.e. the study of good or bad communications that performed by human being, a rational knowledge that invites human to be able to have a good communication. The communication also indicates the existence of interactions among the members of the community, because communication is always involves at least two people. Norms and rules are also required in every interactions to social control. The goal is to create the order society. One of the efforts to realize the orderly society is ethics i.e. philosophy which examines the good or bad an act that performed by human being. The ethics of communication is also known as a rational knowledge that invites human to be able to have a good communication. In perspective of communication, the efforts to realize the public welfare through the elections, perhaps could be realized, when the ethics of communication could be fulfilled as the brainchild of Karl Wallace Johannesen (1996) at Corry (2009:16). the ethical guidelines are rooted in the values of democracy, among other things that the Communicator should cultivate a habit of being fair in choosing and displaying facts and opinions openly. Communication should not be deviate or hide the data that may be needed to evaluate the argument a fair communicators.

The Communicator, for example, prospective leaders, should teach honesty in communication, through transparency of a message launched. Communicators should give priority to the public interest than self-interest. What is the desires and ideals along with the citizens of his country more precedence. That means a prospective leaders required to dwell on fate and togetherness with others in the neighborhood where it is located. Communicators instill the habit of respecting differences of opinion by pushing various variety of argument and opinions. It means the election process really made a momentum to accustom distinction argument and choice but to respect each other, so that positive implications for inward individual satisfaction complete with the risk their choice. Accustom receive wide differences with wise is expensive for the formation of building democracy.

The nature of the ethics is critical nature of ethics is, so according to Darji Darmodiharjo and Shidarta in Mufid (2009) at Tabroni (2012 : 113), the nature of ethics serves; (1) to inquire the norms adopted deemed valid. Investigate what basic norm it is and whether it is the basics to justify obedience demanded by a norm towards norms to be able to deal. ; (2) the ethics of asking questions about legitimacy, meaning that the norm that is unable defend itself from critical question will be disenfranchised; (3) the ethics also questions the right of every institution such as parents, schools, a country, a religion and to give instructions or restrictions that must be obeyed; (4) Ethics give the provision for human beings to take a rational attitude towards all the norms.; (5) The ethics become a tool of a rational and responsible thinking for an expert and for anyone who does not want to be swayed by the existing norms.

According to Mufid, ethics is often also called moral philosophy. Ethics is a branch of philosophy that speaks of a human action in relations to the main goals of his life. Ethics discuss about good or bad of action or behavior by human being and also highlights the human obligations. Ethics inquire about how human should do and investigate all basic of moral norms. In ethics usually distinguished between descriptive ethics and normative ethics. Descriptive ethics gives an overview of the moral awareness of symptoms, from the norms and ethical concepts. Normative ethics don't talk anymore about the symptoms, but rather about what really should be a human action, in normative ethics, norms assessed and every human being determined.

According to Ngorang (2016: 1805), the ethics of political communication as critical reflection, in the context of Habermas thought, shows that the elite of political communication is political communication that equal, autonomous, and responsible, free and critical by subjects that communicate. Political communication thus freeing individuals from the situation and condition of the non-political domination. The situation and political conditions that are free of domination allows individuals capable of reflection order political undemocratic present and build democratic political order in the future. This means that ethics are not only limited to political communication in an effort

to criticize the political order, economic order and order of culture that exist, but also proposing the order of politics, economy and culture that more new, more ethical and humanist. He is not only limited to attempt deconstruction, also reconstruct the order of economy, politics and culture in the future.

An ethical of political communication is not only limited to the manner and style of communicating with other groups of different cultural, religious and political beliefs, but also with related to the content or the content of political messages are delivered. The diverse cultures, religions and political ideologies are indeed easy fishing and ignite conflict between groups due to trivial things as a way of talking that loud that are not preferred by a particular cultural community, or the use of custom clothing and apparel that is not favored by religious and feels forced to people from other cultures and religions. Traditional clothes “koteka” by the chieftain of Papua sometimes assessed by some people as less cultured. Local regulations which require all women to wear hijab in certain areas as denied the existence of non-Muslims women in the area. Therefore, the ethics of political communication based on the spirit of democratic society into something that is imperative.

## C O N C L U S I O N

Political actors at both the legislative and executive levels of government as well as those in political parties still do not understand that they are political communicators who should convey political messages prioritizing public interests, in other words political actors must see the needs, desires and expectations of its constituents. On the other hand, political actors must also provide political education or lessons for the community by respecting the differences of opinion or diversity of opinions that arise in the event of a political event that needs to be discussed.

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