Ridwan Kamil’s Digital Public Sphere and Public Policy

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Abstract. This study aims at (1) exploring how Ridwan Kamil socializes public policy through digital public sphere, specifically Facebook, (2) exploring how Ridwan Kamil’s rhetorical style to socialize public policy, and (3) exploring how the thematic selection can attract the society’s attention to read the public policy socialization on Facebook. This study applies Discourse analysis as the method to answer research questions. Discourse analysis that this study uses includes various texts, i.e. in the textual, graphic, and video forms. In addition, Discourse analysis refers to an approach using interdisciplinary theories that have relation to digital public sphere, politics, public policy, and rhetoric. The result of this study, academically, is expected to be able to be the reference for more holistic studies in the future related to the use of digital public sphere in socializing public policy and politics in Indonesia. The result of this study, practically, is expected to be able to be the bridge between the conformity of theories and the practice in making digital public sphere, for example Facebook, become an effective medium that can share information of public policy.

1. Introduction

In political history, government has used digital public sphere to share information directly and massively. Fast socialization of policy is needed to implement the policy. On the other hand, the society in this millennial era is reactive to the information that the government shares. The millennial society has to be the first individuals that knows the most accurate and current information.

Many leaders adopt the success of developed countries in terms of political campaign such as what Obama did. In Indonesia, president even local leaders understand that digital public sphere can be used to reach the society that has selected them. Facebook, representing digital public sphere, has succeeded in changing the concept of infrastructure society discussion –i.e. warung kopi into social media [1] [2] [3]. Facebook has strong influence to control public issues. This influence is realized through the massive convergent media which is used to distribute information [4]. Furthermore, the other media such as television and radio have special space to review the most up-to-date issues discussed in social media.

Ridwan Kamil, after his winning in 2013 as Bandung governor, was satisfied to socialize government policy and gave appeals to the society through social media. He even conducted a poll through Facebook. Ridwan Kamil admits that before he became Bandung governor, he had called himself as the pioneer who socialized public policy through media social. Some appeals of government policy that Ridwan Kamil
conveyed, after he has selected to be the governor, are Hari Rabu Nyunda, Hari Kamis Inggris, Hari Jumat Bersepedah, Hari Selasa tanpa Rokok, and Senin Gerakan Pungut Sampah.

The first step that Ridwan Kamil took in his first governorship was he demanded the local government work unit, consisting of Camat and Lurah, to have social media. The aim was to make a coordination change between horizontal and vertical communication. Hence, direct and open communication between the society and government is created.

Ridwan Kamil has succeeded in creating various trends in social media. The trends are creating an interesting comic meme about the prohibition to throw rubbish not in the right place, imposing social sanction –e.g. by uploading a person who violates public order, uploading photos of some parts in Bandung that have just been established and calling them as the embodiment of Bandung Smart and Creative City, making some jokes about single person, or inviting the society to tell a joke in his social media.

Some postings about the socialization of public policy are a plan to build a Sundanese cultural center in Blue Water, program magrib mengaji (i.e. reciting the Holy Quran program) that has been conducted in 2,000 mosques, and a plan to build a governmental maternal and child health hospital in Bandung, and etc. There are many people following Ridwan Kamil’s Instagram. The people often respond every posting that Ridwan Kamil makes. The people’s overwhelming responses are realized through the number of “likes” (a shaped form icon) that shows at the account of @ridwankamil. For example, there were 33,806,040 “likes” for 1,008 photos that Ridwan Kamil had uploaded in 2015. Moreover, there are still thousandth of comments for every posting. In fact, there is a trend to be the first person who comments Ridwan Kamil’s posting and being the first person who gives comment would be proud.

The reality showing that public policy can be socialized through social media –the changing from public sphere into digital public sphere- has encouraged this study to bring up the issue of digital public sphere in socializing public policy in Bandung. Some literature reviews that are used to compare similar studies can be seen in the literature reviews part:

1) The opportunity of Tourism Communication Marketing Through Social Media Network [5];
2) The Impact of Social Media in The Public Sector [6];
3) The Impact of Social Media Usage on Transport Policy: Issue Challenge and Recommendation [7];
4) Suspended Because of Social Media? Student Knowledge and Opinion of University Social Media Policies and Practice [8];
5) Social Media Public Discourse and Civic Engagement in Modern China, Telematics and Information [9];
6) Social Media and the public Interest: Governance of News Platform in The Realm of Individual and Algorithmic Gatekeeper [10];
7) Public Interest and Privat Right in Social Media [1].

2. Methods
This study applies Discourse analysis as the method. There are four strengths of Discourse analysis. First, Discourse analysis is qualitative in nature and uses interpretative analysis as the basics where every text is interpreted differently. Second, Discourse analysis focuses on latent massage. That is, meaning of a text cannot only interpreted as what it is but should be analyzed as a text containing hidden meaning. Third, Discourse analysis does not only observe what the text says but also how the text is said. In fact, what the media say is not the matter but how and by what the text is said or stated. Discourse analysis does not only deal with the macro level (i.e. from a text) but also the micro level (i.e. something that arranges or manages the text such as word, sentence, expression, and rhetoric). Four, Discourse analysis does not make generalization or prediction [11] [12].

This study analyses social media (i.e. Facebook) which Ridwan Kamil uses as the digital public sphere to socialize public policy in Bandung. The subjects of this study are text, pictures, or video that can be found
on Ridwan Kamil’s Facebook. The reason for selecting the subjects is because this study applies Discourse analysis as the method.

Table 1. Van Dijk’s Discourse Analysis Elements [12]

| Discourse structure | Something that is being observed | Element       |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Macro structure     | Thematic                         | Topic         |
|                     | Theme or topic that is focused in the news. |               |
| Superstructure      | Schematic                        | Scheme        |
|                     | How every part or arrangement of the news is schemed into a whole text |               |
| Micro structure     | Rhetoric                         | Graph, metaphor, expression |
|                     | How and by what the force is made |               |

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Ridwan Kamil’s strategy in socializing public policy through Facebook

The people’s tendency to look for information in social media (i.e. Facebook) makes the media become popular. Moreover, the people in rural area are into technology development. Technology is used to meet the people’s need of information, entertainment, and education [13]. The metamorphosis happens because the human’s need of information, entertainment, and education has increased.

The people’s dependency – i.e. living in a rural area- on social media, especially Facebook is used to socialize some public policy in Bandung. Facebook –i.e. can be accessed everywhere and anytime- is personal in nature. Because of this nature, Facebook can be the right medium to convey information of what Ridwan Kamil will do.

In the strategy plan of public policy socialization in Bandung, communication and informatics make Facebook as the strategic medium to introduce Ridwan Kamil’s policy. If it is analyzed by referring to the former studies, introducing the policy through Facebook has some advantages such as (1) cheap (2) the information can be distributed quickly and massively (3) accessible, and etc [14].

Ridwan Kamil himself makes Facebook as the medium to promote something. A socialization of new policy in Bandung is important for the future life. The people do not feel reluctant to give any comment. The people’s feedback will be needed to explore the response to the policy that will be implemented. Also, Ridwan Kamil needs feedback that he can see on his comment column.

Ridwan Kamil understands the characteristics of the information that is distributed in his social media –i.e. the information is massive, quick, and global. Hence, the innovation of information, either in the forms of an up-to-date or new policy innovation, should be implemented periodically. The periodical innovation is expected to be able to reduce boredom of any medium that becomes the information source of public policy [15].

A study reveals that an ideal periodical innovation should be conducted once in four or five months. The duration is considered to be the ideal one so that public does not get bored [16]. According to the cycle analysis, the innovation related to the socialization of public policy is quite consistent. The new innovation is formulated according to the ideal period so that the people do not get bored.

Ridwan Kamil’s strategy is quite unique. That is, the way he manages the innovation is quite different from the other governors. Ridwan Kamil has his own style that can be realized through the policy he socializes. In order to get closer to his people –coming from different backgrounds-, he starts introducing the policy that most people can receive. For example, the policy of Minggu Lansia, Program Layad Rawat, Subuh Berjamaah, Magrib Mengaji and program Teknopolis.

Another strategy that Ridwan Kamil uses to socialize public policy on his Facebook is he manages the text that he will deliver. Before the text is distributed in social media (especially Facebook), Ridwan Kamil...
should analyze the people’s segmentation which can be seen in his social media. The knowledge of the
people uses social media influences style and the way the information is delivered.

Text is always combined with visualization. Therefore, the people can discover the formulated policy
not in the form of text but also two-dimension visualization. Text in social media always develops from time
to time. The first development is started through text, graph, and then video [17].

The success of public sphere will depend on (1) accessibility (as universe as possible), (2) autonomy
level (every individual should be free from force), (3) hierarchical denial (every individual has the same
position) [1] [2] [3]. Some characteristics that can be found in Ridwan Kamil’s digital public sphere –i.e.
Facebook- are considered successful. According to the accessibility, Facebook is one of the media that can
be accessed by people from different generations –i.e. from the younger to the older one. Moreover, the
people’s enthusiasm is represented by the number of Ridwan Kamil’s followers, reaching 3,091,180 people.

Mc. Quail states that the presence of social media gives the public hopes to participate actively, where
there will be no more parties will get involved. This happens because the tool that can be accessed in social
media enables people to deliver information or ideas that they have.

The second category is autonomy level (i.e. being forced) and the third category (i.e. every individual
has the same position). The characteristics of new media –i.e. communication- become symmetrical
implying that people get the chance to deliver their opinion. Social media refers to the medium where people
can deliver information in two ways [1] [2] [3]. The column “comment” on Facebook helps the owner of
the account and the other people to interact. Some studies of social media show that the column “comment”
is used to measure public’s opinion of any issue [4].

Social media are expected to bring up a change. The communication flow to socialize is not only top-
down but also bottom-up in nature. Social media become a forum where people and politician can discuss
actively [6] [7]. The development of digital public sphere with new application enables people to discuss or
communicate in a group.

Social media give special sphere not only for the user but also the other people who actively use
Facebook. That special sphere is used to deliver information or opinion that the government has yet to hear
[9] [16] [18]. The advantage cannot be found in other mass media such as television, radio, or newspaper.

3.2. Thematic or topic elements that Ridwan Kamil delivers on his Facebook

The word theme in the perspective of Discourse analysis has the same meaning with topic. Topic in any text
indicates the most important information that people want to share. Thematisation refers to a process which
manages text and gives the reader clue to pay attention to the most important part of the text [11] [12].

The organization of thematic or topic elements can be seen in the title of every posting. The title can be
seen in the upper part of the posting on Facebook. For example, the posting which is posted on May 15,
2017. Ridwan Kamil organizes a policy related to the solidarity program in a heterogeneous society. The
guideline of this country, Indonesia is Pancasila organizes the policy of nine stages to defend the country.
The title or theme which is selected is “Terstruktur, Masif dan Berkelanjutan”.

The analysis of the theme selection has correlation with the former policy of Ridwan Kamil. The word
Terstruktur refers to nine stages that have relation to the aim of the program that is the action to defend the
country. Masif means the action to defend the country that is conducted by santri cannot be separated from
the nine stages including prayer together, the application of zakat car, the establishment of LPTQ, the routing
pengajian (reciting the Holy Quran), the training of MTQ juara, digital preaching, magrib mengaji, English
training for ustadz, and training of Islamic words.

The selection of Islamic word is continuously conducted nine stages of defending Islam has relation to
the former policy of Ridwan Kamil such as pengajian rutin, maghrib mengaji and dakwah digital. The aims
of this public policy was to improve the people’s life. The other aim is to maintain the quality of the people consistently
Ridwan Kamil’s policy is introduced on August 2, 2017. The innovation that Ridwan Kamil has formulated has the essence to maintain traditional culture. The chosen theme can be seen in the title such as “Rebo Nyunda”. As stated in the aim –i.e. to maintain local language-, the selection of “Rebo Nyuda” is applicable. The word “Rebo” is used to emphasize the selection of a day; that is Wednesday, where people are encouraged to practice and learn local language.

Socializing policy does not only use written text but also virtual text. The combination between written and visual text can emphasize the ideology behind a meaning [19]. For example, the words tiksusu, tiseren, tigubrak, titajong that are put in the same design. Based on the observation, introducing policy should not use the scientific concept which is complicated. Ridwan Kamil understands that social media can be used by people with different backgrounds. Furthermore, the people refer to individuals who do not only consume information but also produce information [14] [20] [21].

Communication science teaches a simple and effective text. Conveying text should be adjusted to the experience and the people’s reference is the reason Communication science teaches the simple and effective text [10]. Therefore, a text can be said effective if the meaning can be understood by people through the use of social media [10] [20] [21].

The policy socialization of health service for middle class in Bandung uses a program called Layad Rawat as the theme. The used picture is adjusted to the theme. Besides the prolog pictures, there are some sentences that attempt to describe full information of the health service entitled Layad Rawat. The health service program is created to help the people from middle class. The word Layad, if it refers to the picture and text, has connotation of direct service to the patient’s house. Ridwan Kamil explains the meaning of Layad Rawat. Literally, the phrase Layad Rawat is defined as the basic health service that is given to an individual and family as the patients directly where the health staff comes to the patients’ house. This service aims at improving, maintaining or maximizing the independence and minimalizing diseases.

3.3. Ridwan Kamil’s rhetorical style in delivering public policy on Facebook

Rhetoric is defined as the text that focuses on verbal interaction. Text consists of ideology and power [11]. In rhetorical studies, Discourse analysis does not ignore the written information. To observe text comprehensively, the data consisting of some conversation should be analyzed completely [11] [20] [21].

This study aims at discovering the meaning that cannot be separated from ideology. The formulated question can be “what is the rhetorical meaning that each word or sentence contains?” The other question can be “How does this text have the meaning in this context?” Second, this principle has functional implication “why does this text have this meaning? Or how can the text be inferred so?” [11] [20] [21]. The last stage in observing the meaning of a text is called as the social cognitive process. In Discourse analysis method, this study has social control over the meaning of the text that connects to the ideology.

Ridwan Kamil’s popularity cannot be separated from his digital public sphere. Through social media, Ridwan Kamil invites younger generation, as his big followers, to participate in any socialization of every public policy. Conducting a strategy by inviting people is Ridwan Kamil’s rhetorical style in social media. Social media with its two-way dimension enable the people to share perception of the public policy. Social media are also the medium to solve problems that the people face.

Kekasih refers to a policy meaning kendaran konseling silih asih. This policy aims at giving free counseling to the people in Bandung which is guided by doctor, counselor, and psychologist. In that new policy, Ridwan Kamil invites the people to share the information to any community in social media. Referring to a virtual book of the ethnography, the characteristics of information in social media resembles spider web [9] [17]. The information that can be obtained from the main source can be distributed to different communities in social media. Therefore, the information can be distributed very fast involving different communities [9] [16] [18].
Ridwan Kamil’s rhetorical style can be observed through the choice of simple words. Ridwan Kamil mostly uses Sundanese words or slang words so that he can get closer to the people. Communication science introduces the concept of homophile or the word choice that is adjusted to the understanding level of the people. An idiom says that simple language refers to an effective communication that is used to create the effectiveness in communication [1] [2] [12].

Ridwan Kamil’s rhetorical style can be observed through every posting he makes. The posting is about public policy in Bandung. For examples:

“Karena kami tahu hidup di Kota banyak tekanan. Maka jika kamu stress jika ditikang, jika patah hati, kesal di buli di sekolah, gebetan kalir, istri jablay, persib eleh wae……Ingat bulan September akan di mulai program keren namanya KEKASH……”

(“Because we know that living in a city is stressful. So, if you are stressful, if your lover cheats on you, if you are a broken heart person, if you are stressful to get bullied at school, if your crush runs away, if your husband rarely comes home, if your wife is irresponsible, if Persib always get lost… Remember, a cool program called KEKASH will be on this September)

“Tergantung pada apa dan posisinya gimana, semua kata di posisi ini (tikusruk, tiserele, tigubrag, titajong, tigebrus, tisoledat) artinya sama yaitu terjatuh. Itulah kekayaan bahasa Sunda………Cocok untuk judul film “tisoledat diantara dua hatiatual “jomblo diantara dua mantan…”

(It depends on what and how the position is, all words describing this position tikusruk, tiserele, tigubrag, titajong, tigebrus, tisoledat have the same meaning. That is, falling down. That is the rich Sundanese…. Good for a film title “tisoledat diantara dua hati” atau “jomblo diantara dua mantan…”

4. Conclusion
The result of a study entitled Ridwan Kamil’s digital public sphere and the socialization of public policy can be concluded as follows:

Ridwan Kamil uses Facebook as the medium to promote something. The socialization of new policy is needed to introduce the future policy of Bandung to the people. The strategy of using social media have some advantages including (1) accessibility (as universe as possible), (2) autonomy level (every individual has to be free from force), (3) hierarchical denial (every individual has the same position) [1] [2] [3].

1. Socializing policy cannot only be conducted through the written text but also can be combined with visual text. The organization of written text and visual texts is used to emphasize an ideology behind a meaning [19]. According to the observation, the text to socialize policy should not be organized in the form of scientific text. Ridwan Kamil understands that social media are used by people from different backgrounds. Therefore, the theme is formulated as simple as possible. That is, by using daily language [20] [21].

2. Applying a strategy by inviting people to participate is Ridwan Kamil’s rhetorical style in social media. Social media, which have two-way communications, enable to make the perception of public policy goal similar. Social media are used to solve problems that the people face.

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