

Mass Media in Political Communication: Transformation from Mainstream Domination to Social Media Power

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keyword:</p> <p>Mass media; Political communication; Media transformation; Social media; Political information</p>	<p>This research aims to investigate the role of mass media in political communication, focusing on the transformation from mainstream dominance to the power of social media. The method used is literature analysis to investigate developments and changes in political communication influenced by mass media, especially with social media as a key element. This research also considers concepts and theories related to political communication, providing a basis for understanding the implications of these changes in people's political participation. The research findings highlight a significant shift in the dynamics of political communication, where mass media, which was previously dominated by the mainstream, is now transforming social media. Social media allows people to actively spread political messages, respond to current issues, and interact with political leaders. These changes affect how the public conveys and understands political information, creating a more open and participatory environment in the political process. The implications of these findings can provide valuable insights for political practitioners, mass media, and researchers to understand the role of media in shaping the dynamics of political communication in the digital era.</p>

INTRODUCTION

Mass media plays a central role in forming opinions, disseminating information, and influencing public perceptions of various issues. In the era of globalization and information technology, the role of mass media is not only limited to presenting news but also shaping perspectives and social values. As the main communication agent, mass media has the power to shape narratives and direct the focus of public attention to certain issues. In this way, they become not only sources of information but also determiners in shaping the public agenda and opening space for dialogue and exchange of ideas in society. With this role, mass media becomes a key player in shaping a community's social and political dynamics (Aghaei & Mowlaei, 2023; Hannan et al., 2023).

The transformation from mainstream dominance to social media power has significantly changed the mass media landscape (Bokayev et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2023). Along with the development of digital technology, social media provides a platform for active community participation in information and opinion processes (Baharuddin, Sairin, Nurmandi, et al., 2022; Baharuddin, Sairin, Qodir, et al., 2022; Lestaluhu et al., 2023). No longer just passive recipients, the community now has a bigger role in creating and disseminating content. The power of social media eliminates geographic boundaries, allowing individuals to share their thoughts and

experiences instantly and globally (Baharuddin, Qodir, Jubba, et al., 2022; Luth, Maswati, et al., 2023; Luth, Kismartini, et al., 2023). In this way, the dynamic between mass media and society becomes more symbiotic, where society is not only a consumer of information but also a producer who can control the narrative and voice various perspectives.

However, while social media provides individuals greater freedom to participate in the public sphere, it also brings new challenges regarding information diversity, accuracy, and psychological impact (Karso et al., 2024). The phenomenon of spreading fake news (hoaxes) and the existence of filter bubbles on social media raises issues related to the manipulation of public opinion and polarization of society (Hui, 2020; Park & Rim, 2020; Saputra, 2020). Therefore, while social media strengthens society's role in shaping opinion, it is important to understand and manage the implications of these changes so that mass media, both conventional and social, can continue to function as an important tool in supporting diversity, dialogue and shared understanding.

Social media has changed the landscape of political communications, giving politicians and voters a unique opportunity to engage directly. Real-time interactions between politicians and constituents via platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram enable a faster and more seamless exchange of ideas. Political campaigns increasingly rely on social media to spread messages, organize events and gather support. Although it provides the benefits of direct access and greater engagement, this phenomenon also carries risks, such as the spread of false information, polarization and societal division (Baharuddin et al., 2021; Jubba et al., 2020, 2023; Widayat, Nurmandi, Rosilawati, Natshir, et al., 2022). It is important to recognize that social media is a source of political information and creates a space for forming political identities and social movements. Social media users often engage in active online dialogue, form groups with similar political interests, and voice demands or aspirations through hashtags or specific movements (Rifaid et al., 2023). Thus, social media reflects changes in how we receive political information and how we respond to, participate in, and formulate our political views.

Political promotion has slowly and surely penetrated political life in Indonesia. Like it or not whether it is recognized or not, political parties in Indonesia have been doing political marketing for a long time (Munzir, 2019). What is at the centre of attention here is how we can systematize the application of political marketing. What kind of signs do we need to implement political marketing? What things need to be considered in implementing political marketing? So, what roles and contributions can political marketing make? These are the things that will be discussed (Mustika, 2019). In democratic countries, political parties are important for achieving and exercising power (Atrianingsi et al., 2019). Countries that adhere to democracy need political parties to carry out political processes, such as the legislature, executive government, and other state institutions that cannot be separated from political parties (Diaz et al., 2019). On many occasions, the community's interests can be represented by various programs run by political parties. Meanwhile, for political parties, this is an effort to gain support from voters (Ondang et al., 2019).

Mass media is a means of disseminating information to the public, according to Bungin, mass media is defined as a communication and information medium that disseminates information en masse and can be accessed by the public at large. In terms of meaning, mass media is a tool or means for disseminating news content, opinions, comments, entertainment and so on (Purwanto, 2019). According to Sambode et al., (2019), media is a tool or means used to convey messages from communicators to audiences, while the definition of mass media itself is a tool used to convey messages from sources to audiences using communication tools such as newspapers, film, radio and television.

In many ways, the rise of the internet and the social web has made things much better regarding information about the world. Politics is very closely related to the media because one of the goals of the media is to form public opinion about various things, especially political matters. When public opinion can be 'set' as desired by the media, it becomes the benchmark for the success of a media. Between the world of politics or practical politics and the media, there is a relationship that requires each other and even influences each other. Mass media has a persuasive function that can shape and influence public opinion on developing political issues.

Merrill and Lowenstein revealed that the mass media (newspapers) are subject to the press system, and the press system itself is subject to the existing political system. This means that newspapers must be within the established regulatory circle to provide information to the public or convey messages.

Communication continues to develop following the development of human thought patterns. Communication is now at a broader and more complex stage (Marwan & Isnaeni, 2022). In communicating, of course, we cannot be separated from the role of the media. From a media perspective, the presence of mass media faces problems related to demands for mass media transformation (Sugiono, 2020). Especially related to political communication. Changes in politics are part of the media's contribution, especially mass media. The media greatly influences political developments in Indonesia (Ristarnado et al., 2019). In the era of increasingly sophisticated technology, media makes it very easy for political actors to disseminate political information and campaign politically (Darwis, 2021). The media has enormous power in a country's democracy because almost everyone gets their news from cable and social media rather than original news sources. For this reason, this research was created to determine the role of mass media in a broad scope of political communication (Rindu et al., 2020).

This research explores the urgency and purpose in the context of the role of mass media in political communication, especially in facing the transformation from mainstream dominance to the power of social media. In the era of globalization and information technology, mass media has a central role in forming opinions, disseminating information, and influencing public perceptions of various political issues. With the emergence of social media as a new force, this shift creates new dynamics in the interaction between media and society. It raises new challenges related to information diversity, accuracy and psychological impact. This research aims to investigate how the role of mass media adapts to these changes, especially in the context of political communication, as well as to understand the impact of this transformation on a community's social and political dynamics. Through this research, new in-depth insights can be found about how the mass media plays its role in facing the shift in the political communication paradigm in the modern era.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method chosen by the researcher, namely the descriptive qualitative method, provides an in-depth approach to understanding the role of mass media in promoting politics. By collecting descriptive data in words and images, this research emphasizes that qualitative research is oriented towards in-depth understanding through descriptive data, not quantitative data. The data collection process was carried out through literature studies by accessing and collecting various references that support aspects of the role of mass media in the context of political promotion. By detailing information from various sources, this research aims to provide a comprehensive picture of how mass media contributes to designing and conveying political messages to the public. Although this methodology focuses more on words, images or visual data can also be integrated to provide additional dimensions and support a holistic understanding of mass media content. By applying descriptive qualitative methods, this research is expected to reveal the complexity of the role of mass media in the context of political promotion in-depth and comprehensively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of this research bring an in-depth understanding of the significant changes in the dynamics of political communication triggered by the shift from mainstream dominance to the power of social media. The findings highlight the transformation of mass media in the political context, especially the impact of social media in providing a participatory forum for society. The discussion involves an in-depth understanding of the implications of these changes for political participation, the formation of public opinion, and the relationship between political leaders and society. These findings can provide an important contribution to further understanding the role of media in contemporary political dynamics and

prepare the foundation for developing effective political communication strategies in the digital era.

Political communication in the media

Political communication was born from two terms, "communication" and "politics". The relationship between the two terms is considered intimate and special because, in the political domain, the communication process occupies a fundamental function. However, communication approaches have helped provide deeper and more subtle insights into political behaviour (López-García & Pavía, 2019). Many books on political communication begin with a wandering of definitions, although it is always acknowledged that political communication covers a broad understanding. For example, as mentioned by Denton and Woodward, political communication is defined as public discussion about the allocation of power resources, government authority, both executive and legislative, and the provision of sanctions in the form of reward and punishment mechanisms.

The themes of studies on political communication generally revolve around the role of communication in political functions. Political communication presents all political system activities, present and past so that aspirations and interests are converted into various policies. This thinking departs from the idea that communication is a process integrated with political phenomena (Panuju, 1997, p. 40). Starting from that, political communication in the mass media is an arena for fighting over symbols of interest. With its power, mass media is a tool that interested parties widely contest. Thus, it is not surprising that there is an adage that in the context of general elections, those who have power in the mass media will be the ones who will hold the reins of power. Such a phenomenon also occurred before and during the 2008 East Java Governor election (Fata, 2020).

Political communication in the media has a very important role in shaping public opinion, mediating the relationship between political leaders and society, and influencing the dynamics of the political process as a whole (Baharuddin, Qodir, & Loilatu, 2022; Fenoll, 2022; Hampton et al., 2017; Jubba et al., 2023). In the era of information and technology that continues to develop, the media has become the main channel through which the public conveys and processes political information. The two main aspects involving political communication in the media are news broadcasting and political campaigns. First, in news broadcasting, the media is the main gateway for the public to obtain political information. When the media presents political news, they provide information about political events and help shape society's interpretation and understanding of those issues. In this way, the media has control over the political agenda and has the potential to influence the way society responds to and interprets political events.

Second, political campaigns are also an important aspect of political communication in the media. The media has become the main platform for politicians to convey their messages, build their image, and gain public support. An effective campaign strategy involves using mass media through political advertising, media coverage, or presence on social media (Widayat, Nurmandi, Rosilawati, Qodir, et al., 2022). In this case, the media provides political information and acts as a battlefield to win public support. Overall, political communication in the media creates complex dynamics between political leaders, mass media, and society. In a democratic context, fair and transparent access to political information in the media is essential to ensure informed public participation and support the health of the political process. Overall, the implication of political communication in the media is to create a political information order that influences a society's social and political dynamics. With mass media as a major player in political communication, it is important to understand its role in shaping opinion, mediating political-society relations, and influencing political direction and goals more broadly. In the era of democracy, awareness of these implications is important so that public participation can be based on accurate and diverse information, creating a healthy and transparent political process.

Mass media in promoting politics

From the various literature studied regarding political communication, it is generally associated with the role of mass media in the communication process it goes through (Russmann, 2021). This reflects the tendency for papers and writings related to political communication to be still dominated by political campaigns to gain votes or build political power oriented towards power. These political campaigns cannot escape the influence of mass media, both print and electronic media. As a consequence, the analytical approach he uses, in turn, uses more mass media analysis, especially about theories of the relationship between media and society, such as theories about messages, mechanisms for the dissemination of information that occur, as well as the psychological and sociological effects they cause.

Apart from that, it also reveals the problems of the position of political communication in cases of practical political activity in the transformation and formation of political communication in society. Meanwhile, Graber views political communication as learning, accepting and agreeing to customs or rules, structures and environmental factors that influence political life. Meanwhile, other studies also reveal political communication problems in cases of practical political activities associated with the mass media's role.

In the context of political communication, explains that political influences are mobilized and transmitted between formal government institutions on the one hand and communication between the people on the other hand. In principle, political communication is not only limited to political events such as elections, but political communication includes all forms of communication carried out to spread political messages from certain parties to gain mass support. Theoretically, as explained previously, the phenomenon of political communication that takes place in a society is an inseparable part of the political dynamics in which the communication occurs. Therefore, political communication activities in Indonesia must be distinct from the national political process, which is the background of life (Chatzidakis et al., 2020).

Mass media plays a crucial role in promoting politics by being the main channel for conveying political information and messages to the public (Intyaswati et al., 2020; Russmann, 2021). As the main communication agent, the mass media not only provides coverage of political events but also plays a role in shaping public opinion, designing the image of politicians, and supporting the democratic process. This phenomenon has become increasingly significant in the era of globalization and information technology, where mass media has become a major force that can shape political dynamics and influence interactions between political leaders and society.

In this context, the mass media can influence the political agenda by determining the issues that receive public attention. Through news, interviews and analysis, mass media shape political narratives that influence people's perceptions and attitudes towards political leaders and policies. Mass media is also the main stage for political campaigns, providing a space for politicians to voice their messages, build identities, and gain support. Thus, an in-depth understanding of the role of mass media in promoting politics is very important in understanding the dynamics of political communication that continues to develop.

The implications of the role of mass media in promoting politics are very large and influence various aspects of the political order and society. First of all, mass media can shape public opinion and people's political perceptions, influencing how they understand political issues and deciding their political support. In addition, in the democratic process, the mass media is responsible for presenting information objectively. However, if it is not carried out ethically, it can trigger societal polarisation and conflict. Another implication is in forming a politician's image, where the image built or destroyed by the mass media can significantly impact the electability and sustainability of a leader's political career. Therefore, understanding the implications of the role of mass media in promoting politics is essential in formulating policies, building informed public participation, and maintaining the health of a nation's democracy.

Spreading political messages

Spreading political messages is an activity that plays a key role in the political communication process, where these messages become the backbone for campaigns, political platforms, and interactions between political leaders and the public. In the modern era filled with mass media and digital platforms, spreading political messages is about conveying information and involves effective communication strategies to influence people's views and attitudes. The right political message can shape perceptions, gain support, and foster relationships between leaders and voters. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of spreading political messages is crucial in designing communication strategies that are high-quality and relevant to the needs of an increasingly diverse society.

Political communication is not only limited to political events such as elections, but it also includes all forms of communication carried out to spread political messages from certain parties to gain mass support. Theoretically, the phenomenon of political communication in a society, as explained previously, is an inseparable part of the political dynamics in which communication occurs (Setyoko & Ristarnado, 2021). Therefore, political communication activities in Indonesia must be distinct from the national political process, which is the background of life. The importance of mass media in spreading politics is explained by Reese and Shoemaker, who have tried to open the veil on the factors that greatly influence media content. According to him, several factors influence the content of media, including the influence of media workers (broadcasters or journalists), the influence of media organizations, extra media influences, and the influence of ideology (Larasati & Kurrahman, 2019).

To campaign politically

A mature and strategic communication approach is needed to build emotional connections with potential voters to campaign politically. Political campaigns are not just about presenting a political platform and vision but also involve crafting messages that can penetrate the hearts and minds of the people. Mass media, including digital platforms, become a very important tool in this context. Through mass media, political campaigns can spread key messages, build the candidate's image, and mobilize support effectively. In addition, successful campaign strategies involve direct interaction with voters through debates, public meetings, or social media to increase public involvement and participation (Intyaswati et al., 2020; Karso et al., 2024; Russmann, 2021). Therefore, crafting a political message that is clear, relevant and attention-grabbing is a key element in running a successful political campaign.

Social media users who are well-informed and educated are not easily lied to but are easily influenced and sympathetic to things that touch them. In the social media space, only factual information is valuable. The debate often arises to achieve confidence that the information is factual. In various matters that attract public attention, a thesis is opposed by an antithesis argument. Miracles often appear on social media in the form of achieving synthesis. There is no need for someone to conclude, but from the debate often emerges "silent agreement" between the parties arguing and their "listeners". Due to its long period, social media needs more mobilization campaigns. Work on social media moves slowly by discussing vision, mission, ideas, and ideology.

Social media users cannot be led but move with their own will and awareness. Social media only significantly influences politicians who work around the clock. Not an instant job once every five years. Those who intensely spread ideas and discuss certain areas in depth all the time will get results during the election. Social media is not suitable for "empty" politicians but only for those who can think and use dialectics. Social media is also not suitable for the selfish but for those who have sensitivity and concern for various problems faced by society. Only politicians who empathize with people's problems will gain public sympathy and empathy. The nature of campaigns on social media can be the opposite of campaigns in the real world. If, in the real world, campaigns are so noisy and loud but without real evidence on social media, it is the antithesis of that noise and noise, namely meaningful. Each sound has a meaning and has its proof.

Politics on social media can be true politics, namely politics that contains real ideas and actions for the public good. This is politics that has disruptive power. Various social issues that are a burden on society often find solutions on social media. The interesting thing about social media is that the demographics of its users are generally young. In addition, of course, its popularity among billions of earthlings. This also makes advertising on social media sometimes more effective than on television. Social media is not just a means to strengthen relationships but also discusses political issues, government policies, and the behaviour of public figures. Social media has become a part of every community's life, including the political realm, which can be used as a means of communication, self-promotion, socialization, and promotion of political parties to build the party's image. The use of social media for politics will usually be seen when elections are held for political campaigns (Salehuddin et al., 2021).

Overall, political communication in mass media plays an integral role in shaping political dynamics, influencing public opinion, and designing the image of political leaders. Through news broadcasts and political campaigns, mass media is the main driver in conveying political information and shaping society's interpretation of these issues. The implications of the role of mass media in promoting politics include its ability to shape opinion, influence the political agenda, and design the image of politicians. This phenomenon occurs in globalization and information technology, where mass media has become a major force that shapes political dynamics and influences interactions between political leaders and society. The use of social media also provides a new dimension, with its crucial role in spreading political messages, designing images and mobilizing support. In a democratic context, understanding these implications is essential to ensure informed public participation and maintain the health of the political process.

CONCLUSION

Mass media plays an important role as a facilitator in bridging interaction and communication in society. By providing a platform to present information quickly and to a wide audience, mass media provides opportunities for various parties, including in a political context. As a crucial element in national life, communication finds its ideal channel through mass media. Politics, an inseparable part of national life, also relies heavily on communication to disseminate political information, carry out political campaigns, and influence public opinion regarding political issues. Over time, there has been a significant transformation in the dominance of mass media, especially with the emergence of social media. From the conventional mainstream, social media has become a new force revolutionizing political communication patterns. The role of mass media in political communication is developing to become more dynamic, with social media providing direct and participatory access to the public. This transformation creates a new paradigm in political interaction, where the power of conveying political messages has shifted from the exclusive control of mass media to the collaborative power of society in the digital world. Thus, the role of mass media in political communication encompasses mainstream traditions and reflects the evolution towards the power of social media to give voice to various segments of society.

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