

Komunikasi Sambung Rasa as a Government Communication in 1983-1999

Rosita Budi Suryaningsih^{1*}, Dwi Mulyatari²

^{1,2}Master of History, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

*correspondence email: ochieta@gmail.com

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Abstrak

Komunikasi Sambung Rasa merupakan bentuk komunikasi yang dipakai oleh pemerintah Indonesia di tahun 1983 hingga 1999. Tujuan Penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui betapa pentingnya memilih sistem komunikasi yang tepat bagi pemerintah, yang disesuaikan dengan kondisi masyarakat dan kebutuhan pemerintah itu sendiri. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode historis, permasalahan ini akan dianalisis melalui tahap heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Hasil penelitian ini menyingkap bahwa sistem komunikasi sambung rasa ini dianggap efektif bagi pemerintah dalam menyampaikan informasi kepada masyarakat di masa itu, agar masyarakat merasa turut dilibatkan, dan kebijakan pemerintah diterima oleh masyarakat. Diharapkan penelitian ini bisa menjadi sebuah dokumentasi dimana Indonesia pernah mengaplikasikan sistem Komunikasi Sambung Rasa ini dan memperlihatkan model komunikasi yang cocok dan efektif untuk masyarakat Indonesia di masa itu, walau kemudian terjadi pergeseran tujuan dan informasi yang disampaikan di akhir periodenya.

Kata kunci: harmoko, departemen penerangan, komunikasi pemerintah.

Abstract

Komunikasi Sambung Rasa is a communication form that used by Indonesian's government at 1983 until 1999. This research will be figure about Komunikasi Sambung Rasa and why this communication system is choosen by the government. This research reveals the idea form of Komunikasi Sambung Rasa and how important to choose the right communication system, which is suitable by the people and the condition of the country. With historical method, this problems will be analyze with historical step by heuristic, verification, intrepretaion, dan historiography. This research will be reveals that Komunikasi Sambung Rasa is one of the effective communication from the government to enlightenment and give information to the people, so the people feels involved and feels they are part of the government policy. This research is expected to be a documentation that Indonesia has been applied this communication system that called Komunikasi Sambung Rasa and show how effective it was. But in the end of this period, there are different goal and the information to spread.

Keywords: harmoko, departemen penerangan, government communication.

INTRODUCTION

Government communication is crucial for relationship between the government and its people. The image of the government and its leaders depends on which government communication system that used. All activities and programs carried out by the government, need to be conveyed to the people who are within

the territory of the country, so that they know that they are part and the country. In winning the hearts of the people, the future leaders of this country often display their activities to "blusukan", which is to go down to the community and listen to their problems. In fact, an activity like this was carried out by the Ministry of Information or we called Departemen

Penerangan at the end of the Orde Baru, which was called Komunikasi Sambung Rasa.

This research is reveal how the relationship between the government and its citizens. In the end of Orde Baru era, specifically at 1983 until 1999, government communication system that choosen and effective is by using Komunikasi Sambung Rasa, which is echoed by the Menteri Penerangan, Harmoko. This communication system has been applied until Departemen Penerangan disbaned in 1999.

So far, some research which discussing about the history of communication have not been widely discussed. Even though it is interesting to discuss the development of existing communications, not only about the technology, but also changes in the methods used. With research like this, which is more specific than the study of public history, we can report on the glory and cultural heritage of communication that future generations need to understand.

In an article written by Panggih Sundoro, he stated that in the Orde Baru era where the press was clearly controlled by the Orde Baru government under President Soeharto, with the main role being the Menteri Penerangan, Harmoko, who was trusted for three terms. His communication skills in an effort to control the Indonesian press included

including the Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia (PWI), controlling the Dewan Pers, Serikat Perusahaan Pers (SPS) and the press editorial leaders becoming Golongan Karya (Golkar) party administrators. Likewise, legalizing Press Law NO 21/82 with Surat Ijin Usaha Penerbitan Pers (SIUPP) as the ultimate weapon against a recalcitrant press (Sundoro, 2018).

Harmoko, who comes from rural Java and is a journalist at heart, provided a new approach so that he could be trusted by the Indonesian people, namely by using Komunikasi Sambung Rasa. Harmoko has a personality who is easy to socialize and is skilled at communicating. Harmoko is said to be an expert in communication because he learned how to communicate autodidactically without having received higher education. Even though he doesn't have a specific higher education, Harmoko's way of communicating is very interesting because it can have an impact (Rahmah, 2016).

Harmoko's charisma, which bridged communication links, was effective in making people trust and connecting their feelings to the government. However, the people he visited were then used not only as development actors, but were also directed to become party supporters. With this research, it is hoped that readers will be able to recall what is known as Komunikasi Sambung Rasa and be able to understand its impact and effects on

government communication systems in the past.

METHOD

This article was written using historical research methods, namely through the stages of heuristics or source collection, historical verification or criticism, interpretation, and writing or historiography (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). In the heuristic step, the primary source in this study is a collection of speeches by the Menteri Penerangan in 1985 and 1986. Besides that, this research was also written based on a book written by the initiator of this Komunikasi Sambung Rasa system, Harmoko, which was published in 1986.

The next step is verification. Verification is carried out to criticize the substance of the source text, both internally and extrinsically. The author looked for data from newspapers which published at the same time as this research to check and double-check the primary data that had previously been obtained. The next stage is interpretation, which is comparing it with other sources and the final step is historiography, the step of writing the results of the source's interpretation with a good and correct narrative.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The second president of the Republic of Indonesia, Soeharto, was known as the

Bapak Pembangunan, because during his leadership, Indonesia was accelerated to develop this country into a more economically advanced country. The president, who has been in power since 1965 and comes from the military, feels that he is a recipient of revelation and his leadership style shows an arrogance of power (Wanandi, 2014: 340).

During his reign from 1983 to 1999, he implemented the Pola Umum Pembangunan Nasional based on Ketetapan MPR No. II/MPR/1983 concerning about Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara (GBHN). This is carried out with a series of development programs in all fields and continues continuously, in order to achieve the National Goals contained in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution (Umar, 1989: 258).

To disseminate information to the public throughout Indonesia about these government programs, there is a Departemen Penerangan (Deppen) that carries out its duties. Unfortunately, several Menteri Penerangan who serve are also from the military so they follow a strict military-style communication model. Even Ali Moertopo, who served from 1978 to 1983, felt that the position of Departemen Penerangan was less important, because his passion was in military and intelligence (Wanandi, 2014: 340).

So in 1983, President Soeharto then appointed the Menteri Penerangan, no

longer from the military, but from the journalist circle, namely Harmoko, who at that time was chairman of the PWI. On March 23 1983, Harmoko officially assumed his position as Menteri Penerangan. It was during his tenure that Harmoko then issued a concept through a communication model that he considered could embrace the community and be trusted by them, it called *Komunikasi Sambung Rasa*. This conception of departmental duties shows that Harmoko as minister always had a populist attitude. He had to be able to jump in and act in the field, but he also had to communicate frequently with President Soeharto to ask for direction and direction from him. All actions taken must not deviate from the published rules (Umar, 1989: 238).

In achieving the goal of succeeding national development, a communication system is needed that does not just provide information and then finish. The right communication system is can inspire and mobilize the people to be aware of their involvement in developing this country, to take action according to their abilities to support and participate for their country.

The Concept of Komunikasi Sambung Rasa

Harmoko put forward the idea that technological sophistication is not enough to provide information effectively to all Indonesian people. According to him, a

special way is needed so that communication can be conveyed to the public, so that later it can be accepted and raise the person's enthusiasm so that they are moved and feel that they are not being ordered, but that their participation is based on their own will. This method of communication is called *Komunikasi Sambung Rasa* (Harmoko, 1986: 73).

According to him, with the sophistication of communication technology, we should not erase traditional methods that have become Indonesia's culture, but we need to juxtapose them so that government communication can be optimal. The direction of communication development is also adjusted to the national development strategy which emphasizes equality, growth and stability. To carry out this task, Harmoko as Menteri Penerangan issued Surat Keputusan No.64/Kep/Menpen/1983 on April 19, with the contents of ratifying the Pedoman Penerangan 1983-1988. This decree is a guideline for every official and officer, namely Juru Penerang (Departemen Penerangan et al., 1983: 149). It also contains instructions for communicating persuasively with the public.

With his background as a person who was born in rural Java and likes gathering to get new information, Harmoko initiated the *Komunikasi Sambung Rasa* system which was considered appropriate to implement at that time. Besides from

providing information, the gathered community can also provide input that can help improve the quality of government programs. Harmoko, who was once a journalist, created a concept called *Komunikasi Sambung Rasa* so that the information activities carried out under his command could be effective, and could touch the hearts of his communicants, so that they would get involved and participate in every program promoted by the Indonesian government (Umar, 1989: 235).

This method reflects a form of listening activity from lower society. Menteri Penerangan as representatives of the government can demonstrate a sense of connection with the community directly. What the community feels is conveyed to the government through the Menteri Penerangan, who can connect the feelings, transmit the community's voice to then be brought to meetings that give solutions to their problems.

Harmoko as a Menteri Penerangan carries out this *Komunikasi Sambung Rasa*, in the form of conveying information in a light manner so that it is easy to understand or punctuated with humor. Apart from that, communication is carried out by adjusting community activities, and the topics presented must be in accordance with current issues and community needs which are important to convey (Rahmah, 2016: 4).

Safari Ramadan as a Komunikasi Sambung Rasa's Implementation

Harmoko intelligently initiated a two-way way of communicating directly with the Indonesian people. He carried out this mutual communication like when he was on a Safari Ramadan activity, which allowed him to meet directly with the people and be able to understand what the people's needs. Safari Ramadan is a form of activity that reflects mutual communication, this activities carried out by Harmoko during the month of Ramadan by touring the regions, staying in touch with the community directly, visiting kyai, Islamic boarding schools, mosques, and so on. In between Islamic lectures held during the month of Ramadan, Harmoko inserted government messages and listened to input from the attendees who came to the event. The event looks like a dialogue, creating reciprocal communication, where intimate and dynamic social relationships are established, developing a social communication system (Departemen Penerangan RI, 1990).

Harmoko is a figure who is known for being friendly, respectful of other people, and smiling, always answering with a smile. Before answering questions from the public, Harmoko first said, "let's answer what cannot be answered, let's discuss, *urun rembug*."

The problems presented to the Menteri Penerangan are sometimes small

and trivial, but problems like this are indeed faced by the community. For example, the problem that was faced when Harmoko went on a Ramadan Safari in Gunung Kidul Regency. It was the concern of a ulama figure named Habib who said that the village head election activity was held to coincide with Solat Jumat. Things like this may be unintentional, but the religious figure appealed to the government not to damage the religious feelings.

In every dialogue with the people, Menteri Penerangan always receives complaints and requests such as capital assistance and product marketing guidance, for example requiring a chicken food grinding machine. If a problem like this is discovered, Menteri Penerangan will direct them to regional leader officials. So Harmoko does not always provide answers to people's requests, but brings them together with the regent, governor or other related parties.

Besides their voices heard directly by the government, the community also feels like they are part of the changes and solutions produced. They consciously want to be involved, produce change and support the solutions provided to the problems they face. This is proof that the concept of Komunikasi Sambung Rasa, which aims to inspire people's enthusiasm to be involved in development that can help solve their problems, can be realized.

The role of the Menteri Penerangan in this situation is huge. He becomes a listener and transmitter of the feelings of the people he meets directly. The problems that were presented were really resolved and solutions were provided, Harmoko was able to appear like an angel who could help the community. Harmoko, as a government representative, is increasingly gaining a place in society, being seen as a conduit for feelings. Not only appearing as a government representative, Harmoko also appeared in his role as a representative of one of the largest parties in the Orde Baru era.

This Komunikasi Sambung Rasa system has become a form of positive interaction between society and the government and vice versa (Departemen Penerangan RI, 1990). For Harmoko himself, this system has had an extraordinary impact. He feels comfortable being present among ordinary people, and vice versa, the people he visits feel respected and trust him.

This in line with Max Weber's theory of authority, that there is something called charisma, which is based on the extraordinary qualities possessed by a leader. The leader will be a person who is highly respected and obeyed or can even become a role model for his followers. This can arise due to extraordinary attitudes that emerge from within a leader who has leadership qualities or is often called "charisma". Due

to the influence, approach or communication model used by people who have this charisma, their followers voluntarily follow the rules made by the leader (Giddens, 2007).

Unfortunately, there has been a deviation in the goals of implementing this Komunikasi Sambung Rasa system. Not only is it a means for the government to invite the public to get involved in development programs, this communication system is also effective in inviting the public to vote for one of the parties, namely Partai Golkar (Golongan Karya).

The initial aim of the Komunikasi Sambung Rasa concept was indeed noble. However, this noble concept is later tarnished because the information conveyed is different. The community, which was previously a positive object with the concept of feeling "*diwongke*" (in Javanese means being treated like a respectable human being), by explaining the true meaning and intent of a program, is then exploited. People who have confidence in the government and want to contribute to development are directed to become participants in the current ruling party.

Komunikasi Sambung Rasa's activity looks like they are taking advantage of the community. People are visited by important people, their problems are listened to, so they feel they owe a gratitude to this country, and the

way to return the favor is by voting for a party supported by the important people who came to them. People are indirectly given political education so that they choose one of the parties that promises to solve the problems they are experiencing and can make Indonesia more advanced.

This Komunikasi Sambung Rasa system has proven as an effective communication system, but it is even more effective in terms of getting people's votes to vote for the Partai Golkar. From the results of the 1987 General Election, Golkar was able to increase its votes significantly, gaining an additional 53 seats, bringing the total number of seats occupied by Golkar to a total of 299 seats.

Not only it was used by Golkar, but the community was also used by Harmoko. Because this purposive communication model has led him to become Ketua Umum Partai Golkar in 1993. The more he appeared in society, appeared in all the existing mass media, even people memorized his appearance with neat smooth hair and his tone of voice, making Harmoko increasingly known and worthy of being President Soeharto's confidant.

On 20 October 1999, Departemen Penarangan was dissolved by President Abdurrahman Wahid. Thus, the policy of using the Komunikasi Sambung Rasa system also ends. Until now, a similar communication model continues to be implemented, but the name no longer uses the term Komunikasi Sambung Rasa.

CONCLUSION

Communication is important to the people's relation. However, it needs the right communication system to be effective. Indonesian people have their own characteristics in communicating. This is what Harmoko thought about when planning a communication systems, so that the message conveyed by the government could be effective. Messages can be received, understood, and arouse feelings of wanting to get involved. According to him, Komunikasi Sambung Rasa's system is suitable and can satisfy the community because the leaders can communicate directly and listen to the problems the community faces. This is a bottom-up policies that are prepared based on the results of this mutual communication can make people trust the government, because they are involved too.

This communication model is actually very effective not only in disseminating information about government policies, but also in building public trust to vote for one of the parties in the New Order era. The noble initial intention of Komunikasi Sambung Rasa was tarnished because of this deviated in objectives.

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