

Virtual Democracy: An Interactive Study of Political Communication Patterns on @narasinewsroom Accounts

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ABSTRACT

The development of information and communication technology has changed the way people interact with politics, giving rise to the phenomenon of 'virtual democracy' on social media. The Instagram account @narasinewsroom has emerged as an important actor in the digital political information ecosystem in Indonesia, making it an interesting case study for understanding the dynamics of political communication in the digital era. This research aims to explore in depth the patterns of political communication formed on the @narasinewsroom account. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research analyses the interaction between the content presented, the reactions of the followers, and the dynamics of the discussions that occur through document and literature studies. The results show that the content strategy creates an effective and continuous interaction between the account and its followers. Through mutually enriching comments, followers not only provide answers, but also develop discussions with new perspectives on political issues. The strategy of grouping content into topic categories facilitates dynamic interactions. This strategy has proven effective in building interactive political communication, increasing public participation and providing space for people to express political opinions.

INTRODUCTION

Advances in communication technology have brought about significant changes in the way people interact with politics (Boestam et al., 2023). Social media, especially Instagram, is now an increasingly popular platform for rapid or viral dissemination of information, including in the field of politics in Indonesia (Anggraini et al., 2022). This phenomenon is creating a new form of democracy that can be referred to as 'virtual democracy'. Virtual democracy on social media opens up vast opportunities for people to engage in political discussions, access information and channel support, creating effective new channels for public participation in the democratic process (Boestam et al., 2023). On the Instagram account, @narasinewsroom has emerged as one of the key players in the digital political information ecosystem in Indonesia. With millions of followers and content focused on current political issues, this account is an interesting case study for understanding the dynamics of political communication in the digital era.

In addition, internet access in Indonesia continues to grow rapidly. By 2024, more than 221 million Indonesians, or about 79.5% of the population, will have used the internet. This number is increasing year on year, by 2.67% between 2022 and 2023 (APJI, 2024). This state of affairs reflects the many interactions that take place via digital devices. Meanwhile, data on the number of Instagram users in Indonesia in February 2024 shows that the number of Instagram users in Indonesia is 88.86 million, while in July 2024, the number of Instagram users in Indonesia is 90.18 million (Rizaty, 2024). These conditions allow Instagram to become one of the most accessed and influential media in Indonesia.

The pattern of interaction in the @narasinewsroom comment space reflects the complexity of virtual democracy. On the one hand, this platform provides a space for citizens to participate in political discussions more easily and quickly. On the other hand, new challenges emerge, such as the exploitation of personal data, digital security issues, and the disruption of voting rights (Salasah, 2022). The presence of the @narasinewsroom account also changes the dynamic between the media, politicians and the public. Politicians can now communicate directly with their constituents through comments or mentions (Hutabarat, 2024), while the public has greater access to express their opinions. This creates a new form of public accountability and political participation that needs to be further explored. In addition, the way @narasinewsroom presents political information through interesting and easily digestible visual content opens up opportunities for increased political literacy among the younger generation. On the other hand, the simplification of complex issues into a concise format also has the potential to create a superficial understanding of political issues.

Although the role of social media in political communication has been widely studied, there are still few studies that specifically analyse the dynamics of interaction on the Instagram platform in the Indonesian context. The uniqueness of Instagram as a platform that emphasises visual content and

high interactivity is different from other social media platforms, thus the patterns of political communication formed on it. In addition, the characteristics of Instagram users in Indonesia, which are dominated by the younger generation, add an interesting dimension to this study in terms of its potential influence on the formation of political attitudes of future generations.

This study aims to explore in depth the political communication patterns formed on the @narasinewsroom account. By analysing the interaction between the content presented, the reactions of the followers and the dynamics of the discussions that take place, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in shaping political discourse and public participation in Indonesia. The findings of this study will not only contribute to the academic literature on digital political communication, but can also provide valuable input to policy makers, journalists and democracy activists in navigating the political landscape in the social media era.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Virtual democracy is realised through the freedom of individuals to express themselves, express ideas and interact with others on social media platforms. It reflects the application of democratic principles in the digital space, where users have the opportunity to actively participate in discussions and exchange information without significant restrictions (Anggraini et al., 2022). In order to facilitate the process of virtual democracy, any society (netizen) relies heavily on the existence of the media. In fact, the role of the media is inescapable as a political force known as the "fourth pillar" (the fourth estate), which is a partner of the executive, legislative and judicial branches (Boestam et al., 2023; Hermawanti & Hadiati, 2023). The digitisation of society in cyberspace has facilitated access to information, opening up opportunities for individuals to understand and participate in the future development of virtual democracy (Boestam et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, communication patterns can be understood as a form or structure of relationships between two or more people in the process of exchanging information. This process involves sending and receiving messages in an appropriate way so that the intended meaning can be properly understood. The use of certain communication patterns affects the effectiveness of the communication process when there is interaction between two or more people who form a communication network (Setiawati, 2020). According to Effendi (2008), there are four types of communication patterns (Ratumakin et al., 2023), namely: First, primary communication patterns involve the use of symbols as a medium to convey thoughts from the sender of the message to the receiver. Second, secondary communication patterns involve the use of additional media to convey messages from the sender to the receiver, complementing the use of initial symbols. Third, linear communication patterns involve the direct delivery of messages from communicator to communicant without any reciprocal process. Fourth, circular communication patterns involve a continuous exchange of messages between the

communicator and the communicant, with feedback as a key element in determining the effectiveness of communication.

Political communication takes place in a variety of social contexts, from informal conversations to formal forums. At its core is the communication of policy and regulatory messages to the public. This practice is influenced by the prevailing socio-political system, with the state playing a role in shaping the legal framework that allows various forms of political communication to flourish (Kustiawan et al., 2022). Political communication is a form of communication that aims to achieve a certain level of influence, where the issues discussed in this type of communication are binding on all citizens through sanctions set by political institutions. In any political system, political communication always plays an important role. This includes discussions on political issues, formulation of political policies, implementation of policies and various other decisions that involve the process of political communication (Kustiawan et al., 2022). According to Nimmo, political communication takes many forms, but can be broadly categorised into two main types (Hermawanti et al., 2023): First, political discourse, which includes activities related to symbols, language use, and the formation of public opinion. Second, political persuasion, which includes three sub-forms: propaganda, political advertising and rhetoric.

In social media, social media interactivity shapes political discourse through activities such as online voting, commenting, and reposting content. These conditions reveal political leanings and mobilize support (Nguyen et al., 2022; de Landa et al., 2024; Lipschultz, 2022). The interaction between politics and social media is crucial in political communication, as it increases individuals' political understanding and engagement. This connection increases the role of media in shaping political narratives, participation, and perceptions (Kumar & Hooda, 2022; Choi, 2023; Esteve Del Valle et al., 2022; Oliveira et al., 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The research method used in the study is a qualitative approach. Qualitative research relies on techniques such as observation, interviews, and content analysis to collect and interpret data about the responses and actions of research subjects (Danu, 2015). This research uses a descriptive approach, with the data analysis process including collecting information through document and literature studies, selecting data relevant to the research objectives, and drawing conclusions. This method aims to reveal and describe the phenomenon under study in depth, presenting the characteristics and patterns that arise from the observed reality (Kustiawan et al., 2022).

Table 1: Account @Narasinewsroom

Account	Followers	Posting	Following
@Narasinewsroom	1,6 m	19,7 k	20

Source: @Narasinewsroom

The data source was taken from the @Narasinewsroom account, which has a large number of followers, namely 1.6 million, with a total of 19.7 thousand posts. This significant number of followers shows that the account has a wide reach and influence on Instagram. Furthermore, despite its large number of followers and the content it posts, it only follows 20 other accounts, which may indicate a selective or strategic approach to building connections on the platform. This strategy may emphasise the quality of relationships over quantity. Posts on the account became the source of data in this study. The selected posts were determined based on predetermined criteria to answer the questions in the study.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Narasi.tv has a show called Narasi Newsroom. According to its official website, Narasi is a platform for the exchange of ideas and debate. Its content emphasises pluralism, critical thinking and tolerance. Narasi aims to inspire the younger generation to play an active role in society. Narasi aims to be a catalyst for youth participation. It presents content that is deeply researched and meaningful. It targets young readers and offers different formats such as talk shows, reportage, documentaries, opinion pieces and interaction spaces. Narasi also manages communities and organises online and offline events (Salsabila et al, 2023).

Since August 2021, the Narasi newsroom has been actively disseminating news through Instagram reels. One of the regular contents is flash news with a duration of 40-60 seconds. Flash news is commonly used in television and radio to convey important or sudden information. Narasi Newsroom consistently uploads news on Instagram Reels with the hashtags #NarasiDaily, #JadiPaham and #NarasiNewsroom as part of Narasi TV's public relations campaign. The topics discussed in @narasinewsroom vary from breaking news to entertainment (Salsabila et al., 2023).

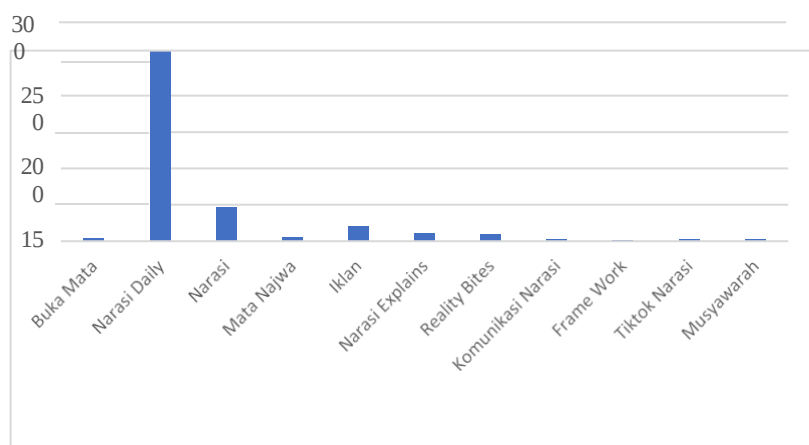
Information delivery on the @narasinewsroom Account

Firstly, Buka Mata, focuses on social issues or public awareness. The frequency of this content is low, indicating that it is only published at certain times. Secondly, Narasi Daily, contains daily news or information that highlights recent events or developments. The intensity of posting is very high. Thirdly, Narasi, the number of posts is quite significant, around 50, indicating that this is an important part of the account. Fourth, Mata Najwa features in-depth interviews and discussions with important personalities on topical issues. Fifth, Iklan, This content relates to advertisements or promotions. Sixth, Narasi

Explains: This content appears to be uploaded in limited quantities. Seventh, Reality Bites, the number of posts is low. Eighth, Komunitas Narasi, The number of posts is low, indicating possible infrequency of community events. Ninth, Frame Work, the low number of uploads suggests that this content is not yet a mainstay. Tenth, TikTok Narasi, The number is limited, suggesting that the TikTok platform may not yet be the main focus. Finally, Musyawarah, This upload is very infrequent, suggesting that deliberation or dialogue may only occur at specific moments or on very important issues (look Graphics 1). All content on @narasinewsroom's Instagram is presented in video reels and carousel formats that include investigations, explanations and stories, with a focus on political and national news, both from Indonesia and internationally. Between 1 and 28 June 2024, @narasinewsroom produced and shared a total of 366 pieces of content through its Instagram account.

The graph shows the distribution of content types posted by the @narasinewsroom account between 1 and 28 June 2024, and shows that content labelled as Narasi Daily dominates, with more than 250 uploads. This suggests that Narasi Daily may be the main or most frequently uploaded content format. Other content types such as Mata Najwa and Narasi have a lower number of uploads, with less than 100 and around 50 uploads respectively. Meanwhile, other content types such as Ads, Narasi Explains, Reality Bites, Komunitas Narasi, Frame Work, Tiktok Narasi and Musyawarah have a much smaller number of uploads, mostly under 20 uploads. The distribution pattern shows that the @narasinewsroom account focuses more on daily content, which is news or updates, compared to other content that may be more specific. This may reflect a content strategy that emphasises relevant and timely information to maintain regular interaction and engagement with followers.

Graphics 1. Content @narasinewsroom 1-28 June 2024



Source:@narasinewsroom 1 - 28 June 2024

Political Communication Patterns between @narasinewsroom and its Followers

The @narasinewsroom account interacts with its followers by presenting informative and relevant content, consistently using hashtags such as #NarasiDaily, #JadiPaham, and #NarasiNewsroom, and grouping content according to categories such as narasi daily, buka mata, mata najwa, narasi, narasi

explains, and so on. When analysing political communication patterns on the @narasinewsroom account, using some of the high interaction content, where there are more than 15,000 comments on the uploaded content.

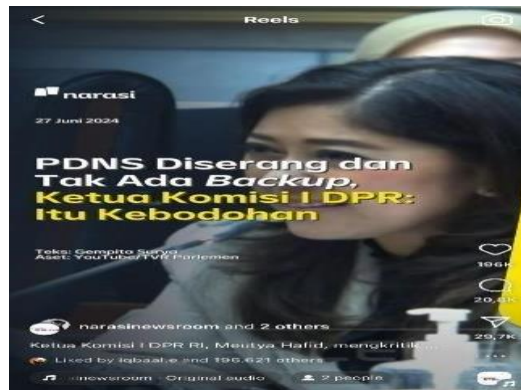


Figure 1. Content Reels

Source: @narasinewsroom account

The upload is a roll of content in the Narasi Daily category containing information uploaded on 27 June 2024 with a total of 6,747,438 impressions, 196,847 likes and 20,911 comments. The content contains information about the Chairman of Commission I of the DPR criticising the Temporary National Data Centre (PDNS). The text in the content cover has a yellow colour, indicating the highlight of the topic discussed in it. The yellow colour indicates the primary communication pattern that @narasinewsroom shows to its followers.

" *skripsi final, skripsi final bgt, skripsi final bgt print, skripsi final bgt bismillah, skripsi final bgt bismillah allahuakbar. Bapaknya kudu berguru sm mahasiswa tingkat akhir buat back up file sakral,*" said the Instagram account @larasatinisa, which was then replied to by the account @fitriayunita2802 "not only on the laptop, on the phone, in the email, in some flash disks are copied because they are afraid of being lost, afraid of deleting, afraid that the laptop will suddenly break because of the importance of the data.

The two comments above can show a circular pattern of communication because there is a continuous exchange of messages, where the second comment is a direct feedback that expands and strengthens the message of the first comment. This pattern allows for an effective dialogue where both users understand the context and provide complementary information about the importance of protecting their files.



Figure 2. Content Reels

Source: @narasinewsroom account

The upload is a reel of content in the Narasi Daily category containing information uploaded on 27 June 2024 with a total of 5,582,723 impressions, 112,134 likes and 16,886 comments. The content includes information about the government's inability to restore the national data centre, which was attacked by ransomware. The text in the content cover is highlighted in yellow to indicate the highlight of the topic being discussed. The yellow colour indicates the primary communication pattern that @narasinewsroom is showing to its followers.

" *makanya, ngasih jabatan menteri dan jajaran dibawahnya itu jangan bagi-bagi. Tapi pilihlah EXPERTISE.*" Said the @fahmihakimofficial Instagram account, which was then replied to by the @ruperzki23 account "*super setuju..apalagi soal rakyatnya sendiri yang punya kemampuan..jangan pernah meremehkan rakyat..huh rakyat? Iyes rakyat (kita2x sebagai warga rakyat negara RI)*".

The two comments above may show circular patterns of communication. The first comment from @fahmihakimofficial conveys the idea of electing officials based on expertise. The second comment from @ruperzki23 provides immediate feedback by expressing agreement and expanding on the idea, adding a perspective on the importance of valuing people's skills. This demonstrates a continuous and complementary exchange of messages, creating an effective dialogue and enriching the shared understanding of the issue at hand.



Figure 3. Content Reels

Source: @narasinewsroom account

The upload is a reels content in the Narasi Daily category containing information uploaded on 20 June 2024 with a total of 8,422,245 impressions, 96,415 likes, and 19,073 comments. The content contains information about Marshel Widiyanto who was officially promoted by Gerindra as a candidate for Mayor of Tangsel 2024. The text in the content cover has a yellow colour indicating the *highlight* of the topic discussed in it. The yellow colour shows the primary communication pattern shown by @narasinewsroom to its followers, "*kalo pas stand up gak lucu, eh pas nyalon walkot jadi lucu*" ujar akun Instagram @sobat.kuliner.ig yang kemudian diberi tanggapan oleh akun @temmykarmal "*emang lucu nih orang, sedikitpun gak lucu pas nyalon malah bikin org bertengkar dan jantungan*".

The two comments above can show a circular communication pattern. This pattern shows a continuous exchange of messages, where the second comment not only agrees, but also adds a new perspective that reinforces the initial message. This interaction creates an effective dialogue, develops shared ideas, and shows how both users understand each other's context and provide complementary views on the topic at hand.

Interacting to Build Political Dialogue on the @narasinewsroom Account

The strategy groups content into specific categories such as Narasi Daily, Buka Mata, Mata Najwa and Narasi Explains to build virtual political communication with its followers. This allows for open dialogue and interaction to express opinions and provide responses to political issues. In addition, this strategy makes it easy for followers to understand and follow certain relevant issues. Third, the content analysed shows that the @narasinewsroom account encourages the shaping of political discourse. This is reflected in the comments made by the account's followers, with each comment receiving direct feedback from other followers, creating an interactive and ongoing dialogue. For example, in relation to the content about the President of Committee I of the Chamber of Deputies criticising the National Data Centre, a comment from Instagram user @larasatinisa about the importance of keeping data secure was replied to by other users. This condition reinforces the message for additional perspectives.

In the second content, which raised the issue of the government's inability to restore the national data centre due to a ransomware attack, the discourse shifted from the issue of data breaches to the importance of electing officials based on direct expertise. This state of affairs is about respecting people's ability to work. This interaction allows the public to openly express criticism and aspirations. For example, the third content discusses the nomination of public figure Marshel Widiyanto as a candidate for mayor of South Tangerang City in 2024 by the Gerindra Party, and conveys political opinions that the nomination is still not appropriate, referring to the actor's lack of experience in politics.

The interaction that appears in the @narasinewsroom comments shows that each comment adds

value to the political discourse, reflecting the voice of the wider community. The patterns of communication not only enrich political discourse, but also reflect the dynamics of politics in the digital age, where every individual has the opportunity to express their opinions and influence public opinion in virtual space.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis of political communication patterns between @narasinewsroom and its followers, it can be seen that the interaction between @narasinewsroom and its followers shows a continuous and effective exchange of messages. The comments analysed show that the account's followers provide responses, but also develop discussions, reinforcing or adding new perspectives to the issues discussed. The Narasi Newsroom programme has created a platform that not only provides up-to-date information, but also encourages discussion and active participation from the younger generation. Using Instagram Reels, Narasi Newsroom presents different types of content. The uploaded content covers a wide range of topics, especially politics and current affairs. The strategy groups content into specific categories such as Narasi Daily, Mata Najwa and Narasi Explains, which allows for dynamic and continuous interaction between the account and its followers. Communication patterns are formed through comments, where each opinion receives feedback that enriches the discussion. This not only strengthens the political discourse, but also creates space for the public to voice criticism and aspirations. This means that the content strategy used by Narasi Newsroom is effective in building interactive political communication and increasing public participation in the discussion of important issues.

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