

# The Political Marketing Discourse of Simulacra and Hyperreality Praxis Era: a Review over The Election of West Java Governor 2018

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this research is to examine The Political Marketing Discourse over the Election of West Java Governor 2018 in the era of Simulacra and Hyperreality. Political stage of the election of West Java Governor 2018 is more massive which reported and predicted to be as "hot" as the elections of the Governor of DKI 2017. The election of regional heads in various regions as practical politic activities increasingly shows the dynamics of extraordinary interest, especially in the era of globalization and virtual media. The idea of Jean Baudrillard (1967) in the discourse of simulacra and hyperreality has a strong relevance in the political marketing of candidates. This is the era in which political marketing is colored with imaging domains and artificial realities that accumulate into imitation arena or reproductions of image or object, beyond the boundaries of the experience itself. New political communication domains, constructed from models or simulacra and hyperreality, takes the substantive political deconstruction, contemplative and reflective.

*Keywords:* political marketing; discourse; simulacra; hipereality

## Introduction

The political stage of the election of regional head or president is always colored by various political promises or campaign jargon. The frenetic and massive democracy is felt by the citizens during the election of the regional head or president. Practical politics seems identical to the celebrity activities of politicians who compete in the domain of power (bureaucracy). Political promises are identical with marketing the candidates.

The election of West Java Governor in 2008 has left a chunk of political discourse (political contract) that has been forgotten by elected elites and citizens themselves. The forgotten political contract are: the realization of

compulsory basic education of 9 years free education; transparency of distribution of education grants; the opening of public space for community; policy-oriented empowerment of small and medium enterprises; clean governance of corruption, collusion and nepotism; the transparency of local regulations; eliminating and cracking down illegal charges; eradicate the judicial mafia; development of arts and culture in West Java through the construction of international arts buildings and patenting typical art; to create sports area and supporting facilities to improve sports achievements in West Java; to change the pattern of agriculture using organic fertilizer to improve production yield; stopping the commercial function of agricultural land to save the environment; to open the marketing access of ornamental flowers for the

development of Cihideung ornamental plants; expansion of employment opportunities for local communities; proposing a better wage (and working conditions) for West Java workers; cheap-fee education utilizing 20% of education budget; accelerated repair of damaged roads of West Java province; provision of one million jobs; exemption of tuition fees and book expenses, granting book aid, repairing school buildings, granting additional salaries for public and private teachers; improving farmers' welfare through bailouts to ensure the stability of fertilizer and grain prices; road construction and irrigation.

The mass "forgot" project is now more actual, because in 2018, West Java will hold the Governor Election, which will become an interested discourse in various spaces and media, mass or social (virtual). In this situation, political parties seem to be the main actor in deciding which candidate is worthy to be a governor.

Ironically, political parties are still far from the values of citizen's trust and aspirations because the elites of the political parties are still filled with the aura of "money politics", corruption, and "thirst" for power. The practice of democracy is still dominating with fake symbols and imaging only.

According to Jean Baudrillard (1967), it is called the stage of simulacra and hyperreality, the era in which humans enter the practice of imitation and falsehood, loaded with ecstasy of communication, hedonism and commodification.

Politics is far from the real meaning, a deprivation of originality and human identity. Contemporary human beings live in the world of simulacra (image or signifier of an event that has replaced the experience).

Humans in general, especially citizens of West Java are no longer want to learn from past experience, especially experience in determining the choice of the best leaders according to ability and capacity. In addition, less information and the influence of communication media (virtual era) has made various efforts to sign the imaging and symbol of governor candidates who seemed to be the best version of the group. The deadlock of information in society continues to occur.

## **Political Marketing**

Democratic elections of regional heads are still considered a good way of making choices for citizens as a form of political participation. However, because the candidates are so often

"sell" promises without proof, then it is all forgotten. The democracy party's euphoria is ceremonially charged. Citizens, campaigners, volunteers and politicians are equally seduced by "democratic practices" in political image, which make the transactional politics (money and position) is more interesting and unavoidable.

Democracy has distorted meaning in various dimensions. By abandoning the large part of electorate, there are a small and close circle of power (bureaucrats, politicians and businessmen) who ended up enjoying the promise of campaign. Democracy is only controlled and dominated by the owners of capital (money). Kotler (1989) says: " If marketing, advertising and public relations can sell toothpaste and deodorant, why not political candidate."

Marketing has played a key role in reshaping the ideology in this country. Political ideology is being driven by marketing, not by party affiliation. The implication of this change lies in the increasing importance of marketing technology in shaping the ideological beliefs of the president. If we look back to recent presidential administrations, ideology was based on very fundamental differences in the way government was run.

The role of money in politics has always been a central issue to the success of a political candidate. These studies have addressed issues such as where to allocate funds, whether campaign expenditures are evaluated as a reflection of demand or supply, and the overall impact of expenditures on the outcome of an election (Newman, 1999).

The same principles that operate in the commercial marketplace hold true in the political marketplace: Successful companies have a market orientation and are constantly engaged in creating value for their customers. In other words, marketers must anticipate their customers' needs and constantly develop innovative products and services to keep their customers satisfied. Politicians have a similar orientation and are constantly trying to create value for their constituents by improving the quality of life and creating the most benefit at the lowest cost (Kotler & Kotler, 1981; 1999).

In politics, an image is created through the use of visual impressions that are communicated by the candidate's physical presence, media appearances, and experiences and record as a political leader as the information is integrated in the minds of citizens.

Market segmentation has been traditionally used by each of the political parties to choose

which groups of people they targeted suit with their appeals. Positioning is a multistage process that begins with candidates assessing both their own and their opponents' strengths and weaknesses. Positioning is the vehicle that allows candidates to convey their image to voters in the best light possible. (Newman, 1999)

The fact is that today, consultants sometimes take the center stage, and even determine the issues of a campaign. Politics has become a big, profitable business. At the level of overall strategic thinking, the candidate is involved, but when it comes to creating a campaign platform, conducting polls, and setting up a promotional strategy, very few candidates are involved. (Newman, 1999)

Paul Ricoeur in Adian (2010) reveals that politics is never free of the foundational values (economic, proletarian morality, public will or supreme goodness or ideology). There was not supposed to be a failure to understand political philosophy in distinguishing between politics (*la politique* / crime) and political (*le politique* / rational). Politics becomes political when it is understood as a polity or constitution-ruled country that guarantees geographic unity, enlightens, and welfare from and between generations. On the other hand, politics can be understood as a crime when pursuing only partial or partisan interests either institutional or non-institutional. Politics becomes a strategy to eliminate the "enemy" for the sake of one group.

According to Piliang (2003), the climate of democracy over the body of the nation lately shows an anomalous character, indicated by the attitude, behavior, and actions of political elites who increasingly lost the true meaning as a qualified human born and inner, but materialistic ideology only.

The democratic machinery that should be built by the power of thought, feeling, knowledge, and intellect is now dominated by the images, spectacle, and political theater machines on the stage of a "society of political spectacle" presenting various artificialities, banalities, and political distortions.

Blumer and Gurevitch (1975) reveal that to measure the relationship between media and political institutions in general, it can be done through: (1) the degree of state control over mass media, (2) the degree of partisan mass media, (3) the degree of integration of elite media and political elites and (4) the character of the trust system prevailing in the media organization.

The political communication machine that is expected to disseminate intelligent political ideas, knowledge and ideas is now the scene of rhetoric, parody, and virtual political reduction. As a result, the democratization process is incapable of building the architecture of a smart, ethical, and aesthetic political society because civic education has now been taken over by civic entertainment.

The pillars of the architecture of democracy are now looking more porous, not because of external forces, but due to the internal parasites of the political elite.

The symbiosis between the political machine and the media machine originally expected to strengthen the construction of democracy building, which has now become a virus that destroying the noble values of democracy itself. Robert M Entman (1989) stated that media freedom should encourage democracy by stimulating citizens' political interests through the supply of intelligent and critical information to maintain government accountability. However, the political kitsch built up in the symbiosis of the political elite and the media, has precisely led to irrational political discourse and immorality.

In the simulacra era, political advertising has taken over the puritanical morality or morality of society and replaced it with hedonistic morality which refers solely to pleasure. Worse yet, the hedonistic has been used as a barometer of hyper-civilization (hyper-civilization). Freedom and independence turned face into a system of political commodities. The image of politicians changes the face to context and importance. The image of politicians can be a representation of reality; masking reality and simultaneously replacing reality. The political communication of party elites is like a series of production and social life colonized by economic commodities and power.

This age of consumption has become a basic foundation of social order (Baudrillard, 1967). Consumer objects organize behavior through a sign function (linguistic function) in linguistics.

Freedom and independence transformed into a commodity system that is "free to be self". Hyperreality refers to the falsity of mingling with authenticity; the past mingled the present; confused facts with engineering/imaging; melting with reality; a lie collided with the truth. The categories of truth, falsehood, originality, issues, reality seem to be no longer valid in such a world. In this context, politicians often become actors who play a role in the engineering of

political symbols to gain the support of the citizens. While citizens, due to lack of awareness and political knowledge, often become the object.

Mass media and social media play an important role in the political phenomenon that is based only on symbols. Joshua Meyrowitz (Septiawan, 2000) illustrates the metaphor for media in its development of influencing the society. Through language narratives, the media serves as our interpreter in making social experiences and "ultimate signs" that provide us with various instruction and social direction.

Signs and symbols, and the elaboration of their use, are the basis of all communication of human life (Littlejohn, 1996). Studies of the relationship between language, power and ideology have been widely practiced by scientists in politics, sociology, philosophy and sociolinguistics. "Language is also a medium of domination and power" says Jurgen Habermas (1967). Research that discusses the relevance of language and ideology, according to Fairclough (1995) can not be separated from the context of language relations and power, because ideological behavior can only be observed through the practice of power.

A full-court press on political marketing seems warranted. Marketing has become a major force in American elections (Newman, 1999). Political marketing can be defined as the application of marketing principles and procedures in political campaigns by various individuals and organizations. The procedures involved include the analysis, development, execution, and management of strategic campaigns by candidates, political parties, governments, lobbyists and interest groups that seek to drive public opinion, advance their own ideologies, win elections, and pass legislation and referenda in response to the needs and wants of selected people and groups in a society. (Newman, 1999).

Vincent Mosco's (2009) says the mass media or virtual media praxis has secrets to be sued, among others, are: the elements of commodification, spatialization, and structure. Commodification is an effort made by the mass media in changing everything in order to be used as a means of generating profits.

Spatialization is an effort made by media owners to overcome distance and time, with the use of technology to maximize work in order to increase profits. The structure as a continuation of vertical integration on spatialization, which interacts in production activities in the mass media due to differences in access between

workers and owners of capital determining the power of who is influential at the time of work. It is no wonder, before governor/regional election, a lot of mass media turn into partisan media and/or political agents of certain groups according to political interests. Unfortunately, Jabar citizens do not yet have full understanding and awareness about practices of domination and hegemony of media and politics.

## Conclusion

Election of West Java Governor 2018, is a series of political process that closely related to various marketing practices or political campaign. The highly massive campaign language or political jargon performed by volunteers or campaigners is often colored with systematic attempts rhetorically to attract the attention of citizens. Mass media and or social media have a strong influence in convincing citizens of candidates for governors. And in the era of simulacra and hyperreality, political communication built will only touch the surface, just imaging the candidates, regardless of the values of morality and the nature of democracy itself.

Based on that, now is the time to build critical awareness and rationality of the citizens into the main and important capital in democracy in West Java, creating an interactive public space for the realization of a prosperous, and also a just and prosperous civil society in West Java. All social elements involved, among others: citizens, politicians, media, formal/informal community leaders, government, professional groups, youth leaders, should learn from the experience so far of how the popularity or image of figures in such a way displayed on mass media or social is manipulative biases and manipulatives by political adventurers. The practice of democracy (politics) is often a means of negotiation and lobbying of practical interest (office and business) in a small circle (political elite) alone.

In such situation, democratic praxis still tinged with fabricated jargon, delusion and falsehood by political elites, financiers and bureaucrats. On the other hand, West Java residents are no longer have adequate and valid information about candidates for governor of West Java. It causes significant changes and real political meaning (build a prosperous and peaceful civil society) are further away from the facts and expectations. Even informal leaders in West Java (outside the power and party) are no longer make an important effect because some of them are also the players inside the game.

Political discourse is no more critical and adequate as an effort to filter out the best candidate for governor. The promise and/or political jargon is nothing more than a mere series of imagery laden with aura of deceit. The eternal existence is the mere interest of the ruling group.

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