

Political participation and political communication In Bali: a study of the effects of communication in rural Indonesia

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Abstrak

ABSTRACT

The study of the effects of, communication on political participation in Bali is based on studies of a research team formed by LEKNASLIPI (the National Institute for Social and Economic Research, the Indonesian Science Institute) on the social effects of television on rural Indonesia. In the present study, political participation is regarded as a dependent variable that is studied in relationship with an independent variable of mass media. Closely related to the mass media variable is the role of opinion leaders. All these are studied in the early period of the television era in Bali. The study will investigate how mass media development influences the level of political participation. In order to explain the dependent variable more fully, some other variables that are regarded as playing important roles are also included in the study.. These variables are level of education, literacy, occupation, and economic capability.

Political participation and political communication, as they are conceived of by the present study, are two terms that are closely related. The two terms have seemingly two rather different meanings, but conceptually their meanings are overlapping. The differences of the two terms lie in their emphasis. The emphasis of political participation is on the act of participation vis-à-vis the government, whereas the emphasis of political communication is on the flow of political messages. Political communication is inherent in political participation, and there is no political participation without political communication because political participation always contains the flow of messages directed to the government in order to influence the decision-making process. Since the terms political participation and political communication play dominant roles throughout this study, they deserve some more explication, which can be found in sections 1 and 2 of this chapter, respectively.

Besides these two terms, two other subjects are dealt with in this chapter: one is the discussion on the channels of communication and the other concerns the data-collecting and data analysis of this study. Like the discussion on political participation and political communication, the analysis of the channels of communication is intended to ex-plain some communication terms used in this study. This part also deals with mass media and the opinion leadership. The last section of this chapter discusses the research methodology of this study and the way the data are analyzed.

1. Political Participation

The study of political participation has been closely related to the study of democracy in general. The basic assumption is that participation in politics is indispensable in creating a democratic political system. Even though the term has been widely used, it does not mean that scholars dealing with the term include the same set of political activities in their analysis of political participation. Some scholars include certain political

activities in their analysis of the term, some do not.