THE MEANING OF GARUDA BIRU EMERGENCY WARNING CONTENT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA X USERS

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ABSTRACT

Social media, with its wide reach and interactive features, has become a new platform for politicians, political parties and the public to engage, debate and shape public opinion. With its capabilities, social media serves as a major source of important news and discussions, allowing individuals to actively engage in public debates through posts, comments and retweets, which can influence the opinions of others. In addition to being a source of news, many users engage with political issues on social media not solely to rekindle their political engagement, but rather to support democratic participation. One frequently used platform is X (formerly Twitter). In Indonesia, X has 25 million users, which demonstrates its relevance as an information source. For example, one important issue that attracts attention on X is the "Emergency Alert", which is represented by an image of a Garuda bird on a blue background. Many interpret it as a warning to Indonesian civilians regarding unusual activities detected by the government. The researcher conducted a study that aims to analyze and interpret the meaning of "Garuda Biru Emergency Alert" among X users. This research uses theories such as political communication, public opinion, uses and gratification theory, and the concepts of meaning and social media. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on users who actively comment or retweet content on X, with the object of research being the meaning of the Garuda Biru emergency warning. Data collection was carried out by in-depth interviews and observations, which were then analyzed through the process of data reduction and presentation. The results show that the content has inferential, significant, and intentional meanings that highlight issues of democracy, public policy, and public participation in the political communication process. This research emphasizes the importance of social media in shaping public opinion and political participation while demonstrating how political communication narratives in the digital era influence public perception and actions.

Keywords: political communication, social media X, Garuda Biru emergency alert, public opinion, meaning

1. PREFACE

According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), in 2024, internet users in Indonesia reached 221 million people, with 83.1% of them accessing the internet to seek information. Social media enables people to engage in political discussions more openly and dynamically. One of the frequently used platforms is social media X, previously known as Twitter. With 25 million users in Indonesia, this platform often serves as a medium for people to express opinions, including political issues such as the viral Blue Garuda emergency warning content in 2024 (APJII, 2024)

Social media are interactive platforms on the internet that allow users to communicate, collaborate, and build social relationships virtually (Junaidi & Syaifulrahman, 2022). Social media, with its interactive characteristics, has become an important medium in political communication in the digital era. These platforms enable users not only to express opinions but also provide space for discussion, sharing, and interaction quickly and without geographical boundaries (Rafiq, 2020).

The Blue Garuda emergency warning content that went viral on social media platform X in 2024 created a wave of reactions among the public. Many viewed it as a warning symbol of a critical political situation, while others understood it as a form of social mobilization reflecting dissatisfaction with government policies. Social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, became the primary platform for people to spread and discuss this issue. Through social media, political communication became more open and interactive, where people could directly engage in political discourse. Political communication plays an important role in delivering political messages aimed at shaping public opinion, creating political images, and driving public participation in relevant issues (Utami, 2022).

Political communication is a process and series of activities that shape political attitudes and behaviors, integrated into a political system through the use of meaningful symbols that play a crucial role in delivering messages to the public (Adeni & Harahap, 2017). Nevertheless, regardless of the motives behind society's use of social media as a form of democratic participation, it is undeniable that social media has significantly influenced the formation of public opinion, which in turn shapes political knowledge and understanding of political issues (Zempi et al., 2023). In the context of the Blue Garuda emergency warning content, social media X played a crucial role in spreading information and facilitating political participation.

The use of symbols like Blue Garuda exemplifies how political symbolism can be interpreted differently by social media users. Some users view it as a protest against public policies deemed unfair, while others see it as a tool for mobilizing public awareness and political engagement (Adeni & Harahap, 2017). This viral content also demonstrates how the uses and gratification theory functions in political communication. This theory explains that the audience plays a determining role in media selection. Audiences are seen as actively utilizing media to fulfill their needs (Hanif, 2018). The meaning of messages like "Blue Garuda Emergency Warning" involves relationships between language elements, not just their literal meaning. According to Ferdinand de Saussure's theory, meaning consists of what is meant *(signified)* and what gives meaning *(signifier)* (Nafinuddin, 2020). Brodbeck divides meaning into three categories: Inferential, Significant, and Intentional (Hartini, 2018). Inferential meaning, where "Blue Garuda" can refer to various concepts such as threats; significance meaning, which links this warning to other political issues; and intentional meaning, which is influenced by each user's subjective understanding. This is relevant in understanding how the Blue Garuda symbol, interpreted as a powerful political symbol, can influence public views.

Figure 1
Blue Garuda Emergency Warning Content

Therefore, this research aims to explore how the spread of Blue Garuda emergency warning content on social media X shapes public understanding and perception of the political situation in Indonesia. Additionally, this research will identify factors that influence public engagement and participation in political discussions on social media, and how the distribution of this content can effectively mobilize public opinion.

2.   RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach, which enables researchers to better understand and analyze audience participation regarding the Blue Garuda emergency warning content on social media platform X. According to Sutopo & Arief, qualitative research describes and analyzes phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts of informants both individually and in groups. Qualitative research involves planned activities to interpret informants by describing, revealing, and explaining (Pahleviannur et al., 2022).

The research method used is the case study method, which according to Robert K. Yin can be widely applied in social research or other fields. The main characteristics of this case study are its focus on single or multiple cases studied in real life, ability to explain causal relationships by developing theories in the research design phase that rely on evidence sources, and generation of theoretical generalizations (Nur'aini, 2020). This research's case study method focuses on an in-depth analysis of the Blue Garuda emergency warning content that emerged on social media platform X. Additionally, this research examines the warning's impact on political communication, focusing on how this content could mobilize public opinion or specific actions, and how this warning influenced social media users, not only in information dissemination but also in shaping political perceptions and actions.

The research subjects are people who actively participated in commenting and retweeting content posts on social media X. Meanwhile, the research object is the meaning generated from the Blue Garuda emergency warning content and how this content is understood and interpreted by social media X users. The data collection method uses primary data techniques. To obtain primary data, researchers use interview techniques. By preparing interview designs, researchers will be facilitated in obtaining more accurate and reliable information/data so they can understand the conditions, phenomena, research context being studied, and can deepen

information on unknown matters. Researchers also use secondary data techniques through documentation, which involves collecting data in visual form (Fiantika et al., 2022).

The qualitative data analysis in this research adopts an interactive and continuous approach. The obtained data will go through reduction, presentation, and conclusion-drawing processes. To analyze data, researchers will use content analysis techniques to identify main themes and sentiment analysis to measure positive and negative sentiments.

3.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The phenomenon of this emergency warning post appeared and went viral on various social media, especially social media X, amidst the efforts of the DPR and the government to annul the decision of the Constitutional Court (MK) which changed the threshold for regional head candidacy requirements.

From this problem, the phenomenon of the image of the Garuda Bird on a blue background with the words "Emergency Warning" has been circulating on social media X (Twitter) since Wednesday, August 21, 2024. Initially this emergency warning was posted by the collaborative accounts @najwashihab, @matanajwa, and @narasitv on Instagram. The post even became a trending topic and received 40,000 tweets on social media X. The "Emergency Warning" post on X social media expanded and could not be separated from the role of several artists and musicians in the country who paid attention to this political issue.

The Emergency Alert post aims to disseminate protests against the House of Representatives' decision to ignore the Constitutional Court's ruling on regional head nomination requirements, as well as to raise public awareness about political issues, particularly related to the revision of the Pilkada Law and the controversial Constitutional Court decision. With the various symbols presented, this upload creates a strong emotional and intellectual connection. Symbols such as the garuda bird symbol, blue, glitch effects, and the words "Emergency Warning".

The image of a garuda on a blue background with the words "Emergency Warning" circulating is a screenshot of a fictitious horror video by EAS Indonesia Concept, titled "EAS Indonesia Concept (24/10/1991), ANM-021 (Mesem) - First Encounter." EAS is a national emergency alert system owned by the United States and used to deliver urgent messages via television and radio. This "Emergency Alert" video was posted on October 24, 2022. EAS Indonesia Concept is a YouTube channel that creates videos with the theme of The Emergency Alert System (EAS), but the Indonesian version.

Social media is an online medium that can transform communication into an interactive dialog (Rafiq, 2020). Platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook have changed the way politics is communicated, enabling greater public participation and strengthening democracy. Political communication can also be the art of designing what is possible (art of possible) and even what is impossible (art of impossible) (Utami, 2022). The presence of modernization in the political communication space opens new opportunities with the ease of expanding campaigns, mobilization, and information gathering (Poulakidakos & Veneti, 2016). Social media has successfully triggered the political awareness of its users in daily practice. Therefore, social

media is believed to display political expression in a more accessible, more vibrant, and fun format (Zúñiga et al., 2014).

Social media X used to be known as Twitter. With X, users can be more responsive and think about political issues with a broader perspective. As such, they have the ability to develop diverse views and insights and are not limited to a single perspective. This is why X is considered so important, not only because it provides quick political information, but also because it is a platform that provides insights and perspectives to respond to political issues (Purwanti et al., 2024). As explained by Dan Nimmo, the mechanistic communication process in political communication is when political communicators use political media to convey political messages to political audiences. Therefore, there will be political feedback or effects, such as public opinion, in the form of support, rejection, or hesitation (Utami, 2022).
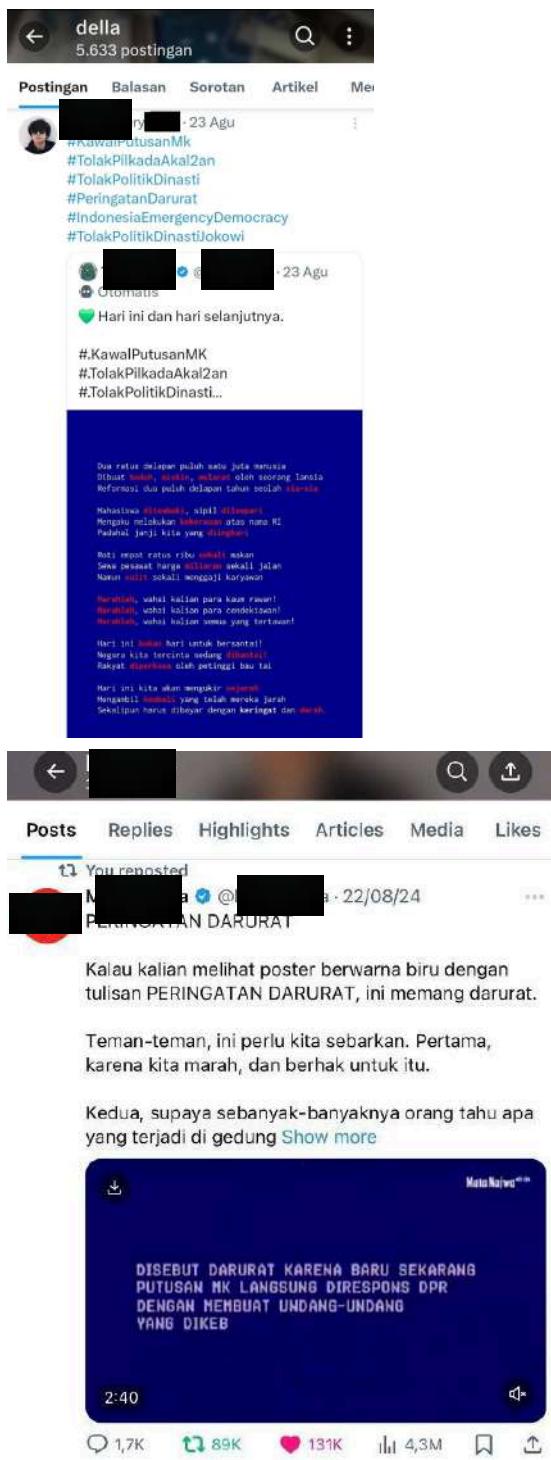
The international artist eaJ Park also participated by retweeting the emergency warning post. In his post, he wrote, "I realize I might be risking opportunities in a place I love, with people I love, but it's impossible to stay silent when my peers are fighting to raise awareness. Please take a moment to read this and stay safe out there." eaJ utilized X and its reach to inform the public about the political issues occurring in Indonesia. In his post, eaJ also elaborated on the issue and the emergency warning in English, ensuring that the global audience could understand the political conditions and issues Indonesia was facing at the time. Here, the intentionality of his message is strikingly clear, as eaJ conveyed it with a specific purpose, without requiring deep or complex symbolic interpretation.

After conducting observations on the social media platform X, the researchers conducted interviews with three individuals who had retweeted the Blue Garuda emergency warning content. The first respondent, DA, is a 21-year-old Communication Science student from Tarumanagara University, class of 2021. She is an active user of the social media platform X for various personal and academic purposes. Additionally, she has a keen interest in political and social issues, which motivates her to frequently monitor hashtags and discussions on these topics on social media.

The second respondent, FK, is a 21-year-old seventh-semester student currently busy working on her final project at university. Aside from her academic activities, she is an active user of X, accessing the platform daily for purposes such as seeking information, following trends, and interacting with friends or communities. The third respondent, VS, is a political communication lecturer who actively uses social media, especially X, to stay connected with current trends and issues. By monitoring popular hashtags, she keeps up with trending discussions in the public sphere and utilizes them as references for classroom discussions and academic research.

Based on the results of the analysis from interviews with sources and observations of social media user X's retweets related to the content of the Garuda Biru Emergency Warning post, it can be explained using inferential meaning, significant meaning, and intentional meaning proposed by Brodbeck (Pratama, 2022). The following are the retweets of 2 sources of social media users X

Figure 2
First and Second Resource Persons' Re-Tweets

Brodbeck explains inferential meaning, namely the meaning (symbol) is the object, thought, idea, concept that the symbol shows (referred to as a reference or referent). One symbol can indicate many referents. This is the implied or hidden meaning, which is not immediately visible, but can be captured if we read deeper or understand the context. From the content of this Garuda

Biru Emergency Warning, the inferential meaning involves the use of symbols contained in the content, such as the visual elements displayed such as, the use of the Garuda Pancasila bird emblem which represents the sovereignty of the country that is being threatened, the blue color which implies disturbed stability, and the glitch effect which indicates a system that is in error, or not running as it should, X social media users tend to interpret this emergency warning as a criticism of national issues that threaten justice and democracy.

As explained by the second informant. The inferential meaning in the content of "Emergency Warning" uses visuals and symbols that have a message to imply an urgent and serious impression, about something that is erroneous or unstable.

> *"... those symbols might be used to create a sense of urgency and seriousness, right? The Garuda symbolizes the nation, while the blue color represents security. Visual glitches usually give off the impression that something is wrong, like an error or instability. The sirens add an urgency effect, signaling a threat that must be addressed immediately. Meanwhile, the use of the term 'emergency warning' probably aims to grab attention and make people aware of the critical situation related to the political process taking place at the time." (second resource person)*

The significant meaning proposed by Brodbeck, is that a term is connected to other concepts. This is a meaning related to the function or role of the elements or symbols in the message. In the content of the Garuda Biru Emergency Warning, it can be seen in the perception of X social media users of the symbols used. As expert sources argue that the intent and message in this Emergency Alert post is very important for upright and transparent democracy.

> *"...that message is incredibly important for ensuring that democracy remains upright and transparent in the future. This message holds significant value for the public, especially for netizens in Indonesia. It was proven when the Blue Garuda post went viral across all social media platforms, particularly on X, where it trended and successfully raised public awareness." (expert resource person)*

Furthermore, Brodbeck also explained, intentional meaning is the meaning intended by someone using a symbol. The meaning intended by the content disseminator can be realized through messages that are deliberately designed to attract the attention of a wide audience. The symbols and visuals used warn of threats to democracy, invite the public to be vigilant and actively participate, and raise awareness of the importance of overseeing the political process. For example, the first source posted an emergency alert to highlight important issues related to national interests and raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding Indonesia's democracy. Meanwhile, the second speaker aims to invite the public to actively monitor the 2024 elections.

> *"I felt the need to post the Blue Garuda emergency warning because it highlights various crucial issues related to democracy and the rule of law in Indonesia, including the revision of the Regional Election Law and the controversies and ambiguities surrounding several Constitutional Court decisions…" (first resource person).*

> *"The primary goal of the Blue Garuda emergency warning was to encourage public awareness and active involvement in monitoring the 2024 Regional Elections. The post also served as a reminder for the public to stay vigilant against potential violations or manipulations, especially following the Constitutional Court's decisions, so that justice could be upheld during the political process at that time." (second resource person).*

This research explains the content of the "Garuda Biru Emergency Warning" which aims to raise public awareness and encourage active participation in safeguarding the democratic process. This can be observed through the delivery of massage with inferential, significant, and intentional meaning, conveyed through strong symbols, visual, and narrative, as well as the dissemination. This phenomenon shows that the use of national symbols can shape successful political communication.

4.   CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The "Garuda Biru Emergency Warning" phenomenon on social media platform X has captured public attention and mobilized audience opinions on issues of democracy in Indonesia. Based on interviews and visual content analysis, it can be concluded that this content carries strong symbolic meanings and successfully raises public awareness, especially among social media users. Symbols such as the Garuda emblem, the color blue, and glitch effects not only attract visual attention but also convey messages of patriotism, stability, and the urgency of the situation.

The Garuda emblem clearly represents unity and nationalism, while the color blue symbolizes calmness and stability amidst threats to democracy posed by controversial decisions. The added glitch effect introduces a sense of tension and urgency, further reinforcing the message of "Emergency Warning" as a call for the public to remain vigilant. This narrative effectively shapes the views of social media users on Platform X, evokes emotional responses, and encourages audiences to observe political issues, particularly decisions that could impact Indonesian democracy.

Findings from this study reveal that social media platform X serves as a highly effective channel for delivering meaningful political communication messages and influencing public opinion. The "Garuda Biru Emergency Warning" provides an opportunity for the public to engage with political issues in a more personal and interactive manner. Through its use of symbols, the content demonstrates that political communication via social media has the capacity to raise public awareness and act as a powerful tool for mass mobilization. Strong messages, supported by compelling visuals, prompt the public to respond critically to their political environment and take more informed actions.

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