

The Dark Side of Communication Studies in Higher Education of Indonesia

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Abstract

This paper revisits the academic culture of Communication studies in Indonesia, which has been stagnant since the political tragedy of 1998 to 2021. The autocratic political system of the New Order, on the one hand, and the liberalization of education, on the other, have triggered it, resulting in the phenomenon of 'dark academia'. This paper wants to address this research question: how is the portrait of communication studies in Indonesia during the last decade? Data were extracted from the collaborative research findings using qualitative methods, organized by the Central Committee of ASPIKOM for the period 2019-2022. The data primarily are generated from the profiles of Communication study program filled out by the ASPIKOM members, as well as from the unstructured interviews and analysis of government policies. This paper finds stagnation in the discipline of Communication studies, particularly the domination of these three special disciplines: Communication science, Public Relations, and Journalism. A combination of bureaucracies in higher education and the global-digital scale of knowledge capitalism hindered academic autonomy and knowledge production within communication scholars.

Keywords: ASPIKOM; Communication Science; Digital Revolution; Market Power; Predatory Bureaucracy

Abstrak

Paper ini mengulas kembali situasi akademik Ilmu Komunikasi di Indonesia yang mengalami stagnasi pasca tragedi politik 1998 hingga 2021. Sistem politik otoriter era Orde Baru di satu sisi dan kebijakan liberalisasi pendidikan di sisi lain menjadi pemicunya, yang melahirkan fenomena 'dark academia'. Paper ini ingin menjawab pertanyaan riset bagaimana potret kajian Ilmu Komunikasi di Indonesia dalam satu dekade terakhir. Data berasal dari temuan riset kolaboratif dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif yang digelar Pengurus Pusat ASPIKOM periode 2019-2022. Data berasal dari formulir profil program studi Ilmu Komunikasi yang diisi anggota ASPIKOM, wawancara tidak terstruktur dan analisis atas dokumen kebijakan pemerintah, dll. Paper ini menemukan stagnasi kajian Ilmu Komunikasi, terutama kajian telah didominasi oleh hanya tiga sektor: Ilmu Komunikasi, Public Relations dan Jurnalistik. Terdapat problem birokrasi yang predatorial dan relasi kuasa pasar transnasional pasca revolusi digital yang menghambat produksi pengetahuan dan otonomi akademis.

Kata Kunci: ASPIKOM; Ilmu Komunikasi; Revolusi Digital; Kuasa Pasar; Birokrasi Predatorial

Introduction

A book called *Dark Academia: How University Die* (2021) has ignited the discourse on the future of academia and science in a university that is corporatized and exposed to a bureaucratic culture. The author, Peter Fleming, based on his observations on the condition of universities in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia, mentioned the emergence of 'dark academia'. Dark academia refers to a black market-like condition in the academic world, where academics work as laborers, experiencing exploitation by corporations, not autonomous intellectuals. The academic stagnation of knowledge production occurs as a result of the university's management model that refers to its function as Edufactory, not public service institution.

There have been at least four important momentums in the last five years in the Communication studies in Indonesia. First, the splendor of the digital media industry initiated a profession called content creator, another term for user-generated content, which is popular in the digital media production. Second, the implementation of government policies under the control of the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim named: *merdeka belajar kampus merdeka* (MBKM) (freedom of learn, freedom of university management) (Prahani, et al., 2020). The first momentum is related to the dynamics of the global-scale media market (market-driven), for example, with the emergence of big data research traditions, etc. The second momentum has a government-driven pattern with a political-bureaucratic approach. The third momentum is the massive growth of Communication study program. The Department of Communication studies has become one of the most favorite choice among students; therefore, the number of universities that manage this department is increasing. ASPIKOM (2021) shows number of Communication study programs has reached 650 units, spread throughout Indonesia, including public/government and private universities.

Fourth, two national-scale organizations in the field of Communication, namely the Association of Indonesian Communication Graduates (ISKI) and the Association of Higher Education Communication programs (ASPIKOM), showed a more active position than in the previous ten years. Both actively offer various activities and "government policy adjustment" to their members. Viewed from their program and management, the two organizations have become a space for inter-institutional collaboration, the discursive point of academic contestation, scientific dissemination, and the desire for activities that accelerate its members to be in line with government policies. Conferences on a national and international scale are actively organized, although the events mostly address a developmentalism approaches, not critical approaches.

In the four situations above, Communication academia have to save their traditional duties to update their skill in Communication teaching, to remember the significance of academic autonomy, and innovation of knowledge in the field of communication. Yet, locality-based study ideas (Antoni et al., 2019; Hair, 2020; Masduki, 2015; Nazaruddin & Ningsih, 2018) against the dominance of the scientific Communication tradition with a Western background such as Europe and America has not yet become a collective discourse, even in the two national associations mentioned above. This idea arose amid the passion of adapting government policies with an administrative standard. Discourse on de-westernization in Communication science is still marginal, and it only complements annual conferences or annual meetings, even it serves as an informal discussion topic. On the other hand, the jargon of

“internationalization” which means Americanization of universities is actually getting stronger, for example, the competition to get the status of the world’s best university according to Webometrics.

One of the consequences or triggers of the above condition is the stagnation of Communication studies which will be discussed in this paper. This paper answers two questions. First, what is the general portrait of Communication studies in Indonesia after the digital revolution? Second, why does the stagnation occur from an economic-political perspective? This paper is part of a research supported by ASPIKOM Central Board in 2021, and is republished so that it can be consumed by public.

Historically, since its founding in the 1950s, academics and decision-makers in the Communications colleges have been exposed to many things. Politically, the power of the New Order authoritarian regime was very strong in gripping their academic culture through the jargon of *developmentism* with communication as its apparatus. After the Suharto regime fell in 1988, it gradually transformed where all the legacy of Suharto’s autocratic educational policies was resisted, and a new climate of democratization of communication based on the logic of market competition became a new spirit of study. Along with the mainstream thought that refers to the ideology of developmentalism, an adaptation and accommodation of liberalistic media system and communication market forces has taken place as well as the adoption of *cross-economic-political* and *culture studies* approaches that are critical in the curriculum.

There are two main poles of thought in the communication science tradition in Indonesia: (1) technocratic positivism: communication science follows market logic, and its graduates become job seekers in a global-scale job market. Following this tradition, the popular programs are Communication studies, Journalism, Media Management, Public Relations, etc. Their performance indicators are considered pragmatic: graduates are accepted into the professional job market over a certain period of time. (2) critical perspective where position of Communication science is constructive in nature, to oppose the trend of media and communication capitalization. In this perspective, the study program must produce scientists capable of sharp analytical thinking, encouraging studies that are adaptive to the dimensions of media locality. This group emerged the discourse of de-westernization, interdisciplinary media studies, etc.

Recent study of Rosser (2022) regarding university governance in Indonesia finds that internal conflicts in several Indonesian universities are caused by three interrelated factors: the university liberalization policy, predatory bureaucracies, and marginalization of the ideal role of universities as innovators of knowledge. First, similar to what Peter Fleming said, neoliberalism policies are characterized by an orientation toward university ranking which are measured by various supranational bodies such as the World Bank. Lecturer performance is measured by publication statistics, citations, and rankings carried out by corporate institutions, not by their social recognition to their local community. The second driving factor of university crisis is bureaucratic climate as the legacy of the New Order political regime, politicization of its management, corruption, etc. Rosser sees the idealis thought of both policymakers and academics to maintain the social relevance of universities to general public as ‘rest in paper’.

In line with Rosser, previous studies have seen external factors, such as autocratic politics that positioned Communication science as an apparatus of *developmentism*, (Adiprasetyo, 2019; Haryanto, 2001). Government dominates higher education policy

and its operational. On the other hand, the historical scholarship of communication rooted in/from the United States with a capitalistic ideology and a positivistic way of thinking is also influential. To date, the academic views of the United States based communications industry with the characteristics of open competition, rating system, etc., has become a key source for the development of media system in Indonesia, which then affects how the Communication studies of Indonesia corresponds.

Referring to the propaganda model developed by Herman dan Chomsky (1988), there are five filters why public institutions, especially the media, constantly function as propagandists for elite groups in the structure of capitalist society. (1) a concentrated ownership structure and the orientation of corporate profits on capital accumulation; (2) the dominance of advertising or government cooperation as the main source of media revenue; (3) journalists' dependence on available information on government, business, and elite-funded "experts"; (4) "criticism" as a means of disciplining the media, and (5) "anti-communism" as a mindset and control system. The five interact and support each other. Communication studies (public relations, journalism, etc.) can be considered as a public interest product. In this case, the application of propaganda model helps us to read its political and economic situation. Two powerful forces: politics and profit interest are the filters for both orientation and governance of communication institutions. Just like journalists, communication academics are trapped in the darkness of life: their academic life depends on what government want to do, not public.

The propaganda concept above is relevant in this paper, especially referring to the first and second filters. The first filter is the ownership of universities in Indonesia that is still under direct control or dependent on government authorities, not autonomous as in developed countries. Ministry of Education is the sole regulator that controls higher education (policy, finance, infrastructure). The second filter is the university orientation to be a corporate model, not social institutions. The dependence of university funding on student registration payment spoils them from internal financing innovation efforts. This second filter may also include regular subsidies for research or institutional innovation from competitive grants provided solely by the government.

Both Herman and Chomsky and Fleming and Rosser base their arguments on the concept of information or science as a public good in developing countries. In capitalist countries, commodifying public good, and turning it into consumer good. Like media institutions, universities are corporatist institutions that produce resource in the form of knowledge to be traded competitively. The difference between media institutions and universities lies in the bureaucratization of universities, which is not found in media institutions. The bureaucratization of universities is typical in Indonesia. It is a legacy of the authoritarian New Order era of indonesia, where university is the implementing units of educational ministries, not an independent academic unit.

In short, two macro factors that affect the academic condition of Communication are: (1) liberalization, which is refined into internationalization in which higher education governance follows the logic of open competition, indexation of academic achievement and is supported by market dynamics, or adopting the practice of 'knowledge capitalization', (2) and paternalization of governance bureaucratization through academic and non-academic subordination as well as the mobility of academia to become university bureaucrats or academic bureaucrats in various governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education.

Studies related to the corporatization and bureaucratization of universities, especially those that focus on stagnation in the Communication studies in Indonesia,

have not been widely carried out. Many studies have focused on communication as an approach to looking at various sectoral issues, such as marketing communication models for women's empowerment (Kancana, et al., 2016) or digital literacy models and social media (Sultan & Istiyanto, 2019). There are quite a lot of historical studies of political economy related to the orientation of the study of Communication science. For example, the study of Haryanto, Adiprasetyo, etc. A study on the de-westernization of Communication has also been written (Birowo, 2007; Rahardjo, 2009; Utari et al., 2012) etc. However, these studies generally focus on the power relations of universities with outside authorities such as the government and industry. Studies that further examine the ongoing power relation with strong emphasis to the university's internal governance have not been widely carried out. Moving on from this problem, this paper provides empirical data with a macro-structural analysis. It also reviews the phenomenon of communication study stagnation from the perspective of digital culture.

Method

This study uses a qualitative method. It intends to portrait the trend of communication studies in Indonesia that serves a performance evaluation as well as self-criticism on the role of associations related to Communication studies in Indonesia. It also expected as a 'red sign' for university policymakers concerned about the knowledge policy reform. The research questions in this paper are: what is the portrait of Communication studies in Indonesia? What are the factors that cause/drive this trend?

In collecting data, the author organized three steps: First, to distribute questionnaire about the profile of the Communication study program using a google form. The questionnaire was distributed to all ASPIKOM members from July 2021 to January 2022. The data was then analyzed using an interactive method. This step collected about 70 filled out questionnaires, spread from Sumatra to Sulawesi. This figure, of course, does not represent the overall portrait of the Communication study program in Indonesia, but it is sufficient to describe the prevailing general trend.

Second, the author conducts interviews with several executives of Communication studies programs. Third, the author collects relevant documents: government policies, guidelines for developing a Communications curriculum, as well as reports from related associations such as ASPIKOM, ISKI, etc. As a part of group research, the author and all other research members distributed questionnaires to ASPIKOM members, conducted unstructured interviews with informants to see macro-economic context and background of the data findings, and finally collected relevant documents.

Results and Discussion

This section overall explores three issues. The first issue is a map of study program in Communication science of Indonesian universities. This issue will also reveal the choice of nomenclature in Communications department/study program. It also indicates the faculty name as an umbrella institution for the management of the study program, which is assumed to influence the perspective, academic approach, and governance of the Communications study program/department. The second issue is a description of causal factors in terms of political economy, especially the power relationship between the Communications study program and authorities of the political education policyholder in Indonesia. Lastly, the third issue is a discussion about internal factors and power relations of key interest groups in the department/study program management that affect both governance, orientation and status of the studies.

Communication Studies Specialization

This study finds three interesting trends in the choice of study programs/departments and faculties that house communication science in Indonesia. The three dominant trends of studies are: Communication science (holistic in nature), Journalism, and Public Relations. Of the three, public relations received the highest position, followed by the study of communication (in general). Outside the three, which are critical or integrative with other disciplines, seems marginal or only a minority. This data confirmed the old critique of Sudibyo (2004), on the absent of academic criticism, political economic perspective in the communication discipline. Interestingly, the guideline of Communication science learning achievements made by ASPIKOM (2021) appears to accommodate this trend. In this sense, the goal of addressing 'nationalist' alumni are at the top, while communicators who conform to social norms are at the bottom.

This study finds that the most common nomenclature of communication studies is Communication science. It shows a static condition of academic development. The focus of the study remains macro, and there is no micro-specialization of the study. Some universities offer more specific study programs such as Public Relations, Journalism, etc. However, this nomenclature is marginal and can only happen if Communication studies becomes a separate faculty, which is still small in number. Moreover, this study finds an organizational correlation between choices of studies and the name or field of science at the faculty as their big umbrella. This research particularly found a decrease in the number of the old Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) as the 'common house' of many Communication study program. For example, at the State Islamic University (UIN), the science and humanities faculty become the new organization in charge of communication. Meanwhile, at several public or private universities outside UIN, the Communication studies study program is under the umbrella of newly and various faculties which are not limited to social and political science disciplines (FISIP). For example, faculty of social sciences and business/economics, faculty of law, etc.

Observing the general trend illustrated above, it can be seen that the approach used by communication department is mono-disciplined or focuses solely on communication science. Interest of studies as across disciplines, especially interdisciplinary ones, is not common. When compared with the historical conditions before the 1998 political reform, it appears that studies in Communication did not significantly moved. In the New Order era, with higher education as a supporter of *developmentism*, the three popular disciplines already exist (Mulyana, 2010). After 1998 reform, university managers innovated only on the dimension of curriculum or particular courses, not study programs as a whole. This choice was perhaps made to adjust the remaining popularity the three disciplines in the public as consumers, not referring to the science innovation. The term popularity in the public's mind is the main argument for maintaining the classic nomenclature. The idea to adopt new study interests that are more micro and popular in international forums such as the ICA or IAMCR in Indonesia remain controversial.

The findings above also confirmed the results of previous research by Ningrum and Adiprasetyo (2021); Rahardjo (2012), that by Communication academics, this science is only considered as a study whose scientific organizers have an orientation to produce graduates (alumni) who are quickly absorbed by the industrial market. Since 2000 to date, Communication science tended to side with the market and became the 'good boy' of the digital media and information industry, whose business octopus

exploded after the fall of the New Order regime, rather than being a social science with a strict epistemological study. Communication Science is a provider of trained workers in various fields of information and mass media industry, such as Public Relations practitioners, Marketing Communication officers, Journalists, Advertising professionals, etc. The following table summarizes the research findings illustrated above.

Table 1. Trends of Communication Studies in Indonesia

No	Study program	Nomenclature	Faculty
1	Communication science	Communication science (56 of 70 study programs)	FISIPOL (28 of 70 study programs)
2	Public Relations	Public Relations	FISHUM (Faculty of Social Science and Humanities)
3	Journalism	Journalism	Faculty of Communication, Literature and Culture
4	Corporate Communication	Corporate Communication	Faculty of Communication
5	Advertising	Advertising	Faculty of Law and Social
6	Media Studies	Media Studies	Faculty of Communication and Languages

(Source: extracted from various documents)

Table 1 illustrates the dominance discipline chosen by most Communication scholars in Indonesia: Communication science, Public Relations, and Journalism. The same happened to the choice of study program nomenclature. Of faculty as its umbrella, there is a shift leading to strengthen the direction of Communication as a business science. This structure axiologically supports industrial growth, not social life in general. The tendency to place the Department of Communication under FISIP has begun to be balanced with a new mindset of placing this scientific department under the business faculty. Referring to the knowledge cluster, there is a tendency to blur communication science positions in-between social sciences, arts and humanities, etc. In the midst of the impasse of study interest and marketization efforts above, interest in studies with a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary, such as media and cultural studies at Universitas Gadjah Mada, for example, still looks marginal.

Predatory Bureaucracy

Government intervention is the most common tradition in Indonesia's political history of higher education. The mono-disciplined and static portrait of interest in the study of Communication above cannot be separated from the structural problems faced by academics and managers of higher education. In line with the ongoing centralization of education policy, government intervention is still very strong, through various means such as determining the instrument for accreditation of study programs, promotion of lecturers, academic productivity, etc. State intervention in the name of the public's right to obtain the best education services is acceptable. However, this policy becomes a blunder if it is permanent, becomes the sole measure of academic performance, creates dependence, and triggers the transfer of academic bureaucratization.

As an illustration, following the implementation of top-down *MBKM*, the principle of autonomy for higher education, and academic freedom to produce people with a

mindset independent of the market and state infiltration, has the potential to be neglected. It is because there is a uniform approach to activities in *MBKM* with a developmental or pro-industrial character. This *MBKM* policy is in line with the tradition of government intervention in curriculum management as the heart of education (Prahani et al., 2020). On the other hand, the policy followed by 'joy' illustrates the still strong paternalism in academic governance in Indonesia. The unequal relations of universities and government place the government as the 'father', and universities are children who are loyal to orders. How this project affects science's productivity? No clear answer. Yet, a threat that will arise and needs to be watched out for is that this *MBKM* is only an ad hoc program, valid for a particular ministry period (Situmorang, 2022).

The government's intervention is changing. In the New Order era, it was carried out systemically from determining the competence of graduates to the leadership structure of universities and academic elites. Since 1998 until now, the government has entered through grant funding and final review or accreditation of higher education to maintain its quality. This intervention tradition gains legitimacy because, following Herman and Chomsky, the Ministry of Education is the 'owner' who determines the life and death of higher education institutions, especially public universities. The government is also the party with the most unlimited funding resources when it is difficult for campuses to find their own funds. The legality of ownership by the government of this university can be seen in the small number of state universities with legal entity status.

Referring to Rakhmani and Siregar (2016), university governance reforms took place in response to regional market demands, but academic bureaucratization, such as administrative research reporting, delayed this process. The bureaucratization process is found at the macro level of research funding policies, etc., quality assurance to the work patterns of individual researchers, which prioritize administrative reports rather than substantive ones. The dominance of civil servants in academic work status at state universities with compliance with the State Civil Service Law makes them think of bureaucrats, not scientists. The factor of the majority of doctoral graduates from within the country also opens a tradition of stronger domestic academic collaboration rather than the performance of academic collaboration. The controversy of establishing the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) in early 2022 seems to align with the facts and new threats to re-centralization and academic bureaucratization.

Another structural factor that causes the stagnation of communication studies is the two climates that Fleming calls the authoritarian turn and the academic star syndrome. Communication lecturers who have earned a doctorate degree after returning to campus do not get adequate places to develop their study interest or research roadmaps because of their obligation to manage campus bureaucracy. Bureaucratic jobs such as Dean, Head of Department hindered the opportunity to build a scientific competence, manage research interests, and intensive journal publications. Culturally, the academic environment of doctoral education in Indonesia, which is a 'hodgepodge' between creating scientists and providing oneself as a producer of degrees or steppingstones for campus bureaucratic officials or other vertical mobility makes the profile of domestic doctorate graduates more measured by their success in occupying structural positions. The glorification of doctoral alumni from Communication science who were successfully elected as high-ranking officials on their universities strengthens this argument.

The phenomenon of social media presence for academia in Indonesia with artificial status has become a popular characteristic after the digital boom. This phenomenon is a continuation of the 'academic popularity competition' to be invited/present on television to provide a short public opinion as a personal branding strategy. Within this framework, academics are required to adapt to the culture of the talk show screen, which emphasizes aspects of appearance, speech intonation, etc., rather than the substance of the ideas conveyed. The trend of *academic star syndrome* is also manifested in the tradition of lecturer mobility for comparative studies abroad, looking for consultancy work off-campus, working on government projects, etc.

This autocratic turn has also spread to professional associations and communication institutions. This situation is a direct risk from the government's systemic control to the associations that oversee the work of study program. This organization is trapped in the role of catalyst, and translator of government policies, considering that the government is the sole regulator of study programs through the authority of accreditation, lecturer certification, university grant funding, etc. The independence of the association has not yet been created, because the awareness of professional organizations is still based on the need for political negotiations rather than strengthening scientific and academic autonomy. Both ISKI and ASPIKOM are competing to establish power relations with the government within the framework of pragmatism. Although there has been no comprehensive research on lecturers' non-academic performance burdens, However, the informants of this study admit that the academic and non-academic bureaucratization that is their burden reduces and even diverts their main task as producers of knowledge. Digital data on the number of publications by lecturers in the Communication department in Indonesia are still few in reputable journals. The weakening of the idea of developing a cross-disciplinary school of communication concept in Indonesia is early evidence of the erosion of work patterns from scientists to bureaucrats.

Referring to Herman and Chomsky (1988) about the five filters that affect the media and realizing that this concept is analogous to the choice of interest in the study of Communication, there is an alignment of objective conditions. The government factor as the 'owner' of state higher education which manages hundreds of Communication Studies majors, the government as a provider of funds, and the dominance of capitalistic ideology in the practice of production, distribution, and market expansion make interest in Communication studies not rejuvenated. In the post-New Order regime, the power of ownership and capital determinants of communication higher education has been divided between the government and the capitalistic communication industry, which is oriented to the capitalization of knowledge and all its derivative activities. The neoliberalism of higher education has become the only school of higher education development, but with a bureaucratic work pattern as its supporting instrument.

Transnational Market Power

This study emphasizes the old mindset of structural functionalism that teaches university as an instrument for creating technocratic human beings. The curriculum is designed so that students can master a number of technical personnel competencies. This logic can be traced to the dominance of practical courses, using theory-practice tutorials, or involving practitioners as main teachers in Communication courses. A new tradition of big data-based research skills as a special unit of study, selection of new

students considering the ability to manage *followers*, etc., the use of digital media in general in the learning process aligns with this mindset. The ambition to seize the global market and dominate the digital economy is the main mantra. However, in this discourse, global digital corporates such as Facebook, Google and/or YouTube are the primary references, dwarfing local Indonesian corporations. Collaboration or obtaining research grants from various global corporations tends to be a new indicator of performance.

After the digital disruption, in addition to the change in higher education governance towards digital total services, global digital corporate power has also emerged due to Indonesia's unprepared national technology industry. Google, Facebook, and now Zoom are building local infrastructure and networks, managing a climate of dependence on service innovations that are continuously provided, and filtering changes to the college curriculum to align with the job market they need. Systematically, they subdue alternative ideas for the 'localization' of digital learning technologies. Gaits of global-scale technology giants such as Google, Facebook, YouTube, etc., in digital literacy campaigns or the establishment of fact-checking units in cyber media in addition to helping strengthen public awareness of the dangers of information technology are also an entry point for transnationalization and the dependency agenda on global digital technology products in Indonesia. The ideological agenda of de-Americanization or glocalization in the digital technology sector is strongly being avoided.

This transnational market power affects the mindset of university management and accelerates the idea of an entrepreneurial university, avoiding research-based universities. In the entrepreneurial framework, Communication Science is designed as a product that continues to experience service innovation, not the substance of study. It will be validated with accreditation that refers to Study Programs with entrepreneurship schools, asked to open distance classes, branch campuses so that they continue to reap more student potential. Following Schumpeter (1934), campuses are busy thinking about how to make financial gains, maintain a reputation in the public's psychological mind, or forge business alliances and technology adoption.

There is an academic capitalism (Jessop, 2018), a term refers to the notion of the 'knowledge-based economy', which requires teaching and research in line with the creation of human beings as industrial assets, supporting the labor economic system, providing communication infrastructure for the accumulation of financial benefits. Knowledge-based economics encourages students and teachers to become entrepreneurs with knowledge as their product (enterprising bearers of intellectual capital). The massive financial crisis in the 1990s to 2000s justified adoption of liberalization of communication knowledge and infrastructure to support the rehabilitation of economic crisis, not to keep social harmony. Communication is part of the fast-food source through an educational process that quickly produces skilled graduates, etc.

Further, Herman and Chomsky (1988)'s market logic is also seen in the funding model of universities which influences the policy direction of the Communication study. The majority of universities in Indonesia depend on two competitive or paternalistic funding sources: student tuition payment and/or government subsidies. Efforts to explore alternative financing from business units have not been successful. As a department dominated by the stigma of producing communication workers, the Communications study program is the mainstay of the accumulation of student funding sources through the number of student registrations exceeding their ideal capacity. A

further implication is that the quality of learning in the classroom is not controlled because the teaching burden of lecturers is beyond reasonable, eroding their time to conduct research and community service and directly involved in social advocacy.

Referring to Fleming and Rosser, lecturers or academics in neoliberal universities are workers who work to serve students as consumers, and knowledge is a consumptive product that is traded instantly. The practice of dealing with academic degrees or reducing the lecture process from regular to accelerated, distance learning, etc. is the creative development of this mindset. In its historical study, a strong symptom of university neo-liberalization is the resultant or antithesis of the politicized movement on the one hand, which is seen in the academic tradition in developing countries. The classical tradition of Humboldtian higher education focuses on teaching and research activities, where the campus is considered an ivory tower of scientists.

The choice of integrating into the transnational university market is a classic issue since 1990 through the liberalization of education (Yudiatmaja, 2015). The liberalization of higher education began with the issuance of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System which states that universities have the right to determine policies and have autonomy in managing education in their institutions (article 50 paragraph 6). This process then continued with the issuance of Presidential decree no. 77 of 2007, which categorizes education as a commercial business field, not a social sector. In this PP, the education sector is allowed to get foreign capital of up to 49%. In line with this, several state universities are designated as State-Owned Legal Entities, such as UGM, UI, ITB, and IPB. They have the right to carry out the regulations contained in Law number 20 of 2003 and Presidential decree no. 77 of 2007.

The peak of the liberalization of higher education occurred in 2009 when the government passed Law number 9 of 2009 on Legal Entities Education. This law is controversial because it legitimizes the government's discharge of responsibility in the education sector. Although it was annulled by the Constitutional Court in 2012, the House of Representatives reformulated the Higher Education Law, which has a similar spirit. Several large universities with dual degree cooperation programs with foreign universities show indications of liberalization. There are international classes that allow international students to study and lecturers from abroad to teach at the university. Learning from the experiences of China and India, Indonesia chose to implement 'limited liberalization' of certain study programs, including Communication studies.

Ultimately, the digital revolution, commercial media control, and US-centered capitalistic media system welcome transnational control over Communication studies. Curriculum design that adopts 'digital' (technological) perspective becomes a new indicator of university's adaptability to globalization, internationalization of education, etc. The implication of this is what Haryanto (2001) called an acceptance of a single paradigm of communication science studies that defends for a pragmatic, positivistic, historically strong paradigm rooted in the *Chicago Schoolism* in the United States. This classical mindset ignores the current context of the need for scientific development in the area in which it develops, ignores the epistemological dimension, or ignores pluralistic reasoning of knowledge, and negates the plurality of scientific schools that should be able to interact methodically with communication science.

Conclusion

This paper described the trend of the study of Communication studies in Indonesia, which is still uniform, a continuation of a similar trend in the authoritarian New Order

era, where this study became an agent of developmentism (politics in the era before 1998 and economics in the post-1998 to date). The dominant of three cores: Communication, Public Relations, Journalism studies at public and private universities shows a complex situation: predatory bureaucracy and transnational market power.

This paper concludes that Communication studies in higher education are oriented to and agree with powers outside itself, both to the government and to investors/digital communications industry on a global scale. Two major factors: a predatory bureaucracy as a legacy of the authoritarian New Order regime that subordinated universities and the strengthening of direct and/or indirect intervention from national and international corporations as key actors of educational neoliberalism became the primary triggers for the stagnant knowledge production and academic autonomy. The first factor typically happened in Indonesia, the latter is global phenomenon.

The obvious implication of the two factors for the study of Communication in Indonesia is the lack of academic autonomy, and the slow transformative step toward an exploration of Communication science in Indonesia. Looking at Fleming's argument about dark academia, the author argues that situation is even darker in Indonesia due to mixed of neoliberalization of educational pressures and higher education bureaucratic cultures. Referring to the Edufactory concept, this paper considers that it eroded academic autonomy, fulfilled solely market interest. The classic problem of government-driven academic culture is still a real phenomenon, which can be seen in the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM), a top-down teaching and learning model initiated by Ministry of Education and Culture. Universities, including Communication study program, seem powerless to avoid this project.

Following the collapse of the New Order regime, which was mono-loyalist toward the world of higher education, the pendulum of power that direct higher education shifted to a new and stronger actor: national and international industrial groups, which emerged in the name of the relevancies of communication education to the needs international job market. The one-dimensional man popularized by Herbert Marcuse is represented by academics and Communication students as workers in the education industry and partly workers in communication industry. The orientation of the current Communications curriculum has changed: from fulfilling infrastructure developments that are exclusively managed by the government to the practical role of skilled human producers for the needs of business competition. Back in the 1970s-1990s, the role of communication knowledge production was forced to align with the interests of national development propaganda. Nowadays, it is shifting to the role of a global digital agency. Its partners are shifting from government to digital giant industry on a global scale.

Taking into account the stagnation of the Communication studies above, which was triggered by both the policies of the legacy of the New Order and by the power of the global-scale digital industry, the two major associations: ASPIKOM and ISKI, need to reformulate their mission, to collaboratively organize projects that lead in deconstructing communication science. This strategic projects must be a key issue to appear in every organizational events, such as the annual conference or leadership regeneration. To begin with, the 'sourcebook' wrote by communication experts in Indonesia on the ideas of de-westernization, Asianization, or Indonesianization of communication needs to be exposed and published soon. This inspiration can be taken from a classic book entitled: De-Westernizing Media Studies (Curran & Park, 2000).

ASPIKOM management must do parallel job between serving interests and/or to acknowledge government missions over the Communication studies with strengthening the autonomous academic culture. ASPIKOM must accelerate the realization of the idea of an independent accreditation agency in the field of Communication. This agency can reduce political intervention, provide opportunities for debureaucratization, as well as can lead to a more substantive non-administrative performance of communication academics. In the future, as is the tradition at universities in Germany, ASPIKOM must encourage the application of dual system of education services: academic colleges (to produce knowledge and are politically autonomous) and vocational colleges that are constructed to produce alumni in accordance with market interest.

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